

# HOTELS & RESTAURANTS INDIA fhrai magazine

FEBRUARY 2018

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A MONTHLY ON HOSPITALITY TRADE  
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**Garish Oberoi**  
President, FHRAI

Dear fellow members,

**W**e recently celebrated the 69<sup>th</sup> Republic Day with the leaders of 10 ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) countries. It was for the first time in Indian history that 10 chief guests graced the Republic Day of India.

The world over, countries benefit greatly from cross-border tourism. FHRAI has been making consistent efforts to promote regional tourism. We have been working to partner with hospitality associations in BIMSTEC countries. The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is an international organisation of seven nations of South Asia and South East Asia, housing 1.5 billion people and a combined economy of 2.5 trillion. Till now, FHRAI has partnered with Hotel Association Nepal (HAN) and Hotel & Restaurant Association of Bhutan (HRAB). With a view to encourage cross-border tourism, all three have agreed to work together to foster the development of the hospitality industry in India, Nepal, and Bhutan on a reciprocal basis. This year we hope to connect with the remaining countries with benefits for all hotel association members.

That said, the point to note is that these very destinations encourage hospitality by levelling a low GST ranging from 5-7 per cent only, while our hotels are struggling at 28 per cent. No other nation has a GST rate as high as 28 per cent on hotels. Charging different tax rates on the nature of accommodation and destination is escalating the perception that India is not a tourist-friendly nation.

The Union Budget has also recently been announced and is not directly indicating any

positive impact on the hospitality sector. The sector has repeatedly been asking for an infrastructure status, which hasn't been mentioned this year as well. Among the positives in the Budget is the ₹500 crore allocation for 'Operation Green' to promote Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), agri-logistics, processing facilities, and professional management. The focus on technology is very relevant in this digital age. The government is planning to set up 5 lakh Wi-Fi hotspots and has allocated ₹10,000 crore for this under telecom infrastructure. People want to visit beautiful and clean places, so the effort by the government to cleanse River Ganga and reduce air pollution in Delhi, Punjab, and Haryana is an effort in the right direction. FHRAI constantly supports sustainable ventures. The Budget allocated to the railways is ₹148,528 crore to build infrastructure, lay tracks, as well as install Wi-Fi and CCTVs. In tourism, 10 prominent tourist sites will be made into national tourist sites.

New Greenfield airports are in the offing and building airport capacities to handle 1 billion trips can give a boost to connectivity. Post demonetisation and GST, many hotels have become Non-Performing Assets (NPAs). We still await measures by the government to deal with NPAs.

We, at our end, will continue in our endeavour to help bring in positive policies for the benefit of our members.

With warm regards,  
**Garish Oberoi**  
President, FHRAI

“  
Post demonetisation and GST, many hotels have become Non-Performing Assets (NPAs). We still await measures by the government to deal with NPAs  
”

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A look at the tourism industry's performance in 2017 and how Ministry of Tourism aims to continue this upward trend with amendments to the tourism policy

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**Surendra Kumar Jaiswal**  
Hony. Secretary  
FHRAI



Hospitality is the only sector that provides maximum employment in all segments. Infrastructure status for hospitality projects worth ₹25 crore or above is a must for the sector



Dear fellow members,

**E**ven after the Union Budget 2018, the progress of hospitality as an industry is a far-off dream as we continue to await an 'infrastructure' status.

A simplified GST along with detailed FAQs for the travel industry remains redundant. In positives, initiatives from an infrastructure standpoint will help boost growth. The attempt to preserve and protect heritage cities is remarkable and will help boost tourism.

National Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) has been taken up in a major way. Tourist amenities at 100 Adarsh monuments of the Archaeological Survey of India will be upgraded. For promoting tourism and emergency medical care, the government will make a framework for encouraging investment in sea plane activities.

Regional connectivity scheme of UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik), initiated by the government last year, shall connect 56 unserved airports and 31 unserved helipads across the country, with operations already having started at 16 such airports.

For the railways sector, with the objective of eliminating unmanned railway crossings, all railway stations that receive footfalls of more than 25,000 will have escalators. The provision of Wi-Fi and CCTVs on all trains and at all stations has also been suggested.

Among other highlights, redevelopment of 600 major railway stations has been

taken up, Mumbai transport system is being expanded, and a suburban network of 160 km has been planned for Bengaluru.

On the financial side, reduction in corporate tax rate to 25 per cent for companies under the ₹250-crore turnover mark will likely increase redeployment of capital among Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). The increase in corporate tax threshold will help the sector, however, this will be restricted to medium and small entities.

An effective single-window-clearance mechanism for expeditious clearance of projects would have been most appreciated. Hospitality and tourism are among the fastest growing sectors generating potential employment for millions, and these sectors deserve increased attention.

Hospitality is the only sector that provides maximum employment in all segments, from skilled and semi-skilled to trained employees. As such, infrastructure status for hospitality projects worth ₹25 crore or above is a must for the sector, that is the only way to fulfil the requirement of mid-segment hotels in India. We would again represent the same to the Government of India.

With kind regards,

**Surendra Kumar Jaiswal**  
Honorary Secretary, FHRAI



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# INDIA for everyone

Taking an innovative approach to inviting more people to visit India, the Ministry of Tourism has launched wall, desk, and digital calendars under the Incredible India 2.0 campaign, depicting India's marvels in a new light.

**Kanchan Nath**

**A**lphons Kannanthanam, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Tourism, recently launched the Incredible India digital calendar in New Delhi. He also released the Incredible India wall and desk calendars for the year. On the occasion, Kannanthanam spoke about the progress that the tourism sector of India made in the calendar year 2017. He said, "In 2017 we did extremely well. Our foreign tourist arrivals were 15.2 per cent more than the year before, which is fantastic because the global tourism industry has been growing at 3.9 per cent. The FEE from foreign tourists has gone up by 20 per cent. So, it's been a fantastic year for us. In 2018, we would like to sustain and increase the growth by 25 to 30 per cent."

He also stated that this year, the Ministry was working to ensure that more and more people from

around the globe visit India. Reiterating this he said, "Our new tourism policy should be in the anvil soon enough. The subsequent version of Incredible India is going to be launched this year, along with the new website. Special tourism zones will also be set up." Kannanthanam also informed that the Ministry had conducted meetings on understanding how the infrastructure in the Buddhist circuits could be developed further, as these are centres that attract huge tourist numbers.

## **NO CANCELLATIONS AT THE TAJ**

It is said that international traveller numbers to the Taj Mahal have been dipping, owing to the ongoing renovation at the site. "I was there at the Taj Mahal recently, along with my family; only a small portion of the Taj Mahal is being renovated. The Taj looks incredibly beautiful and they are making it more beautiful with the mud treatment. They are trying to remove all the pollution and restore the original glory of the marble. There have been no cancellations and I think people know better. The renovation is being carried out in different phases and will be done by November. It has been planned in a way that they do not diminish the experience of the visit,"

“

In 2017 we did extremely well. Our FTAs were 15.2 per cent more than the year before

”





said Kannanthanam while speaking about the visitor numbers to The Taj.

### ABOLISHING BIOMETRICS FOR E-VISA AT PORTS

On having recently cancelled biometrics for e-Visa at the ports for the benefit of cruise tourism, Kannanthanam said, "The whole idea is that people should not get stranded. These are things that make tourism easier and entering the country easier."

Adding to this, **Rashmi Verma**, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, said, "Infrastructure development is happening at the cruise terminals also. A lot of initiatives have been taken in partnership with the port authority. In some places, the work has already started. The foundation stone was laid at the Mumbai port for a new terminal.

We are promoting cruise tourism in a big way; we are participating in all the major fairs to promote cruise tourism internationally and to promote India as a destination for the same. We are engaging with major international cruise players who have shown keen interest in starting a cruise from India. The infrastructure facilities at the cruise terminal are also being improved. We have already worked out the SOPs to ease the process at the terminals."

### CALENDAR 2018

Launching the calendars for 2018, Kannanthanam said, "The digital calendar will be a very dynamic calendar where you will get updated pictures every day. We wanted to keep up with technology and so,

thought to do something innovative. Therefore, for the first time in the wall calendar, we are depicting India at night. Each picture of the key tourist site displayed in the calendar has been taken at night.

A unique feature of the calendar is that when you hang it on the wall, the monument or site glows in the dark. It helps you visualise that monument under the moonlight. The time the picture was taken has also been mentioned in the calendar. Photographs have been enhanced using radium ink. Most tourists see these destinations during the day, we wanted to showcase how they look at night."

Elaborating on the key features of the digital calendar, Verma said, "It is the first time that we have a digital calendar, available for download on Android and iOS devices. It can be used as a planner and every day, as per the festival or occasion, the picture in the digital calendar will change. In case there are two or three festivals in a day, you may get to see more than one picture that day."



The Incredible India digital calendar enables users to know about the events and festivals happening in India, on the go. The digital calendar can also be used as a personal planner, where users can create and manage personal events, get regular notifications on upcoming festivals and events, set customised reminders for individual events, share the events with friends and contacts, etc. The images of tourist destinations from across India can also be shared on various social media platforms.

The Incredible India desk calendar for the year profiles 12 different kinds of travellers and suggests appropriate destinations for them. The theme of this calendar is 'India for Everyone', showcasing India's incredible destinations to travellers.

Garish Oberoi, President, FHRAI and SK Jaiswal, Hony. Secretary, FHRAI, invite Gurudev Sri Ravi Shankar Ji for FHRAI Convention 2018 in Lucknow



## GEARING UP FOR FHRAI CONVENTION 2018

The Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India will be hosting its annual convention for the year in Lucknow, the capital city of Uttar Pradesh. The tentative dates for the event are September 20-22. The theme of the convention this year will be

spiritual and wellness tourism. The event will be attended by spiritual gurus of national and international repute, as well as politicians, policymakers, senior bureaucrats, and other dignitaries.

## MOT STREAMLINES HOTEL CLASSIFICATION RULES

Ministry of Tourism has streamlined the hotel classification guidelines to make them simple, transparent, and time bound. The application for classification and payment of fee has been made through the digital platform only, ensuring the eradication of possibility of delay or manipulation caused by human interference. The recent amendments have included a time limit of three months, thus removing any discretion in the matter. This will ensure a time-bound compliance and speedy disposal of cases. The amendments have made it clear that liquor shops in the premises of the hotel, other than bars, will not be considered for classification under star hotels' 'with alcohol' category. It has been made mandatory for all the hotels classified under all categories to display their classification status prominently at the reception and on their website under a separate icon on the opening page, which will display the order of classification issued by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

The amendments have included a detailed timeline within which the classification has to be completed. In every case where the required documents and procedures are fulfilled, the classification will be completed within 90 days.



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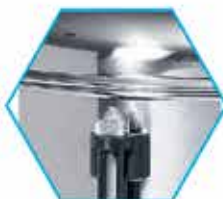
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# HRANI DELEGATION MEETS JAI RAM THAKUR, CM, HP

A delegation led by **Sanjay Sood**, President, HRANI, and comprising other members that included Sanjay Laul, Baljeet Singh, Sunil Bamba, and Rajeev Chauhan, met **Jai Ram Thakur**, CM of Himachal Pradesh. The delegation had a detailed discussion with the minister on issues that affected the hospitality and tourism sectors, with a view to receive due consideration.

Mentioned below are some of the major points that were brought to the notice of the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh.

## REVIEW OF CANCELLATION POLICY

A move has been made to review the 100 per cent refund over reservation cancellation, as such a refund policy is not viable and is unfair on the part of advance paid by stakeholders to the vendors. On the one hand, the Excise Policy regulates the stakeholders to sell the liquor stock within the stipulated time frame while on the other, the tourism department enforces 100 per cent refund. Even the cancellation is made 24 hours before the event, which is against the fundamental rule.

for the development of the state. Roads are the lifeline of the tourism and hospitality industry in Himachal Pradesh. Focusing on the importance of roads, the delegation put forward its concern for the construction and regular maintenance of the road network.

In order to give the required spur to high-end tourism, the establishment of international airports, increase in the number of carriers that connect to the state, and the participation of private helicopter services for better connectivity will definitely give boost to the sector.



