



Soon, FSSAI norms for temple offerings

Dated: - 29th January 2019 (Tuesday)

E-Paper

The commissioner of food safety has made it mandatory for places of worship to take food safety licence or registration to distribute 'prasadam' and offerings.

Under the 'Blissful Hygienic Offering to God' (BHOG) initiative of the food safety and standards authority of India (FSSAI), which was launched last year, licence or registration is mandatory for all places of worship where prasadam is distributed.

Food safety commissioner Rathan U Kelkar has sent notices to all district collectors to convene a meeting at all worship centres to make temple authorities aware of the rules. "Considering the complexity of operations involved, the quantity of food prepared and the lack of awareness of the food handlers, the process of food preparation in places of worship can be categorized as high-risk activity since a lapse in food safety measures will directly impact a large section of population," the notice said.

It said all places of worship will have to obtain a food safety licence of registration and fulfil all responsibilities of a food business operator as stipulated in Section 23 of Food Safety and Standard's Act.



Kelkar said that the FSSAI had asked the state to urge around 10-15 major temples to take licence. "We have met representatives of Sri Padmanabhaswamy temple, Guruvayur and Sabarimala temple. All these temples were happy to take registration as they too believe in delivering safe and hygienic food to devotees. In the meantime, we have also taken steps to make all temples in the state

take registration by March 1. The district collectors were asked to convene meeting of temple representatives by January 31. We have offered to provide training to temple staff about safe food practices within their premises or at food safety offices, whichever is convenient for them," he said.

Kelkar said that the department has no intention to take any penal provisions or fine on delay in taking registration. Only those temples which have a turnover of around Rs 12 lakh will have to take licence and those below it should take registration. "The entire process is online and details are available in the FSSAI website," the food safety commissioner said. He added that the entire process is to avoid issues like the one happened at a Karnataka temple, where people died after consuming prasadam.

The state is aiming to become the first to get 100% coverage under BHOG. Already Kollam district has achieved around 90% coverage.