

# HOTELS & RESTAURANTS INDIA

# fhrai magazine

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A MONTHLY ON HOSPITALITY TRADE  
By DDP Publications

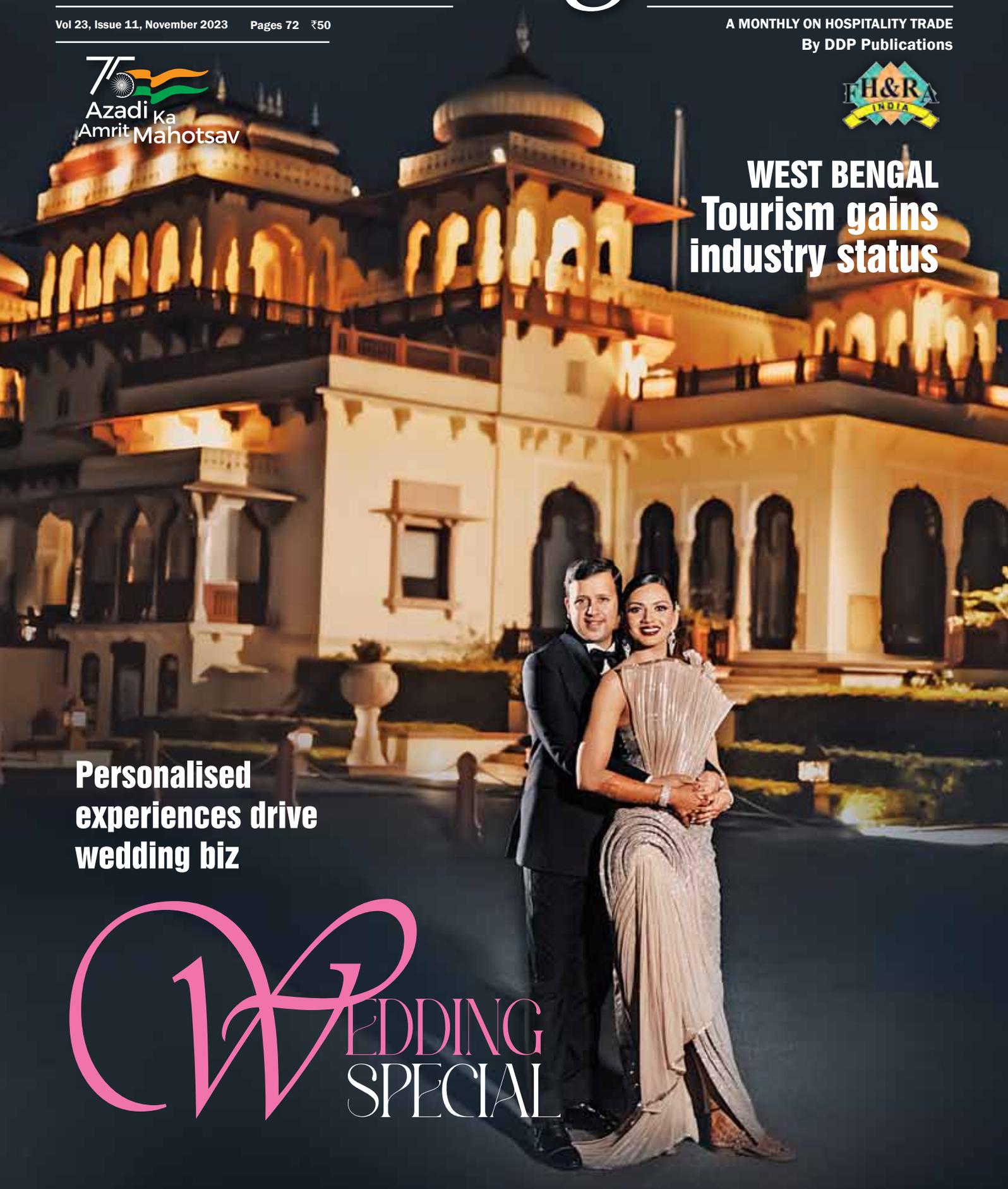
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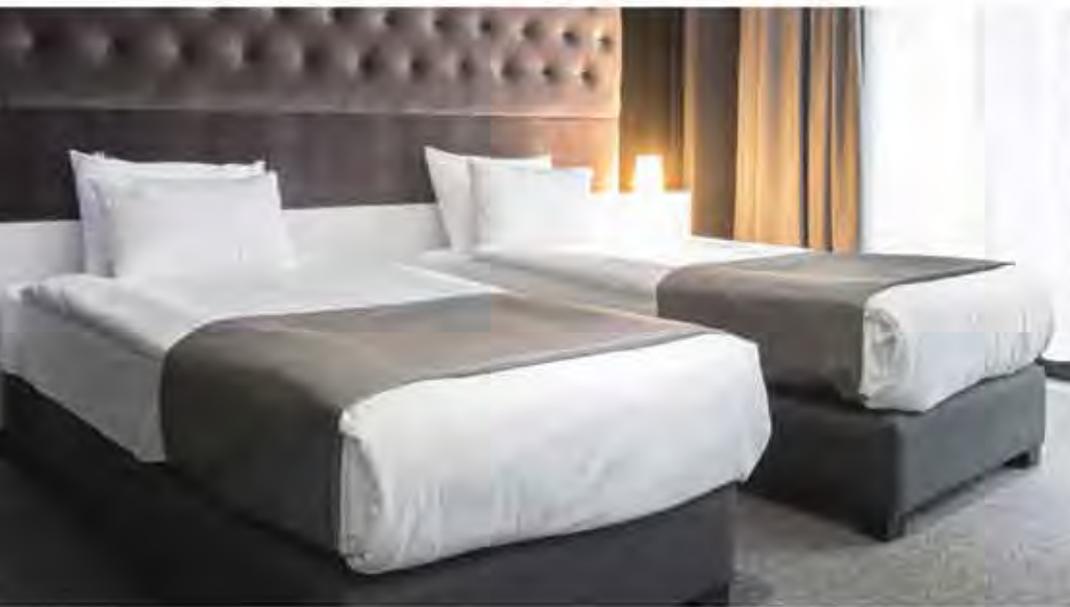


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Tourism gains  
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*Dear FHRAI Members,*

I trust this message finds you well. I am happy to inform you that West Bengal State Cabinet has unanimously approved industry status for the tourism sector in the state. This signifies a monumental shift in the economic landscape, promising substantial changes and opportunities for growth in the state's tourism industry.

I am pleased to highlight that the Department of Commerce is in the process of crafting a Vision Document for the Foreign Trade Policy 2023. This document will outline key strategic objectives and approaches for the coming period.

Considering our role as the apex body of the Indian hospitality industry, we have several suggestions for the Vision Document:

- **Restoration of SEIS or introduction of an alternative scheme in the foreign trade policy:** Continuing incentive schemes such as SEIS are vital for the hospitality industry's global competitiveness and recovery from the impacts of COVID.
- **Granting export status to the tourism sector:** To achieve the target of US \$1 trillion in tourism service exports by 2030, granting export status to the tourism and hospitality industry with tax incentives and benefits is crucial.
- **GST rationalization for the hospitality sector:** We propose the abolition of the 18 per cent GST category for hotels above room rates of ₹7,500, merging it with the 12 per cent GST category.
- **Incentives for foreign tourists:** Offering tax rebates and GST refunds for foreign tourists' spending in India can significantly boost inbound tourism.

We urge the government to consider our suggestions for incorporation into the

Vision Document for the Foreign Trade Policy 2023.

In a different vein, I wish to draw your attention to a pressing issue that demands our immediate intervention. The hospitality industry in Andaman & Nicobar Islands has been grappling with significant challenges, which have persisted for a long period of time. To put the situation into perspective, tourism in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands has not returned to its pre-COVID levels:

- In 2019-20, there were 525,000 tourist arrivals, a number that has plummeted to a mere 275,000 in 2022-23.
- Although there has been a slight increase in the collection of GST, it remains far from the 2019-20 figures.
- Daily flight connections to Port Blair have dwindled from 22 to just 14 as of October 2023.

The challenges faced by the industry in the Islands are multi-faceted, including exorbitant increases in power tariffs, erratic power supply, a halt in land-use diversions, arbitrary increases in circle rates and stamp duties, non-registration of tourist vehicles in Swaraj Dweep and Shaheed Dweep, and inadequate infrastructure development.

We have requested the government for their support in addressing these pressing issues by urging the relevant authorities to take necessary actions for their resolution. The sustainable development of these islands hinges on the swift resolution of these issues.

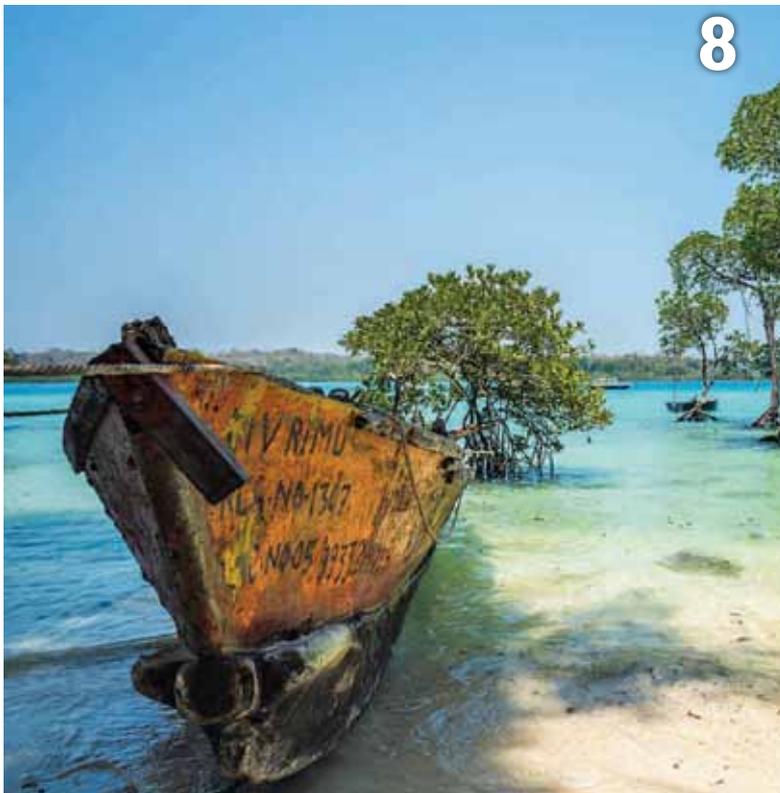
Your continued support and commitment to our industry are greatly appreciated, and together, we can overcome the challenges and pave the way for a thriving and sustainable future for the Indian hospitality sector.

*With best regards,*  
**Sudesh Poddar**  
President, FHRAI



**Sudesh Poddar**  
President,  
FHRAI

“  
**The hospitality industry in the Union Territory of Andaman & Nicobar Islands has been grappling with significant challenges, which have persisted for a long period**  
”



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**India's hotel industry targets double-digit growth**

ICRA estimates pan-India premium hotel occupancy at 70–72 per cent in FY2024, with average room rates at ₹6,000–6,200.



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As luxury catering evolves, it accommodates diverse preferences and fusion cuisines, not limited to big weddings but extending to smaller gatherings and events.



**Festive treats get Millets punch**

Combining nutrition, taste and tradition, hotels are using Millets to give conventional festive hampers a fresh, healthy upgrade.



**India's cultural kaleidoscope: Boon for hospitality**

From wilderness to natural wonders, the diversity of experiences is India's strength as top global tourist spot and big boost for hospitality sector, writes Bhavik Sheth.



**THE FEDERATION OF HOTEL & RESTAURANT ASSOCIATIONS OF INDIA**

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# TOURISM GAINS INDUSTRY STATUS

Industry leaders hail approval of industry status for the tourism sector in West Bengal as a game-changer.

In a landmark decision set to reshape the landscape of tourism in West Bengal, the State Cabinet has unanimously approved the long-awaited industry status for the tourism sector. The proposal to grant industry status to tourism has received resounding support and has been hailed as a game-changer by industry leaders and stakeholders.

**Sudesh Poddar**, President, FHRAI & HRAEI, lauded the government's decision, emphasising the significance of this move in advancing the hospitality sector's prospects in the state of West Bengal.

Expressing gratitude to the **Mamata Banerjee**, Chief Minister, West Bengal; **Indranil Sen**, Tourism Minister, Govt. of West Bengal; and **Nandini Chakravorty**, Principal Secretary, Tourism, Govt. of West Bengal, Poddar highlighted the multi-faceted benefits this status upgrade will bring. He said, "The grant of industry status to the tourism industry will boost invest-

ments in the hospitality sector in West Bengal. The power tariff will be drastically reduced. Water charges, property taxes, licence fees, and other government-related taxes will align with the rates applicable to industries in West Bengal, proving to be more cost-effective compared to the current rates. Additionally, Floor Space Index will be available at a cheaper rate than the existing rates, which are on the higher side. I am hopeful that with this move, the existing hotels and hospitality players will also benefit immensely."

Poddar further added, "The initiative would ensure several facilities for the hospitality sector. Hotels would be able to save a substantial amount on electricity bills as they would have to pay a power tariff as per the industrial rate and not the much higher commercial rate. Hotels are expected to save up to ₹3 per unit on electricity bills. This is huge, as the

**Grant of industry status to the tourism industry will boost investments in the hospitality sector in West Bengal**

hotels spend a considerable amount on power bills. The second highest expenditure of a hotel after employees' salaries is electricity bills."

"The hotels will also be able to save on water supply bills. Now, the hotels pay commercial rates for water supply. When the hospitality sector gets the status of an industry, it will pay the industrial rate, which is less than the commercial rate.

The hospitality sector would have to pay lesser licence fees and other taxes, including property tax,” explained Poddar.

According to experts, grant of industry status will ensure better floor-area ratio (FAR). FAR refers to the relationship between the areas on which the building is constructed and the building floor area that is usable or is allowed to be used. A better FAR means more construction or floor area will be allowed on a particular land. Industrial construction gets the benefit of more construction on a particular land. This will attract investors to set up hotels and other tourism-related infrastructure.

The HRAEI, led by Poddar, had been appealing for industry status for the hospitality sector for quite some time. He had led various delegations to ministers and bureaucrats with the demand for years. “As the cabinet has approved the proposal, it would encourage investors to invest in



**“The hospitality sector would have to pay lesser licence fees and other taxes, including property tax**

the tourism sector in the state. Also, it would aid the expansion of the existing infrastructure,” pointed out Poddar.

**Pranav Singh**, Honorary Secretary, HRAEI, said, “Many states such as Rajasthan and Maharashtra have already granted industry status to hospitality. It is good that West Bengal has now also joined the fray. This will surely help draw fresh investment in the hospitality sector and can create huge employment opportunities as the state has tremendous potential in tourism.” □



# Hospitality issues in A & N brought forward

FHRAI highlights challenges faced by hospitality industry in Andaman & Nicobar Islands, including high electricity rates, land use restrictions, and stamp duty.

FHRAI has written to **Amit Shah**, Union Home Minister, Govt. of India, flagging various issues being faced by the hospitality industry in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Federation stated in the letter, "COVID has severely impacted the hospitality sector of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and as a result, several hotels and resorts have shut down and many others are still facing problems to function smoothly and are trying hard to come out of the disastrous impact of COVID. It can be ascertained from the data given below that the tourism business in the Island is nowhere near to the pre-COVID levels:

- In 2019-20, there were 5,25,000 tourist arrivals, while in 2022-23, this number dropped to 2,75,000.
- There is a marginal increase in the collection of GST in 2022-23 as compared to 2019-20.
- The number of daily flights to Port Blair decreased from 22 per day to 14 per day as of October 2023."

The Federation outlined various issues faced by the industry in the Islands along with the solutions:

- **A manifold increase in electricity rates levied on MSME, commercial sectors and hotels/restaurants/resorts:** Over the years, the A&N administration has increased manifold the electricity rates being levied on MSME and commercial sectors. This inordinate increase in tariffs amounts to a tariff shock and will cause grievous harm to hospitality businesses and other users. The rates proposed by the

electricity department of A & N Islands are the highest in the country and they are nearly five times higher than the rates being charged by the electricity department of other UTs. Suggestion: direct the electricity departments of A & N Islands to review and reduce the rates for all categories.