Sanjay Sood, President, HRANI, and other members honoured Jai Ram Thakur, Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, and discussed pertinent issues in hospitality

## ALTERATION OF LIQUOR LICENCE RULE UNDER EXCISE POLICY

HRANI has earnestly requested to amend the liquor licence rule under Excise Policy in which members of all L-3 (bars in hotels), L-4 and L-5 (restaurants) need to lift liquor of 25 boxes in urban areas and 12 boxes in rural areas every month. Presently, all tourism units authorised to sell liquor should sell it within the prescribed time frame and in case that fails, they are liable for penalty. Hence, a request has been made to amend such anomalies in the policy.

## INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

A first-class infrastructure is crucial to boost the hospitality sector. Rail, road, and air networks are three major concerns that have been brought to the minister's notice. Himachal Pradesh falls under the Northern Railway network; it has three railway lines out of which two are narrow gauge. Work on the broad gauge Pathankot-Jogindernagar railway line needs a speedy start. Expansion of the rail network is the need of the hour, as railways continue to be an important aspect

## GUIDELINES FOR HOMESTAYS, BED AND BREAKFAST UNITS

As homestays and bed & breakfast establishments are levied under cheap tariff and not covered under any taxation, licence, rules and regulations, they give tough competition to hotels from the organised sector that are operational under government rules. A request has been made to define guidelines for this sector.

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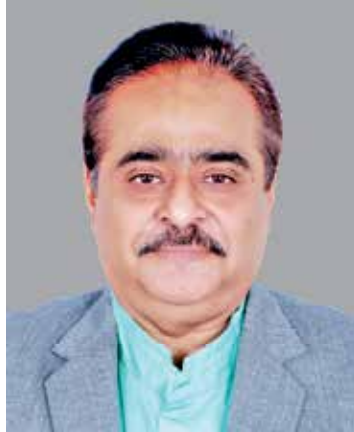
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## HRAWI HOLDS SEMINAR ON ARCHITECTURAL TRENDS

The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) held a seminar on trends in architecture, specifically for hotels and restaurants, at The Ambassador Hotel in Mumbai. The seminar was addressed by some of the city's renowned architects, including Kozema Chitalwala of Designers-Group, Zahabiyah Gabajiwala of Za Works and her partner Yash Bansdawala.

The seminar aimed at offering the city's burgeoning hotel and restaurant enterprises insights into the principal ideas around sustainable and intelligent designs.

The architects shared creative concepts on how establishments could renovate spaces within their defined themes and continue to justify economics. The seminar also focused on other niche areas like kitchen designs, HVAC, and



**Dilip Datwani**  
President  
HRAWI

“Through the seminar we have tried to throw some light on the recent developments in architecture and design”

sanitation, which were appreciated by the attendees. “The restaurant and hotel industry has witnessed a major transformation over the last decade; the leisure travel and tourism industry, especially, has observed a noticeable upsurge.

Be it eating out or room accommodation, customers want to enjoy the finest services; right from food and location to design, ambience, and facilities, everything has to be appealing and as unique as its menu.

Through the seminar, we have tried to throw some light on the recent developments in architecture and design for different types of restaurants and hotels. We are pleased that the architects conducted the seminar with proficiency and their opinions and ideas will benefit the many hoteliers and restaurateurs who attended it,” says **Dilip Datwani**, President, HRAWI.

## HRAWI'S FOOD SAFETY INITIATIVE GAINS MOMENTUM

The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India's initiative to get as many hospitality professionals certified in Food Safety Training & Certification (FoSTaC) programme has gained tremendous reach and response. At the recently-concluded Certification for Supervisor Training in Advance Training programmes in Vadodara and Ahmedabad, 67 hospitality professionals participated, taking the total count to 147 certified personnel in the western region. HRAWI has so far conducted four such training sessions across Maharashtra and Gujarat for hotels, restaurants, and catering establishments to become



equipped with FSSAI-mandated food safety and standard requirements.

“The training programme will help hotel establishments ready themselves in becoming compliant with food safety and standards as required by the FSSAI. We have

received a very good response so far and it encourages us to continue the initiative,” says **Dilip Datwani**, President, HRAWI. The most recent sessions were organised at the Grand Mercure Vadodara Surya Palace on January 9, and at The Metropole Hotel in Ahmedabad on January 10, 2018.



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# WEST BENGAL, AN EMERGING TOURISM HUB IN THE EAST

Bengal is fast emerging as an all-weather destination, welcoming tourists on business, social, and leisure trips throughout the year. Its capital city, Kolkata, is home to the architectural remnants of a colonial past and renowned for the arts.

This was evident at the inaugural session of the Destination East - West Bengal Tourism Summit 2018 held at the Biswa Bangla Convention Centre in Kolkata. Tourism stakeholders from 30 countries, including the US, UK, Russia, Australia, Turkey and many Southeast Asian countries gathered at the meet.

The world-class convention centre has a 100-key property, jointly branded with the state government's flagship 'Biswa Bangla' and Apeejay Surrendra Group. The New Town Kolkata Development Authority (NKDA) is developing New Town as a leading Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) destination of South Asia.

New Town has an area of about 7,000 acres, designed for a population of over 10 lakh. The township is five minutes from the airport and is being connected with metro rail. The authorities have introduced bike taxis, Wi-Fi system on the Biswa Bangla Sarani, and have recently introduced a GPS-enabled smart bicycle riding system.

In terms of tourist footfall, West Bengal has grown at a CAGR of 26.5 per cent between FY 2011 and FY 2016, against a CAGR of 14.5 per cent between FY 2001 and FY 2010. The Durga Puja festival is a major draw.

**Atri Bhattacharya**, the state's Home Secretary in charge of hill



**Sudesh Poddar**  
President  
HRAEI

“The focus of Destination East is to promote West Bengal Tourism with Kolkata as the gateway for international buyers”

affairs and tourism, said that the biggest festival in Kolkata, Durga Puja is one of the largest such events in the world, which attracts around 13 million visitors over the 10-day period. "The state plans to organise homestays for tourists to cater to the huge demand, as hotels mostly remain full during the period," says Bhattacharya.

According to **Dipak Haksar**, Chairman, CII National Committee on Tourism and Hospitality and Chief Executive Officer, ITC Hotels and WelcomHotels, its strategic location holds Kolkata in good stead to become the next important MICE destination in the country that will in turn lend strength to hospitality as a whole.

"Kolkata definitely has the potential to build and create an identity as a



**Dipak Haksar**  
Chief Executive Officer  
ITC Hotels & WelcomHotels

“Kolkata definitely has the potential to build and create an identity as a gateway to the North East”

gateway to the North East," says Haksar, adding that with the unveiling of the new tourism policy in the state and the government's commitment towards infrastructure development, availability of land, incentives and tourism-friendly policies, it is an ideal time to invest and be part of the sustainable tourism development of the state.

According to **Sudesh Poddar**, President, Hotel and Restaurant Association of Eastern India, "West Bengal offers a variety of choices to a traveller, from being the sweetest state to culinary, cultural, spiritual, film, wildlife, and adventure tourism.

The focus of Destination East is to promote West Bengal Tourism with Kolkata as the gateway and a world-class tourist destination among international buyers."





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## EXPANSION

## IBIS PUNE HINJEWADI OPENS WITH 136 KEYS



InterGlobe Hotels and AccorHotels have launched Ibis Pune Hinjewadi (IPH). This marks AccorHotels' third property in the city. Featuring 136 well-appointed rooms, the hotel offers a range of in-room amenities. For food aficionados, Ibis Pune Hinjewadi features the signature 'Spice It' restaurant, a culinary concept tailor-made for India, serving Indian, Oriental, and European cuisine. Strategically located within five kilometres of the Mumbai-Bengaluru highway, the hotel is in close proximity to International Biotech Park and various multinational corporations are also located nearby. The hotel is situated approximately 20 km from Pune airport and the railway station.

**Jean-Michel Cassé**, Chief Operating Officer, India and South Asia, AccorHotels, says, "This is our first Ibis property to debut in Hinjewadi Phase-II. India is a core expansion market and we are delighted to see the demand for international hospitality brands grow in the country. The key to our development over the last 10 years has been the iconic acceptance of the Ibis brand by Indian consumers. The launch of Ibis Pune Hinjewadi gives us an opportunity to showcase the 18<sup>th</sup> Ibis hotel in the country and highlight AccorHotels' growing network in the western region."



## GROWTH

## SAROVAR HOTELS SIGNS NEW PROPERTY IN DAHISAR

Sarovar Hotels has signed a new hotel in Dahisar, marking the group's strong foothold in the Mumbai market. One of the fastest growing hotel chains in India with over 75 operating hotels across 50 destinations in India and Africa, the group has signed an agreement for a 112-suite hotel, Royal Homotel Suites, Dahisar. Owned by Lion Pencils, Royal Homotel Suites is expected to open in 2018. With a key location, the hotel, currently under development, will offer all facilities of an international-standard hotel. Allowing guests a comfortable stay and pleasant experience, Royal Homotel Suites will

feature all-day dining, a bar, banquet halls, conference and meeting facilities, a swimming pool, and a gymnasium.

Commenting on the development, **Anil Madhok**, Executive Chairman, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts, said, "Mumbai is one of our most significant markets. We are already present in Mumbai with all of our three brands: Sarovar Premiere, Sarovar Portico, and Homotel. With this new addition, we look forward to further growth in this city. It is a significant addition to our portfolio."





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## TECHNOLOGY

## INDIA'S FIRST VOICE-ACTIVATED HOTEL ROOMS



Park Inn by Radisson IP Extension has launched its voice assistant-enabled smart hotel rooms. The property features India's first hotel rooms to have complete automation of service requests and virtual control of TV and lighting fixtures. Six of the property's spacious studio rooms have been fitted with Amazon's AI-powered Echo Dot devices. This allows guests to control light settings, music played in the room, and even the television with simple voice commands. Additionally, guests can now request for services such as room cleaning, wake-up calls, laundry, in-room dining, and room check-out by merely speaking to the smart device.

**Saurav Dutta**, General Manager, Park Inn by Radisson IP Extension, says, "Internet of Things (IoT) and voice-enabled technologies are without a doubt the future and we are excited to pioneer these comprehensive and intuitive smart hotel room features in India. With the voice-activated in-room solutions we expect a 50 per cent improvement in housekeeping efficiencies, ensuring speedier completion of service requests. Eventually, the intent is to diversify and grow the connected room features as part of our ongoing effort to offer bespoke experiences that evolve with the needs of our patrons."



## MANAGEMENT

## NIRAAMAYA RETREATS SIGNS CLASSIC INN, KOHIMA

Niraamaya Retreats has expanded to Nagaland with its management lease of Classic Inn, a boutique property in Kohima. Classic Inn Aradura, now named Niraamaya Retreats Aradura, lies on the eastern frontier of the Himalayan mountain range at Kohima. Overlooking the pine forests, Niraamaya Retreats Aradura offers a countryside escape amidst some of the most beautiful scenery in the region. The property features elegant accommodation. With a total of 12 suites, each equipped with modern amenities and an aesthetic fusion of tribal and contemporary design concepts, the property offers a relaxing atmosphere. The Niraamaya Spa also offers invigorating

therapies that will help guests rejuvenate themselves. Located away from the hustle-bustle of the city, the retreat is also a perfect venue to host conferences and off-sites for corporate groups.

"This expansion is the first in a series of many more that Niraamaya Retreats has envisaged for this year. In Aradura we saw a perfect alignment to our philosophy, Niraamaya Retreats being a selection of bespoke experiences in spectacular locations that our clients expect from us," says **Manu Rishi Guptha**, Chief Executive Officer, Niraamaya Retreats.



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# FIRE SAFE

It is essential for hotels to take as many preventive measures as possible to provide safety to patrons from all possible exigencies such as fires. Hoteliers elaborate on safety strategies, fire exit plans, licence requirements and more.

**Kanchan Nath**

**Anil Kumar**  
Director of Engineering  
The Imperial, New Delhi

## ALL SYSTEMS IN PLACE

In our hotel, the engineering and security staff is fully trained to combat fire. Staff members of other departments are also trained in firefighting. We have all types of fire protection systems that are tested periodically and these include everything from a sprinkler system, a fire hydrant system, and fire alarm system to emergency exit plans, emergency backup for lighting in all the areas, gas flooding and emulsifier system, and even a pocket booklet on fire safety and security guidelines that has been issued to all staff members.

