



Single-use plastic: India's food regulator set to review packaging guidelines

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E-Paper

India's food regulator the food safety and standards authority of India plans to review packaging guidelines to help food and beverage companies migrate to single-use plastic alternatives. These revised regulations will be based on feedback from recent meetings with the industry.

Sources told CNBC-TV18 that the FSSAI will explore allowing alternative forms of packaging for certain foods. For instance, the regulator may allow the use of bamboo and glass as packaging for certain food products. "There were certain forms of packaging which were prohibited in the past. These will now be allowed if there is no food safety issue," said a food safety official in the know of the developments.



While the industry has been suggesting the use of compostable plastic as an alternate form of packaging, the regulator is of the view that there are certain challenges. "Compostable plastic needs to be segregated and recycled in a certain environment. There needs to be a mechanism in place before it is included in the packaging regulations," said a food safety official. Sources say that these are some reasons why the authority will not allow the use of compostable plastic just yet.

These changes will reflect as amendments to the packaging norms that the FSSAI notified in January 2019. The regulation defines standards for different materials used for packaging of food products. For instance, these regulations prohibit the use of newspaper and other such materials for packing or wrapping of food articles and includes respective Indian standard for printing inks for use on food packages.

In a response to CNBC-TV18, the FSSAI said that it is participating in 'Swachhata Hi Seva' campaign through various programs. They are also looking into regulations to make packaging more environment friendly.