



*For immediate release*

## **FSSAI CEO Calls on States & UTs to Fill Vacancies and Scale Up Enforcement at 50th CAC**

### **Key focus on enforcement, surveillance and regulatory strengthening**

#### **Press Release**

**Shimla, June 8<sup>th</sup> 2026:** FSSAI Chief Executive Officer Shri Rajit Punhani directed States and Union Territories to expedite the recruitment of Food Safety Officers (FSOs) and Designated Officers (DOs) and fill existing vacancies to strengthen field-level regulatory capacity and scale up food safety enforcement across the country.

The deliberations were held at the 50th meeting of the Central Advisory Committee (CAC) of FSSAI, held a day after World Food Safety Day 2026, under his chairmanship, emphasizing the Authority's continued focus on strengthening food safety systems across the country.

Emphasizing the need for stronger food safety enforcement across the country, the CEO stressed that robust enforcement remains central to ensuring safe food for consumers and directed States and UTs to scale up enforcement activities and significantly increase food sampling and surveillance.

Observing that the meeting was being held immediately after World Food Safety Day 2026, Shri Punhani stated that the global theme, "From Burden to Solutions: Safe Food Everywhere," underscores the importance of translating food safety challenges into practical, science-based and sustainable solutions through collaborative action by all stakeholders. Referring to the evolving discourse around healthy diets, he noted that there is a growing movement globally towards traditional and wholesome food systems.

He also encouraged States and UTs to intensify public awareness initiatives, strengthen outreach efforts at the grassroots level, and build greater consumer trust through sustained engagement and awareness campaigns.

The Committee reviewed the performance of States and UTs on key enforcement parameters, including recruitment of Food Safety Officers and Designated Officers, functioning of State and District Level Advisory Committees, enforcement and surveillance sampling, food safety inspections, regulatory reporting through the FoSCoS platform, and on-time disposal of consumer complaints. States and UTs were advised to address identified gaps and ensure timely achievement of prescribed targets.

Apart from strengthening food safety surveillance systems, the committee also focused on improving the quality and completeness of data reported through digital platforms, and promoting evidence-based decision-making to identify emerging food safety risks and support targeted interventions.

Deliberations were held on improving food recall mechanisms through the recently operationalized Food Recall Module on FoSCoS. States and UTs were advised to sensitize Food Business Operators (FBOs) regarding timely reporting of recall actions and to ensure effective implementation of recall procedures for unsafe food products.

Other key issues discussed included streamlining licensing and registration processes, reducing application pendency, improving regulatory compliance by Food Business Operators, strengthening implementation of labelling requirements for nutraceuticals and health supplements, addressing misleading claims in food advertisements, and promoting sustainable packaging solutions in the food sector.

Discussions also focused on improving laboratory performance through timely recruitment of technical manpower, reduction in sample testing turnaround time, regular training of laboratory personnel, enhanced utilization of Laboratory Information Management Systems (LIMS), and adherence to NABL accreditation requirements.

States and UTs were encouraged to actively share information on food safety awareness campaigns, enforcement and surveillance activities, capacity-building programmes and other initiatives through social media channels to amplify outreach and strengthen consumer awareness.

The 50th CAC meeting also provided an opportunity to reflect on the significant progress made in strengthening the country's food safety regulatory framework since the inception of the Committee. India's food regulatory ecosystem has successfully transitioned from a predominantly physical application-based system to a comprehensive digital regulatory framework through platforms such as FoSCoS, INFOLNET and FICS, resulting in greater transparency, efficiency and ease of compliance. Food testing capacity has strengthened considerably, with the laboratory network expanding from 72 State Food Laboratories and 4 Referral Laboratories to 254 NABL-accredited Primary Laboratories and 24 Referral Laboratories.

The 50th Central Advisory Committee meeting reaffirmed the commitment of FSSAI and State/UT authorities to strengthen food safety governance through enhanced enforcement, improved surveillance, greater regulatory efficiency, and consumer-centric interventions to ensure the availability of safe and wholesome food across the country.

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