

# HOTELS & RESTAURANTS INDIA fhraimagazine

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A MONTHLY ON HOSPITALITY TRADE

By DDP Publications



**SURGING DEMAND  
FOR EXPERIENTIAL STAYS**

**FHRAI HAILS PM'S  
LAKSHADWEEP VISIT**

**EXPERIENTIAL  
SPECIAL**

**PRADEEP SHETTY  
TAKES CHARGE AS  
FHRAI PRESIDENT**

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*Dear esteemed FHRAI Members,*

I extend my heartfelt greetings and sincere wishes to each member of FHRAI as we embark on the journey of 2024. It is with great honour and responsibility that I step into the role of President, and I am enthusiastic about the positive changes and advancements we can achieve together in this industry.

First and foremost, I want to express our collective gratitude to the Prime Minister, **Narendra Modi**, for his visionary leadership in promoting Lakshadweep tourism. His recent visit to this picturesque archipelago underscores a steadfast commitment to bolstering tourism in our country. FHRAI acknowledges and appreciates the Prime Minister's dedication, especially during the challenging post-COVID period, to position Lakshadweep as an emblem of sustainable tourism and an engine of economic growth for India.

The Prime Minister's visit will have a transformative impact. We believe it will catalyse substantial investments in infrastructure, connectivity, and hospitality services, transforming Lakshadweep into a coveted destination for global tourists.

FHRAI remains committed to working closely with the government to contribute valuable suggestions for the benefit of the tourism industry and local communities, playing a pivotal role in India's journey towards becoming a developed economy by 2047.

In alignment with our commitment to sustainable growth, we acknowledge the significant role played by the tourism and hospitality sectors in India's development goals. The initiatives taken by the government, such as encouraging citizens to explore 15 domestic destinations by 2022, bolstering infrastructure, developing tourism circuits, and the 'Wed in India' appeal, have significantly propelled domestic tourism. These endeavours have boosted local economies and FHRAI shall remain committed to engage with the Govt in this regard.

The Prime Minister's focus on ecotourism and responsible practices has paved the way for a future where tourism thrives in harmony with the environment and benefits local communities. FHRAI is resolute in its commitment to working in tandem with the Government of India to further advance the hospitality sector, ensuring sustainable growth and economic prosperity for the nation.

On the global stage, FHRAI actively participated in the World Investment Conference 2023, organised by the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA). With the support of DPIIT and Invest India, this conference, held in New Delhi, was a testament to our dedication to global engagement and partnerships. I served as a distinguished panellist in the Tourism Session on Investment Promotion Agency & Investor Connect, showcasing FHRAI's commitment to fostering collaborations that transcend borders and to enable investments in our sector.

In addition to our global engagements, FHRAI has been actively addressing challenges faced by the members on the domestic front. We have recently communicated with Director General, Foreign Trade, Government of India, expressing our concerns and seeking redressal on behalf of our members. The request for granting relaxation from the maintenance of average export obligation and extension in the export obligation period for specified EPCG Authorization for the year 2022-23 is of paramount importance to the hospitality industry.

FHRAI stands united in its commitment to supporting the growth trajectory of India's hospitality sector. We look forward to collaborating with all stakeholders, including our esteemed members, government bodies, and international partners, to achieve sustainable growth and economic prosperity for our nation.

Wishing you and your establishments a prosperous and fulfilling year ahead.

*With best regards,*  
**Pradeep Shetty**  
President, FHRAI



**Pradeep Shetty**  
President,  
FHRAI

“  
**The Prime Minister's focus on ecotourism and responsible practices has paved the way for a future where tourism thrives in harmony with the environment and benefits local communities**  
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#### THE FEDERATION OF HOTEL & RESTAURANT ASSOCIATIONS OF INDIA

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# TRANSFORMING CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

**New FHRAI President, Pradeep Shetty** prioritises resolution of longstanding matters at Federation & tackling challenges such as music copyright issues.



**Lipla Negi**

**Q What key issues would you like to take up during your tenure as President?**

This year, there will be renewed focus on engagement with the government on policy matters and issues affecting the hospitality trade. As such, I am committed to addressing several pressing priorities of the hospitality industry with a sense of urgency. We intend to actively engage with the government for creating a more conducive regulatory framework for the hospitality sector and the long pending request of the sector for granting infrastructure status is top of our agenda. This can be a game changer by facilitating long term loans at affordable interest rates to accelerate growth in the sector. More stimulus packages and incentives are required from the government to equip the sector to achieve the ambitious

target of welcoming 100 million international tourists by 2047, which include a favourable GST regime and Ease of Doing Business measures in hospitality.

Among other important challenges of the industry, I shall be focusing on during my Presidency are the industry's concerns over music copyright matters, service charges matters and anti-competitive activities by big tech companies, which are adversely affecting the members of the Federation. Demands by copyright agencies and owners for charges related to these events are causing complications, placing hotels in a challenging position between these agencies and guests. To streamline copyright licencing practices, we have conducted several meetings with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade and the Government of India. Our objective is to establish either

a unified single-window system or, at the very least, a single copyright society for specific classes of work. This initiative aims to prevent multiple agencies from causing unnecessary hardship and harassment to both the public and hotels.

Another significant issue of concern is the pending payments owed by OYO to FHRAI members and other hoteliers who sought FHRAI's support in resolving this long pending issue. Ensuring a fair and level-playing field between OTAs and hotels is very vital for the sustainable and harmonious development of the hospitality sector in the country. We firmly believe that digital or e-commerce players in the hotel sector cannot put themselves at an advantage and thereby victimise or cut down the hotel sector share by leveraging their digital tools or technology. We aim to urge all digital or online travel businesses to collaborate with the industry, to promote a mutually beneficial approach for all stakeholders within the tourism landscape.

### **FHRAI's relevance lies in its proactive approach, constant support, advocacy and efforts towards skill development**

Most importantly, with the support of my colleagues, we intend to take our institute, FHRAI-IHM to greater heights and achieve our fundamental objective of training and nurturing talent by way of education in hospitality, which by the way assumes greater significance given the shortfall of manpower in recent times. Enabling FHRAI-IHM an institution of excellence in hospitality education shall be another major thrust area during my presidential tenure.

### **Q How is the 'industry status' pivotal for the overall growth of the hotel sector?**

The demand for 'industry status' for hotels has been a longstanding request of the hospitality sector in the country. The rationale behind this demand stems from the significant role the hotel industry plays as a key economic driver in our country. It contributes a substantial percentage of revenue to the GDP, along with employing a wide spectrum of individuals, from gardeners to Harvard graduates. Recognising the immense potential of this

sector as a pivotal economic force, many states have acknowledged this need, leading to granting the 'industry status' and allied benefits to the sector. These benefits, include electricity and water tariff at a cheaper rate, lower property tax and licence fees, among others. Such benefits are pivotal in facilitating the establishment of a greater number of hotel rooms, essential to meeting the growing demand for accommodation.

### **Q How do associations such as FHRAI stay relevant in the changing times?**

FHRAI stays relevant in changing times through its steadfast commitment to representing and advancing the industry's collective interests. The Federation consistently plays a pivotal role in promoting and enhancing the hospitality and tourism sectors in the country. By actively engaging in policy formulation, FHRAI





contributes positively to industry growth and aids members in adapting to evolving circumstances and acquiring the necessary skills, knowledge and education to overcome challenges.

The Federation's relevance lies in its proactive approach, constant support, advocacy and efforts towards skill development, thus ensuring it remains a pivotal force in promoting industry growth and adaptation to changing times.

**Q As one of the youngest Presidents elected, do you see it as an advantage in connecting with young hoteliers, hospitality professionals & expanding FHRAI's membership?**

Absolutely, I firmly believe in connecting & resonating with young hoteliers and hospitality professionals, potentially expanding FHRAI's membership base. The evolving landscape of the hospitality industry is witnessing an influx of young professionals, startups and innovators who are injecting fresh ideas into the sector. As President, my aim is to actively engage and encourage their participation in contributing to the hospitality domain.

The industry holds tremendous potential, especially considering the emergence of hospitality graduates and professionals venturing into entrepreneurial roles or managing innovative startups. India's vast landscape, coupled with a growing popu-

**I firmly believe in connecting & resonating with young hoteliers and hospitality professionals, potentially expanding FHRAI's membership base**

lation and increased disposable income, presents boundless opportunities for travel, tourism and hospitality. Millennials are increasingly inclined to explore, pav-

ing the way for countless prospects within the sector.

FHRAI intends to embrace and welcome these young entrepreneurs and professionals, nurturing an environment where their innovative ideas can flourish. By fostering their involvement in FHRAI, we not only assist in industry growth but also contribute to India's economic progress. A thriving hospitality sector can play a pivotal role in India's rapid development, reflecting its substantial contribution to the nation's overall advancement. ❑





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# FHRAI URGES EXPORT OBLIGATION RELIEF

Federation demands relaxation from average EO maintenance for 2022-23 & extension in EO period for specified EPCG authorization for hotel sector.

The FHRAI has written to **Santosh Kumar Sarangi**, Director General, Foreign Trade, Government of India, putting forth a request for the consideration of a grant relaxation pertaining to the maintenance of the average export obligation (EO) for the fiscal year 2022-23, along with an extension in the EO period for specified EPCG authorisation for the hotel sector in the country.

In the letter, FHRAI stated, “Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) have reached the highest numbers in 2019 with 10.93 mil-

lion tourists visiting India. Thereafter, COVID hit the world resulting in maximum losses to the tourism industry. In the years 2020-21 and 2021-22, there were literally no FTAs in the hotels and by recognising this fact, DGFT aptly granted one-time relaxation from maintenance of average EO for these years and also extension of EO periods for an additional two years.”

The Federation further pointed out, “The years 2020-21 and 2021-22 were zero business years for the export licence holders in the tourism sector in the coun-

try. In 2022-23, the FTAs in India picked up some momentum and reached 6.19 million from 1.52 million in 2021-22. However, this was far below from the numbers in 2019-20 which should be the base year for calculating the EO average of hotels in the country. At a cursory glance, one would feel that the FTA average in 2022-23 has increased by 305 per cent YoY. But in real terms, it is -56.63 less

**2020-21 & 2021-22 were zero business years for export licence holders in the tourism sector in the country**

than the 2019 figures. The business environment in the hospitality sector in 2022-23 was not conducive enough for the hotels to maintain their EO and annual average conditions due to the very low turnout out of foreign tourists. Therefore, FHRAI once again requests that kindly grant relaxation from the maintenance of average EO for the year 2022-23 along with an extension in the EO period for the specified EPCG authorisation for the hotel sector in the country.” □



# ATAL SETU unlocks tourism potential

India's longest sea bridge, Atal Setu, will enhance connectivity, transform Mumbai's landscape, & boost tourism in Maharashtra, says FHRAI.

FHRAI has commended the inauguration of India's longest sea bridge—Atal Setu. The Federation has extended heartfelt congratulations to the Central and the Maharashtra governments, on the inauguration of the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL), officially known as Atal Setu.

FHRAI has applauded the government's commitment to advancing infrastructure on a grand scale while recognising the profound impact this project will have on boosting the nation's connectivity.

**Pradeep Shetty**, President, FHRAI & HRAWI, described the inauguration as a watershed moment for India's infrastructure development. He emphasised, "Beyond enhancing Mumbai's connectivity, Atal Setu symbolises the nation's dedication to pushing boundaries in engineering excellence. The bridge is poised to transform not only Mumbai's landscape but also provide an unprecedented boost to tourism in Maharashtra. We anticipate a significant surge in



**Pradeep Shetty**  
President,  
FHRAI & HRAWI

**Atal Setu is poised to transform not only Mumbai's landscape but also provide an unprecedented boost to tourism in Maharashtra**

tourist footfall to Mumbai's neighbouring destinations such as Lonavala, Matheran, Alibaug, Mahabaleshwar, and other scenic locales across the state with improved connectivity."

The Federation believes that the engineering prowess of MTHL will itself become a tourist attraction, drawing visitors from across the country to experience the sea bridge. The organisation envisions the bridge as more than just a transportation link.

"The MTHL is more than just a bridge; it is a testament to India's capability to undertake and execute large-scale infrastructure projects. Additionally, the travel experience offered by Atal Setu will not only attract domestic tourists but also position Mumbai as a gateway to explore the rich, cultural and natural treasures of Maharashtra. The enhanced accessibility to these destinations will stimulate economic growth and contribute to the tourism sector's vitality. As tourists explore the diverse attractions within Maharashtra, there will be a multiplier effect on the local economy. Small businesses, hospitality establishments and local artisans stand to benefit, amplifying the positive impact on the overall economic landscape of the State," concluded Shetty. □



# FHRAI WELCOMES PM MODI'S TOURISM PUSH

Federation appreciates Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Lakshadweep, highlighting his commitment to promoting domestic tourism & economic growth.

In a gesture of profound gratitude, FHRAI has extended heartfelt appreciation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his recent visit to the Lakshadweep, highlighting his unwavering commitment to fortifying the tourism landscape of the nation.

connectivity and hospitality services, making the archipelago an accessible and coveted destination for global tourists," said **Pradeep Shetty**, President, FHRAI & HRAWI.

Sharing similar sentiments, **Surendra Kumar Jaiswal**, Vice President, FHRAI, said, "The initiatives, including encouraging citizens to explore 15 domestic destinations by 2022, bolstering infrastructure, developing tourism circuits have significantly propelled domestic tourism,



**Pradeep Shetty**  
President,  
FHRAI & HRAWI

**Lakshadweep as an emblem of sustainable tourism and an engine of economic growth for India is commendable**

"We are immensely grateful for the PM's dedication to promoting domestic tourism in India, especially during the challenging post-COVID period. His visionary leadership in showcasing Lakshadweep as an emblem of sustainable tourism and an engine of economic growth for India is commendable. The presence of the PM Modi on the tranquil shores of Lakshadweep has illuminated the beauty and allure of this picturesque archipelago, drawing global attention to its pristine beaches, vibrant coral reefs and rich cultural heritage. FHRAI firmly believes that the PM's visit to Lakshadweep will catalyse substantial investments in infrastructure,



**Surendra Kumar Jaiswal**  
Vice President,  
FHRAI

**PM Modi has paved way for a future where tourism thrives in harmony with environment & benefits local communities**

boosting local economies and reducing expenditure on overseas destination weddings. By highlighting ecotourism and responsible practices, PM Modi has paved the way for a future where tourism thrives in harmony with the environment and benefits the local communities. We remain committed to working in tandem with the Government of India to further advance the tourism and hospitality sector, ensuring sustainable growth and economic prosperity for the nation." □



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# Deliberating new avenues in tourism investment

**Pradeep Shetty**, President, FHRAI & HRAWI, participated as a panellist in Tourism Session at the World Investment Conference 2023.



