

HOTELS & RESTAURANTS INDIA fhrai magazine

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A MONTHLY ON HOSPITALITY TRADE
By DDP Publications



**In REVIVAL
mode with
ECLGS**

**NEW
AVENUES
for
REVENUES**

**SAATHI FOR
THE INDUSTRY**





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Dear fellow members,

Post announcement of Unlock 5, it seems, hospitality industry is coming back on track, and we are grateful to various Ministries/ Departments of the Government of India and especially guests, for their exemplary support extended to us for a quick revival. Although, it's a long way to go, however, a good start could play a significant role to help the industry survive, which is facing an existential crisis due to the pandemic.

Continuing the initiatives with full vigour, I am pleased to share with members, that FHRAI is and will always be playing a crucial role in the survival of the industry. Out of the many important initiatives taken, I would like to dwell upon the outcome of the webinars with Shri. Arun Singhal, IAS, CEO, FSSAI; Shri. A.K. Sharma, IAS, Secretary, MoMSME; and Shri. Tarun Bajaj, IAS, Secretary, DEA, MoF. Extensively covered in the current and last edition of the magazine, and recordings widely circulated and made available on the FHRAI website, we would request and advise members to please pick up the right information and follow up at their level or write to us for specific matters pertaining to the relevant officials. I assure you that it will be taken to the highest level in the government.

With regard to the circulation and dissemination of information, members may visit FHRAI.com and also social media handles for all updates coming from the government. For instance, the government invited inputs on the Hygiene Rating Audit Agency Scheme of FSSAI, and Draft of Food Safety and Standards (Amendment) Bill 2020. Also, in addition to that, Salient Features of Atal Beemit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana (ABVKY) of Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) and One Time Loan Restructuring Scheme for COVID-19 Related Stress were shared. Vital inputs from members could help the government design/ draft policies favouring the industry,

and therefore, I look forward to receiving your continuous support in this regard.

FHRAI, as you are aware, is supporting SAATHI, a unique initiative of the Ministry of Tourism in association with the Quality Council of India, to assist the hospitality industry in their preparedness to continue operations safely and mitigate risks arising out of the COVID pandemic. Ensuring the safety & health of employees and guests and helping in complying with COVID-19 related regulatory requirements are the objectives of this initiative. Members may register themselves for the same and avail of benefits attached to the scheme.

To conclude, I would like to once again request members to participate and support our initiative to jointly fight against arbitrary and unethical business practices adopted by the Online Travel Aggregators (OTAs). Please do approach the Secretariat if you are facing any such issue, we assure you that it will surely be addressed and raised with the appropriate authority/ department.

Be safe.

Note: The October 2020 edition of the FHRAI magazine will not be available as a printed version due to the pandemic. However, the e-version of the same shall be available on the FHRAI website and circulated to all members as broadcast on registered email.

With kind regards,

Gurbaxish Singh Kohli

Vice President, FHRAI

Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President
FHRAI



Hospitality industry is coming back on track, and we are grateful to various Ministries/ Departments of the Govt of India and especially guests, for their exemplary support extended to us for a quick revival



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'DINE OUT TO HELP OUT' INITIATIVE

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The HRAEI scheme has been designed as a pull-mechanism for diners to come out of their homes.

COVER IMAGE:

Jagmandir Island Palace, Udaipur, Rajasthan



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Hoteliers share that in the ‘new now’ brands are focusing on creating meaningful offers which speak to the needs of guests and will lead the way to recovery.



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FHRAI has been invited by the Ministry of Tourism & Quality Council of India to support and bring forward, SAATHI, a new initiative for preparedness against COVID-19.

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FHRAI organised a webinar with A K Sharma, IAS, Secretary, Ministry of MSME to discuss issues faced by the hospitality industry.



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FHRAI held a webinar with Tarun Bajaj, IAS – Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance to discuss the financial crisis in industry post COVID-19 & the way forward.



FHRAI

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Roadmap for tourism in UP

On the occasion of World Tourism Day, HRANI jointly with UP Tourism organised a webinar with 'Tourism and Rural Development' as the theme.

The webinar focused on the future of hospitality and tourism including strategies to revitalise the industry amid COVID- 19. The roadmap for tourism driving rural development in the state of Uttar Pradesh was discussed. The webinar was graced by **Dr. Neelkanth Tiwari**, Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge), Tourism, Culture and Religious Affairs & Protocol, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh as Chief Guest and **Mukesh Kumar Meshram**,

Principal Secretary, Tourism & Culture, Govt of Uttar Pradesh as Guest of Honour.

In his welcome address, **Surendra Kumar Jaiswal**, President, HRANI & UPHRA & Vice President, FHRAI highlighted the importance of rural development through tourism. Addressing the webinar, Tiwari said, "Uttar Pradesh is a land where cultures have evolved and religions have emerged. The greatness of Uttar Pradesh lies not only in this confluence,

but also in the emergence of cultural and religious traditions." He emphasised on the development of villages located on the banks of holy rivers, Ganga and Yamuna. In response to the submissions from HRANI, he assured positive consideration by the Tourism Department, Uttar Pradesh. Meshram stated that in line with the theme of 2020, villages are an integral part of our country. India's rich culture, cuisines and heritage come from villages and are unparalleled. The country's unity in diversity is still looked upon by the entire world. He added the government will work in tandem with the industry under the PPP model to develop and promote spiritual, religious, yoga, wellness and rural tourism in the state.



HRANI

The greatness of Uttar Pradesh lies in the emergence of cultural and religious traditions - Dr. Neelkanth Tiwari

The webinar saw the participation of Garish Oberoi, Treasurer HRANI & FAITH, Gen. Secretary, UPHRA & Former President, HRANI & FHRAI; Subhash Goyal, Hony Secretary, Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality (FAITH) & Past President, IATO; Arun Dang, MC Member, HRANI, Past President, Tourism Guild, Agra; Pradeep Narayan Singh, MC Member, HRANI & President, Banaras Hotel Association; Rakesh Roy, Vice President, HRANI & Elchico Restaurant, Prayagraj; Upendra Gupta, Managing Director, Hotel Clarks, Varanasi; and Renu Thapliyal, Secretary General, HRANI.

Reduce commission of FSAs: FHRAI

FHRAI has requested Swiggy and Zomato to reduce the commission charged by them from restaurants for takeaway services by 5% with retrospective effect from May 2020.

On behalf of FHRAI, **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli** has written letters dated October 12, 2020, to Sriharsha M., CEO and Co-founder, Swiggy and Deepinder Goyal, Founder, Zomato. The letters state, "We are very happy to note that the businesses of the Food Service Aggregators (FSAs) have in fact shown a mega increase even in this lockdown and we are happy to know that at least some hospitality related vertical has a different story to tell than us."

"In view of this significant business growth of the FSAs, we earnestly believe that being the co-travellers in the food business, the FSAs have an ethical responsibility to show solidarity with the hospitality sector. Since the existence and survival of the hospitality establishments are very vital for the growth of the FSAs, this is the most appropriate time for the FSAs to pay back the hospitality sector on whom they



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI

depend for survival. We therefore request you to reduce the commission charged by you from restaurants for takeaway services by 5% with retrospective effect from May 2020 till the restaurants are allowed to operate 100% without restrictions, after which you may again revert back to your individually agreed percentages, and show your commitment and camaraderie towards the hospitality sector. The 5% amount may be adjusted towards their individual forthcoming business. This would go a long way in expressing your solidarity to the business you are an ancillary of. Looking forward to your favourable and immediate response," concludes Kohli.



Being the co-travellers in the food business, the FSAs have an ethical responsibility to show solidarity with the hospitality sector



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New ease of doing business policy

Under the new ease of doing business policy, the validity of all licenses, with no fixed time limit by law, will be five years from the date of issuance.

The Maharashtra government has approved the ease of doing business policy for the hospitality sector. The new policy reduces the number of licences required to 10 from the existing 70 to start a new business in the state and seeks to boost the hospitality industry by attracting investment and increasing employment opportunities. While 70 permissions were required previously for doing business, now only 10 licenses will be required, and instead of obtaining 15 no objections certificates (NOCs) from seven departments, now only nine self-certifications will be



Sherry Bhatia
President, HRAWI

required for the hospitality sector. The new policy will also bring down the number of application forms from 70 to eight. Under the policy, the validity of all licenses, with no fixed time limit by law, will be five years from the date of issuance. The tourism department will also handle the single window system to issue licences for the hospitality sector to facilitate business.

Sherry Bhatia, President, HRAWI, says, "HRAWI's efforts in spearheading this initiative and diligently following it up with the authorities for over two decades have finally borne fruit. Immediate implementation of the policy will not only help bring back many businesses that have quit, but also help make up for the casualties or permanent closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic."

Immediate implementation of the policy will help bring back many businesses that have quit

HRAWI

Restaurants to re-open gradually

According to the Maharashtra government guidelines, hotels, restaurants and bars were allowed to operate from October 5, with capacity not exceeding 50 per cent of the total staff.

Even as the industry rejoiced the re-opening of restaurants and bars in Maharashtra on October 5, the difficulty over staff mobility, as the lockdown continues till the end of the month, funds and maintenance issues are expected to make it a gradual process over the month, the industry said.

