

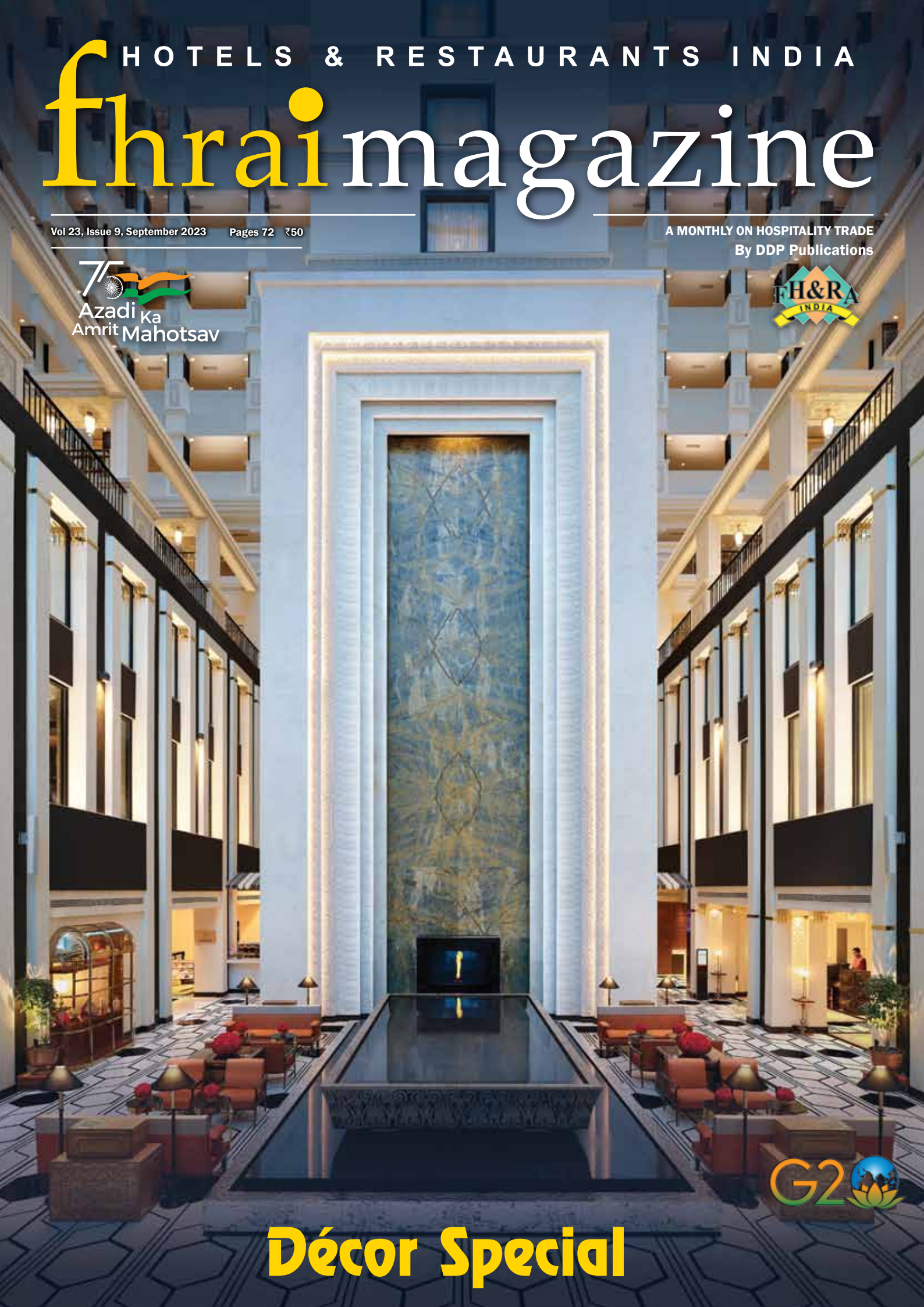
HOTELS & RESTAURANTS INDIA

fhrai magazine

Vol 23, Issue 9, September 2023 Pages 72 ₹50

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Dear members,

I hope this message finds you well. Today, I want to address some pressing concerns that the hospitality industry has been facing, and I want to express our gratitude to the Ministry of Commerce & Industry for inviting FHRAI to the stakeholder consultation to discuss issues pertaining to copyright societies.

One of the major concerns that our members have been grappling with is the constant harassment by collection agents appointed by copyright owners under Section 30 of the Copyright Act 1957, as well as the holders of assignment deeds under Section 18 of the Act. These harassments include multiple parties claiming royalties for the same music or song, the filing of FIRs, civil suits, disruptions of functions and the demanding of payments for events that should be exempt from such fees. These actions not only inflict financial hardships but also tarnish the reputation of our member hotels and restaurants.

Considering the challenges faced by hoteliers, FHRAI would like to offer the following suggestions and views to address the major issues related to copyright societies: single-window system to be established as a centralised system for copyright licencing, simplifying the process and ensuring fair, transparent fee collection. Single equitable remuneration among copyright societies, guaranteeing proper payments to underlying work creators and preventing harassment. Respecting the Section 52 exemption for events such as weddings and ensuring no unnecessary licencing for related festivities. Sections 30 and 33 interplay to clarify that only registered copyright societies can issue licences to the public, preventing misuse of rights assignments. These reforms aim to protect both copyright owners and users in a streamlined and fair manner.

I would also like to inform you about a significant development regarding our

ongoing efforts to improve the regulatory environment for hospitality businesses in India.

We have recently reached out to **Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya**, the Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Chemicals and Fertilisers, Government of India, to address a long-standing concern related to the renewal of Food Business Operator licences for hotels and restaurants.

Our main request pertains to the perpetual licence for food businesses in India. Currently, hotels and restaurants are required to renew their Food Business Operator licences annually. However, the hospitality industry is burdened with approximately 70-80 licences, approvals and clearances from various authorities to operate. The varying renewal dates, frequencies and approval periods create a cumbersome compliance process for hospitality establishments.

In line with the government's focus on promoting the ease of doing business and fostering entrepreneurship, we have requested Dr. Mandaviya to consider issuing perpetual FSSAI licences to all hospitality establishments. Such a move would significantly simplify the regulatory requirements for our industry and align with the government's objectives.

We eagerly await Dr. Mandaviya's response and hope for his continued support and guidance in addressing this crucial issue that affects the ease of doing business for our members.

In conclusion, I genuinely trust that our recommendations will be thoughtfully reviewed, as they resonate with the betterment of the industry and highlight the ease of doing business. We eagerly anticipate collaborating to tackle these urgent concerns and establish a more efficient and equitable framework for our field.

With best regards,
Sudesh Poddar
President, FHRAI



Sudesh Poddar
President
FHRAI

“
In line with the government's focus on promoting ease of doing business & fostering entrepreneurship, we have requested Dr. Mandaviya to consider issuing perpetual FSSAI licences to all hospitality establishments
”



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Cover Credit: ITC NARMADA, AHMEDABAD



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Indian Travel Awards celebrates hospitality excellence

India Travel Awards North 2023 brought together top professionals from hospitality industry to honour the sector's outstanding leaders and achievements.



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Gen Z influencing hotel design aesthetics

In age of blended travel, hotels are taking cue from Gen Z travellers to reimagine their décor, emphasizing upon minimalism & sustainability.



Competing for culinary excellence

Specialty restaurants in hotels play pivotal role in enhancing dining experience by offering unique cuisine, inimitable ambiance and personalised service.



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High rates and occupancy

Hotel occupancy and rates remain strong, but industry experts anticipate a decline in rates following increase in investment in the market.

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THE FEDERATION OF HOTEL & RESTAURANT ASSOCIATIONS OF INDIA

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FHRAI Magazine is printed, published and edited by Devika Jeet on behalf of the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Association of India and published by DDP Publications Pvt. Ltd. 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110 001 and printed at Modest Print Pack Pvt. Ltd., Okhla Industrial Area, New Delhi - 110020

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Simplify hotel classification process

HRAEI expresses displeasure with HRACC inspection process due to new Nidhi portal, providing information about classification checks at advanced stage.

Members of the Hotel & Restaurant Association of Eastern India have taken serious umbrage pertaining to the HRACC inspection process. As per the requirements of the hotel classification process, representatives of travel and hospitality trade associations, as part of the HRACC team, take part in the physical inspection process for the classification of hotels. In the past, the trade associations used to receive information about classification inspections well in advance, which enabled them to assign a suitable representative with the requisite expertise and experience in the domain. However, ever since the new Nidhi portal has been made operational, information about inspection visits usually comes at a very advanced stage, due to which the associations have very little time to appoint an expert member for the HRACC committee for clas-



Sudesh Poddar
President,
FHRAI & HRAEI

sification. The last-minute information makes it extremely difficult to arrange for a member to attend the classification visit. It gets even tougher to arrange for a representative to attend the inspection visit in remote areas due to scheduling and travel constraints.

The members support FHRAI's appeal to **V Vidyavathi**, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, regarding the serious lapse in the

The last-minute information makes it extremely difficult to arrange for a member to attend the classification visit

HRACC inspection process being coordinated through the Nidhi portal. The members discussed the issue, seeking suitable changes or amendments in the process to ensure that information about classification inspection is shared with the stakeholders 15-20 days in advance. This would enable members to appoint suitable representatives to facilitate the inspection visit. □



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Establish single centralised society for copyright licencing

Federation expresses concerns about hassle faced by hospitality industry from copyright collection agents, highlighting issues like multiple royalty claims.

FHRAI has written to **Himani Pande**, Joint Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India saying, “hospitality industry in the country is facing constant harassment from collection agents appointed by copyright owners under Section 30

Hotels and restaurants are compelled to pay royalty over and above what they are paying under Section 38A of the Act

of the Copyright Act, 1957 and assignment deed holders under Section 18”.

FHRAI said in the letter to Pande, “We wish to highlight that the hospitality industry in the country is undergoing constant harassment by the collection agents appointed by copyright owners under Section 30 of the Act and

the so-called holders of the assignment deeds under Section 18 of the Act. These harassments include making of claims for royalty by multiple parties for use of the same music or song, filing of FIRs, filing of civil suits, entering and disrupting functions being held in their premises, claiming of payments for events which are exempt and generally causing loss of reputation of the member hotels and restaurants. Major issues or grievances, faced by the industry are:

To eliminate chaos & anomalies in ecosystem, there should be single window for obtaining the licence & any other clearances

- Multiple agencies claiming royalty for the same class of work and multiple agencies representing different class of works, demanding royalty for the same event or use.
- Hotels and restaurants are compelled to pay royalty over and above what they are paying under Section 38A of the Act.
- Non-copyright society in the business of issuing copyright licences.
- Denial to accept the sanctity of Section 52 (1) (za) and absence of exhaustive list of events where the exemptions will apply.
- Disputes with regard to ownership rights.
- Exorbitant fee being charged by the copyright societies or agencies.
- Fees or royalties are demanded from hotels and restaurants even when they are not the end users of copyright.
- Lack of enforcement mechanism or rules to implement the 2012 amendments to the Copyright Act and absence of regulatory mechanism against abuse of law.
- Agencies and Societies Cinematographic Performance Licence demands charges from hotel members.

The letter further said, “We would like to enumerate our views and suggestions on the major issues related to Copyright Societies as the following:

Single Window System of Copyright Licensing

To eliminate the chaos and anomalies in the ecosystem, there should be a single window for obtaining the licence and any other clearances at a fixed and reasonable cost. The said single centralized society should be the sole body for collecting licence fees and no one else should be permitted to collect licence fee for the same category of works relying either on Section 30 of the Act or otherwise. There should be a transparent system for paying money/royalties/

controlled by the Government of India while safeguarding the rights of the relevant stakeholders.

Issue of exemption under Section 52 of the Copyright Act, 1957

A further explanation may be added to Section 52(1) (za) which is as follows: “for the purposes of this clause other social festivities associated with marriage shall mean and include various functions related to marriage namely roka ceremony, sangeet, reception, ring ceremony, among others and all other festivities associated with the marriage and the same shall not be restricted to religious ceremony. Similarly, all religious functions will include all functions related to the religious event”.



licence fees to copyright owners and the owners of underlying works like lyrics and music should also be brought into force.

