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fhraimagazine

Vol 18, Issue 6, June 2018 Pages 72 ₹50

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Garish Oberoi
President, FHRAI

Dear fellow members,

The Government of Uttar Pradesh and FHRAI have formed an amicable alliance in bringing the association's 53rd annual convention to the vibrant city of Lucknow. Slated to be held from September 20-22, 2018, at Ramada Lucknow, the convention this year is themed on spiritual and wellness tourism. Chief Minister **Yogi Adityanath ji** will be inaugurating the convention that will have **Alphons Kannanthanam**, Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism, Government of India and **Rita Bahuguna Joshi**, Minister of Tourism, Government of Uttar Pradesh, also in attendance.

The government of Uttar Pradesh and the Chief Minister have actively been promoting tourism and hospitality in the state. We aim to further this objective through our annual convention. UP Tourism already has its spiritual and wellness circuits in place. We, as part of FHRAI and having worked closely with UPHRA, have assisted the tourism department of the state in developing these circuits.

The Ministry of Tourism is increasingly focusing on promoting Buddhist tourism, for which not only are they working on promotion but also infrastructure development. MOT recently concluded a roadshow to a few ASEAN countries, and is all set to organise the International Buddhist Conclave in August. **Rashmi Verma**, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, said, "Buddhist tourism is our priority area and in line with the same, we just concluded roadshows in Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand. We saw a lot of interest from people of these countries to visit these sites. We are also organising the International Buddhist Conclave from August

26-28, in which we will have business meetings and will also be inviting prominent monks from these countries. The inauguration will be held at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi, and then by charter flights we will take all the delegates to Ajanta and Ellora caves. This is the first time we will be showcasing other sites related to Buddhism. From there, we will take them to Bodh Gaya and Sarnath."

Recently, the Minister of Tourism, along with a delegation of senior officials, attended the 108th session of UNWTO Executive Council from May 23-25 in San Sebastian, Spain, in which it was decided that in order to address new challenges and trends, UNWTO will pay special attention to scaling up innovation and digitisation in the tourism sector. During the three-day Executive Council meeting, the minister chaired the 'Programme and Budget Committee' meeting of UNWTO. He also brought out the impact of innovation and new technology, which have become key factors for competitiveness of every economic sector, including tourism. The cover feature in this issue addresses technology needs for the hospitality industry. Technology experts and hoteliers share latest trends, data and content security, social listening, security, and new-age payments.

I hope you gain an insight as to which technology will best suit your needs and help grow your business.

With warm regards,
Garish Oberoi
President, FHRAI



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NO GOING BACK WITH TECH!

Hoteliers and other experts share their point of view on the significance of technology in the hospitality industry and its future prospects in the sector

Cover Image

(L-R) Garish Oberoi, President, FHRAI; KJ Alphons, Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism, Govt. of India; Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, Hony. Secy., FHRAI

24 COVER STORY



14 FHRAI DESK



10 NEWS

CONTENTS

THIS MONTH

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	03
SECRETARY'S MESSAGE	08
NEWS	10
FHRAI DESK	14
PRODUCTS & SERVICES	62
EVENTS	64
APPOINTMENTS	68

FEATURES

INTERVIEW	12
MINISTRY PAVES WAY FOR ADVENTURE TOURISM	

Recognising the need for bringing organisation to the adventure tourism sector, the Ministry of Tourism has set guidelines and protocols for adventure tour operators

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FEATURES

VIEWPOINT 22 THE CONVENTION COMES CALLING

Conventions are forums that bring people together and allow them to share ideas. Members of FHRAI share their opinion on what constitutes a successful convention



OPINION 50 NO ROOM FOR GOONS

There isn't a business or industry that hasn't been at the receiving end of unpleasant behaviour by miscreants and goons. Senior members of FHRAI share tips on how hotels must try and deal with such adversities

GM CANVAS 54 CENTRED AROUND SUCCESS

Radisson Blu Marina Hotel Connaught Place enjoys high occupancies and good business. Neeraj Balani, the General Manager, describes what makes the 90-room property flourish in Delhi's food and business hub



SUPPLIER TALK 58 KEEP IT COOL!

Vipin Agrawal, Director, System AC Business, Samsung India, talks about innovative cooling options and solutions the company has for the hospitality sector



CHEF TALK 70 ALL THAT'S DELIGHTFUL

Vikash Prasad, the Executive Chef at The Westin Kolkata Rajarhat, talks about summer foods and drinks that are popular amongst guests in this stifling weather



70 CHEF TALK

64 EVENTS

22 VIEWPOINT

54 GM CANVAS

62 PRODUCTS & SERVICES

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FHRAI Magazine is printed and published by Gunjan Sabikhi on behalf of Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Association of India and printed at Super Cassettes Industries Ltd., C-85, 86, 94, Sector-4, Noida, Distt.: Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P.- 201301 and published at Durga Das Publications Pvt. Ltd. 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110 001, Editor: Devika Jeet

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Tel : 91-11-23344179

This issue of FHRAI Magazine contains 68+4 pages cover

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Surendra Kumar Jaiswal
Hony. Secretary
FHRAI



The convention will aim to facilitate a multifarious dialogue on how all stakeholders can converge and synergise their efforts and expertise towards achieving the shared goal of catapulting India to being a world leader in tourism



Dear fellow members,

The 53rd FHRAI Annual Convention is scheduled to be held from September 20-22, 2018, in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, the land where the multi-hued Indian culture has blossomed since times immemorial. Lucknow, popularly known as the 'City of Nawabs' or the 'City of Tehzeeb', and I welcome you all with open arms to come and make this convention a memorable experience for all.

The FHRAI Annual Convention will be inaugurated by **Shri Yogi Adityanath**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, as the Chief Guest. The event will witness the gracious presence of **Shri Alphons Kannanthanam**, Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism, Government of India; **Smt. Rita Bahuguna Joshi**, Tourism Minister of Uttar Pradesh; and **Smt. Rashmi Verma**, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. **Shri Awanish Kumar Awasthi**, IAS, Principal Secretary, Tourism, Government of Uttar Pradesh, is the patron of the event.

FHRAI Annual Convention has established itself as being among the most eagerly anticipated and widely attended events in the Asian hospitality industry. The 53rd Annual Convention will be held at Ramada Lucknow, hotel and convention centre. The theme chosen for the event is 'Spiritual & Wellness Tourism: Look within India'.

Tourism is poised to serve as a pivotal pillar for revitalising 'Brand India' and driving our country's transformational future growth. In this context, the FHRAI convention will aim to facilitate a multifarious dialogue on how all stakeholders can converge and synergise their efforts, experience, and expertise towards achieving the shared goal of

catapulting India to its rightful position of being a world leader in tourism.

It was only through the initiatives of our Honourable Prime Minister that the International Yoga Day was initiated across the globe on June 21, 2015. It signifies the promotion of global health, harmony, and peace. The most popular quotes from his speech from the day remain, "We did not have health insurance in olden times, but Yoga is a practice which gives health assurance with zero spending. Yoga is not just about getting rid of diseases, but is a guarantee of wellness." When people around the world come to a limbo in life and look towards redemption with spirituality, they turn to India. The secret of true meditation still rests in the mystical aura of its chants, prayers, and mantras. Apart from the inherent spirituality of this sacred land is the knowledge of Ayurveda, Unani, Panchakarma, Yoga, and Homeopathy, which aids health and well-being.

FHRAI Annual Convention brings together a broad cross section of influential voices, iconic thought leaders, distinguished dignitaries from the government, and luminaries of the tourism industry for enriching deliberations on myriad strategic, competitive, and policy issues shaping the sector. Delegates from India and abroad are expected to attend and engage with top policymakers, doyens of the industry, illustrious entrepreneurs, global experts, investors, eminent representatives from civil society, and the media.

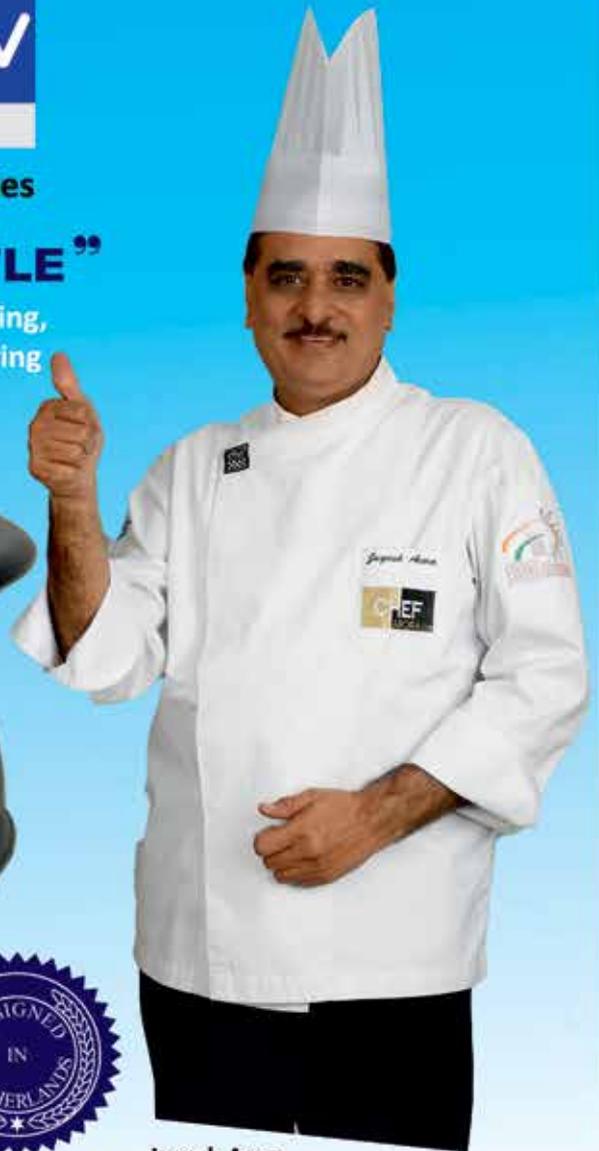
With kind regards,
Surendra Kumar Jaiswal
Honorary Secretary, FHRAI



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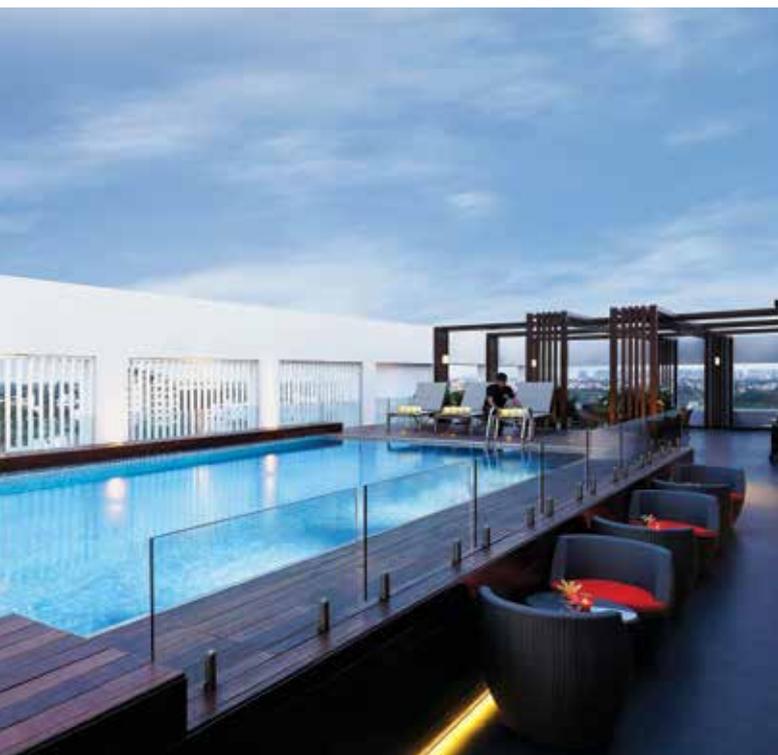
Tamara Leisure Experiences has launched its newest property, The Tamara Kodai, which offers world-class heritage accommodation and luxury experiences in the heart of Kodaikanal. Each suite at the property boasts of a large balcony, a living room, and an attached bathroom. The 53 suites of French provincial design take guests back to a time when La Providence, the colonial building historically known to be one of the first to come up in Kodaikanal, was a monastic retreat. Today, the heritage building has been restored and has expanded into a getaway tucked away amongst some of the most beautiful hills in South India. Food and beverage facilities at the property include La Providence that features a live kitchen counter and Bistro 1845, a French-style à la carte bistro and bar serving the

best of European, Asian, and Indian cuisine. The property also offers boardroom and conference facilities which include a ballroom accommodating more than 200 guests with a spacious pre-function area.

