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A MONTHLY ON HOSPITALITY TRADE
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FHRAI
52ND ANNUAL
CONVENTION
BENGALURU
SEPT 14-16, 2017



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K. Syama Raju
President, FHRAI

Dear fellow members,

We welcome **Shri Alphons Kannanthanam**, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Tourism and Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology. We look forward to members interacting with him in a manner that will enable him in making India a preferred tourist destination that is safer and welcoming.

It is FHRAI's tradition that our Annual Convention be held by rotation in each of the four regions. This year, it is the privilege of the southern region to organise this prestigious event at Bengaluru, the beautiful Garden City and Silicon Valley of India. We find out more about this state and city in our cover story. We also decode the state's market scope, challenges in growth, and the tourism agenda that governments should follow to further grow hospitality and tourism in the city and region.

The Organising Committee, under the leadership of K Nagaraju, Chairman, has been working tirelessly over the last few months in ensuring that the convention delivers what you want- the right speakers and content, by adopting the best practices from the past regional and national conventions. FHRAI Annual Convention has established itself as being the most eagerly anticipated and widely attended event in our industry's calendar. It draws together a broad cross-section of influential voices, iconic thought leaders, distinguished dignitaries from the highest echelons of government, and luminaries of the tourism industry for enriching deliberations on strategic, competitive, and policy issues that are currently shaping our sector's landscape.

The theme chosen for this year's convention is "Hospitality 2025 – The Future is NOW".

Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar ji will be presiding over the inauguration ceremony and blessing the function. **Dr. Mahesh Sharma**, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Culture and Minister of State in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, has accepted to be the keynote speaker. We will be honoured to have **Shri Ananth Kumar**, Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers and **Shri Siddaramaiah**, Chief Minister of Karnataka, as some of the other prominent guests.

On the inaugural day, we will be hosting an Incredible India evening for you, showcasing the myriad hues of different dance forms of South India followed by cocktails and dinner at the Shangri-La Hotel, Bengaluru. An exhibition featuring the latest products and technologies in hospitality will run concurrently with the convention, where delegates will have the opportunity to stay abreast of new hospitality solutions, source them, as well as build a vendor database.

I welcome you all and look forward to meeting you at the 52nd FHRAI Annual Convention at Bengaluru, being held between September 14 and 16, 2017.

With warm regards,
K. Syama Raju
President, FHRAI

“The Convention has established itself as being the most eagerly anticipated and widely attended event in our industry's calendar”

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ZEROING IN ON KARNATAKA'S HUBS

We delve into the hospitality space in Karnataka and how the state's upcoming cities are reigning in more tourists while facing innumerable challenges

Cover Design

Raashi Ajmani Girdhar



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ONE STATE, MANY WORLDS

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CHEF TALK 78

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The art of napkin folding is fast losing its sheen as minimalism in décor and presentation takes over the industry. Some large-scale events, however, are still keeping this tradition alive



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This issue of FHRAI Magazine contains 112+4 pages cover

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Vivek Nair
Hony. Secretary
FHRAI

“During January-July, 2017, a total of 8.36 lakh tourists arrived on e-Tourist Visa, registering a growth of 54.7 per cent over the same period in 2016”

Dear fellow members,

As we go into print, we hear of the appointment of **Alphons Kannanthanam** as the new Minister of Tourism (Independent charge). We appreciate him and trust he will bring the same decision-making power he demonstrated during his stint in Delhi.

We welcome the Supreme Court order that states, "The purpose of the directions contained in the order dated December 15, 2016, is to deal with the sale of liquor along and in proximity of highways properly understood which provide connectivity between cities, towns, and villages. The order does not prohibit licensed establishments within municipal areas. This clarification shall govern other municipal areas as well. We have considered it appropriate to issue this clarification to set at rest any ambiguity." The order will bring much relief to establishments in the hospitality industry, though I hope more can be done to help the remaining 30 per cent that still remain impacted by the order.

FEEs during the month of July, 2017, were ₹14,986 crore as compared to ₹14,285 crore in June, 2016, and ₹11,982 crore in July, 2015. The growth rate in FEEs in terms of rupees in July, 2017, over July, 2016, was 4.9 per cent compared to a growth of 19.2 per cent in July, 2016, over July, 2015. FEEs during the period of January-July, 2017, were ₹102,082 crore, registering a growth of 17.3 per cent over the same period in 2016. The FEEs during January-July, 2016, were ₹87,034 crore and registered a growth of 14.5 per cent over January-July, 2015.

Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in July, 2017, were 7.88 lakh as compared to FTAs of 7.34 lakh in July, 2016, and 6.28 lakh in July, 2015. The

growth rate in FTAs in July, 2017, over July, 2016, is 7.4 per cent compared to 16.8 per cent in July, 2016, over July, 2015. During July, 2017, a total of 1.19 lakh tourists arrived on e-Tourist Visa as compared to 0.68 lakh during the month of July, 2016, registering a growth of 73.3 per cent. During January-July, 2017, a total of 8.36 lakh tourists arrived on e-Tourist Visa as compared to 5.40 lakh during January-July, 2016, registering a growth of 54.7 per cent.

The regulatory framework for hotel licensing continues to be rather complex and remains a challenge for the hospitality landscape. Each state in India has specific policies and laws pertaining to licences and development norms of hotels. A single-window clearance can help expedite this regulatory aspect. Also, the infrastructure status for hotels in the 2013 notification has not resulted in any benefits to hotels from being so included, with reference to the tenure of loans and rate of interest. The cost of borrowing and short tenure of loans indeed remain a challenge; therefore, for economic growth, improvements in this regard need to be addressed.

The Annual Convention is the time for us to get together as a fraternity and take a strong resolve for a better federation and future of hospitality in the country. The theme of this year's convention at Bengaluru is "Hospitality 2025 – The Future is NOW". I look forward to connecting with you all at the 52nd Annual FHRAI Convention to be held in Bengaluru from September 14 to 16.

With kind regards,
Vivek Nair
Honorary Secretary, FHRAI



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ALPHONS KANNANTHANAM APPOINTED AS TOURISM MINISTER

Alphons Kannanthanam has been administered the oath of office as Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Tourism and Union Minister of Electronics and Information Technology. Dr. Mahesh Sharma will now be the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Culture, and Minister of State in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

One of the toppers of IAS batch of 1979, Kannanthanam quit the services in 2006, and was elected a Member of the Legislative Assembly from Kanjirappally in Kottayam



District, Kerala. He joined the BJP as Member of National Executive Council in 2011. He is also a practicing advocate in the High Court and the Supreme Court of India. As the Commissioner of Delhi Development Authority from 1992-1997, he was instrumental in the demolition of 14,310 illegal buildings in Delhi and reclaimed land worth ₹10,000 crore.

Another key appointment in the ministry has been that of Satyajeet Rajan who will be the Director General – Tourism, Government of India. He is a 1987 batch, IAS official of the Kerala cadre.

APPEAL TO WB GOVERNMENT TO CUT HIGH EXCISE RENEWAL FEE



Sudesh Poddar
President
HRAEI

“If the rates are escalated, licence fees for certain outlets will be hiked by 900 per cent, affecting tourism”

HRAEI appealed to Dr Amit Mitra, Minister of Finance, Government of West Bengal, to reduce the recently raised excise renewal fee in the state. The fee for the year 2018-19, with respect to stand-alone bars and restaurants, and those attached to various star category hotels has been raised to an unprecedented rate from 33.33 per cent to 900 per cent. Commenting on this change, **Sudesh Poddar**, President, HRAEI, says, "If the rates are escalated, licence fees for certain outlets will be hiked by 900 per cent. This unprecedented increase will be detrimental to the promotion of the tourism and hospitality sector in the state."

T. S. Walia, MC Member, HRAEI, says, "We expect a positive response from the state government because it has already taken a path-breaking step in cutting down dry days to just 4.5 days, unlike other governments."



T.S. Walia
MC Member
HRAEI

“The government has already taken a path-breaking step in cutting down dry days to just 4.5 days, unlike other state governments”

SC PROVIDES CLARIFICATION ON HIGHWAY LIQUOR BAN

The Supreme Court has clarified that the ban on sale of alcohol within 500 metres of the highway was aimed at sales along roads that provide connectivity between cities, towns, and villages, and not at roads that fall within city limits. An order signed by the Chief Justice of India Jagdish Singh Khehar, Justice DY Chandrachud, and Justice



Dilip Datwani
President
HRAWI

“This was a much needed clarification. The order will bring relief to almost 70 per cent of the affected hotels”

L Nageswara Rao unambiguously cited, “the order does not prohibit licensed establishments within municipal areas. This clarification shall govern other municipal areas as well.

We have considered it appropriate to issue this clarification to set at rest any ambiguity and to obviate repeated recourse to IAs, before the Court.”

Terming it as a landmark order, **Dilip Datwani**, President, Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI), said, “This was a much needed clarification as millions of jobs and the very survival of the nation’s tourism industry was at stake. It has been HRAWI’s contention right from the start that the original order could not have been directed at hotels and liquor vends within city limits. We are thankful to the Bench and the Justices for unequivocally clarifying this. The order will bring relief to almost 70 per cent of the affected hotels.”

Dismissing a Special Leave Petition filed by Arrive Safe Society of Chandigarh (Petitioner) against The Union Territory of Chandigarh & Anr. (Respondents), the Court stated, “The exercise carried out by Chandigarh administration does not breach the directions issued by this Court. It is neither in violation of the terms of the order nor of the purpose and intentment behind those directions.”

The petitioner had challenged Chandigarh administration’s move to de-notify state highways following the original order of the court banning sale of alcohol within 500 metres of all highways.

“The Supreme Court’s order dated December 15, 2016, to ban liquor vends along the highways was to deal with the menace of drunk driving resulting in accidents. However, what was construed as a blanket ban across all highways came with a heavy price for the industry and its large workforce that was employed in the cities.

The SC’s clarification has both acknowledged the legitimacy of de-notification of state highways and removed any ambiguity regarding lifting the ban within city limits,” says

Pradeep Shetty, Honorary Secretary & Chairman, Legal Matters Sub-Committee, HRAWI. “The interpretation of the SC’s order dated December 15, 2016, was a massive blow to the hospitality industry. We were certain that the order of the court was not being correctly interpreted and the association had been vociferously engaging with



Pradeep Shetty
Hon. Secy. & Chairman,
Legal Matters, HRAWI

“The SC’s clarification has acknowledged the legitimacy of de-notification of state highways”

stakeholders, government agencies, and courts on behalf of the industry.

The clarifications cited in the order will allow a majority of the related establishments to go back to business as usual and give back employment to those affected. We welcome the order with great relief,” concludes Datwani.

HRANI NOMINATES GARISH OBEROI AS PRESIDENT, FHRAI, FOR 2017-18



(Sitting L-R): Deepika Arora, MC Member; Rajindera Kumar, MC Member; Ankit Gupta, Hony. Jt. Secretary; RD Anand, Hony. Jt. Secretary; RN Kukreja, Vice President; Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, Hony. Secretary; Sanjay Sood, President; Garish Oberoi, Treasurer; Renu Thapliyal, Secretary General; SM Shervani, MC Member; Ajay Agarwal, MC Member (Standing L-R): Praveen Sharma, MC Member; Pradeep Narayan Singh, MC Member; Bharat Aggarwal, MC Member; Vinod Gulati, MC Member; Rakesh Roy, MC Member; Paramjit Singh, MC Member; Luv Malhotra, MC Member; Mohammad Shoeb, Special Invitee; Vikas Kapoor, Special Invitee; Amarvir Singh, Vice President; Sanjay Madan, MC Member; Lakshyaraj Singh, MC Member; Deepak Parihar, MC Member; Vikas Malhotra, MC Member; Naresh Sethi, MC Member; Arun Dang, MC Member; Vidup Agrahari, MC Member

The 66th Annual General Meeting of HRANI was successfully concluded on August 21, 2017, at The Umrao, Smalkha, New Delhi. The Managing Committee, in its meeting held immediately after the AGM, nominated Garish Oberoi as President of FHRAI for the year 2017-18.

From the northern region, the following seven members were nominated to the FHRAI Executive Committee for the period 2017-18.

FHRAI PRESIDENT (2017-18)

Garish Oberoi, Treasurer, HRANI and Partner, Hotel Uberoi Anand, Bareilly

OTHER MEMBERS

Sanjay Sood, President, HRANI and CEO, The Devicos Restaurant, Shimla

Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, Hony. Secretary, HRANI and Managing Director, Deep Group of Hotels, Lucknow

Amarvir Singh, Vice President, HRANI and Partner, Hotel Natraj, Ludhiana



(L-R): Amarvir Singh, VP; Sanjay Sood, President; Deepika Arora, MC Member; Garish Oberoi, Treasurer; Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, Hony. Secretary; Rajindera Kumar, MC Member; Lakshyaraj Singh, MC Member



(L-R): Sanjay Sood, President, HRANI honouring Garish Oberoi, Treasurer, HRANI

by Taj - Ambassador, New Delhi

Lakshyaraj Singh, MC Member, HRANI and Executive Director, Fateh Prakash Palace, Udaipur

Deepika Arora, MC Member, HRANI and Regional Vice President - Eurasia, Wyndham Hotel Group, Gurugram

HRANI has come a long way in serving the interests of the hospitality industry in the northern part of India. Its constant endeavour is to promote the standards and quality of services extended to the tourism sector in this region.

Rajindera Kumar, MC Member, HRANI and Working Director, Vivanta



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The way forward for FHRAI

EC members of FHRAI tell us about the main concerns that need to be focused on post the convention, as well as their vision for FHRAI 2025.

Kanchan Nath



Rajindera Kumar

Rajindera Kumar EC Member, FHRAI

A LONG WAY TO GO

There are numerous issues before FHRAI to unbundle and ponder over, post the convention. To begin with, despite being a part of the 5Ts as envisaged by the Prime Minister in the manifest, tourism and hospitality have yet to see the light of day to become a reality. The industry has been looking for a friendly, unified tax system, and favourable laws and by-laws to help ease the process of doing business.

Today, having invested crores into projects, hoteliers need to be encouraged through a single-window clearance, favourable tax systems and by-laws, and not be burdened by the numerous irritants that the hospitality industry faces from time to time. If all these could be addressed with a positive mindset

and the right status be accorded to the industry, it will be favourable for everyone to enjoy their business and see it blossom. As hoteliers, after having invested huge amounts into projects, we eagerly look forward to experiencing the joy of doing business, which is not so.

VISION 2025: MORE INVOLVEMENT FOR FHRAI

My vision for FHRAI is simply to work in unison with all four regions, the North, East, West, and South, to emerge as a strong, recognised body. In order to achieve this, FHRAI will have to become a leader in the tax system, by-laws, and tax reforms, and get involved with the government at the policy formulation stage with strong inputs to make it hospitality-friendly before implementation.



SM Shervani

SM Shervani EC Member, FHRAI

MATTERS TO BE DEALT WITH

The GST of 28 per cent on room rate above ₹7,500 makes us uncompetitive, especially if you look at the taxes in hotels in neighbouring countries. FHRAI must try to get this slab reduced to 18 per cent. Additionally, with the confusion over what is to be considered as 'declared tariff', tax should be levied on invoice value.

OTAs are an important part of our business. However, the practice of subsidising room rents through funds received is an unfair trade practice and makes the customer believe that our product is priced lower and that is not fair. This must also be looked into by the association. Homestays and B&B, though part of business today, need to be regulated with regard to safety by building by-laws and other regulations.

Export services are defined as business taking place beyond the shores of India. For the hotel

industry, this cannot happen. Hotels earn foreign exchange through transactions in India. This transaction should not attract GST, just as other export-oriented services.

VISION 2025: ENCOURAGING THE YOUNGER LOT

FHRAI needs to gear itself up to face the many challenges that seem to come its way on day-to-day basis. In my opinion, the structure of FHRAI, which is based region-wise, is well equipped to handle problems of North, East, South, and West. However, by 2025, I hope FHRAI can change this constitution so that all regions can get together to elect a national president by ballot and not through rotation from region-to-region. The term of the president and other office bearers and board members should be fixed to a minimum of two years. This gives the younger lot a chance to come in, giving the board a fresh outlook that is in touch with the times.





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Ashoke Singh

Ashoke Singh Joint Honorary Secretary, FHRAI

FOCUS ON GST

FHRAI, being a body that represents national interests and bears in mind India's fast-growing tourism industry, must focus on petitioning to the government to lower GST on food and beverage. The GST levied on this sector in India is higher in comparison to that levied in other countries, thereby impeding growth of the sector. Also, as we move towards a developing economy and seek to promote tourism, our efforts should be to obtain land at a subsidised rate through government support in order to create a surge in the growth of budgetary hotels, a necessity keeping in mind increasing workforce and business travels as the world becomes a smaller place.

VISION 2025: INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

FHRAI is growing year-on-year and will be a stronger body with many more members by 2025. Our efforts will continue to be channelled towards creating more jobs, thereby improving the



standard of the industry as a whole and making it a larger contributor to the economy. As tourism continues to grow, so will our role in enabling a greater inflow of foreign exchange for the government.

By 2025, our already-established cordial relations with neighbouring countries would probably realise into stronger and defined positions, resulting in FHRAI being an internationally recognised, respected, and relevant organisation.



