

HOTELS & RESTAURANTS INDIA fhrai magazine

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A MONTHLY ON HOSPITALITY TRADE
By DDP Publications



**THE NEW
NORMAL
FOR HOSPITALITY**

GOLF

IT'S MORE FUN THE THE PHILIPPINES





Dear fellow members,

At the outset, may God bless everyone with good health and a long life. We wish to once again reassure members that the FHRAI Executive Committee and Secretariat stand in solidarity with the fraternity to tackle the COVID pandemic.

The FHRAI jointly with FAITH requested a status update meeting with the Ministry of Tourism in the first week of April. The video conference meeting was chaired by Secretary – Tourism, Director General – Tourism, Joint Secretary and Additional Director General – Tourism. Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, Vice President – FHRAI represented the hospitality industry. The important points concerning the relief measures announced by the government were discussed during the meeting. A gist of the meeting was circulated to all members and is also available on FHRAI website.

Subsequent to the tourism meeting, FHRAI and other associations had an e-meeting with Shri Sudhanshu Pandey, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India. The Ministry had sought for inputs with regard to what Global Relief Packages have been given by various countries for hospitality and tourism; where all would the industry like to see government intervention for immediate relief in the short-term i.e. in the next 30-60 days; and where would the industry like to see government intervention in the long-term i.e. after 60 days and for a longer time frame. Responding to which FHRAI has given its inputs on certain subjects and is in touch with the officials to get the best possible relief as compared to global measures.

Also, FHRAI was once again approached by the FSSAI about circulating information requesting members to download the Aarogya Setu application to support the fight against

the coronavirus outbreak. May we request members to please download the same for regular inputs and to keep them updated regarding initiatives taken by the government to combat the pandemic.

To keep professionals engaged in the industry the Ministry of Tourism has launched the Incredible India Tourist Facilitator Certification Programme with the objective of creating a pool of trained and professional tourist facilitators at various tourism destinations. The medium of the programme is online. More information is available on www.iitf.gov.in Interested Member organisations may kindly advise their employees to enrol for the same.

To conclude, we would like to thank all our members for joining the Webinars and FHRAI COVID training programmes organised/facilitated by the FHRAI. We have covered extensively the outcome of the Webinars in this edition and recordings are available under the Events section of the FHRAI website for your reference. We are doing our best for the hospitality industry in these tough times and are hopeful that we will come out of it strongly.

Be Safe. Stay at Home.

Note: The May 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 broadcast on registered email.

With kind regards,
Rahul Lall
Secretary General, FHRAI

Rahul Lall
Secretary General
FHRAI



The Ministry of
Commerce & Industry,
Government of India
had sought inputs with
regard to what Global
Relief Packages have
been given by various
countries for hospitality
and tourism



MAY 2020

WHAT DO THE POLLS INDICATE?

10

FHRAI's Legal Queries Webinar held in April conducted several polls to determine the opinions of the attendees. We share details.

Cover Image: Freepik



CONTENTS

THIS MONTH

SECRETARY'S MESSAGE	3
FHRAI DESK	6
EVENTS	36
PRODUCTS AND SERVICES	38
APPOINTMENTS	40

FEATURES

THE ROAD AHEAD FOR HOSPITALITY	13
Himanshu Talwar, Assistant Secretary General, FHRAI talks about measures which will generate revenue for hospitality post COVID-19.	

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REVIVING TOURISM 14

Regional Presidents share what steps hoteliers are taking to revive domestic tourism to grow occupancy for hotels impacted by COVID-19.

THE QUARANTINE & LOCKDOWN HOTELIER 16

We bring you some answers to hoteliers' queries related to offering quarantine facilities and managing operations in the lockdown.

THE NEW NORMAL RULE OF COVID-19 24

Dr V Pasupathy shows the way forward to enable hospitality industry to broadly create a working SOP as COVID-19 response.

INDUSTRY MUST SURVIVE, RECOVER & THRIVE 26

FHRAI's webinar on "Survival to Revival – Restart and Resume Operations", showed the way forward for hoteliers in this time of crisis.

STRATEGY ON CAPEX, GOVT ASSISTANCE TO SAVE HOTELS 32

FHRAI held the webinar on "Recover & Rediscover -- Challenges & Strategies Going Forward", reassuring hoteliers to stay positive.



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FHRAI, FSSAI training on COVID-19 preparedness and guest safety

The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) in collaboration with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has initiated a dedicated training programme on COVID-19 awareness for hospitality professionals across the country.

The programme aims to gear up hotel and restaurant players for a post lockdown scenario to ensure the safety of their guests and to instill customer confidence. The programme covers training on precautions to be taken and procedures that establishments should ensure implementing including receiving of raw materials, guest service, lobby management, and rooms maintenance post the lockdown gets lifted. FHRAI will conduct the trainings in collaboration with its training partner – Parikshan. The first batch of the Food Safety Training and Certification (FoSTaC) programme for its members was held on May 5, 2020.

The Association is aiming at imparting this training to approximately 5,000 hospitality professionals in the coming three to six months.

"The idea behind initiating this training programme is to have at least one senior staff thoroughly trained in safety, security and hygiene of an establishment. Once the lockdown is lifted, the trained staff will be in a position to impart knowledge to fellow staff in each section.

The underlying objective of this programme ultimately is to ensure the health and safety of our guests. The programme is being organised keeping in view the awareness requirements about the pandemic and necessary precautions that need to be taken by Food Business Operators (FBOs) before restarting their operations. FHRAI is organising these sessions to instill confidence in its members, guests,



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI

The idea is to have at least one senior staff trained in safety, security and hygiene

and the workforce to prepare to tackle the post pandemic situation," says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI.

The trainings will be conducted online using Zoom platform and the training team is being led by Dr V Pasupathy, National Advisor, FHRAI and FoSTaC Diamond Trainer.

"In partnership with Parikshan, FHRAI has scheduled a series of sessions in order to reach all its regional associations and through them, to thousands of its members. In addition to the webinars independently conducted on COVID-19 awareness by FHRAI, these certified awareness sessions are also important, and we are very keen on promoting and learning from them.

The hospitality industry which is known for its hygiene and cleanliness standards, is sure to measure up to the emerging hygiene and sanitation



Pradeep Shetty
Jt Hony Secy, FHRAI

The hospitality industry is sure to measure up to the emerging hygiene & sanitation demands

demands of COVID-19 too," says **Pradeep Shetty**, Joint Honorary Secretary, FHRAI.

The sessions will include video presentations, lecture, activities, chats and question-based discussions also. The participants can register themselves through FHRAI to attend the sessions.

After successful completion of the training, participants are recommended for certification issued by FSSAI through the training partner after verifying the individual's credentials.

"The feedback post the first batch was overwhelming and many sessions have already been pre-booked and are lined up in the coming days. There are multiple trainers arranged by FHRAI in collaboration with Parikshan to conduct these trainings. The hospitality industry is committed and is sincerely working towards safety of the guests and staff," concludes Kohli.

HRANI requests govt to deploy a 'survival & revival' package

HRANI has sent representations to the Hon'ble Chief Ministers of all North Indian states and UTs requesting for help and a revival package, given the number of people the industry employs and the impact any job losses would have on northern India's unemployment figures.

HRANI representations were considered by the state governments of Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

HRANI is thankful to the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh for the relief extended to the industry. To revive the economy of the state in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, the Government of Himachal Pradesh in its Cabinet approved various reliefs on May 2, 2020.

Government had decided to waive off electricity demand charges for the period of six months for hotels and restaurants thereby providing them relief of about ₹15 crore. Excise and taxation license fee for bars would be waived off and lifting quota of bars would be on pro rata basis. The government would also provide support to HPTDC by providing support to the Corporation for paying salaries of its employees.

Token tax and special road tax would be waived off for four months and no penalty would be imposed on owners of private vehicles on account of delay on renewal of registration and permits etc. The Hon'ble Chief Minister also assured that the state government would also take up the matter regarding EPFO, ESIC at the appropriate level so that the same could be redressed at the earliest.

A task force has been constituted to fast-track the situation. It will be headed by Jal Shakti Minister Sh. Mahender Singh to give suggestions for other remedial measures to be taken to revive the economy. The other members of

this Sub Committee would be Education Minister Sh. Suresh Bhardwaj, Industries Minister Sh. Vikram Singh and Transport Minister Sh. Govind Thakur.

UTTAR PRADESH

The Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board has provided relief to the industries who were not able to apply for renewal of consent (water & air) by the pollution department due to lockdown. The Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board vide its order dated April 28, 2020 has permitted to apply for renewal of consent to operate for water and air by the pollution department after the lockdown period is over.



Photograph by Raj Lekharu

An order dated April 2, 2020 was issued by U.P. Power Corporation, Govt of Uttar Pradesh to raise energy bills on actual consumption and not on average basis. An order dated May 6, 2020 was issued by U.P. Power Corporation, Govt of Uttar Pradesh providing relaxation that the electricity bills raised between the period of March 2020 to May 2020 can be paid till May 31, 2020 without any surcharge. The fixed / demand / minimum charges levied in electricity bills for the months of April and May have been deferred and will be charged in the month of July 2020.

RAJASTHAN

The fixed charge of electricity bills

for the months of March and April of all home-based (commercial as well as tourism-related establishments, showrooms, shops, hotels, working hostels etc.) except state establishments and lockdown-free establishments have been deferred until May 31, 2020 by Jaipur Electricity Distribution Corporation, Govt of Rajasthan. The Association has requested for govt support at two levels. One, for waivers & financial relief within the respective state and the second, for seeking their help for reaching out to the PMO, Finance Minister, Home Minister, Power Minister, Tourism Minister, Govt of India and to the Governor-RBI.

RESERVE BANK OF INDIA

Reserve Bank of India has already provided three months moratorium on EMIs of principle and interest payments on loans and recalculation of working capital from Financial Institutions which needs to be extended for next twelve months without any accrued and accumulated interest.

Restructuring of loans be allowed by extending it to minimum two years. Working capital at low rate of interest be allowed. Grant of Infrastructure status to hospitality industry with immediate effect enabling the sector to repay the loans in a longer time period..

HRAEI holds sanitisation drive in a market complex



Pranav Singh
President, HRAEI



Sudesh Poddar
Honorary Secretary, HRAEI



T. S. Walia
President Emeritus, HRAEI

Markets have been sanitised and masks and hand sanitisers were distributed to shopkeepers

We also asked people to maintain the social distancing measures and prevent gathering and crowding

The world is affected by a pandemic. We decided, till they find a cure, let us show some care

Following the request from Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to adopt local markets for implementing hygienic practices to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, leading business chambers and industry bodies have started a sanitisation drive in over a dozen markets across Kolkata.

The Hotel & Restaurant Association of Eastern India (HRAEI) adopted Lansdowne market for sanitisation. The HRAEI took over the market in central Kolkata for proper sanitisation awareness campaign to prevent the

spread of the novel coronavirus. The HRAEI headed by **Pranav Singh**, President, **Sudesh Poddar**, Honourary Secretary, **T. S. Walia**, President Emeritus and senior members organised handing over of gloves, masks, sanitisers and liquid handwash to shopkeepers and buyers in the market. The market committee and local police station helped in the effort. "The markets have been sanitised and masks and hand sanitisers were distributed to shopkeepers through the respective market management," said Singh. The Association

installed four small water tanks at entry points of the market. Proper hand washing arrangements were made for both stall owners and customers.

HRAEI representatives urged people to follow proper hygiene protocols to help prevent the spread of the virus in the community. "We also asked people to maintain the social distancing measures and prevent gathering and crowding," said Poddar. In a rush many shop owners and buyers tend to ignore the basic norms. Especially the fish and vegetable markets have the biggest crowds in the peak hours of buying and selling in the morning. HRAEI representatives painted circles on the floor and urged people maintain the mandatory two-metre distance from one another.

