

# HOTELS & RESTAURANTS INDIA

# fhrai magazine

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A MONTHLY ON HOSPITALITY TRADE  
By DDP Publications



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within  
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**POTENTIAL  
of DOMESTIC  
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**WE NEED A  
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*Dear fellow members,*

**W**ith the announcement of Unlock 4, the industry is all set to kick-off, once again, with full vigour, after being under lockdown for the past six months. I am delighted to share that FHRAI played a crucial role in getting the industry prepared for this moment by way of doing multiple webinars, training programmes, audits, interactions with various dignitaries, and above all by circulating crucial information coming from various government departments about COVID SOPs, guidelines, instructions, etc. from time-to-time.

I, on behalf of FHRAI, would like to thank members and the fraternity for supporting our activities, endeavours, and especially for implementing all measures to take care of their staff, families, and above all from now on our 'Guests'. Our hard work, public relations, and liaisoning with the respective departments finally yielded fruitful results when the Hon'ble Cabinet Ministers who spoke at our platform took the appropriate action by way of considering and acting upon our prayers. For instance, the expansion of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) or extension of grace period for FBOs till December 31, 2020 or the revised Champion Sector in Services Scheme to boost MICE in India. Although this is just the tip of the iceberg, however, any benefit at this juncture will surely help the hospitality businesses in some way or another. We would like to assure the members that we will continuously pursue with the government for a concrete and special relief package for the sector which has received the biggest blow in the last two decades and therefore deserves their intervention and support.

Continuing the efforts, we invited on our platform Shri. Sanjeev Sanyal, Principal Economic Advisor, Ministry of Finance, Government of India, and also the Shri. G. Kishan Reddy, Hon'ble Minister of State for Home Affairs, Government

of India to discuss various issues hampering the growth of the hospitality sector. Speaking at the interactions, both the dignitaries promised to extend their full support to help the sector survive and revive soon. The salient points communicated by the dignitaries along with the recording of the interactions have already been circulated and are also available on the FHRAI website for members to view and give their suggestions, if any.

To conclude, I would like to request members to participate and support our initiative to jointly fight against arbitrary and unethical business practices adopted by the Online Travel Aggregators. As you may be aware that our plea on this subject was heard by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) and an investigation was launched and is going on, however, we have heard from a lot of our members that during COVID times these malpractices unseemly forced upon the hospitality industry, which is indeed an issue of paramount concern for the Federation. Please do approach the secretariat if you are facing any such issue, we assure you that it will surely be addressed and raised with the appropriate authority/ department.

Be safe.

**Note:** The September 2020 edition of the FHRAI magazine will not be available as a printed version due to the pandemic. However, the e-version of the same shall be available on the FHRAI website and circulated to all members as a broadcast on registered email.

*With kind regards,*  
*Gurbaxish Singh Kohli*  
Vice President, FHRAI

**Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**  
Vice President  
FHRAI



Our hard work, public relations, and liaisoning finally yielded results by way of expansion of the ECLGS, extension of grace period for FBOs and the revised Champion Sector in Services Scheme to boost MICE in India





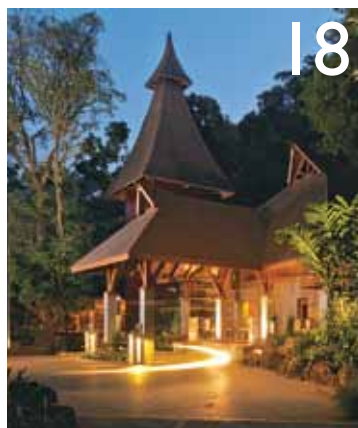
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With a focus on region-wise strategies, a recent HVS webinar discussed incisive perspective on India shared by Mandeep S Lamba, President – South Asia, HVS ANAROCK.

Cover Image: The Fern Hotels & Resorts



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In June, Unlock 1.0 was announced, since then two more Unlocks have further opened up the hospitality sector. Let's find out how has the Unlock worked for the hotel sector.



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FHRAI hosted a webinar recently with G Kishan Reddy, Minister of State for Home Affairs, Government of India, highlighting the various issues being faced by them.

## **READJUST & REALIGN THE BUSINESS** 30

Due to the Work From Home (WFH) mandate, business has taken a beating. Today corporates are wary of conducting MICE events. The new normal is, virtual interaction.



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FHRAI organised a webinar recently on 'Career in Hospitality: Overcoming the Challenges by Adapting to the New Normal' to discuss in detail the repercussions post the pandemic.

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# Sudesh Poddar elected as President

The newly elected President said that his top priority is to revive the hospitality and tourism industry in the eastern part of India, which has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**H**otel and Restaurant Association of Eastern India (HRAEI) has elected a new set of leadership for the region for the next one year. **Sudesh Poddar**, an eminent hotelier, with business interest in the hospitality industry in the states of Assam and West Bengal, was elected as the President of the association in the Managing Committee Meeting held after the recently concluded Annual General Meeting in Kolkata.

Poddar said that his top priority is to revive the hospitality and tourism industry in the eastern part of India which has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. He said, "To attract more tourists in the region, especially Northeastern India, we shall make an appeal to the government for more flights and easier access. We are in the process of making a roadmap to promote a lot of inbound tourism



**Sudesh Poddar**  
President, HRAEI

to tap the tremendous potential of this region."

Poddar also expressed his deep concern for those entrepreneurs who invested in the tourism and hospitality sector before the pandemic. "COVID-19 has hit them hard. We

shall appeal for moratoriums on loan repayment and relaxation on interest rates for them." He also mentioned how the association has tried to help the members in the past six months of the crisis and has also helped out citizens affected by the pandemic.

Poddar is thoroughly acquainted with the hospitality industry and has 35 years of experience. In the past, he has been closely associated with HRAEI and FHRAI in different capacities. He has held office as the President of HRAEI from 2014 to 2018. Poddar has also held office as the Treasurer of FHRAI during the years 2014-15 and 2015-16. He was Honorary Secretary in HRAEI during the year 2019-2020 and Joint Honorary Secretary in HRAEI during the year 2006. He is also a member (Catering Expert) on the Board of Governors of Hotel Management and Catering Technology, Kolkata.

"Whatever we have achieved has been possible due to a strong team guided by seniors like T S Walia. We operate like a big family here in HRAEI," shared Poddar.

**HRAEI**

"We are in the process of making a roadmap to promote a lot of inbound tourism to this region



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L-R : Ankur Bhatia, Director, Roseate Hotels; Luv Malhotra, Past President, HRANI; Manish Sisodia, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Govt. of Delhi NCT; Vinod Gulati, MC member, HRANI; Vijay Wanchoo, Sr. EVP & GM, The Imperial Hotel, New Delhi; and Renu Thapliyal, Secretary General, HRANI.

## HRANI meets Manish Sisodia

**Manish Sisodia**, Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi met a delegation of the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Northern India to understand challenges faced by the industry.

**T**he Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi, **Manish Sisodia** met a delegation of the HRANI to understand the challenges of hotels and restaurants in the process of unlocking the industry and allied services. He opined that we must learn to live with coronavirus and resume the economic activities while taking utmost precautions. "We should learn from innovative global practices in hotel and restaurant business so that we can

also develop a locally relevant model for ourselves. The Delhi government is committed to helping businesses in these difficult times and their issues will be resolved at the earliest," he said.

The delegation consisted of members of the Managing Committee of HRANI – Luv Malhotra, Vinod Gulati along with the Secretary General, Renu Thapliyal and hoteliers Ankur Bhatia, Director, Roseate Hotels and Vijay Wanchoo,

Sr. EVP & GM, The Imperial Hotel, New Delhi. The key concerns taken up by the delegation were relief on excise fee (refund / adjustment) deposited for the lockdown period; credit for the excise duty paid on expired stocks including disposal; waiver on sewerage charges; relief from regulatory compliances; waiver of demand / fixed charges levied in electricity bills; one-time / automatic extension of validity of various licenses & approvals without levy of any fees up to March 31, 2021; relief from property tax by reducing the current rates for hotels and hospitality establishments for a suitable period and no penalty or interest to be levied on payment of any dues to state government.

HRANI



We should learn from innovative global practices so that we can develop a locally relevant model



## Deferment of tax audits

HRANI has requested the Ministry of Finance to defer tax audits for next six months.

**T**he GST department has been issuing notices to the establishments to appear for tax audits (scrutiny of service tax / GST cases). The establishments are being asked for various documents and replies which is practically not possible in this COVID time. Taking

in account the challenge faced by the members of Hotel and Restaurant Association of Northern India (HRANI), the association has sent a letter to Nirmala Sitharaman, Hon'ble Finance Minister, Govt of India to defer all the tax audits for next six months. "Some of our member establishments have

been facing this problem as they are in receipt of notices to appear for tax audits which is practically not possible in this COVID time. Therefore, we have requested the Ministry of Finance to defer any audits / appearance for next six months," said Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, President, HRANI.

HRANI



# Poona hotels not paid dues for quarantine

HRAWI and Poona Hoteliers Association (PHA) have been following up with the Collector's office for expediting payments owed to hotels requisitioned for quarantine purposes.

Several hotels were requisitioned by the state for the purpose of quarantine and accommodation to doctors and other health staff from the month of April 2020. Hoteliers stated that sometime in mid-April, authorities demanded they open hotels for quarantining purposes and assured fair compensation against the services provided. Knowing the extent of the pandemic and the support required for medical service workers, hotels agreed and offered their rooms and staff to the government. Hotels spent on staff salaries, electricity bills, utilities and maintenance, among other overheads from their own pockets.

The HRAWI and PHA have been following up with the Collector's office for over three months but have received no confirmation on the status of the payments owed to hotels. "We did what the government asked us to do. Hotels were requisitioned for the purposes of accommodating health workers and doctors and were promised compensation against the services provided,

We have been pleading with the authorities to disburse the dues owed to hotels



**Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**  
Vice President, FHRAI

but we are still waiting for it. Hotel staff risked their lives to serve those who were quarantined in their hotels during the lockdown. It is unfortunate that the government now chooses to ignore us," says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, President, HRAWI.

Hotel staff risked their lives to serve those who were quarantined in their hotels

"It is unfortunate that the hotels have to bear the brunt of a decision that they made in good faith. Hotels were made to open and carry out operations by the state when they actually were closed. They have incurred expenses which they wouldn't have if they were to remain shut. Now hotels are receiving electricity bills with penalties for not paying on time. Many such hotels are on the verge of filing for bankruptcy.

We have been pleading with the authorities to disburse the dues owed or else many more hotels will go bankrupt. In fact, one of the hoteliers has already filed a petition in the High Court and others may follow suit," says **Sharan Shetty**, President, PHA.



