

Goa, Gujarat and Chandigarh leads FSSAI's State Food Safety Index

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The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), recently released the results of the second State Food Safety Index to celebrate World Food Safety Day during a webinar.

In alignment with this year's theme, "Food Safety is everyone's business", the celebration was dedicated to all those in the supply chain who have ensured the uninterrupted availability of safe food for everyone during this COVID-19 pandemic. Dignitaries from the Health Ministry, senior officials from the State Food Safety departments, professionals in food and nutrition, development agencies, food businesses and various partners joined this celebration online.

The State Food Safety Index ranks states on five parameters of food safety through a rigorous evaluation process every year. This year, among the larger states, Gujarat was the top ranking state, followed by Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. Among the smaller states, Goa came first followed by Manipur and Meghalaya. Among UTs, Chandigarh, Delhi and Andaman Islands secured top ranks.

On this occasion, FSSAI also released an e-handbook on "Eat Right during COVID-19" for citizens. It highlights safe food practices to be followed diligently and tips on health and nutrition.

FSSAI has taken a series of steps to facilitate uninterrupted supply of safe food by the food industry during this pandemic. An updated detailed guidance note 'Food Hygiene and Safety Guidelines for Food Businesses during Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic' was released. This document specifies hygiene and sanitary requirements, responsibility of management and sector specific requirements to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the food supply chain along with a section on 'management of food establishments on identification of COVID-19 positive cases'.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Hon'ble Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare in his keynote address emphasized "Food safety is a shared responsibility. The call to action for safe food on this day is: Ensure it's safe, Grow it safe, Keep it safe, Eat it safe and Team up for safety."

Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Hon'ble Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare remarked, "Children are powerful agents of change. Teaching children and youth the importance of food safety will not only ensure good health for future generations but also transform our habits today."

Smt. Preeti Sudan, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare congratulated FSSAI on its efforts to ensure food safety during these trying times. She also applauded the State Food Safety Index "as a excellent incentive to create a sense of competition among states to improve food safety".

She added, "As we are lifting the lockdown, we need to ensure adequate precautions are taken in restaurants and food service and delivery establishments. We must emphasize food safety through social media and other communication platforms."

Smt. Rita Teautia, Chairperson, FSSAI inaugurated the session and the welcome address was delivered by Shri Arun Singhal, who has recently been appointed as the new CEO, FSSAI.