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A MONTHLY ON HOSPITALITY TRADE
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A WAKE-UP call for India



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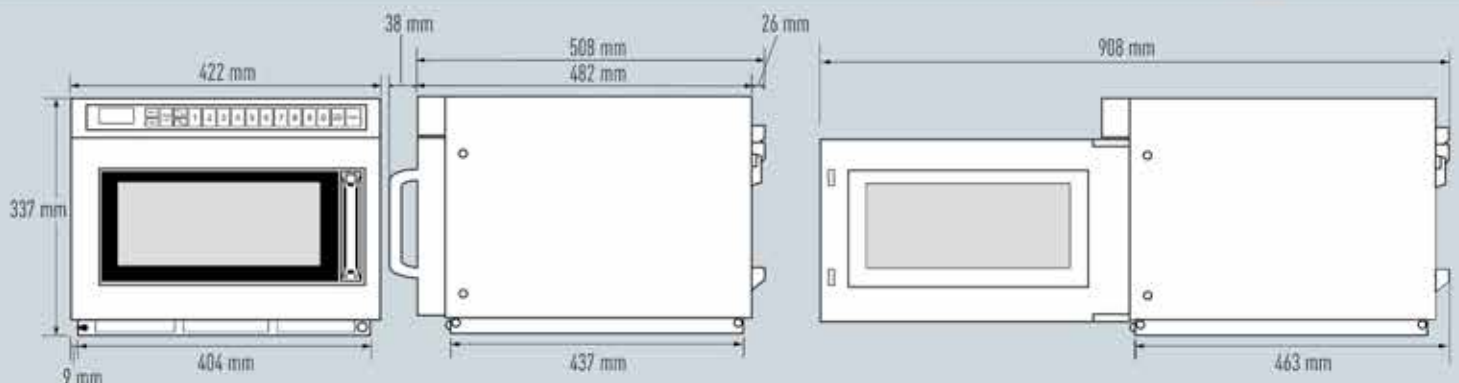
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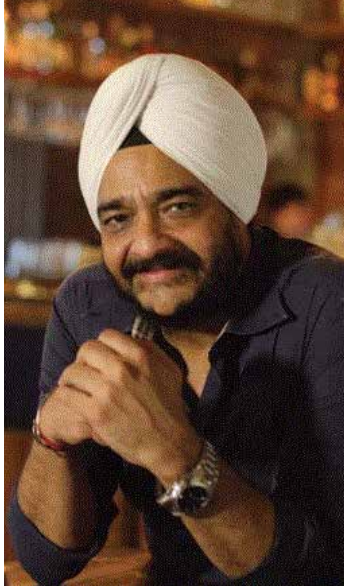
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Panasonic Appliances India Co Ltd., 6th Floor, "SPIC HOUSE" Annexe, No. 88, Mount Road, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032.

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Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President
FHRAI


FHRAI-IHM is collaborating with Parikshan as the training partner to offer Basic Catering Classes to its member organisations


Dear fellow members,

I trust every one of you is fine and doing well. The second wave of the pandemic has devastated us all. There is no one we would know, who can claim that either they or their immediate circle of family or friends have had no one affected by this dreadful virus. This wave did not spare anyone, young or old. What is worse is that the second wave was highly infectious and claimed so many lives. It made India the COVID capital of the world, hardly an accolade to boast about. Our industry also suffered a huge setback with so many of us losing important staff members. Industry stalwarts like Mr. Anil Bhandari, Mr. SH Rahman and our Past President Shri Rajindera Kumar ji also sadly succumbed during this pandemic. We pray for peace to all the departed souls.

Our industry has been virtually shut since one-and-a-half year and all of you are well aware of all the various representations which have gone to related ministers and their departments as well as the all important RBI. We have been all this while in continuous touch with the authorities explaining to them why an immediate stimulus must be provided to ensure the survival of this industry. The govt seems to have taken note of our representations which highlight our dismal condition and is planning to come out with a sector-specific stimulus announcement. We look forward to some kind of relief from such an announcement very soon. FHRAI which is also the founding member of FAITH is liaising with the various departments.

You will be glad to know that FIHM is all set to start physical classes as soon as the permission from the govt comes in for restarting schools and colleges, under the able leadership of Prof. A.K Singh (Ex IHM Mumbai). The curriculum having been sorted, admissions should start soon for the current period. FHRAI-IHM is going to impart a four-module training of soft skills

required utmost during the post-COVID situation along with technical expertise in the field of F&B Division (Production & Service) and Room Division and F&B Service Staff of Hotels and Restaurant Front of the Staff.

FHRAI-IHM is collaborating with Parikshan as the training partner to offer Basic Catering Classes to its member organisations. In addition, as part of this partnership, it is also offering Free Consultancy Services on Labelling to members who are producing food items and selling them in packets with labels. Through this service, members will be enabled to find out whether the label they are using is right or wrong. This will help them from paying heavy fines if any violation is found in the label by the authorities. This service will also be offered free of cost till June 2021. FHRAI is especially organising these sessions to instill confidence in its members and their workforce to prepare them to tackle the ongoing & post-pandemic situation. The training will be conducted online using the Zoom platform. A GOI Certificate will be provided to the trainees who successfully complete the training programme. This will also cover the latest updates with FSSAI which would be extremely useful in making the fraternity fully equipped as and when operations resume.

Be safe.

Note: The May 2021 edition of the FHRAI magazine will be available as a printed version on request. And, the e-version of the same shall be available on the FHRAI website and circulated to all members as broadcast on registered email.

With kind regards,
Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI

MAY 2021

'A WAKE-UP CALL'

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The current pandemic is an inflection point for the medical tourism segment in India, giving the country an opportunity to become a global medical tourism hub.

COVER IMAGE:
FREEPIK



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SECRETARY GENERAL

Jaison Chacko - sg@fhrai.com

PUBLISHER

Devika Jeet - devika@ddppl.com

SENIOR CORRESPONDENT

Neha Rawat - neha.rawat@ddppl.com

DESK EDITOR

Smita Kulshreshth - smita.kulshreshth@ddppl.com

CREATIVE DESIGN

Raashi Ajmani Girdhar

MARKETING & SALES - DELHI

Nikhil Jeet - Nikhil.jeet@ddppl.com
Director Advertising (+91 9910031313)

Gaganpreet Kaur - gaganpreet@ddppl.com
Marketing Manager (+919650399934)

Ankit Endlaw - ankit.endlaw@ddppl.com
Manager Sales (+919650399928)

MUMBAI

Harshal Ashar - harshal@ddppl.com
General Manager (+919619499167)

Priyanshu Wankhade - priyanshu@ddppl.com
Manager Advertising (+919619499170)

SOUTH

Shradha Kapoor - shradha.kapoor@ddppl.com
Assistant Manager (+918179792492)

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Anil Kharbanda

ADVERTISEMENT DESIGNERS

Nitin Kumar

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FHRAI EC members talk about the lackadaisical role of the government in terms of providing relief to the industry, ECLGS 3.0 scheme and priority vaccination of hospitality workers.



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Marriott On Wheels is an endeavour to take gourmet delicacies from the hotel's kitchens to guests' homes, says Prakash Chettiyar, Executive Chef, JW Marriott Kolkata.

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FHRAI

B-82, 8th Floor, Himalaya House
Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi 110001
Tel: 91-11-40780780, Fax: +91-11-40780777
Email: fhrai@fhrai.com

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Editor: Devika Jeet

Email: fhraimag@ddppl.com
Tel: +919818767141

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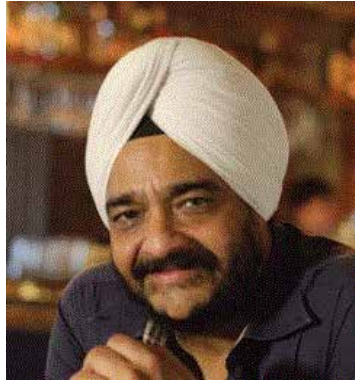
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Special Credit Guarantee Window

FHRAI has submitted a representation requesting Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to provide a 'Special Credit Guarantee Window' to the hospitality sector under the ECLGS.

The apex association of hotels and restaurants in the country – FHRAI has submitted a representation requesting the Hon'ble Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to provide a 'Special Credit Guarantee Window' to the hospitality sector under the ECLGS. Under these special provisions, the FHRAI has asked that the government standardises and aligns the tenures and the moratorium facilities floated under ECLGS 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0. It has also asked that the tenure of loan and moratorium facilities granted under the ECLGS 3.0 to be extended to loans already sanctioned under ECLGS 1.0 and 2.0 with retrospective effect.

"The sector is under tremendous financial stress due to the ongoing lockdown. Closure of many establishments in large numbers has been reported from all parts of the country along with massive job losses in the sector.



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI



It is vital to align the tenure and moratorium facilities



Surendra Kumar Jaiswal
Vice President, FHRAI



Allocation of ₹54,000 cr under ECLGS 2.0 was inadequate



already sanctioned under ECLGS 1.0 and 2.0 with retrospective effect," says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI.

"Government data has repeatedly highlighted that tourism, travel and hospitality sectors are the worst hit by the pandemic, but no specific relief measures have been provided to uplift the sector. Provisions under ECLGS 3.0 came very late and the allocation of ₹54,000 crores towards travel, tourism and hospitality sector clubbed with 27 other sectors under the ECLGS 2.0 was grossly inadequate. It is therefore imperative to make some additional provision of funds under the ECLGS to support the survival efforts of the tourism and hospitality sectors which have been continuously ignored in all previous financial packages," says **Surendra Kumar Jaiswal**, Vice President, FHRAI.

Without adequate government intervention, the situation will escalate further impacting lakhs of livelihoods along with large number of units pushed towards insolvencies and NPAs. The repayment schedule for loans taken under ECLGS 1.0 and 2.0 are likely to begin now, but unfortunately due to the ongoing lockdown many establishments do not have the cash flow to repay it. Therefore, it is

imperative to align the tenure and moratorium facilities under ECLGS 1.0 and 2.0 with ECLGS 3.0. The sector did not make any income for nearly 10 months. As of today, the situation is even worse for the sector and establishments cannot even think of servicing of their loans in the near future. Hence, we request that the tenor of loan and moratorium facilities granted under the ECLGS 3.0 be extended to loans

FHRAI has also requested the government to consider eligible outstanding for tourism, travel and hospitality as an average of 11 months of FY 2020 beginning April 1, 2019 till February 29, 2020 as against the outstanding as of February 29, 2020 as proposed in the guidelines.ECLGS 3.0 scheme," concludes Kohli.

