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FSDA to crack whip against illegal bottled water suppliers



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AGRA: Food safety and drug administration (FSDA) is planning a crackdown on illegal commercial RO (reverse osmosis) plants running in the city. Moreover it will also initiate action against those who sell untreated tap water as packaged drinking water. Last year, taking a stern view of spurious water being sold to people as "bottled water", the Prime Minister's office had shot letters to state governments asking them to immediately put an end to this illegal practice.

Vineet Kumar, who recently took over the charge of FSDA designated officer in Agra, told TOI that ubiquitous RO plants without following the norms are on the top of his list. "Last year after the PMO's directive Noida and Ghaziabad FSDA under my supervision collected 27 samples of water from various such places, which later were found to be substandard quality. In Agra, the problem is more acute. Very soon we will launch a drive against such establishments."

There are around 450 Reverse Osmosis (RO) water filtration plants operating in the city, but only 14 large scale RO plants have the licence. A large number of them do not have mandatory water harvesting system.

As per the norms, an RO plant should have certification from Bureau of India Standards (BIS), licence from FSDA, besides a proper water harvesting system.

Kumar said the drive would be conducted to check all these three criteria, and an action would be taken against those who fail in these parameters.

As city's faces acute shortage of drinking water, bottling plants have mushroomed in the city and supplying water in 20 litter cans for as cheap as Rs 5.

In most case suppliers are just passing ground water as RO purified water and befooling people. Instead of relying on this kind of water, people should go for water purifiers," the official added.

The PMO letter, addressed to state governments' chief secretaries and directors (health service), read, "This has come to our knowledge that drinking water assembling in bottles has become good/ handsome business and water is not distilled water but pipe line water assembled in bottles to earn money by unfair means."
