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H&R



FHRAI flags rising incidents of hotel booking frauds

LUXURY TRAVEL SPECIAL

Leisure travel fuelling hotel development



AUTOMATE YOUR LIGHTS TO CREATE THE RIGHT AMBIANCE

Dear members,

hope this message finds you in good health and high spirits. I am writing to express my sincere gratitude to each one of you for your unwavering support and patronage extended to the hospitality sector in the past. Your continued commitment has been instrumental in helping the sector navigate the challenges since COVID.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge and appreciate the Ministry of MSME for their handholding and support extended to the beleaguered hospitality sector during the trying times of COVID. The Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) has played a crucial role in the survival efforts of millions of MSMEs across the country, including the hospitality sector.

However, despite the government's efforts, there are still inadequacies within the ECLGS that need to be addressed, specifically in relation to the hospitality sector. We have highlighted these concerns to the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of MSME.

I would like to reiterate the key areas of concern for the hospitality sector regarding the ECLGS:

• **Repayment period:** The current repayment period of six years is inadequate for a sector that was severely impacted by COVID. We were the first to suffer and continue to face challenges. A longer repayment period is necessary to alleviate the burden on the industry.

• **Credit burden:** The extension of ECLGS without a long-term repayment option has only increased the credit burden on the industry. Many establishments are still struggling to service previous loans, and the additional loans taken through ECLGS have further compounded the financial strain.

• **Business viability:** The business environment in the hospitality sector is

highly volatile and unpredictable, especially considering the prolonged effects of COVID. Only a long-term credit facility can provide the necessary support for industry members to withstand these challenges.

I want to acknowledge the government's efforts to support the COVIDhit hospitality sector. However, for the industry to fully benefit from the ECLGS, it is crucial that the government addresses these genuine concerns and provides the following reliefs:

Enhanced repayment period: The repayment period of the ECLGS should be extended to 10 years or aligned with the loan repayment period of the principal loan, whichever is longer. This will ensure that the ECLGS loan is in sync with existing loans and prevent defaults and high volumes of NPAs in the sector. Rationalization of norms: The norms for all ECLGS loans taken by the hospitality sector should be rationalized. Currently, there are variations in the tenor and moratorium periods under different versions of the ECLGS. This creates challenges for establishments that have availed loans under previous versions and are already servicing their loans.

I understand that the government has provided significant support to the hospitality sector, and we appreciate these efforts. However, it is crucial that the government takes into account the concerns expressed by the industry and grants the aforementioned reliefs to ensure the maximum benefits of the ECLGS for the hospitality sector.

We are hopeful that you, as esteemed members of FHRAI, will support our initiatives and suggest any further necessary actions. Our influence and collective voice can play a significant role in addressing these concerns and providing much-needed relief and support to our industry.

> With best regards, Sudesh Poddar President, FHRAI



Sudesh Poddar President FHRAI

"

The repayment period of the ECLGS should be extended to 10 years or aligned with the loan repayment period of the principal loan, whichever is longer

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THIS MONTH

- 03 President's Message
- 08 FHRAI Desk
- 70 Movements

FEATURES

8 FHRAI requests extension of ECLGS loan term

Federation writes letter to Nirmala Sitharaman, Hon'ble Union Finance Minister & Narayan Tatu Rane, Hon'ble Union Minister, Ministry of MSME.

14 SIHRA writes to TNPCB Chairperson

Association asks TNPCB not to insist that hoteliers in Tamil Nadu install OCEM & electromagnetic flow metres for self-surveillance of STPs as they have already suffered due to COVID.

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Paradigm shift for 40 hospitality industry

Hyderabad's first hotel, run exclusively by women—Westin Hyderabad Hitec City offers holistic wellness experiences designed to empower quests.

50 Leisure travel fuelling hotel development

India's hotel demand is being driven by leisure travel, and prices are rising across the board, especially in Tier II & III cities, opine hospitality heads.

Luxury hospitality 52 spreading wings

Due to rising disposable incomes and a desire for opulent experiencesdemand for luxury travel has dramatically increased in India—prompting foreign hotel chains to introduce luxury brands in country.

60 Sustainability leads vacation planning

Taking a regenerative approach to travel, Indian travellers are increasingly adopting sustainable hotel practices.

THE FEDERATION OF HOTEL & RESTAURANT ASSOCIATIONS OF INDIA

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FHRAI requests extension of ECLGS loan term

Federation writes letter to **Nirmala Sitharaman**, Hon'ble Union Finance Minister & **Narayan Tatu Rane**, Hon'ble Union Minister, Ministry of MSME.

HRAI has demanded enhancement of the ECLGS loan term for hospitality sector for maximum period under cur-rent provisions. In a letter written to Nirmala Sitharaman, Hon'ble Union Minister of Finance, Govt. of India and Narayan Tatu Rane, Hon'ble Minister for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, Govt. of India, Federation requested, "We would like to reiterate the concern areas of the hospitality sector with regard to the ECLG Scheme as the following: the repayment period of six years is too little for a sector that was the first to get affected from COVID and was also the biggest sufferer from COVID; extension of ECLGS without long-term repayment option has only increased the credit burden of the industry; the additional loans taken through ECLGS that needed to be repaid in a short duration is very badly impacting the business viability of the industry members who are still struggling to service the previous loans; and the business environment of the sector is highly volatile and unpredictable and only a long-term credit facility can help the industry to withstand the challenges arising out of the prolonged

effects of COVID. We understand that the government tried to extend all possible support to the hospitality sector that was badly affected by the COVID and we really appreciate the same. However, for the hospitality industry to avail the

Enhance repayment period of ECLGS to 10 years or as per loan repayment period of Principal Loan, whichever is longer

maximum benefits of the ECLGS, it is imperative that the Government of India take cognizance of the above said genuine concerns of the industry and grant the following reliefs to the beneficiaries of the scheme from the hospitality sector."

Federation further said, "a) Enhance the repayment period of ECLGS to 10 years or as per the loan repayment period of the Principal Loan, whichever is longer: the six-year period is too short for the hospitality sector to reap the desired benefits of an otherwise well-intended scheme. Most of the beneficiaries of the scheme

had already mortgaged their properties as surety for the Principal Loan and if the ECLGS loan is not in sync with the earlier loan, that would lead to default of payments and high volume of NPAs in sector. Therefore, in order to make ECLG Scheme fruitful and effective, it is imperative that the tenure of the loan term be increased to at least 10 years or in accordance with loan repayment period of the Principal Loan, whichever is longer, in interest of hospitality sector; and b) Rationalize the norms for all ECLGS loans by hospitality sector: the tenure of loans granted under ECLGS 3.0 is six years, including a moratorium period of two years, whereas the same under ECLGS 1.0 is four years and under ECLGS 2.0 is five years with one year moratorium. Many hospitality establishments have availed the loans under ECLGS 1.0 & 2.0 and the repayment period for these loans has already started for those cases. The sector is also constrained to service its other loan obligations along with managing its huge capital expenditure to stay afloat. We therefore request the government to rationalize the norms for all the ECLGS loans taken by the hospitality establishments."



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Many incidents have recently been reported from various parts of country, involving fraudsters placing bogus hotel websites on popular search engines, says FHRAI.

HRAI has expressed concern about the increasing number of hotel booking frauds occurring on online platforms. The Federation has written letters to **Arvind Singh**, Secretary (now superannuated), Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India and **Rakesh Kumar Verma**, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India urging strict action against the hackers placing fake hotel websites on popular search engines.

"We wish to draw your kind attention to a serious concern of the hospitality sector with regard to rising incidents of hotel booking frauds taking place on the online platforms. Many incidents have been reported recently by our members from different parts of the country that fraudsters are putting fake hotel websites on popular search engines, including Google, that appear to be authentic on the surface and duping innocent customers into making payments for room bookings," FHRAI stated in the letter.

FHRAI further said, "Another fraudulent activity that is being widely reported involves some unidentified imposters putting up their mobile numbers on pictures of popular hotel properties and uploading the same on the respective Google Maps accounts, only to mislead the consumers. In such cases, typically, the consumers contact the mobile numbers given on the picture with their queries and end up getting trapped by these fraudsters, who pose themselves as representatives of hotels and ask the consumers to transfer money into their accounts. After the amount is transferred, the consumers contact the hotel desk to check the reservation status and they find that they have been duped. Even after the fraud is detected, it continues for many more days with other customers since resolution from Google side takes a long time. A lot of FHRAI members have reported incidents where consumers have been cheated in the garb of reservations in the hotel establishments. Such situations lead to mistrust among consumers and also damage the reputation of hospitality establishments, resulting in tremendous financial losses for the industry. In view of the aforesaid, we request that the Ministry of Tourism direct Google to ensure that their page is

Such situations lead to mistrust among consumers and also damage reputation of hospitality establishments

impenetrable and in the case of complaint raised by the hotels, a real time resolution should be provided."

FHRAI also writes to Google India

The Federation has reported an increase I in hotel booking frauds to Google India. FHRAI said in the letter written to Sanjay Gupta, Country Head & VP, Google India, "We wish to draw your kind attention to a serious concern of the hospitality sector with regard to rising incidents of hotel booking frauds taking place on the online platforms. A large number of incidents have been reported recently by our members from different parts of the country that fraudsters are putting fake hotel websites on popular search engines, including Google that appear to be authentic on the surface and duping innocent customers into making payments for room bookings."

It further said, "A lot of FHRAI members have reported about incidents where consumers have been cheated in the garb of reservations in the hotel establishments. Such situations lead to mistrust among consumers and also damage the reputation of the hospitality establishments, resulting in tremendous financial losses to the industry. In view of the aforesaid, we request the Google Team to kindly look into this matter with utmost seriousness and to ensure that the google page is impenetrable and in the case of complaint raised by the hotels, a real time resolution should be in place. FHRAI is highly hopeful that Google Team would come out with a mechanism to keep a check on the menace of increasing online frauds in the country and safeguard millions of our consumers."



HRAEI organizes seminar to discuss tourism development in West Bengal

At the symposium, **Babul Supriyo**, Hon'ble Minister of Tourism & IT, Govt. of WB was informed of areas of concern from hotel, tourist and travel sector stakeholders.

RAEI organized a seminar on the development of tourism in the state of West Bengal on 14 June 2023 at the Taj Bengal, Kolkata. The meeting was chaired and addressed by **Babul Supriyo**, Hon'ble Minister of Tourism & Information Technology, Govt. of West Bengal. **Nandini Chakraborty**, Secretary, Tourism, Govt. of West Bengal and Chairperson, West Bengal Tourism

Babul Supriyo showcased new website of West Bengal Tourism, which is being developed by state government Development Corporation and Commissioner, Medinipur Division was also present in the meeting.

Supriyo showcased the new website of West Bengal Tourism, which is being developed by the state government, to the stakeholders in the hospitality and tourism sectors.

Also, the stakeholders of the hotel, tourism and travel industry expressed their areas of concern to the Minister and he offered his assurance to take

up the matter and resolve it. Healthy discussions were held by all the participants. The programmes were attended by



(Left to right) Babul Supriyo, Hon'ble Minister of Tourism & IT, Govt. of WB, Nandini Chakraborty, Secretary, Tourism, Govt. of WB & Chairperson, WBTDC & Commissioner, Medinipur Division & Sudesh Poddar, President, HRAEI

the managing committee members of HRAEI and senior office bearers of leading organizations.

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FHRAI urges relief in EPCG Scheme secondary condition

Federation writes to DGFT requesting relaxation/refixation of annual average of past years and modification of amnesty scheme to protect hospitality sector.

HRAI has written to Santosh Kumar Sarangi, Director General, Foreign Trade, DGFT, Govt. of India seeking relief in secondary condition (average obligation) of EPCG Scheme as per Para 5.19 of Handbook of Procedures 2015-20.

In the letter, Federation stated, "At the outset, on behalf of the members of the hospitality industry, FHRAI would like to express sincerest gratitude to the Directorate General of Foreign Trade under your able and dynamic leadership for announcing the New Foreign Trade Policy 2023, along with granting onetime relaxation from maintaining Average Export Obligation for the years 2020-21 and 2021-22 and for the option to avail extension in Export Obligation period for specified EPCG authorizations on account of COVID. While the new policy document is very progressive and positive, it would be pertinent to state that some of the long-pending requests of the hospitality sector have not been adequately addressed in the policy."

"In addition, the amnesty scheme states that the extent of interest and duty payable will be in proportion to the unfulfilled

It would be appropriate to note that New Foreign Trade Policy 2023 does not sufficiently address some of industry's long-standing requests

export obligation. Herein, we would like to once again reiterate that the sector has primarily been able to satisfy the condition of fulfilling the obligation of 8/6 times of the duty saved over the respective

corresponding years, therefore there has been no financial loss to the government exchequer. You may kindly note that the amnesty scheme will be beneficial to the hospitality sector only if the relaxation/ refixation of annual average of past years is done. Therefore, we humbly request you to favourably consider the following long pending request of the hospitality industry at the earliest as the last date of registration for availing the amnesty scheme ends on 30 June 2023 and the payment of customs duty and interest needs to be paid by 30 September 2023. Alternatively, the DGFT may come out with a suitable modification in the amnesty scheme to protect the hospitality sector by considering the fulfilment of primary condition alone (meeting the specific obligation) as the criteria for amnesty scheme applications," FHRAI advocated.







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Writes to TNPCB Chairperson

Association asks TNPCB not to insist that hoteliers in Tamil Nadu install OCEM & electromagnetic flow metres for self-surveillance of STPs as they have already suffered due to COVID.



