

'30% of packaged drinking water units in TN unsafe'

Only 563 Out Of 805 Cleared The Sample Test By Food Safety Dept

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Chennai: Think twice before you buy drinking water in a bottle, can or sachet. Only 563 of the 805 packaged water units in Tamil Nadu manufacture clean drinking water, sample tests by the food safety and drug administration department in July, August and September have found.

About 242 units, or 30% of the packaged water units in the state, sell water that is unsafe for human consumption, a food safety and drug administration department report submitted to the southern bench of the National Green Tribunal on Monday said. Most of the units in TN are licencees of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).

It is to be seen if the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board and food safety department act on the erring units. "We await orders from TNPCB to shut

BUBBLE BURSTS

➤ Out of the 967 packaged drinking water units in the state, **only 153 have government consent orders to operate**

➤ Most units are licencees of **Bureau of Indian Standards of the Union ministry of consumer affairs, food and public distribution**

➤ Water sample tests in 805 private units revealed that **only 563 units provide safe**



drinking water

➤ **Madurai (34) and Ambattur (30)** have the most unsafe units. **Sivaganga (20) and Maraimalai Nagar (19)** follow

➤ The green tribunal has directed over **1,000 units (including herbal water units) in the state to apply for no objection certificates** from government departments before November 29

down these units," a senior food safety department official said.

The report says most number of the erring units are in Madurai (34) followed by Ambattur in Chennai (30), Sivaganga (20) and Maraimalai Nagar (19) in Kancheepuram district. "We will abide by the

court orders, but we are unhappy with the use of high density poly ethylene containers used for water sample tests," said V Murali of the Tamil Nadu Packaged Drinking Water Manufacturers Association.

During the last hearing of the NGT Bench, TNPCB had said that none of the packaged

water units in the state had consent orders from the state government to establish or operate. And, the water manufacturers had argued that a Madras high court bench in a 2011 order had restrained the government from granting consent to extract groundwater for commercial purposes till the Tamil Nadu Groundwater (Development and Management) Act, 2003 was notified.

On Monday, TNPCB counsel Rita Chandrasekar told the NGT bench that Tamil Nadu had promulgated an ordinance last week to repeal the contentious law. The Bench then said the packaged water units in the state should before November 29 apply for no-objection certificates/licence from the PWD, food safety and drug administration department and town and country planning department, before approaching TNPCB for consent to operate.