

# THE TIMES OF INDIA

## **IIFPT signs pact with FSSAI to ensure food safety in preparation, distribution of temple prasadam**

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THANJAVUR: Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has initiated a project to encourage all places of worship to adopt and maintain food safety and hygiene in the preparation and distribution of 'prasadam', FSSAI chairperson Rita Teotia said. After inaugurating a modern food testing laboratory-cum training centre on the Indian Institute of Food Processing Technology (IIFPT) campus in Thanjavur on Thursday, Rita said that global food safety has to be ensured in the country by promoting modern food safety practices. It has been a big challenge to cover the population of 1.35 billion people with minimum facility and resources in the country.

While speaking about BHOG (Blissful Hygienic Offering to God) project, she said that the places of worship are a very important part of Indian society and food served at these places is regarded as pure and sacred. Food safety measures also need to be implemented at such places.

"FSSAI has initiated a project to encourage all places of worship to adopt and maintain food safety and hygiene in the preparation of prasadam. All the places of worship that distribute prasadam, including vendors are required to obtain FSSAI licence or registration and they also need to follow the sanitary and hygiene practices as per the food safety standards regulations. In this context, IIFPT has signed an MoU with the managements of Brihadeeswarar Temple, Punnainallur Mariamman Temple and Shirdi Saibaba Temple in Thanjavur for ensuring safe distribution of prasadam," she said.

"It is high time to bring street vendors and restaurants under the regulations of the FSSAI. The testing-cum training centre established by the IIFPT will serve public, farmers, researchers and students in a big way for the production of safe food and would serve as a skill promotion hub for food safety and hygiene," she said.

The newly-created the centre has essential facilities for testing potential food contaminants

such as microbial identification system, genetic analyser, and pathogen screening, director of IIFPT Dr C Anandharamakrishnan said.

“The centre is unique in screening and testing a wide range of pathogens and microbes in food. The MoU signed with the temple managements will enable skill development for personnel handling at temple kitchens, periodical quality check on food safety and hygiene. The IIFPT also plans to join hands with FSSAI local authorities for testing and safe food distribution in the forthcoming consecration at the Big Temple on February 5,” he said.

Earlier, IIFPT officials signed an MoU with temple managements for the safe distribution of prasadam in the presence of FSSAI chairperson Rita Teotia. Over 700 people participated in an awareness campaign organized during the event on ‘Eat Right India’.