

## Papa John's to invest \$62.5 mn in India

The world's third largest pizza chain Papa John's plans to invest over \$62.5 million (Rs.2.5 billion) over the next four years to open at least 100 outlets in India, said a top official Thursday.

Tapan Vaidya, general manager of JIP Fashion, Indian franchisee of Papa John's, said the American pizza chain would open at least 100 retail outlets in the country by 2011.

Papa John's sees India as one of the priority markets, from where most of its growth will come as new markets discover the delights of deep-pan dinners.

'The Indian market is growing and the number of total pizza outlets in last eight-nine years has grown by 15-20 percent. I expect it to grow even faster at 25-40 percent this year,' said Papa John's Vice-President Myles Felt.

Officials from Papa John's feel dining out here is growing and the affluent sections spend most of their money on buying technological products, mobiles and on restaurants.

'Rising salaries and a growing urban middle class is helping us make these plans,' Vaidya told IANS.

By the end of this year, the pizza chain plans to open outlets in Pune, Vadodara, Bangalore, [Hyderabad](#) and Ahmedabad.

'Just after the opening of our fourth outlet in Mumbai, we kept an exciting inaugural offer, wherein the first 50 customers at the new outlet could avail of free pizza once a week for one full year. We had more than 120 people in the first hour itself,' he said after opening the flagship store in the upmarket suburb of Powai, north central Mumbai.

'Indians like a lot of variety food. Pizza has proven most to the Indian palette. The pizza dough resembles the Indian dough,' he said.

The Louisville, Kentucky-based firm has tailored its menu to local tastes and fixed its prices at a par with the competition, he added.

Vaidya said they would stress equally on dining as well as deliveries, unlike their competitors.

Papa John's has over 3,225 branches in 28 international markets. It is the number one national pizza chain in terms of customer satisfaction, according to the highly regarded American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), a top honour it has held for the last eight years.

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