

UTTAR PRADESH

Food industry to promote startups, cloud kitchens

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Industry bodies have announced plans to promote food startups and cloud kitchens across Uttar Pradesh, following the state government's identification of 208 traditional dishes under its flagship One District, One Cuisine (ODOC) scheme.

The industry plans to leverage Uttar Pradesh's strength as one of India's largest agricultural and horticultural producers, along with the state's supportive investment policy framework.

"Uttar Pradesh is emerging as a hub for the food processing sector, and the micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) segment offers vast opportunities in food packaging, branding, exports, and e-

commerce," said Dinesh Goyal, national president of Indian Industries Association (IIA).

He added that the IIA would handhold innovative food startups in the cuisine business while also promoting the growing concept of cloud kitchens.

A cloud kitchen is a delivery-only food unit that prepares meals exclusively for online orders, eliminating the need for traditional dine-in infrastructure.

Under the scheme, the Yogi Adityanath government is considering providing substantial subsidies for setting up new food units, along with assistance in packaging, marketing, and branding.

Meanwhile, the IIA is planning to host the 11th edition of India Food Expo 2026 (IFX-26) in Lucknow from September

18 to 20.

IIA General Secretary Deepak Kumar Bajaj said that, apart from domestic industries, participants from more than 30 countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe would be invited to the mega event.

"Despite Uttar Pradesh being a leading producer of food products, it has yet to achieve strong national and global recognition due to inadequate packaging and branding," he said.

According to Bajaj, IFX-26 will provide a major platform for MSMEs, particularly those in the food processing sector. He underlined that agriculture, allied sectors, and food processing would play a crucial role in helping Uttar Pradesh achieve its target of becoming a \$1 trillion economy by 2030.