**Sharan Shetty**  
President, PHA

## Training of FBOs under FSS scheme

All licensed food businesses must have at least one trained and certified Food Safety Supervisor under FoSTaC for every 25 food handlers in each premise.







# Potential of Domestic Tourism

With a focus on region-wise strategies, a recent HVS webinar discussed incisive perspective on India shared by **Mandeep S Lamba**, President – South Asia, HVS ANAROCK.



Hazel Jain



Mandeep Lamba

## **By when do you see occupancies and RevPARs returning to normal levels?**

We see occupancies coming back to pre-COVID levels around the third quarter of 2022 in India. We see RevPARs return to normal from the second quarter of 2023. In terms of the segments, it is going to be leisure and the mid-management corporate short-haul travel. The mid-market hotels are what is going to lead this recovery.

## **How would you rate India vis-à-vis global hotel performances?**

India is doing a slower start but is getting there much faster. This is primarily because we have a less steep hill to climb. India had been performing below its potential and our RevPARs have been among the lower ones globally. Secondly, in India one of the remarkable things is our domestic market. If we just look at the numbers, our international arrivals are just under 11 million but domestic tourism is about 150 times of that around the country.

## **Will the focus be on the domestic market?**

Our knights in shining armour are going to be the domestic travellers and everyone is going to start focussing on them like they have never done in the past. That is where the recovery is going to come from. The second part of our recovery will be from our outbound market who will not be able to travel overseas and who will start spending in the leisure markets in India.

## **What valuation methodology will work?**

The DCF (discounted cash flow) continues to be the gold standard in India. I don't think there is any other

methodology which has the ability to capture all nuances in a valuation exercise in India because the transaction market is pretty nascent and we don't have any comparable sales data in most cases. Replacement costs don't necessarily work because land in India is valued very differently from most parts of the world. Therefore, we continue to be absolutely confident about the DCF.

## **How do you see the Cap rates perform in India?**

Due to the increased risk of the pandemic in the short-term, Cap rates will see some increase but they will largely come back to normal in the long run – if anything they will come down. In the Indian context, we will see Cap rates actually coming down over a 10-year period.

## **Your advice to hotel owners who are looking to sell right now.**

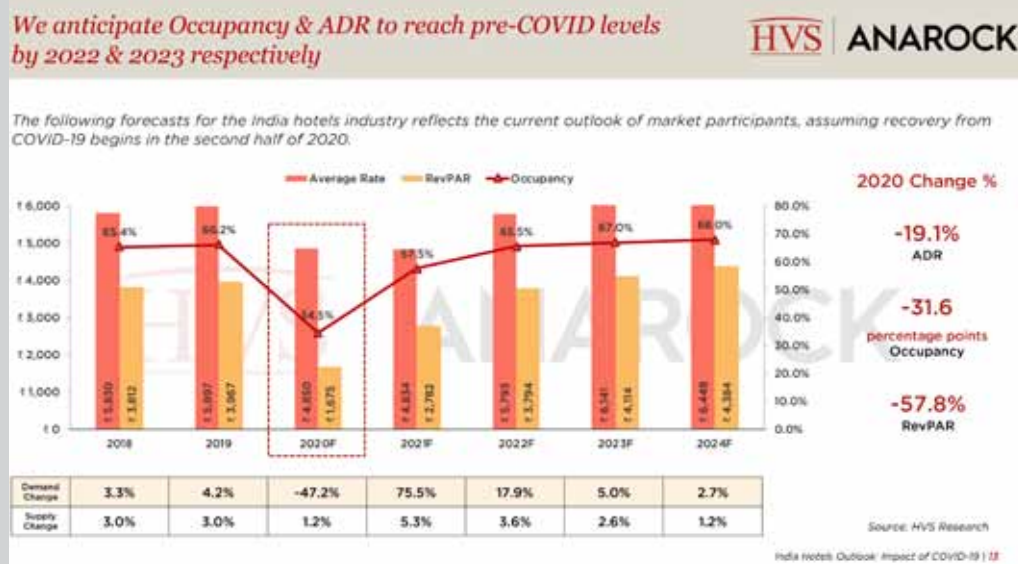
This is not a great time to sell. But if your cash flows are not holding out and you have no other way of managing your cash flow, then there is no option but to sell. Other than that, I would advise everybody to hold on because the valuations will be a little depressed – reasonably depressed actually – if you sell now. So the best advice I can give hotel owners is that if you have the ability to manage your cash flows for the next 12 months, then just hold on.

## **Do you foresee any consolidation happening?**

There will be some consolidation happening at both the domestic and the international level. This is an opportunity and people are looking at larger distribution, larger



Going by predictions made in HVS ANAROCK'S latest report that not only analyses the performance of the Indian hotel sector under the current COVID-19 pandemic but also compares its recovery to events of the past (9/11 and the Global Financial Crisis of 2008), occupancy and ADR are expected to reach pre-COVID levels by 2022 and 2023, respectively, with supply growth expected to remain dormant. This is assuming recovery from COVID-19 begins in the second half of 2020.

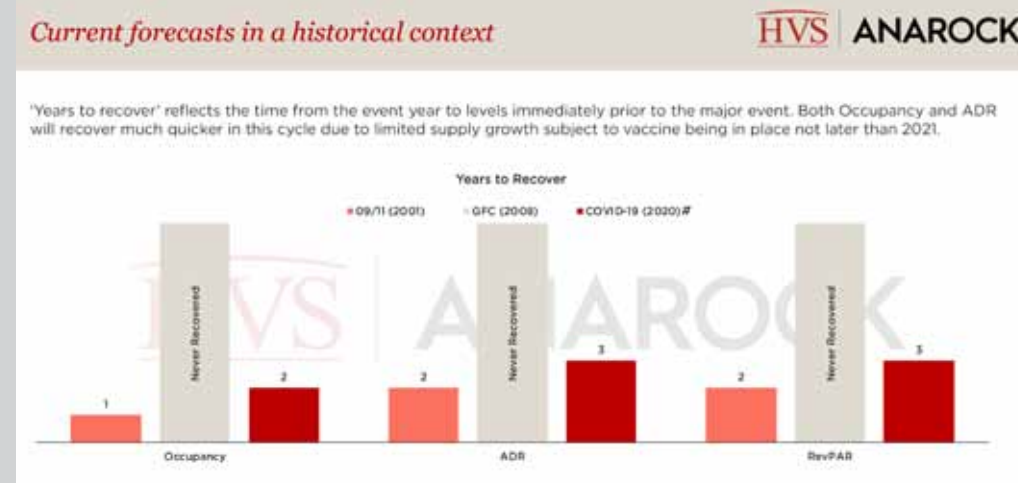


## TRAVEL LESS

**Corporate:** It is expected that corporates will put restrictions on non-essential employee travel. Even for the essential employee travel, allowance limits are likely to be reduced. Senior Management travel is also expected to reduce in the short-term.



If you have the ability to manage your cash flows for the next 12 months, then just hold on



The report reveals that both occupancy and ADR will recover much quicker in this cycle due to limited supply growth, subject to a vaccine being in place not later than 2021. According to the analysis, while business midscale and economy hotels will recover faster than their luxury and upscale counterparts, the case will be quite the opposite in the leisure segment. Here, luxury and upscale hotels will recover quicker than their economy and midscale counterparts.

balance sheets. Therefore, there will be an opportunity to consolidate. It's only natural for a pandemic or a disruption of this kind to bring these opportunities into play. Not that they were not on the cards even before the big merger happened between Starwood and Marriott, others would also want to get the same scale.

## Do you see any changes in the development costs?

In the short-term, there will be a reduction in development costs. Areas are going to get smaller, especially in the South Asian & Asian context. But once the pandemic settles, we will see a fair amount of development.



# Region specific tourism needed

EC FHRAI members talk about the difference in policies for Centre & states, the current scenario and what the government should do to revive the hospitality industry.



Neha Rawat





**S K Mohapatra**  
Co-opted EC Member, FHRAI

**How do you think the difference in the policies for Centre vs State is creating disturbance? Can we not have one policy for the entire nation? What are your views on the same?**

No, as such I don't consider that the differences in the tourism policy of the Centre and the states is creating any major disturbance but that said, coherency in efforts at the policy level to promote the tourism sector is certainly a desirable proposition and more beneficial for the industry. As far as the tourism industry in India

effectively, adequate funds, functions and functionaries must be provided.

**Why has the government neglected tourism & hospitality industry post-COVID?**

Tourism and hospitality for long has been a neglected sector, hardly receiving the attention they deserve. Things had improved over the last few years but post this pandemic outbreak the way the government has ignored the repeated representations from the industry associations for a relief package, it is back to square



**S K Mohapatra**



is concerned, it is not the difference between the Central and the state tourism policies that is impeding our growth, but it is the indifferent attitude of the government towards this sector.

As for having a uniform tourism policy for the entire nation, I feel that for a country of our geographical diversity, this may not be the right thing to do. A decentralised approach would be rewarding for the sector.

The Central and state governments roles should be confined to frame the broader policy framework and development of core infrastructure while more responsibility should be entrusted on the local administration for promoting the tourism of their respective areas. They should be mandated to devise region-specific tourism promotion strategies that also involve active participation of the local community. However, to enable them to function

one. A sector that contributes around 9 per cent to the country's GDP while employing more than 3 crore people certainly deserves better.

**What's your opinion on restarting tourism activities without further delay?**

In fact, it has already started. Post the Unlock 4.0 guidelines which further opened up the economy, tourism activities are gradually resuming. The very fact that tourism-related activities have been allowed, comes as a major respite for our industry.

A sector that contributes around 9% to the GDP while employing more than 3 crore people certainly deserves better





**Param Kannampilly**

## **Param Kannampilly Co-opted EC Member, FHRAI**

***How do you think the difference in the policies for Centre vs State is creating disturbance? Can we not have one policy for the entire nation? What are your views on the same?***

There is no uniformity in the policies and this is definitely creating confusion because tourism is not on the concurrent list of the Constitution. Ideally there should be one policy which should be implemented across the country. It will make the life of the hotelier having multiple properties across different states, easier. But we must remember that India is a huge country and it is not always possible to have one policy. Having said that I must add, in the current scenario which is essentially a health issue, it would have been a far more pleasing situation to have a semblance of uniformity in the policies.

## ***Why has the government neglected the tourism & hospitality industry post-COVID?***

The government has not neglected tourism and hospitality now. The government has been following the same policy of neglecting the sector for a very long time. From time to time we hear that there will be certain incentives which will be given to the industry, however nothing sees the light of the day. There are Union budgets which hardly have anything for the sector. Even this year we were



The government has been following the same policy of neglecting the sector for a very long time



expecting some announcement in the budget, but there was virtually nothing. The government needs to realise that the industry is one of the biggest employment generators. It should be taken more seriously.

