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Toxics Link seeks a nationwide ban on the online or offline sale of excessive mercury-containing skin lightening products across India

Maharashtra FDA's Crackdown on Toxic Skin-Lightening Cosmetics Must Be Nationally Replicated

New Delhi, July 24, 2026: Toxics Link has welcomed the Maharashtra Food and Drugs Administration's (FDA) decisive action against nine cosmetic products found to contain toxic levels of mercury and lead, calling it a critical public health intervention that should now be replicated across the country through a nationwide ban on mercury-containing skin-lightening products.

In a public alert issued on **10 July 2026**, the Maharashtra FDA declared nine cosmetic skin lightening products (8 creams and 1 soap) as "Not of Standard Quality" after laboratory analysis found mercury levels exceeding prescribed limits. One product was also found to contain excessive levels of lead. The regulator has directed an immediate halt to the sale, stocking and distribution of these products and initiated their recall from the market.

The products identified include **Skinia Korean Goree Beauty Cream, Face Fresh Gold Plus Beauty Cream and Beauty Serum, Dazler Eterna Day Care Light Cream, Parley Beauty Cream, Malika Premium Beauty Cream, Goree Beauty Cream with Lycopene, Goree Whitening Soap, Parley Goldie Advanced Beauty Cream Pearl Shine, and Hania Beauty Cream.**

Mostly produced in Pakistan and easily available to the public largely through e-commerce platforms, several of these products were found to be misbranded, lacking mandatory labelling information such as manufacturer details, batch numbers, manufacturing dates and expiry dates. All these skin lightening products are in violation to the national standard for mercury content in creams.

While applauding Maharashtra's prompt response, Toxics Link stressed that consumers across India remain vulnerable because mercury-containing skin-lightening creams continue to be widely available through retail outlets, informal markets and online platforms.

"The Maharashtra FDA has demonstrated that regulatory vigilance can protect consumers from hazardous products. However, restricting action to one state is not enough. Toxic cosmetics do not respect state boundaries. India urgently needs a nationwide ban on mercury-containing skin-lightening products, backed by strict enforcement and sustained public awareness," said **Satish Sinha, Associate Director, Toxics Link.**

Toxics Link has released multiple reports highlighting issues of mercury in skin lightening creams available in the Indian market. As a potent neurotoxin, mercury can damage the brain, kidneys and nervous system. Repeated use of mercury-containing skin creams allows the metal to be absorbed through the skin, posing serious health risks to users. Pregnant women, infants and young children are particularly

vulnerable, as mercury exposure can impair neurological development. Mercury from these products also enters wastewater systems, contributing to long-term environmental contamination.

The continued marketing of skin-lightening products containing mercury is particularly concerning as these products exploit deeply entrenched social biases around skin colour while exposing consumers to dangerous toxic substances without their knowledge.

India is a Party to the **Minamata Convention on Mercury**, a global treaty aimed at protecting human health and the environment from mercury pollution. The continued availability of mercury-containing cosmetics is inconsistent with the Convention's objectives and highlights gaps in market surveillance and enforcement.

Toxics Link urged the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), and the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** to:

- Prohibit the manufacture, import, sale and distribution of all mercury-containing skin-lightening cosmetics across India.
- Strengthen surveillance and routine testing of cosmetic products available in both physical and online markets.
- Ensure swift product recalls and strict enforcement against manufacturers, importers and distributors violating safety standards.
- Improve customs oversight to prevent the import of non-compliant cosmetic products.

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About Toxics Link

Toxics Link is an Indian environmental research and advocacy organisation set up in 1996, engaged in disseminating information to help strengthen the campaign against toxics pollution, provide cleaner alternatives, and bring together groups and people affected by this problem. Toxics Link's Mission Statement - "Working together for environmental justice and freedom from toxins."

More at: www.toxicslink.org

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