**Sudesh Poddar**  
President,  
FHRAI & HRAEI

**Over the years, the A & N administration has increased manifold the electricity rates causing grievous harm to hospitality businesses in the UT**

- **Diversion of land (change of land use from one purpose to another):** Change of land use (diversion) from one purpose to another, i.e., from agriculture to usages such as residential, tourism, education, industrial, commercial, healthcare has been stopped for the past several years. Due to this stoppage, there are hardly any investments coming up in any sector including tourism, education, healthcare, housing or industry. Suggestion: diversion (change of land use) should be commenced at the earliest.



• **Finalisation of circle rates for areas that were not part of the order dated 22 October 2019:** The A & N administration, vide its order dated 22 October 2019, fixed the minimum reference circle rates for the purpose of effecting the transfer of interest in land or immovable property in various areas of the A & N Islands. However, several areas or villages of the A & N Islands were not included in this order. As a result, the transfer of interest in land or immovable property through conveyance, gift, or exchange deeds has stopped in these areas for the past three and the half years. This is causing a great inconvenience to the people living in these areas. Suggestion: circle rates for the areas that were not included in order dated 22 October 2019 be finalised and an order be issued for the circle rates of these areas. Further, the concerned officers may



be requested to commence the registration of conveyance, gift, or exchange deeds in these areas at the earliest.

• **Inordinately high stamp duty and registration charges for the registration of gift deeds and lease deeds:** During the registration of the gift deed and lease deed, the stamp duty charges are calculated by valuing the concerned land and property using the latest circle rates. Then, a stamp duty of 4 to 6 per cent and a registration charge of 1 per cent are charged. As a result, the stamp duty and registration charges for leasing and gifting property are inordinately high. Suggestion: a procedure similar to that in other states and UTs be followed in the A & N Islands as well as for calculating charges for registering a lease deed or gift deed.

**To attract more tourists, A & N administration must make a policy allowing setting up of offshore & onshore casinos**

• **Microbreweries policy:** At present, A & N Islands lacks quality leisure experiences and avenues for recreation that appeal to well-heeled and discerning Indian and foreign travellers. As present microbreweries, which can be a great addition to experiential tourism, are not allowed to operate in the A & N Islands. Curating and crafting beers will create new jobs and give rise to a new category of hospitality specialists in the Andamans



like master brewers. Suggestion: necessary amendments be made to the excise rules to enable grant of licences to operate microbreweries in the A & N Islands.

- **To allow e-tourist visa facility at Port Blair Sea Port and the Veer Savarkar International Airport:** At present, there is no e-tourist visa facility at Port Blair Sea port and at Veer Savarkar International Airport. This will help in promoting international yacht travellers and will also promote direct flights from South East Asian countries. Also, this will give a boost to the tourism industry in A & N Islands and will also bring direct foreign exchange revenue to India. Suggestion: Veer Savarkar International Airport and the Port Blair Sea port should be enabled to accept international travellers as a first point of entry into the country.

- **Setting up of casinos:** To attract more tourists to the islands, the A & N administration must make a policy allowing the setting up of offshore and onshore casinos. Suggestion: necessary directions must be given to set up this policy at the earliest.

- **Holistic development of 15 islands:** The A & N administration, along with NITI Aayog, had selected the 15 islands

for holistic development. Eco tourism sites were identified to be auctioned under PPP models. However, despite repeated attempts to auction the site by the A & N administration the bids have failed. This is because there are issues with the threshold technical capacity, threshold financial capacity and the mandatory numbers of villas to be constructed at the sites. Even though the A & N administration has engaged a reputed consultant, there is no tangible progress in phase 2 bids for 11 islands. Suggestion: the operator must have 26 per cent equity in the project. This condition should be done away with. The criteria of operating or owning either a star categorisation or having a resort or hotel with an ARR of ₹10,000 are very stringent and should be relaxed. The two tourism sites at Little Andaman must also be auctioned under the PPP model.

- **Allow registration of vehicles in Swaraj Dweep & Shaheed Dweep:** The registration of commercial passenger vehicles and other public vehicles in Swaraj Dweep and Shaheed Dweep has been stopped for the last four years. The application for fresh registration of vehicles is not being accepted. Due to this stoppage, there is a scarcity of commercial passenger vehicles to transport tourists. Because of

this, tourists are facing hardships, which are resulting in a loss of business and damaging the brand Andamans. Suggestion: registration of commercial passenger vehicles and other public vehicles for Swaraj Dweep and Shaheed Dweep be allowed to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of vehicles for tourists.

**At present, A & N Islands lacks quality leisure experiences & avenues for recreation that appeal to discerning Indian & foreign travellers**

- **Passenger sea port terminal at Swaraj Dweep & Shaheed Dweep:** The passenger seaport terminal at Swaraj Dweep, which is being constructed under the Sagar Mala Project was assigned project work in 2020, but till now only 18 per cent work has been done. The construction work of passenger sea port terminal at Shaheed Dweep has not yet started. Suggestion: pending work for Seaport terminal at Swaraj Dweep and Shaheed Dweep to be expedited, which will provide visitors and tourists with the required facilities and infrastructure to make their visit to the Islands. □





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# FHRAI suggests **strategy** for **tourism** excellence

Federation proposes suggestions for Foreign Trade Policy 2023, including restoration of SEIS & granting export status to tourism sector, among others.

FHRAI has written to **Peeyush Kumar**, Additional Secretary (Trade, Negotiations and Multilateral), Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Govt. of India putting forth its suggestions for incorporation in Vision Document for the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2023 being developed by Department of Commerce in consultation with the industry stakeholders.

On 7 October 2023, the Department of Commerce had convened an industry consultation in Mumbai, collating feedback from various stakeholders for this Vision Document.

Following are the suggestions presented to the Department of Commerce by FHRAI:

- **Restoration of SEIS or introduction of an alternative scheme in the foreign trade policy:** Incentive schemes such as SEIS are essential for the Indian tourism sector to make it globally competitive. Such benefits help the industry to undertake branding and promotion



**Sudesh Poddar**  
President,  
FHRAI & HRAEI

campaigns to attract foreign tourists. But its withdrawal would come as a big stumbling block to the industry which has been gradually recovering from the colossal damage that happened due to COVID.

- **Granting export status to tourism sector:** Granting export status to tourism, travel and hospitality sectors is critical to amplify India's share of inbound tourism as well as to achieve the ambitious target of service export of \$1 trillion by 2030. Granting export status to tourism and hospitality industry with

tax incentives and benefits would enable the sector to be more competitive and help the sector to jumpstart its growth to the next orbit. The tourism services should be treated at par with merchandise exports to accelerate exports from the sector in a big way.

- **GST rationalisation of hospitality sector:** GST rates for hospitality in India are one of the highest in the world. This makes both domestic and inbound tourism in India expensive. India is facing tough competition from neighbouring destinations especially due to the higher rate of GST in India and other factors which make the total tourism package expensive in India. Therefore, we suggest that the 18 per cent GST category for hotels above room rates of ₹7,500 must be abolished and merged with the category of 12 per cent GST.

**Incentive schemes such as SEIS are essential for the Indian tourism sector to make it globally competitive**

- **Incentives for foreign tourists:** Inbound tourism can be promoted in a big way by offering rebate on tax for domestic spending by foreign tourists and GST refund for their spending in India. It is also important to treat the payments made by the foreigners in rupees in hotels as foreign exchange earned for the purpose of EPCG scheme, which will enhance the service export volume of the country.



FHRAI said that the adoption of these recommendations within the Vision Document for the FTP 2023 holds promise in not only invigorating the hospitality industry but also elevating India's stature as a preferred global tourist destination. □



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## Sudesh Poddar leads HRAEI forward

Poddar's re-election as President, HRAEI underscores his leadership's continued commitment to addressing critical issues.

In the heart of Eastern India's bustling hospitality landscape, the 62nd AGM of the Hotel & Restaurant Association of Eastern India (HRAEI) recently marked a significant milestone by re-electing **Sudesh Poddar** as President of HRAEI.

Under Poddar's leadership, HRAEI has consistently led the charge in addressing critical issues and concerns within the trade, tirelessly advocating for the betterment of the region's hospitality and tourism sector.

During the year, the HRAEI committee relentlessly shared their assessments and views with various ministers, bureaucrats and authorities. The Association also submitted recommendations from time to time for the enhancement and augmentation of the hospitality and tourism industry to deal efficiently with contingencies.

Here are some of the steps taken by Poddar on behalf of the Association.

➤ Poddar met **Mamata Banerjee**, Chief Minister, West Bengal on the occasion of

Utkarsh Bangla with an appeal to allot land to HRAEI to establish a hotel management institute to overcome the shortage of skilled manpower in the hospitality industry. The Chief Minister assured allotment of land and advised **H K Dwivedi**, Chief Secretary, Government of West Bengal to do the needful.

### Sudesh Poddar has been proactive in raising concerns and recommending improvements to the hospitality industry

➤ HRAEI made a representation to the West Bengal Excise Department to extend the time of mandatory implementation of the E-PoS system at their establishments. The Association also gave representation to The Kolkata Municipal Corporation to evoke the ban on serving hookah in bars and restaurants in Kolkata and raised this concern in the media on a regular basis. As a result, the ban on serving hookah in bars and restaurants in Kolkata was later lifted in January 2023.

➤ Under Poddar's leadership, HRAEI representatives met **Firhad Hakim**, Mayor, Kolkata with an appeal to revise the sudden hike of solid waste management charges imposed on the hospitality industry.

➤ During the past year, HRAEI has actively participated in the classification and reclassification of star hotels. The Association also ensured to make a representation to FSSAI and addressed emerging issues, challenges and constraints.

➤ HRAEI collaborated with one of Canada's top business-immigration firms, Green and Spiegel to help create a window of opportunity for investments abroad for members to grow their reach beyond India's border.

The HRAEI team led by Poddar has stalwarts such as **T S Walia**, past President, FHRAI; **Mohammed Azhar** as Senior Vice-President; **Aneel Goenka** as Vice-President; **Pranav Singh** as Honorary Secretary; **Deepak Kapoor** as Honorary Treasurer; **Sandeep Sehgal** as Joint Honorary Secretary; and **H S Bagga** as Joint Honorary Treasurer. □





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**HOBART**

# Maharashtra's hospitality industry seeks respite

HRAWI has requested Maharashtra state govt to rethink the 5 per cent increase in VAT on liquor served at bars and restaurants.

**H**RAWI has urged the Maharashtra state government to reconsider the 5 per cent increase in VAT on liquor served at bars and restaurants. The association claims the hike will negatively impact the hospitality industry, particularly restaurants and bars, and the tourism sector. HRAWI has argued that lower prices will boost state revenues and attract domestic travellers, while higher prices may lead to business declines and illegal activities. The association has urged the government to consider the long-term consequences of such decisions.

**Pradeep Shetty**, President, HRAWI vocalized this concern, stressing the adverse repercussions of the VAT increase by the state government, citing the contrasting strategies of other states such as Goa, Haryana and Chandigarh, which have actively reduced duties on liquor to boost tourism. "The move in Maharashtra stands as a stark contradiction to this



**Pradeep Shetty**

President,  
HRAWI

trend and poses a direct threat to both domestic and international tourism," stated Shetty. "Tourism is a vital contributor to the country's economy, accounting for approximately 9 per cent of the GDP. The affordability of liquor is crucial in the tourism sector. We urge the government to roll back this decision and work collaboratively with the industry to ensure sustainable growth and prosperity for all. We remain open to discussions with the government and stakeholders to find a solution that supports both Maharashtra's

revenue goals and the hospitality industry," added Shetty.

Echoing similar sentiments, **Chetan Mehta**, Vice President, HRAWI, said, "This is the second increase in prices, the earlier one being on account of an increase in excise licence fees by 10 per cent. An increase in yearly excise fees followed by the doubling of VAT on liquor is likely to have a nega-

**Raising yearly excise fees & doubling VAT on liquor is expected to harm businesses**

tive effect on businesses. On the other hand, reasonable liquor prices encourage spending, boost revenues and enhance the overall appeal of Maharashtra as a tourism destination. Further price hikes will dampen the spirit of business owners and may lead to undesirable outcomes, such as increased illegal activities. We appeal to the government to consider the long-term consequences of such decisions." □





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SCAN QR CODE



# Seminar sheds light on eco-friendly hospitality

HRAWI hosts a seminar on safety and sustainability in the hospitality industry, focussing on environmental aspects.

To prioritise safety and sustainability within the hospitality industry, HRAWI recently hosted a seminar titled ‘Life, Property and Environment Safety for the Hospitality Industry.’ The event, held on October 16, 2023, at the Marinha Dourada in Arpora, North Goa, brought together industry experts and professionals to comprehensively address safety concerns, including environmental aspects, in hotels and restaurants.

This comprehensive event delved deeply into safety measures, particularly focussing on environmental aspects, enlightening participants about safety protocols essential for all hospitality establishments. With a commitment to promoting tourism and sustainable practices, the seminar echoed HRAWI’s dedication to exploring eco-friendly approaches within the industry.

The event boasted an esteemed lineup of speakers, including **Ishrat Alam**, Asst. Director, India Tourism, Goa Ministry of Tourism as the Chief Guest. Alongside him were **Menino Proenca**, Director, Resort, **Marinha Dourada** as the Guest of Honour; **Ashok Menon**, Former Director, Goa Fire & Emergency Services and National Secretary, Fire & Security Association of India, who deliv-

ered the keynote address; and **Hemant Khadse**, CEO, East Corp Group, as the Technical Speaker.

**Pradeep Shetty**, President, HRAWI, emphasised the significance of safety and sustainability in the hospitality industry, stressing that these principles stand as the

**Seminar aligned with the Mission LiFE pledge to make all possible changes in daily life to protect environment**

cornerstones of the industry’s commitment. He highlighted the momentum behind sustainable practices, with this seminar being the second of its kind in Goa, reinforcing the industry’s dedication to ensuring the safety of life, property, and the environment.

The seminar also aligned with the Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) pledge to make all possible changes in daily life to protect the environment while also committing to continuously motivating family, friends and others about the importance of environmentally friendly habits. Mission LiFE is an India-led global movement to protect and preserve the environment and, aims to promote sustainable living and combat climate change.

“Together, let us pioneer this transformative journey. By collaborating, learning and sharing best practices, we lay the groundwork for a prosperous tomorrow. We are shaping an era where safety is not just a priority; it is an integral part of our industry’s DNA, ensuring the flourishing of our guests, properties, and the environment,” stated Shetty. □



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# Maharashtra's roadmap to green hospitality

Maharashtra's tourism & hospitality industry under the guidance of **Pradeep Shetty**, President, HRAWI, held a session to strategise sustainable tourism in the state.

On the eve of World Tourism Day 2023, Maharashtra's tourism and hospitality industry came together for an insightful session to discuss and strategise the future of sustainable tourism in the state, held at the IMC Building.

The session focussed on tourism and green investments, exploring various avenues for promoting eco-friendly practices within the industry. During the session, significant initiatives and recommendations were shared including innovation and sustainability, empowering women entrepreneurs, government support and fiscal incentives and education and skill development, among others. The session pivoted around the urgent need for the industry to move beyond rhetoric and take tangible actions for sustainable tourism.

Prominent attendees included **Samir Somaiya**, President, IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industry; **Sanjaya Mariwala**, VP, IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industry; **Farhat Jamal**, Chairman, Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Committee, IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industry; **Pradeep Shetty**, President, HRAWI; **Shraddha**

**Joshi Sharma**, MD, MTDC; **Param Kannampilly**, Co-chair, Travel, Tourism & Hospitality Expert Committee, IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industry; **Shwetank Singh**, Chief Growth & Strategy Officer, Chalet Hotels; and **Sireesha Ghiara**, VP, Learning and Development & Sustainability, IHCL.