"The option to re-open restaurants comes as a big relief to restaurateurs. Although, it is a good development, not all restaurants are geared up to re-



Pradeep Shetty
Sr. Vice President, HRAWI

open. We expect only around 30 per cent of the restaurants to open from October 5 and the rest will re-open only gradually through the month. Mumbai restaurants are allowed to operate with only 33 per cent capacities.

Many restaurants are facing shortage of staff and there is also the problem of mobility for staff to travel to work every day. Also, restaurants were shut completely for over six months so, interiors and other premises may need some renovation or maintenance. There is also the problem of finance. Over the last six months, restaurants had to dip into savings for salary and utility payments," said **Pradeep Shetty**, Sr. Vice President, Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI).

We expect only around 30% of the restaurants to open from October 5 and the rest will re-open gradually

HRAWI

'Dine Out to Help Out' initiative

The HRAEI scheme has been designed as a pull-mechanism for diners to come out of their homes.

The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Eastern India (HRAEI) has launched their latest initiative called 'Dine Out to Help Out' to help the F&B industry, support local restaurants and help establishments bounce back to good times. It is also aimed to bring back employees of the F&B sector, who had lost their jobs in the wake of the pandemic.

Planned on the lines of the initiative in the UK in August, where the government ran the 'Eat Out to Help Out' scheme that offered people a 50 per cent discount on food or non-alcoholic drinks (up to a maximum of £10 discount per diner), the participating establishments here can offer a flat 20 per cent discount on food and non-alcoholic beverages to all their patrons from Monday to Thursday, till November 12. The offer is valid from the time the restaurant opens. The discount, however, can be availed on a minimum bill of ₹500 and above.

The initiative is a welcome move for hotels and restaurants across eastern India. Though the offer will be on from Monday to Thursday every week, it will not be on during the five days of Durga Puja. The offer will also not be valid on alcoholic beverages. Some of the leading 5-star hotels as well as premium restaurants of Kolkata have evinced interest in the unique scheme. HRAEI's move is not only good news for hotels and restaurants, but also



With the present dip in the economic situation of the country, discount offers like these will be received with immense enthusiasm



Sudesh Poddar
President, HRAEI

for food lovers. The scheme has been designed as a pull-mechanism for diners to come out of their homes and patronise their favourite restaurants, cafes, bars and hotels. "We have done a survey in the market among regular diners in restaurants who are currently avoiding eating out for fear of the virus, or because they are being restrained about expenses. With the present dip in the economic situation of the country, discount offers like these will be received with immense enthusiasm among guests. This will gradually increase the footfall in our members establishments, which is imperative for businesses to succeed," said **Sudesh Poddar**, President, HRAEI.

Occupancy is lowest in India

Recent HVS ANAROCK statistics dwell on the India average across the hotel sector, occupancy change in India & other key Asian markets & hotel signings in August 2020.

HOTEL SECTOR

Key Stats (India Average)

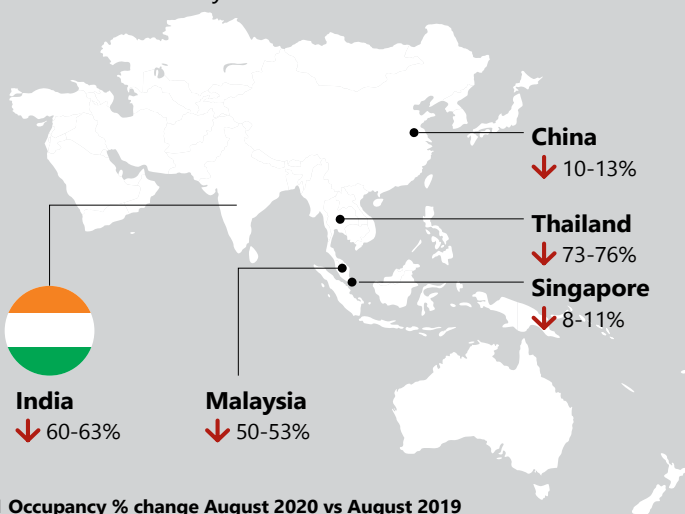


| | AUG 2020 | M-o-M (%) | Y-o-Y (%) | AUG 2020 | JUL 2020 | JUN 2020 | MAY 2020 |
|------------------|-----------------|-----------|------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| ADR | ₹3,200 - ₹3,800 | ↑ 5-8% | ADR | ↓ 29-32% | ↓ 36-39% | ↓ 39-42% | ↓ 36-39% |
| Occupancy | 20% - 25% | ↓ 1-2% | Occupancy | ↓ 60-63% | ↓ 62-65% | ↓ 66-69% | ↓ 75-78% |
| RevPAR | ₹640 - ₹950 | ↑ 4-7% | RevPAR | ↓ 72-75% | ↓ 76-79% | ↓ 79-82% | ↓ 84-87% |

Source: HVS Research

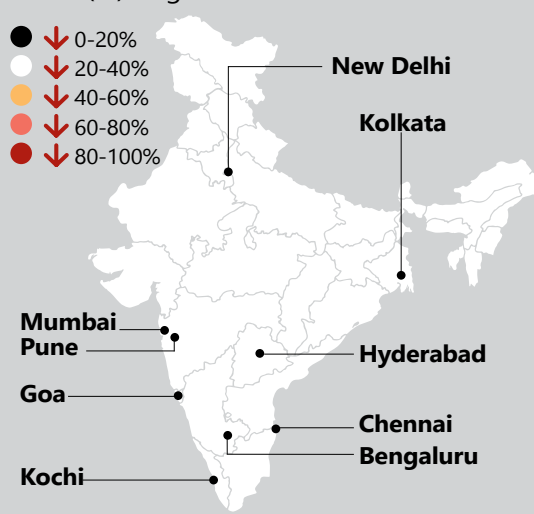
OCCUPANCY CHANGE

India & Other Key Asian Markets



REVPAR CHANGE

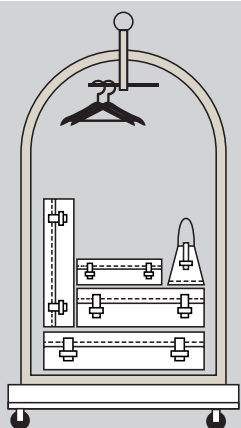
Y-o-Y (%) August 2020



Source: HVS Research

BRANDED HOTELS

Openings & Signings in August 2020



By Keys



By Properties

Openings

6

706

Signings

10

660

Source: HVS Research



HRAWI elects Sherry Bhatia as President

Prior to becoming the President of HRAWI, **Sherry Bhatia** served as the association's Sr. Vice President and has been an active member for over 20 years.

Sherry Bhatia, Managing Director of Golden Swan Group has been elected as the President of the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) for the new term starting September 2020. Prior to becoming the President, Bhatia served as the association's Sr. Vice President and has been an active member for over 20 years.

Over the years, he has helped implement several reforms in the association and strengthened its representation across the Western region. An electronic engineer by qualification, Bhatia ventured into hospitality four decades ago. He set up his first hotel in 1980 and went on to establish the Golden Swan Group consisting of club, hotel, resort and a golf course. The HRAWI is the hospitality industry's voice for hotels and restaurants across the Western region including the states of Gujarat, Goa, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra, and the Union Territories of Diu Daman and Silvassa. The association renders assistance during



Sherry Bhatia
President, HRAWI

promotion & operation of any hotel and/or members, information on various aspects such as applicability of laws, tax matters, labour, liaison with the tourist department, foreign exchange & import licensing, etc. "The HRAWI has been at the forefront in representing the voice of hotels and restaurants for the

Western region. Over the last six months of the pandemic, the association has played a pivotal role in liaising with the government and its authorities to expedite decision making for the hotels and restaurants industry.

HRAWI was successful at convincing the government to allow hotels to re-open in July. Mr. Gurbaxish Singh Kohli as the President with his team made compelling arguments, submitted several recommendations and relentlessly pursued the authorities to allow re-opening of restaurants in the region.

The association is simultaneously following up on several other matters affecting the industry including the excise license fees, electricity duty, the property tax and the compensation owed by the BMC to requisitioned hotels during the lockdown, among other important issues," says **Sherry Bhatia**, President, HRAWI.

For the new term, Pradeep Shetty will serve in the HRAWI committee as its Sr. Vice President, and Chetan Mehta as its Vice President. Jimmy Shaw has been appointed as its Hon. Secretary, Paramjit Singh Ghai, the Jt. Hon. Secretary and Dilip Kothari will hold the post of Hon. Treasurer.



The association has played a pivotal role in liaising with the government to expedite decision making for the industry



A holistic approach is vital

FHRAI EC members talk about the need for extending the moratorium period further, the provision for restructuring of loans and Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme.



Neha Rawat



S K Mohapatra

S K Mohapatra
Co-opted EC Member, FHRAI

As the extension of the moratorium is over, what are your expectations from the government?

We expected that the moratorium for the tourism and hospitality Industry will be extended till this financial year but unfortunately it wasn't extended in spite of the fact that we are one of the worst impacted sectors by the COVID-19 outbreak. Now though the moratorium has ended, the crisis hasn't, at least. We expect the government to consider extending soft loans for our industry, enhancing working capital limits with interest subsidy, and most importantly rationalise the GST tariff at 12 per cent across all categories of services to spur demand.



