

THE HINDU

Pre-audit carried out at three temples for BHOG certification

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

TIRUCHI, JULY 01, 2021

Food Safety officials inspect the store room of the kitchen at Rockfort Thayumanaswamy Temple in Tiruchi.

It is ensure hygiene and safety of 'prasadam' and other food items distributed to devotees

Officials of Food Safety Department and a third party agency carried out pre-audits at three major temples in the city on Wednesday as part of an initiative to issue BHOG (Blissful Hygienic Offering to God) certification of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India to ensure hygiene and safety of 'prasadam' and other food items distributed to devotees.

As part of the pre-audit, inspections were carried out at kitchens, prasadam stalls and annadhanam halls at Srirangam Ranganathaswamy Temple, Thiruvanaikovil Jambukeswarar Akilandeswari Temple and the Rockfort Thayumanaswamy Temple. The team also inspected the cooking process, storage and quality of food products.

The Department of Food Safety and Drug Administration had also identified the Samayapuram Mariamman Temple and Woraiyur Vekkaiammam Temple in the city to be covered under the initiative in the first phase. The BHOG certification and star ratings would be issued by the FSSAI based on the pre and post audits.

Cleanliness of the kitchens and vessels, standard of food products and water used for cooking were among the important aspects studied during the audit. The temples were required to maintain the storage rooms clean and free from rodents and cobwebs to obtain the certification. Treated water should be used and the prasadam/food products should not be kept in the open but always stored in

containers with lids. The prasadam packets should carry the packing and expiry dates.

All handlers were required to be medically certified that they were free from communicable diseases. There should also be proper vessel cleaning, waste and sewage disposal systems.

According to R. Ramesh Babu, District Designated Officer, Food Safety and Drug Administration, the facilities and processes adopted at the three temples were found to be good by and large and about 10 to 15 points have been raised in the pre-audit which would have to be rectified by the respective temple administration. Once the corrective measures are in place, a post-audit will be conducted.

All temples where prasaam and annadhanams are distributed are planned to be covered in a phased manner under the BHOG initiative, Dr. Ramesh Babu said and added that the Department of HR & CE was extending its full cooperation in the exercise.