## REGULAR RENEWALS

An NOC from Delhi Fire Service is required, which ensures proper functioning of the firefighting equipment installed within the premises. This certificate is valid for three years. An annual operating licence is also required to operate the diesel or gas boilers.

## TIMELY DETECTION

We have installed fire-rated curtains on the guest floors. The closure of this system is hooked up with the fire alarm system. and as soon as the alarm activates, the nearest fire curtain opens and blocks the area, not allowing the smoke or fire to spread in the nearby area. A switching system on both sides of the curtain can also be used to open the curtain and it closes automatically after people have passed



**Anil Kumar**

through. We have also installed fire-rated doors that function in a similar manner. A PNG leakage detection system has also been installed in all the kitchens and a CO2 gas flooding system has been installed in the electrical panel, to be released from the tube in case of a fire.



The engineering and security staff is fully trained to combat fire. Other members are also trained in firefighting





Sanjay Wadhwa

**Sanjay Wadhwa**  
General Manager  
Efcee Sarovar Portico, Bhavnagar

**TAKING STOCK**

We have a well-defined Crisis Response Team, responsible for overall decision making and response planning.

The various steps we have in place include immediate response to fire, bomb threat, chemical exposure, natural disasters, unrest, and violence; check on alarms and location or area reporting/source of reporting; authentication and assessment of threat, mobilisation of all persons in crisis; crowd management in the guest assembly area; a plan for first aid; a crisis control desk and a media reporting desk, etc.

**BEING UP TO DATE**

We have staged and total evacuation plans based on threat: simultaneous evacuation or vertical evacuation. To manage exits promptly, each exit is clearly visible and marked with an 'Exit' sign.

“ We have a well-defined Crisis Response Team, responsible for overall decision making and response planning ”



We have two dedicated staircases for exit- the primary and secondary escape routes. Additionally, the staff is trained on dealing with the fire and the evacuation drill.

It is ensured that they know the location of all fire alarm points, regularly use primary and secondary escape routes to get familiar with them, and can assist employees and members of the public to the nearest exits.

**TECH CHECK**

Some technology that we have in place includes fire sprinkler system protection, fire extinguisher protection, jockey pumps, smoke detectors, pull stations, horn strobes, fireproof bells, fire alarm control panels, and repeater panels.



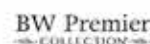


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Shiv Kr. Mehan

### Shiv Kr. Mehan Chief Operating Officer Leisure Hotels

#### DISTINCT EXITS

Each area has a distinct exit door which opens into a garden. In case of any emergency, our team as well as guests inside these areas can come out directly into the safe assembly area.

#### GRILL THE DRILL

The emergency escape route to the safe assembly area is placed in each room and is a part of room orientation. Trainings are conducted on a regular basis with the security team and all the associates on how to handle emergencies like fire, earthquake, etc. An emergency response team comprising team members from all levels is also assembled. Each department has been trained to handle its responsibility well during an emergency situation. First aid and CPR certification training has also been conducted for team members at the unit. Mock fire drills and evacuation drills are also conducted on a regular basis.

#### MEETING ALL STANDARDS

A fire NOC is most important. The fire department also conducts a survey of the property and provides suggestions on fire equipment, water storage tank capacity, fire pump capacity, and what type of



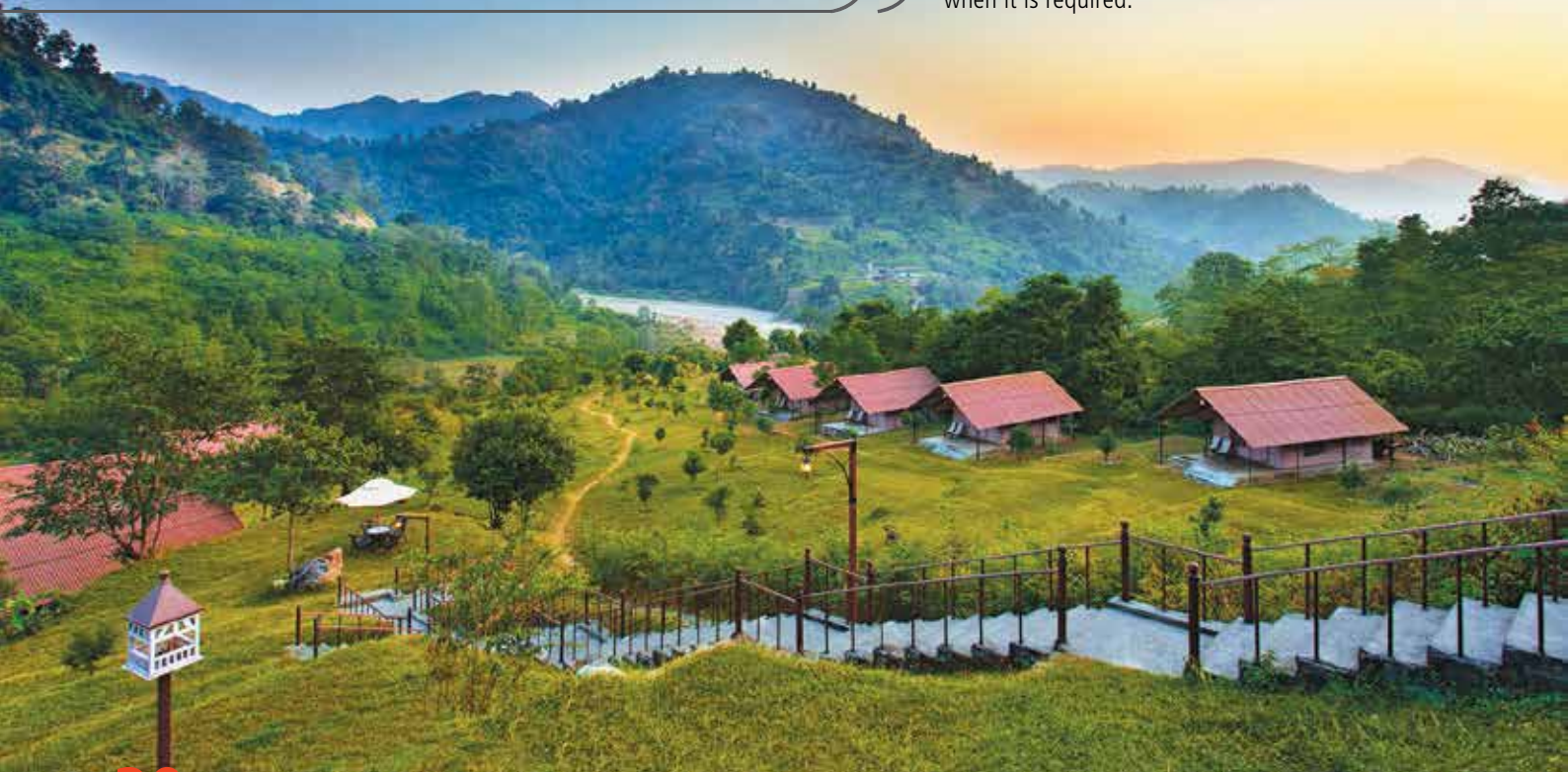
extinguisher is to be placed where. After installing the equipment, they recheck the location and approve the fire licence. This licence needs to be renewed on a yearly basis.

#### KEEPING MEASURES IN PLACE

We have placed a fire panel and kitchen hood fire suppression system. Keeping in line with the fire regulation, we have the latest equipment, including fire detection systems; counter measures to deal with such an emergency; an efficient guest handling process in place, as well as regular check of smoke detectors. We keep these systems and processes up to date and change them as and when it is required.



We keep systems and processes up to date and change them as and when it is required







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Subhrajit Bardhan

### **Subhrajit Bardhan** General Manager Swissôtel Kolkata

#### **DESIGNATED TEAMS**

We have a comprehensive Fire Safety and Protection from Natural Disaster plan in place which is in compliance with the guidelines followed by AccorHotels and instated by local authorities as well. We also have in place a Crisis Response Team which primarily manages the orderly evacuation of all guests and employees in case of a calamity. Its second most important function is to implement pre-set procedures to control and minimise damage to the people in the hotel and restore normal operations as soon as possible.

To ensure smooth operation in case of a crisis, we also have a Crisis Administration Team that supports the management team by maintaining control of the Crisis Command Centre. They are responsible for arranging food and refreshments for everyone in the hotel and maintaining contact with local government and authorities to ensure that the procedures in place are up to date and in compliance with the prescribed norms.

“

We need a fire NOC from the state government and an Explosives Licence from the Government of India

”

#### **EXITS AND ALARMS**

Clear fire exit signage boards are placed in strategic locations across the hotel premises, including restaurants, meeting rooms, and employee working areas to guide our guests and team members towards the nearest fire exits. We have installed a fire alarm panel in a constantly supervised area to identify the location of the fire in case of an emergency, so that the designated fire safety personnel can react immediately.

The hotel has defined team members who form the Crisis Emergency Response Team. They take lead roles to address emergency situations at the hotel.

#### **LICENSING**

The basic licences required for a commercial hotel to operate are the fire NOC issued by the state government and the Explosive Licence issued by the Government of India. The validity of the licences is one year and 10 years, respectively. There are also detailed audits that are conducted by designated authorities, and on successful completion of such audits the operational licences are issued to the hotels. The hotel also undergoes the internal fire safety audit which is conducted by the Corporate Safety Team to ensure that the infrastructure is in line with the prescribed requirements.





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Manoharan

## Manoharan Head of Security Turyaa Chennai

### ERT IN PLACE

Natural disasters are something that no one has control over, however, we sure have the control to protect our people. Since it is mandatory to have a systematic backup plan to prevent any fire incident to take place during a natural disaster, Turyaa Hotel keeps fire safety precautions simple and effective. Our hotel has an Emergency Response Team (ERT) that is specially trained to face any circumstance with regard to fire or some other unpleasant uncertainty. The ERT members must first assess the actual situation and respond to save lives. Next, when in doubt, they take action only after they have received a nod from the security office. Lastly, ERT members keep in touch with the security office for all necessary instructions and feedback. We also have additional backup food stock, backup vehicles, tie-up with the nearest hospital, etc.