Some of the hoteliers in Tamil Nadu had received a communication from the District Environmental Engineer asking them to install online continuous effluent monitoring system (OCEM) and electromagnetic flow meters for self-surveillance of sewage treatment plants (STPs).

A letter was addressed to **M Jayanthi**, Chairperson, Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB), Chennai drawing her attention to the fact that hotels are not chemical or manufacturing industries and polluting the environment with chemical wastes or gas polluting the air and non-chemical wastes produced are treated in the sewage treatment plants and the treated water is being used for gardening and the balance is let into the municipal drainage system.

In the letter, SIHRA also has requested the TNPCB not to insist on the hoteliers at this juncture to install the OCEM and electromagnetic flow meters burdening the hoteliers who have already suffered huge financial losses and are limping back to normalcy after COVID.

Hoteliers' meet in Sakleshpur

SIHRA EC members continue to meet hoteliers in various cities, including Tier II & III cities. One such meeting was organized recently at the Hotel Rosetta by Ferns, Sakleshpur. Sakleshpur, Sakleshpura or Sakleshapura is a hill station town and headquarters of Sakleshpur taluk in Hassan District in the state of Karnataka. SIHRA EC members, including President, **K Syama Raju** were present at the meeting and had an interactive session with the hoteliers present at that meeting.

EC members met at Kukke

Kukke is a pilgrim centre where the famous Kukke Subramanya Temple is located. The pilgrim centre is located

SIHRA EC members continue to meet hoteliers in various cities. One such meeting was organized recently at the Hotel Rosetta by Ferns, Sakleshpur

105 kms from Mangalore. This place can also be reached from Bengaluru via Sakleshpur. They are very popular and best tourist places to visit near Kukke that lure travellers from across the country with their exclusive experiences, a combination of hills, temples, hill stations and other natural avenues.

SIHRA Executive Committee members, including President, K Syama Raju met at Kukke and held a meeting with the hoteliers in and around the town and discussed opportunities for developing hotels in and around the nearby places of tourist interest and pilgrim centres.





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Lauds MoT's Global Tourism Investors' Summit initiative

Delegates from HRAWI attend MoT's Mumbai Roadshow, where they spoke about magnitude of hospitality industry's difficulties.

The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) recently participated in the Mumbai Roadshow organized by the Ministry of Tourism

(MoT), Govt. of India, held on 27 April in the city. The Hon'ble Minister for Tourism, Culture and DoNER, G K Reddy chaired the roadshow, along with senior Ministry officials and was attended by delegates of HRAWI.

"HRAWI commends the government's efforts in organizing the first Global Tourism Investors' Summit, and we believe it is a promising development for the hospitality sector. We thank the Hon'ble Minister for including us in the initiative and seeking our suggestions to make the event a success. As the voice of the hospitality industry in the Western region, HRAWI will play a vital role in



President, HRAWI

supporting the initiative by acting as a bridge between the government, investors and the tourism industry to create a conducive environment for investments in the sector. The hospitality industry is thrilled to be part of this initiative, which aims to propel the growth of tourism and hospitality in the country to make it one of the most preferred investment destinations in the world. In our recent meeting during

As part of the roadshow, a business seminar was organized, which included presentations by tourism departments

the Mumbai Roadshow, we discussed the scope of tourism and investment opportunities as well as brought to the Minister's attention challenges faced by the industry. We will soon submit details related to investment and employment generation across the region along with representations to the MoT," said **Pradeep Shetty**, President, HRAWI.

As part of the Roadshow, a business seminar was organized, which included presentations by tourism departments from various States, including Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan and by Ashish Gupta, CEO, FAITH.

Implementing tariffs that deter spending abroad is difficult

HRAWI says taxes that discourage spending abroad are problematic because the tourism sector depends on both domestic & international travel.

RAWI has expressed concern over the recent inclusion of international credit card payments in the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) and the significant increase in Tax Collected at Source (TCS) rates from 5 per cent to 20 per cent.

"The recent inclusion of international credit card payments in the LRS and the significant increase in the TCS rates from 5 per cent to 20 per cent coincide with a notable rise in spending on overseas travel by Indian individuals. As the tourism industry relies on both inbound and

While this move may potentially stimulate domestic travel demand, it could have adverse effects on thousands of outbound travellers outbound travel, imposing taxes that discourage expenditures abroad is concerning from a broader perspective. While this move may potentially stimulate domestic travel demand, it could have adverse effects on thousands of outbound travellers. Additionally, it sends a negative message to the world community, which could have an effect on our industry, which depends largely on inbound tourism," said **Pradeep Shetty**, President, HRAWI.



Hospitality sector in Maharashtra poised for exponential growth

HRAWI requests the government for introducing special subsidies to encourage the development of more hotels in Maharashtra.

In a letter addressed to the Chief Minister Eknath Sambhaji Shinde, Deputy Chief Minister Devendra G Fadnavis and Tourism Minister Mangal Prabhat Lodha, HRAWI has hailed the Government for expediting approvals on various projects across the State that are expected to boost the tourism potential in Maharashtra. The State recently announced a collaboration of upcoming 30 plus properties by Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC), the Water tourism project at Gosekhurd in Bhandara, MICE centre and Chanakya centre for excellence at Karla near Lonavala, among others.

"The Government's forward-thinking and innovative ideas coupled with proactive promotional efforts, are poised to ignite a tourism boom, both domestically and internationally. To complement the projects in the pipeline, HRAWI requests the Government for introducing special subsidies to encourage the development of more hotels in the State," said **Pradeep Shetty**, President, HRAWI.

HRAWI has acknowledged the valuable suggestions put forth for the development of Ambhora Temple, establishment of a Scuba Diving Centre in Koyna Bamnoli. The beautification projects for Sonegaon Lake in Nagpur and Gajba Devi Temple in Sindhudurg too have received much praise.

"It is crucial to enhance the room capacity to meet the rising demand. Maharashtra has around 3,40,000 rooms and with the number of projects in the pipeline, we will require at least double the capacity of hotel rooms. Subsidy for establishing hotels at specified tourist locations, along with incentives for eco-friendly hotels and

Government's forwardthinking and innovative ideas coupled with proactive promotional efforts, are poised to ignite a tourism boom

electricity subsidies, will provide the necessary impetus for the growth of the hospitality sector," added **Chetan Mehta**, Vice President, HRAWI.



LAN

To organize FOSTaC Session

Association in one-day training session will be providing training to food handlers in good hygienic & sanitary practices.



The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Northern India (HRANI) is holding an offline training session (FOSTaC in advance catering) for food handlers on 1 July, 2023 at the Le Meridien in New Delhi as part of its ongoing efforts to raise awareness among FBOs and members.

Food Safety Supervisors (FSSs) are appointed by FBO and hold a valid FoSTaC certificate issued by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). FSSs are trained in good hygienic and sanitary practices to be followed by all food business operators as per requirements in Schedule 4 of Food Safety and Standards (Licencing and Registration of Food Businesses) Regulations, 2011.

FSSAI, vide its office memorandum dated 21 July 2022, has removed the



Garish Oberoi President, HRANI

limited validity period (two years) from the Food FSS Certificate and the FSS Certificate has become permanent for all food handlers who have qualified FOSTaC.

Members who have not done any FOSTaC training till date need to apply

for it. Also, in case of a change in the Kind of Business (KoB), a food handler will have to undergo fresh FoSTaC training and obtain a new FSS Certificate related to his current KoB.

Food Safety Supervisors are appointed by FBO and hold a valid FoSTaC certificate issued by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India

It will be a one-day training session comprising different sections of activities with an assessment at the end. The certificates for the qualifying participants will be issued by FSSAI.





INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MILLETS 2023

Mix Millets Cookies



Ingredients

1/2 cup Tapioca flour
1/4 cup mix Millets flour
1/4 tsp salt
1/4 tsp baking soda
1/2 cup coconut sugar
1/4 cup coconut oil
1 egg
1 tsp vanilla extract

Instructions

- Pre-heat your oven to 180°C
- In a mixing bowl, whisk together the Tapioca flour, mix Millets flour, salt and baking soda.
- In another mixing bowl, cream together the coconut sugar and coconut oil until light and fluffy.
- Add the egg and vanilla extract and mix well until smooth and creamy.
- Gradually add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients, mixing well after each addition, until a thick dough forms.
- Scoop spoonful of dough onto a baking tray lined with parchment paper, leaving some space between the cookies to spread out.
- Bake in the preheated oven for 10-12 minutes, or until the edges are lightly golden brown.
- Remove from the oven and allow the cookies to cool on the baking tray for a few minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.



Millets Brownie



Ingredients

1/2 cup mix Millets flour
1/2 cup almond flour
1/2 cup cocoa powder
1/2 tsp baking soda
1/4 tsp salt
1/4 cup coconut oil
1/2 cup maple syrup
2 eggs
1 tsp vanilla extract

Instructions:

- Preheat your oven to 180°C.
- In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the almond flour, cocoa powder, baking soda and salt.
- Add the coconut oil, maple syrup, eggs and vanilla extract. Mix well until smooth.
- Stir in mix Millets flour until evenly distributed in the batter use cut and fold method.
- Pour the batter into a greased 8x8 inch baking dish and smooth the top with a spatula.
- Bake in the preheated oven for 20-25 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean.
- Allow the brownies to cool in the pan for at least 10 minutes before slicing and serving. Garnish with chocolate syrup.

Recipes Credits: Rishabh Misra Lecturer, FHRAI IHM Rohit Singla Teaching Associate, FHRAI IHM

Arvind Singh bids adieu to tourism ministry

🗡 Nisha Verma

rvind Singh, Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism (MoT), Government of India (GoI), in his address at the seminar organized by Foundation for Aviation & Sustainable Tourism, said that inbound tourism and hospitality sectors were the worst hit during COVID. "It was not considered a lucrative sector. However, people are getting back into the sector and gaining confidence because they are seeing the numbers and especially the domestic sector has revived strongly," he said.

Infrastructure & tourism

Citing examples of how infrastructural development is making destinations across the country tourist friendly, he said, "In



Arvind Singh Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Gol

Varanasi, infrastructure development has resulted in 10 times increase in footfall compared to pre-COVID levels, according to statistics shared by the UP government. Jammu & Kashmir has seen the highest ever footfall in 75 years of independence."



Before retiring, Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, **Arvind Singh** in his address at seminar organized by FAST says government is improving rail, road & air connectivity to boost hospitality sector.

He added, "Similar stories of booked hotels, booked flights and choc-a-bloc highways are coming from all centres, which are 4-5 hours from the metros. It is very difficult to find accommodation at weekends."

Inbound status

However, he said, international inbound travel has not revived much because of various reasons—the war in Europe, high international fares, and strength of flights not being up to the pre-COVID level. "That is a dampener for international inbound, but I am sure with the numbers going up, industry booming, tailwinds to

Indian tourism sector has an unparalleled opportunity to share its success stories on a global stage with the G20 Presidency

be provided by G20 Presidency, and many steps being taken up, I am sure international inbound traffic will be back to pre-COVID numbers this year," he said.

G20 advantage

Singh mentioned that the Indian tourism sector has an unparalleled opportunity to share its success stories on a global stage with the G20 Presidency. "With 59 centres for 200 G20 meetings, India is the only country where many such locations





are being used. This shows that we have the strength to host international conferences and conventions at these places. Already, 100 meetings out of 200 have taken place," he explained.

Infrastructure is key

He said that infrastructure is driving tourism to a great extent. "We are aware that in the last few years, tourism development

More than one lakh G20 foreign delegates will visit country & witness the diversity of India's culture, its monuments and festivals

has been aided by the government's incessant focus on enhancing rail, road and air connectivity to ensure that accessibility to tourism destinations is easy from all corners of the country. Connectivity to remote areas of the country, hilly regions, J&K, and the Northeast is happening," he shared.

Steering from pandemic to prosperity

Arvind Singh, on his last day in office at the Ministry of Tourism (MoT), described his tenure in tourism and aviation as "interesting and challenging." He joined Airports Authority of India as Chairman within a few months of India encountering the first wave of COVID.

He claimed that in his tenure at MoT, the G20 was the major highlight for him. "Organizing the three working group meetings was a great experience as one had to really plan a lot, work in close coordination with other ministries, the MEA, the G20 Secretariat, and the state governments where the meetings were organized," he said.

Singh also highlighted that while doing the work in the tourism ministry, they were able to streamline a lot of ongoing projects. "We could streamline ongoing schemes, push work on the National Tourism Policy a little bit further ahead to take it up for industry consultations and other consultations. We took it to the stage of approval, and now it is at the final stage. I think, the proposal should see the light of day soon. Similarly, the work on the creation of the National Tourism Board, the thinking of a new media promotion strategy and the overseas promotion strategy, was also very satisfying. These are the major events that one could take concrete action on—completion of projects, some work on new policies and strategies that we unveiled in the last one year and the work on the G20," informed Singh.

He also attributes the surge in numbers to India's G20 Presidency and is hopeful that the momentum will rub off on inbound numbers too. "The G20 tailwinds are helping the sector overall and projecting India as a major centre for holding international conferences. It will help to get more inbound into the country in future. I am sure the G20 Presidency will help us to gain our pre-COVID levels and surpass them this year," he added.





India's hotel industry offers exclusive opportunity for economic growth, job development and social equity, says **Amitabh Kant**.

