

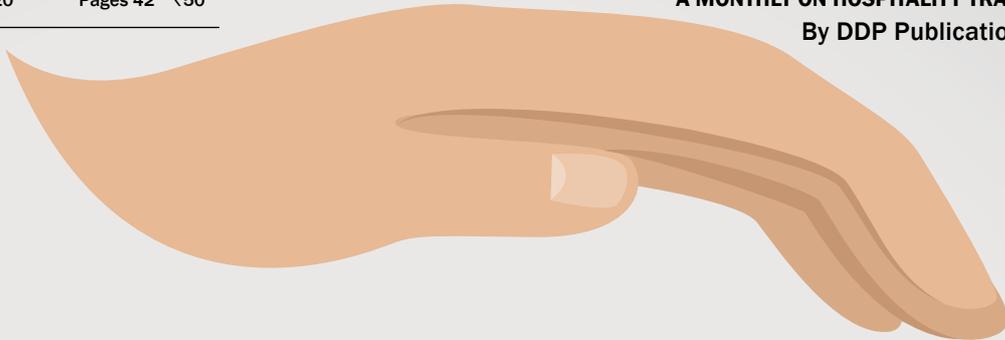
HOTELS & RESTAURANTS INDIA

# fhrai magazine

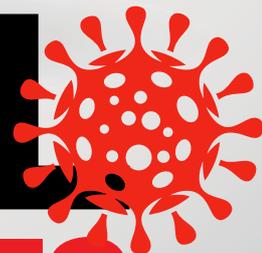
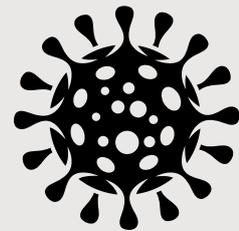
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A MONTHLY ON HOSPITALITY TRADE  
By DDP Publications



## COVID-19 POSES **LEGAL** **CHALLENGES** **FOR HOTELS**



# APRIL 2020

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FHRAI with FAITH had a status update meeting on video with the Ministry of Tourism, which was chaired by Secretary--Tourism, Director General, Joint Secretary and ADG--Tourism.

Cover Design: Raashi Ajmani Girdhar



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**Rahul Lall**  
Secretary General  
FHRAI



We would like to assure our members that the Federation is working day and night to seek relief as the hospitality industry is the worst hit due to the pandemic resulting in a nationwide lockdown



## Dear fellow members,

At the outset, may God bless everyone with good health and a long life. With reference to the latest developments regarding COVID-19, we the FHRAI Secretariat, for and on behalf of the Executive Committee, would like to say that our best wishes are with everyone affected by the pandemic in India and around the globe.

We wish to convey to the members that the FHRAI is working closely with the Government of India and have conveyed the challenges being faced by the hospitality industry due to the pandemic. The Federation is amongst the first ones to assess and evaluate the possible losses and worrisome situation and based on that has written to the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Home Minister, Finance Minister, Law Minister, Finance Secretary, Reserve Bank of India, Tourism Secretary, and Chief Ministers & Chief Secretaries of the respective state governments.

Members may please visit [www.fhrai.com](http://www.fhrai.com) and refer to the communications – under the broadcast and news section, to access the representations sent to the dignitaries across the spectrum of the Government of India. Our prayer is pertaining to the deferment of the statutory compliances and financial relief for the hospitality industry. This was followed by the series of meetings via a digital medium by the Executive Committee members with various heads of the departments in the government. We would like to assure our members that the Federation is working day and night to seek relief as the hospitality industry is the worst hit due to the pandemic resulting in a nationwide lockdown.

We are grateful to the regional chapters HRAWI, HRAEI, HRANI, and SIHRA for working tirelessly for the stranded tourists, doctors, and the people of India. With the increase in several possible patients, and to support hospital staff,

the regional associations extended full support at the state, city, and municipal levels to various departments to combat the pandemic. In-total an inventory of around 45,000 rooms were offered to the local authorities, NGOs and other such agencies on a pro bono basis. In addition to that, restaurant members offered food packets – in lakhs, and meal preparation facilities to support the needy.

As members may already be aware that the Government of India has launched an online application AarogyaSetu in order to have a real-time database of Indian citizens and monitor effectively the spread of the COVID-19 and take steps to control this epidemic. In this regard, we request you to kindly register yourself, your employees, and your stakeholders directly connected with you, on this app.

Last but not least, we would like to thank all our members who spared their time to attend the webinar organised by FHRAI in collaboration with M/s Wadia Ghandy & Co. to address the legal issues and challenges faced by the hospitality industry due to COVID-19. The same has been extensively covered in this edition of the magazine for the benefit of the members.

### **BE SAFE. STAY AT HOME.**

**Note:** The April 2020 edition of the FHRAI magazine will not be available as a printed version due to the pan-India lockdown announced by the Central Government. However, the e-version of the same shall be available on the FHRAI website and circulated to all members as a broadcast registered email.

With kind regards,

**Rahul Lall**  
Secretary General, FHRAI

# FHRAI members pledge over 45,000 rooms and serve close to 5 lakh meals a day

The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) through member hotels has voluntarily offered the government access to over 45,000 hotel rooms from across the country. The rooms have been set aside to quarantine inbound tourists who may require quarantining as well as for others who are stuck in the country because of the travel ban.

The rooms are also open for doctors and healthcare workers who are unable to commute daily from their homes while doing a splendid job of fighting the pandemic. The hotels range from five-star to standalone properties and have been selected based on the cluster regions identified by the government authorities.



**Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**  
Vice President, FHRAI

"The Association has appealed to its member hotels and restaurants to fully cooperate with the government officials and to support the cause. The hospitality

industry has been on the frontline during this pandemic and is offering its full support to the government in the effort to control the spread of the virus. FHRAI through its regional associations is offering meals and has voluntarily offered rooms all over India via our member hotels and restaurants," says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI and President, HRAWI.

Alongside, the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) has been offering meals, food packets and meal preparation facilities besides distributing dry rations for the needy through its restaurant members. This is being done in partnership with the state governments and local authorities besides various NGOs. In Mumbai alone, member hotels and restaurants of the HRAWI are assisting in preparation and distribution of 2 lakh meals per day in conjunction with the state government and local authorities.

"In the Western region, the HRAWI has mobilised many of its member restaurants to provide meals to over 5 lakh people who are in need. The industry and its players have opened their doors and hearts to support the people at the Central, state and local authorities' level to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. We have advised our members to take all precautionary measures and maintain the highest atlevels of cleanliness and hygiene. We have also been sharing all the updated advisories as received from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to members," concludes Kohli. Hotel and restaurant members of HRAWI which include the states of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa and the UTs of Diu Daman and Silvassa too are chipping in to help and support the affected in the smaller cities and towns of these states.

## HOTELS SPREAD THE MESSAGE OF LOVE

Amidst the lockdown, hotels across the country are doing their bit to instill hope and spread the message of love in the ensuing novel coronavirus outbreak. Part of the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India's (HRAWI) attempt to keep its members tethered and united during a crises which has affected the hospitality sector the most, hotels are displaying the symbolic heart across the front facades of their building properties. The heart is also a show of support and appreciation to all the women and men working across disciplines to keep the wheels of humanity moving.

"These are the most trying times for us humans, as a race. Knowing that there is someone out there for you if you need them, gives hope. At this juncture, we all need hope and we are doing everything that we can to offer it. The lit-up heart is a symbolic representation of the hospitality and tourism industry and we want to tell everyone that we're here for them," says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, President, HRAWI. The HRAWI has also offered the state government access to over 500 of its member hotel rooms in the city.



Hospitality industry is offering full support to the government to control the spread of the virus



# Post COVID-19, essential for Hot

FHRAI with FAITH had a status update meeting on video with the Ministry of Tourism, which was chaired by Secretary--Tourism, Director General, Joint Secretary and ADG--Tourism.

**G**urbaxish Singh Kohli, Vice President, FHRAI, was present in the meeting along with all the other Presidents of various Associations, who are the Board Members of FAITH.

FHRAI along with the other industry associations highlighted the concern that the relief measures announced till date have still not addressed the urgency of survival crisis being faced by Indian tourism, travel and hospitality industry and immediate steps need to be taken on survival measures. The industry discussed with the Secretary--Tourism, point-by-point, the status of all the measures announced till date and the gap areas that need to be addressed for its survival.

The Secretary--Tourism updated us that across all the

key Ministries of the government, it has been widely acknowledged and accepted that the Indian tourism industry will be one of the worst hit from this pandemic. He mentioned that this is of concern to the government and this acceptance, itself, within the government is a big move forward for us. We hope that our relief measures will be prioritised accordingly soon.

Listed below are a few of the relevant demands, action taken by concerned agency and what more needs to be done for the industry to survive.

## EASE IN PAYING LOANS

For survival as a relief measure from RBI, the industry had requested for moratorium on repayment of EMIs of principal and interest for term loans for 12 months. As a relief measure RBI has given three months moratorium. Now the demand is for the moratorium on repayment of EMIs to be extended for 12 months. Interest accrual has to stop during moratorium. Also, restructuring of some cases of loans for tourism have to be evaluated immediately. RBI has the requisite data for this.

Moratorium on repayment of EMIs needs to be extended for 12 months. Interest accrual has to stop during moratorium



# Govt help helps to survive

## REQUIREMENT OF WORKING CAPITAL

For survival as a relief measure from RBI, industry had requested enhancement of Working Capital limits/Overdrafts at interest free rates. In response to the same, RBI has allowed Working Capital limits to be re-evaluated by banks. Now the demand is that it needs to be extended for 12 months. Working Capital interest rates have to come down by more than half. We need to declare tourism as a priority sector. There is a need to create 'tourism COVID relief' Working Capital bonds with 10-year repayment cycle of principal only and interest free rates.

## FUND FOR INDUSTRY TO SURVIVE

For survival as a relief measure from Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Tourism, industry needs Support Fund majorly for salaries and establishment costs. The fund can be set up by MOF. The fund can also be set up by MOT on the lines of 'Tourism COVID relief' Working Capital bonds with 10-year repayment cycle of principal only and interest free rates. It will give relief to 53,000+ travel agents, 1.3 lakhs+ tour operators (domestic, inbound, adventure, cruise, outbound), 2700 + MICE 19 lakhs + tourist transporters, 53,000 + hotels, 5 lakhs + restaurants. MOT can set up the funds from its unutilised funds from the previous year and from its proposed allocation for FY 20-21.

Since most schemes for FY 19-20 have been pushed back by another few months, the undisbursed funds from MOT for FY 19-20 can also be held back. As per NSSO 2011-12, there were 48 crore organised and unorganised workers in India. 93 per cent are unorganised workforce. Currently it could be ~ 50 cr total jobs. Tourism is estimated to be 11 per cent so ~ 5.5 crore jobs are at risk, mostly unorganised, so jobs are at risk between 3-4 crores if this prolongs in all markets.