Single Equitable Remuneration

As contemplated by Section 33(3) of the Act, there should be a single copyright society for a particular class of work, which could be a government-controlled body with transparent and clear scheme for distribution of the revenue. The centralized structure of the registered copyright society shall be directly

An interplay between Section 30 & Section 33

An explanation should be added to Section 30 saying: “An assignment under Section 30 may not be the basis for carrying out the business of issuing or granting of licenses governed by Section 33” or in the alternative “Section 30 be made subject to Section 33”.

Thus, adding an explanation below Section 30 and Section 33 will prevent the foul play and ensure that the rights of the owner and the user are protected.” □

Grant perpetual food business licences, urges FHRAI

Federation requests a perpetual licence for food businesses in India to simplify compliance and reduce the burden of annual renewals and multiple approvals.

FHRAI has written to **Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya**, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Chemicals and Fertilizers, Government of India requesting a perpetual licence for food businesses in the country.

In the letter written to Mandaviya, FHRAI said, “We would like to congratulate you and the entire FSSAI team for successfully organizing the Global Food Regulators Summit 2023. We would also like to extend our accolades to FSSAI for the pathbreaking initiative that has garnered global acclaim for its potential to transform and strengthen the world’s food safety systems and paving the way for a more robust food safety and regulatory ecosystem.”

The letter further said, “FHRAI would like to draw your attention to one of our long-pending requests about a perpetual licence for food businesses in the country. As you are aware, hotels and restaurants need to obtain a ‘Food Business Operator’ licence, which needs to be renewed every year. Around

70-80 licences, approvals and clearances from different authorities are required to run a hospitality business in our country. Due to different dates, frequencies and periods for such renewals and approvals, it becomes very cumbersome for the hospitality establishment to manage these compliances. The focus of the current government is to facilitate

“Perpetual licence would enable hospitality establishments to comply with one of most important regulatory requirements in a hassle-free manner

Ease of Doing Business to promote the enterprising spirit of the country. Hence, FHRAI would like to request you to kindly take a favourable decision on issuing a perpetual FSSAI licence to all hospitality establishments. This would enable the hospitality establishments to comply with one of the most important regulatory requirements in a hassle-free manner.” □

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Addressing the decline in hospitality enrollment

In response to the decrease in student enrollment, HRAWI forms a specialized task force with industry leaders, academic experts and hospitality veterans.

The post-COVID era has unveiled the vulnerabilities of the hospitality industry, prompting both students and professionals to explore alternative career avenues. Notably, enrollment in hospitality courses has witnessed a significant decline between 2019 and 2022. To address this, the HRAWI has taken proactive measures by instituting a dedicated taskforce consisting of academic experts to address the shortage in talent, manpower and the decreasing enrollment of students in hospitality programmes.

The taskforce comprises hospitality stalwarts, including heads of educational institutes of various IHMs, owners of hospitality establishments, industry veterans and members of the HRAWI.



Pradeep Shetty
President,
HRAWI

Arun Kumar Singh, Principal, FIHM; **Irfan Mirza**, Principal, V M Salgaonkar Institute of International Hospitality Education; **Pallavi Chaudhari**, Director, D Y Patil School of Hospitality & Tourism

Studies; **Dr Rohan Soni**, Principal, Amro College of Hotel Management; **Dr Jagat K Mangaraj**, Principal, IHM Ahmedabad; **Pradeep Shetty**, President, HRAWI; **Jimmy Shaw**, Honorary Secretary, HRAWI; **Vishal Kapoor**, GM,

“We must focus on developing & nurturing talent, providing them with the right tools & training to excel in their roles

Radisson Blu Mumbai; **Kamlesh Barot**, ex-officio Member, HRAWI and **Sandeep Talaulicar**, Executive Committee Member, HRAWI presently form the core team of the special task force.



essential skills such as communication, active listening, handling billing software, team management and understanding service offerings.

Data reveals significant skill gaps in Indian hospitality sector, particularly in hotel management and food production

Talaular underscored the urgency of addressing the scarcity of skilled professionals in pivotal sectors of the hospitality industry. He emphasised the endeavour to connect accomplished chefs with students to impart expertise, thereby bridging the gap between industry professionals and educational institutions. This collaboration aims to equip students with the aptitudes and experience necessary to excel in the hospitality sector. While mid-level positions exhibit a more balanced supply and demand, both upper and lower-level positions grapple with acute talent shortages. Managerial roles are similarly affected, necessitating assistant managers and senior supervisors to fill the void.

According to industry experts, the talent shortage is particularly evident in specific roles and positions. Good chefs and Food & Beverage Managers are in high demand but are challenging to find. Front office and housekeeping roles are also

struggling to attract qualified individuals. Recognising the need to address this issue, HRAWI is actively seeking experienced chefs to join their team and contribute to the education and training of aspiring hospitality professionals. HRAWI will also publish a white paper to identify and assess the several aspects of education in hospitality today and offer solutions to improve the quality and effectiveness of curriculums. The Association also hopes the uptick in revenues post-COVID will help in this endeavour.

Emphasising the need for fresh perspectives, innovative ideas and a diverse skillset to propel the industry forward, Pradeep Shetty remarked, “We require fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and a diverse range of skill sets to propel the industry forward. Our primary emphasis must be on the development and nurturing of talent, ensuring they have access to necessary resources and comprehensive training to excel in their respective roles. The hospitality industry is one of the most dynamic and exciting sectors to work in and we need to convey this message to the younger generation. The special task force of academic thinktanks will try to bridge the shortfall in talent and manpower and the declining enrollment of students in hospitality courses. We believe that by focusing on attracting, nurturing and retaining talent, the hospitality industry can overcome its current challenges and flourish in the years to come.” □

Pradeep Shetty, President, HRAWI, highlighted the initiative’s objectives, stating, “As new opportunities continue to open up, the industry is also realising the need to attract new talent. To address this, HRAWI has created a special taskforce with three key objectives in mind. These include devising a scheme or strategy for making a career in hospitality attractive to students. To revisit the present-day hospitality education system and curriculum by involving academicians and industry as part of a consultation exercise to make suitable recommendations to the Ministry of Tourism. To take measures to help members tide over the talent shortfall with proper training tools, including informational videos, infographics and data-driven analysis and support, among other literature.”

The data reveals significant skill gaps in the Indian hospitality sector, particularly in hotel management and food production. Practical knowledge deficiencies (33 per cent) and outdated courses (24 per cent) are prevalent in the food production discipline. Similarly, management staff also faces challenges due to a lack of practical knowledge (43 per cent) and outdated courses (29 per cent). Front office managers, assistants, bell captains, bell boys and travel desk personnel lack





Heritage status elevates Durga Puja festival

UNESCO adds Durga Puja festival to its Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list, boosting tourism & hospitality industries in West Bengal, highlights HRAEI.

December 2022 was a proud moment for Kolkata and India as UNESCO added the Durga Puja festival to its prestigious list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (ICH). Commendations and praises poured in from all sectors internationally as well as from various parts of India for the acclaimed credit and pride.

The heritage status gives a big boost to the tourism and hospitality industries in the state of West Bengal and simultaneously in the country, a moment of pride for the Indians.

UNESCO has beautifully illustrated the five-day long festival as being traditional and promoting the talents and skills of artists and designers. The organization elaborated on Durga Puja as being a heritage for art and religion combined. The message conveyed by them is phenomenal in spreading the rich cultural heritage of the country internationally.



Sudesh Poddar
President,
FHRAI & HRAEI

The history, culture and art of West Bengal are old and rich. Tourists all around the world are enticed by the heritage and traditions prevailing in this country. It is definitely a great opportunity for the tourism sector in India to flourish and prosper.

Sudesh Poddar, President, FHRAI & HRAEI, said, "The UNESCO heritage tag for the Durga Puja has increased

the value and significance of India in the international arena. People from different parts of the world recognise and appreciate the cultural values that bind the people of the country."

UNESCO heritage tag for Durga Puja has increased the value & significance of India in the international arena

He elaborated on how hotels in Kolkata and throughout eastern India gear up to attract guests during the auspicious festival. Especially some of the star hotels set up puja pandals and follow all the rituals to offer their guests the authentic feeling of the Puja. They also organize trips to selected pandals to help guests witness the intangible cultural heritage in its full glory. This includes unique vegetarian and non-vegetarian cuisine served in authentic style to discerning guests. □

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President meets Karnataka Tourism officials

K Syama Raju, President, SIHRA meets **HL Patil**, Minister for Law & Parliamentary Aff., Legislation & Tour., Govt. of K'taka and **PK Pandey**, Secy., Tourism, Govt. of K'taka to discuss hotel issues.



India's wedding tourism takes a leap

Ministry of Tourism launches wedding tourism campaign with 360-degree approach to attract couples from around the world to celebrate their weddings in India.



Hazel Jain

G Kishan Reddy, Union Minister for Culture, Tourism and DoNER, recently launched the wedding tourism campaign, which seeks to expand India's wedding industry, by luring couples from around the world to celebrate their special day in India.

At the launch of the campaign, Reddy said, "Today marks the beginning of a remarkable journey. A mission to position India as the epitome of wedding destinations worldwide. Our 360-degree approach will ensure that every moment, from the

first 'hello' to the final 'I do,' is a testament to India's warm embrace and rich heritage."

Under the campaign, MoT has profiled about 25 key destinations across the country, exploring how India fits into their wedding aspirations in more than one way. The campaign boasts of a collaborative approach, developed in close consultation with industry experts, associations and seasoned wedding planners.

The campaign highlights a 360-degree approach, which will leverage the power of digital marketing, social media campaigns, strategic partnerships with wedding plan-

MoT has profiled about 25 key destinations across the country, exploring how India fits into their wedding aspirations in more than one way

ners, collaborations with domestic and international influencers, and a host of offline and online activations. Its thematic focus encompasses wedding themes, such as Beach Wedding, Nature Wedding, Royal Wedding, Himalayan Wedding and beyond, allowing couples to craft their dream celebration in the embrace of India's charm. ❑



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Arjun Awasthy, Vice President
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INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MILLETS 2023

Dry Fruit Cake



Ingredients

Ragi flour	100 gms
Butter/Margarine	100 gms
Eggs	3 nos
Baking powder	¼ teaspoon
Breakfast sugar	100 gms
Vanilla essence	5 ml
Dry fruits	60 gms

Procedure

1. Cream fat and sugar till light and fluffy.
2. Whip eggs till fluffy, gradually add eggs to the creamed butter and sugar, sieve Ragi flour with baking powder and mix dry fruits and mix it to egg and flour batter.
3. After the complete egg is over, fold the flour gently, add essence and check the dropping consistency with milk.
4. Grease and dust the tins, put the batter in the tin, tap gently and level it up.
5. Bake in a preheated oven at 180°C for 30 to 35 minutes.

Ragi Ladoo/Nachni Ladoo



Ingredients

Ragi flour	100 gms
Peanuts	20 gms
Ghee	40 gms
Coconut	30 gms
Almonds/sesame	10 gms
Jaggery/palm sugar	40 gms
Cardamom	2-3 nos

Procedure

1. Fry 1 cup Ragi flour in 2 tbsp ghee till it turns aromatic or get a nice colour with fragrance. Dry roast peanuts until aromatic. Lightly roast dried coconut and almonds or sesame seeds. Cool them. Grate jaggery and set aside. Either use palm sugar or use jaggery.
2. Powder together peanuts, sesame seeds, coconut and cardamoms.
3. Mix all the ingredients and add them to a grinder jar. Grind it until you begin to see the oil oozing out. The oil from peanuts, sesame and coconut begins to ooze out.
4. Take small portions of this mix and roll them to Nachni Ladoo. Finish rolling while the mix is warm. If needed add the left-over ghee and make the ladoo.
5. Serve at room temperature, or store it in a freeze for more days to enjoy after meal.

