FSSAI calls for visible labelling of packaged foods

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BENGALURU (Reuters) - The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has issued draft regulations aiming to mandate packaged food companies to label high fat, sugar and salt contents in front of the package itself in red colour.

Alarmed by rising rates of obesity and diabetes, India has been planning rules from as early as two years ago, requiring food manufacturers to display fat, sugar and salt content on their labels and was also considering a nationwide "fat tax" on so-called "junk food".

The food labels will also declare, per serve percentage contribution to RDA (recommended dietary allowance) on the front of the pack, the FSSAI said in a statement dated June 25.

The Economic Times newspaper earlier reported the move and said the food industry has expressed concerns over the proposed changes.

Currently, most of the packaged food companies print nutrition details of the contents, including their recommended daily values, at the back of the package.

The president of the All India Food Processors' Association (AIFPA), Subodh Jindal, told ET that the proposed FSSAI regulations were neither scientific nor practical.

"It is recommended that the authority should instead focus on awareness generation of consumer about balanced diet and suitability of different foods as per one's lifestyle," the paper quoted Jindal as saying.

AIFPA was not immediately available for comment.