

HRAWI urges Maha govt to allow hotels to operate in full capacities

Ahead of the next phase of unlocking in Maharashtra, the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) on Friday urged the state government to allow hotels to operate with full capacity.

'Right now, the industry's biggest challenge is survival. One of the worst affected industries during this pandemic is the hospitality industry and we are in a dire need of the state government's support,' said HRAWI President Gurbaxish Singh Kohli in a statement.

HRAWI also urged the government to allow sale of liquor at restaurants and also recommended that open spaces and terraces be used at the premises of these establishments.

'Allowing the sale of liquor will be a boon to not only restaurants but also to the state in terms of the tax revenues. As the government already allows sale of liquor online and at stores, it should also be permitted at restaurants as well,' HRAWI Vice-President Pradeep Shetty said.

He added that after the lockdown is lifted, the social distancing norms at restaurants will reduce the seating capacities. 'Therefore, we request the government to allow us to use the open spaces and terraces for restaurants to serve food and liquor.' The association has also proposed that business travellers visiting the city for a short duration of up to 3 days be allowed to enter Mumbai without mandatory quarantine.

'We propose a combination of rapid and accurate testing facilities be implemented at the airport, which would help reduce the time spent by passengers in remaining quarantined. Relaxing the quarantine norm for business travellers will ease travel for business tourists,' Shetty added.

Hotels have made available a lot of room inventory for quarantine purposes since the beginning of the pandemic.

HRAWI have also urged the government for appropriate compensation for their services including providing accommodation to essential services workers and other governmental staff.

The prevailing COVID-19 pandemic has made a significant impact and has adversely affected hotel and restaurant owners. The revenues have plunged overwhelmingly and unfortunately, meeting the ever-mounting commitments and liabilities has rendered quite a few of our establishments as non-performing assets.