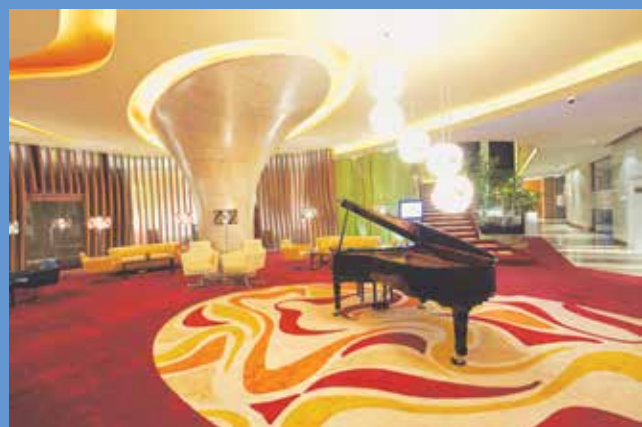
### EXITS EARMARKED

There are different ways by which people present in the hotel can safely make a quick exit when a fire

“

Our hotel has an Emergency Response Team (ERT) that is specially trained to deal with fire

”



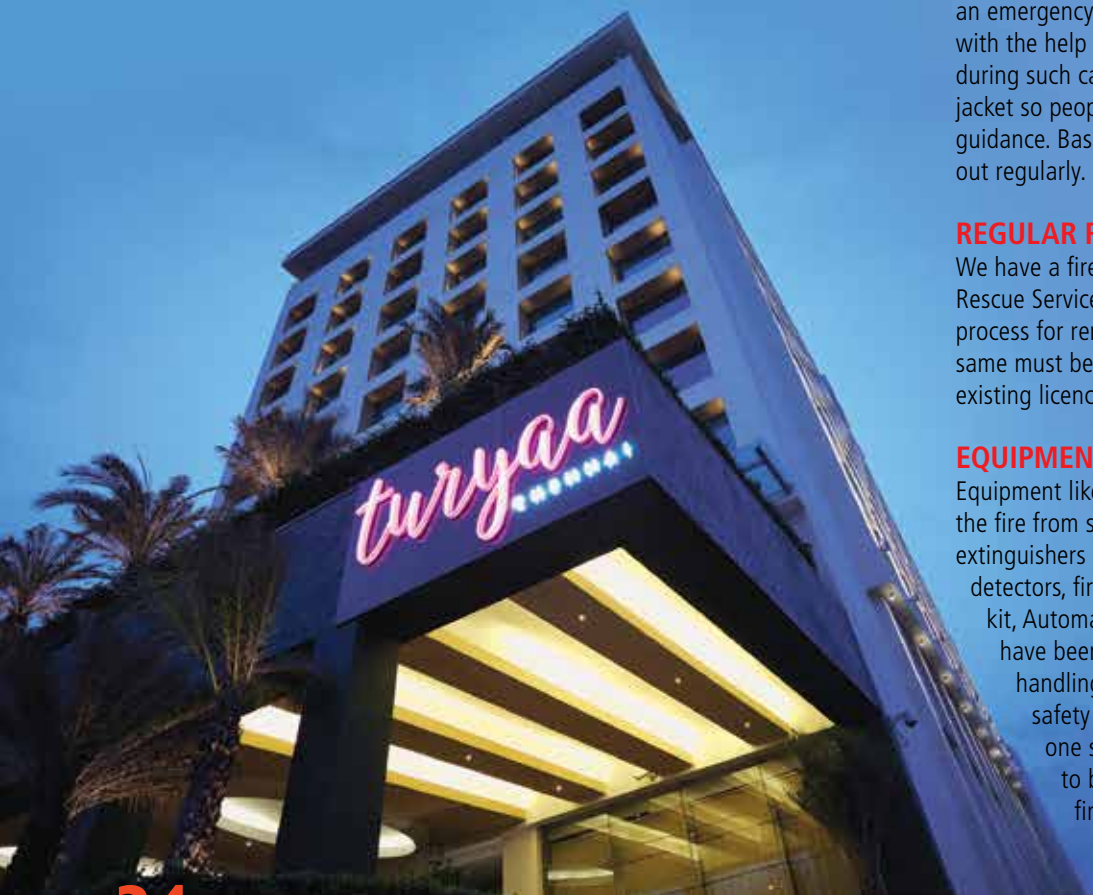
takes place. For instance, we have an exit for the guest staircase and other exits as well that lead to an open area. We also have two refuge rooms on the sixth and ninth floors, with open windows for an emergency fire exit of those who can be rescued with the help of the Bronto Skylift vehicle. Also, during such cases, the team suits-up with the ERT jacket so people can approach them for instant guidance. Basic fire safety training is also carried out regularly.

### REGULAR RENEWAL

We have a fire licence from Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services, to be renewed each year. The process for renewal takes three months and the same must begin a month before the expiry of the existing licence.

### EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING

Equipment like fire extinguishers for preventing the fire from spreading, ABC type portable extinguishers in corridors, fire blankets, smoke detectors, fire hydrants, fire pump room, oxygen kit, Automated External Defibrillator (AED), etc., have been put in place at the hotel. Training for handling this equipment is given during fire safety practices. It's mandatory for at least one staff member from each department to be specialised with the handling of fire safety equipment.







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**Berzin Master**

**Berzin Master**  
General Manager  
Balaji Sarovar Premiere, Solapur

#### **ASSESSMENT AND CORRECTIVE MEASURES**

Fire safety is taken very seriously at Balaji Sarovar Premiere. The hotel has an Emergency Response Team or Fire Emergency Team which is responsible for controlling any disaster arising from fire. This team reaches the site first, does the assessment of the situation, and based on the magnitude, immediately goes into action for minimisation of damage to the property. Once the fire is found, the next step is to communicate the same to the fire department, ambulance service (if needed), the hospital, and other authorities. The team then restricts the area by evacuating guests and other staff. The hotel is well-equipped with firefighting equipment like fire pumps, fire hydrant and sprinkler system, fire extinguishers, smoke detectors and sensors, and the fire alarm system. The team then makes all effort to extinguish the fire. We ensure that external authorised agencies, along with our Security Officer, conduct fire training drills, evacuation drills, periodic fire equipment condition assessment, as well as carry out corrective maintenance of all firefighting equipment.

“We ensure that external authorised agencies, along with our Security Officer, conduct fire training drills”

#### **PROMINENT SIGNAGE**

We have two fire exit staircases, both of which can be used during an emergency to evacuate guests. Each guest room has a rendition of the emergency exit plan placed behind the main door. Exit signs and arrows showing the emergency route are prominently displayed to direct the guests towards the nearest fire exit door. Designated staff is trained to carry out floor combing operations and assist the elderly in evacuating first. Stretchers are used in case of any casualty. All guest and staff are guided to safety outside the hotel. Assembly points for staff and guest are displayed prominently in the hotel premises. An in-house guest list is referred to during roll-call to ascertain that all guests are safely evacuated.

#### **EASY RENEWALS**

We require an NOC issued by the local municipal corporation and the fire department. We have to renew this NOC every year, a process that is easy and free of charge. We also have to submit an inspection report post conduct of inspection by a licensed and authorised fire safety agency.

#### **NEW SYSTEM FOR ALL EXIGENCIES**

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Vikas Suri

## Vikas Suri Senior Associate Vice President Lords Hotels & Resorts

### ENSURING SAFETY EVERYWHERE

We ensure that the housekeeping and maintenance staff keeps the work area, aisles, corridors, guest staircase, fire exit staircase clear of any loose material, trash or scrap. Obstructions such as trolleys, extra beds, dirty linen, trash, etc., are kept away so the fire exit staircase remains clear.

There is a fire exit map in the rooms and fire exit signage in the corridors and lift. It is important that an adequate number of fire extinguishers be placed in all visible areas and that the equipment not be expired.

The team must ensure that build-up of combustible trash such as paper, wood, cardboard, and newspaper is avoided and cleared daily. Use and storage of combustible and flammable products should also be to the minimum.

All storage should be at least three feet from the electrical panel or the gas bank area. Hotels must avoid using substandard, unapproved electrical

equipment, there should be no loose wires, and switches should not be hanging or broken. Laundry is another area of high fire risk. Electric irons, washing and drying machines, as well as some dry cleaning agents used can be a source of fire.

The staff must also ensure that adequate precaution be taken while flaming in a restaurant.

### CARELESS SMOKING

Many hotel fires start because cigarettes, matches, and pipes have been carelessly lit or thrown about. Fires have also started because the guests, while smoking in bed, fall asleep. A hotel must provide sufficient ashtrays in rooms, corridors and offices, and request guests to use them. They must ensure that ashtrays are not emptied into waste bins or rubbish containers; they should be emptied into separate metal containers and then disposed.

### REGULAR CHECKS AND RENEWALS

Periodic inspection should be conducted for chimneys, ventilation ducts and fans, air-conditioning plant, heating and other installations, lift motors, etc. Apart from the fire detection and alarm systems, wet riser systems and portable extinguishers must also be inspected regularly. Renewal of fire and public liability insurance should also be done on time.

“

The team must ensure that build-up of combustible trash is avoided and cleared daily

”



## Anil Mohan

Joint President Personnel & Security  
Jaypee Vasant Continental Hotel  
New Delhi

### ASSESSMENT AND ACTION

We believe in a proactive approach when it comes to dealing with emergency planning. Our disaster management plan includes identification of potential hazards, assessment of who might be in danger, evaluation of risk, preparation of an action plan (proactive and reactive), and review & revision of assessment if necessary.

The risk assessment is done using 'failure mode and effect analysis' where risk is quantified, consequently helping us take the best possible action. A written fire exit plan is in place for the hotel staff and describes actions to be taken in case of a minor fire (where evacuation is not required) and actions to be taken in case of a major fire (which requires partial or complete evacuation).

As training is a situational process, there is no single method to determine what may be appropriate for a situation.

At our hotel, fire safety training is divided into two categories: first, where training is given to every individual who is working as an employee with the hotel and second, which contains all those selected employees who have been pre-designated with any critical role for emergency preparedness as per the fire safety preparedness plan.

As a normal practice, staff members are required to be trained on basic fire safety, but special trainings are given to members related to the emergency preparedness. Despite the trainings, we ensure that all our staff members go through an orientation programme and participate in fire and evacuation mock drills.

### CERTIFICATION, STEP BY STEP

It is mandatory to obtain an NOC from the local fire authority, to be recertified every three years in the star category hotel that we are part of. Apart from this, every year we have to submit Form-K, which is a declaration that we have not altered any arrangement that had been certified by the authority.

As a process, we do submit our request to DCP (Licensing), Delhi Police, for carrying out the hotel business. DCP (Licensing) then



corresponds to Chief Fire Officer of Delhi Fire Service to carry out the inspection of the hotel. Once the concerned fire officials thoroughly check the facility from a fire point of view and are sure that the arrangements meet the required standards, an NOC is issued from the authority.

There is no financial cost involved in it as this is included in basic hotel licensing fee submitted to DCP (Licensing).



**Anil Mohan**

### UPDATED TECHNOLOGY

We recently enhanced the fire protection of our electrical panels by installing an automatic fire clean agent suppression system and kitchen hoods and ducts to avoid electrical short circuits and grease fire. This helps detect the fire at its incipient stage and it automatically suppresses the nascent flame using clean agent or wet chemical-based extinguishers.

We have also taken care while selecting these extinguishing agents so that they do not harm the environment.



A written fire exit plan is in place for the hotel staff and describes actions to be taken in case of a fire





Yuvaraj

**Yuvaraj**  
Assistant Security Officer  
Fortune Select JP Cosmos

**A CLEAR PLAN**

It is absolutely essential to have an emergency preparation plan, which should include a clear system of communication for reaching both guest and staff. Such an evacuation plan is highly beneficial in case of an emergency, when both guest and staff readily understand what needs to be done and react appropriately, reducing reaction time considerably and minimising harm caused due to fire.

**GUESTS, STAFF KEPT PREPARED**

We have two emergency exit routes for guest

and staff. We ensure that we explain these routes to all our guests and have placed emergency exit boards at the entrance and exit doors.

We also conduct regular training of staff on emergency and evacuation procedures.

**AUTHORISED CERTIFICATION NEEDED**

A Revalidation Certificate from office of the Police Commandant, Home Guard, and Director General of Karnataka State Fire & Emergency Service is needed. It is a mandate and needs to be renewed every two years.

**NEW TECH**

The latest technology that we have invested in is an advanced fire alarm system, the Edwards System Technology.



The latest technology that we have invested in is the Edwards System Technology







# BUDGET 2018

From a reduced GST for hospitality to granting the sector an 'Infrastructure' status, we take a look at the expectations that members of FHRAI had from Budget 2018-19, and what made or did not make the cut.

## Expectations

**Rajindera Kumar**  
EC Member, FHRAI

### REDUCED AND UNIFORM TAX

As far as taxes are concerned, rationalisation, uniformity, and quantum in the tax rate have always been the uppermost demand. However, in my opinion, GST has been rolled out by the government without much awareness and proper study that could have made it more practical and sustainable. I also see no reason to give stand-alone restaurants a GST of 5 per cent while restaurants within hotels continue to attract a GST of 18 per cent. This action is not justified. It would be a brilliant idea to bring in uniformity with a single slab of five or seven per cent or maybe even 12 per cent across the board, without threshold.



### THE VALUE OF TOURISM

Tourism is an important segment for the country. Without actually realising its potential, it has always been neglected and considered elitist. FHRAI has persistently been requesting the Ministry of Finance and other concerned departments for inclusion of hotels under the 'Infrastructure' category, which can make hotels eligible for special treatment in terms of higher quantum of loan at a concessional rate of interest, as well as for availing foreign loans under the ECB scheme of the Reserve Bank of India.

