



BACKGROUNDERS
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AAHAR 2026: The International Food & Hospitality Fair

Where Businesses Grow, Scale, and Expand

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The **steady buzz of conversations**, the aroma of freshly brewed coffee, and the sight of innovative food displays filled the halls of **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**, as the **40th edition of AAHAR - The International Food & Hospitality Fair** took place from **10-14 March 2026**. Jointly organized by the **Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI)** and the **India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO)**, AAHAR has emerged as one of **South Asia's most prominent B2B platforms** for the food and hospitality sector. What makes the exhibition stand out is not just the scale of participation, but the way it has evolved into a **trusted name and source for businesses in the food and hospitality industry to grow, scale, and expand**.



AAHAR brings together **hotels, restaurants, catering institutions, importers, distributors, and suppliers**, creating a platform where interactions frequently develop into business partnerships. Over the years, the exhibition has witnessed an interesting trend: several entrepreneurs who once attended as visitors or buyers **now return as exhibitors** with their own brands. Their journeys illustrate how continued participation in the fair can yield business insights, build market connections, and ultimately drive entrepreneurial growth.

Among the **vibrant state pavilions** at AAHAR 2026, the **Kerala pavilion** showcased how regional businesses are using the platform to expand their product reach. One of the participating companies, **RG Foods**, traces its origins back to **1940 in Calicut, Kerala**. Known for its diverse product line, including **edible oils** (gingelly oil, mustard oil, coconut oil), **rice varieties** (Palakkadan Vadi Matta rice), **breakfast powders**, **traditional Kerala snacks** (such as frozen foods), and **Ready-to-use cooking pastes** (ginger paste, ginger-garlic paste, garlic paste), the company has gradually expanded its presence beyond regional markets. At this year's exhibition, the company showcased **authentic Kerala snacks, including banana chips, spicy mixtures, murukku**, and other **traditional delicacies**.

Mr. Swagath, a representative of **RG Foods** at the fair, spoke vividly about how participation in AAHAR has helped the company connect with both national and international clients. Today, our products are available



in **more than 31 countries**, including markets in **Europe, New Zealand, Australia, and Qatar**. Through interactions at the fair, it has strengthened distribution channels in Delhi and initiated discussions to expand into **three new international markets**.

Mr. Swagath mentioned that the company holds approximately **65 percent market share** in the edible oil sector across the **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) regions** and operates an extensive distribution network, reaching about **1.5 lakh retail outlets** across Kerala, supported by over **450 distributors**. Their participation was supported through the state government's **state pavilion initiative**, which provides **free exhibition space** to **well-performing enterprises** from the state. According to

Mr. Swagath, extensive preparation, such as **targeted digital outreach and pre-scheduled meetings** with potential distributors before the event, helps the company maximise the business opportunities at AAHAR.

A similar story of growth was shared by **Mr. Dhyaan Mehta** from Ahmedabad, Gujarat. His company, **TGR Foods**, produces **cake and bread mixes** used as raw materials by bakeries, confectioneries, and dairy industries. For **nearly ten years**, Mehta attended AAHAR as a customer, exploring suppliers and learning about industry trends. This year marked a milestone for him as he participated for the **first time as an exhibitor, showcasing his own products**. His journey shows how entrepreneurs often **learn from the AAHAR ecosystem** before launching their own ventures.



Another entrepreneur who shared a similar journey is **Mr. Soberpreet Singh**, founder of **Packmold**, a company that manufactures **beverage cups for hot and cold drinks**. His business primarily supports **small and emerging beverage brands** that often struggle to meet the high minimum order requirements of large packaging manufacturers.

Packmold produces cups with an **aqua coating** rather than a conventional plastic coating, offering a more environmentally responsible, **government-compliant alternative**. Within just **six months of operations**, the company has secured orders from major clients such as **Reliance Retail's Wild Bean Cafés** and **Adani Airports**, while also supplying packaging to growing beverage brands like **Slay Coffee**.

Mr. Singh shared that years of visiting AAHAR as a buyer helped him understand the industry and identify market gaps. These experiences eventually inspired him to launch Packmold. This year marks his first participation in the exhibition **as an exhibitor**.

Along with emerging entrepreneurs, the exhibition also featured **major global and Indian brands**, including **Nescafé, Barry Callebaut, Go Cheese, Morde, Haldiram's, Cremica, and MTR**. Their stalls attracted large crowds with live product demonstrations and tasting sessions.

At the **Barry Callebaut** stall, chocolatier **Chef Ghosh** presented creative **chocolate preparations** and **artistic designs**, drawing enthusiastic interest from visitors. Many students from **culinary institutes and hospitality colleges** gathered to watch the demonstrations and interact with the chef, eager to learn more about the craft.



For **aspiring chefs and hospitality professionals**, AAHAR has become a **valuable learning platform**. Students attending the exhibition had the opportunity to interact with **industry experts, chefs, and brand representatives**. From ingredients and equipment to **packaging, branding, and distribution**, the event offered them a practical understanding of how the food and hospitality industry works **beyond the classroom**.



As AAHAR marks its **40th edition**, the stories emerging from the exhibition floor highlight its **enduring relevance** to the industry. For some participants, it is a place to connect with new suppliers or distributors. For others, it opens the **door to new markets**. Many entrepreneurs who once walked the aisles as visitors and buyers now return as **exhibitors**, marking an important milestone in their journey. Through these experiences, AAHAR continues to serve as a **trusted platform** where businesses in the **food and hospitality sector** come together to **connect, grow, and expand**.

References

Ministry of Commerce & Industry

<https://www.itpo.gov.in/assets/images/aahar-2026-delhi/pdf/aahar-2026-fact-at-glance.pdf>

PIB Research