



INDIA FOOD FORUM 2018 concludes with a crescendo

The 2018 chapter of India Food Forum, held from 17-19 January at Bombay Exhibition Centre, was a landmark milestone for India's food retail industry. Powered by Sri Sri Tattva, the 11th annual mega congregation of India Food Forum – India's most comprehensive platform for ideas and innovations in the food, FMCG and HoReCa sector – was power-packed with interactive and focused panel discussions, workshops, exhibition, master-classes, product launch pads, awards and an array of other activities.

Delivering his keynote address, Krish Iyer, Chairman, India Food Forum 2018 and President & CEO, Walmart India said, "We are seeing a transformation unfolding before us – be it FDI reforms in food retail or the implementation of path breaking initiatives like GST. All these make the country a unique and priority investment destination." Expressing his excitement at being part of this eventful journey that will enable India to move ahead on the path of higher rural income, improved farm infrastructure, world class last mile distribution and retail infrastructure in the country, Iyer said, "Today's tech-savvy generation and the rapid increase in internet and smart phone penetration is driving the evolution of the food segment. Their preference to engage with grocers and retailers on their own terms has brought a

tectonic shift in the consumption patterns and has made technology a necessary tool to offer the most relevant value propositions such as experience, convenience, price and choice."

Sharing his thoughts, Arvind Varchaswi, Managing Director, Sri Sri Tattva and Trustee, Sri Sri Ayurveda Trust, and Group Advisor - International Affairs, AYUSH Advisory Group, said: "Food is undergoing a lifestyle change and is getting more personalized. There is a need for education about food on what is good for you and when it is good for you." As an Ayurveda & FMCG brand, Sri Sri Tattva promotes health and wellness and has a portfolio of over 350 products across multiple categories. At India Food Forum 2018 it showcased a comprehensive range of cooking products – cow's pure ghee, organic virgin cold pressed coconut oil, whole wheat atta, basmati rice, 100 per cent natural honey, brown sugar, rock salt, a range of masalas and spices along with a range of staples and pickles. The brand has plans to open 1,000 new stores in India and launch its products in 30 new countries with a focus on Latin America, including Brazil and Argentina. Speaking on Sri Sri Tattva's vision, Varchaswi said: "We have earned the trust of our customers through our products with excellent quality and purity. We are positive in inspiring the modern world towards healthy and happy living through our consistent innovation in food and Ayurveda."

All-round industry presence

The three-day Conclave was curated and designed into five structured zones – Food & Grocery Forum India, India Food Service Forum, India Food Retail Tech, Food Start-ups Innovation Convention, and the Golden Spoon Awards for excellence in Food and Grocery, Foodservice and for demonstrating innovation in the Food Start-up category. As in the past, the Forum this year brought together key decision makers from every part of the food supply chain, apart from the country's finest talent in food research, creation, distribution and retailing. Over 200 Speakers, 140 Exhibitors, 500+ Brands, 10,000+ Visitors, 400+ International Visitors and 30 International Exhibitors made their presence felt at the Forum this year.

Among the overseas representatives was a delegation from UK's Department for International Trade comprising top brands in the food & beverage sector who took the opportunity at the Forum to partner with Indian players for expanding their geographical footprint and products' expanse. The delegation includes representatives of the most iconic and trusted British brands as well as the latest food innovation and niche products. The participants include Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board, Arbikie Distillery, Amber Glen Scotch Whisky, B Healthy Ltd, Croom Cuisine Ltd, Delamere Dairy, Devine Distillates Group, DT&G, English Cheesecake Co., Green Box Drinks Ltd,

Green King Brewing & Brands, Iceland Foods Ltd, Society of Independent Brewers, St James Smokehouse Ltd, The English Whisky Co., The Hop Studio, Trading World Ltd, Provenance Brands like Cornish Sea Salt – Simply Cornish & the Great British Crisp Co.

