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E-paper

## Centre approves funds for Jodhpur, Udaipur food testing labs

The central government has approved funds for strengthening food testing laboratories at Jodhpur and Udaipur, said Ravi Prakash Mathur, the additional director, rural health, on Monday



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The central government has approved funds for strengthening food testing laboratories at Jodhpur and Udaipur, said Ravi Prakash Mathur, the additional director, rural health, on Monday.

Mathur said the state government had submitted proposals for strengthening the two food testing labs in January this year, following which a team of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) had visited the labs in last week of April 2018.

## FSSAI IN NEWS

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“Now, health department has received letter from FSSAI approving ₹50 lakh each for these two labs in the first phase,” Mathur said. “The government of Rajasthan has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with FSSAI, after which ₹50 lakh will be credited to the (govt’s) account,” he added.

He said that ₹10 crore would be spent on each laboratory, which include provision for the laboratory space, infrastructure and manpower. The state government will also procure three high-end equipment namely inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometer, gas chromatograph tandem mass spectrometer and liquid chromatograph tandem mass spectrometer with the money. “With these high-end equipment, complex tests such as pesticide, heavy metals, antibiotics etc can be detected; the facility, at present, is available only in Jaipur food testing lab,” Mathur said.

The facility of testing heavy metals and pesticide in fruits, vegetables and food products was added to the central food lab in Jaipur in October last year.

“It (food test lab) will be developed as state of the art laboratory and efforts will be made to get National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) accreditation,” Mathur added. He said that the centre would be spending ₹480 crore across India for strengthening 45 food testing labs.

Mathur said that the ₹30-lakh mobile food testing lab having the state of the art facility would start this week. The mobile laboratory will be used for surveillance, education and creating awareness among people about adulteration in edible items. The mobile lab can be taken to a place where there is complaint about the food items so that testing can be done on the spot, he said.

Mathur said the state currently has six food labs at Jaipur, Ajmer, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Kota and Alwar and soon five more food testing labs would be opened at Jalore, Churu, Bikaner, Banswara and Bharatpur. “Civil works of these new labs are complete and process of procurement of equipment and recruitment of staff by administrative department is underway,” he said, adding that the new labs would be operational by next month.