NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9: In a bid to promote food safety and nutrition at hotels and restaurants, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is exploring ways to get hotels and restaurants to list nutritional information such as calories, salt and sugar content in food products, on menu cards. The regulator is also working on norms for organic food.

Pawan Agarwal, CEO, said: “We have been discussing this idea with the stakeholders. In several countries, this practice is already applicable, and in some of these places, it is voluntarily. To enable restaurants that want to voluntarily list nutritional information on their menu cards, we may provide for a provision in the labelling regulations, which are being finalised.”

Agarwal said the regulator will need to work with restaurant associations and State governments for this initiative.

“We will need to do some field experiments to figure out the best way to do this. If we find that it serves a purpose, we may look at making it mandatory,” he added.

Serve Safe
Garish Oberoi, Vice-President, Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI), and Managing Committee member of Hotel and Restaurant Association of Northern India (HRANI), toldBusinessLine that the associations will run a pilot on these lines.

“In a bid to take forward FSSAI’s Serve Safe initiative, we will be running a pilot with about 200 members in major metros. We will work with chefs on a model to
specify estimated number of calories and other nutritional information on dishes being served, on menu cards,” he said.

Under the Serve Safe initiative, FSSAI has now made it mandatory for every restaurant to have at least one trained and certified food safety supervisor. In collaboration with partners such as HRANI, it has started running training sessions for master trainers who will train these food safety supervisors. Meanwhile, the regulator is also working on norms for organic food in consultations with farmers and other stakeholders, and a draft regulation may be released this month.

**Organic food**

Agarwal said the regulator aims to create an umbrella rule to ensure certification of organic food. He said a committee is also being formulated to look into issues such traceability and organic-food retailing practices.