## Session focussed on tourism and green investments, exploring various avenues for promoting eco-friendly practices within the industry

**Pradeep Shetty**, President, HRAWI, lent his valuable insights, urging the industry to integrate sustainability into education, recognising it as the bedrock of change. He emphasised that the education system must nurture a future generation of responsible tourism leaders. Simultaneously, Shetty advocated for governmental support through fiscal incentives such as tax breaks, lower interest rates, and structured accreditation for green tourism and hospitality projects. These financial incentives, he posited, would create a mutually beneficial environment that encourages businesses to invest in sus-

tainable practices, thereby fostering a harmonious coexistence of the industry and the environment.

“Empowering women in tourism not only reinforces gender equality but also enhances the industry's diversity and creativity. Alongside, innovation is the cornerstone of sustainable tourism. By harnessing local resources and adopting eco-friendly practices, we can create a tourism industry that respects both nature and local cultures,” stated Shetty.

The session highlighted the need for collaboration with global leaders in sustainable tourism, citing examples from countries such as Sweden and Slovenia. It also emphasised the importance of community engagement, collaborative efforts within the hotel industry and effective communication about green initiatives.

Shetty concluded by emphasising that sustainability is a collaborative endeavour, necessitating collective action and effective communication. He expressed his belief that Maharashtra's tourism sector is well-positioned to take the lead in embracing green investments and setting a precedent for sustainable tourism practices. □





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# INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MILLETS 2023



## Millets Parfait



### Ingredients

Pearl Millets	100 grams
Barnyard Millets	100 grams
Sugar	120 grams
Saffron	Few strings
Salt	To taste
Butter	100 grams
Cherry/Strawberry	For garnish
Milk	1 ltr

### Method

- Soak the Barnyard Millets for 30 mins and then prepare the bajra cookie crumb.
- Take milk in a stock pot, add Barnyard Millets.
- Add sugar and let it boil.
- Add dry fruits, elachi powder and saffron and put it on simmer.
- Let it reach thickening consistency.
- Once the desired consistency is reached, layer it one by one in a shot glass.
- Garnish it with cherry/ strawberry/ cookie crumb and serve.

## Millet Biryani Roulade



### Ingredients

Foxtail Millets	50 grams
Chicken Breast	200 grams
Chicken Mince	60 grams
Kewra Water	Few drops
Biryani Masala	01 tsp
Ginger Paste	10 grams
Garlic Paste	15 grams
Mint	Few leaves
Onion	30 grams
Oil/Ghee/Butter	15 grams

### Method

- First soak the Foxtail Millets for 30 mins.
- Cut the breast part of the chicken and give it the shape of a butterfly.
- Beat it with steak hammer to break the tissues.
- Now, mix minced chicken with Foxtail Millets, ginger garlic paste, barista, coriander, mint and biryani masala and add kewra water a few drops.
- Now spread the above-mentioned mixture evenly on chicken.
- Roll it tightly and cover it with aluminum foil and poach it in simmering water for 15–20 mins.
- Once done, cut it into roundels and pour bhurani raita on it.
- Garnish with barista and mint leaves.

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**Rohit Singla**

Teaching Associate, FHRAI IHM



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# New Delhi hotels witness record rise in ARR

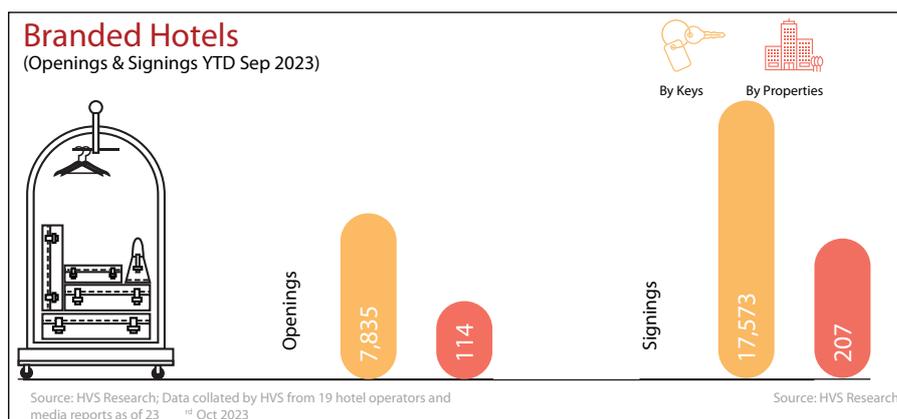


In Sep 2023, the nationwide occupancy rate did not meet levels recorded during corresponding period in 2022 and 2019, observes HVS Anarock.



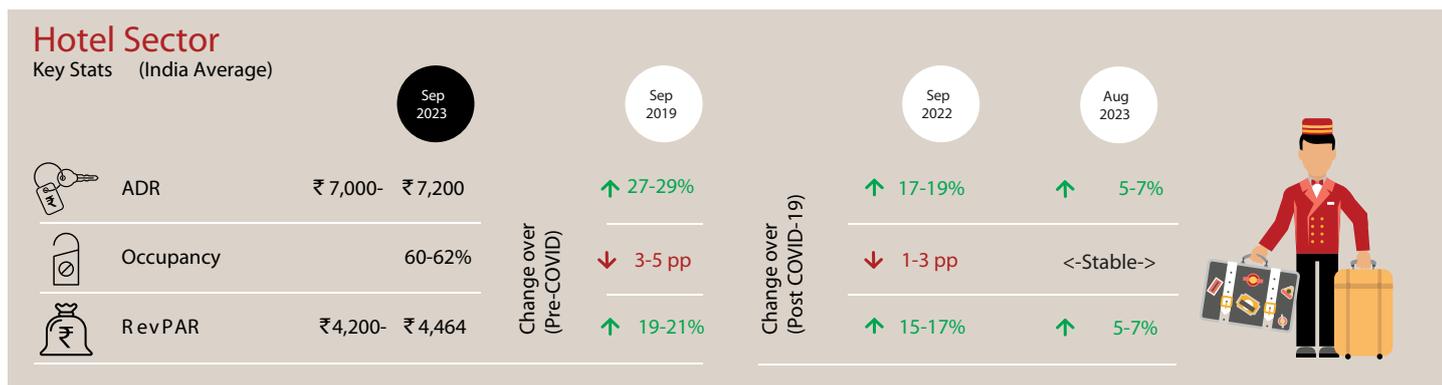
As per the HVS Anarock's Hotels & Hospitality Overview report for October 2023, New Delhi hotels reaped rich dividends in September 2023 due to the G20 summit, boasting high occupancy and rates. The average room rates (ARRs) exceeded ₹11,000, showcasing a remarkable year-on-year (Y-o-Y) growth of over 60 per cent.

The report showed "five of the top 10 key markets experienced a Y-o-Y decline in monthly occupancy rates, even as the average rates continued to increase". "In September 2023, the country-wide occupancy rate fell short of the levels observed during the same period in 2022 and 2019," the report emphasised.



**The average room rates exceeded ₹11,000 in New Delhi, showcasing a remarkable year-on-year growth of over 60 per cent**

The HVS Anarock report has documented the launch of 114 new hotel properties in the current year, adding up to 7,835 rooms. When it comes to fresh agreements, 207 additional hotels have been signed in 2023, contributing to a pipeline of over 17,573 rooms. □



Source: HVS Research

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**MAKE IN INDIA**



# Indian wedding market sees impressive growth

India's wedding industry, which generated ₹3,70,000 crores last year, is poised for future growth rate of 30 per cent.

 **Lipla Negi**

**Rajiv Jain**, Founder & Director of Rashi Entertainment, garnered the attention of delegates and the audience at the recently held PATA Travel Mart. During a session on Day 1 of the event, he promptly highlighted the growth trajectory of the Indian wedding market. He emphasised how the world's leading destinations are eagerly pursuing Indian weddings, sparing no effort to attract wedding planners. "The Indian wedding industry generated a business of ₹3,70,000 crores last year. It is believed that in the future, the industry will grow at a rate of 30 per cent," he said.

He also highlighted the significance of celebrations and weddings in Indian culture. "Indian people spend 20 per cent of their lifetime earnings on their children's weddings," he noted.



**Rajiv Jain**  
Founder & Director,  
Rashi Entertainment

According to him, Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Goa, Kerala, Mussoorie, Delhi, Agra, Khajuraho and Mahabalipuram are among the top domestic wedding destinations in India. He praised the efforts of the Union Ministry of Tourism (MoT) in promoting India as the world's leading wedding destination. He also commended

PM Narendra Modi's proposal for special packages to promote Indian states for destination weddings. "We have suggested to MoT to pave the way for a wedding exhibition in India where countries from around the world can participate," he stated.

**We have suggested to MoT to pave the way for a wedding exhibition in India where countries from around the world can participate**

When discussing potential locations for international weddings, he elaborated on several exquisite destinations such as Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Sri Lanka and Bahrain known for their grandeur and charm, catering especially to those with substantial budgets and a penchant for lavish celebrations. □

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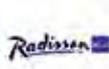


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# India's hotel industry targets double-digit growth

ICRA estimates pan-India premium hotel occupancy at 70–72 per cent in FY2024, with average room rates at ₹6,000–6,200.



## DDP Bureau

Get ready to pack your bags and explore the exciting world of India's hotel industry in the coming year. According to ICRA, FY2024 promises to be a game-changer, with the industry poised for double-digit revenue growth. What is fueling this surge? It is a perfect blend of factors—from the evergreen allure of domestic leisure travel to the rising demand for meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) and business travel. Foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) are set to climb, too, thanks to events like the G20 and the ongoing ICC World Cup 2023.

ICRA estimates pan-India premium hotel occupancy at 70–72 per cent in FY2024, after recovering to 68–70 per cent in FY2023. Pan-India premium hotel average room rates (ARRs) are expected to be at ₹6,000–6,200 in FY2024. The medium-term demand outlook also remains healthy, supported by a confluence of factors, including improvements in infrastructure

and air connectivity, favourable demographics and anticipated growth in large-scale MICE events with the opening of multiple new convention centres in the last few years, among others. The healthy demand amid relatively lower supply would lead to higher ARRs. Larger players would also benefit from revenues or shares of profits generated from hotel expansions through management contracts and operating leases.

**Demand is expected to remain strong across markets in FY2024 as consumer sentiments continue to be healthy & corporate performance is stable**

**Vinutaa S**, Vice President and Sector Head, Corporate Ratings, ICRA, explained, “Demand is expected to remain strong across markets in FY2024 as consumer sentiments continue to be healthy and corporate performance is stable.

Hotel-specific demand would, however, depend on location, competition and other property-related dynamics. Further, domestic tourism would be the prime driver, although FTAs are likely to pick up in H2 FY2024. Mumbai and Delhi, being gateway cities, are likely to report occupancy of 75 per cent in FY2024, benefitting from transient passengers, business travellers and MICE events. While Pune and Bengaluru could be laggards compared to other markets, they are also expected to witness significant improvement in FY2024 compared to FY2023. While trailing the FY2008 peak, the ARRs would witness a healthy YoY increase in FY2024. The sharp rise in ARRs of premium hotels also resulted in the spillover of demand to mid-scale hotels.”

The sustenance of a large part of the cost-rationalisation measures undertaken during the COVID period, along with operating leverage benefits, has resulted in a sharp expansion in margins compared to pre-COVID levels. The staff-to-room ratio



remains 15–20 per cent lower than pre-COVID levels. Companies have increased their usage of renewable power while the pass-through of cost inflation and strict control on fixed costs have also supported margins. Asset-light expansions have been margin-accretive for larger hotel chains. However, there could be some modera-

**Healthy demand uptick has resulted in pick-up in supply announcements & commencement of deferred projects in last 12–15 months**

tion in margins from the FY2023 levels with hotels undertaking renovations and maintenance activities, albeit significantly higher than the pre-COVID levels. ICRA's sample comprising 12 large hotel companies is expected to report operating margins of 25–28 per cent for FY2024, as against 28–30 per cent for FY2023 and 20–22 per cent pre-COVID.



“ICRA expects an uptick in earnings and cashflows to support the capital structure going forward. The asset monetisations, if any, would largely pertain to non-revenue generating assets. Debt metrics for hoteliers are expected to be better than pre-COVID levels in FY2024. The extent of improvement in return on capital employed (RoCE)

would, however, depend on the expansion strategy and could be constrained by the high capital cost of new properties owing to increased land and construction costs, in the case of asset-heavy expansion. The healthy business accruals have led to improvements in the credit profiles of several companies,” emphasised Vinutaa S. □



# Times are changing

National Education Policy 2020 and tie-up with Jawaharlal Nehru University will help revive popularity & demand for hospitality courses, opines **KK Pant**.

 **Lipla Negi**

Not long ago, admissions taking a nosedive post-COVID sent shock waves through the hospitality industry. IHMs faced the worst crisis in their history in 2022, with over 60 per cent of seats vacant. However, things are looking up. With hotels highlighting the acute shortage of a skilled workforce, efforts are underway to re-establish hospitality as a viable career option among the youth. **KK Pant**, Principal, IHM Pusa, New Delhi, feels that the media has disproportionately exaggerated this situation. With the hotel industry registering record revenue numbers and anticipating growth, he assures that the future appears even brighter. “There has been a depletion in the number of aspirants taking the JEE test for admissions to IHMs in the past two to three years. Demand for professional courses consistently lags behind the recruitment in the sector. The last



**KK Pant**  
Principal,  
IHM Pusa, New Delhi

few months have seen multiple job offers chasing only a handful of competent individuals,” Pant claimed.

## Multitude of choices

For the past two decades, IHMs have offered a degree named Bachelor of Science in Hospitality and Hotel Administration. He believes that this

university undergraduate degree opens doors of opportunity for the graduates. He added, “IHM Pusa has representation in the civil services, armed forces, media and MNCs, among others. Moreover, there are more opportunities appearing in the wider hospitality sector recently in comparison to hotels. Of late, allied sectors such as retail, high-end real estate,

**The last few months have witnessed multiple job offers chasing a handful of competent people**

e-commerce have been chasing hospitality graduates for their superior soft skills and focus that they bring to the table. The trend is going to continue with broad basing of the curriculum in response to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.”



Furthermore, through the partnership with the esteemed Jawaharlal Nehru University for awarding degrees to IHM graduates, the curriculum has not only been modernised but also showcases visible sparks of brilliance. He believed, “The curriculum no longer limits itself to the learning of core hospitality skills but instead focusses on encompassing areas such as the environment, wellness, entrepreneurship, and employability skills. This holistic approach aims to groom students to tackle any challenges they may encounter in the future.”

He emphasised that IHM graduates possess a well-rounded personality and aptitude, making them ideal candidates for various sectors. He mentioned, “The entrance examination for IHM admission allocates 20 per cent of its questions to test hospitality aptitude, focusing on empathy, analytical skills, and decision-making of aspirants. Other sections evaluate environmental awareness, communication skills and logical deduction abilities. Consequently, top rankers in the JEE often excel in their future careers due to this comprehensive evaluation.”

### Rebuilding the lost trust

A question of right training and applying right pressure on a fresh crop of hospitality professionals often arises during discussions. Pant advises not to engage

in the futility of blame-game. He disagrees that the industry does not wish to contribute to better groom the students nor that the educators do not listen to industry and are happy continuing in their comfort zone and not mend their instructional strategy and content.

### NEP opens opportunities for faculty & staff to take exposure as practicing hotel managers

Pant identifies the divide as a lack of understanding of the situation and, he adds, “perhaps a deficit of mutual trust as well.” He continued, “I believe there is tremendous scope for collaboration between both sides—the practicing managers and educators—to achieve a win-win situation. The NEP presents a wonderful opportunity to invite reputed hotel managers as professors of practice, while educational institutions provide opportunities for their faculty and staff to gain exposure as practicing hotel managers.”

### Normalize course correction

While selecting a career path is a personal choice, Pant highlights the emerging trend of mid-career switches becoming a common practice nowadays. In the hospitality industry, both young

graduates and experienced professionals are transitioning to other sectors. “I have personally encountered instances with disbelief and amazement, working alongside a senior chef from France, who had previously served as a fighter pilot early in his career. Additionally, several hotel general managers began their careers as flight pursers, security managers, or hotel engineers,” Pant pointed out.