T.S. Walia

T.S. Walia Vice President, FHRAI

FACILITATE COMPLETE DIGITISATION

There hasn't been a man in history who has accurately predicted the future of anything, and I am no different. My heartiest greetings to one and all as the 2017 FHRAI convention is just around the corner, an event with which we are bound to reach milestones never reached before and accomplish feats never accomplished before. That said, we have a bigger task at hand.

FHRAI is about the industry to which we are all heavily indebted, about its patrons without whom none of this could have possibly been achieved, and about all the thousands scattered across the length and breadth of our country who give the industry its foundation.

Post the convention, there are several pressing issues that, according to me, the federation must take up. The most urgent of all is to facilitate the complete digitisation of the day-to-day functioning of our member establishments, keeping in view the government's policy of promoting a digital India and to organise an efficient method for the expression of any grievances that our members might have, so that we can take them up in an orderly manner

and solve the plight of our patrons. This will strengthen our foundation at the grass-roots level and our leadership at the apex.

VISION 2025: RECOGNITION ACROSS GEOGRAPHIES

Times are changing, and with that, we must change too. We are now an imposing presence in the country and everything that is presently going on only indicates further growth in significance in the future.

If we work in cohesion and keep the requirements of our industry before our own, then by 2025, FHRAI will have the potential to be made into one of the most important associations of the hospitality industry across geographies.

We have within our reach, a possibility to gain importance in the international sphere of the hospitality industry, so that we may be able to reward our founders for their foresight. A member body spreading across the lands, and an ethically and strategically sound leadership capable of, in the words of the late Steve Job, "making a dent in the universe," is what we are headed towards.





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Pranav Singh

Pranav Singh
EC Member, FHRAI

TAPPING INTO THE BEST

FHRAI, being one of the bigger associations of the global hospitality industry, has come a long way. We are on the path to being a more evolved organisation that provides leadership to the entire industry. FHRAI members strongly feel that lots can be desired and achieved by this august institution. We still have eight years to 2025, and

we should tighten our belts and work towards creating a legacy for our future generations.

India has a potential to emerge as a favoured tourism destination among travellers. It just needs a comprehensive infrastructure along with a change in mindset. We, as the major stakeholders, have a pivotal role to play.



K Murali Rao

K Murali Rao
Honorary Treasurer, FHRAI

CHALLENGES APLENTY

The existing GST rates are affecting the tourism sector on a large scale by lowering occupancies. Like other major countries, it will be better if a uniform, lower GST rate is brought in. There already exists a challenge of excess supply in the industry. As a result, the rates of hotel accommodations are reducing day-by-day and revenue margins are shrinking. The ever-increasing commission of OTAs is eating into the revenue margins.

ensure ecological sustainability has arisen. Hotels must strive to follow the same. Non-traditional, alternative accommodation concepts like Airbnb and serviced apartments are catching up and leading to surge in supply of inventory. Government regulations are now required to streamline such developments.

VISION 2025: ONE BODY, ONE VOICE

FHRAI must bring all stakeholders under one umbrella, promoting the concept of 'one body, one voice' for the development of tourism in India, encouraging more foreign tourist arrivals. The thriving hospitality industry is a significant contributor to GDP and hence, must be awarded an 'Industry' status. The association must also seek to increase its membership base and give members support services at all levels to satisfy their needs by engaging with governmental authorities.

Availability of skilled human resource continues to be a challenge for the hotel industry. Attrition rates are high, resulting in hotels becoming training centres for other industries. To tackle this challenge, support and skill development programmes are required to be formulated. Ever since socio-ecological changes have begun to worry the world, a dire need for practices that



Luv Malhotra

Luv Malhotra
EC Member, FHRAI

MORE RECOGNITION

I am sure the convention will address some of the concerns of the industry, but there will be a lot of work that will still need to be done later in the year. This includes, and is not limited to, the continuous demand of hotels to be given an 'Infrastructure' status.

by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

VISION 2025: EXPANDING BASE

FHRAI has been serving its members very well since its inception and has seen its membership base grow to numbers well over 4000. By 2025, with a strong leadership, I expect this number to double as more hoteliers will see the benefits of being with a strong association. Hopefully, with many more seminars and regional or state-based conclaves, FHRAI will have the privilege of having the Prime Minister inaugurate FHRAI Convention 2025.

Additionally, the hospitality industry should be in the lowest slab of GST so that the country is competitive with the rest of the world. Hotels must also be in the green or white category of polluting industries rather than the red and orange categories, where most of the hotels have been placed

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Souvagya Mohapatra

Souvagya Mohapatra EC Member, FHRAI

SAFEGUARDING INTERESTS

Due to multiple tax slabs under the GST, there is a lot of discontent amongst hotel and restaurant operators as sometimes it gets difficult to ascertain the right slab under which the services are to be taxed. This issue needs to be addressed and the government should also be requested to have two slabs for hotels and restaurants rather than the complicated four-slab structure.

FHRAI should also take up the issue of FDI in hotels and request the government to frame positive policies for safeguarding the interest of the hotel and restaurant operators in the country.

FHRAI should also appeal to the government to develop those properties that are underdeveloped, yet have a high tourism potential in a PPP mode at site. Besides, interest subsidy on credit extended to hospitality sector must also be taken up.



VISION 2025: A CATALYST FOR DEVELOPMENT

I hope that by 2025, FHRAI would have brought under its fold, all standardised operating hotels and restaurants in the country. By then, the association should have evolved to be a more articulate and powerful platform to voice the concerns of the industry.

Besides, FHRAI will be able to promote the interest of the members more effectively by forging multilateral partnerships with financial institutions, government, tour associations, and other stakeholders.

By 2025, Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India would be able to play a decisive role in the promotion of tourism activities in the country by catalysing supportive infrastructure development, and primarily affordable and comfortable properties at all key locations in the country.



Garish Oberoi

Garish Oberoi Vice President, FHRAI

STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE

FHRAI was conceived with an idea to energise the hospitality industry in India and has achieved many milestones in its 60 years of existence. It is the only pan India association for both hotels and restaurants.

Being the oldest organisation that works for the promotion and protection of the interests of the Indian hospitality industry, it is time that FHRAI maintains its legacy by strengthening its role as an advocate, communicator, and educator of the key issues impacting the industry on a national as well as global level.

FHRAI must strive to become a one-stop data centre capable of updating its members on latest developments in terms of licensing, guidelines on hotels and restaurants, hospitality market research, etc.

Content is key and the availability of relevant data will not only boost the industry's performance but also foster growth in the tourism sector. The association should serve as a nodal body

providing all the relevant knowledge and information on the hotel and restaurant industry nationwide.

VISION 2025: MORE GROUND TO COVER

The GST of 28 per cent on room tariffs above ₹7,500 needs a review. Uncertainty on levy of GST on complimentary rooms, surge pricing, no actual published tariff, difficulty in unbundling of taxes in terms of MICE (including ISGC credits and Input Tax credits) needs to be clarified by the GST Council.

Industry status; categorisation of hotels in 'Red' and other concerns on guidelines issued by CPCB and MoEF; dialogue with Ministry of Consumer Affairs; issues related to MRP, PPL and IPRS; and FSSAI regulations are the major areas wherein the Association needs to focus in days to come.

FHRAI needs to adapt to the pace of the changing world by embracing the digital age. Providing information to all stakeholders instantly through all kinds of social media is the need of the hour.



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DELHI TOURISM



One **State**, many **Worlds**

In an interview, **Gaurav Gupta**, Principal Secretary, Department of IT, BT and Tourism, Government of Karnataka, talks about initiatives taken to promote tourism in the state.

Kanchan Nath



Gaurav Gupta

HOW IS KARNATAKA TOURISM POLICY 2015-20 DIFFERENT FROM KARNATAKA TOURISM POLICY 2009-14?

Department of Tourism, Government of Karnataka, has always been endeavouring to include Karnataka among the best and must-visit lists of tourist places in India. Karnataka Tourism is actively implementing policies, infrastructure development initiatives, and capacity building strategies to achieve this objective. It is with this view that Karnataka Tourism made Tourism Policy 2009-14 to give a new shape to the tourism industry. The policy focused on customer centricity, branding, source marketing, capacity building and training, policy development, fostering PPP ventures, etc. Further, as an extension of the Tourism Policy 2009-14, Karnataka Tourism formulated Tourism Policy 2015-2020.

Tourism Policy 2009-14 had a tourist-focused plan, but Tourism Policy 2015-2020 is investment centric and more focused on inclusive development by considering all the stakeholders associated with

Karnataka Tourism. Much focus has been given on adopting a collaborative regional development approach. More private investments are encouraged by providing various subsidies and concessions. The policy also aims at streamlining processes by establishing a tourism infrastructure company to carry out hassle-free tourism services. As part of responsible tourism, focus has also been given on corporate investments in tourism projects, particularly for rural tourism development. Sustainable development of tourist sites and promoting sustainable growth have also been paid attention to. The policy also aims to introduce small aircrafts and airlines to make air service more people-friendly.

WHAT MARKETING INITIATIVES HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKEN BY KARNATAKA TOURISM TO INCREASE FOOTFALLS?

Department of Tourism has adopted a multipronged strategy to promote Karnataka tourism. This includes organising trade fairs, district tourism festivals, lake festivals, Bengaluru International Arts Festival, etc. Karnataka Tourism has launched co-branding initiatives with Royal Challengers Bangalore and Bengaluru Football Club to promote tourism in the state. This is apart from the promotional initiatives undertaken by DoT at international travel events such as WTM, ITB Berlin, etc. Karnataka Tourism

“

Tourism Policy 2015-2020 is investment centric and more focused on inclusive development

”



has declared 2017 as the 'Year of the Wild'. The objective is not to restrict tourism to wildlife alone, but also to promote the wild side of Karnataka that would include adventure activities. The state has been focusing more on adventure tourism such as skydiving in Mysuru, motorcycle tourism in Hampi, scuba festival at Netravati, surfing festival at Mangaluru, etc. For the promotion of adventure tourism, DoT has joined hands with Department of Sports & Youth Affairs and General Thimayya National Academy of Adventure, Karnataka, for promoting rock climbing, trekking, mountaineering, mountain biking, kayaking, rafting, parasailing, and paragliding. In addition, DoT has also rolled-out social media campaigns, print and radio campaigns to promote Karnataka Tourism.

Government of Karnataka has established the Karnataka Eco-Tourism Development Board to create awareness about wildlife and promote eco-tourism. Along with the Eco-Tourism Board and Jungle Lodges and Resorts, eco-tourism zones are being identified with a chain of nature camps and eco-trails to provide the best experience of the wild.

HOW MANY TOURISTS HAVE YOU RECEIVED? WHAT ARE YOUR TARGETS?

The tourist flow into the state has steadily been increasing from 3.67 crore in 2006 to 13.30 crore in 2016, which indicates comprehensive increase in arrivals.

We have aggressive targets for 2018. As per the 2015 data released by Ministry of Tourism, Karnataka is at the ninth position in terms of foreign footfalls and at the fourth position in terms of domestic footfalls, in comparison to other states in India. We

are aiming to be among the top three in domestic footfalls and the top five in terms of foreign footfalls by 2018.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS TO AUGMENT STATE INFRASTRUCTURE?

Department of Tourism is focused on development of tourism infrastructure for the state. In this regard, Karnataka Tourism has embarked on destination development across 20 destinations in the state. Government of Karnataka, in its 2017-18 Budget, has allocated ₹385 crore, which covers integrated development of heritage tourism infrastructure in the destinations, development of roads connecting to World Heritage sites and other most important destinations, and construction of hygienic public conveniences at important tourist destinations. Destination development includes last-mile connectivity to the destinations.

Department of Tourism is presently implementing Coastal Circuit development under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. Apart from this, DoT has also embarked on the development of Deccan Sultanate Circuit, Heritage Circuit, and Eco-Tourism Circuit in the state.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR ROLE AS PARTNER STATE FOR FHRAI CONVENTION 2017.

The event will feature a diversity of activities unique in showcasing the best of the region, with displays of the culture, heritage, and customs of the state. FHRAI and member hotels are an important part of the tourism ecosystem in Karnataka and we want to see things from their point of view as well. We wholeheartedly support them for the event and view this as a great opportunity to showcase Karnataka Tourism.

WHAT ARE YOUR PRIMARY SOURCE MARKETS? WHAT INITIATIVES HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO PROMOTE THE STATE?

Karnataka is emerging as a promising tourism destination in the country for both domestic and foreign tourists. Based on the tourist footfall statistics to the state, USA, UK, Canada, Malaysia, Australia, Germany, France, and Japan are identified as the primary markets with a large number of tourists flowing to Karnataka.

In terms of key initiatives, Department of Tourism envisages to conduct an international travel exposition (Karnataka International Travel Expo), which showcases the potential investment opportunities and competencies of Karnataka tourism so as to foster its strategic marketing and for planning new projects in eco, rural and health tourism.

Zeroing in on **KARNATAKA'S HUBS**

Bengaluru is a city that has seen maximum growth of hotels in recent years. We dissect its market scope, challenges in growth, and the tourism agenda the government should adopt to further the hospitality and tourism sectors here and in other regions of the state.

Kanchan Nath



Jatin Khanna

Multi-property Vice President (Bengaluru) and General Manager
Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield

GROWTH DRIVEN BY MILLENNIALS

Being a hub for IT and ITES companies and start-ups, Bengaluru is a market driven by an influx of corporate travellers and corporate events. The industry in the city remains upbeat with the current occupancy level at more than 70 per cent. Marriott's portfolio in Bengaluru is well spread-out in terms of inventory with 13 operating hotels and our aim is to leverage the strength of this integrated portfolio and position ourselves as the market leaders in each of the segments. Development and expansion of the state's tourism sector is largely dependent on adventure and leisure travellers. Karnataka Tourism has already launched 'Motorcycle Tourism' with a bike ride in Hampi and a series of other rides in Karnataka's numerous destinations.



Jatin Khanna

The government is actively promoting Mysuru as an aero-sport destination, especially for skydiving. The takers of this sport are a mix of people staying within the city as well as travellers who are visiting the city. They are always looking for unexplored places to visit. The area surrounding Bengaluru has a lot of tourist spots within a 4-5 hour drive. These places include Hampi, Coorg, Gokarna, and Dandeli.





Kunal Chauhan

Kunal Chauhan
General Manager
The Leela Palace Bengaluru

POTENTIAL APLENTY

The city of Bengaluru is a melting point of beautiful natural trails with ethnic and cultural backgrounds. On the one hand, it is in close vicinity to a number of archaeological and heritage sites like Shravanabelagola and Mysuru, and on the other hand, you would find places like Coorg, Chikmagalur, Gokarna, and Bandipur National Park with beautiful landscaping, trekking spots, and adventure sports. Karnataka is truly a perfect blend of mountains and sea that are a rare combination in any state. Thanks to its favourable climatic condition, the region is an ideal tourist spot in any season.

FACING CHALLENGES

A city's hospitality sector depends on the growth seen in infrastructure and tourism. It is a well-known fact that the city is slightly stretched in terms of traffic and congestion. With an estimated population of 10.1 million in its urban area, the city's infrastructural facilities need to scale up. Of late, the state government has taken various positive steps towards curbing this issue with metro connectivity that is soon to come up. This will surely help with the issue of congestion. Several other steps that are being paid attention to are restoration of the ecosystem of Bengaluru's lakes in a time-bound and cost effective manner and addressing the city's drainage issue. The government, through its various initiatives, is also taking special measures in addressing the condition of the roads and solving the pothole menace. There is also an urgent need to scale up and construct elevated corridors in the key stretches of the city.

“
The city average
for occupancy is
71 per cent,
ARR is ₹8,983,
and RevPAR
is ₹6,412
”



Additionally, Bengaluru's international airport, with its state-of-the-art technology, has the bandwidth to have more connectivity at both a national and international level; there is also a need to increase the air traffic in the city.

UNIQUE REGIONS

Bengaluru enjoys a favourable ecology with natural trails, coffee plantations, and other heritage sites that act as quick getaways and need to be promoted holistically. There is Chikmagalur that has transformed the coffee culture and Gokarna that is complete with open beaches, dreamy sunsets, cliffs, and quaint temples that make it a highly interesting tourist spot. For those who have an inkling towards jungle safaris, there is Bandipur Wildlife Sanctuary. There are more places that are replete with historical sites. Mysuru is one such example that has revived the silk culture, Shravanabelagola has Asia's tallest monolithic statue, and Channapatna is the nation's go-to destination for wooden toys. These places need to be equally projected on the world map for their abundance in natural beauty and enriching archaeology. The highways connecting them also need to have infrastructural facilities and optimum accommodation.





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Gaurav Singh

“

Bengaluru has witnessed the highest y-o-y RevPAR growth of more than 15 per cent

”

Gaurav Singh

Multi-property General Manager

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BETTER INFRASTRUCTURE FOR TRANSPORT

Bengaluru is the heart of the IT industry of India, a fact that overshadows the historical significance of the city and its surroundings. The infrastructure and the traffic conditions here need to be paid attention to. The city will witness a significant improvement in the near future with various flyover projects approaching completion and the work for a metro-rail in full force.

PROMOTION, A MUST

Promoting the city and the state at both national and international trade shows is a must for creating awareness and to help boost tourism. Public transport needs upliftment and reintroduction of city tour buses and tours to neighbouring localities that have a historical significance will surely help increase tourism in the region. The travel and tourism industry has been instrumental in the nation's economic growth and is a significant source of foreign exchange and employment. The

state government plays a vital role in supporting and encouraging the inflow of tourists to the state.

