

YEAR END REVIEW 2018- (DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS)

Relevant for: Government Policies & Welfare Schemes | Topic: Government policies & interventions for development in various Sectors and issues arising out of their design & implementation incl. Housing

Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution

Year End Review 2018- (Department of Consumer Affairs) Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution

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1. Weights and Measures Unit

(1) Amendment made in the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011 to safeguard the interest of consumers and ease of doing business came into force w.e.f. 01.01.2018. Goods displayed by the seller on e-commerce platform shall contain declarations required under the Rules.

Ø Specific mention is made in the rules that no person shall declare different MRPs (dual MRP) on an identical pre-packaged commodity.

Ø Size of letters and numerals for making declaration is increased, so that consumer can easily read the same.

Ø The net quantity checking is made more scientific.

Ø Bar Code/ QR Coding is allowed on voluntarily basis.

Ø Provisions regarding declarations on Food Products have been harmonized with regulation under the Food Safety & Standards Act.

Ø Medical devices which are declared as drugs, are brought into the purview of declarations to be made under the rules.

Ø On the representations of Industries and their Associations on the huge inventory of packaging materials with them, permission was given by this Department for making declarations under these amended rules by affixing sticker or by stamping or online printing or using a tag upto 31.7.2018. Further, to facilitate smooth transition and for ease of doing business advisories have been issued to the Controllers of Legal Metrology of State Governments not to take coercive action against the industry upto 31.7.2018 for font size.

(2) Permission to display revised MRP due to reduction of rates of GST up to 31st December, 2018:

Ø On account of implementation of GST w.e.f. 1st July, 2017, there may be instances where the

retail sale price of a pre-packaged commodity is required to be changed. In this context, the manufacturers or packers or importers of pre-packaged commodities were allowed to declare the revised retail sale price (MRP) in addition to the existing retail sale price (MRP), for three months w.e.f. 1st July 2017 to 30th September, 2017. Declaration of the changed retail sale price (MRP) was allowed to be made by way of stamping or putting sticker or online printing, as the case may be.

Ø Use of unexhausted packaging material/wrapper was also been allowed upto 30th September, 2017 after making the necessary corrections.

Ø Considering the requests received to extend the permission for some more time it was extended to display the revised MRP due to implementation of GST by way of stamping or putting sticker or online printing further up to 31st March, 2018.

Ø When Government reduced the rates of GST on certain specified items, the permission was granted under sub-rule (3) of rule 6 of the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011, to affix an additional sticker or stamping or online printing for declaring the reduced MRP on the pre-packaged commodity. In this case also, the earlier Labelling/ Sticker of MRP will continue to be visible.

Ø This relaxation will also be applicable in the case of unsold stocks manufactured/ packed/ imported after 1st July, 2017 where the MRP would reduce due to reduction in the rate of GST post 1st July, 2017.

Ø The above permission/ relaxation were extended upto 31st March, 2018.

Ø As the Government has further reduced the rates of GST on certain specified items, permission has been granted to affix an additional sticker or stamping or online printing as the case may be, for declaring the reduced MRP on the pre-packaged commodity upto 31st December, 2018. However, the earlier Labelling/ Sticker of MRP will continue to be visible.

Ø This relaxation is also applicable in the case of unsold stocks manufactured/ packed/ imported where the MRP would reduce due to reduction in the rate of GST w.e.f. 27th July, 2018. Any packaging material or wrapper which could not be exhausted by the manufacturer or packer or importer, may also be used for packing of material upto 31st December, 2018 or till such date the packing material or wrapper is exhausted, whichever is earlier after making corrections required in retail sale price (MRP) on account of reduction of G.S.T. by way of stamping or putting sticker or online printing.

(3) Support to State Governments:

Ø Grants in aid were released for the construction of Laboratory Buildings to States / UTs Governments for effective enforcement of weights and measures laws.

Ø Legal standard equipment have been supplied to State Governments for calibration, verification and stamping of weights and measures and weighing and measuring instruments to ensure the correct quantity delivered to the consumers.

Ø Training programs at National Physical Laboratory, New Delhi were organised for the enforcement officers of the State Governments.

(4) Initiatives taken for Regional Reference Standards Laboratories at Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Bhubaneswar, Faridabad, Guwahati and Indian Institute of Legal Metrology, Ranchi

Ø All RRSs and Indian Institute of Legal Metrology, Ranchi have been accredited by National Accreditation Board of Laboratories (NABL).

Ø Two new Regional Reference Standards Laboratories are being established at Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh and Nagpur, Maharashtra. The land for both the laboratories has already been purchased from the respective State Governments and the construction work is yet to start.

Ø The up gradation of Regional Reference Standards Laboratory, Bangalore is in progress to make it at par with the best International Laboratories in the field of Legal Metrology.

(5) Advisories issued:

(i) In the interest of consumers advisory has been issued to the Controllers of Legal Metrology of all States/UTs to enforce overcharging and dual MRP, for which actions have been taken by the State Governments.

(ii) To safeguard the interest of consumers advisory has been issued to all State Governments to ensure all declarations including MRP on all medical devices.

(iii) The permission relaxing the manner of declaration of the retail sale price was granted vide order No. WM-10(54)/2016 dated 04.12.2017, in respect of Single Brand retail trading entities, which has been extended upto 31.07.2019.