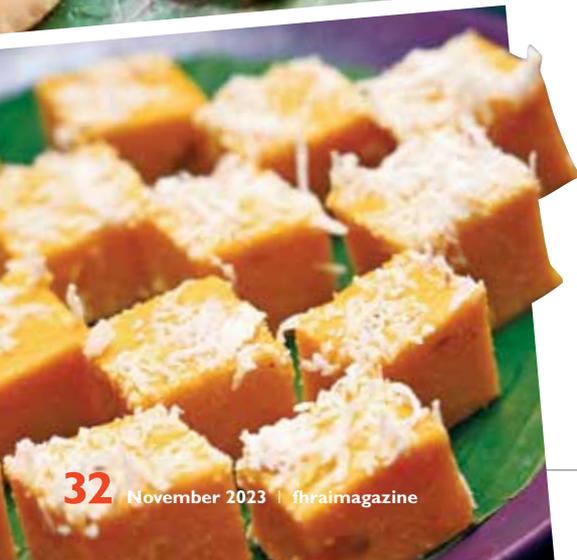
### IHMs are at par

Discussing the competition between IHMs and standalone hospitality institutes, he remarks, “The proof of the pudding is in the taste. The true test for any educational institution lies in the industry’s reception of their graduates and the impact these individuals make in the workplace.” He perceives state-funded institutes as platforms offering equal opportunities. “Despite the state-of-the-art training facilities and international connections held by many private educational institutions, they often lag behind in cultivating the quality of talent and innate competitive spirit found in state-funded institutions such as government IHMs. Fortunately, quality education remains the most reliable path from adversity to success in our society. IHMs play a pivotal role in offering a life-changing opportunity to individuals from disadvantaged sections of society,” he concluded. □



# Festive cheer drives F&B sales

The LaLiT Great Eastern Kolkata has seen a 25% increase in food sales & 35% rise in beverage sales compared to non-festive season, says **Kamal Raza**.



 **Lipla Negi**

**K**olkata as a city is known for its F&B offerings and the festive season canalises this demand further. Combine the growing appetite for delectable culinary experiences with good weather, and the gastronomic scene of the city becomes even more cheerful. Agrees **Kamal Raza**, Resident Manager, The LaLiT Great Eastern Kolkata, “There has been a 25 per cent increase in food sale and 35 per cent increase in beverage sale as compared to non-festive season. Good weather also helps in pushing consumers to go out on non-weekend days as well.”

The hotel is gearing up for bumper season ahead. “The bakery at our hotel is well known for its quality and taste. There is high demand for its products during Christmas and New Year, and we have started preparation for meeting the demand,” he shared.

Capitalising on the city’s multi-culture culinary legacy, the hotel plans to expand its F&B offerings in the coming months. “Besides our existing all-day dining outlet called Alfresco, we have added our new multi-cuisine restaurant The Legacy Lounge that serves all four cuisines—Bengali, Mughlai, Anglo and Tangra Chinese,” he informed. He further adds that the hotel aims to redefine social and corporate events in the city. “In November, we are looking forward to the launch of our late-night Bar Wilson’s which will play music till 04:00 am. Plus, our one-of-its-kind rooftop terrace of 14000 sq. ft is ready to take over all social and corporate events,” he stated.



**Kamal Raza**  
Resident Manager,  
The LaLiT Great  
Eastern Kolkata

Kolkata serves as a gateway to north-east travellers, and it helps attract both business and leisure travellers to the city. “Barring COVID period, the last few years have been significantly better for the North-East. There is a rise in business travel traffic also as the North-East is seeing infrastructural and commercial developments. We, as a premier hotel, are witnessing an uptick in accommodation users who are using us as a stopover point,” he explained.

**Room occupancy saw a rise of 12–15 per cent and ADR also grew by 18 per cent**

According to him, this year the general sentiment amongst travellers has been positive during the festive season which has further led to higher spends in both rooms and F&B. “This year, room occupancy saw a rise of 12–15 per cent and ADR also grew by 18 per cent,” he stated. □

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# Fortune outlines vision for Northeast

Hotel chain is actively seeking opportunities in Northeast region, with a recent hotel opening in Kalimpong and plans to open more hotels.

 **Janice Alyosius**

The hospitality industry in the Northeast holds significant potential that hotel chains are keenly eyeing. There is a growing interest among travellers to explore this region, and the hospitality industry aims to harness this potential by establishing a presence in the area. Highlighting the region's promise, **Samir MC**, Managing Director, Fortune Park Hotels, stated, "The Northeast appears to be an emerging destination, primarily due to the improvements in connectivity to various locations in the region. I am confident that it will become a preferred destination for many tourists in the next few years. We have recently started exploring this region. While we have opened a hotel in Kalimpong, which technically serves as the gateway to the Northeast, we are also planning to open more hotels."

In terms of market segmentation, Fortune Hotels has shown remarkable



**Samir MC**  
Managing Director,  
Fortune Park Hotels

adaptability. Originally known for its business-oriented hotels, the brand has recognised the growing significance of the leisure segment. This realisation led to a strategic shift towards a balanced portfolio. Samir MC shared, "Fortune Hotels originally began as a business hotel chain. However, over the last few years, we have recognised the growing importance of the leisure segment, so we have gradually expanded our presence in the leisure mar-

ket. Looking ahead, our aim is to strike the right balance between business and leisure locations, targeting a 50-50 per cent mix in terms of business and leisure properties."

**“Northeast appears to be an emerging destination, primarily due to improvements in connectivity to various locations in the region”**

He further added, "In the coming year, we are set to open approximately eight to ten hotels, with an even split between business and leisure properties. This expansion covers Tier I, II and III locations. Notably, around 65 per cent of the new hotels in our pipeline will be positioned in Tier II and III cities."

A significant shift in focus for the hospitality industry, especially post-COVID, is the emerging popularity of destination weddings. □



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# CULINARY CREATIVITY MEETS SUSTAINABILITY

**Stephan Jones**, Executive Chef, Six Senses Fort Barwara, shares his insights on blending sustainability, wellness & tradition in his culinary creations.



DDP Bureau

## **H**ow do you incorporate sustainability and wellness into your culinary creations?

Our commitment to sustainability and wellness is unwavering. We take a conscientious approach, adhering to our guiding principles of using natural ingredients. We often see trendy alternatives that bring their share of issues. We strive to avoid the bad stuff, focussing on ethical farming, reducing waste and repurposing food wherever

possible. We cook from scratch to steer clear of additives and unnecessary packaging while simultaneously supporting local communities and suppliers.

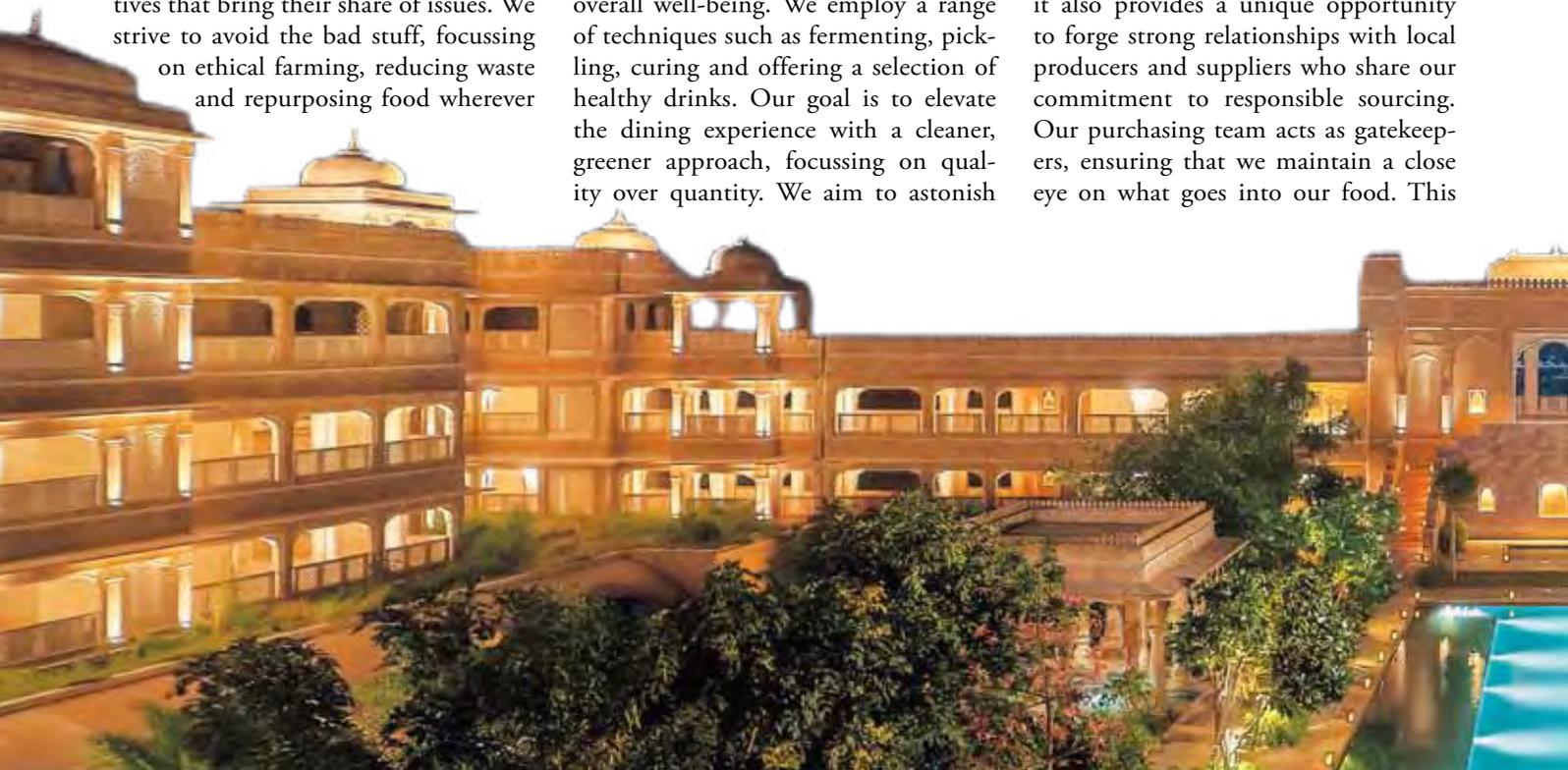
## **What culinary philosophy do you follow at Six Senses Fort Barwara?**

Our culinary philosophy at Six Senses Fort Barwara is imbued with a sunny, relaxed approach to food, prioritising overall well-being. We employ a range of techniques such as fermenting, pickling, curing and offering a selection of healthy drinks. Our goal is to elevate the dining experience with a cleaner, greener approach, focussing on quality over quantity. We aim to astonish

our guests with a blend of local and international dishes infused with an Indian twist.

## **What are some of the unique challenges & opportunities of creating a culinary experience in Fort Barwara?**

The challenges are not without their opportunities. The seasonal nature of the location presents a challenge, but it also provides a unique opportunity to forge strong relationships with local producers and suppliers who share our commitment to responsible sourcing. Our purchasing team acts as gatekeepers, ensuring that we maintain a close eye on what goes into our food. This



meticulous scrutiny enables us to know precisely what we are serving our guests, from origin to table.

**How do you balance innovation and tradition in conventional Indian cuisine?**

Innovation and tradition coexist harmoniously in our culinary creations. We derive inspiration from the local traditions, customs and rituals. Our approach is simple—we prepare dishes using fresh ingredients, keeping the food as natural as possible while preserving the essence of traditional flavours.



**Our goal is to elevate the dining experience with a cleaner, greener approach, focussing on quality over quantity**

**Amid rising demand for plant-based & sustainable diets, how do you meet diverse dietary preferences while ensuring satisfying culinary experience?**

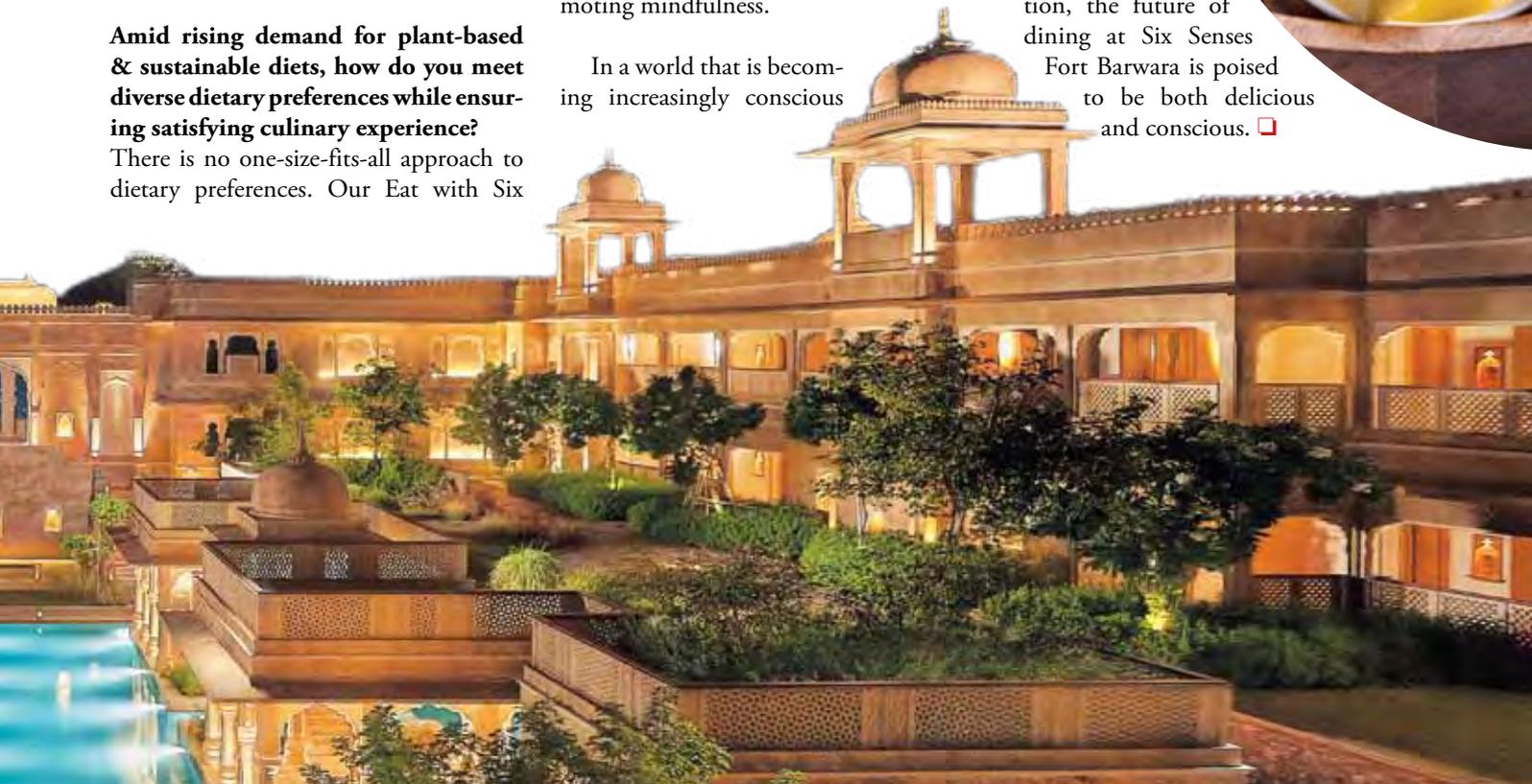
There is no one-size-fits-all approach to dietary preferences. Our Eat with Six

Senses philosophy is not about imposing strict dietary rules. We encourage healthier habits and provide options for guests to choose the depth to which they want to embrace these habits. It is all about fostering a positive outlook towards healthy eating, enabling better decisions and promoting mindfulness.

In a world that is becoming increasingly conscious

of what goes on the plate, Six Senses Fort Barwara offers a culinary experience that blends tradition, sustainability and wellness. Our commitment to sourcing locally, engaging with the community and providing a diverse range of dining options exemplifies the evolving landscape of fine dining in the modern era. With a focus on well-being and a respect for tradition, the future of dining at Six Senses

Fort Barwara is poised to be both delicious and conscious. ▣





# Hotels bet big on packed wedding season

Hotels are gearing up to hit a jackpot as this season is poised to witness wedding business worth ₹4.25 lakh cr in just three weeks, from 23 Nov to 15 Dec.