## HRAWI ushers culinary safety excellence


Association hosts FoSTaC programme, training 39 hospitality professionals to enhance their expertise in food safety, setting new industry standards.

In its unwavering commitment to fostering excellence in the hospitality industry, the HRAWI orchestrated a pivotal event on 14 December 2023—the FSSAI's Food Safety Supervisor Training in Advance Catering (FoSTaC) programme. The programme served as a beacon for 39 hospitality professionals keen on elevating their expertise and fortifying safety standards within their establishments.

The event, inaugurated by **Dr. Pasupathy** from Parikshan, **Raosaheb Shinde**, Banquet Manager, Pritam Da Dhaba, and **Hemanshu Chauhan**, Assistant Secretary General, HRAWI, marked a collaborative effort to set a new standard for culinary safety.

**FoSTaC programme delved into crucial facets of food safety, including handling, preparation & hygiene, among others**

The comprehensive programme delved into crucial facets of food safety, including handling, preparation, hygiene, sanitation, and waste management. Designed with precision, the modules aimed to empower participants with the requisite skills, enabling them

to seamlessly integrate stringent food safety practices into their daily operational procedures. HRAWI has effectively provided training and certification to 2,873 professionals through FoSTaC Training Programme. 



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# FUELLING AYODHYA'S TOURISM BOOM

Ahead of Ram Temple's opening, HRANI & UPHRA pledge to actively support Ayodhya's transformation into a premier tourist destination.

**H**RANI, with its state chapter UPHRA, has expressed its enthusiasm for contributing to Ayodhya's journey towards becoming a top-tier tourist destination ahead of the opening of the Ram Temple on 22 Jan.

**Garish Oberoi**, President, HRANI, & Secretary, UPHRA, stated, "We eagerly anticipate the inauguration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, which is poised to elevate the city into a cultural and spiritual hub. We foresee a surge in tourist footfall post-inauguration. Projects of all prominent hotel chains are in the pipeline in Ayodhya. The government is actively supporting policies that encourage private investment and sustainable



**Garish Oberoi**  
President,  
HRANI, & Secretary, UPHRA

development. Public-private partnerships are being forged to ensure that Ayodhya's transformation is comprehensive and well-rounded."

Echoing similar sentiments, **Surendra Jaiswal**, President, UPHRA, VP, FHRAI, & Honorary Secretary, HRANI, said, "We are looking forward to the opening of Ram

**Public-private partnerships are being forged to ensure that Ayodhya's transformation is comprehensive**

Temple in Ayodhya. Travellers from all over the world will be drawn to Ayodhya to see its temples and locations connected to the Ramayana, making it a well-known tourist destination." □

## CONNECT, CONVERSE & COLLABORATE

SIHRA Convention 2024 emerges as guiding light for industry enthusiasts and decision-makers from top hotel brands.



**T**he ongoing SIHRA Convention 2024 takes place in the coastal city of Visakhapatnam from January 19 to 21, 2024. **K Syama Raju**, President, SIHRA along with other delegates, meets **G K Reddy**, Union Minister for Tourism, Government of India and **J K Rao**, Minister, Prohibition & Excise, Tourism & Culture, and Archaeology, Government of Telangana, and invites them for the convention.

**SIHRA convention provides golden opportunity to participants to interact with celebrity chefs on food concepts**

The convention provides golden opportunity to the participants to interact with celebrity chefs of the country

on food concepts and food journey narratives. The conference features a session on whether chef branding helps in creating successful Food & Beverage businesses. Participants also have the opportunity to meet decision-makers of top hotel brands in India to discuss the challenges of independent hotel owners and the pros and cons of aligning with brands in India. □

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# Impactful initiatives

Ministry of Tourism marked a transformative 2023, promoting India globally through events such as G20 meetings & International Tourism Mart.



DDP Bureau

As we bid farewell to 2023, it is time to reflect on the accomplishments of the Ministry of Tourism (MoT), which has left an indelible mark on the landscape of Indian tourism. From hosting international events to launching sustainable initiatives, the ministry has been at the forefront of promoting India as a global tourism hub.

## G20 tourism working group and tourism ministerial meeting

One of the significant achievements of the Ministry was the successful organisation of the G20 tourism working group and tourism ministerial meeting. Held at different venues across the country, these events provided a platform for dialogue and collaboration among nations, fostering international cooperation in the realm of tourism.



## Travel for LiFE Programme

The Goa Roadmap and the Travel for LiFE programme received resounding endorsement from G20 members and invitee countries. This strategic initiative not only promoted sustainable tour-

ism practices but also underscored India's commitment to environmental consciousness on a global scale.

## ITM in Shillong

The 11th edition of the International Tourism Mart was organized as a green event in the picturesque Shillong, Meghalaya. This event aimed to showcase the untapped tourism potential of the Northeastern states, both domestically and internationally, creating a positive impact on the region's tourism sector.

## Wedding Tourism Campaign

In a bid to position India as a premier wedding destination on the global stage, the Ministry launched a comprehensive Wedding Tourism Campaign. This initiative not only showcases India's cultural richness but also positions it as a top choice for couples seeking a memorable wedding experience.



### Alternative Livelihood Programme

The Ministry launched an Alternative Livelihood Programme under the Amrit Dharohar Capacity Building Scheme. This initiative focuses on training facilitators, guides, and other tourism service providers, strengthening nature tourism at Ramsar sites.

### International accolades

India's tourism efforts received international recognition at the Golden City Gate Tourism Awards 2023 held at ITB, Berlin, with the country bagging both the Golden and Silver Star awards. This achievement underscored India's prowess in offering unparalleled tourism experiences on the global stage.

In conclusion, the MoT's endeavours in 2023 have not only showcased India's diverse cultural and natural heritage but have also set the stage for sustainable and responsible tourism practices. These accomplishments serve as a testament to the nation's commitment to becoming a world leader in the tourism sector. ■

### Bharat Parv at Red Fort

The Red Fort played host to Bharat Parv; an event organised on the theme of Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat. This celebration of India's diverse cultural heritage showcased the unity in diversity that defines our nation.

### G20 Tourism Expo in Jaipur

In Jaipur, the splendour of the G20 Tourism Expo unfolded, drawing together more than 150 tour operators and delegates from various nations. This grand gathering was dedicated to commemorating the unique cultures and offerings of each participating country, transforming Jaipur into a dynamic melting pot of ideas and fostering collaborations.

### Under the PRASHAD Scheme, the Ministry sanctioned 46 projects in 26 states/UTs, promoting development of pilgrimage and heritage destinations

#### PRASHAD Scheme

Under the PRASHAD Scheme, the Ministry sanctioned 46 projects in 26 states/UTs, promoting the development of pilgrimage and heritage destinations. Simultaneously, the identification of 55 destinations across 32 states/UTs under Swadesh Darshan 2.0 aims to boost tourism infrastructure and experiences.

# BWH Hotels woos India's luxury travellers

Shifting focus from economy to luxury segment, BWH Hotels announces expansion of its brand World Hotels in India, Bangladesh & Sri Lanka.



Lipla Negi

**B**WH Hotels has big plans for 2024. In a move to expand the brand's footprint in the South Asian market, it recently announced the expansion of World Hotels in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. BWH Hotels acquired World Hotels in 2019, whose portfolio boasts of 250 strong hand-picked, luxury hotels and resorts over 175 destinations around the world. Sorrel Hospitality, BWH Hotels' master franchise in the region, will start pitching aggressively for membership with potential properties in the country.

Admiring India's growth story in the recent years, **Larry Cuculic**, President and CEO, BWH Hotels, said, "India now has the largest young population in the world. The beauty and culture of this country compliments the ethos of our brand. We excel in curating unique experiences and India inspires us just like it inspires people to travel and explore this diverse land." Currently, the brand has a global network of approximately 4,300 hotels across diverse chain segments, spanning over 100 countries globally.



The visit to India by the top leadership of the brand could also be seen as a move to underline the brand's trust in the strength of its Indian partner-master franchise Sorrel Hospitality. "The hotels we visited were spectacular and

in the luxury hospitality sector and this strategic move is a testament to our dedication to enhancing the presence of World Hotels in this region," said **Atul Jain**, COO, India, Bangladesh & Sri Lanka, BWH Hotels.

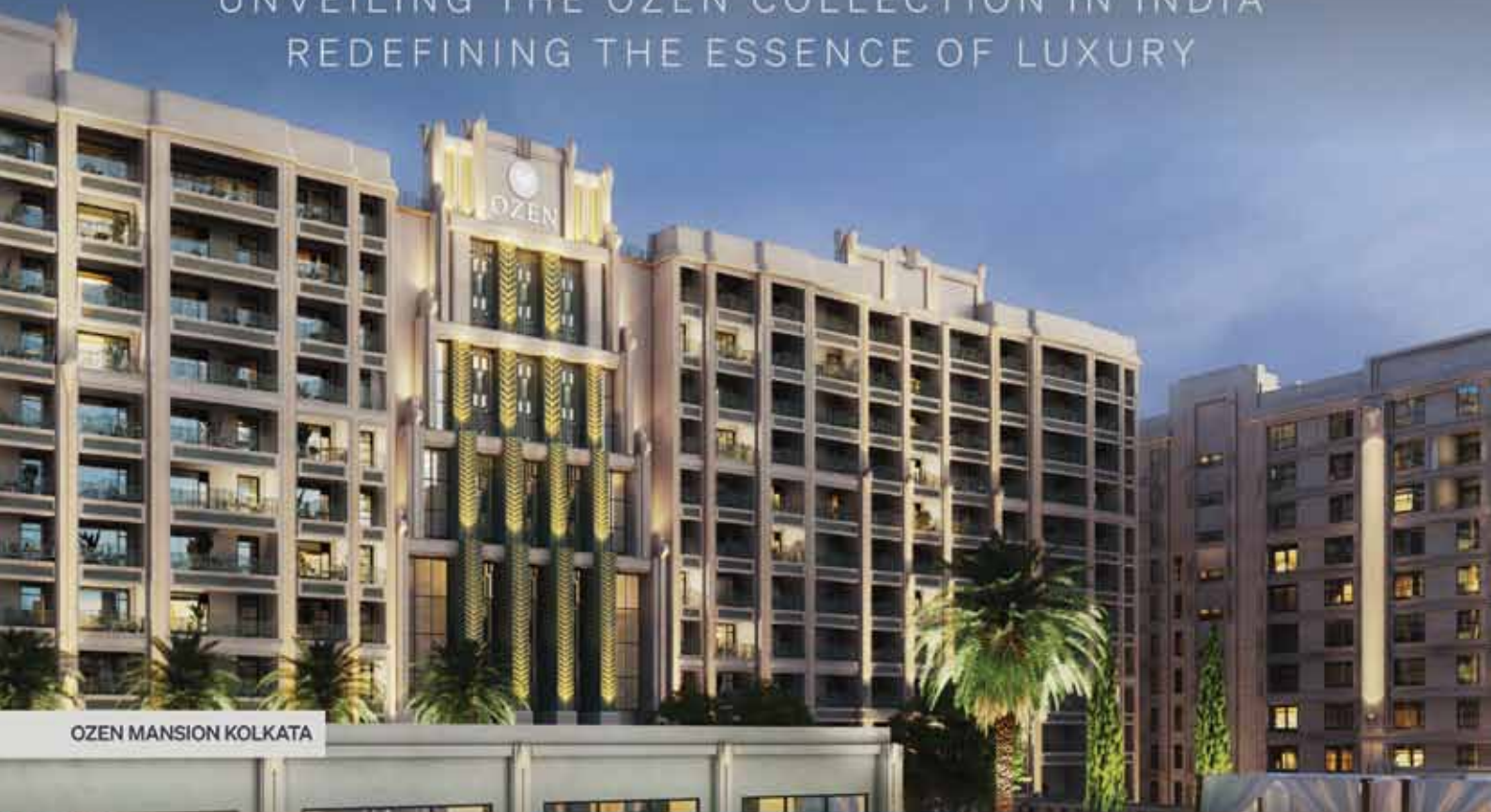
**WH has 160 hotels and resorts across the world and 35 more in the pipeline**

exceeded our expectations. So, our strategy for India is to exceed guest expectations and establish BWH as the brand of choice. We are eyeing expansion in Tier II & III cities considering the improving infrastructure in the country," stressed Cuculic. With 31 operational hotels and 20 more in the pipeline, the brand aims to cross the 50 hotels mark in India. "The region holds immense potential

Citing the travel trends, **Ron Pohl**, President, International Operations & World Hotels underscored the rise in demand for luxury escapes, which was further punctuated by COVID. "We saw more and more travel into the upscale and luxury segment. At present, under the brand umbrella of World Hotels we have 4 sub brands—Luxury, Distinctive, Elite and Crafted," emphasised Pohl. Currently, the brand has 160 hotels and resorts across the world and 35 more properties are in the pipeline. "We would definitely like to sign a WH crafted property in India as flagship hotel," desired Cuculic. □

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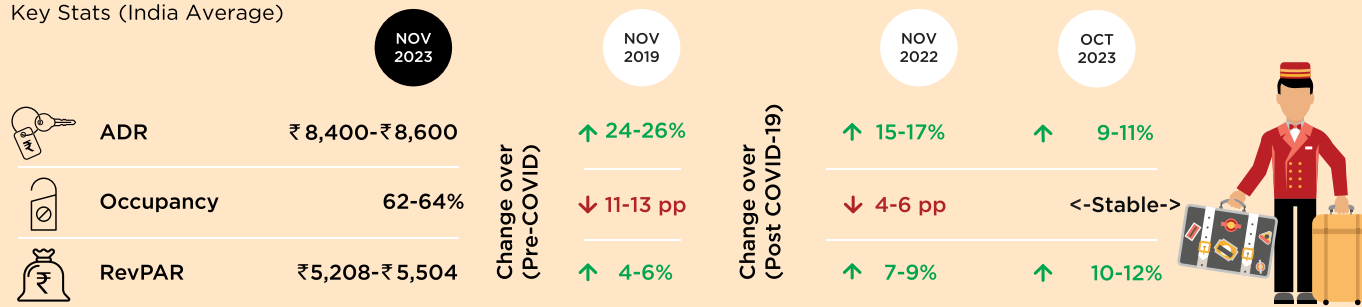
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## Hotel Sector

Key Stats (India Average)



Source: HVS Research

# Goa sets new rules in hotel rates

HVS Research shows a dip in hotel occupancy rates in India in November 2023, with festive season impacting key cities such as Bengaluru & Mumbai.