LOCAL ART AND SIGHTS

Bengaluru, being the capital of Karnataka, has hidden treasures of history such as the Summer Palace of Tipu Sultan and the Nritya Bangalorem village that is approximately 30 kms from the city and houses a classical dance academy. The Bannerghatta Biological Park is an important tourist attraction as well. Nandi Hills in Bengaluru is popular for its temples and fort. Devarayanadurga, situated 70 kms from Bengaluru, is known for its hilltop shrines. These sights have witnessed a surge in tourist arrivals, both national and international. Courtyard by Marriott and Fairfield by Marriott are closely associated with the local art form of Channapatna toys, elements of which are visible across the hotels. The toys are manufactured in Channapatna in Bengaluru's rural district. The craft is protected as a geographical indication under the WTO and is a popular tourist attraction.



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ibis Bengaluru Hosur Road Hotel

PROMOTING HISTORICAL SITES

Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation is already focusing on promoting heritage and wellness tourism in the international markets. In the heritage tourism segment, it's looking to promote the UNESCO inscribed World Heritage sites of Hampi and Pattadakal, along with sites like Badami and Bijapur. For wellness tourism, the corporation plans to promote destinations in and around Bengaluru. We feel that this is a good initiative and will help in giving a boost to leisure tourism in the city.

**ADVENTURE TOURISM,
A DRIVER FOR GROWTH**

The tourism industry in Bengaluru, which receives more business travellers than leisure tourists both from the international and domestic markets, is set for further growth supported by improvements made to the tourism infrastructure and the continued growth in inbound arrivals. Given its strategic location as a key gateway to World Heritage sites and historical locations in the state,

particularly for domestic tourists, Bengaluru is in a good position to further expand its leisure tourism potential. Adventure and nature tourism are now being explored with domestic segments. Multiple sporting activities and adventure groups have been the main instigators for this.

SKILLED MANPOWER, A CHALLENGE

The emergence of Bengaluru as the IT capital of India towards the beginning of the new century has necessitated quality accommodation to service the needs of the industry in a big way. Bengaluru's hospitality market is fiercely competitive and driven with a continuous upsurge of hotels in the area. Given the specific needs and demands of the traveller, there is a shortage of highly skilled and trained employees. Retention of the workforce through training and development is a problem and attrition levels are a cause for concern. As Bengaluru emerges as a destination on the global travel map, expectations of travellers rise further. We feel that the hospitality industry has to focus on guest loyalty and repeat business.

“

Adventure and nature tourism are now being explored with domestic segments

”



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Sujeet Kumar

“
RevPAR for the
month of July
was ₹6,366 and
ARR was ₹8,164
”

Sujeet Kumar
General Manager
Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at
Brigade Gateway

HUB OF MEDICAL TOURISM

Karnataka is a land of opportunities not only for business but also for leisure travellers, with a growing industry and a diverse mix of cultural sites. Multiple tourist destinations attract tourists to Karnataka, with a lot of places to visit in and around Bengaluru. The capital city is also the most popular medical tourism destination in India, with a variety of specialty treatments available here. This gives us the business advantage where we cater to a variety of clients.

TRAFFIC, A MENACE

While the state government is extremely supportive of the growth of tourism in the state, the government's focus has to be channelised to ensure that efforts are enhanced to promote areas



with cultural and religious significance, which in turn would not only ensure continued earnings but would also give livelihood to the local communities.

Additional focus is required on city infrastructure and traffic control, including metro connectivity. While the city provides opportunities to people working in all sectors, travelling to and from work is a concern for most city dwellers. A lot of time and fuel is lost while commuting from one place to another within the city. The city has expanded manifold, however, the infrastructure development has not been able to keep pace at the same speed. If the government can address the concern on priority, the business and tourism sentiment would improve and so would the overall life of citizens.



Parul Thakur

“
There is a lack
of identity and
recognition for
Karnataka
”

Parul Thakur
General Manager
JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru

RECOGNITION FOR STATE

A major challenge that the city faces in hospitality is the lack of identity and recognition for Karnataka. There is a dire need to create and market an identity for Karnataka.

PROMOTING EACH ASPECT

The most appropriate solution to curb the issue of recognition is to promote the state for tourism. Bengaluru and its neighbouring towns and cities have a lot to offer when it comes to fulfilling the needs of business as well as leisure travellers. With more support in terms of promoting Bengaluru as an IT hub and a city that harbours a rich heritage and culture, apart from being a wedding destination and one for industrial or business travellers, we would be able to see an increase in the influx of more companies along with transient and group travellers.





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Faiz Alam Ansari

Faiz Alam Ansari
Complex General Manager
Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Center and
Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park

A BOOMING MARKETPLACE

The tourism industry in Bengaluru is booming and gaining a lot of momentum. Continuous improvements are being made with regard to the tourism infrastructure to gain more visitors. The growth has been more than 300 per cent from a mere 24 million 10 years ago to an astonishing 85 million today.

Bengaluru receives more business travellers than leisure tourists, both from the international and domestic markets since it is the IT hub of India. It also provides a range of investment opportunities throughout the value chain and across tourism industry verticals spanning both the manufacturing and service sectors.

Given Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park's strategic location in Cessna Business Park, it mainly caters to business travellers and is now also expanding and attracting leisure travellers. Tourism is a sector that keeps advancing with new hotels launching and growing their base. Hotels now are adapting to cater to customer needs. Bengaluru, being an IT-centric city, has hotels that are equipped with the latest technology and automation that makes a customer's life easier and more relaxing. The tourism industry in the city is now increasing and getting competitive by each passing year.

Bengaluru is blessed with natural and historical advantages which, coupled with its art and culture

ethos, can be leveraged to a great advantage. Around the city, circuits of urban tourism include Mysuru and Coorg.

Bheemeshwari is situated near the Kaveri River and includes beautiful gorges, waterfalls, rapids, dense forests, and much more, making it a great tourist attraction for adventure and nature lovers. Other activities that give a thrill include activities such as para gliding at Nandi Hills or caves for exploration in Tumkur, Antara Gange, and Kolar.

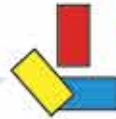
Channapatna Crafts Park, belonging to the handicraft circuit, can attract passionate art lovers as it is India's first crafts park. The park has a cluster of over 3000 traditional artisans engaged in the production of lacquerware. The infrastructure and facilities of the park are also available to architects, designers, and other companies for crafting and manufacturing of wooden products and lacquerware.

Bengaluru can also be promoted as an Ayurvedic-driven leisure tourist destination as it has multiple rejuvenation centres such as SOUKYA Holistic Health Centre and Samatvam Holistic Health, and native holistic services from yoga and meditation to Ayurveda, naturopathy, and homeopathy.

To sum it up, Bengaluru is a fast-growing market for hospitality and tourism and has the potential to be the number one tourist destination.

“Growth has been from a mere 24 million, 10 years ago, to an astonishing 85 million today”

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Nilesch Gajare

Nilesch Gajare
General Manager
Lemon Tree Premier,
Ulsoor Lake, Bengaluru

MARKET SCOPE

Bengaluru has lots to offer through segments such as IT, ITES, aerospace, and defence sectors, apart from being a transit stopover for nearby destinations. The city also contributes through leisure and MICE segments to the overall business. Emerging trends in the city such as medical tourism from UAE and the Middle East, and staycations are further contributing to boosting occupancy.

LACK OF CAPACITY

Poor infrastructure that leads to traffic congestion across the city is a major challenge. Absence



of high quality and high capacity convention facilities prevents the MICE segment from choosing Bengaluru over other destinations where huge MICE gatherings are concerned.

MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE

Bengaluru, being the state capital and a key location for places of interest such as Mysuru, which has heritage value; Hampi, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site; and Coorg, considered as the Scotland of India, is being promoted by the state government but a greater thrust is needed to boost leisure and cultural tourism in the city.



Bipendra Gupta

Bipendra Gupta
General Manager
Lemon Tree Hotel,
Whitefield, Bengaluru

AN EVOLVING MARKET

The potential of the hospitality and tourism industry in the city is rising and the demand for the same is expected to go up with advancement in tourism activities. With the trend of new start-ups and IT giants evolving in the city, the demand for hospitality and tourism, especially during holidays and extended weekends, has taken a significant jump. The neighbouring town of Channapatna is explored for its wooden toys and lacquerware. Also, Nandi Hills, which is at a distance of 60 kms from Bengaluru, is a haven for bikers who have adventure on their mind.

UPGRADE OF INFRASTRUCTURE A MUST

The oversupply of hotel brands in the city, with restricted increase in demand, is impacting the average rates due to stiff competition. Also, the infrastructure problems leading to traffic congestion and sporadic waterlogging issues often make travellers change their travel plans to the city. The civic authorities need to find out a permanent solution to the issue.

PROVIDE MORE OPTIONS

The state government can better the infrastructure of roads, traffic management, and organised parking spaces for vehicles at tourist spots. Guided tours for important cultural heritage destinations in the city, with affiliation to more hotels and restaurants, will give more choice to travellers.

“

The hotel had an occupancy of 85 per cent vs the city average of 75 per cent

”





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Narendra Prabhu

Narendra Prabhu General Manager Signature Club Resort Bangalore

EXPLORING POTENTIAL

Being the IT capital of India, Bengaluru has a huge potential to attract a vast number of expatriates and delegates. Being a hub for many SEZs and industrial regions, the city attracts a lot of MICE business. Bengaluru also opens up as a market for transit travellers and tourists who are enroute to Coorg, Wayanad, Ooty, and Mysuru. Leading and well-known hospital chains of the world have also made their presence in Bengaluru, which opens the opportunity to exploit medical tourism as well.

Bodigere, a suburb in North Bengaluru, has been identified as the birthplace of Karnataka's native sport, Kambala, and Karnataka tourism has planned to conduct this event in Bodigere during January, 2018. The event will attract at least half a million tourists.

KEY CHALLENGES

Some of the key challenges that the hospitality sector in the city faces include more supply than demand, price war due to new entrants, and the concept of serviced apartments. The country's two major financial reforms, demonetisation and the introduction of GST, have brought the market to a standstill, even though they're highly advantageous for customers. Non-availability of skilled workforce is another major challenge that the hospitality market here faces.

BENEFICIAL INITIATIVES

Some essential steps must be taken by the government and key stakeholders to overcome



these challenges. First-time hotel developers should tie-up with experienced or well-known hotel brands, the consistency and quality of service standards must be improved, a cost leadership strategy must be implemented, and awareness must be created regarding advantages of GST and its benefits to the end-consumer.

The state government's initiatives to develop the coastal area, implement traveller-friendly norms, move towards cashless transactions for the comfort of travellers, e-Visa scheme to ease the process of applying for a visa for foreign tourists, invitation to international hospitality brands to open properties in the state, and uplifting the standard of tourist spots in the state will help promote tourism.

“

Being a hub for many SEZs and industrial regions, the city attracts a lot of MICE business

”





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A GROWING INDUSTRY

Udupi is a famous pilgrimage spot and also one of oldest religious education centres. It is also known for its beaches such as Maravanthe, Trasi, Malpe, Kaup, and Padubidri. Manipal, a suburb within the city of Udupi, is a major technology and medical research hub. Manipal University caters to more than a lakh students nationally and internationally across various streams.

LIMITED INFRASTRUCTURE

There are no large-scale industries in Udupi to support hospitality. Due to heavy rainfall, all the beaches are closed for more than two months during this season. This impacts the growth of tourism in the region.

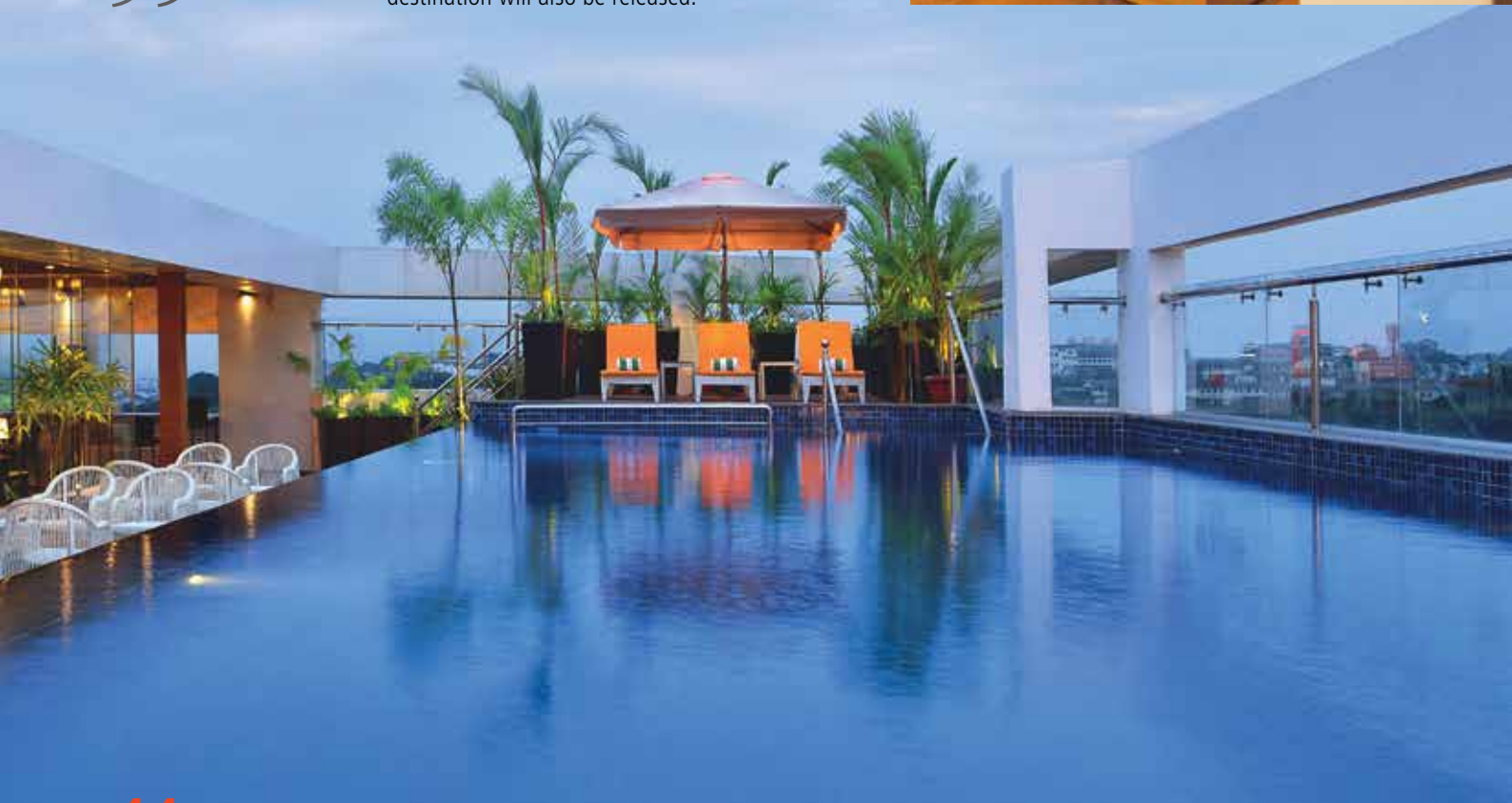
PROMOTING DIGITALLY

The tourism department of the region is working on a mobile application called 'Udupi Tourism'. This application is to promote Udupi as a tourist destination. The application will have information related to places to visit, accommodation options, tourist guides, hospitals, emergency contacts, etc. In addition, the department has already prepared jingles that will be formally launched. The department will also tie-up with radio stations to promote tourism through social media. A short video of 40 seconds, promoting Udupi as a tourist destination will also be released.

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Ashish Kumar

Ashish Kumar General Manager Hyatt Place Hampi

A HAVEN FOR TOURISTS

Hampi is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, recognised as a temple-town that inspires guests to visit us more often. Hampi has over 650 national monuments and 54 World Heritage monuments. The tourism sector in the region contributes 14.8 per cent to GSDP of Karnataka. Plans are also afoot to increase this to 26 per cent by 2020. Witnessing a steady flow year-on-year, Hyatt Place Hampi has successfully managed to grow in the surroundings. We have successfully targeted the corporate offsite.

The government also organises an annual festival called 'Hampi Utsav', a cultural extravaganza of dance, drama, music, fireworks, puppet shows, and spectacular processions, all combined to recreate the grandeur of a bygone era. Sandur Kushala Kala Kendra (SKKK) helps revive the traditional crafts of the area and improve the quality of life of craftswomen by encouraging and developing their skills and marketing their products, thus ensuring regular income to the artisans.

The NSDP of the state grew at a CAGR of 13.91 per cent between 2005-06 and 2015-16. Adding to that, we are placed within the township that has a 3-D museum, Kaladham, known for its visual interactive trip of Hampi. Some other initiatives that the government has undertaken include promotion of the region as a wedding destination, construction of a new Olympic stadium, and the commencement of commercial flights under the UDAN scheme to soon fly to Vidyanagar airport.

BAD CONNECTIVITY, A HINDRANCE

The main challenge is connectivity as we do not have a functional airport nearby. The closest one is the Hubli airport, which is three hours away and is a hindrance to guests wanting to travel by air. Also, people are now looking for alternatives; with new restaurants coming up in the vicinity, it becomes a challenge to maintain the footfall. At times, the environmental and economic situation of the area changes and there are hindrances created from the perspective of procurement. Other than that, there is inadequacy of adventure, entertainment, and wellness for which we have taken special measures.

