

Killer fruit juice: Kano confirms 10 dead, 400 hospitalised, Lagos, Cross River, Sokoto warn residents

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Kano State Governor, Abdullahi Ganduje

***Don't take products not approved by NAFDAC, Lagos warns**

***Killer drink can get to Osun from Kano, says Oyetola's aide**

The Kano State Government on Thursday said 10 people had died and 400 others hospitalised after drinking a poisonous fruit juice.

The state government had last month said the poisonous fruit juice claimed three lives and led to the hospitalisation of 183 others.

The state Commissioner for Health, Dr Aminu Tsanyawa, in a video recording made available to journalists in Kano on Thursday, stated that out of 400 people hospitalised, 50 persons were undergoing treatment for kidney-related ailments.

As the Kano State Government gave an update on the killer drink, Lagos, Katsina, Cross River, Sokoto and Osun state governments urged residents to be vigilant before consuming any fruit drink.

Although they urged residents not to panic, they advised them to check the expiry dates of drinks.

The Kano State Commissioner for Health had at a press conference in Kano on March 16 said the outbreak spread to 13 local government areas of the state.

The state ministry of health said the affected patients showed symptoms such as bloody urine, fever, lethargy, and sometimes yellowness of the eyes (jaundice).

On Thursday, Tsanyawa urged residents to be vigilant when consuming any fruit juice during the ongoing Ramadan to avoid catastrophic consequences.

The commissioner stated, "As you are aware, the ministry of health had in the recent past announced the outbreak of a strange disease traceable to the consumption of a substandard drink.

"The consumption of this fake and substandard product has telling effects on the kidney and other vital organs of the body.

"Due to excessive heat that coincides with Ramadan, there is a possibility for high patronage of juices; I want to use this opportunity to caution residents to be on the watch-out."

Kano has over the past couple of weeks been battling with an outbreak of a strange disease that has further stretched the health challenges of the state.

Thursday's update by the health commissioner came after a major breakthrough by the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control's arrest of the suspects behind selling the Kano killer drink.

The Public Relations Officer of the ministry, Hajiya Hadiza Namadi, in an interview with *The PUNCH* on Thursday, said the video on the update of the incident was meant to further warn residents against taking the killer drink, as traders were still selling in the state.

NAFDAC had last week explained that it found out that the chemical added to the drink that led to the death of three persons contained 'Hydroxylamine,' used for terrorism.

The regulatory agency disclosed that all the merchants of the deadly chemicals and additives had been apprehended while further investigations were ongoing.

Ramadan: Katsina cautions on fruit juice

The Katsina State Commissioner for Health, Yakubu Danja, in an interview with one of our correspondents on Thursday, advised the people of the state to be cautious about what they consumed during the ongoing Ramadan.

He said, "Honestly speaking, I am not aware of the killer drink, but I will enjoin people to be cautious of what they consume especially during this fasting period.

“Of course, Islam is specific about the food or drinks to be consumed when breaking the fast. I will still suggest that people should take precautions in the food or drinks they take.”

Don't take products not approved by NAFDAC, Lagos warns

The Lagos State Commissioner for Information, Mr Gbenga Omotoso, on his part, advised residents to check the expiry dates of the products they consumed.

Omotoso, in an interview with one of our correspondents, also urged residents of the state not to consume products that were not certified by NAFDAC.

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Reacting to the story of the sales of expired citric acid powdered drinks in Kano State, the commissioner said the state consumer protection agency would not allow the 'killer drink' to be sold in the state.

He said, “We have consumer protection agency saddled with the responsibility of curbing fake products and prosecuting people selling such.

“People must watch out for expiry dates on the products they consume and they have to ensure that such products are NAFDAC approved.”

Omotoso also assured residents of the state that there was no need to panic about the 'killer drink.'

Killer drink can get to Osun from Kano, Oyetola's aide warns residents

In an interview with *The PUNCH*, the Special Adviser to Osun State Governor on Public Health, Dr Siji Olamiju, warned residents against consuming any drink they were not familiar with.

Olamiju said with a large population of northerners resident in the state, there was high possibility that the poisonous drink might be brought to the state.

He said that the state officials in conjunction with NAFDAC staff in the state would inspect sale outlets to ensure that the said drink was not allowed in the state.

He said, “NAFDAC has spoken about the incident and it has made us to understand that the 'unidentified' product was illegally smuggled in to the country and by analysis and investigation, it is a substandard product.

“I want to advise all Nigerians, especially the residents of Osun, that they should be wary of new products. During this fasting period, people will be lured in to taking different types of juice to break their fast. They should take only those products they are familiar with.

“Another thing is that we have a very high population of northerners here, so there is possibility of smuggling such drink into the state.

“So, we are already working together with NAFDAC to give us the identity of that drink. So that we can work with the NAFDAC here to make sure that we check all the juice stores. With that, we won’t allow it at all in the state.

“We have to take responsibility for our health and we should be wary of what we drink in this period. I want to urge everybody to take it serious. We will make sure the drink doesn’t get to Osun and if it already here, we will knock it off with the assistance of NAFDAC in Osun.”

C’River urges NAFDAC to identify killer drink, calls for vigilance

On its part, the Cross River State Government called for vigilance.

In a chat with one of our correspondents on Thursday, the state Commissioner for Information and Orientation, Asu Okang, said, “the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the relevant agencies like the Consumer Protection Agency of the state and others should be able to come together and mount surveillance to ensure that such should not enter our state through the boundaries.

“But we must first of all identify the real drink which is now termed killer drink before we can know whether it is already in the state or on its way to the state.

“Residents of the state should be vigilant and report any incident to the Ministry of Health.”

The Sokoto State Commissioner of Health, Dr Ali Inname, stated that, there was scarcity of information on the alleged killer drink.

Inname stated, “There is scarcity of information on the name of the killer drink, the source of the killer drink. If you know, you can avail us with such information.

“Notwithstanding, we have never for once lower our guard. We have sensitised our people, particularly the traders to quickly intimate us, immediately they notice any strange drink in the market.

“The people too, have been sensitised to be wary of what they eat and consume, especially with Ramadan, on going.”

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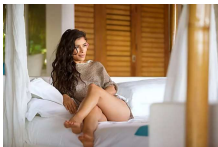
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