## PF CONTRIBUTIONS FOR EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE

For survival as a relief measure from Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Labour, industry needs to waive off PF contributions for employer and employee for 12 months. They have waived off for three months for organisations less than 100 pax and @ 90 per cent below 15,000 and contributed for by the government. Demand remains

that PF needs to be waived off for all categories by changing the PF Act for tourism and a special Act to be created like other sectors. If protection scheme has to be evolved it has to cover all kinds of tourism organisations. If tourism MSMEs have to be covered then it should be covering employees with minimum wages across all states. It needs to have a structure like the PM Rojgar Pradhan Yojana.

## WAIVE OFF ESI

For survival as a relief measure from Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Labour, there is a need to defer ESI contributions for 12 months. There has been no relief so far. The insurance corpus of ESI needs to be used now



For survival as a relief measure from MOF and MOT, industry needs Support Fund for salaries and establishment costs



to provide paid wages relief to all organised workers for all accumulated days from non-availability of work and the Act needs to be amended immediately as the PF Act was done.

## DISASTER MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE FOR TOURISM

For survival as a relief measure from Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of Tourism, the National Tourism Disaster Management Task Force between Centre and states will standardise tourism survival package across states. There is a need to set up the task force under PMO and MOT with Chief Secretaries and other GOI ministries and make immediate legislative decisions on the tourism survival package.

This task force should pick up data from CBDT, CBIC for income tax and GST, Ministry of Labour for all PF, ESI and from all state governments for excise, power and utility calculations for tourism. Private sector cannot do this and making assumptions will only do 'damage by data delay'. Disaster management task forces have been set up. If tourism is one of them, it should be upgraded.

# FHRAI advises members to have strict hygiene & screening processes

FHRAI

The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) has issued an advisory to its members to strictly adhere and follow the instructions issued by the government authorities on containing the COVID-19 spread. The Association has advised members to maintain stringent checks and hygiene standards. The advisory does not advocate the shutting down of restaurants unless there is any specific directive that may be received from the local authorities in this regard or if any establishment(s) voluntarily wishes to do so.

"The Federation has members across the country and we are not asking anyone to shut down their establishments. But yes, we are insisting that everyone who is open to business be extremely aware and vigilant and that they take all the precautionary measures and follow the directives by local authorities."



**Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**  
Vice President, FHRAI

says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI.

"We have advised member establishments that the staff and customers be thoroughly screened. Anyone indicating symptoms of cough, cold, flu be immediately sent



**Pradeep Shetty**  
Jt Hony Secy, FHRAI

for medical check-up to the nearest government hospital. It is critical that the hotel and restaurant premises be sanitised regularly and procedures be followed as per the guidelines," concludes **Pradeep Shetty**, Jt. Honorary Secretary, FHRAI.

## GRT Group extends a helping hand during pandemic

At this difficult time, GRT Group of Hotels and Resorts has stepped up to the plate and is providing tremendous help during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic which has affected everyone worldwide.

GRT Grand has been providing meals to the hardworking doctors of the General Hospital in Chennai as well as to Corporation health workers who have been working non-stop. In Madurai and Coimbatore, GRT hotels have been providing meals to the police force who are on duty to ensure the safety and well-being of citizens. The hotels in Tuticorin and Tirunelveli have also been providing meals to those working at the forefront in the fight against this pandemic.



SIHRA

# HRANI organises 37<sup>th</sup> FoSTaC programme in Jodhpur



**H**otel and Restaurant Association of Northern India (HRANI) organised the 37<sup>th</sup> Food Safety Training & Certification (FoSTaC) programme on March 13, 2020 at Chandra Imperial Jodhpur. The objective of the session was to train the hospitality aspirants in food safety. The faculty of the session was Vikas Gupta, Professor, Amity University Noida who informed the participants on various aspects and procedures to keep food safe and the policy framework pertaining to the FSS Act and law. "I would like to thank HRANI for this initiative. The workshop was very informative and comprehensive. It will go a long way in instilling awareness on food safety," said **Deepak Parihar**, Managing Committee Member, HRANI.



"It was heartening to see a good turnout of HRANI members in the session. Food safety has assumed a crucial role in the wake of increasing urbanisation, pollution and changing lifestyles," said **Surendra Kumar Jaiswal**, President, HRANI.

"The commitment on part of the FSSAI trainers was noteworthy, especially

the methodology applied and the resultant training session were lucid and interactive enough for a thorough understanding of the subject of food safety at a very practical level," said **J.M. Boob**, a participant from Chandra Imperial.

"We have been conducting FoSTaC programmes for last three years in different cities of northern India. We

plan on continuing to host these programmes in series so that maximum hospitality professionals from our member units can benefit from it," said **Renu Thapliyal**, Secretary General, HRANI.

Hotel and Restaurant Association of North India (HRANI) is the lead training partner for the organised sector in northern region empanelled by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). HRANI has been organising FoSTaC programmes in all nine states on rotation basis to facilitate the members of the Association.



Food safety has assumed a crucial role in the wake of increasing urbanisation, pollution and changing lifestyles



# HRAEI offers isolation rooms to fight COVID-19



**Pranav Singh**  
President, HRAEI



**Sudesh Poddar**  
Honorary Secretary, HRAEI



**TS Walia**  
President Emeritus, HRAEI

In the wake of COVID-19 we decided to offer nearly 640 rooms mainly in three- and four-star hotels

We have requested the state govt to allow us to distribute dry food items like breads, bananas and puffed rice to the needy

In most hotels there is no boarder. A skeletal staff has been kept to serve those who will stay in isolation

To help the West Bengal Government manage cases of COVID-19 pandemic, several hotels in Kolkata and Siliguri have come forward to offer pay-and-use rooms to people who have been asked to live in isolation for 14 days. A total of 640 rooms of 31 two-star, three-star and four-star hotels have been offered on pay-and-use basis at highly subsidised rates and all meals such as breakfast, lunch and dinner will be provided. The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Eastern India (HRAEI) had an internal meeting after it received requests from the Health Ministry and decided to extend their full support to the state government in this hour of crisis. A list of hotels and availability of rooms has been sent to the West Bengal Government and a request made for imparting medical training to staff in handling those who want to stay in isolation.

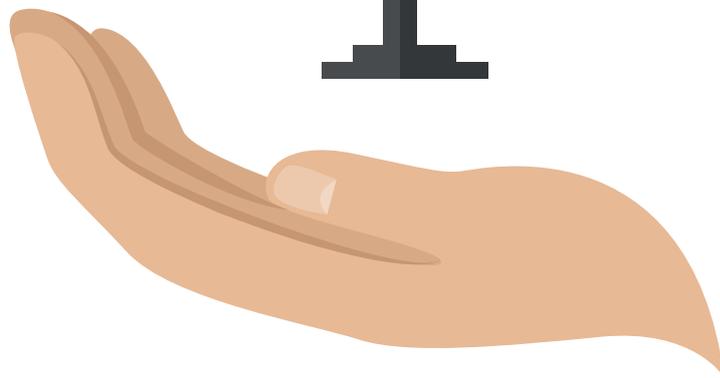
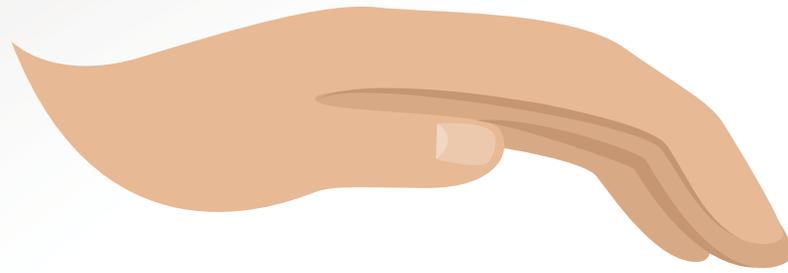
"In the wake of COVID-19, we had a

discussion with the state tourism and health department. We have been asked to request all our hotel owners/members to come forward in allocating rooms for the purpose of self-isolation and self-quarantine for those who want to stay in hotels and avail this facility," said **Sudesh Poddar**, Honorary Secretary of HRAEI.

"Following the request, we decided to offer nearly 640 rooms mainly in three- and four-star hotels. A total of 31 hotel owners agreed to provide rooms and soon we will make a list of our hotel staff, who will be trained by the health officials in handling the guests who want to avail hotel isolation facility," said **Pranav Singh**, President, HRAEI. He added, "The training will be given as per WHO norms like how to serve food, which food should be served, how to sanitise the rooms and their personal items, etc. This is a challenging task, but the hotels are ready to take it up." **T.S. Walia**, Former President, FHRAI and

President Emeritus, HRAEI, said, "In most hotels there is no boarder. A skeletal staff has been kept to serve those who will stay in isolation, but they want to go to home too. It will be better if people start coming to these facilities soon." The state health department has promised to provide all kinds of help to the hotels. "Please convey the message that only asymptomatic guests will stay in isolation for 14 days. In case someone develops any symptoms, then they will be handled as per government guidelines," added Singh. Besides providing comfortable isolation, HRAEI has also initiated dialogue with the state government for assisting them in distributing dry food items like breads, bananas and puffed rice to the needy. "We have arranged for a delivery van and requested the govt to allow us to distribute food items as we will be needing police permission due to the lockdown. Once we get a nod from the government, we will start distributing food items to the needy," said Poddar.





# COVID-19 POSES LEGAL CHALLENGES FOR HOSPITALITY



We bring you extracts from the FHRAI webinar with the law firm Wadia Ghandy & Co on legal challenges faced by the hospitality industry due to COVID-19.



Kanchan Nath

Over 1000 + members actively participated in the very fruitful webinar, which allowed them to post questions through the Q&A section at the bottom of the page and most of the same were covered through the discussion. FHRAI partnered with Wadia Ghandy & Co, one of the oldest and finest law firms of India, to discuss issues arising due to the pandemic and lockdown.

The webinar was moderated by **Pradeep Shetty**, Joint Honorary Secretary, FHRAI. Speakers included **Bindi Dave**, Senior Partner – Litigation, Wadia Ghandy & Co; **Ashish Ahuja**, Senior Partner – Corporate & Banking, Wadia Ghandy & Co; **Sameer Pandit**, Partner – Litigation, Wadia Ghandy & Co; **Aarish Dhunjibhoy**, Partner – General Corporate, Competition, Pharma and Labour Law Practice, Wadia Ghandy & Co; The facilitator was **Nirav Gandhi**, EC Member, FHRAI. The vote of thanks was given by **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI. The administrator of the webinar was **Himanshu Talwar**, Assistant Secretary General, FHRAI.

Staring the discussion, **Pradeep Shetty** said, “FHRAI members have come together at a critical time, when the hospitality industry has been hardest hit due to COVID-19. In wake of this unprecedented event, there are many queries and members are looking for answers, therefore the webinar will deal with the following pertinent issues.

- Force majeure as a saviour – myth or reality: Concepts, legal position and litigation strategies on force majeure and frustration of contracts.
- Labour and employment issues: Salaries, wages, and termination and issues pertaining to obligations towards employees from the point of view of various advisories that have come in from the different states and also the NHA order at the Centre, and
- Finance and banking related matters.