According to HVS Anarock's monthly industry update for December 2023, the hotel occupancy rate in India in November 2023 dipped over the same period in the previous year with the festive season playing a pivotal role in shaping this trend, particularly in key cities such as Pune, Bengaluru and Mumbai. Goa emerged as a shining beacon in the hospitality landscape, reclaiming its position at the top. The beach paradise not only witnessed an increase in occupancy rates but also

**Goa not only witnessed an increase in occupancy rates but also set bar high with highest average rates**

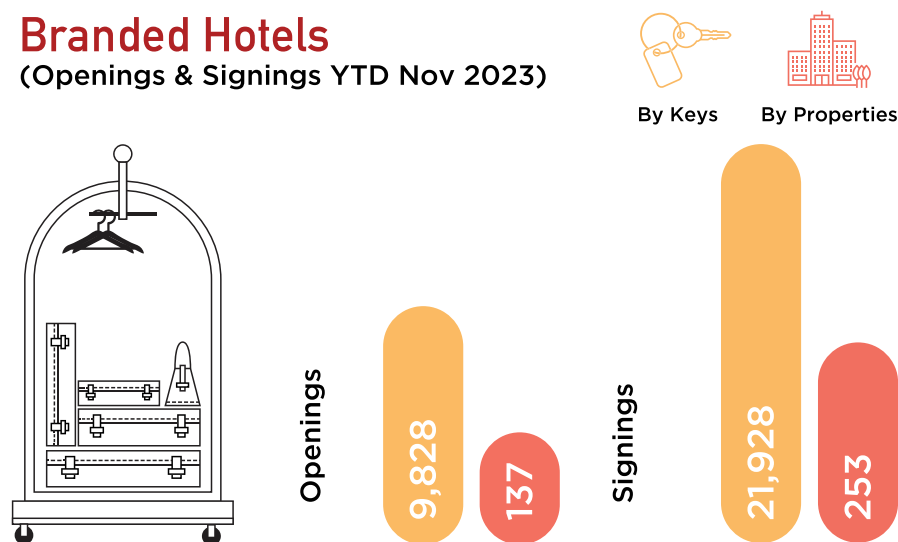
set the bar high with the highest average rates, surpassing ₹12,000. Mumbai, another bustling metropolis, followed closely with average rates exceeding ₹12,000 as well. Kolkata, in a surprising turn of events, showcased a substantial 30 per cent spike in its average rates com-

pared to the previous month. This surge also marked a vital 23 per cent increase when compared with the hotel rates recorded in November 2022. The city's resilience and adaptability were on full display as it navigated the myriad challenges posed by the constant evolution of the travel industry.

HVS Anarock publishes Hotels & Hospitality report every month highlighting key trends in the hospitality industry.

## Branded Hotels

(Openings &amp; Signings YTD Nov 2023)



Source: HVS Research; Data collated by HVS from 18 hotel operators and media reports as of 19th December 2023



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# MANPOWER SHORTAGE TO PERSIST



With 44 hotels in its kitty, Lords Hotels & Resorts is set for further expansion, aiming for 100 properties by 2026.



Janice Alyosius

With 44 operational hotels in its portfolio, Lords Hotels & Resorts stands poised for a promising future. **Pushpendra Bansal**, COO, Lords Hotels & Resorts, shared valuable insights into the current state of the company and its future. “2023 was a significant year for us, marking a remarkable upsurge of 100 per cent in business compared to the turbulent times during COVID,” Bansal stated. The occupancy rates, averaging between 70 and 80 per cent, showcased the resilience of leisure destinations, with even city hotels showing exceptional performance. The occupancy figures were achieved despite challenges on weekends.



**Pushpendra Bansal**  
COO,  
Lords Hotels & Resorts

**We are exploring recruitment from Northeastern and Northern India, where there is an abundance of talent**

Acknowledging the ongoing challenge of manpower shortage, Bansal said that sourcing experienced staff remains a daunting task despite the presence of a sizable number of hotel management institutes in Surat. “To address this recruitment challenge, we are intensifying our training programmes. We are exploring recruitment from Northeastern and Northern India, where there is an abundance of talent. We are also investing in more trainers. Although, retention remains an issue as

trained staff tend to seek other job opportunities, we anticipate this trend to persist, necessitating more hiring than initially planned. Thus, we need to be prepared to face these challenges head-on,” he said.

Lords’ focus remains on the mid-segment hotels. “My focus primarily revolves around the mid-segment, as we lack large five-star properties suitable for weddings or major events. While our smaller properties—around six to eight—already boast of significant bookings, my emphasis remains on the mid-segment, targeting city hotels in Tier II & IV cities. We are strengthening our presence in Rajasthan and the Northeast, focussing on the mid-segment, which may cater to backpackers or bike riders, among other similar clients,” he shared.

Highlighting their expansion plans, Bansal shared, “Unfortunately, we do not cater to international tourists, but our properties in Nepal—three currently operational and a fourth under construction in Kathmandu, featuring 60 rooms and potentially a limited casino—stand testament to our international expansion. We have recently opened a motel in Atlanta, USA, with 46 rooms. We are exploring further expansions in international cities and countries, including an offer from Bhutan.” □



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# Global confluence of food & tech

38<sup>th</sup> edition of AAHAR, major B2B event in food and hospitality industry, is set to take place from March 7–11 at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.



The annually held international food and hospitality fair, widely known as AAHAR, has been announced to take place from 7–11 March this year at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. It is one of Asia's biggest B2B event organised by India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO), which is the trade promotion body of the Government of India. ITPO has already opened the registration inviting food businesses, sourcing professionals, and hospitality leaders who are planning to display their products and services this year on its website.

This is going to be the 38th edition of the AAHAR, where industry experts, sourcing professionals, and vendors from all over the world gather to exchange business leads, trade trends, and developments regarding the food and hospitality industry.

The five-day event will be a vital catalyst for hospitality leaders, executive chefs, distributors, entrepreneurs, and policymakers from the hospitality sector and the allied sectors to discuss business prospects. Every year representatives of the industry establish business contacts and generate humungous marketing or sales leads for their brands at the event.

## What to expect

AAHAR provides a significant platform to exhibit products, services, food products, technology, food processing equipment, and décor solutions. The event offers an opportunity to gauge technological upgrades, innovations, trends, and new launches in the industry.

**The 5-day event will be a vital catalyst for top-line hoteliers, chefs, restaurateurs, distributors, suppliers, & policymakers from food & hospitality sectors**

## A resounding success

In the last few years, industry experts and leaders including exporters and importers have participated in large numbers in AAHAR intending to showcase their food products and innovative electronic technologies such as smart devices, and gadgets. The focus in the past had also been on eco-friendly and sustainable products and equipment, which could be the future of the industry. Moreover, there were dedicated stalls from different states of India displaying distinctive culinary items such as spices, cereals and tea, among others, asserting the enriched culinary culture of India that could overtake the global food market in the coming years. □

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# Redefining hospitality with NATURE & CULTURE



Starting as a Chartered Accountant, **Jose Dominic** ventured into world of hotels with deep-seated passion for preserving local culture & minimising environmental impact.



**Lipla Negi**

**Q Give us a brief account of your journey in hospitality, highlighting special achievements.**

I started out as Chartered Accountant and worked with Ferguson and Company in Mumbai. I joined my father's hotel, Casino Hotel, in 1978 and worked on building the organization. In 1987, the Indian government decided to privatise the Bangaram island in Lakshadweep. Despite competition from major players, Casino Hotel received an invitation to bid. I proposed a unique model emphasising the natural beauty of the island, offering non-luxurious accommodations. While the bid was not awarded, it laid the foundation for a new approach to hospitality. Following the Lakshadweep venture, I introduced disruptive models such as Spice Village, Coconut Lagoon,



**Jose Dominic**  
Farmer & Tourism  
Entrepreneur

**Kerala's high Human Development Index became a crucial factor in attracting tourists seeking responsible and community-centric experiences**

and Marari Beach. These properties embraced local architecture, culture and minimal environmental impact. I ensured the success of these models, challenging traditional pricing norms. The name of the group eventually changed to reflect its values, becoming Earth. It emphasised a shift towards responsible tourism, catering to the alert independent traveller. The group expanded to around 21 properties across peninsular India, maintaining its commitment to responsible and experiential hospitality.

**Q What steps would you recommend for long-term benefits to the state & increased tourist arrivals?**

The success of Kerala's tourism model is attributed to factors such as the state's focus on human development, including education, health, and social equality. The 1957 election brought in the



first Communist government through democratic means, leading to significant land reforms. Kerala's high Human Development Index became a crucial factor in attracting tourists seeking responsible and community-centric experiences. The state's ability to support small local entrepreneurs in creating world-class offerings played a pivotal role in establishing its tourism dominance.

Kerala's partnership between private entrepreneurs and the state resulted in branding the destination as 'God's Own Country'. This branding, along with the state's commitment to responsible tourism, had a profound impact on both the supply and demand sides of the industry. Tourism became a major contributor to Kerala's economy, constituting a significant percentage of its GDP and serving as a primary employment generator. The success story, however, faces challenges such as waste management, highlighting the need for sustainable practices to maintain Kerala's status as a top international destination.

**Q Do you believe the hospitality industry is genuinely committed to embracing sustainable practices in real-time?**

Sustainability needs to be integrated into tourism. It goes beyond cleanliness and green initiatives. Local communities

**Sustainability needs to be integrated into tourism. It goes beyond cleanliness & green initiatives**

should be actively involved in creating a tourism product that reflects their culture. The expression of local ideas and the empowerment of communities through

tourism are considered essential for a sustainable model. The challenges faced by India in maintaining sustainable tourism, include waste management, inadequate social infrastructure, and climate change. There is a necessity of building public transportation systems and managing tourist destinations' carrying capacity to ensure their longevity and attractiveness. There is a need for a shift in the mindset, from individual vehicle use to public transportation.



**Q** What are your thoughts on 'Over Tourism'. What key challenges do you see in mitigating its negative impacts?

The real problem lies in undermanagement. Proper management, including infrastructure development and technology utilisation, can expand a destination's carrying capacity and enhance the overall tourism experience. Preservation of the environment and local culture is also very important. To preserve destinations and jobs, technology must be used to amend regulations and protect the environment.

In India, the biggest challenge is creating enough jobs and livelihoods. Tourism can help create jobs in far corners of the country, supporting local economies and preserving the environment. However, the current model of tourism must be radically shifted to focus on creating local livelihoods and supporting local economies. By promoting public transportation, preserving natural landscapes, and supporting local economies, tourism can contribute significantly to job creation, economic development, and the preservation of indigenous cultures.

**Q** Could you provide insights into your new venture, AB Salem House, a project steeped in history?

We are planning to re-open our hotel and cafe in two months. We are also focussing on re-opening old houses, which will be



**Tourism can help create jobs in far corners of country, supporting local economies & preserving the environment**

converted into luxury boutique properties. We will be offering a luxury buy-in price but concentrating on authenticity and providing a unique experience.

**Q** Is there a noticeable demand for luxury boutique properties?

The demand for travel and tourism is increasing, with both international and domestic travellers seeking experi-

ences and healthy eating habits. Travel is now viewed as a journey of learning and embracing the new world of learning. This shift is influenced by the current crisis of climate change, which calls for a more sustainable lifestyle. Public areas are increasingly using sustainable practices, such as Patch Coconut Patch, which avoids air conditioning, providing a sense of identity and comfort. This shift is also a result of the need for a circular economy, where traditional skills are shared and resources are used more efficiently. This move is crucial for a more sustainable and prosperous future. □



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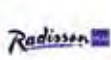


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# BREAKING FREE FROM CONVENTIONAL BOUNDARIES

 **Charmaine Fernz**

The Indian travel industry has undergone a notable transformation over the years because of evolving traveller preferences towards unique, experiential and immersive journeys. The trend towards seeking out luxurious hotel properties has given way to a

more enriching and fulfilling pursuit of a range of experiences. These experiences can range from adrenaline-high adventure sports, and cultural tourism to just savouring the authentic local cuisine. This shift has given rise to experiential hotels, which offer guests stays that go beyond the conventional hotel experience and provide something truly extraordinary.

Evolving traveller preferences in India has given rise to experiential hotels that offer stays beyond conventional norms, catering to a range of experiences.



### A personal preference

The term ‘experiential’ can mean different things to different people. The Indian hospitality industry continually innovates and thinks outside the box to showcase new elements to its guests. As **Rajesh Chakraborty**, Cluster General Manager, Operations & General Manager, Taj Hotel & Convention Centre, Agra explains, the term ‘experiential’ refers to the personal experiences of individuals that enable them to connect personally and emotionally to events they encounter at the hotel. It is supposed to delve into the rich tapestry of personal interpretations and emotional responses tied to those experiences.

However, **Abhilash K Ramesh**, Executive Director, Kairali Ayurvedic Group thinks that an experience begins from the idea of booking a property. “Experiential, in the context of Kairali - The Ayurvedic Healing Village, goes beyond a mere stay and treatment. It embodies a transformative journey where guests are immersed in an Ayurveda-

specific holistic healing experience, connecting mind, body, and soul in harmony with nature,” he averred.

**Saumitra Singh**, Managing Director, The Tigress Resort and Spa, Ranthambore reiterates that the landscape of the Indian travel industry is undergoing a notable evolution, driven by changing preferences among travellers who are increasingly seeking distinctive, immersive, and experiential journeys. Recognising this unexplored potential, numerous properties have seized the opportunity to introduce unconventional accommodations that provide guests with unforgettable experiences.