Shruti Shibulal, Promoter and Director - Strategy and Development, Tamara Leisure Experiences, says, "The launch of The Tamara Kodai is a proud moment for us. Tamara Leisure Experiences was established with a vision of creating world-class resorts and hotels around the world with a focus on responsible tourism and unique experiences for our guests. The launch of this property, our second luxury resort, marks an important milestone in our journey."

LAUNCH

ACCORHOTELS LAUNCHES PROPERTY IN CHENNAI



AccorHotels has launched its seventh property in Chennai, the Novotel Chennai Chamiers Road. It is the first Novotel with a contemporary design and interiors. The hotel has been conceptualised by SODA, an international design firm known for creating fresh, innovative, yet sustainable spaces, and is owned and promoted by SK Gupta, Chairman, Gupta Group of Companies and Ashish Gupta, Managing Director, AG Hospitality. Less than a 30-minute drive from the international airport and the railway station, Novotel Chennai Chamiers Road has an inventory of 100 rooms that include four suites as well as rooms designed for the specially abled. It also boasts of four meeting rooms which can accommodate more than 100 guests for conferences, meetings, events, and other social gatherings.

"We are excited to partner with AG Hospitality to launch Novotel Chennai Chamiers Road and look forward to a fruitful partnership. The opening of this hotel marks our seventh hotel in Chennai and eighth property in the state of Tamil Nadu. Chennai is fast becoming a key market fuelled by both strong business and leisure traveller growth in an improving economic climate. It forms an integral piece of our densification strategy to become leaders in the market segments we operate in," says **Jean-Michel Cassé**, Chief Operating Officer, India & South Asia, AccorHotels. With this launch, AccorHotels has become the largest international hospitality player in Chennai.



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Ministry paves way for ADVENTURE TOURISM

Alphons Kannanthanam, Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism, Government of India, believes that a uniformity in guidelines for adventure tour operators and service providers would only bring more credibility to the sector.

Nisha Verma

Alphons Kannanthanam recently released the Guidelines by Government of India on Adventure Tourism, which have been formulated along with the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) in an effort to make adventure sports safer. Speaking at the launch, Kannanthanam said, "India has great potential for adventure tourism; 70 per cent of the Himalayas are here and we have beautiful rivers in every state, which offer immense possibilities. We have brought out these guidelines for 29 activities on land, in air, and in water. We believe that adventure tourism is going to be a \$1 trillion industry in 10 years. Currently, it's a 490 billion-dollar industry worldwide, and we want to have a big pie of that in India because we have incredible natural resources for adventure tourism."

Speaking on the need for putting a set of guidelines in place, he said, "It's very important to lay down protocol for these kind of activities because unless we have a basic protocol on how things should happen, nothing would be organised. We want people to be safe, and that's the most important thing. We want basic facilities to be available and hence, all these things are laid down in the guidelines. ATOAI is going to work with the government, and Ministry of Tourism (MOT) would provide whatever help is necessary to the state governments and associations to create these basic facilities."

These guidelines cover land, air, and water-based activities which include mountaineering, trekking, bungee jumping, paragliding, kayaking, scuba diving, snorkelling, river rafting, and many other sports. The guidelines have been framed for 15 land-based, seven air-based, and seven water-based activities which cover the entire gamut of adventure tourism available in India. The guidelines also codify the Standard Operating Procedures and instructions for risk mitigation and emergencies, as well as provide for details like safety precautions, training required, insurance, etc.

Kannanthanam also stressed on the need for Indians to adopt an active lifestyle and take up adventure activities. "Adventure has to be part of our lives for this country to

be successful. Fundamentally, we want our young people to go out and not stay indoors. We want them to climb a mountain, climb a tree, fall down, but take up an active lifestyle, so that there are many more adventure-crazy people in India."

The year 2018 was declared as the Year of Adventure Tourism in India, but the guidelines have been released only now. Kannanthanam said that the service providers in the adventure tourism category in India were not organised. "Until now, there were no guidelines and everyone was doing it on their own. Now, we have realised that these kind of things should be organised and there needs to be uniformity in the guidelines, which were earlier different in different states. Hence, we sat down with ATOAI and brought out these guidelines. These are extremely important and we will keep on improving them as we go on. We hope to create an ecosystem in which adventure tourism becomes a big thing in India," added the Minister.

Regarding protocols for guides, he said, "We will be working with the guides in association with ATOAI and will organise workshops to ensure the protocols are followed."

However, what's next? Would the MOT also be licensing or accrediting the tour operators and service providers in the adventure tourism category? Kannanthanam explained, "After these guidelines, we will have a system of licensing them, but it will be voluntary. We will be working with the states to ensure that these guidelines are followed. Hence, those who want will get a rating, and it's not compulsory. On the other hand, those with accreditation will have more chance of getting clients, which means that an operator's credibility increases with accreditation. I think that would be incentive enough for the individual operators."

“

It's important to lay down protocol for these kind of activities, else nothing would be organised

”



Delegates at the session in Udaipur

HRANI CONDUCTS THREE MORE FOSTAC SESSIONS

Hotel and Restaurant Association of Northern India (HRANI) recently concluded its 27th Food Safety Training & Certification (FOSTAC) programme on June 5, 2018, at The Leela, Udaipur. HRANI has so far trained and certified nearly 1000 hospitality professionals in the northern region under FSSAI's Master Trainer and Supervisory Training programmes. Each programme has been witnessing good participation and every session has imparted new knowledge to hoteliers and restaurateurs in food safety and hygiene.



FOSTAC session at Udaipur



SESSION AT UDAIPUR

Food handlers from various restaurants and hotels attended the session for their mandatory FOSTAC certification. **Ravi Kant Patel**, Master Trainer certified by FSSAI and an Executive Sous Chef with HRH Group of Hotels, elucidated the importance of maintaining food hygiene standards in hotels

“HRANI has so far trained and certified nearly 1000 hospitality professionals in the northern region under FSSAI's programme”

FOSTAC session at Radisson Blu Faridabad, held on May 19

and restaurants. **Renu Thapliyal**, Secretary General, HRANI, was also part of the session. During her address, she put forth her views on food hygiene and commended FSSAI for the incredible success of the initiative. She thanked the management of The Leela Palace

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Participants are all smiles at the session held at The Oberoi, New Delhi



The FOSTAC session at The Oberoi, New Delhi, has the participants listening attentively to the speaker



FOSTAC session at Radisson Blu Faridabad



Members at The Oberoi, New Delhi

Udaipur for hosting the session. Contributing to celebrations on completing the first year of FOSTAC in the month of May, 2018, HRANI conducted two more Food Safety Training and Certification programmes.

SESSION AT FARIDABAD

On May 19, 2018, the session was held at Radisson Blu Faridabad, where the faculty comprised eminent trainer **Vikas Gupta**, a professor in School of Hospitality at Amity University, Noida. The Eros Group hosted this session. While welcoming the participants at the session,

“Each programme has been witnessing good participation and every session has imparted new knowledge”

Thapliyal said, "We are happy to be training partners. This step taken towards food safety will go a long way in enhancing customer experience and generating credibility for the food industry."

SESSION AT NEW DELHI

On May 23, 2018, the second session was held at The Oberoi, New Delhi. **Rakesh Sethi**, a famous celebrity chef and also the Corporate Executive Chef with Radisson Hotel Group, was the guest trainer. He was accompanied by **Pritha Tripathi**, Scientist (IV), Training, FSSAI.

Sethi kept the participants engaged in the session and shared with them his valuable experience of having been in the industry for a long time. The session was well-attended by food experts and handlers of the hospitality industry. HRANI acknowledges the support of Executive Chef **Rohit Gambhir** and the management of The Oberoi for hosting the programme.

As it has now been made mandatory by FSSAI for all food business with Central or State Licence to have at least one trained and certified food handler for every 25 food handlers in all their premises, the FOSTAC-certified Food Safety Supervisor will be a conduit between FSSAI and the FBO.

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HRAWI'S CONVENTION IN COLOMBO THIS JUNE

The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) will be hosting the 18th edition of its Regional Convention from June 27-30, 2018. For the first time, the association will hold its convention overseas in the port city of Colombo in Sri Lanka. Themed 'Surfing the Wave of Global Tourism', the convention will host an interactive three-day programme with a focus on international tourism trends and best trade practices. Centred around hospitality, the event will integrate related business sessions and business networking opportunities for participating professionals. For recreation post the convention, HRAWI is also organising tours for delegates around Colombo and Kandy.

Kumar De Silva, Chairman, Sri Lanka Convention Bureau; **Sanath Ukwatte**, President, Hotel Association of Sri Lanka; **Aravinda de Silva**, Deputy Chairman, Ideal Motors; **John Amaratunga**, Minister of Tourism Development and Christian Religious Affairs, are some of the eminent personalities who will be part of the convention.



“The association has invited industry leaders to share their experience and expertise through four business sessions

“Annual conventions offer an excellent opportunity to network with fraternity members,

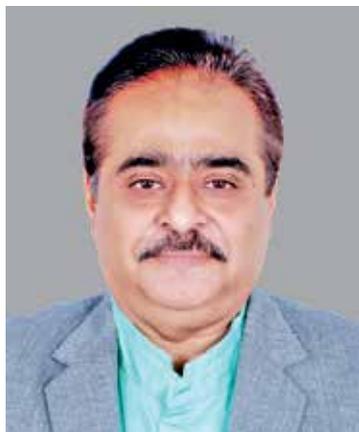
professionals, consultants, vendors and many others from the industry. The association has invited industry leaders to share their experience and expertise through four business sessions for the benefit of participating hotels and restaurants,” says **Dilip Datwani**, President, HRAWI. “The registrations have been pouring in and the response has been fantastic. We feel positive that this convention will turn out to be a great success,” he concludes.