## ***What's your opinion about embracing the new normal and restarting tourism activities without further delay?***

Be it hospitality or other sectors, life is limping back to normalcy. The industry has learnt to stay afloat by following various hygiene practices. We at The Fern Hotels & Resorts have also gone ahead and implemented Staygiene – the new normal. It stresses the optimal use of technology to reduce human touch to the bare minimum.

Online e-registration options before arrival, scanned ID proofs before check-in, e-version of reservation confirmation voucher are some of the new SOPs to ensure minimal guest interaction during check-in. Right from the time the guest is picked up from the airport, utmost care is being taken. All hotel cars are sanitised before and after every use, only two guests are allowed per car.

## ***What should the government/MOT do in order to win back the confidence of the hospitality industry?***

For starters they should start talking to the hotel owners. The officials do not have any idea as to how the industry functions. The ministry can have a committee which can have members from the ministry, hospitality, aviation and allied sectors. They should discuss the problems faced by each sector and the remedies which are possible.



## Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar EC Member, FHRAI

**How do you think the difference in the policies for Centre vs State is creating disturbance? Can we not have one policy for the entire nation?**

In this era of the pandemic, we ought not to create discord, disturbances nor refer to disturbances. Yes, the draft National Tourism Policy 2020 is an important policy document with a clear intention to develop, build and make tourism grow in the years to come. Being a vast country, with state governments having their own priorities, it is prudent to have a 'federal approach' – let the Centre and states work in tandem while meeting their own specific objectives.

**Why has the government neglected tourism & hospitality industry post-COVID?**

Please note – we are not in a post-COVID stage; the govt is doing its best to contain the pandemic over the last six months. What the tourism & hospitality industry has suffered is public knowledge. I am optimistic, that as the unlocking of the economy continues, the industry will get its due share of concern from the government. We have to wait and watch, and not be judgmental at this stage.

**What's your opinion about embracing the new normal and restarting tourism activities without further delay?**

We welcome the measures taken by the government to restart the economy and the phased opening up of the country. Tourism-related activities will kick start when people can begin travelling for leisure or business with

roads, railways and airlines providing their full services. We cannot rush into these activities – safety, security and health regulations will have to be ensured at all times, everywhere.

**What should the government/MOT do in order to win back the confidence of the hospitality industry?**

While we can all have our wish-lists, it is for the industry associations to reflect and plan for the future. Whitepapers and reports will be drawn up for presentation to the government to ensure that our industry can begin contributing back to the national economy in an even bigger way than before. However, this will surely take time.

The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown up the challenges of survival and inter-dependence; we have to rise to the occasion by being self-reliant, or as the Honourable Prime Minister said, 'atmanirbharta' is the clarion call for us all. The five pillars of Atmanirbhar Bharat that our PM has announced are economy, infrastructure, systems, demography and demand. And, the objective of Atmanirbhar Bharat is to empower our people and the businesses to succeed.



**Lakshyaraj Singh  
Mewar**



Let the Centre and states work in tandem while meeting their own specific objectives





# Solutions within existing systems

FHRAI hosted an interactive webinar with **Sanjeev Sanyal**, Principal Economic Adviser in the Ministry of Finance, Government of India. We bring you details on the same.



Neha Rawat



**T**he Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) held an interactive webinar with Sanjeev Sanyal, Principal Economic Advisor, Ministry of Finance. The webinar focused on issues faced by the hospitality industry with respect to availing schemes announced by the government and the Reserve Bank of India.

Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, VP, FHRAI, and President, Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI); Pradeep Shetty, Jt Secretary of FHRAI, and VP, HRAWI; D V S Somaraju, Treasurer – FHRAI; S P Jain, MD, Pride Hotels; Surinder Jaiswal, President, HRANI; Vivek Nair, CMD, Leela Hotels; and Nirav Gandhi, MD, Express Hotels were part of the FHRAI interactive meeting delegation.

Beginning the session, **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli** said, "We thank Sanjeev Sanyal for taking the time to hear us out and for his valuable suggestions. We have put forth to him the most critical aspects and issues compounding the sector's woes. We presented to him the revenue projections which indicate a loss of 1.6 lakh crore and job losses mounting to 5.5 crore if the sector is not revived. With no revenues, but rentals, salaries, statutory bills still to be paid, the industry may succumb by the year end. Indian hotel and restaurant (hospitality) industry contributes about 10 per cent GDP to the country's economy and needs urgent attention from the government."

**Sanjeev Sanyal** suggested focusing on matters that need urgent attention and narrowed them down to restructuring of existing debts which would require financial restructuring by the banks, bringing back people from their homes to their jobs and specific policies related to the hospitality sector. He added that the banks may not be taking that view, but RBI takes it seriously. For faster and effective turnarounds, he advised the association to identify solutions within the existing systems instead of recommending a new scheme for the sector. He opined that since there is an existing framework, it can work for hospitality too. He added that there are common issues in every sector, and since 100 per cent guarantee is given to MSMEs, it will be applicable for hospitality as well. He also asked FHRAI to coordinate with FICCI & CII and to come up with solutions.

"One of the challenges faced by the hotels that are 10 to 15 years old is that they have no way to avail of the facility offered by the government. Most of these establishments' debts are paid off and they have been using the working capital to meet expenses of operations. Presently, the



**Sanjeev Sanyal**

The association needs to identify solutions within the existing systems



**Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**

Revenue projections indicate a loss of 1.6 lakh cr and job losses mounting to 5.5 cr



**Pradeep Shetty**

Hotels that are 10 to 15 years old have no way to avail the govt facility



**Surendra Kumar Jaiswal**

Restructuring is not a feasible option for long, plus banks have refused funding

banks decline loans to such hotels since these do not come under the priority sector. But we do need cash to manage everyday expenses and are hoping that the government opens an Emergency Line of Credit for such hotels and restaurants," said **Pradeep Shetty**.

**Surendra Kumar Jaiswal**, VP, FHRAI, stated that restructuring is not a feasible option for long, plus banks have shown defiance and refused extending funding under ECLS as well as for restructuring inspite of RBI circulars, CBDT circulars and the Finance Minister's statements. Also, despite an advisory issued by the RBI to banks that the entire accumulated interest of seven months of moratorium period be distributed and collected up till March 31, 2021, the banks have disregarded the RBI and put our businesses in big jeopardy by debiting all of the accrued interest in one go, on September 1. Responding to the issue, Sanyal asked the association that hard facts/evidence be presented in order to make an inquiry.

**D V S Somaraju** made a very good point that the main problem is about working capital issue.

**Nirav Gandhi** said, "It's not just the COVID issue but also the historical past, we are employing a large number of people. We need a report stating the actual size of the hotel industry for more clarity. There is an MSME aspect to the hotel industry and the main issue is working capital."

Sanyal responded, "It is quite difficult to provide funding to an industry which is running in loss and government itself has to borrow funds and they are awful in giving credit as it's hard to pass on the funds. Plus, even if all the problems are resolved, it is less likely that people will rush to travel in large numbers. FHRAI needs to focus on the schemes that are already existing in the framework and push them. The association needs to come up with some project or deadline for solving the problems. The focus must be on G-20 in 2022 in which India will be inviting the world and it's a great way to showcase ourselves and the hotel industry will get a boost. Funds is not a problem, economy is doing good, there is liquidity in the market – the task is how to leverage it."

Concluding on a positive note, Sanyal reiterated that the association needs to identify solutions within the existing systems instead of recommending an entire new scheme for the sector. He also asked the association to allow him some time for resolution of their problems and to come together with their sister industry for a generic view for which the government could give a generic solution.





# Restart after Unlock



**Gaurav Sinha**

Social events and staycations are major contributors



**Girish Krishnan**

There is demand for experiences that are value for money

In June, Unlock 1.0 was announced, since then two more Unlocks have further opened up the hospitality sector.



Steena Joy



The world as we knew it before COVID-19 has forever changed. It has taught the travel and tourism industry to reinvent their working SOPs and rethink the strategy to just stay afloat. The resilient hotel industry is now faced with changes in consumer travel patterns and behaviour and have to accordingly work to include these in their operational strategies.

**Gaurav Sinha**, Director of Operations, JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru says, "A positive outlook towards business has made us look beyond the conventional way of opportunity. We are seeing development in business – social events and staycations as major contributors. MICE will take longer than expected and uncertainty of travel can continue. For large form of events we have seen some possible light with enquiries for Q4 of 2021."

**Girish Krishnan**, Hotel Manager, Four Points by Sheraton Mahabalipuram Resort & Convention Center observes that the industry has faced a

major loss in terms of mass-scale cancellations and reduced traffic. He says, "Some of the short-term challenges will be low expenditure but the long-term challenges will be a shift in consumer behaviour, consumption patterns, perception, expectations and trends. Accordingly, we are working on the pricing strategies and on understanding the perception during this time, we have anticipated a change in the saving patterns and the demand for experiences that are value for money. The focus is to shift from an anxious situation to a positive approach."

Four Points by Sheraton Ahmedabad has seen a marginal increase in the number of travellers coming into the hotel – people travelling for work, transiting through the city to other destinations, families staying over weekends to take a break from routine and rigorous schedules they followed during the lockdown. The hotel is also seeing dine in inquiries. Speaking about the challenges, **Vinayak Mhatre**, Hotel Manager, Four Points by Sheraton Ahmedabad points out, "Challenges that continue to impact the business are limited travel options



**Vinayak Mhatre**

Leaner operative models would help the industry to revive faster



**Punish Sharma**

With the unlocking we have seen some more activity on the rooms front



**Fredrik Blomqvist**

F&B is very much the front & centre of the game & that has been positive for us



**Shruti Shibulal**

We are slowly seeing an increase in intra-state travellers at our properties

from feeder markets like Mumbai, New Delhi and other metro cities in the country. Current limitations on international travel will impact the overseas business that was coming into the hotel." The hotel has seen some inquiries for last quarter of 2020 and first and second quarter of 2021 coming in. Mhatre feels that Clean and Hygienic Stays complemented with Innovative and Safe Dine in options would be the key to business in the months to come. Leaner operative models without losing out on delivery efficiencies would help the industry to revive faster, he adds.

**Punish B Sharma**, Vice President – Operations, The Fern Hotels & Resorts opines that it's still early days as far as the hospitality industry is concerned. He says, "The industry got the permission to open recently and that too with limitations. If I take all these things into perspective, I will say that Meluha, The Fern is doing pretty decent. We had a few guests who were staying with us even during the lockdown. We also got guests who stayed with us as a part of self-quarantine. With the unlocking we have seen some more activity on the rooms front, however it is going to take some time to get good numbers. We have a huge locational advantage. A lot of corporates operate from Hiranandani gardens and we have a captive audience. This puts us in a better situation."

