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ON SUNDAY

In a first, FSSAI to promote temple food at Delhi's annual Street Food Festival

Dated: 12.01.2018 (Friday)



The President of NASVI, Arbind Singh (third from left), talks to reporters during a press conference as FSSAI CEO Pawan Kumar Agarwal (second from left) looks on.

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FSSAI IN NEWS

Prasad served at temples will be promoted as vintage street food at this year's National Street Food Festival, the annual culinary event that has been taking place in New Delhi for eight years.

At least eight temples from across the country have confirmed participation in the festival. Gujarat's Somnath and Swaminarayan temples, ISKON Temple and Tamil Nadu's Meenakshi and Palani Murgan temples will be marketing their foods among other place of worships, according to the organisers.

"We thought it would be a good idea to promote food from different temples in India. So, we have asked temples from across the country to join us," Food Safety and Standards Authority of India's (FSSAI) Chief Executive Officer Pawan Kumar Agarwal said at a press conference on Wednesday.

"Temple food is a centuries-old tradition in this country. Much of the wisdom behind consuming temple food is premised on what constitutes good food," he added.

The National Street Food Festival was started by a street vendors advocacy group National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI). This year will be the first time that the event is being jointly organised, with the government food regulator FSSAI being the other partner.

Agarwal said that introduction of temple food was one of the four initiatives being pushed by the government food inspector at this year's event.

There will be a section promoting organic food, another on 'legends' where 20 selected food vendors from round the country will set up stalls and yet another on MNC's repackaging western food to better suit Indian taste buds, Agarwal informed the press. Nearly 500 food vendors from across India will participate at the event, which begins at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on Friday.

"The purpose of the festival is to bring street food vendors in the mainstream food scene so that they get their deserved space in the cities and respect by people," Arbind Singh, the National Coordinator of NASVI, told reporters. "The National Street Food Festival 2018 is being organized as part of the larger initiative to promote hygiene of street food as well as promotion of local and traditional foods as healthy and nutritious options for our citizens," Singh added.

He also said that 300 different cuisine varieties from 25 Indian states will be promoted at the three-day festival, which is expected to see a footfall of 70,000.