HRAWI



HRAWI REQUESTS MCGM TO PERMIT SHEDS IN MONSOON

With the rains expected to arrive earlier than usual this year, F&B outlets in the city have applied to the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) for permission to build temporary sheds. However, many of the establishments are facing delays and difficulties and have not been able to obtain the same. The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI), on behalf of its members, in a letter to the Municipal Commissioner has requested to instruct all MCGM wards to grant such permission to hotels and restaurants in the city. Stating that the sheds are essential for smooth operations for the next three to four months, the association has assured the authorities of complete compliance and promised abiding by all relevant conditions as stipulated by the law.



Dilip Datwani
President
HRAWI

"The temporary permissions for sheds during monsoons have been customarily granted by the MCGM every year. However, this year many of our members have brought to our attention that they are facing

difficulties in obtaining the required permission. The sheds are essential for avoiding rainwater seepage in the properties and for conveniently carrying out the daily operations at hotels and restaurants," said **Dilip Datwani**, President, HRAWI.

The letter specifically points out to areas including front entrance, rear entrance, terraces, other approved service areas that need cover in the monsoon. "We fully understand if there is any apprehension of misuse of the temporary sheds. For this, HRAWI on behalf of its members assures the MCGM its commitment to the law and agrees to follow the statutory guidelines. We also humbly request the concerned authorities to look into the online process of licence renewals and applications, which has not yet taken effect at ward levels," concluded Datwani.

HRAWI

HRAEI & FSSAI ENSURE SAFE AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD FOR ALL

Hotel and Restaurant Association of Eastern India (HRAEI) along with FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) organised a day-long training session on 'Ensuring Safe and Nutritious Food' to create awareness on food safety, at Hotel Central Courtyard Resort, Siliguri, on May 30, 2018. From now on, it would be mandatory for all food business with Central Licence or State Licence to have at least one trained and certified Food Safety Supervisor for every 25 food handlers or part thereof on all their premises. To implement the same, FSSAI has designed a large-scale Food Safety Training & Certification (FOSTAC) programme for food business across the value chain. HRAEI, being the lead training partner in



Sudesh Poddar
President
HRAEI

the eastern region, is facilitating its members by organising its first round of training sessions free of cost. The curriculum for the training had been created centrally, but

the training was delivered through training partners, including large food business operators; academic and vocational institutions; training partners approved under Skill Development Councils and Missions; industry, scientific and technology associations as well as civil society organisations.

Commenting on the training session, **Sudesh Poddar**, President, HRAEI, said, "Our aim is to create awareness among our fraternity members about the hygiene and quality of the food being served in hotels and restaurants of the eastern region. We plan to organise similar training sessions in a bigger and better way in cities like Kolkata and Guwahati."

HRAEI

Inviting nominations for **FHRAI Awards**

FHRAI Awards has been instituted to encourage young industry professionals and recognise excellence in the hospitality industry. Over the years, these awards have firmly established themselves as being among the most credible and coveted accolades in the industry.

This year, the FHRAI awards will be presented at a glittering ceremony scheduled to be held on September 22, 2018, as part of the prestigious 53rd FHRAI Annual Convention being held from September 20-22 at Ramada Lucknow Hotel & Convention Centre. The awards will be given in the following categories:

INDIVIDUAL ENTREPRENEUR AWARDS

- Young Hotelier of the Year
- Restaurant Entrepreneur of the Year

INDIVIDUAL MANAGER AWARDS

Hotel General Manager / Hotel Manager of the Year

- Luxury – Upper Upscale
- Upscale and Upper Midscale
- Midscale and Economy

Hotel F&B / Banquet Manager of the Year

- Luxury – Upper Upscale
- Upscale and Mid-market

Chef of the Year

- Luxury – Upper Upscale Hotels
- Upscale and Mid-market Hotels
- Stand-alone Restaurants

Hotel Front Office Manager/ Rooms Division Manager of the Year

- Luxury – Upper Upscale
- Upscale and Upper Midscale
- Midscale and Economy

Hotel Housekeeper of the Year

- Luxury and Upper Upscale
- Upscale and Mid-market

Other awards in this category are:

- Hotel Sales & Marketing Manager of the Year
- Hotel Revenue Manager of the Year
- Restaurant Manager of the Year
 - Hotel Restaurant
 - Stand-alone Restaurant

- Hotel HR Manager of the Year
- Hospitality Journalist of the Year

INSTITUTIONAL AWARDS

- Best Hospitality Institute of the Year
- Best Hotel Spa of the Year
- Best Wellness Resort of the year

Green Hotel of the Year

- Luxury – Upper Upscale
- Upscale and Mid-market

For F&B, the award will be given to:

- Green Restaurant of the Year

The application forms can be downloaded by visiting the awards section on the FHRAI website, at <https://www.fhrai.com/awards.aspx>

You are kindly requested to ensure that all duly completed application forms reach **Rahul Lall**, Secretary General, FHRAI, by **July 15, 2018**.



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The convention comes calling

Conventions not only showcase the achievements of associations, but also help in networking and sharing information. Senior members of FHRAI share their point of view on what makes conventions perfect.



TS Walia

TS Walia
Vice President
FHRAI

CARRY ON INNOVATING

The annual FHRAI convention is an event marked by three scrupulously organised days with forums for discussion in the day and evenings for leisure. With each detail meticulously planned, it is truly one of the grand occasions of the hospitality calendar. The mandate of this event, which is enthusiastically attended by hundreds of our patrons, is marked by the presence of the who's who of the industry and several eminent figures from across a plethora of fields.

At this point, our prerogative should be to implement the most advanced technologies and integrate them into the system so as to ensure a more efficient, cost-effective, and sustainable functioning of hotels and restaurants through the length and breadth of our land. Our patrons should have the best facilities for this implementation available to them; the techniques of newer methods of operation must be introduced so as to ensure further expansion of an industry whose services are of paramount importance to the growth of our country as a whole.

It is my firm belief that innovation is what will drive growth in the future. We must change with changing times. The present landscape is more conducive than ever before to carve out a path for the future on innovative and more advanced lines, and FHRAI's annual convention, with its magnitude and resources, can provide the perfect platform for that.

“

This year, anticipation is building and it is imperative that the EC judiciously manage expectations

”

ADDRESSING THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY

My expectations from this convention are now higher than ever before. This year in particular, anticipation is building and it is imperative that the Executive Committee judiciously manage expectations. The government has been coming up with bold steps for digitisation and other IT-based reforms, and it is hoped that the convention will address their implications with respect to the hospitality industry. I expect the convention this year to be as enjoyable and as grand an event as ever, with the purpose of taking up the advantages offered by technology and propelling growth like never before.

PRODUCTIVE INTERACTIONS

The existing framework governing the organisation of our annual convention is one that, if improvised on, can provide the optimum platform for achieving our goals. Experts on aspects of technology dealing with hospitality operations and eminent personalities in the field who wield influence can make companies produce systems which can help in further technological integration of the industry. We can characterise the two days of the convention, which are given to deliberation on pressing issues, by forums for intense discussions amongst panelists and patrons of our industry. It is also imperative that we set up an interactive session for budding young entrepreneurs in the field with the veterans of the industry to motivate them to undertake more ambitious ventures and give them a better insight into the intricacies of the functioning of units in the field.

All of this, combined with proper planning and efficient execution, can go a long way in making our convention into what our founders wanted it to be.

HOSPITALITY
2025



Param Kannampilly
Co-opted EC Member
FHRAI

STAYING ABREAST

Conventions should impress upon the government the needs of our industry. A report card needs to be provided on what must be achieved in the

coming year. It should be able to impart knowledge to members on the latest trends and occurrences in the industry.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

At the FHRAI convention, members should be informed about what the association did during the previous year. The organising committee of the convention should select three-four topics and get industry experts to educate the association members on trends, both present and those that are fast approaching. There should be knowledge sharing sessions on project finance, law, project management, and other such topics of relevance.

Every convention should recommend a few subjects that may be discussed at the convention in the year to follow. Each of these must then be put to vote amongst the delegates and the one with the majority must be selected.

“

There should be knowledge sharing sessions on finance, project management, and topics of relevance

”



Param Kannampilly

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No going back TECH!

Technology, an enabler and a disruptor, has penetrated every aspect of travel, hospitality, and guest experience. Experts in the field and tech-savvy hoteliers of today provide their point of view on the latest trends in technology for hospitality, data and content security, social listening, and new-age payments.

Kanchan Nath

There's no denying that technology is the future of hospitality, but every change comes with a bagful of benefits and pitfalls. Artificial Intelligence, chatbots, and social media interactions continue to shape how service is delivered and enhanced in the industry. Big Data, if used well, enables hotel groups to differentiate themselves from others, thereby helping them thrive in a competitive world. However, with so much information all around, data security becomes a prime concern for hotels. It may do them wonders to provide excellent service to guests based on data collected about their preferences, likes and dislikes, but at what cost? How can they secure the data they've been entrusted with? Paying online is not completely risk-free either. A business has to ensure that its payment interface is well secured so guests aren't apprehensive of transacting online. This becomes a market differentiator. It is also no surprise that with technology ruling the roost, human interactions have reduced considerably. New-age travellers may be savvier with such tech, but cannot completely do away with human interaction. How futuristic can technology really get then?



with





Niklas Andréén

Niklas Andréén
Senior VP and Managing Director
Global Hotel, Car & Digital Media, Travelport

DIGITAL ASSISTANTS

With more and more travel Apps and hardware integrating voice and natural language search into their user interfaces, consumers will soon be able to talk to their digital assistant, whether through their smartphone, smart speaker, or other device to search and book a hotel room immediately. Technologies that power the digital world include cloud, mobility, machine learning, APIs, as well as data and analytics. They enable Big Data to be accessed; provide an understanding of the volume mixes and travel trends across our platform and industry; and automate, filter, and target results long before they are even requested.

USING DATA APTLY

Matching data from all segments in a traveller's itinerary will enable hospitality travel players to not just efficiently handle areas like travel disruption, but will also allow them to enhance and add value to the traveller experience over and above individual core

offerings. In keeping with the statement that 'data is the new oil', the big winners in this trend will be those who make the most effective use of customer data to predict and respond to surge in demand and promote tailored offers.

TECHNOLOGY AND SECURITY

We're moving into a world where the Internet of Things (IoT) allows us and other service providers to know where people are, what they're reacting to, and then being able to use AI to give the consumer the best experience. IoT-enabled companies need to understand what core data is, how it needs protection, and what is outside of those parameters that informs you, but doesn't compromise the individual. The brand value of a travel provider will be based on the security of the data it holds on its customers. If consumers don't feel their data is protected, they won't trust those providers.

INNOVATION IN PAYMENTS

Thanks to the fintech revolution, today's consumers have more choice than ever in how they pay. In India, there are already around 60 non-banking providers offering digital payment services, including Paytm, MobiKwik, and Amazon Pay, which have grown in popularity.

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The big winners will be those who make the most effective use of customer data to predict surge in demand

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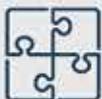
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Rakshit Desai

Rakshit Desai Managing Director FCM Travel Solutions – India

CLOUD-BASED AND CONTACTLESS INNOVATIONS

For the travel industry, advanced technology has not only given rise to many opportunities but also challenges that need to be addressed. Security concerns, along with cost effectiveness and user acceptance, need to be carefully evaluated while working out the pace and operating process for introduction of any new technology.

Trends such as cloud passports, which are primarily e-passports for immigration and clearance, as well as self-booking tools or SBT require lesser documentation and hence,

compromising on data security. Blockchain is another tool that addresses the key concern of travel manager-travel process visibility and data security on cloud, however, its application in the Indian travel scenario is yet to evolve.

