

Published Date:	Tuesday 20th April, 2021	Publication:	The Economic Times [New Delhi]
Journalist:	Vinod Mahanta, Gaurav Laghate	Page No:	1, 8
MAV/CCM:	462,088/54.66	Circulation:	126,805

RESTAURANT, CINEMA OWNERS WARY OF FURTHER CURBS

'Longer Lockdown to be Catastrophic'



Restaurants and cinema owners said they would be able to tide over a six-day lockdown announced by the Delhi government despite severe cash crunch but an extension of restrictions or the lockdown would be catastrophic for their businesses. **Vinod Mahanta & Gaurav Laghate** report **▶▶ 8**

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Restaurants, Cinemas Wary of Longer Curbs

DISTRESS CALL Can weather the 6-day lockdown in Delhi but further restrictions will hurt, they say

Vinod Mahanta & Gaurav Laghate

Mumbai: Restaurants and cinema owners have said that they would be able to tide over a six-day lockdown announced by the Delhi government despite facing a severe cash crunch but an extension of the restrictions or the lockdown would be catastrophic for their businesses. Amid a massive surge in Covid-19 cases, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday announced that the national capital will be under lockdown from April 19 to April 26. It will start at 10 on April pm on Monday and will be in place till 5 am on April 26.

This comes at a time when the restrictions imposed by the state government earlier this month combined with the prevailing negative sentiment amongst people due to a spike in infection rates has already severely impacted businesses. The Delhi government had not allowed bars and restaurants to operate in the state till April 30 or further orders but home deliveries and takeaways were allowed.

"The restaurant owners were already dealing with restrictions and since takeaways and home delivery will be allowed during the lockdown, it's status quo for the sector. But if the restrictions or the lockdown are extended, it will be catastrophic for the owners," said Anurag Katriar, president, National Restaurant Association of India. The takeaway business comprises just 10-15% of any restaurant and is not enough to sustain operations.

Delhi hospitality players have already seen dwindling occupancy levels in the last few days, and they expect the lockdown to further add to their distress.

Recovery in both the corporate and leisure market will be hit

Tough Times

Delhi lockdown from Apr 19-Apr 26



Takeaway business comprises **10-15%** of a restaurant

Delhi hospitality players seeing dwindling occupancy levels

Big cinema chains recording less than 5% occupancy



hard, especially if cases keep rising for a longer period.

"The hospitality sector has been adversely impacted by the Covid-19 disruption and various restrictions imposed by the state governments over the months. We need help with regards to some charges, taxes and other levies to help us tide over the crisis. We are disappointed that no help has been extended to the sector despite many representations," said Rattan Keswani, deputy managing director, Lemon Tree Hotels.

Apart from restaurant and cinema businesses, the lockdown in Delhi will also hurt cinema theatres as they have been asked to remain shut. Earlier cinemas could operate with up to 30% capacity and shut during the weekend lockdown.

While a few single screens have already suspended operations, other big chains were also recording less than 5% occupancy in the last couple of weeks, sources said.

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