

India gets its first ‘clean street food hub’, guess where it is

About 66 street food vendors around the 16th century Kankaria Lake serve popular street food to approximately 12 million people each year.

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With around 66 street food vendors, Kankaria lake serves popular street food to approximately 12 million people each year.(Reuters File Photo)

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on Friday declared Kankaria Lake area in Ahmedabad as country’s first ‘clean street food hub’. In the next one year, the food regulator hopes to designate 150 such streets across the country.

Hindustan Times, in its December 21, 2017, issue, had first reported about India’s top food regulator being in the process of certifying India’s popular street-food places , to assure quality for those in love with street food but wary of hygiene.

The 15th-century Kankaria lake, with around 66 street food vendors, serves popular street food to approximately 12 million people each year.

As part of the initiative, the FSSAI framed guidelines for upgrading the existing infrastructure of street food clusters to make it safe and hygienic.

The parameters include best practices for garbage disposal, maintaining personal hygiene, demarcating cooking and non-cooking area, working street lights, pest control and overall cleanliness among other things.

“There is an 80% cut-off and anything above that is outstanding. These people have done a fabulous job in reaching up to that level, and now it is about maintaining the standard. The state food regulator will be conducting regular inspections to keep a check,” said Pawan Agarwal, chief executive officer (CEO), FSSAI.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India along with Gujarat Food and Drug Control Administration and other regulatory agencies initially conducted pre-audit of the street earlier this year.

At the time of pre-audit, suggestions were given for improvement and subsequently training of street food vendors was conducted.

“After being satisfied with the required changes that vendors made, it was unanimously decided to designate it as ‘Clean Street Food Hub’,” said Agarwal.

“The ‘Clean Street Food Hub’ initiative will raise hygiene standards and revolutionise street food vending in the country, making it popular among both domestic and international tourists while also preserving rich culinary heritage of the country. The initiative will nudge the street food vendors into a food ecosystem where the Indian street food vending will be looked up with high esteem at a global level.”