App-based taxi operators

HRAWI has submitted a representation requesting the government to allow app-based taxi service aggregators to operate in the interest of tourists and the industry.

The HRAWI has submitted a representation to the Hon'ble Chief Minister – Pramod Sawant and to the Hon'ble Tourism Minister – Manohar Ajaonkar requesting the govt to allow app-based taxi service aggregators to operate in the interest of tourists & the industry.

HRAWI has stated that the local taxi operators' demands are unreasonable while viable & transparent app-based options are available. "App-based cab operators including Ola, Uber, Goa Miles, among others offer tourists the choice of their ride. These operators provide decent services at reasonable fares to the local commuters & tourists, and hence should be allowed to operate. App-based cab operators are operating in almost every state in



Sherry Bhatia
President, HRAWI

Goa does not have app-based cab operators



the country but not in Goa which is a huge inconvenience for both the domestic and international tourists. We also suggest that the state govt implements the use of digital meters on all local taxis. This will bring transparency and offer convenient and reliable taxi services in the state," says **Sherry Bhatia**, President, HRAWI.

HRAWI

FHRAI to intervene in Oyo case

In the latest hearing on the Oyo insolvency case before the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), the FHRAI has been allowed to intervene on behalf of hotels.

The FHRAI has presently filed the application on behalf of its member hotels in India, who are operational creditors and are suffering hugely on account of non-payments of debt by Oyo. Sr. Counsel Kishnendu Datta appeared for FHRAI intervening on behalf of its affected members for their outstanding of approximately ₹72 crores. The Tribunal has also allowed the FHRAI to make its oral submissions on June 2, 2021. The total claims registered with IRP against Oyo are to the tune of ₹200 crores.

The hotels have stated that Oyo entered into various kinds of agreements ranging from leave and license agreements to Management Services Agreement with minimum return assurances, but Oyo eventually breached the terms of the agreements. "The FHRAI has been receiving several complaints from member



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI

There are complaints regarding non-payment of debts

hotels with respect to the non-payment of debts by Oyo for years. The FHRAI has presently filed the application before the NCLAT on behalf of aggrieved hotels and restaurants across India who have filed their claims with the Insolvency Resolution Professional (IRP). Many are small standalone hotels that are fighting to survive in an extremely competitive market.

At present hospitality business is badly affected due to the pandemic and the non-payment of the debts by Oyo is causing extreme hardships to hotels. The development in the case has given a sense of relief to several hotels across the country who felt short-changed by Oyo's sudden change in their alignment and policy. It has brought them a new ray of hope with the possibility of recovering their rightful dues," says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI.

FHRAI pleads for fiscal measures

RBI data on the deployment of gross bank credit to hospitality sector says that outstanding amount for tourism, hotels & restaurants as of February 26, 2021 stood at ₹48,102 crore.

The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) in a representation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi has pleaded for special fiscal measures to rescue the hospitality industry from severe COVID impact. In the representation, which was also submitted to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, MSME Minister Nitin Gadkari, and Tourism Minister Prahlad Singh Patel, the Federation requested for a three-year moratorium extension on all loans, complete waiver on the interest of loans from March 2020 till the time businesses are normalised, and a stimulus package for the industry's working capital requirements.

Hospitality has been among the sectors including aviation, realty, retail, etc., that have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. As per industry estimates, a majority of the hospitality sector, which comprises micro and small-sized hotels and restaurants, has witnessed revenues plunging with multiple outlets and properties either shut or on the brink of closure amid the second wave of the pandemic. "Since March 2020, the industry has been struggling to manage its statutory and capital expenditure obligations. Without a moratorium on EMIs and interest payments, the sector will completely crumble...Our right



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI



The right to recover loans from us is being allowed

to conduct business was taken away but the right to recover loans from us is being allowed. This is discrimination against our industry," said **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI.

According to the industry figures highlighted by FHRAI, the hotel industry's total revenue in the financial year 2020 (FY20) was ₹1.82 lakh



Pradeep Shetty
Vice President, FHRAI



50% of hotels & restaurants continue to run in losses

crore while around 75 per cent (over ₹1.30 lakh crore) of FY21 revenue is estimated to be wiped off. As per the data on the deployment of gross bank credit to the hospitality sector, from the Reserve Bank of India's April bulletin, the outstanding amount for tourism, hotels and restaurants as of February 26, 2021, stood at ₹48,102 crore, up from ₹45,184 crore as of February 28, 2020.

"Due to financial losses, 30 per cent of hotels and restaurants in the country have shut down permanently and about 20 per cent haven't opened fully since the first lockdown. The remaining 50 per cent continue to run in losses and revenues are below 30 per cent of the pre-COVID levels. The financial institutions have marked the industry in the negative list," said **Pradeep Shetty**, Joint Secretary, FHRAI.

The association urged the government to ask the RBI for interest on loans at fixed deposit rates along with two per cent for all loans taken by the sector. According to FHRAI, the tourism and hospitality industry accounted for around 10 per cent of India's GDP, supported around 90 million jobs, and generated Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE) to the tune of ₹1,94,881 crores in 2019.



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‘A wake-up call’

The current pandemic is an inflection point for the medical tourism segment in India, giving the country an opportunity to become a global medical tourism hub.

In the last decade, India has emerged as one of the leading medical tourism destinations globally. The presence of several high-quality, well-equipped healthcare facilities along with a strong base of highly skilled and specialised English-speaking medical professionals, offering world-class treatments at much more affordable costs compared to developed nations are some of the reasons for the growth of this segment in India.

Reports indicate that medical treatments and travel in India cost up to 50% less than that in developed western countries. India has also been successful at attracting medical tourists from other developing nations, mainly from Asia and Africa, looking for specialised treatments that may not be easily available in their home countries.

Looking at the potential in this segment, the government introduced e-medical visa in 2014, which along with the other competitive advantages mentioned earlier have provided a significant boost to this segment. The government also set up facilitation counters at major airports for medical travellers and launched a portal to provide comprehensive information on the healthcare facilities in the country. As a result, foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) on medical visas to India have grown at a notable CAGR of over 30% during 2014-19 and accounted

for 6.4% of the total FTAs in the country in 2019. The medical tourism segment was expected to reach US\$9 bn in 2020 as per a report by FICCI, however, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the related travel restrictions became temporary roadblocks in its growth story. The segment has been witnessing green shoots in the last few months with easing travel restrictions and the creation of air bubbles, with a number of medical travellers, especially those coming in for critical treatments, gradually picking up.

The current pandemic is an inflection point for the medical tourism segment in India, giving the country an opportunity to become a global medical tourism hub as soon as international travel restrictions are eased considerably. India has showcased its scientific capabilities by being one of the few countries to manufacture its own COVID vaccination, which is being used to inoculate not only Indians but also people in other countries.

However, the second wave has been a wake-up call for the country as it exposed the issues in the country's healthcare system, pushing the government to increase its spending on strengthening the medical infrastructure in the country.

Moreover, India continues to be one of the most affordable destinations for medical treatments globally, which will continue to be an advantage in the post-COVID world.



The medical tourism segment was expected to reach US\$9 bn in 2020



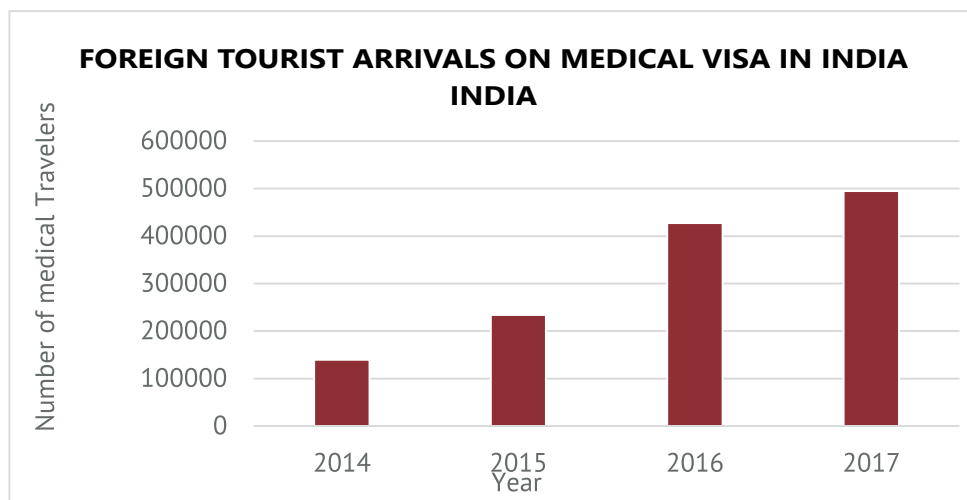
A GLOBAL MEDICAL TOURISM HUB IN THE FUTURE



Mandeep Lamba

“The Indian hospitality sector has joined the country's fight against the second wave of the pandemic and is trying its best to help reduce the stress on the crumbling healthcare infrastructure in the country. Hotels are providing fresh, packed meals to medical staff and tying up with hospitals to provide isolation & quarantine facilities to mildly symptomatic and asymptomatic patients, helping reduce the acute shortage of hospital beds in the country.

The second wave has been a wake-up call for India as it exposed the issues in the country's healthcare system, pushing the government to increase its spending on strengthening the medical infrastructure in the country. Better equipped healthcare facilities with a strong base of highly skilled and specialised medical professionals, along with India's reputation of being one of the most affordable medical tourism destinations globally will go a long way in making the country a global medical tourism hub in the future.”



Trend of Medical FTAs in India
Source: Ministry of Tourism, EY Analysis

India competes with other Asian countries such as Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia that offer similar advantages to medical travellers. It is, therefore, imperative to develop effective marketing campaigns to create awareness and communicate the COVID safety measures being implemented at various facilities. This will showcase the country as a 'safe' global medical tourism destination and help rebuild traveller confidence. The campaigns should promote India's strength in alternate medicine and practices such as Ayurveda, Naturopathy, and Yoga.

CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN DESTINATION COUNTRIES & INDIA'S TOP SOURCE-COUNTRIES

Country	India	Thailand	Singapore	South Korea	Malaysia	Turkey
Bangladesh						
Afghanistan						
Iraq						
Maldives						
Oman						
Kenya						
United States						
United Kingdom						

Connectivity across source countries and compete markets

TRAVEL AND TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS INDEX

Country	Travel and Tourism Competitiveness index	Overall rank in 2019
South Korea	4.8	16
Singapore	4.8	17
Malaysia	4.5	29
Thailand	4.5	31
India	4.4	34
Turkey	4.2	43

Travel and Tourism competitiveness index



Foreign tourist arrivals on medical visas to India have grown at a CAGR of over 30% during 2014-19

OVERALL PERFORMANCE OF INDIA

	Quality of Health Care Accreditation		Accessibility
	Price of Treatment		Tourism
	Visa Fee		Regulations

Rajindera Kumar, a warrior

Rajindera Kumar, Former President of FHRAI & HRANI passed away recently. He made invaluable contributions to the advocacy efforts of FHRAI & HRANI.

Indian hospitality veteran, Rajindera Kumar, Former President of FHRAI & HRANI passed away on May 6, 2021. 78-year-old Kumar was the son of the legendary hotelier, Ram Pershad, who was President of FHRAI and HRANI for the longest period.

Kumar was one of the longest serving senior members of the Managing Committee of Hotel and Restaurant Association of Northern India (HRANI). He was elected President of HRANI in 2002-03 and then in 2006-2008. He also led FHRAI as President in 2009-10. Kumar remained a true warrior of the industry all his life. He made invaluable contributions to the advocacy efforts of FHRAI & HRANI, leaving a special imprint across India.

Born on January 10, 1943, Kumar was educated at the School of Hotel Administration, Cornell University, USA. After graduation, he worked as a management trainee for Statler Inn Hotel, which was a part of the hotel administration school after which he joined the Sheraton Hotels in Boston and Philadelphia.

He returned to India in 1968 and then got actively involved with the Ambassador Hotel as Director. In April 1990, the Ambassador tied up with the Taj Group of hotels and went on to become the Taj Ambassador which is currently now Ambassador New Delhi IHCL SeleQtions. His experience of over four decades in the hospitality sector had enabled him to stress on the importance of HRD. He was also a



Rajindera Kumar
Former President, FHRAI

member of the Board of Governors at IHM, Faridabad; DIHM&CT, Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi & Banarsidas Chandiwalla Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology, Kalkaji, New Delhi. He had been the Director of Haryana Tourism Corporation and CITCO, Chandigarh and was also a former member of Telecom/Telephone Advisory Committee, Delhi (South-1) Dept. of Telecommunications, Govt. of India and Member of National Committee on Tourism, CII.

Describing Kumar as "one of our industry's legends and statesmen", **Surendra Kumar Jaiswal**, Vice President, FHRAI and President, HRANI said, "The hospitality industry has lost an advocate of knowledge-sharing and an accomplished ground breaker, he was definitely a frontrunner in the activities of the association, a man ahead of his time, very disciplined and straightforward."

Garish Oberoi, Former President FHRAI and HRANI, recalled Kumar as

being 'a very passionate grand hotelier' who possessed 'great charm'. His leadership style and thoughtful advocacy and PR was admired by one and all.

Saeed M. Shervani, MD of Shervani Group of Hotels and former President of FHRAI & HRANI said, "We were together in FHRAI and HRANI for many years. Being my senior, Kumar was President of FHRAI and HRANI before me. He was a decent, honest man who was passionate about the industry. He gave the associations a lot of time."

Luv Malhotra, Managing Director, CHL, Delhi and Former President, HRANI shared, "Kumar guided me during my initial few years as a HRANI board member (as he had done with my father) but more so when I had become President. His death is a personal loss for me but a bigger loss for the hospitality industry."

Manish Bhatia, MGB Hotels, Alwar recalled, "Every conversation and meeting with him was productive. I have been following him for the last 26 years when I joined his hotel as an industrial trainee and his way of handling his work has impacted my hotel business in positive way."

Sanjay Sood, CEO, The Devicos, Shimla and Past President, HRANI shared, "I have personally lost a mentor and a father figure who was always there to advise and give suggestions. He being one of the pioneers of the hospitality industry will be missed and remembered always".

The void left behind him will be deeply felt by FHRAI & HRANI including the entire hospitality & tourism fraternity. FHRAI and HRANI mourn the loss of an invaluable leader & offer deepest condolences to the family members and friends of Kumar.



He was a frontrunner in the activities of the association – a man ahead of his time



Anil Bhandari passes away

The doyen of tourism and hospitality, Anil Bhandari, passed away due to COVID-19 in Delhi-NCR and is mourned by the industry in India and abroad.

Hotelier and tourism doyen Anil Bhandari passed away on May 7 due to COVID. With vast experience in the field, Bhandari was Chairman of his own consultancy firms, AB Smart Concepts and AB Smart Placement for nearly a decade.

Bhandari began his career in hospitality with the India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) which he joined in 1977.

A connoisseur of Indian cuisines, Bhandari always tried to promote Indian cuisines and Indian chefs. He was the brain behind setting up of the Annual Chef Awards platform which has later on become a



Anil Bhandari, Former Chairman, AB Smart Concepts

calendar event of the Indian Culinary Forum (ICF) in the country. Bhandari was also

one of the key members of the committee which recommended a dedicated Culinary School along the lines of the IHMs under the National Council set up.

Bhandari was in the forefront of advocating civilian Padma awards for Chefs who are ambassadors of Indian culinary culture and heritage. He has also authored three books: Tourism – an Economic Industry; Top Chefs, Top Recipes; and Art of Plating.

Nakul Anand, Chairman of Faith and Executive Director, ITC said, "This is such tragic news. In his passing, the hospitality industry has lost one of its much-loved voices. It is a big personal loss to me."

SH Rahman no longer with us

SH Rahman, former Owner & Founder of Sovereign Hotels & Resorts passed away recently. His mantra was dynamic action coupled with sustainable innovation.

SH Rahman, Owner & Founder of Sovereign Hotels & Resorts passed away recently. Having dedicated a major part of his life to the hospitality industry, he also supported various associations and think tanks at a global level. Among other things, he was the Executive Committee member of Hotel & Restaurant Association of Eastern India (HRAEI), one of the founding members of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Tourism Committee, and the former President of SKAL International's Kolkata Chapter. Whether it was meeting revenue targets of ₹500 cr (US\$ 70 million) or going beyond mere guest satisfaction to champion the concept of experiential



S H Rahman, Founder, Sovereign Hotels & Resorts

hospitality in east India, his keen eye for detail and his passion for perfection

truly set him apart. His simple mantra included dynamic action coupled with sustainable innovation.

He was an alumnus of St. Xavier's College, Kolkata, and had an MBA from the University of Calcutta. He was an avid reader and an enthusiastic learner who completed several Professional Development Programmes (PDPs) from Cornell University, USA; XLRI – Xavier Institute of Management, Jamshedpur; Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad; and IIM, Kolkata. When not working, he mostly spent his time hiking through forests, playing squash and hanging out with his family.

The **current** scenario

Regional Presidents opine that hotels and restaurants are being targeted and victimised when in fact they are the ones that operate in the safest of environments.

Neha Rawat



Sherry Bhatia
President, HRAWI

EXPECTATIONS FROM STATE GOVT

The hospitality industry just cannot go on without the government's support. Whenever a lockdown is imposed, the hospitality industry is made to suffer first. It's almost like hotels and

restaurants are being targeted and victimised when in fact we are the ones that operate in the safest of environments and follow all the mandated compliances.

We have requested the govt to allow us to resume our work and if not, the govt must take care of our incomes. The industry should get a complete waiver on all statutory fees and taxes, and establishments should not be billed for water and electricity for the duration of the curbs.

FACILITATIVE MEASURES

There is a lot happening in five states & two UTs that HRAWI covers. This is with respect to property tax relief, electricity



Sudesh Poddar
President, HRAEI

REPAYMENT OF LOANS AN ONEROUS TASK

As we all know, the hospitality industry is a labour-intensive one and it is the biggest employment generator of both direct and indirect jobs. Therefore, the industry has to

run their establishments; the repayment of loans and payment of monthly establishments have become an onerous task.

WAIVE OFF 50% OF PROPERTY TAX

In light of that we have sent



We sent letters to CMs & Lieutenant Governors for waiving off 50% of property tax

take care of a large number of employees.

The industry requires a lot of working capital which has seriously hit almost all hotels and restaurants which have to pay taxes such as advance tax and GST. Most establishments have been managing the systems with their own cash reserves. In addition to that, a lot of hoteliers have taken loans to construct and

letters to Chief Ministers (States) & Lieutenant Governors (Union Territories) in the region asking them to waive off 50% of property tax, waive off 50% of electricity charges, provide relaxation in excise license fee up to 50%, offer extension of the payment of Excise Renewal Fee and complete GST holiday for six months.

PROVIDING RELAXATIONS

We have sent gentle reminders to the governments to take cognizance of the distressed situation and support the hospitality sector by providing relaxations by way of waiver of electricity charges, property taxes, and excise license fees.



The government needs to come out with facilitative measures to save the sector

rates, water rates, municipal taxes, etc.

HRAWI has made representations to each of the state governments. We have requested the govt to come out with some urgent facilitative measures to save the sector.



K. Syama Raju
President, SIHRA

ASSISTING THE GOVERNMENT

We all aware about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the struggles that the hospitality industry is going through in the entire country. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have been assisting the government by accommodating doctors and nurses and now asymptomatic and symptomatic COVID patients at hotels, considering the risk to their family members. Hotel staff

Management Departments, but the government order was not issued. However, realising that the concern was genuine, Chennai Corporation and Coimbatore Corporation Commissioners vaccinated more than 1,600 hotel staff in the age of 18 to 45 through the camps arranged by SIHRA.

Karnataka government also considered our request and we have forwarded the list of hotel staff to be vaccinated.

MASS VACCINATION

As of now, SIHRA is co-ordinating with the vaccination camps in Bangalore. Kerala government has already issued orders to vaccinate hotel staff



Mass vaccination is the only way to open up the economy



serving the doctors, nurses and patients have been at high risk since the last one year.

VACCINATING HOTEL STAFF

SIHRA has written to various governments many times to include hotel staff in the frontline workers category and it was in principle agreed by Health and Revenue Disaster

considering them as frontline workers. We continue to work with various local authorities and governments and emphasise on the importance of vaccinating hotel staff.

