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Government wants details on packaged food items visible and readable

Government is planning to amend the 2011 commodities packaging rules to ensure the details on the packaged food items are more visible and readable and also wants to incorporate barcode-kind of system to protect consumers from spurious products.

The Consumer Affairs Ministry has held several round of discussions to amend the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules 2011 in the interest of consumers. Even the industry and public have demanded changes to the rules. "Rule 7 specifies about the font size of the declaration but most companies do not follow strictly. In smaller packs, the font size is too small for consumers to read. So, we have decided to adopt the US standard on font size," a senior Consumer Affairs Ministry official told PTI.

Right now, the font size of the declaration such as name, address, net commodity, date of manufacturing and retail price -- is less than 1 mm. "The US follows 1.6 mm size. But we are planning to keep 1.5 mm for a pack of 200 grams/ml."

The font size for a packed food item containing more than 200 grams/ml up to 500 grams/ml would be increased from 2 mm to 4 mm and for above 500 grams/ml, the font size would be doubled to 8 mm, he said. Besides, the ministry is considering introducing bar-code or any such mark to identify food products are made in India or other country to curb sale of fake food items in the country.

That apart, the ministry is considering increasing maximum quantity of packaged food items up to 50 kg/litres from the existing 25 kg/litres.

"For smaller packs, consumers have to pay more. So, we are thinking of allowing some commodities like rice, atta and others to be packed up to 50 kg/litres. This

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will bring down the cost on consumers," the official explained.

The ministry had last amended the rule in 2015.
