

HOTELS & RESTAURANTS INDIA

fhrai magazine

NOVEMBER 2017

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Garish Oberoi
President, FHRAI

Dear fellow members,

While the roll-out of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) was a positive step of the government, the high rate is hitting the industry hard. For India to remain competitive vis-à-vis other Asian countries, GST must be brought down to 12 per cent across segments. Once again, we have approached the GST Council to bring about a positive change for the industry. Here are some suggestions.

GST AT 12 PER CENT

The four levels of GST ranging from 5 per cent to 28 per cent is a major deterrent from a tourism perspective as the leisure tourist travels from city to city. He is subjected to a different tax structure depending on the nature of the accommodation and destination, escalating the perception that India is not a tourist-friendly country. The lower tax rate will attract more tourist inflow and will thus create more valuable foreign exchange earnings for the country.

GST ON TRANSACTION VALUE

The publishing of charge for hotel accommodation was earlier relevant for the hotel industry for communication to consumers when internet or other modes of quick dissemination of information were not available. The concept of declared and published rates is now redundant since the actual amount that is to be charged for a room is visible to the consumer in real time over the internet, at the time of booking in most cases, based on which a consumer may or may not opt for the room. Negotiation between hotels and consumers may also occur offline, mostly for corporate consumers, crew accommodation bookings, etc.

REVIEW OF THE IGST ACT

The non-refund or non-receipt of Input Tax Credit for business holding MICE in states other than the ones they operate in is the biggest drawback of GST for hospitality. Input Tax Credit is available if the entity arranging the MICE has its GST registered in the state where it is held and Input Tax Credit on Integrated Goods & Services Tax (IGST) is not applicable for the hotel industry. Not receiving a set-off for an expense is discouraging for any business to conduct MICE outside their state.

ONE GST WITH INPUT CREDIT

For the restaurant business to go ahead, it is important to rationalise GST on all restaurants at 12 per cent from 18 per cent without stopping the flow of Input Tax Credit (ITC). The GST of 18 per cent is the real reason for burden on consumers as restaurants are unable to get sufficient Input Tax Credit.

Restaurants and F&B form an important part of increasing bottom lines and can be depended upon even in periods of low rates or occupancies to tide an establishment over. In our cover story, owners and managers talk about restaurant trends, food culture, breakfast menus, and how GST is impacting the restaurant business.

As we enter a busy season for hotels, I wish you all the best!

With warm regards,
Garish Oberoi
President, FHRAI

“The concept of declared and published rates is now redundant since the actual amount that is to be charged for a room is visible in real time”

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NOVEMBER 2017

COVER STORY

26

EATING OUT

Restaurant owners and managers talk about the latest trends in the business and how increase in disposable incomes of patrons are driving innovation

Cover Picture Courtesy

Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group



26 COVER STORY

10 FHRAI DESK



36 INTERVIEW

CONTENTS

THIS MONTH

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	03
SECRETARY'S MESSAGE	08
FHRAI DESK	10
NEWS UPDATES	16
PRODUCTS & SERVICES	60
EVENTS	62
APPOINTMENTS	68

FEATURES

OPINION	22
BOOSTING REVENUE WITH F&B	

Senior Members of FHRAI describe how revenue from F&B operations of hotels is increasingly becoming a bigger part of the pie

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FEATURES

INTERVIEW 36

ON THE CUSP OF AN UPTURN

Sanjay Sethi, CEO, ITC Hotels and WelcomHotels, talks about the year that is soon coming to an end and what 2018 can bring for the industry



38 PANEL DISCUSSION

PANEL DISCUSSION 38

STRIDING AHEAD OF COMPETITION

Industry experts on how technology is now a game changer in the hospitality industry

OVERVIEW 40

INDIAN HOSPITALITY OVERVIEW

On the sidelines of PACE 2017, industry experts talk about the trends that shaped 2017 and what to expect in 2018

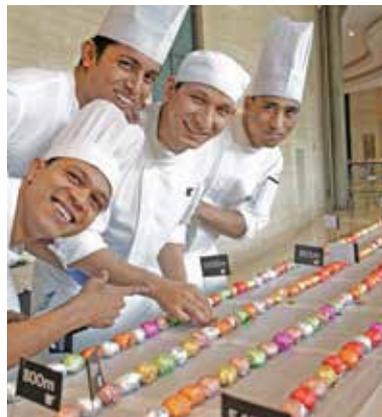


52 AWARDS

EDUCATION 44

EDUCATING FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

Kamal Kant Pant, Principal, IHM, Pusa, New Delhi, on his vision for the institute and keeping the curriculum in line with industry requirements



62 EVENTS

AWARDS 52

MAYA DAZZLES IN AHMEDABAD

A look at the fourth edition of West India Travel Awards held at Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad City Centre



60 PRODUCTS & SERVICES

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This issue of FHRAI Magazine contains 68+4 pages cover

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Surendra Kumar Jaiswal

Hony. Secretary
FHRAI

“ Foreign tourists are going to neighbouring countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore where the tax rate on hotels is only between 6-7 per cent ”

Dear fraternity members,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate **Shri K.J. Alphons**, Minister of State for Tourism (I/C) and the Ministry of Tourism for the celebration of Paryatan Parv. It highlighted the importance of tourism and its social, cultural, political, and economic value among the national and international community.

I would also like to inform our members that on October 12, 2017, I, along with the President, had the privilege of meeting the Tourism Minister at his office. During our short meeting, the concern of high taxation (GST) on the hospitality sector was discussed and submitted. The Minister was also apprised with the issue of infrastructure status, currently available for projects only above ₹200 crore, which should be extended to projects that lie above the ₹50 crore mark. The issues of multiple licensing and skill development were also discussed. The Minister gave a patient hearing and assured all support from the ministry.

I am happy to share with you that the Tourism Minister, in his statement to the press, said that his ministry will soon take up with the Finance Ministry the proposal for lowering GST rates on 5-star hotels. Currently, there is a 28 per cent GST, the highest slab, on rooms with tariff above ₹7,500. According to the tourism industry, the 28 per cent GST rate is making India uncompetitive. Foreign tourists are skipping India and instead going to neighbouring countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore where the tax rate on hotels is only between 6-7 per cent. An infrastructure status to the hotel sector will also be beneficial for constructing more

budget hotels. He also pointed out that the industry needs to obtain over 70 permits to open a hotel and that this number be reduced drastically from such outrageous levels.

FHRAI, with its four regional associations and other trade bodies, has made vigorous and detailed representations to the central and state governments regarding review and reduction in quantum of GST for hotels and restaurants. I hope that by the time you read this, the Group of Ministers (GOM) in the meeting of GST Council scheduled for November 9-10, 2017, in Guwahati will decide on reduction in the quantum of GST to 12 per cent from 18 per cent with Input Tax Credit that will give due impetus to all categories of restaurants. I would also like to inform our fraternity members that FSSAI has issued a notification dated October 6, 2017, for all licensed Food Business Operators (FBOs). As per the order, it would be mandatory for all food business with a central or state licence of FSSAI to have at least one trained and certified Food Safety Supervisor for every 25 food handlers or part thereof on all their premises.

Before concluding, I would only say that we always have and will keep on trying to raise our issues and concerns with one voice to get the focus of the government and persuade it to bring out industry-friendly policies.

With kind regards,
Surendra Kumar Jaiswal
Honorary Secretary, FHRAI



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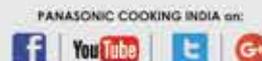
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RAHUL LALL APPOINTED SECRETARY GENERAL OF FHRAI

Rahul Lall has been appointed as the Secretary General for Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India. He completed his Post Graduate Diploma in Hotel Management from The Oberoi School of Hotel Management, New Delhi. He is from the Management Trainee batch of 1985-87. Prior to this, he did his Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) from Delhi University. He is an alumnus of St. Xavier's Collegiate School, Kolkata, and Don Bosco School, Chennai.

He brings with him over 30 years of progressive hotel experience spanning renowned hotel chains across the



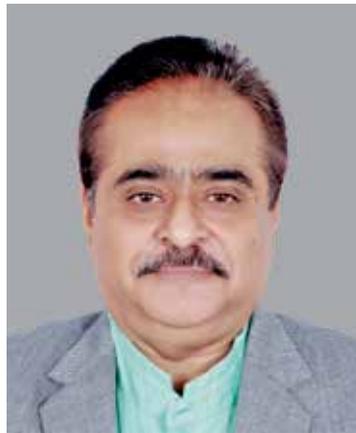
Rahul Lall
Secretary General
FHRAI

country. With an extensive operational and administrative experience coupled with strong leadership, Lall is ideally suited to take on the responsibilities of running the day-to-day administration of FHRAI.

He worked with The Oberoi Group of Hotels for 15 years and thereafter with Sarovar Hotels & Resorts. He has served the industry in various capacities such as General Manager and Area Director, apart from having overseen pre-opening and successful openings of various hotels. Prior to joining FHRAI, Lall held the role of Vice President - Operations for Dangayach Group.

MCGM ALLOWS OPERATION OF ROOFTOP RESTAURANTS

The Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) has issued a circular permitting hotels and restaurants in the city to operate open-to-air terraces as a service area for serving food. The circular has granted permission to hotels and restaurants with existent eating house and lodging services. Hotels and restaurants in the city have welcomed the much-awaited decision and their guests to a new dining experience. HRAWI and Indian Hotel and Restaurant Association (AHAR), which had been pursuing the authorities in allowing establishments to utilise their open terraces, have lauded the government's move. Both associations have jointly expressed their gratitude towards Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis; Ajoy Mehta, Municipal Commissioner of Mumbai; Rahul Shewale; Aditya Thackeray and Rais Sheikh for their invaluable support and being instrumental in facilitating the permission grant.



Dilip Datwani
President
HRAWI

"It has been our plea to unlock the huge potential that terraces offer by allowing them to be operated as leisure or recreational spaces. Sky bars and rooftop cafés are an emerging trend across the world and Mumbai, despite being the commercial capital of India, lacked the policy for allowing these activities. This is a welcome decision," says **Dilip Datwani**, President, HRAWI.

MCGM's circular cited Mumbai as one of the biggest business and tourist hubs of the country, attracting a huge number of domestic and international tourists. Mumbai is also a preferred destination for many international visitors as a tourist embankment for travelling to various places in India. "It was our contention that Mumbai, too, be able to showcase its beauty and make it possible for patrons to enjoy an evening of dining under the stars. This, clubbed with nightlife operations, would truly make Mumbai a World City," concludes Datwani.

“Sky bars and rooftop cafés are an emerging trend across the world and Mumbai. This is a welcome decision”

HRAWI RECLASSIFIES 13 HOTELS UNDER GLOBAL NORMS

In a first-of-its-kind initiative, the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) has certified 13 hotels in Maharashtra under new norms that are more contemporary and global in standard as compared to existing ratings. This new, independent classification system in India will follow the global practice of trade bodies rating hotels and ensuring adherence to best practices and standards. As per the new norms, hotel properties will be classified, rated or graded under six categories listed as Budget, Classic, Premium, Luxury, Deluxe Luxury, and Primo Luxury, and will be uniform for both domestic and foreign tourists. The Shalimar Hotel, The Fern Residency, Golden Swan Beach Resort, The Emerald, Peninsula Grand Hotel, Sun-N-Sand Hotel, Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport, Waterstones Hotel, T24 Residency, Hotel Transit, Hotel Meluha, Renaissance Mumbai Hotel and Convention Centre, and Hyatt Place are among the first hotels to have been audited as per the



Dilip Datwani, President, HRAWI, presenting the certificate to Patrick Rodrigues - Hotel Waterstones



Kamlesh Barot, Past President, HRAWI, presenting the certificate to Param Kannampilly, Hotel The Fern Residency

new classification standards and are officially certified as of October 25, 2017. With this classification system, HRAWI hopes to remove any ambiguity for tourists checking into an Indian Hospitality Quality Standards (IHQS) certified hotel. The objective behind this initiative is to bring in standards of evaluation and parity that are in line with international standards, as well as making redundant some criteria in star ratings that has become irrelevant today.

"The objective behind developing IHQS is to educate our members on modern quality standards as well as reduce the burden of the Ministry of Tourism (MoT). Now the government can focus on improving and promoting tourism while we, from the industry, are doing our bit to support the initiative," says **Dilip Datwani**, President, HRAWI.

The association has also engaged an external agency for auditing hotels to independently verify and award each hotel a fair classification.

IN MEMORIAM: RABINDER SINGH BEDI



Rabinder Singh Bedi, Director, Hotel Colaba, Mumbai, left for heavenly abode on October 23, 2017. He had been an active member of HRAWI since 1985, was the President of HRAWI from 2006-07, and was also Vice President of FHRAI in the same year.

In his formative years with the association, he worked very closely with Prakash Mallik, Cama and Sunder Awatramani for various issues faced by hoteliers and restaurateurs. During his time with HRAWI, he was successful in getting the hotel industry relaxation of luxury tax rates, rationalisation of VAT rates and excise fee, and various legal steps were taken to defend

the members of the fraternity who were faced with challenges of copyright violation for cable TV, music, and live performances. Bedi also worked very closely with the tourism department and maintained a good rapport with all those associated to classification of hotels and restaurants. He was always open to lend a helping hand to fellow members who faced any issues with classification or with various departments.

Bedi was of the belief that for the continuity and benefit of the industry, the association should induct young blood and hence, always encouraged the next generation to become active members of the Executive Committee of the association.

He will surely be missed by all for the immense knowledge he shared and his ever-willing attitude to help the industry.

ALCOHOL-SERVING EATERIES TO APPEAL TO GST COUNCIL

Restaurants in Kolkata will appeal to GST Council to remove the discrimination in tax rates against eateries serving alcohol. Under the GST regime, all restaurants that serve alcohol, whether or not air conditioned, charge 18 per cent tax on food while their non-alcohol and non-air conditioned counterparts charge 12 per cent. Even though the earlier tax on alcohol has been withdrawn since GST came into effect on July 1, the relief to 'dry joints' could lure away customers from the alcohol-serving restaurants that drive the industry in Kolkata. The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Eastern India (HRAEI) is now planning to seek a uniform GST irrespective of whether a restaurant serves alcohol or not.