We expect the govt to rationalise the GST tariff at 12% across all categories of services to spur demand



What do you think about the provision for the restructuring of loans?

Restructuring the loans is the need of the hour. This pandemic has severely dented the repaying ability of the borrowers and in this situation taking recourse to the restructuring of loans will be a win-win situation for both the lenders as well as the borrowers.

How beneficial has the ECLGS funding scheme been for you?

The Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) which was announced as a part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat package is certainly a very good initiative by the Central government but here too out of the targeted ₹3 lakh crore, by September only 40 per cent amount was disbursed and further the major beneficiaries of it have been the small businesses. As regards our brand, as of now, we haven't availed this facility but speaking on a broader note this has been of great help to many businesses across the country and we are thankful to the government for that.

**Does your
hotel have a
COVID
compliance
certificate?**





Param Kannampilly

Param Kannampilly Co-opted EC Member, FHRAI

As the extension of the moratorium is over, what are your expectations from the government?

It was good on the government's part that there was a moratorium announced on loans and other type of credits availed by individuals, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as well as corporates. The deadline for the moratorium is over and all of those who have borrowed money have to start paying their equated monthly installments (EMIs) now.

It is true that some of the businesses are doing better and are in a position to pay the installments. But the government cannot have a uniform policy across the board. There should be a pragmatic approach which the government should follow.

Unfortunately, the hospitality industry has been hit the hardest. Now to expect a restaurant owner who is already grappling with high rentals and other recurring costs to start paying EMIs, when his establishment has not even opened, is ridiculous. For seven months



ECLGS provided some relief to small businesses. They got some working capital to resume their operations



he hasn't earned a dime, if you force him to pay EMIs, you are forcing him to shut his shop which means not just him, but another ten people will become jobless.

What do you think about the provision for restructuring of loans?

The Reserve Bank of India has allowed a one-time restructuring of loans. It will provide some relief as these loans will not be classified as NPAs. This will help companies and individuals manage the financial strain caused by the pandemic. However, till such time things come back to normalcy, nobody can predict anything. If the businessmen are not making any money, how will they pay back?

How beneficial has ECLGS funding scheme been for you?

Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) provided some relief to small businesses. They got some working capital to resume their operations. However as far as Concept Hospitality is concerned, we didn't benefit from it. The scheme is targeted towards those who are directly involved in doing business. We are a hotel management company, we do not own any of the 80 plus hotels we manage. We are running the day-to-day operations.

I am sure some of the hotel owners must have availed the benefits of the scheme as they come under SMEs.

**Is your
covid certificate
authenticated
by the
national board
of the country?**





Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar

Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar
EC Member, FHRAI

As the extension of moratorium is over, what are your expectations from the government?

In this pandemic era, it is not just the government but the industry associations and bodies that have to think together and act together. My expectations, at first, are from the industry associations. There is need for a comprehensive 360-degree view of the business and social situation. We need to hear about tax-holidays, tax-benefits that can meaningfully contribute to the revival of the industry.

What do you think about the provision for restructuring of loans?

As I said, we need to take a bigger and holistic view of the business situation; loans and restructuring are small cogs in the entire wheel of our businesses.

How beneficial has the ECLGS funding scheme been for you?

We are a closely-held family business enterprise and I cannot comment on corporate financial issues. I sincerely hope that the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme has been useful to the small and medium-size players and they have profited from it.



We need to hear about tax-holidays, tax-benefits that can meaningfully contribute to the revival of the industry



**Do you have
a Global
recognition
for Covid
safety?**





Sudesh Poddar

Sudesh Poddar President, HRAEI

As the extension of moratorium is over, what are your expectations from the government?

Since the period of moratorium granted by RBI ended by August 31, 2020, the banks have started demanding for EMLs and interest on loans from September 1 onwards without even considering the fact that the industry is under severe liquidity crunch due to zero business, and under severe stress to manage the huge operational costs even at this dormant state. There should be an extension of moratorium period for the worst affected hospitality industry till March 2021 irrespective of availing RBI restructuring package by eligible companies. We would request for complete waiver of interest for hospitality establishments for the lockdown period.

What do you think about the provision for restructuring of loans?

As per the Kamath Committee recommendations ratified by the RBI, the banks and NBFCs are given the discretion to decide the modalities of implementation of the restructuring. In the given scenario when the banking institutions are shying away from their responsibilities, and effective implementation of the restructuring plan seems doubtful.



Out of the about 4.5 million MSMEs eligible for relief in the ECLGS scheme, only 2.4 million have secured loans



Apart from the stringent restructuring parameters that will be exercised by the banks, the time-consuming exercise would also get complex with many probable riders and conditions imposed by banks on promoters like equity infusion, pledging of promoters shares and additional mortgage of assets etc.


How beneficial has the ECLGS funding scheme been for you?

ECLGS in itself is quite burdensome for the borrower with repayment to be done in four years with one year's moratorium. This increases the burden on cash flow substantially. Under the scheme, the lender will create a second charge on the mortgaged assets and only if the underlying asset is incapable of realisation the Central government guarantee would be invoked. In other words, if the borrower defaults on payment of this ECLGS liability, then the underlying asset would be acquired by the lender and sold. The lender can fall back on the government only if the realisation of the asset is not enough to cover the loan under ECLGS. This could have dangerous implications. If 80 per cent of the credit is not restructured, the MSME will be in difficulty. Resolution of restructuring is of critical importance.

There has been a low disbursement ratio of the ECLGS. As per data emanating from the ground, out of the about 4.5 million MSMEs eligible for relief under this scheme, only 2.4 million or 53 per cent have secured loans. With the specific design of this scheme, it caters to a certain segment.

???


**So many
Questions
and only
one
Answer!**





'We need to be united'

Every state of India has abundant potential and we should use our collective strength to market the destination, says **Sundar Singaram**, the new Secretary General of SIHRA.

 Neha Rawat



Sundar Singaram

As the new Secretary General of SIHRA, how will you take on this new role?

First of all my designation at the moment is Director Operations. I have been serving the tourism and hospitality industry in South India in various capacities, as a Tour Operator over two decades, President of Travel Club, Madurai, Hon. Secretary of Tamilnadu Travel Mart etc. Now this assignment will open up many opportunities to assist the hospitality industry in a proactive manner.

Please share your experience and how will it help you excel in your current role.

I personally believe, to increase the 'footfalls' in the country, State and Town is the only solution to overcome all our problems in the hospitality industry. Every state of India has abundant potential by the grace of our ancestors and we should use our collective strength to market the destination. Associations can play a vital role in creating revenue opportunities for the investors and stakeholders of the industry and not just address their grievances.

There are many issues that are going on with the hospitality industry in COVID times, which key issues will you put forward with the government?

Yes, there are various issues and the anxiety, expectation is high. From SIHRA we are consistently approaching

various governments with various requirements from time to time under the guidance of our President Syama Raju. The pandemic is new for the government and also the entrepreneurs, hence, every time we carefully analyse every problem without emotion and escalate it to the governments. The anxiety level is high with the governments also, however, we patiently make them understand the core issue and request the best possible solution. The key issues change from time to time, for example, few months back re-opening the hotels was the key focus but now the emphasis is on extending the timelines and operating bars, increasing the number of participants for banquets etc.

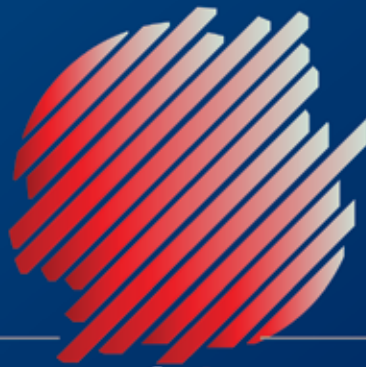
What steps are being taken to evolve this association further?

This association has a great legacy and has been serving its members for the past 67 years. After I took over in June, we started communicating with all our members twice almost every day. We have revamped our communication systems and are using all possible modes like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn etc. Realising the fact that physical meetings are possible in the near future, we initiated a new concept 'SIHRA CONNECT' which is a virtual platform. We have conducted various knowledge sharing sessions, food safety trainings, COVID safety training by experts, interaction with top Govt of India and state government officials exclusively for our members. Also, we have created a marketing opportunity for our members to present their products to 4,000+ tour operators, travel agents and DMCs in the country. The SIHRA CONNECT webinars are well attended and enable participants to get an update of the destinations in South India and our member hotels.



Our members can avail the opportunity to present their products to 4,000+ tour operators, travel agents and DMCs





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Post Unlock 4.0

Regional Presidents talk about the challenges they are facing, viz. acute financial crunch, difficulty in repayment of loans, dire need for extension of moratorium, and more.

Neha Rawat



Sherry Bhatia
President, HRAWI

ONE-TIME LOAN RESTRUCTURING NEEDED

The challenges for the hospitality industry are almost the same across the country, with only minor differences. Except for a few states, our industry was the last to be granted permission to re-open in the phase-wise unlocking. Many hotels and restaurants closed permanently, and some are undecided about re-opening. Payment of salaries, pending electricity bills, maintenance and overheads, debt and now, shortage of manpower are some of the main issues that many players are facing.