CHATBOTS COME CALLING

Chatbots simplify the end-to-end booking process with natural language commands. Due to the amount of data required for true intelligence, there are currently only a few advanced travel applications with actual AI.

Globally, FCM has launched an AI-based chatbot, which is a travel assistant designed to simplify life for corporate travellers by blending AI with the expertise of a real FCM travel consultant. SAM, the chatbot, assists in all aspects of travel via a 24-hour conversational interface, including Facebook, WhatsApp and in-app chatbot, answering questions, making recommendations, and performing actions.

Virtual assistants, on the other hand, perform tasks for an individual based on user information and access from many external sources such as user flight schedules, hotel availabilities, country events, weather, and traffic conditions.

INTEGRATING BUSINESS WITH TECHNOLOGY

In order to realise the dream of 'digi-smart' business travel, it is imperative for Indian business to incorporate a technology-enabled integrated business travel programme. SBT is the primary tool used for end-to-end travel management, right from booking to settlement of claims. Globally, SBT is being increasingly used by business as the primary business travel management tool. AI is another area which can enhance business travellers' experience. Travel analytics is also an emerging technology that aims to address the issue of analysing travel spends and behaviour to enable greater visibility over individual traveller and overall travel spends.

While there are other technological solutions being developed to enhance the quality and experience of business travellers, the above technologies are relevant for the Indian business travel market given the growing awareness for these systems and their potential in enhancing the quality, expectations, and transparency for key stakeholders, that is business travel managers, travellers, and TMCs.



“Trends such as cloud passports require lesser documentation and hence, enhanced data safety”

enhanced data safety and security. In terms of SBT adoption, larger organisations prefer having a customised SBT system.

Other trends include Near-field Communication (NFC), which is different from other contactless communication systems such as Bluetooth and RFID. It does not require pairing and has capabilities to read and write and card emulation, thus enabling payments, access control, etc. NFC combines the limitations of Bluetooth and RFID to enable single-point of paperless authentication without



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Deepak Mavinkurve

Deepak Mavinkurve Founder & CEO KePSLA

TRIED AND TESTED TECH

While there are many interesting advances in this space, I would encourage hotels to stay focused on technologies that are tested, easy to implement, do not have a bleeding edge, and have a short-term or medium-term ROI. They include technologies that speed-up check-in, mobile as a single source of access, and data analytics.

With easy access to Aadhar card and the IndiaStack, hotels can put together easy and safe check-in solutions that avoid rush at the reception and help guests get to their room faster. Guests' mobile phone can also be made a focus point for all guest interaction.

RELEVANT LAWS AND GUIDELINES

Interestingly, India does not have an explicit law that

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Focus on technologies that are tested, easy to implement, and have a short-term or medium-term ROI

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governs data security. I understand it will be introduced in the parliament shortly. At this time, the Information Technology Act, 2000 and The (Indian) Contract Act, 1872 are the two. In my opinion, both need to be amended to stay relevant with the times. Europe took the lead in implementing the GDPR in 2016 that has just been implemented on May 25, 2018. I think this is a very fair law and helps protect consumer data security effectively. Also, from an online marketer's perspective, I strongly believe this is a step in the right direction to help make online marketing a lot more effective. KePSLA takes a very strong stand for data protection and is probably one of the first companies to be compliant with European GDPR laws.

LISTENING AND DELIVERING

Hotels should be cognizant that there are over 120 social sites where guests can write about them in over 30 languages. It is imperative that hotels keep their ears to the ground and are at all times listening to guests and improving the experience for them. Big Data has helped us use this information effectively to deliver to them customised solutions and pre-empt guest requirements based on their persona, prior experiences, and reason of travel.

LOOK BEFORE INVESTING

Riding on the IndiaStack and the Aadhar ecosystem, hotels can create a simple security authentication of the guest prior to check-in. This can help them and the guest have a seamless and quick check-in process. KePSLA's FMS solution is one such way to handle this. Technologies around face recognition, retina tracking, and fingerprint tracking are getting cheaper and smarter. However, I would advise hotels not to invest in these technologies till there are multiple use cases and active commercial success for this investment.

FINTECH AND THE INDUSTRY

Fintech and the payments industry is going through an interesting phase. Some big trends that I foresee include banks increasing their technologies to complete newer platforms to stay relevant; the payment infrastructure becoming smarter and more democratic, making it cheaper for the consumer; alternate payment channels like contactless and wearables to gain acceptance; blockchain to make payments safer and instant, enabling payments from international banks reach faster; and financial frauds declining due to better authentication technologies entering the market.





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Greeley Koch Executive Director Association of Corporate Travel Executives (ACTE)

DATA AND CONTENT SECURITY

The flipside of the explosion in new technology is that it introduces data vulnerability. All members of the business travel community, from travellers and travel managers to hoteliers and travel management companies, are seeking ways to protect sensitive information. For example, on the traveller side, we're seeing more comprehensive security strategies, such as providing wiped devices to travellers upon their arrival.

On the industry side, we're seeing enterprise-level policies take shape, including purchasing cyber

hoteliers to understand where their customers are engaging with them and the tone of their conversations. This allows for a more tailored and rapid response.

DUTY OF CARE

Technology is supporting safety and security across the business traveller experience. One of the key areas we see this in is 'duty of care'. There are Apps now that allow travellers to quickly communicate their whereabouts and needs to their travel managers.

There are also tools that allow travel managers to aggregate all information about their travellers' itineraries (flights, accommodations, ground transportation, etc.) in one place that can help them identify where there may be safety concerns.

TRENDS IN PAYMENTS

One of the most exciting trends in payments and supplier management is blockchain-driven smart contracts. These are essentially automated processes by which buyers can ensure that bookings are being made at the appropriate negotiated rate and suppliers can gather instantaneous analytics that help them make better business decisions. It helps everyone involved save money and improve their return on investment.

The number of new payment technologies is increasing exponentially. It'll be exciting to see which take off and make a real difference to both the hospitality industry and the business traveller.

ROBOTS AND AI

These are such new technologies that it's difficult to offer a definitive answer about which are being developed and adopted at any given point. It will be interesting to see, over the next year or two, which processes can be automated or outsourced to technology versus which will continue to require a human touch.

EVALUATING NEEDS

Every hotelier is different, so I can't make a firm recommendation about which technologies they should invest in. This is something the hotel needs to determine for itself. The key is to assess your needs, understand and listen to your customer base, and take a close look at what your business could be doing better or differently. That will determine the tech you should be exploring.



“Google Analytics and Sysomos can be leveraged to know where customers are engaging with hotels”

insurance and investing in stronger encryption technology.

SOCIAL LISTENING

There are more tools than ever available to the hospitality industry to better understand how travellers are interacting with and discussing their brands online. The same software and online platforms that marketers use, such as Google Analytics and Sysomos, can be leveraged by

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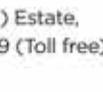
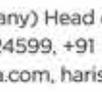
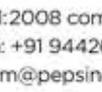
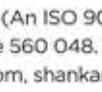
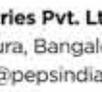
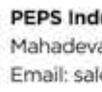
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Corbin Ball

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AUTOMATED INTERACTIONS

These are exciting times. The rate of technology change is accelerating with thousands of ideas, Apps, and innovations bubbling up to help planners, exhibitors, and other meeting participants to do their job better and improve the attendee experience. For hospitality, some of the trends are chatbots, robots (on a limited basis), VR, AR, mobile check-in, and face recognition.

BOOKING MEETINGS ONLINE

Of the 1.8 million meetings held annually in the US each year, small meetings (50 people or under) make a large percentage of them. These are often simple one-day events in a single room with basic AV and catering. However, hotels have often managed these meetings in the same way as they have larger events – assigning a sales person and negotiating a contract. This costs time, labour, and money for the hotel and the event planner. This is about to change with many streamlined options becoming available.

With Airbnb changing the landscape for lodging, there are a number of similarly-designed sites for meeting spaces, often in non-traditional venues. Peerspace, Spacer, and EVENTup are alternative meetings space booking engines. Planners can sort by budget, number of attendees, neighbourhood within a city, amenities (AV, pets, street parking), venue type, and look/feel (i.e. corporate, cosy, loft space), etc.

EVENT WAYFINDING AND AR

Global Positioning System (GPS), using signals from satellites, does not work indoors. Over the years, there have been many attempts at Indoor Positioning Systems (IPS) to help attendees navigate through meeting spaces and exhibition halls. Google Indoor Maps has been around for several years and is already available in thousands of buildings. Simply open up the Google Maps App within the building to navigate the various halls, meeting rooms, and levels.

Additionally, there are indoor mapping content management systems, such as MapsPeople, that make it easy for facilities to manage their Google Indoor map. However, Google Indoor Maps primarily

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For hospitality, some of the trends are chatbots, robots, VR, AR, mobile check-in, and face recognition
”



uses Wi-Fi triangulation with a position accuracy of about 15-45 feet (5-15 metres). While this accuracy is fine to give general directions inside a large facility, it is not accurate enough for booth-to-booth navigation in an exhibit hall – a key goal for many tradeshows and exhibitions.

A better positioning accuracy (down to six feet or two metres) is possible using beacon technology. Sherpa Solutions, EventBase, DoubleDutch, and ITM Mobile are among the several mobile event App companies using BLE combined with a mobile event App to determine indoor positioning applicable for tradeshows and events.

Now, Augmented Reality (AR), a technology that superimposes a computer-generated image on a user's view of the real world, thus providing a composite view, will soon be added to the arsenal of indoor positioning methods.

Typically, this is done via your mobile phone camera, but eventually will become available in updated versions of AR glasses. Google recently announced its Tango Visual Positioning Service, an AR GPS for indoors. Working with Google Indoor Maps and visual data from the camera, Tango will see features in the environment to give users hyper-local direction guidance.

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Avijit Arya

Avijit Arya Chief Mogul Internet Moguls

PERSONAL ASSISTANTS

I think, a trend once predicted means it's already halfway there. However, voice-controlled technology is the biggest frontier in service and demand generation as everyone is now looking for a personal assistant that is constantly listening to them and is ready to perform various tasks. Rapid change is the new trend and hoteliers are realising that now more than ever. I urge my colleagues to have a morning meeting schedule where 10 minutes are allotted to how we can use technology to solve more problems.

PARITY ACROSS COUNTRIES

Soon we are coming to parity in laws across the world and India, too, will have to be strict about the security of guest data. In return, this data can also be leveraged to offer customised solutions for a better guest experience.

“

Voice-controlled technology is now the biggest frontier in service and demand generation

”

THE IMPORTANCE OF FEEDBACK

Observing online conversations about the brand and the industry helps understand consumers and their grievances better. It's been there for a while now; listening to requests results in a win-win for everybody. Hoteliers are increasingly listening to feedback and making changes on the go. I think, it's now part of their morning meeting routine to check reviews and sentiments across channels, and if someone is not following this, they should do so as soon as possible.

SECURING DIGITAL ASSETS

Websites and servers are all open to hacking. I feel, the Indian hotel industry is very open to being hacked and there are hardly any backup servers. In that sense, a lot needs to be done to secure digital assets, especially seeing how top brand websites have been hacked in the past. Being a reservoir of guest data, you may have liability issues if this is not addressed urgently.