Recipes Credits:

Rohit Singla

Teaching Associate, FHRAI IHM

Aman Kumar

Teaching Associate, FHRAI IHM



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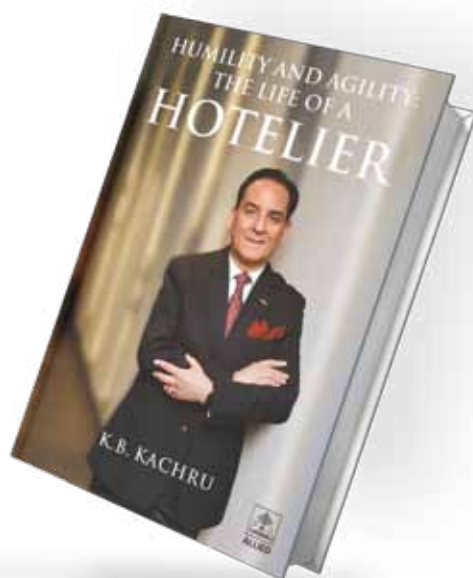
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Navigating hospitality's path

Hospitality veteran **K B Kachru** shares his remarkable journey and leadership principles in his debut book *Humility and Agility: The Life of a Hotelier*.



Janice Alyosius

In the industry of hospitality, where memories are created and experiences are produced, **K B Kachru** is a symbol of leadership and tenacity. Kachru, Chairman Emeritus & Principal Advisor, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group, has had a brilliant career spanning decades. He just published a compelling book that not only details his extraordinary journey but also offers priceless insights into the hospitality industry. His debut

book, titled *Humility and Agility: The Life of a Hotelier*, reflects Kachru's remarkable career, and is a testament

Both domestic & international chains are thriving, underscoring their serious commitment to Indian market.

to the principles of humility and agility that have served as his compass, and is

a storehouse of knowledge that extends beyond the sector.

Regarded as a revered figure in the hospitality industry, Kachru introduces a diverse spectrum of behaviours that hold the potential to be imbibed and embraced by leaders across various spheres. His inspiring moments and personal anecdotes are woven seamlessly into key leadership lessons, providing readers with practical insights they can apply to their own professional and personal lives. A heart-



felt expression of love and dedication towards his career, the book delves into the pivotal role played by the people Kachru encountered throughout his journey.

Explaining the driving force behind penning this book, Kachru articulated, “As I navigated through different chapters of my life, I recognised the importance of documenting certain events that held valuable lessons for future generations. Learning is a journey, and my intention was simply to share these insights.”

Within the confines of his book, Kachru’s objective was to kindle a flame of inspiration within the hospitality sector. “Many of my colleagues are writing good things about their experiences. I think it will do very well. As leaders of the industry, we all should contribute and share our experiences with others, which will help everybody. You may relate to it now or later, but it will help everybody at some stage of life,” he said.

When it comes to encouraging the hospitality industry, one of the primary factors driving or impacting the industry are the G20 events. Emphasising the impact of G20 events on the hos-



K B Kachru

Chairman Emeritus &
Principal Advisor, South
Asia, Radisson Hotel Group

pitality industry, Kachru said, “G20 events are helping us to position the country better. Travellers are now moving to lesser-known destinations and understanding what India has to offer. These meetings have strategically showcased lesser-known destinations in India, placing the country on a broader tourism map. So, I think this will help our industry in a big way.”

Beyond individual brands, sustainability has become a collective commitment within the hospitality sector. Kachru highlighted the fact that sustainability is of key importance in the tourism and hospitality industries. “It is very important not only for Radisson

but for the entire hotel industry. They have recognised that we must do something for Mother Earth, and everybody is contributing, whether it is in terms of using renewable energy or saying no to single-use plastic. Each brand and hotel are contributing towards it,” he shared.

Highlighting the potential of India, Kachru said, “India presents a dynamic marketplace, and our industry’s resurgence post-COVID is a source of immense pride. The pace of growth will be influenced by market dynamics, and as inventory increases, it will

Kachru highlighted the fact that sustainability is of key importance in the tourism and hospitality industries

introduce a stabilising element. We are equipped for this progression, but our aspiration remains to enhance room availability and inventory. Investment is flowing, and progress is evident. The opportunity for expansion is open to all. Both domestic and international chains are thriving, underscoring their serious commitment to the Indian market. Our collective expansion is in motion.” □



Networking platform boosts business collaboration

Marriott Marketplace begins its three-city tour bringing together senior management from Marriott International & C-Suite executives from top corporations.



Lipla Negi

While COVID forced every business to work virtually, the significance of in-person meetings and conversations remains unparalleled. Agrees **Arun Kumar**, Market Vice President, North India, Nepal and Bhutan, Marriott International, “Human nature is such that we want to meet. Now people are travelling for business because what you can achieve in person probably becomes less efficient when you try to do it over a phone call or in online meetings. Here at Marriott Marketplace, we want to make people feel that we are present.” He further added that while things will continue to grow virtually, physical events will always bring more productive results. He further added that domestic demand will continue to surge, bringing growth and development to lesser-known destinations. “We are trying to talk to developers



Arun Kumar

Market Vice President,
North India, Nepal & Bhutan,
Marriott International

in the secondary markets to see what the potential in those markets is. Expansion will happen in these markets where no brand has a presence. We will open some smaller hotels in cities such as Varanasi, Ayodhya, Ujjain, Kanpur and Gwalior,” he revealed. The brand has plans to open 15 hotels in India by the end of this year.”

In its ninth year, Marriott Marketplace is known as a unique networking platform that helps foster collaboration, innovation and growth within India’s business landscape. “This year we have 80 hotels showcasing their products to corporates and tour operators,” he explained.

While things will continue to grow virtually, physical events will always bring more productive results. Domestic demand will continue to surge

This multi-city event started its tour in Delhi at the JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity and will also be taking place at the Marriott Whitefield, Bengaluru on 7 September followed by an event in Mumbai at The St. Regis, Mumbai on 14 September. □



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RHG's growth strategy

Tapping India's dormant markets

RHG aims to solidify its presence by expanding its portfolio and targeting untapped Tier II, III, IV & V cities.



Janice Alyosius

Zubin Saxena, Managing Director and Senior Area Vice President, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group (RHG), claims that India's hospitality industry is about to embark on a transformational journey that will last for the next 25 years. Within next 5-7 years, Saxena predicts that India will emerge as the third-largest economy in the world, setting the stage for it to become a major player in the travel and hospitality sector.

Highlighting RHG's ambitious plans to solidify its presence further, Saxena shared, "We currently have a portfolio of 170 hotels operating and under development, and we plan to develop the portfolio further in the next 3-5 years. We are opening 10-12 hotels every year, which is part of our active strategy to target Tier II, III, IV and V cities within the Indian market. The strategic move is to tap the potential these cities have to offer, and



Zubin Saxena

MD and Senior Area Vice President, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group

that is where we see the Indian domestic story really shining. Radisson is positioning itself to penetrate and thrive in these untapped markets."

Radisson's commitment to sustainability extends from guestrooms to operations at their properties. "We are investing deeply in terms of energy efficiency, right

from temperature control, air conditioning in our hotel rooms, to producing power by using solar panels and so on. We are ensuring that our hotels are at the forefront of this cause," he further added.

India's hospitality industry is about to embark on a transformational journey that will last for the next 25 years

Adding that the dynamics of hotel room pricing are a complex interplay between supply and demand, Saxena, believed, "We are at a point where demand for hotel rooms is very strong and the supply is stable to an extent, which is pushing the average rates up. Also, our industry has started focussing on price value proposition for the customers. In addition to this, the average rates are bound to grow and remain this way for the next 12-18 months." □

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Luxury & sustainability coexist in *style*

Nestin Ventures is reshaping India's hotel sector with luxury and sustainability, creating a premium market for eco-friendly products that improve daily life.

By fusing luxury with sustainability, Nestin Ventures establishes itself as a trendsetter in India's retail and hotel industries. Their goal is to create a premium market for goods that ooze luxury while preserving moral principles. Nestin Ventures wants to be the go-to source for luxurious, environmentally friendly items that improve daily activities and way of life.

Nestlux's bed and bath linen collection transforms living environments by fusing functionality, sustainability, and elegance

Duni

The Duni Collection, a shining example of ethical excellence, sits at the centre of Nestin Ventures' endeavour. Duni's Blue Mission serves as the foundation for their CSR, ensuring that innovation, quality and environmental awareness are harmoniously intertwined. For many years, Duni Group has worked to take the lead in the manufacture of disposable goods that are ecologically friendly. Products that offer the highest level of usefulness and long-term options for composting, recycling, or reusing.

Additionally, Duni Premium Napkins are efficient. Their collections improve convenience and hygiene by providing a stunning colour palette. This results in time savings and happy customers, which is a proven formula for company success. A new age, marked by luxury and morality, is

ushered in by Duni. The path to sophistication, accountability and genius has started.


Nestlux

Nestlux's top-quality bed and bath linen will enhance the appearance of your house. The collection transforms living environments by fusing functionality, sustainability, and elegance. The vast catalogue offers everything from stylish bed linens to warm duvets to suit individual tastes. The skilled team provides informed advice and is dedicated to customer satisfaction, boosting client experiences, enhancing lives via attractive, sustainable spaces, raising awareness of sustainable living principles.

La vita

Finally, La vita urges you to create

delight via fine tableware by revolutionising eating occasions with immaculate stainless-steel cutlery and table accessories. They provide timeless elegance for prestigious hotels, restaurants, and houses because they know how important first impressions are. With a love for providing excellent dining experiences, La vita has expanded its network to include distributors, consultants, and worldwide exports.

Nestin Ventures shines as a light of innovation, elegance and social responsibility in the vast tapestry of India's hotel and retail industries. Their journey serves as an example of how luxury and sustainability may coexist together, paving the way for a more promising and responsible future for the sector. 



Transforming hospitality with digital marketing

Avi Arya, Chief Mogul, Internet Moguls, is dedicated to ensuring that every hotel brand establishes its unique niche in the digital landscape.



Avi Arya, Chief Mogul, Internet Moguls, says that he started the digital marketing agency after he could not find an online agency that understood hospitality well. Initially, he started digital marketing for Ajanta, his own hotel in Delhi, and Tamarind, his another property in Goa.

He says that digital marketing changed the way hotels used to do business. "Nowadays, people find digital marketing a better investment than gold," he claimed. "Earlier people didn't know how to calculate their Return on Investment (ROI) when they put money into digital marketing. However, today we don't have sufficient staff



Avi Arya
Chief Mogul,
Internet Moguls

to give our clients, we have at least a month waiting to onboard a client," he added. Now, Internet Moguls is handling marketing for a number of hotel brands and makes sure that

Internet Moguls is handling marketing for a number of hotel brands and makes sure that every brand retains its USP

every brand retains its USP. "When we start working with a brand, we have at least two weeks of onboarding, understanding previous mistakes. Hotels basically have four revenue centres — rooms, F&B, spa and banquets. We see where they stand and who is the competition. After that we give an X-ray of the issues affecting their business. Hotels generally don't like when they are made to stand in front of the mirror, but it is our job to show them the real picture and that is where the journey starts," he said. □



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India Travel Awards celebrates hospitality excellence

India Travel Awards North 2023 brought together top professionals from hospitality industry to honour the sector's outstanding leaders and achievers.

The India Travel Awards North 2023, hosted at the Hyatt Regency Delhi on 25 July, marked an extraordinary success, bringing together the foremost professionals from the hospitality sector to honour outstanding leaders and achievers.

SanJeet, Founder, DDP Group, conveyed his joy, affirming, "Tonight's award recipients embody the spirit of excellence, creativity and resilience. They have elevated India's status as a global tourism destination and showcased the true essence of Indian hospitality. From creating unforgettable experiences for travellers to empowering the workforce, these trailblazers have left no stone unturned in their pursuit of excellence."

The award selection kicked off with an online nomination phase that garnered enthusiastic engagement from various segments. The nomination form prompted participants to reflect on their unique attributes, leading to over 203 distinct nomination categories, showcasing the vibrant and ever-changing landscape of the Indian tourism sector.

Voting was conducted with the utmost care to ensure transparency and avoid any duplication, giving rise to a fair and unbiased selection process. After the completion of online voting, a distinguished jury, diligently assessed and chose the most deserving individuals and organizations as award winners.


