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E-Paper

World Food Safety Day: FSSAI to rate quick service food joints on six parameters

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In a pilot project in Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) will launch a hygiene plus rating system for quick service restaurants, food chains and joints to assess them on parameters like how they dispose off excess food, hygiene practices amongst staffers, safe water handling and how they promote consumer education about healthy eating.

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“The concept will be expanded across India and we make such certification mandatory in future,” said Pawan Agrawal, CEO of FSSAI. Hygiene rating will also influence customer decision in choosing a place to eat, he said.

“We will also judge a restaurant on how transparent they keep their kitchen for customer visits, whether they have open kitchen or easy access,” Agrawal added. The six parameters will assess whether staff is medically examined for infectious diseases every six months, what the restaurant does with surplus food, whether it is providing hygiene and sanitation to customers, if the restaurant advises on nutritional status of food items, complaint management, waste water management and transparency in food preparation in kitchens. A major focus on concept of open kitchens will be laid to ensure food preparation is hygienic.

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“The idea is to make consumers aware. Restaurants will start complying if a customer is affected by the hygiene standards of a food joint,” said Pallavi Darade, Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) commissioner. FDA has selected four food hubs in Maharashtra — in Juhu Chowpatty, Giragaum Chowpatty, Saras baug in Pune and Futala lake in Nagpur — to train street hawkers on hygiene practices, sanitation and healthy cooking habits.

“The framework has been prepared by central government. We will have to coordinate with other agencies and licensing authorities to ensure cleanliness is maintained. Declaring these hubs as clean street food hubs can take months,” Darade said.