“We are technically MSMEs, but we do not get any benefits which other industries receive

We are technically MSMEs, but we do not get any benefits which other industries receive from the state and Central governments. Despite being accorded the status of an industry, hotels and restaurants continue to pay tariff on water and electricity at high commercial rates when ideally, it should be at industrial rates.

The industry has been imploring the government to offer us a one-time loan restructuring, but the banks don't cooperate and we are left to fend for ourselves. Many of our hotels were requisitioned by the government for accommodating doctors and health workers. These hotels are yet to receive payments against the provided service. So the industry which is already squeezed out of working capital is further burdened with these additional expenses.

WAIVE OFF STATUTORY FEES AND DUTIES

Other than this, the statutory fees and duties by state governments under different heads are also something that HRAWI has been asking to be waived. Businesses were asked to remain shut by the government and it's only fair that the fees and levies be made inapplicable for the duration when no business was conducted. The tourism and hospitality industry contributes close to 10 per cent to the country's GDP and we are hopeful that the government understands that we cannot be ignored.



Sudesh Poddar
President, HRAEI

DEGROWTH RANGING FROM 80 TO 85 PER CENT

Virtually there is no cash as most of the hotels were hit hard in the first quarter of 2020, facing degrowth ranging from 80 to 85 per cent. The sector has been reeling from huge losses due to cancellations of bookings after the coronavirus outbreak. Forward bookings which may have helped offset the losses are also negligible because of

“The hospitality sector has a debt burden to the tune of ₹45,000 to ₹50,000 crore

uncertainty in containing the pandemic. The hospitality sector of the country has a heavy debt burden to the tune of ₹45,000 to ₹50,000 crore. As the cash flow stopped abruptly

after the lockdown induced by COVID-19, the debt burden kept rising. Moreover, paying of the utility bills, employee salaries, loan repayment, property rentals (especially those who do not own property), excise renewal fees etc. added to the acute financial crunch.

EXTENSION OF MORATORIUM

The RBI has given a three-month moratorium on all loans to the industry. The moratorium ended on August 31. But the hotel industry has made no progress in terms of bookings even after many states unlocked and hotels resumed operations. In the initial stages the average occupancy levels didn't even reach 20 per cent levels. Moreover, wherever hotels and restaurants opened, footfalls have been minimal. On the top of it, the establishments now have to spend more on maintaining hygiene and safety measures after the pandemic.

The loan restructuring plan announced by the RBI for distressed MSMEs is not going to help the hospitality sector. Therefore, the industry has urged that the moratorium period be extended by a further three months. Hopefully, the revenue will improve in the festive season and MICE bookings (especially, the weddings) will improve, offering some respite to the industry in the coming months.



K. Syama Raju
President, SIHRA

FINANCIAL CRUNCH DUE TO NO REVENUE

The major challenge we are facing is the financial crunch due to no revenue because of the lockdowns since March.

Due to no revenue, we are forced to pay reduced salaries of up to 50 per cent to our employees, however, the government did not give any concession on taxes for the lockdown period, including electricity charges, property tax, prohibition and excise tax, pollution control consent fee etc.

FEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESS

Many hotels have been forced to retain minimum staff for maintenance of rooms, gardens, kitchens etc. and have exhausted all their financial resources.

The government has allowed hotels to reopen from September, however there are restrictions on the number of persons allowed to attend functions, restaurant and bar timings etc., which deprive us of opportunities for business.

RESTRICTIONS ON INTERSTATE MOVEMENT

Another major issue is the different policy by each state

government on interstate movement, which restrict the corporates and domestic tourists to travel to other states. Even now some states like Tamil Nadu have an e-pass system for hill stations for travellers within the state, this affects the occupancy of hotels.

ADDRESSING THE CONCERNS OF OUR MEMBERS

Moreover, there is fear among the travellers and virtual meeting trends affect the hotel business. SIHRA



Due to no revenue,
we are forced to pay
reduced salaries of up to
50% to employees

is taking all efforts to kickstart the movement in South India through its SIHRA CONNECT platform. Through SIHRA we are consistently motivating our members with various training sessions and discussions through our virtual platform. Also, we are addressing our members' concerns and highlighting issues to the state and Union government. At SIHRA, our objective is to encourage, promote and protect the interests of member establishments.

We have also been rendering professional advice and assistance from time to time to all our members on topics of vital importance. SIHRA covers five states and two union territories in southern India, viz. Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala, Karnataka and the two Union Territories of Puducherry and Lakshadweep.



Surendra Kumar Jaiswal
President, HRANI

INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC SUPPORT MECHANISM REQUIRED

The COVID-19 pandemic has dealt a body blow to businesses across the country including regions, across sectors, with many having lost business almost overnight. No sector has been spared the impact of the biggest challenge any business entity has faced. Each vertical of tourism industry – hotels, restaurants, travel agents, tour operators, tourist transporters, guides etc. are facing the worst ever crisis due to the pandemic.

Although hotels and restaurants in the region have reopened after the lockdown, the occupancies and business are very low and therefore the major challenge before the entrepreneurs is managing operations cost and at the same time managing the debt repayments. The hospitality establishments are facing survival crisis and if there is no industry-specific support mechanism, the number of insolvency cases will increase, which will lead to job losses.

BANKS REFUSING FRESH LOAN SUPPORT

The tourism industry has been identified as one of the 26 most stressed industries by the RBI expert committee, and eligible for restructuring.

Although schemes like ECGLS have been announced by the government, less than 50 per cent of the eligible people are able to harness it because of the lack of interest by the banks. Same is the case with restructuring of loans. The banks are refusing fresh loan support to new clients as the hospitality business is in the negative list of many rating agencies. We thus need to ensure that an across the board moratorium is made immediately applicable for tourism enterprises till March 2022 and there should be no interest during that period.

REVIVAL POLICIES NEEDED

Some of the states have extended few reliefs but we need revival policies in terms of GST correction, export status, infrastructure status, industry status, secured refunds including refund / adjustment of bar license fee, waiver of demand / fixed charges levied in electricity bills including property tax / house tax. For the renewals of licenses, NOC should be



We need an across the
board moratorium for
tourism enterprises till
March 2022

extended automatically and the policy of one-time special renewal valid up to March 31, 2021 should be provided to hotels and restaurants to ease operations. The policies of the states and the Centre in terms of unlock should be aligned.

This whole situation will end, but relationships will last, and hoteliers have to do everything they can to maintain relationships.



'Focus more on hygiene'



Neha Rawat

FHRAI organised a webinar with **Arun Singhal**, IAS, CEO, FSSAI, to discuss 'Emerging Trends, Concerns and Regulatory Measures in the COVID-19 Era'.



In his opening address, **Surendra Kumar Jaiswal**, President, HRANI, said, "I am extremely privileged to extend a warm welcome to **Shri Arun Singhal**, IAS, CEO, Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI). I take this opportunity to compliment the dynamic CEO and the FSSAI for the various proactive measures taken by them to combat the effects of the pandemic, including the extension of the grace period for renewal/ registration of FSSAI licenses of Food Business Operators (FBOs) to December 31, 2020."

He added, "At this juncture, FSSAI being the regulator in the food business has a greater role to play by providing a conducive and facilitative environment to the industry to survive, revive and thrive. We shall be extremely grateful to FSSAI for resolving the issues that we see as stumbling blocks in the smooth management of the hospitality business in the country. It is worthwhile here to mention about the mutually enriching partnership of FSSAI and FHRAI since the inception of the Authority in 2011. Hospitality industry has played a very active role throughout the journey of FSSAI. FHRAI was one of the first organisations to welcome the new enactment. FHRAI has been an active participant and co-traveller on this evolving landscape of food safety in India. FHRAI and its Regional Associations have actively participated and

supported all major initiatives of FSSAI during these years such as the FoSTaC trainings, Swasth Bharath Yatra, Hygiene Rating, Eat Right Movement and RUCO etc. We are very proud to mention here that FHRAI and its Regional Associations have done the maximum number of advanced catering sessions in the country."

"We are also happy to share that in the last five months, FHRAI organised 10 rounds – 44 sessions of the FSSAI approved COVID-19 awareness training programmes under the guidance of Dr. V Pasupathy, National Advisor, FHRAI. Around 3,000 hospitality professionals, both white and blue collar, have availed the benefit of the free of cost sessions as a part of the membership services of FHRAI. Going by the guidelines issued by FSSAI, the programme covered precautions and steps the hospitality industry establishments should implement.

I hope that in near future also FHRAI along with its Regional Associations will work with FSSAI to maintain hygiene and food safety in all FBOs. We hope that your esteemed guidance would be a great morale booster for the FHRAI members to start the food business with the same zeal as in the pre COVID-19 period," he said.

While speaking on the amendment issue, **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President of



Arun Singhal



We have published more than 13 final regulations in the past three months





FHRAI and President of the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI), said, "Considering the amendment to be a noble attempt, there is a huge fundamental difference between packaged and cooked food and more so, if it's Indian. It can be implemented in QSRs, where menus are more restricted and not customisable.

As there is no custom model for cooking Indian meals, we feel that Indian food and recipes are not standardised. The recipes depend on old-world cooks who don't do any measurements while cooking and do it in their andaz. It will be really difficult to mention the calorie count of Indian dishes on the menu as it can be customised as per the needs of the customers, and then its calorific value will differ. We feel this can be used against us for various purposes."