"The world is affected by a pandemic. We decided, till they find a cure, let us show some care," said Walia.



HRAWI seeks permission to liquidate ₹10 cr worth of perishable stock

Maharashtra Government pleading hotels and restaurants in the state to be given permission to liquidate perishable liquor stocks lying with them. Estimated to be in excess of ₹10 crore with all license holders, the goods including liquors and beers are likely to perish due to the expiry of the products. The Association has stated that allowing liquidation of the unsold stock will minimise the losses and introduce working capital by encashment of the existing liquor stock.

"The hospitality industry is under lockdown now for almost 45 days. Further, all sale of liquor under FL3 licenses have been prohibited by declaration of 'dry day' pursuant to the order issued by the State Excise. But now with the government relaxing the ban on sale of liquor we are hoping to salvage from the unsold stock which in turn can induce some liquidity into our



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI

Allowing FL3 licensees to sell liquor would help the cause of social distancing and maintenance of law

businesses. This will introduce working capital for many establishments that are bleeding in outgoing expenses and are sitting on dormant stocks," says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, President, HRAWI. In the letter to the government, the HRAWI has requested that either it directs manufacturers to replace liquor stocks that are on the verge of expiry or already expired or allow the sale of perishable liquor stocks from the outlets of FL3 license holders, as and when the same is advisable, under the present circumstances.

"Under the present situation of chaos at the liquor shops across the country, we believe allowing all FL3 licensees to sell liquor would help the cause of social distancing, and maintenance of law and order. Our suggestion is only complementary to the government's decision of allowing sale of liquor across the state," concludes Kohli.

Associations appeal for rollback of 15% hike on license fee

The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI), the Indian Hotel and Restaurant Association (AHAR) and the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) have once again appealed to the Maharashtra Government to consider a rollback of the 15 per cent hike in the excise license fee for the year 2020-21. The associations have cited the latest notification issued by the Chhattisgarh State Government announcing a 25 per cent reduction in the annual license fees for the year 2020-21 being provided as a relief on account of disruption caused to businesses due to the nationwide lockdown. Other than Chhattisgarh, Goa and Madhya Pradesh, the Union Territories of Diu-Daman too have offered relief in the excise license fee

in their states to reduce the burden on establishments during the lockdown, without any increase having been suggested earlier.

"The cash-strapped hospitality sector is already reeling under the pressure of ensuring the well-being of its employees during the shutdown and somehow preventing the immediate specter of massive job losses in the sector by deploying all its resources towards human needs. The hospitality and tourism sector account for 12.75 per cent of employment, 5.56 per cent of it is direct and 7.19 per cent indirect. As we speak, the industry is staring at a potential job loss of around 38 million, which is 70 per cent of the total workforce. Amidst this looming

doom, an increase in fees is just too harsh a decision to even comprehend. While other states are making efforts to alleviate the pain and burden of its businesses, Maharashtra has decided to go in the other direction," says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, President, HRAWI.

The HRAWI has also appealed for

- Withdrawal of the latest circular dated April 13, 2020 as well as of expectation from hotels and restaurants to pay any fees under the present situation whereby lockdown is extended.
- Not to put conditions to the relief granted on deferment of renewal date of staff payments or otherwise.

What do the p

The FHRAI's Legal Queries Webinar held on April 9, 2020 conducted several polls to determine the opinions of the attendees. We share details from the same.

The Attendance Metrics report indicated that total 324 questions and answers were entertained from both Question & Answer and Chat sections. The attendance rate for unique registrations was 70 per cent with total unique registered being 816 and attendees being 575. The attendance rate for total users (including shared users)

was 78 per cent with 844 attendees out of the total 1,085.

Among the total registrations, seven per cent were from HRAEI, 29 per cent from HRANI, 46 per cent from HRAWI, 18 per cent from SIHRA and one per cent from unknown.

POLL 1

WHAT IS THE EXPECTED CHANGE IN YOUR PROPERTY'S AVERAGE ROOM RATE (ARR)?

Will drop by 20%	Will drop by 15%	Will drop by 10%	Will remain the same	TOTAL
163	62	24	12	261
62%	24%	9%	5%	55%
Chains - Indep	Chains - Indep	Chains - Indep	Chains - Indep	Chains - Indep
41 122	24 38	7 17	2 10	74 187
25% 75%	39% 61%	29% 71%	17% 83%	28% 72%

Poll 1 asked whether the attendees would be negotiating with their Online Travel Agents (OTAs) such as MakeMyTrip, Goibibo, to reduce the commissions. Out of the total 224 respondents, 58 per cent voted for demanding 10 per cent, 33 per cent voted for demanding 15 per cent and nine per cent voted for not paying anything to get room business.



olls indicate?

POLL 2

POST LOCKDOWN, BY WHEN DO YOU THINK YOUR PROPERTY/PROPERTIES WILL REACH 50% OCCUPANCY?

Within 3 months	Within 6 months	Within 9 months	Within 12 months	TOTAL
63 23%	94 34%	77 28%	39 14%	273 57%
Chains - Indep	Chains - Indep	Chains - Indep	Chains - Indep	Chains - Indep
26 37	35 59	12 65	7 32	80 193
41% 59%	37% 63%	16% 84%	18% 82%	29% 71%

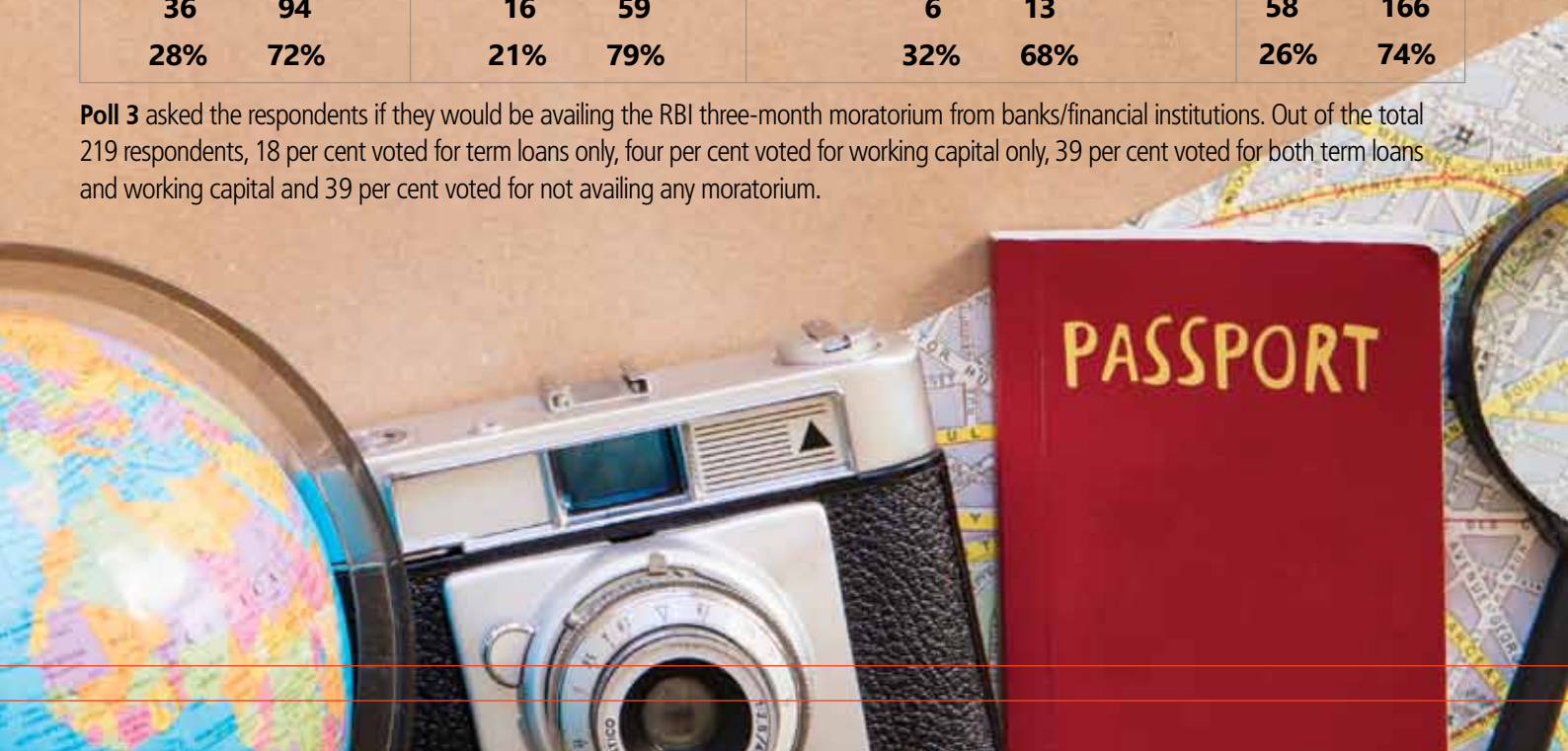
Poll 2 enquired about the expected change in their property's Average Room Rate (ARR). The 261 respondents voted in the following distribution: 62 per cent for 'Will drop by 20 per cent', 24 per cent for 'Will drop by 15 per cent', nine per cent for 'Will drop by 10 per cent', and five per cent for 'Will remain the same'.

POLL 3

WILL YOU BE NEGOTIATING WITH MAKEMYTRIP, GOIBIBO, BOOKING.COM - TO REDUCE COMMISSIONS ?

Yes, will demand 10%	Yes, will demand 15%	No, will pay to get room business	TOTAL
130 58%	75 33%	19 8%	224 47%
Chains - Indep	Chains - Indep	Chains - Indep	Chains - Indep
36 94	16 59	6 13	58 166
28% 72%	21% 79%	32% 68%	26% 74%

Poll 3 asked the respondents if they would be availing the RBI three-month moratorium from banks/financial institutions. Out of the total 219 respondents, 18 per cent voted for term loans only, four per cent voted for working capital only, 39 per cent voted for both term loans and working capital and 39 per cent voted for not availing any moratorium.



POLL 4

FOR YOUR SURVIVAL, ARE YOU WILLING TO FIGHT WITH THE OTAs TO REDUCE THE COMMISSIONS TO 10%

Yes	No	TOTAL
182	26	208
88%	13%	55%
Chains - Indep	Chains - Indep	Chains - Indep
43 139	14 12	57 151
24% 76%	54% 46%	27% 73%

Poll 4 enquired about the donation of cash/food/services for helping the local community during the current crisis. Out of the total 93 respondents, 63 per cent donated upto ₹1 lakh, 15 per cent donated upto ₹3 lakh, eight per cent donated upto ₹5 lakh and 14 per cent donated ₹10 lakh and more.

POLL 5

WILL YOU RE-NEGOTIATE WITH ZOMATO & SWIGGY FOR LOWER COMMISSIONS?

Yes, will allow only 10% commissions	Yes, will allow only 15% commissions	Will discontinue 30% or Gold platforms	Am very happy with Zomato Gold	TOTAL
88	27	14	2	131
67%	21%	11%	2%	48%
Chains - Indep	Chains - Indep	Chains - Indep	Chains - Indep	Chains - Indep
21 67	6 21	7 7	0 2	34 97
24% 76%	22% 78%	50% 50%	0% 100%	26% 74%

Poll 5 asked whether the respondents would re-negotiate with Zomato and Swiggy for lower commissions. Out of the total 131 respondents, 67 per cent would allow only 10 per cent, 21 per cent would allow only 15 per cent, 11 per cent would discontinue 30 per cent or Gold, and 2 per cent were very happy with Zomato Gold.

POLL 6

WILL YOU BE AVAILING THE RBI 3 MONTHS MORATORIUM FROM YOUR BANK / FINANCIAL INSTITUTE?

