

PM lauds Eat Right India Movement & Swasth Bharat Yatra in Man Ki Baat

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E-Paper

Prime Minister Narendra Modi applauded FSSAI for spearheading the Eat Right India movement and organising the Swasth Bharat Yatra, a nationwide cycle relay to build awareness on eating right, as part of the 150th birth anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi, in the final episode of Man Ki Baat in 2018. Addressing the nation on All India Radio, DD News and DD National through the popular programme, he commended FSSAI for stepping beyond its role as the country's apex food regulator and generating public awareness on safe and healthy diets through its unique campaigns. The Eat Right India movement was launched this year in July to engage, excite and enable citizens to improve their health and well-being by adopting safe and healthy diets. Given that six out of the 10 risk factors for the burden of disease in India are related to food, this was a timely intervention to address the alarming rise of obesity and non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and heart diseases, rampant food-borne illnesses and widespread micronutrient deficiencies such as anemia in the country. Modi also acknowledged in his address that nutritious food was critical for good health and congratulated FSSAI on this initiative. Led by FSSAI, under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Eat Right India movement is a collective and holistic effort of all stakeholders on both the demand and supply sides and rests on two key pillars - Eating Safe and Eating Healthy. On the demand side, this movement focusses on empowering citizens to make the right food choices. On the supply side, it nudges food businesses to reformulate their products, provide better nutritional information to consumers and make investments in healthy food as responsible food businesses.

It is focussed on preventive healthcare as per the National Health Policy 2017 and is aligned with the Government's flagship programmes, such as the Ayushman Bharat Yojana, POSHAN Abhiyaan, Anaemia Mukh Bharat and Swachh Bharat Mission. The Swasth Bharat Yatra, a massive outreach initiative of the Eat Right India movement, was kicked off on World Food Day 2018 (October 16), as a humble tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary. Inspired by the Mahatma's countless yatras to unite the nation towards one goal - freedom from colonial rule - this cycle yatra is taking the message of eating right to the grassroots level to free India from food-related diseases. The pan-India relay cyclothon was flagged off from six different locations in the country, namely Leh, Panaji, Thiruvananthapuram, Puducherry, Ranchi and Agartala. A total of 150 volunteer cyclists, along with a convoy of the Eat Right Mobile Unit and Food Safety on Wheels, a mobile food testing van, started cycling on six tracks towards New Delhi, stopping at various locations to take part in Prabhat Pheris and activation events to spread awareness and pass on the baton to the next batch of cyclists. The yatra, in the past 75 days, has witnessed the mobilisation of over 1.5 crore people in 30 states and UTs (Union Territories). It has covered about 15000km thus far, with activations at about 1,500 locations. Over 5,500 Eat Right Champions have pledged to take the Eat Right movement forward as local community champions. At all these locations, over 4.5 lakh people have participated directly in the events, representing a wide cross-section of society including government institutions, civil society organisations, industry associations, professional associations, food businesses, schoolchildren, teachers, doctors, professionals, NCC cadets, NSS volunteers, nuns and monks.

Many public representatives, including the chief ministers of Tripura and Gujarat, the Lt Governor of Puducherry, the health ministers of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Manipur and Kerala and the Minister of State for Shipping, have supported this movement with their presence at various locations. The yatra is currently at Kalka in Panchkula, Haryana, after covering the North region; Kishangarh in Ajmer, Rajasthan, after covering the West region; Manpur in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, after covering the South-West region; Lalitpur, Fatehpur, Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh, after covering the South-Central, East and North-East regions of the country. The Swasth Bharat Yatra will culminate in New Delhi on Republic Day, with the grand finale on January 27, 2019.

Before concluding his address, Modi urged the nation, particularly children, to join the Swasth Bharat Yatra and participate in the Eat Right India movement to learn about safe and healthy diets. He stressed that education regarding the importance of food was essential right from childhood. "After all, a clean and healthy India will lead to a prosperous India," he remarked.