

Press Note

Building on the huge response to Swashta Bharat Yatra, Eat Right Mela in Delhi on 14-16 Dec at IGNCA, India Gate as part of the 'Eat Right India' movement

New Delhi, Dec 10, 2018: There has been a huge response to 'Swasth Bharat Yatra' a nationwide relay cyclothon that was flagged off from 6 remote locations on 16 Oct. In the first 50 days, the 'Yatra' has covered 10,000 km with 225,000 people directly participating and touching lives of another 10 million people. There is more to come before the six rallies converge at Delhi on Republic Day next year. Recognizing that food is an essential part of our lives, health and wellbeing and that disease and death due to unsafe food and poor diets exceeds that from TB, Malaria and HIV/AIDs taken together, FSSAI had launched the 'Eat Right India' movement earlier this year. This movement is aimed at mass mobilization for both supply-side and demand-side interventions to change the way India eats.

In his statement on the occasion, CEO, FSSAI, Pawan Agarwal pointed out that 'many of us are not mindful of what, when and how we eat. In order to ensure that people eat safe and eat healthy, mass mobilization is needed.' He noted that 'Swasth Bharat Yatra is perhaps world's largest and longest public outreach programme of its kind that is engaging and exciting people in the remotest parts of the country on safe food and healthy diets.' He expressed gratitude to States, NCC, NSS, Scouts and Guides, food businesses, professional associations and consumer organizations for their active participation. He stated that 'this is our respectful tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, on the occasion of the 150th year of his birth anniversary, who believed that real change only happens through mass mobilization.'

Apart from 'Swasth Bharat Yatra', FSSAI has launched the 'Eat Right Creativity Challenge' to engage young and creative people in making posters, wall art and digital creative(s) and the 'Eat Right Awards' to recognise and reward food businesses that demonstrate their commitment to the movement. Now, in partnership with the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI), Delhi State Food Safety Department, NDMC, IGNCA (Ministry of Culture) and Tasting India Symposium FSSAI is organizing the 'First National Eat Right Mela' on 14-16th December, 2018 at IGNCA, India Gate, New Delhi.

Recognizing that street food vending is an important part of the country's food system, the first National Eat Right Mela is being held along with the established and well-known 'Street Food Festival' organized by NASVI for over a decade. National Coordinator of NASVI, Arbind Singh emphasized, "In the past 10 years, NASVI's street food festival has blossomed into a sustainable signature event of Delhi. It has successfully brought people together from all walks of life under a single roof to celebrate the diversity and flavours of Indian street food showcased by around 500 street food vendors from all parts of the country." In its new avatar, it is now integrated with the 'Eat Right Mela' and not only celebrates our food culture but also promotes safe and healthy eating through various engaging activities through convergent efforts.

This three-day Mela would provide a complete food experience for the entire family; an opportunity to know everything one needs to know about safe food and healthy diets, including quick tests for adulterants, health and nutrition benefits of different types of food, dietary advice by experts and more. It would allow citizens to engage in dialogues and conversations with food visionaries and experts such as Chef Sanjeev Kapoor, Dr. Shikha Sharma, Prof. Pushpesh Pant, relish delicious street food, sample diverse flavors from

across the country, watch live ‘healthy cooking’ demonstrations by celebrity chefs such as Chef Manjit Gill and Chef Rakesh Sethi, and enjoy live music, dance and theatre performances. As a part of the celebrations of 150 years of Mahatma Gandhi’s birth, the theme pavilion this year is on ‘Gandhiji, his habits of food and his thoughts on food and nutrition’.

Gandhiji had experimented a lot with his diet and his views on food and nutrition find contemporary relevance as we struggle with right kind of diet today. An on-the-spot poster competition, release of food-related books, National Gastronomic Tourism workshop in collaboration with Tasting India Symposium and Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India are other highlights of the ‘Mela’. An Indo-Nordic Food Policy workshop focused on learnings from Nordic countries on the reduction of trans fats and salt in the diet, menu labelling, healthy and sustainable diets, is also a part of this Mela, bringing an international flavour to the event. Sourish Bhattacharyya and Sanjoo Malhotra, Founder Directors, Tasting India Symposium remarked *“We believe that the Eat Right Movement of the FSSAI is a public health intervention model that the world can learn a lot from. We are grateful to both the FSSAI and the Nordic Food Policy Lab for coming together for a unique knowledge-sharing workshop, whose outcome, we hope, will benefit the peoples of India as well as the Nordic nations.”* Since physical activities go hand in hand with healthy eating, cycling, a run and yoga is also being organised on the days of the ‘Mela’. For the activity calendar and more, visit www.fssai.gov.in/eatrightmela.

In his statement, CEO, FSSAI Pawan Agarwal pointed out that *“While this mela is the first of its kind, this is expected to become an annual event and would get bigger and better each year. It is also expected to be replicated in at least 40 major cities including state capitals across the country through State governments”*. Eventually, this Mela would become a one-stop-shop for people to know about safe, healthy and local foods, and enjoy the rich culinary heritage of our country. It is hoped that this public outreach through celebration and entertainment would nudge citizens to become aware of and adopt safe and healthy eating habits. Further, it is expected that States would start organizing these Eat Right Melas in other cities and towns at the district level taking the message of ‘Eat Right India’ to each and every citizen of the country.

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