Yes, for term loan only	Yes, for working capital only	Yes for both, term loans & working capital	No, will not avail any moratorium	TOTAL
39	9	86	85	219
18%	4%	39%	39%	44%
Chains - Indep	Chains - Indep	Chains - Indep	Chains - Indep	Chains - Indep
5 34	5 4	21 65	21 64	52 167
13% 87%	56% 44%	24% 76%	25% 75%	24% 76%

Poll 6 asked the respondents by when they thought their property/properties would reach 50 per cent occupancy post lockdown. Out of 273 respondents, 23 per cent claimed it would happen within three months, 34 per cent claimed six months, 28 per cent claimed nine months and 14 per cent claimed 12 months.

The road ahead for hospitality



Continuing the series of articles on tourism and hospitality, **Himanshu Talwar**, ASG, FHRAI talks about measures which will generate revenue for hospitality post COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic has people cooped up inside their houses while the nation remains under lockdown. Businesses are shut and going out to dine or travel seems like a thing of the past. However, what is the need of the moment is a plan of action for the future. The hospitality sector, and most other sectors included, have been almost entirely inactive during the lockdown period. Restaurants have shut down and hotels are empty, other than few of them who already might have some guests locked in because of the pandemic. Some restaurants are being able to function through take-out and delivery services, while maintaining social distancing norms. Some hotels, on the other hand, are being converted to quarantine centres on government orders. While this is the present reality of the hospitality sector, we could also incorporate such aspects for their sustainability in the aftermath of this worldwide pandemic that has left humans extremely sensitive.

Delivery and take-out services should constitute as one of the major revenue points of restaurants as people would still be apprehensive about dining in even after lockdown ends. For dining in, the restaurants should minimise furniture use and provide as much space as possible between tables. Fewer tables should be laid out to allow social distancing norms to be followed. The employees should be all medically fit and such assurance should be given to the customers. Provision of sanitisers should be compulsory at every entry point not only in restaurants but also in hotels. The employees and the customers should all be following the necessary precautions such as gloves while serving and cooking, etc. This will provide not only the customers but also the employees assurance of safety. Slowly, more tables could start rolling out once the fear of the pandemic lifts from the minds of the public.

Hotels should invest in technology to sustain the inflow of people and in turn, revenue. Automated entry systems, technology-based sanitisation, automatic light system, cleaning robots and other such advanced technological measures need to be taken up. This will ensure a touch-free experience and interaction. All social distancing norms should be followed in hotels too, especially in hotel pools, gyms and other communal facilities. Following these measures will give the public a sense of assurance and the fear will start dissolving. The technological innovations can be taken up by restaurants who can afford to invest in them. Slowly and steadily, the hospitality sector will be back to normal but with a safer and more hygienic experience. Considering the disappointment of people at being quarantined at home because of this awful pandemic, the people will soon be flocking to restaurants and hotels once their minds are eased. Restaurants will be busier than ever, and hotels will be booked to the brim. People already miss the daily urgent flow that life had before the pandemic swept all of them inside homes with no social interactions. There is a lot of hope for the hospitality sector to prosper once the pandemic ends. Till then, we need to chart out a plan and look at the bright side of things.

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



Himanshu Talwar



Hotels should invest in technology to sustain the inflow of people and in turn, revenue



Reviving tourism

Regional Presidents share what steps hoteliers are taking to revive domestic tourism in their regions to grow occupancy for hotels adversely impacted by COVID-19.

Kanchan Nath



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
President, HRAWI

RESTAURANTS NEED QUICK AID

What is positive about this crisis is that for the first time, hospitality, travel and tourism have been named specifically as an industry that is vital in any functioning economy and in fact many economies derive a considerable amount, if not the majority of their GDP from travel and tourism related activities. We must understand that the process of casualties has already started, owing to the pandemic and resultant recession. Restaurants will be the first to succumb to pandemic lockdown.

“To ensure that revival is swift it is imperative that F&B businesses need to target the right markets”

The industry will have to reinvent itself to bounce back. The future will see different forms of travel. Short travel will become more frequent and it will take a longer time for long-haul or international travels to happen. There will be new opportunities. India has everything, 35 UNESCO world heritage sites, Ayurveda, Yoga, etc.

TAPPING DOMESTIC MICE

India has 22 million outbound tourists. A lot of this is MICE and destination weddings. We need to focus on how they can be contained within India and how much of the 22 million we can manage to hold back. This would help us bridge the gap to bounce back.

Specifically, for F&B, one will need to focus on less competitive, new markets having higher potential. To ensure that revival is swift, without extensive cash outflow, it is imperative that F&B businesses need to target the right markets via meticulous selection without burning a large chunk of capital in their marketing strategy.

We have requested MOT to form a tourism task force involving government and stakeholder participation on how to tackle the present situation. We are a very large contributor of employment, taxes, capital and deserve a little more attention from the government to help us emerge as winners.



Pranav Singh
President, HRAEI

FAMILY WEDDINGS, SOCIAL EVENTS WILL CONTINUE

The situation is so grim at the moment that we are following a wait and watch policy. There are several projections of the future by health experts. Some say the pandemic and its effects will be there for two to three years. In the past few years, locations in eastern India turned into key MICE destinations for many companies and

“Unless we get support from the government the industry will get into an economic pandemic”

government agencies. After COVID-19, most agencies will put all events on hold. However, family weddings and other social events will continue. Our members will be encouraged

to attract customers for such family events. Special packages must be offered to draw the customers. International tourism is expected to remain under severe strain even after the pandemic is over. But domestic tourism may gradually grow. So, hospitality industry must turn its focus to local tourists, especially those in the religious circuits. Since people's spending power will reduce after the pandemic, we should think of appropriate incentives for such travellers.

TOURISM WORST HIT

This crisis emanating from COVID-19 is the worst ever to hit the tourism industry, bigger than the combined financial impact of 9/11, past economic downturns and said to be even bigger than the impact of World War II and the Great Depression. At this point, we are not in a position with much of a solution in our hands, as it depends upon so many unknown uncertainties. As hospitality is a capital-intensive industry, and most of the companies run on huge loans, the main challenge for the industry will be paying off the loans. In this situation, the government has to take action on loan repayment. Our association has appealed to Chief Ministers of states in the region for waiver of excise duties, electricity and utility charges, and certain tax holidays. Unless we get support from the government the industry will get into an economic pandemic.



K. Syama Raju
President, SIHRA

GETTING BACK TO THE BUSINESS OF HOSPITALITY

The COVID-19 pandemic is like no other, we have not witnessed anything like this in our lifetime. There are no references to draw upon and no past experience to fall back on. The first priority is to ensure the health and safety of our people and to that extent the hospitality industry has come up with a lot of measures to ensure safety; simple things like making hand sanitisers available can make the difference and ensure safety.

SIHRA recently hosted a webinar for its members on "Getting Back to the Business of Hospitality" which is an apt topic for the hospitality and tourism industries, as we gear up for the re-opening after the lockdown. We now have to look forward and plan together to tide over this difficult period.

WORK TO REVIVE HOSPITALITY

As per the indications we see, domestic air travel may still take some more time to commence. International air travel may not commence for a couple of months or even longer, and even if it does, there will not be many inbound travellers for tourism since people will be cautious about travelling abroad in these times. Therefore, it is clear we

must concentrate on domestic tourism and work towards reviving the industry.

As soon as the lockdown is lifted, do not expect people to travel for leisure. However, with a little more time, and as lockdown restrictions ease, we hope and believe that people will want to take a short break where they can drive to a destination. Therefore, it is likely that hotels and resorts that are away from the cities, yet close enough to drive to, will begin



Hotels & resorts that are away from the cities, yet close enough to drive to, will begin to see occupancies



to see occupancies most likely on weekends. They will need to be prepared for all the required protocols to allow guests to stay.

At a later date, as confidence improves and the spread of COVID-19 is controlled, interstate travel will commence and promotion of destinations in different neighbouring states will give a boost to domestic tourism. The domestic traveller will still be able to drive to the destination and may take a longer break.

States must look at cross promotional tourism and work together to build confidence which will help people travel without any worry.

We must look forward with a positive attitude and work together to take the hospitality and tourism industries back to the levels we were at before the outbreak of the pandemic.



Surendra Kumar Jaiswal
President, HRANI

The travel and tourism industry, one of the growth engines, is bearing the brunt of the coronavirus pandemic. Hoteliers are amongst the worst hit and could do the following to grow occupancy for hotels.

SAFETY & SECURITY

Highlight and promote hygiene and sanitisation as a key priority of your brand. In order for guests to feel comfortable staying in hotel rooms again, hoteliers will need to step up their cleaning procedures. The tech-meets-hygiene companies can help.

DISCOUNTS AND LOYALTY PROGRAMMES

Discounts could include a family discount, group booking discount, booking a minimum of three rooms to avail 15 per cent off, booking three months in advance to get 20 per cent off, etc. Loyalty programmes are also a great way to entice guests and increase occupancy.

CUSTOMISED PACKAGES AND PROMOTIONS

Create special packages as and when needed. These packages can be defined in the backend catering to very specific audiences and their expectations. The thing about packages is that the better your understanding of your guests, the higher the level of customisation will be and in

turn, the better the chances of customer delight and loyalty.

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE GUESTS

One of the coolest things about a hotel's PMS is that the guest's data is at the disposal of the hotel at all times. Create exclusive mailing lists so that every time a hotel has an announcement that might be of interest to a certain segment of the guests, it can engage with them.

CORPORATE AND MICE

For city hotels and accommodation solutions based in big cities, partnering with corporates is an absolute must. The opportunity they provide is too big to miss out on. Reach out to corporates and come up with a compelling package which will make the decision. The best part about such a partnership is that it can be assured of steady



Every indication is that the industry will rebound quickly once the worst of the pandemic is over