**Fredrik Blomqvist**, General Manager, Four Seasons Hotel Bengaluru agrees. "Without any doubt, the business pace is slow and this recovery journey is going to take time – we need to be patient. We

are currently focusing a lot on internal training and ensuring our revised operating standards have been implemented accordingly." Four Seasons has launched Lead With Care, an enhanced global health and safety programme that is being implemented at properties worldwide, including at Four Seasons Hotel Bengaluru. "Food & Beverage is very much the front and centre of the game and that has been a very positive thing for us. The key challenges are that we are unable to see the light at the end of the tunnel and it will take time to restore the confidence in our travellers," Blomqvist adds.

**Shruti Shibulal**, CEO and Director, Tamara Leisure Experiences informs that the nationwide lockdown and the travel restrictions it brought with it was a very challenging period for her group. "However, we are a strong and resilient organisation, with an incredible team of dedicated and committed associates, chefs, and operations managers. We are slowly seeing an increase in intra-state travellers visiting our properties. We are hopeful that, in time, inter-state travellers will also return," she says.

Courtyard Surat is fortunate to run a full house during the March to July 2020 period and still counting. "We were able to secure business from a local company of Surat, which protected our top line. With stringent initiatives put in place and controlled bottom line, we were amongst the few hotels in India to achieve a high GOP of 65 per cent in April and May; and, 60 per cent in June and July," says **Vikas Sharma**, General Manager, Courtyard by Marriott Surat. This





**Vikas Sharma**

We were amongst the few hotels to achieve a GOP of 60% in June and July



**Rubin Cherian**

Economy & midscale segment hotels will be the first to recover



**Atul Upadhyay**

Communication will play a lead role in reaching out to the guests



**Prantik Ray**

Recovery will be prolonged by at least three to four quarters

helped Courtyard Surat to protect associate jobs and their salaries and thereby has resulted in a highly motivated workforce. "We have to now, as industry professionals, start looking at the hotel as a business enterprise as the new pillars of hospitality in my view will be associate, guest, cash," he states.

Being in proximity to the airport, Novotel Hyderabad Airport had never shut operations completely. The hotel had few international long stay guests who were unable to travel back to their countries. **Rubin Cherian**, General Manager, Novotel Hyderabad Airport says, "Since Unlock 1.0 we have seen a steady rise in our business. Nearly 77 per cent of our guests are domestic, thus our dependence on the international inbound traffic is limited. The hotel

the management of cleaning, disinfection, and inspection. He believes regaining guest's confidence should be the first step in overcoming the crisis. "Communication will play a lead role in reaching out to the guests and needs to be done subtly. Gentle, so it reassures the guest of the safety in their decision to start planning and travelling again," he reiterates.

**Prantik Ray**, Area General Manager, Sayaji Indore advises, "The prime focus should be on guest safety & sanitisation. Stick to brand USP, customise packages & promotions, focus on transit travellers, engage with online channel partner, target less impacted corporate bodies are a few brand strategies to boost occupancies." He opines that recovery will be prolonged by at least three to four quarters



has by now hosted a healthy number of Indian weddings (respecting the 50 guests gathering rule) and we have also been getting requests for rooms from airlines dealing in cargo and private jets for their crew. We were able to capture this business as we have an advantage of being close to the airport." He believes that while economy & midscale segment hotels will be the first to recover as travellers are going to be very price sensitive in such times, they would also like to patronise brands which have a strong global presence.

**Atul Upadhyay**, Vice President Operations, Pride Hotels feels that the biggest and foremost challenge while reopening the business will be the implementation of the new standards, which will require developing a new set of skills around

with normalcy around two years away. Small scale business travellers will recover first whereas group or MICE will be the last to recover.

**Vipul Tripathi**, DGM-Operation, Effotel Indore says, "COVID-19 has severely impacted the hospitality sector in Q2 & Q3 2020. As far as Indore is concerned, even after the Unlock, restaurants are not being operational, only room business is operational. There has been significant decline in occupancy, average room rates (ARR) and also revenues." But he opines that, "There will be definitely be a boom in domestic tourism in India. Also, as Indore is a city between two Jyotilingas (Ujjain & Omkareshwar), we are planning for some value for money pilgrim packages where guests can visit these Jyotilingas in a very safe and secure manner."

# 'FHRAI can play the role of a catalyst'

**Jaison Chacko**, the new Secretary General of FHRAI, says he would be facilitating the industry to grow, prosper and keep pace with the latest developments in the sector.



Neha Rawat

## **As the new Secretary General of FHRAI, how will you take on this new role?**

It's a matter of great honour and privilege for me to assume the role of Secretary General of this prestigious institution. As Secretary General of FHRAI my role would be to facilitate the hospitality industry to grow, prosper and to keep pace with the latest developments and innovations, taking place in the sector. In these challenging times, the Secretariat under me would have to be more proactive and responsive towards the frequent changes in the policy environment and the challenges being faced by the tourism and hospitality sector.

## **Please share your experience and how will it help you excel in your current role?**

I am having work experience of close to two decades in various capacities spanning across situations and challenges of all kinds, interfacing with diverse stakeholders at all levels. In my last assignment I worked with one of the leading industry Chambers of the country, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry as Head, Human Resource and Core Team Member, State Development Council (SDC) – a premier Think Tank of PHDCCI. Prior to joining PHDCCI, I worked with reputed developmental organisations such as Magic Bus India Foundation, Gandhi Peace Centre and Deepalaya. I am optimistic that my strong faculties in operations management, business development, strategic planning, handling government relations and corporate networking supplemented with excellent interpersonal skills would help me excel in the new role.

## **The hospitality industry is facing many challenges due to the pandemic. Which key issues will you put forward to the government?**

As you are aware, tourism and hospitality has suffered the maximum damage due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Zero business during the last six months, negative cash flows, threats of insolvency and millions of job losses have devastated the sector completely. Due to this unprecedented crisis, today the hospitality industry is facing an existential crisis and some real relief measures from the government can only save this sector. Since the beginning of the lockdown, the Federation has been

assiduously advocating to the highest authorities in the government for some hospitality industry specific relief measures that included financial packages, quarantine guidelines, power tariff relaxations, waiver of statutory payments & penalties, compliance issues, to name a few. We have left no stone unturned to highlight the issues before the government but some real relief is yet to come.

## **What steps can be taken to develop this association further?**

In the future landscape of the Indian hospitality industry, I foresee a major role that FHRAI can play as a catalyst in the development of the industry. With this objective, it is envisioned to add new dimensions to the multifaceted services that the organisation is presently providing to the industry. They are also expected to augment organisational growth with enhanced visibility and branding and increased stakeholder involvement.



Jaison Chacko



The Secretariat would have to be more responsive towards the frequent changes in the policy environment





# COVID Safe







# COVID Compliance Audits & Certification for Hotels & Restaurants



**The National Accreditation  
Board for Certification  
Bodies Accreditation**  
(Under process)





# 'We need a task force'

FHRAI hosted a webinar recently with **G Kishan Reddy**, Hon'ble Minister of State for Home Affairs, Government of India.



Neha Rawat



**G Kishan Reddy**



Focus on safety, making destinations attractive & economic viability



**Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**



The hotel & resto sector accounts for 35 mn, i.e. almost 12.5% employment



**S K Hari Arumugam**



Guidelines by MHA could be made uniform across the country



**T**he session was moderated by Pradeep Shetty, Joint Honorary Secretary, FHRAI and the panellists were Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, Vice President, FHRAI; Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, President, HRANI; D V S Somaraju, Hony. Treasurer, FHRAI; S K Hari Arumugam, EC Member, SIHRA; Nirav Gandhi, MD, Express Hotels; and S P Reddy, Chairman & CEO, enGenius Consulting Group.

Starting the discussion **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli** said, "Hospitality and tourism is a very important sector in the economy and as mentioned by the PM in his speech that out of the five pillars, tourism is also the most important. Our industry is highly labour-intensive and an employment generator of both direct and indirect jobs. So out of 50 mn employed by the hospitality and tourism industry, the hotel & resto sector accounts for 35 mn, that is, almost 12.5 per cent employment is generated by our industry in the entire country. Post-COVID we believe that 30-40 per cent

of the industry may not even exist. We have stood by the government in giving our hotels to doctors, quarantined passengers and hospitals. And our restaurants have opened their kitchens and distributed meals to the needy. We see ourselves as true corona warriors. We seek your immediate support to allow the hospitality industry to restart their businesses. Rooms and places to eat will be required as soon as people start travelling. Although the Central government has opened the sector but there are several issues that are yet to be addressed at the state level."

**G Kishan Reddy** responded, "I am extremely happy that FHRAI has reached out and put forth their problems along with the solutions. It is important to put forth all issues and hold in-depth discussions. I am confident that this webinar will prove to be a milestone on the road to recovery. I believe that for the recovery of this sector we need to focus on three fundamental aspects – catering to the safety norms, making destinations attractive

for tourists and remaining economically viable." The government has taken a number of steps for extending relief and mitigating the effects of the pandemic. Our government has put in place various measures for crisis management and supporting tourism. In the beginning of the outbreak itself, GOI set up a 24/7 COVID cell and several guidelines for the benefit of the industry. For the foreign tourists stranded in India, hotels wards were set up to effectively tackle the situation. As many people have lost jobs, GOI is working on ways to provide upskilling. I also encourage industry leaders and organisations to submit recommendations for the government to consider."

"We must increasingly focus on revival along with adhering to the government guidelines and with suggestions from experts the sector can start attracting tourism. Hospitality is primarily about our ethos grounded in the philosophy of 'Atithi devo bhava', customer safety and well-being is inherent to the Indian industry. GOI is doing much work in the field, the PM has set up a team of eight members, I am a part of the team. We are focusing on skilling members and employment generation. In this group, Ministry of Labour, MOT, Ministry of Skill Development, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of MSMEs, Ministry of Tribal Welfare will submit the report to the PM," he added.

**Nirav Gandhi** said, "We appreciate the efforts of the Central government which has done a tremendous job in containment zones and in spreading a lot of knowledge regarding guidelines."

Talking about job losses in the sector, **D V S Somaraju** said, "The last five months have been difficult for employees, we could not impart training to our staff. Is there any possibility of getting help from the government in this regard? As you are in-charge of the district development programme for training and skill development, we hope we can work out with some kind of arrangement with the government." Reddy responded, "We will address skill development and employment generation during this pandemic. Through e-commerce we will be catering to tribal artisans and the handloom sector too. We wish to reduce imports particularly from our neighbouring countries. We require your inputs as to how we can generate employment and skill upliftment of these people. Government is working on this area and stands with the hotel industry in this tough time."

