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## Govt bid to stop drinking water adulteration

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The Central government said on Monday that it was working on a mechanism to stop adulteration in packaged water, which would include cracking down on manufacturers as well as coming up with low-cost machines to test the quality of water.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has been requested to prepare a low-cost testing device which can be used to check adulteration in various other food products as well as packaged water, food and consumer affairs minister Ram Vilas Paswan said.

Mr Paswan said that a government report found some adulteration in bottled water and that action would be taken after going through the report.

He further said that it was the duty of state governments to provide clean drinking water and that state governments should follow the minimum standards laid down by the World Health Organisation (WHO) while providing piped water supply.

Briefing the media after a meeting of the Central Consumer Protection Council (CCPC), the minister said that all citizens have a right to clean water and that he would write to states on the issue of following WHO standards while providing clean drinking water.

He said that the department of consumer affairs would launch six regional consumer helplines in the next three months and that the state governments had been requested to provide necessary support for the establishment of the helplines.

Officials said that at the meeting of the Central Consumer Protection Council (CCPC), the focus was on how to strengthen the enforcement machinery and testing infrastructure, training and capacity building of all stakeholders, consumer advocacy and capacity building of Panchayati Raj Institutions and other rural development functionaries to spread consumer awareness in the rural areas.

The minister also sought suggestions from the members on issues like service charges being charged by hotels and restaurants, awareness on wastage of food, legal metrology activities such as sale at less than the maximum retail price, and issues related to food adulteration and fake and spurious goods.