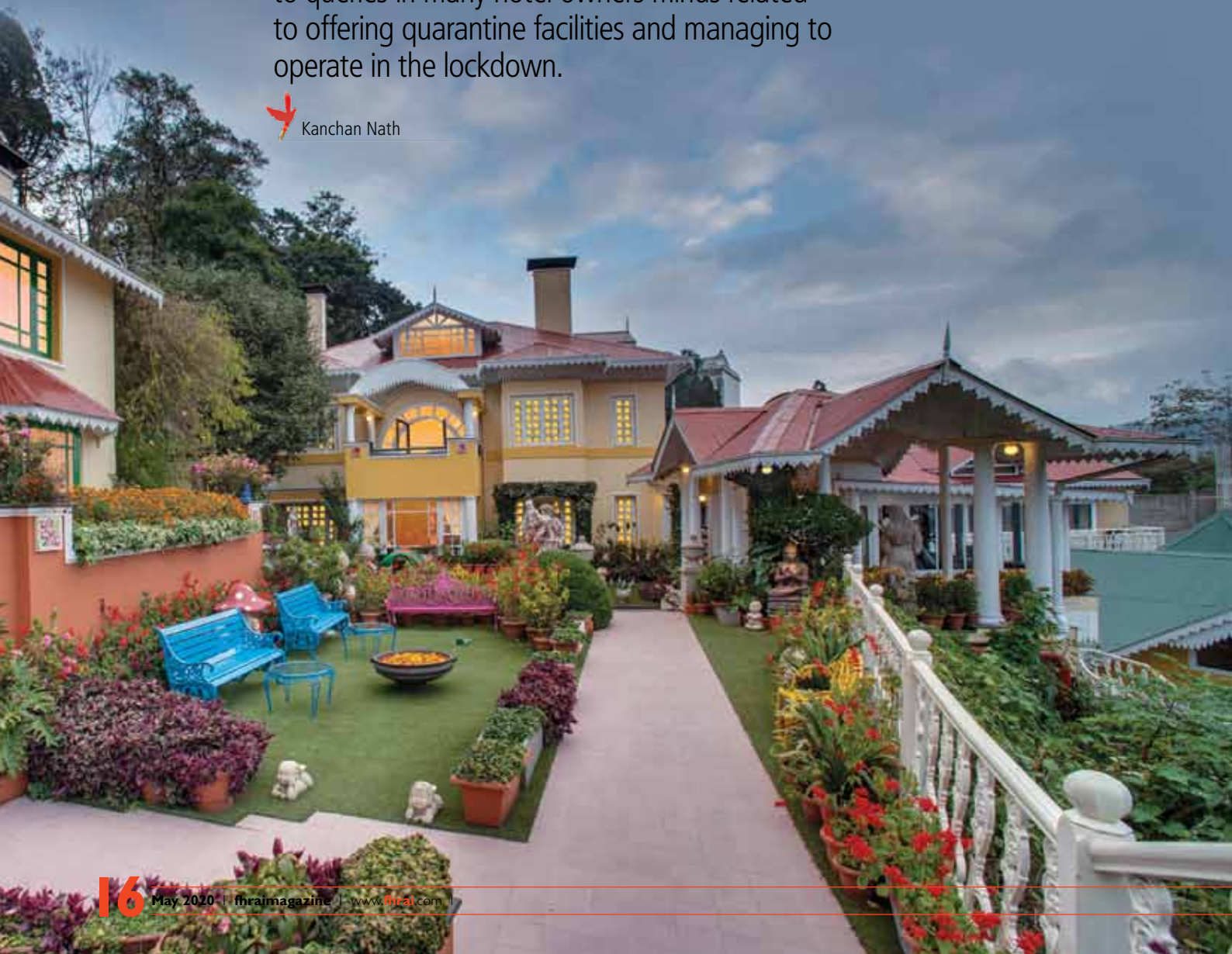
business coming in from them, regardless of seasons. It is clear that COVID-19 poses key short-term and long-term issues for the industry. But every indication is that the industry will rebound quickly once the worst of the pandemic is over. The rebound might be tempered by prolonged economic performance, so hotel companies have to be prepared for multiple scenarios that might unfold. The key will be to react to the short-term issues that arise but then quickly pivot to long-term planning and identification of opportunities.

The quarantine & lockdown hotelier

On popular demand we bring to you some answers to queries in many hotel owners minds related to offering quarantine facilities and managing to operate in the lockdown.



Kanchan Nath



SK Mohapatra **Co-opted EC Member, FHRAI**

HOTELS FOR QUARANTINE

What should be kept in mind before giving your hotel for quarantine services?

There is no harm in offering hotels for quarantine services. However, the brand has to ensure that it has proper facilities, infrastructure and adequate manpower in place (given the lockdown) to effectively and safely cater to the quarantined guests. Also, considering the high infectivity rate of this contagion, any hotel offering such services should devise a robust SOP on safety, hygiene & social distancing measures in line with Health Ministry, government and WHO directives which should be made available to the occupants as well as the staff with instructions to strictly adhere to them for the overall well-being of everyone involved in the operation.

How will you be disinfecting the hotel post quarantine?

Be it post quarantine, during quarantine or for that matter after the lockdown being lifted, the disinfection exercise should be undertaken on a very serious note with emphasis on deep cleaning through scrubbing, use of recommended chemicals & detergents preferably through a specialised agency, and 100 per cent disinfection of common touchpoints with alcohol based solutions. Laundry operations should be redefined with recommended protocol. As a standard safety measure, even though our properties are not being used for quarantine facilities, still we have decided to disinfect all public areas thrice a day using sodium hypochlorite solution and other recommended chemicals.

Is there any policy on liabilities arising out of such takeovers of hotels for quarantine? What should the government do in such a scenario?

No, I do not think there should be any unjust liability arising out of such a situation. For a hotel to be notified as a quarantine centre, local government administration shall notify and it is mandatory that all protocol as prescribed shall be followed. A comprehensive checklist of guidelines for hotels who are taken over by government agencies as quarantine hotels has been issued by FHRAI & the same shall be strictly followed.

What precautions are you taking to prevent COVID-19?

To ensure a safe stay at any of our properties once the lockdown is lifted, the precautionary measures we would be undertaking are temperature screening of guests at the time of entry into the premises and that of staff too on a daily basis; regular disinfection of public areas, kitchen & lobby; setting up sanitation stations at strategic points; encouraging guests to maintain social distancing, in-room dining; alternate room allocation for resident guests;



Be it post quarantine or after the lockdown being lifted, the disinfection exercise should be undertaken seriously

sending e-newspaper through WhatsApp instead of print newspaper, etc. In restaurants, buffets are to be avoided, number of tables should be reduced with limited covers on each table, cloth napkins must not be used, there should be contactless transactions along with a number of similar initiatives. Use of PPE by staff, maintaining social distancing norms including at staff lockers, staff cafeteria, suspension of biometric attendance system, etc. are some of the many listed protocols that have been undertaken.

UNAVOIDABLE FUNCTIONING IN LOCKDOWN

How are you managing to cater to the guests who have got stuck during the lockdown period?

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India had started issuing travel advisories from February 26 onwards and therefore most of our guests had either postponed or cancelled their travel plans or those who were staying departed just a day before lockdown was enforced. Therefore, we have no guests stuck at our properties during this lockdown.

How are the employees coming to work to cater to these stranded guests?

As mentioned above we had not faced any such situation. However, even if we had to, as a matter of preparedness to deal with any such development, we still had adequate resources and plans in place to station minimum number of staff at every property to ensure continuity of services.

How can the government help in this situation?

Since government and local authorities have taken over the handling of the entire situation, they are doing a great job in these difficult times and are extending all assistance and aid possible at their end. Some relief measures have been announced by the government which are still not adequate, but we are pressing hard for more aid from government through FHRAI and other allied platforms.



SK Mohapatra



Dr. M Venkadasubbu

Dr. M Venkadasubbu Jt Hon Secretary, FHRAI

HOTELS FOR QUARANTINE

What should be kept in mind before giving your hotel for quarantine services?

The hotel should bear in mind that it is a once in a lifetime opportunity to help the society recover from the pandemic. This initiative will project the hotel as a socially responsible business which is not just profit centric. Morally, the hotel has to return to society the benefits it has gained over the years by providing hospitality services to the COVID warriors who are ready to sacrifice their lives to save others. Hotels need not worry about any stigma attached with accommodating quarantined guests. On the contrary, this is something for a hotel to feel proud about.

How will you be disinfecting the hotel post quarantine?

It has been proven that the virus does not survive on inanimate surfaces or objects which means merely leaving the hotel undisturbed and letting it dry for three to four days will help eradicate all germs and virus that can cause an infection. However, we will be going further and cleaning all touchpoints and surfaces with disinfectants before opening the hotel after the quarantine period.

What precautions are you taking to prevent COVID-19?

There will be no buffet service. Meals will be preset and delivered to rooms. If there is a buffet, we insist on



Hotels need not worry about any stigma attached with accommodating quarantined guests

social distancing and a person (wearing masks and gloves) stationed near the food counters to serve food in a hygienic manner. Guests will not be allowed to sit close to each other. Some hotels have been planning to disconnect Wi-Fi service in public areas of the hotel to prevent guests from loitering in public areas for more time than necessary. We are also planning to provide housekeeping only when needed or once in three days instead of once every day. This will prevent frequent staff interaction with guests. Hotels have to morph into quasi hospitals if they want to stay ahead in this race with the pandemic.

Is there any policy on liabilities arising out of such takeovers of hotels for quarantine? What should the government do in such a scenario?

We have health insurance for hotel employees. We need to find out if insurance companies can provide a cover for hotels against liability to guests if they claim to be infected in a hotel which can be very difficult to prove. Moreover, governments could come out with a life insurance plan and provide a lumpsum amount to hospitality employees if they lose their life when employed by a hotel.

UNAVOIDABLE FUNCTIONING IN LOCKDOWN

How are you managing to cater to the guests who have got stuck during the lockdown period?

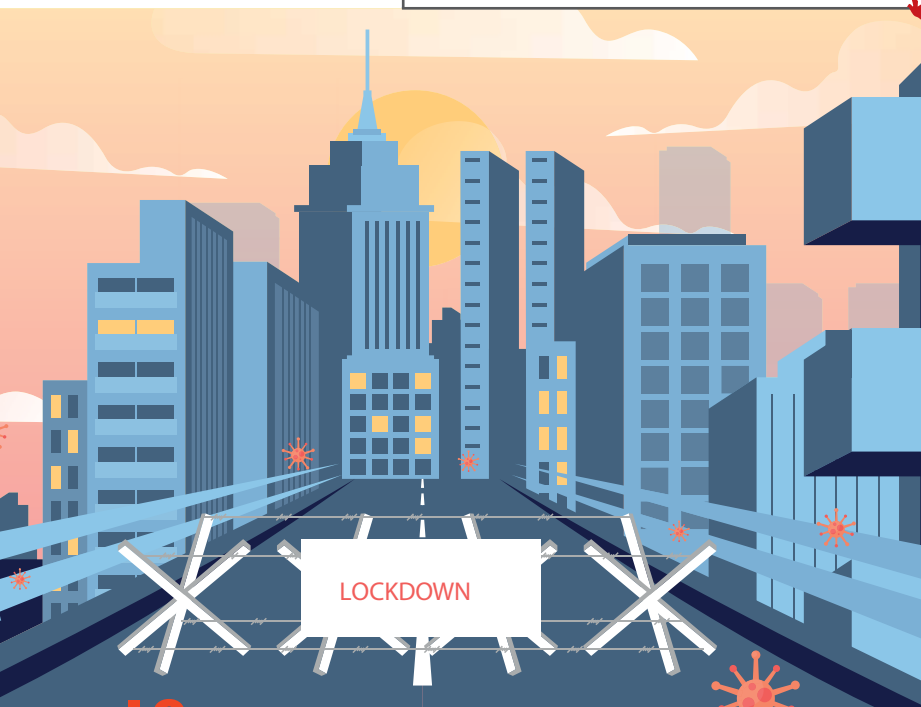
Most of the guests were informed of the impending lockdown well in advance for them to make travel arrangements. In cases where they could not go home, we have continued to accommodate them in the hotel with minimal staff to cater to them.

How are the employees coming to work to cater to these stranded guests?

Hotels that had no guests suspended their operations completely. Those which had guests, managed to operate with minimal staffing. Staff who were staying in other accommodation were encouraged to move into the hotel to avoid transporting them during the lockdown period and to ensure that their food and basic necessities were met. In other words, our staff enjoyed the same luxury in the hotel that they were providing to all the guests.

How can the government help in this situation?

Government can subsidise the wages that hotels incur during the lockdown period with zero revenue. GST and interest on borrowings can be waived. Electricity tariff can be reduced to the extent of fixed levies, commensurate with minimum consumption of energy. Term loans can be rescheduled. Employee salary can be reimbursed. This can be done to help hotels decrease their losses.



Paramjit Singh Ghai

EC Member, FHRAI

HOTELS FOR QUARANTINE

How will you be disinfecting the hotel post quarantine?

Hotel establishments which have been used as quarantine facilities are no more susceptible to the contagion than other public establishments which are visited by a large number of people.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTION:

Even in the absence of COVID-19 cases in the establishment, it is recommended that hygiene services be enhanced. Special consideration should be given to the application of cleaning and disinfection measures

for example, toilets, handwashing basins, and baths should be cleaned with a regular household disinfectant solution containing 0.1 per cent sodium hypochlorite (that is, equivalent to 1,000 ppm). Surfaces should be rinsed with clean water after 10 minutes contact time for chlorine.