**Bindi Dave** stated that often one gets confused and thinks that force majeure clause and frustration are used interchangeably, however they mean very different things. On strategy of litigation, she said, “One needs to examine the contract in each case, and also the circumstances prevailing around it, to be able to strategise. Running to courts is not the first thing I would advise. If there is some scope of sitting and negotiating, that is the first thing that should be explored. If you have all the rights in your contract, you have a better chance, but it does not mean you will succeed. In court also the matter takes a long time, as you are aware of the kind of backlog we have. It is not a quick fix solution and there is also a cost to it, irrespective of whether you are winning or losing.”

Giving a short disclaimer, **Sameer Pandit**, stated, “We will be sharing a brief overview of the legal aspects which cover force majeure, employment, among other finance-based issues, however many of such matters are fact



**Dave:** Running to courts is not the first thing I would advise. It is not a quick fix solution and there is also a cost to it



specific and explicitly depend on the agreement that you may have. So, the discussion must be taken as a general guide but specific queries on specific factual situations would need to be analysed separately.”

He further added, “There are a lot of queries from hoteliers like what happens to your relationship with your landlord, including rent, contracts, what happens if you have a minimum revenue arrangement? Do you still get the minimum revenue that has been promised to you as hotels have been shut down. What happens after lockdown? So, most of these queries are often previewed under force majeure or frustration of contracts.”

If a party’s ability to perform its contractual obligations has been compromised on account of COVID-19 and the ensuing lockdown, the law recognises two methods by which a party can be exempted from the rigours of its contract: Invocation of the force majeure clause in the agreement; and, treating the contract as ‘frustrated’. Both the remedies, while often spoken of together, are different concepts and have distinct legal consequences.

#### UNDERSTANDING FORCE MAJEURE

**Sameer Pandit** added, “As far as force majeure clause is concerned it needs to be in the agreement as far as Indian law is concerned. You need to have an express force majeure clause in your agreement, for the concept to become relevant. If you do not have a force majeure clause, the force majeure argument cannot be used. In such a scenario you can use the frustration clause.”

A force majeure argument can be raised only if the contract contains a force majeure clause. Such clauses are negotiated between parties at the time of drafting the



Pradeep Shetty



Bindi Dave



Ashish Ahuja



Sameer Pandit

agreement and may differ on a case-by-case basis. While some clauses may expressly cover epidemics, pandemics, governmental action and embargoes, others may only refer to more generic terms such as acts of god and natural calamities/disasters. Typically, in order to successfully invoke a standard force majeure clause, a party will have to prove the following: COVID-19 and/or the lockdown prevented or unavoidably delayed performance of the contract; the delay or non-performance could not have been avoided despite reasonable efforts; and COVID-19 and/or the lockdown can be classified as a force majeure event under the terms of the contract.



Nirav Gandhi

### LOOPHOLES IN INDIAN CONTRACTS?

He also added, "Most contracts made in India do not use the terms like 'cover epidemics, pandemics, governmental action and embargoes', they only refer to more generic terms such as acts of god and natural calamities/disasters. In such a scenario you need to make an argument to show that COVID-19 and lockdown does amount to an 'Act of God.'"

### IMPORTANCE OF INVOCATION

In addition to satisfying the above conditions, he added that it is important that the party will also have to strictly follow the invocation process set out in the agreement. This will usually require the affected party to issue a written notice at the earliest opportunity informing the other party of invocation of force majeure.

### CONSEQUENCES OF FORCE MAJEURE: CONTRACT TERMINATION?

He confirmed, "In most standard clauses what you have is that if there is a force majeure event and a party is aggregable to perform its contract, or if there has been a delay in performance, such delay or non-performance will not amount to breach of the contract. This means for a short duration you will not be held to be in breach of the contract. It is important to note that a force majeure clause may often only provide temporary relief."

"There are also other aspects of invoking force majeure. Some aspects can also help you get out of force majeure; many parties have re-agreement or a contract may provide for a change of price. Invoking a force majeure clause is a right to terminate and this is quite important to understand. You will not get a blanket relaxation or moratorium from performance forever. Some clauses will set out a time limit for the period that you get the relaxation. Typically, that time limit is for 30 to 90 days. After that period the other party may have the right to



terminate that contract without giving any compensation. So, it is critical to consider this aspect before invoking force majeure, especially if you wish to preserve the contract," Pandit elucidated.

### DOCTRINE OF FRUSTRATION

On frustration, Pandit added, "Frustration is a concept covered by Section 56 of the Indian Contract Act, 1872. This section provides that if the Act to be performed under a contract becomes 'impossible' or 'illegal/unlawful', then the contract is treated as void. The key distinction between force majeure and frustration is that while force majeure grants a temporary relief to the affected party, frustration brings the contract to an immediate end. Pandit stated, "So, if you don't have a force majeure clause in your agreement and you decide to employ the doctrine of frustration, then you cannot expect the contractual relationship to continue, it comes to an immediate end." So, a party invoking the defense of frustration cannot simultaneously continue to seek the benefits of the contract. For instance, a tenant/licensee cannot avoid paying the rent/license fee and still hope to retain the premises under the doctrine of frustration.

### JUDICIAL TREATMENT AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The views of Indian courts on force majeure and frustration have traditionally been conservative. "Almost all the cases we have had in the Supreme Court and high courts have said that the concept of frustration has to be looked at narrowly. It is not enough if there has been a financial burden or if a party finds it difficult or onerous to perform. The contract must ideally be 'impossible' to perform or the situation must have been so difficult, that the contract itself has become useless from the point of view of the object of the contract. So do keep in mind that economic downturn is not a ground for invoking force majeure and frustration."

Answering the query whether force majeure or frustration of contract continue only for the lockdown or for the



**Pandit:** If the force majeure event continues for longer than specified time, the other party is entitled to terminate





entire duration when the economic impact of COVID-19 continues, Pandit responded, "During the lockdown period you have a good case for calling force majeure or frustration of contract, arguing the contract stands frustrated. Going forward, once the lockdown opens, economic impact of coronavirus continues for a period much longer than the lockdown, is not a ground for invoking concept of force majeure or doctrine of frustration."

He added, "Going forward, we feel that the courts have veered away from their traditional approach. There have been unprecedented moves from the Supreme Court and various high courts, where they have called for extending the period of limitation, extending interim orders which have been passed. All of these points indicate that the judiciary is taking a more relaxed view, especially when a lot of litigation, arising out of COVID-19 will go to court."

The Supreme Court has issued a universal order extending the limitation period for all legal proceedings in India with effect from March 15, 2020 till further orders. Similarly, several high courts have suo moto extended all interim orders passed by them and courts/tribunals under their supervision. In a few cases, courts have departed from settled commercial principles and granted relief to defaulting borrowers against invocation of pledges and classification of their accounts as non-performing assets keeping in mind the impact of the outbreak. Such moves indicate the judiciary's view that the outbreak is indeed an unprecedented event and requires extraordinary solutions. This could trigger a departure from previous precedents. There is a real possibility that force majeure cases arising out of the COVID-19 outbreak may receive a more lenient treatment from courts.

Broadly in case you are not getting revenue, you still need to pay the landlord, in case you want to keep using the premises, unless some kind of relief measures are there in the tailored agreements/contracts. In case of vendors, you may be able to defer the same, negotiate, however, if you have already received those goods or

**Pandit:** Do keep in mind that economic downturn is not a ground for invoking force majeure and frustration

taken those services, you will have to pay. On the query from Shetty, can you really force an industry to pay if there is zero revenue, as per MHA order? The industry on one hand has been disabled from doing business and on the other hand they are expected to pay employees. What does MHA entail? **Aarish Dhunjibhoy** said, "We are a country and a judiciary, which has since time immemorial, always been pro employee, keeping the humanitarian grounds in mind. Violation of the disaster management Act as well as pandemic acts can lead to criminal prosecution for employers in case of non-compliance."



**Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**

**Ashish Ahuja** said, "On reliefs that have come though GST, TDS is almost like providing some Working Capital to the country on a nine per cent interest instead of 18 per cent. It's basically asking people to come back and that they can pay TDS and GST to the government a little later. On RBI, he said that they have allowed postponement of your EMI and installments, installments include the interest for a period of three months. So, this will allow you to keep some cash in



**Himanshu Talwar**

**Dhunjibhoy:** We are a country and a judiciary, which has since time immemorial, always been pro employee

hand at the moment. The downside is the interest continues to accrue, so it would be advisable to pay these installments mid-way. A lot needs to be done by the government and RBI and it requires numerous representations to be made to them."

# ITPO needs to reinvent itself: LC Goyal



The 35<sup>th</sup> edition of Aahar was inaugurated by L C Goyal, IAS, Chairman & Managing Director, ITPO. Reassuring the participants at Aahar, he said, "Large complexes are sensitive to the needs of participants, and ITPO has to go a long way in achieving this. I am going to revisit the entire system and make it robust. In case of any malpractice, please bring it to my attention. We need to focus on infrastructure as well as develop soft skills. The industry is becoming very competitive, more venues are coming up, so the best of services are required." He further added, "Such events are the lifeline of the exhibition industry, which is poised to grow at a faster pace. Recent studies have indicated that Asia and India will be at the forefront of future growth

of the global exhibition industry. This is a huge industry waiting to expand, it is directly or indirectly creating a business of more than 3 lakh crore every year. It has a crucial role to play in achieving the target of a US\$5 trillion economy by the year 2024, as envisioned by the Prime Minister."

I am going to revisit the entire system and make it robust. Kindly let me know of any malpractice

# THSC, Marriott India sign MoU to promote apprenticeship

Tourism & Hospitality Skill Council (THSC), one of the sector skill councils approved by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), has announced its collaboration with Marriott India to promote apprenticeship in the tourism and hospitality sector.

As part of the collaboration, Marriott will engage 5,000 apprentices through its network of 90 properties in the country. The apprentices will be provided with an opportunity to receive hands-on experience at Marriott hotels

The MoU was signed by Rajan Bahadur, Chief Executive Officer, THSC, Neeraj Govil, Senior Vice President, South Asia, Marriott International and Gurmeet Singh, Senior Area Director of Human Resource, South Asia, Marriott International Inc., in the presence of Manish Kumar, Managing Director & CEO, NSDC and Rattan Keshwani, Chairman, THSC.

The partnership will provide aspiring professionals an opportunity to get access to quality training and explore job prospects at Marriott India. The apprentices may seek opportunities in industry-relevant portfolios or through self-employment.

**Manish Kumar**, MD & CEO, NSDC, said, "Apprenticeship has been recognised worldwide as key to providing the right training and acquiring world-class talent. The introduction of optional trades widens



Apprenticeship has been recognised worldwide as key to acquiring world-class talent

the scope of apprenticeship in sectors such as services, retail, tourism, IT& ITes among others."

**Neeraj Govil**, Senior Vice President, South Asia, Marriott International, stated, "We are pleased to partner with NSDC and THSC. It is a step forward in our commitment to building the next generation of hospitality professionals and equipping them to operate in a challenging environment."

# Springfit to donate 2 lakh surgical masks

The production of the first batch of surgical face masks has already begun at Springfit's factory in Coimbatore to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.



