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## **Mayor warns vendors of raids**

CHENNAI: A 'compromise mission' led by a group of 20 fruit vendors from Koyambedu on Tuesday was rejected outright by Chennai Corporation Mayor M Subramanian, who lambasted them for indulging in the sale of artificially ripened fruits causing public health hazards.

A group of fruit traders from Koyambedu under the banner of Chennai Fruits Commission Agents' Association met the Mayor on Tuesday and sought a 'private audience' with him to clarify 'doubts' on artificially ripened mangoes.

The traders' compromise move followed the recent spate of raids at Koyambedu fruit market where the civic body officials seized more than 65 tonnes of artificially ripened fruits, mostly different varieties of mangoes, and sealed at

least two shops.

Since the Mayor was wary of the request for a 'private audience' with fruit vendors at Ripon Building, he arranged for an 'interactive session' and asked other officials concerned, including the Corporation Health Officer Dr P Kuganantham, to attend the meeting at his conference hall.

During the 30- minute session, fruit traders argued that a few illiterate vendors did the artificial ripening of fruits and the practice continued only because of the shortage of space (godown) for making fruits ripe naturally.

The vendors also complained that only eight

godowns were available in the whole Koyambedu fruit market for natural ripening of fruits and they were awfully inadequate during peak seasons.

The justification from fruit traders did not convince the Mayor, who shot back with warnings of further continuous raids on such traders engaged in artificial ripening of fruits.