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mitabh Kant, G20 Sherpa, India, speaking at the ASSOCHAM's India Tourism Conference held recently, highlighted the challenges faced by the world in the post-COVID era. He said that tourism will be a key driver of growth. Digital transformation has been one of the key drivers of India's economic growth. He emphasized that every challenge presents an opportunity for radical change and progress. "India's hosting of the G20 Presidency with the motto of Vasudev Kutumbakam reflects the country's commitment to unity and progress in the face of global challenges," he said.

Digital transformation

India, as the fifth-largest economy, has embraced digital transformation, leading to significant economic growth. With a digital identity for every citizen and millions of bank accounts opened, India has become a global leader in digital payments. "From 2015 to 2017, India opened 500 million bank accounts, accounting for 55 per cent of global bank account openings. Mobile devices have become virtual banks for many Indians, leading to digital payments in India being 11 times higher than Europe and America and 46 per cent of realtime digital payments worldwide. India believes that digital transformation



Amitabh Kant G20 Sherpa, India

will be a critical driver of growth in the future," shared Kant.

Global travel patterns

India recognizes the transformative power of tourism in driving economic growth and job opportunities. "As India strives to become the world's third-largest economy, it is essential to comprehend the evolving landscape of travel and tourism," he said.

Kant said tourism serves as a crucial catalyst for India's progress, generating employment and fostering economic expansion. "Despite India's pursuit of becoming the third-largest economy, it will continue to possess the world's youngest population, with an average age of around 30 even by 2047. Indian workers are projected to contribute nearly a quarter of the global workforce. The hospitality sector has undergone a transformation, witnessing Indian professionals assuming leadership positions in renowned hotels across the globe," Kant said.

Rediscovering India

While Indians explore the world, it is equally important for them to rediscover India and its diverse offerings. "By promoting unique experiences across the country, India can enhance the quality of

By promoting unique experiences across the country, India can enhance the quality of its tourism infrastructure

its tourism infrastructure. This includes improving the standards of accommodations and leveraging platforms such as Airbnb to provide exceptional experiences to travellers," he said.

Sustainable destination

Kant said, "India's diverse heritage and cultures make it a unique destination with high-value offerings. India should position itself as an experiential and sustainable green destination to attract visitors."





Plan of action for future

At 3rd G20 TWG meeting, delegates deliberated five main priority areas green tourism, digitalization, skills, MSMEs and destination management.

Nisha Verma

The third TWG meeting in Srinagar had the highest participation registered as compared to the first two meetings held at Rann of Kutch and Siliguri, informed Arvind Singh, Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism (MoT). More than 60 delegates from 29 countries attended the event.

Kashmir kickstart

Manoj Sinha, Lieutenant Governor, Jammu & Kashmir inaugurated the meeting in the presence of Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), Science & Technology, MoS, PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space; G K Reddy, Union Minister of Culture, Tourism and DoNER; and Ajay Bhatt, Union Minister of State for Tourism and Defence. The inaugural ceremony was held at SKICC Srinagar. The five key priority areas for the Third Tourism Working Group Meeting comprised Green Tourism, Digitalization, Skills, MSMEs and Destination Management.

Welcoming the delegates, Singh said the meeting gives a unique opportunity to present the rich culture and heritage of the region. He insisted the third G20 TWG brings huge potential to the tourism sector in the state. "The five priorities constitute the key building blocks for accelerating the transition of the tourism sector and in achieving the United Nations sustainable development goals 2030," Singh said.

Collaborations galore

During his welcome address, Singh said through successful collaborations of the global tourism community it will be possible to achieve outcomes envisioned and strategized through these TWG meetings.

Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir, elaborated on the varied and immersive tour-





G K Reddy Union Minister of Culture, Tourism and DoNER

ism products that the UT has to offer to the visitors, as well as the warmth and hospitality of its people. Briefing about the current developments in various sectors to have taken place in the UT, he said, "The change is evident, 18.8 million tourists arrived in UT in 2022."

Singh said J&K will soon find its place in the top 50 destinations in the world and it will be on the bucket list of travel of global travellers. "J&K is developing the country's largest book village on the banks of Wular Lake, as the aim is to make the countryside and popular destinations more sustainable and preserve the beauty of fascinating heritage sites. Tourism in J&K reflects multi-religious and multi-cultural ethos of India. Under the guidance of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we have ensured that the transition in tourism sector in the

backdrop of COVID focusses on needs of travellers, interests of industry stakeholders, creates job opportunities and promote environmental awareness," he emphasized. Reddy claimed TWG is progressing in the right direction and the joint effort of G20 nations, global organizations and invited countries will result in the achievement of inclusive and action-oriented decisive guidelines for the tourism industry.

Film tourism is a powerful medium to promote tourism potential, as films have an impact on the travel choices

Film tourism

A side event on Film Tourism for Economic Growth and Cultural Preservation was held as part of the TWG meeting in Srinagar, where Amitabh Kant, G20 Sherpa, India, said the pristine beauty of the UT has the potential to pose itself as a film tourism destination. "There is no better film destination than J&K, which has everything to offer to the film industry," he claimed. Kant highlighted the initiatives taken by the government in improving overall infrastructure development across the country, especially in J&K and the tourism sector.



Overcoming aviation headwinds

To ensure stability of aviation sector & hospitality industry, the government & authorities must address problems faced by struggling airlines.

Flight prices affected by Go First's suspension

Just before the summer travel season, Go First airline announced the suspension of its flights, creating turbulence in flight fares across the country. The pullback on the 315 routes on which the airline had been operating created an excess demand on several routes. Even though the Civil Aviation Ministry gave the routes to other airlines, it did not stop skyrocketing prices in certain sectors.

Airfares are market-driven and are neither established nor regulated by the government. As a result of spiked airfares on several leisure routes, many travellers had to foil their summer breaks. There was a big impact on spot airfares as IndiGo, Air India and SpiceJet tried their best to handle a sudden surge in airfares.

In many sectors, air fares surged by over 30-40 per cent. For instance, data from travel portals showed last-minutes airfares for routes such as Delhi-Pune shot up to $\overline{16,000}$, from around $\overline{15,300}$ at the end of April. Delhi-Srinagar flights also rose last week to $\overline{12,000}$ from $\overline{19,000}$ in April 2023.



Sudesh Poddar President, HRAEI

But despite the surge, there were 13.2 million domestic passengers in May, surpassing the previous record of 13.02 million set in December 2019. Domestic air traffic in May marked a 15 per cent rise from the year-ago period and more than 2 per cent. This is encouraging.

Some experts claim that the current surge in certain leisure sectors is due to the fact that many domestic carriers have substantially reduced flight capacity. In addition, they also embraced dynamic ticket fares in order to make up for the losses they incurred during the COVID years.

As a result of these airfare fluctuations, routes that are not very busy, are also witnessing a low passenger load for all airlines. This means that most flights have 15 to 30 per cent of their seats vacant. The airline operators cite rising fuel prices and losses in certain non-

The high-ticket prices impact the hospitality and tourism industry badly because many people postpone all their vacation plans

profitable routes across the country. They also deny the allegation of forming cartels among themselves to lock in high flight prices. The high-ticket prices impact the hospitality and tourism industries badly because many people postpone all their vacation plans.

Current aviation crisis has impacted hotel sector drastically

ospitality and aviation are both highly capital-intensive industries and the aviation industry plays a crucial role in facilitating travel and tourism. Any disruptions or challenges faced by this sector will inevitably have a ripple effect on our industry. There are serious concerns arising from the ongoing crisis in the Indian aviation sector. The current state of some airlines raises apprehensions for the hospitality industry. One of the significant impacts is the decline in air travel on account of reduced flight frequencies, flight cancellations and a steep increase in airfares. This comes at a time when domestic tourism is at its peak, creating a significant gap between demand and supply. The decline in tourist arrivals directly affects the occupancy rates of hotels and associated hospitality businesses.

The void left by the closure of one of the prominent players in the aviation sector, has not been filled, adding to the challenges faced by the hospitality industry. The limited flight options and decreased competition in the market hinder the growth and development of tourism within the country. The financial strain faced by airlines has led to cost-cutting measures, including reducing corporate travel budgets and renegotiating contracts with hotels. As a result, we are witnessing a slowdown in corporate travel, conferences and meetings, which are essential for our industry's growth and revenue generation.



President, HRAWI

The reduction in flight connectivity to certain destinations has also impacted regional tourism. Many leisure travellers choose their holiday destinations based on the availability of direct flights. The limited options and increased airfares deter potential tourists from choosing specific holiday destinations, resulting in a loss of tourism revenue for those regions. There is a need to add more flights on certain routes that are in high demand. In light of these concerns, it is imperative for the government and relevant authorities to actively address the issues faced by the struggling airlines. Prompt action is required to ensure stability and seamless functioning of the aviation sector, as such volatility directly impacts the overall health of the tourism and hospitality industries as well. For the hospitality industry, it is essential that we closely

monitor the developments in the aviation sector and adapt our strategies accordingly. We must explore alternative solutions to mitigate the impact of reduced flight options. Collaborative efforts with airlines and travel agencies can help create attractive packages and incentives to entice travellers. By aligning our efforts, we can try to minimize the impact of the

For the hospitality industry, it is essential that we closely monitor the developments in the aviation sector and adapt our strategies accordingly

ongoing crisis in the aviation sector on our industry. It is also essential that the government recognizes the significance of the hospitality industry and provide it with the necessary support during this period of uncertainty.

I encourage the industry to remain resilient and proactive in adapting to these challenging circumstances. The hospitality industry has overcome obstacles in the past and we are confident that with collective efforts, we will navigate through the current situation in the aviation sector and emerge stronger. Let us come together to explore innovative strategies, support each other, and work towards adapting to the current scenario to tide over these turbulent times.





Recent events have shaken up the Indian aviation industry

ir transport makes a crucial contribution to people's mobility. Even long distances can be travelled quickly and safely with air travel, which is why aviation in all its forms is fundamental and indispensable, whether in commercial, private, or business travel. Air transport enables millions of people to connect, and it also boosts the tourism industry, which is a major economic factor.

The events of the past two and a half years, from COVID to the economic environment, have touched every aspect of the travel industry over the past 18-20 months, from hotels and hospitality to air travel. The latter has experienced turbulence in a manner not seen in decades.

In recent months, incidents of aviation turbulence have been making headlines. Airfares are already higher this summer than in the previous season.

Domestic air travel has been hitting all-time highs since March and all airlines are reporting over 90 per cent occupancy.



Garish Oberoi President, HRANI

India is a price-sensitive market, where the rise in fares corresponds with lower air travel. Nearly 60 per cent of air passengers in India travel by low-cost carriers. Fares across all major sectors are high at the moment, foiling the travel plans of summer tourists or making their budgets go awry. In fact, travel to both business as well as leisure destinations has skyrocketed to the extent that it has become at par, if not more to some of the international destinations making holiday traveller to rethink of his choices.

However, taking cognizance of the current turbulence, surge in airfares, the government has directed airlines to exercise moderation and ensure a balance in the pricing of air tickets. The Union Aviation Minister, Jyotiraditya Scindia has also directed and asked airlines to increase the

Domestic air travel has been hitting all-time highs since this March and all airlines are reporting over 90 per cent occupancy

frequency of flights on routes where there is excess demand. The industry is hopeful that with the efforts of the government and requisite steps of the aviation industry, the situation will improve in the days to come.





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Aviation crisis directly & indirectly affects hospitality sector

India is the world's third-largest civil aviation market. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation's Traffic Report for March 2023 states that the passengers carried by domestic airlines during January-March 2023 were 375.04 lakh as against 247.23 lakh during the Jan-March 2022 period, thereby registering an annual growth of 51.70 per cent and a monthly growth of 21.41 per cent.

The government introduced the UDAN 5.0 scheme, which will help connect small and medium-sized cities with major cities via air services. This will boost tourism in small towns and help promote India's culture and heritage. With the launch of new airports and connectivity due to the UDAN scheme, Tier II is growing faster than Tier I. However, only 469 UDAN routes were operational out of the 1152 routes awarded.

Airport congestion is one of the major issues faced by air travellers and the government is making a three-step plan to tackle airport congestion. The approach is to increase the number of screening points, digitalize the pre-queuing process and limit the number of flights during peak hours. Increasing CISF personnel is also on the cards to reduce congestion.

Any turbulence in the aviation sector can directly and indirectly affect India's hospitality industry. Here are some potential impacts:

Reduced tourist arrivals: Turbulence in the aviation sector such as flight cancellations, reduced routes and increased fares can lead to a decline in tourist arrivals. This directly affects the hospitality industry



K Syama Raju President, SIHRA

as fewer travellers mean lower occupancy rates in hotels and a decrease in demand for other hospitality services.

Decreased business travel: Business travellers contribute significantly to the revenue of the hospitality industry. When the aviation sector experiences turbulence, companies may cut back on business travel, leading to declining bookings for hotels, conference centres and meeting venues.

Impact on hotel revenues: With fewer flights and reduced travel, hotels may face challenges in maintaining their occupancy rates and room revenues. This can result in decreased room rates and increased competition among hotels to attract guests, potentially leading to lower profitability.

Airline-hotel partnerships: Many airlines have tie-ups with hotels to offer bundled packages or loyalty programmes. Turbulence in the aviation sector may affect these partnerships, impacting the benefits and offers available to customers. This, in turn, can affect travellers' decision-making processes and their choice of accommodations.

Reduced demand for ancillary services: Hospitality establishments such as restaurants, bars, spas and car rental services often benefit from the presence of air travellers. If the aviation sector experiences turbulence, there may be a decrease in demand for these ancillary services, leading to lower revenues for the hospitality industry.