Mass vaccination is the only way to open up the economy, especially tourism in the country and we believe we can be safe when everyone around is safe.



Surendra Kumar Jaiswal
President, HRANI

ANOTHER TOUGH YEAR

The tourism and hospitality sector, that barely survived the crisis of 2020, are staring at another tough year despite the vaccination drive. The year 2021 has taken a 360-degree turn and we are back to where we were last year.

The sector has been requesting various state governments to take cognizance of the distress situation and support it by providing relaxations by way of waiver of electricity charges, property taxes, excise license fee etc., but they were ignored.

Mini-lockdowns, curfews due to the current surge in cases have led to cancellation of room bookings, many travel and marriage plans including disruption of international commercial airline operations. The industry is back to square one, under lockdown and non-operations, reeling from losses.

RELIEF PACKAGES NEEDED IMMEDIATELY

This pandemic-ravaged industry could see "independent hotels with limited financial resources facing closure" in the immediate term. It's high time for the Central and state governments to offer relief packages immediately. And no time could be better than now



2021 has taken a 360-degree turn; we are back to where we were last year

as the industry is facing one of its existential moments.

For the survival of the sector, reliefs such as waiver of demand / fixed charges levied in electricity bills; refund / adjustment of excise fee deposited; one-time / automatic extension of validity of various licenses & approvals without levy of any fees; relief from property tax for hotels and hospitality establishment for a suitable period during the current financial year; and no penalty or interest should be levied on payment of any dues to state governments.

RECOVERY OF TOURISM & HOSPITALITY SECTOR

Review of the Kamath Committee recommendations; classifying hospitality under the Reserve Bank of India infrastructure lending norm criteria; industry status to hotels, restaurants, and resorts across the country; and including hospitality and tourism in the concurrent list need to be considered for the recovery of tourism and hospitality sector.

‘An opportune time for new beginnings’

At a recent webinar hosted by Sommet Education in collaboration with UNWTO, entrepreneurs and stalwarts talked about the current trends in the hospitality industry.



Neha Rawat



Suman Billa



2020 saw international tourists drop by 76 per cent



Mandeep Lamba



Next year occupancy should return to normal



Sommet Education in collaboration with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) hosted a virtual webinar on “Hospitality education in the post-COVID world”. Panellists included Suman Billa, Director of the UNWTO Department for Technical Cooperation and its Silk Road Development project; Mandeep Lamba, HVS President of South Asia; and Adrian Artimov, Regional Director South Asia, Sommet Education.

During the panel discussion, **Suman Billa** explained how the hospitality sector is shaping up in the post-COVID world. He said, “In the year 2020 we saw international tourists drop by 76 per cent which means that 1 bn people travelled less in that year. In terms of

tourism exports, we are looking at 1 trillion dollars less (100-120 mn jobs loss in tourism sector). We were hoping for an early rebound in 2021 but that plan is also delayed until everyone is vaccinated.

We are looking at hotels and restaurants which are looking at zero carbon footprint and zero food miles. We are looking at the industry – showcasing the community itself not as a means of tourism but also as a way to make the experience more authentic. The direction and trajectory of tourism sector is going to be different than it was before. So, it is the great opportunity to hit the restart button and start moving towards new beginnings. It’s a great chance for the Indian industry to reinvent their sectors and push it.”

Billa also outlined some of the initiatives undertaken by UNWTO to help the hospitality education sector in order to bounce back. He said, "During the pandemic, we were aware that there would be widespread job losses and people would be furloughed or we would have a situation where people would be partially employed. So, we looked at providing them with online courses in order for people to use their time and enhance their skills to compete in the hyper competitive market. The second initiative we undertook was the Hospitality Challenge in collaboration with Sommet Education – this was to see how we could identify ideas and individuals who can help in the faster recovery of the tourism sector. And, the third element that is still underway is the Job Factory programme, which is essentially a fair and free online marketplace for jobseekers and employers. This marketplace is being rolled out in conjunction with several governments across the globe."

Speaking on the trends that are shaping the current hospitality sector in the post-COVID world, **Mandeep Lamba** said, "India being a developing nation has been more severely hit. We did rebuild some occupancy in the beginning of 2021, and we were hopeful about picking up as hotels were booked for 60 per cent in many places though the rates were highly deflated. However, the second wave has dampened our optimism. We are

hoping to see a rebuild in the occupancy towards the end of this year once the vaccination is spread little more widely. We also anticipate that by next year occupancy level should return to normal, but the rates shall recover by 2023. In terms of trends, the world is talking of revenge travel, and therefore travel shall definitely take an upward trend post-vaccination. Leisure travel is another trend to have come to the forefront, with people choosing locations much closer to home and that are possible by car. Furthermore, isolated locations are also being chosen by travellers. And finally, sustainable travel is a trend that is here to stay."

Talking of how Sommet Education responded to the changes in the hospitality sector due to COVID, **Adrian Artimov** said, "It wasn't easy, and it took everyone by surprise. We were quite fortunate, since we are a hospitality management institute. We were already equipped with the skills to deal with such a crisis. We quickly switched to an online model, keeping our students engaged and keeping that strong community vibe alive. We developed totally new online programmes in record time. We invested in technology so that the product delivery was there, and we also revamped our facilities to make COVID-free areas. We are happy with the outcome; the journey hasn't stopped, and we need to continue to work together."



Adrian Artimov



We switched to an online model, keeping our students engaged



Criteria for industry status

The government of Maharashtra has now announced the criteria for levying taxes & charges at the industrial rate for non-classified hotels in the state.

In a landmark decision to bolster the hospitality sector, government of Maharashtra had awarded the hospitality sector the status of an industry last year. From April 1, 2021, one to five-star hotels registered with the Ministry of Tourism (MOT) have been able to enjoy tariffs and duties on electricity, water, property, development and non-agricultural taxes at industrial rates. For the hotels which are not registered with the Ministry, an expert committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Dr Dhananjay Sawalkar, Director, Directorate of Tourism, Maharashtra, to define the norms for them to avail these benefits. The state government has now announced the criteria for levying taxes and charges at the industrial rate for the non-classified hotels, in the special hospitality category. The application process is now open on the official website of Maharashtra Tourism. The criteria are



aimed at reviving the sector. The hoteliers will be able to avail these industrial concessions after fulfilling the criteria set by the state government committee. These criteria are categorised in two sections, Annexure-A and Annexure-B. Annexure-A outlines 50 mandatory 'minimum basic standards' that need to be fulfilled by the non-classified hotels. Some of them include – minimum six lettable rooms with windows/ proper ventilation; cleanliness of the hotel; effective management of the reception and other public premises; clean and licensed kitchen; special arrangements for the disabled; and Code of Conduct and ethical behaviour by the hotel staff. Annexure-B for 'Green Hotel' lists 43 norms. The green hotel status will be given with a view to promote eco-friendly and sustainable tourism practices. If the 10 basic eligible criteria are met, 'green hotel' status can be attained by a particular hotel.

REGISTRATION

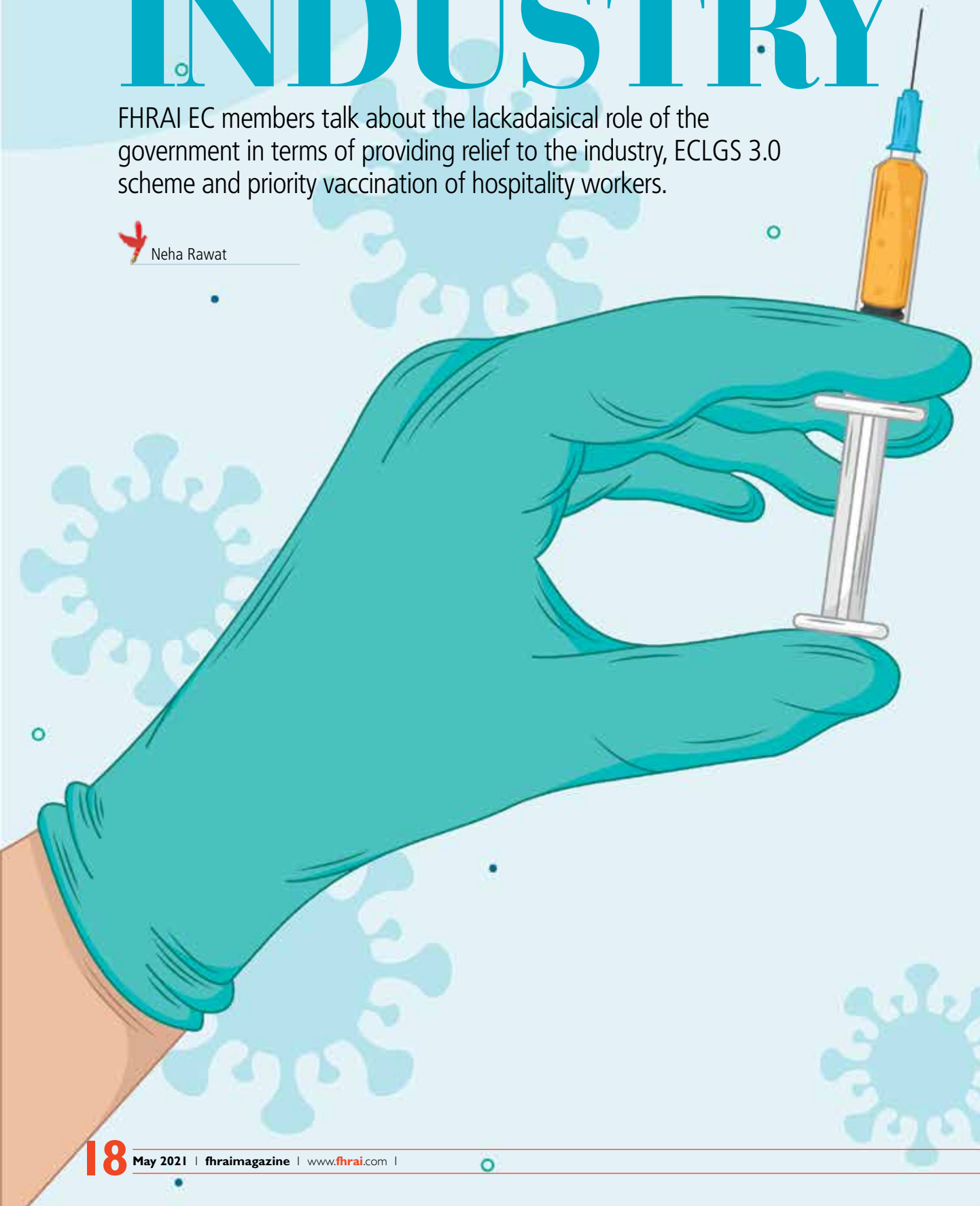
Interested hoteliers need to visit the official website of 'Maharashtra Tourism' and click on the 'What's New' tab for the form for industry status registration. Industrial concessions will be applicable from the date of registration certificate of the applicant hotel.