MARKETING, A MUST

The government here has been doing its best to promote the destination with roads and connecting highways from Bengaluru, Pune, and Goa. Other than roads, Government of Karnataka is very keen on promulgating Hampi as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. However, absence of promotion and marketing for the same has been noticed in the area. From railways to roads, everything is at par for visitors wanting to experience this magical city of ancient ruins. On the other hand, the government is also ensuring maintenance of archaeological sites at regular intervals. A national highway is also under construction. Marketing initiatives should be strong for the state to acquire expressions of interest by participating in various trade fairs and promotional activities. Adventure, entertainment, wellness, MICE, and eco and spiritual tourism should be kept in focus.

“

Our occupancy has been 45 per cent while the city average for Hampi has been 65 per cent

”



Anderson Noronha
General Manager
Lemon Tree Hotel,
Electronics City, Bengaluru

PROMOTING HEALTHCARE

Since the 480-year-old city acts as a key gateway, particularly for domestic tourists, to the UNESCO World Heritage sites and historical locations in the state, Bengaluru is in a good position to further expand its potential for leisure tourism.

Besides, the city is well on its way to become a premier healthcare hub in the country with big players like Columbia Asia, Manipal Group, and Narayana Hrudayalaya.

MARGINAL GROWTH

Bengaluru has been known for its verdant greenery and lakes. However, the pressure of a burgeoning population has taken a toll on these sites. Air pollution has been on the rise due to increase in the number of vehicles on the road. While there has been a rapid growth of supply of classified rooms in the last 10-12 years, ADRs and occupancy have shown only a marginal growth.



Anderson Noronha

“

The hotel has an occupancy of 81 per cent vs the city average occupancy of 75 per cent

”

IMPROVING WHAT EXISTS

Improving traffic management, having a better local transportation network, and conserving the lakes and rejuvenating them would provide a boost to tourism in the city.



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FUTURE PERFECT

It is not easy to construe the intricacies of both science and art that go into the designing of a hotel. Striking a balance between technology and guest comfort, a hotel design ensures there is something for everyone.



Ritu Bhatia Kler

Future perfect is how we would like Indian hotels to be. The most important criteria is to build them faster. We are often asked, as designers, if our designs become dated by the time they are ready. In today's fast-paced world, the answer is yes. It is not just technology that is evolving fast but overall capabilities of industries, markets, business undertakings, methodologies of construction, and the biggest driving force- competition. Competition in business ensures that we are all moving, thinking, planning, and working faster, but maybe not fast enough in constructing hotels.

FUNCTIONAL ELEMENTS OF DESIGN

A hotel is a social place, a large home with different occupants of varying tastes and temperaments. In spite of this, a hotel must be

perfect for each customer, a task that is challenging for both the operator and the designer. In today's tech-savvy, fast-paced world, humans are increasingly becoming loners.

The present and future of design must strive to create social hubs in public spaces, make them more interesting, and create communal zones. An important question that we must seek answers to is why business hotels can't have activities too.

Through activities such as morning yoga or meditation classes, more bespoke fitness and wellness routines, and a more experiential approach to exercise, hotels and resorts will need to become more experimental and absorb some of the entrepreneurial ideas spinning around the fitness and beauty market.

There should be fewer F&B outlets but more interesting zones; private dining spaces should increase, given that guests visiting the hotel for the restaurant would definitely be coming with friends or family.

“

The present and future of design must strive to create social hubs in public spaces

”



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zones could display themed-cuisines, each distinct from the other. Live cooking or interactive stations are also here to stay, and must constantly evolve as a theatrical event.

Contemporary design is effective in furniture as it is light-weight and provides flexibility. However, the hotel should have a story to tell that is evident in the design element that runs through it. Artwork can also be part of this story, depicting local culture and heritage. These ideas may not be new but what can be new is the way we design and implement them. Technology can also be used to create art and visual effects, just as lighting can be part of this light and shadow effect.

NEW-AGE MATERIALS, THE KEY

- Large tiles that look like marble slabs
- Laminates that look as real as timber and metal
- Smaller lights that are brighter, yet more energy efficient
- Glass used as visual display
- Solid surfaces that can mimic almost any other material

A good idea would be to have one large restaurant in a 4-star business hotel that would have different zones and operate according to the time of day. For instance, during breakfast, all zones could be operational and at lunch, only a few zones, depending on the location of the hotel, could be open. During a conference, all zones must be put to use. The setting at dinner could vary, that is different



Design can become highly interactive with technology and hotels need to be more up-to-date on this



TECHNOLOGY AND DESIGN

Design can become highly interactive with technology and hotels need to be more up-to-date on this trend. Already, technology has advanced in other parts of the world with mobile phones being used for entry to hotel rooms, interactive TVs providing all requisite information and check-out facility, hotel room preparation on landing at airport, etc. In India, we still need to catch up on these trends. For instance, hotel check-in and check-out still involves a lot of time and paperwork.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Designers need to be allowed to think out of the box; brands need to be more flexible. As long as operation standards and guest comforts are met, hotels need to be unique in design elements. Trends are changing so fast in the fashion and technology world; hotels must not be left behind at any cost.

New elements such as metallic tones and warmer metals can also be used in design. This look can also be created with laminates, paint shades, and tiles. Bronze and other dark shades are also making a



comeback. Other materials like leather and exposed brick can be juxtaposed with smooth tones for an interesting décor. These elements can also be used in light fixtures and furniture. Plentiful options are also available in sanitary fixtures and hardware. A smart design would have accents of these and contrasted with other elements so as not to be too thematic or overpowering. Art and artefacts can set the mood to tell a story and be used as decorative touches.

GOING BEYOND

Some futuristic trends that can be out of a movie but will be a reality in years to come in some parts of the world:

- Robot butlers with special skills may be used to help improve the hotel experience for guests.
- Guests will have access to neuro-technology to programme their dreams.
- Meals will be custom-designed with a unique diet and nutrition menu that would be based on an individual's DNA.

Whichever the preference, in a hotel design or operations method, the end result can only be achieved through sincere dedication and advance planning. The owners and operators need to be in sync with their plan and the various consultants be briefed accordingly.

(The article has been written with contributions of TID team and compiled by Ritu Bhatia Kler, MD, Total Integrated Design – India. The views expressed above are the author's personal views).

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2018: Anticipating growth

In the cycle of hospitality, 2018 is said to be the one year when the sector will witness a boom, an event on the lines of the surge seen in 2008. Regional Presidents elaborate on what 2018 will be like for the tourism and hospitality industry of the country.



Sanjay Sood
President
HRANI

The Indian tourism and hospitality industries have emerged as one of the key drivers of growth among the service sector in India. Tourism in India has significant potential considering the rich cultural and historical heritage, and variety in ecology, terrains and places of natural beauty spread across the country. Tourism in India accounts for 7.5 per cent of the GDP and is the third largest foreign exchange earner for the country. The growth for the Indian hotel industry is expected to improve in FY-2018 even as the growth prospects have been scaled down from the earlier 8-10 per cent, constrained

“Growth prospects have been scaled down from the earlier 8-10 per cent, constrained by regulatory hurdles”

by the regulatory hurdles the industry has currently faced. While the business sentiments and discretionary spends were impacted temporarily by demonetisation in November, 2016, the positive long-term impacts of the same coupled with scheduled roll-out of Goods and Services Tax (GST) in July, 2017, will boost domestic economy and travel. The creation of five special tourism zones and the launch of Incredible India 2.0 campaign announced in the Union Budget 2017-18 are also expected to be a long-term positive for the industry. India is expected to move up five spots to be ranked among the top five business travel markets globally by 2030 (source WTTC).

The GST implementation raised many challenges initially, including classification mistakes. It seems the law was put in place without being completely ready as drafters were still working on many formats.

Luxury hotels may see a drop in occupancy in the coming months since there would be a significant increase in their pricing, being in the 28 per cent bracket of the GST. This may affect their competitiveness vis-à-vis destinations outside India. The government needs to seek feedback from all sources and then address each and every concern. This will bring about more clarity and aid easier implementation of tax laws.



Sudesh Poddar
President
HRAEI

According to a report by Boston Consulting Group and Google India titled 'Demystifying the Indian Online Traveller', the Indian passenger travel market is predicted to grow between 11-11.5 per cent to \$48 billion by 2020. The report also projects the hotel industry growth at 13 per cent to \$13 billion by 2020. Another recent report released by India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF) says that the hospitality industry is expected to create 13.45 million jobs across sub-segments such as restaurants (10.49 million jobs), hotels (2.3 million jobs), and travel agencies or tour operators (0.66 million). Surprisingly, the hospitality industry is growing at a faster pace as compared to recent years. In fact, with the growth of tourist inflow, the hospitality industry has become one of the main sectors to increase Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) influx. As more people come online, smartphone penetration increases, and use of digital payments go

up, the report estimates that India's online hotel market will grow to \$4 billion with 31 per cent penetration at a CAGR of 25 per cent. With an expanding middle class, better infrastructure, extension of e-Tourist Visa to 150 countries, and several initiatives by the government such as Incredible

“India's online hotel market will grow to \$4 billion with 31 per cent penetration at a CAGR of 25 per cent”

India and Atithi Devo Bhava, the country is witnessing a phase of incremental growth in the sector. Last November, the unexpected storm of demonetisation was a big blow to the sector, especially the unorganised side. However, the organised hospitality sector recovered quite fast due to its practice of digital payments.

However, with growth come challenges too. Liquor ban in several states and the law banning liquor near the highways has considerably affected business at a large number of establishments. Another challenge is the untrained workforce. Though many institutions impart the required knowledge, lack of practical training has hit the industry hard.



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Dilip Datwani
President
HRAWI

The hospitality industry of India has seen a lot of disruptions since November, 2016. When the government brought about demonetisation in the country, the industry was in turmoil and business across segments was also significantly impacted.

In another unanticipated move, in March of 2017, the Supreme Court banned the sale of liquor within 500 metres of highways, impacting nearly 25 per cent of hotels and restaurants in the vicinity of the highways. Liquor sales contribute up to 30 per cent of food and beverage revenues of hotels. Stand-alone restaurants and bars along the highways had to face losses and unpaid EMIs.

The third event to take the industry by storm came on July 1, 2017, when the new Goods and Services Tax came into implementation. This new tax regime brought about a GST of 28 per cent, the highest slab that adversely impacted hospitality as hotels with tariffs above ₹7,500 were brought under its ambit. Nowhere in the world's hospitality scene is this charge more than 10-12 per cent, something that made us lose

out to other more suitable destinations outside India. In view of the current difficult market condition, there has been some deferment or pairing of plans for various hotel projects across the country. Project delays caused by funding gap and related cost escalation has led to significant financial stress in various projects, especially for projects with relatively short moratorium on loan repayments leading to repayment obligations falling due, even before the hotel has stabilised its operations. Industry experts believe that there will be more projects up for sale.

India is a large market for travel and tourism. It offers

“
The industry will see a recovery after a long period of pain and we should be witnessing a strong upcycle spread over the next few years
”

a diverse portfolio of niche tourism products that include cruises, adventures, medical, wellness, sports, MICE, eco-tourism, film, rural, and religious tourism. The government has also released a fresh category of visa, the medical visa, to encourage medical tourism in the country.

The industry will see a recovery after a long period of pain and we should be witnessing a strong upcycle spread over the next few years, provided the rates of GST are rationalised.



K. Syama Raju
President
SIHRA

There is an emergence of budget hotels in India to cater to the majority of the population who seek affordable stays. International companies are also increasingly looking at setting up such hotels. Increase in tourists, both domestic and foreign, not being supported with an equivalent rise in the number of rooms is a latent source of opportunity for growth. The hotel industry is expected to fall short of meeting the long-term demands of an economy growing at 7-9 per cent annually. Around 40 international brands are said to enter the country in the next five years (as per Cygnus estimates).

The government's proactive approach to negate the adverse impact of demonetisation, along with proposed GST, should augur well for the tourism industry. The industry seems to be a divided lot over the impact of demonetisation on travel and tourism. The government opines that demonetisation has not taken the sheen away from the country's fast-growing inbound tourism sector. The statement issued by Ministry of Tourism states that demonetisation did not have any impact on the

foreign tourist arrivals and foreign exchange earnings that have shown robust growth over the comparative period last year and have provided statistics to support the claim.

While demonetisation may have led to a slow-down in growth, tourism has great resilience power and Indian tourism growth will bounce back. On the other hand, demonetisation of currency is expected to impact growth of the tourism sector in a positive manner in the long-term with a more transparent economy via digitalisation. A growth of 5-10 per cent because of the aggressive marketing by the tourism ministry and reforms in the e-visa system will translate into a boost in the coming year.

Also, new destinations are coming up in the North East, mainly in the states of Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, and Manipur, that will further boost the influx of both foreign and domestic

“
A growth of 5-10 per cent because of the aggressive marketing by the tourism ministry and reforms in the e-visa system will translate into a boost in the coming year
”

tourists, furthering the tourism and hospitality sectors in the said regions. Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat are also coming up with new destinations to promote tourism in these states.

Creating **DESIGNER DREAMS**

Mehta Furnishers reveals what makes them a preferred choice among hospitality brands in the country.

The charisma of hospitality is inherent in uniqueness of the ambience. Well-designed, durable, and comfortable furniture and accessories for good living go a long way in developing that special feature for a welcoming hotel or restaurant. Mehta Furnishers lets you discover the world of comfort, style, and elegance as it uncovers the aesthetic, artistic, and environmentally friendly wicker artwork as manifest in designer furniture.

The new housekeeping strollers, the mobile caddies of Mehta Furnishers, have carved a niche for themselves in boutique hotels that are always looking for unique ideas and aesthetic values. The huge housekeeping service stations that blocked corridors are set to become a thing of the past.

These new trolleys are not only compact but their mobility makes them extremely versatile. Other such products from the company are user-friendly, workably priced for the value they deliver, and are environmentally friendly.



Closely working with top-of-the-line hospitality managers, Mehta Furnishers has earned a well-deserved reputation of a trendsetter in the field of wicker arts.

Products from the company cover natural wicker furniture, teakwood outdoor furniture, patio umbrellas, trays, butler-stands, luggage-jacks, trolleys and strollers for housekeeping, multipurpose baskets and bins, picnic hampers, loungers, and many other options that are personalised to suit individual requirements of clients.

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Strolling amongst **MAGNIFICENCE**

The Garden of Five Senses is a space designed to stimulate one's sensory response to the environment. An ambitious project of Delhi Tourism, it is a 20-acre, spectacularly beautiful site, close to the ancient village of Saidul Ajaib, New Delhi.

Inaugurated in 2003, the Garden of Five Senses has been very popular ever since. Entry to the Garden of Five Senses is through a gateway of soaring stainless steel birds mounted on state clad pillars. This is the work of a contemporary Indian artist - Subodh Kerkar. The contrast between the rough pillars, the soft greenery, and the shining birds is striking. The name of the park is engraved in 52 Indian and international languages. A plaza at the entrance of the garden acts as a buffer between the busy main road and the garden proper. Low walls composed of pink sandstone, golden-yellow Jaisalmer stone, and pale-pink Dholpur sandstone are piled together. The walls have traces of influence of Mughal architecture. The garden is visible from this plaza through a magnificent stone wall built by Rajasthani craftsmen using stones from Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, and Dholpur.

Amongst the innumerable marvellous pieces of architecture, some that need a special mention are the Fountain Tree sculpture in bronze by sculptor Bowman and ceramic wind chime by ceramist Michael. This towering piece with delicate metal spirals holds hundreds of hand-beaten chopper bells that tinkle in the slightest breeze. The most stunning of these is Indian artist Enaz's 'A new heaven, a new earth', a gigantic sculpture of a man holding aloft a woman cartwheeling. Radha Krishnan's Heritage Column is another not-to-be-missed sight.

The Garden of Five Senses is young and still evolving; the growing species of plants and trees are still filling spaces. The garden runs on the unique concept of a solar energy park. Delhi Tourism's three-day Garden Tourism Festival is held at the Garden of Five Senses.

Available for hosting memorable events like birthdays, picnics, gala events, pre and post wedding functions, and corporate functions, the garden is an invigorating space and a veritable playground for your senses. The blurring of the boundaries between the old and the new, and tradition and modernity, is fascinating.

“

The Garden of Five Senses is young and still evolving. It runs on the unique concept of a solar energy park

”

From hospitality services to **LUXURY EXPERIENCES**

The world of hospitality is dependent on the skill set of professionals that are part of it. Today, as more companies seek to create memorable experiences for their customers, skill sets of hospitality graduates are in high demand.

The global luxury industry has seen a shift of focus away from luxury products towards experiencing luxury as a whole as identified by Boston Consulting Group. This has led luxury brands to rethink their service offer and brand experience. Luxury brands are approaching hotel schools as hospitality students are well versed in building excellent customer relations. The unique Swiss education model combines theoretical and practical courses, complemented by mandatory internships that transfer crucial soft skills of communication, problem-solving, and an acute sense of aesthetics and detail.

Glion Institute of Higher Education, a leading hospitality business school with campuses in Switzerland and London, established an

undergraduate track combining hospitality and luxury brand management, preparing students to create personalised experiences of the future.

DEMAND FOR EXPERIENCED SKILL

India's Ministry of Tourism identified a serious talent shortage in the hospitality sector, especially at managerial and supervisory levels. To ensure the relevance of curricula and the success of graduates in the marketplace, there should be a constant exchange with hospitality schools.