Turbulence in the aviation sector such as flight cancellations, reduced routes and increased fares can lead to a decline in tourist arrivals

Regional impact: Different regions in India rely on air connectivity for tourism and business. Turbulence in the aviation sector can disproportionately affect certain areas that heavily depend on air travel, impacting the local hospitality industry more significantly.

Government policies and support: Government policies and interventions to stabilise the aviation sector can indirectly influence the hospitality industry. If the government takes measures to stimulate air travel such as reducing taxes or providing subsidies, it could boost tourism and benefit the hospitality sector.

It is important to note that the specific impacts on the hospitality industry may vary depending on the duration and severity of the turbulence in the aviation sector.



New tourist destinations High on priority

Government is continuing to add new tourist destinations. It has introduced various schemes to boost tourism across the country, reckon EC Heads.

Several programmes have been launched to push domestic travel

Every avid traveller is always keen on visiting unexplored locations that are far away from the noise and city pollution. Hence, to increase tourist footfall, both domestic and international tourism are the need of the hour. Each state, if not cities, should identify newer and more promising locations or develop the existing ones to attract more visitors.

The Government of India did identify this gap and has been trying to give a push to the tourism sector by introducing various schemes. In the first phase of Swadesh Darshan 2, which began in January 2023, the Government identified 15 states across the country, which would be promoted under India's new domestic tourism policy. Under this, there are various circuits, which have been created for integrated development. These circuits are the Buddhist Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Desert Circuit, Eco Circuit, Heritage Circuit, Northeast Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Sufi Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Ramayana Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Tirthankar Circuit, Wildlife Circuit and Tribal Circuit. The main mantra of this



Vineet Taing President, Vatika Hotels

revamped scheme (which was initially started in 2014-15) was to raise the voice for local destinations and be vocal for local and attain Atmanirbhar Bharat status by realizing the full potential of India as a tourism destination.

Other exemplary initiatives launched by the Government of India were Dekho Apna Desh, which focused on encouraging middle-class people to choose domestic travel over international and the Vibrant Villages Programme, which focused on developing the tourism infrastructure in border villages. Also, with the recent G20 meetings, India opened up 50 new tourism destinations, promoted green tourism, launched publicity campaigns in overseas markets and operationalised 59 new air routes this year. The government pushed green initiatives to promote responsible tourism in the coun-

In first phase of Swadesh Darshan 2, Government identified 15 states, which would be promoted under India's new domestic tourism policy

try and authorities planned to ensure small businesses have adequate resources for green investments while also creating local jobs. The next one in the row was Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN), which opened the doors to new airports and connected even more destinations for the tourists, allowing them to visit the hidden gems of India.









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Rajasthan needs to improve and add new destinations

would like to first dwell on our home state, Rajasthan, and then share my views on tourism at large. Rajasthan has many firsts to its credit when we talk about new destinations. Way back in the 60s, my grandfather pioneered the promotion of Lake Palace Udaipur, which went on to garner national and international attention with the support of our oldest partner, the House of Tata.

Post-COVID, we have our work cut out, viz., to consolidate, enhance and add new destinations to make Rajasthan relevant as a trendsetter. With the industry status that the state has garnered, it is important to first fast-track regional connectivity between Jaipur, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer and Udaipur for example and feeder markets as well. Next is the infrastructure. As is often said, "If you build it, they will come." It plays a crucial role in travel and tourism competitiveness and improves the image of the country from a national and global perspective.

The buzzwords in tourism of late, are Cultural Tourism, Spiritual Tourism, Wellness, Adventure and Experiential Holidays. Most have been in existence for niche markets but have gained popularity within certain segments due to COVID and alleviated interests.

Where Cultural Experiences score: it does not matter how old or new the destination, what is significant is how vibrant, dynamic, inclusive and authen-



Dr Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar Executive Director, HRH Group of Hotels

tic the cultural experience being shared with the guests. I could add: the sharing is also interactive, immersive and gets the guests completely involved with the experience.

Speaking of Spiritual Tourism, every state in our country, have centres of religious worship or spirituality which go back thousands of years. Not only are they attracting pilgrims, but they are also waiting to be networked with the larger tourism circuits. I could share the example of Rajasthan, where the important temples and temple-towns continue to draw in devotees throughout the year. For instance, Nathdwara, Ranakpur and Deshnoke. At the same time, the Cultural Experiences, being offered must continue. Such temple-towns are great venues for the performing arts and visual arts medium. Whether it is Khajuraho, Konark or Banaras, the music and dance festivals are its annual highlights.

Wellness, on the other hand, has explored new avenues beyond spas, Yoga, nutrition and retail. Holistic healing and rejuvenation are now being offered in unique retreats that offer fitness boot-

Adventure Tourism too is going through a reset, as we have seen with rafting, rappelling, rock climbing and zip lining

camps, mind therapies and the staples of Yoga and Ayurveda. Wellness retreats and resorts range from monk like minimalists to wilderness and farms to the sumptuous.

Adventure Tourism too is going through a reset, as we have seen with rafting, rappelling, rock climbing and zip lining.

Looking at our Northeastern states— Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland and similarly in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand—their real potential is waiting to be developed. The summer destinations—Shimla, Gulmarg and Nainital—need improved logistics and infrastructure.

Setting new standards in hospitality education

Regency College of Hotel Management and Culinary Arts has emerged as the top culinary school for aspiring chefs & hospitality professionals.

Ver the past 30 years, Regency College of Hotel Management and Culinary Arts has received numerous awards and has consistently triumphed in competitions at the national level in New Delhi, Mumbai, Aurangabad, Bengaluru and Hyderabad. It has emerged as India's top culinary institute for aspiring chefs and hospitality professionals.

An institution's value is determined by its consistency in achieving the desired outcomes, motivating students to set goals, fostering a positive learning environment and getting them involved in extracurricular activities. This demonstrates the college's successful track record as many alumni hold prestigious positions as General Managers, Corporate Chefs, and heads of departments in top hotel chains such as The St. Regis, The Leela, Accor and Hyatt and in cruise line companies such as Royal Caribbean, Carnival, Costa and P&O.

The institute's USPs include well qualified and internationally experienced faculty members, ideal location, sophis-



ticated infrastructure, contemporary course curriculum designed as per industry needs, interactive and adaptive teaching and learning methodologies, developing students with high employability with a dedicated employability, placement and career advancement cell, empowering and encouraging women in hospitality by providing scholarship, scholarships for students based on Regency National Entrance Test, special

ARE YOU READY FOR

Institute uses a methodology called "learning by doing" and encourages students to plan a variety of hospitality events all year long

concessions for girl students, global connect with hoteliers from international brands of hotels, very strong alumni network, international placements with excellent career prospects for hospitality aspirant students to kickstart their careers with cruise liners and international brands of hotels.

The institute has also launched numerous initiatives to take advantage of digitalization. It has been equipped with contemporary amenities to improve teaching and learning. The campus has, among other things, fully functional training kitchens, front office labs and restaurants that have been digitally transformed. It guarantees practical training for PMS software, which is utilised by all the world's major hotels. Experts and industry leaders are frequently invited to conduct master classes and impart their wealth of knowledge to the students.



The Regency College of Hotel Management and Culinary Arts uses a methodology called "learning by doing" and encourages students to plan a variety of hospitality events all year long. The institute offers practical training in molecular gastronomy, Sous vide, liquid deserts and sustainable cuisine, among others.

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Moving forward

Revival of 50 additional airports, heliports and water aerodromes, as well as the reduction in personal income tax, are expected to benefit the Indian hospitality industry, states HVS Anarock's India Hospitality Industry Overview 2022 report.

The outlook for the Indian hospitality industry remains positive. Domestic demand will continue to be strong and international travel is also expected to pick up, despite the looming threat of a recession in the US and Europe, growing global geopolitical issues, and an increase in COVID cases in some countries. In addition, the G20 presidency of India and the fact that India is hosting a number of international events, including the ICC Men's World Cup and the likes of the Dior global event in Mumbai, will increase demand for hotels in the cities where these events will take place.



Courtesy: HVS Anarock





Union Budget 2023

The Union Budget 2023 iterated the fact that the government is recognizing the importance of the tourism sector as an employment generator and is looking to promote the sector on a mission mode with active participation from all stakeholders, including public-private-partnerships.

The revival of 50 additional airports, heliports, and water aerodromes to increase regional air connectivity and the development of fifty tourism destinations as a complete package for domestic and international tourism, as well as the government's continued emphasis on infrastructure development, including the significant investment in railways and last-mile connectivity, bode well for the sector.

The government's stated objective to actively promote tourism is a welcome announcement. Furthermore, the reduction in personal income tax will increase disposable income, which will drive demand in the tourism and hospitality sectors.

Transactions Outlook

Transactions will continue to remain sluggish in the near term in an otherwise gradually maturing hospitality market due to the ongoing conflict between buyer and owner's expectations. Buyers must recognize that as COVID was an anomaly, the asset's valuation should take into account both its historical (particularly pre-COVID) and anticipated future performance. On the other hand, owners who want to exit or reduce debt should realistically take advantage of the improving market sentiments.

With improving market sentiments and a bullish outlook for the hotel sector, Indian hotel operators may

explore the IPO route in the medium term. Hotel companies - both operators and owners - may now consider ramping up their operations to achieve the scale and size needed to go public. Using the IPO route will help hotel companies in raising funds for expansion plans, deleveraging their balance sheet, or providing an exit to existing investors. Furthermore, new listings of good-quality hotel companies will also provide the depth needed to create a hotel industryspecific index that can be used as a benchmark to track the industry's performance, helping investors make more informed decisions going forward.



Courtesy: HVS Anarock

G2 www.fhrai.com

The way forward

The Indian hospitality sector is expected to see accelerated growth in 2023, in spite of ongoing global headwinds and the uncertainty brought on by the occasional COVID-scare. This will be driven primarily by buoyant domestic demand, the revival of inbound travel, and the Indian government's renewed emphasis on the expansion of the tourism industry, which is expected to contribute US\$250 billion to the country's GDP by 2030. The government also intends to release the National Tourism Policy soon to promote sustainable and inclusive tourism growth in the country. The hotel sector should develop strategies to take advantage of the short- and long-term opportunities that are emerging as the Indian tourism industry gains momentum. Here are the top trends to watch in the year ahead.

Advantages of India's G20 Presidency

Over 200 G20 meetings are expected to be held across 55 destinations in the country during India's G20 presidency till November 2023. The Indian hotel sector stands to gain significantly from this development, as there will be substantial incremental demand for hotels in the cities where the meetings will be held.

Additionally, the G20 meetings are also expected to help inbound tourism to recover the lost ground as the Ministry of Tourism intends to take advantage of this chance to promote India as a "major tourism destination". Necessary initiatives, such as visa reforms and traveler-friendly immigration facilities at airports, are also expected to be implemented to make travel to the country easier for inbound visitors. The G20 presidency has coincided with India's efforts to establish itself as a global MICE destination, and the smooth organization and completion of these high-profile 200+ meetings will support those efforts.





Rise of new-age wellness resorts Experiential and immersive travel experiences such as Yoga, workouts, biking, nature trails, and trekking retreats, with gastronomic delicacies from very elaborately curated health food menu options, meditation with global fitness and well-

ness gurus along with local community involvement are going to be a newer area for resort development, very different from the current label of wellness resorts.

A case in point is the newly launched SIRO brand by Kerzner which also operates the luxury One & Only brand.





Courtesy: HVS Anarock


Bleisure travel will become even more popular

Bleisure travel, also known as blended travel, is becoming popular in India.

According to reports, prior to the pandemic, Indians ranked second among bleisure travelers in 31 countries, with more than 70% of Indians surveyed extending their business trips to enjoy the destination. As international business travelers and high-profile MICE events return to India, bleisure travel is expected to receive further boost in the country. As a result, it is critical that the hotel sector, particularly traditional business hotels, recognize the opportunity and create special packages and offerings by incorporating more leisure elements into the experience to attract

corporate guests looking to extend their trip. Providing customized experiences to meet the evolving needs of the business traveler will give them reasons to stay longer, helping the hotel sector to generate more revenue and guest loyalty.

Growth of medical tourism

The relaxation of international travel restrictions and the falling rupee is expected to increase medical tourism in India. As per the Invest India website, the country aims to become the world's top medical tourism destination, tripling its revenue to US\$13 billion in four years. During the pandemic, hotels and healthcare facilities, the two key stakeholders in this growing segment, successfully collaborated to provide quarantine services. The two sectors should now build on this success to provide medical travelers with a seamless medical tourism experience.

Developing dedicated hospital-hotel mixed-use projects and patient hotels designed to meet the needs of medical travelers, as is common in Scandinavian countries, could be a profitable business model in the future and help the country realize its true medical tourism potential.



Reimagining F&B by partnering with branded restaurants

Hoteliers should reimagine F&B by leasing spaces to standalone marquee restaurant brands on a revenue-share model, which can be beneficial for both parties. Restaurant operators can benefit from the hotel's captive clientele, location benefits, and brand image, while hotels get an opportunity to elevate the customer experience by becoming a 'destination' for both hotel guests and locals, resulting in higher F&B revenues and profitability.







Leisure property development will grow in India

Most of the hotel development in India in the last decade was focused on the key business destinations as a significant proportion of hotel demand stemmed from corporate or business travelers. Moreover, the lack of infrastructure and seasonal nature of leisure travel made this segment less lucrative for hoteliers. However, this mindset is witnessing a shift, and several hotel chains are increasing their leisure hotel development pipeline to tap into the growing demand. Moreover, leisure travelers usually stay longer and utilize more services at the hotel compared to business travelers and hotels in leisure destinations are also likely to have higher average rates than business hotels, making the investment more attractive.