"A large number of restaurants serve alcohol but they rely on food sales to drive their business. The lower tax at non-alcohol joints has been eating into their business, which is unfair. Also, this discriminatory tax is an incentive to bar alcohol, which is not an encouraging sign. In Kolkata, the food and beverage sector has grown exponentially over the last decade,



Sudesh Poddar
President
HRAEI

“We believe that there should be no discrimination between restaurants on the basis of alcohol availability”

largely due to a rise in the number of restaurants serving liquor," says

Sudesh Poddar, President, HRAEI. Till GST came into force, restaurants charged 20.5 per cent tax on food and 6 per cent tax on alcohol. The latter was withdrawn and a uniform 18 per cent GST came into effect. However, non-air conditioned restaurants not serving alcohol were allowed to charge 12 per cent. The GST Council has set up a five-member committee to review the existing tax structure and will meet soon. HRAEI will also meet to draft a letter to be sent to the GST Council. "We believe that there should be no discrimination between restaurants on the basis of alcohol availability," adds Poddar. There is hope that the committee will recommend a 12 per cent uniform tax rate.

Other than the tax discrepancy, the committee should also look into other grey areas, feels Poddar. "It is not clear whether star hotels serving food by the pool, which is not an air conditioned area, should be charging an 18 per cent GST. Some 5-star hotels in the city have multiple non-air conditioned sections where food is served," says Poddar.

HRAEI

HRANI ORGANISES FSSAI'S FOOD SAFETY SUPERVISOR TRAINING

In its ongoing effort to align with Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Northern India (HRANI) recently organised three Food Safety Supervisor Training sessions in three states of the northern region. Based on Food Safety Training & Certification (FoSTaC) programme developed by FSSAI, HRANI conducted the sessions for interested participants for getting certified in the



(L-R) Renu Thapliyal, Secretary General, HRANI; Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, Hony. Secretary, HRANI; Celebrity Chef Rakesh Sethi and Garish Oberoi, Treasurer, HRANI

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Trainees at Food Safety Supervisor Programme held at Radisson Hotel Shimla



Sanjay Sood, President, HRANI, welcoming the faculty with Celebrity Chef Rakesh Sethi

advanced level of catering. The Food Safety Supervisor Training in Advance Catering Programme is meant for catering establishments where the systems are complex and the need for a dedicated personnel for food safety and standards is imperative.

The association has partnered with FSSAI for the pilot sessions of Master Trainers in the past and has organised programmes to familiarise hoteliers and restaurateurs with the finer nuances of food safety and hygiene. Food business across India, from roadside eateries to restaurants, will have to comply with a wide set of food safety rules, norms, and procedures and obtain Food Business Operator (FBO) licences.

Sanjay Sood, President, HRANI, says, "HRANI applauds the initiative of FSSAI under its Chairman, Pawan Agarwal, for holding effective consultations with the industry and for partnering with the association in the creation of Master Trainers and thus, a technical workforce.

HRANI

UPCOMING SESSIONS Food Safety Supervisor in Advance Catering

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NOVEMBER 23, 2017

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HIMACHAL PRADESH

NOVEMBER 25, 2017
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UTTARAKHAND

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Food Safety Master Trainer (Training of Trainer)

RAJASTHAN

NOVEMBER 20, 2017
Fateh Prakash Palace, The City Palace, Udaipur

NOVEMBER 22, 2017

Hotel Mansingh Tower
Sansar Chandra Road, Jaipur

HIMACHAL PRADESH

NOVEMBER 24, 2017
Hotel Combermere, Opposite Tourism Lift, The Mall, Shimla

For registration or any other assistance, call at 011-26468103, 26433590 or write to hrani.1950@gmail.com

The sessions witnessed the presence of food handlers and experts from member establishments of HRANI. The faculty at these sessions comprised Vivekanand Chandrasekaran from Parikshan Mumbai at Radisson Hotel Shimla, Celebrity Chef Rakesh Sethi at Le Méridien New Delhi, and Chef Sanjiv Verma at Hyatt Regency Ludhiana.

Garish Oberoi, Treasurer, HRANI, says, "HRANI aims to create awareness amongst its members for becoming FSSAI compliant even before it becomes a mandate. It would be in the best interest of the industry to be thorough and fully equipped to meet standards that are internationally accepted and followed. The training programme enables the business establishment to institute a supervisor who in turn can effectively cascade the communication to the grass root level in the establishment to uniformly implement the processes as required by FSSAI." To this, adds **Surendra Kumar Jaiswal**, Hony. Secretary, HRANI, "FSSAI's objective behind the Food Safety Training & Certification (FoSTaC) programme is to have at least one trained and certified Food Safety Supervisor in each and every food service establishment including the catering industry. The trained supervisor will be responsible for ensuring hygiene and food safety implementation in his/her respective establishment. We think this is a great way to ensure that each establishment understands and maintains standards without any ambiguity in implementation across the country."



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FHRAI welcomes decision to cut GST for restaurants to 5%

The 23rd GST Council meet in Guwahati on November 10, 2017, brought some much-awaited relief to the hotel and restaurant industry as the GST for all restaurants was drastically cut down to 5 per cent, without Input Tax Credit.



Garish Oberoi

The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) has welcomed the GST Council's decision to cut tax rate for restaurants to 5 per cent, without Input Tax Credit. A delegation from the industry led by **Garish Oberoi**, President, FHRAI, and which included **Sudesh Poddar**, President, HRAEI, and **Pranav Singh**, Hony. Secretary, HRAEI, had earlier met with the GST Council at Guwahati and requested the government to either bring down the GST rate on restaurants to 12 per cent with input credit or at 5 per cent without input credit.

"We are extremely thankful to the government for making these much required changes in the

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We are extremely thankful to the government for making these much required changes

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GST regime. This will help restaurants across India rationalise tariffs," said Oberoi.

Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India had requested the committee to look at seven key issues for the hotel and restaurant industry, namely:

1. IGST be made available for immovable properties for tourism accommodation such as for hotels, cruises, campsites, and for restaurants.
2. Transaction value and not declared tariff be the basis for rate categorisation of hotels.
3. GST on hotels be lowered to 12 per cent.
4. Foreign exchange earnings in tourism services be treated as exports or deemed exports.
5. Hotels and resorts be allowed to unbundle their package rates.
6. GST not be charged on complimentary meals.
7. Rationalisation of GST on restaurants at 12 per cent from 18 per cent, with input tax credit or 5 per cent, without input credit, be done.

EXPANSION

IBIS DEBUTS IN COIMBATORE WITH 129 KEYS



AccorHotels and InterGlobe Hotels have announced the opening of ibis Coimbatore City Centre, marking the debut of the smart hotel brand in the second largest city in the state of Tamil Nadu – Coimbatore. The business hotel is strategically located in the city's central business district at Lakshmi Mills Junction, within proximity of local tourist attractions and shopping hubs, and is a short drive from the city's railway station and airport. With 129 well-appointed rooms, the hotel boasts of a contemporary design that offers unparalleled comfort and convenience, living up to the ibis promise of providing 'well-being at the best price'.

Speaking at the hotel's launch, **Pierre-Etienne de Montgrand**, Director of Operations, ibis & ibis Styles India, AccorHotels, said, "The thriving, centuries-old city of Coimbatore is renowned as a bustling metropolis with a rich heritage. The city is fast emerging as a growing business hub for textiles, industries, commerce, education, information technology, healthcare, and manufacturing. This is our first ibis in the city, third in the state, and 16th in the country. This hotel caters to the growing needs of business and leisure travellers."

EXPANSION

SAROVAR SIGNS 72-KEY HOTEL IN JHANSI, UP



Sarovar Hotels has announced the signing of a new hotel deal in Jhansi, expanding the group's footprint in Uttar Pradesh. One of the fastest growing hotel chains in India with over 75 operating hotels across 50 destinations in India and Africa, the group has signed an agreement for a 72-room hotel, Nataraj Sarovar Portico Jhansi.

Owned by Nataraj Sai Hotels, Nataraj Sarovar Portico is expected to open in January of 2018. The hotel is under development and is situated just two kilometres from the railway station. Once opened, it will have an all-day dining restaurant, bar, banquet hall, conference and meeting facilities, swimming pool, gymnasium, salon, and rooftop banquet space.

Commenting on the development, **Ajay K. Bakaya**, Managing Director, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts, said, "With its significant development and rich antiquity, Jhansi is an important destination with rising number of visitors from across the country. It is an important location for us and a significant addition to our portfolio. The hotel will cater to the needs of corporate, group, leisure, and MICE clients."

OPENING

TWO KEYS HOTELS OPEN

Berggruen Hotels has announced the launch of new hotels in Port Blair and Ramgarh (Uttarakhand). The property in Port Blair, Keys Hotel Aqua Green, has 48 rooms and suites. It also houses indoor banquet and conference facilities that can cater to around 250 guests. The second property, Keys Prima Aamari Resorts that is located in Ramgarh is spread across 72 acres and has 22 executive rooms and three executive suites known as Sky Villas. Commenting on this aggressive expansion, **Anshu Sarin**, CEO, Berggruen Hotels, says, "We are really grateful to our hotel partners who have shown faith in us to manage their properties. With this new brand promise, we reiterate our commitment to our guests and to ourselves."



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EXPANSION

FAIRFIELD BY MARRIOTT COMES TO INDORE



Marriott International has announced the opening of its brand-new hotel in the city – Fairfield by Marriott Indore. The hotel offers 106 guest rooms, banqueting and meeting room facilities with modern technology, a well-equipped business centre, and a state-of-the-art fitness centre. Speaking at the launch, **Neeraj Govil**, Area Vice President, South Asia, Marriott International, said, "Tourism in India is growing at a very fast pace with a lot of focus

being generated towards the Tier-II markets. We believe the timing is right and therefore, ideal for our expansion. We are confident with our entry into this market. Fairfield by Marriott fills the gap in the moderate-tier segment with its contemporary design, service excellence, and quality that comes from being a part of Marriott International." The hotel major currently has nine Fairfield by Marriott properties joining a portfolio of 90 hotels across 15 brands in India.



GLAMPING

TUTC'S NEW LUXURY LODGE IN DUDHWA

The Ultimate Travelling Camp (TUTC), a company that is known for bringing to its customers the perfect combination of a nomadic lifestyle, has announced that it is set to extend its philosophy of luxury to lodges and palaces. The rebranded luxury lodge, Jaagir Lodge Dudhwa, located in the rainforests of Terai, Uttar Pradesh, will be operational from December 19, 2017 to June 15, 2018, when game viewing is at its best.

The colonial structure built in the 1940s is a gateway to India's four distinct forest reserves – Dudhwa, Katarniaghat, Kishanpur, and Pilibhit. The lodge is a witness to the Bengal Tiger Conservation Programme. TUTC's Jaagir Lodge not just promises guests a luxurious stay but also familiarises them with conservation initiatives in India's most diverse and productive Terai ecosystem.

Rajnish Sabharwal, COO, TUTC, says, "We are excited to unveil our new jungle lodge safari experience in Dudhwa. A beautiful colonial structure like Jaagir Lodge preserved deep in the Terai is a rare find, and we thought it was a great opportunity to bring this hidden gem to the esteemed travellers seeking wildlife encounters in the comforts of luxury. TUTC's Jaagir Lodge Dudhwa is infused with the same warmth and exceptional service as our other luxury camping properties."





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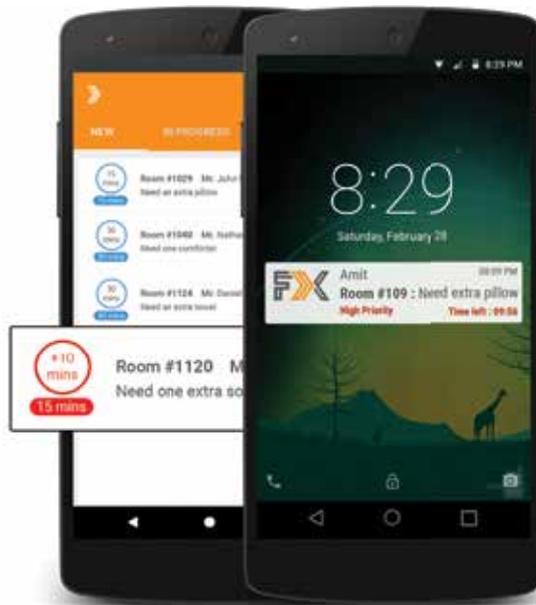


TECHNOLOGY

IDS NEXT LAUNCHES FX SERVICE FOR HOTELS

IDS Next Business Solutions has announced the launch of a new product, FX Service, a mobile based service quality improvement platform for hotels. FX Service will enable hotels to delight guests by attending to their requests ahead of their expectation. The application will also help hotels to improve guest experience and staff productivity.

Hotels can create guest requests in a web-based application. Once a guest raises a request or complaint, the staff in the respective department gets notified on its FX Service Android application, enabling immediate action. "In a typical environment, a staff gets instructed to deliver a specific item to



the guest in his/her room. In this case, the staff would not have any idea about who requested it, when the request was registered, and how soon the guest wants it. This leads to guest disappointment.

With FX Service, this will be a thing of the past. The application shows the service request, room number from where it was requested, name of the guest, time of request, and the time before which a request has to be completed," says **Binu Mathews**, Chief Executive Officer, IDS Next.

IDS Next has always aimed to help its partners leverage the best technology solutions for strengthening their position in the industry.

STATE



KERALA TOURISM LAUNCHES #GOKERALA CAMPAIGN

The Tourism Department of Kerala has launched a marketing campaign, #GoKerala, in association with HolidayIQ, to promote state tourism. Under this campaign, five couples will get a chance to win a 10-day, all-expense paid trip to Kerala. A holiday itinerary specially curated by Kerala Tourism and HolidayIQ will show these travellers a Kerala beyond its backwaters and mere honeymoon destinations to a more wholesome family destination.

Speaking about the campaign, **P Bala Kiran** (IAS), Director, Kerala Tourism and Managing Director, Kannur International Airport, says,

"Kerala Tourism has always sought new and innovative marketing avenues to build Kerala as a top tourism brand and destination.

#GoKerala campaign is a content-led, multiple-platform campaign with a dedicated microsite, integrated touchpoints, and targeted reach. The experiential campaign, unlike traditional marketing campaigns, is completely powered by the holiday experiences and reviews of travellers across the country." The campaign will further the state's tourism objective to strengthen its foothold in the country and abroad.

