



Government amends E-Commerce Rules to strengthen consumer protection and promote transparency

Amended Rules strengthen provisions on consumer grievances, search results, sponsored listings, price reductions, dark patterns and seller disclosures

New Rules to come into force from January 1, 2027

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The Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India, has amended the **Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020** through the **Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) (Amendment) Rules, 2026**, with the objective of strengthening consumer protection while facilitating a transparent and balanced regulatory framework for the e-commerce sector.

The amended Rules seek to address emerging consumer concerns in the digital marketplace while taking into account the need for **Ease of Doing Business** and a balanced approach that protects consumer interests without imposing unnecessary regulatory burdens on e-commerce entities.

A key provision of the amended Rules requires **every e-commerce entity to become a partner in the convergence process of the National Consumer Helpline (NCH)**, strengthening the integration of e-commerce platforms with the national consumer grievance redressal mechanism.

During 2025, the NCH received **17,71,622 grievances**, of which **5,11,196, or around 29 per cent, related to the e-commerce sector**.

Key Amendments

The amended Rules provide for:

- **Consumer complaints:** Every e-commerce entity shall provide the complainant with a copy of the complaint as recorded by its grievance officer.
- **Search results:** E-commerce entities shall not manipulate search results in a manner that misleads users or adversely affects the relevance of results to the user's search query.
- **Sponsored listings:** Sponsored listings shall be identified through clear and prominent disclosures.
- **Price reductions:** Where a price reduction is announced, the reduced price and prior price shall both be displayed. The “prior price” means the lowest price at which the goods or services were offered during the 30 days preceding the announcement.
- **Dark patterns:** E-commerce entities shall comply with the Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023, undertake a yearly self-audit and prominently display a

certificate of compliance.

- **Seller and product information:** Marketplace e-commerce entities shall provide key information, including best before/use before dates, return/refund, warranty, delivery and payment details, to enable informed consumer decisions.
- **Consumer information:** Marketplace e-commerce entities shall not use consumer information for specified purposes without express and affirmative consent.
- **Bundled fees:** Marketplace e-commerce entities shall not collect **bundled fees for services unrelated to the e-commerce platform**, subject to the specified exception for loyalty or membership programmes.
- **Imported goods: Importer details and country of origin** shall be disclosed for imported goods.

Strengthening the e-commerce framework

The **Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020**, notified under the **Consumer Protection Act, 2019**, provide the framework for safeguarding consumers against unfair trade practices in the e-commerce sector. The amended Rules further strengthen this framework in view of evolving business models, digital practices and consumer expectations.

The amendments seek to establish a **more transparent, accountable and consumer-centric e-commerce ecosystem**, while providing clarity to e-commerce entities on their responsibilities and enabling a level-playing field for businesses operating in the digital marketplace.

The Department of Consumer Affairs remains committed to ensuring that the growth and innovation of India's e-commerce sector is accompanied by **effective consumer protection, transparency, fair business practices and Ease of Doing Business**, while maintaining an appropriate balance between the interests of consumers and e-commerce entities.

The **Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) (Amendment) Rules, 2026** shall come into force from **January 1, 2027**.

RT/ SB/ ARC

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