

FDA to turn Sarasbaug Chaupati into food hub

By Vicky Pathare, Pune Mirror | Updated: Feb 11, 2019, 06:00 IST



The recommendations were made after looking at the food hub's growth, which began with 17 stalls four decades ago; PIC: RAHUL DESHMUKH



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75 stalls being trained in hygiene norms, waste disposal

Pune's nook and corner bustles with large and small food hubs, with people often indulging at their favourite eateries. One such landmark is the iconic Sarasbaug Chupati which has thrived for years and now is all set to get an upgrade as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of Maharashtra is planning to turn it into a food hub. The project is aimed at

promoting the preparation and sale of healthy food.

The recommendations for the project followed the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and FDA officials' recent inspection at Sarabaug. They screened these vendors for the handling of surplus food, hygiene and sanitation practices, nutritional status of food items, complaint management, wastewater management and transparency in food preparation in kitchens. The stall staffers were also checked for hygiene along with a medical checkup. Their accommodation and skills were scrutinised, too. Taking all these factors into consideration, the operators are all set to be trained to promote healthy food habits and the chaupati will get a uniform look.

“The chaupati started with only 17 stalls four decades ago. There are now 75 stalls. The recommendations will be beneficial to the customers and business operators,” said, Suresh Deshmukh, joint commissioner of FDA, Pune Region.

The pattern of changes, he added, has been devised according to the law and after taking food vendors’ demands into consideration. “In its first phase, training has been provided to the staff working at these stalls corresponding to the hygiene norms while handling the raw materials, preparing the food and disposing of the excess and waste,” Deshmukh said.

The inspection also brought to fore several other issues, including some vendors who did not have licences. A meeting was also conducted with civic officials to look into the garbage disposal and timely cleaning of drains. The traffic police have also been roped in to manage the area during popular hours. All these moves, vendors claim, will indeed help them.

Manik Mane, who owns the Amrapali Pavbhaji and Juice Bar for the last 35 years, said, “There can be errors on a vendor’s part even if we follow the hygiene norms. If experts can help us overcome the lacunae, it will be a welcome move. The lines are old and this regular problem spoils the hygiene of the entire area. This needs to be solved quickly.”

Ashish Mahadalkar, an assistant commissioner of PMC, said that they routinely undertake the cleaning of drainage lines and disposal of garbage. “The food vendors dispose the waste food in the drainage line, which leads to blockages. As far as garbage disposal is concerned, PMC garbage vans visit the stalls at the closing time and take it to the processing centre,” he added.