(This is an excerpt from an article by **Benoît-Etienne Domenget**, CEO, Sommet Education, that covers Swiss hospitality schools Glion Institute of Higher Education and Les Roches Global Hospitality Education.)



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Luxurious

Hotel lobbies are meant to create a lasting impression on visitors. Hoteliers share trends in themes, colours, and décor for perfect lobby spaces.

Kanchan Nath

LOBBIES

Meena Jarajapu Executive Housekeeper Mercure Hyderabad KCP

Every Mercure hotel has its own unique architecture that creates an authentic, warm atmosphere. We want our guests to feel welcome and enchanted by the locally inspired details. The brand Mercure resonates the theme of being 'in harmony with people and places'.

MAKING AN IMPRESSION

A lobby is the first and foremost thing a guest gets to see. Thus, we ensure that the lobby looks elegant all the time. We do periodic cleaning, polishing, crystallization, shampooing, etc., to keep the appearance of the lobby as fresh as possible. Consistency in floral decorations

is maintained to give an exclusive look to the lobby with a mild and soothing fragrance being dispensed all over the place. As Hyderabad is famous for being ruled by the Nizams, we have decorated a wall right behind the reception, inspired by their culture and lifestyle. Another wall has been covered by a Pochampalli handwoven cloth with an artistic design. To uphold local culture and tradition, the lobby has authentic Aranmula Kannadi handmade metal-alloy mirror sourced from Aranmula, a village in the state of Kerala. Other paintings by local artists and rare plants have also been added to make an everlasting impression on the mind of the guest.



Meena Jarajapu



Harikumar B

Harikumar B General Manager Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel Mysore

The lobby is the first sign for a guest that they have arrived in a space that welcomes them and understands their needs. We have gone all the way to ensure that the décor at Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel Mysore is stunning and eye-catching with a high ceiling that runs through the lobby space. Private seating and social zones inspire our guests to spend more time in the lobby while either relaxing or working. The lighting theme on pillars and coves that run into the high ceiling attracts the attention of guests first and foremost. The elegant contemporary design is reflected by patterns running over the lobby walls and columns and is complemented by creative zones like selfie corners, bridal photography spots, etc. Hotel lobbies are increasingly used as a place for social interactions and hence, it is important for us to ensure that both design and service enhance a guest's experience. Our hotel lobby is designed to offer limited privacy for these interactions but also provide the comfort of technology, entertainment, and culinary offerings during these interactions.

BLURRING BOUNDARIES

There has been a definite shift in the way designers are treating lobby spaces by infusing bold and vivid colours into neutral themes. This makes certain areas of the common space pop out. There has also



been an increased experiment in usage of bold metallic tones and outdoor elements like living vegetation that help in blurring the boundaries between the indoor and outdoor areas.

TEAMS WORK IN UNISON

The visual appearance of the lobby is sometimes transformed to reflect seasonal events like Christmas or Valentine's Day. While the workmanship is often outsourced to ensure perfection, the brief is always provided by the hotel team. This brief lays out very clearly the various components that can come together to create this transformation and is presented to us as design options that we can build upon and choose from. Regular upgrade of décor elements such as artefacts, floral arrangements, soft furnishings, etc., is often done by the hotel team in unison with leading vendors of the trade.



Ganeshram Iyer

Ganeshram Iyer Rooms Division Manager Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport

The hotel lobby has a high ceiling and glass windows to allow light to enter the property. There is a vibrant 'Tree of Life' painting that is visible as one enters the lobby. The whole lobby is designed in a way that displays space and a peaceful ambience for our guests.

SEASONAL CHANGES

The theme of the lobby is elevated every year on Christmas, New Year's, and Earth Hour. Elements of decoration are seen all over the lobby on these celebratory days. During Earth Hour, the lobby is lit up with candles as we celebrate the said hour. It gives the whole place a tranquil and beautiful ambience.

CLEANLINESS AND COLOUR

At Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport, we follow IHG's brand standard to maintain the lobby



décor, cleanliness, and conditions at the highest level. Colour themes and décor for hotels differ as per the brand. Most of the new and upcoming hotels are allowing natural sunlight to enter their lobby and add colour and freshness. Our in-house team manages and ideates the decoration of the lobby.

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Puja Mehta

Puja Mehta
GM Housekeeping
Jaypee Greens Golf & Spa Resort,
Greater Noida

The lobby of the deluxe hotel has a story to tell. Generally, it is kept very thematic, portraying the thought and vision of the hotel and its reason for existence. A business traveller's hotel would have less clutter, soothing colours, updated technology, and overall, be a good resting place after a day's hard work. A resort property would either boast of the region's specialty or the specific thought behind its existence. Jaypee Greens Golf & Spa Resort presents a lobby that exuberates peace, calm, positivity, and organic simplicity, which is further in sync with the Six Senses Spa, making it a world-class wellness destination.

ECONOMICALLY WELL-LIT

A large drawing room gives a traveller the feel of the hotel. The lighting effect is such that the areas



are well-lit and also look beautiful, taking into consideration the level of luxury and the colour of the lights. The conservation of energy is also always kept in mind while designing a lobby.

LESS IS MORE

The layout of the furniture is such that it looks clean and uncluttered. The areas have sufficient seating for travellers to be able to spend a comfortable time. The artefacts are thematic and follow the vision of the hotel. Carefully chosen colours support the hotel theme in its upholstery and accessories. The nature of the artwork tells a story on the hotel concept. In terms of décor trends, subtle and soothing colours and interesting textures are a popular theme nowadays. 'Less is more' this season.



Nitin Tanwar

Nitin Tanwar
Executive Housekeeper
The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel &
Residences

At The Leela Ambience Gurugram, we decorate our lobby with white, yellow, dark-pink, and orange colours. The decoration of the lobby is often inspired and changed per the festival. A single décor theme remains in the lobby for anywhere between seven to ten days.

FESTIVE ELEMENTS

During Valentine's Day, a big heart of red roses (approximately 3500) with some goodies and chocolates are displayed in the lobby. When it is time for the festival of colours, Holi, a rose arrangement on the centre table with organic and eco-friendly colours is made.

Around the time of the festivals of Dussehra and Diwali, the lobby is lit with *diyas* and a

Ram-Durbar is displayed for 10 days, surrounded by red and yellow roses. There is also a Diwali Hut, a souvenir festivity house for the guests displaying small brass and silver idols of Lord Ganesha and Goddess Laxmi, as well as sweets and other goodies.

When Christmas arrives, the décor of the lobby transforms into an even more festive space with a Christmas tree at the centre of the lobby, beautifully decorated with Christmas ornaments and gift boxes. The water body is also decorated with golden deer and red flowers of poinsettia.

The lobby furniture is in two different colours and decorated with different flower arrangements. The lobby rugs and carpets also add value to the furniture. Being an area that receives the maximum footfall, the marble in the lobby is polished regularly to maintain the standard that Leela follows while maintaining the aesthetic value of the space.

TRENDING DÉCOR

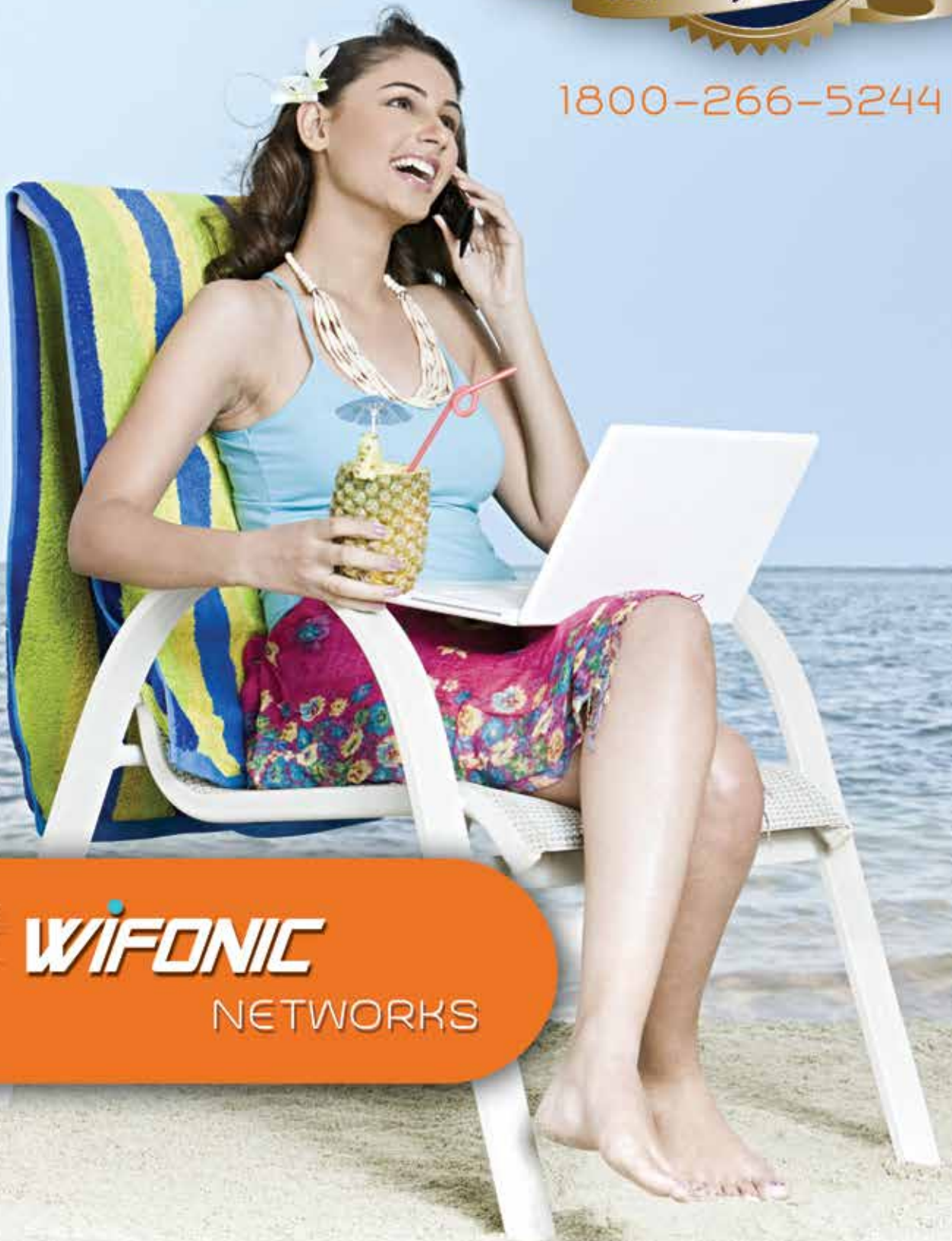
Some important trends for the season are spacious lobbies with less furniture, a huge chandelier, dim lighting in the lobby, and use of imported flowers that have a better shelf life than Indian flowers.



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Achal Aga

Achal Aga
Executive Housekeeper
The Leela Mumbai

The majestic dome in our lobby is made of 24-carat beaten gold, contrived by the artisans of South India. We also have ancient and cotemporary Indian artefacts in our lobby and a waterfall that adds a soothing touch. To further enhance the beauty of this space, we decorate it with fresh exotic flowers. We follow a certain cyclic pattern and have separate decorations for festivals, round-the-year.

FIXED CLEANING SCHEDULES

Given the décor and ambience of our lobby, it is imperative that we follow this in order to ensure that it is well maintained. We also have contracted partners for cleaning our façade, marble maintenance, and a dedicated carpet crew.



MORE LOCAL

'Go Green' seems to be the mantra for 2017. I think, everyone will start adopting environmentally friendly practices. Earlier, many hotels used to import products, but I feel, this year, with an evolving mindset, we will see hotels accepting local Indian products and innovations.



Naveen Vishen



Naveen Vishen
Head of Operations
jüSTa Hotels & Resorts

The décor of a lobby imbibes the theme and concept of the hotel itself throughout the year, focusing on visual opulence, ease of convenience, functionality, and comfort of the visitors.

A WARM APPROACH

As part of our culture and DNA, it is imperative that we ensure utmost sensitivity to keeping the area clean, clutter-free, visually appealing, and maintain that sense of invitation to everyone.

DÉCOR TRENDS

Our interior designer and architect spend a lot of time finalising before the actualization of any hotel project, creating the concept and theme of each of our hotels. Detailed thought is given to how each area of the hotel develops, keeping in mind the location of the hotel, the city, its culture, the audience it will cater to, as well as the uniqueness we want to create. Everything from colour, choice of material, flooring, lights and chandeliers, furniture and fabric, woodwork, and artwork is custom designed to fit into the scheme of the design and theme.



Mukesh Patil

Mukesh Patil
Rooms Division Manager
Four Points By Sheraton Hotel
& Serviced Apartments, Pune

Modern hotels have cleverly adapted to rapid social changes with creative solutions. Four Points By Sheraton hotels all over the globe are recognised for simplicity and honesty as their core brand values.

IMBIBING LOCAL FLAVOUR

There are no specific colours that are a trend or that the hotel needs to follow. This is more in line with the interior setup and clientele of the hotel. What is usually avoided are bold colours and what is preferred are soothing ones. Four Points By



Sheraton is known for its lobby ambience which creates a euphoria among the elite clientele with its soothing ambience that constitutes energising colour themes as per the geographical taste and a mix of local flavour.



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Driving revenue with cloud-based Property Management System

Today, guest behaviours and booking patterns are changing so rapidly that having a robust revenue management strategy is not a question of choice. It is imperative for hoteliers to follow holistic revenue maximising practices to realise dramatic impact on their profitability.

Revue management is the process that lets a hotel dynamically adjust its inventory pricing based on sales trends, past data, and other forecasts. As a result, hoteliers can derive maximal value from every sale and boost their bottom line. When effective revenue management processes are set right from the early stages of a hotel's lifecycle, it informs everyone about the hotel's direction and what measures the group should collectively take to achieve that goal. This is where a fully integrated, cloud-enabled property management system can help hoteliers accomplish that goal.

ADVANTAGES OF CLOUD-BASED PMS

Better pricing: Hotels can get the right pricing for maximum profitability by observing guest trends and demand. They can earn more revenue from the same inventory set. Prediction of high and low periods is possible by studying and evaluating variables such as season, occupancy levels in an area, guest type, competitor pricing, room features, and amenities that affect pricing. With this, a hotel can safely increase prices during periods of high occupancy and decrease them during periods of lower occupancy. This type of dynamic pricing can be used to determine rates based on the current and historic demand.

Making the most of existing bookings by upselling: Once the hotel has made a reservation, regardless of the channel from where the booking has come, there's always room for upsells. An advanced cloud-based PMS can track and record guest information and history within the system, which is immensely useful for multi-property groups to serve the guests when they happen to visit the property again.

Drive more profitability: Though increased occupancy is directly proportional to increased



revenue, targeting high occupancy can be a mistake. To be profitable, hotels should focus on Average Daily Rate (ADR) and RevPAR, and not on maximising occupancy.

Brand recognition: In today's social media era, feedback provided by guests is visible to everyone. Unfortunately, negative feedback attracts more attention than positive feedback. This can severely impact a hotel's credibility. A good PMS enables the hotel to track guest preferences every time they visit the property and also empower the hotel with reputation management tools.

Better distribution: A cloud-based PMS can improve a hotel's online presence and create or manage reservations coming from multiple channels. It helps the hotel owner to get a clear picture of the profit breakdown and account for opportunity costs. OTAs provide hotels with a powerful distribution platform and connect them to a specific set of guests. Once the hotel manager knows the opportunity costs associated with each of the online channels, he can make informed decisions and discover the right blend of distribution channels for higher profitability. Any hotel that is not embracing these revenue management practices is setting itself up for failure. By choosing the right technology, hoteliers can streamline operations, increase their revenues and cut costs.

Hotelgix is a cloud-based PMS that provides hotel revenue managers with the right technologies designed for optimising hotel operations and increasing revenue.

“

A fully integrated, cloud-enabled property management system can help hoteliers increase revenues

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Aiding Spokespersons talk about the viability of receiving finance for a new hotel or restaurant, the best segment to invest in, and the break-even period for profit in terms of operations.

HOTEL DEVELOPMENT



Amruda Nair

Amruda Nair

Joint Managing Director and CEO, Aiana Hotels & Resorts

NEED TO BOOST DEVELOPMENT

India is recognised as one of the fastest growing tourism destinations in the world with steady year-on-year growth in terms of tourist arrivals. With its contribution to 6 per cent of the GDP and 9 per cent of employment in the country, there is a need to continue to boost development in the sector through infrastructure building as well as supply of classified hotel inventory. The government has allowed 100 per cent FDI under the automatic route in the tourism and hospitality sector. Investors and lenders remain active in the hotel space, however, a recent survey indicates that there is cautious optimism towards lending for hotel projects due to tighter lending norms and increased scrutiny.

LOCATION, KEY TO SUCCESS

Given the wide range of size, scale, and classification, a blanket rule cannot be applied for hotels and restaurants as segmentation, type of financing, size of hotel, and cost to build will vary from project to project. Location is the key

criterion that determines the success of a hospitality business and in India, the attributable cost to real estate can be as high as 50 per cent of the total project cost. Typically, it would take three to four years to achieve cash break-even for a new build and equity break-even can take anywhere between 7 to 10 years.

A VIABLE SEGMENT

Opportunities for investment in hotels are completely location driven, based on availability of inventory and demand drivers unique to that market.