**Dilip Datwani**  
Vice President, FHRAI

### INFRASTRUCTURE STATUS AND REDUCED GST

One of our long-standing demands has been for the hospitality sector to be accorded an 'Infrastructure' status. We also request the government to grant soft loans to hotels with a minimum project cost of ₹25 crore as against the present ₹250 crore. We also request the government to levy a uniform 12 per cent GST irrespective of room tariffs, for all hotel categories. We've also been requesting the GST Council to not consider declared tariff as basis for levying the GST and let it be on the basis of transaction value. The government should also compare our tourism taxes with those levied by neighbouring countries and understand that the high rate works against our objective of attracting foreign tourists to the country.





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

#### LOANS AT REDUCED RATES

The hotel industry is one of the largest employment generating industries in the country today. The industry is highly capital intensive and the break-even period of a hotel is more than that of many other industries. Also, a hotelier has to put in a lot of money to constantly upgrade and refurbish the inventory. A large amount of money is borrowed at very high interest, making it difficult for the running of the hotel. Our expectations from this budget are to allow organisations like TFCI to create a fund and give loans to hotels at a reduced rate of interest. Another important concern area is the GST on the declared tariff rate. No hotels today work on the declared tariff card and are very flexible with rates, depending upon the supply and demand during weekdays and weekends.

#### GST ON ACTUAL SALE

One of the biggest remedies that will turn many companies out of the red would be availability of credit at easy interest rates. I have witnessed so many distress sales by local hoteliers as they are not able to cope with the high interest rates. Even so, many big brands have put their properties for sale as they are not able to service the loans that take a large chunk of their earnings. If some mechanism can be developed where the GST can be charged on the actual sale of the room and not the declared tariff, this will also help the industry. In cities like Mumbai and Delhi, the rate fluctuates too much and taxing on the declared rate card is not feasible. Also, the GST at the top end should be rationalised and be brought to 18 per cent.



**Souvagya Mohapatra**  
EC Member, FHRAI

#### GST AT 12 PER CENT

Union Budget 2018-19 will be the first post-GST budget of India. It is also the last full Budget before the 2019 general elections. This year, the indirect tax structure of the country was given a facelift with the new Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime. It is expected that our demand to declare the hospitality sector as an industry and give it an 'Infrastructure' status will be fulfilled by the government. Our demand for a flat GST of 12 per cent across the hospitality sector is also expected to be fulfilled by the government; this will certainly help the sector grow and increase FTAs and FEEs. It is expected that there will be changes in the direct tax structure, including income tax. Infrastructure is also expected to be a priority in the upcoming Budget. The government should maintain the momentum at which new infrastructure is being developed in the country. Under the Bharatmala project, the biggest-ever highway development plan has already been approved by the government. Urban infrastructure, housing, water and sanitation needs are also expected to be discussed.



### Reality

**Rajindera Kumar**  
EC Member, FHRAI

#### EFFORTS FUTILE

The Finance Minister has tried to emphasise on health, security, and education. He has also balanced the Budget by delving on promoting growth with better reforms for a brighter future for India. He has also introduced LTCG (long-term capital gains) tax, limiting it to 10 per cent, which is an excellent move. He has tried to boost the rural economy by introducing measures for a better livelihood.

Reduction in corporate tax rate to 25 per cent is a welcome move for corporates that have a turnover of up to ₹250 crore, leading to more ease of doing business. On the whole, the Budget looks good for future growth. However, the tourism sector and its potential have once again been completely ignored by the Finance Minister. All our demands in the pre-Budget memorandum have been left hanging and continue to remain unaddressed. For us, tourism is a lacklustre exercise by not even being mentioned in the Budget.



**Dilip Datwani**  
Vice President, FHRAI

**SECTOR'S POTENTIAL IGNORED**

The hospitality industry feels dejected and is extremely disappointed with the Union Budget. Tourism contributes 7.5 per cent to India's overall GDP and hospitality is the backbone of tourism. Hospitality is the single biggest contributor to India's tourism GDP and its growth, decline or stagnancy directly reflects on the health of tourism in the country. The Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE) from tourism amount to roughly \$23 billion and once again, the largest chunk of this earning is generated by the hospitality industry. Employment generation, which is one of the focus areas for the government, has the biggest support of the hospitality sector. It directly employs over 12 per cent of the Indian workforce and is one of the biggest employers of unskilled and semi-skilled labour. Despite having hospitality as an asset at its disposal which can propel the country's growth, the government has yet again chosen to ignore its potential.



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

**HOSPITALITY LEFT OUT**

The Union Budget this year, like many previous ones, has ignored the hospitality and tourism sectors. The industry was waiting anxiously for the Finance Minister to make a concrete announcement, however, nothing happened. The only silver lining is the increase in spend on infrastructure, which will help the sector. Improved connectivity will give rise to hotels coming up in new towns.

It might also result in higher occupancies and better ARR's. The increase in the corporate tax threshold will help the sector, however, this will be restricted to medium and small entities.



**Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar**  
EC Member, FHRAI

**REVIVAL OF TOURISM SITES TO BE HELPFUL**

Though the demand for a new corpus of funds for tourism has not been met and no additional investment expenditure for the sector has been announced separately, the tourism and hospitality sector hopes the Budget proposal to develop 10 prominent sites as iconic tourist destinations will allow for creation of additional infrastructure and will also draw more tourist inflow and create islands of excellence.

The plan to upgrade 100 Adarsh monuments of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and creation of a framework to encourage investment in sea plane activities will attract more investment in the sector. The sector was also hopeful of hearing boosting of digital and payment infrastructure for sectors with big-ticket transactions and tax relief, especially on indirect taxes levied on tourism and hospitality.



**Souvagya Mohapatra**  
EC Member, FHRAI

**A POPULIST, COURSE-CORRECTION BUDGET**

Union Budget 2018-19 has not met the expectations of all the sectors, including hospitality, but for both infrastructure and health sectors it has brought some good news with the allocation of more funds and drafting of new schemes. These structural changes will help achieve the expected economic growth of 205 trillion and India is expected to be the sixth largest economy by the end of the year. Overall, it's a populist budget benefiting the rural sector as well as basic health and infrastructure facilities, but does not provide any major tax relief. Some relief has been given to female employees who can now contribute up to 8 per cent towards Provident Fund for an initial period of three years. I think this Budget is a mixed one and may be termed as a course-correction Budget.



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# Tier-II and III: Engines of growth

Senior members of FHRAI provide their point of view on the growth of hospitality in Tier-II and III markets in the country, and elaborate on the new and upcoming towns or cities in the different regions.



**Garish Oberoi**  
President  
FHRAI

## NEW, EMERGING INDIA

As one witnesses a saturation in the economic growth and construction opportunities in the major cities of India, concurrently, a number of Tier-II and III cities have been found to deliver a successful economic growth.

Tier-II cities like Surat, Nagpur, Vadodara, Indore, Chandigarh, Ahmedabad, Kanpur, Patna, Dehradun, Puducherry, Pune, etc., have a population of around one million, whereas minor cities with a population less than one million like Madurai, Baroda, Nashik, and Trichy are termed as Tier-III cities. In spite of low public investments, these cities have great potential.

With a success story in all fields, they have some inherent advantages like possessing basic amenities, ample availability of land and skilled labour, etc., that make them favourable destinations for the industry.

“Tier-II and Tier-III markets are experiencing increased demand for mid-segment hotels and are expected to boom in the years to come”

## REDUCED PRESSURE ON METROS

In an emerging India, the growth opportunities in the hospitality sector in Tier-II and III cities is primarily due to the gigantic gap between availability and demand. The growth of these two tiers gestures towards a positive sign for the nation with their efforts to deviate the pressure on the metros, which are dwindling under the burden of space, time, and infrastructure. This offset of pressure will also facilitate an improved distribution of revenue, in due course increasing the status of rural India.

One has been noticing significant improved hospitality and restaurant options in cities like Vizag, Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Patna, Mohali, Nagpur, Lucknow, Agra, Udaipur, Puducherry, etc.

Key factors supporting growth in these cities include reasonable land costs, limited hotel supply, availability of low-cost manpower, healthy demand patterns led mostly by domestic visitation, and strong economic and infrastructural growth. While branded hotels, both Indian and foreign, are expected to attract a significant market share in these emerging cities, at the same time, hotels in these markets will take a little longer to stabilise and owners should be realistic about their expectations on occupancy and rates. Also, though tapping the potential in small towns sounds like a notable takeaway, one cannot treat the Tier-II and Tier-III markets simply as an extension of their Tier-I markets.

To conclude, Tier-II and Tier-III markets are experiencing increased demand for mid-segment hotels and are expected to boom in the years to come. In cities like these, the hotel segment should strive for budget accommodation for travellers so that they can penetrate the market and acquire long-term customers.



**Sanjay Sood**  
President  
HRANI

## RISING DISPOSABLE INCOME

The tourism and hospitality industry in northern India functions as a key driver of growth. Considering the historical heritage, rich culture, variety in ecology and natural beauty spread across India, tourism has immense potential, both in terms of revenue and employment generation. In a recent study of the top 10 emerging business destinations, the growth in Tier-II and Tier-III cities is aided by the increasing disposable income of the people, creating immense opportunities for companies looking out for new markets to grow.

## OFFBEAT LOCATIONS

The Government of India has taken initiatives to boost the tourism and hospitality sector by the year 2030 in both Tier-II and Tier-III cities. Jaipur, Jodhpur, Dehradun, Chandigarh, Amritsar, Lucknow, Varanasi, Kanpur, Ludhiana, Faridabad, etc., are some of the Tier-II cities that have shown growth in the hotel and tourism sector as compared to metropolitan cities which have witnessed escalating property prices, high cost of resources, delay in execution of projects, overall slowdown in demand, and a dip in supply.

These markets focus on promoting small business tourism with big discounts on attractions, making travel affordable and fun at reasonable prices.





**Sudesh Poddar**  
President  
HRAEI

### HUGE UNTAPPED ASSETS

Tier-II and III cities represent hugely untapped assets, especially due to the gap in availability and demand. With efforts towards redirecting pressure on metro cities due to space and time constraints as well as underdeveloped infrastructure to greener pastures, growth in Tier-II and III cities reflects a positive change for India.

From an overall industry standpoint, increased domestic travel and its positive effects on leisure hotels will open new opportunities for development, especially in emerging destinations such as India's north-eastern states. Dibrugarh (Assam), Imphal (Manipur), Agartala (Tripura), and Shillong (Meghalaya) have emerged as good destinations for the hospitality industry.

### SMALLER PLACES, IMMENSE POTENTIAL

Despite the growth in small towns, there is tremendous potential for even smaller places. For instance, Tezpur and Jorhat can be turned into bases for tourism to Kaziranga National Park and the burgeoning tea tourism in the region. Arunachal Pradesh's pristine beauty invites hospitality giants. Sikkim has lots to see and enjoy beyond Gangtok. Northern Andaman Islands have pristine beaches that can compete with beach destinations of South-East Asia. With the central government's impetus on air connectivity across north-eastern India and the Andamans, there is huge untapped potential out there for the hospitality industry.



**Dilip Datwani**  
President  
HRAWI

### FRANCHISE EXPANSION

If the metros witnessed the bulk of development in the first phase, the next phase has seen the emergence of Tier-II and III cities with a sizeable jump in their economic activities. While most of them do not have master plans, they can now prepare their plans on the basis of past experiences of other cities. Those that will spearhead the growth will include Surat, Nagpur, Vadodara, Pimpri, Chinchwad, Indore, Rajkot, Bhopal, Thane, Kalyan, Navi Mumbai, and Nashik in the western region. These markets are continuously gaining momentum because they have provided franchisers and aspiring entrepreneurs not just a chance to enjoy healthy competition but also immense opportunity and fair chance to capture the largest share of the market.

### FRESH AVENUES

Labour in such cities is easily available and cheaper than metro cities, thereby lowering the cost of the franchise venture. Acquiring and recruiting the manpower also costs less here. Besides this, on the basis of the consumer demographics of these cities, the hospitality brands incorporate certain changes in their product and service offerings in order to ensure profitability. There is a huge gap in the mid-sized hotel segment in these cities that needs to be tapped. These cities need quality accommodation for tourists and corporates; hospitality brands also need fresh avenues for franchise expansion. Tier-II and III cities offer a pool of entrepreneurial talent, spending power and low penetration cost.



