

## Demand Has Only Deferred Not Disappeared



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**Manoj Gaur, MD, Gaurs Group and Chairman, Affordable Housing Committee CREDAI (National)** in conversation with **Realty+** shares his views on the industry beyond the pandemic.

**Will you be resuming construction activities and when?**

We are waiting for the government to give orders to start construction work on sites. Due to the halt in construction, the sector is facing many issues including bearing the fixed cost at the sites that cannot be avoided. Apart from that the delivery dates of the projects will now be pushed. Once the construction starts we are planning to use the latest technology and double shifts to ensure faster completion of work.

**2) Will this crisis see a drop in prices of real estate?**

Real estate is going to bounce back sooner than other industries for many reasons – the tumultuous stock market and other commodity markets have proven that in the longer run it is real estate only which is the safest investment as you have a tangible product at hand. Also, home has proven to be the only vaccine so people who can afford it will definitely like to buy their own home. These are unprecedented times and hence we are seeing unprecedented offers and schemes which should continue for the better part of this year. We were ourselves pleased to close more than 100 bookings in the lockdown period till now. For trusted developers, the market would bounce back. Prices would not fall, it's just that more value adds and innovative offers would be driving the market.

**3) Which sector do you see recovering the fastest and why?**

Every segment of real estate has got its own unique set of buyer/investor with their own rules which they follow. The demand for residential will always remain; we have been saying that Festival season around November is always a good time for real estate and it is yet to come this year. If we talk of the commercial segment, it has to bounce back as people are waiting to start businesses and some are waiting to expand operations. So the layoff time due to lockdown will make people burst out, which is important also for the overall development of the economy.

**4) Looking beyond the crisis, how do you perceive the revival of retail real estate?**

Once the lockdown is over, retail will revive quickly as people are waiting to dine out, shop, etc. The segment has to be ready with safety measures to make sure the surge should not lead to untoward incidents of the disease. Beyond crisis, retail will grow exponential as the demand will always be there.

**5) What opportunities can come out of this situation for real estate?**

The demand is only deferred by the lockdowns and will not disappear. With new homes flooding the market, and developers wooing homebuyers with measures such as online viewings during the outbreak and discounts, we expect another jump in the coming months. A lot of people have now understood that real estate is the safest investment option and this change in perception may lead to 'binge buying'. Overall, the opportunities are going to go up in every segment of real estate and it appears that the realtors will have busy years ahead. We expect a resurgence in property buying in the same way as seen after the slowdown of 2004 and 2009.