Nitin Gupta

Springfit mattress is producing and donating 2,00,000 face masks to support healthcare and other essential service workers across the country who are at the frontline in the battle against the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The company announced that the first batch of production has already begun with the aim of manufacturing 2,00,000 surgical face masks at its Coimbatore factory, and will start donating soon to anyone who needs them, with priority being given to those who work in the medical or essential services.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the ones suffering from this pandemic and with the fearless healthcare workers who are caring for them 24X7. In the present circumstances, we will be making around 2,00,000 surgical masks in a month, which will be donated across the country.

We are also planning to have our two other factories follow the Coimbatore factory's lead for the next several days. We are making the best possible use of our company's significant manufacturing capacity

to provide our community with surgical masks," says **Nitin Gupta**, Director, Springfit.

Also, to help ensure the supply to meet the continually increasing demand for face masks over the next several weeks, Springfit will look to increase production.

Springfit is a domestic leader in the bedding industry. Currently it owns three manufacturing plants in India and a corporate office in Delhi-NCR region.

Springfit maintains high-quality control standards and delivers mattresses with innovative technology used by millions of Indians. Springfit mattresses and sleep products are shipped pan India and can be found at over 1,000 retail stores, exclusive stores, My Sleep stores, and Springfit Studio stores across the country.



In the present circumstances, we will be making around 2,00,000 surgical masks in a month, which will be donated



# Hospitality hit hard

Regional Presidents share the impact of COVID-19 and what the hospitality industry desperately needs from the government for revival after the pandemic.

Kanchan Nath



**Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**  
President, HRAWI

## RESURGENCE STRATEGY OF HOTELS AND TOURISM

Hospitality and tourism contribute nearly 9.2 per cent to our GDP and 10 per cent to the global GDP, account for more than 10 per cent of all the jobs generated in India and globally over 8.5 per cent to the total number of jobs. Presently we are dealing with forced closures of borders, public health advice to practice social distancing, and considerable consumer health concerns. What will follow will be low consumer confidence, reduced disposable income and continued health concerns. For resurgence, one needs to

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We must focus on how much of the 22 mn outbound tourists can we manage to contain within India  
”

focus on survival and revival, in that order:

- **Survival:** Addressing cash flow issues is the first step to survive. There is a need to ensure that Working Capital is in the hands of the people of this sector.
- **Revival:** Exiting the lockdown successfully would depend largely on the impetus by the Govt and the authorities. We have been discussing the various deferments and waivers which the Govt may need to initiate for the resurgence of this sector, whether they be in form of taxes, levy duties, loans and their EMIs, statutory payments and compliances.

## CONTAIN AND GROW MICE IN INDIA

This pandemic has brought unprecedented societal changes that may result in long-term reductions in travel, be transformative for the entire planet, and will dramatically affect tourism. Every destination will need to re-invent itself and do a ground-up restoration of its tourism. India gets 11 million inbound and 22 million outbound tourists. A lot of this is MICE, destination weddings etc. We must focus on how much of the 22 million can we manage to contain within India. If we can get the Govt to incentivise this sector it would help immensely. Incentives could be in the form of tax benefits, which will help the sector bounce back.



**Pranav Singh**  
President, HRAEI

## LARGE-SCALE CANCELLATIONS

The Indian hospitality industry is likely to be hit really hard, due to the worldwide pandemic. March has borne the brunt of many large-scale cancellations across the corporate, MICE and leisure segments. Tier-I, tier-II and tier-III hotel markets in India continue to witness huge erosion in business due to the pandemic. The Indian government, just like many other governments

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We have requested for a moratorium on GST for the hospitality sector for at least a few months  
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have closed their borders and suspended visas till April 15. All international airlines have closed their operations to Indian destinations till the lockdown. Indian airlines have suspended

operations to international destinations and have reduced their domestic operations. To add on to this, the governments have requested people to work from home. All the above have contributed to total loss of business for the hospitality sector. In the coming months too, the industry should brace itself for very challenging times. Resurgence for the tourism and hospitality industry will be quite an uphill task after the COVID-19 pandemic. The lockdown and travel restrictions have already affected this industry --already hit by a slowdown -- to a large extent. There have been large-scale cancellations of bookings and new bookings have stopped. So far, overall loss of business is to the tune of 15 to 20 per cent of annual revenue. If the lockdown continues this will further increase the loss.

## APPEAL FOR RELIEF FROM GOVERNMENT

We have appealed to the government requesting for a moratorium on GST for the hospitality sector for at least a few months. We have also sent representations to respective state governments in the region seeking waiver of property tax & municipal taxes for one year, relaxation in excise license fee, extension of the payment of excise license renewal fee, complete GST holiday for 12 months, immediate sanction of funds to support salaries, PF and professional tax of employees.



**K. Syama Raju**  
President, SIHRA

### **DECLINE IN OVERALL REVENUE**

We first heard about COVID-19 at the end of December 2019, little did we know at the time the impact it would have on India and the world. 2019 had been a good year for the hospitality industry and it was expected to continue in 2020.

By February 2020, it was clear that COVID-19 was going to impact the hospitality and tourism industries and by March 2020 it was evident that nothing would be the same and it was a global pandemic.

The current lockdown is essential and is the only way that the spread of the disease can be controlled. In a country like ours with one of the largest populations in the world, it is the only way to contain the spread. The effects of this pandemic will result in a decline in the overall revenue of the hospitality sector. Hotel owners will incur losses due to operating expenses, debt and interest repayments.

SIHRA has made a representation to the state governments and FHRAI has also made a representation to the PMO and Finance Ministries. The government has responded favourably.

### **LOOK AHEAD, STAY POSITIVE**

We must now look ahead; hotels must be prepared to adapt to a rapidly changing environment.

They should have a plan in place for the time when demand bounces back. It would be advisable to maintain minimum operations with a small team so that once the situation improves, they are ready to commence full-fledged operations.

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**Hotels should have a plan in place for the time when demand bounces back**  
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Through subtle marketing the hotels can ensure brand recall. It would help to focus on local demand initially since outstation travel would still be low in the aftermath of the pandemic as people would be wary about travelling. The hotels should also ensure that they are complying with revised government norms, if any. We must focus on remaining positive and looking forward and being prepared for better times ahead.

We are doing our bit, meanwhile COVID-19 has taken pandemic proportions in many countries and in view of the seriousness of the matter, Govt of India and State Governments have taken several preemptive measures to contain this disease in the country. Frequent washing of hands with frothing soaps is recognised as most efficient and effective measure in the listed preventive measures for controlling the spread of the virus.



**Surendra Kumar Jaiswal**  
President, HRANI

### **COVID-19 CRIPPLES HOSPITALITY**

The hospitality industry had gone through the toughest times in last several decades. It has managed to surpass oil shocks, wars, financial crises, and many such situations. However, COVID-19 seems to be the most severe crisis ever faced by the industry. The effect of the COVID-19 coronavirus has crippled tourism and hospitality in India at an astonishing pace. Occupancy across hotels in key cities has declined rapidly. Such a steep decline in such a short period of time has never been witnessed by the sector.

### **BLANKET MORATORIUM OF 12 MONTHS ON REPAYMENTS**

The financial impact on the hospitality and tourism industry can only be assessed once this pandemic is over. Hospitality and tourism has been the worst hit. The Govt of India has been requested to rapidly deploy a 'Survival and Revival' financial package to the Indian hospitality and tourism industry. Detailed representations for relief have been submitted to both Central and state governments from HRANI and FHRAI. The representations majorly covered the following:

- To stabilise and support the sector in the near term, and

set up a government corpus to support and fund the sustenance salaries of all the affected employees in the tourism, travel and hospitality sector to ensure that there are no job losses.

- Extend immediately a blanket moratorium of 12 months on repayments of interest and principal amounts including Working Capital payments and overdrafts. For micro and small establishments, explore a waiver period of interest beyond one year.
- Advise all credit rating agencies to suspend all corporate ratings during this period and to not issue any 'outlook' statements which can adversely impact the credit risk profile of companies and, therefore, their cost of funding.
- Provide a 12-month corporate tax holiday to travel, tourism and hospitality sectors.
- Waive off all statutory,

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**The industry is hopeful that the govt will consider the recommendations to combat COVID-19**  
”

financial and non-financial obligations with immediate effect. These will include items such as Provident Fund, ESI contribution, GST payments, adjustments of advance tax including excise, VAT and levies on utilities such as power and water by respective state governments.

- Waiver on property tax for minimum three years.

The industry is hopeful that the task force constituted by Govt will consider the recommendations to combat the economic effects of COVID 19.



# HONING SKILLS FOR HOTELS

Hoteliers share how human resource managers can train and retain skilled as well as talented staff and how to put a stop to attrition of these young associates.



Kanchan Nath





**Rishabh Tandon**

**Rishabh Tandon**  
**Area Director of HR – North India, IHG**  
**Director of HR at Crowne Plaza Greater Noida**

**SKILLING TALENT IN A  
HIGH PRESSURE ENVIRONMENT**

At Crowne Plaza Greater Noida and IHG, talent is constantly engaged in multiple on-the-job learning projects. As there is pressure to maintain standards, high potential talent always aim for recognition and speedy growth preferably within the organisation. IHG hotels in South West Asia are known for their winning culture with colleagues. As a part of the winning culture, colleagues are appreciated through 'Thank You' cards on a weekly basis for each act exceeding expectations. This weekly event is celebrated as Winning Ways Wednesdays.

We believe that there are no difficult colleagues, however they may be in a challenging phase of life. During such challenging moments, we aim to initiate conversations with our colleagues. With an open-door policy, colleagues at all levels feel free to approach their respective department heads, HR head or general manager of the organisation.

We display Escalation Matrix on our notice boards with names, photographs, contact numbers and email ids of the hotel leadership team, HR, general manager and area general manager. Colleagues are consistently engaged in 'quarterly check-in' conversations regarding

Colleagues are consistently engaged in 'quarterly check-in' conversations regarding their overall performance

their overall performance, behaviour and development within the organisation.