**Lipla Negi**

**B**igger and fatter—the Great Indian Wedding season this year is all set to take an unprecedented leap. Around 35 lakh weddings are expected to take place across the country pumping in about ₹4.25 lakh crore worth revenue. According to the Confederation of All India Traders, 3.2 million weddings occurred during the same period last year. The hotel industry is also gearing up to cash in on this wedding extravaganza.

A growing number of global travelers are also choosing India as their wedding destination. In fact, PM Narendra Modi recently called for positioning India as a premier wedding destination. The



**Rajiv Kapoor**  
General Manager,  
Fairmont Jaipur

Ministry of Tourism has also launched an ambitious campaign with profiling about 25 key wedding destinations across the country. A number of factors, including

the rich culture and heritage of India, the stunning scenery, and the relatively affordable cost of weddings in India compared to other popular wedding destinations makes it a top wedding destination.

**We are currently receiving many destination wedding inquiries from the United States, Argentina, the Middle East, and Africa**

Agrees **Rajiv Kapoor**, General Manager, Fairmont Jaipur, “We see a growing trend of foreign nationals picking India as a wedding destination, similar to Italy, Greece and the Maldives. We



**Pankaj Saxena**  
General Manager,  
Radisson Blu, Kharadi

**Radisson Blu, Kharadi has launched Wedding Memoir, a comprehensive platform for wedding and pre-wedding events**

wedding season, we have had the privilege of hosting and looking forward to welcoming more than 50 weddings, each a testament to the seamless blend of luxury and tradition,” shared **Sandipan Bose**, General Manager, Mementos by ITC Hotels, Ekaaya Udaipur.

Modern couples are increasingly opting for personalized and extravagant weddings, incorporating innovative themes and lavish decorations. “There is a growing demand for unique entertainment options, gourmet cuisine and high-end hospitality services. Social media influence also plays a pivotal role, inspiring couples to create visually stunning events. Overall, the trend towards opulence, customization, and memorable experiences is driving the wedding industry in India, catering to the evolving desires of discerning customers,” said Mathew.

In response to the growing demand, Radisson Blu, Kharadi has recently launched Wedding Memoir, a comprehensive platform for wedding and pre-wedding events. Elaborating on the platform, **Pankaj Saxena**, General Manager, Radisson Blu, Kharadi, said, “We proudly offer an array of services that cater to the specific customs and rituals of diverse groups, including Marwari, Sindhi, Christian, Parsee, Muslim, South Indian, Rajasthani, Maharashtrian, and more. Within these services, we take pride in providing authentic regional delicacies and meticulously curated decor that is steeped in the traditions of each community.” □



**Sandipan Bose**  
General Manager,  
Mementos by ITC Hotels,  
Ekaaya Udaipur

**We have received an overwhelming response in terms of bookings, showcasing a thriving demand for our exquisite wedding services**

are currently receiving many destination wedding inquiries from the United States, Argentina, the Middle East, and Africa, and we anticipate that this trend will continue to grow. Additionally, many Indian families living abroad are eager to share their culture and traditions with their loved ones, and a wedding is the perfect opportunity to do so.”

**Mervin Mathew**, Director, Sales & Marketing, Le Meridien Kochi believes that factors such as economic growth, changing lifestyles, and a preference for luxurious experiences contribute to this upward trend, indicating a promising boost in revenue for the hospitality and

event industry during the upcoming wedding season. He further added, “The wedding season in India, traditionally from October to February, sees a surge in celebrations. Compared to previous years, a steady increase in bookings and revenue is expected due to a growing trend in elaborate weddings, higher guest counts, and increased spending on venues, accommodations and related services.”



**Mervin Mathew**  
Director, Sales & Marketing,  
Le Meridien Kochi

**A steady increase in bookings and revenue is expected due to a growing trend in elaborate weddings, higher guest counts and higher spend**

**Keeping it exquisite**

On the lookout for picturesque locations, destination wedding seekers are driving the demand for luxurious celebrations. “Mementos by ITC, Udaipur has received an overwhelming response in terms of bookings, showcasing a thriving demand for our exquisite wedding services. For this

# WEDDING CATERING goes a notch up

As luxury catering evolves, it accommodates diverse preferences & fusion cuisines, not limited to big weddings but extending to smaller gatherings & events.



 Sakshi Singh

A few elements epitomise India like no other—the peacock, the Royal Bengal Tiger, and the grand Indian wedding. As a predominantly collectivist society, hosting and participating in public functions is deeply embedded in the psyche of most Indians. Whether it is birthdays, anniversaries, or weddings, Indians endeavour to infuse every celebration with an extra touch of splendour, and the thread that weaves every event together is food. It is often said that a guest might forget most things about an Indian wedding, but they are likely to forever cherish the culinary experience. Food has always held a central position at these gatherings, but several factors are reshaping the fundamental aspects of serving and consuming food at luxurious Indian weddings. The surge in disposable incomes, the availability of diverse ingredients, a growing propensity to spend, the unimpeded flow of ideas and



**Vishal Chawan**  
Director, Food & Beverage, Court-  
yard by Marriott Pune Chakan

professionals, and exposure to more developed markets have led to the burgeoning market of luxury wedding catering.

From simple, low-key affairs a few decades ago, weddings have metamorphosed into gala events, and the change is most prominent in the kind of food that is

being served. Wedding catering was already an elaborate affair, with a medley of dishes neatly divided into different sections for guests to savour. Luxury catering, however, has brought an element of personalisation to food. Besides gastronomical senses, luxury catering appeals to the visual as well as olfactory senses of attendees. With patrons demanding differentiated products and

**“Guests are increasingly seeking unique and luxurious catering services to complement their special occasions”**

services such as organic, vegan, gluten-free and locally sourced ingredients, sustainable cutlery, interactive food stations and themed menus, hotels and caterers are constantly customising their offerings.



“Guests are increasingly seeking unique and luxurious catering services to complement their special occasions. This has led to hotels investing in top-notch culinary teams, exquisite presentation, and premium ingredients to meet the rising demand for high-end catering services,” noted **Vishal Chawan**, Director, Food & Beverage, Courtyard by Marriott Pune Chakan. The boom in the luxury catering segment is driving a strong trend of innovation across the board. For instance, new-age patrons are relatively more health-conscious and sustainability-focused, which makes ingredients such as millets, ragi and jaggery quite common in Indian weddings. Similarly, several organisers are experimenting with food stations made of bamboo and other sustainable materials. “Hotels are sourcing ingredients locally to ensure freshness and sustainability. This trend reflects a growing interest in organic and locally sourced produce,” Chawan pointed out.



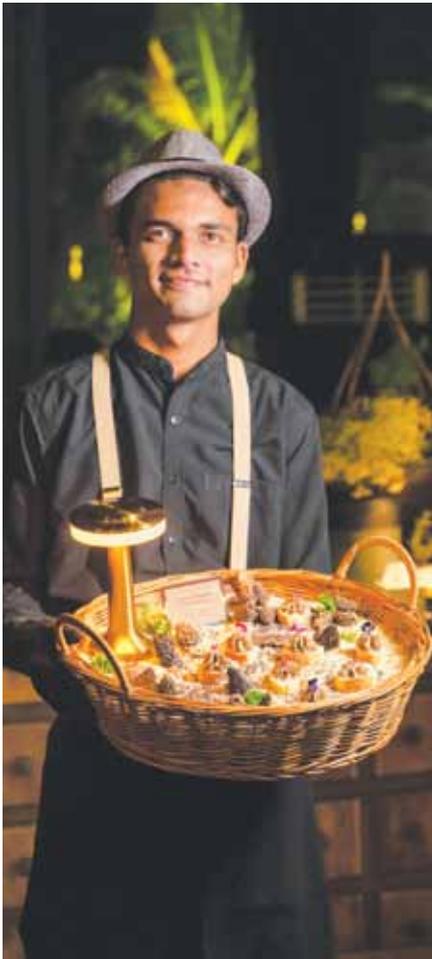
**Sanjay Vazirani**  
CEO,  
Foodlink F&B Holdings India

The uptick in demand for high-end catering is a subset of the overall surge in the luxury appetite of Indian consumers. As per Bain and Co., luxury spending in the country is likely to triple by 2030 to touch \$200 billion. The demand is underpinned by a rising number of high-net-worth individuals, growing entrepreneurship and the presence of a strong middle class. Parallely,

the \$50-billion Indian wedding market is growing at a scorching 20–25 per cent annually, with a large chunk of the spending allocated to catering services. More financial firepower for catering services at Indian weddings is directly leading to exclusivity, opulence and magnificence when it comes to food. “Food is no longer just a part of an event; it has evolved into an experi-

### **Luxury caterers in India are now focussed on addressing even the minutest concerns of event attendees**

ence in itself. This transformation encompasses all aspects of the catering experience, from decor and presentation to service. Luxury caterers in India are now focussed on addressing even the minutest concerns of event attendees,” said **Sanjay Vazirani**, CEO, Foodlink F&B Holdings India.



**During the lockdown, people experimented with cooking and eating more, which made them crave new regional flavours**



The evolution of high-end catering has opened up the option of uncommon cuisines and celebrity chefs for Indian patrons. When it comes to luxury catering, no dish is too exotic and no preference is too outlandish. Caterers and hotels are teaming up with celebrity chefs to design menus specially customised to the hosts' preferences. The exposure to international palettes has made fusion cuisine one of the most sought-after options in Indian luxury weddings. Be it jalapeno kachoris, a tofu patty or pizza with anchovies as toppings, exclusive catering services are making sure that no demands remain unmet. "We are increasingly experimenting with cuisines to cater to evolving tastes and preferences... it includes fusion menus, dietary diversity, interactive food stations and themed menus," emphasised **Bhawishya Rituparn**, Director, Sales and Marketing, Radisson Blu Pune, Hinjawadi.

At the other end of the spectrum, many individuals demand local, raw and distinctive cuisines, especially in the case of destination weddings. To satisfy the hunger for original, local cuisines, many high-end caterers involve researchers who dig up authentic dishes and ingredients to ensure accurate flavours. "During the lockdown, people experimented with cooking and eating more, which made them crave new regional flavours," said **Sarita Bazaz**, Founder, The Food Affairs.

Luxury catering has been mostly limited to big fat Indian weddings, but a

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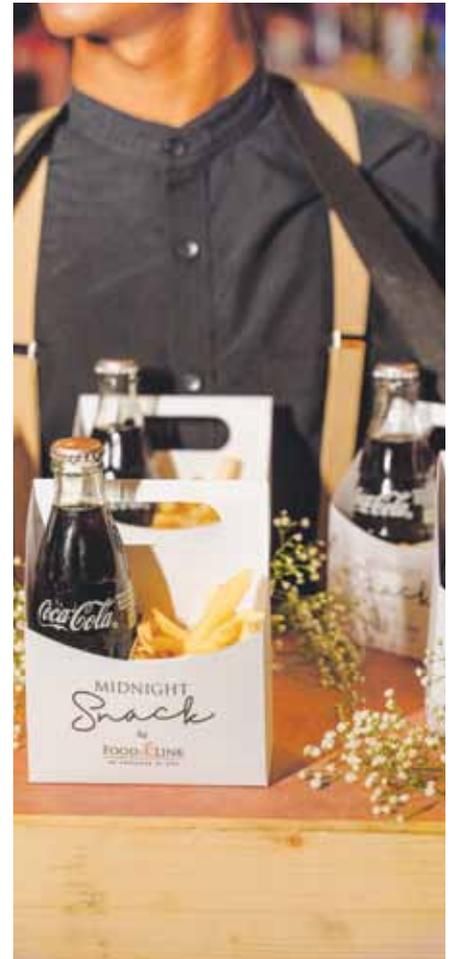


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**Bhawishya Rituparn**  
 Director, Sales and Market-  
 ing, Radisson Blu Pune,  
 Hinjawadi

50th birthday celebrations,” Vazirani said. Witnessing the demand, Vazirani has carved out a separate vertical named Foodlink Boutique for intimate parties.

**“We are increasingly experimenting with cuisines to cater to evolving tastes and preferences**

bulging aspirational class is breaking the shackles and opting for high-end caterers for smaller events such as birthday parties and anniversaries too. Hotels are optimised for events of all sizes, with most resorts having multiple spaces for different occasions. However, some of the biggest hotels exclusively reserve their luxury buffet services for large events such as weddings. The growing demand for full-scale luxury catering for company events, meetings, anniversaries and birthdays has forced hotels to take note and provide high-end catering for gatherings of all sizes. In fact, small events have become major demand drivers for luxury catering in several Tier-II cities. “Individuals are increasingly opting for luxury catering services for smaller functions and get-togethers... these could be small office meets for clients such as Deloitte or launches such as media meets for the Royal Enfield Bullet 350 launch or parties such as the Gadar 2 success party or Ritesh Sidhwani’s

Just like dressing and decoration trends associated with weddings keep evolving, catering trends too keep changing. Fusion and theme-based menus may be the flavour of the season, but it may change soon, and no one can make an informed guess on what it may be in the future. Food curators

must be on their toes and look out for innovative flavours and presentation styles to sweep attendees off their feet. Technology-driven food presentation is gradually finding takers in the country. The use of motion sensors, the Internet of Things and smart lighting is growing; the fully evolved form of luxury wedding catering is anyone’s guess. □





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# Personalized experiences drive wedding biz

There is a shift towards more personalized and diverse wedding experiences with a focus on unique settings and various price options.

 **Lipla Negi**

The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) is expecting businesses to earn ₹4.25 lakh crore this wedding season, which is the highest ever. This estimate comes after CAIT expects a whopping 35 lakh weddings to be solemnised in a span of just 23 days between November 23 to December 15, 2023. “In this wedding season alone, in Goa we are almost seeing a double-digit growth as far as the weddings are concerned. These are resident weddings as well as non-resident weddings being celebrated with us. The size of the weddings range from 15 guests intimate weddings

to 600 guests timeless weddings and are not necessarily centred towards large luxury hotels as guests are willing to choose from our amā Stays & Trails bungalows too, which become a perfect destination for guest to have a small intimate wedding of 15 to 30 people,” said **Dr. Anmol Ahluwalia**, Cluster General Manager, Taj North Goa.

**Taj Holiday Village, in its 41st year of operations, has witnessed 2 generations coming to us from the same family**



**Dr. Anmol Ahluwalia**

Cluster GM,  
Taj North Goa

### Personalised experiences

Destination weddings are first on the checklist of several young couples. He shared, “We are seeing a tremendous surge in destination weddings at our resorts. The resorts have witnessed a growth of almost 25 per cent compared to last year in the wedding segment in terms of numbers and revenue.” He further believes that several trends influence the demand of wedding destinations. Primarily among them is personalisation. “Families seek personalised experiences,” he added. There is also a growing interest in environmentally conscious weddings with focus on sustainability. He pointed out, “Technology integration for live streaming of the ceremonies as well as digital guest books are on the rise.”

**“ Millennials are changing the way destination weddings are done, turning them into an epic affair—cost-effective yet absurdly personalised ”**

The demand for unique experiences drives the business. “Exotic locations such as the Sunset Deck at Taj Holiday Village Resort & Spa, Goa have gained tremendous demand among couples looking for unique and memorable experiences. The wedding ceremonies take place as the sun sets in the Arabian Sea and are captured in memories,” he divulged. From

gourmet dining to entertainment, luxury weddings include immersive experiences to create unforgettable moments for the families. “Guests now are willing to spend more on F&B and personalised dining experiences and are ready to splurge more when it comes to destination weddings,” he pointed out.

Driving the demand are the discerning guests who enjoy not just a destination wedding but an end-to-end curated experience which might be spread across destinations. “The guests’ expectation is a seamless travel between various resorts for various functions. For instance: an Ahmedabad family might have the pre-bridal function in their own city followed by a wedding in Goa and then the couple along with close family and friends travel to Udaipur Palace or London for their wedding reception. They are looking for an end-to-end service in which they will be able to get multiple options and still be able to use the luxuries of the Taj,” he explained.

