

Mayor says Indira Canteen food safe, cites analyst's findings

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Bengaluru: Mayor Gangambike Mallikarjun, two of her predecessors and a few corporators on Tuesday put up a stout defence, vouching for the quality of food provided at Indira Canteens in the city.

They also produced a BBMP food analyst's findings on the quality of food samples from select Indira Canteens and contested claims made by BJP corporator Umesh Shetty on Monday. He had produced findings of test results of Indira Canteens samples by two laboratories.

The mayor and her team even warned of serious action against Shetty, if charges framed by him are not proven. Gangambike said she spoke to BBMP commissioner N Manjunatha Prasad and other health officers and asked them to collect samples of cooked and raw food from 16 Indira Canteen kitchens in the city to dispute Shetty's claims.

"Indira Canteens were started to cater to poor people who can't afford quality food at cheaper prices and it is a hit in Bengaluru. BJP corporator Shetty has tried to politicise the issue in the wake of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Nobody knows when Shetty took the samples and submitted them to the labs. Besides, Ramaiah advanced testing laboratory, where Shetty claimed to have got the tests done, is not authorised to conduct such tests under Food Safety & Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). Hence, Shetty's claims are not authenticated," claimed Gangambike.

Gangambike further appealed to citizens to not harbour any fears as the food supplied at Indira Canteen is fit for consumption. She claimed the BBMP food analyst had taken samples from Indira Canteens in two wards of Mahadevapura assembly constituency recently and found them to be satisfactory.

While samples of tomato bath and shyavige payasa were collected on March 1 from TC Palya, rice kheer was collected from Doddanekundi. The BBMP food analyst, who found their physical appearance satisfactory, said added colour, extraneous matter, presence of insects and rodent hair/excreta were not found. Further on March 7, the report authenticated that the samples sent for analysis conformed to the FSSAI standards.

Former Congress mayors Manjunatha Reddy and G Padmavathi said Shetty was trying to create fear and panic among poor people who were dependent on Indira Canteens for quality food.

Congress floor party leader Abdul Wajeed said there is no truth and credibility in the allegations made by Shetty. Every month around two lakh people consume food prepared and distributed at Indira Canteens, but till today not a single complaint of any individual facing health problems have been reported, he added.