The event commenced with a keynote address by the Chief Guest, **V K Duggal**, former Governor of Manipur and Mizoram. He urged the hospitality industry to focus on providing competitive pricing, seamless travel experiences and sustainable practices to attract and retain international tourists, further elevating India's

position as a preferred global destination. The India Travel Awards North 2023 recognised several accomplished names in the industry, including the following noteworthy honorees: Gallery of Legends inductee: **Ashwani Lohani**, former Chairman of the Railway Board and former CMD, Air India; DDP Trailblazer for 2023: **Rajiv Mehra**, President, Indian Association of Tour Operators; Wedding Tourism Ambassador 2023: **Rajeev Jain**, Founder and Director, Rashi Entertainment; DDP Game Changer for 2023: **Rikant Pittie**, Co-Founder, EaseMyTrip and Face of the Future: **Isha Goyal**, Executive Director & CEO, STIC Travel Group.

V K Duggal, Chief Guest, urged industry to focus on providing competitive pricing, seamless travel experiences & sustainable practices

These exceptional leaders were celebrated for their dedication, innovation and outstanding contributions, which have played pivotal roles in shaping the Indian hospitality landscape.

The ceremony also showcased exceptional achievements across various categories, including Best Hotel Chain and more. This provided a glimpse into the talent and dedication within the Indian hospitality industry, reflecting the vibrant spirit of Indian hospitality.

The India Travel Awards North 2023 went beyond just being a simple event; it served as a grand celebration that honoured the outstanding efforts of individuals and organizations within the hospitality industry. This event not only recognised their achievements but also served as an inspirational platform, motivating others to emulate their accomplishments and thereby making a significant contribution. 



Hyatt Regency Delhi

Honouring strong leadership

The India Travel Awards North 2023 highlighted remarkable contributions of individuals and organizations in the hospitality sector, inspiring others to excel.







Bringing back the numbers

Efforts are underway to revive student enrollment in hospitality courses following COVID impact, reckon heads of premier hospitality institutes.

 **Sara Haque**

In recent years, COVID has had a widespread impact on industries across the globe, including India's education and hospitality sectors. The Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) experienced a significant challenge, with approximately 60 per cent of its seats remaining vacant, posing a crisis for the hospitality sector. Consequently, extensive efforts have been undertaken to revive student enrollment in IHM courses. Additionally, the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) has introduced a more comprehensive approach to hospitality courses, aiming to enhance the preparedness and qualifications of graduates for specialised roles within the hospitality sector.

Holistic curriculum

The numbers are already looking promising for the leading IHMs in the country. IHM Mumbai, for the academic year 2023-24, boasts an enrollment percentage



A K Singh
Director, FHRAI Institute of
Hospitality Management

of 99 per cent. Similarly, IHM Hyderabad has achieved an enrollment percentage of 93 per cent. **A K Singh, Director**, FHRAI Institute of Hospitality Management, mentioned, "FHRAI-IHM offers scholarships to meritorious, economically disadvantaged students, single girl children, and dependents of defence personnel to support them financially in pursuing B.Sc in Hospitality & Hotel Administration."

Students and parents are gradually regaining interest in hospitality courses and their incentives, particularly following the rapid implementation of NEP 2020 in IHM courses.

FHRAI-IHM offers scholarships to economically disadvantaged students and single girl children, among others.

Starting from the academic year 2023-24, hospitality courses in IHMs have introduced electives such as Employability Skills and Customer Relationship Management in the first semester. **Sanjay Thakur**, Principal, IHM Hyderabad, explained, "Employability skills will contribute to their overall career advancement, especially in the dynamic and customer-focused hospitality industry. Customer Relationship Management will

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prepare students for the industry, equipping them with the knowledge and skills required to provide exceptional guest service.” He also added, “Similarly, subjects related to finance and technology will be included as electives in subsequent semesters, providing in-depth information about those fields and their relevance to the hospitality sector.”



Sanjay Thakur
Principal,
IHM Hyderabad

Employability skills will contribute to their overall career growth, especially in customer-focused hospitality industry

MoU with JNU

The National Council for Hotel Management and Technology (NCHMCT) entered into an MoU with Jawaharlal Nehru University in February 2023 to recognise degrees offered by

IHMs. Previously, the partnership was with Indira Gandhi National Open University, which posed challenges for students seeking various positions in the industry.

“The collaboration with JNU holds great promise for transforming hospitality education and training. By acknowledging degrees conferred by IHMs, this partnership enhances the credibility and prestige of hospitality qualifications on a global scale. This shift elevates IHM degrees by granting NCHMCT enhanced academic autonomy to design their curriculum in alignment with industry standards, potentially enhancing graduates’ employability and competitive edge. Beyond these immediate benefits, the collaboration also opens up avenues for interdisciplinary initiatives, research collaborations, and holistic education between IHMs under NCHMCT and JNU,” explained **Sitesh Srivastav**, Principal, IHM Chandigarh.

Training & placements

The current scenario for placements in the hospitality sector may not appear very promising, but there are rapid developments underway. Factors such as poor working conditions and inadequate remuneration have led students to explore other industries like retail or real estate. On the flipside, the industry expects graduates to be more job-ready.

Kamal Kant Pant, Principal, IHM Pusa, elaborated, “Both academia and industry need to play their part. While

academia should enhance industry connections and groom job-ready talent, the industry needs to revamp its human resource policies and offer competitive compensation to attract and retain talent. To provide better job prospects for graduates, we should limit the number of students in undergraduate and PG programmes by implementing rigorous selection processes for IHM admissions. Those with the right aptitude and attitude should be groomed for management positions. This should also be implemented during the course through stringent passing criteria, allowing weaker students to exit through the multiple exit route outlined in the NEP 2020 and placing them in frontline positions within the industry.”



Sitesh Srivastav
Principal,
IHM Chandigarh

The collaboration with JNU holds great promise for transforming hospitality education and training

This holistic approach to the syllabus, along with the development of better incentives for hospitality graduates, would lead to further progress for the industry.

“Hoteliers must also spend time and interact with budding hoteliers to motivate them. Working conditions in the hotel should also be made more lucrative and project bright future prospects,” pointed out **Nisheeth Srivastava**, Principal, IHM Bombay.

In a post-COVID world, where the hospitality industry is making leaps and bounds in terms of innovation and services, the most important task at hand seems to be reinstating a strong interest among the youth in this profession. □

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Gen Z influencing hotel design aesthetics

In age of blended travel, hotels are taking cue from Gen Z travellers to reimagine their décor, emphasizing upon minimalism & sustainability.



Lipla Negi

COVID transformed the hospitality industry, including the shades of the walls and material of the bedsheets! Eyeing to win over the growing population of millennial and Gen Z travellers, hotels are rethinking their décor to include more local and sustainable elements. So today, when you walk into a hotel, you will notice the lobby filled with more plants, insta-perfect backdrops and chic corners where local culture thrives.

Shift in expectations

The desire to travel for Gen Z is not driven by opulence or state-of-the-art architecture. Instead, they are more focussed on the experience, sustainability and exploring the local culture. Agrees **Rubin Cherian**, General Manager, Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre and Hyderabad International Convention Centre, “Gen Z values authenticity and seeks out experiences that are unique and memorable. They travel across the globe and have a sense of financial confidence

when it comes to travel. Their digital connectivity has intensified their desire to be a trendsetter.”

However, their design sensibilities are not just limited to sleek and sophisticated décor. Minimalism is one of the elements they constantly seek. A clean finish accentuated by bright colours, along with enough charging points and a work desk, basically sums up their expectations from a hotel room for every budget. Wellness is another factor that they are highly



concerned about. As fitness becomes a habit, they want smart gyms and yoga mats to burn it out even when they are away from home for a business or leisure trip.

Blending it big

Blended travel is finding big favour among 'digital nomads', which primarily includes Gen Z and millennial travellers who like to travel more than the previous generation. "We design hotel spaces that can easily adapt to different needs such as convertible furniture, multifunctional rooms and flexible layouts. This allows guests to customise their experience based on their preferences and activities. At the same time, Generation Z travellers value unique and personalised experiences. We focus on creating spaces that reflect the local culture, history and aesthetics of the destination. Incorporating local artwork, materials and design elements can help create an authentic and memorable experience," explained **Vidya Prakash**, Vice President, Projects, ITC Hotels.

As workation is tweaking the traditional definition of vacation, hotels are trying to keep up with the needs of blei-



Rubin Cherian
GM,
NHCC & HICC



Ashish Vohra
Founder & CEO,
jüSTa Hotels & Resorts

Gen Z value authenticity and seek out experiences that are unique

sure travel. The Taj Mahal, New Delhi, which has recently undergone an extensive renovation, packs a punch for travellers coming to the capital city. "The hotel has introduced leading-edge air purification technology, a state-of-the-art fitness centre, a temperature-controlled swimming pool amidst lush green environs, and the J Wellness Circle, offering a holistic haven of time-honoured wellness rituals at the spa and luxurious salon experiences at Niu & Nau," shared **Satyajeet Krishnan**, Area Director, Operation and GM, Taj Mahal, New Delhi. It is basically

Instead of top up landscape gardens, hotels are going for forests with fruit trees to attract birds

or design—are coming up in a big way. The landscape is also changing. Instead of top up landscape, hotels are going for forests with fruit trees to attract birds," said **Ashish Vohra**, Founder and CEO, jüSTa Hotels & Resorts.

As young travellers are consciously trying to cut their carbon footprints, hotels are also trying to reduce the use of single-use plastic in rooms. "We are also the only hotel in the world that started offering water that is made from air (you heard



under one roof for those combining business with leisure, so that guests are able to make the most out of their stay.

Sustainability supersedes opulence

Sustainability and local elements are becoming the heart of hotel design as Gen Z travellers fuel demand for eco-friendly and sustainable hotels. "Local sensibilities—be it in material, fabric, architecture,

it right...from air) by partnering with a company called Aria, which imported this technology from Israel. This water is bottled and served in glass bottles, thereby not only saving groundwater levels, but also avoiding single-use plastic bottles," said Cherian. Clearly, the future of hotel décor is more technology-driven, with an emphasis on local elements, sustainability and minimalism. □



Experiential stays

curating memories, not just rooms

Is an experiential stay merely a catchphrase or a real thing?

Steve Borgia explores the true essence and components of experiential stays.

Experiential holidays fall under a very special category that will emerge into a niche segment that will perpetually grow. Beyond all that, it will also be very close to sustainability.

As we move into the next decade, I can only see people favouring experiential holidays, especially when it comes to families. Experiential stay is not only jargon; the impact of immersive holidays has been strong enough that numerous standalone





Destinations that provide experiential holidays will last for a long time. Our flagship hotel, INDeco Hotels Swamimalai in Tamil Nadu, is not only a pioneer but a classic example too. While we are experiential, we are innovative by the hour. Curated experiences by the hotel and natural wonders around the hotel, both in equal proportion, offer a great experiential stay for the guests.

The natural wonders add to the authenticity, but to go experiential, much of it must be positioned, innovated and offered by the hotel. For instance, you can offer a beautiful stretch pool inside a guestroom and sell it for

Natural wonders add to authenticity, but to go experiential, much of it must be positioned, innovated & offered by the hotel

a bomb to the guest. On the other hand, you can fix a pump set inside the room and sell it as an experience for a much higher price. People may prefer the latter because it is not only an experience but also unique and innovative. Nothing that they can experience elsewhere should be part of your offering.

There are some experiences that are common to both domestic and international travellers. But they can also be totally different when you experience in a hotel. It should not only be wow, but also unique and something special. A mundane day-to-day life for



Steve Borgia

Founder Chairman & MD,
INDeco Group of Hotels

a domestic guest will not make much of an impact when it comes to an international case. Therefore, it is extremely important to position it differently so that it makes a good impact.

The wow factor must be built; for instance, making a dosa can be an everyday routine for domestic guests. But for an international guest, it can be mind-blowing. Likewise, eating food on a

hotels offering experiential stays might have succumbed to the challenges of COVID and its aftermath.

When it comes to vacation hotels, we need to be experiential. It is far beyond the understanding of the industry. We have got to continuously innovate to be experiential, and at the same time, we should also be authentic. Its application is far and wide among different countries. Asian countries stand to gain a huge advantage in this sector, especially India.



In one of our hotels, guests have the unique opportunity to immerse themselves in local culture as they are taught how to ride a bullock cart, complete with comprehensive training to pass a riding test, ultimately earning them an official license to ride a bullock cart. And when it comes to experiences around the hotel, guests are taken to fish in the nearby village pond. The chef helps them cook their catch.

banana leaf can be an everyday ritual and therefore may not mean much as an experience. But for an international tourist, it can be a once in-a-lifetime experience.