No relief for INDUSTRY

FHRAI EC members talk about the lackadaisical role of the government in terms of providing relief to the industry, ECLGS 3.0 scheme and priority vaccination of hospitality workers.



Neha Rawat



Param Kannampilly Chairman & Managing Director, Concept Hospitality

BUDGET DID NOT OFFER ANY RELIEF

There is no point asking anything from the government as they are not going to give any sops to the industry. Even during the height of the first lockdown they didn't offer anything worthwhile to the industry.

The budget didn't provide any relief as well. The industry leaders and the FHRAI have given many representations in the past and told the officials as to what is required. However, it has not produced any desired results. So, to think that the government is going to do anything now is a far-fetched idea.

Moreover, the staff is exposed to guests who come not only from within the country but from other countries as well. The chances of getting infected are far higher than the average person who works in any other industry.

If you recall, during the first phase of the pandemic when Indians stuck abroad were coming back, they were getting quarantined in hotels. The staff who served them while the quarantined guests stayed in the hotel were exposed. Though the hotels across the board took caution, the chances of staff getting infected were very high. Hotel



Param Kannampilly



ECLGS 3.0

Under ECLGS 3.0, business enterprises in the hospitality, travel and tourism, leisure and sporting sectors would be able to avail credit under the scheme. This is a classic case of doing too little too late. The scheme brought the hospitality sector together when almost 80 per cent of the money was already disbursed.

PRIORITY VACCINATION OF HOSPITALITY WORKERS

Priority vaccines for the hospitality workers is a must as unlike other professionals they do not have the luxury to work from home. Almost all the people employed by the hotel industry are in touch with outsiders either directly or indirectly.



ECLGS 3.0 scheme brought the hospitality sector together

employees continue to come in contact with quarantined passengers and with persons kept in isolation.

Due to this very reason, FHRAI has requested the government to administer COVID vaccine to all the hospitality professionals at the earliest. Vaccinating the hospitality workforce would help in instilling confidence in guests and it would also give a boost to the business.



Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar

Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar Executive Director, HRH Group of Hotels

EXPECTATIONS POST THE SECOND WAVE

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented circumstances before the tourism and hospitality industry. The highly infectious novel coronavirus continues to thwart the sector and raises serious questions about the present and future survival of the sector.

Destinations that rely heavily on international, business and events tourism are struggling. This sector also risks being among one of the last to recover with the ongoing travel restrictions and the global recession. This has consequences beyond the tourism economy, with many other sectors that support and are supported by tourism also significantly impacted.

The government at all levels is facing huge challenges, both in terms of medical infrastructure, material and finances. Therefore, the captains of the hospitality/tourism industry will have to take a call whether they want to add to an already burdened government.

Needless to say, the industry, which has been hardest hit by the pandemic of the last 14 months,

needs both direct cash transfers and indirect financial benefits in the short and medium term. For today, and tomorrow, the question is one of survival and ensuring that the staff members and professionals are able to get their remunerations. It is going to be a tightrope walk over the next 12 months. So let's think...and think out of the box to find solutions.

REACHING OUT TO ALL SEGMENTS

The government will have to reach out to all segments of the hospitality and tourism industry, not just the organised sector. We have a huge unorganised or small sector functioning in every city and town of India that is reliant on hospitality and tourism. The governments of the day have to divert some of their attention to the needs of this citizenry which has suffered losses on all fronts.

A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

We need to recognise the service of hospitality workers as frontline corona warriors and recommend them for priority vaccination. The hospitality sector has been at the forefront of the pandemic battle and has also paid the price for it. Priority vaccination will be a step in the right direction. The sooner it is done, the better it will be.



It is going to be a tightrope walk over the next 12 months



Paramjit Ghai
Chairman & MD, Hotel Unicontinental

**SEVERE IMPACT ON
HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY**

COVID-19 has affected every sector across the globe, and the hotel industry is among the hardest hit. McKinsey Research suggests that recovery to pre-COVID-19 levels could take until 2023 or later. The pandemic has had a profound impact on the hospitality industry in India – with the worst impact of the second wave leading to more lockdowns, curfews, travel restrictions, limits on gatherings, the closure of restaurants and bars – bringing the hospitality industry to a grinding halt.

Several hotels and lodgings are reporting occupancy levels of below 10 per cent and facing imminent closure as they can't bear even the operational costs. The industry is facing massive layoffs with the closure of the hotels and restaurants. It is important that governments, both the Centre and states, wake up and provide necessary financial relief and support for the beleaguered hospitality industry given the

additional loan schemes up to 30 per cent of the loan outstanding as on February 29, 2020 at a concessional interest rate and in addition allowed the banks to lend further funds to MSMEs. These loans were fully guaranteed by the government called the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS). Both these RBI schemes helped bring in some liquidity for some of the smaller hotels, but the inevitability of repayment hangs like a Damocles sword unless the hotels and restaurants reopen, business improves and travel resumes.

SEEKING A STIMULUS PACKAGE

Taking all these points into account, the hotel industry is seeking a stimulus package on following



**Several hotels are reporting occupancy
of below 10%**



Paramjit Ghai



significant role the industry plays in the Indian economy. The need to support the industry through the crisis is obvious – to protect jobs of masses and to protect its own cash cow, as well as to preserve the significant capital investment in over 10,00,000 hotels, restaurants, lodges and guest houses all over India.

RELIEF MEASURES FOR MSMEs

The RBI also announced relief measures for the smaller hotels classified as MSMEs by providing

lines – complete GST holiday for six months from both state and Central governments; deferment for fiscal statutory compliance deadlines such as payment of direct and indirect taxes; deferment for repayment of loans and bank EMIs for a period of further period of six months; reduction of bank interest rate by at least 200 basis points with immediate full transmission for working capital; relief in electricity bills in the form of waiver or subsidy of FAC charges and electricity duty; vaccinating on priority all frontline workers in the hospitality industry.

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ENERGY

efficient solutions

FHRAI's recent webinar on "Innovative Approach for Implementing Energy Efficient Solutions for the Hospitality Sector", aimed at creating awareness about EESL program.



Neha Rawat

Addressing the webinar, **Pradeep Shetty**, Joint Honorary Secretary, FHRAI said, "At the outset, I would like to thank and congratulate PHDCCI for organising an interactive video conference on "Innovative Approach for Implementing Energy Efficient Solutions for the Hospitality Sector".

I am indeed positive that awareness about EESL programs and the potential benefits of these initiatives for the hospitality sector will go a long way in identifying issues and finding solutions, as envisaged

by EESL, ICA, PHDCCI, and FHRAI. I would like to express my profound gratitude to Energy Efficiency Services and International Copper Association for extending their support for agreeing to share their technical expertise with the hospitality fraternity.

As all of us are aware, we are going through the biggest crisis of this century in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic that has seriously impacted more than 200 countries and millions of people. In addition to the deadly human toll and the disruptions to millions

of people's lives, the economic damage is already significant and far-reaching. The hospitality sector of our country is the biggest casualty of the first wave of COVID outbreak last year.

Now, the second wave of COVID infection is spreading rapidly in India and the country reported record-breaking new infections in April 2021, resulting in more severe restrictions imposed by various state governments and local authorities on the hospitality sector. The imposition of curfews/lockdown by various state governments fully in some states and partially in some others has brought the hospitality sector to its knees.

Due to the prevailing restrictions and WFH arrangements, restaurants have no significant business during the daytime and the imposition of night curfews is tantamount to the closure of business for the sector in these locations.

Under these circumstances, the hospitality sector can't stay afloat. Today, hospitality has become the most unviable and unsustainable business in the country and is heading towards the closure of thousands of establishments in many parts of the country and massive job losses."

He added, "During these tough times, we at the FHRAI, an apex body of the hospitality fraternity, have been majorly demanding to waive off the power and water bills incurred when establishments were shut, not operational, and due to that had suffered huge revenue losses. The impact was so disastrous that the fraternity has still not been able to generate resources to cope

up with the situation, and on the other hand, the sector has been hit once again by the second wave of COVID-19. However, even during the tough situation, the industry came forward and worked closely with companies offering innovative technical solutions to tackle issues arising due to the pandemic.

The hospitality industry started investing rigorously in inculcating new approaches which could potentially reduce the energy cost and provide maximum benefits to the guests/ customers. In line with the agenda of this webinar which is about "Innovative Approach for Implementing Energy Efficient Solutions for Hospitality Sector", I would like to share a few examples with respect to the approach adopted by the industry.

Despite using energy-efficient lighting solutions, air-conditioning systems, etc., establishments consume a large amount of energy to provide high-quality service to their guests. Energy costs are a significant part of a hotel's operating budget, which could potentially range from 15-35 per cent, depending on the size and category of the hotel.

It is well known and widely accepted that implementing an energy management system can save up to 10-40 per cent on electricity bills. For instance, Ems in hotels enhances controls on the various aspects of energy used including lighting, and HVAC from a central point, reducing error intensity caused by manual operation of these services."

According to a report by BEE India, "The hospitality sector accounts for a large proportion of energy use in commercial buildings. In any operational hotel building,



Pradeep Shetty

Energy costs are a significant part of a hotel's operating budget

Energy efficient technology can reduce the operating cost

Girja Shankar



Manoj Kumar

Our energy efficient ACs can lower down cost for the industry



Ajay Raj, DGM, EESL added, "We have a retrofit of air-conditioners to improve IAQ for safety & efficiency (RAISE). We are currently building 14 national programs such as Ujala scheme, National Motor program, RAISE Program. Our program helps in curbing the environmental impacts and we are meeting our global ambitions.

HVAC remains the main power guzzler and most cost intensive application for hospitality industry. EESL is your A to Z shop for energy efficient consumption. RAISE is designed keeping in mind the global IAQ standard RESET. It continuously monitors, tracks and reports IAQ."