(iv) Advisory was issued to the Controllers of Legal Metrology of all States/ UTs for compliance of Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011 for sale/ distribution of edible vegetable oil including blended edible vegetable oil.

(6) Action taken to stop fraudulent practices in Petrol/ Diesel dispensers:

(1) E-sealing: To prevent the manipulation in petrol/ diesel dispensing units, e-sealing has been introduced at petrol/ diesel retail outlets on pilot basis with the officers of Legal Metrology of State Governments, representatives of Oil Marketing Companies, Original Equipment Manufacturers and Central Government Legal Metrology Officers.

(2) The OMCs are also asked to upgrade the existing Dispensers for the following features:

(i) To have the facility of generating OTP for any Hardware Change, Pulser validation and Calibration.

(ii) To change the existing pulser with non-openable, self destructive potted magnetic pulser

(iii) To have family integrity

(iv) To upgrade the software encryption.

(3). The permission was granted to install the Vapour Recovery System for green environment and to reduce the petrol vapours at the Retail Outlets.

(7) Time Dissemination:

Ø To enable dissemination of Indian Standard Time in the country, budget provision has been made by this Department for the dissemination of the same through the five Regional Reference Standards Laboratories located at Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, Faridabad and Guwahati with the cooperation of NPL.

Ø There are seven base units for any quantitative measurement, which in the international systems of units (SI unit) are kilogram for mass, meter for length, second for time, Ampere for electric current, Kelvin for temperature, Candela for light intensity and mole for amount of substance. Provisions for units of weights and measures are provided under the Legal Metrology Act, 2009.

Ø In India, dissemination of Time, one of the seven base units, is being maintained at only one level which is at NPL, New Delhi. The Group of Secretaries on Science & Technology, constituted by the Cabinet Secretariat in 2016, recommend that, "Presently, Indian Standard Time (IST) is not being adopted mandatorily by all Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) and 'Internet Service Providers' (ISPs). Non-uniformity of time across different systems creates problems in investigation of cybercrime by the law enforcement agencies (LEAs). Hence, synchronisation of all networks and computers within the country with a national clock is a must, especially for the real time applications in strategic sector and national security.

Ø Accurate time dissemination as well as precise time synchronization has significant impact on all societal, industrial, strategic and many other sectors like monitoring of the power grid failures, international trade, banking systems, automatic signalling in road & railways, weather forecasting, disaster managements, searching for natural resources under the earth's crust requires robust, reliable and accurate timing systems.

2. Price Stabilization Fund (PSF)

- Buffer stock of upto 20.50 lakh tonnes of pulses built through domestic procurement and import for effective market intervention to stabilize their prices. As on date, 3.77 lakh MT of pulses are available in the buffer after disposal of 16.73 lakh MT from 20.50 lakh tonnes, of which 3.79 lakh tonnes was imported and 16.71 lakh tonnes was procured domestically. Of 16.71 lakh tonnes procured domestically, 13.67 lakh tonnes was procured at MSP during 2016-17 and 2017-18, benefitting around 8.49 lakhs farmers. Procurement and import of Onions undertaken through NAFED, SFAC and MMTTC for stabilising prices of onions. Domestic procurement of 13,508 MT of Onions took place under PSF in 2018-19. Domestic procurement of 5,131 MT onion took place in 2017-18
- Pulses from the buffer are being utilized for supply to States for distribution under their schemes; Ministries/Departments of Central Government having schemes with nutrition component as well as those providing hospitality services either directly or through Private

Agencies.

- In addition, pulses from the buffer are being utilized to meet the requirement of pulses by Army and Central Para-military Forces. Food Aid has also been provided to Afghanistan as well as towards Flood-relief measures undertaken in Kerala. Pulses are also being disposed through auction in Market.
- These interventions, inter-alia, ensured that prices of pulses and onions remain at reasonable level throughout the year.
- **Strengthening of Price Monitoring Cell(PMC):**

From financial year 2018-19 onward, for Strengthening of Price Monitoring Cell (PMC) at State level, new items of funding support have been added. These comprise remuneration for a contractual employee at the level of Data Entry Operator (DEO) and provision of a handheld device with geotagging facilities for price collection along with a simcard for the said device.

3. Consumer Protection Unit

The Consumer Protection Bill 2018 has been introduced in the Parliament on 5th January, 2018 in the Parliament. The bill provides for the following:-

- i) Strengthening the existing Act
- ii) Faster redressal of Consumer Grievances
- iii) Empowering Consumers and
- iv) Modernizing legislation to keep pace with ongoing change in market.

4. BUREAU OF INDIAN STANDARDS (BIS)

The Bureau of Indian Standards Act 2016, which established the Bureau of Indian Standards as the National Standards Body of India, was brought into force with effect from 12th Oct 2017. The following rules and regulations have been framed and notified under the BIS Act:

1. BIS (Conformity Assessment) Regulations, 2018 notified on 4th Jun 2018.
2. BIS (Advisory Committees) Regulations, 2018 notified on 7th Jun 2018.
3. BIS (Hallmarking) Regulations, 2018 notified on 14th Jun 2018.
4. BIS Rules, 2018 notified on 25th Jun 2018.
5. BIS (Powers and Duties of Director General) Regulations, 2018 notified on 29th Aug 2018.
6. BIS (Amendment) Rules, 2018 notified on 6th Nov 2018.

Apart from the above, Gold and Silver artefacts have also been notified as the precious metal articles to be marked with Hallmark on 14th Jun 2018.

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