**MANTRA TO RETAIN STAFF**

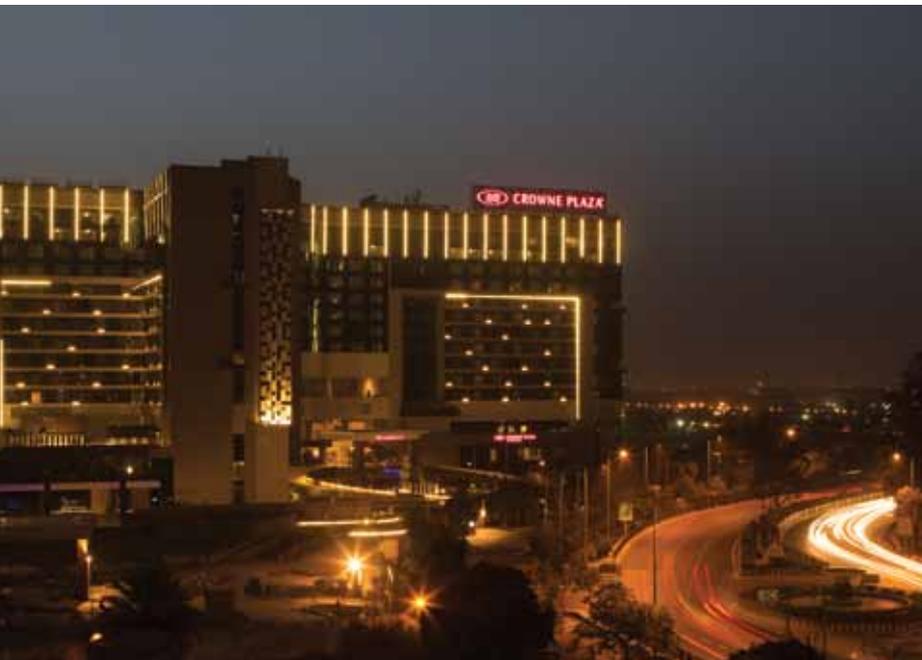
My mantra to retain staff is to consistently engage our colleagues in a learning project. The organisation works on a 70:20:10 learning model, where 70 per cent learning happens with on-the-job training and Standard Operating Procedures' refresher sessions.

20 per cent learning is focussed through planned coaching and mentoring sessions while 10 per cent learning is assisted by classroom and online training programs Each section head is accountable for measuring learning deliverables and their outcomes. Training efficiency is also measured on a monthly basis with the support of certified departmental trainers.

**TRAINED AND RETAINED AFTER 12<sup>TH</sup> CLASS**

About 95 per cent of our current hotel strength comprises 12<sup>th</sup> class pass-outs and all of them have been trained in hotels/hospitality vertical. Primarily non-hotel management staff who have been given training are working as chefs, stewards and in the housekeeping department. They are working in transportation and even in the engineering department as technicians after completion of internship in the role.

The hotel aims at training colleagues from economically challenged backgrounds. This will indeed make a difference in the lives of those who come from the nearby community.



**Sarbendra Sarkar**  
**Founder and Managing Director**  
**Cygnett Hotels and Resorts**

**SKILLING TALENT IN A  
HIGH PRESSURE ENVIRONMENT**

Talented people are the actual asset of any company and for the hospitality industry in particular. The best practice one can follow to manage them is to understand the needs of such human resources and their mindset. The company should try to impart the value and culture right from the beginning to mould them as future leaders and also help them assess their growth path.

We do this to help them feel connected with the company. In addition, a company should also boost their enthusiasm by doing team-building exercises and assigning them new challenges.

**MANTRA TO RETAIN STAFF**

In today's high pressure environment, hospitality professionals seek to have a comfortable life to give their best at work. Therefore, we try to maintain their work-life balance. Our priority is not skills but the cultural mindset.

Therefore, we look for that quality while hiring staff who can be skilled with due training. It is important for us that the employee gets the right orientation process to work effectively. Our company's vision and

methodology should be clear to all employees and that way we are able to retain staff. There is a constant emphasis on proper mentoring whereby employees have a mentor to look up to.

The focus is always on employee recognition, be it monetarily or otherwise. We also ensure that staff goes through regular training exercises. At Cygnett we conduct regular townhall meetings, and also have a strong mechanism for employee feedback to work on our policies for their betterment.

**TRAINED AND RETAINED  
AFTER 12<sup>TH</sup> CLASS**

We have engaged ourselves with NSDC (National Skill Development Corporation) to ensure staff with less education is aptly skilled. We hire such young talent as job trainees and give them opportunities in various departments such as housekeeping, Food & Beverage services and others.



There is a constant emphasis on proper mentoring whereby employees have a mentor to look up to



**Sarbendra Sarkar**





Anil Mishra

**Anil Mishra**  
**Corporate HR Manager**  
**Lords Hotels and Resorts**

**SKILLING TALENT IN A HIGH PRESSURE ENVIRONMENT**

Workplace gossip should not be relied upon for information about an employee, hence the evaluation of an employee should be done after due diligence. We ensure that we are clear in our assessment and presentation of the problems of talented yet difficult staff. We try and point out the effect that problems can have on team performance.

We approach these subjects in a sincere manner, however with the tone of a mentor. Sometimes the best route to a solution is not always the direct one. Our goal is to give an employee a chance to speak

interaction with effective communication; and being transparent and just with each service delivery.

We focus on delivering quality guest service using modern and cutting-edge systems combined with the rich Indian heritage of being a kind host.

**MANTRA TO RETAIN STAFF**

We must develop a work culture which encourages employees to align their goals with that of the organisation. At Lords Hotels & Resorts we strive to infuse synergy among our human resources. As a result, they also learn to speak the same



Workplace gossip should not be relied upon for information; evaluation should be done after due diligence



about what is keeping her from being a not so difficult employee. One needs to express that you're there to guide employees and develop solutions along with them to make things better.

At Lords Hotels & Resorts we believe in skilling our employees to work to their optimum level in a high pressure environment. Today, with a legacy of over 10 years, we have become a name to reckon with in the hospitality industry.

We look forward to welcoming guests from across the globe with exceptional services; leading every

language of commitment when it comes to achieving organisational success.

Also, staff can be retained by conducting many employee development activities like training analysis, cross training, job enlargement, job rotation, etc.

**TRAINED AND RETAINED AFTER 12<sup>TH</sup> CLASS**

Approximately 45 per cent of our employees are undergraduates. We enrol them as trainees and teach them to become hospitality professionals.



## **Maverik Mukerji** **General Manager Delegate** **Novotel & ibis Bengaluru Outer Ring Road**

### **SKILLING TALENT IN A HIGH PRESSURE ENVIRONMENT**

Talented employees have the opportunity to fast-track their career through various development programs such as AELP (Accor Emerging Leader Program for associates who have the potential to be team leaders); NGL (New Gen Leader Program which inspires hotel school graduates who have the potential to be assistant managers); IHMP and GM Pass (International Hotel Management Program for Executive Committee members who have the potential to be general managers).

Employees are given the opportunity to be a part of various decision-making committees such as Corporate Social Responsibility Committee, Welfare and Cafeteria Committee, Safety and Emergency Committee. They are also given the opportunity to be a part of strategic meetings like the P&L and MIS.

A strong reward and incentive program is in place for high performers. This program is higher than the rewards given by our competitors and include Accor Value Champion, Cross Selling Incentive, to name a few.

### **MANTRA TO RETAIN STAFF**

Attrition was found to be the highest in the associates and to retain them the following mantra is used – Fast-track programs (AELP, NGL, IHMP); accommodation allowance which is over and above the salary to

negate the high cost of living in Bengaluru; and various indoor and outdoor activities for employee well-being. For indoor activities we have a staff gymnasium, table tennis table, billiards and monthly yoga sessions.

Outdoor pursuits include cricket, football and badminton sessions. Work-life balance is key, and we are on a trial period for a 5-day work week and have a strong mechanism to monitor working hours in order to reduce long hours.

### **TRAINED AND RETAINED AFTER 12<sup>TH</sup> CLASS**

Approximately 17 per cent of our permanent employees are either 12<sup>th</sup> class pass-outs or school dropouts. To enhance their learning, we encourage them to enrol for English communications course from Veta (a premier training organisation), and successful candidates are reimbursed the tuition fees.

To increase their skills, NIIT is roped in for their self-learning. Further, the hotel has a library for employees.



**Maverik Mukerji**



Work-life balance is key, and we are on a trial period for a five-day work week





**Nihar Mehta**

**Nihar Mehta**  
**General Manager – Human Resources**  
**Sarovar Hotels and Resorts**

**SKILLING TALENT IN A  
HIGH PRESSURE ENVIRONMENT**

Difficult yet talented staff is handled in a number of ways. One way is to know of these employees. There is a time and productivity factor with such employees, where hotels / hospitality chains have to analyse productivity of such employees. The company always addresses problem areas and issues with such employees very transparently. As and when an issue /problem area comes to light, it is documented clearly, and a solution is worked out with all parties in agreement.

Clear communication and feedback sharing with all concerned plays a major role in handling such employees. At regular intervals, our company has been giving interesting assignments to such employees, which can keep them motivated, and where the organisation knows they can excel. Keeping communication with HR department open and making the department part of all decisions related to such employees and situations also plays a key role in handling difficult yet talented staff and keeping out of trouble areas.

 Clear communication and feedback sharing with all concerned plays a major role in handling employees 

**MANTRA TO RETAIN STAFF**

Employee retention, especially of good employees is important. To give recognition to employees in terms of awards, appreciation certificates for deserving employees play an important role for retention, especially for employees working at entry-level jobs. Encouraging seniors to be more understanding to team members helps build a positive workplace.

Making efforts towards having positive workplace relationships also helps in retaining employees. Allowing flexibility in certain cases for employees and also addressing employee concerns at the right time helps to retain key employees. Workplaces should be encouraged to have employee-friendly policies, employee engagement practices and fun activities.

**TRAINED AND RETAINED  
AFTER 12<sup>TH</sup> CLASS**

Approximately 10-15 per cent of staff at hotels are 12<sup>th</sup> class pass-outs and have been trained for working at hotels. Many of such staff are working at entry-level jobs, after they are trained at hotels for respective departments.

Others are working at supervisory levels and mid-segment roles once they have spent a good amount of time understanding the respective functioning of departments. Such employees are hired for housekeeping/food & beverage/front office/kitchen/back office department after being well trained.



# Service providers seek govt support

The hospitality, F&B and tourism industry and sub-sectors, which have been severely hit by the COVID-19 crisis, seek support from the government to address challenges.

The hospitality, F&B and tourism industry and sub-sectors have sought government intervention and made a representation to the Prime Minister of India, to offer support to the sector to withstand the challenges posed by the current COVID-19 crisis.

**Rakesh Kumar**, Chairman, India Exposition Mart, said, "Hospitality industry supports the travel, tourism, and F&B industry and contributes ₹5 lakh crores to the Indian economy, engaging a sizeable number of people from MSME sector. The hospitality, F&B and tourism industry has been severely hit and is witnessing a massive distress due to the lockdown."

He added that the hospitality industry has submitted a detailed representation to the Prime Minister of India which includes the following:

## DETAILED REPRESENTATION

- Six per cent Interest Subvention to the entire hospitality sub-sector
- Moratorium of EMI payments for loans and working capital from financial institutions (both banking & non-banking)
- Deferment of all Statutory Dues such as Advance Tax payments, PF, ESIC, customs duties at the Central government level or at any state government level, the excise fees, taxes, bank guarantees and security

deposits and deferment of all renewals, across the sub-sectors supporting tourism, travel, hospitality and F&B industry

- Waiving of Electricity and Water Charges for the next six months or charged on the basis of actual consumption (not as per load)
- Wages Compensation for the employees
- Speedy GST Refund
- Auto-renewal of 70+ licenses which a hotel must acquire/renew for two years at no cost
- Amendment in clauses relating to EPCG
- Waiver of Bar License Fee and reduction in excise duty linked to consumption
- Offering a one-time, mobilisation fund/advance to manufacturing organisations from sub-sectors of hospitality that could re-tool and start producing to meet the demands of the healthcare sector for Covid-19



Rakesh Kumar

Commenting on the representation, **Hari Dadoo**, President, India International Hospitality Expo, said, "We have requested authorities to consider 50 per cent wage compensation for the employees in the sector."