**Pradeep Shetty** suggested, "The EPFO fund – around 30,000 crore – can be used to support the employees. The hotels have already provided support for three to four months but now with no

business, how long can we survive. Some measures have been announced for employees with less than ₹15,000 salary but nothing concrete has been done, so we will submit a report on this and will share our suggestions on the same." Reddy responded, "We will take up this issue with the employment generation department and the PM and we will soon give you a report on it. We will soon release some relief like three months' salary for those who are ESIC, PF employees and they are going to get 50 per cent salary for three months."

Shetty shared, "Financial support has come from the MSME Ministry as an emergency credit line was given to people who took loans. The moratorium on repayment of loans was up till August but now that has ended too. And there is now a restructuring plan which the RBI has come up with. The measures are there but they are not reaching the industry.

We request that we should be given moratorium for two years, interest waiver for this industry, and some interest payment from hotel owners could be worked upon. We are requesting you to look into this industry specially and craft a special policy. Hotels owners are exhausted and almost on the verge of bankruptcy. We request the government and the PM to have a special task force for this industry headed by some specialist/senior bureaucrat."

**Surendra Kumar Jaiswal** said, "Employment is one of the major concerns for all of us – we thank you for allowing MICE and weddings in hotels and restos for increasing the occupancy. We have given our big venues and you can fix it by square feet accordingly, halls could accommodate more people according to the area. November is wedding season and we could generate some revenue, we will benefit and create jobs as well. We will follow all the guidelines given by the government. We are also requesting for automatic renewal of licenses."

**S K Hari Arumugam** said, "Guidelines by MHA could be made uniform across the country, SOPs are given by MHA. In each state they are different, but we need a uniform system for better functioning." Reddy replied, "We have given full freedom for Unlock guidelines to all states, and we are facing problems as relaxations and restrictions are under state governments' purview. However, we can't implement common SOPs in every state."

Concluding the session, Reddy said that the government needs to create a special task force for the industry to look into immediate issues. He suggested that the association should come up with a detailed action plan plan for specific problems that GOI can solve with help from them.



**D V S Somaraju**

Is there any possibility of getting help from the govt for training our staff?



**Pradeep Shetty**

The measures are there but they are not reaching the industry



**Surendra Kumar Jaiswal**

We thank you for allowing MICE and weddings in hotels and restos



**Nirav Gandhi**

The Central govt has done a tremendous job in containment zones



# Growth across sectors

Regional Presidents share insights on the restructuring plan, MICE tourism, Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs, and FSSAI's measures for promoting healthy eating habits.

Neha Rawat



**Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**  
President, HRAWI

Although the tourism and hospitality sector have been included in the priority list for the Resolution Framework by the Expert Committee of RBI under Shri. K V Kamath, we feel that our industry being the first causality sector of the pandemic and the last to revive, will find it very difficult to benefit from it due to the stringent nature of restructuring plan. Therefore, we have requested the government to simplify the resolution plan by incorporating the following changes in the Resolution Framework.

## **STRINGENT THRESHOLD RATIOS**

Threshold ratios set by RBI for hotels & tourism sector

“Penal measures are needed against banks and FIs who are not following RBI guidelines”

restructuring will evade deserving companies from availing the resolution plan. Hence, we have requested the government to modify/ abolish the same.

## **EXTENSION OF BORROWING TENURE**

The general guidelines suggested by the Committee include extension of residual tenure of loan by a maximum of two years (with or without payment of moratorium). We have requested that the extension in borrowing tenure permissible be increased to five years.

## **RESTRUCTURING FOR HOSPITALITY LOANS**

Restructuring for hospitality loans be done on same parameters as extended to aviation & commercial real estate.

## **SPECIAL REDRESSAL ONLINE CELL / FORUM**

We have requested for a Special Redressal Online Cell / Forum to be set up for reporting and resolution of inaction on part of the banks, especially actions that are not in line with the RBI circulars during COVID times.

## **PENAL ACTION AGAINST ERRING BANKS & FIs**

Due to heightened stress in the hospitality sector and large-scale reports of banks not complying with RBI directions, there is an urgent need for putting some penal measures in place against banks and other financial institutions who are not following RBI guidelines.



**Sudesh Poddar**  
President, HRAEI

## **MICE FUND SET UP**

In order to give a boost to MICE tourism and attract more events and conventions to the country, GOI has decided to extend the benefits to the meetings / conference organisers under Champion Sector in Services Scheme (CSSS), administered by the MOT. For this purpose, a MICE fund has been set up under the CSSS. This move will surely boost MICE tourism in

“NTP should clearly lay out targets for MICE, inbound and domestic, and how to retain the outbound MICE”

the country by encouraging the meetings / conference operators to bring more international conferences / meetings / seminars etc. to India. It will also lead to

increase in foreign tourist arrivals, employment and foreign exchange earnings for the country.

## **NTP NEEDS TO FOCUS ON EACH VERTICAL**

However, going forward we would recommend inclusion of additional events such as weddings, corporate events, etc. The global MICE industry is estimated at over \$700 bn and is expected to double in the next five years. India's share is quite low in all sub segments of MICE and National Tourism Policy (NTP) needs to focus on each vertical. NTP should clearly lay out targets for MICE, inbound and domestic, and how to retain the outbound MICE which goes from India.

## **DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT TARGETS**

Destination infrastructure plays the most critical role and city-wise and state-wise destination development targets for MICE tourism must be laid down over five years in the NTP, which should define the specific Central govt policies which will be addressed for MICE tourism for achieving goals – policies and permissions, State and Centre relationships, GST, MICE infrastructure, training, sustainable development, e-visa policies for MICE, PPP policies which need to be addressed for MICE, etc.



**K. Syama Raju**  
President, SIHRA

### **ECLGS PART OF ₹20 LAKH CRORE COMPREHENSIVE PACKAGE**

The Finance Ministry unveiled the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) as part of the ₹20 lakh crore comprehensive package to aid the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector in view of the economic distress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic which has impacted everyone. The ECLGS scheme was part of the ₹3.7 lakh crore package for MSMEs under the ₹20 lakh crore economic stimulus announced by PM Modi.

### **ANNUAL TURNOVER LIMIT RAISED TO ₹250 CRORE**

According to the scheme, it was expected that 45 lakh units would be able to benefit from resumption of business activity and also safeguarding jobs for employees.

The government later also expanded the scope of the ECLGS scheme and eligibility criteria to benefit individual entrepreneurs and a larger number of MSMEs. The government had also enhanced the annual turnover limit from ₹100 crore to ₹250 crore in line with the increased ceiling of loans outstanding.

### **ABOUT 23 LAKHS OF MSMEs HAVE RECEIVED CREDIT**

Close to 23 lakhs of MSMEs have received credit from banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs). There are many requirements that MSMEs have to comply with to be eligible for credit under the scheme. Additionally, the scheme would be applicable to all loans sanctioned during the period from May 23, 2020 to October 31, 2020, or till



**It was expected that 45 lakh units would be able to benefit from resumption of business**

an amount of ₹3 lakh crore is sanctioned, whichever is earlier. The scheme will provide relief to many distressed MSMEs and help them to continue their business and get through this difficult period.

### **APPLICATION FOR THE ECLGS SCHEME**

The ECLGS scheme guideline establishes an automatic pre-approval system. The borrower need not approach the lender for an ECLGS loan. If the MSME is eligible as per the ECLGS scheme eligibility criteria, a potential lender will approach the MSME themselves.

This loan scheme will be for an extended period of years from the date of disbursement. Business enterprises opting for the scheme must keep in mind that there will be a one-year moratorium on the principal amount that is to be repaid. During the moratorium, the ECLGS scheme interest rate payment will also continue.



**Surendra Kumar Jaiswal**  
President, HRANI

### **INFORMATION ON CALORIFIC VALUE & ALLERGENS MAY NOT FUNCTION OPTIMALLY**

We appreciate and stand by the vision of FSSAI as an authority of food safety and promoting healthy eating habits by educating citizens of calorific intake.

However, in specific customer-centric cases of food service establishments which are hotels such as standalone fine dining restaurants as well as restaurants in hotels, information on calorific value and allergens may not function optimally.

Display of information on calorific value on a prepared product by food service establishments may not serve its intended purpose because dishes are modified / prepared as per the requirements of guests and such requirements usually differ for each customer.

Also, no standardised measuring equipments are being used by the cooks/chefs and it will be difficult to standardise their recipes.

### **METHOD OF COOKING IMPACTS FINAL CALORIE COUNT**

It is well established that cooking carbohydrate and

protein-based foods increases their digestible calories. The method of cooking and other variable parameters such as cooking time and temperature have an impact on the prepared dish.

Similarly, cooking methods that require different temperatures to cook, such as frying, baking, steaming, boiling etc. also have an impact on the final calorie count. Therefore, calorific value of a manually cooked dish with non-standard time temperature combinations cannot be standardised.

### **HEALTHIER FOOD CHOICES**

Providing allergen information and nutritive value in the menu will result in making it a book as the maximum dishes in a food service establishment has ingredients such as cereals, milk, egg, fish, groundnut tree nuts & soyabean products etc.

While seeking the exemption for the hotels and fine dining restaurants which are central



**In standalone fine dining restaurants, information on calorific value may not function optimally**

licensees from the purview of implementation of this regulation, we also propose that an addendum /insert/ supplement titled as 'Healthy Menu' can be introduced for breakfast, lunch and dinner providing alternate nutritious and healthier food choices with reduced salt, sugar and fat. Today healthy foods have become a top priority for customers on the move or those enjoying a vacation.





# 'We built from scratch'

**Himmat Anand**, Founder, Tree of Life Resorts & Hotels did not get bogged down during the adversities caused by COVID-19, and managed to sail through.

 Nisha Verma



**Himmat Anand**

**H**immat Anand believes that the industry created a lot of negativity as a reaction to COVID-19. However, they kept a positive approach towards their business. "We accepted that everything was lost and decided to build ourselves back upwards from zero. We were very positive and proactive on social media and took out new programmes. The idea was that we wanted to have a continuity of our presence and of our business. We were the first in the country to announce the opening of our property. In mid-May, we announced that on Friday, June 19, we will open," he said.

Tree of Life Resort & Spa was the first property they opened. "We were conscious of the fact that we will only open properties which are within four to five hours of driving distance from the source market, and hence Jaipur was the best bet, as it was within driving distance of NCR. We started with an occupancy of 28-30 per cent in June, and slashed June prices. To activate the market again, we went for a deep 50 per cent discount in June. In July we brought it to 40 per cent, and in August we had around 25-30 per cent discounting. By October it would come to around 10-15 per cent discounting, as I believe that by October things will

be stable for us as a group. This means that out of eight properties, at least in four, things will be stable. Four will continue to struggle and we will see that as it comes.

