Restaurant body seeks urgent policy, liquidity support from FM

Representatives reiterate demand to be allowed to avail input tax credit on GST

OUR BUREAU
New Delhi, May 22
The National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) has urged the Centre for urgent policy and liquidity support to survive the impact of the lockdown. A four-member delegation of the industry body discussed the challenges faced by the restaurant industry during a virtual conference with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Revenue Secretary and Secretary of Economic Affairs Department on Thursday.

In a statement, NRAI said it has requested the government to give an unemployment pay support to lower-rung employees through the ESIC corpus. “Out of approximately 3.20 crore beneficiaries of the ESIC scheme, over 50 lakh belong to the hospitality sector,” the association said. It also sought working capital support with the lowest possible interest and a six-month moratorium.

Anurag Katriar, President of NRAI, said, “We are fighting a grim battle for our existence and staring at massive job losses and we will need urgent policy and liquidity support from the government to survive this phase. The industry is second only to agriculture in employing human capital.”

“We also conveyed to the Minister and officials that the current pandemic is one of the worst human crisis ever, and the event should be declared as force majeure. This is similar to the invocation of force majeure made in the real estate sector,” he added. The industry representatives reiterated a longstanding demand — to be allowed to avail input tax credit on GST.

“The delegation apprised the Minister and the officials that how the modern-day digital landlords are hurting the interests of lakhs of small and large entrepreneurs in the sector. It requested an immediate clarification, bringing them under the ambit of Press Note-2 of the Commerce Ministry of December 2018. A proposal to regulate and cap platform-led discount & commission was also made,” the statement added.