Run your COMPLETE HOTEL ON-THE-GO

Hoteliers are leveraging the widespread mobile adoption to enhance guest experience, improve operational efficiency, and increase bookings. Mobile Hotel application by Hotelogix makes that task easier and faster.

Hotelogix, a pioneer in cloud-based PMS and online distribution system, has brought the latest in next-gen hospitality technology by enabling hoteliers to efficiently execute, co-ordinate, and monitor hotels from the convenience of their smartphone. This 'Mobile Hotel' application, launched at ITB Asia, Singapore and WTM, London 2017, is attuned to meeting a hotel's growing needs by contributing to improving the guest experience.

The all-in-one application can practically do everything that a traditional PMS does while giving the flexibility of being mobile. Not only this, it also enables accessibility to vital hotel information from anywhere, anytime to hotel managers and their teams. It guarantees automation and better organisation of tasks, giving hotel staff more time at hand and enabling them to attend to guests better.

WHAT IT BRINGS TO THE TABLE

Speedy check-ins and check-outs

The hotel's staff is no longer dependent on

the availability of a workstation. They can make express check-ins and check-outs and assign rooms from their smartphone. The staff has more time to attend to guests waiting in the lobby or F&B outlets, and perform the check-in wherever the guest is.

Housekeeping

Housekeeping information is updated in real time, eliminating paperwork, making the hotel more eco-friendly, and enabling tired guests to check-in earlier.

The application is in complete sync with the hotel's front desk and has the most current room information. Any changes can be amended or updated with the click of a button.

Increase sales conversions

Sales teams that are on the go will have

up-to-date visibility of room rates and availability when they get inquiries from corporate agents for bulk booking. Everything will now be immediately accessible on the phone and there won't be difficulty in checking room availability and rates.

Intuitive dashboard

Decision makers can access multiple reports in real time and take better business decisions for their hotels. Hoteliers can manage their rack rates and seasonal rates, and keep track of how their hotel is performing, right from the application.

Manage POS outlets

The application can also manage unlimited Point of Sale (POS) outlets. The seamless integration of POS offers better management of billing processes and eliminates paperwork.

The application facilitates taking and managing room, table, and takeaway orders from the smartphone. Also, invoices and payments can be updated in real time.

"Mobile devices are redefining guest-centric services, and Hotelogix is all set to leap ahead of the curve with its new Mobile Hotel application. Our system puts up-to-the-minute control of the hotel business literally in the pockets of a smart hotelier.

It includes front desk, housekeeping, and POS that help to significantly improve guest experience while giving remarkable control on manpower, infrastructure, and operational costs.

The application is available in both iOS and Android platforms," says **Prabhesh Bhatnagar**, Founder, Hotelogix.



Boosting revenue with F&B

Senior members talk about the growing trend of eating out and how hotels are leveraging this to increase their revenue from F&B, a segment that is increasingly gaining ground as a major contributor to the revenue of a hotel.



Garish Oberoi
President
FHRAI

INNOVATE TO SUSTAIN

With changing trends, hotel restaurants need to be more innovative to get better revenues. Banquet revenues, per se, have always been used to tide over hotels during seasons of low occupancy. The market today is steadily becoming buoyant and it is the right time for hotels to cash-in on F&B revenues.

With stand-alone restaurants gaining momentum in the market, restaurants within hotels need to continuously strive to ensure that if their rates are higher than the food, ambience and service remain exceptional to stay competitive. Hotels may look to elevate the dining experience of their guests by bringing in live performances, themed nights, food festivals, and promotional discounts and offers. While some hotel restaurants have been popular from days of yore, new ones need to position and brand themselves well.



Non-refund of Input Tax Credit for MICE business held in states other than the one the business operates in is the biggest drawback of GST



Understanding market dynamics is a must. In case the food culture of an area demands a specific cuisine, it would be a good idea to come out with a specialty restaurant. While regional and local authentic cuisine will always be relevant, especially for foreign guests who are there to experience the local food, the millennials of today will have to be provided a global menu that can even offer food from the far reaches of the globe.

The restaurant business will only grow, remain dynamic, and be highly competitive. Hotels that need to focus more on restaurants could opt to source the space out to independent restaurants that would devote the time and energy for their successful running. This would mean getting the right partner with a benefit for both in the long run. In terms of marketing and loyalty of guests, technology can play a big role. It can provide feedback on guest eating habits and help rework that 'magical meal'. Social media and mobile marketing can be engaged to interact with guests and keep them up to date.

MICE, A GAME CHANGER

Hotels are increasingly looking to attract more MICE business and marketing their banqueting facilities vigorously to get more clients that would help generate substantial revenues for the hotel. Globally, the Indian wedding industry is already pegged to be a ₹3000-5000 crore business, growing at a pace of over 40 per cent annually. Be it an elite wedding or the big fat Indian wedding, this segment only speaks big business. The non-refund or non-receipt of Input Tax Credit for MICE business held in states other than the ones they operate in is the biggest drawback of GST for hospitality. Not receiving a set-off for an expense is discouraging for any business to conduct MICE outside of their state.



Sanjay Sood
President
HRANI

MICE, A KEEN DRIVER

The hospitality and tourism industry has changed significantly over the last 20 years in size, globalisation, economic importance, technology, and sophistication. Hospitality is a sector that has faced frequent questions on its revenue and management from time to time. F&B has always been seen as a value-added proposition in the Indian hotel industry. It has been considered as one of the key factors of a potential revenue growth model.

Hospitality chains are increasingly focusing on food and beverage operations to boost revenue and drive profits. Hotels are aggressively promoting their F&B through discounts and offers to maintain their top-line. In fact, new hotels across the country have come up with large meeting spaces and restaurants. Developers are including banqueting spaces in resorts in leisure locations to attract MICE business.

THE SOCIAL BUZZ

Websites, blogs, online advertising, social media, online ordering, and information repositories are also helping convince guests to choose a cuisine or a location. In fact, with changing times, we can see that social networking has created a buzz all over and therefore, the use of social media like Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook, Google, and LinkedIn to connect to people and customers at one click is important for driving revenue.



Sudesh Poddar
President
HRAEI

A CRUCIAL CONTRIBUTOR

According to recent data, there's not much difference between the total revenue from F&B and room revenue as a percentage of the total. In some cases, revenue from F&B exceeds revenue from rooms. In other words, revenue from F&B contributes to nearly 50 per cent of total hotel revenue, so it is as important as selling room rates. This is why some hotel chains are aggressive in promoting F&B.

The importance of F&B revenue has increased as room revenue profitability has declined over the past decade in India. What seems to be driving this growth in F&B is a change in the trend of eating out often. In India, the culture has drastically changed in the last two years where there is more spending on eating out. F&B is therefore more of a revenue centre than a cost centre. Revenue growth in this segment has been 60 per cent in the last few years.

MORE INCOME, MORE SPEND

The size of the F&B market in India is over \$25 billion and is expected to increase to \$78 billion by 2018, according to a data. Disposable incomes have been increasing in India and consequently, the spend on F&B. Banquets have emerged as another key trend in recent times.

Nearly 50 per cent of F&B is from banquets in most of the hotels, as most Indians today are splurging on weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, and other celebrations in hotels. Most hotels do two to three such events per week.



Dilip Datwani
President
HRAWI

CULTURAL CHANGES

Hotels nowadays have realised the importance of F&B as revenues have increased and room-revenue profitability has declined over the past few years. The gap between profitability is bridging. The per-square-foot yield of F&B has increased. What seems to be driving this growth in F&B is a cultural change in eating out often. In India, the culture has drastically changed in the last few years where there is more spending on eating out. F&B, therefore, has become more of a revenue centre than a cost centre.

Disposable incomes have been increasing in India and consequently, the spend on F&B. Typically, food and beverage business is profitable in a hotel only if it is able to attract non-residents in addition to hotel guests. Banquets have emerged as another key trend, with close to 50 per cent of F&B revenue being generated owing to banqueting events.

POSITION STRATEGICALLY

The restaurant industry has been conditioned to believe that only traditional restaurant promotion efforts can be applied to grow sales because that is what everyone else is doing. Fact is, the restaurant industry is getting more competitive and will continue to do so. In the face of increased competition, the most effective strategy is to differentiate your restaurant from the others and create excitement in a way that reinforces your positioning strategy. It is entirely possible to execute these promotions in a way that it's completely in alignment with the image of your restaurant no matter how exclusive.



K. Syama Raju
President
SIHRA

SPECIALTY RESTAURANTS WIN

Hotels in the South get maximum revenue from F&B outlets rather than room occupancy, mostly true to well-known brands of three and four-star hotels that have specialty restaurants. These are frequented by both Indian and foreign visitors to enjoy special dishes like Israeli Falafel and Bulgarian Gulash. People visiting beaches or those going to remote destinations of the South prefer food that either has shrimp or fish and is cooked in the Chettinad style. These F&B outlets promote through advertisements, the hotel website or by inviting well-known journalists who then write about them in well-circulated magazines.

COLLABORATE TO INCREASE SALES

The focus is particularly intense when it comes to food and beverage. In many cases, this flattening of F&B revenue correlates to length of stay of groups. It requires creativity to remain competitive. There are some ways by which the same can be achieved. Firstly, a hotel must identify and improve the profitability of food and beverage events. Secondly, it must increase collaboration among sales, F&B operations, convention services, and local partners to present creative options that maximise customers' spend. Lastly, they must compete with the new venues to capture more F&B business.

Working with clients to get at least one night of a group's stay on the property would be beneficial. Dinner menus and alcohol are especially profitable, so hotels must strategise to use them accordingly.



The town of terracotta temples is about a 4-

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A

EATING OUT

In this feature, owners and managers unravel restaurant trends, food culture, breakfast menus, and how GST is impacting restaurant business.



Prashant Issar



Break-even period for restaurants is between 12-26 months



Prashant Issar
Co-Founder and CEO
Squaremeal Foods

QUALITY MATERIALS

Restaurants are going for non-patronising, contemporary dining spaces with good quality materials (wood and metal). Moments of truth relating to the product are discreetly interspersed.

ASIAN CUISINES TOP LIST

Indian, Chinese, Italian, and Thai are the cuisines that remain popular among Indians. Japanese is also making an entry. Popular dishes in different cuisines include grills (Indian), dimsums (Chinese), wood fired pizzas (Italian), and sushi and katsu (Japanese).

REGIONAL PREFERENCES, A MUST

People are conscious about what they eat. Restaurants are thinking in the same direction. I doubt if breakfast is the next big thing, not just yet. The culture is changing but is far from making an impact in the organised sector. Our pricing is still too aspirational for the common man. Starbucks and Pret A Manger are affordable abroad. In India, they almost cost as much as a meal. Chaayos and Café Coffee Day made an impact but did not cater to regional tastes. Breakfast is a habit, so regional

tastes have to be incorporated. Hence, masses are still frequenting kiosks and roadside carts.

POPULAR BREAKFAST ITEMS

Regional specialties include idli, poha, porridge, fruits, quinoa porridge, smoothies, cereals, fruity yoghurt, quinoa salads, oatmeal, and granola.

PAYMENT TECHNOLOGY

Latest technology being used in cooking, service, and billing in restaurants includes mobile payment applications and contactless payments.

CRITICAL MARKETING

Break-even period for restaurants is between 12-26 months. Digital media is extremely effective and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is critical in marketing the restaurant well.

ADAPTING TO POLICIES

GST is a necessity for the country as a whole. Change is always challenging and we have to adapt to it. Input Credit is critical to the survival of independent restaurants and promotes ease of doing business. It keeps the prices in check.





Kazem Samandari



Laurent Samandari

“The increasing appeal of health foods means breakfast is not an unfettered indulgence



Kazem Samandari and Laurent Samandari Founders L'Opéra

ETHNIC EXPERIENCE

Given the proliferation of ethnic cuisine restaurants in Delhi these past years, from Vietnamese to Lebanese or even French, there has been an expectation for restaurants to manifest their ethnic identity in more ways than just taste. Music, setting, décor, and aroma are just some of the examples of features that need to be 'ethnified' for a true ethnic restaurant experience to be realised. Live music is increasingly becoming popular as well just as themed restaurants, where a leitmotif including colour, look, and feel or tone makes going to restaurants a holistic experience.

ITALIAN FOOD FAVOURED

Italian food, due to its simple ingredients and widespread popularity, remains a favourite. The most popular Italian dish by far is pizza, but an increasing number of restaurants are offering different varieties of pasta from fettuccine to gnocchi and farfalle. Prosciutto (cured ham) is also a delicacy that is offered in some establishments. Chinese food, previously only in its Indo-Chinese variant, now has more venues than before, with Kimchi, glazed duck, and a number of sweet and sour sauce variants being the most popular.

BREAKFAST GAINING IMPORTANCE

There is a reason breakfast is referred to as the most important meal of the day; it is the first and therefore, provides one with the necessary energy for the rest of the day. The increasing appeal of health foods also means breakfast is no longer viewed as an unfettered indulgence, rather an opportunity to satiate one's hunger albeit with a

balanced set of ingredients that mostly includes fruits and grains.

HEALTHY ALTERNATES

Beyond the traditional French croissant and raisin brioche, Granola seems to be picking up as a healthy option along with smoothies, as they combine a number of fruits and/ or vegetables that make for a punch of well-being.

MULTIPLE ASPECTS, A KEY

The break-even period often depends on the market segment the restaurant operates in, but it is generally believed that if there has been no break-even or a reasonably foreseeable break-even for the near future after nine months of operation, red flags should be raised. Any new marketing strategy needs to fully appreciate the fact that with so many new openings being present, multiple customer touch points are essential.

Adding value in terms of ambience; ensuring consistency in taste, presentation, and hospitality; being appropriately responsive to customer trends and values and clear, coherent brand messaging are a few pointers for a good marketing strategy.

GST AND INPUT CREDIT

The initial couple of months were challenging given the uncertainty governing both the supply and demand sides, but the situation is more manageable now and in the long term, having one nationwide tax system is a significant step forward. Input Credit is indeed a relief from the old, troublesome tax system.



