

“Right diet will help to reduce disease burden in India”: Dr Harsh Vardhan

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New Delhi: “The right kind of diet will help to reduce the disease burden in the country”. This was stated by Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare while inaugurating the second edition of the ‘Eat Right Mela’ at Jawahar Lal Nehru Stadium, here today. He stressed upon the importance of having a Jan Andolan, a peoples’ movement, encouraging people to have healthier diets which will help in reduction of the disease burden in the country.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan stated that the Eat Right Mela of FSSAI is a commendable effort and outreach activity for citizens to nudge them towards eating right. “Let the ‘Eat Right Melas’ be part of public gatherings like local melas, community programs etc., so that the citizens would learn about health and nutrition benefits of different types of food, dietary advice by experts, engage in dialogues and conversations with food visionaries and experts, relish the delicious street food, live demonstration of food recipes and have fun and entertainment.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan also highlighted that “India, on one side, is suffering from under-nourishment resulting in infirmities such as wasting and stunting and on the other side, there is another critical area of concern to be addressed i.e. obesity, which is apparently the result of excessive consumption of junk food, wrong choices of food, overeating and lack of exercise. At the same time, the rise of diet related diseases suggests that people are eating

less healthy food than they were eating a decade ago. In this context, the movement of 'Eat Right India' started by FSSAI is a timely initiative".

The Union Minister launched 'The PURPLE Book' a handbook on diets for diseases. The book provides general guidelines for hospitals on suitable diets for common medical conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, cancer, gut disorders and so on in a simple format and has been developed and vetted by experts in the field of food and nutrition. This book is available for free download on www.fssai.gov.in.

At the event Dr Harsh Vardhan also launched NetSCoFAN (Network for Scientific Co-operation for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition), a network of research & academic institutions working in the area of food & nutrition along with the NetSCoFAN directory, covering detailed information of various heads/Directors and lead scientists of lead and associated partnering institutions. The NetSCoFAN would comprise of eight groups of institutions working in different areas viz. biological, chemical, nutrition & labelling, food of animal origin, food of plant origin, water & beverages, food testing, and safer & sustainable packaging. FSSAI has identified eight Nodal Institutions who would develop a 'Ready Reckoner' that will have inventory of all research work, experts and institutions and would carry out and facilitate research, survey and related activities. It would identify research gaps in respective areas and collect, collate and develop database on food safety issues for risk assessment activities. "The need for identify research gaps in respective areas and collect, collate and develop database on food safety issues for risk assessment activities, will be addressed by NetSCoFAN (Network for Scientific Co-operation for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition)", Dr Harsh Vardhansaid.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan also handed over 3 mobile food testing vans (CNG enabled) to Shri. D N Singh, the Commissioner of Food Safety, Government of NCT, Delhi during the inaugural ceremony.

Smt. Rita Teatota, Chairperson FSSAI; Ms. Preeti Sudan, Secretary, Health & Family Welfare; Dr Shekhar C. Mande, Director General, CSIR; Sh. Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI along with officials of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, FSSAI, corporate partners, representatives from the food industry and NGOs were also present during the inauguration ceremony.