A CASHLESS ECONOMY

Moving towards a cashless economy, systems like Airpay, PayPal, and others are used by international and Indian markets to trade points and do a lot more. However, the cost incurred for payments is still very high and many people encourage payment on arrival as a result.

THE HUMAN TOUCH

Studying and analysing guest behaviour helps hoteliers predict what a guest may need and serve it beforehand, also allowing hotels to provide a humane touch, thereby contributing to ensuring consumer loyalty. People are focused on robots that replace humans; I don't think we need that in India. People here are still driven by emotion and we need to better predict demand, price our services accordingly, and customise the facilities.

PROVIDING ROOM FOR INNOVATION

Hotels still struggle with having revenue solutions that give them a 360-degree view of how far they have come and how to predict revenue, number of rooms and banquets, and provide F&B. A more integrated approach to developing tools in this regard would help tremendously. I can't help but say that Indian hoteliers, in general, don't prefer to pay for solutions and as a result miss out on showcasing tools to their seniors that they feel will be rejected by virtue of being expensive.





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ORGANISED BY





Chetan Kapoor

Chetan Kapoor
Research Analyst, Asia Pacific
Phocuswright

PERSONALISATION, THE KEY

Technology is cutting through the hospitality industry. While much of the historical technological development was focused on distribution and reservations, an increasing amount of technology development and solution is seen in the spaces of personalisation, operations optimisation, guest relations, and loyalty.

REVIEWS HELP IMPROVE SERVICE

There are several agnostic platforms which pull in social feeds from major social networking platforms. Most chains already use these tools to keep in the know of guest experience at their hotels and delight them during their stay.

SECURITY, A TWO-WAY STREET

Security can be two-fold and may include guests being careful or aware about what they are posting on social media channels and it being the hotel's

responsibility to not access the personal data of guests without their consent.

ONLINE PAYMENTS

Digital payments, primarily net banking and debit cards, remain the popular payment tool among travellers.

LIMITED USE OF ROBOTS

There are several examples of how robots are being employed at hotels. They are used more for maintaining the premises than meeting guest requests such as in-room deliveries.

NEEDS DEFINE TECHNOLOGY

A hotel's requirement varies according to its need, process, and investment capacity. That said, a more nimble reservation system and robust tools to enhance guest experience are a must. That is what hotels will benefit from.

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Nilesh Patel

Nilesh Patel Director of IT AccorHotels India

DATA SECURITY AND THE LAW

Along with digital transformation, data security is very important for AccorHotels. Globally, we take appropriate technical and organisational measures in accordance with applicable legal provisions to protect guests' personal data. Our teams at different levels are aware of the ethics around collecting customer data. All hotels are also enrolled for PCI-DSS compliance requirement, followed strictly at all levels.

PERSONALISING EXPERIENCE

For an organisation like ours, the key objective is personalisation of customer experience. At AccorHotels, we understand the importance of data to ensure the best for our guests. It helps our teams improve every dimension of user experience at every

processes help us ensure worldwide deployment of our projects.

DIGITALLY ASSISTING GUESTS

We are focusing on capturing customer preferences through our platform, Phil Welcome, that becomes a personal assistant for our guests. The Artificial Intelligence-based chatbot recommends hotels as well as services like restaurants, spas, and other travel-related features based on what customers like or prefer. Our first digital concierge, John Paul, helps us in guaranteeing excellent service for both simple and unusual requests of guests.

GETTING MORE BUSINESS

AccorHotels has developed an ambitious digital strategy with the investment of €225 million to



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We have developed a digital strategy with the investment of €225 million to enhance the experience

”

stage of the trip. Moreover, rewarding our loyalty membership customers is a priority for us. We use all digital levers and collected data to constantly reinvent our offers and provide a consolidated hospitality experience. Our Accor Customer Digital Card (ACDC) allows us to record guests' preference and share data internally in a secured manner. Through the data, we reinforce support for our teams on the ground by co-designing new solutions with the teams that will use them every day. All

enhance the digital experience of our customers, partners, and employees. Overall, the focus is to improve the quality of our direct channel and mobile applications along with bringing in flexibility and ease of use for our website. We are making sure that when travellers book on AccorHotels.com, it is fast and efficient, and customers would want to come back.

LEVERAGING VARIOUS PLATFORMS

AccorHotels understands that technology is transforming loyalty and engagement with consumers and enhancing it. We are driving our outreach based on inspirational, entertaining, educational, informative, and reactive content across channels. We leverage different platforms to get feedback and update our customers.



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Vishwajeet Singh Solanki

Vishwajeet Singh Solanki
Systems Manager
Indore Marriott Hotel

ENCRYPTING DATA

Many hospitality players allocate their time and funds to systematically collect and process data with a purpose. This could be to improve sales, customer service and loyalty, or operational efficiency. Such technological advances make it easier for us to manage a wide range of information pertaining to customers, vendors, and employees. Technology is a boon, however, it also increases the risk of data privacy and security breaches.

At Indore Marriott Hotel, we use a secured network system that the government has approved. Encryption format data is used, which infers a process of substituting a sensitive data element with a non-sensitive equivalent that has exploitable meaning and value. This is governed per the guidelines set by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of India, as notified by the Information Technology Rules, 2011.

GAINING AN EDGE

The Indian hospitality industry is seeing a new digital wave taking over. We are witnessing huge amounts of data collection via mobile bookings, guest reviews, search engines, and even cloud-based PMS as integrated by the hotel. The key here lies in

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The key here lies in collecting, understanding, prioritising, and further analysing data properly
”

collecting, understanding, prioritising, and further analysing data properly to help the hotel boost guest experience and eventually increase revenue. For hoteliers, being able to store and analyse such critical data enables them to have a competitive edge when it comes to taking vital decisions pertaining to the business. Chatbots act as an important channel of communication as they provide guests with an immediate response to some standard questions.

MARKETING AND SALES

Social media has become a major tool not only for marketing the brand, but also to ensure a rise in customer loyalty. Apart from this, website management, SEO optimisation, and OTA channels also play a major role in enhancing hotel revenue via marketing. Loyalty programmes are again a great tool that benefit guests by offering them greater flexibility and personalisation. Hotels must also seek to invest appropriately in revenue management as it ensures optimisation of rates during high productive days.

AI AT THE FOREFRONT

Artificial Intelligence is playing an increasingly important role in the hospitality industry, primarily because of its ability to carry out traditional human functions at any time of the day. This potentially means that hotel owners can save significant money, eliminate human error, and deliver superior service. Perhaps the most obvious way Artificial Intelligence can be deployed by those within the hospitality industry is for front-facing customer service.

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Harish Chandra



Harish Chandra
 Director - Information Technology
 Sarovar Hotels & Resorts

ENCRYPTION AND NEW-AGE TECH

Guest data and guest privacy is of utmost importance to us. The biggest concern for data privacy is fraudulent online transactions. We take this really seriously and have therefore partnered with Simplotel to keep customer data completely encrypted. We do not share their payment instruments with our individual units either. Additionally, we also use a secure guest Wi-Fi gateway so that guest data is not compromised. We are using the best of industry-certified solutions that include Wireless Intrusion Prevention System (WIPS) with latest patches available. Also, we only have data collected to be used for our own customer loyalty programmes and to keep business engagement on.

USER-FRIENDLY INTERACTIONS

We have looked at chatbots extensively and our earlier website was perhaps the only hotel website in India that was in Hindi. However, when we revamped our e-commerce solution with Simplotel, we consciously discarded the Hindi website based on the earlier metrics and instead, adopted more iconography and short phrases to address the needs of our guests who may not be as conversant in English.

TRACKING DEVELOPMENTS

We believe that AI, chatbots, and voice-controlled technology will be the future. We are closely monitoring and evaluating Amazon Echo and Google Home platforms as they develop. However, our

investments will always be driven by what is best for our guest and not based on trends or technology for merely the sake of it.

Energy is another major cost for our industry. Investments are being made in sensor-based automated systems to achieve energy efficiency. We are of the opinion that sensor and IoT will help the hospitality industry in reducing energy costs and achieving sustainability.

BALANCING CHANNELS

We believe in a balance of channels and are investing in our online channels. We have recently completely the revamp of our e-commerce site and it is showing good results. There has been an increase in direct website booking. We also believe in building a brand. Our new website has capabilities to engage with the visitor. This reduces website bounce ratio. It also helps in uplifting online bookings.

We are evaluating development of a mobile application to facilitate last-minute bookings by pushing real-time offers via our website and social media platforms to keep potential customers engaged. We are also evaluating a two-way CRS and PMS interface. The new CRS will be cloud-based and will help us in achieving a single image inventory.

In terms of social media marketing, we constantly keep engagement on by offering loyalty or referral schemes to our customers. We send live videos, live stories, interesting tips and trivia to them, and encourage social media visitors by displaying digital content of their choice. We also engage with social influencers, who have very high traffic to their pages, to talk about our properties.

“

Sensor and IoT will help the hospitality industry in reducing energy costs and achieving sustainability

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Honing the telephone

Giving life to the simple telephone is Bittel, a company that manufactures landlines for the hospitality industry. These new-age phones have multiple features that provide ease of use to customers through modern-day innovations.

Over the last 15 years, the old faithful telephone has been losing its importance. With reduction in mobile call rates, better connectivity, and ease of use of mobile phones, most people now prefer to use these instead of landlines. However, hotel rooms are still required to install telephones, especially for internal calls to the reception, housekeeping, room service, etc., and also for wake-up calls and emergencies.

Bittel, a hotel telephone manufacturer, decided to use technology to bring life back to the old faithful telephone, so that it could be used more often and could also provide guests with better facilities. Today, most modern hotels like to provide their guests with docks, radios, sockets for chargers, etc., but each product uses valuable space, needs electricity supply, and clutters the room. Bittel put its engineers and designers to work and asked them to develop a product that could incorporate all these things and was still small enough to put on the bedside table or desk, and was also easy to use.

After a lot of discussions and prototypes, the UNO Media 77 (UM77) was born. The UM77 incorporates a hotel phone with message wait or retrievable button, a high-quality stereo speaker system that can be connected to most devices through cable or Bluetooth, a digital alarm clock, a radio, a charging cable, four USB ports for charging devices, a large screen, and easy-use buttons.

The UM77 has been a big success as it is technologically advanced and extremely well priced. It delivers the guests huge conveniences and has been very well received.

THINGS THAT MAKE UM77 POPULAR

Given below are the unique features of UM77 that make it the perfect bedside phone for hotels.

- High performance sound system brings the full audio experience to guests
- NFC (Near Field Communication) enabled touchless pairing
- Bluetooth connection is initiated automatically by placing mobile device near the UM77
- Specially-designed Bluetooth features that address both ease of use and security concerns for hotels
- Patented multi-function cable provides multiple charging ports
- Four additional powerful USB charging ports
- Extensive support for all brands of mobile devices
- Outstanding clock and alarm
- Patented clock adjusted by remote cloner. It's easy and convenient to adjust the time, which can save labour cost and improve accuracy rate



“

The UM77 has been a big success as it is technologically advanced and extremely well priced

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No room for goons

Bribes or freebies from hotels and restaurants are often demanded by certain political participants and goons. Senior members of FHRAI provide tips on dealing with such miscreants and surviving 'goonda raj'.