**K. Syama Raju**  
President  
SIHRA

### BETTER CONNECTIVITY

The Government of India, in the promotion of rural tourism, wellness tourism, and pilgrim tourism, as well as interactions with state governments, investors, and hotel chains, has shown interest in establishing hotels in lesser-known destinations, especially in the Tier-II and Tier-III cities. With the introduction of the UDAN scheme, better connectivity to smaller towns that have hotels at affordable prices has led to an increase in their overall revenue, both in room occupancy and F&B outlets. The support given by Government of India in the reduction of GST for restaurants and room tariff has created confidence in establishing budget hotels. Without worrying about budgets and stay, travellers from India and abroad will have more to visit, more to experience, and more to talk about.

### TRAVEL MARTS

Cities like Thanjavur, Vellore, Karur, Coimbatore, and Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu; Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh; Wayanad, Vayalar, Palakkad, and Munnar in Kerala and Chikmagalur in Karnataka have witnessed an increase in tourist arrivals with improved hotel occupancy. SIHRA, with the help of state governments and the CII, has proposed to hold travel marts in Kerala, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh, similar to the one held in Tamil Nadu in September last year, to attract travel writers and travel agents from both India and abroad to make the South the most affordable and favoured tourist destination in the country.

# Can INNOVATION disrupt?

The fifth edition of Global Hospitality Conclave, held on January 6, saw discussions by eminent panellists on the various aspects of hospitality and how this dynamic industry was evolving. The first panel discussion was on 'Disruptive Innovation'. Here is an excerpt from what was discussed at the meet...

Moderated by **Abha Bakaya**, broadcast journalist, anchor and producer, the session was a progressive discussion on disruption and the way forward for the hospitality industry. Panellists included **Rajesh Magow**, CEO, MakeMyTrip; **Jan Tissera**, President International, Travel Click and **Kaushik Dasgupta**, Head of Industry, Google India.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Speaking on how he defines disruption and putting

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The second phase of disruption was where even the existing internet business was being disrupted

”

it in context to changes in the last 10 years, Magow said, "In terms of the literal meaning of disruption, it has to disrupt something. When you put that in the context of business, the first level of disruption that happened went back to 2000 when we started the ecosystem for the internet. It was the beginning of the online era, disrupting the old brick and mortar business. That was the basic disruption led by technology. Then, over the last decade, massive introduction of new technologies came about. Different kinds of disruptions were happening within the technology space itself. That would be the second phase of disruption, where even the existing internet business was being disrupted. The way travel business was conducted initially from a distribution standpoint was very conventional. The GDS for aviation used to be the blue screen, which still exists but is getting disrupted now. From the railway

(L to R) Abha Bakaya, Anchor & Producer; Kaushik Dasgupta, Head of Industry, Google India; Rajesh Magow, CEO, MakeMyTrip and Jan Tissera, President International, Travel Click





transport standpoint, there were huge queues. This was when IRCTC came about and became one very good example of how technological disruption had changed the system." He further added, "The next level of disruption in the internet space came with smartphones. We also faced that for our existing business. It was now a small screen device and everything had to be fitted into it. The technology disruption it caused in the existing business was phenomenal. Now, once again, there is a new era that is the buzz; technology is going to be led by artificial intelligence and machine learning. This is the new innovation that will happen."

### THE HUMAN TOUCH

While disruption can strengthen some business, it can destroy others. Tissera said, "From the year 2000, if you look at Fortune 500 companies, 50 per cent of them do not exist anymore; that is a wake-up call. If you look at the music industry, iTunes has taken over and we no longer require CDs; in the hospitality industry, shared economy has taken over. In the industry that I am in, I serve many hoteliers across geographies. Localisation is extremely important in this disruptive world that we live in. Approximately 900 million people travelled across the world last year. In the disruptive world, we cannot get away with the whole aspect of the human touch as far as hospitality is concerned. Technology is the enabler and human touch is the aspect of personalisation."

### BIG DATA AND MARKET DYNAMICS

Hotels need to get smarter, but how can they do that? To this, Tissera said, "It is essential to understand your customer, their needs and preferences. The second important thing is to understand big data. To grow, you need to put the right product in place at the right time. Gathering business intelligence remains important. By doing that, all the other aspects of it will be put in place."

### INTERNET ECOSYSTEM STILL EVOLVING

Commenting on what the data is telling us, Dasgupta explained, "Fundamentally, you need to figure out what it is that your users want. In India, no matter what we do, the internet ecosystem still does not support fast connectivity. We can either consider it to be a challenge and go to the government or service providers or wait and let the ecosystem evolve. It is best to ensure that your assets are fast enough, irrespective of internet connectivity."

Explaining how the travel ecosystem is broken down into five different phases at Google, Dasgupta said, "In the first phase, it's about dreaming of travel. This could be because of some social media post or a picture the traveller has seen. The second phase would be about researching, thinking about going to a beach, and



“  
 Conversational e-commerce is the next wave that is going to come, especially in India  
 ”

then searching for beaches. The third phase is about booking, either through a GDS or calling up a hotel directly. The fourth phase is experiencing the property or holiday. The fifth and final phase is about sharing the experience. This process pretty much remains the same; what is changing, though, is how people are engaging with these processes."

### CONVERSATIONAL E-COMMERCE

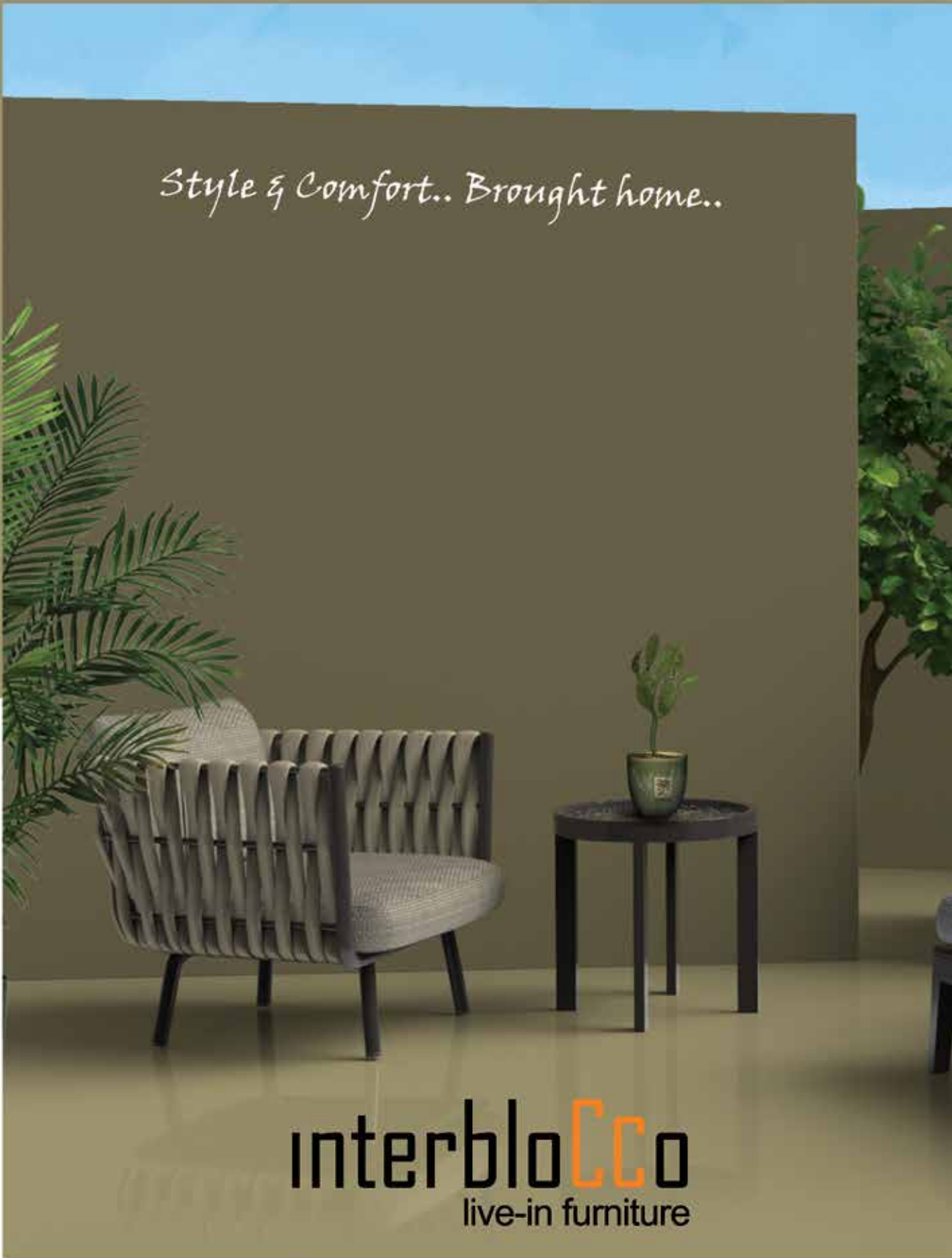
The future is in being able to talk to artificial intelligence. According to Magow, voice is going to be the next game changer. "When you think of the next 150 million people using technology, they will also be bringing in the vernacular language aspect of it. We are working on two models, one is fully live now using Alexa. However, we are trying to build our IP on that. With this you can do a redBus booking using a vernacular language. We have already tested that and it is available in three vernacular languages, that is Hindi, Tamil, and Telugu, though the response that you get now is in English. We are trying to change that to a vernacular output as well.

It's a seamless booking experience till the end. This is conversational e-commerce and we think this is the next wave that is going to come, especially in India, given that English is going to be a challenge for more than 200 million people."

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# MAKING THE MOST OF 2018

This year is packed with long weekends and hoteliers already have their strategies in place to capture the weekend traveller. They also give us a peek into revenue strategies and how they aim to capture last-minute bookings this year.

**Kanchan Nath**



**Dietmar Kielnhofer**

**Dietmar Kielnhofer**  
General Manager  
JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar

## **POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STABILITY**

I expect the Indian economy to grow in 2018 at a rate between seven and nine per cent, driven largely by domestic consumption rather than tax increase and no political surprises like demonetisation or GST changes. What today's consumer needs, more than anything else, is confidence in the government to deliver basic services and transparency in all its dealings. General consumers and the business community do not appreciate surprises that create

uncertainty and have the potential to create economic instability. For an economy to grow and prosper, there needs to be political and economic stability. As an additional boost to economic growth, I foresee less bureaucracy and red-tapeism and more technological innovation with regard to assisting companies in reaching their commercial objectives.

## **WELL-EXECUTED CHANGE**

What consumers desire more than anything else in this time and age is service consistency, more food innovation, cutting-edge restaurant design, and value for money. Change for the sake of change causes more confusion and could be highly counterproductive. Change, if executed well, has to create tangible benefits for all stakeholders where everyone is at the winning end. If we, as hotel operators, get our basics of excellent food, a level of personalised service, and innovative restaurant design right, top-line revenue is a given and if cost and expenses are prudently managed in a responsible manner, a healthy and sustainable bottom-line is a natural by-product.

## **CONVENIENCE OF LOCATION**

The key to attract weekend guests depends on the location and convenience of commuting in and around the city. While we have the convenience aspect on our side, we could look to aggressively promote weekend packages on our website and across other digital media.

## **BOOKINGS ON THE GO**

Our mobile platforms are designed to encourage customers to make real-time bookings. The trend we have seen for the last 10 years is to move away from desktop computing to laptops and tablets, and then finally to smartphones. As a marketing driven company, the future is definitely in mobile and dynamic booking platforms that allow customers to make bookings anywhere, anyplace, as long as there is internet connectivity.



“

The key to attract weekend guests is location and convenience of commuting in and around the city

”



**Kush Kapoor**  
Area General Manager  
Roseate Hotels & Resorts

**BANKING ON THE BUDGET**

For the hospitality industry the year will be a promising one as domestic travel and MICE will pick up, resulting in business growth. With the upcoming Budget for 2018-19, we are looking forward to reforms supporting the industry. While the government is aggressively marketing brand India globally, it is imperative to focus internally and address issues around taxation, infrastructure, and inconsistent regulations imposed by various states to achieve the potential of these industries. We also hope the Union Budget will empower each of the industries to take full advantage of varied opportunities ahead.

