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FSDA to crack down on illegal RO plants in city

Agra: The Food Safety and Drugs Administration here is planning a crack down on illegal commercial RO (reverse osmosis) plants in the city. Moreover, it will also initiate action against those who sell untreated tap water in packaged bottles. Last year, taking a stern view of spurious water being sold to people as "bottled water", the Prime Minister's office had shot off letters to the states asking them to immediately put an end to this malpractice.

Vineet Kumar, who recently took charge as the FSDA designated officer in Agra, told TOI that RO plants that don't follow norms are on top of his list. "Last year after the PMO's directive, the Noida and Ghaziabad FSDA under my supervision collected 27 samples of water from various plants and these were found to be of sub-standard quality. In Agra, the problem is more acute. Very soon we will launch a drive against such establishments." There are around 450 RO water filtration plants operating in the city, but only 14 of these have a licence, the official said. A large number of them do not have mandatory water harvesting system, he added.

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

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

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As the city's faces an acute shortage of drinking water, bottling plants have mushroomed across the city and supply 20lt "drinking" water cans for as cheap as Rs 5.

"In most cases, the suppliers are just passing ground water as purified water and fooling citizens. Instead of relying on this kind of water, people should buy water purifiers at home," the FSDA official added.
