

Steps taken to strengthen food safety enforcement and adulteration control

47 State food testing laboratories have been upgraded & 34 microbiology labs have been set up under SoFTeL Scheme

States and UTs have procured 305 Mobile Food Testing labs under FSSAI support to bridge testing infrastructure gaps

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Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is mandated to lay down science -based standards for articles of food and to regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption.

The implementation and enforcement of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 is a shared responsibility between the Central and State Governments. While (FSSAI), is responsible for laying down science-based standards and ensuring overall coordination, the State Food Safety Authorities are primarily responsible for enforcement at the field level.

To ensure compliance with the set standards, limits, & other statutory requirements under the Act and Food Safety & Standards Regulations (FSSR), FSSAI, through State/UT food safety authorities and its four regional offices, conducts regular localized/targeted special enforcement and surveillance drives. Surveillance programmes are conducted from time to time in a structured manner on staple foods and commodities that are prone to adulteration to collect and collate data to understand the spectrum of food safety and then provide relevant data for food safety monitoring, risk assessment and standards setting.

FSSAI has notified 246 National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) for the testing of food samples. In addition, 24 Referral Food Laboratories, primarily owned by Central Government departments and institutions, have been notified for the analysis of appellate samples.

Furthermore, to strengthen the food testing infrastructure in States & UTs, FSSAI has provided technical & financial assistance to the States/UTs under the scheme - "Strengthening of Food Testing System in the Country Including provision of Mobile Food Testing Labs" (SoFTeL). Under the Scheme, 47 State food testing laboratories have been upgraded & 34 microbiology labs have been set up in the area of food safety & quality parameters. To bridge the gap in testing capabilities and extend outreach for on-the-spot food testing in the remote areas, where the laboratory infrastructures are lacking, State/UTs have deployed Mobile Food Testing Laboratories (MFTLs). So far, 305 MFTLs have been procured & deployed by States/UTs against the funds provided by FSSAI for 541 MFTLs.

The Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Shri Prataprao Jadhav stated this in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha today.

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