**MULTIFOLD REVENUE STRATEGY**

We are looking at a multifold revenue strategy that will focus on key experiences exclusive to the hotel; retargeting of guests who missed out on hotel visits the first time; customer satisfaction while

curate special experiences and offers to entertain our guests over long weekends. These include luxurious stay packages, an array of gastronomical experiences, exclusive spa packages and more.

**CAPTURING EVERY BOOKING**

The rules of online hotel marketing have been changing for a few years now. With numerous OTAs, metasearch sites, and last-minute-booking mobile applications, the average traveller is indeed spoilt for choice. Changing purchase behaviour of travellers, increased use of smartphones accompanied by increased access to online or



**Kush Kapoor**



We pay special attention to those who search for inventory on dates with low business



maintaining high hotel and restaurant rankings on review portals of repute; energy, power, and variable cost saving; innovative revenue-driven rooms and restaurant promotions and fair balance between OTAs and website bookings.

**LONG WEEKENDS AROUND FESTIVALS**

More and more people have started taking long weekend breaks, especially during the festive season. They are also willing to spend more on luxury travel experiences within India. Therefore, at Roseate Hotels & Resorts, we always endeavour to

mobile travel tools provide both a challenge and an opportunity for us. Moreover, last-minute-booking applications on mobile and penalty-free reservations have made the competition tougher in the hotel industry.

We pay special attention to prospects that already visited our website and searched for inventory on dates that coincide with low business periods. We aim to re-engage with them by sending them customised offers to successfully convert them, thus helping improve days with short booking windows.



Ravi Rawat

### **Ravi Rawat** General Manager The Park, Navi Mumbai

#### **FOCUS ON TOURISM**

Business this year, without any hiccups, looks better and is expected to grow by 8-9 per cent. We have seen an economic revolution in the last two years with multiple reforms taking place. These reforms have jolted the market and are expected to bear fruit in the coming years. Over the years, supply has increased manifold and is expected to grow steadily. On the other hand, ADRs have seen some serious correction. This has resulted in shrinking GOPs and shaken the trust of investors to an extent. This year may bring steadiness in profitability. We are also looking at a focused approach on improving tourism and promoting domestic and international travel, better infrastructure and transportation systems to boost tourism, development of tourist attractions, and providing an affable environment.

#### **GAINING CUSTOMER LOYALTY**

The increased focus on food and beverage initiatives at hotels in the last several years has created momentum around the concept of 'local'. It's more than just having a farm-to-table restaurant on premise, it's about providing a one-of-a-kind experience to guests. The Park hotels are known for

their unique offerings while promoting local trends to create an atmosphere of authenticity. We are not competing with each other in the hotel space, we are fighting technology and other lines of business. So, what is going to really make a mark is gaining the loyalty of consumers. Technology investment is now being directed towards service and experience elements more explicitly. The smart home is becoming the smart room at hotels installing Alexa, Nest thermometers, and easy ways to sign in and out of streaming accounts.

GOP per available room would be a preferred metric in the future with tracking total revenue per available room and total revenue per square foot, rather than only revenue per available room.

#### **SPECIAL PACKAGES ON WEBSITES**

The year is packed with 16 long weekends. A holiday that falls on a weekday and has a weekend following or preceding it is like icing on the cake. Everyone loves a fantastic holiday special, which is why it's highly recommended to create a holiday-specific package and special offers on the website. Hotels must look to sell the experience of staying at the property. We are selling more than just a place to sleep; we are selling a weekend getaway or a seamless business trip. Decide on all touchpoints where potential guests may contact the hotel (website, email, social media, etc.) and accordingly craft and disseminate the content.

“

Decide on all touchpoints where potential guests may contact the hotel and then disseminate the content

”



## SM Azmat President Sales & Marketing Jaypee Hotels

### POSITIVE GROWTH THIS YEAR

The reflections of several key initiatives taken by the central government should be the important factors for an improved business environment. The active approach of Ministry of Tourism to promote inbound traffic as well as domestic tourism should also contribute towards improved numbers. Moreover, growth on the supply side has stabilised in the key markets and so we expect a positive growth in 2018.

### TECH TO IMPROVE BOTTOM-LINES

Capitalising on an efficient business environment, various channels of business should contribute to the top-line. Application of technology with improved availability should contribute to better bottom-lines.

### LONG WEEKENDS, BOOM TO BUSINESS

Long weekends are a boom to our business, giving additional travel windows to domestic leisure travel. Our luxury leisure destinations, Jaypee Residency Manor, Mussoorie; Jaypee Palace Hotel



& Convention Centre, Agra and Jaypee Greens Golf & Spa Resort, Greater Noida, are favoured destinations for such long weekends. We plan to create and offer interesting indulgent packages for domestic leisure travellers.

### A FRIENDLIER PLATFORM

The booking trend is already showing positive signs of last-minute bookings made through mobile phones or on the website. Our effort is to make this platform even more user-friendly in 2018.



SM Azmat



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Arun Arora

**Arun Arora**  
General Manager  
Radisson Blu Hotel  
New Delhi Paschim Vihar

#### AN UPWARD CURVE

We are hoping that the buoyancy observed in the second half of 2017 will continue. 2018 is expected to see a good upward curve before hitting the peak over the next few years.

#### IMPROVE REVPAR, FOCUS ON F&B

The strategy this year would be to increase RevPAR and improve the RGI. Corporates and OTAs will continue to be the focus segments. Looking at bringing new concepts in Indian restaurants with emphasis on the great Indian food with innovative service concepts to strengthen the APC will also be a prime focus.

Digital platforms and F&B portals will continue playing a major role. F&B outsourcing will also get a push in 2018 to increase the bottom-line. The food and beverage industry is touching new horizons and so, hotels where F&B is not the core will certainly

“

We are hoping that the buoyancy observed in the second half of 2017 will continue

”



explore avenues to fall back on, with more seasoned players occupying that space.

#### COMPREHENSIVE PACKAGES

Wholesome weekend staycation packages loaded with comfort and scrumptious food and combined with leisure and recreational activities, together providing value for money will be the focus this year.

#### LAST-MINUTE BOOKINGS

This year, the trend of last-minute real-time bookings will definitely pick up. Leading OTAs are fast capturing this mode of booking. They are tying up with hotels for last-minute deals, both online and offline. We also aim to take advantage of this space.







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Somnath Mukherjee

### **Somnath Mukherjee** General Manager Taj West End, Bengaluru

#### **MORE TRAVELLERS, BETTER SERVICE**

With the expected GDP growth of over eight per cent, 2018 will be a robust year for the hospitality industry. Inbound foreign travel is likely to see continued upsurge. More Indians are also travelling within the country on account of higher purchasing capacity. Bengaluru is a key destination and an important junction for many popular destinations across South India. The increase in demand is also likely to give rise to more stringent customer service standards, a factor that the industry will need to keep pace with.

#### **ACHIEVE PRICE LEADERSHIP**

In 2018, our strategy in the retail space would be to achieve price leadership in the market with a focus to grow yields for the hotel and consolidate our market share in the non-negotiated segment.

The overall strategy would be to grow market share at the existing demand levels and drive more than fair market share from the incremental demand expected in 2018 with a focus to grow GOPAR (Gross Operating Profit per Available Room). The strategy for the negotiated business would be to

“

We are looking at a deeper discounting extended on opaque platforms to sell the distress inventory

”



drive more than fair market share from accounts in the secondary and tertiary catchment area.

With a large part of our overall business being driven by the competitive F&B segment, restaurant revenues are critical to overall performance. We have successfully created differentiated offerings to create a niche for ourselves in this cluttered market space. Our strategy will be to continue providing diverse experiences to our guests, supported by sustained marketing efforts to drive growth in bottom-lines.

#### **WEEKEND STAYCATIONS**

The concept of weekend staycations has seen a gradual but constant demand over the past two years. We plan to leverage chain-wide promotions to continue this growth. Compelling pricing tied up with value add-ons will be used to grow occupancies and drive RevPAR during the lean period. We are looking at partnering with OTAs with a deeper discounting extended on opaque platforms to sell the distress inventory.





**Harjeet Wasan**  
General Manager  
Hilton Garden Inn Lucknow

**REORGANISING THE MARKET SHARE**

The year is going to be an interesting one. With 450 new rooms added to the city in the branded star category and new outlets in these hotels, there will be a rationalisation in the rates and ADRs. The corporates are going to have more choice and since hotels have opened in all rate brackets, the market share will also be rejigged. However, investor forums and similar initiatives by the state government will ensure a sporadic influx of business.

The added inventory will also ensure a sharp incline in the confirmation of new domestic and international medical conferences.

**STATIC MARKET AND NEW INVENTORY**

Since long, hotels and owners have wanted high occupancy and high ADR resulting in high revenues. However, when you are in a static market with newer inventory having opened resulting in major alteration in the market share, the obvious approach will be to go the RevPAR way.

**RISING POTENTIAL AS A WEEKEND DESTINATION**

Though Lucknow is not a preferred weekend destination, we do see a huge potential for the same because now people and leisure travellers do want to

explore the city and even club this with Agra or Varanasi in their weekend trips. We will definitely leverage the new Agra-Lucknow expressway, which makes it easy to travel by road and will also work closely with travel agents and float staycation packages highlighting the tourist locations and food trail in Lucknow. Our biggest strength lies in Hilton Honors, which also includes our employees, and we are confident that the segment itself will give us enough support in this market during the long weekends.

**DIRECT CHANNELS FOR BEST PRICE**

With over 52 million Hilton Honors members, we already have a successful mobile application to understand customer behaviour for last-minute bookings. We promote this application and encourage all our guests to download it in order to get the best deals. All bookings through the mobile application and directly through the website will always give our customers the best price possible amongst all other online channels.



**Harjeet Wasan**

“

When you are in a static market, the most obvious approach is to go the RevPAR way

”



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## LOOK NO FURTHER

◆ The latest weathered wood collection by Antica Ceramica mimics reclaimed antique wood, distressed wood, and hand-scraped hardwoods, with superior attention to detailed high-resolution, which captures the naturalistic wood format. With options of different wooden tiles that show fine grain, hand-scraped and soft or bold finishes, the room can become a masterpiece. The reclaimed weathered look embraces nature-inspired textures, while the distressed wood look is extremely versatile.



## A PREMIUM SOLUTION

◆ Roca has introduced its Alba Bathroom collection, a premium solution for bathrooms. Alba in-wash integrated toilet offers an intelligent system that can be controlled through an application on your iOS device and also through an easy-to-use remote that comes along with the product. The toilet also boasts of features such as night light, heated seat, auto open and close seat cover, auto flush, instant water heating, user detection and user profile memory. It uses an embedded air pump-assisted flushing system to execute a strong, silent flush, and the nozzle uses an ultraviolet disinfection system to ensure maximum hygiene.



## LIGHT UPRIGHT

◆ The White Teak Company has launched its floor lamp collection which comprises lamps with shelves, tripod style lamps, and asymmetrical design lamps that sparkle even when switched off. These floor lamps make a stunning ivory and ebony combination that adds great visual appeal to the lamp and its surroundings. The tripod style lamps have a sleek, black iron body and the other pieces are designed with ceramic and Italian marble with a nickel chrome finish.





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Wonder Gel 50	++++	++++	50-80	
Wonder Gel 100	+++	+++	100-200	
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## MOT BACKS HERITAGE MOTORING IN THE CAPITAL

The 21 Gun Salute International Vintage Car Rally & Concours Show, India's most premium vintage car event, is all set to host its eighth edition, to be inaugurated amongst renowned national and international car aficionados as well as connoisseurs of culture, art, and history. Hundreds of rare and premium vintage cars will participate in the 21 Gun Salute Drive on February 17, 2018. The rally will be flagged off at India Gate and will continue to Ambience Greens Golf Course, Gurugram. Over two days, February 17-18, these cars will be showcased for visitors at Gurugram.

