

# DNA

## Maharashtra: FDA to educate Ganpati mandals on food hygiene



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The Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) will not only collect food samples for testing but will also educate Ganpati mandals on food hygiene and safety measures on the same. The authority had last year started a similar initiative to promote preventive measures to ensure safe food is distributed in the big mandals.

According to an FDA official, seven divisions of the FDA in Maharashtra have been asked to reach out to the mandals in their division. "All the seven division's commissioner — Mumbai, Thane, Amravati, Pune, Nagpur, Nashik and Aurangabad have been about the drive to reach out to the mandals. With the help of FDA's district officials, they will be connecting with the Ganpati mandals. In order to distribute food items as prasad which are not adulterated, these steps are taken," said Chandrashekar Salunke, FDA food joint commissioner.

Last year, a one-day workshop was conducted for the food vendors who would sell sweets near Ganpati mandals and for the members of mandals to make them aware of the safety and hygiene measures.

Sweets are purchased abundantly during the Ganesh festival every year. Every year, the FDA collects sweets samples from various shops to keep a check on adulteration during the festival. Raw food items like oil, ghee, mawa used in preparing sweets like barfi, laddoo and such, are inspected by the FDA in surprise visits.

Salunke said, "During the festival season, we usually conduct surprise inspection for the regular adulteration drive. Tagging along with Mandal's helps as a precautionary measure. The Mandal members becoming aware of the food safety needed. A regular check will also be conducted during the festival."

#### FEAST IN THE PINK OF HEALTH

- A similar workshop was conducted by the FDA and the FSSAI last year during the Ganpati festival
- 70 Ganpati mandals, along with food vendors attended the workshop
- Lalbaug, Byculla, Chembur, Borivali, Bhandup and Dadar mandals had attended the workshop
- The FDA will also take complaints of food adulteration reported by the citizens