In short, experiential hotels will sustain for a long time if creating experiences within the hotel is not namesake. They must be authentic and unique, and surely, they must add a wow factor. □

Evolving trends in hotel décor



In a post-COVID era, the hotel industry is reevaluating its approach to décor, preferring subtler designs over loud and flamboyant ones.



Charmaine Fernz

The hotel's décor is among the initial aspects that catch a guest's attention, and it can evoke both positive and negative impressions. This notion is reflected in a statement by Diane von Furstenberg, who remarked, "When you get into a hotel room, you lock the door, and you know there is secrecy, there is luxury, there is fantasy. There is comfort. There is reassurance." This statement effectively summarises the entire hotel guest experience. However, circumstances and trends evolve, particularly in the post-COVID era, prompting hospitality chains to reevaluate their interior design.



Nikhil Sharma
Market Managing Director,
Eurasia, Wyndham Hotels
& Resort

Gone are the days when everything Indian had to be loud and obvious. Subtlety

is the key to today's décor and style. The décor investment has been carefully considered. **Sonali Sharma** and **Jay Surolia**, Owners of Diona Jaipur explains from a hospitality point of view. "The décor budget could vary based on two major factors. First, if one would want to spend on good quality initially to avoid recurring maintenance costs, or second, if one would aim to cut costs in the beginning and rather

Investments in decor design and refurbishments vary, but we allocate resources to maintain quality and cater to evolving preferences



Nikhil Sharma, Market Managing Director, Eurasia, Wyndham Hotels & Resort is of the opinion that investments in decor design and refurbishments can widely vary based on individual hotels. “Nevertheless, we allocate substantial resources to maintain quality standards and cater to evolving guest preferences,” said Sharma.

An eye for design

A vacation, or even a business trip, is all about getting away from the monotony, or rush and bustle of everyday life. Every hotel represents something different to different people on different occasions, whether it is a vacation, a work trip, or a special occasion. Sharing a perspective on décor, Sharma and Surolia add that key elements comprise primarily three aspects: functionality, aesthetics and most importantly—the audience’s taste. Citing an example, in a city such as Delhi, one would want to focus more on contemporary vibes and themes, while in Jaipur, the focus is an amalgamation of heritage and modern work.



Kush Kapoor
CEO,
Roseate Hotels & Resorts

spend on changes within shorter periods of time. However, depending on the area and target audience, the average amount could range anywhere from ₹5 to 10 lakh or even up to a crore or more,” added Sharma and Surolia.

In reality, budgeting for décor can be a difficult undertaking. The target audience and location of a property may differ depending on its type. Nonetheless, aside from money, there are various other aspects to consider.

Kush Kapoor, CEO, Roseate Hotels & Resorts, puts it succinctly, “The design and décor philosophy at Roseate Hotels is all about being minimal, clean, and yet functional. We incorporate natural elements such as natural light, greenery, water elements and open spaces in our design. Our hotels are designed to give our guests a sense of space while being close to nature.”

“Minimalism works better in bigger cities, while secondary cities gravitate towards a bit of maximalism as they learn to adapt to a metro cities’ culture,” added Sharma and Surolia.

Making a strong point, Sharma explains that minimalism has emerged as the prevailing trend in the hospitality industry. This design philosophy revolves around retaining only essential amenities while eliminating superfluous elements. At its core, it caters to the contemporary consumer’s primary desires: a tranquil ambience, a carefully curated mood, and an intelligently designed spatial layout.

In the pursuit of minimalism, the focus is on making subtle yet impactful additions that elevate the overall aesthetics of the space.

Rajat Gera, Commercial Director, Six Senses Fort Barwara, who led the restoration and architecture project at Six Senses Fort Barwara, shares his view from a regional perspective. He says Six Senses Fort Barwara showcases a lot of character with its history and ancient tales. “There is a fascinating story behind the 10 years of restoration and conservation. Many local and conventional architectural techniques are combined with cutting-edge technology to create a unique aesthetic that combines local sensitivity and global sensibility,” Gera elaborated.

However, a group property has a different approach, says **Jaspreet Singh**, General Manager, Six Senses Vana. He points out that Six Senses Vana takes inspiration from surrounding nature and being in harmony. The property showcases pebbled pathways, unique architecture and striking aesthetics are based on contemporary shapes, natural and sustainable materials, including bamboo flooring and FSC certified wood, thoughtful lighting and a neutral colour palette. All these elements are incorporated to evoke a sense of comfort, harmony, and well-being. These values are artfully expressed at each turn.

We maximise use of natural materials such as wood & leather and ensure decor is simple, uncomplicated & minimalistic

Kapoor, too supports a sustainable approach. He added, “In continuation of our design language, we maximise the use of natural materials such as wood and leather and ensure decor is simple, uncomplicated and minimalistic using neutral colours and without the use of paintings, sculptures and chandeliers.”

What lies ahead

Décor is a very personal word for many people, and this is true even for hotels. The style and feel of a hotel are the next factor for any traveller looking for a decent offer. The way guests travel and stay, however, is



changing because of the new generation of travellers. As Sharma and Surolia explain, the next generation of travellers has a shorter attention span given the exposure to social media and content consumed in the last three to five years. “The focus of hospitality players should be on providing guests something new, improved and unique every six months. The trends are constantly changing, and we must evolve. Gone are the days where the same concept would work for 10 years straight on autopilot,” Sharma and Surolia asserted.

Kapoor is of a slightly different view, stating that the next generation of travellers is looking at open and multi-use spaces that give them freedom and flexibility. This is embodied in the co-working spaces offered at Roseate Hotels and cafes.

Sharma explains that when it comes to designing property decor, the paramount goal is to create a captivating and practical space that caters to guests’ needs. In this ever-evolving landscape of consumer preferences, one enduring factor remains constant: the allure of a spacious and tranquil environment. Achieving this invigorating sense of space involves a meticulous approach by seasoned designers who consider several key elements:



Rajat Gera
Commercial Director,
Six Senses Fort Barwara

- The selection of colours for the rooms plays a pivotal role in setting the desired mood and tone, enhancing the overall invitation of the space. Warm hues are renowned for their ability to create a welcoming and cosy atmosphere for guests.
- Furthermore, striking the right balance within the room is pivotal in elevating the ambience, rendering it spacious and aesthetically pleasing. A judicious use of furniture is imperative to avoid congestion, ensuring the room feels open and uncluttered.

“In recent years, a new generation of travellers has emerged, adapting to the

evolving concept of the new normal in innovative ways. This shift has given rise to several notable trends, including workations, staycations, and a heightened focus on wellness, all of which have significantly influenced interior design preferences. Today’s consumers seek spaces meticulously crafted to cater to their dual needs of productivity and relaxation. Furthermore, integrating cutting-edge technology has become pivotal to creating seamless and functional stays, enhancing the overall travel experience,” concluded Sharma and Surolia.

Local & conventional techniques blend with cutting-edge technology to create unique aesthetic, balancing local sensitivity & global sensibility

The new world is all about firsthand experiences and regional flavours. Today’s guests do not want to be restricted to the walls of a hotel room but rather to experience and immerse themselves in the local culture, savour new cuisines and bring back memories that last a lifetime. □

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Competing for culinary excellence

Specialty restaurants in hotels play pivotal role in enhancing dining experience by offering unique cuisine, inimitable ambiance and personalised service.



Ananya Kukreja

A great dining experience is provided by speciality restaurants, where diners may savour food prepared to absolute perfection by top chefs in a real kitchen. Experiences to treasure include the genuine setting and friendly, individualised service. In-house guests, international travellers, and a substantial number of local customers are all catered to by these hotels' restaurants. "The specialty restaurants contribute substantially to the hotel's ambience and ethos," said **Abhishek Sadhoo**, General Manager, Shangri-La Eros, New Delhi. Each specialised restaurant is a true work of art that expertly combines beauty and usability to provide warm areas for gatherings and business meetings.



Abhishek Sadhoo
General Manager,
Shangri-La Eros, New Delhi

Specialty restaurants offer guests a variety of dining options beyond the standard hotel dining facilities. This diversity allows guests to choose from different cuisines, atmospheres and culinary experiences, catering to vari-

ous tastes and preferences. Specialty restaurants also provide an opportunity for the hotel's culinary team to showcase their skills and creativity. This can boost the hotel's reputation and establish it as a culinary destination. Specialty restaurants are not only a source of Food & Beverage (F&B) revenue but also contribute to the hotel's total revenues.

Specialty restaurants contribute substantially to the hotel's ambience and ethos

A well-regarded specialty restaurant enhances the overall reputation of the hotel, making it a desirable destination for all its potential clients and attract-



ing a wider base. This, in turn, can drive room bookings, event bookings, and other revenue-generating services and products within the hotel. “A successful specialty restaurant becomes an



Rajneesh Kumar
General Manager,
Courtyard by Marriott
Aravali Resort

integral part of the hotel’s identity and contributes to its brand equity, leading to increased revenues across various streams,” pointed out **Rajneesh Kumar**, General Manager, Courtyard by Marriott Aravali Resort.

Since we are in the day and age of experiential dining, specialty restaurants do give us an edge and help us further in serving a memorable dining experience, which can foster customer loyalty. Satisfied guests are more likely to return to the hotel for future stays and dining

experiences, driving repeat business and generating a consistent revenue stream over time.

Rewarding contribution

Specialty restaurants wield a substantial impact on F&B budgets and hotel revenues, often contributing around 10 to 15 per cent of the overall income. These figures can vary based on factors such as restaurant popularity, location, pricing strategy and guest footfall. “High-quality dining experiences can command premium prices, further enhancing rev-

A successful specialty restaurant becomes an integral part of the hotel’s identity and contributes to its brand equity

enue,” said **Pankaj Srivastava**, F&B Manager, Taj Mahal, Lucknow. Efficient cost management and menu innovation can optimise profitability. With a focused marketing approach and seamless service, specialty restaurants bolster a hotel’s financial health, playing an essential role in achieving sustainable revenue growth.

Where, which and how

During the project stage, deciding on the kind of specialty restaurant that

would fare well in a particular hotel located in a specific place involves a thorough analysis of various factors to ensure that the restaurant aligns with the target audience, location and overall hotel concept.

One needs to consider the hotel’s surroundings and the overall vibe of the location. Is it a business district, a tourist area, a residential neighbourhood, or a mix? The local ambiance should guide the restaurant’s concept. “The theme of the restaurant has to resonate with the target audience and the hotel’s concept,” said **Sarbendra Sarkar**, Managing Director & Founder, Cygnett Hotels & Resorts. It could be fine dining, casual, ethnic, fusion, or something unique.

A hotel in the project stage must identify existing restaurants in the vicinity and what types of cuisine and dining experiences they are offering. In case, there is a gap in the existing F&B space in the area, a specialty restaurant can be introduced accordingly in the market.

The opening of a specialty restaurant also depends on the kind of property—whether it is budget-friendly, boutique, or luxury. The restaurant needs to complement the property’s positioning, costs and competition. Conducting thorough market research aids in identifying gaps and potential demand.



Competing with completion

Specialty restaurants within hotels often compete with standalone or chain specialty restaurants. While hotels have the advantage of captive guests, standalone restaurants offer a specific dining destination. Hotel chains benefit from brand recognition and consistency. Hotels must excel in both culinary innovation and guest experiences to compete.

Price points, ambiance and convenience play important roles. The competition pushes hotel restaurants to maintain high standards; however, hotels can leverage their amenities and cross-promotion to gain an edge.



Dev Thakur
Director, F&B,
JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar

Specialty restaurants require perfection, authenticity and fine-dining service standards

“However, guests who frequently visit quality standalone restaurants rather than well-known hotel brands have consciously chosen to dine in those restaurants for the food and unique experience,” said **Vishal Lonkar**, General Manager, Brand Development, Renest Hotels & Resorts. On the other hand, hotels often have to cater to guests who may not specifically be there for the food, and it is up to the hotel or brand



Sarbendra Sarkar
Managing Director &
Founder, Cygnett Hotels &
Resorts

The theme of the restaurant has to resonate with the target audience and the hotel's concept

to attract these customers to their specialty restaurant with what it can offer.