Adopting a personal touch is necessary, feels **Abinash Manghani**, CEO, WelcomHeritage. He said, “Experiential is purely creating a memorable and immersive stay for guests, going beyond the traditional aspects of accommodation. It involves crafting an experience incorporating the destination that resonates with the unique characteristics of each property



**Rajesh Chakraborty**  
Cluster GM, Ops & GM, Taj  
Hotel & Convention Centre

**Experiential refers to personal experiences that enable guests to connect personally & emotionally to events they encounter at hotel**

and the region, ensuring guests not only stay comfortably but also actively engage with the destination and its culture, and cuisine.”



**Saumitra Singh**  
MD,  
The Tigris Resort and Spa

**“We look to offer our guests creative freedom by collaborating with local players**

### Creating experiential factor

According to industry experts, the preferences of modern travellers have evolved beyond just finding comfortable accommodation. Nowadays, travellers seek to immerse themselves in the local culture and experience the destination in its entirety. This means that they are not only interested in the tourist attractions and landmarks, but also in the local food, customs, and traditions.

Ramesh explains that, unlike regular homogeneous stays, the experiential offering goes beyond accommodation

and therapies. The wellness resorts are offering Ayurveda therapies with locally sourced food and a Kerala-style experience. The experience of the local surroundings is integrated seamlessly with nature, wellness, and local culture, creating an immersive environment that nurtures well-being.

### Key elements

Some key elements are local cultural integration, incorporating elements of the local culture into the guest experience. Offering curated activities and experiences that showcase the destination's distinctiveness, tailoring services to individual preferences and needs, providing local and authentic culinary offerings and finally, collaborating with local communities for a more authentic experience.

However, Singh feels that the guest experience hinges on a few key components such as convenience, encompassing location and amenities; comfort, including a cosy bed and a welcoming atmosphere; service, defined by helpfulness, efficiency, and staff attitude; quality, reflecting the state of facilities and furnishings; cleanliness, crucial for safety and satisfaction; and value, where pricing is weighed against service, quality, and cleanliness.

Taneja believes that a personal touch always makes a difference. “We welcome our guests with the traditional Himachali

cap or stole upon check-in. Our menu features special regional dishes that showcase the flavours of the region. Adventure enthusiasts can indulge in trekking activities, while we also offer a range of engaging activities for both children and families.”

### Blending with community

Creating an experience requires support from various partners. For many hospitality players, working with local partners





brings out their true culture and authenticity. As Singh explained, “We look to offer our guests creative freedom by collaborating with local players. This would be for heart-pounding adventure sports and active tourism to immerse oneself authentically in the local culture. We arrange beats of Rajasthani folk music resonating through the air, creating a lively ambience during our cultural nights, available upon request. Our guests can also discover the

rich biodiversity of Ranthambore Tiger Reserve and be captivated by the enchanting combination of nature and heritage.”

### Reaching out

In today’s world, guests are no longer satisfied with just any experience. They are looking for something unique—something that sets a particular establishment apart from the rest. As a result, simple advertising is no longer enough to attract and retain customers. Instead, social connections and word-of-mouth referrals are becoming increasingly important. Customers want to know that their friends and family members have had a positive experience at a certain establishment before they decide to try it out for themselves.

Chakraborty emphasises that value comes at a price. He asserts that while some experiences are complimentary for in-house guests, some curated experiences



**Abhilash K Ramesh**  
Executive Director,  
Kairali Ayurvedic Group

**Experience of local surroundings is integrated seamlessly with nature, wellness & local culture**

are priced depending on the requirements. Manghani reckons that marketing the unique experiences needs to emphasise local cultural immersion and personalised services. “Experiential travel attracts premium pricing and is influenced primarily by locale and differentiated value-added curated activities, personalised services, and cultural engagement. While exact price points may vary based on the specific offerings of each property, it is positioned to reflect the enhanced value and unique experiences provided, making it a premium option for travellers seeking more than a traditional hotel stay,” Manghani pointed out. □



# SURGING DEMAND FOR EXPERIENTIAL STAYS

Travellers looking for an unforgettable & stimulating escape from their usual lives or job schedules are increasingly choosing experiential vacations.

 **Sakshi Singh**

**K**aran and Sujata, a Bengaluru-based couple and a mutual friend have not stopped gloating about the trip to Himachal Pradesh they made last month. They skipped a luxury hotel stay and booked an Igloo near Manali. With youngsters like the couple making a bulk of new-age travellers in India, the demand for experiential stays is surging. As per a recent TravClab report, over half of Indian travellers are seeking offbeat destinations, reflecting the growing trend of experiential travel.

India's travel landscape has undergone a significant transformation in recent years. Traditionally dominated by sight-seeing and budget-oriented trips, the Indian traveller is evolving into a more

discerning individual, seeking immersive and experiential journeys. The shift in mindset has opened up immense potential for the development of the experiential travel in India.

New-age Indian travellers are willing to invest in extraordinary journeys that create enduring memories for themselves and their families. They are in search of exclusive, personalised adventures, desiring shared experiences that transcend the ordinary. However, only a select few domestic travel companies possess the expertise to curate immersive holidays that leave a lasting impression. From luxurious tents and boathouses to glass houses, the concept of lodging is evolving among Indian travellers, who are increasingly seeking experiences that are local, authentic, unique and sustainable.





Take the example of glamping. The global glamping market size is projected to exceed US \$11.62 billion by 2033, showing a significant CAGR of 11.69 per cent from US \$3.84 billion in 2023. The industry's growth is primarily driven by a preference for experiences over conventional pampering, fuelled by the increasing demand for eco-friendly and sustainable tourism.

Numerous businesses now offer diverse facilities such as pet-friendly resorts, luxury tents, and custom contemporary cottages. Some also provide clubhouses with communal fire pits, outdoor sports, board games, and hammocks. Glamping, being a viable choice for sustainable tourism, has received significant government promotion in India, with initiatives such as developing glamping sites in national parks and wildlife reserves by the Ministry of Tourism.



**Bhavik Sheth**  
COO,  
Evoke Experiences

**Discerning travellers seek more than just a place to rest; they crave memories that transcend the ordinary**



**Abinash Manghani**  
CEO,  
WelcomHeritage

**“Experiential vacations are gaining popularity as guests seek enriching & memorable break from their work schedule or regular life**

the hospitality and service industry, their main challenge was designing something environmentally friendly, crucial considering the untouched nature of the location. From tours guided by trained locals to indulging in local cuisine at dhabas, the founders aim to enrich guest experiences while preserving the land and empowering the community through sustainable practices and conservation efforts.

**Abinash Manghani**, CEO, WelcomHeritage, observes that experiential vacations are gaining popularity as guests seek an enriching and memorable break from their work schedule or regular life. He added that in today's culture of social media-induced sharing of experiences, there is a shift towards stays in nature-oriented, heritage, or locales that transcend the ordinary and move away from “brick and mortar”. Millennials and



Evoke Experiences, acclaimed for its Rann Utsav Tent City, is set for a glamping sector expansion. **Bhavik Sheth**, COO, Evoke Experiences, expressed excitement about being part of the evolving travel experiences in 2024. He emphasised that discerning travellers seek more than just a place to rest; they crave memories that transcend the ordinary. As the desire for unique experiential travel grows, so does the allure of unconventional stay options. Sheth believes that the journey is as important as the destination.

The four founders of GlampEco, **Shilpi Rawat, Kush Tevatia, Swagata Paul, and Akshat Jain**, envisioned creating a successful, luxurious, and sustainable place. With over 40 years of combined experience in

Gen Z, being more tech-oriented, desire to experience “more” from life than their older generations, contributing to a long-term trend.

Manghani further added that due to changing travel trends, nature and wildlife, which are part of India's natural heritage, have become much sought after, primarily due to their experiential quotient.

The emerging sector is witnessing a growth in demand which has provided a much-needed tailwind to major operators. For instance, The Ultimate Travelling Camp (TUTC) envisions doubling its revenue and growth by the year 2024-25, driven by the escalating demand and travellers' expectations for sustainable and



experiential travel. TUTC specialises in Nomadic Camps that offer the epitome of luxury civilization. Each tent boasts a subtle palette of desert colours, adorned with colonial furniture, discreet valets ready to anticipate every need, ensuite bathrooms featuring teak wood wardrobes, invigorating hot showers, and mattresses that beckon slumber.

**Numerous businesses now offer diverse facilities such as pet-friendly resorts, luxury tents, and custom contemporary cottages**

The company is currently extending its presence to wilderness destinations such as Bandhavgarh, Kanha, and Ranthombore this year. **Rajnish Rai**, COO, and founder member of TUTC highlighted the company's focus on glamping and canvas accommodation, seamlessly intertwined with local experiences, involving local artisans and communities. The canvases are sourced from various parts of the globe, emphasising sustainability. Despite utilising expansive land, TUTC creates a limited inventory, ensuring a guest-centric approach. The company targets conscious



travellers with global exposure who understand the importance of sustainability. Rai emphasised that while traditional brick and mortar accommodations are enduring, the world has become smaller, and travellers now seek diverse accommodation experiences beyond conventional stays.

The sector, however, will have to calibrate the rate of inventory addition with the growth in the number of travellers and the impact on the environment. An unplanned expansion of experiential properties will gradually lead to the loss of the novelty factor that these stays offer, but



**Rajnish Rai**  
COO & founder member,  
TUTC

## World has become smaller & travellers now seek diverse accommodation experiences beyond conventional stays

more importantly, it may disturb the environment and affect sustainability. The primary allure of experiential stays lies in the intricate harmony achieved among travellers, nature, and the local culture. This delicate equilibrium, when artfully maintained, ensures that the experience remains a source of delight. However, should the finely tuned balance among these three crucial elements be disrupted, the once enchanting experience may lose its luster and fail to elicit the same sense of delight that originally characterised it. ▣





# EXPERIENCES HANDCRAFTED

Moving away from typical, overcrowded tourist hotspots, travellers want to put in their money for an ‘experience’ that is distinctive & wholesome.



**Lipla Negi**

One are the days when Indian travellers sought cookie-cutter vacations. Today, the new-age traveller, partially inspired by social media, craves authenticity and unique experiences. Going beyond the typical tourist hotspots – overcrowded and dotted with kilometers of traffic snarls – the travellers are pushing hospitality players to extend their offerings beyond

bed and breakfast. Exploring travel as a source of inspiration to embark on novel and distinctive adventures, individuals are increasingly inclined to invest their resources in “experiences” rather than merely selecting a hotel or destination. How hotels are focussing on offering curated holidays to meet the rising demand for ‘experiential stays’, we find out from some of the top General Managers across the country.

# Strive to be cultural connectors



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Regional GM, IHG South West Asia & GM,  
InterContinental Jaipur Tonk Road

Through the 'insider expertise', exclusive offering at the Concierge Lounge, our colleagues serve as cultural connectors, offering personalised insights for an immersive local experience. Unlike the regular Pink City tours, we offer our guests to experience the art in the rawest possible form

**Families looking to create 'incredible occasions'**

such as creating pottery from scratch where artisans let you try your hand on Jaipur's famous 'Blue Pottery'. Guests can also experience the famous Sanganeri block printing, a day trip to Hathigaon, Jhalana Leopard Safari, a personal shopping spree of famous Jaipuri artifacts and prints and many more.

Recognising Gen Z's inclination towards value-based luxury, our continuous innovation provides a dynamic range of experiences, blending experimentation and fusion. With the surge in domestic travel and destination weddings, our tailored offerings cater to the growing market of local explorers seeking unique experiences and families looking to create 'incredible occasions'. The hotel embraces emerging trends such as digital detox travel through various spa and relaxation therapies and curated itineraries, ensuring holistic guest experiences that prioritise relaxation and disconnection.

## It is all about an immersive journey



**Karaan Kapoor**

General Manager,  
Taj Fort Aguada Resort, Goa

It is about transforming the traditional stay into an immersive journey. Our team offers curated experiences that blend luxury with local culture, ensuring a truly memorable stay through meticulously

**Blend luxury with local culture**

designed programmes, culinary delights and exclusive activities, creating a personalised and unforgettable experience. Most importantly, it is not about charges, it is about curating each stay as per the guest desires in terms of service. Guest relations do play a huge role in anticipating the required. Today's discerning guest is more inclined towards immersive experience. Concepts such as farm-to-fork, sustainability, no single-use plastic and zero cost weddings, among others are in vogue.



# Focus on thoughtful touches



**Tarun Seth**

General Manager,  
Grand Hyatt Gurgaon

Recognising the evolving times and changing client behaviour, we understand that today's travellers seek more than just a place to rest. They expect personalised touches that create a sense of exclusivity and warmth for guests without any additional cost.

Our value-added services are deeply ingrained in our ethos and extend to surprising guests with specially crafted culinary delights and handcrafted amenities. These enhancements are seamlessly integrated into the overall experience, enhancing each stay with a touch of luxury.

**Create a sense of exclusivity and warmth for guests**

By seamlessly incorporating the value-added services into the overall guest experience without any additional charges, our objective is to not merely meet but exceed expectations, crafting indelible memories that linger in the hearts of our guests. In essence, our commitment extends beyond offering a transient sojourn; it aspires to be a cherished chapter in the life stories of our guests.

## Integrate wellness & rejuvenation



**N A Marfatia**

SVP, Sales & Marketing,  
The Fern Hotels & Resorts

At our hotels, we prioritise personalisation. From the moment they arrive, personalised welcome amenities and tailored room preferences create a distinctive and memorable experience. Our facilities go beyond accommodation, providing a holistic approach to health through fitness

programmes and spa services, ensuring a rejuvenating stay.

Our commitment to guest convenience is reflected in flexible booking and cancellation policies, providing peace of mind and adaptability to changing plans. Embracing the new era of remote work, our hotels are equipped to meet the needs of business travellers. High-speed internet, thoughtfully designed workspaces, and comprehensive business support services ensure a seamless and productive stay for those working from their rooms.

**There is growing interest in ecologically conscious stays**

Sustainability continues to be a significant trend, with more hotels adopting eco-friendly practices. Guests are showing a growing interest in environmentally conscious stays, prompting hotels to implement green initiatives such as energy-efficient systems, waste reduction programmes and sustainable amenities.