Courtesy: HVS Anarock



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The rise and rise of alternate accommodation

Alternate accommodation products such as homestays and villa rentals will grow exponentially, as these have piqued the interest of travelers. New players, including hotel brands, are entering this segment, which is still largely unorganized in India, as they realize that alternate accommodations are not just a passing trend but are here to stay. IHCL, for instance has forayed into the country's fastgrowing homestays segment through its brand, amã Stays & Trails, already increasing its portfolio in this segment to 108 properties at 50+ locations in the last two years. Meanwhile, Marriott International recently introduced its Homes & Villas by Marriott Bonvoy, a curated collection of whole home rentals in India, with plans to launch around 500 units in 2023. For hotel chains, alternate accommodations can open up new revenue stream,

and help in attracting new-age travelers seeking unique, highly personalized, and authentic travel experiences. It also provides them a financially attractive investment model, particularly for expansion

in underserved leisure destinations, due to lower overhead costs and higher profitability than a hotel.

The potential of this segment is enormous, and the hospitality sector has only begun to scratch the surface. From bed and breakfast facilities, homestays, villa rentals, and hostels to caravans and houseboats, among so many others, this segment has a lot more to offer to travelers and can help the Indian travel industry reach greater heights.



Global hotel chains will expand their brand portfolio in india

Bullish about the growth prospects of the Indian economy and the hotel sector, international hotel chains are expected to introduce newer brands from their global brand portfolio in India, to strengthen and expand their distribution and presence in the country. Marriott, for instance, recently introduced its lifestyle hotel brand Moxy in India, while IHG unveiled its conversion-friendly brand voco. Other global hotel chains are also expected to follow suit as growth slows in developed countries and as a rapidly developing country, Tier 2, 3 & 4 cities open up in India.

Net-zero hotels will be the next step in sustainability

Despite increased efforts, the Indian hotel industry's sustainability initiatives are still limited to hotel operations. Simply removing single-use plastics and reducing housekeeping is no longer sufficient to attract the growing number of environmentally conscious tourists. Hotels are often criticized for their conspicuous consumption, so a concerted effort to reduce consumption and waste across the board is needed, which will also help change public perception of the industry. So, the industry should now consider incorporating green technologies and resources into construction so that hotels have net-zero energy consumption from the start of their life cycle. Net-zero hotels can help to make travel more environmentally friendly by allowing guests to enjoy luxuries without feeling guilty.

Finally, hotels will also consider employing gig workers and multiskilling hotel employees to address

Courtesy: HVS Anarock



the staffing issues in the sector, which have increased post the pandemic. Employing gig workers can help manage staffing needs during busy and lean periods, optimize staff-to-room ratios, and reduce hiring and training costs. Meanwhile, multi-skilling will allow

employers to optimize labor costs, improve efficiency, and increase operational flexibility, while also increasing employee loyalty and motivation, which can help companies retain their human capital in today's fiercely competitive environment.





Paradigm shift for hospitality industry

Hyderabad's first hotel, run exclusively by women—Westin Hyderabad Hitec City offers holistic wellness experiences designed to empower guests.

🚽 DDP Bureau

estin Hotels & Resorts has launched its second property, The Westin Hyderabad Hitec City. The hotel stands out for being the city's first all-women-managed hotel. The 168-key hotel, offers a holistic array of wellness experiences designed to empower guests to be the best version of themselves, regardless of their nature of travel. This hotel will run entirely on green energy produced from renewable resources to contribute to the development of a more sustainable future.

"We are thrilled to expand the brand's footprint in Hyderabad with the opening of The Westin Hyderabad Hitec City. This landmark opening marks the first all women-operated hotel within the city and heralds a paradigm shift for the hospitality industry, breaking from the conventional ways of operating. Paired with the Westin brands signature programmes, adapted to the needs of the modern traveller, the hotel is set to deliver experiences designed



Ranju Alex Area Vice President, South Asia, Marriott International

to empower a better you," said **Ranju Alex**, Area Vice President, South Asia, Marriott International.

The hotel features 168 spacious guest rooms and suites, all equipped with the brand's Heavenly Bed, which is uniquely designed to revitalize the body and mind for a night of restorative sleep. The sleek bathroom featuring the Heavenly Bath redefines the shower experience with a revitalizing rain shower and features White

Paired with the Westin brands signature programmes, the hotel is set to deliver experiences designed to empower a better you

Tea bath amenities, to help guests start the day feeling pampered and invigorated.

The hotel offers four holistic dining options. The Market is an all-day dining restaurant, which offers a sustainably sourced menu for those seeking healthier food choices, and a buffet of local and international favourites for the discerning traveller. The Lobby Lounge, with its unmatched city views, is the ideal spot to unwind over cocktails and seasoned malts. The Grab & Go caters to those on the move, with a host of fresh juices, salads and sandwiches made to order. The rooftop poolside Bar & Grill features comfortable open-air seating and a delectable menu comprising freshly grilled meats and barbeques, paired with refreshing cocktails and chilled beers.





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Summer season Bonanza for hotels

As the summer season progresses, there is an overwhelming sense of anticipation among Indian travellers as they seize the opportunity to rediscover the country.

DDP Bureau

Travellers are looking for places to relax in summer season

The summer season has always been associated with vacations, exploration and rejuvenation. This year, there is a palpable sense of excitement as travellers eagerly embrace the opportunity to rediscover the world and create cherished memories. At DoubleTree by Hilton Goa Panaji, we are witnessing this surge firsthand as guests flock to our picturesque coastal paradise, eager to bask in the sun, embark on new adventures and indulge in the vibrant culture of our region.

As General Manager, DoubleTree by Hilton Goa Panaji, I am delighted to welcome the summer season and witness the exciting trends that are shaping the travel landscape this year. As the world gradually recovers from past challenges, it is heartening to see a resurgence in travel and a renewed sense of wanderlust.

One of the prominent trends we are observing this summer is a return to nature. After spending an extended period indoors, travellers are seeking destinations that offer pristine beaches, lush greenery, and an opportunity to reconnect with the great outdoors. Goa, with its breathtaking landscapes and serene beaches, has become a preferred choice for those



Shiv Bose General Manager Double-Tree by Hilton Goa Panaji

yearning for solace in nature's embrace. Our centrally located resort, close to Goa's capital, provides guests with the perfect blend of tranquillity and convenience, enabling them to explore the region's natural wonders while enjoying the comforts of a world-class resort.

Another significant trend is the growing focus on wellness-oriented travel. After a year of prioritizing health and wellbeing, travellers are seeking destinations that offer opportunities for relaxation, rejuvenation and self-care. At DoubleTree by Hilton Goa Panaji, we have curated a range of wellness experiences that cater to our guests' holistic needs. From indulgent spa treatments to beachside yoga sessions, we offer a serene sanctuary where guests can unwind and replenish their mind, body and soul.

Furthermore, there is an increased interest in immersive cultural experiences. Travellers are eager to delve into the rich tapestry of local traditions, art and cui-

Travellers are seeking destinations that offer pristine beaches, lush greenery, and opportunity to reconnect with great outdoors

sine. Goa's vibrant heritage and multicultural influences make it a captivating destination for those seeking an authentic cultural experience. At DoubleTree by Hilton Goa Panaji, we provide guests with the opportunity to immerse themselves in Goa's vibrant traditions through curated tours, culinary delights and interactive workshops that showcase the region's artistic and culinary heritage.







Seeing great demand for family holidays in summer season

elcomHeritage Cheetahgarh Resort & Spa opened its doors two years ago, this being its second summer. Building this property has been a passion project with extremely detailed planning, keeping in mind the environment, community, and of course our guests.

The idea was to showcase the authentic Rabari community and Bera landscape, with all its bounty of terrains as well as flora and fauna, in the lap of a sublime luxury resort. Over these two years, we have been motivated and encouraged by our guests' feedback that while they thoroughly enjoy our curated activities, from the safaris that begin from within the resort to the village walks and treks, what they love is that they come back to their lavish rooms, 5-star services, and rejuvenating spa, in the setting of an intimate boutique resort.

In terms of our number and occupancy, while outbound has opened, we have seen a 120 per cent growth in occupancy and revenue per room. Despite the ADR growth of seven per cent, we have seen domestic markets increase.

Here are some summer trends we see currently:

• Weekend stays are still the flavor: Our occupancy rates and trends show us that



Gulshan Jhurani Promoter, WelcomHeritage Cheetahgarh Resort & Spa

weekends and specifically long weekend getaways (either by road or even if it involves air travel) are preferred.

- Small group family holidays: Microgroups of families like to experience a luxurious, rejuvenating escape from the mundane urban chaos to connect and relax. We are seeing a demand for our cottages due to this.
- A luxurious experiential resort beyond the hills: While hills will always be a hot favorite for the summer, we find many queries coming in from travellers who are looking at offbeat experiential hotels. To beat the heat factor, they are opting for luxurious boutique

properties that enhance the destination experience. At Jawai, the wildlife season and, therefore, safaris, run through the twelve months, hence it is an all-year destination.

• Accessibility: This always play a key role, especially for shorter holidays. Better flight connectivity to Jodhpur and Udaipur has also eased accessibil-

In terms of our number and occupancy, while outbound has opened, we have seen a 120 per cent growth in occupancy and revenue per room

ity to our resort. We are very particular about the airport transfers, we offer our guests in making the journey to the resort extremely comfortable. Adding to this, our resort is located within a driving distance of five to nine hours from major cities in North India such as Delhi, Delhi NCR, Chandigarh, as well as from cities such as Ahmedabad, Himmatnagar, Vadodara, Surat, Jaipur and Jodhpur.

As for now, we are looking ahead to a very positive summer at WelcomHeritage Cheetahgarh Resort & Spa.



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Strong desire to explore offbeat destinations in summer season

S ummers have always been the favourite period for Indians to travel right from childhood days. It is evident that the desire to explore is strong post-COVID. The customer experience centric approaches adopted by the hospitality industry are also fuelling the confidence to travel. The innovative newly added features and marketing campaigns from the travel fraternity—the travel now pay later, EMI schemes, nation on vacation, trip coupons, all-inclusive pricing, block seats and pay later, among others are all adding to the reason.

I must also add here the government's support and initiatives in building infrastructure such as new airports, roadways, dedicated trains and flights for shorter distances, along with the beginning of the





Joyjit Chakravorty General Manager, Hilton Garden Inn Saket

Char Dham Yatra and other pilgrimage destinations for spiritual enrichment.

The trend that emerged in the aftermath of COVID—preference for shorter trips and rejuvenating staycations of 1-3 days—continues this summer as well. The weekend trend of booking "Great Small Breaks" by Hilton—a curated quick urban escape with a chance to unwind, valuing quality experiences over extended durations still drives the weekend occupancy at Hilton Garden Inn Saket.

As far as summer travel trends are concerned, referring to our guests' interactions and the data available, I witness a strong inclination towards exploring offbeat and lesser-known destinations. These unique and lesser-explored locations have piqued the interest of travellers seeking new and extraordinary experiences.

I can also see the younger generations embarking on road trips with relaxed itineraries, enjoying their way to their destinations. They are willing to spend more on experiences and believe influencer

Preference for shorter trips and rejuvenating staycations of 1-3 days, continues this summer as well

marketing better than traditional marketing. There is also an upward trend from multi-generational families to young professionals/millennials, couples and ad hoc friends travel together to celebrate special occasions and holidays.

If 2022 was the year of welcomed pentup demand, 2023 is a year of coming to grips of repositioning and recalibration. Hence, we all must rise up and proactively strategize on the ongoing complicated realities of cancelled flights, surging airfares, climate change impacts, manpower shortages and corporate travel curbs facing cost related challenges.







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Outdoor adventures are popular in summer season

A summer heat sweeps the nation, one destination stands out as a refuge for travellers seeking respite and adventure—Manali. Nestled in the picturesque state of Himachal Pradesh, Manali witnesses a remarkable surge in tourist arrivals during summer. Let's delve into the reasons behind this surge and explore the top travel trends in Manali during the summer season:

- The scenic beauty of Manali: Manali's breathtaking landscapes and majestic mountains are a magnet for tourists seeking natural beauty. The region is blessed with snow-capped peaks, lush valleys, gushing rivers and enchanting forests. During summer, when the weather is mild and pleasant, visitors flock to Manali to immerse themselves in its serene ambience.
- Adventure tourism: Manali has emerged as a hub for adventure enthusiasts, attracting thrill-seekers from all over the country. Summer offers the perfect weather conditions for various adventure activities such as trekking, paragliding, river rafting, zorbing and mountain biking. The town has a plethora of adventure sports operators who cater to the growing demand for adrenaline-pumping experiences.
- **Cultural immersion:** Manali is not just about natural beauty and adventure it is also a cultural delight. The region is home to the indigenous culture of



Sumeet Sharma General Manager, Renest River Country Resort Manali

Himachal Pradesh and during the summer months, visitors can witness vibrant local festivals and traditional dance performances and also indulge in local cuisine. The Manali Summer Festival, featuring folk dances, music concerts and local handicrafts, attracts a large number of tourists.