Manuj M Gupta
 Founder and Partner
 The Darzi Kitchen & Bar

DETAILED MINIMALISM

Minimalistic, subtle, and attention to detail are the latest trends. It is more about creating a synergy between the theme, comfort, and cost efficiency that plays a pivotal role in interior design decisions for the restaurateurs.

HEALTHY FOOD IN HIGH DEMAND

With the increase in work pressure and the level of work in today's environment, the need and demand for nutritious food has gone manifold, which has dictated the hotel and restaurant industry to venture towards healthy food items. Taking these demands into consideration, we at Darzi have specially crafted an all-day breakfast menu and a line-up of healthy smoothies and shakes that can satisfy the nutritional demand of customers without compromising on the flavour.

THE TECHY RESTAURATEUR

A number of international, modern-age cooking methods have been incorporated in the Indian

hospitality sector due to ease of access to modern technology vis-à-vis sous-vide, smoking, spherification, etc. Even on the service front, wireless devices are used for taking reservations, orders, and for billing. This results in a shorter service cycle.

INDIVIDUALISTIC MARKETING

Break-even period is a number that is dependent on a lot of variables to which there is no set answer. If we go as per the industry standard depending on the size of the outlet, it may vary anywhere from one year onwards. Marketing should be individualistic in nature and should be best suited to put the best foot forward for the brand, which in return should convert into sales.

EASE OF BUSINESS

A single tax has ensured ease of business, with a simplified input credit helping us to pass on the benefit to our customers.



Manuj M Gupta

“Break-even period is a number that is dependent on a lot of variables”





Mohd. Khalid

“
Most customers
are looking
for outlets that
can offer healthy,
nutritious options
”

Mohd. Khalid
Managing Director & Promoter
Mughalnama - Bespoke Catering Concepts

NUTRITIOUS BREAKFAST MENU

Delhi has a diverse culture and same is reflected in the ambience of the restaurants serving Delhi's population. As of today, we have restaurants offering various themes, some of them being Persian, Bollywood, Biker, Medieval, Vintage, etc. The list of innovations is growing longer every day.

North Indian cuisine is an evergreen cuisine and it fits the taste of Indian as well as international customers. Dishes like Dal Makhani, Kadhai Chicken, and Paneer are the most popular within the North Indian clientele. A healthy, nutritious breakfast is the need of the current food market as people are getting very conscious about their health. However, only a handful of restaurants offer breakfast menus as Indian restaurant business typically caters to lunch and dinner. That said, in the current scenario, most of the customers are looking for outlets that can offer healthy, nutritious options.

LOCAL AND GLOBAL DISHES

A variety of Indian dishes like poha, muesli, sprout poha mix, oat idli, methi or palak parantha, and even more hybrid breakfast dishes that are healthy can be incorporated in the Indian breakfast menu. With time, international breakfast is also getting very popular amongst Indian customers. Some of the food items that can be promoted for Indian customers are fresh salads, pastas, healthy sandwiches, cold pressed juices, and exotic fruit salads.

BETTER SERVICE WITH TECH

Day-to-day operation of restaurants is changing as needs of customers are changing daily. The

food industry, too, is developing new methods to grow the business. Technology is playing a major role to provide better service to customers. Restaurants are using paging systems to punch orders and locate customers. E-menu, online customer feedback, etc., are examples of using technology for better handling of operations and customer service. Billing software has also become cloud based, allowing owners to track sales of multiple outlets on the go.

TESTING UP TO EIGHT MONTHS

It is very difficult for someone to predict the break-even period for a new outlet, however, in general, any new outlet should touch break-even in six-eight months. If it doesn't touch break-even even after eight months, stakeholders need to evaluate the reasons for the same so they can correct any problem that is not allowing operations to reach the break-even point. There are various innovative strategies that can be used for restaurant or food business, however, one needs to take a call depending on various factors such as space, theme, target audience, etc.

GETTING A HANG OF GST

The GST impact has been reasonable, however, due to new processes and systems, it is getting difficult for most stakeholders to understand its procedures. Credit input and credit is simple to manage but lack of knowledge and untrained staff is making it difficult to comply with. It seems that in due course, staff will get trained on managing operations and billing with GST. The tax worked well for us as we trained our staff in advance to handle GST transactions.

Naveen Sachdeva

Founder, Cherish Banquets and Owner, Ministry of Beer

BEAUTIFUL INTERIORS

Ambience is the first and foremost thing that attracts a customer to an outlet. Hence, we make sure to not compromise on the look and ambience. Concept interiors with beautiful fittings, upholstery, pictorial joints, and attractive facades, each thing is important for stronger registration and impact of interiors on customers.

ORIENTAL CUISINE FOR STARTERS

At Ministry of Beer, we have noticed in our menu engineering that favoured dishes among guests are majorly Oriental cuisines for starters, Indian for main course, and they all love to experiment in desserts. In Oriental, the highest selling dishes are teriyaki and togarashi vegetables. For main course, people love to go for Indian classics like rogan josh and dal makhani.

TRADITIONAL INDIAN DISHES

Indian cuisine also has various healthy options and age-old combinations that people forget. Idli-sambhar, rice pancake, and vegetable stew give carbohydrates, the most important source of energy, and protein from the vegetable stew.

Some of the other healthy dishes that are a must in the breakfast and for right nutrition to the body are

selection of fresh fruits and a combination of oats, yoghurt, fresh fruits, honey, nuts, and raisins.

Complete power packed in one bowl, detox juices are also quite beneficial. A melange of healthy fruits and vegetables and healthy egg preparations are also popular.

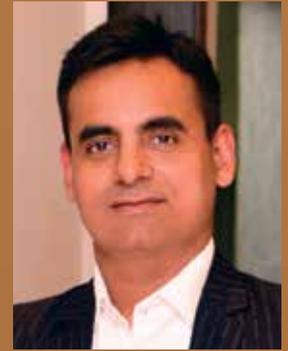
ALL OUT MARKETING

Marketing is our key to involve. It is the way to remind customers constantly about our existence. Right from advertising to blogging to roping in celebrities, we have been making sure not to leave any stone unturned in making our restaurants visible.

REASON TO CHEER

I think the response to GST has been constructive and there is reason to cheer. Under the VAT regime, restaurant business owners did not have any option to adjust the output of Service Tax liability with the credit of input VAT on goods consumed.

However, under GST, both these taxes will be subsumed into GST and thus, credit of input will be available for adjustment against the output liability, irrespective of goods and services.



Naveen Sachdeva

“The response to GST has been constructive and there is reason to cheer”





Sukriti Singh Rao

“Break-even period of restaurants differs on the level of investment



Sukriti Singh Rao

Director
NYC.PIE

QSR, HEALTH, AND TECHNOLOGY

QSR: F&B industry in India is shifting towards a QSR model in which investment is substantially less, yet revenue generation is more. NYC.PIE is a QSR based model where 85 per cent of the business is home delivery.

Health: People are becoming more health conscious and you can witness this trend in the rise of organic and whole foods. We also have a whole wheat base pizza catering to the health segment of the audience.

Technology: With cloud technology completely automating restaurant management such as billing, stock management, kitchen management, etc., restaurants are no longer the manual labour-centric places that they used to be. The advent of online ordering, table reservation, advanced CRM software has left little space for manual intervention.

RICH INDIAN CUISINE

India is a vast country with diverse tastes and takes on cuisine, with every part of the country being very different from its counterpart. There are a lot of international cuisines (Lebanese, Korean, Mexican, Burmese to name a few) that have opened their doors to Indians. The most popular cuisines still remain Indian and Chinese, with youngsters and expats turning to pizza since our maximum business comes from the age bracket of 15 to 25-year-olds.

Within India itself, we have regional cuisines, all very different from each other in taste and aroma. North Indian cuisine is primarily oil-rich food and noodles and soup is the staple diet of East India. South India's diet is rich in rice based dishes. Every state in India has a story to tell in the richness of its flavours and authenticity of its cuisine.

DIVERSE BREAKFAST OPTIONS

As they say, breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and rightly so because a rich meal full of nutrition is what will keep an individual going throughout the day in a productive manner. There are a lot of diners now that come in for varying breakfast menus such as an all-American breakfast with waffles, sausages, bacon, and eggs or an Indian side of dosas, paranthas, etc. With people becoming more health conscious, there is a strong



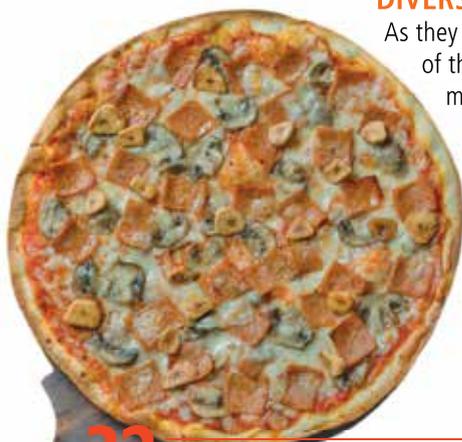
paradigm shift in the daily breakfast intake of Indians from using minimum to bare minimum oil in their home cooking, mostly turning to oats, and fruits in the morning to packaged juices being substituted by smoothies and fresh juices. With North Indians still preferring their paranthas to healthier options, South India is mostly about rice based dishes like dosa, idli, and uttapam. Young people in metros are turning to healthier options of fresh fruits, oats, juices, and cold cuts in the morning to kick-start their day.

SIMPLE FAVOURITES

Sausages and ham sandwiches with scrambled, poached eggs or the old-fashioned omelette (with whites of an egg for the more health conscious) are a favourite. For vegetarians, poha in bare minimum oil, oats with strawberries, fresh fruits, etc., remain a favourite.

CLOUD KITCHENS

Technology is applied more in inventory management, Point of Sale (POS), and delivery rather than cooking, at least in India. Several chains in India have shut down their traditional restaurants and are transitioning to cloud kitchen, or kitchen-only operations. Because cloud kitchens do not serve customers on premise, there are huge savings in renting in non-premium locations. These





cloud kitchen pods not only eliminate infrastructure costs and high rent, but promote shared delivery personnel to offset delivery costs.

The POS in any restaurant is the backbone of efficiency with a good POS keeping a track of your inventory, calculating your food costs, and ensuring a smoother transactional output of your customer base.

STAYING COMPETITIVE

The break-even period of restaurants differs on the level of investment and location, and to a certain extent, on the cuisine itself. For a free-standing fine dining restaurant, a break-even point takes up to one to two years whereas in a QSR format, it's much quicker. At NYC.PIE, our break-even point for operations is anywhere between 4-6 months.

DIFFERENT OUTLETS, DIFFERENT GST

Under the new GST rates, non-AC restaurants are being charged at 12 per cent while AC restaurants are being charged at 18 per cent. Since NYC.PIE, Gurugram, has no AC seating, GST has worked in our favour by reducing our taxation amount to 12 per cent. NYC.PIE, Delhi, though has an 18 per cent GST.

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BANKING ON BREAKFAST

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day and most of the restaurants are coming up with concepts on breakfast now. I think if restaurants can come up with a good breakfast menu which is modern but still keeps all the nutrition value of food, then it will be a great hit.

ESSENTIALS

There are a lot of dishes that can be incorporated in the breakfast menu like uttapam, idli, cutlets, etc.

INTERNATIONAL FEAST

There are a lot of international dishes that are popular for breakfast like waffles, crepes, croque monsieur, oatmeal, pancakes, porridge, etc.

A TECHY CONCOCTION

As per the trend, a lot of modern technology is used for cooking, for servicing, and billing, like sous vide cooking, combi oven, and dehydrator for cooking, and iPad menus, QR code menus, online ordering for servicing and billing.

People ordering through tabs are already aware of their bill and can pay over a number of wallet-based applications as well.

GST AND FOOD

Under the post GST tax regime, restaurant business owners did not get any option to adjust the output Service Tax liability with the credit of input VAT on goods consumed. However, under the new regime, both these taxes will get subsumed into GST and thus, irrespective of goods and services, credit of input will be available for adjustment against the output liability.

This will further optimise the working capital of these restaurants and consumers can expect more superior quality of food and services.



Manish Sharma

Manish Sharma
Owner
Molecule

A FOCUS ON INTERIORS

Interiors set the tone of the outlet and are definitely getting bigger and better. Setting up the restaurant with a theme and doing the interiors around it is the main focal trend these days and will be the trend for coming months.

Grunge and raw were popular themes till last year; this year, there is shift to more spacious, lively and themed outlets.

STREET FOOD

Indians mostly enjoy street food and restaurants are majorly coming up with comfort food of India with their own twist.

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On the cusp of an UPTURN

Sanjay Sethi, the recently-appointed Chief Operating Officer of ITC Hotels & WelcomHotels, shares his point of view on the hospitality scenario in the country.



HOW HAS GST IMPACTED THE HOTEL INDUSTRY?

For the industry it was a wait-and-watch scenario for a couple of months, and we got affected like a lot of the other industries did. People were unsure how the taxation and tax credit would work out before they started committing to expenses. When there was uncertainty in the market because of GST, a lot of the corporate travel got curtailed because people wanted to see how things would pan out for them. That is now settling down and things are getting back to normal.

WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF THE BAN ON LIQUOR?

This has selectively affected hotels; a lot of the hotels lost four to five months of revenue. The ITC hotel in Chennai was affected and we could not server liquor right up to the middle of August. The occupancies did not flag and the client mix changed. We did not do too many conferences and events. With that not happening, we had spare inventory to sell to FITs, who are typically the higher paying guests, therefore we were able to take the average rates up. However, we got hurt very sharply on the F&B side. There we lost a lot of conferences and events to competitor hotels that had the liquor licence at that point of time. A lot of the people who used to eat at the hotel started stepping out and started eating at some of

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The supply and demand dynamics are driving the growth and they will continue to drive it

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the stand-alone restaurants around or went to other hotels. Beyond that, it did not affect us too much and now things are back on track. We expect a quick recovery on F&B too.

WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS FROM 2018?

I am very confident that we are on the cusp of a solid and longish upturn. We have a good five years ahead of us. The supply and demand dynamics are driving the growth and they will continue to drive it. On the supply side, leaving aside pockets in some cities, the growth rate is only about 4 to 5 per cent whereas demand is growing somewhere between 12 to 14 per cent. Clearly, demand is going to outpace supply. That is why I am very confident that we have a great four to five years ahead.