### High in demand

While Goa has always been one of the top choices for destination weddings, wedding revellers nowadays like the wedding functions to be sprinkled across multiple venues. “When it comes to the wedding segment both Taj Fort Aguada Resort & Spa and Taj Holiday Village Resort & Spa, Goa are suited for the wedding seg-



ment because of the various breathtaking venues that are on offer for the various wedding related functions. From Sangeet to Haldi and Mehendi ceremonies, today's families look for various locations for each function," he emphasised. In Goa, the hotel chain offers almost every segment of hotel that is available whether it is resorts such as Taj Fort Aguada or Taj Holiday

as the world's strongest brand by Brand Finance for the years 2020, 2022 and 2023, our resorts are known for exceptional service, ensuring that every detail of a wedding is flawlessly executed. Both our resorts offer picturesque beachfront as well as lush garden settings for weddings, providing a beautiful backdrop for ceremonies and receptions."

Village or Taj Exotica or newly rebranded Taj Cidade Goa. He stated, "Being judged

### Rising cost of weddings

The wedding planners community has been raising concerns regarding the high rate of Indian hotels and wedding business shifting to international destinations subsequently. Dr Ahluwalia calls it the 'millennial effect'. "Millennials are changing the way destination weddings are done, turning them into epic, once-in-a-lifetime vacations for them and their friends, picking exotic locations, plastering it all over social media, keeping it all cost-effective but still absurdly personalized," he pinpointed.



**The size of the weddings ranges from 15 guests intimate weddings to 600 guests timeless weddings**

He further sees the choice of destination or country as a personal choice between shifting to international locations to make it a grand affair with minimum budget or giving in to the families' deep-rooted traditions. "There are various hotels offering various price points as far as weddings are concerned. That is why the multi-brand approach of IHCL works very well because if the guests want to have various price points, they can choose within the same city various hotels which are available from a Vivanta to a Yellow House to Taj Cidade de Goa, and resorts such as Taj Fort Aguada Resort & Spa; Taj Holiday Village Resort & Spa, Taj Exotica along with our intimate amā Stays & Trails as well as Ginger Hotels," he mentioned. □

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# Festive treats get MILLETS PUNCH



Combining nutrition, taste and tradition, hotels are using Millets to give conventional festive hampers a fresh, healthy upgrade.

 **Lipla Negi**

Chocolates, cupcakes and the traditional sugar-loaded sweets are passe! As we celebrate 2023 as the International Year of Millets, the modest and unassuming grains are adding a healthy yet flavourful twist to festive hampers this year. Hotels across the country are promoting Millets in a big way with gourmet festive hampers. A perfect pick me up, the Millets-inspired delights are an instant hit among clients, especially the young ones, for whom



**Somnath Rakesh**  
Executive Sous Chef,  
Taj Holiday Village Resort & Spa, Goa

**“Today’s youth and traveller leans more towards health, environment and is an outspoken champion of sustainability”**

health and fitness has become non-negotiable. “So far, we have received good response to Millets-based sweets as today’s youth and traveller leans more towards health, environment

and is an outspoken champion of sustainability. We are only beginning to discover and experiment with the rich possibilities that Millets offer, without compromising on taste,” averred **Somnath Rakesh**, Executive Sous Chef, Taj Holiday Village Resort & Spa, Goa.



**Karam Dogra**  
Executive Chef, Sheraton Grand  
Palace Indore

### An instant hit

From delicate cakes served at a high tea to a sophisticated Risotto made of grains your great grandmother may have been cooking for decades, Millets have rightfully reclaimed their place in our diets, and are unlikely to fade away as the year ends. The chefs at hotels are absolutely enjoying the process of reviving and reinventing Millets-based recipes with a modern twist. “We get to work with ingredients that go so back to our roots, predating imports of foreign grains or modern agricultural intervention, is frankly what excites me,” confided Rakesh.

Garnering the international spotlight and admiration, Millets flattered the palates of international delegates and guests during the G20 Summit in New Delhi recently. “Inspired by our involvement in hosting G20, we have embarked on an innovative journey with Millets in our festive hampers. We have artfully created a range of delectable festive sweets that not only tantalize the taste buds but also champion the health benefits of Millets. The offerings also reflect our dedication to both tradition and the global emphasis on Millets this year,” explained **Karam Dogra**, Executive Chef, Sheraton Grand Palace Indore.

### Pushing F&B revenue

Millets are driving the demand for festive hampers. “This year, the demand has been remarkable. Festive hampers

transcend being mere items for purchase. Additionally, it is worth noting that these hampers have contributed significantly to our F&B revenue (30–40 per cent) during the festive season,” pointed out **Ankur Gulati**, Executive Chef, The Claridges New Delhi.

## Festive offerings reflect our dedication to both tradition and the global emphasis on Millets this year

Aiming to capitalise on the rising popularity of Millets, many brands have introduced special Millets-based gourmet hampers to boost sales during festive season. “We have introduced the ‘Royal Millets’ Mithai box, designed as a delightful gift option for travellers. The box features Foxtail Millets Laddu, Jowar and Bajra Millets Chikki, Ragi Millets Burfi, Jowar and Bajra Millet Cookies, and Millets Mixture made with Jowar and Ragi,” said **Arvind Dadu**, Managing Director, Anand Sweets.

### Celebrating sustainability

Along with nutrition, Millets are known to be planet-friendly grains as well. This is one of the key reasons why these little grains have found big favour among eco-conscious millennials and Gen Z. Agreed Rakesh, “In line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s mantra of ‘Lifestyle for Environment’ to tackling the larger challenge of climate change: one that falls back on age-old sustainable Indian practices preserved over generations.”

Besides being planet-friendly, Millets also help people indulge in festive treats without compromising on their



diet plan. Traditionally, these treats have been part of our season-based diets and now these are being highly recommended by nutritionist and fitness experts. Added Gulati, “Foxtail and Ragi Millets star in bread and pancake pre-mixes, offering nutrition and gluten-free versatility. Mixed Millets Laddos with pearl, finger Millets, amaranth, and jaggery enhance our commitment to healthy, sustainable gourmet choices.”



# ZERO- WASTE HOTELS

## Pioneering sustainability

Rise of zero-waste hotels in India is transforming hospitality industry by championing eco-friendly practices.

In recent times, India has witnessed a remarkable surge in a unique trend within the hospitality industry—zero-waste hotels. These establishments are setting new benchmarks for sustainability by aiming to minimise waste, reduce environmental impact, conserve resources, and offer guests an eco-conscious and responsible travel experience. This article delves into the world of zero-waste hotels in India, exploring their innovative practices and the substantial impact they are making on the global tourism landscape.

Zero-waste hotels are committed to minimising, recycling, and repurposing waste materials to divert them from landfills. Their core mission is to contribute nothing to landfills. Instead, they adopt practices that reduce waste generation, promote recycling, and encourage composting. In doing so, they significantly lower their carbon footprint, preserve resources, and contribute to a healthier and more sustainable environment.

Here are some key eco-friendly practices commonly embraced by hotels:

- **Composting systems:** Zero-waste hotels employ on-site composting systems to manage organic waste effectively. This includes transforming food scraps, garden clippings, and other biodegradable materials into nutrient-rich compost. For instance, the Taj Jai Mahal Palace in Jaipur boasts an organic waste compost recycling system that converts discarded



**Dr. Niraalee Shah**  
State Convener  
Maharashtra, RTSOI

kitchen wet food into valuable manure for its landscaped gardens.

- **Waste separation and recycling:** Efficient waste separation processes are fundamental in zero-waste hotels. This practice ensures that recyclable materials such as paper, plastic, glass, and metal are collected separately and sent for recycling. Marriott has taken significant steps to reduce food waste through the implementation of food waste-tracking technology, Leanpath, as part of its goal to reduce food waste by 50 per cent by 2025.

- **Sustainable sourcing:** To minimise waste and reduce carbon footprints, zero-waste hotels prioritise the use of eco-friendly and sustainable products in various aspects, from linens and toiletries to furniture and decor. An excellent example is the Green Haven Resort in Himachal Pradesh, which harnesses solar energy to meet a substantial portion of its energy needs and sources locally grown, organic ingredients for its restaurant to support the local community and reduce food miles.

**Zero waste hotels are committed to minimising, recycling, and repurposing waste materials to divert them from landfills**

- **Reduction in single-use plastics:** Hotels are making conscious efforts to eliminate single-use plastics. Reusable water bottles, refillable toiletry dispensers, and cloth bags are among the eco-friendly alternatives offered to guests. ITC Hotels in Mumbai stands out by forming a cross-

functional task force dedicated to identifying and eliminating areas using single-use plastics, collaborating with suppliers to find suitable alternatives, and devising a plastic-free roadmap for the future.

**ITC Mughal Hotel, Delhi follows a sustainable process by harnessing rainwater for its buildings & processes**

• **Energy and water conservation:** These hotels invest in energy-efficient appliances and lighting while implementing water conservation practices, such as low-flow showerheads and toilets, to reduce water consumption. ITC Mughal Hotel in Delhi follows a sustainable process by harnessing rainwater for its buildings and processes, ensuring water needs are met through efficient rainwater harvesting.

• **Local engagement:** Many zero-waste hotels actively engage with local communities, sourcing supplies and services from nearby businesses to support the regional economy and minimise transportation-related emissions. For instance, Forest Escape Koyna in Koyananagar col-



laborates with local farmers, taxi drivers, communities, and tour guides, ensuring fair prices and supporting local businesses.

• **Xanadu Earth Resort:** Located in Kerala, Xanadu Earth Resort is a leading example of sustainable hospitality. The resort focusses on permaculture, organic farming, and composting to minimise waste, and they have even managed to produce their own energy.

• **Marari Beach:** Marari Beach, another Kerala hotel has implemented exten-

sive recycling and composting systems, alongside providing guests with reusable glass bottles and refill stations to reduce plastic waste.

• **Spiti Ecosphere:** Spiti Ecosphere in Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh actively engages in waste reduction, focussing on composting and recycling, while also educating guests about responsible travel.

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

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# Mastering Front Office ops

## Key insights

Front Office in hotels is the initial point of contact for guests & is responsible for creating crucial first impression.

The Front Office stands as the heart and soul of every hotel, serving as the initial point of contact for guests and shouldering the crucial responsibility of creating that all-important first impression. Beyond this, it operates as a bustling communication centre, facilitating the seamless flow of information between guests and various other departments within the hotel. It is no exaggeration to say that the Front Office is indeed the nerve centre of any hotel. Let's delve into the intricacies of this vital department, explore its sub-departments, responsibilities, and discover key insights that can enhance the efficiency of Front Office Operations.

Here are a few valuable insights that I have gained from my extensive experience, which can significantly contribute to enhancing the efficiency of Front Office operations.

### Prioritise tasks

One thing that we should always practice is prioritising tasks that are urgent and important. I have given clear instructions to my team to prepare a 'to-do list', categorise tasks by priority, and follow this list each day. This approach helps in preventing tasks from



**Abu Huraira Khan**  
Front Office Manager,  
The Westin Mumbai Garden City

being overlooked and ensures they are completed on time.

### Invest in training staff

Training during the initial days of employment does not have a lasting impact, so it should be an ongoing process. Staff should be evaluated, perhaps every quarter, and rewarded based on their knowledge. Training helps staff acquire product knowledge and deliver exceptional service.

### Avoid staff shortage

Staff should not be overloaded with responsibilities, as it can negatively affect their performance and, consequently, guest sat-

isfaction. Each hotel is allocated a manning budget based on its size, and as a manager, one needs to keep the staff motivated. This approach will reduce attrition, ensuring that each staff member efficiently performs their designated tasks, without shouldering the burden of others.

### Know your guests

Knowing your guests' preferences can make a world of difference. A recurring guest typically requests specific amenities or services with each stay. It is crucial to pleasantly surprise them by pre-arranging these preferences instead of waiting for the guest to ask each time. This is where your guest connection plays a significant role. Often, you should proactively anticipate the guest's needs instead of relying on them to communicate their preferences. Capturing guest feedback enables to pleasantly surprise and delight them during their next stay.

**It is no exaggeration to say that the Front Office is indeed the nerve centre of any hotel**

### Bring better technology

Technology plays a vital role in optimising Front Office operations. To optimise Front Office operations, it is essential to invest in technological aspects such as Property Management System (PMS), F&B management software, and a revenue management system.

### Optimise SoPs

SoPs are the backbone of every hotel operation. They guide staff in executing tasks efficiently. Incorporating innovative ideas into your SoPs will significantly improve the efficiency of overall operations.

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



# Radisson's unique HOSPITALITY GEM

The Radisson Blu Resort, Kumbhalgarh, is reshaping hospitality landscape by expertly blending tradition & modernity.



The Radisson Hotel Group is redefining hospitality with the Radisson Blu Resort, Kumbhalgarh. This resort seamlessly combines tradition with modernity, paying homage to Rajasthan's rich heritage.

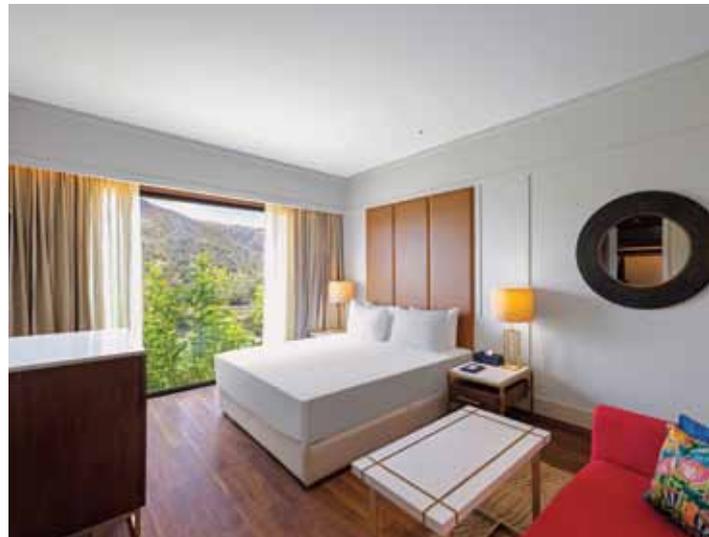
**The resort is in proximity to Kumbhalgarh Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage site renowned for its architectural splendour**

Set in a spectacular location with a mountainous backdrop, the resort is accessible from Maharana Pratap Airport Udaipur and Udaipur City Junction Train Station within two hours.

“We are thrilled to unveil Radisson Blu Resort Kumbhalgarh, a true gem in our growing portfolio. With its captivating setting, thoughtful amenities, and Rajasthan's warm hospitality, we are confident that Radisson Blu Resort, Kumbhalgarh will become a preferred

destination for travellers seeking an unforgettable experience. We derive deep inspiration from this and will continue to add more such magnificent hotels to our portfolio that are an embodiment of India's rich heritage,” said **Zubin Saxena**, Managing Director & Area Senior Vice President, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group.

The resort is in proximity to Kumbhalgarh Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage site renowned for its architectural splendour. Its strategic location ensures convenient access to other prominent attractions, including the revered Ranakpur Jain Temple and the captivating wildlife of Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary. Just a 2-hour drive away from Udaipur, life at Radisson Blu Resort, Kumbhalgarh is all about the simple pleasures—waking up to warm sunshine, strolling through lush gardens, savouring local culinary



delights, and exploring tales of bravery with guided treks and trails to sites undiscovered.

It is the only IGBC-certified property in the region. The resort boasts spacious rooms and suites that are elegantly designed with thoughtful touches offering stunning views of the picturesque landscape, ensuring a tranquil retreat for every guest. ▣



# MILLETS *spark culinary* REVOLUTION

Hotels are innovating with Millets in their menus, offering a diverse and healthier dining experience.

**M**illets are a highly diverse group of small-seeded grasses grown extensively worldwide as cereal crops or grains for both fodder and human consumption. They serve as major food sources in arid and semiarid regions and are a staple in the traditional cuisines of many cultures. Due to their ability to thrive in less fertile soil and their minimal need for pesticides, Millets are inherently organic and chemical-free by nature.