Jaipur has done unbelievably well in July. It has taken us by surprise, as we have done better this July than July of last year. Our occupancy in July was about 68 per cent with an ARR of ₹10,700. Interestingly, our luxury pool villas are the ones to sell out first and they sell between ₹14,000-16,000 per night only with breakfast plus GST," shared Anand. This means, according to him, that there is a capacity for people to pay. "It was always said that domestic market doesn't pay. I think domestic market will pay if the product is right. That's been the learning for us," he claimed.

Small weddings is another segment, which did get them some business. "Before COVID happened, we launched a brand called Intimate Moments by Tree of Life in Jan-Feb. The idea was that people wanted to get away from huge numbers and we felt that people want to do small weddings, celebrations, anniversaries, birthdays, baby showers, and bachelorette parties, but in an intimate and personalised way. However, it didn't take off the way we expected, but now we have re-introduced Intimate Moments, where we are focusing only on small segment functions at our properties, which usually have 10-18 rooms, which can accommodate 35-50 people. We've had around four weddings in the last month, including two in Varanasi. We also have bookings for Varanasi and Jaipur for November and December," concluded Anand.

## OCCUPANCY

Udaipur is dependent on the Gujarat market, which hasn't taken off the way we thought, but when we opened on July 1, we did about 24-26% occupancy in July.



I think domestic market will pay if the product is right. That's been the learning for us



# Wyndham to expand

**Nikhil Sharma**, Area Director, Eurasia for Wyndham Hotels & Resorts EMEA, shares that the brand is ready to open new properties across India, catering to different segments.



Nisha Verma

## **Please share the expansion plans by Wyndham Hotels in India.**

We recently shared the news of our expansion across the Indian sub-continent, showing Wyndham Hotels & Resorts' strong growth trajectory in the region with the openings of our first hotels in Nepal and Bhutan. We expect to open our 50<sup>th</sup> Wyndham branded hotel in the Indian sub-continent next month, highlighting our commitment to growth across the region.

## **Why did you think of coming up with Hawthorn Suites in Dwarka?**

We see tremendous potential in religious holiday destinations across India. Dwarka is one of the four main pilgrim destinations for Hindus, which made it the perfect location for a Wyndham branded property. We currently have various hotels in religious



Wyndham in Dwarka is an ideal property for families that are looking at an extended stay



Aligarh GT Road a convenient, amenity-rich location for meeting, event and industry-specific business travel.

## **What kind of business are you looking at from your Pune property?**

Ramada Wyndham Pune Hinjewadi is strategically located in Hinjewadi – India's largest IT Park, as well as home to the Balewadi Stadium. This prime location garners significant business from international and domestic IT and automobile companies and also offers sports fans a great home base when travelling for sporting events taking place at the nearby stadium.

## **How are you promoting these properties across the Indian market?**

We participate in major travel and trade shows in India and offer a variety of promotions. Our most recent promotion included our 'Travel Again' offerings for corporate and leisure travellers. These offers provide discounted rates and encourage travellers to book and travel with Wyndham once again.



**Nikhil Sharma**



destinations such as Varanasi, Amritsar, Ajmer and are currently exploring opportunities in Tirupati, Vrindavan, Shirdi, Kathmandu, among others.

## **Aligarh is a different choice as a destination. What kind of business are you expecting?**

Over the last few years, we are seeing a significant uptick in interest for internationally branded hotels that offer large meeting and event spaces. Aligarh is a Tier-III city, as well as an industrial city. It is also home to public sector undertakings such as Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC), making our Ramada by Wyndham



# Readjust & Realign the Business

Due to the Work From Home (WFH) mandate, business has taken a beating. Today corporates are wary of conducting MICE events. The new normal is, virtual interaction.



**Sarbendra Sarkar**

**Sarbendra Sarkar**  
Founder and Managing Director  
Cygnett Hotels and Resorts

**Has WFH mandate till December affected your corporate business? How do you plan to offset this?**

There has been a steep decline in the overall business and corporate business is one part of it. Our relationships with the corporates are strong now as they were before COVID. However, due to this health crisis, corporates are refraining from conducting any MICE events at this time and all planned events/conferences have been deferred to a future date. Also, with 'Work From Home' business travel has reduced too.

We are in constant touch with our corporate partners and are already in talks with new potential partners. We are keeping communication steady and consistent.

Corporates are refraining from conducting MICE events, all planned events have been deferred to a future date

We are braving through this pandemic, even though the lockdown restrictions are slowly easing up.

As the pandemic continues the signs of recovery are still bleak, even though queries are trickling in, the sentiment of fear embedded in people's psyche will take time to ease up – hygiene and safety will be a top priority with travellers when they book a hotel.

We at Cygnett have implemented all necessary initiatives to ensure the comfort, care and safety of our guests. We ensure consistent sanitisation of all our premises on a daily basis; all employees use PPE kits; contactless experience to make the guests more comfortable; and are very strict about practicing social distancing.

Also, we are concentrating on our core business – Stay and F&B and have started getting leisure bookings and wedding enquiries.





## **Anand Sarode** General Manager – Sales Lords Hotels and Resorts

### ***Has Work From Home mandate affected your corporate business? How have you planned to offset it?***

The Work From Home mandate has affected the corporate business to some extent but it won't continue in the long run once the COVID curve flattens. This also opens up an opportunity for us to deliver food.

At Lords Hotels and Resorts we have come up with special facilities for guests who want to work from our premises. Working space with work desk, uninterrupted WiFi, in-room dining and on the go office facilities like printing and scanning can be availed.

This has offered corporates a safe and a cost-effective workspace and opened an alternate source of revenue for the group. We have customised packages available for hourly /daily /monthly usage.

### ***Anything more you would like to mention?***

Lords Hotels and Resorts have remained connected with its guests, corporates and travel trade partners all through this pandemic. We look forward to welcoming our guests back with the same warmth and hospitality, and keeping them well informed about our new safety and hygiene standards. We are sure that, in the days to come, the situation across the country is bound to

improve. Our industry has seen many crises earlier. We have not only recovered but grown stronger as well. This phase too shall pass and we shall achieve new heights. We are hopeful that corporate business will flourish again and we will once again serve our guests with better amenities in a post-COVID world.

Lords Hotels and Resorts is committed to serve guests in a safe and hygienic environment. Our safe stay initiative 'Karona Safe Rahona Safe' is based on the guidelines of WHO, FSSAI and MoHFW.

The enhanced protocols include social distancing, contactless check-in, sanitisation, in-room dining, thermal screening of guests, allotting room to the guest after 48 hours of the previous check-out, to mention a few. In addition to these measures the hotel group has also designated a COVID warrior at each hotel and a dedicated team is available 24X7 for assistance.



**Anand Sarode**



WFH has affected the corporate business to some extent but it won't continue in the long run







# Hope lies beyond challenges

FHRAI organised a webinar recently on 'Career in Hospitality: Overcoming the Challenges by Adapting to the New Normal' to discuss in detail the repercussions post the pandemic.



Neha Rawat

**T**he panellists in FHRAI's webinar were Suman Billa, Director – Technical Cooperation and Silk Road Development, UNWTO; Rakesh Kumar Verma, Joint Secretary, MOT; Rajan Bahadur, CEO, Tourism & Hospitality Skill Council of India; Nirav Gandhi, MD, Express Hotels; A K Singh, Principal, IHM Mumbai; K K Pant, Principal, IHM Pusa; Dr. J K Mangaraj, Principal, IHM, Ahmedabad; and Nisheeth Srivastava, Principal, IHM Kolkata.

and tourism industry, the hotel & restaurant sector accounts for 35 million or around 12.5 per cent of the total employment generated in the country and supports jobs directly and indirectly across India."

He added, "Now that we have entered the Unlock 4 phase and many states have allowed the industry to restart, we are trying to sensitise the much-needed employer-employee conglomeration to revive the industry at the earliest. This webinar is going to be a stepping stone for the revival of the hospitality education in which we will cover an official & true perspective on both international and domestic hospitality education systems – during and post-COVID. We will discuss in detail the career prospects of hospitality students & adapting their curriculum to COVID-19 protocols. And, dwell and deliberate upon the need of having to take the industry-academia collaboration to a new level for better prospects for institutes, students, and the entire fraternity. I would like to wish the fraternity and the students' good luck and assure them that the Federation stands in solidarity with them during these tough times."

Addressing the panellists, **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli** said, "It is well known that the youth of a country is its greatest asset. Likewise, the students who are planning to pursue hospitality education are the future of our industry. And, we at FHRAI, are amongst the first ones to realise and assess the impact of the pandemic on education and jobs. In the last five months, we represented to the highest echelons in the government what the industry is going through, especially from the perspective of human resource and employment generation. Out of the 50 million employed by the hospitality



Suman Billa

We are looking at a drop of 1 billion in tourist numbers, & 1 trillion in economy

**Nirav Gandhi** said, "My perspective basically has more to do with students' future post-COVID, globally we are going to see a big gap in the jobs. Most of our students who are seeking jobs abroad will be completely zeroed down to remain in India, thus putting more pressure on hospitality industry. A study has shown that 4 crore jobs exist in the industry. So it is not difficult to get a job, but they may have to settle for lower salaries & invest in their career for the first three years, but when the industry bounces back, they will be able to command salaries that they expected earlier."

Addressing the questions of the Federation, **Suman Billa** said, "We are facing one of the most unprecedented challenges of our times. UNWTO estimates a drop of 50-60 per cent in the international tourist arrivals this year, and it is hard to have a contingency plan for such a steep decline. We are looking at a drop of 1 billion in tourist numbers, 1 trillion in economy, and 100-120 million job losses. It will almost take two to three years to bounce back."

"Tourism spending is discretionary and it is the first to shrink, only a vaccine will result in the bounce back. However, we receive 11 million tourists every year, and we send 26 million of our nationals out in the world, who spend approximately 25 billion. To survive this problem, we would have to create a domestic market and to retain it in the country. The industry can't wait for the vaccine and we need to restart as soon as possible. There are four elements which are important in our recovery plan. First,

we need to have strong gatekeeping for health, every state has different quarantine procedures so harmonisation of protocols is necessary. Secondly, we need a strong safety and hygiene protocol – to kill the anxiety and reassure the travellers that right from the airport, cab and hotel, guidelines are being followed in letter and spirit. Third, we need to identify destinations of importance and develop them. Fourth, to build a strong synergy with airlines, the countries which are likely to come out first are the ones who are working strongly with the airlines of their country," Billa said.

