

Snack makers to resize packs to meet state's plastic norms

FMCG Firms Plan To Reduce Packet Sizes

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Mumbai: One always wonders why 100gm of branded potato chips or any other snack comes in a packet that could easily contain five times the quantity. Well, snack manufacturers are now considering reducing packet sizes to bring down plastic use. The plan is in keeping with the Maharashtra government's anti-plastic steps, which includes attempts to clamp down on multilayer packaging for fast moving consumer goods (FMCG).

Though plastic used at the manufacturing stage is exempt from the plastic ban that has been imposed in the state, the government told FMCG companies last month to come up with solutions for package recycling and reuse. Among the companies that have shown an intention to follow the order are PepsiCo India, ITC and Cavinkare.

PepsiCo India is resizing packs of its bestselling Lay's and Kurkure as it ramps up sustainable packaging solutions amid growing concerns over plastic depleting the environment, said a company spokesperson. The fastest selling units of Lay's are the Rs5 and Rs10 packs of American cream onion and magic masala flavours, and of Kurkure are similar packs of the masala munch flavour.

ITC, which makes Bingo and Mad Angles, too is looking for a solution. "Over the next decade, ITC will deploy superior solutions so that 100% of its product packaging will be reusable, recyclable or compostable. Already, over 99% of solid waste generated in ITC's factories is recycled," said a spokesperson.

Then, the Chennai-based Cavinkare is looking to "optimise" its raw material intake of plastic for its Garden snacks brand. The company is also working on a buyback process specific to Maharashtra, a spokesperson told TOI. Some FMCG companies, including Coca Cola and Bisleri, are offering a buyback price of Rs 15 for a kg of PET bottles and Rs 5 for a kg of shrink wraps.

FMCG companies are also looking for alternatives to PET bottles, though the state has allowed their use provided there is a buyback mechanism. PepsiCo is looking to introduce non-returnable glass packaging for its beverage brands. It launched Pepsi Black in this format. The firm is also attempting to recycle plastic films to convert into fuel. A pilot has been initiated at the company's Pune plant. "We are yet to figure out how and where the fuel will be utilized. But we are making progress," said a spokesperson. Even as companies look to reduce plastic use, the solutions will come at a cost and the firms will have to ensure that margins are such that their business remains sustainable and viable.