Garish Oberoi
President
FHRAI

TEAMING UP

It's not just the hospitality industry which is affected by plagues like 'goonda raj' and political raj. The entire country has been affected by this plague in the worst manner possible. Such goons feel they are entitled to freebies because they either belong to a political party or have been practising this for a long time, irrespective of any affiliations with political parties.

People who practise *goonda raj* have a deep-rooted and clear understanding of the broken system. Though political parties try their best to curb such diseases, they seldom succeed. Strict action and clear laws need to be set in place for such disruptive elements. The ease of doing business is disturbed by hooligan-like behaviour of some of these goons when they're denied preferential treatment.

To deal with such elements, hotels and restaurant owners have management teams that can deal with such goons when they try to cause a ruckus in front of the customers. Dealing with them is a gnarly task. A hotel or restaurant's front office staff can be taught how to handle such individuals. One needs to be extremely level-headed and collected while tackling these goons. The same should be practised with people who demand bribes and threaten to interfere with business.



Sanjay Sood
President
HRANI

A TACTFUL APPROACH

The problem of disruptive elements such as political goons who threaten to interfere with smooth operations ails the industry. Dealing with such individuals needs patience and experience. Individuals will show up and demand for free meals or free stays alleging political ties and if not agreed with or tackled in the right manner, cause a lot of unnecessary ruckus in the hotel or restaurant. A permanent solution to this kind of *goonda raj* is not possible unless the system and rules are in place. Hoteliers deal with such errant elements frequently. The best way to handle goons is to stay extremely calm and patient while talking to them. If they pose an unreasonable demand, try talking them out of it, but the truth is, trying to reason with such goons is often a dead end. Generally, discounts (as per the hotel or restaurant's protocol) are granted to these people in order to get rid of them and avoid unwanted disturbance in operations. If they start creating commotion and disturbing other customers, they should immediately be taken away from the crowd and the manager should deal with the individual. We live in the time of social media where such disorderly instances are recorded and news spreads like wildfire. This can hurt the business by causing a negative image of the restaurant or hotel.



K. Syama Raju
President
SIHRA

NEGOTIATIONS, THE KEY

The hospitality industry in South India is not faced much by such misconduct and unruly behaviour from anti-social elements. Perhaps due to a ban on serving beef, there may have been some tension in certain areas. Here again, hotel owners conduct themselves very responsibly in sensitive areas to avoid the wrath of the locals. There have been protests against dress code, dancing bars, and discotheques. That cannot be generalised as a disruption to run normal business.

Except for an incident in Hyderabad recently, where a miscreant demanded service after restaurants timings, there has been no reported incident of hooligans' disruption of restaurant operations. Similar incidents took place years ago when a five-star hotel in Chennai was ransacked and damaged by miscreants and opposition in accommodating and offering facility to a high-level official doing election duty, which was amicably settled by local officials and hotel authorities. The hospitality industry sometimes faces hurdles in getting licences and permits in running the hotel due the interference from outside forces, which is settled through negotiations. By and large, the industry is well-respected in the South as it provides employment to many.

A base for your business

Shreeji International, established in 2015 as an importer of high-end furniture for the hospitality and foodservice industry, is the sole distributor of the world-renowned FLAT table bases in India.

Shreeji International specialises in sourcing innovative products for the Indian market. It is focused on introducing best-in-class products for the hospitality and foodservice industry in India. The sole distributors of FLAT table bases in India, the Hyderabad-based company is well-positioned to serve customers in the domestic and international markets, and its team of specialists are able to provide bespoke recommendations.

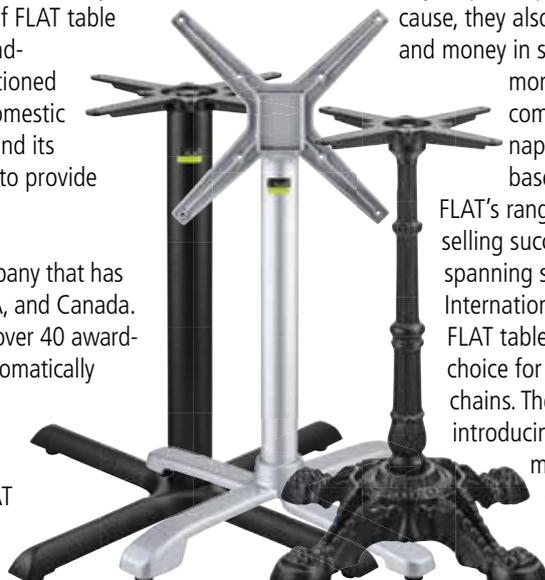
FLAT is a Sydney-based company that has offices in China, the UK, USA, and Canada. It has developed a range of over 40 award-winning table bases that automatically stabilise on uneven surfaces.

Shreeji International has also recently introduced FLAT Equalizers to the market.

The patented hydraulic technology located in the table base allows users to perfectly align multiple table tops when catering for groups. FLAT table bases

not only stop the spillage that wobbly tables cause, they also save operators time and money in setting up tables each morning, reduce customer complaints, remove unsightly napkins from underneath bases, and protect brands.

FLAT's range of table bases are selling successfully in 35 countries spanning six continents, and Shreeji International's mission is to make FLAT table bases the number one choice for hotel and restaurant chains. The company will also be introducing more styles to the market as the range grows from the present 40-plus styles.



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Sustainability

Keeping events in order is not the only responsibility a hotel has. With per capita consumption and waste generation increasing manifold each time an event is hosted, a hotel's prime responsibility must shift to developing sustainable solutions that can reduce or avoid the damage that may be caused.



Niranjan Khatri

The events industry in India is expected to grow at an exponential rate in the next few years. The revenue of the industry in 2016-2017 was around ₹5,500 crore and has been predicted to nearly double to reach ₹10,000 crore by 2021. While economic impacts are usually scrutinised in order to increase efficiency and reduce organisational costs, environmental implications are largely overlooked, further aggravated by the transient nature of events. Events of any kind largely depend on and are direct recipients of the growing hospitality sector, with infrastructural, locational, and material dependency

being fulfilled by them. It makes good strategic sense to examine the interrelationship between the economic and environmental impact of events. A thorough understanding of environmental risks and consequences can help in better management of the event. For instance, choosing more sustainable travel options or investing in more efficient lighting fixtures can substantially reduce environmental as well as economic impact. Indirect costs associated with neutralising the carbon footprint of emissions from travel, hospitality, accommodation, food and materials result in high environmental and social costs. The hospitality sector in India is slated for

“

Understanding the risks and consequences can help in better management

”



for prosperity

a huge jump in footfall and consumption with growth in the economy and more disposable income available with consumers. However, this also means that it is going to create huge stress on the finite resources available to the entire sector and cost for unit consumption of any type of resource is going to scale rapidly. Every time there is an additional event in a hotel, there occurs a huge surge in consumption per capita for the hotel. With rampant consumption, it will result in higher waste generation, degradation of service quality and rapid environmental loss, all of which would deter consumers and visitors. With this in mind and the rapid change in consumer preferences, it becomes only logical for the hospitality industry to focus on more responsible and sustainable solutions to provide as an industry standard.

SUSTAINABLE EVENTS: A CASE STUDY

The Round Glass Samsara Festival was a week-long multi-location art & music festival and conference in the first week of October 2017. It consisted of an environmental summit, art exhibitions, a film festival and a music concert, and was spread across Bengaluru's iconic locations with events at Vidhana Soudha, UB City, and IISC campus among others. Considering that the theme of the event was built around sustainable consciousness, it became paramount for the organisers to make it sustainable and walk the talk.

The sustainability framework and methodology of Smarter Dharma made it simple to infuse the ethos of sustainability by reducing material dependency and accounting for the emissions from activities related to the event and compensating for the resulting emissions by carrying out a carbon offset. With the organisers, hospitality partners, and participants on board, it became a shining example of what can be done if everyone puts their mind to it. After the event, the resulting emissions from different activities were summarised and reported. A carbon offset plan was devised to compensate for the emissions that resulted and constituted an afforestation plan. This afforestation was carried out by a partner organisation, Forest First Samithi, that works extensively on planting and long-term maintenance of RET (rare, endangered and threatened) species of trees in ecosystems. It subsequently became a carbon-neutral event and if such a vast event could be converted, it becomes the hospitality sector's responsibility to mandate it across India.

Customers today demand responsible luxury; it has become the differentiator between a loyal customer and a missed opportunity. It becomes paramount for hotels to quickly transform themselves into adopting sustainable practices not only for environmental benefits, but because it's the right way forward.

*(The authors are **Niranjan Khatri**, Founder of iSambhav, a sustainability training organisation and **Sriram Kuchimanchi**, CEO of Smarter Dharma, a social enterprise operating in the field of social and environmental sustainability. The views expressed above are the authors' personal views.)*

“The sector is going to create huge stress on finite resources”

”



Sriram Kuchimanchi

Centred around SUCCESS

In an interview, **Neeraj Balani**, General Manager, Radisson Blu Marina Hotel Connaught Place, explains how being in a business and leisure hub can amount to both an advantage and a challenge.



Neeraj Balani

Situated in Connaught Place, the vibrant hub of New Delhi, Radisson Blu Marina Hotel Connaught Place provides guests with four-star accommodation close to the city's top business, shopping, and entertainment destination. Connaught Place is steeped in history and heritage, and Radisson Blu Marina Hotel continues to keep that vibe alive. Elaborating on the history of the hotel, Balani says, "The association of the Marina hotel with Radisson has been for the last eight years. We got associated with them in the year 2010. However, the hotel has existed since 1981, when it was run in a private name as The Marina Hotel. Then this association happened and ever since we have been with Radisson."

A BOUTIQUE PROPERTY

Plans are in place to revamp the lobby and bring in some décor changes to give the space a modern, yet classic feel. "It's a city-centric hotel and is heavily



used because of the location. We don't really get the time to rejuvenate like other properties do. We would like to phase it in a manner where we are more comfortable doing it. We would help the consumer touch the right points. We want to be focused on the heritage and boutique part of it," says Balani.

OCCUPANCY, REVPAR AND GUEST MIX

Radisson Blu Marina Hotel has the advantage of location over several other hotels in the city. This is the prime reason that it has been touching high occupancies. "We closed last year at a 92 per cent occupancy, which is very healthy. We have completely leveraged the centrality of location and optimised it well. Business in today's world is not through B2B channels alone. It comes from various other channels as well, and all those have to be exploited aptly in order to realise your true potential. In terms of RevPAR, we are far ahead of what we projected. We are forecasting a RevPAR growth of 10-12 per cent from last year," says Balani.

With a view to expanding the guest mix, the hotel is now looking to target industry-specific clients such as defense, ministries, the oil and natural gas sector, and pharmaceuticals, which will also give a boost to the F&B business of the hotel. However, being in the vicinity of a marketplace that is thriving with F&B outlets catering to a huge populace, a challenge is already on the horizon for such an expansion. Balani





“

We closed last year at 92 per cent occupancy and have completely leveraged the centrality of location”

”

explains, “It is a very challenging market. People get really bored with one concept very soon and you have to keep the market invigorated with innovative strategies. With whatever you want to bring across the table, you have to entice your guests and not lose them to competition. They will go once, twice, or even thrice to an outside restaurant because everyone is looking for variety.

The question that arises is how you can get them back to your restaurants. What difference do you create either by change of menu, by bringing in an entertainment value, by doing a lot of promotions, or by keeping yourself alive on social media?” In his opinion, there are various channels today through which you can reach out to guests. Today, social media makes such an impact that it can be the main vehicle for a hotel to reach out to its customers.