Abhishek Dhupar, Program Consultant, ICA India said, "There is a need for switching to energy efficient models in hotels and restaurants or other types of buildings. EESL is a national program to accelerate the adoption of energy efficient motors in buildings or vehicles.

Hotel or restaurant buildings can adopt new energy efficient motors for consumption saving. EESL is also providing a warranty of three years

in motors unlike what is being offered in the market.

Explaining the unique features of the EESL model, Dhupar said, "Our motors have approximately 15-20 per cent lower price as compared to the market retail price. We give IE3 motors of leading brands with extended 3-year warranty and prices are on F.O.R. basis.

Pre-dispatch inspection is conducted by EESL for all orders. The entire investment has to be made by EESL (under ESCO mode). We give hassle-free repayment options to our buyers and value-added support like M&V of motors on sample basis. We also offer technical training for maintenance teams. In addition to this, we collaborate with EESL, Ministry of EESL, Ministry of Power at the national level (EESL Dashboard).

Answering the query about the motors being purchased and their after-sales service, Kumar said, "All the motors which will be supplied will be from reputed brands like Crompton etc., and once we supply these motors to you, if you face any issue with respect to the motors or any issue related to the performance of the motors, you can get in touch with EESL.

Even if you feel that EESL is new and are apprehensive about the services being offered, you can rest assured that the services are provided by the manufacturer himself. If you buy motors from EESL, we will provide you with all the end-to-end services.

Our program already does a pre-dispatch inspection and we will also provide you with the routine check certificate which will help you judge the performance of the motor."



Abhishek Dhupar

EESL will speed up the adoption of energy efficient motors

Our program helps in curbing the environmental impacts

Ajay Raj



‘A period of reflection’

Mark Willis, CEO – Middle East and Africa, Accor, says that while the pandemic impacted everyone across the globe, business for Accor did not stop or slow down dramatically.



Nisha Verma



Mark Willis

It's been a period of reflection, quite a humbling period as well," says **Mark Willis**, as he talks about the last 12 months at Accor. And, though the group witnessed a positive period of business in India moving from Q4 2020 into Q1 2021, times are again uncertain and predicting the future is still tricky, he believes. "Unfortunately, it was difficult to predict last year, and it continues to be difficult to predict this year. In Q4, India showed real levels of improvement within our sector and in Q1, India, from an Accor perspective, had a really good start to the year. But, now that situation is under threat. The future is particularly hard to predict, however, we remain optimistic, more so with regard to India

which is one of those locations which always bounces back wonderfully well from a crisis," Willis says.

This optimism also reflects in Accor's plans for India, its strong development pipeline and network across the country. Willis says, "In line with our expansion plan with regard to openings in India, we have over 25 hotels in the pipeline to open over the next 36 months. Apart from the Raffles in Jaipur, other key openings for the year include a second ibis in Mumbai which will open late in the year. So, while the outlook remains shaky today, and particularly uncertain at the moment, we still have a positive feeling about India, our expectations from growth in the country, and increasing our footprint here."

BUSINESS TRAVEL

"With different restrictions to travel & organisations across the globe being negatively impacted financially over the last 12 months, international business travel will be slow to return. Zoom & Teams are wonderful platforms, but, as always, nothing is going to replace meeting face-to-face. The global desire to travel will never go away," says Willis.

The CEO believes that India is truly up there with the US and China as a stand-alone market, and is a critical inbound and outbound market. He says, "Even though a very high percentage of business in India relies on the internal segment, still, outbound business from India has grown dramatically over the years. The country is not only important from a business generation perspective, but also from a portfolio-growth perspective. The expectation from India is high and consequently, we remain committed to developing our brands here." Willis shares, "Growth in the hotel business is a long-term strategy. We have a solid business hotel footprint across India, which is growing and yes, the right strategy is to mix business and leisure, more so at the moment when there is limited global business travel and leisure is expected to return faster than the business segment."



India is important from a business generation perspective

‘Build strong teams’

Subhabrata Roy, General Manager at DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Bangalore, talks about his success mantra and preferred holiday destinations in the country & abroad.

What is your mantra for success?

My success mantra lies in building a successful team. While strong leadership can provide a good foundation for success, it is in building strong teams that I have really got things done. Half my work is finished when connections are made between different departments of the hotel. Whenever I find certain employees rarely interacting with each other, I try putting together a mixed-skills team to work on a shared project. In doing

so, my purpose is to create a common purpose between them, set-up connections and most importantly, build trust with one another. Sooner or later, this gradually helps me boost the morale of the entire organisation. Through my two decades of experience in the hospitality industry, I have learnt that collaboration in the workplace is what makes teamwork successful.

Your favourite holiday destination in India and internationally

Travel happens to be my favourite topic of discussion and if you talk about my best holiday destination in India, it has to be Northeast. Dubai rides high on my international travel list.



Subhabrata Roy



Collaboration in the workplace makes teamwork successful

Unique designer concepts

A designer with a holistic approach can blend the richness in cultures and offer finely styled yet practical uniforms, says **Zubin Mehta**, Managing Director, Uniforms Unlimited.

Uniforms today have become synonymous with being the branding vehicle of any organisation. In fact patrons have an instant brand recall, identifying the uniforms of the service personnel representing the organisation, helping the brand reach a wider audience. Hence uniforms are increasingly getting a designer touch, to make them more appealing to brands operating in luxury segments.

Zubin Mehta, MD, Uniforms Unlimited heads his designer brand ‘Dezenzia’ and is one such designer who believes in being inspired by local cultural influences while designing the uniforms. He emphasizes that the designs created by him are unique and charming and play an important role in perfectly complementing a hotel’s ambience, be it a resort at an exotic location, a concept boutique resort or an urban hotel. “A stylish yet practical uniform adds value and unifies the complete experience



of hospitality. A designer with a holistic approach can blend the richness in cultures and offer finely styled yet practical uniforms – depicting the geographical heritage, thus instantly lending the resort the feel and charm of the destination being visited,” he shares.

Over the years, Uniforms Unlimited has made a mark through Dezenzia by delivering designer concepts of uniforms for niche hotels, resorts & spas. Their uniforms are now being flaunted by the clients as their brand differentiator.



Zubin Mehta



Designs are vital in complementing a hotel’s ambience

‘Leveraging wellness’

Global wellness tourism will be largely driven by secondary wellness travellers, says **Ingo Schweder**, Founder & CEO, GOCO Hospitality & MD, Horwath HTL Health & Wellness.



Ingo Schweder

In 2018, secondary wellness travellers accounted for 89% of all wellness trips worldwide, growing by 10% annually between 2015 and 2017. However, a rise in primary wellness travellers is also expected to emerge as more people look to travel with the sole purpose of seeking and experiencing genuine wellness at a destination that is designed and positioned to provide this.

TRAVELLING FOR WELLNESS

International wellness tourism trips grew 12% annually between 2015 & 2017, significantly faster than domestic tourism trips. And despite domestic wellness travel dwarfing international wellness travel over the same period, international wellness trips represented a proportionally larger share of expenditures because the average level

Encompassing physical, mental, emotional, social, environmental and spiritual dimensions, wellness tourism aims to provide solutions to improving all of these foundations collectively.

WELLNESS AS A BUSINESS DRIVER

As people begin to seek more experiential travel opportunities and wellness-centric experiences, the hospitality industry has a unique and much-needed opportunity to leverage wellness as a key service proposition. This can lead to the creation of better brand positioning, increased revenue generation and a more sustainable model that has the ability to better react to future crises. This change will engage and more effectively service the needs of both health-enlightened and uninitiated guests alike. The Global



of spending for an international trip is much higher. Growth rates will undoubtedly be reduced over the next few years, but a similar or larger growth rate is expected to return, notably at a faster rate than the wider hospitality industry as a whole. This data helps support the claim that wellness has never been more important than in current times. A truly multifaceted concept, it focuses on the pursuit of activities, choices and lifestyles that can lead to a state of good health and a sense of positive holistic well-being.

Wellness Institute estimates that international wellness travellers spend at a 53% premium over the average international tourist, while domestic wellness travellers spend at a 178% premium over their standard domestic counterparts. In addition, overall rising consumer interest in extending wellness experience beyond the hotel and vacation setting into the home and everyday life will continue to create opportunities for the industry, manifesting itself in a surge in wellness real estate investments and workplace wellness initiatives.

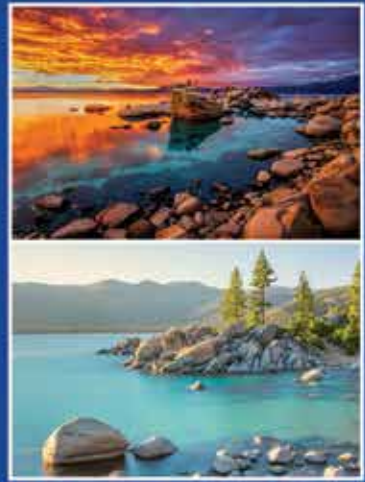


International wellness travellers spend at a 53% premium

(The article has been written by Ingo Ronald Schweder, Founder & CEO, GOCO Hospitality & MD, Horwath HTL Health & Wellness. The views expressed are the author's personal views)



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Focus on INDUSTRY REVIVAL

Hoteliers talk about how they have learnt to go with the flow based on the city and state needs and based on the COVID-19 bell curves.

 Neha Rawat



Reuben Kataria GM, The Leela Bhartiya City Bengaluru

IMPACT OF SECOND WAVE

The second wave of COVID has brought in hardships that we did not envisage. The efforts made in the last few months, after the first wave, by the industry to get back on its feet have been derailed. We reckon this will be a challenging climb as this wave has not just hit businesses but people. However, while the industry strives to recover, we are primarily focusing on uplifting our people.

At The Leela, we are concentrating our efforts towards extending support to associates, the safety and well-being of our employees, their family members, our guests, and the community we work with. Now is the time to practice hospitality at its best and as hoteliers we are optimistic about the recovery and steadily winning this battle. Our teams are working keenly on planning our processes and strategising for a successful opening soon.

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE PROCESSES

'Launches' are usually momentous affairs, and it is indeed a privilege for me as the General Manager to witness this come to life. This typically encompasses magnificent events that the industry reminisces for months. In the current times, though launching a property comes with its new set of challenges with every passing day but our team has been passionately engaged to rethink, reimagine and pivot. It is endearing to see the property unfolding exactly as it was planned.