## Identify & embrace your unique charms



**Rajneesh Kumar**

General Manager,  
Courtyard by Marriott Aravalli Resort

Embracing the unique charm of the Aravalli region, we offer guests an opportunity to connect with the local culture and natural beauty. From locally inspired

culinary journeys to curated outdoor activities, our goal is to create lasting memories that enrich the overall stay. Rather than adding extra charges, we focus on inclusive packages and thoughtful amenities that elevate overall stay.

**Create opportunities to connect, interact with nature**

We have also observed a growing emphasis on sustainability among our guests. In response, we have implemented eco-friendly practices, from sustainable sourcing in dining options to energy-efficient initiatives throughout the resort.

## Offer intrinsic ingenuity in services



**Abhishek Sadhoo**

General Manager,  
Shangri-La Eros New Delhi

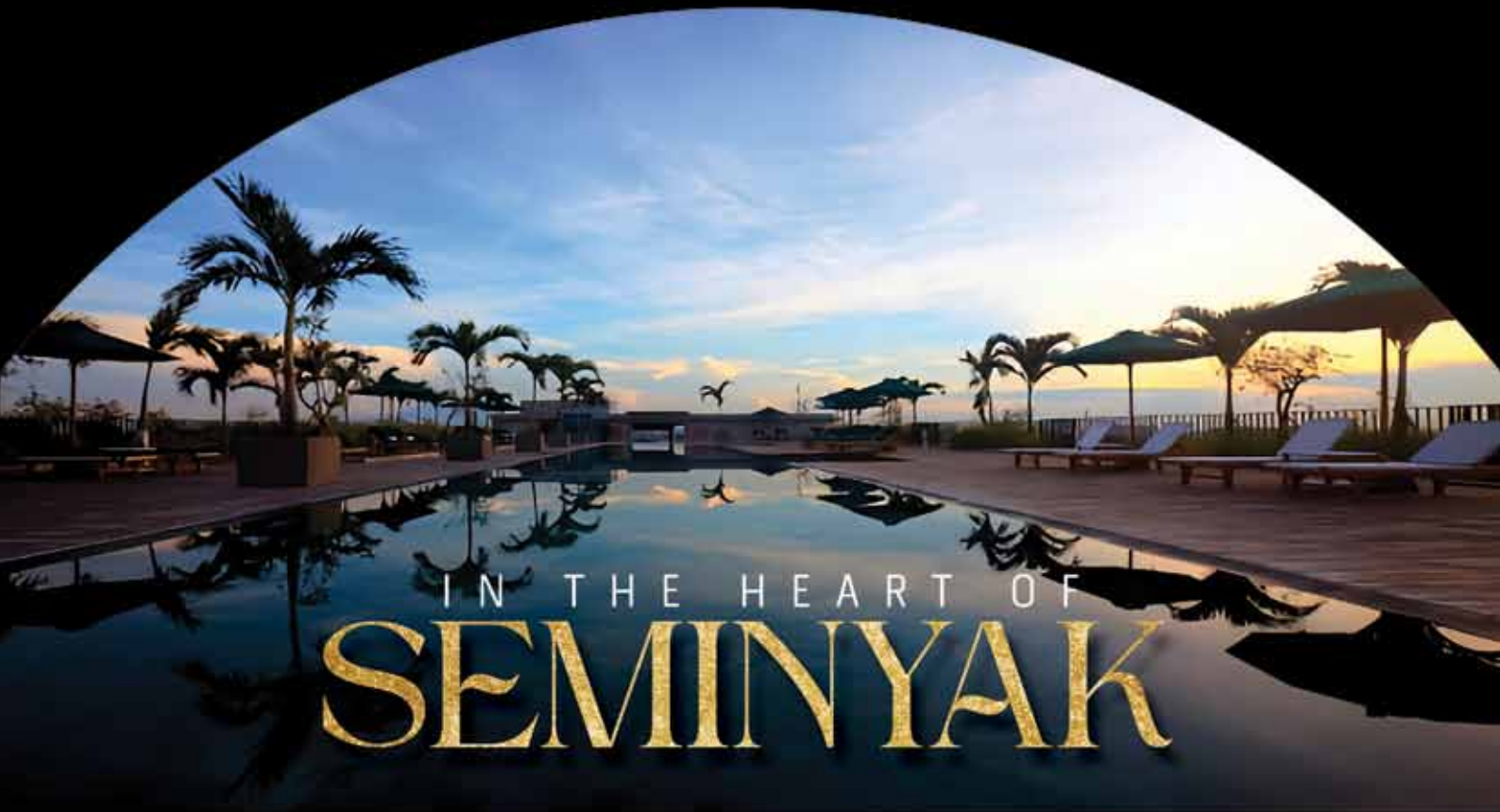
We redefine the quintessential experiential stay by offering unparalleled luxury with our 'Suite Staycation' in our Horizon Club rooms and Executive Suites. Guests enjoy a seamless experience with included benefits such as return airport transfers, a daily breakfast buffet and evening cocktail hours. Our meticulously curated stay packages and enticing special promotions

**Highlight the rich cultural tapestry of the city**

distinguish us as a destination where each guest experience is carefully fashioned with meticulous attention to detail. We have noted a rising interest in authentic local experiences, prompting to curate unique excursions and collaborations with local artisans. This ensures that our guests can immerse themselves in the rich cultural tapestry of Delhi, providing them with genuine and memorable experiences. □



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Hotels in India are emerging as catalysts for positive change in community empowerment programmes. These initiatives include skill development workshops & vocational training.

## Ananya Kukreja

In recent years, the landscape of the Indian hospitality sector has undergone a significant transformation. Beyond its traditional role of providing accommodations and services for tourists, a growing number of hotels have recognised the significance of contributing to the communities where they operate. This paradigm shift has given rise to a burgeoning trend—community service. In India, hotels are actively engaging in community service projects, making a positive impact on the social fabric.

“Our dedication has a personal touch, from organising blood donation drives and inviting orphan children on Children’s Day celebrations to actively participating in community activities such as cake mixing celebrations, leading plantation drives, and joining coastal clean-up initiatives,” said **Rishi S Puri**, Senior Vice President, Operations, Mayfair Hotels and Resorts.

### Empowering local communities

Hotels have become driving forces for positive change through active participa-

tion in community empowerment programmes. These initiatives encompass skill development workshops, vocational training, and job placement programmes designed to enhance the employability of local residents. By equipping community members with valuable skills, hotels



**Dheeraj Kukreja**

Vice President, MGM Muthu Hotels and Resorts

**Fisherman does not have to go to the market to sell and hotel gets fresh product. This is a win-win situation**

play a pivotal role in promoting sustainable development and fostering economic independence.

Many hospitality establishments aim to prioritise local sourcing for various products, including fresh produce, meats, dairy, and artisanal items. For instance, MGM buys a part of the nearby fisherman’s daily catch. “The fisherman does not have to go to the market to sell and hotel gets fresh product. This is a win-win situation,” emphasised **Dheeraj Kukreja**, Vice President, MGM Muthu Hotels and Resorts. Establishing strong relationships with local suppliers is key, and preference is often given to those who can meet both quality and quantity requirements. Hotels and restaurants often communicate directly with local vendors to discuss their requirements, quality standards and delivery logistics. Establishing strong relationships with local suppliers is key, and preference is often given to those who can meet both quality and quantity requirements. It is however very important for hotels to discuss and communicate their specific requirements giving the local vendors and community a chance to produce



the same. It is important to note that different organisations in different regions lead different sustainability practices; it is also vital that they are utilising their potential to serve the community to the fullest.

### Way ahead

Correct profiling of guest preferences reduces wastage, cuts costs, and allocates budgets more toward CSR activities. It is imperative that hospitality industry now focus on educating their community, instead of merely training them toward their interest. Big brands can help educate individuals and certify them. The brands should concentrate on soft skills, grooming, table etiquettes, environmental care and vocational skills, among others. “One



**Abanti Gupta**

Director, Human Resources,  
JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar

of the key focus areas for our company is ESG sustainability,” pointed out **Abanti Gupta**, Director, Human Resources, JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar.

In the last few years all larger hotel giants are moving towards a more holistic approach towards conducting business. With the changing time this healthier approach towards business encourages companies to build a positive brand image in the community and with their stakeholders. The companies can assist the government in building a stronger pool of relief funds, support initiatives that provide employment, abide by the laws of employment to ensure fair pay, ensure business is conducted fairly, promote equality and take steps towards environmental suste-

nance. It is pertinent to say that any sustainability initiative is half done without community service and it is imperative that hospitality industry realises and utilises its potential in this arena.

As the hospitality industry undergoes transformation in India, the idea of community service has emerged as a potent force for positive change. Hotels are no longer merely temporary shelters; they are actively involved in uplifting the social, cultural, and environmental aspects of the communities they serve. This symbiotic relationship between hotels and communities not only enriches the overall guest experience but also establishes a legacy of social responsibility and shared prosperity. □

**One of the key focus areas for our company is ESG sustainability**



# Where comfort meets eco-friendliness

Nestin Ventures is poised to introduce a line of eco-friendly products in 2024 that seamlessly weave together opulence & ethical principles.



**Chakradhar Rao**  
CEO, Nestin Ventures



**N**estin Ventures anticipates 2024 to be a transformative year marked by innovation, elegance, and a deep commitment to social responsibility. Positioned at the intersection of luxury and sustainability, the company aims to redefine India's hotel and retail industries, introducing eco-friendly products that impeccably blend opulence with ethical principles.

Nestin Ventures envisions a paradigm shift in India's hotel sector by introduc-

ing a premium market for eco-friendly products. Their commitment to sustainability extends beyond a mere offering; it is a pledge to enhance daily life while embodying a harmonious blend of luxury and ethical responsibility. The journey begins with key ventures under the Nestin umbrella:

**Nestin Ventures envisions a paradigm shift in India's hotel sector by introducing premium market for eco-friendly products**



## Duni

Duni, a company is dedicated to revolutionising dining experiences through premium, sustainable disposable products. Duni Premium Napkins, available in a captivating spectrum of colours, add a touch of elegance to any table setting. Their superior absorbency and softness provide a delightful guest experience, all while minimising waste and saving time. Ideal for fine dining restaurants, catered events, parties, and personal use, Duni brings luxury and sustainability to every occasion.

## Nestlux

Transform your home ambiance with Nestlux's exquisite collection of premium bed and bath linens. This curated range seamlessly blends practicality, eco-friendliness, and sophistication to elevate your living spaces. From stylish bedsheets to snug duvets, Nestlux offers a diverse catalogue crafted to suit distinct preferences. Nestlux sets itself apart by not just offering linens but by curating an experience that reflects individual tastes. Nestlux is not just about linens; it is about transforming living spaces into havens of comfort and style while contributing to a more sustainable and beautiful world.

## La Vita

La Vita, under Nestin Ventures, redefines dining experiences with meticulous craftsmanship and an unwavering commitment to quality. The stainless-steel cutlery and table accessories transcend the ordinary, transforming every meal into a celebration. Beyond functionality, La Vita is a story of creating joy and enriching lives through the simple act of sharing a meal. Infused with the passion of skilled artisans, each piece reflects dedication through meticulous detailing and enduring quality. □

# Tech trends in hospitality

## SUSTAINABLE ODYSSEY

Hospitality industry is leveraging technology to drive eco-friendly practices & ensuring guests with more responsible and enjoyable stay.

In an era where sustainability is at the forefront of global concerns, the hospitality industry is increasingly leveraging technology to drive eco-friendly practices. The hospitality industry synonymous with unforgettable experiences, also faces the challenge of being a significant contributor to carbon emissions and resource consumption.

However, technology is revolutionising this landscape, paving the way for a more sustainable future for hospitality. Let's dive into the top tech trends pushing boundaries and creating a greener tomorrow. From energy-efficient solutions to innovative guest experiences, here are some top hospitality tech trends shaping a sustainable future.

### Renewable energy powerhouse

Hotels are leading the charge in adopting renewable energy sources such as solar panels, geothermal energy, and wind turbines. These powerhouses not only significantly reduce carbon footprint but also resonate with the growing demand for eco-conscious travel. According to a report by the World Future Council, 66 per cent of hotel guests are willing to pay more for a sustainable stay. The Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai, stands as a shining example, having installed a 1 MW solar photovoltaic system, reducing its carbon footprint by a staggering 1,200 tonnes annually.



**Dr. Niraalee Shah**  
Founder, Image Building and  
Etiquette Mapping

**Internet of Things is changing the game with a network of sensors and smart building systems optimising operations**

### Smart building management systems

Smart building management systems are revolutionising the hospitality sector by optimising energy consumption. These systems use sensors and IoT devices to monitor and control lighting, heating, ventilation and HVAC systems, ensuring they operate efficiently.

The Internet of Things (IoTs) is changing the game with a network of sensors and smart building systems optimising opera-

tions. Occupancy sensors adjust lighting and temperature based on guest presence, ensuring optimal comfort while minimising energy waste. Automated irrigation systems implemented by The Leela Goa manage water usage efficiently has led to 20 per cent reduction in energy consumption.

### Blockchain for supply chain

Blockchain technology is enhancing transparency and traceability in the supply chain of hospitality businesses. By implementing blockchain, hotels can provide guests with information about the origin of hotel features, room categories and hotel experiences. A study by Allied Market Research estimates that the global blockchain in the hospitality market will reach US \$5,811.4 million by 2026, with a CAGR of 76.6 per cent.

### Immersive eco-tourism experiences

Augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) take guests on virtual tours of natural wonders, reducing the need for actual travel and its associated emissions. Taj Safaris India offers VR experiences of wildlife encounters, raising awareness about conservation efforts and inspiring appreciation for our planet.

### Energy-efficient guest rooms

Hotels are adopting energy-efficient technologies in guest rooms, such as smart thermostats, occupancy sensors, and energy-





efficient lighting. For instance, Hilton's Connected Room technology allows guests to control room settings through a mobile app, leading to a potential 10 per cent reduction in energy consumption. This innovative approach aligns with the industry's commitment to sustainability.

### Waste reduction through IoT sensors

IoT sensors are being deployed to monitor waste levels in real-time, optimising waste collection and reducing unnecessary pickups. This not only reduces operational costs for hotels but also contributes to a significant decrease in environmental impact. A case study from The Venetian Resort in Las Vegas reported a 38 per cent reduction in food waste after implementing IoT sensors.