- Service staff may require additional training in the preparation, handling, application, and storage of these products, mostly bleach, which may be at a higher concentration than usual. The cleaning staff should know how to make sure the bleach is not disintegrated and how to rinse it off after 10 minutes.
- When use of bleach is not suitable, e.g. for telephones,



Paramjit Singh Ghai



in common areas (restrooms, halls, corridors, lifts, etc.) as a general preventive measure during the epidemic. Attention should be paid to objects that are frequently touched such as handles, elevator buttons, handrails, switches, doorknobs, etc. Cleaning staff should be instructed accordingly. As part of the hotel's action plan for disinfecting post quarantine, there should be a special cleaning and disinfection plan especially for situations in which there were sick guests or employees staying at the establishment or identified with COVID-19 within a few days after leaving the establishment. Written recommendations for enhanced cleaning and disinfection should describe the enhanced operating procedures for cleaning, managing solid waste, and for wearing personal protective equipment (PPE). The following should be implemented for rooms or specific areas exposed to COVID-19 cases:

- Any surfaces that become soiled with respiratory secretions or other body fluids of the ill person(s),



Hotels used for quarantine facilities are no more susceptible to the contagion than other public establishments



remote control equipment, door handlings, buttons in the elevator, etc. then alcohol (70 per cent) based solutions could be used.

- Whenever possible, use only disposable cleaning materials. Discard any cleaning equipment made of cloth and absorbent materials, e.g. mop-head and wiping cloth. When required, disinfect properly non-porous cleaning materials with 0.5 per cent sodium hypochlorite solution or according to manufacturer's instructions before using for other rooms.
- Textiles, linens, and clothes should be put in special, marked laundry bags and handled carefully to prevent

raising dust, with consequent potential contamination of surrounding surfaces or people. Instructions should be given for washing them in hot cycles (70°C or more) with the usual detergents.

- All used items must be handled appropriately to mitigate the risk of potential transmission. Disposable items (hand towels, gloves, masks, tissues) should be placed in a container with a lid and disposed of according to the hotel action plan and national regulations for waste management.
- In general, public areas where a case has passed through or has spent minimal time in (corridors) do not need to be specially cleaned and disinfected.
- Cleaning crews should be trained on use of PPE and hand hygiene immediately after removing the PPE, and when cleaning and disinfection work is completed.
- All rooms & common areas should be ventilated daily.

What precautions are you taking to prevent COVID-19?

The hotel management must adopt a responsible attitude to address the health threat of COVID-19. The hotel has to prepare an action plan. Every staffer must strictly comply with the basic protective measures against COVID-19



Government policies should reflect the hotel industry needs to be protected owing to the large number of employees



such as hand hygiene, physical distancing, avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth, practice respiratory hygiene and heed the advice to stay home .

ACTION PLAN

The management team in consultation with the local health authority, hotel, restaurant, catering and tourism administration and industry association should establish an action plan tailored to the situation and implement it in accordance with the recommendations of local and national public health authorities with the aim to prevent cases, effectively manage cases, and mitigate impact among clients and staff, including cleaning and disinfection of rooms occupied by ill persons. The plan, which may incorporate teleworking, should be updated when necessary as a consequence of new procedures or regulations issued by the authorities.

MOBILISATION OF RESOURCES

The management team should make sufficient human and economic resources available to ensure that the action plan can be implemented rapidly and effectively. The action plan should also include the provision of equipment and procedures developed in collaboration with local health authorities for the management of suspected case (s) and their possible contacts.



SUPERVISION

The implementation of the action plan and the effectiveness of the measures undertaken should be evaluated frequently to verify compliance, identify and correct gaps, and adapt the plan to practical experience. A crisis team involving members of each relevant department can support management in the implementation of the action plan and timely identification of required adjustments. It is necessary to be alert to any unusual rise in worker absenteeism, especially those due to acute respiratory infections, possibly caused by COVID-19.

LOGBOOK OF ACTIONS

It is advisable to keep a logbook of the important actions and measures carried out and to record them in detail (e.g. including date and time a disinfectant was used, by whom, where etc.). This logbook can be used to improve the actions implemented.

COMMUNICATION

Communication should be maintained between management and staff, including through the managers in charge of the different departments, in order to pre-define an information policy for guests as well as to rapidly provide and obtain information on incidents that may arise in the establishment and to know the

status of the situation at all times. Providing guidelines to the staff on how they should communicate the action plan to guests and other stakeholders can ensure alignment consistency.

Is there any policy on liabilities arising out of such takeovers of hotels for quarantine? What should the government do in such a scenario?

For hotel owners and operators already facing nosedives in revenue, the corresponding guest costs, whether over a daily, weekly or monthly basis, can be significant. So, what can hotels do now to limit their possible economic exposure?

BUSINESS INTERRUPTION INSURANCE COVERAGE

Henceforth business interruption insurance will be a special focus for all hotels. Policies are normally taken out by owners in combination with standard property damage insurance cover and is required under most hotel management agreements. Such policies typically cover loss of revenue flowing from interruptions to business operations for a specified period, and subject to other liability caps. However, recovery under such policies typically depends upon the insured showing that the business interruption has been caused by physical loss or damage to the insured property. In addition, policies

may contain express exclusions in respect of infectious or communicable diseases. Therefore, it is unlikely that coronavirus COVID-19 or an acquisition for quarantine by the local authority or government would be covered under most standard policies.

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

Industries around the globe are lobbying their local governments to lessen the blow of COVID-19 by establishing emergency assistance funds. Nonetheless the pandemic is still in its infancy and because there will be a limit to government assistance, it is important for hotels in affected jurisdictions to ensure that quarantined hotels seek priority of payout. Before being placed under quarantine, hotel owners and operators must understand the legal standing under their hotel management agreements and hedge against the downside risk. The state and Central government are aware that there is a fine balance between the health and welfare of the people and the devastation to the economy that the lockdown is creating. The hospitality industry is set to be one of the most affected by the pandemic. Government policies should be put into place to reflect that hotel industry needs to be protected owing to the large number of employees hotels are sustaining to avoid the knock-on effect of mass unemployment and destitution that may result due to the wider financial downturn that is about to take place domestically and abroad.

**Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar
EC Member, FHRAI**

**DEPTH AND WIDTH OF THE
COVID-19 UNPRECEDENTED**

We all must realise that today we are going through an unprecedented crisis, historic and global beyond belief. Therefore, we cannot be taking a stance on anything besides following guidelines and orders issued by the Central, state and local governments. We are not in a position to make any hypothetical plan or policy about our hotels and industry. We simply have to wait for governmental instructions and do the best we can.

The 'stay at home' and 'social distancing' regulations have to be adhered to; it is the best way to save lives and take all social and medical precautions. No one, however senior or learned outside the governmental circles, can advise the government nor take independent actions simply because we are not aware of the depth and width of the COVID-19 impact across our geographies. It is all in the hands of the government, and we have to strengthen those hands. We can be alert, take full precautions as per government orders and pray to the Almighty.



**Lakshyaraj Singh
Mewar**

I can assure you, and your readers, that we will be doing our best and ensuring that not just our establishments but the entire city of Udaipur is safe for its residents. May we all triumph in our collective endeavour.



The 'stay at home' and 'social distancing' regulations have to be adhered to; it is the best way to save lives



Changing
the way,

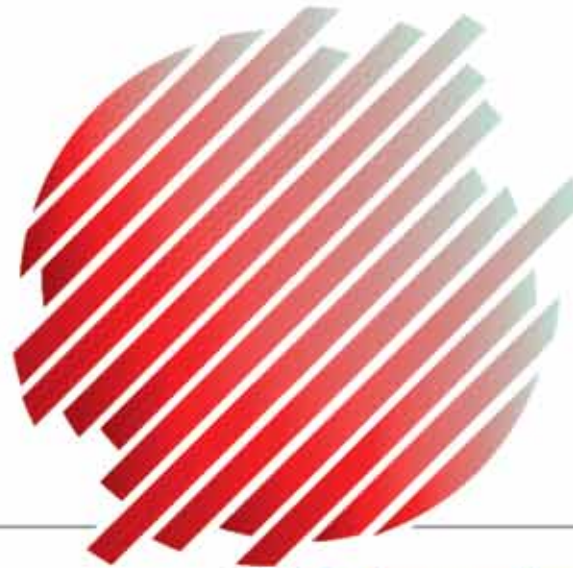
the world sees

hotels

and

restaurants

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The new normal rule of COVID-19

FSSAI has come out with specific guidelines for food industry as well as other guidelines issued by government on places of long stay, **Dr V Pasupathy** shows the way forward to enable hospitality industry to broadly create a working SOP as COVID-19 response.



Dr V Pasupathy

Dr V Pasupathy is a Food Safety Expert, Microbiologist, Scientist and Advisor to FHRAI, BIS, FSSAI and MoCA constituted a committee to draft guidelines for the food industry. The disease can spread directly through human to human contact or from droplets of infected individuals. Indirectly it spreads through contact surfaces contaminated with droplets that may contain this virus from infected people transmitted directly or indirectly. Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the

virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. So, avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth. Also, make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. The good news however is that this is not food borne or water borne as per available evidence.

An initiative by consumer affairs with BIS and FSSAI enlisted the checklist for food industry as a whole covering even areas of warehousing, transportation and retail.

FIVE MAJOR PRINCIPLES

The major principles include hand wash, social distancing, respiratory hygiene, disinfection & sanitation and critical personal hygiene care.



HOW DO WE START THE PROCESS?



SOME SPECIFICS

1. Appoint a COVID-19 response officer who is nominated amongst the team by management, he should be a senior executive with powers to take decisions in case of emergency.
2. Allocate isolation room in case of requirement.
3. No buffet for time being.

KEY ASPECTS

1. Screening facilities for staff, guests, suppliers, visitors and service providers at both time office and front office.
2. Hand wash stations from lobby to all operational areas more importantly in staff zones with soap solution, drying facility, sanitiser too.
3. Provide guest amenities only on request. Remove all placards and restrict the chances of spread by reducing number of items guests may touch.
4. All items in the room have to be cleaned and sanitised like TV remote, telephone, knobs, switches, handles etc.
5. No sharing of lockers for staff. Focus on uniform and hygiene.
6. All secondary packing materials like carton boxes to be disposed of at receiving itself to reduce risk, all vegetables, fruits and eggs to be washed and brought in.
7. Designate persons for guest plate clearance, place only items requested by guest on table for dining.
8. Avoid personal service like standing inside guest rooms, place the food with cover and clear it with cover.
9. Have mattress and pillow protective covers which are easy to sanitise.
10. Other than family only single occupancy in any room unless it's a suite where social distancing is possible.
11. Staff must wear face masks, have individual face towels, gloves in all operational areas.
12. Staff must be trained daily on COVID-19 response routines.

GUIDE ON CHEMICALS

CHLORINE

Uses

- Perishable Products
- Food Contact Surfaces

Frequency

- Always (For food to be consumed raw)
- After use

QUATERNARY METHYL BUTYRIC ACID (QMBA)

Uses

- Food Contact Surfaces

Frequency

- After use

70% ALCOHOL BASED

Uses

- Hand Sanitation
- Common Touch Points
- Food Contact Surfaces

Frequency

- As and when required or after each use

HOW DO I PLAN MY KITCHEN WORKFORCE AND ENSURE SOCIAL DISTANCING?

RANGE
CRITICAL

NON RANGE
CRITICAL

PRE
PREPARATION

KEY POINTS

Any person with fever, symptoms of flu should not enter premises

Persons resisting COVID-19 procedures be moved out of work

A register of monitoring health indicators be maintained

Such planning will ensure social distance spacing is possible. To summarise the new normal challenge has to be met with meticulous planning, alert monitoring and good documentation. The two main things that should be kept in top of our mind are ensuring safety to all stakeholders; and increasing guest and staff confidence. The comeback depends a lot on how we approach this with scientific temper and sensible action.

