

Star rated refrigerators, tubelights this month

Refrigerators and tubelights rated on the basis of their power consumption will be the first energy efficiency coded products to hit the market later this month, enabling consumers to make informed choices about how much electricity they would be using.

'The first of the energy efficiency labelled electric products will start arriving in the market by the third week of this month, led by refrigerators and tubelights,' said Ajay Mathur, director general of the power ministry's Bureau of Energy Efficiency.

Star ratings for air-conditioners and general-purpose motors would also be launched subsequently, Mathur told reporters.

Though India set up the Bureau of Energy Efficiency four years ago to promote efficient use of power, it is only now that manufacturers will be coming into the market with star rated products.

The rating is being done by the bureau on the basis of testing done by manufacturers like Godrej and Whirlpool in their own laboratories followed by repeat tests in the labs of rival manufacturers and also in those of government certified centres.

The difference in power consumption between three star and four star could well be 25 to 27 percent, said Mathur.

With three tests to vouch for the power efficiency of a product, consumers would do well to be guided by the star comparison and not just the appearance, promotions or brand of a product.

Manufacturers were told about the star grading criteria ahead of the grading exercise that started in August.

With India seeking to cut wastage of power, higher efficiency standards would be in place by 2008 and 2010, which means that unless the manufacturer improves the working of a product, his product could lose a star or two in 2008 or in the next round of grading.

According to Mathur, there were many ways in which manufacturers could better the power performance of a product like a refrigerator - by improving the working of the compressor, circuit of fluid, better insulation and separate controls for multiple compartments.

The grading process would be constant, with the government planning to have energy efficiency rating not just for consumer products but also for industrial units, houses and building and other products like automobiles.

The code of energy efficiency for buildings are in the process of being framed. This may well be a prelude to the government levying taxes for wastage of power in energy deficient buildings.

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