ANY POLICIES THAT IN YOUR VIEW THE GOVERNMENT MUST AMEND TO PROMOTE THE INDUSTRY?

There is a need to relook at the GST rates. At 28 per cent for high-end hotels, it does pinch the pocket a bit. One needs to look at rationalising them to global standards. I think we need to reinvent the India marketing story, go beyond Incredible India and talk more and more about not just the tourism product

but also the business product that India has to offer, thereby driving foreign travellers to come into India. It does not have to be in the organised sector alone but also the unorganised sector, which within India is very lucrative for foreign business to come in and invest in or work with.

A MERGER OR A STAND-ALONE ENTITY, WHAT IS THE WAY FORWARD FOR HOSPITALITY?

There is a clear benefit for brands to manage hotels. One is the benefit of scale in terms of the cost of customer acquisition. Second is benefit of scale on the operating cost side. Third, loyalty programme is still a big driver for people making reservation decisions. Also, the bigger brands and chains stay more current with what's happening in the world, thereby are able to share their knowledge with the smaller hoteliers. That leads to benefit for all. Thirty years down the line, independent hotels will continue to coexist because there are people out there who also like stand-alone boutique hotels, which are not standardised to the extent that some of the branded hotels can be standardised to. They will continue to coexist in a small format and more so in the leisure destinations. In terms of business travellers, the move will be more and more to the branded hotels.

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As time changes, the factor that differentiates hotels from their competition also changes. While services to customers may once have been an apt differentiator, it is now technology that the industry must recognise as a game changer. Industry spokespersons tell us how technology has slowly taken the role of an enabler but cannot replace the involvement of humans.

Striding ahead of COMPETITION



The CEO's Panel at PACE 2017 saw a discussion on the subject- 'With human interaction and traditional moments of truth with hotel guests gradually reducing, how will hotels in the future differentiate themselves from the competition?'

The participants included Raj Rana, CEO, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group - South Asia; Kapil Chopra, President, Oberoi Hotels & Resorts; Mandeep S Lamba, Managing Director, JLL Hotels & Hospitality Group – India and Sanjay Sethi, CEO, ITC Hotels. The session was moderated by Anurag Bhatnagar, Multi-Property Vice President, Luxury (India), Marriott International.

THE CULTURE OF CUSTOMER DELIGHT

Reminiscing a one-time conversation with Vijay Shekhar Sharma, **Chopra** said, "How can one operate in a high-tech, competitive environment where Google has also launched a mobile wallet. How do you compete? Wherever a founder has an

agenda, it's very difficult to dislodge that agenda. The current Chairman has a very specific agenda focused on customer delight. He will look at TripAdvisor comments more than the profitability of a hotel. That then becomes the underlying culture across the brand. The entire brand gets totally focused on customer delight. If he wants to look at guest comments, that will form the culture for the organisation. That is how we have actually carved a niche.

If you see brands, they have a different perspective- What is your turnover? How many hotels do you have? Some people look at your guest satisfaction score and some others look at your profitability percentage. Nothing is right or wrong, it's just the choice you make."

AN ENABLER, NOT A REPLACEMENT

Speaking about how technology has revolutionised the hospitality industry but is a tool that cannot replace human involvement, **Sethi** added, "Basic skills don't change. You still fall back on them with great hotels that offer great hospitality and differentiated F&B offerings. These three things will continue to be the differentiating factors for hotels in the future as well. Technology will serve two purposes. Firstly, it will make things convenient for

“Technology will make things convenient for guests and help employees deliver better service”



(L-R) Raj Rana, Kapil Chopra, Mandeep S Lamba, Sanjay Sethi, and Anurag Bhatnagar

guests and will also give them control of the service spectrum. Secondly, technology will help employees deliver higher quality hospitality service. It will not replace them, but free them enough to deliver their best. Technology will thus be an enabler and not a replacement.”

STRIKING A BALANCE

Agreeing with Sethi, **Rana** said, “Technology is an enabler and if you really want to differentiate your company, you need to strike the right balance between technology and human contact. That also comes with making sure that people are well trained to use the technology that is coming forward. It is one of the fastest rising costs today, be it property management systems or other such technology. For instance, we did not know that self-driven cars would one day be a reality; we also did not know that flying cars would come into existence. Also, there are devices that help translate what we say in English into other languages.” With technological innovations coming in every now and then, hotels really need to understand and analyse which of these innovations would meet their needs and then make an appropriate investment depending on the life cycle of that technology. “Today, there is a lot of new technology out there. We have to balance the technology input into hotels based on the life cycle of the technology. We do not unnecessarily invest in technology that can be bought off the shelf; we are wanting to use tried and tested technology, which I know has some shelf life. In many cases, one does not have a choice. The customer dictates the technology that needs to be implemented in a hotel,” added Rana.

TECHNOLOGY, THE DIFFERENTIATOR

Lamba said that while he did believe technology was an enabler, there were a few things that must be clearly understood. “The average age of travellers to hotels has reduced. These young travellers across the world are now the same. With internet, social media, mobile phones, etc., a traveller in New York is no different from a traveller in New Delhi. What he wants in his room or his hotel is no longer greatly differentiated.

The problem that I find is that I don’t think that in India we are engaging with technology to the extent that we should be. I think all of us still want someone else to bell this cat, make sure it works, make sure that it’s successful, and then adapt the technology accordingly. I think that is going to be a problem because somewhere we will have to create a differentiator for leadership. There will be a trend in the next 10-15 years where hotels will be greatly triggered by technology and the human interface will shrink.

I think, traditionally we are very attuned to the idea that a hotel is about people and I don’t think we are allowing ourselves to let that go. We continue to believe that the differentiator is people, though in times to come and in my opinion, the differentiator is going to be technology, at least in the short term.

Those who embrace it and adapt it quicker than others will have an edge. We will go through this full technology cycle and come back to where we are now, and will yearn and want more human touch. You cannot wish away technology.”



Indian Hospitality Overview

On the sidelines of PACE 2017 (PIHMAA Annual Conclave and Exchange), prominent hoteliers elaborate on how the year 2017 has been for the industry and what to expect from 2018.

Anupriya Bishnoi and Kanchan Nath

Mandeep S Lamba
Managing Director,
India, JLL Hotels and
Hospitality Group



The hospitality industry went through a very severe down patch. For almost seven years, we felt the stress as capacity and supply of inventory of rooms increased in almost all our key cities and demand shrunk to that extent between the supply and demand curve. We are now clearly seeing enough evidence that the industry is perhaps at the beginning of an upcycle. There is enough evidence in the last year to see that occupancy levels in almost all key cities are going up, which is only a precursor to ADRs going up as well. I think we are headed for a bull run in the next four to five years. Unless something drastically goes wrong with the economy or at a political level, we are confident that we are heading for an upcycle.

Michel Koopman
GM, The Leela Kempinski Gurgaon



2017 was a tough year; we started with the liquor ban, then the GST. However, it's been a year that will set us right for the future. At the end of the day, when business is tough you have to reinvent yourself. You look at your expenses and efficiencies. I am convinced that it will be better now as we have seen that food and beverage revenues, especially in banquets, are back on track from September 2017 onwards. Also, we are looking at an increase of 10 per cent in RevPAR.

Shipra Sumbly Kaul
GM, Holiday Inn Express & Suites
Bengaluru Racecourse



The industry faced a lot of challenges because of the liquor ban. Liquor is one of the most important components of the industry and we didn't realise its importance until it was gone. When the liquor ban was imposed, we saw how the entire gamut of business moved around liquor and how hotels struggled. With GST, it was not very clear how it was to be implemented and till date, hotels are struggling with what's right and what's not. A few amendments are still awaited.



Raj Rana
 Chief Executive
 Officer, South Asia
 Carlson Rezidor
 Hotel Group

2017 was a challenging year but despite that, the industry has done well. We have seen growth both in occupancy as well as rates, which of course means better margins for owners and brands. All the challenges faced this year, that is GST, liquor ban, demonetisation, were a disruptor for us but all said and done, the industry is limping back to normalcy. A respite may be that GST for restaurants could go back to 12 per cent. This will be a welcome move for the industry. If I look at the year ahead, occupancy will continue to increase and rates will continue to soar as well. The economy is slowing down, this is something we are watching very closely because our hotels, especially the Radisson brand, are largely dependent on corporates. I hope slowing down of the economy doesn't translate into cutting down of corporate spend because we rely on corporate business quite heavily. So, we are hoping this slowing down of economy is just for the quarter. Currently, we are at 85 hotels and will end the year at about 90 or 91 hotels, adding another 5-6 hotels by the end of this year. We have signed 12 hotels and we expect to sign two more. Each year, we are opening 7-9 hotels and each year, we sign 12-14 hotels. Our growth is more in the state capitals.



Anurag Bhatnagar
 Multi Property Vice President, Luxury,
 India, Marriott International

There were some initial bumps and a lot of apprehension and anxiety, especially with demonetisation and GST being implemented back-to-back. I think we crossed over well and we are back to business as usual. I do not see any significant downside to it at all. Rather, we are very optimistic from the MICE and luxury perspective. We see a significant upside because there is an ease of doing business. In 2018, we are forecasting almost a double-digit growth in terms of what we have done this year. There is a lot of transparency now and a feel-good factor of how business is conducted in India. I think it all augurs well for our business. As far as the luxury space of Marriott is concerned, we are looking at opening a Ritz Carlton in Mumbai in Worli and a Ritz Carlton in Pune between Q3, 2019 and Q4, 2020. We are also looking at some projects in the pipeline. In the next four years, we will eventually have 10 luxury hotels of Marriott in India.



Arindam Kunar
 Area General Manager, South India, InterContinental Hotels Group

The industry was hit by demonetisation, GST and liquor ban this year. This raised challenges for some of our hotels, especially because of the liquor ban. It impacted our F&B revenue as well as the room revenue. I don't think demonetisation had a huge impact on hotels except in the wedding segment, but challenges bring their own opportunities and it gave us the chance to look at our cost structure. Most of the hotels did very well and came out with great results. Overall, the challenges were well handled. Despite the setbacks, most of our hotels have grown over the past months. The upcoming year, without any hiccups, looks better. We are expecting firm rates with occupancies doing relatively well. It's all about managing better rates in 2018. Gaining guest loyalty is going to be the biggest game changer. It will include loyalty programmes, customer satisfaction, personalised services, etc. With OTAs and players such as Airbnb coming in, loyalty can be a differentiating factor. We are not competing with each other in the hotel space; we are fighting technology and other lines of business. So, what is going to really make a mark is gaining the loyalty of consumers.



Kapil Chopra President, The Oberoi Group

Business in the industry was majorly impacted this year. One reason was demonetisation, not because cash was used in the hotel but from the point of view of sentiment. GST also made sure that companies postpone their plans on MICE movements and conducting conferences at hotels because they didn't know how they were to get cash back or tax back on their conferences. So, I think the sentiments took a hit there. Liquor ban resulted in another 3-4 month loss of business and a great opportunity was lost at the time. What the government needs to do is to do consistent policymaking. Once we stabilise the base, I think things will only look positive in the next two years.

We are on the right track now. Like the Prime Minister said, the economy is on the right footing and the next two years are going to be wonderful from an economic perspective. I already see a promising November-December and the fourth quarter is already showing signs of recovery. Great days are ahead as long as policymaking is consistent and we are not surprised by events like liquor ban. We will be reopening our iconic property in New Delhi on January 1, 2018. We will also be opening The Oberoi, Marrakech, Morocco. This is going to be a great year for us.



K.B. Kachru Chairman Emeritus & Principal Advisor, South Asia, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group

To be honest, it's been a very difficult year for food and beverage business, first with the liquor ban and then the uncertainty of business getting better. As far as we are concerned, 29 of our hotels were impacted, so you can imagine the losses we had. We had some restaurants to open, but couldn't; we had some bars to open, but couldn't. Having said that, things have now been rectified and we are grateful to the Supreme Court of India to have amended and lifted the ban to a reasonable level. Business seems to be picking up and occupancies are better countrywide. We are seeing a positive change but more would be known during the next off-season. There is more domestic business which is happening now and I hope MICE business also improves. MICE is improving in certain pockets but not everywhere. We are opening the first Radisson Red in Mohali. Our focus is going to be secondary and tertiary towns because India's prime market is domestic. We are also focusing on pilgrim sites like Haridwar, Katra, Vaishno Devi, Ajmer, etc.



Sanjay Sethi Chief Operating Officer, ITC Hotels & WelcomHotels

Overall, I have seen the rates go up. This is an industry-wide phenomenon, which is a great positive because the challenge that the industry faced so far was that occupancies were climbing up steadily but rates were static. There has been a 4-8 per cent growth in rates. Some hotels have even seen 10 per cent growth in rates. It's a mix of domestic as well as inbound. Hotels that rely heavily on foreigners coming in for business have done extremely well.

Market dynamics decide rates. If occupancies are high, irrespective of whether it is inbound or outbound, rates go up for everyone. The dollar-to-rupee ratio has stayed steady, so has not affected buying patterns in the last one year. The leisure segments have also shown a positive growth. A large amount of the leisure growth has come through the domestic segment. We have seen, for the first time, a double-digit growth among foreign leisure tourist arrivals as well.



Educating for a better TOMORROW



Kamal Kant Pant

In an interview, **Kamal Kant Pant**, the recently-appointed Principal at Institute of Hotel Management, Catering and Nutrition, Pusa, New Delhi, shares his vision for the premier hospitality education institute of the country.

WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR IHM, PUSA, AS ITS NEW PRINCIPAL?

IHM, Pusa, enjoys the leadership position in the country for hospitality education. It is the preferred institute for the brightest students to study. The institute has been consistently receiving international students, especially from the South Asian region. The vision sees the institute further expanding its global

sphere of influence in the Middle East and the Afro-Asian region. In the home front, IHM, Pusa, sees itself being recognised as the undisputed leader in research and consultancy in the area of hospitality, catering, and applied nutrition besides retaining the leadership position in the hospitality education in the country. The institution aspires to achieve this vision when it completes 60 years in 2022.



HAS YOUR COLLABORATION WITH ÉCOLE HÔTELIÈRE DE LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND, FRUCTIFIED?