(The article has been written by Dr V Pasupathy, the views expressed are the author's personal views.)



INDUSTRY MUST **SURVIVE, RECOVER & THRIVE**

FHRAI has continued its series of knowledge share webinars. With the webinar on “Survival to Revival – Restart and Resume Operations”, it showed the way forward for hoteliers in this time of crisis.



Kanchan Nath



The webinar covered currently relevant topics such as F&B operations, food handling and food safety; room division and housekeeping operations; security and baggage handling and sanitisation; sales and marketing innovations; cost cutting and trimming; and energy management and engineering.

Over 1,000 + members actively participated in the webinar, while registrations had been made by 3,000+ members. Priority was given on the first come first serve basis. Yet again the session was made interactive with questions posed through the Q&A section at the bottom of the page and most of the same were covered through the discussion. There were also more than 10,000+ views of the webinars conducted.

The webinar was moderated by **Nirav Gandhi**, EC Member, FHRAI. Speakers included **Debashis Chatterjee**, Corporate Executive – Housekeeper, Sarovar Hotels and Resorts; **T Natarajan**, Chief Executive Officer, GRT Hotels and Resorts; **Nikita Ramchandani**, Senior Area Director of Operations – South Asia, Marriott International; **Delna Jasoomoney**, Associate Vice President – Travel Industry Sales & Luxury Partnerships, The

Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL); and **Dr V Pasupathy**, Food Safety Expert, Microbiologist, Scientist and Advisor to FHRAI for FSSAI, BIS, and MoCA. The facilitator was **Pradeep Shetty**, Joint Honorary Secretary, FHRAI. The vote of thanks was given by **Surinder Kumar Jaiswal**, Vice President, FHRAI. The administrator of the webinar was **Himanshu Talwar**, Assistant Secretary General, FHRAI.

COMMON CHECKLISTS FOR ALL

Motivating hoteliers in times of crisis, **Nirav Gandhi** stated that hoteliers are resilient and have always bounced back with better and updated levels of service. He said, "In Asia Pacific region the hotels have had a higher level of service compared to America and Europe. Hoteliers will once more need to rewrite operations and the service manuals. Yet again we need to show to the world that India is safe and that we take



Nirav Gandhi



Gandhi: Hoteliers will need to rewrite service manuals. Protocols will have to change and we need to accept that





Nikita Ramchandani

care of our customers very seriously. There will no longer be departmental checklists but a common checklist for everybody in the hotel. Protocols will have to change and we all need to accept that."

As moderator he asked the panel: How do you bring the people back into hotels? How do you change the mindset of the employees and convince them that they need to be working harder now?

Nikita Ramchandani responded, "Business will be severely impacted by COVID-19 and with the lockdown that the government has enforced to flatten the curve, it has had major ramifications for the industry which is very people sensitive and with high touchpoints. This impact we have felt is irrespective of brand, tier of brand, business segment and location."

She went on to add, "Even when the travel norms ease up this would be uncharted and dynamic territory for all.



Ramchandani: We want to stay connected with our customers and have certain strategies for engagement



As Marriott International we have the added advantage of information from around the world. In touch with our counterparts globally, we have been sharing information and getting global best practices. Therefore, we are able to work out a contingency plan, work with a sense of urgency and agility and prepare a recovery plan. We have worked out for any short- or long-term damage. Personally, I feel communication is key during this period and we have stepped up the same with all our stakeholders, these include owners, industry bodies, competitors, media and our associates. Some of our hotels are being used as

quarantine facilities and we have opened our doors for doctors. Also, we are engaged with our local communities for CSR work. To be at the frontline, we need to use all our resources as an international conglomerate and fight this crisis."

ASSOCIATES AS GROUND WARRIORS

Elaborating on the steps towards revival and resuscitation, Ramchandani said, "Resuscitation of industry will depend on forward-thinking relief measures. We have been working shoulder to shoulder with our ownership groups, especially in critical decisions that we had to make. Constant dialogue, discussion and brainstorming has been the focus and owners have been very supportive. The fabric of the culture has been very strong with Marriott. People are our strongest assets, the engagement level with our associates has been very consistent. There are also those associates who are ground warriors currently working in our hotels, we are constantly soliciting their feedback on operational challenges in the current scenario. Safety, security and health of our associates remains of paramount importance. We have also been providing online and virtual training to our associates for upskilling. A lot of our associates have also done a lot in terms of working with authorities distributing rations, and giving food to the needy with the spirit to serve that Marriott embodies. As restrictions recede, we anticipate not all our workforce will return, some may not return due to health concerns, or maybe due to locational challenges. But the resounding sentiment seems that they want to come back and work, doing what they love best."

CONTACTLESS SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Commenting on contactless service, Ramchandani stated, "Customer is king, and we want to stay connected with our customers and have put into place certain strategies for engagement. Our sales force is ensuring that they address any needs that they may have. A lot of trends



will pick up, work from home becoming popular as well as virtual meetings. With Marriott Bonvoy programme we have been very flexible with the cancellation policies of our guests. We do believe that at the end of the year there is some excitement of business coming back.

For operations, I think there will be a paradigm shift. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will now be a part of the regular uniforms and social distancing, with significant investment in best-in-class hygiene and sanitation standards. One prominent trend that we are seeing is going to be contactless service experience. We are keeping this in mind while developing our various touchpoints and utilising technology for developing the Bonvoy App. Buffet services are going to be pre-portioned and will involve less sharing. We will ensure an arrival experience where safety is priority. We will try and provide contactless service to our clients yet keep it warm."

WHAT OF BUFFET SERVICES?

On the same Ramchandani added, "For Marriott, buffet service is not likely to be introduced in near future, there are likely to be more live stations. Traditional buffet will change, it will be pre-portioned and with single offerings. Buffet will showcase the offerings and guests will not be allowed to serve." Dr Pasupathy said, "Service cannot be done by guests, it has to be by the designated trained person." T Natarajan shared, "It will take some time for guests to come to restaurants, buffet will come at a much later stage. Also, there will have to be more distancing so the number of covers will get reduced." Ramchandani said, "Outlets will change 100 covers and will move to 50 covers. In-room dining is what is currently operating, again it is as contactless as possible. There is a revolution going on in menu engineering with immunity boosting foods at the back of everybody's mind. Associates leave the trolley outside the room, for clearance also it is kept outside the room. Once the business restarts, associates

need to be agile and the stringiest checks need to be in place for associates as well as vendors, so that there is no ambiguity in communication and safety." Dr Pasupathy added, "There needs to be a designated person to handle guest leftovers with PPE and trained exclusively to handle that. That cover is sanitised, never kept open, then handled and disposal is through a covered trolley. In dishwasher, we recommend some temperature hike as well as certain chemicals need to be added to prevent cross contamination, among other precautions."

CLINICALLY CLEAN NORMS

Elaborating on how housekeeping will be redefined, **Debashis Chatterjee** said, "Sanitisation and hygiene will be foremost in mind, creating a 100 per cent secure environment should be the focus of the industry. Hotels will need to redesign their hygiene protocols. We need to redefine SOP, create awareness, sanitise all touchpoints through effective training and



T Natarajan



T Natarajan: It will take some time for guests to come to restaurants. Buffet will come at a much later stage



retraining, ensure medical check-ups for the entire team and thermal check-ups for anyone entering the hotel. PPE and social distancing will become a norm making housekeeping more challenging. Specialised chemicals are required for cleaning. The practice of using hand sanitisers needs to be imbibed. Most challenging would be the back of the house areas, like lockers. Coffee shop, lobby, offices need to be disinfected. Everything needs to be cross-checked.

Housekeeping will be about making everything clinically clean, updated with latest health norms and members



Debashis Chatterjee



Chatterjee: For every area we need to have the checklist culture and zero tolerance for non-compliance



Dr Pasupathy

need to be trained by health professionals. For every area we need to have the checklist culture and zero tolerance for non-compliance."

Guiding us further, **Dr Pasupathy** said, "Three points need to be kept in mind. One, it is compulsory for all hotels to have a hose connected with a powerful pipe to sanitise the public areas like portico, parking, floor cleaning of back areas, including staff quarters with one per cent hypochloride. Two, guest amenities inside the room cannot be reused, they should be 'guest to dustbin'. Three, there needs to be a designated person for linen handling who should be completely protected, this is the highest point of contact as body fluids can come into the linen. Also, he advised that touchpoints need to be cleaned with 70 per cent alcohol-based sanitisers, one must avoid gel-based sanitisers, liquid sanitisers are better."



Delna Jasoomoney

CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES

Chatterjee added, "All the items we generally give should be made on request and we need to minimise items being touched by guest. Linen, pillows and mattresses are very vulnerable touchpoints, so we now need mattress protectors and pillow protectors. Pillows can be washed with a temperature above 60 degrees." Gandhi went on to say that it was essential to bring confidence-building measures so that guests start coming into hotels. He added that FHRAI in coordination with FSSAI will conduct training for COVID-19 Awareness for Hotel Staff, Certification and Hygiene Audit.



Surinder Kumar Jaiswal

BE PREPARED FOR AN UNKNOWN 'NEW NORMAL'

T Natarajan said, "We all know the hoteliering of the highest standards till March 24, 2020. From March 25 the new normal has come. To do all the above-mentioned points would possibly need a full day for a restaurant. We need to get into the new normal, we really don't know what it is, we need to look at that very carefully and put

it across as practically as possible. Also, if we need to sanitise to such an extent for 300 room hotels only 150 would be made functional. So, we need to relook at all of this practically. We need to double/triple front office and housekeeping staff. All of this is likely to increase cost, while cash flow is not there."

FEW OPPORTUNITIES IN DIVERSITY?

Elaborating on how Taj has been responding, **Delna Jasoomoney** said, "IHCL is keenly aware of their responsibility to our immediate community. Community is not just a stakeholder but the very purpose of our existence. We have been working very closely with state governments providing meals to migrant workers and have opened doors to the medical fraternity across a number of cities. In the first week of March we started our outreach to our customers. Reassuring them about cancellations and post lockdown the engagement continued online through recipes, wellness programmes and webinars. There is a new norm, we are still navigating new waters every day and no matter how prepared we are, something new will come up. I am quite an optimist and feel even in this adversity there are few opportunities."

She added, "The first priority for people will be personal safety and hygiene. I think one of the opportunities we have is to provide a safe and sanitised space for guests. Once the lockdown opens there will be pent up domestic demand. While inbound will come later we have a huge domestic market that has been growing ninefold. Opportunities can be explored in secluded bungalows, safari lodges, tea plantations, new innovative ideas and other niche experiences. There is also an opportunity in F&B service to provide 'hospitality at home' with personalised items offered to guests. There is also a potential in spa and saloon."

STICK TO PRICING STRATEGIES

With all that needs to be done for hygiene, costs will go up. The hotels also need to have some cash flow in hand to operate. Jasoomoney shared, "Keeping the same in mind, hotels need to ensure that they have a verifying balance and pricing strategy in place. Hotels must not get into panic pricing and reduce costs. Hotels need to stand



their ground, more important than the price right now is value. Building value before valuation of the product is important. With what has currently happened, the need for people to go somewhere familiar is important, that may be a place, person or brand. People will be willing to pay a bit more if they feel safe, that is a competitive advantage so people will be willing to pay. Competitive advantage is the willingness to pay minus the cost of service. The minute you get the balance right, keeping in mind that the cost of service is going to go up, you will be on the right track. I feel we need to be responsible to the industry and stay firm on pricing, however, one needs to be a bit flexible with policies in terms of cancellation."