Challenges for overcoming

“Specialty restaurants require perfection, authenticity and fine-dining service standards,” said **Dev Thakur**, Director, F&B, JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar. One of the major challenges seen most of the time is having and retaining the right talent to execute the required experience. Balancing uniqueness with cost-effectiveness poses a challenge, impacting pricing strategies. Navigating seasonality, trends and evolving customer preferences requires constant adaptation. Creating awareness amidst local competition and building a loyal clientele demand strategic marketing. Coordinating seamless service alongside regular hotel operations presents operational complexities. Overcoming these challenges requires meticulous planning, adaptability and a firm commitment to culinary excellence within the hotel. “Bearing high costs and retaining quality-trained manpower to consistently deliver high-quality experiences in fine-dining standalone restaurants adds to the competition and challenges,” said **Chef Gagandeep Singh Bedi**, Director, Culinary, Roseate Hotels & Resorts.

It is up to the hotel industry to understand these challenges and overcome them to maximise the utilisation of all that specialty restaurants bring with them. □



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Women in hospitality challenge stereotypes

Hospitality industry has seen significant shift, with women actively participating and excelling in various roles, including leadership and managerial positions.

 **Suhani Sood**

Westin Hyderabad Hitec City, a 168-key hotel, stands out as the city's first all-women-managed hotel. However, some may still argue that the hospitality sector remains male-dominated. In recent years, the hospitality sector has undergone significant transformation, evolving beyond being a male-dominated field. Women are setting high standards and challenging gender stereotypes within this industry. In support of this shift, **Barnali Sarkar**, Executive Director, Cygnett Hotels and Resorts, stated, "The hospitality sector has witnessed remarkable changes, and it is no longer male-dominated. The perception that the hospitality industry is a male domain is now outdated." She further emphasised that women are actively participating and



Barnali Sarkar
Executive Director,
Cygnett Hotels and Resorts

**Hospitality sector has
witnessed remarkable
changes, and it is no longer
male-dominated**

excelling in various roles, including leadership and managerial positions.

Similarly, **Deeksha Suri**, Executive Director, The LaLit Suri Hospitality Group, noted, "Gender disparity, particularly the underrepresentation of women in managerial roles, has been extensively documented for years. Nevertheless, there is a noticeable shift as women are gradually challenging these stereotypes and are prepared to assume managerial and leadership positions."

Long-standing issue

Sarkar stated that gender disparity in the hospitality industry, specifically the underrepresentation of women in managerial and team leader roles, is a complex issue influenced by various factors. Despite some progress made in recent years to tackle this



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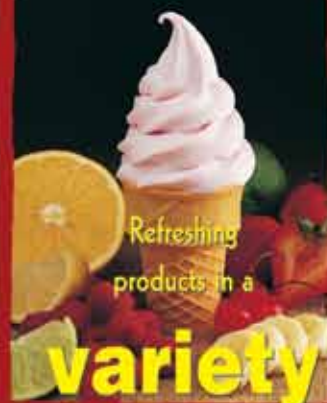
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disparity, it continues to pose a significant challenge that requires further attention and action.

“While acknowledging that gender disparity may still have its proponents, there is undeniable progress within the industry towards achieving gender equality within organizations,” stated **Neha Rana Dutta**, Chief Human Resources Officer, Espire Hospitality Group. She further emphasised, “Historically, gender disparity in workplaces may have arisen from a lack of self-confidence among some women, but today, women are more self-assured than ever.”

Challenges for women entrepreneurs

Sharing a personal experience as a woman entrepreneur in the hospitality sector, **Sonica Malhotra Kandhari**, Joint Managing Director, MBD Group, stated, “I have come to the conclusion that gender bias and discrimination are still prevalent.”

Furthermore, Kandhari added that balancing work and family life can be a significant challenge, as the hospitality industry often demands long hours, including weekends and holidays. She also noted a lack of representation and support for women in leadership positions within the industry.

Rise of role models

Sarkar emphasised a significant factor contributing to the empowerment of women in the hospitality sector, namely the emergence of role models and mentors. She pointed out, “Women who have succeeded in the industry are serving as inspirations



Neha Rana Dutta
Chief Human Resources
Officer, Espire Hospitality
Group

for aspiring professionals, demonstrating that gender does not determine one's potential for success. Their stories and achievements have inspired more women to pursue careers in hospitality and aspire to leadership positions.”

Women stepping up ladder

Suri proudly announces that 50 per cent of the senior leadership at The LaLit Suri Hospitality Group consists of women, with **Jyotsna Suri**, Chairperson

and Managing Director, The LaLit Suri Hospitality Group, serving as a role model for the entire industry. “Inspired by the same ethos, we aspire to increase the representation of women in our workforce to 25 per cent by 2025. Additionally, we take pride in being the only hospitality chain in the country with two national award-winning Women Executive Chefs,” shared Suri.

Historically, gender disparity may have arisen from a lack of self-confidence among some women, but today, women are more self-assured

Focus on meritocracy

Dutta stressed the critical importance of placing a strong emphasis on meritocracy, where individuals are chosen and recognised based on their demonstrated abilities and merits.

When asked about her most significant achievement, Dutta responded, “Undoubtedly, one of my greatest achievements has been embodying unwavering determination. Throughout my life, I have maintained relentless perseverance and a deep passion to pursue my long-lasting goals. I have never allowed life's milestones, including domestic and family responsibilities, to hinder my career progression.”

“Therefore, it is not about physical equality; rather, it is about mental equality, and there is no reason why women should receive fewer opportunities,” pointed out Dutta. □



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High rates and occupancy

Hotel occupancy and rates remain strong, but industry experts anticipate a decline in rates following increase in investment in the market.



Lipla Negi

Tier II & III sectors fuelling growth

With a positive outlook for India over the coming 10 years, the market is now experiencing strong demand and constrained supply. There is a consensus that hotels will continue to see an increase in both occupancy rates and prices even if big international conferences have not yet completely resumed after COVID.

ADRs have increased compared to 2019, but there is still a sizable space for development, particularly when compared to rates in other worldwide areas. The attractiveness of a location and the experiences provided by hotels are more important to travellers than the simple cost. The expansion of resort portfolios, such as the 30 per cent rise seen at Marriott, highlights the significance of distinctive experiences in luring leisure travellers. In India, the growth of the hotel industry is being driven by a dual focus on Tier II and III sectors as well as a specific focus



Dilpreet Singh Bindra

Area Director, Ops, North India, Bhutan & Nepal and Franchise Operations, South Asia, Marriott International

on the luxury market, especially in resort areas. The strategy focus of the sector is on signing premium assets, which reflects an alignment with shifting customer tastes.

Weddings have emerged as a significant source of revenue for Indian hotels, contributing close to 30 per cent of overall revenue, changing the complexion of the industry. Additionally, the MICE sec-

tor continues to be crucial to the success of the whole industry. While the Indian market is on the mend, the industry understands that for a thorough recovery to occur, international leisure travellers must return to the nation.

The expansion of resort portfolios, such as the 30 per cent rise seen at Marriott, highlights the significance of distinctive experiences

High rates have not discouraged inbound leisure travel, contrary to initial forecasts and expectations. Industry insiders are not only excited but also encouraged by recent reports indicating a significant increase in international visitor visits to India this year. This increase clearly demonstrates that tourists are regaining their confidence in India's tourism industry. The competitive pricing of hotels in India stands out when compared to other destinations, making it even more appealing to travellers.

Investor outlook on India is optimistic

Occupancy and rates will continue to grow for at least the next four years. Some of the factors that are contributing to the high growth are:

- Currently, India is mostly driven by domestic demand, and inbound arrivals have not recovered to the pre-COVID level. This is expected to change in the coming years, with the government's focus on increasing foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) to the country.
- Investor sentiments, both domestic and international, towards India are positive. Foreign investments with manufacturing units are being set up in different states, which will lead to higher travel needs. The hosting of the G20 events in India will also add confidence in G20 nations for investments in our country.
- Demand growth is surpassing supply



Vikramjit Singh
President,
Lemon Tree Hotels

growth, and as we have seen from the cycles of the past, this trend will continue for a few years until supply catches up.

- Religious tourism is thriving despite the economic downturn, with Kashi surpassing Goa in tourist numbers and Ayodhya emerging as the next hotspot. Hotel owners and operators are strategically targeting these high-demand markets.

- There has already been and will continue to be a boost in connectivity with additional airports in the pipeline and the Vande Bharat Express routes.

Despite rate stabilization concerns, the predicted supply-demand mismatch makes it likely that rates will continue to increase Y-o-Y

Despite initial concerns regarding rate stabilization, the anticipated disconnect between supply and demand makes it highly probable that rates will continue to experience year-over-year increases. This positive trend in rate increases remains sustainable as long as supply expansion lags behind the growth in demand. The robust performance of the industry at present is driving the construction of new hotels across various price ranges, including the upscale luxury segment.



Brands accelerate inventory expansion strategies

I see high occupancy and rates moving upward for another year. With no inventory adding up, it would still remain a sellers' market and we would continue to command rates. I see rate stabilisation happening once occupancies settle down. That would happen once outbound opens up completely. A backlog of visas and skyrocketing airfares are still affecting travel outside India.

I see a strong inflow of foreign tourist arrivals this year between November 2023 and March 2024. Though the numbers are quite encouraging and satisfying, it appears that inbound tourism is expected to be back to pre-COVID levels by the last quarter of 2024.

Major hotel chains such as Marriott International, IHG, RHG, IHCL and



Greesh Bindra
Vice President, Operations,
The Suryaa New Delhi

Oberoi hotels, among others, are signing deals to increase their inventory size in the country. Though demand is going to be buoyant for room additions, I do not see any new inventory size adding, at least in the Delhi NCR region for the next one year.

The wedding business has helped hotels to maintain occupancies and high

ADRs. All Indian hotel chains are vying for a piece of this growing market, with several brands launching new marketing initiatives specifically targeted at the wedding market. We have seen over 100

Industry is becoming a more significant economic force and has the potential to be used as a tool for development

per cent growth in the revenues generated in this segment compared to the pre-COVID era. Guests are taking advantage of the opportunity to spend lavishly on themed and grand weddings.

It is irrefutable that industry is becoming a more significant economic force and has the potential to be used as a tool for development.





Average room rate remains consistent

Although there are worries regarding rate stabilisation, the existing situation of hotel rates in India points to a stable and balanced hospitality business. The industry's resiliency in the face of economic changes is demonstrated by the average daily room rate (ADR), which has stayed stable. In addition to drawing tourists looking for trustworthy lodging alternatives, this stability shows how adaptable the sector is to shifting market dynamics.

There are concerns regarding the appeal of international travel for Indian tourists as hotel charges in India grow. The world's largest middle class, which has enormous potential, offers a unique opportunity for both domestic and international travel. Growing disposable incomes enable this group to make a considerable contribution to the expansion of the tourist sector globally.



Nikhil Sharma
Market Managing Director,
Eurasia, Wyndham Hotels
& Resort

The growth of hotels across all market categories is being driven by the hospitality sector's present performance, with the mid-segment receiving special attention. The future of this market sector appears to have bright potential, given its growth trajectory. The industry's diversification is further aided by the expanding number of upmarket accommodations designed to appeal to discriminating travellers.

The hospitality business in India has witnessed a spectacular increase in Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR), and occupancy rates have been continuously high. These trends are not temporary occurrences but rather a sign of a strong and long-lasting demand for hotel rooms. In the medium to long term, it is anticipated to pick up momentum. Notably, the

The existing situation of hotel rates in India points to a stable and balanced hospitality business

hosting of big events such as G20 meetings and the ICC World Cup has had an impact on the increase in demand. These sizable gatherings caused a surge in hotel reservations, supporting the industry's upward trend. A positive picture for the future success of India's hotel sector may be seen in such excellent indicators.

Strong demand, slow supply growth expected

Occupancy rates are moving in line with seasonality experienced by the hotel sector in India. This is characterised by a strong Q1 (Jan to March) on the back of corporate travel followed by a dip in Q2 brought about by the reduction in corporate travel amidst extreme summer months and by summer vacations. We expect occupancy levels to pick up during Q3, which is normally the shoulder months followed by an uptick in Q4, which is typically led by corporate travel, MICE and weddings.

