FSSAI finalises recruitment norms, proposes to create 600 posts

Most concerns raised by CAG being addressed, says CEO

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 20:
The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), which is in the process of finalising its recruitment regulations, is looking to create 600 posts to strengthen its workforce.

The food safety regulator has sent its proposal to the Ministry of Health. It also said that the Central government was investing ₹480 crore to strengthen State food laboratories and referral laboratories.

“We have finalised the recruitment regulations and have made a suggestion to create 600 posts. Discussions and deliberations are going on to finalise this proposal with the ministry,” Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI, told reporters on Wednesday.
Agarwal was reacting to the CAG report tabled in Parliament on Tuesday, which raised various issues around the functioning of FSSAI, the existing inadequate lab infrastructure, delay in formulation of standards and regulations and lack of recruitment regulations among others.

“We appreciate the inputs we have got from CAG to improve performance of food safety. However, over the past one-and-half-year, we have addressed most of these areas of concern. We remain committed to raise the bar for food safety standards in the country,” he said, adding that FSSAI wanted to assure citizens that they could trust the food they get.

Agarwal said that over the past few years, several steps had been taken to strengthen and improve food safety. “The CAG report should be seen in the context of the huge and complex task at hand and the fact that FSSAI is a new and evolving organisation that faces severe constraints of manpower and resources,” he added.

**Delays and deficiencies**
On concerns raised by the government auditor around the delays and deficiencies in formulation of standards and regulations, FSSAI said over the past two years, it had focused on expediting the process of developing new regulations and food standards. These include regulations on health supplements and nutraceuticals, food ingredient regulations, import regulations, and approval for non-specified food, among others.

Talking about food testing infrastructure, Agarwal said FSSAI was already in the process of upgrading its existing lab in Ghaziabad through a public-private partnership, and was also looking to set up its new labs in other metro cities, including Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata.

Talking about efforts to support State laboratories, he said hand-holding was being done to States to support them in getting NABL accreditation. “Just like the developed markets, we are also in the process of identifying and setting up a network of reference labs, which will be involved with setting benchmarks and methodology for testing for other laboratories,” he added.