

Pledge we'll not waste even one grain of food, contribute towards food security: Dr Vardhan



New Delhi, Jun 7 (UNI) Appealing to the people of the nation to make 'Eat Right' movement a 'Jan Andolan', Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Friday said 'food is everyone's responsibility' and we should pledge to not waste even one grain of food.

"I appeal to all the people of India to make 'Eat Right' movement a 'Jan Andolan' with 'Jan Bhagidhari'

just as we all had come together and made India polio-free. Food is everyone's responsibility- let us pledge to not waste even one grain of food, and ensure that in our own personal capacities and in our institutions, contribute towards food security. This will help to eliminate poverty, hunger and malnutrition," said Dr Vardhan at the first-ever World Food Safety Day being celebrated by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), here.

The theme for this day was 'food safety, everyone's business.'

'The New India vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi includes health, social security and nutrition. He has acknowledged the 'Eat Right Movement' of FSSAI in his 'Mann ki Baat' address,' Dr Vardhan stated.

Reiterating its importance, he said, 'health is not only absence of disease and infirmity but the presence of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness,' adding that Dr Vardhan unveiled a statue of 'Gandhiji on a Bicycle' installed at the FSSAI complex.

'As we commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Bapu, the statue symbolizes his journey towards good health and shall constantly inspire people for emulating his good health practices,' Dr Vardhan stated.

He added that Bapu's philosophy on food and health is relevant even today and advocated a simple, whole-foods, plant-based diet, regular fasting and physical exercise for health benefits, which was the inspiration behind the Swasth Bharat Yatra of FSSAI.

Dr Vardhan added that people should adopt Gandhiji's messages of eating less, eating safe and healthy food, and also reducing waste and sharing surplus food.

"I request you all to take this pledge in your own local communities to take this message forward. It needs to be used optimally and turned into a Jan Andolan,' the Minister added.

Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Ashwini Kumar Choubey congratulated FSSAI and said, "Clean food will result in a clean body, mind and thoughts and deeds. For this people's awareness about safe and healthy food and participation is critical to make an impact on society."

At the function, the Union Health Minister felicitated seven leading States/UTs based on the ranking for the year 2018-2019 for their impressive performance. These were Chandigarh, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. In an effort to galvanize states to work towards ensuring safe food for citizens, FSSAI has developed the first State Food Safety Index (SFSI) to measure the performance of States on five parameters of food safety.

The categories included Human Resources and Institutional Arrangements, Compliance, Food Testing- Infrastructure and Surveillance, Training and Capacity Building and Consumer Empowerment. States such as Bihar, Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh followed close behind.

Dr Vardhan also launched a new-age, hand-held battery operated device called 'Raman 1.0'. This device performs rapid detection (in less than 1 minute) of economically driven adulteration in edible oils, fats and ghee. The equipment tests more than 250 samples per battery charge, collects and stores data on the cloud using a smart device. This is the first of 19 such equipment and methods that have been provisionally approved by FSSAI for strengthening the food testing infrastructure in the country.

An innovative solution to take food safety to schools, called the 'Food Safety Magic Box' was also launched by Dr Vardhan. This do-it-yourself food testing kit comprises a manual and equipment to check for food adulterants, which schoolchildren can use in their classroom laboratories. This kit is also useful for frontline health workers. Twenty kits were distributed to Primary Health Centres and Government schools in Delhi with the support of the Delhi Food Safety Department.

The Health Minister also felicitated the campuses of IIT Gandhinagar, IIT Roorkee, LBSNAA, Mussourie, Unilever, Bengaluru, Wipro, Bengaluru, HCL Noida and Genpact, Gurugram for their exemplary standards. The felicitation was for recognising the efforts at the community level to promote food safety, FSSAI has declared seven campuses such as those of universities, schools, colleges/institutes, workplaces, defence/paramilitary establishments, hospitals and jails as 'Eat Right Campus'.

FSSAI has instituted the 'Eat Right Awards' to recognise the contribution of food companies and individuals to empower citizens to choose safe and healthy food options, which would help improve their health and well-being of individuals.

A commemorative volume to capture the journey and impact of this yatra was also released by the Union Minister of Health as a tribute to all the stakeholders who contributed to make this movement a huge success.

A web-resource online Library of FSSAI was also launched which hosts informative and interesting videos on topics such as food adulteration, eating a balanced diet and fortified foods .