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Noose tightens, illegal bottling units to face criminal charges TNN

KOLKATA : Kolkata [Municipal Corporation \(KMC\)](#) and the enforcement branch that have been raiding several illegal packaged drinking water manufacturing units in Kolkata and its suburbs, have now decided to slap criminal charges against the offenders. These units will now be liable to be prosecuted under sections of the Indian Penal Code, which could lead to a six-month imprisonment and fines. The ensuing action will also cover illegal units producing packaged drinking water without valid licences or faking brands.

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR ERRANT TRADERS		KMC to slap showcase notice on 3 packaged water brands 	
 <p>More water units will come under KMC scanner over the next few days</p>	What happened so far	What may happen now	KMC set to seal illegal water units 
	LEGAL OPTIONS	IPC Section 272 Adulteration of food or drink intended for sale Can result in imprisonment for up to six months, or fine that may extend to one Rs 1,000, or both. The section is bailable	IPC Section 273 Sale of noxious food or drink Can result in imprisonment for up to six months, or fine that may extend to Rs 1,000, or both. The section is bailable
		All packaged water must have 3 stamps of approval: Govt  <p style="text-align: right;">TOI reports on civic crackdown on bottling units</p>	

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The penal action, KMC sources felt, will help it act fast. According to an official, the civic body on its own can lodge a lawsuit against errant owners according to a provision of the [Food Safety and Standards Authority of India](#) (FSSAI). If charges are proved, the offenders can be imprisoned for six months and need to pay a maximum penalty of Rs 1 lakh. The seal-and-seizure option, however, was hardly a deterrent.

“This time, we have sought help from the EB top brass to seal several packaged drinking water manufacturing units that are running illegally,” said Atin [Ghosh](#), the MMiC (health). “We will conduct raids with the EB officials by our side. They will have the power to arrest errant owners or seal the water plants and seize fake water bottles,” he added.

Ghosh indicated that a joint team will conduct a series of raids next week to book a number of owners.

KMC brass believes the efforts will bear fruits this time since police enjoy the power of apprehending those producing packaged drinking water without taking the specified purification measures or faking popular brands. The KMC authorities and the EB have unanimously decided to such proposal mooted by the Atin Ghosh, the mayor-in-council member overseeing the KMC health department. The meeting was attended by [Bijoy Kumar](#), the director-general of state enforcement branch, and Debasis Sarkar, the deputy commissioner, EB (Kolkata police).

According to a section of KMC health department officials, the civic body has already handed over a list of unlicensed packaged drinking water manufacturing units operating in and around Kolkata. The civic body has also given a list of businessmen who are running units with a licence but are not adhering to FSSAI standards. “We are glad that EB officials have assured us of extending their cooperation to our drive against water and food adulteration. We will conduct a series of raids in the coming weeks,” Ghosh said.

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Unlike the previous method of taking the offenders to the court, errant owners will now face action immediately. The KMC food safety inspectors will collect water samples and if any samples are found to be adulterated, the police would take appropriate action (may arrest them if needed).

The KMC is also an authority under the Prevention of Adulteration of Food, Drugs and Cosmetics (West Bengal Amendment Act, 1973) which also has a six-month prison term if violated.