Although, there has been a significant growth in room inventory in the past 18 months, but we expect the supply over the next 3-4 year period to be comparatively slow. Demand on the other hand is expected to remain buoyant given the growth in Indian economy. We expect the hotels' performance to remain robust in the medium term.




Jaideep Dang
Managing Director, Hotels & Hospitality Group, JLL India

Development activity has witnessed an uptick in recent quarters as per data tracked by JLL. In H1 (Jan to June) 2023, there have been 127 new branded hotel signings comprising more than 11,500 rooms which is a 36 per cent Y-o-Y growth in new room inventory signed. The midscale hotels comprise the largest segment (26 per cent) of upcoming hotel room inventory in

major hospitality markets comprising of Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Gurgaon, Pune and Goa. The luxury segment is the runner-up in the same comprising approximately 24 per cent of the future supply in major hospitality markets.

There has been a significant growth in room inventory in the past 18 months, but we expect the supply over the next 3-4 year period to be comparatively slow

Due to the completion of several hotel projects that had been put on hold due to COVID, the branded supply increased significantly in 2022 compared to 2021. This led to an upsurge in development activity. However, this growth is expected to witness a rationalisation in coming years as upcoming supply tapers down. 



Summit's vision Connecting hill stations

Summit Hotels & Resorts prioritize quality experiences, expanding to hill stations, addressing connectivity gaps, and engaging travel trade.



DDP Bureau

Summit Hotels & Resorts, positioned in the midscale leisure market, prioritizes delivering quality and amazing experiences. Enriching their portfolio by constantly expanding to touristic hill stations, they aim to offer tranquil gateways to visitors. For the past 15 years, they have been at the forefront of evolving hospitality sector. They have established 30 world-class hotels and resorts. Their properties are spread across 15 sought-after destinations, spanning over six states, creating delightful experiences for the guests.

Sumit Mitruka, CEO and Founder, Summit Hotels & Resorts, said that recognizing void in hill station accommodations



Sumit Mitruka
CEO & Founder,
Summit Hotels & Resorts

and limited connectivity is very critical. "By addressing gaps in infra and connectivity in North East, we are strategically opening properties in hill stations, creating a circuit of comfort with nature," said Mitruka.

Addressing infrastructure gaps, we strategically open properties in picturesque hill stations, creating comfortable circuit with nature

He said that Summit Hotels & Resorts' commitment to remain unwavering, as they nurture destinations by facilitating connectivity and fostering growth, thereby transforming hill stations into vibrant destinations. "Our plans are focussed on extending our presence beyond hill stations and include major leisure destinations," Mitruka stated. □

Housekeepers shine in Hilton India's campaign

Hilton India introduced the #YouAreTheSparkleAndShine campaign to appreciate the hard work of housekeeping teams in the hospitality sector.



DDP Bureau

Commemorating International Housekeepers Week (10–16 September), Hilton India launched a unique digital campaign called #YouAreTheSparkleAndShine. This initiative was designed to recognise and appreciate the hard work and dedication of housekeeping teams in the hospitality sector.

The campaign included a specialised video that highlighted the numerous contributions made by hotel housekeep-

ers to creating a welcoming environment. Additionally, it encouraged individuals from across India to participate by shar-

Campaign included a specialised video that highlighted numerous contributions made by hotel housekeepers

ing their cherished memories or images depicting how the hard work of hotel housekeepers enhanced their stay.

Commenting on the campaign, **Sabu Raghavan**, VP, Human Resources, Hilton India, expressed, "At Hilton India, we deeply value our housekeeping team as an integral cornerstone in our daily operations. Their unwavering commitment to maintaining high standards, meticulous attention to detail in creating a warm ambiance and their wholehearted dedication to ensuring each guest's comfort truly establish the foundation for the exceptional hospitality experience we aim to deliver. We are excited to introduce #YouAreTheSparkleAndShine to acknowledge the hard work of our housekeeping heroes." □

Art of food plating

elevating dining experiences



How can food plating improve the whole eating experience, and does it encourage patron loyalty? We explore the significance of this artful strategy...



Lipla Negi

The presentation of your food speaks volumes about the establishment and the chef behind it. In the culinary world, food plating is considered equivalent to an art, where skill meets strategy. In a world where restaurants are competing on a global scale, chefs are constantly exploring ways to plate their food in an awe-inspiring way. Experimenting with varied textures and temperatures, food plating finds new interpretations and significance in the age of social media. But how much does this artful skill contribute to building the reputation of a restaurant? Does it also help in gaining a legion of patrons? And how do chefs balance taste and technique while plating for perfection?

Food plating vs. styling

According to **Manish Mehrotra**, Culinary Director, Indian Accent restaurant, people often confuse food plating with food styling. While styling is done for the camera



Apoorva Kunte
Executive Chef,
The Westin Melbourne

inside the four walls of a studio, plating is done for consumption at restaurants. He explained, "Food styling is done by food stylists who are not necessarily chefs, while food plating is done at restaurants by chefs who have prepared that dish right from scratch. Often, food styling involves the use of artificial materials to enhance the appearance of the food and make it look more appetising on camera. For instance, shaving foam is used instead of real ice cream, or shoe polish is brushed

over the cooked food to give it a very charred effect. Whereas, in food plating, all the ingredients used are edible."

Taste, texture and temperature can make or break a dish and its presentation. Underlining the fine nuances of the art of food plating, Mehrotra said, "While plating, one should not waste so much

Gone are days when plates needed to look big; understanding portion sizes & flavor pairings achieves perfect plate

time that the dish becomes cold. Texture is important and people should feel it in their mouths. Next comes the colour of the ingredients, and which should complement each other. So, no dark on dark or white on white." Talking about the key principles of food presentation, **Apoorva Kunte**, Executive Chef, The

Westin Melbourne, said, “One of the key principles with food styling will always be to keep it simple, fresh and real. The eye needs a focal point on a plate. If the styling includes multiple focal points, then this confuses the brain and gives the perception of a crowded plate.”

Taste meets technique

Have you ever wondered why upscale restaurants have bigger plates serving smaller portions of food? No, it is not about exotic ingredients arriving on almost life-size plates in a luxury dining setting! The secret lies in layering the ingredients in a way that the dish appeals to all your senses. Explained Kunte, “Food looks better when it is served in smaller portions as opposed to a piled up plate. The size of the plates used to serve the food plays a very important role in luxury styling. Gone are the days when plates needed to look big and full when served. Understanding portion sizes and flavour pairings helps achieve the perfect-styled plate.”



Manish Mehrotra
Culinary Director,
Indian Accent restaurant

Food plating is often confused with food styling. While styling is done for the camera, plating is done for consumption at restaurants

To attain a balance of taste and texture, chefs rely on an array of tools. “The tweezers, spray bottles, brushes and kitchen torches are necessary equipment for food plating since they allow for fine placement, the addition of gloss, the application of finishes and controlled charring. Ingredients are shaped by pastry rings and moulds and aesthetics are enhanced

by backgrounds and utensils. Zesters and other garnishing implements add decorative touches,” explained Rajnish Malkoti, Executive Chef, Welcomhotel By ITC Hotels Shimla. However, Mehrotra feels that one does not need too many tools to elevate the appearance of a dish. It is out-



Rajnish Malkoti
Executive Chef,
Welcomhotel By ITC Hotels
Shimla

of-the-box thinking that makes any dish stand out. “At Indian Accent, we serve the famed Old Delhi street chat, daulat ki chat, in currency notes. The idea and its representation should make sense. It should not be over the top or gimmicky. Flavour and temperature of the dish are supreme.”

A luxury experience

Food plating is often intertwined with a luxury dining experience. Kunte stated, “A luxury dining experience starts with styling that pleases the eye. It does not always involve using expensive ingredients or high-end produce. It involves elements

such as freshness of ingredients, layering and perfect portioning.”

When plating is woven with storytelling, a one-of-a-kind experience is evoked. According to Malkoti, storytelling through plating helps cement a stronger bond with diners and often results in repeat customers. He explained, “Each carefully created dish conveys a narrative about the ingredients, the chef’s creativity and the culinary tradition. By enhancing the dining experience with a narrative element, restaurants help their customers develop stronger bonds with the dishes they are enjoying.

Luxury dining is known for its attention to detail, and food plating is a prime example of this dedication to excellence. Every component of the dish, from the arrangement of the microgreens to the

Every dish component, from microgreen arrangement to sauce drizzles, is carefully designed for a harmonious plate

accuracy of the sauce drizzles, is carefully designed to produce a harmonious plate.” At this point, Mehrotra is quick to point out, “Taste is non-negotiable. So, everything else must match it. People come back for taste and not for plating.” So, a good presentation may give people a selfie moment, but eventually, it is taste that rules the roost. □





Nurturing heritage with sustainability

Exploring a sustainable oasis, we interviewed **Siddharth Chakravarty** to understand Six Senses Fort Barwara's commitment and valuable lessons for other hotels.



Nestled within the historical embrace of Fort Barwara, Six Senses Fort Barwara stands as a testament to luxury seamlessly intertwined with sustainability. This hotel has set a benchmark for harmonising the rich cultural heritage of its location with a steadfast commitment to preserving the environment and uplifting local communities. The rear gem at the hotel is its Director, Sustainability, **Siddharth Chakravarty** who is not only overseeing and managing sustainability initiatives but also developing strategies within the hotel and measuring its success. Here are snippets from a discussion with Chakravarty.

At the very core of Six Senses Fort Barwara's sustainability ethos lies its unique location at Fort Barwara. This historical backdrop has not only influenced the resort's design but also its commitment to preserving the rich tapestry



Siddharth Chakravarty
Director, Sustainability,
Six Senses Fort Barwara

of local culture and heritage. The hotel's dedication to preserving and protecting the natural environment, cultural heritage and local communities is evident in its practices. It actively sources materials locally, engages with the community for collaboration and adopts sustainable construction practices. This holistic approach is a testament to the hotel's commitment to preserving the past while building a sustainable future.

Sustainability initiatives

Six Senses Fort Barwara's commitment to sustainability is not just lip service; it is embedded in its everyday operations. The resort has implemented a range of initiatives, from producing its own bio-enzymes for cleaning to installing water and energy meters in individual areas for efficient resource management. These measures not only reduce waste and conserve resources but also contribute to wildlife protection and community engagement.

Six Senses Fort Barwara harnesses renewable energy systems, such as solar and wind power, to minimise its environmental footprint

For biodiversity conservation, the resort has taken the innovative step of producing its own bioinsecticide solution. Additionally, it supports local livelihoods by employing community musicians and



promoting responsible tourism. These initiatives showcase the resort's holistic approach to sustainability, where environmental protection and community well-being go hand in hand.

Innovative practices

Six Senses Fort Barwara stands at the forefront of sustainability through the adoption of innovative technologies. The resort harnesses renewable energy systems, such as solar and wind power, to minimise its environmental footprint. Energy-efficient appliances, coupled with a sophisticated intelligent building management system, ensure responsible energy consumption.

The commitment to sustainability extends to construction and landscaping practices, with eco-friendly materials and sustainable landscaping techniques being utilised. These innovative practices not only reduce the hotel's environmental impact but also set an example for the industry as a whole.

Guest experience

One of the most remarkable aspects of Six Senses Fort Barwara's sustainability journey is how it seamlessly integrates sustainability into the guest experience. Heritage

and horticulture walks, educational workshops at the Earth Lab and interactions with young environmentalists from the resort's group all provide unique and enriching experiences for guests. These sustainable practices enhance luxury by fostering a deeper connection with the destination and leaving a positive impact on the environment.

Water & energy conservation

Efficient water and energy management are paramount to the resort's sustainability efforts. Rainwater harvesting, greywater recycling and state-of-the-art irrigation systems reduce water consumption. The use of renewable energy sources and an intelligent building management system

optimise energy use across the resort. Six Senses Fort Barwara also promotes a culture of energy efficiency among its staff, further contributing to resource conservation.

Zero waste approach

Championing a zero-waste approach is no small feat, yet Six Senses Fort Barwara rises to the challenge. Initiatives include the reduction of single-use plastics, a complete absence of plastic amenities in guestrooms, composting organic waste and a comprehensive waste separation and recycling programme. Collaborative efforts with vendors to reduce packaging on raw materials underscore the resort's dedication to minimising waste and its environmental footprint.