• Wellness and Retreats: The summer season in Manali witnesses an increasing number of travellers seeking wellness and rejuvenation. The town boasts a plethora of wellness retreats and yoga centres that offer holistic therapies, meditation sessions and detox programmes. The tranquil surroundings and cool mountain air create an ideal atmosphere for wellness seekers to unwind and rejuvenate. • Sustainable travel: In recent years, sustainable travel has gained significant momentum and Manali is at the forefront of this trend. Travellers are increasingly conscious of their environmental footprint and are opting for eco-friendly accommodations, responsible trekking practices and supporting local communities. Manali's efforts towards sustain-

Manali has emerged as a hub for adventure enthusiasts, attracting thrill-seekers from all over the country

able tourism such as waste management initiatives and promoting organic farming have garnered appreciation from tourists.

As travel resumes and people seek new experiences, the current summer travel trends reflect a shift towards local exploration, outdoor adventures, sustainable practices, wellness retreats, worklife balance and health-conscious travel. Whether it is a road trip to a scenic destination, a wellness retreat in a serene setting, or an outdoor adventure in nature's playground, travellers are adapting to the changing landscape of travel and embracing these trends to create memorable and fulfilling summer getaways.



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Leisure travel fuelling hotel development

India's hotel demand is being driven by leisure travel, and prices are rising across the board, especially in Tier II & III cities, opine hospitality heads.

🚽 Suhani Sood

eisure travel plays a pivotal role in driving the development of hotels in India, not just with numbers but also, by and large dictating its direction of growth as well. Hotel demand has rebounded back in 2023, especially domestic leisure travel. However, the domestic leisure segment in India continues to be underserved, with several emerging tourist destinations still lacking adequate infrastructure, including good quality hotel accommodation.

According to HVS Anarock's India Hospitality Industry Overview 2022 report, "India had 28,000 branded rooms in the leisure segment across the entire country". The report stated that the share of hotel rooms in Tier II & III cities increased to 38 per cent of the total inventory at the end of 2022 from 33 per cent four years ago. In 2022, 166 new hotels with 14,885 rooms were signed, while 90 hotels with 5,702 rooms were rebranded.

Leisure destination hotels have higher rates as compared to business hotels.



Abinash Manghani CEO, WelcomHeritage Hotels

Udaipur has the highest ARR in 2022 which overshadows the conventionally famous destinations such as Mumbai and Goa. Rishikesh saw a growth of 70 per cent as compared to pre-COVID levels. The hotel signing by properties increased from 35 per cent in 2019 to 47 per cent 2022 in leisure destinations. Despite the great figures, hotels still have a long way to win loyal leisure guests. Indians are price sensitive and COVID has further elevated this behaviour. So, some discounts or vouchers can be introduced to win over guest and encourage travellers.

Revamping packages

Hotels also revamp offerings, packages and develop new incentives to keep up with the changing trends in leisure travel. **Abinash Manghani**, CEO, WelcomHeritage Hotels, said, "The increasing demand from

The increasing demand from domestic and international tourists motivates hotel developers to expand offerings and create new properties

domestic and international tourists motivates hotel developers to expand offerings and create new properties. We, as Indian leisure travellers are always seeking unique experiences, having diverse and constantly changing preferences."

Telling about the importance of leisure travel for hotel, he added, "This inspires us as hoteliers to keep developing spe-



cialized properties and experience offerings that cater to their specific needs and desires. We have witnessed an accelerated rise in new luxury resorts, boutique hotels, eco-friendly accommodations, and heritage properties, all aimed at meeting these expectations of leisure travellers."

"A rise in leisure travel spends has always been accompanied by a revenue boost in the hotels, thereby contributing to the economy of the region, creating employment opportunities, and inevitably leading to the development of infrastructure in tourist destinations such as improved transportation networks, expansion of airports, among others," Manghani added.

Leisure destinations galore

Vibhas Prasad, Director, Leisure Hotels Group, Uttarakhand & Himachal Pradesh, commented that leisure travel has always been an integral part of hotel and hospitality business. This type of travel is here to stay and according to my expectations, it will become a larger part of the industry going forward. There are many incredible parts in India and they can provide incredible experiences. People



Vibhas Prasad Director, Leisure Hotels Group, Uttarakhand & HP

will continue to travel across the country. "India seems to be in a good place to monetize consumption. People in the industry have been talking about hospitality supercycle, where consumption will lead to hospitality boom and with infrastructure improving—this will continue for next few years," he added.

"Increasing supply in leisure destinations will help enhance India's marketability as a major global tourist destination. This is also the reason several international and domestic hotel operators have either introduced new leisure brands to cater to this demand or are contemplating doing so. Due to this reason, this year witnessed multiple hotel signings in several Tier II, III & IV cities, including Agra and other emerging leisure destinations such as Haridwar, Corbett, Statue of Unity, Manali, McLeod Ganj, Morbi, Siliguri, Solan, Dharamshala,

Increasing supply in leisure destinations will help enhance India's marketability as a major global tourist destination

Digha, Kasauli, Katra, Mahabaleshwar, Puri, Pushkar, Rishikesh, Tirupati and Vrindavan, amongst others," Prasad further pointed out.

Upgradation is vital

Upgrading of products and services is a never-ending process. Customer expectations are high and hotels have to continuously evolve. There is a noticeable shift in the definition of upgradation as travellers today value experiences and authenticity over simple luxury.







spreading

wings

Due to rising disposable incomes and a desire for opulent experiences—demand for luxury travel has dramatically increased in India—prompting foreign hotel chains to introduce luxury brands in country.









Sanjay Sharma Founder & CEO, BluSalz

"With increased purchasing power, Indian travellers are moving away from cookie-cutter itineraries and seeking opulent immersive luxury experiences and hyper-personalization as a part of their travel," said **Daniel D'Souza**, President & Country Head, Holidays, SOTC Travel. Besides rapidly rising disposable incomes, several other factors are contributing to the unprecedented demand for luxury stays and travel options in India. Increasing awareness and improving infrastructure such as airports and expressways, are some of the tailwinds propelling luxury travel demand.

As per a report by the World Travel and Tourism Council, the Indian hospitality industry is likely to register an annual growth rate of 7.8 per cent for the next ten years, outperforming the broader economy. Luxury hospitality is one of the fastest-growing seg-

🚽 Sakshi Singh

A xplore, find and travel have all firmly established themselves in Jour social lexicon. Considering the global tourism boom, it is not surprising. More people than ever before are travelling and taking domestic and international trips. Indians, who were not known for being frequent travellers a few decades ago, have recently caught the travel bug. Increasing numbers of domestic tourists and growing international footfalls, coupled with rising disposable incomes, have led to a surge in demand for luxury travel options. Unlike the initial phase of the tourism boom, when domestic tourists sought value-for-money options, the new generation of travellers is more inclined towards the finer things.



Akash Garg Chairman & MD, Asia Resorts (Moksha Himalaya Spa)

ments in the tourism sector. The luxury travel market is poised to grow by US \$703.14 billion from 2023-2027 accelerating at a CAGR of 11.5 per cent during the forecast period, according to a research report by Technavio.

Consistent GDP growth has led to significant wealth creation over the years, producing several high-net-worth and ultra-high-net-

Luxury independent hotels have a remarkable capacity to fulfil the evolving preferences of discerning travellers

worth individuals. The number of individuals with assets of over US \$1 million is likely to grow by 107 per cent in the next five years and will touch 16.5 lakh, as per a report by Knight Frank. Similarly, the number of ultrahigh-net-worth individuals will grow by 58.4 per cent in the same period. The new segment of discerning travellers is more environmentally conscious and seeks world-class experiences and services.

The demand for curated and experiential luxury ranging from local cuisines and cultural engagement to unique activities and finedining experiences is booming. The increasing appetite for luxury expenditure is reflected in the surging demand for luxury services such as Palace on Wheels, Deccan Odyssey, Maharajas' Express, Royal Rajasthan on Wheels and cruises such as MV Mahabaahu Cruise, The Sacred Ganges and Maharajas' Express by Uniworld Wellness Cruise and MV Ganga Vilas by Antara Cruises.

"Travellers have been displaying a strong appetite for luxury travel and we have witnessed 30-35 per cent growth in demand versus pre-COVID. Despite the increasing

With a growing emphasis on health and overall well-being, hotels have been integrating wellness facilities into their offerings

overall costs by over 10 per cent for travel, our customers are clearly willing to increase spending for that once-in-a-lifetime experience," said **Rajeev Kale**, President & Country Head, Holidays, M!CE, Visa, Thomas Cook (India). The COVID had significantly disrupted the industry, but it also led to permanent behavioural changes. The importance of rejuvenation and work-life balance has taken centrestage, which has led to an increased frequency of vacations. "India's HNIs and head honchos are displaying an increased appetite for quick, short getaways to recharge, especially to wellness resorts and villa staycations in the most stunning, exclusive locations; also exclusive and private travel experiences, outdoor and adventure holidays, biking trips and glamping," said D'Souza.

International hospitality chains, tour operators and other service providers have taken note of the strong demand for luxury tourism in India. Tour operators have introduced specially curated experiential packages that include activities such as hot air balloon rides and dining in a natural water stream. On the other hand, gauging the demand, at least three international hospitality chains have announced the debut of their luxury



Daniel D'Souza President & Country Head, Holidays, SOTC Travel

brands in India. Jaipur is the chosen destination for the debut of Minor Hotels' Anantara brand and Hilton's Waldorf Astoria. Anantara is expected to welcome guests by the end of the year, while Waldorf Astoria is slated to be operational by 2027.

Radisson Group has zeroed in on Hyderabad for the launch of its Radisson Collection brand in India, while Marriott International opened a 151-room luxury property in Goa under the JW Marriott brand in April. "India is one of our top focus countries globally that presents significant opportunities to both investors and guests. We are thrilled to enter the country with our first Radisson Collection," said **Elie Younes**, Executive Vice President, Global Chief Development Officer, Radisson Hotel Group.

Marriott International CEO Anthony Capuano has on multiple occasions said that India has an immense appetite for luxury, and it is in the early stages of development. At a hospitality event, while highlighting the available room for growth in India, Capuano said that the Marriott Group would have 250 properties in 50 cities in the country by 2025. The Indian luxury hospitality space was dominated by home-grown brands such as Taj, ITC, Oberoi and Leela for a long time, the entry of global brands such as Waldorf Astoria, Ritz-Carlton, Park Hyatt and Raffles is a sign of a maturing market. The presence of global brands has helped in diversifying the market and has increased the available options for high-paying guests who seek the utmost luxury.

In addition to the influx of hotel chains expanding into the luxury segment, the Indian hospitality industry has witnessed a surge in the emergence of numerous new startups and hospitality brands. These entities have arisen in response to the escalating demand for luxury and experiential travel experiences in the country. **Sanjay Sharma**, Founder and CEO, BluSalz, expressed his perspective on the potential of luxury independent hotels in India. He believes these establishments are strategically positioned to attract a growing number of travel agencies

India's HNIs and head honchos are displaying an increased appetite for quick, short getaways to recharge

and a new generation of tourists who seek more thrilling and personalized accommodations. With their innate allure and distinctive offerings, luxury independent hotels have a remarkable capacity to fulfil the evolving preferences of discerning travellers.

Along with rising luxury travel, the optimism of global hospitality players is also supported by the humongous wedding industry, increasing business travel and the expanding



Rajeev Kale President & Country Head, Holidays, M!CE, Visa, Thomas Cook (India)

medical tourism sector. With destination weddings and theme-based weddings on the rise, a number of new properties have been planned with an equal focus on tourism as well as events such as weddings and corporate meetings. New-age couples are not shying away from splurging, which has given a shot in the arm to the hospitality industry. In fact, Waldorf Astoria Jaipur has been planned with weddings as its primary focus, as expenditures on hospitality services such as venue and dining take up the bulk of a typical wedding's budget. As per a report, it is estimated that Indians will spend US \$159 billion on weddings and other related activities in the first half of 2023. The medical tourism sector is not as large as the wedding market yet, but it is growing at a breakneck speed. The Indian government has designated medical tourism as a champion sector making it critical for driving future growth. It is estimated that medical tourism is expected to generate US \$12 billion annually in the next four years, a three-fold jump from US \$4 billion currently. A shift is underway in the medical tourism segment as the profile of inbound traffic is changing towards high-paying clients who visit the country for elective procedures.

According to **Akash Garg**, Chairman & Managing Director, Asia Resorts (Moksha Himalaya Spa), the realm of luxury travel has recently placed considerable emphasis on wellness. He stated, "With a growing emphasis on health and overall well-being, hotels have been integrating wellness facilities into their offerings. Presently, wellness resorts and retreats are observing a surge in demand from travellers who are not only seeking exceptional experiences but also willing to allocate additional financial resources towards their personal wellness endeavours."

As Indians embrace the allure of opulent journeys and seek out personalized and immersive encounters, the hospitality sector is undergoing a remarkable transformation, catering to the demands of a discerning and affluent clientele. As per industry estimates,

Travellers have been displaying strong appetite for luxury travel & we have witnessed 30-35 per cent growth in demand

the luxury segment accounted for 14 per cent of the total key signings in 2022, compared to 11 per cent in 2020 and 9 per cent in 2018. With a thriving wedding industry and the entry of international luxury brands, India's luxury travel industry is poised to reach unprecedented heights in the near future.



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Ideal getaway from busy city life

Fortune Hotels announces 5th hotel in Himachal Pradesh. In its pristine surroundings, the hotel combines immersive experience with a mystical charm in hills.

DDP Bureau

Protection of the scenic town of Khajjiar, Himachal Pradesh. Nestled amidst magnificent landscapes of Himachal Pradesh, this addition to the Fortune Hotels portfolio promises an extraordinary experience for travellers.