We have brought onboard the best of the brigade, design elements and experiences while our emphasis is on building more sustainable and environment-friendly processes. The focus on the social and digital platforms is large for us in these times. Our priority will be on developing a product that is quietly brilliant and subtly luxe.

A ONE-STOP DESTINATION

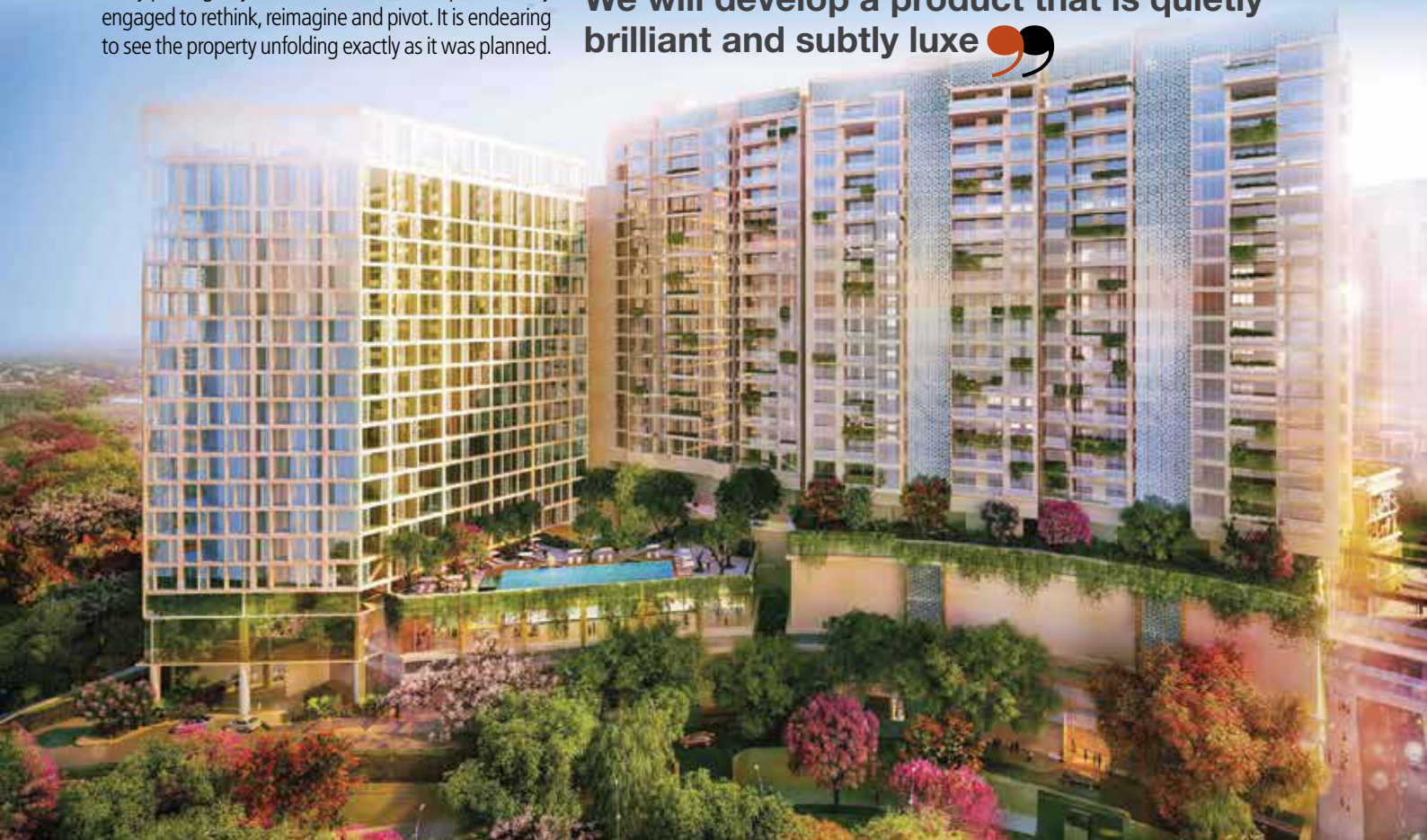
The Leela Bhartiya City Bengaluru is a one-of-a-kind luxury hotel in this part of North Bangalore, just 30 minutes from the International airport and the city center. We are nestled inside a 125-acre lush landscape development that is marked as a Special Economic Zone in the SMART City – Bhartiya City. The hotel has 281 lavish rooms and suites, over 50,000 sq ft of convention space coupled with additional garden spaces and luxury residences. We are confident of bringing value to people in every way. From the quality of stay, the convention space we offer, the fine dining options we have, we aim to offer people a one-stop destination with the state-of-the-art facilities and amenities.



Reuben Kataria



We will develop a product that is quietly brilliant and subtly luxe





Vishal Kamat

Vishal Kamat Director, Kamat Group of Hotels

ADAPTING TO THE SITUATION

There is no fight, there is only acceptance that the situation has changed and how we adapt to the moment. I use the word moment as gone are the days when grand planning was done, and annual budgets, trend analysis, and various other tools were used to monitor and forecast performance. All such have gone out of the window with each day, week, and month being handled and business calls being taken at the moment to survive. This situation will continue for a while. So we have learned not to spend our energy in fighting but going with the flow based on the city and state needs and based on the COVID bell curves. We have been the pioneers in starting Vande Bharat in Mumbai with rare hotels that were interested in participating. We were the first hotel to take COVID positive asymptomatic guests in our hotels. We have opened our resorts quickly when things looked up but closed as quickly when we saw the curve and saved lives through shutdown. Such timely calls have helped us extend what frugal and limited flow of money we have.

STAYCATIONS, THE NEW NORMAL

Staycations were always there but the demand was less. This demand will again drop as more hotels are

turning into COVID centres and most people are keen to go out of town rather than just stay in a hotel. Some traction is there which is good but it's not super-duper nor sustainable and rarely profitable unless there is volume. Those hotels that are like resorts in the city are mainly the ones to benefit.

BE AATMANIRBHAR

Before the revival, we need to see survival. It is clear we are last on the agenda. It's like the Titanic sinking... state and Central governments have a different focus and will wait, the ones who perish can't speak so they needn't worry and the few who survive at that time they will give a warm blanket and hot chocolate and give such support that will be like a huge relief but actually there nothing much therein. Whatever limited we get we will take. We are used to 'hand me down' treatment as the government knows where all to suit up to demand like the ones who can actually stand on the roads to ask for their rights to livelihood.

I suggest and advise all my friends from the industry when we chat, to be Aatmanirbhar as that's the only true point of our current situation. Each one has different problems. Some have rental issues, some don't so our industry is too vast to paint with a one-solution brush so it does make it all the more difficult to provide relief. The consumers will come back so we should be prepared in the future especially considering foreign travel won't open up for outbound tourism so soon. There is a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow ... the challenge is walking till there.



We were the first to take COVID positive asymptomatic guests



Inputs from IHCL

DELIVERING MEALS TO THE NEEDY

As the country began its fight against the pandemic, the medical community, the true heroes, are again at the frontline of the battle. Understanding that there is an urgent requirement for safe and nutritious food, and driven by our Tata Values that places our community and the people in it at the heart of all that we do, IHCL has once again committed itself to providing meals for doctors and healthcare workers across the nation.

The Taj Public Service Welfare Trust (TPSWT), which was set up in 2008 to provide relief and support to victims of natural or manmade disasters, is distributing meals to medical staff at key hospitals and COVID-19 centres in Mumbai and Ahmedabad, while expanding outreach to other cities shortly.

STAYCATIONS BECOMING POPULAR

The past year has inspired people to explore new avenues of travel and leisure, giving rise to novel trends that are reshaping the travel and hospitality industry. With the lines between work and home blurring, people are looking for safe ways to take short, much-needed breaks with their families and friends in the comfort of their own cities, leading to a rising popularity of staycations. Staycation offers such as Urban Getaways across IHCL's hotels offer myriad options for guests to enjoy various indulgences like

IHCL



Urban Getaways offer myriad options for guests to enjoy



QUARANTINE FACILITIES

Select IHCL hotels across India have been converted into quarantine facilities in collaboration with hospital partners. The quarantine rooms are for mildly symptomatic and asymptomatic patients at the discretion of the hospital partner, who will provide a doctor and nurse to monitor the patient's vital parameters. 11 hotels across eight cities are offering 950 rooms. The hotels are : President, a SeleQtions hotel, Mumbai; Vivanta Dwarka, New Delhi; Taj Club House, Chennai; Taj Yeshwantpur, Bangalore; Taj Banjara, Hyderabad; Ginger Bangalore Inner Ring Road; Ginger Vadapalani, Chennai; Ginger Guwahati; Ginger Indore and Ginger Mahakali, Mumbai and Ginger Jaipur.

culinary delights, wellness breaks, cultural itineraries within the hotel and more, bringing the destination's magic into the hotel experience.

VALUE-DRIVEN OFFERS AND SERVICES

Domestic travel, buoyed by driving holidays, workcations and staycations will be some of the key trends that the hospitality industry will continue to cater to through value-driven offers and Wservices. People are also looking for longer stays with family and loved ones, like the amā Stays & Trails is our first branded portfolio where one can experience living the simple life in heritage bungalows at pristine locations to discovering untouched forest trails and local cuisine.



Getting future-ready

Educationists at hospitality management institutes opine that their aim is to prepare students to take on challenges.



Neha Rawat

Dilip Puri **Founder & CEO, Indian School of Hospitality**

MOVING A STEP AHEAD

Hospitality education needs to move in tandem with the changes that the industry is going through. Hospitality brands are going to evolve as they adapt operationally – resulting in leaner, cost-effective structures integrating more technology into the customer journey, and becoming more innovative with product and services offerings. Education will always move a step ahead as it equips existing and future workforce with skills that make them more efficient and future-ready.

UPDATING CURRICULUM & LEARNING METHODOLOGY

At Indian School of Hospitality, we are constantly observing the changes that the industry and economy are going through and delivering education that mirrors those changes. With a strong focus on research and a team of industry experts and renowned academics, we constantly strive to anticipate these changes and update our curriculum and learning methodology. Our aim is to prepare our students to take on the challenges

relevant in the long-term, focused on tech innovation, digital marketing and entrepreneurship, among others. As an institute, we want to encourage students to think outside the box and become more aware of what's happening in the world so they can develop a holistic outlook, which is what reflects in our curriculum. In the midst of the pandemic last year, we launched our Postgraduate Programme in Service Operations Management, because we anticipated a gap in the skill set that organisations would demand in the new normal.

