



Dated: 07.06.2018 (Thursday)

E-Paper

World food Safety Day: FSSAI to start rating eateries on quality, hygiene

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As part of a pilot project covering Pune, Mumbai and Nagpur, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is set to launch a hygiene plus rating system for quick service restaurants, food chains and joints. The restaurants will essentially be assessed on parameters such as disposal of excess food, hygiene practices, water management and work towards promoting healthy eating habits.

“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, commissioner, the Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The FDA has selected four food hubs in Maharashtra — Saras Baug in Pune, Juhu and Girgaum Chowpatty in Mumbai, and Futala lake in Nagpur — to train street hawkers on hygiene practices, sanitation and healthy cooking habits.

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

FSSAI IN NEWS

Based on the parameters, as many as 30 restaurants — 10 in Pune, 15 in Mumbai and five in Nagpur — have been rated on a scale of five till now. “The concept will be expanded across India and we will make the certification mandatory...,” said Pawan Agrawal, CEO, FSSAI.

He said hygiene rating will also influence the decision-making process of the customer. “We will also judge a restaurant on transparency — whether it’s an open kitchen or has an easy access,” Agrawal added.

As part of the project, the medical condition of the staff will also be reviewed every six months. The restaurant’s handling of surplus food, hygiene and sanitation practices, nutritional status of food items, complaint management, waste water management and transparency in food preparation in kitchens will play a significant role in the rating process, said Agrawal. Focus will be laid on open kitchens to ensure that food preparation is hygienic, he added.