

Guj, TN, Maha top in FSSAI food safety index for 2019-20

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New Delhi, Jun 7 (PTI) Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra have topped an index that ranked states ensuring food safety in 2019-20, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said on Sunday.

The index ranks states on five parameters of food safety: human resources and institutional data, compliance, food testing facility, training and capacity building besides consumer empowerment.

Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra have topped in the list of larger states on the index.

Among the smaller states, Goa came first followed by Manipur and Meghalaya. Among Union Territories, Chandigarh, Delhi and Andaman Islands secured top ranks, FSSAI said in a statement.

This is the second index on food safety, which FSSAI released on the occasion of World Food Safety Day with the theme "Food Safety is everyone's business" that was dedicated to those in the supply chain who have ensured the uninterrupted availability of safe food during this COVID-19 pandemic.

"Food safety is a shared responsibility. The call to action for safe food on this day is: Ensure it's safe, Grow it safe, Keep it safe, Eat it safe and Team up for safety," Health Minister Harshvardhan said in a webinar organised by FSSAI.

Health Secretary Preeti Sudan said the food safety index is an excellent incentive to create a sense of competition among states to improve food safety.

"As we are lifting the lockdown, we need to ensure adequate precautions are taken in restaurants and food service and delivery establishments. We must emphasize food safety through social media and other communication platforms," he added.

On this occasion, FSSAI also released an e-handbook on "Eat Right during COVID-19" for citizens. It highlights safe food practices to be followed diligently and tips on health and nutrition.

The food regulator has taken a series of steps to facilitate uninterrupted supply of safe food by the food industry during this pandemic.

An updated detailed guidance note "Food Hygiene and Safety Guidelines for Food Businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic" was released.

This document specifies hygiene and sanitary requirements, responsibility of management and sector specific requirements to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the food supply chain along with a section on "management of food establishments on identification of COVID-19 positive cases".

FSSAI Chairperson Rita Teotia and new CEO Arun Singhal were also present at the webinar.
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