To keep the delegates connected with the next big innovations in food retailing, HoReCa and food technology, and to ensure that they are empowered with the products and insights to maximize the opportunities offered by India's vast



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– Arvind Varchaswi
MD, Sri Sri Tattva and Trustee, Sri Sri Ayurveda Trust, and Group Advisor - International Affairs, AYUSH Advisory Group

consumer universe, the forum featured a line-up of powerful conferences and eminent industry experts as speakers. Among the impressive star-studded roster of speakers at the Forum were Hari Menon (Founder & CEO, Bigbasket), Jamshed Daboo (MD, Trent Hypermarkets), Damodar Mall (CEO, Grocery, Reliance Retail), Piruz Khambatta (CMD, Rasna), Saugata Gupta (MD & CEO, Marico) A. Mahendran (CMD & Co-Founder, Global Consumer Products) and top honchos from Amazon, Patanjali, HUL, Abbott Nutrition, Godrej, Modern Foods, Dr. Oetker, Hypercity, Tata Chemicals, Emami Foods and Field Fresh Foods to name a few, all of whom shared valuable insights on building the overall pie of modern food retail through innovation, ideas and technology and how the food industry will evolve in the next decade.

Food for thought

Industry stalwarts and eminent speakers at the 11th edition of Indian Food Forum were of the view that food retailers must take Indian gourmet to the world to help achieve quality and scale in addressing the demand of Indian retail market. Echoing this view when speaking at the inaugural session of the Forum, Piruz Khambatta, CMD, Rasna said, “We must not cater to India, but cater to the world and possibly then look at India. We will subsequently have quality and scale that will drive. If pasta can be sold across the world, we can also sell khakra across the world.” Pointing out that 75% of India still wants pickles or soft-drink at Rs.2, which despite a huge opportunity does not grow beyond a nascent stage, Khambatta said, “We must Make in India for the World.” Concurring with his view, Jamshed Daboo, MD, Trent Hypermarkets, pointed out that India food retail is currently going with the power of brand without understanding what the palate is giving. Moreover, food access to consumers, which was dependent upon distribution, is set to change. “It is not a game of scale any more, but of skill. New innovation in supply chain management will help in product cycle end-to-end and give consumer something different than they were otherwise getting in their catchment area,” Daboo said.

Top honours for retailing excellence

A major highlight of the Forum and the latest addition to the prestigious platform this year was the launch of India’s 1st Food Startups & Innovation Convention and Awards supported by FSSAI. The initiative – to support and bring path-breaking entrepreneurs to the platform to share their ideas, business models and help them find solutions to the challenges they face – saw 16 start-ups present their ideas, execution strategies, implementation stages and payoff to an eminent jury panel of 16 members. Of the whole lot, three start-ups – Inner Being Wellness, 4700BC Popcorn and Earthy Tales – stood out as they clinched honours to be a part of the prestigious



Amazon Launchpad Program. Out of 184 entries received for the competition, 16 start-ups were shortlisted and the winning start-ups will now have an opportunity to access millions of Amazon customers nationally and internationally.

Congratulating the three winners – Aman Deep Lohan, Head, Amazon Launchpad India said: “We are very excited to have these start-ups be a part of Amazon Launchpad. We look forward to working with them and assist them through various tools and mechanisms that will help them launch products, get them discovered, build their brand, and help sell on the Amazon marketplace. These start-ups will also get access to the curated Amazon Launchpad store, the one-stop destination to find products from entrepreneurial companies. Additionally, they will get support in account management and customized recommendations on product launches and enhanced quality content with unique product page experience.”

Amazon Launchpad was launched in India in 2016 as a dedicated program showcasing unique and exciting products from startups across India, making it easy for them to launch new products to millions of Amazon customers. The Amazon Launchpad storefront offers customers a one-stop shop to discover a curated selection of cool and innovative products from entrepreneurial companies in the country. In addition to this, start-ups under the program also get Sponsored Products and AWS credits to further boost their business. Current Amazon Launchpad marketplaces include: US, UK, Germany, France, Mexico, Canada, China, Japan and India.

Apart from the Amazon awards, the eminent jury also selected five more start-ups for the Coca Cola Golden Spoon Awards and Images Food Start-ups & Innovation Awards. These include Frshly (Food Service Aggregator), The Thick Shake Factory (Food Service), Jarlie (Food service), Earthy Tales (Organic Farm to Fork) and Numbermall (B2B platform for food and grocery suppliers and retailers). Another three sets of awards were presented to honour India’s most exciting and innovative food retailers, foodservice formats and food retail professionals. •

