Each Indian state to have a high quality food testing lab

Health minister J.P. Nadda says the central government is providing support to the tune of Rs482 crore for the states to strengthen the food safety system.
“Central government is providing support to the tune of Rs482 crore for the states. As many as 45 state labs are to be strengthened. I have requested the States to come forward with the proposals or give us the plan for strengthening the laboratories,” health minister J.P. Nadda said on Tuesday.

Nadda was presiding over the ‘First Health Ministers Roundtable on Food Safety & Nutrition’ organized by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). “Finance will not be a constraint and each state should have at least one government food laboratory of high quality with bigger states having at least two. Carrying out information education and communication (IEC) and outreach efforts to create awareness in people about safe food and nutrition at schools, workplace, etc is central to avoiding food borne disease related morbidity & mortality and consequent savings in healthcare,” said Nadda.

He also released a framework for ‘Clean Street Food Hubs’ and ‘Safe and Hygienic Food Festivals’ aimed at helping to build capacities of street food vendors and to inspire citizens’ trust in unorganized street food vending.

According to a team of government researchers, who have carried out a rapid assessment of economic costs of food borne diseases, food-borne diseases impose a huge economic burden on India. As per their estimates, this would amount to as much as 0.5% of India’s GDP or about $28 billion.

During the roundtable, the state health ministers also adopted a joint resolution with a seven-point charter that included supporting development of robust food standards and code of practices for safe food, creating a positive regulatory environment and addressing micronutrient deficiencies and promoting healthy dietary habits.