Hospitality industry supports the travel, tourism, and F&B industry and contributes ₹5 lakh crores to the economy





# Developing quality & Tier-III markets

**Vibhas Prasad**, Director, Leisure Hotels Group shares more about the 72-key boutique business hotel, The Hideaway, which has opened recently in Greater Noida.

 Kanchan Nath



**Vibhas Prasad**

Leisure Hotels Group, a prominent hospitality chain with 26 operational properties across the country, has announced the launch of its 27th property, The Hideaway, at Greater Noida. The opening of this hotel also heralds the entry of the Group into the Delhi-NCR region.

## **GROWING WITH GREATER NOIDA**

Elaborating on the new project, Prasad said, "We are co-invested in the project. The partner had the foresight to identify this location few years ago. Greater Noida is a manufacturing, commercial, industrial and IT hub and a satellite city for Delhi with an upcoming international airport. And, with the India Expo Centre in close proximity, it already has a thriving hospitality, convention and banqueting business. We expect to corner a small market share of this existing and growing demand to

not just meet but exceed our business goals in the short and long-term."

"There are a few branded hotels in this area, but they are priced too high. We saw a gap just underneath the pricing to be able to launch right now. We have launched at ₹3,000 to ₹4,000 plus taxes, but this is just the inaugural offer till March end, eventually we will be at ₹4,000 to ₹5000. Some hotels here have a pricing in the range of ₹6,000 to ₹7,000 because there are a lot of corporate clients. They come through entitlements, and if you offer quality products, they will be happy to lower their costs and move into a hotel like ours," shared Prasad.

## **TIER-II AND TIER-III**

On brand strategy he added, "When the company got formed 30 years ago, we were largely looking at the leisure market. 20 years into our journey, we realised there are tertiary markets in Uttarakhand and UP. Just as Greater Noida is a satellite town for Delhi, there are tertiary markets like Bareilly and Kashipur. So, we helped some family friends to build a hotel on the land that they



We did not want to come into a large city and Greater Noida fits the tertiary market segment for us





# hotels in Tier-II

owned. We helped them with bank finance, building the hotel and then we took it on a management basis. Kashipur and Bareilly were our first forays in the business hotel segment. We did not want to come into a large city and Greater Noida fits the tertiary market segment for us. The return on capital does not justify the investment for us, therefore we will not move into a city like Delhi at the moment.”

## EXPANSION PLANS

The hotel is part of an earlier announced expansion plan of adding nine hotels and resorts in destinations like Haridwar, Rishikesh, Dharamsala etc. to the Group’s existing portfolio through a ₹160 crore investment by the end of 2021. “We have a good opportunity in Dehradun, it has huge potential for a business hotel. There is a 45-key hotel which we are currently contracting for and it will run in 2021. We are seeing a good demand for most of our markets from Delhi, but if people are transiting from Mumbai to Delhi, that is taking a toll. I think this is a good opportunity”, he concluded.

## WORRY FREE LEISURE WITH BUSINESS

The Hideaway brand is a quintessential Leisure Hotels Group legacy offering worry free leisure time, away from the hectic routine in a city. The Hideaway boasts of 72 well-styled boutique rooms. The hotel offers Premier rooms and Superior rooms with round-the-clock in-room dining experience. The Hideaway also offers three dining outlets that include an all-day diner L’attitude, and an option to experience far-eastern culinary art at the speciality restaurant, Mikuni. The Cafetiere at lobby level offers a variety of delicatessen short eats with a choice of beverages. Besides the

boutique nature of the hotel, another highlight of The Hideaway is that it offers almost 50,000 sqft of indoor and outdoor venue spaces for conferences and events.

Leisure Hotels Group is a prominent hospitality player in northern India and the largest across the state of Uttarakhand. Its portfolio of smart business hotels, boutique resorts, bespoke villas & luxury camps, incorporates beautiful properties in the tourist states & scenic destinations offering leisure, adventure, wilderness, wellness & spiritual experiences. The Group is soon coming up with an upscale travellers’ hybrid hotel in Rishikesh under the brand "Bedzzz".



We have a good opportunity in Dehradun, it has huge potential for a business hotel



Since the time of the first venture at Nainital - The Naini Retreat in September 1989, the company has had the opportunity to serve the largest number of tourists in Uttarakhand at much sought-after locations i.e. Nainital, Corbett National Park, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Ramgarh, Rajaji National Park, Kausani, Kasauli, Dharamsala etc.

Leisure Hotels in its three decades years of operations has struck deep and meaningful relationships with many travel companies in promoting the hotels in India & abroad. Leisure Hotels Group also owns the resorts now run by Mahindra Holidays & Resorts in Naukuchiatal & Corbett National Park and Taj Hotels & Resorts in Corbett National Park.

# Sustainable

We continue our series on purchase managers, particularly as Aahar 2020 is one of the major events we have had in 2020 before the growing impact of COVID-19 was felt.

 Kanchan Nath



Arun Raju

## Arun Raju Vice President & Head of Projects, InterGlobe Hotels

### PURCHASE TRENDS 2020

The biggest purchase trend we see going forward is top hotels companies including ours moving to a 'one stop solution' where a hotel company does not engage with multiple vendors, instead they connect with a single system-oriented solution provider for their business needs. This can be related to HVAC systems, security solutions, F&B processes of production, waste management, to mention a few.

The purchase trends are likely to be more B2B (Business to Business) going forward instead of B2C (Business to Consumer). Each hospitality company has its own set of business needs, but once this market is streamlined there

purchase of kitchen cooking equipment and rooms & public area furniture. The public area design has been done very well and we have used a variety of furniture to add colour and a very energetic look and feel to the public area. So the choice of furniture for seating areas, F&B and the lighting requirements are a few items we are closely tracking. We have also lined up a very extensive list especially for operational supplies and equipment like Signage's, Information Technology needs, FF&E reserves.

### TRENDS FOR RESTAURANT PURCHASE

As a hotel company our focus is always on improving our F&B story with new local cuisines, signature drinks and snacks and constantly providing new F&B offers and box meals or combos. So as far as procurement is concerned we are looking for new design and colourful crockery to serve the dishes, apart from this we are looking at new styles in glassware for in-room dining cutlery, buffet utensils, table cutlery and even banquet areas to integrate these with the new age designs and F&B concept of our upcoming hotels.

### CHALLENGES FOR PURCHASING

The biggest challenge remains the global market trends. Due to the current situation, many foreign trade partners have put business on hold, which has affected all concerned stakeholders. Even the government policy on imports like duty & GST benefit under EPCG license can impact the purchasing strategy. Being part of an international hotel company, many of our purchases are done from international vendors. The general issues are always the impact of forex changes, international taxation, custom clearances and delivery timelines which always impact the construction period. But having said that our projects team and all team members are experienced in development and we are well versed



### GO LOCAL

- Induction Plates
- Water Dispensers
- Fabricated Local Kitchen
- Kitchen Hoods
- Masala Grinders and Juicers

is potential to really grow. We expect more engagement with consultants and system providers who would further connect with vendors to secure goods and materials.

### EQUIPMENT WORTH LOOKING OUT FOR IN 2020

We have three hotels which are due for completion by the end of next year, so we are actively involved in the procurement side of the project phase. Most of our purchase is going to be focussed on the interior works and for the BOH areas. We expect a huge surge in

 The purchase trends are likely to be more B2B (Business to Business) going forward instead of B2C (Business to Consumer) 

# purchases

with the whole procurement cycle and timelines, which are factored in during construction. Until something unprecedented happens the challenges don't impact the operations in a major way even though challenges like these always persist

## DIFFERENT HOTELS, DIFFERENT REQUIREMENTS FOR PURCHASE

From a design point of view our hotels follow very detailed brand specifications which ensure standard products across all regions. This has helped procure the necessary furniture, fixtures and equipment with ease through trusted vendors and consultants. Even with our new generation properties and all new refurbishments the design intent has thrown in new requirements and expectations, but now we have been able to understand the finer details and crux of the design instructions and corresponding requirements. So, this was a change which has been understood and completed. But now we have started to explore other brand opportunities within our partner JV and the product under construction has a very new look and feel with a different area programme, GFA requirements and design elements. For these types of hotels, we need to explore the global market as well as local alternatives to procure the right design interiors and fixtures and furniture items. We have gone about exploring all items, held multiple meetings to understand the design story and be mindful of the site constraints and location. Once all stakeholders agreed on the same thought process, we have gone about discussing each and every line item to be purchased for the specific area. It surely is a challenge but a great learning experience for the team.

## MANTRA TO STAY ECONOMICAL

The best option of course is to club orders for multiple hotels in order to drive volumes and ensure the best available rates. For this, every year we run through the capital expenditure requirements of all the hotels across the portfolio and we work with the operator to club the requirements and order accordingly. To ensure this we communicate a lot internally and with all concerned groups and look at the best quality alternatives for the specific requirement. With new products entering the market and as mentioned earlier with an emerging trend of a single system-oriented solution provider the aim is to be flexible with the requirements and understand the highest and best use features of any equipment. We engage with many solution providers and vendors and ensure there is enough competition in the market for the best value for money equipment and furniture. We push the operator to look beyond the set specifications and our team also does a thorough research in order to understand new products in the market.

## GST IMPACT ON PURCHASE

In the earlier taxation system one big issue with purchases was that different line items fell under different tax slabs varying from 12-28 per cent depending on the nature of items. But with the beginning of the GST regime one big advantage has been that the GST tax rates have been streamlined in one tax bracket of 18 per cent. So overall the taxes have averaged out and now there is a better understanding of the entire procurement process. In case of direct imports we are not impacted by GST as there are no taxes involved, but for local purchases the GST taxes are simplified and straightforward, bringing in more clarity.





**Madhusoodanan Pillai**

## **Madhusoodanan Pillai** **Materials Manager, Crowne Plaza Greater Noida**

### **EQUIPMENT WORTH LOOKING OUT FOR IN 2020**

Trending for 2020 is plastic-free hotels and we are on top of it and have already replaced most of the items. We are about to start our in-house plant for glass water bottling refilling system for mineral water.

### **CHALLENGES OF PURCHASE**

Food & Beverage is the major holding area of procurement for hotels and restaurants where you have to give maximum quality products to your customers irrespective of the location and distance from the main market. Location is a major challenge for procurement,

 The major challenge is market stability, price is linked to supply and demand ratio

especially when you have committed for a last minute requirement with no empowerment with purchase managers and you are sitting in a remote location but still you have to manage the situation efficiently and effectively for your valuable customers. Another major challenge is the market stability, price is linked to supply and demand ratio, this happens every year for some products without any prediction of the particular item.

### **DIFFERENT HOTELS, DIFFERENT REQUIREMENTS FOR PURCHASE**

Requirements from hotel to hotel can be different especially for engineering-related products, and depend on the hotel projects, products and equipment. As far as F&B and general supplies are concerned, most of the products seem common and similar. Operating equipment can be of different brands, the choice will depend on spending power and the given budget.