Lausanne Hospitality Consulting (LHC) helped us articulate the values of IHM and make them more student-oriented. As a result, IHM's values were articulated and rolled out for the benefit of everyone in the system. LHC has been able to orient the institutions from a teacher-centred approach to a student-centred one. It lays emphasis on making the students take responsibility of their own learning.

The team from LHC has audited institutes of hotel management in the country and made its recommendations to not only bring them at par with global leaders but to also set new benchmarks in hospitality education. The curriculum, being one of the most important ingredients of education, needs to be developed with due caution and therefore, takes time to emerge. In the process, IIM, Lucknow's input has also been taken to develop the

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The vision sees the institute further expanding its global sphere of influence in the Middle East and Afro-Asia”

curriculum to ensure that students get enhanced input in management subjects in addition to what is available to them already. The curriculum has been developed and is under deliberation with IGNOU, another important stakeholder and education partner of IHM.

HOW HAVE TRAININGS BY ÉCOLE HÔTELIÈRE DE LAUSANNE BENEFITTED IHM'S PROFESSORS?

Around 72 of our faculty members have been through a two-week intensive module on learner facilitation skills called 'Qualified Learning Facilitator' (QLF) in their campus in Switzerland. QLF certification makes them a member of an elite group



of a few hundred certified professionals globally. National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NCHMCT), the apex body for controlling the enrolment, education, and certification of hospitality management institutes in the country, has been able to develop a similar programme in-house - The Certified Learning Facilitator, which is being offered to every faculty member in the system.

HOW ARE YOU USING TECHNOLOGY TO AID EDUCATION AND LEARNING?

The campus is already fitted with modern presentation gadgets and systems in the classrooms and uses some of the most modern machines in the laboratories of the institute, like combi-ovens, mechanised cleaning and laundry equipment, etc. The institute is also the first to follow best food hygiene practices and to get HACCP certification ensuring that the food handling practices conform to

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The institute is the first to follow best food hygiene practices and to get HACCP certification

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the best in the world. There are plans underway to upgrade the classrooms to ‘Smart’ classrooms and use eco-friendly technology in campus management.

APART FROM HOSPITALITY, WHICH OTHER STREAMS ARE YOUR STUDENTS GETTING INTO?

We do not encourage our students to restrict themselves to the hotel industry alone. With the kind of diverse talent we are able to enrol, we wish that brand IHM spreads to diverse industries and all walks of life. Some of our recent graduates have qualified civil service and defence service examinations conducted by UPSC and SSB, besides many of them joining banks as probationary officers and different finance and insurance companies. A good number of our students have been able to tap new territories and establish themselves as web designers, social media marketers, choreographers, actors, stand-up comedians, and other entertainment content developers.

HOW DO YOU ENSURE YOUR TRAININGS ARE IN SYNC WITH INDUSTRY REQUIREMENTS?

Meeting the needs of the industry is very high on our agenda. Both formal and informal interactions with the industry are conducted to ensure that the institute is able to understand the requirements of the industry from the stalwarts themselves. The opportunity to interact with campus recruiters is very useful to fine-tune the knowledge that the students have absorbed over the years so they can be better placed in the industry. That said, environmental changes are causing constant evolution in the hospitality industry. The lead-time to prepare the students to face a new challenge of the industry is roughly the duration of the course. By the time graduates skilled in tackling a particular challenge are prepared, the industry has moved a step or two ahead. In such a situation, it will not be fair to claim that we are totally in sync with the needs of the industry but at the same time, we are not falling behind by more than one or two paces.

TELL US ABOUT NEW PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS AT THE INSTITUTE.

With learning extension programmes, we are keen to make our expertise available to diverse organisations to make need-based learning opportunities available to such organisations. Additionally, consultancy and outreach programmes are also being designed to provide live projects to students studying facility planning. Consultancy projects with prestigious institutions like IIT, Delhi, will be taken to plan the dining or catering areas so that real time facility planning experience is available to students.



For the Nashik, a city of food lovers, has been setting new trends in the F&B space. With vast food spreads through the day, patrons have a lot to look forward to.

LOVE OF FOOD

Express Inn, Nashik, is committed to delivering a customised experience to its guests through the culinary excellence of its team of chefs who believe in providing a personalised experience to valuable guests. By doing so, they deliver sumptuous delights to satisfy their taste buds. The restaurants and cafés at the property offer a range of cuisines and spirits to make a guest's stay and experience a memorable one.

In hotel restaurants these days, a prevalent trend is guests preferring to take a heavy breakfast. Hence, it is absolutely necessary to have a good breakfast spread in any business or city hotel that primarily deals with corporate travellers. "Express Inn, Nashik, has a scrumptious breakfast spread, one of the best in the city. Nashik, too, has witnessed the trend among travellers of taking a heavy breakfast, being a city surrounded by six industrial estates. Most of the local eating joints are also busy during breakfast hours, with a traditional South Indian or local-dish menu," says **Hrishikesh Joshi**, General Manager, Express Inn, Nashik.

The hotel also keeps a substantial spread for lunch as it is situated close to the industrial area, thereby attracting a lot of corporate lunches and parcel orders. The afternoon hours of high tea also attract footfalls when people prefer conducting small

meetings away from the office and students wish to simply hang out. Eateries in shopping malls and around colleges also get decent footfalls during this time. "We have also come up with an initiative called Chai Katta in which we serve a choice of tea and snacks at an affordable price. This is an instant favourite for many and attracts youngsters and ladies at kitty parties," adds Joshi.

Evenings in Nashik are livelier. Residents of the city are fond of good quality food and service, particularly during weekends. Combo meals in case of families and dishes with wine pairings at bars are a favourite among frequenting guests. Nashik also has a liking for both local and global fast food, hence, hotels and restaurants need to ensure they have all varieties available during dinner. Elaborating further, Joshi says, "Over weekends, guests tend to experiment more with food. Therefore, for a dinner menu to successfully attract crowds, there must be ample innovation on dishes and the food served must match the diverse palates of diners."



Hrishikesh Joshi

“

For a dinner menu to successfully attract crowds, there must be ample innovation on dishes

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Working towards a regenerative economy

Incorporation of sustainable practices soon becomes part of your Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). **Niranjan Khatri** shares his experience in the Andamans and the need for hotels to embrace Green initiatives.



Niranjan Khatri

YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW

The year 1988 only seems like yesterday, when I heard about my transfer from Chennai to Port Blair, the capital of Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal. The news sent ancient shivers down my spine, three parts chill and one part thrill. However, this feeling lasted for a few days only. When I first went to Port Blair, as the aircraft landed I could see the thick verdant tropical forests in numerous islands surrounded by tequila-clear water, azure and green in colour, and white sand in the pristine strings of islands.

The three-parts-chill became four-parts-thrill for being so fortunate to be posted in such a beautiful place that I could not have imagined in my dreams. Surprisingly, Port Blair used to be called Kaala Pani (black water) in those days, a terminology used by the freedom fighters who were imprisoned there during the British regime.

There are very few places in the world that have bragging rights; the Andaman and Nicobar Islands have this unique privilege because of their awe-inspiring natural capital. While the islands are extremely beautiful, the infrastructure here is impaired, as is in most remote locations. I was the GM of the only 5-star, 45-room hotel that had its own challenges and hence, I was a big fish in a small pond.

A month after I was posted there, the Commander-in-chief of the Indian Navy called me up and requested me to do something about the packed lunch boxes emanating from hotel tourists who visited these outlying islands on day picnics. The remote islands did not have any restaurant facility; they only had sun, sand and crystal-clear waters. So, everything taken by tourists to these islands was left behind, littering them with empty lunch boxes. The conservator of the forest also gave me similar feedback with a request to do something about changing the guest behaviour. In those days, my hotel team and I were not aware of the environmental challenges and we did not know what to do. These gentle prods from the local administration led us to take hesitant, but simple creative steps in environment management, today termed as Sustainable Development.

The first initiative was to make stickers with a message- Please do not litter the islands. Please bring the lunch box back to the hotel. The sticker was affixed on the cardboard packed lunch box and it had the desired outcome; guests started to bring the litter back. In 1988, we had no idea that we had started EPR- Extended Producer Responsibility, which many industries are still grappling with today. There is a saying, "Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the test first, the lesson afterward."

Photographs by: Kanchan Nath

Through this experience we learnt that business and environment can coexist only if we do the same thing differently by engaging all stakeholders. Having tasted success, we eliminated the use of paper in many processes of the hotel, recycled paper optimally, and then phased off CFC based products found in room fresheners without a clue of the Montreal protocol of 1988, which mandated that western countries stop production of CFC by 2000 and developing countries like India by 2015.

It is important to know the background of the islands those days to appreciate the nature of the challenges. The islands had poor telephone connectivity, no TV in the rooms, ships used to come once in 25 days, and only Indian Airlines would fly to the destination twice a week, with restricted loads, as the runway was small. The hotel was operating with many infrastructural challenges.

After some time we analysed what to do with spent cooking oil and then converted the same to soap for washing utensils- beginnings of circular economy. Since our hotel was made with wood, we started compensatory/depository afforestation to maintain a balance of natural resources. Today, there are certification bodies like Forest Stewardship Council and the UN with a programme called REDD- Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation.

On April 1, 1990, the hotel experienced a severe water crisis without any fore warning. Our water supply was cut by the municipality from 10 kl to 2 kl per day. We had no clue about water management, hence we stopped piped supply of water in the rooms and on request, supplied fresh water in buckets for bathing and salt water for flushing. It was time to focus on demand management, the need of the hour in the country. Thereafter, we implemented water harvesting in a well for use in the garden and rooftop harvesting of water that was to be used for drinking. A seawater pipeline was also laid, to be used for flushing in the washrooms. We used tender coconut shell for protecting the soil on the slopes of our hotel to prevent soil erosion, yet another simple example of biomimicry.

In 1990, we adopted an orphanage and started imparting vocational training to the boys. Today, Ministry of Tourism has mandated all hotels to adopt the Hunar Se Rozgar programme and train underprivileged boys and girls to create employment

“

Business and environment can coexist only if we do the same thing differently, with all stakeholders

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It is important to migrate from a compliance mode to an approach that goes beyond compliance

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opportunities. In 1991, the hotel opened an environment museum at a cost of \$725, depicting the challenges and opportunities of changing ground rules of how to conduct business responsibly by empowering everybody in the organisation to think differently. This step was taken in order to enter the perceptual arena of a guest's mindset.

In the bliss of a small pond and sheer geographical isolation, I was fortunate to learn about the strategy of a green, circular economy and how to bring eco-efficiency in many business processes in the long journey towards sustainable development. Today, it is good to see that concepts like green building, marketing, and energy are becoming mainstream.

The UN had set 10 millennium development goals in 2000 and in 2015, it set guidelines for countries under the term Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). It is important that hotels align themselves to these goals.

WHAT HOTELS NEED TO DO

First and foremost, the management of hotels and single owners need to retool the mindset of their workforce at multiple levels. Catering colleges need to incorporate a simple module on eco-design in colleges, so that students are equipped with a creative, questioning mind of operating hotels with minimal resources.

In line with the country's commitment to decarbonize, hotels must identify every opportunity to enhance the intake of renewable power through onsite and offsite opportunities. In a similar vein, water consumption can be halved and brought down

to a minimal expense with existing technologies with a short ROI cycle.

In India, while solar and wind are systems being installed to run hotels, factories and heavy industry, there is an opportunity to use a manure based biogas plant to generate power in large quantities. According to KPMG India, we will have 155 million tonnes of cow and poultry manure by 2020 and by 2030, it will be 260 million tonnes per annum. Herein lies an opportunity for generating power in rural India and using the slurry as a good quality fertiliser, thereby contributing to Swachh Bharat and helping farmers enhance crop yields as per the vision of the Prime Minister. For the power generated in the rural area, an equivalent can be given by the state grid as per wheeling laws that exist in the wind energy domain.

Needless to say that all stakeholders, especially the government, must try and demonstrate an example in partnership with the hotel industry in Haryana, to begin with, so that the dung of 7323.286 (as per cattle census of 2012) cattle in Haryana is put to productive use, benefitting the stressed farmers and deriving green energy through synergy with the farming or hotel sector. The IT industry also needs to embrace the principles of the cradle-to-cradle concept, so that no waste finds its way into any landfill site for use in a closed-loop economy and the country sets its target to make India a landfill-free country.

It is important for the industry to migrate from a compliance mode to an approach that goes beyond compliance, as I believe the industry has the bandwidth to unleash creativity in a world with declining resources.

*(The author is **Niranjan Khatri**, Founder of iSambhav, a sustainability training organisation. The views expressed above are his own personal views).*

The COMPLETE PACKAGE

With a vision to be the country's most admired and respected food service company, FSIPL lays its focus on great taste, exceptional customer service, and strong relations.

Food Service India (FSIPL) is a leading food and beverage solutions provider for the HoReCa segment in India. It carries forward a legacy of over 75 years from its parent group, VKL Seasoning. FSIPL offers its products through five brands – Springburst, Chef's Art, Sunbay, Spicefield, and Marimbula.

The team at FSIPL comprises experienced chefs and sales professionals who specialise in the HoReCa segment. The exclusive sales team understands the challenges faced by the chefs in terms of cost, inventory, taste, consistency, and many other parameters, and works towards making the process of cooking easier for its customers

through its services. FSIPL offers three differentiated services – Building the food and beverage menu, standardising recipes, and in-kitchen demonstration and training. FSIPL has specialised food service distribution partners across India and abroad who provide best last-mile services to HoReCa customers.

The company's diverse product range includes seasonings, gravy bases, blended spices, whole spices, ground spices, soups, Chinese bases, rice mixes, Tikkas, marinades, coating mixes, sprinklers, dips, gravy mixes, beverage mixes, enhancers, bakery mixes, sauce bases, syrups and more.



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Maya dazzles in

The fourth edition of West India Travel Awards was held at Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad City Centre amidst industry moguls.



Nikhil Anand

India's first heritage city as per UNESCO, Ahmedabad played host to the fourth edition of the West India Travel Awards held at Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad City Centre on October 15, 2017. Pioneers and achievers from the travel and tourism industry in this region were rewarded for their continued hard work and sincere dedication in the interest of the entire industry. The glitzy ceremony saw in attendance the barons from the travel and tourism industry from not just the host city, but from across West India. The event was graced by the presence of **Bhupendrasinh Manubha Chudasama**, Cabinet Minister, Revenue, Education (Primary, Secondary and Adult), Higher and Technical Education, Legislative

and Parliamentary Affairs, Government of Gujarat, who was also the Chief Guest at the event.

