Focus on compliance with new norms: FSSAI

Food-safety czar tells commissioners to go easy on cases involving old norms

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 8: The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has asked safety commissioners to take cognisance of the new standards framed for various food products.

It has advised them to withdraw or not pursue cases of violation of old norms and standards, unless companies are still not compliant with the new or revised standards.

This comes days after the district administration of Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh, decided to impose a fine on Nestle India and its distributors after it allegedly found ash content above permissible limits in samples of Maggi.

Nestle India has refuted these allegations and said that it is compliant with the latest standards, which were notified by the FSSAI in August and September.

New standards

The FSSAI, through its Friday order, said that during the last few years a large number of new standards have been framed or amended for several food products based on scientific evidence to ensure appropriate food safety levels.

“The field machinery tasked with the responsibility of ensuring food safety may have lodged cases against food business operators for violation of the old standards even though the impugned products may now be in conformity with the new/revised standards.

“It may be appreciated that such revision of standards has taken place after talking into account all scientific evidence required to ensure appropriate level of...
protection of human life and health. Engaging of state machinery in pursuing such cases not only diverts the scarce resources of the government but also burdens the judicial system,” the order stated.

Speaking to BusinessLine, FSSAI CEO Pawan Agarwal said: “Standards are continuously evolving based on the views of the scientific panels. We want the field machinery to be focussed on genuine cases of unsafe food products. We also want to reduce the burden of litigation.”

Accordingly, commissioners have been advised to withdraw, or at least not pursue, cases for violation of old norms and standards unless the products in question are still not in conformity with the new/revised standards, the FSSAI stated in its order.