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FDA turns tap off for six packaged water plants

PUNE: Officials of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have shut down six packaged drinking water plants — in Pune and Kolhapur — for operating illegally without mandatory licences this month.

Licences issued by the Bureau of Indian Standard (BIS) and Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) are prerequisites to run a packaged drinking water plant. “The demand for packaged drinking water usually shoots up during summer.

Besides, there is a tendency to offer packaged drinking water at all kinds of events where people gather in large number including wedding functions, social and cultural events taking place not just in the cities, but also in rural areas,” said SS Desai, the joint commissioner (food), FDA, Pune division. “To cash in on the increasing drinking water demand, people start packaged drinking water plants without acquiring the mandatory licences.

Without the licences, the functioning of such plants is illegal,” Desai added. Of the six plants found operating without the mandatory licences, one was from Pune city and the remaining five from Kolhapur. “It has been found that such illegally operating packaged drinking water plants do not even have a laboratory, which is necessary to check water potability.

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They also have no test reports of the processed water from other laboratories,” Desai said. “Most illegal plants fill the bottles from taps or groundwater sources and sell them as processed drinking water.