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Suite Room, Manali



Bedroom, Manali

Dimensions of design

HS Ahuja & Associates continues to expand its diaspora of clients and locations. With a number of projects currently under progress, the interior design firm is surging towards a greater excellence.

HS Ahuja & Associates (HSAA) has gained reputation for exciting and stimulating designs. Interior designer **Hema**, the Vice President at HSAA, ensures that clients get just the design they're looking for. Her understanding of space combined with a unique aesthetic sense make designs look more beautiful and allow them to fit perfectly with the aspirations of those who desire them.

"I like to work in line with the preferences of clients and so, I do a lot of different styles. I really don't

have one particular design style. I love all things simple and elegant; I am a believer that interiors shouldn't look staged, something that you often see nowadays. I prefer the place to look loved and lived in, with its own timeless personality and that little touch of fantastic," says Hema.

HSAA offers a seamless turnkey service to clients and investors, ensuring that every aspect of creation and development is dealt with in synergy. Some of its ongoing projects are a resort in Manali, a hotel in Indore, one in Bhopal, and another in Dehradun, as well as residences and offices in Delhi.

“

HSAA offers turnkey services that ensure all aspects of creation and development are dealt with

”



Hotel, Indore

Changing needs and changing geographical locations are a major deterrent in defining the services and ambience required to suit a particular location. With the definition of luxury being very subjective and changing with individuals and locations, getting the design right may be a challenge, but not one that HSAA cannot overcome. "When you look around our work, you can immediately see the superior design and architectural edge softened with the soothing tones of luxury furniture and materials. Interior remodelling and refurbishment provide the opportunity to create a space that reflects your lifestyle," concludes **Subhash Ahuja**, Managing Director, HSAA.

HSAA's designs are a melange of traditionalism and modernity. With roots that go back more than two decades, the spirit of presence has guided HSAA quite well. The company believes in adhering to the principles and values of a rich cultural heritage.

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Keep it cool!

Vipin Agrawal, Director, System AC Business, Samsung India, talks about the cooling solutions the company has in store for the hospitality sector, one of its biggest drivers of business.



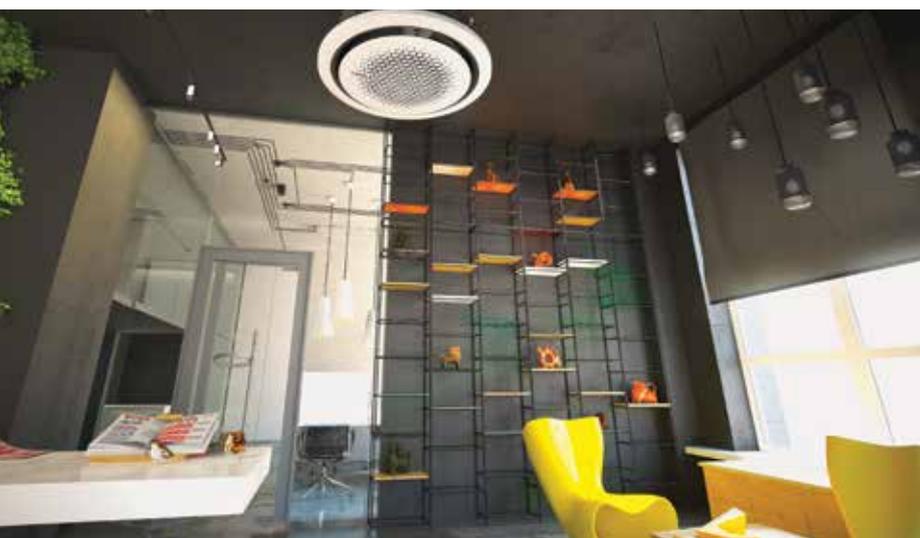
Vipin Agrawal

WHICH PRODUCTS DO YOU OFFER AS HOSPITALITY SOLUTIONS?

We have a versatile range of HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems and facilities for the hotel and the hospitality sector. These innovative products include 360 Cassette, 30 HP VRF ODU, 14 HP Side Discharge VRF ODU, Slim 1 Way Cassette, Ductable and DVM Chiller.

The 360 Cassette features a stylish panel and an intuitive display that allows users to change between multiple settings for airflow, depending on their preference. It is the most radical innovation in the air conditioning industry. The other product, 30 HP VRF ODU, is the world's largest-capacity VRF outdoor unit for space saving, installation cost saving, and for increasing performance. Slim 1 Way Cassette, suitable for guest rooms, overcomes the challenge of space constraints.

Recently, Samsung introduced 'Wind-Free' cooling technology, providing customers with a cooler indoor climate and optimal energy efficiency without the discomfort of direct cold airflow. The new line-



“Our systems offer the unique application of simultaneous heating and cooling from the unit”

up provides ambient conditions by maintaining comfortable room temperature using Wind-Free cooling technology to gently disperse cold air through 9,000 to 15,700 micro air holes. A two-step cooling system, which first lowers temperature in the 'Fast Cooling' mode and then automatically switches to 'Wind-Free' cooling mode, creates still air once the desired temperature is achieved. This approach also reduces energy consumption by up to 50 per cent compared to the former mode.

Air conditioners equipped with the 'Wind-Free' system are available in 1 Way Cassette (essentially those air conditioners which are installed on the true or false ceilings of the confined space), 4 Way Cassette & Mini 4 Way Cassette (installed at the centre of a false ceiling, giving uniform cooling across the space) indoor unit coupled with DVM Variable Refrigerant Flow air conditioning systems. Cassette-type air conditioners are essentially those that are installed on the true or false ceilings of a confined space.



TELL US ABOUT THE REFURBISHMENT AT THE GRAND IN LEH-LADAKH.

The Grand Hotel in Leh-Ladakh had been using radiators for in-room heating purposes. That system consisted of a boiler at a central location and the radiator systems in individual rooms. One of the issues with the system was its low efficiency and the second was that it had to be fed with fuel (diesel, kerosene, coal or gas). The process of arranging fuel in Leh is a big challenge and dependency on it is a risk. Also, the hotel needed a system that was capable of providing heat at a very low ambient temperature of -25 degree Celsius, but the standard systems could only perform between -15 and -10 degree Celsius. We took up the challenge and executed it successfully, fulfilling all the requirements.

The need for cooling in some areas and heating in some others was also realised. Our systems offer a unique application of simultaneous heating and cooling from the unit. We offered their VRF system with a DVM heat recovery unit, a highly efficient and unique solution with a three-pipe system that

recovers heat from one source and uses it for the other unit.

HOW QUICK ARE YOU ON AFTERSALES SERVICE AND REPAIR?

We feel highly responsible towards all our customers and ensure that we provide the best of service in a short span of time. We have been aiming to respond to all service calls within 24 to 72 hours, depending on the complexity of the case. Calls booked during the first half are mostly serviced on the same day, while those booked during the second half are serviced the next day.

HOW TOUGH A TASK IS INSTALLING AIR CONDITIONING IN HERITAGE HOTELS?

A major concern with heritage buildings is that they cannot be tampered with for civil work. It becomes a big challenge since the refrigerant is to be supplied through copper tubes up to the indoor units. Also, heritage buildings may have high ceilings that need supply through bigger units or cassette units in case the height is lesser. All these are taken care of by us.



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THE ITALIAN TOUCH

◆ The Emmebi Collection by Nomita Kohli of Wisma Atria Interiors brings to you meticulously designed and carved sideboards, dining tables, side tables, and chairs. These artistic wooden pieces of furniture can give your space a modern and traditional look at the same time. The collection has been made in Italy, a country known for its passion for wood that carries from one generation to the next. This Italian furniture collection is a perfect blend of style and exclusive design inspired by tradition and modern concepts, adding vivacity to your living space. With this series, the company continues to offer end-to-end solutions to designing unique living spaces.



A TURKISH BLEND

◆ IOTA Boutique Furniture, a leading importer of luxury furniture in India, is introducing famous Turkish brand Rendi Mobilya in the country. The collection is composed of beds, dining furniture and sofas, and is designed using cutting-edge technology. Wood, metal, and leather have been used to craft the pieces of furniture. A key feature of Rendi Mobilya designs is the perfect blend of material with neutral colours and minimalistic designs in surprising patterns.



LIGHT IT BACK!

◆ Ply Mahal has launched Glorious Backlight Laminate Panels, a new concept with metallic fusion and backlighting. With designer laminate panels becoming popular not only for their appearance but also for the impact they have on spectators, this collection is the best way to charm guests with delightful interiors. The metallic fusion with the special feature of backlight is perfect to enhance the overall ambience of a space, turning the interior into one that is more alive and artistic.

SLEEP LIKE ROYALTY

◆ Bouteak has re-crafted the hallowed four-poster bed to enhance modern rooms with a touch of antique-inspired beauty and novelty. One can choose from a modern-looking bed with a hint of panache in the padded and curvilinear headrest or go for an exotic four-poster bed with clean lines for the bed-posts, but a trellis-inspired curlicue design for the head-board. Bouteak's elegant woodwork allows this four-poster bed to fit into any modern room.



DISPENSING DELIGHTS

◆ Underscoring its commitment to technology that addresses the dynamic requirements of the Indian hospitality sector, ELANPRO, in collaboration with SPM, Italy, has launched Karma, a compact dispenser for soft serve ice-cream and frozen yogurt. Karma is equipped with some pioneering features that include a multifunctional prominent display with programmable keypad for precise temperature setting. With an hourly output of up to nine kilograms, the machine can whip out several batches of premium quality ice-cream and frozen yogurt without longer lead time or intermittent breaks.



ICED TO THE 'TEA'

◆ Positive Food Ventures, through its brand Brewhouse, is eyeing to change the way we consume iced tea by bringing real-brewed iced tea in a bottled format for the first time in India. The iced teas are all-natural with no preservatives and contain 40-70 per cent less sugar than aerated beverages and juice-based drinks. The company sources its tea from the Nilgiris in South India, known to produce some of the finest teas in the world.



COLOUR IT LIME!

◆ Pergo Sensation gives you exciting new oak décor to delight! Limed Grey Oak looks and feels like a floor weathered by the sun and sand, adding a maritime touch to any room. Sensational wood-look floors from Pergo retain lustre longer. Taking laminate flooring to a whole new level, Pergo Sensation offers beautiful, authentic, textured flooring that has a truly natural feel. The unmatched durability of the patented TitanX surface protection will make your floors look fresh and elegant always.





THE LEELA HOTEL HONOURS CHAIRMAN NAIR

The Leela Ambience Convention Hotel, Delhi, hosted a blood donation camp and a five-kilometre marathon to commemorate the fourth death anniversary of their Chairman, Captain CP Krishnan Nair, on May 17, 2018. The vision behind organising the event was to carry forward his legacy and showcase solidarity towards the welfare of the society. The hotel celebrated the memory of the revolutionary thinker, who laid the foundation of The Leela group of hotels, through the blood donation camp in partnership with The Lions Blood Bank and the marathon run in association with Decathlon, a French sports goods retailer. An avid advocate and ardent supporter of the late Founder Chairman's values,

Varun Chhibber, General Manager of the hotel, said, "This is the fourth anniversary of our founder's demise and we wanted to pay homage to his memory through initiatives that would have been close to his heart. He always believed in contributing towards the betterment of the society and working as a team towards a common goal. The run and the blood donation camp is our way of showcasing that despite our differences, we as a society can work together to make this world a better place." The Leela Ambience Convention Hotel, Delhi, reminisces their Founder Chairman's fond memories by inculcating his teachings in their day-to-day operations.