From composting food waste to utilising greywater for landscaping, hotels are embracing circular economy principles, where waste becomes a resource. AccorHotels has set an ambitious goal to halve its food waste by 2025 through composting and menu optimization. This not only reduces waste but also creates nutrient rich compost for gardens and landscapes.

### Virtual concierge & digital services

The adoption of virtual concierge services and digital guest amenities is reducing the need for printed materials, such as brochures and menus. Hotels such

as Courtyard by Marriott International are using mobile apps to offer contactless check-in, keyless entry, and in-room controls, minimising the use of physical resources. This trend not only enhances guest experiences but also aligns with sustainable practices.

### Data-driven sustainability


Knowledge is power and data analytics

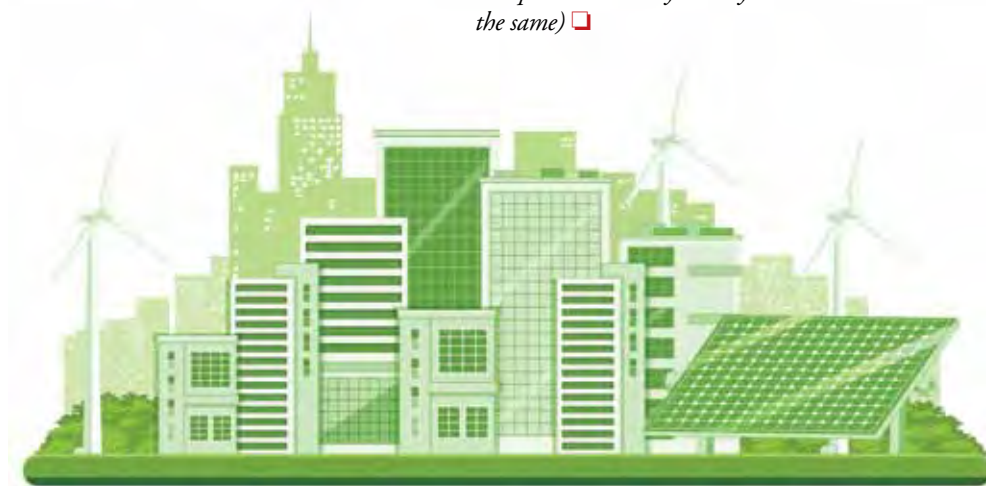
**Knowledge is power & data analytics are empowering hotels to track their environmental impact & identify areas for improvement**

are empowering hotels to track their environmental impact and identify areas for improvement. The Oberoi Group India leverages real-time data to monitor water and energy consumption, enabling targeted interventions to reduce their footprint.

### Renewable energy integration

The hospitality industry is increasingly turning to renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, to meet energy demands. According to a report by the World Travel & Tourism Council, the global hotel industry is expected to reduce its carbon emissions per room by 66 per cent by 2030 through the integration of renewable energy.

*(The views expressed are solely of the author. The publication may or may not subscribe to the same)* 



# Crafting culinary fashion legacy



Pioneering innovative fabrics & techniques, Uniforms Unlimited has become trendsetter in chef wear, striking delicate balance between practicality & style.



In the vibrant landscape of hospitality, where every detail contributes to the guest experience, the significance of a well-designed uniform cannot be overstated. Beyond being a mere dress code, a stylish yet practical uniform holds the power to elevate the brand image of a hotel, creating a lasting impression on patrons.

At the forefront of this dress innovation is Uniforms Unlimited, a brand renowned for its finely designed and meticulously crafted uniforms tailored to meet the diverse needs of every department in the hospitality sector. The emphasis on customised designs, specifically curated for ease of movement and comfort, has propelled Uniforms Unlimited to the pinnacle of recognition, making it the most sought-after brand in the world of hospitality.

At the heart of this story is **Zubin Mehta**, a distinguished figure with exten-

sive manufacturing experience. Fuelled by an unyielding passion for culinary excellence, he gave life to the brand Chefs Unlimited. Serving as a testament to Mehta's deep comprehension of uniform design, this culinary wear brand is exemplified by a cutting-edge production facility committed to transforming the presentation of chefs in the culinary world.

**What sets Chefs Unlimited apart is not merely its stylish designs, but a commitment to functionality and innovation**

Chefs Unlimited specialises in creating chic designs aligned with current fashion trends, instantly capturing the spotlight and establishing the brand as a trendsetter in the passionate world of chef wear.

What sets Chefs Unlimited apart is not merely its stylish designs, but a commitment to functionality and innovation.

Through exhaustive research, the brand has pioneered the use of innovative fabrics and techniques, from heat-resistant materials that absorb sweat to ventilation strategies tailored for the demanding environment of hot kitchens.

Chefs Unlimited is proud to be associated as uniform partners with many culinary forums for their annual culinary events. Limited edition designer uniforms are specially developed for member chefs, who wear it throughout the culinary events. Numerous chef forums such as ICF, IFCA, SICA, WICA and reputed culinary institutes have been associated for many years with Chefs Unlimited for various culinary events across India. This partnership has proved to be fruitful in terms of attracting the best talent from the industry and rewarding them with Chef Unlimited's uniform on their culinary triumphs. For more details, contact [www.uuindia.com](http://www.uuindia.com), [soniya@uuindia.com](mailto:soniya@uuindia.com), Mob: 7045877488. □



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# TRAILBLAZING CULINARY INNOVATION

In an increasingly competitive F&B industry, five-star chefs are sparing no efforts to maintain their culinary excellence & compete with standalone restaurants.



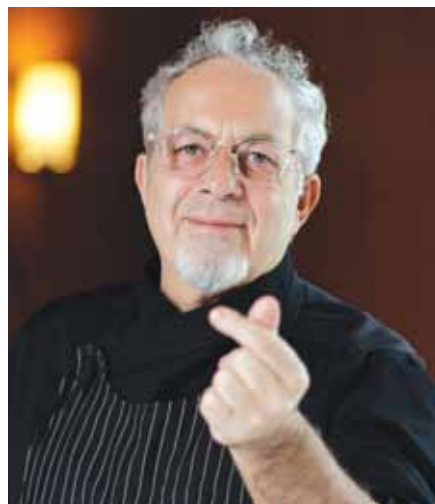
**Lipla Negi**

In the fight of flavours, and a desire to be the 'talk of the town', five-star kitchens now find themselves competing with the hottest restaurants in the F&B space. From interiors to the menu and over-

all experience, it is a close battle where one tries to maintain the legacy and the other looks for starting one. While hotels take the lead when it comes to opulent spaces and premium service, restaurants score extra points when it comes to ideas and innovations. Lending a new perspective to food as

well as décor, restaurants try to appeal to all the senses and, as a result, gaining more favour with millennials as well as Gen Z. However, this does not mean that hotels are lagging far behind. The five-star kitchens are ramping up their game with culinary ingenuity and craftsmanship.

## Quality, authenticity & innovation



**Mario Caramella**  
Executive Chef,  
Grand Hyatt Gurgaon

In a city that is no less than a playground for restaurants, it could be tough to stay at the top. But that is not how **Chef Mario Caramella** looks at the competition. He revealed, "Our approach at Grand Hyatt

Gurgaon is to embrace the vibrant culinary landscape of Gurgaon rather than compete with it. We acknowledge the diversity and creativity that independent restaurants bring to the scene, and we strive to complement that by offering a unique and immersive dining experience within the hotel."

**Tantalizing the tastebuds**  
Curate an immersive culinary journey for your guests

Complementing meals with a transcendental ambience is precisely about crafting unforgettable culinary journeys for him. And his aim is to cater to a 'spectrum of tastes'. He averred, "We continuously innovate our menus, collaborate, and curate special events to ensure that our dining offerings remain dynamic and resonate with the evolving preferences of our guests."

### Price wars

Adding perspective to his plates that goes beyond price points is something that transcends a simple dine out into

### Go-to F&B strategy

Embrace the vibrant culinary landscape of the city rather than compete with it

an unforgettable experience. "Pricing is undoubtedly a factor in the competitive dining landscape, but at Grand Hyatt Gurgaon, we see it as an opportunity to showcase value rather than a barrier. Quality, authenticity, and innovation remains the top priority, ensuring that our guests not only enjoy a meal but an entire journey," pointed out Caramella.

### Team spirit

Foster a sense of belonging and purpose in your team

### Retaining talent

Retaining talent involves creating an environment where chefs feel inspired and valued, he affirmed, "We offer opportunities for professional development, collaboration with renowned chefs, and exposure to diverse culinary experiences."

# Culinary excellence beyond SOPs



**Sudhanshu Sharma**  
Executive Chef,  
The Suryaa, New Delhi

Having worked with one of the biggest restaurant chains in the country for more than three years, **Chef Sudhanshu Sharma** knows that running a stand-alone restaurant is a different ball game altogether, “where one has more freedom to play with dishes and presentation,” as compared to hotels where they have SOPs and constraints due to clients from all around the world. He explained, “We focus on adding the X factor to our F&B offerings, which includes some modern Indian food presentation, inimitable flavours, and some of the dishes with unique twists that makes it more exhilarating.”

## Tantalizing the tastebuds Pop-up menus and food festivals

Staying relevant is a major challenge in the times of fast changing trends in the real and reel world both. For Chef Sharma the rule is very simple, “you have to evolve yourself in order to compete and stay ahead in the market”. He advised, “We do quite a lot of pop-up menus and food festivals in a year at our F&B outlets for our clients. We also do our market survey and menu engineering and keep on updating our regular a la carte menu every

## Go-to F&B strategy

Update regular a la carte menu every year by adding the best dishes from the festival menus

year where we add the best dishes from the festival menus.”

## Price wars

According to Chef Sharma, pricing plays a vital role in the industry where the competition is cut-throat. He added, “Sometimes it does seem like a challenge in hotels but not always. In our hotel where international travellers are more than 60 per cent of occupancy and they have good spending ability. They know that in a five-star hotel they are in safe hands with all the parameters of their health considered. Apart from the liquor which is less expensive in standalone bars I do not think it does make a big difference.”

## Team spirit

Take care of your team in their difficult time and they will take care of you

## Retaining talent

When restaurants are paying good money and giving their people the spotlight at a very early stage of their career, it becomes tough for hotels to retain their talent. He confided, “The top chefs are opening new restaurants and joining good brands is making our task further difficult.”



# Pivotal breakfasts & culinary reimagination



**Gaurav Paul**  
Executive Chef,  
Hilton Bangalore Embassy Golflinks

While the competition is fierce, Hilton Bangalore Embassy Golflinks leverages its unique strengths—unparalleled standard of hospitality and flawless services—to solidify its position as a premier dining destination. “One inherent advantage that sets us apart is the continuous presence of in-house guests. This affords us multiple touchpoints to engage with our patrons, allowing us to cultivate lasting relationships,” affirmed **Chef Gaurav Paul**.

## Tantalizing the tastebuds

**A timeless recipe accompanied by classy and immersive atmosphere always works**

To compete with independent dining establishments, he refers to a time-tested strategy consisting of commitment to excellence, personalised guest engagement, and a keen awareness of industry dynamics.

According to him, ‘breakfast’ is a pivotal moment to establish rapport and enhance the F&B business. Constantly drawn to reinventing timeless classics with a new perspective is something he feels. “From the Garuccio family of Piedmont, ‘Trasporenza’ has endured the test of time and is distinguished by its unique

## Go-to F&B strategy

**Create multiple touchpoints to engage with your guests**

presentation, served in the very glass jar where the magic happens during cooking,” he shared.

## Price wars

According to Chef Paul, in big cities, the cost of eating at a fancy standalone restaurant and a hotel falls pretty much in the same ballpark. “Sometimes, dining at a standalone spot can be even fancier and pricier. Nowadays, people often prefer these upscale standalone places for their cool vibes, music, and relaxed settings, especially when they are in prime locations or popular malls,” he analysed.

## Team spirit

**A collaborative workplace culture keeps the team motivated**

## Retaining talent

Prioritising a nurturing environment that fosters creativity, growth, and recognition to encourage culinary talents, the hotel offers competitive compensation, professional development opportunities, and a collaborative workplace culture. “Celebrating the unique contributions of our chefs ensures they feel valued and motivated to stay with us,” he said.



# Sustainability in dining



**Liang Xiao Qing**  
Executive Chef,  
Yi Jing, ITC Maratha Mumbai

Finding its place on almost every dining table during the Chinese New Year, the Wonton Soup is one of **Chef Liang Xiao Qing** most sought-after creations. The Wontons are delicately shaped like Ingots which resemble each one's willingness towards increased wealth and prosperity. A desire to constantly innovate and awe is the driving force behind Chef Liang's work at Yi Jing. He said, "At ITC Maratha, we are renowned for presenting the most exquisite culinary traditions, guided by the exploration of novel concepts within our acclaimed branded restaurants. Our dedicated team of culinary experts consistently crafts innovative menus that highlight a fusion of global and local flavours. Through the introduction of new and exciting dishes, our goal is to captivate the tastebuds of our guests, ensuring they have a memorable dining experience."

## Tantalizing the tastebuds

**Innovative menus that highlight a fusion of global and local flavours**

Underlining 'sustainability' as the current top dining trend, he informed, "Sustainable dining continues to gain popularity, with menus showcasing local ingredients becoming a noticeable social media trend. This movement is bringing attention to what has consistently existed but remained largely undiscovered in our surroundings. Restaurants set up in slightly modified houses and historical structures, offering environmentally friendly dishes are witnessing higher demand."

## Go-to F&B strategy

**Competitive prices and quality services are essential for attracting and retaining customers**

## Price wars

While he agreed that pricing is a crucial factor in the hotel industry, he also added, "a delicate balance between setting competitive prices and providing quality services is essential for attracting and retaining customers." Introducing thoughtfully curated menus centered around special occasions allows his team to tailor their offerings to the celebratory nature of guests' stays.

## Team spirit

**Freedom to experiment and contribute to menu development keeps them engaged**

## Retaining talent

While it has become an ongoing trend both in India and globally, he recognises the importance of nurturing and retaining skilled professionals to maintain the high standards of guest expectations. He further explained, "Allowing our chefs the freedom to experiment and contribute to menu development not only keeps them engaged but also ensures a dynamic and evolving culinary experience for our guests. Our dedication to retaining talent also strengthens our standing as a sought-after destination for top-tier industry professionals." □





# ELEVATING DIGITAL STANDARDS

In today's digital world, a strong online presence is crucial for hotels to engage with their target audience.



