

Hoteliers step up boycott heat on two online portals

Hoteliers in Maharashtra are planning to boycott two online portals just like Gujarat has pledged to do in protest against “indiscriminate discounts” to customers and “high commissions”.

Hotels and Restaurant Association Western India (HRAWI) officials said if there’s no headway in the discussions between their Gujarat counterparts and MakeMyTrip and Goibibo, they would also boycott the two portals. If this happens in Maharashtra, bookings done by customers through these portals may not be accepted by the hotels in the state.

Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, HRAWI president and vice-president of the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India, said, “HRAWI has seconded the decision made by the Hotel and Restaurant Association Gujarat. HRAWI had sensed this monopolistic and arm-twisting tactic, germinating last year.” He also said that HRAWI had contemplated a counter-move last year and made an exclusive arrangement with another online travel portal, specifically for its members. “Many hotels individually signed the agreement. Some hotels in Mumbai have already delisted the two online portals. The online aggregators’ practice works on the divide-and-rule model and monopoly. The associations have sent out a strong message to them by declining them any part of their hotel inventory.

The two portals are inadvertently charging very high commissions and discounting prices as per their whim. Repeated requests have not yielded results. Goibibo was acquired by MakeMyTrip about two years ago and are under the same management.