He further said, "Also, I feel that the universal implementation of the amendment will be a challenge. Restricting it to a chain or only 10 restaurants where there is Central licensing doesn't make sense and it should be across the spectrum. A small restaurant or dhaba should also follow the same rules."

Arun Singhal said, "Hygiene issues are a dampener for India in normal times and also during COVID-19. In the aftermath of COVID, all of us have to focus more on hygiene. To streamline processes, we are emphasising on improving software environments. On our part, we will try to help out the industry. Many new regulations have come out in the past two or three months. We have published more than 13 final regulations in the past three months, and many more are in the pipeline."

Commenting on perpetual licenses, Singhal said, "The regulation discussions are going on with the ministry, it will come out soon. All our licenses will

be perpetual very soon. Every year one will have to submit his account and deposit a small amount of yearly fees." He also informed, "All restaurants and hotels which have 10 or more outlets will have to provide serving size, calorific value of the serving and allergen information – which can be given symbolically in their menu card. While it is a voluntary regulation right now, it will become mandatory after January 2022."

Starting with FoSTaC training, **Pasupathy Venkat**, Lead Expert, FoSTaC, FSSAI, New Delhi, mentioned, "90 per cent of members who are usually small-scale units or from the unorganised sector are in the composite GST bracket. We request for GST concession because they are not being able to take the advantage of Input Credit Tax. According to the rule in GST, with FSSAI normal testing the GST is exempted thus there should be an extension."

Regarding hygiene rating, Venkat mentioned that the normal way of auditing did not meet an organisation's requirement. "We created a course which the industry veterans have highly appreciated. We feel that FSSAI can increase the number of auditors through our own qualifications metrics," he added.

Raising the third requirement, Venkat said, "FSSAI has been testing cooked foods as per various parameters. For the cooked food products, we have created a draft on what should be tested. We have prepared a manual which can go for scientific checks before passing it."

Pradeep Shetty, Joint Honorary Secretary of FHRAI and Vice President of HRAWI, concluded, "We realised that more than 70 per cent of our population eats on the streets and in dhabas. So, to bring about regulation and universally adopt it, is a difficult process."



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli

There is a huge difference between packaged and cooked food



Pradeep Shetty

More than 70% of our population eats on the streets and in dhabas



Surendra Kumar Jaiswal

We have done the maximum number of advanced catering sessions



Pasupathy Venkat

90 per cent of members from the unorganised sector are in the composite GST



New avenues for revenues

Hoteliers share that in the 'new now' brands are focusing on creating meaningful offers which speak to the needs of guests and will lead the way to recovery.



Neha Rawat



Sarbendra Sarkar

Sarbendra Sarkar
Founder and Managing Director
Cygnett Hotels and Resorts

How is F&B sector changing the dynamics of the industry?

Right now, the F&B sector is providing varied opportunities for the hospitality industry to stay afloat and take slow and steady steps towards revival. F&B has a new philosophy and face now – guests prefer food bowls, aggregate meals and immunity boosting holistic meals, à la carte rather than buffet; chefs prefer local produce and working with a local vendor/supply chain; people afraid to venture out, but craving to satisfy their gastronomic needs, now have 'home delivery'.

At Cygnett, we are already on the 'home delivery' bandwagon. We have already initiated QR coded

menus, contactless service and immunity boosting food options in our menus across properties. We are working on creating some novel F&B experiences that will get us more local footfalls.

Hotels are concentrating more on ancillary revenue and trying out new platforms. How successful is this concept going so far?

Thanks to home delivery, business is slowly picking up as people cooped up at home are craving to eat 'hotel food'. Also, work from home is driving people up the wall and working in a hotel is being looked at as a pleasant change for most guests. Thanks to Cygnett's Safety Protocol Drive and Hygiene Assured Drive, customers are mustering the courage and trusting us to come over for a weekend staycation. We are working on a lot of new ideas but scaling up to make all the 'new platforms' successful will take some time. Overall, 'ancillary revenue-making' platforms are helping us navigate the current scenario.



We are working on a lot of new ideas but scaling up to make all the 'new platforms' successful will take some time



Vikas Suri
Sr. Associate Vice President
Lords Hotels and Resorts



Vikas Suri

How is F&B sector changing the dynamics of the industry?

We are seeking innovations and have modified our business model for the new post-COVID world. Our efforts are towards reducing the touch points and also maintaining the feeling of 'Dining Out' in the mind of guests. Contactless payments, digital menus, spaced out seating arrangements, to mention a few, minimise human contact.

Hotels are concentrating more on ancillary revenue and trying out new platforms such

revenue. All these new revenue generation areas are here to stay in our industry.

Anything else you would like to mention about changing trends in the industry?

We are at the threshold of a technological revolution because the need of the hour is to adopt more creative approaches in conducting our business. Digital marketing will now gain more popularity than before. Today hygiene, quality control and cleanliness include stringent disinfection and sanitisation. This crisis has also forced hotels to adopt stringent



as food delivery, food & beverage business, co-working spaces, urban warehousing, laundry services, facility management for offices, etc. How successful is this concept going so far?

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted the hospitality industry. It has made the industry concentrate on ancillary services like co-working spaces, food delivery, facility management for offices etc., to generate



This crisis has forced hotels to re-look at their costs and adopt stringent cost control measures in all departments



cost control measures in all departments. However, we must be hopeful that everything will change for the better as and when this crisis recedes.



Anant Leekha

Anant Leekha
Deputy General Manager
ibis New Delhi Aerocity

How is F&B sector changing the dynamics of the industry?

In the current scenario, F&B is one of the biggest game changers of the industry. Adapting to the new normal and recognising the changing demands of guests plays a crucial role in driving business towards a progressive path. Needless to say that health and safety of guests will take priority over everything else and people will prefer to dine in places where stringent protocols are being followed and efforts towards guest safety are visible.

At ibis, we have moved to contactless menu and ordering software for in-room and restaurant guests.

All physical menus have been replaced with QR code for digital menu access on smartphones, allowing our guests to place orders without touching the physical menu. We are also available on all major online delivery platforms to bring our culinary experiences from Spice It – our casual dining restaurant, to the doorstep of our guests. We foresee this as a long-term strategy and we'll continue to cater to the needs of our guests as per their preferences.

Hotels are concentrating more on ancillary revenue and trying out new platforms such as food delivery, food & beverage business, co-working spaces, urban warehousing, laundry services, facility management for offices, etc. How successful is this concept going so far?

In the last few months, the world around us has changed rapidly and hotels have had to adapt and become more thoughtful in the way they do things. In the 'new now' brands are creating meaningful offers which speak to the needs of guests and will lead the way to recovery. Since a lot of people are still working from home, many hotels have converted their rooms and spaces into workspaces at affordable prices.

It's important that we continue to re-think and re-imagine alternate revenue streams to meet the demands of the changing times. At ibis New Delhi Aerocity too, we are offering alternate office space solutions to cater to the needs of working professionals or organisations with an aim to provide efficient and flexible solutions. We are also actively working towards curating customised 'Food Boxes' for corporates for offices in the vicinity. With this, the idea is to provide end-to-end solutions for corporates.

Lastly, few of our hotels are offering a host of services like laundry, parking, storage facilities etc.

Anything else you would like to mention about the changing trends in the industry?

Staycations and workations are emerging as the latest trends as people are looking to break the monotony after months of lockdown. Most people are currently opting for staycations in the same city or driving down to the nearest leisure destination to rejuvenate over the weekend.

Apart from staycations, it is very encouraging to see an uptick in wedding queries. With the changing trends, there has been a rise in hosting intimate weddings with all the safety precautions. The exquisite poolside venue at ibis New Delhi Aerocity is the ideal venue for weddings with expert staff dedicated to getting every last detail right.



It's important that we continue to re-think alternate revenue streams to meet the demands of the changing times





Ravi Rai

Cluster General Manager, Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach,
Novotel Vijayawada Varun and Bheemli Resort Managed by Accor

Hotels are concentrating more on ancillary revenue and trying out new platforms such as food delivery, food & beverage business, co-working spaces, urban warehousing, laundry services, facility management for offices, etc. How successful is this concept going so far?

With the countrywide lockdown & stringent guidelines for the hospitality industry, hotels have been adopting various concepts for generating ancillary revenue and maintaining brand loyalty. We at Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach have been offering various packages and concepts for food delivery, chef@home, wellness at home, wellness packages, virtual dinners, takeaway brunches, and much more. We have seen a positive response for most of these offerings and are confident that the F&B business will bounce back very soon.

How is F&B sector changing the dynamics of the industry?

Hospitality is synonymous with personalised services and guest recognition. However, due to the pandemic, hospitality experiences and safety & hygiene have become analogous. From the initial days of lockdown, F&B has been the driver for recovery for the hospitality sector and various hotels are delivering well-curated F&B options at your doorstep, i.e. bringing the five-star experience to your home.

Familiarising to the new normal and implementing new safety measures are playing a vital role in driving the hospitality industry towards a progressive path. We have always cared deeply about the safety, quality and environmental impact of our food. Across Accor we have now established new, even higher standards for our bars and restaurants which exceed government and local regulations. To this end, we are temporarily removing all in-room minibars as part of our enhanced hygiene process.

Anything else you would like to mention about the changing trends in the industry?

