

## Rs 5000 fine for selling stale food at Bali yatra

Over 650 food joints and eateries are under the scanner of the special quads at the fair venue

[Lalmohan Patnaik](#)

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A fast food kiosk at Bali yatra venue in Cuttack on Monday.

The civic body on Monday decided to impose heavy penalty on eateries at Bali yatra trying to stale and unhygienic food following large scale seizure of stale food over the past three days.

“We have decided to invoke the Food Safety Act and impose a fine of Rs 5,000 on eateries on every instance of seizure of stale and unhygienic food,” city health officer Umesh Panigrahi told The Telegraph on Monday.

Special squads are on job to continuously check the quality of food being served at various food joints at the fair right from 7.30 in the morning till 11 at night.

“We are focusing on the quality of food taking into consideration the heavy turnout of people and the hazards of unchecked consumption of stale and unhygienic food,” Panigrahi said. He said the food safety drive would continue till the end of the fair.

Official sources said the civic body’s food safety wing had so far destroyed more than 6.6 quintals of food following seizure from various eateries and vendors.

Three special squads — one led by a food safety officer and the other two by sanitary inspectors along with ten health workers and supervisors in each 51 had started off with destroying 70kg, followed by 1.4 quintals on Friday and Saturday respectively. More than 3.5 quintals of stale food was seized and destroyed on Sunday alone.

More than 650 food joints and eateries are under the scanner of the special quads at the fair venue.

Cuttack collector Arvind Agarwal and municipal commissioner took stock of the food safety drive on Sunday.

Several hotels across the city that had opened kiosks were found to have brought leftovers of the day from their restaurant to sell at Bali yatra on the first evening.

“During raids, we have detected attempts to sell stale and leftover chicken and rice-based food items and,” the health officer said.

He said huge quantities of milk-based products along with around 500 rasagolas were also seized and destroyed.

The special squads are also keeping an eye on the use of colour in the food items. The civic body has also been making announcements through mikes to create awareness among people to avoid unhealthy food items and lodge complaints at its counter.

“We are receiving numerous complaints from the public,” a health wing official told The Telegraph.

“The civic body has made it mandatory for all food joints to display their food licence in their kiosks. Those food sellers or vendors of Cuttack Municipal Corporation area who do not have food licence have been directed to apply for it at our counter,” the official said.