Announcing the hotel opening, **Samir MC**, Managing Director, Fortune Hotels, said, "Khajjiar is a mesmerising location, relatively untouched and undiscovered by most of the travellers. It is sure to appeal to holiday-goers looking to travel to unique locations. As a business, we recognize our strength in running successful hill hotels and our team hopes to recreate the same magic in Khajjiar as well. This is our 5th hotel in Himachal Pradesh and with it, we reiterate Fortune Hotels' dedication to delivering memorable experiences and impeccable service across our 49th location in India."

Set in the heart of the Mini Switzerland of India, Fortune Khajjiar blends warm



Samir MC Managing Director, Fortune Hotels

hospitality and a mystical charm in its pristine surroundings. The property offers guests an enchanting retreat surrounded by towering pine trees, snow-capped mountains and lush green meadows. The property's idyllic setting provides a perfect escape from bustling city life, allowing guests to immerse themselves in nature's splendour.

Situated just an hour's drive from the tourist hotspot Dalhousie, the hotel offers easy access to numerous popular tourist attractions in the region, making it a perfect choice for leisure travellers.

The rooms and suites along with the all-day diner, a chic bar, a modern banquet hall, a swimming pool, kids play area, and soon to open gymnasium and a restful spa, making the hotel apt for

As a business, we recognize our strength in running successful hill hotels & our team hopes to recreate the same magic in Khajjiar as well

families, couples and solo travellers alike. Additionally, the town attracts adventure seekers as well, hosting multiple adventure sports.

With a spacious and fully- equipped banquet hall and outdoors, Fortune Khajjiar lays special focus on hosting events and intimate celebrations too, making it a perfect venue for small weddings, corporate and social gatherings.





To maintain cleanliness, cook food thoroughly and store food at safe temperatures, it is crucial to practise food safety, says **Chef Prakash Chettiyar**.

DDP Bureau

very year, World Food Safety Day is observed on 7 June to increase Jpublic awareness of the value of safe food handling procedures and to emphasise the need for safe food worldwide. Chef Prakash Chettiyar, Director, Culinary, JW Marriott Kolkata, said, "Food safety is a crucial aspect of ensuring good health, as it encompasses the proper practices followed during the preparation, handling and storage of food to prevent the occurrence of foodborne illnesses and injuries. It is essential to maintain the safety of food from the initial stages of production on the farm to its consumption at the table."

Chettiyar added, "This involves adhering to a set of five fundamental concepts—maintain cleanliness: this involves ensuring hygiene measures are in place to prevent contamination of food during its production and handling; separate raw and cooked food: it is important to keep



Chef Prakash Chettiyar Director, Culinary, JW Marriott Kolkata

raw and cooked food separate to avoid cross-contamination and the transfer of harmful bacteria; cook food thoroughly: proper cooking of food is necessary to eliminate any potential pathogens that may be present and ensure its safety for consumption; and store food at safe temperatures: proper storage of food at appropriate temperatures prevents the growth of bacteria and other microorganisms that can cause foodborne illnesses."

Practical application

"Implementation of food safety measures in India can be achieved by adhering to the guidelines provided by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India. These guidelines, include essential sanitation practices and standards that need to be followed. The awareness and importance of food safety have increased in general life, especially in the post-COVID era. There is a growing emphasis on supporting local markets,

It is essential to maintain the safety of food from the initial stages of production on the farm to its consumption at the table

promoting locally sourced ingredients and providing training to indigenous vendors. These initiatives aim to ensure that food safety practices are integrated into local food systems, benefiting both consumers and vendors," explained Chettiyar.

Narking the 100th hote milestone

The Fern Hotels & Resorts scores a century with the opening of Fern Shelter Resort Palghar, further aims for domestic dominance.

DDP Bureau

The Fern Shelter Resort in Palghar, Maharashtra, which will be the company's 100th hotel, has announced its grand opening. The Fern Shelter Resort, Palghar promises a distinctive and unforgettable stay for its guests. Nestled amidst serene surroundings, the hotel has 81 tastefully appointed rooms that offer a blend of modern amenities and elegant décor. Each room has been thoughtfully designed to provide the utmost comfort and convenience to discerning travellers.

Suhail Kannampilly, Managing Director, The Fern Hotels & Resorts, expressed his utmost pride and joy as the brand reached this momentous milestone with the launch of its 100th hotel. He said, "The unveiling of The Fern Shelter Resort, Palghar, not only marks the expansion of the brand into this bustling business district but also signifies a significant achievement in the group's journey. We are grateful to our valued guests, dedicated team members and esteemed partners who have played a significant role in our growth and success. As we celebrate this achievement, we remain dedicated to expanding our presence and setting new benchmarks in the hospitality industry."

The group celebrated its 100th hotel milestone with a green gesture by plant-



Suhail Kannampilly Managing Director, The Fern Hotels & Resorts

ing 100 tree saplings at The Fern Shelter Resort, Palghar. Distinguished guests, dignitaries and representatives from The Fern Hotels & Resorts participated in the event, coming together with great enthusiasm to plant the 100 saplings. This gesture not only signifies the brand's commitment to greening the planet but also reflects its responsibility towards nurturing and safeguarding the environment.

In addition to its exceptional infrastructure and dining options, The Fern Shelter Resort, Palghar, boasts top-ofthe-line banquet facilities, including a picturesque lawn. This makes it an ideal destination for weddings, social events and corporate offsites, offering a seamless blend of luxury, comfort and convenience. The hotel will be fully operational by the end of June. The Fern Shelter Resort, Palghar follows the brand's ethos by incorporating eco-friendly features and initiatives to minimize its environmental impact. The Fern Hotels & Resorts takes pride in its sustainable practices and has received several accolades for its initiatives in ecofriendly hospitality.

Noshir A Marfatia, Senior VP, Sales & Marketing, The Fern Hotels & Resorts, shared, "It is a proud moment for us as we accomplish this significant milestone in

As we celebrate this success, we remain dedicated to expanding our presence and setting new benchmarks in the hospitality industry

the group's journey by opening our 100th hotel in India in our ever-growing portfolio. It further reinforces our commitment to expand our service offerings to newer destinations in the country. It also supports the company's objective of achieving growth through domestic dominance."

The achievement of reaching 100 hotels in India reflects the relentless dedication and hard work of the Fern team. The brand has consistently aimed to provide unparalleled hospitality experiences while maintaining a strong focus on sustainable practices.





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Sustainability leads vacation planning

Taking a regenerative approach to travel, Indian travellers are increasingly adopting sustainable hotel practices.



ooking.com's latest Sustainable Travel Report has found that Indian travellers are integrating sustainable thinking into their vacation planning, beyond everyday small habits such as using reusable water bottles or reusable shopping bags. Some say, they now travel outside of peak season to avoid overcrowding and opt for walking, biking, or taking public transport as part of their means of transportation. Others

h a v e also taken on the "buy local" mantra, favouring small, independent stores to contribute to the local economy.

"Over the eight years that Booking. com has conducted this research, the growing urgency that people feel to act now and make more sustainable travel choices continues to be encouraging. The report promisingly points to the traveller mindset evolving with some noticeable shifts in the more sustainable behaviors that travellers say they have put into practice over the past year. With continued industry collaboration and the dedication of our partners, we are on course for more sustainable travel to become the norm, and not the exception," said **Glenn Fogel**, CEO, Booking.com.

In a bid to save water, 55 per cent Indian travellers reuse their towels multiple times, up 21 per cent from 2022

Santosh Kumar, Country Manager, India, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Indonesia, Booking. com, said, "Indians are travelling with a renewed outlook to reduce their impact on the planet. With 73 of respondents wanting to leave the places they visit better than when they arrived, today's travellers are increasingly adopting a regenerative approach to travel. They are converting intent into action by taking active small steps at home and when travelling to drive a more sustainable future. To help travellers

> in their sustainability journey, Booking.com has taken measures to help not only travellers but also local communities and the environment. This includes awarding thousands of properties in India and globally with the Travel Sustainable Badge, the ability to compare

the CO₂ emissions for different flight options or being able to find and book greener taxi options. We are committed to making it easier for everyone to experience travel in a more mindful and responsible way."

According to the report, a majority of Indian travellers recognize by conserving resources now and being more sustainable, one can help save the planet. In just a year, Indians have grown extremely conscious of how they impact the planet and are implementing several measures as a result. In a bid to save water, 55 per cent



80% confirm that traveling more sustainably is important to them

4 Highest 99% India Philippines 96% Kenva Vietnam 96% Israel 65% 65% Belgium 62% Netherlands Denmark 4 Lowest

cent of individuals always carry their personal, reusable water bottle.

"Indians are taking several sustainabilityrelated actions as their environmental consciousness grows. Taking conscious habits from home when travelling, 66 per cent Indians now turn off their air-conditioning when they are not there (up 23 per cent from 2022). Indian travellers are moving towards sus-

> tainable travel practices and are becoming more selective when deciding their accommodations and modes of transportation primarily due to the worsening effects of climate change and growing environmental awareness. When it comes to transportation, 51 per cent of Indian travellers now plan their sightseeing so that they can walk, use bicycles or take public transportationessential for ecotourism. Looking to further reduce their impact, 41 per cent decide to go offpeak to avoid overcrowding, up 5 per cent since 2022.

Additionally, taking the buy local ideology is also a popular mantra amongst travellers, while on vacation with 52 per cent respondents favouring small, independent stores," the report said.

The report further noted, "Today, while the intent is clear, there are several challenges, travellers face to find and book sustainable properties, however, they are open to further incentives to travel sustainably. Nearly half of Indian (44 per cent) travellers are asking for dis-

counts and financial incentives to choose eco-friendly options. Additionally, it has been found that 53 per cent of people would be motivated to travel more sustainably if they were given reward points for selecting sustainable options. These reward points can also be used to receive additional benefits or discounts through online travel agencies."

travellers reuse their towels multiple times, up 21 per cent from 2022. As more people are comprehending the value of reducing, reusing, and recycling, 57 per cent of them

Taking conscious habits from home when travelling, 66 per cent Indians now turn off their air-conditioning when they are not there

brought their own reusable water bottles, up by 12 per cent since 2022. 52 per cent individuals are utilising reusable bags to be more responsible; 44 per cent practise recycling garbage while travelling; and 51 per Customize holidays gaining popularity

Indians showing greater willingness to travel for experiential stays compared to pre-COVID period, states Thomas Cook's India Holiday Report.

DDP Bureau

homas Cook (India) in its India Holiday Report for May 2023 has reaffirmed the extremely favourable consumer attitude and the significant revival of holidays. Thomas Cook (India) and its group company, SOTC Travel surveyed over 3,500 consumers, covering a comprehensive market, including India's metros, mini metros such as Pune, Chandigarh and Coimbatore and key Tier II-III markets of Jaipur, Indore, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai, Nagpur, Surat, Baroda, Bhubaneswar, Visakhapatnam, Mysore, Lucknow, Guwahati and Patna, among others to release the India Holiday Report - May 2023. The survey was conducted over a period of one month and administered via the companies' online channels.

Rajeev Kale, President & Country Head, Holidays, M!CE, Visa, Thomas Cook (India), said, "Holidays are witnessing a rapid rebound, with travel clearly emerging as a non-negotiable/must-do for Indians! Our India Holiday Report – May 2023 reveals that not only are multiple

While only domestic holidays were preferred by 40% of respondents and only international by 66%; a significant 90% opted for both

mini-cations back for 82 per cent respondents (in addition to 1-2 long holidays), but also that they are willing to pay 20 per cent more. Also noteworthy is the rise of young India's Gen Z and millennials, equally Middle India/Bharat as significant power centres in the evolution of the sector. With COVID having created a deeper appreciation for life, the you only live once (YOLO) mindset is driving travel desire: Indians are now seeking immersive travel experiences and wanting to live like a local! This highly positive consumer sentiment will serve as a key catalyst for our teams in creating customized holidays and exceptional experiences."

The key findings of the report are as follows:

Increased holiday intent: Travel is back on the Indian consumer radar, with over 84 per cent respondents indicating increased intent to travel in the next six months versus 45 per cent pre-COVID. In addition to at least one or two long annual trips of approx. 10–12 days, 82 per cent respondents indicated preference





for multiple 3-4 shorter trips/minications (domestic and international short haul).

High growth segments: While multigenerational families (75 per cent), DINKS couples (62 per cent) continue to display a strong travel desire, high growth segments that are emerging include:

Rise of Young India: As the youngest demography in the world, approx. 65 per cent of India's population is below the age of 35. Young India (millennials and Gen Z) forms the new powerhouse for the sector with the highest intent to travel (95 per cent). The concept of YOLO is driving travel demand.

Gen S: India's silvers and seniors have significant disposable income post-retirement, topped up with funds from their children, and are displaying a high travel appetite (58 per cent), especially for premium holidays.

Regional India-Bharat: Rising disposable incomes plus the aspirational value of holidays is resulting in strong desire (60 per cent).

Experiences driving demand: COVID-induced restrictions have increased appreciation for life. 78 per cent respondents opted for experience led travel to create memories of a lifetime with deeper exploration and distinctive local elements versus regular sightseeing: bucket list destinations/elements (65 per cent), gastronomy (45 per cent), outdooradventure-fun (50 per cent) and culture and history (30 per cent).

