

## Kumbh Mela: Food inspectors to check quality of meals

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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Food safety officers have been deployed to inspect the quality of meals being served at the Kumbh Mela.

These checks assume significance in the light of the tragedy that struck Sulwadi in Chamarajanagar district, where 17 persons died and more than 100 took ill after consuming temple 'prasada' allegedly laced with poison.

The organisers of the Kumbh Mela have made arrangements for serving meals to thousands of devotees expected to turn up over the three days. As part of the Dasoha programme, devotees will be served rice, sambar and a vegetable dish.

Apart from three food safety officers, who will inspect all raw materials for the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) mark before allowing them to be used in the preparation of food, Mysuru District Vector-borne Diseases Control Officer S. Chidambara and Mysuru District Surveillance Officer, Health and Family Welfare Department, Kusuma, have also been deputed to oversee the preparation and serving of meals.

Dr. Chidambara told *The Hindu* that the raw materials come in packets. "We will not allow packets without FSSAI mark." The quality of water and cleanliness of utensils used in cooking will be checked, he said. Cooks and personnel employed to serve meals will have to undergo medical check-up. "Our teams will check if they are suffering from any communicable disease. We will also check their personal hygiene. We will advise them to cover their hair and use gloves wherever necessary," he said.

A sample of the food will first be tested for quality and consumed by the food inspectors before it is served to devotees. The food will be served at JSS Bhavan, Adichunchanagiri Bhavan, and a tent put up for police personnel. Dr. Chidambara said food safety officers are routinely deployed to check the quality of food at all government programmes. However, it has assumed attention now in the wake of the tragedy at Sulwadi, he said.