Hazel Jain

**W**e live in a fast-paced world that is not just highly globalised, but also digitalised. Strong digital presence through online travel platforms, social media, and user-friendly websites has become crucial and can significantly boost exposure for hotels.

**Tshering Yanki**, Sales & Marketing Executive, Pemako – says that digital presence certainly allows them to showcase what is offered in terms of service, and facilities to the world. “It also keeps us vigilant of trends to continuously

improve across various aspects and cater to the needs of different consumers. We are dealing in a competitive landscape and the digital world plays a significant role in the hospitality industry. It allows us to continuously reach out to and engage with our target audience and potential guests in a cost-effective way. With ease, hotels can nurture customer and business relationships through email marketing, attend to online reviews and feedback that contribute to a positive reputation. This also leverages search and advertising optimisation that ensures the hotel is boosting visibility and is easily accessible. Digital marketing is essential in fostering brand

awareness and garner distinct visibility for a hotel. This is a huge opportunity for the marketing and advertising teams to leverage on new digital or AI driven tools, making it easier to enhance exposure and expansion by streamlining processes and efficiency,” she said.

## Connect to a global audience

The digital marketing landscape is dynamic and empowers hotels to connect to a global audience. This is a great time for us to learn current marketing trends and harness the power of social media, search engines and targeted advertising. Digital marketing is great way to convey



**Asawari Musale**  
Head, Digital Marketing,  
Ramee Group of Hotels

**Digital marketing efforts are crucial for staying competitive and reaching a diverse range of travellers**

the values, culture and vision of a hotel. Hotels can not only enhance exposure but also create sustainable expansion in today's competitive hospitality industry.

**Tanu Singh**, Associate Director, Marketing Communications & PR, Signum Hotels & Resorts, emphasised, "Key factors that would help new hotel brands like ours are online marketing strategies, like a user-friendly, mobile-responsive, and SEO-optimised website helps potential guests find your hotel online, partnering with popular OTAs such as Booking.com, Expedia, or Airbnb to increase bookings and exposure, social media presence to showcase hotel features and engage with users, encouraging guest reviews on sites such as TripAdvisor, Google and Zomato. Positive reviews

influence potential guests and building a customer database and send regular updates to maintain relationships and inform them of new offerings. What is also important is optimising hotel online presence with keywords, location-based content, and accurate online directories. A comprehensive and well-executed online marketing strategy can significantly contribute to the exposure and expansion of hotels in today's digital era."

As a professional who comes from operations background to revenue management, Singh says that she is fascinated with the term revenue management, which encompasses tasks such as data gathering, analytics, pattern, market segmentation analysis, budgeting, forecasting, demography, and more, the significance of effective revenue management tools becomes apparent. "Additional training and exposure to revenue management systems like these are crucial for our expansion in today's age, emphasising the significance of digitalization and AI learning, given that AI represents the future," she added.

### Streamlining processes

The digital landscape plays a pivotal role in the contemporary hotel industry. Digital technology has significantly transformed various aspects of hotel operations, contributing to enhanced guest experiences, streamlined processes, and improved revenue management strategies.

**Ayodhya Nath Tiwari**, Director, Revenue Management, Novotel Kolkata Hotel & Residences, feels that the advent of online booking platforms has revolutionised how guests reserve accommodations. Digital booking systems not only



**Ayodhya Nath Tiwari**  
Director, Revenue Management,  
Novotel Kolkata Hotel  
& Residences

**Digital booking systems not only provide convenience to guests but also allow hotels to showcase product more efficiently**

### Multiple platforms

Digital marketing for Ramee Group of Hotels is a multifaceted strategy that encompasses various online channels and platforms to enhance its brand visibility and engage with the audience. **Asawari Musale**, Digital Marketing Head, Ramee Group of Hotels, averred, "In the dynamic hospitality industry, digital marketing efforts are crucial for staying competitive and reaching a diverse range of travellers. This includes implementing comprehensive strategies across social media, SEO, email marketing, and online advertising. One of the key advantages is the ability to reach a global audience and tailor our messages to specific demographics. Social media platforms have allowed us to showcase the unique experiences offered by each of our properties, creating a more personalised connection with our audience. Additionally, strategic SEO practices have improved our online visibility, ensuring that our hotels are easily discoverable by travellers seeking accommodation in our locations." □



# HOTELS' WIN-WIN STRATEGY

Global hospitality industry has undergone significant transformation in past year. Industry leaders discuss benefits, challenges, strategies & emerging trends shaping the sector.



**Janice Alyosius**

The global hospitality industry has undergone an enormous transformation in the last year. From unparalleled challenges to newfound opportunities, the sector has adapted to a new era marked by innovation, resilience, and an evolving landscape. *FHRAI Magazine* talked to industry leaders for their perspective on the benefits, challenges, strategies, and emerging trends that have shaped the industry's trajectory.

According to **P S Chandra Mohan**, Sr. Manager, Facilities & Travel, Tessolve Semiconductor, the past year has brought significant benefits to the hospitality industry. "This year, the travel industry has experienced significant benefits. Many people have begun to travel again, which is good news for airlines and hospitality sector, both of which had struggled for the past 2 to 3 years. However, the sudden surge in travel has led to increased costs for the airline and hotel industries, affecting companies' budgets and causing overruns," he highlighted.

**Shashikiran Parameshwaran**,  
Global Front Office Lead T&E, ABB,

delved into the multifaceted changes within the industry. He emphasised, "The last 12 months have been a transformative period for the hospitality industry. Despite challenges, this sector has showcased its adaptability to evolving landscapes. The initial shock of the COVID prompted an unprecedented shift, presenting both challenges and unique opportunities."



**Rajdev Bhattacharya**  
Global Head,  
Travel & Hospitality, Wipro

**There was a noticeable gradual recovery within the hospitality industry, marked by an uptick in leisure segment bookings**

He also stressed on the rapid shift towards digital advancements, and the growing focus on sustainability and eco-friendly travel. "The hospitality industry swiftly adopted digital transformation, relying on online platforms, travel apps, and virtual tours," he said.

**Rajdev Bhattacharya**, Global Head, Travel & Hospitality, Wipro, highlighted both the benefits and challenges faced by the industry in the past year. "There was a noticeable gradual recovery within the industry, marked by an uptick in leisure segment bookings and intermittent increases in international business travel," he said. However, these positive trends were accompanied by a set of



challenges stemming from the aftermath of COVID.

These challenges encompassed uncertainties such as international travel restrictions enforced by companies, notable skill shortages in the industry—exemplified by strikes in Europe and the USA—escalating operational costs, leading to global fare and hotel rate hikes, and geopolitical tensions impacting business decisions.

### Outlook of business travel

When discussing the current status of business travel compared to pre-COVID levels, Mohan observed a surge in travel during holidays and long weekends. “Most corporates have successfully managed assignments to be executed remotely. Corporations are planning cost-cutting measures and are authorising only essential travel,” he said.



**Shashikiran  
Parameshwaran**  
Global Front Office Lead  
T&E, ABB

**Green initiatives have been a significant focus for many establishments, encompassing energy-efficient technologies**

Parameshwaran noted a significant rebound in business travel from 2020 but acknowledged lingering effects such as health concerns and remote work adoption, influencing a cautious travel approach.

According to Bhattacharya, business travel has not yet reached the heights seen in 2019. It is lingering at about 45–65 per cent of its former activity and business.

### Future projections

Regarding the evolution of the hospitality industry in 2023, Mohan high-



lighted the absence of a revenue slump despite increased travel and hotel costs, signifying a positive comeback post-COVID. Bhattacharya projected a continued focus on sustainability, digitalization, traveller experience enhancement, health, safety, and increased technology investment.

Parameshwaran predicted a sustained shift towards hybrid or remote work options, increased emphasis on sustainable travel practices, and a reshaped

travel policy landscape which can prioritise employee health and mental well-being.

### Technology and apps

In terms of technology, Mohan commended the advent of new applications that have simplified travel necessities, enabling them to be effortlessly met with just a few clicks. Bhattacharya





highlighted platforms such as TravelPerk, Egencia, SAP Concur, and TravelBank, emphasising on their role in enhancing travel experiences.

Highlighting the convenience of travel apps, Parameshwaran said, “Travel apps have made it easier for travellers to plan and book their trips. With just a few taps on a smartphone, users can book flights, accommodations, car rentals, and activities, which has streamlined the booking process and made it more convenient.”

He added, “Many travel apps use data and algorithms to offer personalised recommendations for hotels, restaurants, and activities based on a user’s preferences and previous travel behaviour. This can enhance the travel experience and help travellers discover new places and experiences.”

#### Tech-driven TMC platforms

Mohan underscored the benefits of tech-driven Travel Management Company (TMC) platforms. “TMC platforms pro-

vide an opportunity to comprehend the entire scenario regarding costs and expenditures. They offer real-time data that allows us to manage the entirety of travel. This opportunity prompts traditional travel agents to seek improvements,” he said.

Highlighting the advantages of tech-driven TMC platforms, Bhattacharya said, “Shifting to tech-driven TMC platforms is the current trend, offering several benefits, such as cost-effectiveness, real-time data, faster response time, personalised traveller experiences, and improved transparency in audit trails.”



**P S Chandra Mohan**

Sr. Manager,  
Facilities & Travel,  
Tessolve Semiconductor

**The Travel Management Company (TMC) platforms offer real-time data that allows us to manage the entirety of travel**

#### Sustainability initiatives

Sustainability adoption in the hospitality segment is gradually becoming a pivotal focus for corporations. Mohan said, “This technological advancement not only streamlines the financial aspects but also lays a foundation for better monitoring and potentially reducing the environmental impact of travel.”

Emphasising on the significance of sustainable practices, Bhattacharya said, “A pleasant surprise has been that travellers are increasingly seeking eco-conscious choices, which align with corporate sustainability efforts. This revision adds the phrase ‘which aligns with corporate sustainability efforts’ to clarify how travellers seeking eco-conscious choices connect to corporate sustainability efforts.” □





# Navigating growth amidst changing trends

India's hospitality sector is growing due to changing trends, government initiatives & increased business travel, notes Mordor Intelligence in its analysis.



DDP Bureau

India's hospitality industry is traversing through dynamic changes, adapting to evolving travel trends, embracing technological advancements, and positioning itself for sustained growth in the years ahead. According to Mordor Intelligence's India Hospitality Market report, the industry faced challenges in 2020 due to COVID but has shown resilience, bouncing back in 2023. Here are some of the notable insights from the report:

**Staycations, weekend getaways, and social events such as weddings are gaining popularity, boosting business for the hospitality sector**

## **Economic impact**

The hospitality industry is a vital contributor to India's economy, generating an estimated 15 million jobs. Despite the setbacks caused by COVID, the hotel industry in major cities exhibited substantial growth in 2023.

### Changing trends

Staycations, weekend getaways, and social events such as weddings are gaining popularity, boosting business for the hospitality sector. Enhanced road infrastructure, particularly in tourist hotspots, has spurred road traffic, providing a considerable boost to the hospitality industry.

### Government initiatives

Government policies supporting domestic and international tourism, along with affordable airfares, have fuelled the industry's rapid ascent. India's tourism sector has expanded, attracting international visitors from countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and France.

### Hospitality sector dynamics

The hotel industry is experiencing increased business travel due to the growth of the IT sector and global companies. Positive trends in key performance indicators (KPIs) such as Average Room Rate (ARR) and Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR) underscore the sector's resilience and potential.

### Future prospects

Independent/unbranded hotels, alternate accommodations, new-age hotel chains, and traditional hotels are going to fuel massive demand in the Indian hospitality sector. Sporting events like the cricket and hockey world cups are expected to drive increased foreign tourist footfall, shaping the industry's future prospects.

**The hotel industry is experiencing increased business travel due to the growth of the IT sector and global companies**

### Changing face of tourism

The emergence of millennials and Generation Z has redefined tourism preferences, with a focus on staycations and workstations. Increased demand for solo female travel has led to investments in women-centric tours and safe accommodations.

### Technological integration

Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India witnessed a significant increase in 2023, marking the recovery of the hospitality sector. Remote working trends are reshaping hospitality, with hotels becoming remote working hubs, emphasising the importance of digital and contactless services.

### Aviation-hospitality synergy

The hospitality industry stands to benefit from the growth in aviation, with Air India's substantial aircraft order indicating a positive trend. Domestic travel and government programmes such as Made in India and Digital India have contributed massively to the demand for hotel rooms.

### Conversions

The rise of foreign brands and conversions from independent to branded properties is a notable trend in the Indian hotel scene. Tier III cities have witnessed the highest number of brand signings, showcasing a shift in geographical preference. ▢



# Tulip Inn blooms in pilgrimage city

Sarovar Hotels & Resorts expands its presence in pilgrimage destinations with the launch of Tulip Inn in Shravasti, Uttar Pradesh.



DDP Bureau

In a significant stride towards enhancing its presence in key pilgrimage destinations, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts has launched Tulip Inn in Shravasti, Uttar Pradesh. Nestled in the revered pilgrimage city, Shravasti holds immense significance for Buddhist pilgrims, and the addition of Tulip Inn marks Sarovar's commitment to providing world-class hospitality in sacred locales. This establishment is the second Tulip Inn branded hotel in India, following the success of its counterpart in Koramangala, Bengaluru, showcasing Sarovar's dedication to expanding its footprint across renowned pilgrimage and tourist destinations.

Located near Airport Chouraha, Katra Balrampur, the hotel is 18 km from Balrampur railway station and can be accessed via the nearest airport



**A K Bakaya**  
Managing Director,  
Sarovar Hotels & Resorts

Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport, Lucknow.

Nestled in Tarai region, the hotel features 71 rooms and suites that epitomise modern-day comfort, Tulipe Inn—an all-day dining restaurant, an expansive banquet hall with an attached lawn, swimming pool and fitness centre.

Expressing excitement at the opening, **A K Bakaya**, Managing Director, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts, said, “We are excited to enter a partnership with Orison Hotel & Resort and express our deep

**We stand committed to preserving cultural ethos of Shravasti while offering contemporary & world-class hospitality experience**

gratitude to **Dr. Anil Kedia** and **Dr. SK Verma** for reposing trust in us with their flagship hotel. We stand committed to preserving and celebrating the cultural ethos of the Shravasti region, which is the major Buddhist pilgrimage city, while offering a contemporary and world-class hospitality experience.”