Surge across both domestic and international travel: While only domestic holidays were preferred by 40 per cent of respondents and only international by 66 per cent; a significant 90 per cent opted for both. Domestic destinations favoured

ANALYSIS

were Kashmir (60 per cent), Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand (50 per cent), Ladakh (35 per cent), North East (40 per cent), Kerala (25 per cent), Andamans (30 per cent), Goa (30 per cent) and Bhutan in the Indian subcontinent (30 per cent). International tourism is witnessing a strong resurgence. Despite visa challenges, Europe is a clear favourite preferred by over 46 per cent of respondents led by Switzerland, France, Spain and Italy. Short hauls (50 per cent) are witnessing rapid growth with increased interest for Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Oman, Maldives and Mauritius.

85 per cent respondents displayed a clear return of confidence in air travel with increased demand for airinclusive packages

Mode of travel: 85 per cent respondents displayed a clear return of confidence in air travel with increased demand for air-inclusive packages, 15 per cent for drivecations; cruise holidays/sea-cations seeing a surge of 70 per cent.

Customers opting for Hybrid/ Omni-Channel routes to choose their holiday: While digital models continue to see an uptick of 66 per cent, 58 per cent respondents require the guidance of a holiday expert and prefer to purchase their holiday through retail outlets, 95 per cent prefer phygital channels (combination of physical and digital models), based on their convenience.

Sustainability: 30–35 per cent of respondents are becoming more mindful about the environment/local communities. □



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Top hotel chains anticipate increased sales

Growing population of mass affluent and high net worth individuals, spending more on holidays, fuelling long term growth of luxury hotels.

DDP Bureau

Some 86 per cent of senior executives of large luxury hotel chains expect revenue to increase this year when compared to 2022. This is according to new global research commissioned by communication technology company Communications Specialist.

Nearly one in 12 (8 per cent) of the senior luxury hotel executives interviewed anticipate revenue growth of up to 10 per cent on last year for the organizations they work for, and half predict growth of between 10 per cent and 30 per cent. A further 12 per cent anticipate growth of between 30 per cent and 50 per cent, and some 16 per cent expect revenue to be at least 50 per cent higher.

Kevin Buchler, Chief Marketing Officer, Communications Specialist, said,

"Our research shows that the luxury hotel market is very optimistic about market growth this year. They expect occupancy rates to be higher than in 2022, and there are several factors such as a growing population of mass affluent and high net worth individuals supporting long-term growth in the sector. Our findings also suggest that there is still a bounce-back from

Nearly one in 12 (8 per cent) of the senior luxury hotel executives interviewed anticipate revenue growth of up to 10 per cent on last year

COVID with many people wanting to spend more on their holidays this year to make up for the lack of vacation time during the recent Coronavirus lockdowns. It is also clear from our study that standards continue to improve in the high-end hotel market, and key to this is investing in technology to ensure even higher levels of efficiency and customer service."

When comparing expected revenue streams for this year to 2019, 92 per cent anticipate some form of revenue growth.

A key reason for the level of optimism amongst senior luxury hotel executives is that 90 per cent expect occupancy rates at the hotels they work for to be higher this year than in 2022—18 per cent predict they will be significantly higher. For the high-end, luxury hotel market as a whole, the corresponding figures are 78 per cent and 20 per cent, respectively.

When asked for other reasons for optimism around revenue growth, 70 per cent of senior hotel executives interviewed cited the growing population of mass-

affluent and high net worth individuals, and 57 per cent said it was because people are generally looking to spend more on their holidays following the COVID lockdowns. Some 39 per cent said it is because the luxury hotel market experience has improved and become even more sophisticated, and 33 per cent said it was due to the guest experience becoming more personalised.

However, although revenues are expected to rise, all of the respondents interviewed say overall costs for the highend, luxury hotel market will be higher in 2023 than last year. One in four (24 per cent) expect them to be at least 30 per cent more.



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Technology meets exclusivity

Ozone Overseas showcased its most recent product line of home improvement and security solutions in recently concluded Index Exhibition.

🚽 DDP Bureau

zone Overseas recently showcased its latest range of products at the Index Exhibition, which was held in Mumbai from 26 to 28 May 2022. With over 200 brands showcasing their products, the Index Exhibition is one of India's biggest international trade fairs catering to the architecture and interior design industries.

During the exhibition, Ozone Overseas displayed its diverse range of products, including the Eazy & Outliner Framed Shower Enclosures, the Kubik Demountable Partition System, Door Hardware, and an extensive collection of kitchen and furniture fittings. Visitors also had the chance to witness the company's fingerprint and furniture locks, digital safes and smart devices. Additionally, Ozone Overseas also interacted and communicated Commenting on the success of the exhibition, **Abhishek Aggarwal**, President, Strategy, Ozone Overseas, said, "The brand focuses on curat-

Ozone focuses on curating products that cater specifically to Indian market. For instance, our security solutions are designed to address needs of Indian customers

ing products that cater specifically to the Indian market. For instance, our security solutions are designed to address the needs of Indian customers. By embracing such tailored approaches, we foster long-term relationships with consumers, dealers and various stakeholders."







Lounge Chair collection by Living Spaces

The Lounge Chair collection showcases a diverse range of designs, encompassing vintage-style chairs, chairs featuring contoured back upholstery, chairs showcasing luxurious quilted back upholstery and traditional designs blended with contemporary finishes. These variations cater to different preferences and seamlessly integrate with a wider range of interior styles. The collection offers an extensive selection of styles, materials, and sizes to cater to diverse tastes and interior design preferences. Lounge chairs can be crafted from an assortment of materials, including wood, metal, and upholstered with fabric, leather, or synthetic materials.





Rahnumaa by DBEL Studio

DBEL Studio has launched the sculptural lamps Rahnumaa. Rahnumaa reflects the human journey in a profound way through its design and takes you through every stage of life. The collection comprises a series of seven lighting compositions-the journey begins with The Womb, which represents the beginning of one's life and where creation starts. The collection is an assemblage of eclectic and minimalist table lamps, floor lamps and planters made of marble and fibrereinforced polymer. DBEL Studio is a pioneer of contemporary lighting that envisions creating lighting as an experience and accentuating any corner of the space.

FINEZZA by GRAFF

GRAFF has launched its faucet collection for the bathroom, FINEZZA. The faucet's main body has been developed in a shape that relies on a unique horizontal section that is wider at the base and at the top, while slimmer in the middle. The collection is available in polished chrome or polished nickel that can easily adapt to a transitional environment, while the olive bronze and brushed nickel finishes shine like jewels inside bathrooms with a classical style. The complete collection offers a wide range of elements for the bathroom and the shower.





Gilded Graphic by Kika Tableware

The newly launched Gilded Graphic dinnerware collection by Kika brings extravaganza to your table as it captures the magic of classic Ikat through a contemporary lens, embellished with 24-karat gold accents. Featuring bold Ikat-style geometrics, this premium bone china dinnerware collection elevates your dining experience with style and sophistication. This collection offers something that makes every occasion memorable, whether you are hosting a formal black-tie dinner party at home or enjoying your Sunday morning caffeine fix with the Gilded Espresso Cup and Saucer.





UKIYO Collection by AGAM Design Studio

AGAM Design Studio, founded in 2020 by 31-year-old Designer Nandha Ravichandran, has launched UKIYO Collection. The Ukiyo series features wooden furniture characterized by solid hollows and intricate cord weaving. All furniture at AGAM can be customized in terms of dimensions, colour, material and finish. UKIYO Collection has beds, sofas, centre tables, dining tables, side tables, study tables, bar stools, bed benches, TV units, and more. Each design can be customised as per the size and needs of the consumer and preferred material and finish.

Berkeley and Swallow by UDC Homes

UDC Homes has presented two new luxuriating textured wallcoverings—Berkeley and Swallow. The dual inaugural collection of Swallow and Berkley showcases an array of styles, including but not limited to abstract, geometric and Wabi-Sabiinspired wallcoverings. These exquisite wallcoverings create invigorating and familiar spaces by using earthy hues and brilliant aesthetics that push the boundaries of art, offering an amalgamation of styles that genuinely redefine wall decor. The brand's vision is to create delightful walls that nurture dreams and aspirations in the most unique and customised ways.



Clinch Home

Cinch Home has launched its online store with a vision to offer and create decor products that resonate with every Indian and seamlessly blend into their homes. With exquisite designs, intricate detailing, and a thoughtful curation of materials, Cinch Home's collection is a testament to the brand's passion for creating products that are perfect for adding a touch of luxury to one's living space. Whether you are looking to infuse your home with a cozy ambiance or searching for the perfect gift, their handpicked selection of decor items is sure to add a touch of refined elegance to any space.





Millefleur by The Blue Knot

Amid summer, it is time to anchor a vibrant spring vibe with the lifestyle brand The Blue Knot's latest rug collection, Millefleur. The edit is a homage to the vivacious midsummer dream with rugs inspired by the English chintz and opulent blossoms, meticulously woven in an eclectic palette with cheerful hues that adorn to enliven a space with their nature-endowed freshness. The Blue Knot entwines craftsmanship with contemporary sentiments and immaculate finishes, where every rug is crafted with passion and grace. This collection is a canvas drenched in lively hues that brings spring to your bohemian summer party or a mellow movie night.

Wilde Kids Custom Wallpaper Collection

Wilde Pattern Company's latest Custom Wallpaper Collection offers a wide array of design possibilities. With advancements in digital printing technology, there are an incredible variety of themes, patterns, and colors available. From whimsical characters to captivating landscapes, from educational motifs to abstract designs, the options are endless. One can create a captivating haven for your little prince, a delightful sanctuary for your princess, or a wonderfully inclusive space for your precious children. What sets the collections apart are not only its captivating designs but also transforming any room in a short span of ten working days as per the client's need.





Classifieds



PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform our Travel Associates/Travel agencies & General Public that **Ms. Priti Acharya Tushar – Associate Director of Sales and Ms. Ekta Gandhi** – **Assistant Sales Manager** are no longer in the service of our organisation w.e.f. 04th June, 2023 onwards.

Any establishment / Travel agencies dealing with them on behalf of Averina International Resorts Pvt. Ltd; Holiday Inn Resort Goa or Aaverina Hospitality Pvt. Ltd and Essentia Hotels shall be doing so at their own risk.

We kindly request everyone to take note of this cautionary notice and refrain

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Please be aware that our Organisation will not assume any responsibility for any transactions or deals made with them from this point forward.





Ms. Ekta Gandhi Ms. Priti Acharya Tushar

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MOVEMENTS



K MOHANCHANDRAN

Senior Vice President, Operations, East and North-East, IHCL

K Mohanchandran has been elevated to Senior Vice President, Operations, East and North-East, IHCL. Prior to being appointed to his current role, he was serving as Area Director, Udaipur and Jodhpur and General Manager, Taj Lake Palace, Udaipur. He embarked on his journey with IHCL/Taj Group in 1989 as a Management Trainee and has been an integral part of the Taj legacy ever since. With close to 35 years of experience in hospitality, Mohanchandran's strength lies in his thorough knowledge of the industry and his people-handling skills.



ATUL ARORA

Director, Sales, Catering, Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport

Atul Arora has been promoted to Director, Sales, Catering at the Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport. As Director, Sales, Catering, Arora will play a pivotal role in driving the growth and profitability of the catering sales division. Arora will lead and strategize the catering sales efforts, working closely with the team to deliver exceptional catering solutions and exceed clients' expectations. With an impressive career spanning over 15 years in the hospitality industry, Arora brings a wealth of experience and expertise to his new role.



HARISH GOPALAKRISHNAN General Manager, The Westin Goa

Harish Gopalakrishnan has been appointed as GM, The Westin Goa. With over 23 years of hospitality expertise, Gopalakrishnan will provide strategic oversight to the senior management and operations teams of The Westin Goa. His primary responsibility will be to develop business strategies and operations for the hotel. He will be responsible for developing strategic plans, enhancing organizational effectiveness, creating a motivating work environment, implementing innovative changes that align with Marriott standards, looking for growth opportunities.



SUNIL KUMAR General Manager, JW Marriott Hotel Kolkata

With over two decades of experience and strong leadership skills in the luxury hotel industry, Sunil Kumar, has joined JW Marriott Hotel Kolkata as General Manager. His primary responsibilities at the hotel include enhancing productivity, ensuring customer satisfaction and implementing strategic initiatives. With his passion for the industry and wealth of knowledge, he has consistently delivered exceptional results. Kumar had previously served as GM, The Westin Goa for over two years, where he established the brand in the highly competitive market.



KRIS REYNOLDS Assistant General Manager, Hyatt Place Vadodara

Hyatt Place Vadodara has appointed Kris Reynolds as their Assistant General Manager. As AGM, Reynolds will spearhead the Front Office and Housekeeping departments, along with overseeing the Sales & Marketing of the hotel. He has spent over 11 years with Hyatt India and has climbed the ladder steadily, starting from the position of a Sales Executive in 2010 with Hyatt Hotels. In 2012, he was appointed Sales Manager at the Grand Hyatt Goa and was subsequently elevated to Senior Sales Manager in 2014.



SALIL KOPAL Director, Marketing, Four Seasons Hotel Mumbai

Salil Kopal has joined Four Seasons Hotel Mumbai as Director, Marketing. In his new role, Kopal will spearhead strategic marketing initiatives, brand development, sales and customer engagement strategies to further promote the commercial interests of the property and strengthen its position as a premier destination for luxury hospitality. A graduate of the IHM Ahmedabad, he has built on his academic training in hospitality management with 18 years of service with luxury brands such as Ritz Carlton, Sheraton Hotels, The Oberoi Group, Marriott Hotels and Encalm Hospitality.







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