MANAGING ASSETS

A General Manager is the custodian of the operational side of business and hence, focus on the bottom line in terms of property-controlled GOP is key. Most asset owners with large portfolios will also enlist professional asset managers to liaise with the hotel operator on a quarterly basis for a financial review.

Vineet Verma
CEO & Executive Director
Brigade Hospitality

BUILD A CONVINCING BUSINESS MODEL

Procuring debt for building a hotel or restaurant has been a bit of a challenge with most leading institutions being a bit vary of the cyclical hospitality business. However, if one is to come up with a convincing business model for an upcoming hotel or restaurant business, there will be institutions willing to extend debt at hopefully reasonable rates.

BREAK-EVEN PERIOD FOR PROFIT

The break-even period for a hotel or restaurant depends on a host of factors and one single benchmark cannot apply to all. Having stated that, one can reasonably assume that a business-class hotel in a city area should see an ROI coming in from the seventh or eighth year for a 4 or 5-star property and a year or two earlier in case of a



budget hotel. For restaurants, one should be happy to see an ROI coming in from anywhere between the 24th and 30th month.

WHERE TO INVEST?

This would be very location specific and would also depend on market conditions. While all major cities in India are seeing a saturation in the 5-star and luxury segments, there is still scope in the mid-scale segment and budget categories.

COUNTING ON THE GM

A GM who understands numbers and has the capability to think like an owner will always be preferred over an external financial advisor.



Vineet Verma

Vinay Gupta
Vice President - Asset Management, SAMHI

OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE

SAMHI ensures efficiently built hotels that are operated at an optimum cost structure, allowing all its hotels to achieve operating break-even within months of their opening. SAMHI works with the best-in-class operating team of Marriott,



Hyatt, and Starwood to ensure the most efficient operating performance. SAMHI also uses various analytical tools to benchmark performance for its lower, mid-scale, and upscale hotel portfolio to draw desirable results.

ALL SEGMENTS CRUCIAL

SAMHI enjoys a well-balanced and diversified mix of hotels. We operate in small segment hotels such as Fairfield Marriott, Four Points By Sheraton in the mid-scale segment, and Hyatt Regency, Courtyard by Marriott, and Sheraton in the upscale segment.

Whilst SAMHI continues to focus on all segments of hotels, it has particular interest in mid-scale and lower mid-scale hotels. We now have 21 operating assets in the country that are growing consistently, adding to our portfolio.

GM WITH BACK-END SUPPORT

SAMHI enjoys a talented pool of General Managers to run its assets across segments. In addition, by virtue of the management agreement, the General Manager receives regular corporate support from Marriott and Hyatt (India) for finance, sales, revenue, and operations. SAMHI also provides structured asset management and analytical guidance to all its hotels.



Vinay Gupta


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*Andhra Pradesh has been named the Best Emerging Hotspot Destination for 2017 by the Pacific Area Travel Writer's Association (PATWA) at ITB, Berlin, Germany

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Andhra Pradesh
TOURISM

Backing **Ashok Garg**, Managing Director, Aska Equipments, tells us about the innovative products and the various industries that the company caters to.

DISASTER

management



Ashok Garg

KINDLY TELL US ABOUT YOUR COMPANY AND ITS PRODUCTS.

Aska Equipments is an ISO 9001:2008 certified company with a manufacturing base at Roorkee, Uttarakhand. It was established in the year 1985 and is headquartered at New Delhi. We are a pioneer in the field of lighting, specialised fire safety systems, and disaster management products, and have gained market leadership in the last few years.

Our lighting equipment includes portable inflatable emergency lighting system, mobile lighting tower, mini mobile light tower, backpack lighting, and long-range LED search light. Fire extinguishing systems include high pressure water mist and CAF-based firefighting system (10L, 50L, and bike-mounted 10Lx2 systems), WMG (high pressure), portable 9L water mist technology-based fire extinguishers on DRDO (CFEES) technology, WMG (low pressure), composite extinguisher foam, aerosol-based fire suppression system, and hero units.

Under CBRN, we offer FASTACT (First Applied Sorbent Treatment against Chemical Threats) neutralisers.

Among life-saving devices, we have automated external defibrillator for sudden cardiac arrest and ResQmax launcher and tactical devices.

WHO ARE YOUR CLIENTS?

We have already supplied to the Taj Hotel, Leela hotel, and also to disaster management authorities, Ministry of Defence, paramilitary forces, police, electricity boards, power companies, oil companies, hospitals, municipal corporations, pharmaceutical companies, airports, coalfields, banks, port trusts, PSUs, steel plants, and several others.

DO YOU PROVIDE AFTERSALES SERVICES?

We emphasise a great deal on service support and aftersales. We realise that delighting the customer through prompt and quality services only will help build trust and a relationship that yields repetitive business. We have our setup of 20 engineers who provide prompt aftersales services throughout the country and assure users of spare parts throughout India.

WHAT IS THE LATEST IN FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT? PLEASE ELABORATE.

We have played a pivotal role in revolutionising the firefighting concept by introducing a unique water mist technology and compressed air foam-based fire extinguishing system that has a distinct capability of

“

We are a pioneer in the field of lighting, specialised fire safety systems, and disaster management products

”

extinguishing Class-A, Class-B, and live electrical fires of up to 1000 volts. We have also revolutionised the firefighting concept by introducing an award-winning firefighting bike that is meant for narrow roads and congested by-lanes, which cannot be accessed by normal fire tenders.

Aska has also introduced composite extinguishers (light weight and corrosion-free for 10 years) as per EN3-7 Standard in various capacities. This is available in foam and ABC type. Aska has recognised the emerging threat rising from CBRN risks and has come up with path-breaking technology, FASTACT (First Applied Sorbent Treatment against Chemical Threats), based on Nano technology, used by the NDRF, Karnataka State Fire & Emergency Services, and Indian Army shelters. The product can also be used by pharmaceutical companies.

Furthermore, we have joined hands with Blaze Cut, an economical and effective solution for fires arising from small electrical panels and engine compartments. We have also joined hands with FirePro, Cyprus, and introduced automatic fire detection and suppression systems based on condensed aerosol technology. This technology is non-toxic, non-corrosive, and safe. The products are

UL-listed. Aska has also joined hands with ResQmax for its rope launcher and tactical device meant for the Indian market.

PLEASE TELL US ABOUT YOUR NEW BUSINESS VENTURE.

Bespocut is a techno-commercial enablement platform for design entrepreneurs to create their own bespoke clothing label. It offers a technology-enabled, cloud-based application to the bespoke entrepreneur who can connect with globally renowned fabric manufacturers, and trim and accessory manufacturers across the world.

HOW DO YOU PERCEIVE GST?

The overall reduction of cascading effect of taxes, especially on the post-manufacture stage of the supply chain, should have a positive effect on the cost of manufactured products in the hands of consumers. However, concerns remain on specific issues such as the additional one per cent Origin Tax, increased cash flow issues on account of GST payable on stock transfers, and increased costs owing to exclusion of petroleum fuels from the ambit of GST. The government should look into these issues in more detail if it is keen to promote its 'Make in India' initiative.



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Gulping down, **KARNATAKA** **STYLE**

Regional cuisines within Karnataka are largely influenced by the culture and palates of its inhabitants. Eminent chefs of star hotels elaborate on the history of Karnataka's diverse cuisine and how they ensure authenticity is kept intact.

Tripti Mehta



Zafar Ali
Executive Chef
The Leela Palace Bengaluru

INFLUENCED BY COMMUNITIES

The cuisine of Karnataka is not as popularised as other regional cuisines in the Indian subcontinent. The cuisine, though, is very diverse and unique in the way it has been influenced by religion and community. The major communities of Lingayats, Kurubas, Vakkaligas, Kodavas, Tuluvas Mangaluru Bunts, and Udupi Bhats (Brahmins) have influenced the cuisine of the state.

In terms of food habits, the region may broadly be divided into three, North, South, and Coastal. The staple food of northern Karnataka is millets such as pearl millet, sorghum, and finger millet, while in the coastal region, rice dominates the food intake with limited consumption of wheat and finger millet. The southern region predominantly uses finger millet and adequate quantities of rice in its diet.

A POPULAR FEAST

The local cuisine is gaining popularity amongst the diverse clientele of our hotel. Our chefs take the time to educate our guests about the health benefits of millets that are used in the cuisine, making them want to try the cuisine and appreciate the food. Walk-ins at our restaurants are generally about 35 to 40 per cent while the rest of the guests are residential. Saturday and Sunday brunches and speciality restaurants have a mix of close to 50 per cent walk-ins with the rest being in-house guests.

TOO DIVERSE A CUISINE

There are 30 districts in Karnataka and the cuisine of each region is influenced by various factors such as availability of ingredients, climatic conditions, religion, and community. In a broader sense, the regions may be divided as northern, southern, coastal, and the Coorg region. The cuisine of the northern region is predominantly influenced by vegetarians. The region has a tropical climate with high temperatures in the summer. Cuisine of the coastal region is influenced by neighbouring states of Goa and Kerala and is known for its seafood and coconut-based gravy preparations. With seafood being popular here, rice tends to be the staple food. Kuchalakki or brown rice is used often. Udupi, though a coastal town, is very popular for its vegetarian cuisine because of the Brahmin population in the region. Kodavas, the term used for the population of the Coorg region, are known for their non-vegetarian preparations such as Pandi Curry, Kadambuttu, Akki Rotti, and Coorg Aanbe (Kumme) Curry. South Karnataka is known for its Ragi and rice-based preparations and a wide selection of vegetarian preparations. The region includes Bengaluru, Mysuru, Tumkur, Mandya, Chamarajanagar, and other areas of the region. The rice preparations, selection of chutneys, Kosambari, pickles, and a whole lot of sweets, including the very popular Mysore Pak, are from here.

RECREATING WITH AUTHENTICITY INTACT

Traditional recipes are best preserved in their right form to ensure that authenticity of dishes is maintained and carried forward through generations. Innovations are done using traditional techniques to create variations to the dish, however, authentic dishes are not replaced. We must accept the fact that our ancestors created recipes based on nutritional and health benefits. The process now is to recreate the traditional recipes and methods of cooking to achieve a healthy, balanced diet.



Zafar Ali





Anthony En Yuan Huang

Anthony En Yuan Huang
Executive Chef
JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru

OFFERING KARNATAKA'S SPECIALTIES

Our menus are dynamic in nature and give us the opportunity to try different things all the time. At the recently concluded Marriott India Chefs Workshop, we focused on going local, a group initiative to embrace local food, use locally sourced produce, and also keep the locals happy. We have an elaborate vegetarian South Indian counter at our all-day dining restaurant that serves local fare through the day from all regions of Karnataka and our neighbouring states. This counter features dishes such as the famed Benne Dosa and Bisi Bela Bath in the morning to Chitranna and Vangi Bath for lunch and dinner. The Friday Night Market that takes place at JW Kitchen also features at least one star specialty from Karnataka in the form of a specialised stall, week after week.

We are inherently born with a sweet tooth and a sweet end to our meal is all that we seem to be living for. Besan Unde and Kajjaya are some examples of sweets.



INNOVATING ON TRADITIONAL RECIPES

We go to great lengths to rediscover lost recipes by speaking to people of previous generations and digging out old recipes from dilapidated diaries. Traditional recipes are being tampered with most of the time because the chef has lost his way somewhere and reproduced something similar to the original. This is not something we follow at our hotel. Most of the traditional food that existed was the most nutritious and did our body a lot of good; there is no reason we need to mess with this. The world is slowly turning to millets like Ragi for nutrition; why should we shy away?

PAN TO PLATE

We serve our food in the cooking vessel that it has been prepared in. Guests who opt for South Indian food can also request the server to line the plate with a banana leaf if that is what he/she wishes to eat out of. For special events, we can also serve food on banana leaves.



Kapil Sahi

Kapil Sahi
Executive Chef
Davanam Sarovar Portico Suites, Bengaluru

TWO REGIONS WITHIN ONE

The cuisine of Karnataka is one of the oldest surviving cuisines of the country. The cuisine has influenced that of neighbouring states as well that include Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Maharashtra. The cuisine in North Karnataka differs from that in South Karnataka.

Some of the typical drinks and dishes that form part of Karnataka cuisine are Ragi Dosa, Ragi Mudde, Bissi Belle Bath, Puliogare, Mysore Masala Dosa, Mysore Pak, and Koshambari Salad. With drinks, nothing can beat the sugarcane juice of Karnataka.

LOVE FOR SWEETS

In our culture, desserts and sweets play a symbolic role when it comes to day-to-day life. From sweet offerings to god to homemade sweets, we love our sweets and desserts. Sweets in India bind us all together and Karnataka is no different. Some of the popular sweet offerings at our hotel are Mysore Pak, Kadabu, and Tambittu.



A HEALTHIER ALTERNATIVE

With the food industry growing at a rapid pace, innovations with traditional recipes have evolved over the years. Recipes now have a healthier approach with the involvement of new techniques.

At our hotel, we also believe in healthy offerings to our guests for which the famous Masala Dosa of the Udupi cuisine has been transformed into a special Davanam Dosa. This Dosa is cooked purely in olive oil and basil herb. The Dosa stuffing also has healthy, fibre-enriched vegetables with no carbohydrates. Keeping the real essence of Dosa alive, a healthy twist is given to it.



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Suresh Thampy

Suresh Thampy
Executive Chef
Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway

A RICH CUISINE

Within the state itself, local tastes vary region to region. Both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food items have distinct specialties. Breakfast is the key meal and what the cuisine is majorly famous for. Karnataka also has a long coastline and is famous for its seafood variants as well. Coconut plays a vital role and most of the dishes have a tinge of coconut in them either directly or as an accompaniment.

Some of the typical breakfast dishes and drinks include Kanadigar Sambar, Sannas, Neer Dosa, Rava Dosa, Raggi Roti, Akki Roti, and Uchal Roti that are served with a variety of local chutneys like Kadala Chutney, Ell Chutney, Uchal Chutney. For lunch, the popular dishes are Raggi Muddha, chicken and fish Gassi, Natti Khozhi curry, Karre meen curry, etc. Our in-room specialties include Mathur Vada, Mangalore Bhajji, Rave Vada, Kadale Vada, Rave Laddu, and Dharwad Pedha. Apart from that, Mysore Pak, milk pedhas, and halwas are also quite popular among guests.



FOOD FOR ALL

The client-mix between local guests and others would be 40 per cent and 60 per cent. Our local specialties feature on our buffets on a cyclic basis. Guests, both local and those from outside the state and even from other nationalities, enjoy these unique offerings, making them quite popular.

HEALTHIER INGREDIENTS

We do not innovate much on traditional recipes, but do incorporate healthy grains like millets, green leaves, squashes, brown rice, drumstick leaves, etc.



Santosh Kumar

Santosh Kumar
Sous Chef
RBD Sarovar Portico, Bengaluru

REGIONS DEFINE CUISINE

The places and their natives who have contributed in popularising regional culture and cuisine are Udupi, Coorg, Mangaluru, Mysuru, Karwar, and Bengaluru. The variations are stunningly visible. While Udupi brings in a lot of vegetarian varieties popularised in and around the temples, Mysuru cuisine and culture is influenced by royalty. Mangaluru and Karwar are highly influenced by the long coastline. Coorg gives the perfect climatic condition to enjoy red meats. Bengaluru collates all the varieties and makes it appropriate for a cosmopolitan city.

Kheer and Valakki Unde, prepared using beaten rice, sugar, desiccated coconut, and ghee is a must treat during social ceremonies and banquets.

CUSTODIANS OF TRADITION

Innovating on traditional recipes is no less than a crime in itself. Regional cuisines are a reflection of the rich tradition, heritage, and culture of a place. We are the custodians of the tradition and contribute to preserving the rich heritage. That said, dishes can be improvised on to make them healthy. Attention in presentation and plating can be paid to improve the look and feel of a particular dish.

SWEETENED DELICACIES

Sweets occupy an important place in the daily diet and social functions. The confectionery industry of Karnataka has flourished because of its close association with social ceremonies. Undoubtedly, Mysore Pak is a clear winner in popularity. Obattu, a sweetened thin flat bread is also not far behind. Sabakki Payasa or Sago

TRADITIONAL PRESENTATION, THE KEY

Banana leaves continue to be an integral part of our culture and we can't imagine any important event without it. Banana leaves are generously used to boost the food presentation. The leaves are also believed to have medicinal value. Furthermore, their use is a reflection of our tradition.



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EXPRESSLY exploring NASHIK

Hrishikesh Joshi, General Manager, Express Inn, Nashik, talks about the city's changing landscape, which is fast becoming the centre for wellness, business, and leisure travel.



Hrishikesh Joshi

KINDLY TELL US ABOUT THE USP OF YOUR HOTEL.

We are a one-stop-solution for the discerning traveller, with accommodation available for a budget-conscious traveller to a Presidential Enclave for people who prefer luxury. Our banquet venues and MICE facilities give us the advantage of holding an event of any size, from a small get-together to a big event such as a wedding, awards function, or a large-scale corporate event.

WHERE DO YOU GET THE MAXIMUM DOMESTIC TOURISTS FROM? WHICH AREAS ARE YOU TARGETING?

As the city grows, Nashik attracts travellers from all across the globe, primarily due to the industrial areas surrounding it, the pilgrimage places in and around the city, and its being part of the Golden Triangle, situated equidistant from Pune and Mumbai. As both these cities have grown into mega metropolitans, Nashik has the best scope for development. This also makes Nashik a travel destination for people from all around the world and all walks of life.