PLACEMENT SCENARIO

All our students have been placed for their operational as well as business internships with reputed brands. Our senior-most undergraduate cohort is set to graduate next year, following which they will take illustrious roles in the industry. We've received an overwhelming response from our internship and placement partners, which include Indian as well as international hospitality, travel, F&B, luxury real-estate and tech companies.



Dilip Puri

Now it is more important for employers to work in tandem with educational institutions



of the future and attain skills which are relevant in the long run.

We place an increased focus on the importance of research and we have incorporated 'research methodology' into our undergraduate curriculum. This gives our students the opportunity to look beyond textbooks and apply what they have learnt, in addition to developing their own thought process. We have also introduced many modules which are topical yet

Our Centre for Career Development works closely with students to ensure that career opportunities match their individual aspirations. Given the situation we are in, I would like to stress that it is now more important than ever for employers to work in tandem with educational institutions which understand & mirror their requirements. This will ensure that the increasingly complex demands of the industry are met by professionals who are upskilling themselves constantly and getting future-ready.

Swarovski Lighting unveils Milano

◆ New Delhi-based Sacmeh International has unveiled in India, Milano – an awe-inspiring light from Swarovski Lighting. The baroque castings of Milano, made in Italy, feature delicate ornamentations that celebrate the heritage of the great Italian chandeliers of the seventeenth century. Heavy crystals enhance the lace-like precious metal body of this magnificent lighting fixture. Milano is a tribute to the country that enlightened the world with the gifts of Michelangelo and Da Vinci. The ornate body of Milano is composed entirely of Italian castings. Filigree openwork gives these baroque castings a unique lace-like quality.



RR Decor launches Nuwa

◆ Famed for their luxurious hand-woven silk fabrics with original designs rooted in Indian traditions, yet exuding a universal appeal, RR Decor has launched a new collection of luxury furnishing fabrics – Nuwa – bringing a range of distinctive floral patterns. With a variety of floral motifs in a mostly bright palette, barring a few in subtle shades, Nuwa is just right for the summer months. Nuwa fabrics are printed on 100 per cent polyester velvets giving them the rich and textural look they boast. They are ideal for all kinds of upholstery from sofas to accent chairs to ottomans.



Sicis unveils Vetrite

◆ Renowned worldwide for its spectacular mosaic creations that epitomise superior craftsmanship, design and technology, Sicis has launched its exquisite Vetrite Collection in India (available through Tessera India) for the first time. Vetrite is suitable for an infinite range of applications such as furniture, counters, doors and lighting, providing unprecedented design solutions. On request, the Vetrite collection can be produced with a self-cleaning and antibacterial surface.





Maishaa unveils AirDrop towels

◆ Maishaa has launched a new series of towels known as the AirDrop Collection. These towels are everything you need in a towel – soft, absorbent and plush. Using the yarn to its full potential, the AirDrop technology by Maishaa is a revolutionary technique that takes spinning cotton fibers (100%) and traps them with air. The luxurious AirDrop by Maishaa towels have hydrophilic capability far superior to conventional towels and other so-called high-tech materials. The exquisite AirDrop towels are available in a range of striking colours. Some of the arresting hues include Dessert Glow, Dessert Palm, Washed Indigo, White, Wine and Stone Age. These towels are made with 100% cotton, are extremely absorbent and are soft & luxurious, perfect for turning your bathroom into your dream spa.

Multiflora Honey

◆ Conscious Food, a pioneer of organic food products in India, is expanding its immunity and wellness foods category with the launch of its new raw unprocessed Himalayan multiflora honey, a completely unfiltered and unpasteurised product that retains the immense natural benefits of honey as it travels from 'bee to the bottle'. The certified organic Himalayan multiflora honey is sourced from the Apis cerana bee species from the Shivalik hills of Uttarakhand.



Consoles from Beyond Designs

◆ Beyond Designs has launched a collection of statement consoles that bring a unique aesthetic to your space. You can add oodles of glamour and artistic sophistication to your space by choosing from the new collection of credenzas. The impeccably crafted Cannes six-door credenza is made of wood and finished in French polish. It has a black glass top. Brass handles add the perfect finishing touch. Intricate brass inlay and Mother of Pearl detailing elevates the Miraya dresser credenza to a piece of art while the Classic console is a striking combination of beveled mirror with antique gold finish resulting in a sleek and sophisticated console..



Unique Houdini Cabinet

◆ Sources Unlimited has unveiled a unique cabinet, Houdini by the renowned Italian design brand Giorgetti. Combining the most modern technologies with a largely manual workmanship, the cabinet is designed to fit into any part of a home. Houdini is a sculptural cabinet that blends the manufacturing skills of the 123-year-old company with designer Roberto Lazzeroni's distinctive features of essential and soft lines. With its many hidden chests and drawers, the cabinet opens out to uncover secret storage units. It is like a magical jewel box, a precious treasure chest. The cabinet comes in one-door and two-door units.





How successful has this module been?

It has been rewarding and very gratifying in terms of food and beverage offerings. Despite the lockdowns, we managed to reach guests in every corner of the city though it was less in the scale of profitability and high in guest engagement and recall value. The best part was that we were able to create great memories – despite guests being at home and us at home.

Can this module replace the experience of dine-in?

No, the module cannot replace the experience of dine-in as we are diluting the food concepts. Marriott on Wheels is a takeaway and dine-in is purely a restaurant experience with music, design, presentation/plating and service of food playing a critical role.



‘Creating memories’

Marriott On Wheels is an endeavour to take gourmet delicacies from the hotel’s kitchens to guests’ homes, says **Prakash Chettiyar**, Executive Chef, JW Marriott Kolkata.



Neha Rawat



Prakash Chettiyar

Tell us something about your home delivery module ‘Marriott on Wheels’?

JW Marriott Kolkata has always gone above and beyond for its valuable patrons and hence, the property has relaunched its home delivery module – Marriott on Wheels, this year too. Marriott On Wheels is a special endeavour to take the gourmet delicacies from the heart of the hotel’s kitchens to the guests’ homes. The menu features a wide selection of signature dishes from the hotel’s three in-house F&B outlets so that everyone can relish the flavours of JW Marriott Kolkata. We have put in the best culinary experience in offering innovative and comfort food covering Asian, Western, Indian, desserts, and celebration boxes /hampers in the menu.

Are your services still picking up during this second wave scenario?

Yes, services are picking up, but they are very slow in terms of engagement as the second wave of COVID-19 has been more devastating.

Anything else you would like to mention?

When it comes to food, it has always been a winner for all ages, community festivities as well as celebrations. As a chef, I was moved when one of my guests asked to send special food to his children because he wanted them not to miss the home-cooked food since their mother was recovering from COVID-19. The guest also mentioned that he ordered the same dishes last year too and it felt like home-cooked food. To add a personal touch, we wrote a simple note to the family saying that we pray for their mom & family to come through this. I can proudly say, we are being able to create memories, whether it’s lockdown or not.



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Appointments



SOUVAGYA MOHAPATRA

Managing Director
Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts

★ Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts has announced the appointment of Souvagya Mohapatra as the Managing Director for India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan. This announcement signals significant growth plans, with a strong focus on the Indian Subcontinent. A consummate veteran of the field, Mohapatra comes with over 28 years in the hospitality and tourism sector and will be responsible for the overall business strategy and setting up new Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts in emerging destinations in South Asia.



AMIT KUMAR

General Manager
Sheraton Grand Chennai Resort & Spa

★ Sheraton Grand Chennai Resort & Spa, the experience-driven beach resort in Chennai, has appointed Amit Kumar as its new General Manager. Kumar, a highly motivated and dynamic hotelier, is set to take the reins in these unprecedented times and steer the hotel's objective of creating a safe and welcoming destination for guests. With his astute leadership in managing hotels, Kumar will focus his efforts on ensuring the well-being of the hotel team and safeguarding the health and best interests of guests.



VIKAS SHARMA

General Manager
Radisson Blu Resort Dharamshala

★ Vikas Sharma has been appointed as General Manager at the upcoming Radisson Blu Resort Dharamshala. With a career spanning over three decades in hospitality, Sharma has contributed to well-known hotel brands such as Taj Hotels and Resorts, IHG, Starwood, Hilton and Hard Rock Hotels. Sharma's core competence lies in successfully launching new properties and managing hotel operations. He has had extensive experience in Food and Beverage, Sales and Revenue Management.



ANIL CHAVAN

General Manager
Novotel Imagica Khopoli

★ Novotel Imagica Khopoli has appointed Anil Chavan as General Manager, effective March 2021. Chavan comes with almost two decades of experience in the hospitality industry, having worked in Operations as well as Sales & Marketing with a range of brands across India and Dubai. In his new role, Chavan will focus on enhancing the overall guest experience at the 287 rooms Novotel Imagica Khopoli, and will be responsible for revenue growth and overseeing the management of the operations team.



SUJJAN GANGULY

Area General Manager
Regenta Suites Element One, Gurugram

★ Sujjan Ganguly, an industry veteran with over 28 years of experience, has been transferred recently to Gurugram as Area General Manager (AGM) of Regenta Suites Element One, Gurugram By Royal Orchid Hotels. Prior to this, he was based in Amritsar and taking care of Punjab as AGM. Ganguly was recently awarded as 'Best General Manager in Amritsar' and 'Hospitality Superstars' in 2020. He was also selected as a nominee of the President of HRANI on behalf of FHRAI for inspection at the Institute of Hotel Management, Gurdaspur.



AJAY SINGH

Operations Manager
The Fern Kesarval Hotel & Spa, Goa

★ Ajay Singh has joined as the Operations Manager in The Fern Kesarval Hotel & Spa, Verna Plateau-Goa. He is an alumnus of 'IHM Mumbai-2002' and is an MBA with dual specialisation in HR and Sales & Marketing. He is also a certified SAP consultant (Sales and Distribution) from DUCAT Academy, Noida. Singh has 18 years of experience in the hospitality industry with brands like Taj, Carlson, HHI, Fidalgo and many more. He believes that to excel in the industry, one has to have the passion to serve.

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