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E-Paper

FSSAI proposes new rules for food products, businesses

By Express News Service |



NEW DELHI:

India's apex food safety regulator has proposed draft rules of advertisements for food products that will bar food companies, restaurants and hotels from putting up ads that are "against" healthy lifestyles or portray packaged food as a complete replacement for a normal meal.

As per the proposed regulations by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, food businesses cannot use words as "natural", "fresh", "premium", "finest", "best", "authentic", "genuine", "real" on food labels except under specific conditions.

The draft guidelines have been put up in public domain for feedback and suggestions.

The draft rules also say that food businesses will not be permitted to advertise or make claims undermining the products of other manufacturers, so as to promote their own food products or influence consumer behaviour.

"Any person, including a third party, who advertises or is a party to the publication of any misleading advertisement not complying with these regulations, would be penalised with a fine extending upto Rs 10 lakh under Section 53 of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006," the draft norms say.

FSSAI IN NEWS

These regulations, after consideration of stakeholder comments and finalisation, are likely to come into force in a month's time

Authorities in the FSSAI said that the proposed rules are aimed at protecting consumer interests and help them make informed choices.

“The guidelines also stipulate that the claims must be truthful, unambiguous, meaningful, not misleading and help consumers to comprehend the information provided,” said an official.

In respect of nutrients or components, the claims may refer to a nutrient such as energy, fat, cholesterol, saturated fat, trans-fat, sugar, or sodium salt being low or absent, a food being a source of or high in respect of nutrients like dietary fibre, protein, vitamins or minerals—he explained.

Also, food products can be claimed to be fresh only if they are not processed in any manner except washed, peeled, chilled, trimmed or cut or have undergone other processing necessary to make the product safe without altering its basic characteristics in any manner—say the proposed rules.