

Hospitality sector in recovery mode, says hotel body chief

'Biz Will Touch Pre-Covid Level By 2022-End'

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Nashik: The hospitality sector, which was severely affected due to the Covid pandemic in the past two years, is in a recovery mode and 80% of its business has been recovered, said Pradeep Shetty, the president of the Hotel and Restaurant Association, western India.

Shetty was in Nashik city for the regional convention of the association. Addressing the media, he said the business will touch what it was during pre-Covid time by year-end.

Shetty said 20% of the

hotels and restaurants in the country are still closed due to the losses they incurred due to repeated lockdowns during Covid pandemic, but they are gradually opening.

He said domestic travel has improved a lot, but footfall for international travel has not improved yet due to Covid impact, lack of promotions by the government and inadequate direct international flights.

"Around 4 million Indians, who would travel to various international destinations in a year on average, are now travelling to domestic tourist destinations," he said.

"There are still restrictions on international travelling and direct international flights are in fewer as compared to the number of direct flights during the pre-

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Covid time.

Moreover, flight fares have also increased. The government needs to take steps to boost international travel. We have urged the av-

iation ministry to make the international flights normal as they were pre-Covid," said Shetty.

"This industry generated 79.5 million jobs pre-Covid that accounted for 15% of the total jobs in the country. But employment in this industry was affected due to Covid and there is still a 30% drop in jobs. But the scenario is changing, and the sector will reach the pre-Covid level in providing jobs by year-end," he said.

Shetty also expressed his disappointment over higher GST and said the government needs to reduce the tax from the present 12% to 6% to make the industry competitive.

When asked, Shetty said Nashik is one of the major fastest growing cities and it is unique due to its varieties of tourism like wine, agro, religious and cultural tourism.