Commenting on the changing employment scenario in Pusa, **K K Pant** said, "It was the best scenario as far as the beginning of 2020 was concerned, we still have 47-57 management offers from international chains, food aggregators. More than 50 per cent offers have been postponed, deferred and withdrawn. Offers from the retail industry are still there. There is increasing interest to tap into the hotel industry. And, due to upskilling our students are going to be in a strong position."

**Rajan Bahadur** said, "I think tourism and hospitality industry is still seen as the catalyst for the economy of the country and job creation. It is time to wake up and think out-of-the-box. The goalpost is shifting and we need to readjust and realign our focus. Hospitality is already equipped to multitask and it is much easier for a hospitality person to move to retail. As there are no jobs right now across the sector, students should use this opportunity to upgrade their skills."



**Nirav Gandhi**

Students may have to settle for lower salaries & invest in their career for three years



**Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**

We are amongst the first ones to realise the impact of the pandemic on education







**Rakesh Kumar Verma**

Students have to be entrepreneurs rather depending on jobs alone

**Nisheeth Srivastava** said, "We have to evaluate the mapping of the knowledge that we impart to the students. The basic job of institutes is to hone the presentation skills of students. The syllabus is based more on methodology and grooming of the students. Teaching technology has improved as we have upgraded ourselves to online teaching, but it can't replace one-to-one teaching as personal mentoring and guidance is required."

**Dr. J K Mangaraj** said that industry and academia need to have a strong interface. COVID-19 protocols must be included in the curriculum. The govt is working on opening hospitality schools which will result in growth.

Explaining how faculty is working during these times, **A K Singh** said, "Digital education has helped us to keep the curriculum moving. Recently we pulled off a workshop with Microsoft team on Google Meet. We are able to cover five to six semesters online. We are working on curtailing some courses and coming out with morning & evening classes and practicals."

**Rakesh Kumar Verma** shared, "Training and education have gone undergone tremendous change during this crisis due to digital technology. Digital skills will be an important determinant for success in the future. We are working on the five pillars of Atmanirbhar Bharat that PM has announced, viz. economy, infrastructure, systems, demography and demand. All the five pillars will create opportunities for the hospitality sector to grow and create jobs at the next level."

"Students have to be entrepreneurs rather depending on jobs alone. They have to create jobs and grow their own startups. And, if enterprises

grow, jobs and careers will also grow. We already have schemes for infrastructure development namely Swadesh Darshan and PRASAD. Under these schemes the ministry is trying to create tourism infrastructure in existing and lesser known destinations in Tier-2 and Tier-3 towns which will create jobs in the hospitality sector," he stated.

"Demography, one of the five pillars, deals with how we should cater to the aspirations of our young generation and how do we benefit from it. The ministry will try to help in every possible way and we need a strong set of partners to create that kind of ecosystem of skilling in the country which will involve the government, industry and the training institution. Providing internship, apprenticeship, on-the-job training, are some of the ways in which the industry can help in improving the skilling ecosystem in the country.

Examining and assessing bodies have to be sensitised and trained to assess the competencies of the students so that they succeed in their respective jobs. Many states have started skill universities. The ministry is upscaling its skilling programme in some 150 destinations and is also working on changing the national council into a deemed university," added Verma.

Concluding the webinar, Gandhi said, "Hospitality institutes have been ignored for the last five months, they have not been so quick to adapt. The moot question is – how many students are FSSAI – COVID certified and trained? The ministry should have made it mandatory for the students to be certified, they should have been COVID-ready in the past five months. Only curriculum changes are not enough, institutes should have pushed themselves and been prepared to tackle the crisis."

# Opportunities in disguise

**Prahlad Singh Patel**, Minister of Tourism & Culture (I/C), claims that the COVID-19 crisis has given the MOT an opportunity to mend procedures for the future.



Nisha Verma

**C**alling Ministry of Tourism (MOT) as a stakeholder of the tourism industry, **Prahlad Singh Patel** says that owing to COVID-19, most damage has already been done to the industry and revival will come only after survival. That said, he adds that the crisis has also given the industry opportunities in disguise. "Statistics have always been in question; we realised that earlier, only 1,400 hotels were listed with MOT and we started enrolments amid the crisis. Now, the number has reached 17,000. Even for guides, we didn't have statistics. We have used this opportunity to do something for the stakeholders," the Minister said, speaking at fourth edition of National Talent Competition in Tourism & Hospitality Sector. Patel also welcomed the move to open hotels and restaurants in Delhi, and thanked the Home Minister as well as Lieutenant Governor of Delhi. "Opening of the two biggest segments of the tourism industry – hotels and restaurants – in the country's capital is a positive move that will help push domestic travel and give much

relief to the industry which has been readying itself with all health and safety protocols," he shared, adding that soon, they will be able to open banquet halls with 50 per cent capacity.

He shared, "We have been able to revive air travel to a certain extent and will continue to increase it." The Minister also stressed on the importance of the tourism industry as an enabler of economic growth, adding, "We have immense opportunities to increase wellness tourism in the country. We need to handhold and collaborate so that the tourism industry bounces back smoothly."



**Prahlad Singh Patel**

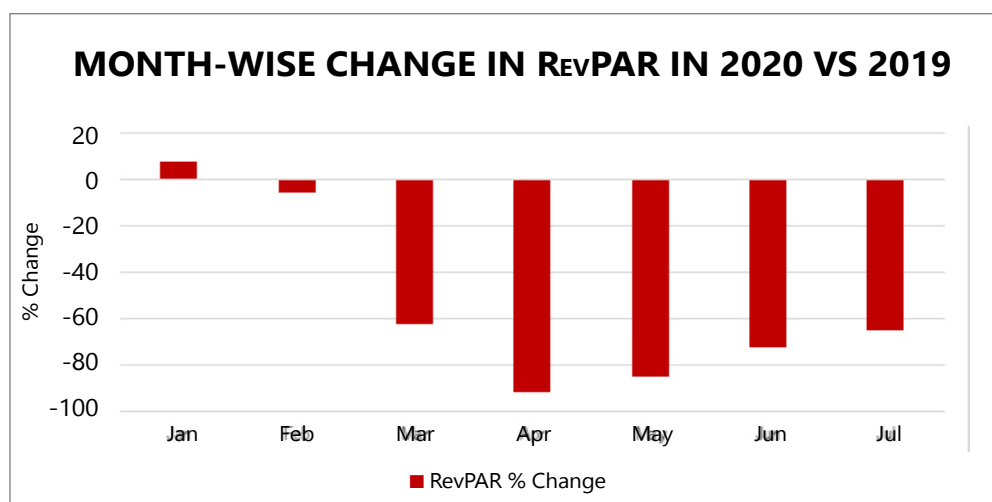


We need to handhold and collaborate so that the tourism industry bounces back smoothly



## Delhi's RevPAR declined 44.3% in Jan-July 2020

Delhi's decline in RevPAR is the most modest decline as compared to all major cities in India, reeling under the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Source: STR

**T**he city's RevPAR is slowly rising as the Central and state governments have gradually eased lockdown restrictions, with international repatriation flights and some domestic travel leading the way for recovery of the hospitality sector in Delhi, says JLL India Hotels and Hospitality Group's recent press note. Delhi's hotel demand is driven by corporate business travel, govt & judiciary linked travel & leisure segment travel. Govt, judiciary & administration linked travel are likely to bounce back sooner.



# Small, medium hotels remain shut

According to the President of Small & Medium Hotels Associations in Goa, its members are looking to open their doors only by 2021, considering high bills with miniscule occupancies.



Hazel Jain



Serafino Cota



While the star category hotels in Goa are seeing some guest check-ins, the small and medium hotels in the UT are rolling under mounting water and electricity bills with almost zero occupancy. **Serafino Cota**, President, Small & Medium Hotels Associations, says, "Our members don't want to keep their hotels open anymore. What is happening in Goa is that while the



Even if we get one guest for a few days, the government marks the hotel as 'operational'

then you also have to help the businesses stay open. The government is just looking to charge the hotels for everything. We are not asking for dole or anything. But at least be fair with us, we can't afford to pay the water and electricity bills with a single guest. When there is no guest, that means there is no consumption, but the rule in Goa is that even if one guest is there, we are charged for minimum consumption," Cota adds.

He explains that minimum consumption is not the same as actual consumption. "Earlier, we could afford to pay bills on minimum consumption because we had business. Now, for not consuming the minimum electricity we are still being charged. Our bills are coming with the remark 'minimum consumption' fee, which is quite high," Cota adds. For example, if a hotel is normally using 100 units, the minimum consumption is fixed at say 50 units. But with one or two guests, hotels can't even manage to use one unit. "The government did give us a 50 per cent waiver on electricity duty charges, but that is not very high anyway. So we have decided to open only in September 2021," he says.

## NO CHARTERS THIS YEAR

Cota shares that even the charter companies are not showing any interest in coming to Goa. "The cases are increasing. Also, charters require a lot of permissions and they have to work out a schedule three to four months in advance. So far there is no information of any charters. I expect Goa to be at peak in November 2020 in terms of number of cases," he says.

## SOPs NOT IMPLEMENTED?

While Goa does have a strict requirement for negative health certificates to enter, there are many entry points that are not manned. "There are many shortcuts and dirt tracks coming into Goa, so not every entry point is checked. Also, a lot of visitors come and stay in second homes which are not registered as hotels. The SOPs released by the tourism board are only on paper, no one has physically gone to check if they are really in practice. In the current scenario, how can guests know if the hotels are safe?" questions Cota.

government is trying to show that it is opening the state to tourism, at the same time, it is not extending any help to us. Even if we get one guest with great difficulty for a few days, the government marks the hotel as 'operational' and then they start charging you for full electricity, water bill, etc., so people prefer to close it altogether."

Cota is also a hotel owner but he is now looking at doing agriculture for the time being. "There is no scope for business right now. It will take some time. If you really want to open things up and the economy to grow,





# ‘We need ease of doing business’

FHRAI has collated some suggestions from members and is sharing the inputs with the MOT so that at least some key ones can be a part of the national tourism policy.

 Hazel Jain

**A**s the Ministry of Tourism (MOT) readies to take inputs from various national associations and trade bodies for its national tourism policy draft, FHRAI too gets ready to share some suggestions collated together with inputs from its members. **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI and President, Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI), shares some highlights of the draft shared with the ministry.

