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BIS, FSSAI to work on the issue of plastic contamination in bottled water

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The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) will work with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on the issue of plastic contamination in bottled water, sources said. The two bodies monitor packaged water in the domestic market. The sources said the move comes at a time when the World Health Organization is reviewing risks from plastic contamination, following a study.

The study tested 259 samples from nine countries, including India. The scientists found over 90 per cent had plastic particles.

FSSAI IN NEWS

Indian samples emerged the third-highest contaminated, after those of the United States and Thailand.

Sources said the findings had put pressure on the BIS and the FSSAI to take the matter seriously. On Friday, FSSAI chief executive officer Pawan Kumar Agarwal said there were no parameters in India to test plastic contamination of bottled water. Current regulation looked at contamination due to pesticides and micro-organisms, he added. He said the matter would be referred to a scientific panel before any amendment to the regulation was proposed.

Ramesh Chauhan, chairman and managing director, Bisleri International, said Indian laboratories did not conduct tests for plastic particles or micro plastics.

Bisleri, Aquafina, Dasani, Evian and Aqua, Nestlé Pure Life and Pellegrino were named in the study.

PepsiCo India, which owns Aquafina, said it maintained rigorous quality control measures when bottling water and other beverages. “The science on micro plastics and micro fibres is an emerging field. It is in its infancy, which requires further scientific analysis, peer-reviewed research and greater collaboration across stakeholders,” a spokesperson said.

Coca-Cola’s Kinley, not named in the study, said, “We have some of the most stringent quality standards and the water we use in all our beverages is subject to multi-step filtration processes prior to production.”

The Indian government has been trying to reduce the use of plastic across industries, as it is an environmental and health reasons.

On Sunday, Maharashtra became the eighteenth state to ban the every-day use of plastic.