Conceding how this prestigious award would act as a stimulator to grow the industry even further, he said, "It's a great initiative to identify and give due credit to those who have shown great enterprise and steered their way to become one of the forbearers of the industry. Such motivation and incitement will spur talent from across our dynamic industry to consolidate and contribute even more towards the development of this sector." These one-of-a-kind awards have been concocted to provide an extraordinary platform that recognises and encourages the leaders and innovators



Ahmedabad



of the tourism industry pan India. The ceremony brought more than 150 stars of the travel industry under one roof. Welcoming the guests for the award, **SanJeet**, Mentor, India Travel Awards, said that the awards acknowledged the consolidated efforts of the trade partners from the western region owing to whom the travel industry is now growing by leaps and bounds. "Today, tourism has become a key driver for socio-economic progress of India and every small hotel, restaurant, tourist attraction or tourism outlet contributes towards the growth of this country. The regional award recognises those establishments that have shown steadfast commitment, added value, and chaperoned our industry to greater heights," he insisted. These exclusive awards are based on a

unique jury judgment and a final list is made after a fair online voting process. The awards themselves were divided into four categories - Personal Awards, Business Awards, Trending Awards, and Partner Awards.

Also gracing the evening were Guest of Honour Nirav Munshi, Manager (Tours & Travels), Gujarat Tourism, and Dr. Marisha Kaul, Gladrags Mrs. India-North 2017. Awards were presented in 49 categories in both travel and hospitality. **Mahesh Shirodkar**, MD, Tamarind Global was the recipient of the illustrious DDP Game Changer award, while the famed DDP Trailblazer award went to **Mahendra Vakharia**, Managing Director, Pathfinders Holidays.



Recognising the hard work of the industry

The fourth edition of West India Travel Awards recognised the extraordinary hard work of the tourism and hospitality partners from the West at Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad City Centre on October 15, 2017. The award winners were applauded for the efforts undertaken over the years.



CHIEF GUEST Bhupendrasinh Manubha Chudasama



DDP GAME CHANGER Mahesh Shirodkar



DDP TRAILBLAZER Mahendra Vakharia



BEST GENERAL MANAGER Sanjay Kaushik, Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad City Centre



MOST TRENDING PERSONALITY Nagsri Prasad Sashidhar



MOST ENTERPRISING CORPORATE TRAVEL PROFESSIONAL Ikson Menezes



BEST GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM (GDS) Travelpport Galileo



BEST CASINO HOTEL Deltin Suites



BEST FOREIGN EXCHANGE AGGREGATOR FxKart.com



BEST WEDDING AND MICE HOTEL Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad City Centre



BEST CITY HOTEL Sayaji Hotel, Kolhapur



BEST AIRLINE - DOMESTIC SpiceJet



BEST MID-MARKET HOTEL Hyatt Place Pune/Hinjawadi



BEST MICE DESTINATION The Deltin Daman



BEST BEACH RESORT Map5 Village Resort, Goa



BEST LEISURE HOTEL Radisson Blu Resort & Spa Alibaug



EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE Courtyard by Marriott Pune Chakan



BEST DESTINATION WEDDING RESORT Madhubhan Resort & Spa



BEST FOREIGN EXCHANGE COMPANY CentrumDirect



BEST FLOATING CASINO HOTEL Deltin Caravela



BEST CORPORATE TRAVEL PRACTICE Mahindra & Mahindra



FASTEST GROWING HOTEL BRAND Map5 Hotels



BEST CASINO Deltin Royale



BEST BUSINESS HOTEL Courtyard by Marriott Ahmedabad



BEST CORPORATE HOTEL Holiday Inn Express Ahmedabad Ashram Road



HOSPITALITY PARTNER Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad City Centre



PREMIER PARTNER Mystifly Consulting India



Award Snapshots

This one-of-a-kind awards show showcased glitz and glamour to encourage the leaders and innovators of the tourism industry pan India. Here are some glimpses.



AWARDS







AN EXPRESSION FROM PERGO

◆ Pergo Living Expression highlights the natural character of wood even down into the bevels. The matte finish brings out the best of wood. Living Expression collections are equipped with Pergo's trademark technology- TitanX and PerfectFold 3.0, that not only keep its elegant finish year-in, year out, but are also fast and easy to install. Pergo Living Expression is the perfect combination of beautiful design and performance to revamp a place with the finest flooring with easy maintenance and care. The Living Expression quality level is suitable for domestic use because of its durability, making it stand against wear, stains, and fading.

NEST SMART

VitrA, the bathroom solutions brand of Eczacıbaşı Building Products Division in Turkey, introduces Nest - Design For All Series, which considers different needs and styles and provides common solutions for everyone regardless of age, ability or condition. This series is designed by Pentagon Design, a leading Finnish design agency. Nest - Design for All Series by VitrA combines design, ergonomics, and functionality with VitA distinction. The series offers special products for hospitals, hotels and other public buildings considering their special needs. The multifunctional grab bar ensures safer use, the wall-hung WC pan facilitates cleaning, and the faucet provides easy access and control by virtue of its design and position. The mirror with adjustable angles offers users a new, comfortable experience.



CHOCOLATEY EXTRAVAGANCE

◆ FunFoods by Dr. Oetker is all set to delight consumers with a new variant in peanut butter which comes with a chocolatey taste. The new product, Peanut Butter Chocolate, combines best of both worlds, i.e., goodness of 80 per cent peanuts and chocolate. Peanut with chocolate is a much-loved combination, however, currently it is limited to the snacking category like bars and candies. FunFoods Peanut Butter Chocolate will help create ultimate magic combined with the goodness in the kitchen. Consumers can spread it on bread, muffins, pancakes, cookies and much more. It has 66 per cent less sugar than a cocoa hazelnut spread. It is also cholesterol and trans fat free, thereby affirming to be a nutritious, chocolatey spread for consumers.

EXCEPTIONAL EXTERIORS

◆ No more boring paints and wall colours to beautify your walls as there's another way to add a magnificent and dramatic touch that is trendy and stylish. Cladding, launched by Notion, a pioneer in tile solution for home and commercial spaces, is a magnificent range of cladding that adds additional layer of material on walls, providing protection and insulation while adding an aesthetic appeal. Notion guarantees choice offerings for the largest range of timber in terms of width, length, look, and finish for exterior use. The product is 100 per cent natural and quality is assured through trustworthy production methods. The collection is well suited for outdoor use and protects walls from extreme cold to hot, dry and humid weather conditions.



MIX AND GRIND

◆ Usha International unveils its latest innovation in the kitchen appliances category – Imprezza Plus mixer grinder. True to its tagline, 'Quieter Faster Tastier', this mixer grinder is a technologically advanced product with advanced fluid dynamic blades. The mixer grinder comes with a set of five jars to support all the mixing, grinding, blending, and storage needs.



FOR A PERFECT SERVE

◆ Reiterating its commitment to bringing technologically advanced products for the food service industry, ELANPRO, India's commercial refrigeration company, added U GO by SPM to its product portfolio. U GO is a unique and compact countertop machine with green cooling system that increases efficiency and productivity for food service operators. U Go dispenses soft serve ice-cream and frozen yoghurt, and is designed to generate revenue with a significantly lower investment in the floor space, operations, and staffing. With a sleek, modern style and small footprint of the beverage dispenser, U GO is eye-catching and saves valuable counter space. Additionally, it produces virtually no noise and has a high-capacity refrigeration system.



BEAUTIFYING THE OUTDOOR

◆ Nomita Kohli of Wisma Atria Interiors has launched a uniquely designed outdoor furniture collection by its Italian furniture brand DFN- The Outdoor Company. This furniture collection comprises a designer range of sunbeds, chaise lounge, and armchairs in sinuous shapes for decorating your outdoor environment with ease. Available in several colour options like brown, grey, teak, black, blue and green, this outdoor furniture supports an aluminium frame covered in handwoven synthetic resin that is supplemented with a cushion to be applied over the entire length for optimum comfort. It also has a headrest with a removable roller.



PUNE GETS SECOND TGI FRIDAYS



TGI Fridays opened its doors on August 25, 2017 in Pune. The restaurant, located at The Pavilion, Senapati Bapat Road, Pune, becomes a part of TGI Fridays' growing international presence in over 60 countries and joins a famous tradition of serving favourite American foods in a restaurant setting where every day feels like a Friday. The new restaurant, second in Pune and 14th for the brand in India, will seat more than 140 people in the dining and bar areas and will see over 50 staff members serving people with a smile.

As the original casual dining restaurant, TGI Fridays differentiates itself with a unique point of view that promises to exhilarate its guests with the feeling of a Friday. TGI Fridays is also famous for its knowledgeable and charismatic bartenders. Their endeavour is to

exceed guests' expectations by giving them a satisfying experience, making TGI Fridays the perfect place for your birthday celebrations, office get-togethers, team lunches, and other special occasions.

Rohan Jetley, CEO, TGI Fridays, says, "TGI Fridays in India has a history of providing fresh, handcrafted food and drinks that appeal strongly to our guests while also introducing innovative food items inspired by our American bar and grill heritage.

Over the years, we have become more focused on developing social food that is destination-worthy and shareable, something our guests crave. Our handcrafted menu also visually communicates our brand's unique heritage and commitment to quality."

CELEBRATING ART WITH JUSTA HOTELS & RESORTS



Justa Hotels & Resorts concluded the 4th edition of its annual art residency from September 11-17, 2017. It was a week-long celebration of art and its diverse forms with some of the most distinguished talent from India and abroad. Chitrashaala was hosted at the scenic Justa hotel at Lake Nahargarh Palace, Rajasthan.

The landscape of Lake Nahargarh Palace is the ideal atmosphere and situation for an artist to seek inspiration and direction. Whilst the artists immerse in painting their thoughts on the canvas, the calm serenity enhances their creativity, energy, focus, and freedom. Along with this, it is surrounded by the grand Indian heritage and culture, owing its name to the renowned Bundi School of Art.

Curated by renowned art critic and curator Anirudh Chari, this year's edition pays homage to this rich legacy by bringing together many noteworthy artists - Etah Hrieb from Syria, Anastasia Mukhina from Russia, Arunava Mondal from Kolkata, Elham Huq from Bangladesh, Meriem Elmakhoulouf from Morocco, Hossameldien Mostafa Mohamed Gawish from Cairo, and Salma Abo Zeid El Ashrey from Cairo among many others. Chitrashaala 2017 is supported by Holding Hands, a group of practising artists, formed in July 2016, with the aim of increasing artistic co-operation in all spheres of creative endeavour. In future, Holding Hands hopes to play a significant role in furthering artistic dialogue both within the country and overseas with exhibitions, workshops, seminars and much else.



LONGEST LINE OF CHOCOLATE EGGS

JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar has successfully set the Guinness World Record for the longest line of chocolate eggs. The initiative was spearheaded by **Chef Santosh Rawat**, Multi-Property Executive Pastry Chef, JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar and JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu. The attempt made during the Easter celebration at the hotel on April 16, 2017, fructified with an official certification from concerned authorities on October 5, 2017.

On the day of record setting, the hotel showcased a trail of 20,203 chocolate eggs on 170 tables placed in the hotel lobby through the banquet walkway. The length of the chocolate trail was 1026 metres. The team spent over 105 hours over a period of six days, utilising more than 750 kgs of chocolate, crafting the record-breaking longest line of chocolate eggs. Post the attempt, the chocolate eggs were displayed for sale. The remaining chocolates were distributed to children from a Mumbai-based orphanage, who were invited on the day of the attempt for the Easter themed Sunday brunch. **Dietmar Kielhofer**, General Manager, JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar, said, "We take pride in being able to pin the hotel on the global map and be associated with the coveted Guinness World Record institution. My heartiest congratulations to the culinary team for working relentlessly towards the achievement." Commenting on the achievement, Rawat said, "With



the support of my team, we have been able to bag this prestigious title. This is an incredible achievement for the team at JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar and we are proud of setting a benchmark in the industry."

Guinness World Record aims to inspire people and companies to participate in record breaking, and truly recognises and celebrates their success.

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ROOHAFZA PARTNERS WITH BARISTA

Hamdard Laboratories, an over 100-year-old iconic FMCG company's flagship brand- RoohAfza, strikes a delicious partnership with Barista Coffee Company. Barista is a pioneer of the coffee business in India, with a huge network of outlets across the country. After some invigorating sensorial experiments, they have launched two exciting cold beverages, RoohAfza Shakerato and Masaala RoohAfza. This move comes post the launch of the ready-to-drink RoohAfza Fusion and the media campaign-Greed is good, in a bid to connect with the youth of the country. The two new beverages offer a completely new consumer experience, creating a surprising, unexpected twist. While RoohAfza Shakerato offers a twist of RoohAfza with a Barista espresso shot and ice to give a nerve-tingling experience, Masaala RoohAfza is your favourite RoohAfza shaken and stirred with soda and *shikanji masala* with mint and ice to bring a tangy twist. Both the beverages will be available at 100 Barista outlets across India.

Speaking at the launch, **Mansoor Ali**, Chief Sales & Marketing Officer, Hamdard, said, "There has been a perceptible move towards natural, herbal products in the consumer space and RoohAfza sits naturally on this positioning. We see this unique partnership with Barista as a long-term strategic alliance, where heritage meets cool and gives the young consumers a twist they would love."

Adding to this, **Puneet Gulati**, Chief Executive Officer, Barista, said "Innovation has been the cornerstone to our success and that's the



mantra we would carry forward for future as well. Barista is excited to partner with Hamdard and launch a fresh new perspective in cold beverages. The proposed coffee fusion drink, RoohAfza Shakerato, nicely blends our coffee made from 100 per cent Arabica beans and the established flavour of RoohAfza.

Our endeavour is to line-up more exciting offering in times to come. Our association with Hamdard is a testimony to the fact that we keep having newer reasons for guests to visit our outlets."