WHAT ARE YOUR MARKETING STRATEGIES?

We mainly market ourselves online. Also, as part of Preferred Hotels, we are well represented in all major travel trade events. Individually, we participate in the IITT.

HAVE YOU TIED UP WITH ANY OTAs? HOW HAS THE EXPERIENCE BEEN?

We have a tie-up with all the major OTAs. The experience in general is good, and this a good and safe way of driving occupancies.

HOW IS TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY DEVELOPING IN NASHIK?

Tourism is developing in and around Nashik in a big way, particularly with the blend of avenues available for business, leisure, and pilgrimage. The city has some of the most picturesque locations in and around the Sahyadri range, attracting a lot of weekend tourism. The region is also known for farming of grapes, as a result of which most of the major brands of wines have their production units situated around the city. Wine tourism is a concept that is catching up fast as these wineries are open to visitors.

WHAT POLICY CHANGES BY THE GOVERNMENT HAVE HELPED DEVELOP NASHIK?

The government is putting in a lot of new initiatives and policy changes to promote and enhance tourism in and around Nashik. Igatpuri Taluka, which lies in Nashik district, is proposed to be a wellness destination.

HOW HAVE YOUR OCCUPANCIES BEEN IN 2017? WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS FROM 2018?

We have had an occupancy of close to 70 per cent and expect this to be better the next year, reaching a point of at least 80 per cent. New investments are also on the cards due to the 'Make in Nashik' initiative of local industrial associations.

“

We have had an occupancy of 70 per cent and expect this to reach 80 per cent in 2018

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Best Western Hotels & Resorts to have 700 KEYS IN BANGLADESH

Bangladesh continues to attract big brands of the hospitality sector. The latest addition is Best Western Hotels & Resorts that is looking to expand its portfolio in the country in collaboration with Index Holdings.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and a franchise signing ceremony was held recently between Best Western Hotels & Resorts and Index Holdings in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Atul Jain, COO, Sorrel Hospitality India and Md. Mamunur Rashid FCMA, Deputy Managing Director, Index Holdings, signed the agreement on behalf of their respective companies.

As per the agreement, Index Holdings, one of the fastest growing business conglomerates of Bangladesh with notable presence in various sectors of the country like architecture, construction, real estate, agro, ceramics, etc., is expected to arrange at least 700 rooms of 3-star, 4-star, and 5-star category

hotels within the next three years. Out of this, 210 rooms have already been signed for Dhaka, Rajshahi, and Sylhet areas in Bangladesh.

The signing ceremony took place in the presence of Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu and Guest of Honour Ronald Pohl, COO, Best Western Hotels & Resorts (USA), and high officials from both the companies. Representation from the business community, investors, financial institutions, hotel and tourism sectors, and high officials from various ministries were also present at the programme. The minister mentioned the socio-economic development of Bangladesh, the opportunities in the tourism sector, and thanked both the companies for contributing to the development of Bangladesh's tourism sector.



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Index Holdings will arrange at least 700 rooms of 3-star, 4-star, and 5-star categories in the next three years

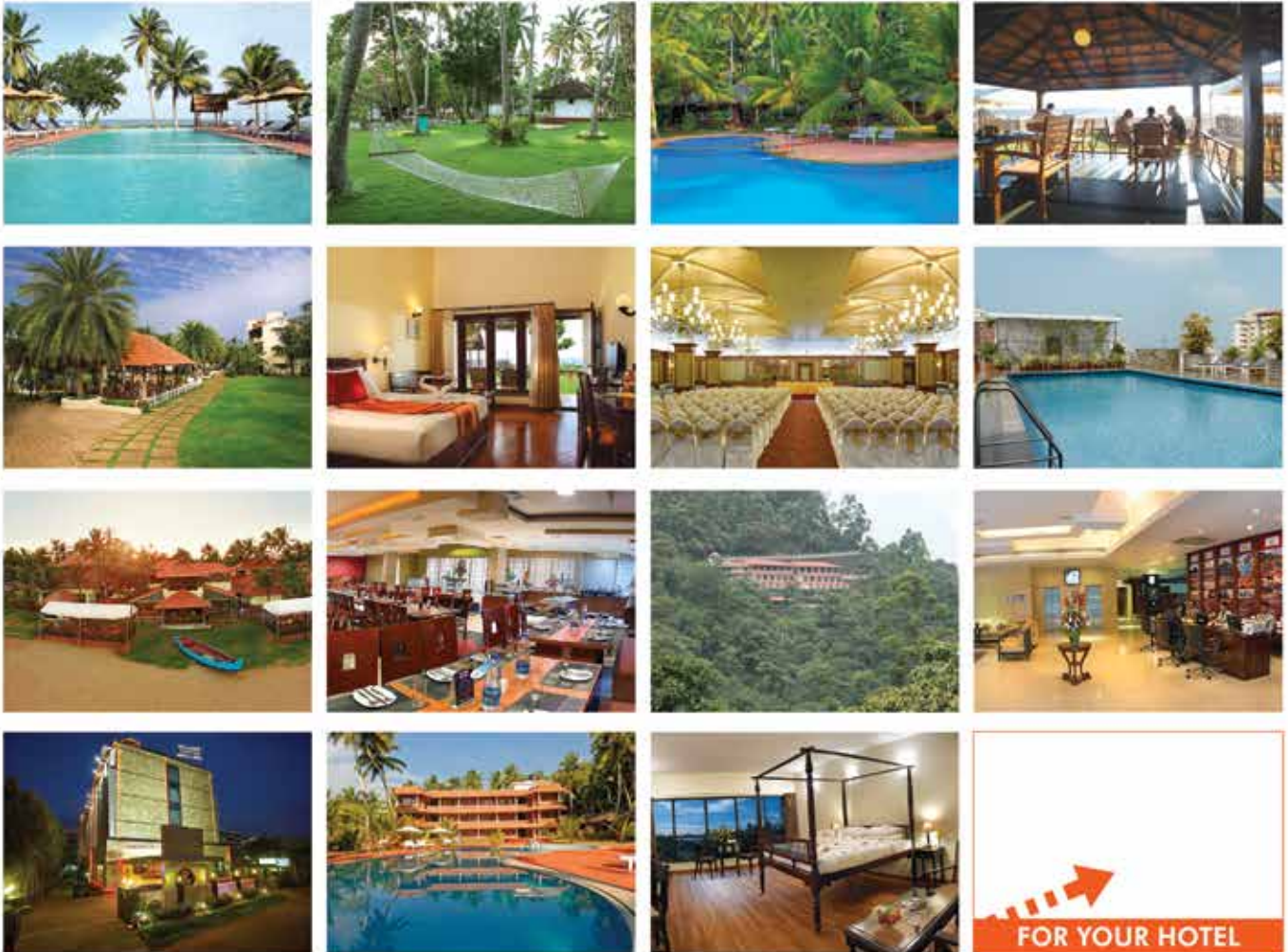
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Best Western Hotels & Resorts, headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona, is a privately held hotel brand with a global network of 4,100 hotels in more than 100 countries and territories worldwide. Now celebrating more than 70 years of hospitality, Best Western provides its hoteliers with global operational, sales, and marketing support, and award-winning online and mobile booking capabilities. Best Western continues to set industry records regarding awards and accolades. It is the first major company of its size and scale to launch a virtual reality experience for customers, setting a new industry standard and reinventing how guests view hotels.

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The art of

FOLD

The elegance of the dining table compliments the delicacies that are served on it. Such refinement is often exemplified by artistically folded napkins. We find out from eminent hoteliers how this art form, though fast losing its sheen, is still being adopted at certain events.



Cindrella Gomes

Cindrella Gomes Assistant Food & Beverage Manager Sofitel Mumbai BKC Hotel

A composition of the small details is what makes up the bigger picture. Hence, each detail has to be individually tailored in order to achieve perfection. At Sofitel Mumbai BKC, we believe in simplicity, personalisation, and anticipation of a guest's needs, which can be showcased through our napkin folds in each of our individual outlets. At most of our restaurants, the napkin is folded in terms of a simple book fold. The key reason behind such a fold is the ease of usage for the guest as the guests can just unfold the napkin and use it accordingly. It's not only the ease of usage that is taken into consideration, but the napkin fold should be subtle

enough to not only go with the table setup but the décor of the restaurant as well.

Meeting a guest's needs more effectively is what defines personalisation. In order to do so, our guest names are embroidered on the napkin as a special gesture for the regular guests. This act not only makes the guest feel important and welcome, but in the long-term, increases goodwill as well. With reference to napkins, our ambassadors are trained to offer guests wearing black or dark clothing, black napkins. The reason behind this is that white linen tends to leave lint on a dark-coloured garment.



Charles Dean

Charles Dean Manager - 1911 Restaurant The Imperial, New Delhi

The use of napkins started in the 1400s in Europe on the tables of royalty, where these napkins were made from warm or even perfumed cloth. Napkin folding is often defined by the occasion or event.

Typically, and for best results, a clean and starched square linen or cotton napkin is used. In the 18th century, napkins became a part of the bourgeois lifestyle. The revival of the art of napkin-folding took place after World War-II and the Japanese were the exponents in developing this art.

The last few decades have witnessed reluctance in the use of such artistically folded napkins as part of table decoration as there is no practice or training in napkin-folding, leading to such a



decline. The trend of minimalism is embraced by most hotels and restaurants as far as napkin-folding is concerned. Simplicity in style has been adopted far and wide. However, particularly for weddings and special occasions, the art of napkin-folding is still used to mark these occasions.





Ashutosh Thakur

Ashutosh Thakur
 Director of Food
 and Beverage
 Courtyard by Marriott
 Pune Chakan

Napkin-folding is a beautiful focal point on a dinner table as well as a key element in creating the perfect style you desire. The fold of a napkin can really set the tone from casual to formal. The history of napkin-folding is quite interesting, explaining how these beautiful creations actually came into being.

These days, a new trend of minimalism is being embraced. Even though it is gaining popularity all over, fancy napkin folds and colours still form part of weddings and auspicious occasions. There is no doubt that the development of napkin-folding



has been greatly influenced by Origami, the ancient Japanese art of paper-folding. Some of the most popular napkin folds include bishop's hat, candle, diagonal pocket, dress shirt, envelope, fan, fleur-de-lis, iris, lotus, and rose.



Subhashish Gupta

Subhashish Gupta
 Director of Food
 & Beverage
 Radisson Blu Hotel
 New Delhi Dwarka

Since early 1980s, we have become more reluctant to use napkin-folding as part of table preparation on the grounds of hygiene. Elaborate napkin-folding has gone out of favour and simplicity in presentation is now being adopted. This



Surender Singh



Surender Singh
 Assistant Manager - F&B
 Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel Hyderabad Banjara Hills

A napkin is a beautiful focal point on a dinner table as well as a key element in creating the perfect style you desire. Napkins have become an integral part of all restaurants and their themes. It is often said that you eat with your eyes first; this is because presentation matters.

Gone are the days of classic napkin folds in restaurants; nowadays, the trend is of artistic folds that help keep it simple,

yet elegant. A strikingly elegant napkin adds charm to the dining experience; too much fiddling around with the napkin can make it unhygienic as it passes through so many hands and folds. To make a napkin-fold look artistic with minimal handling, accessories like satin ribbons, rings, ties, etc., are often used. A clean white or black napkin is neatly rolled and pulled through an elegant copper ring and placed next to a rose on the table, giving it a perfect contrast.



new minimalistic trend is very popular today with our fine-dining operations. That said, for bigger events such as weddings and other festive occasions, artistically folded napkins are still being used. Colours are also a form of communication, being able to say a million things in a fraction of a second. They can instantly set a mood, convey an emotion or invoke a psychological reaction. The right combination of napkin colours is that which helps the client understand the theme or story of the place. Therefore, the colour of a napkin is chosen based on the theme and cuisine of the restaurant.

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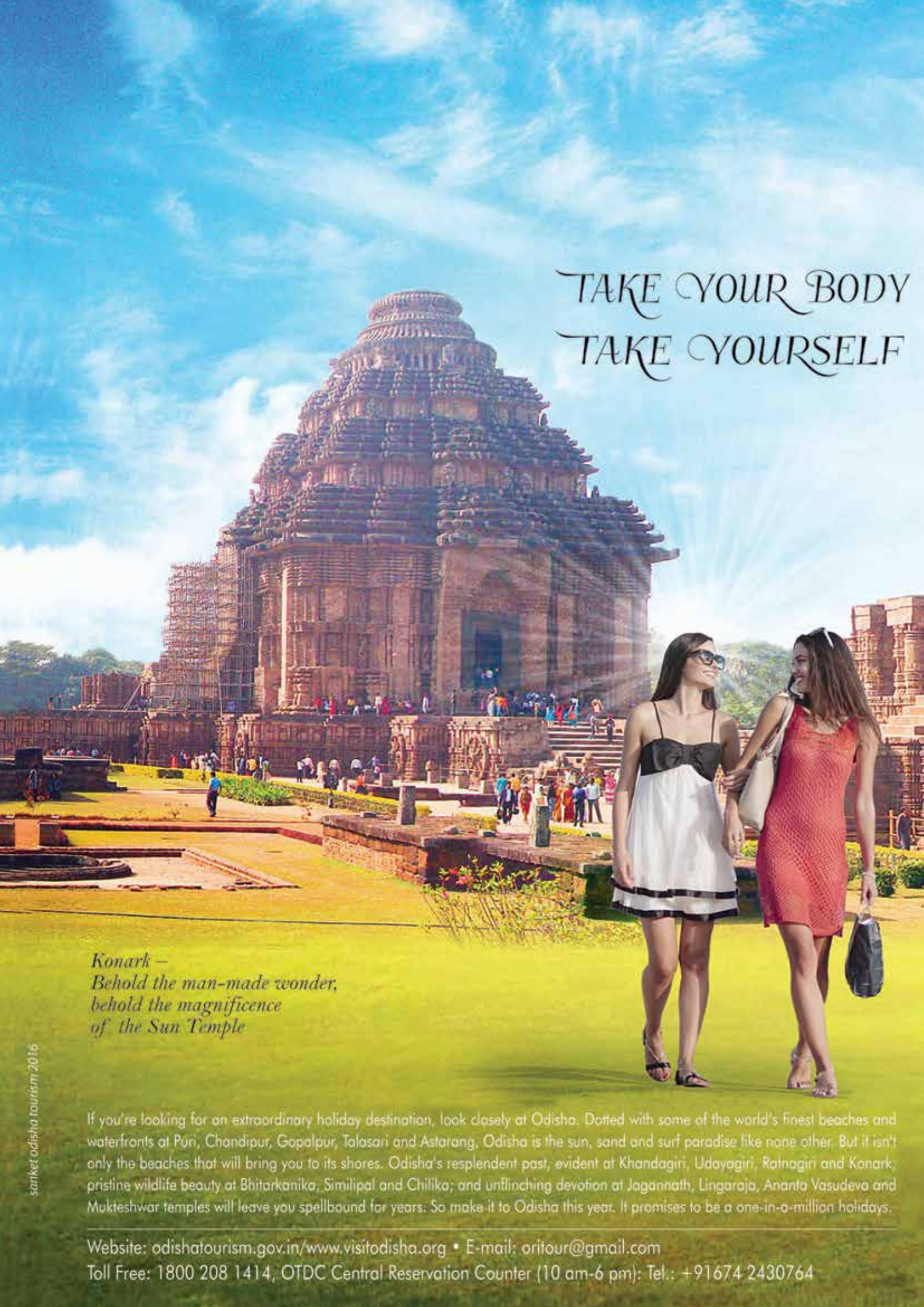
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Cooking up a **STORM**

Vinod Cookware has been in the market for more than two decades, providing innovative kitchen solutions.

Sunil Agrawal, Director, Vinod Cookware, tells us more.



Sunil Agrawal

TELL US ABOUT YOUR COMPANY AND THE PRODUCTS IT HAS ON OFFER.

Vinod Cookware has been in the market for more than two decades. It was set up with a vision to alleviate the challenges in Indian kitchens, bringing a modern touch to traditional methods. Determined to provide innovative kitchen solutions, Vinod products have built an instant connect with homemakers of all ages. Today, after a decade's experience and a repertoire of over 400 products spread across seven different categories, Vinod Cookware has established itself as one of the most preferred names in the Indian as well as global markets. We have been successful in striking the right chord with consumers and are one of the most desirable brands in the cookware industry.

We have been the pioneers in Sandwich Bottom pressure cookers and have the largest share of this product in the retail market across India. At the same time, Vinod Cookware has also been very aggressive in tapping the regional market segment with a competitive product line. The brand's philosophy is to build a

stronger and wider reach and ensure an immediate connect with every Indian home. Our devotion towards revolutionising kitchens with quality and innovative products continues.

Our products are made in India, are of a high quality, and offer value for money. Our commitment to the supply chain and delivering the best possible customer service experience we can is what we strive to achieve through innovations.

WHAT IS YOUR SELLING STRATEGY FOR THE INDIAN MARKET?

Our strategy for success has always been genuine products and loyalty towards customers. We strongly believe that though there are many players in the Indian market today, we are the only ones that offer value for money on every purchase. At the same time, we have drawn up an appropriate strategy and planning for manufacturing and distribution of our products. Quality, design, and technology are the three pillars of our product range; with

uncompromised quality, latest in technology, and a modern outlook to design, Vinod Cookware has reached millions of homes in India.



