Facing severe manpower crunch: FSSAI

NEW DELHI: A day after the comptroller and auditor general of India (CAG) pulled up Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) for recklessly issuing licences to food companies without complete documents and questioned the quality of testing, the food regulator said that it faces severe manpower constraints and "is a new and evolving organisation".

It also assures citizens that they can trust the food they get.

In its report, CAG has raised concerns regarding lack of equipment, shortage of manpower and absence of accreditation of the state food laboratories in the country.

"CAG report should however be seen in the context of the huge and complex task at hand and the fact that FSSAI is a new and evolving organisation and it faces severe constraints of manpower and resources. It would have been useful if the report had noted a lot of very useful work done by the FSSAI over years," said FSSAI in a statement defending itself.

The CAG in its audit found systemic inefficiencies, delays and deficiencies in the framing of regulations and standards and the specific direction of the Supreme Court. The CAG also found that licenses were issued on the basis of incomplete documents in more than 50% cases tested checked in the audit.
In its report, CAG has raised concerns regarding lack of equipment, shortage of manpower and absence of accreditation of the state food laboratories in the country. Accepting the reality, FSSAI pointed out that it has been working over the past couple of years to ensure that the state food laboratories and referral laboratories are fully equipped and functional.

Central government is making an investment of Rs 480 crore for strengthening state food laboratories and referral laboratories. It is also investing in training of staff and handholding National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories accreditation.