ICF FELICITATES TALENT IN THE KITCHEN



To celebrate and recognise the talent in the kitchen, eminent representatives of the hospitality and culinary industry came together at the 14th Annual Chef Awards organised by Indian Culinary Forum (ICF) at The Ashok Hotel, New Delhi, on November 1, 2017. The best of chefs were bestowed with awards in the presence of Chief Guest K.J. Alphons, Minister of State for Tourism (I/C), among other top-notch names from the culinary fraternity. The culinary extravaganza kicked-off with a four-day-long trade test where participating chefs competed in 11 culinary categories and showcased a series of live culinary skills. As part of the celebrations, ICF also organised Chef Summit for the fourth consecutive year where eminent names from the hospitality industry were present.

The winners under different award categories were Chef Sanjeev Kapoor for Hall Of Fame; Chef Manmohan Singh, Lifetime Achievement Award; Chef Sudeep Bose, Golden Hat Award; Chef Gautam Chaudhary, Silver Hat Award; Chef Mousmi Das, Lady Chef of the Year; Sumit Pant, Chef of the Year; Sitaram Mewati, Best Food Writer Award; Mohit Pokhriyal, Master Chef International Cuisine Award; Sumit Kumar, Master Chef Baker Award; Kamla Kamalakannam, Master Chef South/East/West Indian Cuisine; Jitendra, Kitchen Artist Award; Chef Vajj Nath, Master Chef North India Cuisine Award; Sukanta Pal, Master Chef Indian Sweets Award; Harish Chander, Master Chef Oriental Cuisine Award and Ravindra Singh, Master Chef Kebab Award. Student Chef of the Year Award (Male) went to Vijay Chawla and Student Chef of the Year Award (Female) was given to Vrinda Kureel.





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Fix your eyes on DESIGN

HS Ahuja and Associates, in their latest project in New Delhi, have ensured that art and design go hand in hand while ensuring minimalism remains the key element.

A recent project of HS Ahuja and Associates has been Swagath restaurant, situated in a prime South Delhi location of Greater Kailash – II. Keeping the location in mind, they visualised a space that would be perfect for all-day dining, with interiors that would delight the eyes of onlookers.

The vital aspect of the design is that it engages the senses- the visual with the use of texture and colour, while the softness of the fabric and the woodwork engage the sense of touch.

It's a proven fact that our environment can affect our mood and our creativity. Colour is an essential part of the equation, creating the mood and style of the décor. Swagath, a popular seafood restaurant, is inspired by the shades of the sea; its exposed ceiling creates a fusion theme. There is tremendous detailing that can be seen all around the restaurant. The partition is the most vital and prominent part of the design. This semi-visual partition, with a tree mural

and planters, pleases the eyes of visitors. Shades of blue and grey are used to neutralise the look and splashes of light blue have been used to give it a serene and peaceful ambience, while maintaining a fine balance between the use of colours so that the space does not lose its neutrality.

Another important aspect of the interior is that too much has not been added to the space. Keeping minimalism intact, the place has not been overcrowded with too many elements. Statement pieces have been used to keep the tidiness of the design in check. Comfortable chairs with wooden tables, Italian flooring, and quilting on walls with backlight provide beauty and elegance to the atmosphere. The space appears larger and richer, making it permissible to use bright shades without forgetting that the space should not look gaudy.

Art and design go hand in hand, and wall paintings used in the interiors serve just the purpose, providing a pop of art in the design of the space.

Under the guidance and leadership of Subhash Ahuja, CEO and Hema, Vice President, HSAA, the firm is achieving greater heights of creativity and exploring new ideas. They create unique, timeless interiors for residences, commercial undertakings, corporate offices, and hospitality spaces.

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Colour is an essential part of the equation, creating the mood and style of the décor
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WONDERGEL

Marine Hydrocolloids has launched spreadable Agar Agar branded as Wonder Gel, a thermally modified version.

spreadable Agar Agar

Previously known as Marine Chemicals, Marine Hydrocolloids has been in the field of manufacturing Agar Agar for the last 35 years. **Kurian Jose, Jr.**, CEO, Marine Hydrocolloids, says, "As the name itself indicates, the use of this product in various food production processes is to impart a wonderful change in the texture."

The product is a unique functional ingredient obtained by transforming the rigid structure of native Agar Agar with no chemical treatment to give a softer and creamy texture that maintains the natural benefits of seaweed fibre. It is an excellent alternative for partial or total replacement of traditional animal-based gelling agents and other expensive hydrocolloids to provide a particularly delicate and succulent feel with a smooth thixotropic flow.

BENEFITS AND PROPERTIES

Spreadable Agar Agar type Wonder Gel dissolves completely at a low temperature of 75-80 degree Celsius, and also has a low gelling point at 33-35 degree Celsius. It is a thermo-reversible gel that is highly spreadable and does not require gelling aids.

The product is completely free of BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy) and has a high content of natural dietary fibres, containing up to 70 per cent total dietary fibre. Its high clarity and neutral taste impart a pleasantly smooth



and creamy texture. The high water-binding capacity offers a good and homogenous structure. Spreadable Agar Agar type Wonder Gel has excellent synergy with sugar, dairy products, and other hydrocolloids. It is suitable for various cultural, religious and dietary preferences (vegan, vegetarian) and successfully replaces animal-based gelatin, LM Pectin, and Iota Carrageenan.

Spreadable Agar Agar type Wonder Gel is a perfect vegetable substitute for traditional gelatin with the additional benefits of lower dosage and longer shelf life. It also has lower gel strength, lower dissolution temperature, and better spreadability and creaminess.

With the introduction of spreadable Agar Agar type Wonder Gel, Marine Hydrocolloids is expecting a remarkable improvement in the quality of food products in the Indian market.

“ Spreadable Agar Agar type Wonder Gel is a perfect vegetable substitute for traditional gelatin

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appointments



GARIMA NAGPAL

Head - Quality
OYO

★ Garima Nagpal, a seasoned hospitality professional with over four decades of experience has joined OYO. In her new role as Head of Quality, Nagpal will be responsible for network-wide upgradation of OYO hotels to ensure highest levels of quality, including hygiene and ambience. The appointment is in line with OYO's commitment to solve supply-demand imbalance and offer beautiful and quality living spaces. She joins OYO from The Imperial Hotel where she was the Executive Housekeeper for nine years. She has also worked with Aman Hotel and Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts. In 2001, she was selected by The Taj Mahal Hotel, New Delhi to help improve the hotel's guest experience scores.



RUPAM DAS

Regional Director – Operations & Business Development
Clarks Inn Group of Hotels

★ Rupam Das has been promoted as Regional Director – Operations & Business Development at Clarks Inn Group of Hotels. In the current profile, Das will be responsible for bringing in increased efficiency in hotel operations, enhanced brand visibility, as well as oversee growth of the company's hotel portfolio through new acquisitions across its various brands. Additionally, he is also heading Clarks Holidays, a vacation ownership offering by Clarks Inn. In his previous role as Area Director – Operations, South & Western India, Clarks Inn, he was heading operations & business development across southern and western India.



ADITYA SHAMSHER MALLA

General Manager
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Pune -
Chinchwad

★ DoubleTree by Hilton has appointed Aditya Shamsheer Malla as the General Manager at its Pune hotel. An industry veteran with more than two decades in the business, Malla has been part of some of the best global brands. In his new role as the General Manager, he will be responsible for curating strategic initiatives that will lead the hotel to continue its guest-focused approach and consolidate its leadership position. He will focus his efforts to deliver year-on-year growth, focus on staff engagement activities, and spearhead corporate social activities.



RAJESH MALLIYA

General Manager
Hyatt Place Goa/Candolim

★ Rajesh Malliya has joined Hyatt Hotels as General Manager of Hyatt Place Goa/Candolim. Malliya has a rich experience of over 24 years in the hospitality industry. In his current role, Malliya will be responsible for driving Hyatt Place Goa/Candolim to new heights, making it the most preferred hotel in North Goa and to deliver the Hyatt Place brand experience that offers fresh, purposeful, and friendly stays. Prior to joining Hyatt Hotels, Malliya was the General Manager of the Royal Orchid Bengaluru.



SHERIN MATHEW

Director of Sales & Marketing
Hyatt Place Goa/Candolim

★ Sherin Mathew joins Hyatt Place Goa/Candolim as Director of Sales and Marketing. His last assignment was at Hyatt Regency Chennai as Director of Sales. For Hyatt Place Goa/Candolim, Mathew will be based out of a satellite office in Mumbai and his key responsibilities will be to ensure competitive positioning of the hotel by the induction of marketing agendas, and planning sales and distribution strategies in relevant national and international markets.



AMIT KULKARNI

**Director of Sales
Renaissance Mumbai Convention Centre Hotel**

★ Renaissance Mumbai Convention Centre Hotel has appointed Amit Kulkarni as Director of Sales for the hotel. Under this designation, his responsibilities will include active participation in forecasting and sales strategy meetings, mentoring department heads at the property, and driving the sales force while creating a productive environment. He was previously associated with Novotel Mumbai as the Acting Front Manager. Armed with a decade of experience in the field of hospitality, Kulkarni has been associated with leading premium brands in India and the United Kingdom. He has been a part of the Renaissance family since February 2015, and has been key in driving the sales and profitability of the Lakeside Chalet- Marriott Executive Apartments year-on-year.



MANISH KUMAR

**Operations Manager
Lords Eco Inn, Porbandar**

★ Lords Eco Inn, Porbandar has appointed Manish Kumar as its Operations Manager. Prior to joining Lords Hotels and Resorts, he served as the Director of Operations with Mohammad Omar Bin Haider Holding Group. Kumar has vast experience in front office management, general operations and revenue management, and will lend expertise in executing his role at Lords Eco Inn, Porbandar. Kumar comes with over 12 years of industry experience and has worked with many reputed hospitality establishments including Grand Millennium, Dubai; Sheraton Hotels, Dubai; Aryana Hotels Sharjah, UAE; and London Crown Hotel, Dubai.



SANKET THAKUR

**Assistant F&B Manager
The Resort, Madh-Marve, Mumbai**

★ Sanket Thakur has recently joined The Resort, Madh-Marve, Mumbai as Assistant F&B Manager. At the resort, Thakur will be responsible for carrying out various duties to ensure that customers receive excellent service. He will prepare management, variance, and financial reports on a periodic basis. He will manage everyday operations, and accounting and financial matters of F&B. Also, identifying and rectifying operational, financial, and employee issues will be part of his job responsibilities. With over seven years of experience in hospitality, he has been associated with renowned brands like Sofitel, Hilton, The Lalit Hotels & Resorts.



SUBHAJIT MITRA

**Executive Housekeeper
Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport**

★ Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport, part of the InterContinental Hotels Group, has announced the appointment of Subhajit Mitra as Executive Housekeeper. Mitra brings aboard over 12 years of extensive experience in his field. He began his career in 2005 with the Taj Group of Hotels and has also worked with the Hyatt group. Most recently, he was associated with the Taj President, Mumbai as Deputy Housekeeper. Previously, he has worked in the housekeeping department at Taj Bengal, Hyatt Regency Kolkata, and Hyatt Raipur.



HIMANSHU DRAWID

**Executive Housekeeper
Novotel Goa Resort and Spa Hotel**

★ Novotel Goa Resort & Spa Hotel has appointed Himanshu Drawid as their Executive Housekeeper. Drawid brings with him over 15 years of extensive experience in his field. He began his career in 2005 with Marriott International and has also worked with Four Points By Sheraton. Most recently, he was associated with the Renaissance Mumbai Convention Centre Hotel as Housekeeping Manager. Previously, Himanshu has also worked with Europa Hotel, Radisson Blu, Royal Orchid, Sun & Sand, and Lemon Tree.



Revealing in THE RIGHT LIGHT

Navneet Kumar, Director, Fotobubbles, talks about the company's projects and how they depict hotels in a true and beautiful form.



Navneet Kumar

TELL US ABOUT YOUR HOSPITALITY PROJECTS. HOW DIFFERENT ARE THEY FROM THE REST?

Typically, our clients are hoteliers who want to give importance to showcasing their property in its true form, which is similar to the amount of detailing and effort they have put into creating it. Unfortunately, very few hoteliers can differentiate between an average photograph of their property and what a good photographer can click. We have been fortunate to have clients who understand that pictures play a major role in ensuring they project the right image of their property in the potential client's mind.

WHAT ARE THE KEY FACTORS THAT A PHOTOGRAPHER KEEPS IN MIND WHILE SHOOTING FOR HOTELS?

We want to keep the pictures as real as possible. We do not want customers to feel cheated when they land at the property. All our pictures convey how the property would look at a certain part of the day and we choose to photograph the property at the time that it looks best. During most photo shoots,

we have to imagine a potential traveller's mindset while selecting which kind of picture to take. The same hotel can be photographed very differently based on who the target audience is.

Earlier, photography was only done for brochures, hoardings or print media. Now, with marketing moving to social media and online OTAs, photographers have to evolve keeping in mind the usage of the picture in a variety of mediums. Earlier, where just 30 pictures of the property were good enough, now, for every property, we are doing more than 100 pictures at a time. In order to appear fresh and competitive, hotels have to revive their look every 1-2 years on all channels and mediums. Given our strength in video production as well, we have worked on hotel videos in a variety of formats, helping hotels stand apart from their competition.

WHAT SPECIFICATIONS DO HOTELIERS GIVE WHILE REQUESTING A PHOTO SHOOT FOR THE HOTEL?

Our hoteliers simply ask us to take good pictures that help them market the hotel well. We then inquire about their marketing strategy, target audience, mediums of marketing, etc., and based on that, build our overall visual strategy. This helps us create a story that is coherent across all pictures and videos, and helps hotels immensely in their marketing efforts.

“

We have to imagine a potential traveller's mindset while selecting which kind of picture to take

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FOR MASTER CHEFS**

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guest satisfaction is
your prime concern,**

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is only for you.

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NOTABLE SPEAKERS

Arne M Sorenson, President & CEO, Marriott International
Ashish Jakhanwala, Managing Director & CEO, SAMHI
David Keen, Chief Executive Officer, QUO
Deep Kalra, Chairman & Group CEO, MakeMyTrip
Nakul Anand, Executive Director, ITC Limited

Oliver Tittmann, Managing Director, X-CUBE Engineering
Patu Keswani, Chairman & MD, Lemon Tree Hotels Limited
Roshan Abbas, Chairman, Geometry Global Encompass
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