

## **HRAWI appeals to Municipal Commissioner to allow reopening of restaurants & bars**

In view of the State's latest 'Break the Chain' order extending the lockdown, the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI), has written to Municipal Commissioner Iqbal Chahal, to grant concessions to the hospitality industry.

It has requested that stand-alone restaurants and bars, as well as restaurants and bars in hotels for outside guests to be allowed to reopen immediately. HRAWI has also requested Municipal Commissioner to extend the operation timing of restaurants to 11 pm.

The first and second lockdowns combined have impacted over 20 lakh jobs and for each month that hotels and restaurants remain closed, the industry suffers a loss of over Rs 2000 crore.

With the latest order, the industry is expected to remain closed for another half month which will cost it another approximately Rs 1000 crore in revenue loss. There are around 210,000 restaurants and 10,500 hotels in the State and the industry employs around 30 lakh jobs directly and indirectly.

Mr. Sherry Bhatia, President, HRAWI, said, "The industry revenue in the beginning of 2021 was below 20 per cent of pre-pandemic levels and since April 2021, it hasn't even touched 5 per cent of the pre-pandemic levels. Each lockdown extension is costing the industry massive loss and the debt is only piling up. No data or study has shown hotels and restaurants to be Covid-19 spreaders. At present the positivity rate of Covid-19 cases in Mumbai is less than 10 per cent. Under these circumstances to save the industry from NPA and bankruptcies; and to save the livelihood of millions of people engaged, we request Municipal Commissioner to grant us the concessions."

The HRAWI has also pleaded to Government for waiver of statutory charges including property tax and minimum water charges, electricity bills along with full relief in excise fees.