

## EXPANDING AGGRESSIVELY

# Domino's, KFC, McD, Others Plan to Open Many Outlets This Yr

Rasul Balle & Ratna Bhushan

**New Delhi:** After a Covid-induced lull which saw large-scale shutdowns, quick service restaurants (QSRs) are now aggressively expanding, riding on a recovery that has been the quickest within the otherwise beleaguered broader restaurant industry.

Domino's, KFC, McDonald's, Pizza Hut and Burger King among others are collectively planning to launch scores of outlets this year, people familiar with the matter said.

As consumers became wary of sit-in restaurants, QSRs were supplemented and buoyed by deliveries and takeaways, and most players in the segment have so far recouped 80-100% of their pre-pandemic business. Now, they are trying to capitalise on the recovery to push further growth. On the other hand, fine-dining and other sit-in restaurant formats have suffered heavily during the pandemic and their recovery is still only around 40-70%, according to industry estimates.

"QSR is on a much faster recovery than casual and fine dine formats," said Shriram PM Monga, principal consultant at F&B and retail real estate advisory firm SRED. "Most of the QSR operators have started the process of expanding their networks as everyone is looking to expand and fill up the gaps in their store networks."

People in the know said Domino's, KFC and Pizza Hut are looking to open dozens of outlets each this year.

"Our focus will be to continue pushing growth in the Indian market and widen our reach. We are looking at expanding the brand's presence in the country by entering newer markets and geographies this year; and remain confident of sustaining this momentum and building a path for long-term growth in the country," a KFC spokesperson said.

Jubilant FoodWorks, which operates Domino's and Dunkin Donuts in the country and Bur-

ger King India that had a stellar stock market listing last month did not respond to emails seeking comment till press time Tuesday. In a stock exchange filing after releasing its second-quarter results, Jubilant had said it had shut down 105 stores in the July-September quarter.

The bulk of the upcoming outlets will be focused on deliveries and take-away and most of the new stores will be smaller in size compared with the earlier ones.

Meanwhile, some chains said they are watching the overall Covid-19 situation before pushing for expansion.

Wendy's, which announced a strategic partnership with Rebel Foods to set up 250 cloud kitchens and 150 traditional Wen-



**SHRIRAM PM MONGA**  
PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT, SRED



QSR is on a much faster recovery than casual and fine dine formats. Most of the QSR operators have started the process of

expanding their networks as everyone is looking to expand and fill up the gaps in their store networks

dy's restaurants in the country, will expand its network depending on the vaccine rollout and consumer sentiment, Sierra Nevada Restaurants chief executive Jasper Reid said.

Sierra Nevada operates Wendy's in India. As of now, Wendy's has nine physical stores in the country.

"The expansion this year will depend on unknown factors like Covid. Overall, we will set up 150 physical stores over time," Reid said.

Amit Jatia, vice chairman of Westlife Development, which runs McDonald's in southern and western India, had said in an interview with ET in November that the chain was looking to relocate a few stores to malls or locations where the footfalls were high, to compensate for shut downs of "a few stores" in smaller malls which were unlikely to reopen. McDonald's operates about 300 outlets in West and South India.