MARRIOTT CELEBRATES BRITISH ROYAL WEDDING



Three JW Marriott hotels across India joined in the celebration of the wedding of Britain's Prince Harry to American actress Meghan Markle on May 19, 2018. Royal wedding viewing events were held at the JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity, the JW Marriott Jaipur Resort & Spa, and the JW Marriott Mussoorie Walnut Grove Resort & Spa. The luxury properties decked out in sumptuous wedding finery to mark the event, and each venue livestreamed the royal wedding on big screens as the ceremony and related events took place in and around St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, England.

"We were happy to share in the excitement across the world for the royal wedding. Weddings are joyous and momentous occasions for celebration, and JW Marriott hotels have always been favoured wedding destinations for couples and their families. Our properties offer sophisticated venues and settings complemented by thoughtfully-crafted wedding packages. This is supported by the brand's dedication to treating guests exceptionally through the JW Treatment, which believes that it takes people who truly love what they do to create enriching experiences," said **Bruce Ryde**, Vice President Brand and Marketing APAC, Marriott International. JW Marriott is part of Marriott International's luxury portfolio and consists of beautiful properties and distinctive resort locations around the world.





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IGNACE BAUWENS

Regional Vice President - Middle East, Eurasia and Africa (MEA)
Wyndham Hotel Group

★ Wyndham Hotel Group has promoted Ignace Bauwens to Regional Vice President for Middle East, Eurasia and Africa (MEA). Based out of Wyndham Hotel Group's office in Dubai, Bauwens has led the Middle East and Africa region since 2016. His newly expanded role underlines the company's strategic plan to unite the broader region, in recognition of the strong economic ties between India and the Middle East. Here, Bauwens will be responsible for driving Wyndham Hotel Group's continued growth in both established and new markets. He has more than three decades of experience in hotel operations, having previously held leadership roles with Abu Dhabi National Hotels and AccorHotels.



PRANAY VERDIA

Multi-property GM, Courtyard & Fairfield by Marriott,
Outer Ring Road and Fairfield by Marriott, Rajajinagar

★ Marriott International has appointed Pranay Verdia as Multi-property General Manager for Courtyard by Marriott Bengaluru Outer Ring Road, Fairfield by Marriott Bengaluru Outer Ring Road, and Fairfield by Marriott Bengaluru Rajajinagar. He brings with him over 19 years of experience in hospitality and has been associated with various properties of Marriott International across India. Prior to Marriott, Verdia worked with hospitality brands such as the Four Seasons and Park Hyatt in different roles. He began his journey in hospitality as a Front Office Associate at Hotel Sofitel Ummed, Ahmedabad, in 1998.



RAHUL PURI

General Manager
The Westin Gurgaon, New Delhi

★ Rahul Puri has been appointed as the General Manager at The Westin Gurgaon, New Delhi. A seasoned hospitality professional with 20 years of international experience, he joined Marriott International in 2005 at Sheraton Hong Kong Hotel and Tower, then transitioned into the role of Area Director for Revenue Strategy for India, Australia and Malaysia in 2011, which culminated into his most recent assignment as Senior Area Director of Revenue Strategy South Asia, leading the 100-plus hotel portfolio of the group.



DEVESH RAWAT

General Manager
Indore Marriott Hotel

★ Indore Marriott Hotel has brought on board Devesh Rawat as its new General Manager. Rawat played a pivotal role in launching the property successfully as part of the pre-opening team, and has put his leadership skills into action to train and lead the employees. His role at Indore Marriott Hotel includes overseeing and monitoring all departments, managing the commercial and operational strategy as well as performance of the hotel, and ensuring full compliance to hotel operating controls and service standards.



VISHAL KHOSLA

General Manager
Novotel Goa Dona Sylvia Resort Hotel

★ Vishal Khosla has been appointed as the General Manager of Novotel Goa Dona Sylvia Resort Hotel. He brings over two decades of hospitality and management experience to the role at the new property. He will be responsible for spearheading operations at the beach resort and ensuring growth through innovative strategies. His strong team-building skills and a resilient background in hospitality will provide strategic and tactical depth to the hotel. Khosla has also previously worked in the UK and UAE.



AJAY SAMPIGE

GM, Novotel Aerocity Hotel and Deputy GM, Pullman Aerocity Hotel

★ Ajay Sampige has been appointed as the General Manager of Novotel New Delhi Aerocity Hotel and Deputy General Manager of Pullman New Delhi Aerocity Hotel. He is an accomplished hotelier with 21 years of hospitality experience. Sampige has been associated with AccorHotels for 12 years through his career, while working in both Australian and Indian markets. In the new role, his focus will be to increase the revenue, customer experience, guest satisfaction and food & beverage, while being in command for accomplishing corporate objectives, developing procedures, service standards, operational policies, and overseeing the property in an effective manner.



GIRISH BHAGAT

General Manager Grand Hyatt Kochi Bolgatty

★ Grand Hyatt Kochi Bolgatty has appointed Girish Bhagat as the General Manager of the property. Bhagat has been a part of the Hyatt family for over a decade and in the new role, he will lead a team of more than 450 associates for the 264-key luxury resort and Lulu Bolgatty International Convention Centre, one of the largest convention spaces in South India. He will also be responsible for all aspects of operations at the hotel as well as its day-to-day staff management, annual operating budget, etc. The other Hyatt-branded hotels that Bhagat has worked with include Grand Hyatt Dubai, Grand Hyatt Muscat, and Hyatt Hyderabad Gachibowli.



SURAJ KUMAR JHA

General Manager Crowne Plaza Gurgaon

★ Suraj Kumar Jha has been appointed as the General Manager of Crowne Plaza Gurgaon, part of the InterContinental Hotels Group. With a career spanning over two decades in operations and business development, he brings with him an extensive understanding of the hospitality industry in India. Prior to this appointment, Jha was the General Manager with Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport for over four years. Before joining IHG, he served as the General Manager at Hotel Radisson Blu Greater Noida. During his career he has also worked with Zuri Hotels & Resorts, Unitech's hospitality arm, for the development of Marriott and Radisson hotels.



ANOOP JOSEPH

Multi-property Director of Sales & Marketing, Kochi Marriott Hotel & Courtyard by Marriott Kochi Airport

★ Anoop Joseph is the new Multi-property Director of Sales & Marketing for Kochi Marriott Hotel and Courtyard by Marriott Kochi Airport hotel. He has an experience of over 13 years in the hospitality industry, with an expertise in sales and marketing in the Indian as well as international markets. In the new capacity, Joseph will lead in developing and implementing sales and marketing strategies for both the hotels in Kochi, apart from overseeing and managing sales staff and reservation to ensure maximum revenue and promotional coverage. Prior to his current role, he worked with brands like the InterContinental Hotels Group, Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts, AccorHotels, and The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts.



AMIT CHAWLA

Operations Manager Country Inn & Suites by Radisson, Navi Mumbai

★ Amit Chawla has been appointed as the Operations Manager at Country Inn & Suites by Radisson, Navi Mumbai. His primary responsibility at the 96-key hotel will be handling the entire operations of the hotel, including sales and finance. He will also ensure that apart from the operational goal, the hotel enhances its recognition in the market with new additions to the property and maintains the standards set by the Radisson brand. Chawla has been working in this industry for over 17 years. Prior to the new assignment, he was working with ITC Hotels as a Food and Beverage Manager. He began his career with the Taj Hotels and Resorts in the F&B arena, and then rose from a supervisory to a managerial level.

All that's delightful!

Vikash Prasad, the Executive Chef at The Westin Kolkata Rajarhat, talks about summer foods and drinks that are popular amongst in-house and walk-in guests at the hotel.



Vikash Prasad

TELL US ABOUT POPULAR SHARBATS DURING THE SUMMER.

Summer is the best season to quench your thirst and nothing better than coolers during this hot weather. Based on availability of summer fruits and seasonal produce at The Westin Kolkata Rajarhat, we do a variety of sharbats such as *kairi aur jal jeerey ka sharbat* that has raw mango, roasted crushed cumin seeds, green chilli, ginger, *jal jeera* powder, fresh mint; *gulab ka sharbat* with dried rose petals, lime juice, sugar, and crushed ice; *badam aur subze ka sharbat* that is made of peeled almonds, *subza* seeds, sugar, crushed ice, and lime juice; as well as *bel ka sharbat* that has wood apple, sugar, lime juice, chilled water, *misri*, and mint leaves.

The mango and basil sharbat is made from ripe mango, sweet basil, sugar, and ice; lychee sharbat is made of fresh lychee, sugar, lime, ginger, and lime juice; mint *masala* sharbat is made from fresh mint leaves, lime juice, black salt, crushed black peppercorns, *chaat masala*, sugar and ice; *jal jeera* is made from mint, coriander, cumin, ginger, black salt, tamarind, sugar, ice, and water; and *thandai* is

made of milk, saffron, sugar, almonds, *charmagan*, peppercorns, *khuskhus*, rose petal, and *saunf*.

ARE KULFIS POPULAR IN THE RESTAURANTS AT THE HOTEL?

Kulfis are a favourite through all seasons. At Seasonal Tastes, we feature a variety of kulfis such as *malai kulfi*, *kesar pista kulfi*, *rabri kulfi*, mango kulfi, *kacche aam ki kulfi*, *badam kulfi*, *chai kulfi*, and strawberry kulfi to name a few. We do a variety of desserts as well, from ice-creams and frozen cheesecakes to frozen cheesecake brownies, frozen chocolate pudding cakes, chilled *rasmalai*, blueberry cheesecake with fresh berries, vanilla ice cream with chocolate sauce and molten brownie, mascarpone cheese and mango parfait to name a few. We do the biggest cold pastry buffet in Kolkata, featuring pastries, cakes, frozen desserts, mousses, soufflés, tarts, strudels, and other Indian favourites.

WHAT DO CONSUMERS PREFER TO EAT DURING SUMMER MONTHS?

Guests look for light, low-calorie, easily digestible, and healthy dishes. They also look for a variety of fresh and healthy salad leaves, marinated olives, prawn cocktails, and chilled soups. They generally avoid oily dishes. The most popular dishes during this time include freshly cut fruits, fresh fruit juices and healthy vegetable juices, as well as pasta, noodle soup, and Asian stir-fries that are available at the live cooking stations.

Guests look for a variety of salad leaves, marinated olives, prawn cocktails, and chilled soups



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NOTABLE SPEAKERS

Anshuman Bapna, Chief Product Officer, Goibibo
Arif Patel, Vice President Sales, Marketing, Distribution & Loyalty, AccorHotels
James Brtichford, Vice President Sales and Marketing - India, ME & Africa, IHG
Jiggs Kalra, Mentor and Culinary Director, Massive Restaurants
Navjit Ahluwalia, Sr. Vice President and Country Head - India, Hilton
Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director and CEO, Indian Hotels Company
Raj Rana, Chief Executive Officer - South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group
Rattan Keswani, Deputy Managing Director, Lemon Tree Hotels
Renu Basu, Global Vice President Sales, Indian Hotels Company
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Vir Sanghvi, Resident Commentator, CNN News18

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