### **GST IMPACT ON PURCHASE**

Earlier, the tax rebate was applicable only for F&B procurement but currently hotels can claim tax rebate for the entire product irrespective of the nature of the product, after the GST implementation, which is a great advantage for controlling the procurement cost.

### **PURCHASE RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS**

Coronavirus is a global crisis for the business and revenue, but hotel procurement is still not affected much. We are focussing on saving costs for 2020 as the overheads are fixed irrespective business and revenue. Kitchen is of course, the major spending area where cost control needs to be done by identifying top 10 spending items from the categories like dairy, meat, vegetable & fruits and grocery, which can always be identified from the system and frequently analysed with chefs.





**Carmo Rodrigues**  
**Materials Manager, Novotel Goa Dona Sylvia**

**PURCHASE TRENDS 2020**

On the all-India platform, purchase managers will look for 'Make in India' vendors rather than depend on vendors who rely on imports from China etc., which have virtually come down to a trickle due the coronavirus outbreak. Focussing locally, Goa being a net importer of almost all perishable food & non-perishable goods, the trend will be to source new vendors from Maharashtra, Rajasthan etc. and not depend solely on supplies from Karnataka. Whilst no one can predict the future, it's primarily to deal with the major supply chain disruptions due to flooding in many parts of Karnataka during monsoons in the last two years. We are planning to purchase a new combi oven for the bakery and induction cookers for the main 24x7 coffee shop.

**TRENDS FOR RESTAURANT PURCHASE**

Trends include, exploring new innovative sources for the food counter enhancement props, procuring eco-friendly products in food service like plastic-free straws & stirrers, and customised digital menus.

**CHALLENGES FOR PURCHASE**

Meeting tight delivery deadlines for imported equipment, anxiety over delayed deliveries for items ordered especially against advance payments, remains one of the major tasks haunting purchase departments for closure. The financial status of these suppliers followed by their health and safety industrial practices is another concern. In administration, retaining talent remains a constant challenge.

**DIFFERENT HOTELS, DIFFERENT REQUIREMENTS FOR PURCHASE**

Requirements of diverse branded hotels differ ranging

from Capex to Sinage's, linen specifications, guest toiletries, stationery etc. Lot of time and effort goes into the selection of reliable and capable vendors. Understandably, every purchase manager has to make time to go through this learning experience, to have a hands-on knowledge of the brand standards.

**MANTRA TO STAY ECONOMICAL**

The age old proverb of procurement still remains in force – to get the best product at an affordable rate in addition to the vendor's selection, that is, "You don't get what you deserve, you get what you negotiate". And, one must not forget the daily purchase protocol questions – what to buy, how much to buy, when to buy and how much to pay etc.

**GST IMPACT ON PURCHASE**

GST regime has been a sort of mixed bag, while few products saw price reduction, there was no sign of the much hyped prices sliding marvel.

**PURCHASE RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS**

Chemicals used for water treatment of the swimming pool, Made in China brand standard guest toiletries, paper products etc.



**Carmo Rodrigues**

**GO LOCAL**

- The Goan Pork Chops & Sausages
- Kingfish, Modhso & Dyna Fish Fillet,
- Goa Dairy Milk & Ghee
- Godrej Chicken
- McCain French Fries & Dawat Basmati Rice & Goan Brown Rice

When it comes to procurement,  
 you don't get what you deserve,  
 you get what you negotiate



# Interior designs that **impress**

With a vision of giving an ordinary looking space an extraordinary touch, H.S. Ahuja and Associates (HSAA) creates designs to bring to life their clients' dreams.



Hema

Time has played a crucial role in the evolution of design. It has changed perceptions and circumstances. Design is nothing but a response to a requirement which is put forth by society or posed by a client. If the requirement changes, so does the design. HSAA's expertise lies in giving an ordinary looking space an extraordinary touch. It needs a third-eye vision and a willingness to take the boat into the deep ocean. Subhash Ahuja, CEO and Founder of H. S. Ahuja and Associates, a Delhi-based interior design company, has the distinction of taking his dream beyond selling latest furniture to creating timeless interior impressions. The company has successfully created numerous luxurious houses, restaurants, hotels, schools and villas projects located all over India. The current hotel projects they are working on include MJ Clarks Inn Express, Rishikesh; RS Residency Jhansi, Sayaji Effotel Hotel in Indore; Guwahati hotel; Bengali Sweets in South Extension, New Delhi, among others. Recent hotel projects done by them include Fairyland Clarks Inn, Bhopal; Status Resort, Bhoumri Jod Bhopal; Sagar Ratna, Noida and Swagath.



Bespoke furniture and choicest of fabrics create a vivid colour palette bound by neutral coloured flooring and walls. Warm lighting accentuates the colours making them attractive and appealing. Carpet flooring has been used in the luxury rooms and lobby area & wooden flooring is in ordinary rooms as per clients' taste. Quality finishing and furnishing completes the exuberant feel while a clever play of complementing and contrasting materials helps create a stylish and comfortable living space. "There is nothing I like more than an empty room and a head full of ideas. From the concept and design to fabrication and installation, we can tailor-make lighting and furniture as per your brief, experimenting with style, size and material. Tell us what you have in mind, and we will create it for you," says **Hema**, Principal Interior Designer, HSSA. Contact: [hsaaco@gmail.com](mailto:hsaaco@gmail.com), [www.hsaa.co.in](http://www.hsaa.co.in)



From the concept and design to fabrication and installation, they can tailor-make lighting and furniture as per client brief





M. Sathish Kumar



# Tools of the cooking trade

EssEmm Corporation, established in the year 1997 in the industrial city of Coimbatore, is promoted by **M. Sathish Kumar**, B.E., M.B.A. He shares more about trends in this segment.

**Kindly share the USP of your company? What kind of growth have you had in the last five years, especially in 2019? What is the plan for 2020?**

EssEmm Corporation is a unique solution providing company for all commercial kitchen equipment needs. We try to understand the challenges faced by the customer in food preparation and provide the right equipment for automating the processes. Cosmos is the registered trademark of EssEmm Corporation. Under Cosmos brand, there is an array of hi-tech kitchen machines for vegetable washing and cutting, and rice and masala grinding. Also, there are dough kneaders, potato peelers, steamers and cook wok, to name a few. In last five years, the growth has been steady. The turnover has doubled compared to what it was five years back. Cosmos Cook Wok Prime has been introduced into the market in 2020, we hope this new product will grab a sizeable market share.

**What is your marketing and promotion strategy pan India?**

We are marketing and promoting our products worldwide by participating in trade shows, online marketing and media etc. Regular live demonstrations and customer interaction also play a pivotal role in our marketing.

**What are the new trends in terms of kitchen equipment for the hospitality industry in India?**

Customers nowadays want green energy products and fuel-efficient machines. To fulfill that, EssEmm is also introducing induction range cooking systems and a more energy efficient equipment line.

**Kindly elaborate on the new offerings that you have for the hospitality industry.**

Cosmos Cook Wok has been a revolution in bulk gravy and curry making for banquets and catering functions. EssEmm has introduced Cook Wok Prime with gas and induction options which is an advanced cooking system. An automated control panel with time and temperature control and multi-rotation stirrer makes this machine stand out from the rest in the market. Also, Cosmos ZETA A8 is an advanced machine which can cut all kinds of vegetables.



Cosmos Cook Wok Prime has been introduced this year, we hope this new product will grab a sizeable market share



## Dine in style

◆ Ashley Furniture Home Store launches a new range of dining room furniture – Windville. Brought to India by Dash Square, the dining room ensemble offers a brand-new interpretation of heritage classic style. The dark brown Windville is rustic yet refined. The table and chairs are made of wood and mango veneers. Windville dining room bench serves up a tasteful helping of rustically refined style. Classic cross-buck profile is beautifully on trend, as in the infusion of mango veneers for dramatic, grainy character. It comfortably seats three and given its generous scale, three's not a crowd. The five-piece dining room set invites you to gather around in conviviality and celebrate everyday.



## Walk in closets



◆ Plüsch is now offering the discerning Indian clientele Schmalenbach's handcrafted and completely customised wardrobes and furniture solutions. With a simple mantra, "if you have the space, we have the system," Schmalenbach offers built-in and walk-in wardrobes. With this philosophy, the clients have to simply envision and specify their requirements and dimensions of space, and Schmalenbach converts those visions into production-ready designs.

## Recline in comfort

◆ After a long tiring day all you need is comfortable seating to recline in your favourite relaxing posture. Bring home an ultra-modern power sofa or a recliner that can surely add elegance and a comprehensive look to your state-of-the-art living spaces. Designer recliners are modern furniture pieces ensuring that you are at ease for hours without any unnecessary backaches.



Keeping this in mind, IDUS, the luxurious furniture store has launched its Collection of Recliners that will infuse a classy and invitingly cozy feel to your living spaces.



## Exclusive bedrooms

◆ Delhi-based interior designer and stylist Sanjyt Singh, known for his bold and creative ideas, has unveiled exclusive bedrooms that stand testimony to his design sensibilities – unconventional décor where every small detail is important to curate a memorable look. Each bedroom is an exquisite combination of diverse colours and materials with a strong focus on details. Natural light bathes the space through floor-to-ceiling glazing, acting as an asset in which subtle features and surfaces anchor themselves.



## Patterns on the floor

◆ French-based Chevron Patterned Flooring Collection by NOTION is a modern and technologically superior take on the floor, available in lovely designer hues with a colour range of over 200 options. With a two-layer engineered technology it is known to have a lifelong span, as it doesn't get cracked easily. It is manufactured in a single size and milled to precision, with a worry-free installation. This collection is best known for its durability and stain resistance. It also has special layers which protect it from discolouring.

## Relax in style

◆ IOTA Boutique Furniture is all set to welcome the summer with the introduction of some of the best sofas by furniture label Ligne Roset, a brand that offers consumers an entire lifestyle in which to live, both boldly and beautifully via its furniture collections and complimentary decorative accessories, lighting, rugs, textiles and occasional items. The collection comprises pieces of furniture in warm or soft colours providing relaxation, taking one away from the excess of modern industrial design, and offering quality and functional innovation.



## Digital deep fryers

◆ AKASA, adding another feather to the range of its premium quality deep fryers, has launched electric pedestal digital deep fryers this year. With its robust stainless steel and high-quality finish, it is ideal for restaurants and takeaways as well as businesses that require a professional and reliable deep fryer. With temperature upto 300 degree C and buzzer timer, it can be used to fry vegetarian and non-vegetarian items easily and quickly. It's a single tank fryer with oil capacity of 11 litres with stainless steel durable basket. It comprises a digital temperature controller and specially designed heaters to avoid overheating of oil and wastage.



## Closet in the bathroom

◆ India's premier design and build company, Essentia Environments has launched an exclusively designed bathroom-cum-closet that was part of their unique luxury studio apartment concept unveiled at the recently concluded India Design ID 2020. The Essentia booth was a collection of signature furniture pieces – each of which makes a definitive statement with its exquisite design and appeal, and the bathroom-cum-closet is no different.

