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Swasth Bharat Yatra brings the message of Eat Right India to Mumbai

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E-paper

Looking at the epidemic of lifestyle diseases causing large scale obesity as well as nutritional deficiencies among Indians, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare started an awareness campaign called Eat Right India, and awareness about it is being spread through the Swasth Bharat Yatra. The inspiration behind this yatra is the Dandi March undertaken by Mahatma Gandhi in 1930.

The yatra was flagged off from six different cities - Panaji, Leh, Thiruvananthapuram, Pondicherry, Agartala and Kolkata - on the occasion of World Food Day on October 16. More than 7500 volunteers will cover over 1800km and assemble in New Delhi on January 27, 2019 after covering 36 states. This week, the yatra is coming to Mumbai.



“Participants will help spread our message of “Eat right, Eat safe, Eat Healthy and Eat Fortified”. Our stress is to urge people to reduce the quantity of oil, sugar and salt that they consume. There will also be demonstrations on moving labs called food safety on wheels to show people how they can recognise adulterated rice, oil, milk, flour and salt at home,” informed Shailesh Adhao, Joint Commissioner of Mumbai FDA. FDA is a co-organiser of the yatra.

Participants of the various activities under this awareness programme range from school kids to food business owners. Activities will be undertaken in Godrej colony, Vikhroli and Vasantdada Patil engineering college, Chembur on Saturday; at Institute of Chemical Engineering, Matunga, Kurla’s Phoenix mall, Juhu chowpatty and Lokhandwala complex, Andheri on Sunday; and FDA office in BKC, NESCO exhibition centre, Goregaon and Lodha Aqua, Mira Road on Monday.

Giving an example of why it is important to educate the countrymen about the right kind of good to consume, Adhao cited a study conducted last year that concluded that 80 per cent Indians had a portion deficient diet. “Though there are no studies to give an exact number, Indians have very low amount of vitamins and minerals in their diet as well. In fact, iron deficiency is so common here that more than 50 per cent adolescent girls in India suffer from anemia,” he said.

Fortified food, he added, is a great way to deal with such dietary deficiencies. “We are in the process of making guidelines for food product manufacturers in terms of how they can boost the nutritional value of their products through fortification. For example, adding micronutrients like iodine and iron to salt. We will also issue an SOP regarding reused oil on Monday as the yatra ends,” he said.