# Captivating rooftop lounge experience

Echo, a rooftop lounge bar & dining area in Bengaluru is set to become popular destination for nightlife enthusiasts.



**Janice Alyosius**

With its highly anticipated rooftop lounge bar and dining area, Echo at Aloft Bengaluru Outer Ring Road is set to become a staple in Bengaluru's nightlife. Tucked away in the Cessna Business Park, the lounge bar welcomes visitors to experience a captivating trip where panoramic views and urban elegance strike.

"We are thrilled to unveil Echo. We have been working tirelessly over the past year to create a space where gastronomy, mixology, and music harmoniously converge. Each dish on the menu has been


meticulously selected to pair beautifully with the cocktails available," said **Sita Lekshmi**, General Manager, Aloft Bengaluru Outer Ring Road.

**Echo captivates with its alfresco seating, epicurean delights & live music, creating irresistible ambiance that exudes sophistication & allure**

The lounge bar captivates with its alfresco seating, epicurean delights and live music, creating an irresistible ambiance that exudes sophistication and allure. At the heart of Echo's allure are its exquisite

gin cocktails. With an extensive selection of over 30 gin brands, it promises to be Bengaluru's ultimate gin destination.

Echo, as its name suggests, is set to create an enchanting atmosphere where the melodies of carefully curated music and the artistry of expert mixologists dance together. With live bands and celebrity DJs, the lounge bar sets itself apart with the blend of classical elegance and modern beats, where each hour brings in a new flavour to the lounge bar.

Echo stands out with its dedicated gin bar, global and local delicacies, live bands and resident DJs. 



# Products & Services

## SPIN's HomeBar collection

Contemporary design meets supreme functionality in SPIN's HomeBar collection. SPIN Bars are more than just furniture—they are conversation starters, meticulously crafted to bring a chic and relaxed vibe to your space. With features such as stemware racks, wine bottle slots, and ample storage, these bars effortlessly blend style with functionality. For those who love flexibility, the Bar Trolleys redefine versatility. These on-the-go MiniBars seamlessly transition from room to room or even terrace. Picture them as equally chic breakfast trolleys, enhancing your mornings with practical elegance.



## BOILO boards

Action Tesa has introduced a breakthrough solution for kitchen areas, BOILO – BWP FR HDF BOARD. The BOILO board is produced using cutting-edge technology. It is loaded with low-flammability features due to its nano-engineered particles. BOILO boards possess unique properties of Boiling Water-Proof, High-Density Fiberboard, and Fire Resistance, making them exceptional for kitchen applications. These boards are not only suitable for diverse environmental conditions but also resistant to fungus, addressing the specific challenges posed by damp kitchen spaces. These boards offer a toughened surface, high impact resistance, termite proofing, environment friendliness, and fungus resistance.

## India Circus Gruidae's Trance Dinner Set

The India Circus Gruidae's Trance Dinner Set is a captivating ensemble of artistic brilliance. Crafted by Clay Craft India, this 20-piece dining collection seamlessly blends traditional craftsmanship with contemporary design. The set features exquisite crane motifs, symbolising grace and longevity, rendered in vibrant hues that instantly elevate your dining experience. Each piece, from dinner plates to bowls, is meticulously crafted from high-quality materials, ensuring durability and style. Whether hosting a formal dinner or casual gathering, the Gruidae's Trance Dinner Set adds a touch of sophistication to every meal.



## Linara collection

Crafted with precision and elegance, Designers Resource has introduced Linara—a new fabric collection which sets the stage for a new era in home design. From classic to contemporary, Linara seamlessly integrates into diverse design schemes, making it a versatile choice for any home. Linara does not just meet industry standards; it surpasses them with a Martindale rating above 50,000 rubs. This means your upholstery not only exudes style but is also built to withstand the test of time, ensuring a lasting investment in quality and comfort.

### Precipan from HOBART

The new multifunctional braising pan Precipan from HOBART ensures efficient and very fast preparation of various dishes in the professional kitchen. With a capacity of 100 or 150 litres and an extra-thick high-performance pan base, Precipan cooks, fries and braises even the largest quantities of food with precision. The new all-rounder replaces various kitchen appliances and makes work much easier for the kitchen staff. The Precipan's design is meticulously crafted to facilitate easy and ergonomic loading, unloading, and cleaning of the unit. The electric tilt function makes the filling of liquid food and cleaning very easy.



### Interior décor collection by Logam

Logam has launched a range of meticulously crafted interior décor. The collection offers a tapestry of home adornments that is as diverse as India itself, from their harmoniously contrasting range of unprecedented, matte centre and side tables to the luxurious Zara Candle Holders artistically crafted for a cozy evening setting. The collection also includes dynamic dining accessories such as aesthetically pleasing Amber Bowls with resin detailing and stunning Alaya Platters that not only elevate the presentation of culinary creations but also serve as an exquisite decorative element to the homes.

### Lucaris' Hong Kong Hip Collection

Discover the essence of Hong Kong's vibrancy encapsulated in the Hong Kong Hip Series by Lucaris. This collection draws inspiration from the pulsating energy of the city, which seamlessly blends Eastern and Western cultures. It embodies the modern, edgy silhouette that is a perfect statement for fashionable society and the finest wine enthusiasts who seek the most stylish dining experiences. Crafted with modern elegance, these stemware pieces not only elevate the visual appeal of any table setting but also enhance the aroma and taste of your favourite wines and whiskies.



### Swadeshi for Sarita Handa collection

Sarita Handa has collaborated with Swadeshi Silks to unveil the 'Swadeshi for Sarita Handa', a collection of ethereal furnishings that express art with an innovative cultural fusion. Reinventing time-honoured crafts with contemporary interpretations, each fabric opens a mystic window of storytelling, with an innovative blend of different textures, hand-embroideries, prints and hues. Diverse aesthetics and design sentiments add brilliance to this motley of thirty innovative furnishing fabrics that cater to every desire. Each fabric is a masterpiece—be it striking geometry, creative abstracts in cheerful hues.

# Redefining luxury in nature



Bookmark Jogi Mahal Resort offers a tranquil escape. Featuring 40 meticulously designed rooms, it provides perfect blend of opulence & serenity.



Nestled in the heart of Ranthambore, Bookmark Jogi Mahal Resort emerges as the latest jewel in Onora Hospitality's boutique luxury wellbeing collection. Following the success of its debut property in Manali, this newly unveiled resort spans 3.74 acres, offering an oasis of tranquility. With 40 meticulously designed rooms, including luxurious options with heated plunge pools, the resort combines opulence with nature's embrace.


Regarding this development, **Ashish Vohra**, Founder & CEO, Onora Hospitality, said, "Our endeavour through the Bookmark Resorts brand is to offer transformative getaways so that people can move away from the hustle and bustle of city life and immerse themselves in the sights and sounds of nature. Our new property in Ranthambore fits this description perfectly. While it is a cosy, luxury base for wildlife enthusiasts who want to explore the National Park, it also offers a holistic wellbeing getaway experience that will make the guests feel good inside out."

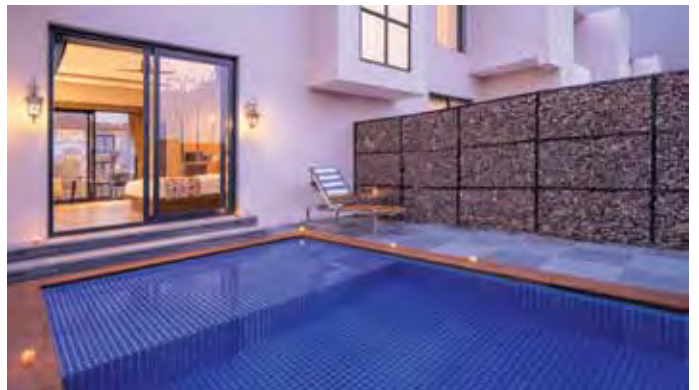
**The resort has a multi-cuisine restaurant, which can seat 80 guests indoor and 40 al fresco. There is also a banquet hall spread over 4,200 sq.ft. area**

There are 40 rooms at Bookmark Jogi Mahal Resort: 19 luxury rooms with a heated plunge pool and 21 deluxe rooms without the plunge pool. The rooms, with plush furnishing in soothing earthy tones and soft lighting, offer guests a world of tranquillity and understated luxury. Each room has a private balcony, a sprawling bathroom with an indoor as well as an outdoor open-air shower area and all state-of-the-art amenities. There is also a twin-bedded disabled-friendly room at the resort.

According to Vohra, "The entire resort gives a sense of opulence and space, right from

the massive lobby to the wide corridors to the spacious rooms and bathrooms to the spectacular banquet hall and restaurant as well as the central lawn around which the rooms are located."

The resort has a multi-cuisine restaurant, which can seat 80 guests indoor and 40 al fresco. There is also a banquet hall spread over 4,200 sq.ft. area, which can accommodate a total of 500 guests. The large swimming pool, next to Rajasthani stepwell-style steps, is the perfect location for an afternoon of relaxation. Bookmark Jogi Mahal Resort also features a spa with three treatment rooms, a fitness centre, a bar and an amphitheatre. 



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# MOVEMENTS



**ROHIT ARORA**  
**VP,**  
**North & Goa Operations and**  
**Head, Leisure Sales, ASPHL**

★ ASPHL has elevated Rohit Arora to the position of Vice President, North & Goa Operations and Head, Leisure Sales. He has been associated with ASPHL since 1988 and previously held the position of Area General Manager at The Park New Delhi. As a market strategist with an exceptional skillset, Arora has proven to be an integral asset for ASPHL. During his tenure, he spearheaded The Park New Delhi in becoming one of the most successful five-star hotels in the capital city. He has also successfully launched two premium hotels in Goa under ASPHL.



**M PRABHAKAR**  
**Director,**  
**HR, The Leela Ambience**  
**Gurugram Hotel & Residences**

★ The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences has appointed Meenakshi Prabhakar as Director, Human Resource. Prabhakar has an extensive 31 years of HR experience. Prior to joining The Leela Family, she was associated with various established brands, including ITC Welcome Group and Radisson Hotels. As Director, HR, Prabhakar will have a pivotal role in reorganising companies, leading HR processes, suggesting inventive HR solutions, and strengthening The Leela Family. Throughout her career, Prabhakar has been a driving force in implementing HR policy formulations.



**G SHAIK**  
**Director,**  
**HR, InterContinental Chennai**  
**Mahabalipuram Resort**

★ InterContinental Chennai Mahabalipuram Resort has appointed Gouse Shaik as Director, Human Resource. With an illustrious career in the hospitality industry and a proven track record of transformative leadership, Shaik will be leading HR Operations at the resort aiming to make a lasting impact on the workplace environment. With over eight years of association with the InterContinental Hotels Group, Gouse Shaik is a familiar face within the organisation. In his new position, Shaik will concentrate on enhancing the employee experience.



**PIYUSH BHASIN**  
**GM,**  
**The Fern Residency, Ajmer**

★ The Fern Residency, Ajmer has announced the appointment of Piyyush Bhasin as General Manager. With a distinguished career spanning over two decades in the hospitality industry, Bhasin is renowned for his impactful contributions to revenue performance, growth, and service excellence in esteemed organisations. His wealth of knowledge, coupled with a steadfast commitment to strategic leadership, positions him as an invaluable asset, poised to elevate standards and make significant contributions to the sustained success and growth of the organisation.



**VAIBHAV GUPTA**  
**GM,**  
**The Astor Goa**

★ Vaibhav Gupta has joined The Astor Goa as General Manager. With over 18 years of dedicated service in hotel operations, Gupta brings a wealth of experience and a comprehensive understanding of the industry to his role. Gupta's illustrious career began at Oberoi Hotels & Resorts. As the General Manager at The Astor Goa, Gupta brings on the table his extensive experience towards delivering exceptional guest experience in line with the groups vision of being North Goa's newest address focussed towards redefining experiential luxury.



**RICHARD LUNEL**  
**Rooms Division Manager,**  
**Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel**

★ Richard Lunel has joined Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel as Rooms Division Manager. With over a decade of expertise in operations, Lunel brings a unique skill set and a wealth of knowledge to his new role. Lunel has extensive experience in the kitchen, F&B service, and the front office departments. His diverse background allows him to understand the intricacies of each department and bring a holistic approach to his management style. Lunel has a deep understanding of budgeting and forecasting, revenue enhancement and operational excellence.

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Abhishek Logani, Chief Business Officer - Hotels, MakeMyTrip  
Anuraag Bhatnagar, Chief Executive Officer, The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts  
Arshdeep Sethi MRICS, President - Real Estate, RMZ Corp  
Binu Mathews, Chief Executive Officer, IDS Next  
Carlton Ervin, Global Development Officer International, Marriott International  
Clint Nagata, Founder and Creative Partner, BLINK Design Group  
Cyril Jacob, Founder & MD, Ascentis  
Deepika Rao, Executive VP, New Businesses, Hotel Openings & Corporate Communications, IHCL  
Dillip Rajakarier, Group CEO, Minor International  
John Gerondelis AIA, IIDA, LEED AP, Principal, Smallwood  
Mark Hoplamazian, President & CEO, Hyatt Hotels Corporation

Omar Romero, Chief Development Officer, Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas  
Peter Joehnk, Founding Partner, JOI Design  
Pieter Elbers, Chief Executive Officer, IndiGo Airlines  
Raghu Sapra, Head Hospitality, Embassy REIT  
Samir MC, Managing Director, Fortune Hotels  
Sébastien Bazin, Chairman & CEO, Accor  
Snehdeep Aggarwal, Founder and Chairman, Bhartiya Group  
Suma Venkatesh, Executive VP, Real Estate and Development, IHCL  
Tim Harlech-Jones, Executive Director, Bentel Associates  
Vikram Cota, Chief Executive Officer, GRT Hotels & Resorts  
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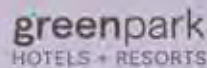
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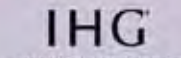
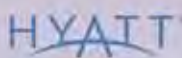
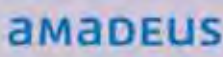
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