

FSSAI Cracks Down on Artificial Flavouring in Alcoholic Beverages, Orders Prohibition of Sale of Select Liquor Variants

06 August 2026 | News

The affected products include selected variants of Royal Challenge Whisky, Antiquity Blue Whisky and McDowell's No. 1 Rum manufactured by United Spirits Ltd at specific facilities, Bagpiper Deluxe Whisky and Old Cask Deluxe XXX Rum produced by Inbrew Beverages, as well as three variants of Old Monk rum manufactured by Mohan Rocky Springwater



The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has initiated enforcement action against several alcoholic beverage manufacturers for the use of artificial or nature-identical flavouring substances in whisky and rum, ordering the prohibition of sale of select product variants after laboratory testing found them to be non-compliant with food safety standards.

In an official statement titled "Position of FSSAI on the use of identical flavours in alcoholic beverages", the regulator clarified that while the Food Safety and Standards (Alcoholic Beverages) Regulations permit the use of natural flavouring substances, there is no recognised manufacturing practice that allows the addition of "rum flavour" to rum or "whisky flavour" to whisky. According to FSSAI, such practices bypass traditional production methods involving natural ingredients and maturation processes, rendering the products "sub-standard" under the Food Safety and Standards Act.

The enforcement action follows laboratory analysis of samples collected from manufacturing facilities, which detected the presence of external artificial or nature-identical flavouring substances in certain alcoholic beverages. Based on these

findings, FSSAI has issued prohibition-of-sale orders for specific product batches manufactured at designated facilities.

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FSSAI emphasised that the action should not be interpreted as a ban on natural flavouring substances, which continue to be permitted under the regulations. Instead, the regulator said the enforcement is aimed at preventing the use of flavouring substances that imitate the character of the alcoholic beverage itself, a practice it says is inconsistent with internationally recognised manufacturing standards.

The move forms part of FSSAI's broader efforts to strengthen regulatory oversight of the food and beverage sector and ensure compliance with quality and labelling requirements. The authority reiterated its commitment to protecting consumers and maintaining the integrity of alcoholic beverage standards in India.