**S Mukherjee**  
Executive Chef,  
The Metropolitan Hotel Spa,  
New Delhi

buffet that includes a wide variety of idlis, dosas, pongal and utthapam rustled up from jowar, ragi and bajra. It also adds a great texture to the food that rice is sometimes unable to add. Unlike wheat paratha, those made from Millets are lighter on the stomach and easy to digest too. The goodness of Millets has always been a part of traditional Indian cuisine since ages, but it is now recognised after the UN announcement. Indian restaurants globally are aiming to serve more Millets-based products so



With the UN declaring 2023 “Year of Millets”, the hospitality industry is rejoicing at the revival of Millets. Numerous hotels and restaurants are now curating and incorporating distinctive Millets-based dishes into their menus.

From Millets khichdi to Millets dosa, poha, utthappam, rotis, parathas, kheer, breads, cakes, risotto, pastas, pizzas and more, versatile Millets are being showcased in an eclectic range of dishes. Nowadays, even festive Diwali, Christmas or New Year hampers consist of Millets-based food items such as popcorn, chips, cookies, chikkis, laddoos and cupcakes, and they are selling like hot cakes.

There is a lot of demand for vegetarian and non-vegetarian Millets salad, soups and shorbas. With time, guests have become well informed and health conscious and this change in behaviour is one of the major reasons that has increased Millets’ popularity immensely. Millets are high in fibre content, and is a super ingredient when it comes to weight loss and is good for the heart. These are gluten-free whole grains and an excellent option for people with gluten allergies or those who suffer from celiac disease.

If you are someone who craves the blend of wholesome eating and delightful taste, your search ends as few hotels and restaurants now offer a special Millets breakfast

**Millets can be mixed in all types of cuisines with minimal fuss, from Italian to Indian and continental**

as to give the health benefits of these multi-grains to the busy urban population. The Millets can be mixed in all types of cuisines with minimal fuss, from Italian to Indian and continental, a new dish and taste is innovated with the addition of the nutrient-dense grain. With restaurants crafting distinct Millets-based menus, the offerings allow you to relish the essence of traditional grains with a contemporary twist.

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# Innovative tech triumphs

Through its unique hosted buyer programme InfoComm India 2023 provided decision-makers & end-users with invaluable learning opportunities.



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# India's cultural kaleidoscope

## Boon for hospitality

From wilderness to natural wonders, the diversity of experiences is India's strength as top global tourist spot & big boost for hospitality sector.

India, often referred to as the Land of Diversity, is a country that encapsulates a mesmerising blend of traditions, cultures, landscapes and festivals. For travellers seeking a diverse and immersive experience, India is a treasure trove of opportunities. India's calendar is dotted with a plethora of festivals, each representing a unique facet of its rich heritage. These festivals are not only celebrated with great fervour but also offer tourists an opportunity to experience India's cultural, religious and historical diversity up close.

Festivals in India have played a pivotal role in boosting tourism in several ways, contributing to the country's status as a popular global tourist destination. These celebrations offer a unique opportunity for cultural exchange, allowing tourists



**Bhavik Sheth**  
COO,  
Evoke Experiences

to immerse themselves in India's rich cultural heritage, traditions and artistic expressions. Tourists attending these festivals often seek an authentic and memorable travel experience, fostering a deeper connection to the country.

**The Rann of Kutch, an extensive salt desert located in Gujarat, undergoes a breathtaking transformation during the Rann Utsav**

India's major festivals, including Diwali, Holi and Navratri, draw massive crowds of tourists to key destinations. During these festivities, local economies experience a surge in visitors, leading to increased revenue for the tourism industry. Hotels, restaurants, transportation services and local artisans all benefit from this increased tourist footfall. Moreover, festivals contribute significantly to the economy as they drive the sale of traditional clothing, handicrafts, souvenirs



and local cuisine, providing livelihoods for communities dependent on tourism. These celebrations also serve as a platform for local artisans to showcase their skills and crafts, fostering the preservation of traditional craftsmanship and the promotion of local art.

The country's geographical diversity is a treasure trove, encompassing the snow-capped Himalayan peaks in the north and the pristine beaches that grace the southern coastline. This natural variety serves as a haven for nature enthusiasts, offering a wide array of breathtaking destinations and experiences.

The Himalayas, with their towering peaks, lush meadows and pristine landscapes, invite adventure seekers to explore remote villages through exhilarating treks. Key destinations such as Manali, Shimla and Leh-Ladakh provide access to awe-inspiring vistas and cultural interactions in the lap of these mighty mountains.

On the other hand, the Kerala backwaters offer a tranquil and unique experience, where travellers can embark on houseboat rides through serene waterways. These journeys present travellers with picturesque views of interconnected canals, lagoons and lush paddy fields. Alleppey and Kumarakom, known for their backwater beauty, are popular destinations for those seeking a peaceful immersion in Kerala's natural splendour.

The Rann of Kutch, an extensive salt desert located in Gujarat, under-

goes a breathtaking transformation during the Rann Utsav. This remarkable festival works its magic, turning the otherwise arid landscape into a surreal white desert, creating an otherworldly experience for visiting tourists. Here, travellers not only get to witness captivating folk dances and explore intricate art and crafts, but they also have the opportunity to traverse the unique desert terrain, making Kutch a destination of unparalleled wonder. Moreover, visitors can revel in the grandeur of the massive tent city, adding an extra layer of comfort and excitement to their Rann Utsav adventure.

### Village tourism in India offers a chance to travellers to experience the rural way of life

This grand cultural event and festival, in addition to its extraordinary visual appeal, has played a significant role in boosting the local economy of Dhordo Village. The infusion of tourism and economic activity has had a transformative effect on the village's fortunes, resulting in Dhordo Village, located in Kutch district, receiving the prestigious Best Tourism Village title from the United Nations World Tourism Organization. This recognition underscores the positive impact of Rann Utsav in supporting and uplifting the local community, showcasing the powerful synergy between culture, tourism and economic growth.

Meanwhile, the Sundarbans, a unique mangrove ecosystem in West Bengal, is home to the Royal Bengal Tiger. Tourists can embark on boat safaris to explore this mystical wilderness, observing a variety of wildlife while being surrounded by the beauty of the mangroves. The Sundarbans offer a truly immersive experience in nature and an opportunity to encounter one of the world's most majestic big cats in their natural habitat.

Village tourism in India offers a chance to experience the rural way of life, far removed from the hustle and bustle of city life, which helps in preserving traditions and uplifting local communities. Travellers can immerse themselves by staying with local families, participating in daily activities such as farming and cooking, and gaining insights into the rural lifestyle, particularly in regions such as Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Tamil Nadu.

Moreover, artisan villages provide the opportunity for tourists to observe traditional art forms with skilled artisans crafting pottery, textiles, and various crafts, found in places such as Khurja (pottery), Pochampally (ikat weaving) and Murshidabad (silk). Additionally, India's growing interest in organic farming is opening doors for travellers to learn about sustainable agriculture practices and even engage in farm work.

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



# ELEVATING HOTEL A ESTHETICS

**Naresh Kapuria** plays a pivotal role in curating a diverse collection of over 5,000 artworks in Art Junction at The LaLiT.



At the heart of New Delhi's bustling Connaught Place stands the towering 28-storey hotel, The LaLiT. Among the many facets that contribute to the hotel's allure, art plays a pivotal role, meticulously curated and overseen by **Naresh Kapuria**, Director, Art & Culture, The LaLiT Group.

Art is not merely an embellishment but an intrinsic part of the hotel's ethos. The Art Junction located on the first floor is a testament to this commitment. Curated by Kapuria, this dedicated space showcases a diverse collection of works by over 5,000 artists, both established and emerging talents. The spectrum of artistic expressions on display ranges from oil, charcoal and water-colour paintings to sculptures, photographs, and installations, each piece meticulously selected to offer a unique experience to art aficionados. With a keen eye for detail and a passion for promoting art and culture,



**Naresh Kapuria**  
Director, Art & Culture,  
The LaLiT Group

Kapuriah's influence reverberates through The LaLiT Group, breathing life into the spaces he has curated. His unique ability to create and curate art that resonates with both seasoned art connoisseurs and newcomers to the world of artistic expression is a testament to his profound connection with the artistic realm. Kapuria's dedication to fostering a rich and diverse artistic environment within

the hotel is reflected in the Art Junction. As guests walk through the corridors and spaces of The LaLiT New Delhi, they are not just traversing a luxury hotel; they are traversing through a living canvas of artistic brilliance, an experience meticulously crafted by the guiding hand of Kapuria.

**Kapuriah's dedication to fostering a rich and diverse artistic environment is reflected in the Art Junction**

Kapuriah, a distinguished figure in the realm of contemporary Indian art for over five decades, has left an indelible mark on the global art scene. His artistic journey began with the Charles Wallace Award, facilitating his residency at the Wimbledon College of Art in London, where he honed his skills and developed a distinctive style that he has tirelessly evolved over the years. □



# Belgian café experience arrives in India

With Belgian classics & more, India's first Belgian Beer Café seeks to replicate atmosphere of a European beer bistro in the nation.

## DDP Bureau

Crowne Plaza Greater Noida has opened India's first Belgian Beer Café (BBC), offering a nostalgic Belgian atmosphere with sophisticated dark wooden interiors and rustic accessories. Offering a variety of Belgian dishes and a selection of handpicked brews, the lounge boasts signature dishes such as Belgian Fries, Tenderloin Carpaccio

Platter, Vol Au Vent and Fruiture, along with hoppetizers perfectly paired with the beers.

**Sharad K Upadhyay**, General Manager, Crowne Plaza Greater Noida, stated, "We proudly unveil the first and only BBC in India, bringing you the same authentic BBC experience you would expect from anywhere else in the world. The interiors of our restaurant are sure

to leave you spellbound. Located just an hour from Delhi and a mere 30 minutes from Noida, our five-star luxury hotel is now home to six unique F&B outlets."

## BBC boasts signature dishes such as Belgian Fries, Tenderloin Carpaccio Platter, Vol Au Vent and Fruiture

The café is designed with intricate Belgian-themed interiors, a rural ambience, and a hospitable setting, offering a warm and welcoming environment, providing an escape after a hectic workday or a delightful experience to conclude a pleasant one. The concept aims to encapsulate the essence of rural Belgian beer cafes and offers an authentic experience akin to its counterparts worldwide.

Each decorative element exudes an authentic Belgian character and narrates a captivating story. Joie De Vivre, translating to The Joy of Living, embodies the very essence of this bistro. The BBC 'Rural Concept' strives to evoke the same sense of organic evolution found in its original Belgian counterparts. □



# Tier II & III boom Hotel chains expand horizons



Hospitality industry in India has seen significant change, with surge in demand for alternative accommodation options, reveals 'How India Travels' report.



The hospitality industry has undergone a remarkable transformation in recent years, with a noticeable surge in the demand for alternative accommodation options, as revealed by the recently released 'How India Travels' report from Booking.com.

"There is a surge in demand for alternative accommodation options such as hostels, campsites, vacation rentals and chalets. The growth rate of Average Daily Rates (ADRs) and booked room-nights for these alternative accommodations are around twice that of traditional hotel and managed chains, indicating a paradigm shift in travel preferences. In 2023, for every night booked at a camp, three nights were booked at villas and 14 nights were booked at guest houses. The growth in weekend bookings for alternative accommodation in top leisure and business cities such as Varanasi, Goa, Bengaluru and Delhi are 4 to 5 times higher in 2023 than in 2022," the report stated.



**Santosh Kumar**  
Country Head, Indian subcontinent & Indonesia, Booking.com

The report further added, "In 2019, mostly group travellers were booking alternative accommodation. In 2023, couples are taking the top spot, as they look for more intimate experiences, privacy, and stays in unique locations. There is an increasing trend of hotel as the destination with a rise in resorts, wellness centres and glamping options, driven by the rising popularity of weekend getaways."

**Santosh Kumar**, Country Head, Indian subcontinent & Indonesia,

Booking.com, said, "Alternative accommodation has done for travel and tourism what the Indian Premier League has done for cricket. It has transformed the way people travel, enabled destinations and neighbourhoods to be experienced in a more authentic manner, and facilitated a wave of micro-entrepreneurship for homeowners."

**Alternative accommodation has done for travel and tourism what the Indian Premier League has done for cricket**

## Tier II & III cities

Leading international hotel chains are expanding to Tier II & III cities such as Jodhpur, Dharamshala, Bodhgaya, Bilaspur, Kodagu and Raipur. Over 70 per cent of the upcoming property pipeline for Tier I hotel chains is coming up in Tier II and III cities such as Kolhapur, Nashik and Puri. The potential for growth in these emerging markets have driven the share of branded inventory in Tier II and



III cities to increase from approximately 27 per cent in 2015-16 to around 52 per cent in 2022-23. This shift underscores the immense growth potential in these markets and represents a significant change in the distribution of branded hotel inventory. The rising growth potential in these markets has boosted branded inventory share from about 30 per cent in 2015-2016 to approximately 50 per cent in 2022-2023.

“Branded hotels are currently focusing on Tier II cities for expansion owing to the increasing business opportunities and travellers’ increasing will-

ingness to pay for standard services,” said **Deepak Rao**, Director, Revenue Management, India and South West Asia, Hyatt Hotels.

### **Leading international hotel chains are expanding to Tier II & III cities such as Jodhpur, Dharamshala, Bodhgaya & Bilsap, among others**

#### **Hospitality technology**

The report said, “As traveller expectations increase, the hospitality industry needs to invest more in technology. Emerging businesses, especially in niche markets, face difficulty in accessing expertise. The cost of technology upgrade at multiple hotels is typically recovered by the cost savings through efficiency within a year. For managed chains, technology solutions across the spectrum remain highly relevant, as they have aligned traveller’s

expectations to their technology solutions. Independent hotels vary in their technology needs based on their size. Solutions such as property management systems, channel managers, booking engines and Wi-Fi are consistently relevant across different hospitality archetypes, including alternative accommodations. The industry could make the most of available technology to provide travellers with a digitally enhanced experience, resolve staff shortages, and improve working conditions. A range of technologies will be integrated into the existing technology stack to make them more self-sufficient. Automation and digitisation can also liberate staff from dealing with repetitive tasks, allowing human resources to be allocated to roles where they can provide the most value. For example, technology can empower customer-facing staff to deliver more personalised services. With the assistance of technology, a trainee can quickly develop into an experienced concierge.” □



# Innovating IoT for efficient buildings

BuildTrack's cutting-edge IoT solutions efficiently focus on high-energy-consuming devices, including air conditioners, motors & fans & numerous other appliances.



In an era where energy efficiency, sustainability, and seamless management of commercial and residential buildings are paramount, BuildTrack has emerged as a pioneering force. With a focus on cutting-edge technology and innovative solutions, BuildTrack offers a range of IoT solutions designed to revolutionise the way we interact with our environments.

According to **Mohamed Syeed**, Vice President, Enterprise Solutions, BuildTrack, BuildTrack's energy efficiency solutions are designed to target the highest electricity-consuming assets in any space. This includes lighting, air conditioners, fans, water pumps, and motors. To achieve significant energy reduction, BuildTrack leverages motion sensors, ensuring that energy-consuming devices

are turned on or off based on motion detection in various areas, such as cabins, passages, aisles, and more.

“Our Smart App provides centralised and scheduled-based control of air conditioning units, offering efficient energy management.



**Mohamed Syeed**  
VP, Enterprise Solutions,  
BuildTrack

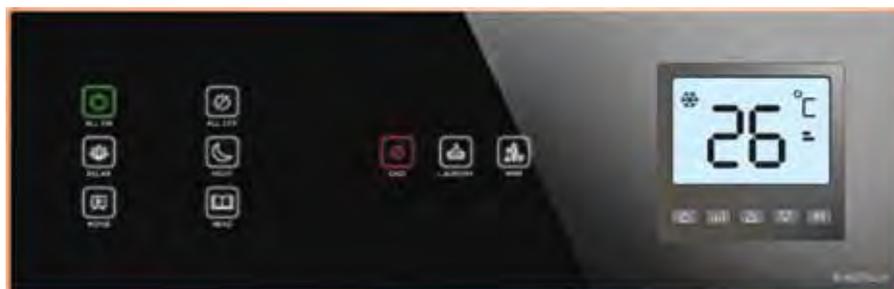
Integration with smart meters and current transformers allows comprehensive monitoring of energy consumption, enabling businesses to significantly reduce energy wastage,” stated Sayeed.

