

Flurys to Unfurl Its Goodies Nationally

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Flurys, a popular British Raj teahouse in Kolkata that still evokes nostalgia among Brits, Bongs and the old Kolkata schoolboys' club, is venturing into other cities riding on the booming mall culture.

The Park Street joint, popular for its omelettes, cream of mushroom on toast, doughnuts and hot chocolate drink, will soon open outlets in Navi Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai and Delhi-NCR, says Priya Paul, MD of Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels that owns Flurys.

It has already opened an outlet in Hyderabad earlier this year, and has 14 small counters selling its confectionary in Kolkata. It has a counter at the lobby of The Park in Delhi as well.

"The basic idea behind the expansion drive was that we felt that Flurys over the last eight decades has achieved iconic proportions of brand recognition, brand loyalty and was the benchmark in gourmet bakery and confectionery segments," Paul said. The tearoom was opened in 1926 by Swiss baker Joseph Flury and his wife for Swiss confection-

ery. And soon its breakfast menu, cakes, pastries, everything became popular.

It changed hands in 1965 when Apeejay Surrendra Group patriarch Jit Paul, who was then supervising the construction of the building that would become The Park hotel, one day asked Flury if rumours were true that he was selling his tearoom and the former replied in the affirmative.

Its charm and appeal stood intact under the new management and its distinguished clientele included late filmmaker Satyajit Ray and industrialist LM Mittal. Even today many people visiting Kolkata make a least one visit to Flurys. Actress Raima Sen says she can still vouch for the flavour of Tosca cake with vanilla ice cream from Flurys that her dad would buy her in her schooldays. "Flurys has been very close to my heart because it was right next to my school Loreto House and I was a regular there."

Even her first movie started with a scene at Flurys. "The old world charm in the place is the crowd puller there, this factor could make it a hit in other cities too," Sen says. Priya Paul of Apeejay Surrendra Park says two Flurys restaurants in Navi Mumbai would be up and run-

ning in the next two months. Going forward, the group's endeavour is to expand Flurys to all the metros, essentially all the cities where Park Hotels is present. It plans to open 10 Flurys outlets in the current financial year, Paul says, adding that it's in advanced talks to start operations in Bangalore, Chennai and Delhi.

"The new outlets would be in three formats — flagship tearoom having a carpet area of 850 sq ft or more, or a cafe having a carpet area of 350 sq ft, or kiosks of 80-100 sq ft," Paul says. The group has roped in design consultancy Incubis, which did the famed interiors of New Delhi Airport Terminal 3, to ensure all Flurys outlets would express its heritage with a contemporary twist.

The food served at Flurys typically is high-end authentic European cakes, bakery, desserts, breakfast and hot and cold beverages. It also has an extensive European style lunch and dinner menu.

Paul says the core menu will remain the same in all new outlets although there will be some customisation in puff fillings as per the local palate. To start with, the new outlets would use The Park Hotels' kitchens.