He says, “FHRAI intends to submit suggestions to the MOT on the draft National Tourism Policy 2020. We suggest that developers be provided tax incentives or tax holidays for setting up tourism projects in the tier-2 and 3 cities and remote locations. This will help promote the growth of tourism sector in the country. We will also ask the ministry to rationalise taxes, and visa rules should be adopted that are in comparison to our neighbouring countries.” He adds that India should learn from the leading tourism destinations about best practices that will boost tourist arrivals into India, especially regarding MICE – something which our neighbouring countries take away literally from under our noses due to our antiquated, irrational and restrictive policies.

“Tourism and hospitality are key contributors to the Indian economy. Given their ability to catalyse the growth engine for both revenue and job creation, the MOT should be

strongly focused via budgetary allocation, on the sector. Although hotels are considered an industry by the government, the incentives and privileges associated with an industry have not been conferred on hotels and restaurants. For the prosperity of tourism vis-à-vis the hospitality sector, it would be necessary, especially now that the industry gets treated like one,” he explains.

Another pertinent issue that is hampering the growth of hospitality in the country is the absence of ease of doing business. “On paper, India may have climbed up the charts in the rankings for ease of doing business, but the ground reality remains completely different. There is absence of a uniform system and processes in the sector for approvals and compliances. From inception of a hospitality project to day-to-day running of the establishments, the sector is tangled in the myriad web of bureaucratic processes. We have asked the government before, and we are now again recommending to the MOT that the single-window clearance systems be introduced and implemented uniformly across the country for hospitality, to make it an attractive enterprise to invest in,” Kohli says.



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli



India may have climbed up the ranking charts in ease of doing business, but the ground reality is different





## Design panels from Havwoods

The home of Havwoods' herringbone, Chevron and Versailles pattern wood flooring, the Design from Havwoods collection includes both engineered and solid construction planks, alongside the introduction of a select range of genuine reclaimed wood sourced from a multitude of mills; each distinctive design is presented in a breath of beautiful wood tones and quality finishes. Havwoods offers a choice of timber – Oak, Pine, and even Elm to create most of the design panels. It is available in 16 different designs in the tile pattern.



## Lavazza's smart coffee system

◆ Keeping all safety measures in mind and not compromising on the regular cup of coffee, Lavazza's new contact free coffee dispensing system allows one to brew their favourite cup of coffee through an app without an internet connection. One just has to download the Lavazza app on their phone, choose their favourite cup of coffee and pick it at the schedule time shown on the screen. To make sure there is complete distancing maintained between people, the app features an automatic inbuilt queuing system to avoid contact between multiple users, while seamless synchrony between the machine and app ensures zero lag time.



## 'Work from Home' range

◆ Home Canvas aims to help customers set up comfortable home offices through its new range of 'Work from Home' Furniture. These ergonomically designed tables efficiently convert areas in your home into a work/study space with minimum effort. The Float is an easy to mount work and study table that can transform any corner of the house into a cozy workspace. The Deskette is a modern and compact work from home desk with unmatched functionality. Porto is a portable study table that is easy to move, providing the flexibility to work from your bed or your couch.





## VAMS SafeGuard for contactless tracking

◆ The Visitor Authentication & Management Systems by VAMS SafeGuard comes with an effective solution to ensure efficient, secure and quick visitor processing. It helps in the process of tracking and keeping records of everyone who enters and exits the hotel premises. In the existing scenario, VAMS SafeGuard can read body temperature from 18" and the accuracy is up to 0.6F. The solution ensures the implementation of recommended processes through discrete, contactless temperature scanning and ensures that staff, guests contractors and visitors have a mask on their faces. The solution offers a combination of user-friendly pre-registration and walk-in processes. Guests only need to pre-register themselves and on the basis of which they receive an access code in advance of visit for seamless entry. The solution also comprises a digital Aarogya Setu declaration form, making it easy for hotels to collect and track the compliance as mandated by the government.

## Society Tea introduces CLEANSE

◆ Society Tea has introduced CLEANSE, which is made of ingredients known to accelerate metabolism and help build immunity. This Green Tea Detox Kahwa Premix contains ingredients like turmeric, ginger, asafoetida, cardamom, black pepper, clove, cinnamon, green tea extract, amongst others, which helps remove toxins from your body, working towards cleansing your system.



## Italian vintage writing desk

◆ Enhance your home decor with Italian vintage writing desk from The Great Eastern Home. The writing desk is made of hard wood. A warm finish is always a classic and adds just the right amount of elegance to a home study or workspace. The graceful curves of the legs of this beautiful solid wood desk are cleverly designed to help lighten the look of the piece. The Italian writing desk features four small drawers in front for ease of operation and one below the desk. A small panel in front provides additional space to hold all those books, stationery, and other items which are needed to keep you organised and functional. There is a wide range of writing tables and desks with or without beautiful marquetry to choose from.



## Impact Whey Protein

Myprotein has introduced their bestselling Impact Whey Protein (IWP) Mango in limited edition packaging, Impact Whey Kulfi and Birthday Cake flavours. Myprotein's IWP provides 21g of protein per serving. They also include protein-building essential amino acids – 4.5g of BCAAs and 3.6g of glutamine. The product contains only 1.9g fat, 1g carbs, and 103 calories, making it ideal for those looking to lose weight in a healthy way.



# Sleepwell's Cocoon

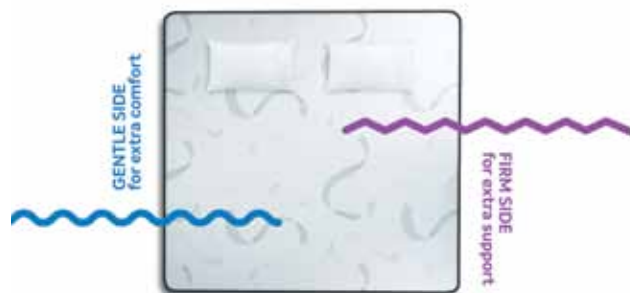
Sleepwell has launched Cocoon Mattress, a first-of-its-kind offering that allows consumers to choose the comfort feel of the mattress on their side of the bed.



**Sumit Sehgal**  
Chief Marketing Officer  
Sheela Foam

**T**he Cocoon Mattress from Sleepwell integrates a high level of personalisation in its product portfolio. A few distinctive highlights of the product are as follows.

- **Half-Half Concept:** The mattress allows two sleepers on the same bed to have two different type of feel on two sides of the same mattress by rearranging the two different top foam layers.
- **Choice of Firmness:** The Cocoon is a triple layered mattress comprising customisable top two layers & a core bottom layer for support. The top two layers have a different feel on either side – gentle & firm. The customer can change the feel of the mattress by interchanging the layers – from gentle to firm or vice versa. It is a dual feel mattress which enables two sleepers on the same bed to enjoy a good night's sleep just by re-arranging the two different top foam



layers as per their choice of feel, without disturbing their partner.

- **Mattress in a Box (MIAB):** A concept where a mattress is compressed and packed in vacuum packaging with the help of a special compressing machine, which makes it suitable for direct shipping to the customer. After the vacuum packaging is opened by the customer, the mattress decompresses to its original shape and size and becomes ready for use.
- **DIY (Do it Yourself):** In this DIY product little effort is required in making it ready to use. The zipper allows the user to open the top cover for changing the feel.



The customer can change the feel of the mattress by interchanging the layers – from gentle to firm or vice versa



## Marketplace

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# Marketplace

**ONE STOP HOTEL MANAGEMENT SOLUTION**

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The diagram illustrates EASEROOM as a central hub for hotel management. It is connected to a PMS (Property Management System) and a variety of Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) and booking engines, including Expedia, Hotels.com, Travelocity, TripAdvisor, Booking.com, Lastminute.com, Orbitz, Hotelbeds, and Goibibo. The central circle for EASEROOM is labeled 'Minimum Effort, Maximum Revenue...'.

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# Appointments



**REUBEN KATARIA**

General Manager, The Leela Hotel and Residences Bhartiya City Bengaluru

★ The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts has announced the appointment of Reuben Kataria as the General Manager of the upcoming The Leela Hotel and Residences Bhartiya City Bengaluru. With more than two decades of experience in managing hotel operations for both business hotels & resorts and with extensive knowledge of F&B operations, product enhancement, upgradation & concept development, Kataria brings with him the ideal skillset required to position the hotel in a highly competitive market.



**RAJAT TULI**

General Manager  
DoubleTree by Hilton Gurgaon

★ Rajat Tuli has been appointed as General Manager at DoubleTree by Hilton Gurgaon. He brings with him over two decades of industry experience having worked in several well-known brands such as Hilton, Taj, Marriott, ITC, and Radisson amongst others. From 2008 to 2015 he worked with Hilton India, across a number of their hotels. He was also instrumental in assisting with the opening of several Hilton hotels such as Hilton Chennai, Hilton Shillim & Hampton Vadodara through task force assignments.



**NEHA CHHABRA**

General Manager  
Courtyard by Marriott Bengaluru Hebbal

★ Neha Chhabra has been appointed as the General Manager of Courtyard by Marriott Bengaluru Hebbal. With over 18 years in the hospitality industry, she has worked with both, The Oberoi Group and Marriott International at their iconic properties across New Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai. Chhabra has been a pivotal team player with ideating and launching new F&B concepts, driving revenue and meeting guest satisfaction. Her previous position was Director of Operations at JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar.



**VIJAYENDER NATH**

Operations Manager  
Mourya Lords Inn, Kurnool

★ Lords Hotels and Resorts has appointed Vijayender Nath as the Operations Manager of Mourya Lords Inn at Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh. He comes with a rich experience of over 32 years in Operations, specialising in front office and revenue management with Oberoi and Trident group, to mention a few. His last assignment was with Daiwik Hotel, Shirdi – Maharashtra as Operations Manager. In his new role, Nath will ensure Mourya Lords Inn continues to make a mark for itself in the state of Andhra Pradesh.



**ATHITHA KUMARAN  
PANDIARAJAN**

Assistant Manager, Crowne Plaza Chennai

★ Athitha Kumaran Pandiarajan has been appointed as Assistant Manager Marketing and PR at Crowne Plaza Chennai Adyar Park. He will be handling all aspects of online/offline marketing, partnership management and public relations management for the property. Pandiarajan brings with him an extensive track record of restaurant and bar marketing strategies managing campaigns for several fine dining establishments. He has been instrumental in the launch of many award-winning campaigns and outlet openings.



**ROUBAL KHORANA**

Assistant Manager – Research  
Ngage Hospitality

★ Roubal Khorana has been appointed as Assistant Manager – Research at Ngage Hospitality. With an MBA in Infrastructure Management and PG from the University of Petroleum & Energy Studies (Dehradun), Khorana holds over five years of experience in the research industry. He has contributed to hospitality, healthcare, and real estate sector through his work. This includes exposure in market and industry performance assessment, data analytics, and strong client engagement.





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