The rally will be an opportunity for both Indian and foreign guests to witness vintage and classic cars in the backdrop of India's heritage and culture. Confirming participation from USA, Australia, Singapore, Italy, and the UK, **Madan Mohan**, Founder & Managing Trustee, 21 Gun Salute Heritage & Cultural Trust, said, "We have received huge support from Ministry of Tourism. The eighth edition of 21 Gun Salute International Vintage Car Rally & Concours Show is probably the only event where cars will be arriving from across borders of the Indian subcontinent." This year, guests will witness classical dance performances like

Kathakali, Bharatnatyam, Odissi, etc. Besides showcasing the rich automotive heritage to the world, the rally will also take up a social cause of raising funds for children with special needs. The two-day event will incorporate a colourful cultural fest representing India's pride, glory, and cultural elegance.

The jury panel for the year includes Christian H. Kramer, FIVA Scrutineer & Collection Advisor, who will be the chief judge; Rolls-Royce expert Paul Wood; Shin Ichi Ekko, Founder of Maserati Club of Japan; Siegfried Linke, Master Judge at Classic Car Club of America and many other automotive luminaries. Since 2011, the 21 Gun Salute Heritage & Cultural Trust has been successfully conducting the 21 Gun Salute International Vintage Car Rally & Concours Show, and this year's edition will take the celebration a notch higher. The vision of the event is to bring India forward as a world-class global motoring tourism destination. Several Indian and international vintage & classic car owners, along with esteemed royal families, will be bringing their prized possessions to participate in this milestone event. Great food, music, and vintage cars and bikes will make the event an affair to remember.



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## **PERLICK'S TOBIN ELLIS SIGNATURE COCKTAIL STATION EARNS GLOBAL ACCLAIM WITH GOOD DESIGN AWARD FOR THE SECOND TIME**

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The coveted Good Design award confirms that the Tobin Ellis signature cocktail station is a superstar that empowers bartenders to work better and ultimately provide superb customer service.  
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## LE MÉRIDIEN GOA UNLOCKS ART IN THE CITY



Le Méridien Goa, Calangute, has collaborated with Museum of Goa, a privately owned contemporary arts museum, for the brand's 'Unlock Art' signature programme. With this partnership, guests of Le Méridien Goa, Calangute, will get a complimentary visit and tour of Museum of Goa and be a part of the immersive cultural experiences that the museum hosts. This is an endeavour to bring travellers close to the state's thriving art and cultural scene. The museum was established with the idea of taking art to the masses, where it seeks to break social and cultural barriers and make it accessible to all. It is intended as a platform for contemporary Indian and international artists to build a cultural network for exchange

and interaction. Speaking at the occasion, **Norton Pereira**, General Manager, Le Méridien Goa, Calangute, said, "At Le Méridien hotels, our keys unlock more than just the room door; they unlock access to inspiring art and cultural centres offering travellers a unique perspective on the destination they are visiting.

We would like our guests to get up and close with Goa's thriving art scene and what better place to start that than with Museum of Goa. Our idea of this partnership is to encourage our guests to visit local art galleries and museums and in that, showcase our artists and support art communities to thrive."

## TUNNEL WASHERS LAUNCHED AT LAUNDREX INDIA



For the first time in India, laundry professionals got to see a 'tunnel' laundry system at the third edition of Laundrex India Expo. Tunnel washers are laundry machines capable of washing 100,000 pieces of linen in a day using very limited amount of water and labour. The system was showcased by United Machines India and was on display at the expo till January 20, 2018.

Part of Asia's largest exposition on cleanliness, hygiene, and sanitation besides laundry, Laundrex India Expo is an exclusive exhibition catering to the segment. It caters



to commercial, institutional, and centralised laundry services, dry cleaning and linen care solution providers, and equipment and chemical suppliers.

The growth in sectors like healthcare, hospitality, transport, railways, and educational institutions demands cost-effective, water-efficient, energy-efficient, and quality laundry systems.

The laundry market in India is fast expanding as a very organised sector. Laundrex India provides the platform for national and international suppliers to enter this growing market.



# appointments



**MANISH SODHI**

Chief Executive Officer  
Hotel Sahara Star

★ Hotel Sahara Star has appointed Manish Sodhi as its Chief Executive Officer. A seasoned hospitality professional, Sodhi will be responsible for the hotel's international expansion and will continue to elevate the brand and its growing portfolio, building on the company's extraordinary success over the years. He brings with him an experience of over 20 years in the hospitality sector, working with leading international and Indian hotel brands like Starwood and Leela Kempinski, with his most recent assignment being that of the General Manager at The Lalit Mumbai. With the new appointment, Sodhi will look to lead the business and the brand into its next level of evolution.



**JAIDEEP ANAND**

General Manager  
The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences

★ Jaideep Anand has been appointed as the General Manager of The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences. His last assignment was with The Leela Ambience Convention Hotel, Delhi, as General Manager. Anand started his career in hospitality with The Oberoi New Delhi in F&B and rooms division. Later he served The Oberoi Nile cruisers and was transferred to Oberoi Hotels in Saudi Arabia at the Allied Forces camps that involved catering of over 25,000 meals daily, in addition to housekeeping of the camps. He later served as EAM F&B at The Oberoi New Delhi and led the pre-opening launch of three Oberoi hotels.



**SUMEET SURI**

General Manager  
Kochi Marriott Hotel

★ Kochi Marriott Hotel has appointed Sumeet Suri as the General Manager. Prior to his current role, he was the Hotel Manager of ITC Grand Chola, Chennai. Suri has an experience of 17 years in the industry and has handled multiple brands of ITC across the country. After beginning his career at the Welcomgroup Management Institute, he joined ITC Maratha, Mumbai, where he fronted the opening of a fine-dine restaurant and overlooked both banqueting and restaurant operations. He also worked as the Food & Beverage Manager at ITC Kakatiya.



**SURAJIT CHATTERJEE**

General Manager  
Park Plaza Ludhiana

★ Sarovar Hotels & Resorts has appointed Surajit Chatterjee as General Manager of Park Plaza Ludhiana. A passionate hotelier with over 20 years of experience in hospitality, Chatterjee brings with him hands-on experience in operations management, inventory management, customer relationship management, team management, and pre-opening hotels. Prior to joining Sarovar Hotels & Resorts he worked with AccorHotels as the Operations Manager of Lavasa International Convention Centre.



**RAVI NAIR**

General Manager  
Express Inn, Nashik

★ Express Inn, Nashik, has appointed Ravi Nair as the General Manager. With over 30 years of experience, he is known as a game changer in each of his assignments. In the new role at Express Inn, Nashik, Nair will be leading a team of 330 associates, taking care of 197 rooms as well as unique restaurants and luxurious banquet halls. He will also ensure the development of tactical programmes to pursue targeted goals and objectives, and ensure overall delivery and quality of the unit's offerings to customers.





**MOHIT KANWAL**

**Director of Sales & Marketing  
Hyatt Regency Delhi**

★ Hyatt Regency Delhi has appointed Mohit Kanwal as Director of Sales & Marketing. Kanwal brings with him more than 18 years of experience in the industry, which gives him an in-depth and holistic understanding of the hospitality business in the country. He possesses leadership skills, a passion for quality, and a penchant for developing high-performing teams that deliver expected results within stipulated timelines. Kanwal completed his post-graduation in Marketing from SIES University Mumbai in 2004. Thereafter, he started his career with The Taj Mahal Hotel, New Delhi, as Hotel Operations Management Trainee, after which he joined The Oberoi and Trident Nariman Point in Mumbai as a Sales Executive.



**KOUMAAL KAPOOR**

**Revenue Manager  
Novotel Pune and Mercure Lavasa**

★ Koumaal Kapoor has been appointed as a multi-hotel Revenue Manager at Novotel Pune and Mercure Lavasa. She joined the hospitality industry in 2009 as a Management Trainee with The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group. With over nine years of experience in hospitality and revenue management in the Indian and international markets, Kapoor has worked with global brands like InterContinental Hotels Group and Hyatt Hotels. She has taken up various roles, from single-property Revenue Manager to multi-property Revenue Manager. In the newly-undertaken role, she will be responsible for liaising with the sales team and the general manager, and initiate promotions to generate business.



**KAREN MENDES**

**Director of Sales & Marketing  
Park Hyatt Hyderabad**

★ Park Hyatt Hyderabad has appointed Karen Mendes as the Director of Sales & Marketing. In the new role, Mendes will work to develop strategies to maximise RevPAR and grow market share so that the property meets or exceeds the hotel's budgeted goals while attracting new business in Hyderabad. With a total of 16 years of experience in sales and marketing, Mendes has earlier worked with brands like JW Marriott, Grand Hyatt Mumbai, Hyatt Gachibowli, and Renaissance Mumbai. She specialises in MICE and works to maintain and promote team work with effective and clear communication amongst all co-workers.



**NILESH JAIN**

**Food & Beverage Manager  
Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway**

★ Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway has appointed Nilesh Jain as the Food & Beverage Manager for the hotel. Jain comes with an experience of over 12 years in handling F&B operations at some of the country's established brands. He will play an integral role in managing overall operations, working with the core team across multiple F&B venues and reporting to the Director of Food & Beverage at the hotel. Prior to joining Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway he held the position of Assistant Food & Beverage Manager at The Oberoi Rajvilas, Jaipur. He started his journey with Taj Lake Palace, Udaipur, and worked with hospitality groups such as The Oberoi, Le Méridien, and The Leela Palace.



**ANTHONY HUANG**

**Executive Chef  
Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway**

★ Anthony Huang has been appointed as Executive Chef at Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway. A veteran in the culinary space, Huang has consistently set industry benchmarks to high standards of fine dining in India. His fascination with creating food and presenting it in simple yet authentic style has gained him popularity. In this role, Huang will hold the responsibility of planning and directing food preparation and culinary activities, modifying menus or creating new ones that meet quality standards, estimating food requirements and costs, complying with nutrition and sanitation regulations and safety standards, etc.



# CRAFTING it out

Great planning combined with a good design concept can help create an excellent space. HS Ahuja and Associates (HSAA) describes this concept well with its beautiful interior design solutions.

With luxurious, sumptuous design to delight and inspire, HSAA interiors give customers a place they wouldn't want to leave. They create interiors that reflect the style their customers desire. The backbone of HSAA is a creative, passionate, and innovative team of designers, engineers, and architects sharing the common goal of delivering a complete solution for interiors. Having travelled all over India, **Hema**, Vice President, HSAA, draws inspiration from a vast array of cultures, styles and materials, as well as organic shapes resulting in a kaleidoscope of



ideas to breathe new life into spaces. "Experimentation is our basic principle on which new design trends are built and developed. Complete flexibility in design is what we usually work with," says Hema.

Quality finishing and furnishing complete the exuberant feel while a clever play of complementing and contrasting materials helps create a stylish and comfortable living space where interiors exude elegance and relaxation. Some of the ongoing projects of HS Ahuja and Associates include a hotel in Indore, a resort in Manali, a hotel in Bhopal, one in Dehradun, as well as residences and offices in Delhi. Each project begins with an in-depth personality study with the client before design options are explored. This helps the team at HSAA learn about a client's taste, lifestyle, and aspirations. From here, a unique design combined with the company's signature style evolves, where both HSAA and the client partner and work together to achieve a space they desire.

Experimentation is the basic principle on which new design trends are built and developed





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### NOTABLE SPEAKERS

Arne M Sorenson, President & CEO, Marriott International  
 Ashish Jakhanwala, Managing Director & CEO, SAMHI  
 Deep Kalra, Chairman & Group CEO, MakeMyTrip  
 Deepak Bagla, Chief Executive Officer & MD, Invest India  
 Dr. Ankur Bhatia, Executive Director, Bird Group  
 Gaurav Bhushan, Global Chief Development Officer, AccorHotels

Katerina Giannouka, President - APAC, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group  
 Nakul Anand, Executive Director, ITC Limited  
 Patu Keswani, Chairman & MD, Lemon Tree Hotels Limited  
 Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director & CEO, Taj Hotels Palaces Resorts Safaris  
 Ritesh Agarwal, Founder & CEO, OYO Rooms  
 Siddhartha Gupta, Managing Director Real Estate, The Blackstone Group

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