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Hyderabad's Paradise biryani now in Bengaluru

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To launch brand in Chennai next year

Bengaluru, January 22:

Hyderabad's popular biryani brand Paradise opened its first restaurant outside in Bengaluru on Wednesday. The 140-seater restaurant located on CMH road, Indiranagar, had customers waiting in line to savour the signature Paradise biryani, despite it being the middle of a weekday.

Funded by India-focused private equity firm Samara Capital, Paradise plans to add more restaurants in Bengaluru; followed by Chennai next year. "Ours is a 61 year-old brand that has flourished purely through word-of-mouth; we have never advertised or promoted it. We had a soft launch of this restaurant on January 8 and had to keep many customers waiting. This is our smallest restaurant; we have arguably the largest restaurant in Secunderabad which can accommodate 1,500 customers at a time," Ali Hemmati, Chairman and Managing Director, Paradise told *BusinessLine*.

He said three restaurants are under construction in Hyderabad and a few more in Bengaluru – Koramangala and Whitefield will be finalised soon. Paradise employs 1,700 people across its 6 outlets in Hyderabad and can serve 3,000 people at a time. At a time when most other restaurants saw a dip in same store sales, Paradise registered a 15 per cent year-on-year growth. "We charge marginally higher prices than we do in Hyderabad as the overheads in Bengaluru are higher. A normal portion of biryani is 800 gms compared to 500-550 gms served in Bengaluru. We offer 75 dishes from soups and starters to curries, kebabs, rotis/naans and desserts and will launch home delivery and online ordering shortly," said Hemmati, who plans to take the brand global. Paradise is patronised by celebrities including Sachin Tendulkar, Aamir Khan, Rahul Dravid, Salman Khan and Chef Sanjeev Kapoor.

Without divulging the amount of funding, Raj Halve, Operating Partner, Samara Capital said, "We are funding Paradise in tranches, as and when required and it is the first food service brand we have invested in, as we believe they have tremendous scope to grow their business. Every day people parcel 350-400 biryanis to take back home to Dubai, Canada, US, Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru etc from Hyderabad. An enterprising businessman from Mumbai has started a company called Biryani By Air where he sells 400 - 500 Paradise biryanis on the weekends, which is flown to him in Mumbai."

Biryani is a significant segment of the 50,000 crore food service business, worth approximately 2,000 crore (organised sector) with a few large chains such as Lucky in Mumbai, Karim's in Delhi, Arsalan in Kolkata, Nagarjuna in Bengaluru dominating the scene. "As customers get more quality conscious we are witnessing a shift from unorganised to organised in the food service business. Unorganised players have low standards of hygiene and are not certified by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India. Paradise procures meat from certified companies such as Godrej for chicken and basmati rice from Dawat," says Halve.

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