

Hon'ble Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare flagged off 12 Food Safety on Wheels

Press Release

New Delhi, Nov 25, 2021: The Hon'ble Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Bharati Pravin Pawar flagged-off 12 Food Safety on Wheels (FSWs) to supplement the food safety ecosystem across the country. Out of the 12 mobile food testing vans, 2 will be deployed in Uttar Pradesh, 6 in Kerala and 4 in the State of Gujarat. With this, the number of mobile food testing laboratories has gone up to 122 in the country.

An FSW is a fully functional mobile laboratory, equipped with basic infrastructure for quick qualitative testing for detection of adulteration in various food commodities. FSWs act as the cold chain logistics for regulatory / surveillance samples and can be treated as an offsite wing of the network of laboratories available in every State/UT.

The Hon'ble Minister also released two recipe books. The first book 'Eat Right with Low Salt' is a compilation of winning recipes from the National Low Salt Cooking Challenge, a one of its kind virtual cooking competition that was organized to increase awareness about simple strategies to cook food with less salt. 'History and Food' covers the history around evolution of various dishes in India. A total of 31 such recipes are available in this book.

The Hon'ble Minister of State also reviewed in detail the functioning of FSSAI. During the review, various action points were discussed to delineate the future strategic actions of the Food Regulator. Discussion on the recent achievements of FSSAI included development of new laboratories to enhance the food testing ecosystem; finalization of regulations including amendments in the FSS Act; reduction in clearance time of food imports and scope for surveillance activities. Convergence with States/UTs in order to ensure food safety at the grass root level was also discussed, including technical and financial assistance to States/UTs for creation of necessary infrastructure and mobilizing resources through MoUs. Further, it was highlighted that elimination of Trans Fats by 2022, finalization of some important regulations including Front of the Pack Labels, Genetically Modified Foods and Ayush Aahaar are some of the strategic priorities of the Food Regulator.

While speaking on the occasion, the Hon'ble Minister of State highlighted that more efforts are needed at the grass root level by creating linkages and regular liaisoning with various stakeholders for consumer awareness and behavioral change towards food safety and hygiene. Further, she applauded the Eat Right India initiative and its efforts to bring back the wisdom of traditional foods with focus on local and seasonal produce, millets and indigenous crops etc. She also emphasized that mobile food testing laboratories are a good vehicle to reach out to people and spread awareness about safe food practices not only in the cities and districts but also in the far flung areas where a lot of infrastructural facilities are still minimalistic. It is very important that various initiatives reach out to citizens and are localized as per their suitability and local conditions.