

## **Roof-top restaurants at star hotels receive nod from state excise dept. to serve liquor**

The Maharashtra State Excise Department vide a Government Resolutaion (G.R.) has granted permission to star rated hotels in the State to serve liquor in their open to air terrace restaurants, which until now could serve only food. The permission will be granted only to those hotels that have obtained an NOC from the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and from the Fire Department for statutory compliances. The GR also allows hotels to apply for a single Composite licence covering all its restaurants, lounges and cafes making the process of applying for liquor licence simpler. The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) has welcomed the move and has indicated that it will continue holding dialogues with the Government for making the same applicable to restaurants too. The Association has been liasioning with the various departments of State for over a decade on this subject. While this is applicable only for star rated hotels as of now, we would be interacting with the department to include non-starred hotels and standalone restaurants also. Classification and star rating by the Government is to be used as a guideline, to be followed by the industry and is not a rule, therefore we shall be requesting the Department to de-link the benefits to be derived through policies from classification and star ratings. The permission granted by the State Government to serve liquor at rooftop restaurants in a hotel is now approved by the BMC. As per the BMC's policy, only if the entire structure is a star hotel by itself, can they serve liquor in their rooftop restaurant but the same should be applicable for stand-alone restaurants as well, if they have a restaurant with a kitchen below their terrace. This permission to serve alcohol therefore should be given to any hotel or restaurant, irrespective of their star category and having a restaurant and a kitchen below their terrace in their building.