## Marriott Pune offers customised catering



Courtyard by Marriott Pune Chakan understands that a large part of the enjoyment of any celebration is the type of food served. Ensuring the cuisine matches your vision for a successful and happy event is part of the commitment to you. Having handled a crowd of approximately 39,000 people, the team is adept at managing both corporate and social events.

Whether you're planning an elegant late-night soiree, wedding or a



Having handled a crowd of approximately 39,000, the team is adept at managing events



laidback brunch gathering, the team of expert caterers are always available to help you execute your vision. Dedicated staff members take care of all the details -- from set up, food service to clean-up.

The hotel catering offers a variety of dazzling menus for your evening meet ups. Start the night with a selection of sparkling sips. For the main course, treat your guests with custom-made cuisine and warm-intuitive service. Finish the night with handcrafted top-shelf cocktails and made-from-scratch wedding cake prepared by the master pastry chef. Put a fresh twist on your wedding with the irresistible brunch menus, which feature a variety of juices and plenty of flaky pastries and colourful fruits. Savoury options include scrambled eggs, grits with cheddar cheese and fresh bagels with an array of flavourful spreads.

## NatureFresh Professional 'Bake Zone' tour



We are overwhelmed with the response received for the fourth consecutive year at Aahar Expo



NatureFresh Professional, the fastest growing national brand of bakery shortenings and margarine from Cargill's Oils business in India, engages with consumers and bakers through 'Bake Zone' tour. The objective of the tour is to add value to every baker by enhancing their skills along with constant encouragement to acquire industry knowledge. Keeping in mind the trend of increased preference towards healthy baked delicacies, NatureFresh Professional's expert chefs curated 60 new special recipes, like cheese crackers, sesame berry cookies, whole wheat khari, to name a few, which were displayed at the expo.

Over 600 visitors visited the NatureFresh Professional's stall this year, a number higher than the previous editions of the expo. Customers appreciated the 'Bake Zone' tour demonstrating the applications of the products over engaging baking sessions. Along with this, bakers shared their queries regarding new baking techniques during the sessions with the chef and received valuable guidance.

Speaking on the occasion, **Piyush Patnaik**, Managing Director, Cargill's Oils business in India, stated, "NatureFresh Professional is an important brand of Cargill's Oils business in India's portfolio catering to the needs of the modern-day bakers and customers across the country. We are overwhelmed with the response received, for the fourth consecutive year, at our stall in Aahar Expo. We are grateful to Aahar for providing us with a platform to engage with our existing and potential consumers."

## Grand Mercure launches Samaroh



Grand Mercure Gandhinagar GIFT City, the first international hotel brand in Gandhinagar, has launched the specialty restaurant Samaroh. Guests can treat themselves to a range of carefully chosen authentic dishes specially crafted by experienced chefs. The poolside restaurant will offer vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes from across states. It will also offer the most varied vegetarian cuisine in India – Gujarati thali.

Samaroh was inaugurated by Bijoy Sengupta, General Manager, Grand Mercure Gandhinagar GIFT City, Vineet Verma, Executive Director & CEO, Brigade Group, and Maverik Mukerji, GM Delegate, Bengaluru, Mysuru and GIFT City Hotels, in the presence of about 50 people including senior government officials and board of directors of GIFT City.

Grand Mercure Gandhinagar GIFT City is located in the heart of GIFT City Gandhinagar, India's first International Financial Service Centre being developed on the periphery of Ahmedabad city en route to Gandhinagar. The hotel offers 151 rooms and suites, swimming pool, gym, all-day dining restaurant and free Wi-Fi. It has well-equipped meeting rooms and banquets for hosting business and social gatherings. The hotel is conveniently located near all the key companies within GIFT.



Guests at Samaroh can treat themselves to a range of carefully chosen authentic dishes



## Le Méridien Gurgaon's water bottling plant



Le Méridien Gurgaon has tied-up with Swajal's WaterCube, a WaterTech firm working on new and innovative technologies to make clean drinking water affordable, accessible and reliable, thus enabling the hotel to take a step towards a sustainable living approach. The initiation of the in-house water plant is a testament to the hotel's approach towards sustainable living. The eco-friendly bottled water is distilled and packaged in-house, is free from micro plastics and carbon emissions, consists of healthy alkaline mineralised water which is safe for consumption and the environment at large along with bio-plastic recyclable caps. With this initiative, the hotel aims to negate the use of plastic bottles, that were consumed on a higher frequency earlier.

"Living by Marriott's ideology on sustainability, over the past two years we have introduced few and brainstormed on bringing to life some long-term environmental strategy that includes investing in innovative conservation initiatives like these. The introduction of Swajal's WaterCube stands out as a significant landmark initiative taken for a greener tomorrow," stated **Sanjay Gupta**, General Manager, Le Méridien Gurgaon.



The introduction of Swajal's WaterCube is a landmark initiative taken for a greener tomorrow



# Appointments



**AMIT K SINGH**

Corporate General Manager – Operations  
Sayaji Hotels

★ Sayaji Hotels has appointed Amit K Singh as Corporate General Manager – Operations. A seasoned professional, Singh comes with a rich experience of over two decades in the hospitality industry. In his new capacity, Singh will play a pivotal role in driving and overseeing all aspects of operational excellence at Sayaji Group of Hotels. A stickler for perfection and attention to minor details, Singh has led from the front, motivating his team at all times. In his previous role, he has been responsible for overall growth.



**NAGESH CHAWLA**

General Manager  
Renaissance Mumbai

★ Renaissance Mumbai has announced the appointment of Nagesh Chawla as General Manager. Almost two decades ago, Chawla began his stint as a Front Office Manager at Renaissance Mumbai, and later became Director of Rooms. He moved to JW Marriott Hotel & Marriott Executive Apartments, Tomorrow Square, Shanghai and thereafter took over as Resident Manager at the JW Marriott Hotel, Hong Kong. In his previous role, he was the Managing Director for The Ritz-Carlton Jakarta and JW Marriott Hotel Jakarta.



**MANAV MALHOTRA**

General Manager  
Le Méridien Mahabaleshwar Resort & Spa

★ Le Méridien Mahabaleshwar Resort & Spa has appointed Manav Malhotra as General Manager. Malhotra brings with him over 16 years of experience in core hotel operations and has held managerial roles with several renowned hotel chains. He will oversee all the operational and commercial aspects of the hotel. Malhotra will also be responsible for driving the performance through new and innovative strategies. He joined the Marriott India family four years ago as the Director of Operations at JW Marriott Kolkata.



**BALAJI P.K.**

Director of Finance  
Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield  
Hotel & Convention Center

★ Balaji P.K. has been appointed as Director of Finance at Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Center. He brings with him over 12 years of experience in the field of finance and operations. In his new role, he will head the team and oversee all aspects of financial management such as, cash flow forecasting, budgetary planning, productivity metrics analysis, team management, accounting, insurance policies, cross-functional collaboration, reporting and stakeholder engagement.



**RAVI SHARMA**

Director of Finance  
Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre  
& Hyderabad International Conv Centre

★ Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre and Hyderabad International Convention Centre announced the appointment of Ravi Sharma as Director of Finance for their dual property. A dynamic hospitality professional, he brings over 14 years of domain experience in financial planning and analysis, accounting control, budgeting, taxation, statutory audit, and pre-opening of 5-star hotels. In his new role, he will be spearheading the supervision of the revenue management and distribution strategy of the hotel.



**VAISHALI SHAHI**

Human Resource Manager  
Hyatt Regency Chennai

★ Hyatt Regency Chennai has appointed Vaishali Shahi as the Human Resource Manager. She brings 12 years of vast experience in human resource and will be overseeing strategic planning, recruitment policy design & implementation, talent management and associate engagement. Having a strong background in the hospitality industry, Shahi gained immense knowledge working with eminent brands such as, IBIS Bengaluru, Crowne Plaza Pune City Centre and JW Marriott Pune.



### **JOHN MATHULLA**

**Executive Assistant Manager  
Holiday Inn Chennai OMR IT Expressway**

★ John Mathulla has been appointed as Executive Assistant Manager by Holiday Inn Chennai OMR IT Expressway. Armed with more than a decade-long experience, Mathulla has mastered the art of hotel operations to ensure an enriching experience for guests. Known for his cooperative yet go-getter attitude and excellent communication skills, Mathulla's potential to remain calm whilst under pressure truly sets him apart. He remains positive, proactive and skilled at multitasking in a fast-paced environment.



### **SHALIN JOSE**

**Director of Spa  
The Westin Mumbai Garden City**

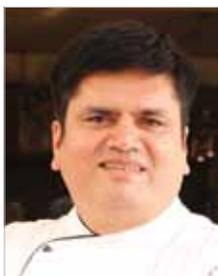
★ Shalin Jose, the newly appointed Director of Spa at The Westin Mumbai Garden City has over 16 years of experience in the wellness industry. Jose's abilities span every facet of the industry including management, branding and business development. He has a Master's degree in Physical Education and Diploma in Beauty Therapy and Cosmetology. In his new role, Jose will be responsible for bespoke experiences at the Heavenly Spa by Westin in addition to ensuring the staff are trained to the highest degree of excellence.



### **AJAY DHASMANA**

**Front Office Manager  
Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel**

★ Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel has appointed Ajay Dhasmana as Front Office Manager. A seasoned hotelier, with over 13 years of professional exposure, Dhasmana brings an array of skills to the table. He will ensure stellar services in all aspects of guest relations & satisfaction, operations management and manpower planning. He has worked with Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park and W Goa, as Front Office Manager. Prior to this he was Cluster Manager with Privé Property Management, Goa.



### **KAILASH GUNDUPALLI**

**Director of Culinary  
Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre**

★ Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre and Hyderabad International Convention Centre announced the appointment of Kailash Gundupalli as their new Director of Culinary for their dual property. Bringing over 20 years of hospitality experience, Gundupalli enjoys experimenting diverse flavours and cooking styles to suit the modern day palate. In his new role, Gundupalli is predominantly responsible for formulating and implementing the department's standard operating procedures.



### **SOUGATA HALDER**

**Executive Chef  
Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park**

★ Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park has appointed Sougata Halder as Executive Chef. An expert in the culinary space, Halder has consistently set industry benchmarks for fine dining in India. He has been a part of the industry for over 12 years. A maverick in the space, he has closely watched the food and beverage industry turn into a culinary paradise. Before joining Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park, he was working with Marriott Kathmandu, Nepal as the Executive Sous Chef, and was also part of their pre-opening team.



### **ARABINDA SETH**

**Executive Chef  
Fairfield by Marriott Kolkata.**

★ Rustling up a storm in the kitchen for over two decades now, Arabinda Seth is currently employed as Executive Chef at Fairfield by Marriott Kolkata. Having worked with top hospitality brands, he is known for his inventive take on modern soul food as well as comfort classics. Leading the kitchen management team vis-à-vis daily operations, Seth is also responsible for ensuring quality standards in compliance to F&B policies, planning and pricing menus, innovative food presentation and working in tandem with the catering department.

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