As safety and wellness have become paramount, the industry is observing a few trends such as guests' preference for in-room dining over a buffet, compulsory usage of disposable containers and cutlery for food delivery in the rooms, increase in the number of food deliveries and careful evaluation of the menu and the ingredients' source by the guests. The key will be brand loyalty & the safety measures every hotel is adhering to.



Ravi Rai



We have seen a positive response and are confident that the F&B business will bounce back very soon



SAATHI for the industry

FHRAI has been invited by the Ministry of Tourism & Quality Council of India to support and bring forward, SAATHI, a new initiative for preparedness against COVID-19.



Himanshu Talwar



Himanshu Talwar

The global pandemic has changed the map of the hospitality industry especially because of the social distancing norms in place all over the world. In the current situation, hotels and restaurants face empty days ahead of them if necessary and properly planned actions aren't taken.

To help hotels, restaurants and other hospitality units get back on their feet while ensuring the prevention of any further transmission of the coronavirus, the FHRAI has been invited by the Ministry of Tourism and Quality Council of India to support and bring forward SAATHI, a new initiative.

SAATHI (System for Assessment, Awareness & Training for Hospitality Industry) is a certification scheme that assists the hospitality industry in their preparedness and alertness to continue their daily operations while combating the risks of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The SAATHI scheme, which has been initiated to provide confidence to guests/ customers, consists of three components: Self-Certification, Webinar for Capacity Building and Site Assessment (optional).

The first process, Self-Certification, will explain the key elements related to preparedness against COVID-19. A certificate will be generated for the participants in the end.

After undertaking Self-Certification, the key elements of SAATHI will be explained through webinars. A Certificate of Participation will be issued after this step too. After these two steps, units may choose to opt for a site or remote assessment which will assess on-ground preparedness and suggest areas for improvement.

A Certificate of Assessment will be handed over to the participants. The final stage of certification is voluntary, so as to help with any cost related obstruction.

SAATHI has been projected to have numerous benefits not just pertaining to assurance of safety and health of guests and employees but also help with the compliance of the COVID-19 related required regulatory procedures. This extremely helpful initiative will also prove beneficial in the identification of vulnerable areas within the industry which need to be plugged to ensure continuity in operations. To be a part of this scheme, the hospitality unit needs to register on the official website of SAATHI, <https://saathi.qcin.org/>. To register for Self-Certification, an applicant unit must have registration number, mobile number & email address as registered on <https://hotelcloud.nic.in>.

SAATHI self-certified units can take Self Certification any number of times as they deem fit. The self-certified units may also undertake training (webinar) and site-assessment. SAATHI Guidance Documents (Checklists) and SOPs or Guidelines as issued by the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and other regulatory bodies are available for download on the official SAATHI website.

SAATHI is an extremely beneficial and helpful scheme which ensures that the operations of the hospitality industry flow smoothly without any hindrance and allows guests to be completely tension free about their health and safety. The Ministry of Tourism has planned and executed the SAATHI scheme in order to allow the creation of a safe, transparent and positive environment where both the industry and the guests/ customers can feel confident and adjust to the new normal as easily as possible.

SAATHI has numerous benefits pertaining to assurance of safety and health of guests and employees

(The article has been written by Dr. Himanshu Talwar, Assistant Secretary General, FHRAI, the views expressed are the author's personal views.)



Assisting in preparedness of the Hospitality Industry against COVID-19

About **SAATHI**

System for Assessment, Awareness & Training for Hospitality Industry

Given the current COVID-19 outbreak, it is important that all hotels, restaurants and other hospitality units take suitable measures to restrict any further transmission of the virus while providing accommodation and other services post lockdown. To assist the hospitality industry in their preparedness to continue operations safely and mitigate risks arising out of the COVID pandemic, the Ministry of Tourism has partnered with the Quality Council of India, to bring this initiative that entails:



Self-Certification

This process will explain the key elements related to preparedness against COVID-19. A Self-Certification will be generated at the end.



Webinar

After undertaking Self-Certification, the key elements of SAATHI will be explained through Webinars. A Certificate of Participation will be issued.



Site-Assessment (optional)

After Self-Certification units may go for a site/remote assessment which will assess on-ground preparedness and advise opportunities for improvement. A Certificate of Assessment will be issued.

Expected Benefits of **SAATHI**

Ensuring safety & health of
employees and guests

Helping in complying with COVID-19
related regulatory requirements

Identifying vulnerable areas within the
organization, which need to be plugged

Ensuring continuity
in operations

How **SAATHI** works

Log on to the official website of SAATHI <https://saathi.qcin.org/> to register

To register for Self-Certification, applicant unit must have:

Registration number, mobile number & email address as registered on <https://hotelcloud.nic.in>

SAATHI self-certified units
can take Self Certification
multiple times

SAATHI self-certified units
may also undertake
training(webinar) and
site-assessment

SAATHI Guidance Documents (Checklists) and
SOPs/Guidelines as issued by MoT, MoHFW
and other regulatory bodies are available for
download on the SAATHI website



In revival mode with ECLGS



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli

The only respite the industry got was through ECLGS of the MSME Ministry



A K Sharma

Schemes which are applicable to MSMEs will be given to all service sectors

FHRAI organised a webinar with **A K Sharma**, IAS, Secretary, Ministry of MSME to discuss issues faced by the hospitality industry.



Neha Rawat



Opening the session, **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, VP, FHRAI, said that he was profoundly thankful to the Ministry of MSME for addressing some of the concerns shared in FHRAI's various representations in the last six months. He emphasised that the MSME Ministry was found to be the most forthcoming and supportive to the hospitality industry amid the crisis.

"Among all the gloom and doom of the pandemic as well as the not so encouraging response from the government, the only respite the industry got was through the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) of the MSME Ministry. We would like to compliment the Ministry for announcing this very supportive scheme. Though this very promising step of the GOI to provide relief to the stressed MSMEs is hamstrung at some points due to the apathetic attitude of the banks, the scheme has been found to be a great stimulus in the revival process of the economy," Kohli added.

A K Sharma started off by saying, "We have set up the Champions portal, where people can come and lodge their grievances. We have also launched sub portals. The Champions portal is the mother of all the portals in the grievance redressal cell. This portal is open to all the members of the organisation to tackle problems and is by far one of the best portals made by any government organisation for grievance redressal. You can write to us about your complaint against any bank if you are turned down. We have nodal officers who will contact the bank. If this doesn't work, we will help you in providing similar options in case you are turned down by banks or NBFCs. It's a 360 degree arrangement for resolution of problems."

Pradeep Shetty, Jt. Hon'y Secretary, FHRAI said, "In our interaction with the Ministry of Finance and with the principal economic advisor also we have often mentioned about the Champions portal and have been informed that it is functioning effectively. We wish to give few suggestions which could help



ease redressal of grievances. We would further like to discuss the ECLGS scheme and few questions pertaining to restructuring for the industry."

Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, President, HRANI, said, "As per our Finance Minister's direction, it was conveyed that the applications from MSME can't be refused by banks, still banks are not following the orders and they are somehow trying to delay the process. Even when the government is acting as the guarantor, the banks are not taking action on time and delaying the whole process. We request you to make the bank loan application process time bound and if it gets delayed anyhow then they must give justifiable reasons to the government about the same. The ECLGS scheme will expire on October 31 and should be extended to December 31 looking at the behaviour of banks & popularity of this scheme."

Shetty added that the need of the hour is timely disposal of the applications as more than 90 per cent of the applications are still pending. Sharma responded by saying, "We have been in touch with the banks and also with RBI and Department of Finance. We will definitely keep in mind the points that you'll have raised and convey them further."

S P Jain, MD, Pride Hotels, shared, "We have lost the bookings for two years for international as well as domestic tourists. At least we should be allowed four years period for revival. Banks are also expecting some contribution from us on grounds of restructuring, which will be a burden on us during such difficult times. Restructuring is not happening in a proper way as banks have more powers. This kind of negative outlook of banks will only make it more difficult for us to avail this facility. Some banks are asking for additional security on loan applications, hoteliers will not be able to fulfill such requirements."

Sharma replied, "The Federation should inform the government in case they face issues when dealing with banks. We will do whatever we can to resolve your problems."

Shetty said, "20 per cent additional credit is given to MSME industry, we are requesting and asking you to support our industry for the 80 per cent part also, it would also come into the ambit of restructuring." Sharma responded, "All the schemes which are now applicable to any MSME will be given to all service sectors."

Enquiring about the stringent threshold ratio, Jain said, "While restructuring, the Kamath Committee has given some ratio, but hospitality sector is a highly capital-based industry and that is why the ratio is a little different. And we may not be able to comply by this ratio and the hospitality sector might not take the proposal. To be treated as a guiding factor and if the company is performing well they should be given a chance and not rejected on technical grounds. Some reasonable guidelines might be given for the MSME so that this kind of trouble in restructuring does not occur."

Shetty said, "We have a very peculiar revival phase and it will be long drawn than any other industry as tourism and travel will not bounce back soon. We request that if the Ministry is reviewing the scheme for moratorium and restructuring, there should be provision for penal action against erring banks."

