

Hotels, restaurants across Maharashtra hold silent protest on closure of operations

Hospitality associations across Maharashtra on Thursday, 8th April, 2021 organised statewide silent protests, under the aegis of the United Hospitality Forum of Maharashtra (UHF), against the government's recent lockdown order. Lakhs of restaurants participated in the silent protest with their employees standing outside the establishments holding placards.

HRAWI President Sherry Bhatia said, "The hospitality industry demands fair play and justice. We request the government to either allow us to continue regular operations with the mandated SOPs (standard operating procedures) or permanently shut us down, rather than keep us half alive and in a state of misery." He said the industry operates in the safest of environments and follow all the mandated compliances. "A majority of the establishments have mounting debts and face threats of insolvency along with millions of job losses."

With fear of losing jobs like last year, many workers have begun to leave for their homes again, he added. "Through our silent protests today, we are requesting the government to allow us to resume our work and if not, the government must take care of our incomes. The industry should get a complete waiver on all statutory fees and taxes, and establishments should not be billed for water and electricity for the duration of the curbs. The campaign #MissionRoziRoti has gained momentum on social media with several restaurateurs and hoteliers in the state posting pictures, messages, and videos showing support and solidarity to the campaign.

The hospitality associations rallying against the latest lockdown across the state include Poona Hoteliers Association, United Hotel Association Pune, Nagpur Hotel and Restaurant Association, Aurangabad Hotel and Restaurant Association, Vasai Taluka Hotel Association, Hotel Owners' association of Thane, Navi Mumbai Hotel Association, and Palghar Hotel Association.

The protest was also supported by various city- and district-level hospitality associations from Beed, Amaravati, Nanded, Hingoli, Jalna, Parbhani, Aurangabad, Satara, Osmanabad, and Vasind, among others.