

# TOUGH, NEW E-COMMERCE RULES KICK IN NEXT WEEK

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Rights Issues - Consumer Rights in India

Details of importers have to be published for goods sold through e-commerce sites.

The e-commerce portals will have to set up a robust consumer redressal mechanism as part of the rules under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, that come into force on Monday, Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said.

The Consumer Protection (E-commerce) Rules, 2020, which fall under the Consumer Protection Act, will be notified within a few days, Mr. Paswan said at a press conference held via video-conference.

The e-commerce entities will have to provide every detail relating to return, refund, exchange, warranty and guarantee, delivery and shipment, modes of payment, grievance redressal mechanism, payment methods, security of payment methods, charge-back options and so on.

“They will also have to mention the country of origin which are necessary for enabling the consumer to make an informed decision at the pre-purchase stage on its platform,” he said.

The e-commerce platforms also have to acknowledge the receipt of any consumer complaint within 48 hours and redress the complaint within one month from the date of receipt under this Act. And will also have to appoint a grievance officer for consumer grievance redressal.

These rules, Mr. Paswan said, are mandatory and not merely advisories as issued earlier. This is the first time that such detailed rules have been published by the Government of India for e-commerce entities.

Mentioning the country of origin is equally essential. “Where an e-commerce entity offers imported goods or services for sale, it shall mention the name and details of any importer from whom it has purchased such goods or services, or who may be a seller on its platform,” the draft rules say.

Under the rules, sellers cannot refuse to take back goods or withdraw services or refuse refunds, if such goods or services are defective, deficient, delivered late, or if they do not meet the description on the platform. The rules also prohibit the e-commerce companies from manipulating the price of the goods or services to gain unreasonable profit through unjustified prices.

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