Natarajan stated, "When it comes to pricing, all hotels will not offer reduced prices. However, customers will demand the same, especially the corporates who take large occupancies. In terms of pricing hotels will be as different as can be and panic pricing will happen as some smaller hotels are urgently in need of cash flow to repay bank loans. In case they do not do so, it will wipe out bottom lines." Jasoomoney added, "Mid-scale hotels will be the ones to revive, so if pricing is reduced there it will have a cascading effect. Brands are holding ground on rates. FHRAI has recommended to members not to go below five per cent of rates offered last year." When it comes to value addition Gandhi suggested that hotels do not need to discount the airport transfers anymore.

ONLINE TRAVEL AGGREGATORS

On Gandhi's query on commission to OTAs, Jasoomoney said, "There is no fixed formulae. Different hotels will have different agreements with different partners. In the current scenario, we need to work with all our partners, we need every bit of business out there and every possible channel to get that. We try to drive business directly even though we have OTAs. Our brand drives our value and demand. Every partnership has a cost to it, the minute you know there is a line you will not cross it, all depends on your pricing strategy. Demand will not change because of rates or commissions being cheaper." Natarajan added, "Smaller hotels which have borrowed money cannot afford closure for 40 days. Many are suffering due to their

debts The OTAs will promote some schemes and smaller hotels will go for that as they have their loans to repay. Initially they will look at only cash flow and not their losses, three to four months moratorium is not practically on the ground. Initially OTAs will be saviours and then they will make a move later." Ramchandani stated, "OTAs have a certain amount of prowess in the digital space and we cannot ignore that. Pricing is a derivative of supply and demand. As an international conglomerate we have global alliances, so they are not driven by local markets. This gives us a bigger negotiating tool, be it global partners like Bookings, Expedia, Agoda. We are also working with local OTAs like MMT and Yatra.

We are clear that where we want to drive business is from Brand.com that is Marriott Bonvoy. Even since the pre COVID era we have been trying to shift OTA business to direct business. We are looking at a more collaborative



Jasoomoney: We need every bit of business out there and every possible channel to get that



relationship, it's a very symptomatic relationship as of now." Sharing technical aspects that need to be kept in mind, Dr Pasupathy added that the government has four important conditions as COVID responses. These include social distancing; respiratory hygiene; washing hands and critical personal hygiene care. Government is creating Suraksha stores and warehouses with stringent safety norms. Likewise, for safe hotels, the following measures are very important.

- Screening facilities.
- Staff zones, for every ten feet there will be only two workers, timings have to be meticulously coordinated. COVID-19 coordinator is compulsory, he is the nodal person working with and reporting to local authorities.
- Hand wash facilities followed by 70 per cent alcohol-based sanitisers.
- Respiratory hygiene uniform, three layers mask with two ties, three pleats looking down, the external layer being a synthetic one.



Pradeep Shetty



Himanshu Talwar



Strategy on CapEx, govt assistance to save hotels

FHRAI held the webinar on “Recover & Rediscover -- Challenges & Strategies Going Forward”, reassuring hoteliers to stay positive and show resilience in this time of crisis, where the working capital expenditure (CapEx) is going to be high.



Kanchan Nath



Kamlesh Barot

Over 1000 + members actively participated in the webinar, while registrations had been made by 4000+ members. Priority was given on the first come first serve basis. Yet again the session was made interactive with questions posed through the Q&A section at the bottom of the page and most of the same were covered through the discussion.

The webinar was moderated by **Kamlesh Barot**, Past President, FHRAI. Panelists included **Param Kannampilly**, CMD, Concept Hospitality; **Sanjay**

Sethi, CEO & MD, Chalet Hotels; **Ajay Bakaya**, MD, Sarovar Hotels; **Rattan Keswani**, Dy. MD, Lemon Tree Hotels; and **K. B. Kachru**, Chairman Emeritus & Principal Advisor (South Asia), Radisson Hotels Group. **Pradeep Shetty**, Joint Honorary Secretary, FHRAI and **Nirav Gandhi**, EC Member, FHRAI joined for some time. The vote of thanks was given by **M. Venkadasubbu**, Joint Honorary Secretary, FHRAI. The administrator of the webinar was **Himanshu Talwar**, Assistant Secretary General, FHRAI.



Kachru: Business destinations in Tier-1 will pick up faster, real progress would be between six to nine months



Starting the discussion **Kamlesh Barot** enquired as to what is going to be the impact of COVID-19 on the future of Indian hospitality when it comes to luxury, business & other properties. He also wanted to know whether any major change has been done in terms of strategy.



BUSINESS DESTINATIONS IN TIER-I WILL REVIVE FASTER

Responding to him, **K. B. Kachru** said, "We are in tough times, I personally feel properties right through, whether luxury or economy are going to be impacted. There will be more car travel now, particularly in the luxury or first-class market. People will be wary of travelling internationally at least for the next nine to 12 months. They will travel more as a family, to a shorter distance of three to six hours and mostly by car. Those properties will revive first rather than those only connected by air. I feel that in the business destinations, Tier-1 will pick up faster than Tier-2 and Tier-3. The first three months will be very difficult, real progress would be between six to nine months.

BUSINESS TRAVEL WILL COME BACK FIRST

Sanjay Sethi added, "Leisure would take some time as people have been away from businesses for quite some time now and they need to work. Leaves have been consumed and liquidity in the hands of people is also no longer there, so business people will face a liquidity crunch. Business travel will come back because it's a necessity. As all businesses have suffered, people will want to come back and engage with their clients, dealers, sales team, to try and get back as soon as possible to normalcy. International travel will come back later unless it's long-stay project travel which requires one flight for a 30-day or 60-day period."

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT REQUIRED

On support from the government for the industry, Sethi said, "We need the Central government to step in and ease the debt pressure. We are a capital-intensive business and we need help on that front. Secondly, we need some assistance on payroll cost which is the largest operating cost that we have as a business. We have made strong representations to state ministers and chief ministers, firstly for our electricity cost and excise license cost and other things like property tax and lease."

Kachru added, "Effective recovery is only possible with the help of the government. It's great to see all hospitality and travel associations come together at this time. From the government we are asking for deferment of statutory liabilities, including EMI for a minimum



Pradeep Shetty



Himanshu Talwar



Sethi: There will be a liquidity crunch and business travel will be the first to revive because it's a necessity



period of 12 months. We are talking about subsidising employment, suspension of lease and license rental, and GST capital for use of working capital, which is needed by all. We have requested the state governments to not charge on minimum guaranteed load for hotels and restaurants." **Ajay Bakaya** said, "Resorts and leisure properties at a driving distance of one, two, three or four hours from large cities do have more probability of fast revival. There are a lot of people who want to get out and driving is being considered the safest mode of travel right now. Apart from the push by the associations there



Sanjay Sethi



Ajay Bakaya

needs to be huge efforts at the state and city levels to get the benefits that you want from each state."

Param Kannampilly added, "Maybe the government does not plan to give money but the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC), Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India, has got money. Government should start patronising ESIC to release the money of people unemployed at the moment. The government also needs to promote India abroad as a safe country. We are hygienic, our hospitality industry is careful and cares for guests and staff."

BRAND OPERATORS AND OWNERS' PERSPECTIVE

On how they are supporting the relationship with the owners they represent, Kachru said, "As a brand that is

on which owner is leveraged and who is not. One size does not fit all. Some owners are not thinking seriously of following the Disaster Management Act notifications." Bakaya went on to say, "We have 16 hotels out of 83 that are operating in India, the others have suspended operations. The first thing is that, how do I pay my people? I don't have the money. Secondly, if the cost of opening the hotel is far greater than any perceived revenue, why should I open now, or should I open at all? If we clearly see an extended period of six to nine months, we see very little or no business, say 10 per cent of the business. We are advising owners to hold off the opening, it makes better sense that way." Kannampilly said "We are in touch with our owners and the assurance they want is, if they open, how soon can business pick up? Our team is in touch with them as well as clients. It depends on when the transportation starts."



Kannampilly: Government should start patronising ESIC to release the money of people unemployed at the moment



Param Kannampilly

totally asset light, it is important for us to feel their pain. We have to walk along; the real picture will emerge after May 3. Then you have to decide what to open and what not to open. We have some owners who at the moment want to be over cautious and we do not blame them. They don't want this to reoccur or have a problem. We will have to deal at the brand level and with local problems." **Rattan Keswani** added, "You need to look at it, location by location, owner by owner. Some of those destinations might start to see some interest in the future. A lot of the hotels are closed barring four in the management piece of my business. I think it also depends

On how asset owning companies are going to handle the crisis, Sethi said, "What we require from our brand partners and operators are two things. Firstly, safety of our employees and guests staying with us. Secondly, continued engagement with the key client base that we have in each of the locations so that you maintain relationships with them and when things do open up, you are able to come back pretty fast. We need to reinvent and reengineer the business in terms of product and service offerings. We need to know what the new normal would be like and align the brand standards with the new normal. This is the strategy for later, but it is imperative to plan now."

On the key points for future dynamic strategy, Sethi shared, "At Chalet we started with a three-pronged strategy. The first was crisis management, no-regret decisions to begin with. Second was how do we get to

open and address the new world after this. The focus of discussions was on frequent use of business hotels, and the third was to race ahead for higher market share, so that is what we would expect our operators to do. We need to improve the market share from a limited market, keep the costs tight, and look at what we can do away with in terms of services and products."

Elaborating on the need of the hour, Barot reiterated that it's important to build the confidence of the clients in the brand once more. Bakaya said, "It would be great if we can have a five-word slogan, irrespective of the brands, communicating to the customers that it is safe for them to come to hotels or restaurants." Keswani said, "In the critical guidelines that have come, we need to check if recycling is possible and identifiable. Put your safety and hygiene practices into focus on what

to survive over the next couple of months." Sethi added, "Moratorium in current form is of no use to businesses. We need a 12 to 18-month relief period from EMLs. We also need interest subsidy during this period otherwise the interest will build up on your principal and start increasing your liabilities. In a capital-intensive business you need a 20-year loan period without which it is difficult to make the business profitable." Kachru added, "It's important to restructure the policy, loan and the period of the loan. If this is not addressed now, there



Rattan Keswani



Bakaya: If the cost of opening the hotel is far greater than any perceived revenue, why should I open now



is the right thing to do when you do open. Hope that you don't get a symptomatic guest, but you still run a welcoming hotel with the right distances and hygienic practices. Put the practices into place for perpetuity for the next 24 months so that the clients go back home saying the stay was fabulous." Bakaya said that at the end of the day, we have to see what the guest is asking for. SOPs will have to change as per guest requirement.

MISSING INFRASTRUCTURE STATUS?

Barot went on to say, "If Mumbai and Delhi remain under lockdown where would the domestic business come from? The question was, how hotel owners and operators would expedite the banks decision-making process and gain respect from banks and the lenders." Keswani said, "We need to get the moratorium at least for a year, without which I think even a reasonably mortgaged business or leveraged hotel will not be able

will soon be a lot of NPAs. If we do not address the EML issue, it will be very difficult for people, they do not have working capital after 60 days."

MICE AND WEDDINGS

Kannampilly said, "Tourism will bounce back, MICE may not." Bakaya added, "It is important to provide a feeling of safety, security and hygiene to the traveller. I think the focus will be on filling up rooms for six, 12, 18 months and getting the business. I would reach out to the domestic market. MICE will be shrinking for the next six months." Keswani said that MICE would return after three to four months but it will be with lesser numbers.

Weddings will happen, each of the bigger hotels will become destinations with lesser numbers and wider spaces. Sethi added, "Surprisingly, we have had a lot of enquiries on weddings, so there may be scope there."



Nirav Gandhi



K. B. Kachru

Cargill offers ration kits to the needy

As COVID-19 continues to spread, there is a growing need to feed the most vulnerable communities in our society. In line with its purpose of nourishing the world, Cargill has pledged support to families through dry ration kits containing Gemini Cooking Oil and NatureFresh Acti Lite along with NatureFresh Atta and cooked meals.