Success & challenges

Success in sustainability is not a vague notion for Six Senses Fort Barwara; it is quantifiable. The resort uses indexing and

data capture to track its performance, measuring metrics such as energy and water consumption reduction, waste diversion rates, carbon footprint reduction and the positive impacts on local communities. By transparently publishing sustainability reports, Six Senses Fort Barwara holds itself accountable and sets a benchmark for the industry.

Challenges, however, do exist. Balancing sustainability with guest expectations and financial viability can be demanding. The resort is sometimes challenged by guest preferences, but it remains steadfast in its commitment to reducing carbon footprints. For instance, it abstains from using fresh flowers and seafood, which have significant environmental costs.

Challenges, however, do exist. Balancing sustainability with guest expectations and financial viability can be demanding

Six Senses Fort Barwara's sustainability journey is a beacon of hope in the realm of luxury hospitality. It demonstrates that sustainable practices can seamlessly blend with opulence, providing guests with enriching experiences while safeguarding the environment and supporting local communities. As it continues to innovate, collaborate and measure its success, the resort not only sets a precedent for the industry but also showcases the potential for a sustainable future that respects the past. While their hard work can be seen impressively throughout the hotel, it does leave you with the thought that maybe it time for all hotels to have sustainability directors now. ❑





'No more royalties' demands wedding industry

Recent DPIIT directive cautioning against collecting royalties for events & weddings has garnered support from hotel professionals & wedding planners.



Sara Haque

The DPIIT, in its latest notification explaining the Copyright Act, 1957, has cautioned copyright societies against gathering royalties for government-organized events, religious ceremonies, such as weddings, and other cultural or literary gatherings. According to the DPIIT, such royalty collections are considered a breach of Section 52 (1) (za) of the Copyright Act of 1957. Here is what hotel professionals and wedding planners have to say about it.



Pradeep Shetty
President, HRAWI

HRAWI has been rigorously pursuing this with various government authorities, highlighting the misconduct of copyright societies, which end up in constant harassment of hospitality establishments. This directive is a result of HRAWI's commitment and perseverance to work towards creating a conducive business environment for its members.



Rajeev Jain
Director,
Rashi Entertainment

The government just reimposed the law, which was not followed by PPL and other copyright societies, so we thank them. No businessman likes the unlawful extraction of money. The government must form a system through which artists are paid their dues, but through a private body, it will never happen. It is a welcome move for the whole wedding industry.



Sharon Immanuel
Business Head & Wedding
Planner, BMP Weddings

I am glad about the ruling because the amount and the licensing fee that were asked were much more than what a regular DJ would cost. They were pressuring the hotels and organisers, and because there were no regulations, some of the people were taking advantage of the situation and using it to force the clients to pay an extra fee.



Armaan Sharma
Founder,
Humsafar Weddings

When clients are having wedding events in 5-star hotels and all, third parties are always creating a ruckus because they require a licence. A lot of wedding planners also do not know about this thing that licences are required or not for a social event. So, what is important is that, pan-India, everybody who is organising these events is aware of this.



Vandita Bawa
VP, Business Development,
Weddings By Chime

It becomes very uncomfortable for the client and wedding planners because sometimes the band costs you 50k, but this extra money amounts to up to a lakh. Hotels are still not allowing this. I had to face a lot of problems in Goa for a wedding. Apparently some IPRS thing had come out, and we had to take it. It is very inconvenient for the client.




Minnat Lalpuria
Founder & CEO, 7Vachan

The licences have not been applicable since a couple of years ago, but it is basically the hotels that insist on the licence. Now that there has been a public ruling, the hotels are under a mandate. Now that it has been completely waived off, we are expecting more live entertainment and drama to be added to these social events. This is a welcoming gesture for the clients.



Sahil Sachdeva
Co-Founder, The Event
Designer

This directive has shed light on the intricate intersection of copyright, artistic expression and cultural festivities. This decision reflects a broader recognition of the communal and celebratory nature of wedding events. Popular Bollywood tracks play an integral role in setting the tone for such occasions. It adds a lot of emotional resonance to the celebration. 



Nanki Chawla
Wedding Planner, Nanki
Chawla Events

Collecting royalties from people who play music seems ridiculous. It seems a bit shady that so many of these parties are privatising it and almost extorting royalty fees for it. It is a money-making system because these fees do not even go to the government. There is no uniformity, too, because some places do not require a licence, but hotels usually do.



Products & Services

Marga Mulino

Marga Mulino is the only machine that lets you prepare flakes and flour from grains, dry fruits and spices in just a few minutes. These are used to process various dry ingredients into finely ground or powdered form. Marga Mulino uses three rollers that rotate at different speeds and is easy to use by hand or with the Marcato Pastadrive motor. The machine is made of high-quality chrome steel, whereas the rollers are made of food-grade anodised aluminium: a material that guarantees no particles are released during use, which are harmful to health.



The Palace 110 by Hafele

Hafele has launched an extensive SLIDO Wall range, The Palace 110. This system makes it easier to organize your space with panels reaching a height of more than fifteen meters, thus opening up an array of design possibilities. With Palace 110, you can achieve countless possibilities with regards to shape, material and colour. In consultation with Hafele, you can determine the parking positions and the layout of the track, tailored to your personal requirements. This robustly executed movable wall system satisfies even the toughest requirements and proves that quality and design can be perfectly integrated.

Opulent allure of Lucaris' lavish crystalware

Crafted with meticulous precision, Lucaris' Lavish collection is the pinnacle of crystal craftsmanship. Every piece is a testament to its commitment to visual perfection, showcasing your cherished wines and beverages in their finest glory. The iconic rounded shape adds a touch of classic elegance to any setting, inspiring unforgettable wine and dine experiences that linger in memory. A symphony of premier aesthetics harmonised with a modern twist, the crystalware range epitomises extravagance.



Circle Design Tiles Collection

In the world of interior design, circle design tiles have emerged as a captivating trend that beautifully combines aesthetics and functionality. Circle Design Tiles Collection has been exclusively designed to be UV and slip-resistant. Available in 600 x 1200 mm and with a thickness of 10 mm, you can trust that these tiles are exactly what you need to give your next project a unique new look! These tiles are also produced with non-slip textures to strike the right balance between functionality and design. Aesthetics aside, they make the space look elegant and interesting.



Sento by GRAFF

GRAFF has unveiled Sento collection, designed by the Italian studio Angeletti Ruzza Design. The design of the Sento collection has involved the solution of numerous complex issues; first and foremost, that of the lever, which had to be robust yet light to prevent its excessive weight. The sinuous lines allow the cartridge, positioned within the body, to perform all necessary functions without any need for any additional nuts and grooves on the lever. The collection consists of 15 faucet elements and a full selection of matched accessories available in polished chrome, Steelnox, and black and white finishes.



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Fortune Hotels expands its presence in Uttarakhand



Adds one more jewel to its crown with the signing of new resort property in the pristine wilderness of Jim Corbett, marking its 50th location in India.



DDP Bureau

Fortune Hotels has expanded its portfolio by signing a new resort property in Jim Corbett, Uttarakhand, marking its 50th location in India and its 60th alliance in the country.

The upscale resort, branded as Fortune Jungle Resort & Spa, is located near Ramnagar and offers a safari-style experience amidst pristine wilderness. It features stylish accommodations, dining options, recreational facilities, and a spa, with a focus on personalized services and celebrating the natural beauty of Jim Corbett National Park.

Samir MC, Managing Director, Fortune Hotels, expressed, "Our new property in Jim Corbett offers tremendous location advantage as it appeals to nature enthusiasts and wildlife lovers alike. This landmark alliance marks our entry into our 50th location in India besides helping us advance our footprint into Uttarakhand, making it a significant milestone for us. We are excited to



Samir MC
Managing Director,
Fortune Hotels

let guests experience the innate beauty of the Jim Corbett National Park amid plush comforts and personalised services that Fortune Hotels is known for."

Crafted by architect John Hay, this resort with an African theme is perched on an untouched hill and handcrafted from timber. Nestled amid unspoiled and pristine forests, with uninterrupted vistas of the Bohrakot Wildlife Reserve, it promises to enchant guests with its distinctive Swiss-style accommodations, featuring charming-thatched roofs and intricately

designed decor crafted by skilled artisans from various corners of the world.

This strategic expansion aligns with the brand's vision of becoming the preferred choice for discerning travellers in the leisure segment. The property will

We are excited to let guests experience the innate beauty of the Jim Corbett National Park amid plush comforts and personalised services

be Fortune Hotels' first jungle resort and is estimated to open in the next few months.

Jim Corbett National Park occupies a prominent position in India's wildlife conservation endeavours. Originally established in 1936 under the name Hailey National Park, it holds the distinction of being the nation's oldest national park. The park's primary mission is to safeguard the endangered Bengal tiger. ■

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MOVEMENTS



KULPREET KAUR

**Director, Sales & Marketing,
Hyatt Centric MG Road Bangalore**

★ Kulpreet Kaur has joined Hyatt Centric MG Road Bangalore as the new Director, Sales & Marketing. Kaur will fortify the leadership team's capabilities and play a pivotal role in optimizing market share. Her expertise lies in propelling revenue growth and establishing a robust brand presence. Kaur began her career in food and beverage operations at Taj Exotica Goa and Taj Yeshwantpur. She then joined Aloft Cessna Business Park before enriching her experience with Sheraton Grand Whitefield hotel and convention centre under Marriott International.



PRABIN C B

**Director, Revenue Management,
NHCC & HICC**

★ Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre and Hyderabad International Convention Centre has announced the appointment of Prabin C B as the Director, Revenue Management for the property. Prabin brings with him illustrious experience spanning over two decades in the hospitality industry. In his present role, Prabin will be responsible for determining the strategic vision for the property by establishing goals and guiding the hotel's commercial team in implementing tactical efforts to promote revenue growth and development.



PRASHANT SHEWALE

**General Manager,
Blue Ocean The Fern Resort & Spa**

★ Prashant Shewale has joined Blue Ocean The Fern Resort & Spa as General Manager. Shewale brings with him a wealth of expertise and a proven track record in the hospitality industry. He holds a degree in hotel management and catering technology from Nagpur University. His impressive career includes over a decade with Accor Hotels, where he played a pivotal role in elevating hotel profitability, enhancing customer satisfaction and elevating hotel ratings. He is known for his passion, self-motivation and hands-on leadership approach.



SUDARSHAN MOTUPALLE

**General Manager,
Novotel Vijayawada**

★ Sudarshan Motupalle has been appointed as new General Manager of Novotel Vijayawada. With over a decade of experience in the hotel industry and a strong background in hospitality leadership, Motupalle brings a wealth of expertise to guide the hotel towards continued success. He earned his Bachelor of Hotel Management at Westin College of Hotel Management and his Master's degree in Hospitality Management, from Napier University. Motupalle has garnered a reputation for his commitment to delivering extraordinary guest experiences.



JITENDRA SINGH RATHORE

**Executive Chef,
Courtyard by Marriott Tiruchirappalli**

★ Courtyard by Marriott Tiruchirappalli has announced Jitendra Singh Rathore as the new Executive Chef. He comes with an impressive career of over two decades and extensive experience acquired from working in renowned hotels across the country. He started his culinary journey in 2003 at Oberoi Rajvilas in Jaipur. Prior to joining Courtyard by Marriott Tiruchirappalli, Rathore held the position of culinary lead at Compass Group in Karnataka and was also involved in the pre-opening of Courtyard by Marriott Sindhu Bhawan Road in Ahmedabad.



SAIF USMANI

**Spa Manager,
Shangri-La Eros New Delhi**

★ Shangri-La Eros New Delhi has appointed Saif Usmani as the Spa Manager. Saif Usmani will oversee managing and improving Shangri-La Eros New Delhi's spa, wellness and fitness programmes. He has a proven track record of providing exceptional customer experiences in hotels and resorts. With his strategic thinking and exclusive management style, he is expected to lead the Spa team to achieve their goals. He has previously worked with hotel chains such as Oberoi Hotels and Resorts, Mandarin Oriental, and more.



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