The Building Management System (BMS) offered by BuildTrack is a game-changer in the industry. It provides centralised control over electrical assets, enabling single-point management through BMS kiosks and Smart Apps. With the ability to control power-consuming assets and monitor other systems such as elevators, DGs and water tanks, the BMS stands out for its versatility. Moreover, its support for third-

party integrations coupled with role-based permission management and an interactive user interface makes it a comprehensive and user-friendly solution.

**“Our Smart App provides centralised and scheduled-based control of air conditioning units, offering efficient energy management**

What sets BuildTrack apart in the market for IoT solutions is its unique framework that caters to various segments such as homes, hotels, hospitals and offices. Notably, BuildTrack operates on DC power with wireless, wired, or hybrid connectivity, ensuring adaptability to both new constructions and existing spaces. The company's Smart Touch Switches comply with international safety requirements, ensuring user and environmental safety. Recognised for excellence



in design and energy efficiency, BuildTrack has received awards and accolades, including the India Design Mark and the CII award for innovative energy efficiency products. In alignment with global sustainability goals, BuildTrack's IoT solutions directly contribute to environmental objectives by significantly reducing energy consumption and optimising resources. □

# 'Tis the season to be merry

As a delightful prelude to holiday season, hotels all over India come together to joyously celebrate tradition of Christmas cake mixing.



Courtyard by Marriott Shillong



Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach



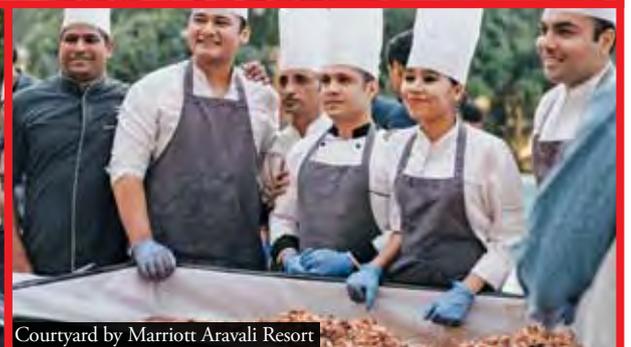
Hyatt Regency Ludhiana



Conrad Bengaluru



Sheraton Grand Palace Indore



Courtyard by Marriott Aravali Resort



Meluha, The Fern, Mumbai



Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach



Pride Plaza Hotel Aerocity



JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity

# Products & Services

## Barware accessories by Frazer and Haws

Frazer and Haws has launched a fine collection of Barware accessories that are a combination of sterling silver and mixed media. You can now create a home bar easily with an array of bar accessories from Frazer and Haws and make your home always party ready. A classy range of barware that is all you need to shake, make and pour your drinks. You can choose from customised pieces and various home bar accessories that are made in sterling silver. The range of Barware from Frazer and Haws is extremely stylish and usable.



## Mavi Dinner set by ICHKAN

ICHKAN has presented its latest masterpiece: Mavi, a dinner set curated exclusively for the festive season. The 21-piece dinner set exemplifies ICHKAN's commitment to design excellence, boasting an intricate gold motif that exudes timeless sophistication. Meticulously fashioned from the finest Porcelain, the dinner set takes its inspiration from the mesmerizing flight and vibrant plumage of hummingbirds. This collection encapsulates the delicate allure and charm that these magnificent creatures bring to the world. The thoughtfully crafted dinner set marries the rich tapestry of traditional Indian design with the sleek lines of contemporary aesthetics.



## New fire pits & lanterns collection

In a world where traditions meet modernity and where every occasion deserves a touch of class, Kaniry is about to turn up the heat in the home decor world with an electrifying new addition to its lineup that is the utmost definition of finesse and cosy—introducing the Fire Pit and Lantern Collection. Kaniry's meticulously crafted range comprises intricately designed lanterns that will be a symphony of tradition and innovation; and fire pits that create an enchanting ambience in your outdoor spaces, taking any occasion to a whole new level.



## New glassware collection by Kika Tableware

Kika Tableware has launched its new glassware collection. Bathed in hues of enchanting blue and grey, the PALERMO Collection, is not merely about glasses. It is about a toast to elegance. Each design, with its intricate ridges, swirls in harmony enhances the pleasure of sipping funky cocktails and refreshing mocktails. The golden gradient on the glass stands as a testament to the festivity's radiant warmth. Whether paired with bubbling moments of joy or toasting to success, this collection effortlessly infuses an air of luxury to every occasion.



## Ikka collection by The Blue Knot

Drawing inspiration from the tradition of gatherings, The Blue Knot's latest collection Ikka celebrates the joyous spirit of Diwali. Each piece is a reflection of the spirited colours synonymous with the festival—maroon for vibrancy, beige for serenity, rust for abundance, and purple for the regal spirituality that defines Diwali. Featuring old-world charm with intricate Persian motifs, the finely woven rugs made in luxurious wool serve as statement pieces. Adding an extra splash of cheer to the lavish food spreads, table runners from this collection regale the tales of dining table.

## The House of Things

The House of Things presents an exquisitely curated assortment of designer festive decor items, each chosen with meticulous consideration. Delve into their opulent collection, which includes a stunning array of candles, captivating sculptures crafted by artists, and uniquely crafted furniture pieces, all designed to help you create a remarkable and memorable ambiance this Diwali. With a passion for authentic, thoughtfully curated design, The House of Things offerings range from furniture, lighting, homewares to textiles, curios and art. It is an online marketplace for interior designing and hand-crafted furniture, art and accessories.



## Interior décor by Logam

With a passion for seamlessly combining contemporary design through a touch of opulence, Logam's newly launched collection encapsulates the spirit of India, infusing homes with an aura of splendour, warmth, and culture. From their harmoniously contrasting range of unprecedented, matte centre and side tables to the luxurious Zara Candle Holders artistically crafted for a cosy evening setting, the gamut offers a tapestry of home adornments that is as diverse as India itself. Along with luxe home embellishments, the collection also witnesses dynamic dining accessories which includes aesthetically pleasing Amber Bowls with resin detailing.

## Collection of contemporary furniture

Sarita Handa Now and Wendelbo have introduced their exclusive collaboration through the launch of a collection of contemporary furniture that echoes quite simple luxury which is reflected in the minimalistic design vocabulary. An alliance that seeks beauty in the art of simplicity fused with functionality, where each piece is meticulously crafted to evoke a sense of serenity and slow living. Each piece of the furniture collection iterates a powerful visual identity, remarkable aesthetics and uncompromising quality that can effortlessly enliven any room and seamlessly blend to create an uber luxury ambiance.



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# FUELLING HOSPITALITY BOOM

India's hospitality sector is poised for a bright future, influenced by infrastructure development, the burgeoning aviation market & expansion of office spaces.

## DDP Bureau

Noesis Capital Advisors has unveiled its latest research report titled 'Unlocking Hidden Value'. This study delves deep into the hospitality sector in India, uncovering compelling investment prospects within this rapidly evolving and dynamic industry.

**Nandivardhan Jain**, CEO, Noesis Capital Advisors, commented, "India's hospitality sector presents an enticing opportunity. As an emerging market, it offers not only substantial growth potential but also a chance to participate in a transformative industry. This report underscores the promise and potential that India holds for investors in the hospitality sector."

### Some of the key findings of the report are as follows:

- India, currently the world's fifth-largest economy, is experiencing remarkable economic growth. However, its hospitality sector has lagged behind this burgeoning economy. The rapid urbanization of India is driving a surging demand for hospitality services. The growth in the urban population, coupled with rising incomes,

is fostering a wave of domestic and international tourism, elevating the demand for quality accommodations.

- The hospitality industry is intrinsically tied to India's economic growth. With a projected rise in per capita GDP of US \$4,400 by 2030, India is set to experi-

**Expansion of premium office spaces in Tier-I cities is poised to propel demand for hotel accommodations, especially among business travellers**

ence a surge in consumption and spending, particularly within the tourism sector. Rising incomes lead to increased travel, spurring the demand for hotel rooms.

- India is in a strong position to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the tourism and hospitality sector, positioning the country as an alluring destination for international investors. Government initiatives to promote tourism and infrastructure development are creating a conducive environment for investment. Significant FDI inflows are anticipated in

the coming years, further stimulating the hospitality sector growth.

- The expansion of premium office spaces in Tier-I cities is poised to propel the demand for hotel accommodations, especially among business travellers. Additionally, the growth of airports and the projected rise in air passenger traffic are positioning India as the world's largest aviation market, directly fuelling the demand for hotel rooms.

- Currently, India boasts a supply of 3,75,000 hotel rooms while there is a substantial projected demand of 6,30,000 rooms by 2030. This supply-demand disjunction presents an opportune investment prospect. It signifies that hotel developers and investors stand to gain significantly, given the impending surge in accommodation needs. Notably, the sector has already garnered considerable attention from diverse investor categories, including institutional entities, high-net-worth individuals, established hotel chains, seasoned hotel developers and discerning family offices. This confluence of interests underscores the burgeoning potential and profitability within India's evolving hospitality landscape. 

# Classifieds

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# MOVEMENTS



**BARUN GUPTA**

**General Manager, Expo Inn Suites and Convention**

★ Expo Inn Suites and Convention has appointed Barun Gupta as its General Manager. With a career that has spanned brands such as Accor, Marriott, IHG and Hyatt, Gupta brings a wealth of expertise and a passion for excellence to his new role. Gupta's success lies in his adaptability to the unique styles and ethos of different hotel chains and his unwavering commitment to delivering the best for guests, clients and owners. He is highly regarded for his meticulous planning and intuition. Gupta's courage to go where no one has ventured before has earned him numerous accolades.



**CHANDRAYI BASUTHAKUR**

**Director, National Sales, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts**

★ Sarovar Hotels & Resorts has appointed Chandrayi Basuthakur as Director, National Sales. In her new role at Sarovar Hotels & Resorts, Basuthakur will be responsible for directly overseeing all Sarovar Regional Sales Offices. Additionally, she will actively collaborate with unit sales teams across Sarovar's diverse portfolio to provide expert guidance on offline sales strategies. In her most recent assignment, Basuthakur spearheaded the sales division at Orchid Hotels & Resorts, based out of Delhi. Throughout her career, Basuthakur has exhibited exceptional leadership qualities.



**SAMIT KAZI**

**Area Head, Sales, West Division, ITC Hotels India**

★ Samit Kazi has been appointed as the Area Head, Sales, West Division for ITC Hotels India. In his new role, Kazi will be responsible to drive hotels sales across assigned geographical region for ITC Hotels, Welcom and Storii brand. Based out of Mumbai region, Kazi will leverage his experience of over two decades, to collaborate with the sales department and ITC Hotels headquarter team with an objective of driving revenue across hotel portfolio for the West region. He started his career with Renaissance Mumbai Hotel and Convention Centre in 2003.



**H S KUSHALGARH**

**General Manager, The Claridges New Delhi**

★ Hemendra Singh Kushalgarh has joined The Claridges New Delhi as the General Manager. With an illustrious career spanning over two decades, Kushalgarh is an Indian hospitality industry veteran and brings a wealth of experience to this role. In the past, he has held key roles at hotel chains such as The Lodhi New Delhi and Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces. With Kushalgarh taking charge as the GM, the hotel is all set to scale new heights in terms of guest experience, team strength and service expertise. His professional journey began at Oberoi Hotels & Resorts.



**PRIYANKA MISHRA**

**Housekeeping Manager, Hyatt Regency Ludhiana**

★ Hyatt Regency Ludhiana has appointed Priyanka Mishra as new Housekeeping Manager. Mishra brings over eight years of extensive experience in the hospitality industry. Her journey began in 2015 as a Management Trainee at Vivanta by Taj Mumbai, and through unwavering dedication and hard work, she rapidly ascended the ranks. In 2017, she assumed the position of Assistant Manager Housekeeping at Hyatt Regency Chennai. She further refined her skills as the Deputy Housekeeper at The Ottera Bengaluru.



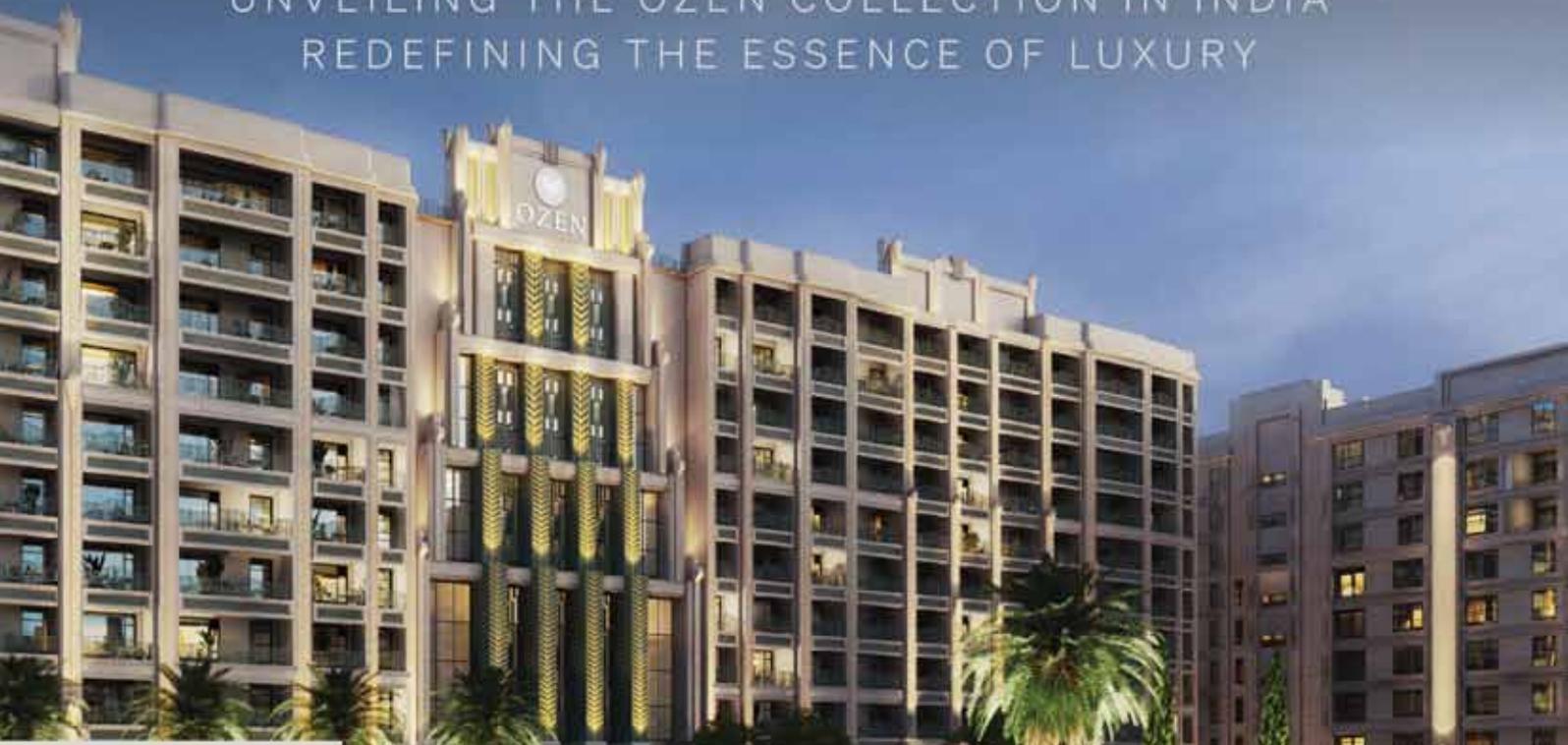
**SANDEEP SINHA**

**HM, The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences**

★ The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences has appointed Sandeep Sinha as Hotel Manager. Bringing a wealth of experience to the role, Sinha carries over two decades of work experience in the luxury hotel industry, having overseen some of the most renowned hotels. He has shared his expertise with hospitality brands, including Taj Hotels, Marriott International and Hyatt Hotels. His most recent assignment was with The Oberoi Group, where he was deputed at Trident Bandra Kurla. He is an alumnus of The Oberoi Centre of Learning and Development.

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