The relief efforts will impact families across cities like Delhi/ NCR, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Pune to name a few. This is in line with Cargill India's pledge to support 16 million meals across the country, providing nutrition to 150,000 families across 16 states.

Piyush Patnaik, MD, Cargill's oils business in India, said, "The present circumstances have impacted every industry and community across the world. We are working tirelessly to supply essential commodities where most needed.



We are also ensuring distribution of sanitisation kits to our workers and the communities where we operate. We are supporting local authorities and reaching out through NGO partners to provide food items and meals to nourish those affected."

Maharashtra is a key market for Cargill's edible oils business in India. In Pune, Cargill is working with the District Administration (Pune Zilla Parishad) to supply Gemini Cooking Oil to 1,00,000 families in need in the region. Additionally, the organisation is also working with NGO partners to supply cooked meals and family kits to impacted families in the region.

Cargill is working with The Akshaya Patra Foundation, Zomato Feeding India, MagicBus India Foundation and India Food Banking Network in Maharashtra, to ensure that relief and recovery efforts are being effectively directed to the communities who are most affected.



We are supporting local authorities & reaching out through NGOs to provide food items and meals



Along with this, contractual workers at Kurkumbh where Cargill's edible oil plant is located, are being provided cooked meals daily. Cargill is also allotting hygiene kits for all contract workers, distributing masks and making sanitisers available to local communities near the plants.

The Fern contributes in tough times



Quite a few hotels are offering food to the needy in Mumbai and other parts of the country



The Fern Hotels & Resorts is spreading the message of being sensitive during trying times -- be it by providing food to the needy during these times of national crisis or ensuring there will be no pay cuts across its 72 hotels or displaying light hearts on the facades of various hotels to exude positivity. From Mumbai to Pune, from Rajkot to Sarnath, the hotels are acting as good Samaritans and spreading the message of being sensitive. All the necessary precautions which include wearing gloves, masks and social distancing are taken care of when these exercises are on.

The CEO of the company, **Suhail Kannampilly** said, "We as a company are doing our bit to contribute during this time of crisis. Quite a few hotels are offering food to the needy in Mumbai and other parts of the country. The Fern Hotels is strong enough to come out of any crisis. Our team members are some of the sincerest and focused individuals in the industry.

The Labour Ministry's advice on not reducing any salaries is clear and we as a company want to show our commitment in resolving this crisis. However, at this point we are compelled to take some actions. So rather than salary cuts or unpaid leave we will work towards a salary deferment, where by each hotel pays based on their available cash flow, a base amount for substance and then when the situation reverts to normal the balance is paid out in tranches."



Hospitality bats for stronger measures

FSSAI allows a grace period till June 30, 2020 for license renewals and newer applications for the licenses due between March 22, 2020 to May 31, 2020.

India Exposition Mart Limited in association with HOTREMAI, ARCHII, PPFI had submitted a collated document with requests for the hospitality and F&B industry in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic on April 3, 2020 to Honourable Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi. The initiative, taken by India Exposition Mart, Greater Noida, comes as a step towards giving the hospitality and F&B industry a unified voice in these tough times. One of the requests in the letter was for two-year auto-renewal at no cost of over 70 licenses that the hotels require to renew every year to be operational. This demand has been partially agreed by the government and communicated as per their notification on FSSAI website, but the relief has been given till the period of June 2020 only as against March 2022 which was requested for.

The industry also had the following demands:

- 6 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 off 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
- 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

The request for auto-renewal of mandatory licenses for the hotels was put forth by **Amarjit Ahuja**, Founder and President, PPFI (Purchase Professional Forum of India), who said, "We're glad that the government has considered one of our requests but the relief given is not enough for a larger impact on our operations. We need reforms that can help us sustain for a longer period."



Rakesh Kumar

Hari Dadoo, President, India International Hospitality Expo, stated, "When it comes to businesses, we need to see reforms on a larger scale beginning with the deferment of payment of all statutory dues." Echoing the same sentiment, **Rakesh Kumar**, Chairman IEML added, "Considering we represent India's largest hospitality and F&B show, we work very closely with hotels and restaurants at one end and their manufacturers and suppliers on the other and have presented the above requests after due consideration. The SMEs would benefit greatly if at least their demand for waiving off fixed electricity and water charges is considered for a period of six months." As India battles with coronavirus, some stronger measures and support from the government is the need of the hour.



SMEs would benefit greatly if their demand for waiving off fixed electricity and water charges is considered



Elegant furniture from Ashley Home

◆ Ashley Furniture Home Store has launched a new collection of stylish living room furniture. The Ashley Home Collection 'Breville Espresso' is for those who love classical styles. Elegantly wrapped within rich faux leather upholstery in the espresso shade, it impresses with the traditional beauty of nail head accents and stylish window pane stitched details. The Breville Espresso sofa and loveseat offer plush comfort and a luxurious feel. The sweeping rolled arms and rich finished bun feet work together to transform the décor of any living room. The Breville accent chair in earth-tone palette makes for a stylishly practical choice.



Chill on the patio



◆ IDUS has launched its exclusive Patio Furniture Collection comprising elegantly designed daybed and seating made out of rattan loops that artistically combine old technology with modish designs, shapes, and curves. Resembling either random doodling or a crescent-shaped frame with a distinct central crest or a boat or the one with a simple, solid design, these seatings are a true blend of everlasting beauty.

Designer table lamps

◆ The Whiteteak Company has recently launched the Designer Table Lamp Collection which comprises of table lamps in different designs, patterns and styles in coffee or brown colour. The Love Potion Table Lamp Shade has a gold matte body that peeks out from behind the block of solid coffee Italian marble which makes the piece stand out extensively, while the Blind Spot Table Lamp has dark walnut finish with an arresting metal design and ivory shade.



AV Organics launches Evocus

◆ India's first black and natural alkaline bottled water – Evocus – is all set to usher in a new era of water that not only hydrates, but also helps stay active, alert and healthy. It contains antioxidant, anti-ageing and anti-disease properties; cleanses the colon; rejuvenates the skin; and lubricates muscles and joints. This unique new-age water gets its black colour from 70+ minerals, which are infused in it to maintain the alkalinity. It helps neutralise minerals in the bloodstream, which leads to increased oxygen levels, improved energy and metabolism. Evocus offers constant protection against acidity.





Custom paneling from **Lualdi**

◆ Ottimo brings home to India the latest trend in interior design – doors with matching custom paneling by Lualdi, the Italian brand for internal doors. In this latest style for wall and doors, minimalism becomes a fine art expressed through invisible joints and lines of the doors and panels. The eye beholds a perfectly unified look stretching out in either direction as the doors and walls merge into one another.

Exclusive seating for you

◆ Seetu Kohli Home, the high-end architecture and luxury interior design company renowned for representing some of the top-notch global luxury brands in India, has launched a new collection of exclusive seating, Wickham, by the iconic Bentley Home. What strikes you as unique about the Wickham seating is its unusual form that comes with superb functionality and ergonomics. The Wickham 3-seater sofa and armchair both feature a sensuously curved back that envelops the seat in a warm hug. A lateral view of the furniture pieces allows you to admire and marvel at the elegant lines of the curvaceous frame. The design is aerodynamic and modern, yet the overriding sensation is inviting and relaxing.



Animal-shaped ottomans from **Danube Home**

◆ The latest collection of ottomans from Danube Home come in the shape of elephants, bears, sheep, horses, antelopes and many other cute animals with a storage feature that just makes it the perfect buy. Designed for kids and adults these ottomans feature a contemporary design that is packed with utility. It can be used as a footstool and to bring a fantastic wildlife accent to kids' rooms, cabins, living rooms, and that little unused corner of the bedroom. They are perfect for both putting your feet up and hiding away the knick-knacks that clutter. The unique animal-shaped storage ottomans are made with thick padded cushions on all sides with high-quality fabric.

Hand tufted carpets

◆ Shapes speak a language that has no singular translation. Beautifully hand tufted in 100 per cent bamboo silk, each carpet of the new Forma Collection is an elegant expression of luxury, brought alive through an infinite interplay of pile height variances, colours, textures, and patterns. With this collection, Hands is going beyond construction, technique, colour, material, or design type, to boldly play with the shape of a carpet, thus adding a distinctive character to the space each adorns.



Appointments



AKSHAY THUSOO

Vice President – Sales
Sarovar Hotels

★ Akshay Thusoo has been appointed as Vice President – Sales at Sarovar Hotels. Thusoo brings with him almost a decade of experience across hospitality, media and automobile industries. In his new role, he will be conceptualising and implementing sales strategies at both corporate and regional level and will contribute in further strengthening the group's efforts in driving more business from existing as well as new markets. Prior to joining Sarovar Hotels he was with The Oberoi group as Regional Sales Manager.



SUPRIYA MALHOTRA

Area General Manager
Ascott, Chennai

★ CapitaLand's wholly owned lodging business unit, The Ascott Limited (Ascott), has recently appointed Supriya Malhotra as Area General Manager for Chennai Cluster. In her new role, Malhotra will be responsible for Ascott's overall operations in Chennai. She has been with Ascott since 2013 and was previously the City Manager for Chennai with direct operational responsibilities of Somerset Greenways Chennai. She has a vast experience of over three decades in hospitality operations.



MANSUR AHMED

Deputy General Manager
Somerset Greenways, Chennai

★ Ascott has appointed Mansur Ahmed as Deputy General Manager of the 187-unit Somerset Greenways in Chennai. Ahmed has been with Ascott for over nine years and was previously the Director of Sales and Marketing for Chennai cluster. A seasoned sales & marketing professional, he was selected by the Ascott management to undergo a rigorous six-month training spread across India & Singapore, prior to his appointment as DGM. In his new role, Ahmed will be responsible for managing operations for Somerset Greenways.



JEN VARGHESE

Director of Sales and Marketing
Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel

★ Jen Varghese has been appointed as Director of Sales and Marketing at Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel. With a robust experience of 16 years in the hospitality sector, Varghese has enriched his professional expertise in the areas of sales, business development, strategic planning, and team management. In the new role, his responsibilities will include maximising hotel revenues through result-oriented sales and marketing strategies and exploring business opportunities through events.



VIJAY KESAVAN

Director of Sales and Marketing
Jalesh Cruises, Mumbai

★ Jalesh Cruises has announced the appointment of Vijay Kesavan as its Director of Sales and Marketing. His responsibilities will encompass sales team leadership, accelerating Jalesh revenue through expanding Jalesh's presence in new markets, development of new channels, and contributing to the company's marketing and business strategies. Kesavan brings over 22 years of sales & leadership experience having worked with Akbartravels.com, Thomas Cook India & Indigo Airlines, to name a few.



VAIBHAV GUPTA

Hotel Manager
ibis Kolkata Rajarhat

★ Vaibhav Gupta has recently been appointed as the Hotel Manager of ibis Kolkata Rajarhat. His journey with Accor started in 2015 as a Front Office Manager at ibis New Delhi Aerocity. Since then, he has successfully spearheaded ibis Styles Goa and ibis Bengaluru Hosur Road in various managerial roles. Gupta began his career with Oberoi Hotel & Resorts as Front Office Assistant and for over a decade, worked with the likes of Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts, Radisson Blu and Hilton Hotels.

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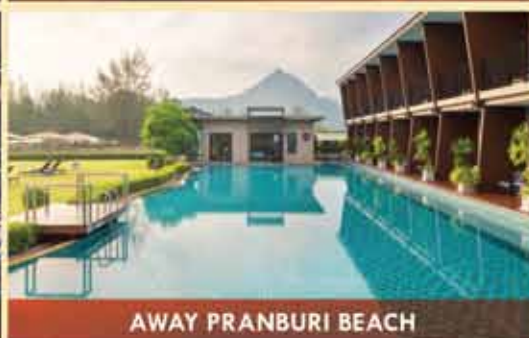
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