Sharma responded, "For the forward linkages you have already got good number of aggregators. There are many services that aggregators can help you with. The aggregators and delivery services could be reached to customers' homes. Use some aggregators for the back-end services like procurement of vegetables and fruits. It will make your logistics cheaper and stabilise your cost and generate some revenue. The mode of presentation and delivery should be changed. Learn to adapt to new systems and technologies. The government will help you."

Highlighting the shortfall of aggregation, **Nirav Gandhi**, EC Member, FHRAI said that the transportation of the food is not happening as per FSSAI guidelines. No aggregators come under any Act, these points are equally important issues which are plaguing our industry.

Concluding the session, Sharma said, "The need for measures to make banks more proactive, extension of timeline are the key points that the government will work upon. Certain changes in the moratorium part will also be taken into consideration."



Pradeep Shetty



More than 90 per cent of the applications are still pending



Surendra Kumar Jaiswal



Even when the govt is the guarantor, the banks are not taking action on time



S P Jain



Some banks are asking for additional security on loan applications



Nirav Gandhi



The transportation of the food is not happening as per FSSAI guidelines





Be safe with Sippline

The recently introduced Sippline offers a novel way of ensuring oral hygiene while using glassware, says **Rohit Warriar**, Founder & Director, Warriar Safe Shields.



Smita Kulshreshth



Rohit Warriar

Not so long ago, the focus of the hospitality industry was on creating the right ambience and the quality of food to attract its guests. However, guests today are viewing things from a different lens and the priorities have shifted to cleanliness, sanitisation, hygiene and finally the quality of food – everything else comes after that, according to **Rohit Warriar**.

"The entire hospitality sector has raised its volume in an attempt to reconnect with their guests, highlighting their efforts in ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience at

their establishment. 75 per cent of respondents in a survey claimed that hygiene and cleanliness of an establishment would define their choice of dining out," he adds.

"What if you could add a different touch to your hygiene parameter, that would give an edge to your establishment while offering unparalleled safety to your customers? Or a solution that could well set a new benchmark in customer orientation, safety and hygiene? We at Warriar Safe Shields have tried to address this dilemma by coming up with a novel way of ensuring oral hygiene while using glassware. We have recently introduced Sippline – an oral hygiene instrument used on the rims of the glass, cup, mug to avoid lips coming in direct contact with the rim of the glass while drinking. Sippline is a protective shield between your lips and the rim of the glass and ensures that your lips touch a sterile, clean surface at every drink," he shares.

Explaining how Sippline is a safe bet for hoteliers, Warriar says, "As a hotelier, it is time to go an extra mile, and ensure that the guest experience is undiluted and consistently hygienic with Sippline. Add it to your tableware and explain the benefits to the guest, doubling their confidence in your service and quality. Offer it as a default or as an option, either way the guest sees the extra mile you are willing to go for his/her wellbeing. Also, Sippline is reusable, presenting another opportunity to retain the guest mindshare. Encourage your guests to carry their Sippline with them, with every use they will recollect the experience they have had at your establishment while reiterating your guest orientation, reminding them to visit again."



It is time to go an extra mile, and ensure that the guest experience is consistently hygienic with Sippline



Risk-free franchise based model

Chhotu Maharaj Cloud Kitchen has a risk-free franchise based model where one gets a chance to become an entrepreneur, says **Clyde Monteiro**, CEO, K Sera Sera Miniplex.



Neha Rawat

How has the cloud kitchen concept evolved in India?

Cloud kitchen as a concept has emerged and caught up in the past couple of years. Many entrepreneurs who are looking to start their food business with less investment as compared to a traditional restaurant business have found a good opportunity through this concept. The online food delivery segment in India is set to grow at an unprecedented pace of around 12 per cent annually, with COVID-19 shifting consumer preferences to online ordering. As per a report by DataLabs - Inc42 the food ordering market of India is expanding at a CAGR of 16 per cent and could touch \$17 billion by 2023. The projected market size of cloud kitchens is expected to reach \$1.05 billion by the same time.

meals or depend on food brought in through deliveries. Chhotu Maharaj ensures providing hygienic and homemade healthy food delivered with utmost precautions.

As of now, cloud kitchens seem to be one of the best solutions to cater to the increased demand of people ordering food online.



Clyde Monteiro



The projected market size of cloud kitchens is expected to reach \$1.05 billion by 2023



What is the revenue model of Chhotu Maharaj Cloud Kitchen?

Chhotu Maharaj Cloud Kitchen has a unique risk-free franchise-based model wherein an individual gets a chance to become an entrepreneur without any risk and investment. Any individual or family opting for the franchise can become an entrepreneur and earn approximately ₹60,000 to ₹3 lakhs per month and the ratio of the partnership between Chhotu Maharaj and the franchised owner will be 80: 20. We will be providing quality semi-processed food to the franchisee which they will process in their kitchen and the same shall be delivered to customers via our delivery partners and online aggregators.

Based on this concept, what kind of revenues would be generated?

The company is projecting a revenue of ₹40 cr through this concept. Understanding the present scenario of job and income losses due to the pandemic, we believe in generating additional family income via entrepreneurship and jobs for thousands throughout the country.

How is the concept going to pan out during the pandemic?

The risk of COVID-19 transmission, has pushed a majority of the population to opt for either home cooked



What are the expansion plans pan India?

Considering the current situation, we have already planned for 108 outlets in Mumbai and moving forward we expect to expand this concept in 70 other cities of India. Also, we have planned to start more products in the menu based on the location that matches the taste buds of the locales. In phase 2 we shall come up with packed sweets which will again be sold through our cloud kitchen partners.



Reviving industry

FHRAI held a webinar with **Tarun Bajaj**, IAS – Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance to discuss the financial crisis in industry post COVID-19 & the way forward.



Neha Rawat

Highlighting the problems of the industry, **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, VP of FHRAI, said, "The hospitality sector is facing an existential crisis today as there is zero business for the last six months and the threats of insolvency, NPAs and millions of jobs losses have made the situation more severe for the industry to survive. The Federation has been continuously appealing to the GOI to take note of the gross damage in the hospitality sector which is heading towards an imminent collapse if some real relief measures are not announced. We are continuously requesting the government to issue an industry-specific circular to insulate the hospitality industry from mass bankruptcies and foreclosure of assets."

Pradeep Shetty, Jt. Hony Secretary, FHRAI, added, "The surging numbers of corona infections in the country have totally shattered the hopes of revival of the industry which has been reeling under the stress of no income and increasing burden of overhead expenses. The revival of the industry would take more time than what was expected initially. Today the industry is staring at the grave threats of insolvencies and bankruptcies leading to acquiring of the hard-earned assets by fund houses and financial institutions."



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli



The industry is expected to manage their running fixed operational costs



Tarun Bajaj



Banks are asking the govt for money, they are also in an extremely bad condition



Tarun Bajaj responded, "The industry is in a lot of pain and is yet to open up completely. Hotel occupancy is low and has been better where hotels have been used for COVID facilities. However, in terms of resto and food delivery we need to know whether the situation has improved and what is the percentage of the business that is being done on an average."

S P Jain, MD, Pride Hotels, stated, "In order to provide relief to COVID affected companies, RBI on September 7, under the ambit of Kamath Committee recommendations, allowed corporates to avail one-time loan restructuring for a period of two years. Borrowers need to meet five sector-specific threshold ratios by March 2022 as per RBI (Kamath Committee recommends by March 2023). Most of the hospitality companies are unable to meet the said parameters. There are challenges in following financial parameters to be met in the hospitality industry."

Bajaj replied, "The Kamath Committee has given certain suggestions according to which banks are directed to function and this has been agreed to by the RBI. However, if there are certain banks that are not working as per the suggestions and are putting conditions or some extra burden on you, I want you

to give us the details of such banks so that we can take action on it."

"RBI allowed corporates and individuals across all sectors to avail moratorium on debt servicing from March to August 2020. Since moratorium is effective from September 1, 2020, banks are recovering the debt dues moving forward. In spite of various government restrictions still continuing on hospitality industry, the industry is expected to manage their running fixed operational costs and debt servicing to lenders. The hospitality industry will take at least two years to reach pre-COVID levels once all government restrictions are lifted," shared Kohli.

Jain said, "RBI has allowed banks to restructure existing loans (that are not NPAs) to hotels with a principal repayment holiday for two years. However, this exercise will increase the interest cost to hotels as banks need to provide higher provisioning when a loan is restructured. The current restructuring exercise is warranted because of the pandemic. So, RBI should waive banks from the requirement of providing for additional provisioning for restructured loans. This will help hotels to have their loans restructured without increase in interest cost. The stringent credit rating system is impacting availing loans in the industry. This might also impact the loan restructuring incentive offered by the government and RBI. We are requesting to delink the credit rating with loan sanction process at least till the entire industry in India has revived and economy is back on track. This would stimulate the industry where genuine entrepreneurs in the market would be able to borrow funds and contribute towards revival.

Bajaj said, "The Emergency Scheme was not availed by everyone so kindly give me their names and also make sure that they qualify for the same and we can then take further action on it. We will make sure that the banks actually respond to your needs. I wish banks were in a healthy condition, but they are asking the government for money, so that they can lend it further. They are also in an extremely bad condition."

Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, President, HRANI, said, "As experienced by our members, the banks are showing a totally apathetic attitude towards the problems the industry is facing in this challenging situation. They are not bothered to follow the guidelines of RBI and are showing no interest to help the distressed customers. Since the period of moratorium granted by RBI ended by August 31, the banks have started demanding for EMIs and interest on loans from September 1 onwards without even considering the fact that the



Pradeep Shetty

There is no income and increasing burden of overhead expenses



S P Jain

Delink the credit rating with loan sanction process at least till industry revives



Surendra Kumar Jaiswal

The banks are showing a totally apathetic attitude towards our problems



Nirav Gandhi

The RBI loan moratorium period should be extended till March 2021

industry is under severe liquidity crunch due to zero business and under severe stress to manage the huge operational costs even at this dormant state. The stringent clauses proposed in the restructuring plan and the overwhelming role of the financial institutions seem indifferent in managing the resolution framework, which makes this scheme ineffective and inaccessible to the industry."

Nirav Gandhi, EC Member, FHRAI, said, "The RBI loan moratorium period for worst affected hospitality industry should be extended till March 2021, irrespective of availing RBI restructuring package by eligible companies. We would request for complete waiver of interest for hospitality establishments for the lockdown period. We urge the GOI to come out with a concrete policy to support the hospitality industry which is the most affected sector due to the pandemic and faces a bleak business scenario at least for the next six months to one year. The working capital requirement of the sector needs to be supported by the government through a soft loan with low rate of interest to reach the pre-COVID levels. This will help the hospitality establishments that are struggling due to negative cash flows to restart and sustain their operations."

Bajaj responded, "Extending the moratorium is not a solution as it is only postponing it, it is better to get restructuring done so that you know what is to be paid and in how much time."

DVS Somaraju, Hony. Treasurer, FHRAI, said, "We are aware that banks cannot waive interest completely for the lockdown period though hotels incurred a loss during this period. However, RBI can mandate the banks to charge interest on hotel loans at the base rate / Marginal Cost of Fund based Lending Rate (MCLR) without any spread on top, for the lockdown period. Hence, banks will still make enough interest to pay their depositors. By waiving the spread on top of the MCLR rate, they will forgo their profit which everyone did during the lockdown period. There will be equity in sharing the loss arising out of the lockdown."

He suggested, "Many hotels have EPCG obligations under the Export Promotion Capital Goods Scheme. This commitment may be pushed back by three years for all hotels to allow them time to recover and generate foreign exchange to meet their export obligations."

Concluding the webinar, Bajaj said, "There are some issues which are related to the RBI and issues which we will look into from the point of view of the hospitality sector. As economy is improving, I hope this sector will improve with it."

OAH unveils Rajbari Collection

◆ Kolkata-based Ochre at Home (OAH) have unveiled the Rajbari Festive Collection. Crafted with intense lacquer finish wood, subtle veneers, bold beaten metal and inlay with semi-precious stones, the collection encapsulates the vintage royalty of British Raj Calcutta's zamindar era. With solid wood pillar-like legs crafted with inlay work and a moulded marble top, the Navami Console is an ageless piece of furniture. Featuring black and white chevron pattern rendered with semi-precious stones in black matt-finish wood, the Navami mirror frame is further accentuated with medallions of beaten brass.



Home Canvas launches Popsicle



◆ Popsicle Collection by Home Canvas features a range of cane chairs to make patios and balconies come alive. The chairs add both comfort and quirk to any outdoor space and are available in vibrant colours and designs. Home Canvas brings the French bistro experience to your homes with the collection, adding a retro pop vibe to your balconies and patios. The Popsicle chair is designed to be light and so moving them around, arranging or stacking them is convenient and quick. The chairs are handcrafted by artisans and are incredibly durable. They are customisable in a variety of designs and colours and are outdoor weather resistant.

EASEROOM hotel system

◆ EASEROOM Hotel Operating System is an all-in-one hospitality management suite. It allows you to set your hotel pricing strategies based on current demand using dynamic pricing model; create your B2B travel agent and corporate rates and manage all your online and offline bookings; manage occupancy based pricing of different OTAs; provide your guests GST billing; have touch free and hassle free check-ins; create, maintain OTA rate parity across all channels; and avoid overlapping bookings by Real Time Data Sync to ensure that all your hotel booking charts are updated.

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Roca launches Ruy Ohtake basins

◆ Roca has recently launched a new range under its Sanware collection in India; Ruy Ohtake Basins, designed by renowned Brazilian architect Ruy Ohtake. The collection stands out for its timeless and organic design and has won the prestigious Red Dot "Best of the best" award in 2019. The entire collection has been developed with the Fineceramic technology, exclusive at Roca: an ultrafine ceramic material with a thickness of 5 mm, which allows the production of pieces that are 40% lighter and 30% more resistant than conventional basins. In the Indian market, the Ruy Ohtake basins come in two size variants available in three colors i.e. Coffee, Onyx & Beige.

BingoHSA for hoteliers

◆ BingoHSA (Hotel Sales Automation) from Bingoforge enables hoteliers to automate their complete sales operations through one single solution. This tool automates your daily sales report sales pipeline, offer letters, contracts follow-up, manage, travel expense management, potential revenues, budgets and incentives and lots more. The MIS reporting tool provides you with the flexibility to manage and create your own set of reports.



Auto-Adjust PX23 Table Base

◆ FLAT's multi-award-winning table bases are entirely unique in that they can be automatically stabilised whenever they are moved, and in addition, allow operators to perfectly align multiple table tops. The Auto-Adjust PX23 Table Base is unique within the range of self-stabilising tables as the first decorative, Parisian-style base. It can accommodate table tops up to 750mm/30in (square) or 800mm/32in (round) and is ideal for restaurants, cafes, hotels and bars that require a European-style table base. All FLAT table bases contain patented, hydraulic PAD stabilisation technology for stabilising tables and aligning table tops. There are over 40 self-stabilising table base styles and configurations to choose from, whatever the decor or theme.



Yasanche Splash Fruit Tray

◆ Yasanche has launched the Splash Fruit Tray from its Water Series. This unconventional home décor accessory is moulded in translucent resin using eight intricate techniques to achieve the final product. Since these techniques are hand-processed, each piece has one-of-a-kind features. The inspiration behind Yasanche's Water Series is the purity and kinetic form of water. This Series exhibits a unique collection of accessories that portray the fluidity of water in its different states of existence, and its natural flow in the form of ripples, splashes, droplets and bubbles – shapes and movements that have been wonderfully captured as a moment in time.

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Appointments



A. RAHIM ASLAM

Chapter Head – Maharashtra
International Ecotourism Society

★ The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) has appointed A. Rahim Aslam as Chapter Head for Maharashtra for a duration of two years, while also further appointing him as the sole authority of The International Ecotourism Society within the district. Aslam is the Founder and Advisor for One Above. He had been South India Chapter Chair for OTOAI (Outbound Tour Operators Association of India) and currently holds the position of General Secretary at SIGTOA (South Indian Global Tour Operators Association).



VIKRAM CHOUBAL

Senior VP – Design and Technical Services
The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts

★ The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts has appointed Vikram Choubal as Senior Vice President, Design and Technical Services. Prior to joining The Leela, he was Vice President, Project Management at Marriott International for South Asia. In his new role, Choubal will provide technical support and oversee the design, planning and execution of all hotel projects within The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts portfolio. Choubal has a solid grounding in hospitality engineering, architecture, design, and construction.



ANUPRIYA GHOSH

Senior Director Revenue Strategy
The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts

★ The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts has appointed Anupriya Ghosh as Senior Director Revenue Strategy. She brings with her over a decade of focused Revenue Management Strategy experience. In her new role, Ghosh will be responsible for building and driving the overall Revenue Management Strategy for the brand. She will work closely with all hotel Revenue Managers and guide and assist them in driving the Corporate Revenue Strategy to optimise the company's channel delivery and revenue yield.



SHERIN MATHEW

Commercial Director
Hilton Chennai

★ Hilton Chennai announced the joining of Sherin Mathew as its Commercial Director. Mathew comes with more than 14 years of experience in Hospitality Sales & Marketing. He shall be responsible for developing a commercial strategy covering all segments and channels to maximise revenue and profit performance of the hotel. Also, he will lead execution of the commercial strategy with an integrated revenue management, pro-active sales and marketing communications team. Prior to this, he worked with Sterling Holiday Resorts..



SHATABDI DUTTA

General Manager – Marketing
Sarovar Hotels, New Delhi

★ Sarovar Hotels and Resorts has announced the promotion of Shatabdi Dutta as the new General Manager – Marketing. Dutta will be responsible for database – quality, quantity and targeting; digital thrust – search engine optimisation, campaigns, lead generation, viral content reach, social media traction, partner programmes and guest recognition.. During her ongoing journey since 2013 within the organisation, Dutta has actively contributed in Sarovar's major marketing campaign – 'Happiness @ Sarovar.'



GAURAV MISRA

General Manager
Holiday Inn Express Gurugram Sector 50

★ Gaurav Misra has been appointed as the General Manager for Holiday Inn Express Gurugram Sector 50 starting October 1. This is a unique appointment as Misra takes on dual responsibility of maintaining his current role of Portfolio Operations Manager for 10 Holiday Inn Express hotels and spearheading the team at the Gurugram Sector 50 hotel. Misra comes with around 18 years of experience in managing Hotel Operations with expertise in Rooms Division & Quality Control in various capacities.



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