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“

With uncompromised quality and the latest in technology, Vinod Cookware has reached millions”

HAVE YOU MANAGED TO INCREASE YOUR DISTRIBUTION SCALE IN INDIA?

Yes, we have increased our distribution scale in India. We have the largest share of retail markets across major cities in India and are targeting the metropolitan as well as regional market segment with competitive products in line. With a well-developed distribution strategy and a broad distribution network, we are constantly trying to nourish our relationship with strategic partners. Focused to understand market requirements from a dealer's perspective, we are expanding in Tier-II and Tier-III cities, aiming to reach even the smallest store, thereby putting the company at a competitive advantage.

WHICH OF YOUR PRODUCTS ARE POPULAR WITH HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS?

For hotels and restaurants, our star product is our Platinum series that is best suited for home and professional chefs. The most unique aspect about Platinum is its triple-layered construction, which is actually the first in India. The sturdy construction not only reduces the cooking time by 20 per cent,

a much-needed feature in a commercial setup, but also minimises sticking. The other key element in its construction is the use of aluminium even at the bottom, facilitating faster cooking and efficient heat retention. Platinum blends good looks with features, making Indian kitchens complete.

HOW WAS GROWTH IN 2016? WHAT IS YOUR MARKETING AND SALES STRATEGY FOR THE CURRENT YEAR?

Vinod Cookware has seen year-on-year growth of 10-20 per cent. As a brand, we have created a niche for ourselves across the country, being the only brand to bring the right mix of technology and price.

We are focusing more on point of purchase sales, shopper marketing activities, and several ATL and BTL activities to reach the audience. Currently, we are working on a new product roadmap as well as an expansion plan for the offline market. We plan to increase our distribution in areas like Ranchi, Assam, Kerala, and Chennai.

WHICH NEW PRODUCT DO YOU HAVE IN THE PIPELINE FOR THE INDIA MARKET?

We see a huge scope in bottles and our Platinum series. Already in sync with growing needs, we have launched a range of bottles in stainless steel that keep water safe and hygienic to drink. With growing technological advancements, we shall bring new technologies to the sector. For Platinum, we have several product categories to be brought out later.

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STYLE YOUR CASA

◆ Interior designer Nomita Kohli of Wisma Atria Interiors has launched a splendid collection of contemporary design sofas from the renowned Italian brand CASA International, at her design studio, Wisma Atria Interiors, New Delhi. The range consists of meticulously designed sofas comprising 3-seater as well as 2-seater sofa sets that wonderfully infuse the Italian touch with your state-of-the-art décor. These sofas are upholstered with premium quality fabric along a strong wooden frame that conveys an impression of sheer comfort at first glance. With different shape, design, and colour options, these Italian sofas can give a touch of modernity and vivacity. The well-designed collection is promising enough to be steady and durable enough to exhibit Italian creativity and innovation.



LAMINATED DIMENSIONS

◆ Following the latest décor trends, Ply Mahal, an innovative designer and importer of interior products, has launched an exquisite collection of decorative laminated door panels to give your interiors a new stately dimension. This exquisite collection consists of deeply textured pliable panels that are used along the wooden frame of the door. The panels come in a variety of colour options that include copper, rose gold, bronze, silver, and other metallic textures.



JAZZ UP YOUR GARDEN

◆ Notion has launched a robust collection of outdoor wooden flooring for the garden. The exquisite collection of outdoor wooden flooring is sure to let you infuse one of the key trends of contemporary outdoor flooring while capturing the beauty of sumptuous floor surfaces. Making a compelling fashion statement while raising the style of your exterior spaces, this collection, comprising hardwood flooring as well as deck tiles, can bring life and add character to your outdoor areas. Being manufactured from premium quality wood and raw materials, it is equipped with an authentic finish that allows natural texture to be appreciated by both sight and touch. Available in a variety of colours (shades of brown), patterns, sizes, and designs, the wooden flooring exudes beauty and panache.



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Business in your **PALM**

RanceLab FusionResto is a one-stop-solution for the F&B industry. **Nilesh Shah**, Co-Founder, RanceLab, tells us how the company continues to serve this industry with its latest mobile platform, FusionMobi 2.0.



Nilesh Shah

KINDLY TELL US ABOUT THE USP OF YOUR GROUP.

RanceLab FusionResto is a one-stop-solution for the F&B industry. It automates every vertical of the F&B industry from fine-dine and takeaway counter to food court, sweet shop, and home delivery. It connects all business operations such as point of sale, inventory, accounts, payroll, customer loyalty, analysis and promotions, and tab-ordering. Whether you own a single restaurant or a chain, FusionResto manages your operations efficiently. Unlike others, it helps you make profits sooner, reach break-even faster, and open new restaurants quicker. It focuses

on the core aspects of the restaurant business and keeps you away from complex day-to-day operations. It empowers you to face challenges and stay ahead of the game.

HOW HAS 2017 BEEN FOR YOU SO FAR AND WHAT ARE YOUR GROWTH PLANS?

2017 has been a great year so far. The company has seen organic growth in the past 20 years. Our cost-effective and affordable innovations have helped over 35,000 installations in 40 countries achieve superior returns compared to their competition. We simplify the day-to-day requirements of the food-service business and address their challenges so they can enjoy benefits and returns.

FEATURES OF FUSIONMOBI 2.0

- **Mobile POS:** Speedy service with zero errors that results in quick table turn
- **Kitchen display:** Real-time digital KOTs to avoid printing nightmares in the kitchen
- **Feedback:** Digital feedback forms that eliminate manual hassles
- **Mobile wallet:** Convenient mode of digitally secure payments
- **Mobile reports:** Real-time reports on the move
- **E-menu:** View dishes before ordering, take decisions faster
- **Customer loyalty:** Engages the customer, increases repeat sales

DO YOU HAVE ANY NEW PRODUCTS IN THE PIPELINE?

Using technology as a tool, we address the customer's need to minimise losses and operational costs, and encompass critical data that helps in on-time decision-making. With the emergence of mobile phones and tabs, RanceLab FusionResto has come up with FusionMobi 2.0, the coolest suite of mobile applications that adds fuel to your restaurant's growth engine and ensures you stay ahead of your competition. This mobile platform is available on both Android and iOS devices.

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MAYFAIR eyes EASTERN INDIA EXPANSION

Souvagya Mohapatra, Executive Director, MAYFAIR Hotels & Resorts, tells us about the group's expansion plans, how the company has fared so far, and the tourism and hospitality space of southern and eastern India.



Souvagya Mohapatra

WHAT IS THE USP OF YOUR GROUP?

Our USP is the unique design and architecture of our properties, as well as the aesthetic ambience we have developed with a thrust on ecology. Our uniqueness is also anchored in our ability to provide differentiated services to our guests and create nuanced values in all aspects of service delivery.

HOW HAS BUSINESS FARED SO FAR IN 2017?

The occupancy at our hotels in the last eight months has been 68 per cent. We have achieved an ARR of ₹7,100 during the same period.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR IN SOUTH INDIA?

South India is blessed with many beautiful tourism sites, many of which are still not optimally developed due to the absence of a supportive infrastructure. There is scope for developing new hospitality properties, which also depends on better incentives and favourable government policies. Entrepreneurs interested in developing properties need to be

provided capital support from the bank as well as facilities like subsidised power and water supply from the government. Besides this, the government must connect potential tourism sites with better roads, railway links, and air routes wherever possible.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE IN THE PIPELINE?

Apart from our hotel in Kalimpong, we are also developing properties at Raipur, Siliguri, and Kolkata.

HOW IS TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY GROWING IN THE EASTERN REGION OF INDIA?

The tourism and hospitality industry is performing well in the eastern part of India and is clocking a fair growth rate. The central government as well as state governments in the eastern parts of the country are becoming more proactive in promoting tourism and coming up with favourable policies for the growth of tourism and hospitality industries. We, on our part, are pioneering development of hospitality properties in the eastern region of India.





Karnataka Rural Infrastructure Development Limited



Sri. Rajshekar B. Patil
Hon'ble Chairman KRIDL
and MLA, Humnabad
Constituency, Karnataka.



Sri. H K. Patil,
Hon'ble Minister Rural
Development and
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Department, Karnataka.



Dr. R Raju, IFS,
Managing Director
KRIDL, Karnataka.

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Hon'ble Chairman and Managing Director, KRIDL dated on 18-09-2017 issued a Dividend cheque of Rs. 6.00 crore to Hon'ble Chief Minister of Karnataka in the presence of Minister and Principal Secretary, Rural Development and Panchayath Raj Department.

K.R.I.D.L

The cardinal philosophy of the organization is service, integrity and efficiency in serving rural community. A unique organization of Government of Karnataka involved in the Civil Engineering construction and creation of assets in the state.

Achievements:

- Achieved turnover of above Rs.2200.00 crore during year 2016-17.
- Contributing to Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) from 2014-15 onwards.
- Successful implementation of around 4200 Water Purification Plants (WPP) in Rural areas of Karnataka from 2015-16 onwards.

Awards

- ACCE Sarvamangala Award in 2001.
- ACCE Sarvamangala Award in 2002.
- Appreciation Certificate for Kudalasangama works in 2005.
- Chief Minister's Ratna Award in 2013.
- CSI-Nihilent Certificate for Bhusiri Project Monitoring software in 2015.
- Chief Minister's Appreciation Certificate in 2016.



On Gandhi Jayanti 02-10-2016 received Chief Minister's Appreciation certificate from Hon'ble Chief Minister of Karnataka for successful implementation of WPP's in Rural areas for the year 2016-17.

MORPHY RICHARDS BRINGS GLOBAL RANGE TO INDIA



Morphy Richards, a premium kitchen and home appliances brand, has launched its global range of products- Redefine, Prism, and Total Control. With the launch of this product line, Morphy Richards aims to capture the interest of the Indian audience through smart technology and innovative designs.

Redefine's USP is the Intelligent ThermoGlass Technology that allows you to clearly see your bread being toasted or water being boiled to perfection. The Prism collection, on the other hand, is a leading iconic design piece for those who do not worry about

going against the crowd. The smartest amongst the lot, the Total Control Collection, has a range of products enabling you to prepare food just the way you like it. It uses Smart Response Technology that intelligently controls the motor in a variety of ways, providing the right level of power regardless of the mixture. Commenting on the launch, **Shekhar Bajaj**, Chairman and Managing Director, Bajaj Electricals, said, "A modern lifestyle calls for a modern home and convenient living, and that's exactly what's going to be on offer. The beautiful designs and Smart Response Technology are sure to adorn your modern homes."

MADHUBALA'S WAX STATUE AT MADAME TUSSAUDS



Madame Tussauds Delhi, set to launch in the later part of 2017, is unveiling the figure of Madhubala, the timeless beauty of Indian cinema. Madhubala's flawless beauty has received significant attention in the mesmerising figure created by a Madame Tussauds artist. It involved tremendous research which included meeting the family members and studying the photos and videos available of the celebrity. There were a number of artists who worked over six months to create this replica.

Anshul Jain, General Manager and Director, Merlin Entertainments India, says, "We are ecstatic to be unveiling Madhubala's figure in Delhi. Madame Tussauds is known for bringing together on a single platform, the much-idolised icons around the world for their various contributions, offering their followers a platform to admire and capture exceptional artwork. Madhubala is unarguably one of the most beautiful women the world has seen."



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Actual view of the property

At present all internal developments are complete. In all approx. 60 rooms & few cottages can be built along with amenities like Gym, SPA and other recreational facilities.

For more information please contact **Mr. Sunil Gandhi,**

Ph.: 09891068807, 09899972977 or e-mail: rkghospitalities2007@gmail.com

ENDURING properties

DivyaSree Developers, with over three decades of glorious achievements, is one of India's leading real estate developers playing a significant role in changing the real estate landscape of South India.



DivyaSree Developers is a reputed urban infrastructure developer with operations in Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Chennai. Be it an IT park, a residential development, an infrastructure project or a built-to-suit campus, the company's technical expertise, global exposure, and project management skills give them the edge to constantly innovate and deliver the best. DivyaSree has scaled a steep growth curve in recent years with its commercial projects spanning over 15 million sqft and the company has about 7 million sqft of living spaces in various stages of development and planning,

catering to various needs of the contemporary Indian family. The team at DivyaSree works in an integrated way, guided by a dynamic and hands-on leadership to successfully deliver numerous residential and commercial projects across South India. Despite the exponential growth over the past five years, commitment towards superior client service and adherence to highest level of quality is not compromised. DivyaSree focuses on delivering excellent, reliable services and products consistently, winning them a base of customers who return to them time and again. The company's main intention is to create properties of enduring values.



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LAVA

Choco Lava Premix, Espresso Lava Premix, Payasam Lava Premix, and Red Velvet Lava Premix

Food Service India (FSIPL) is a leading food and beverage solutions provider for the HoReCa segment in India. The team at FSIPL comprises experienced chefs and sales professionals who specialise in this segment. FSIPL offers three differentiated services for its customers that include building a food and beverage menu, standardising recipes, and in-kitchen demonstrations and trainings.

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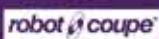
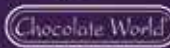


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*The Company is registered wide registration number 24942, dated 9th April 2002 under the International Companies Act 1990.

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appointments



MARVIN ALBALLI

Director of Restaurants and Bars (IMEA)
IHG

★ InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) has appointed Marvin Alballi as its new Director of Restaurants and Bars – India, Middle East, Africa (IMEA). Alballi will be focused on driving commercial operations across IHG’s restaurant and bar (R&B) offerings in IMEA, generating greater revenue and profitability for the company’s hotels. He will also be responsible for operational excellence and delivering great guest experiences across the region. Prior to IHG, Alballi served as the Franchise Business Leader for a leading restaurant chain in North America, supporting 61 restaurants across Alberta and British Columbia, Canada. He also served as a Franchise Business Consultant for White Spot Restaurants in Canada.



NIHAR MEHTA

Corporate HR Manager
Sarovar Hotels & Resorts

★ Sarovar Hotels & Resorts has appointed Nihar Mehta as Corporate HR Manager. Based out of Sarovar’s corporate office in Gurugram, Mehta will be looking after human resources and manage employee development policies and systems. Prior to joining Sarovar Hotels, he had worked in Ravi Jaipuria Corporation as Manager – HR and has led the human resources department for the retail division for J Mart brand of Ravi Jaipuria Corporation. He had also worked in the human resource department of Varun Beverages. Adding to his experience in the industry, Mehta has also worked at ITC Fortune’s corporate headquarters for more than three years.



TEJ BAHADUR SINGH

Head – National Sales
India Sales Associates

★ India Sales Associates, Luxury Hotels’ marketing and consultancy firm, has appointed Tej Bahadur Singh as Head – National Sales, for its portfolio of hotels and resorts. Singh’s last assignment was in the role of Area Manager for Jet Airways. Spearheading the business development and partnership alliances, he will be responsible for augmenting the network of luxury travel agencies and tour operators to support the growth of the GSA service in India for the select portfolio of Banyan Tree and Angsana Hotels & Resorts, among others.



SIMARJEET SINGH

General Manager
The Chancery Pavilion, Bengaluru

★ The Chancery Pavilion, Bengaluru, has appointed Simarjeet Singh as the hotel’s new General Manager. His previous assignment was with Hilton Garden Inn New Delhi/Saket, where he significantly helped improve the overall hotel performance. He has held eminent positions with renowned brands like Radisson Blu, Park Plaza, and InterContinental to name a few. In this new role, he will provide leadership and strategic direction to the hotel team and will focus on maximising revenues.



KUMAR SHOBHAN

General Manager
Hyatt Regency Lucknow

★ Kumar Shobhan is now the General Manager of Hyatt Regency Lucknow. Shobhan has spent more than 17 years in the hospitality industry. He has acquired a deep knowledge of diverse aspects of hotel management and has gained experience in dealing with different cultural backgrounds while working in the UAE (Dubai) and across India. Shobhan started his career in August of 2000 as an F&B Associate at Hyatt Regency Delhi. After a brief stint outside Hyatt, he returned to the brand in December, 2006.

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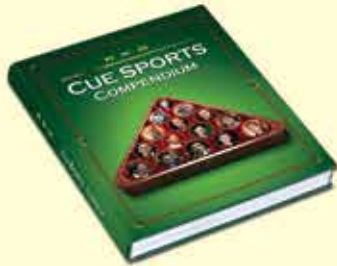


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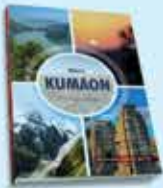


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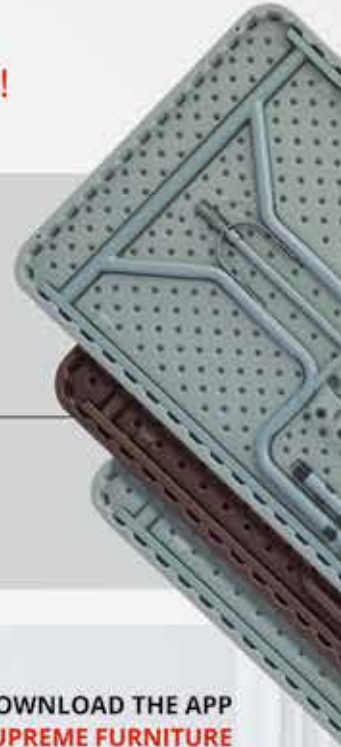
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