

HOTELS & RESTAURANTS INDIA

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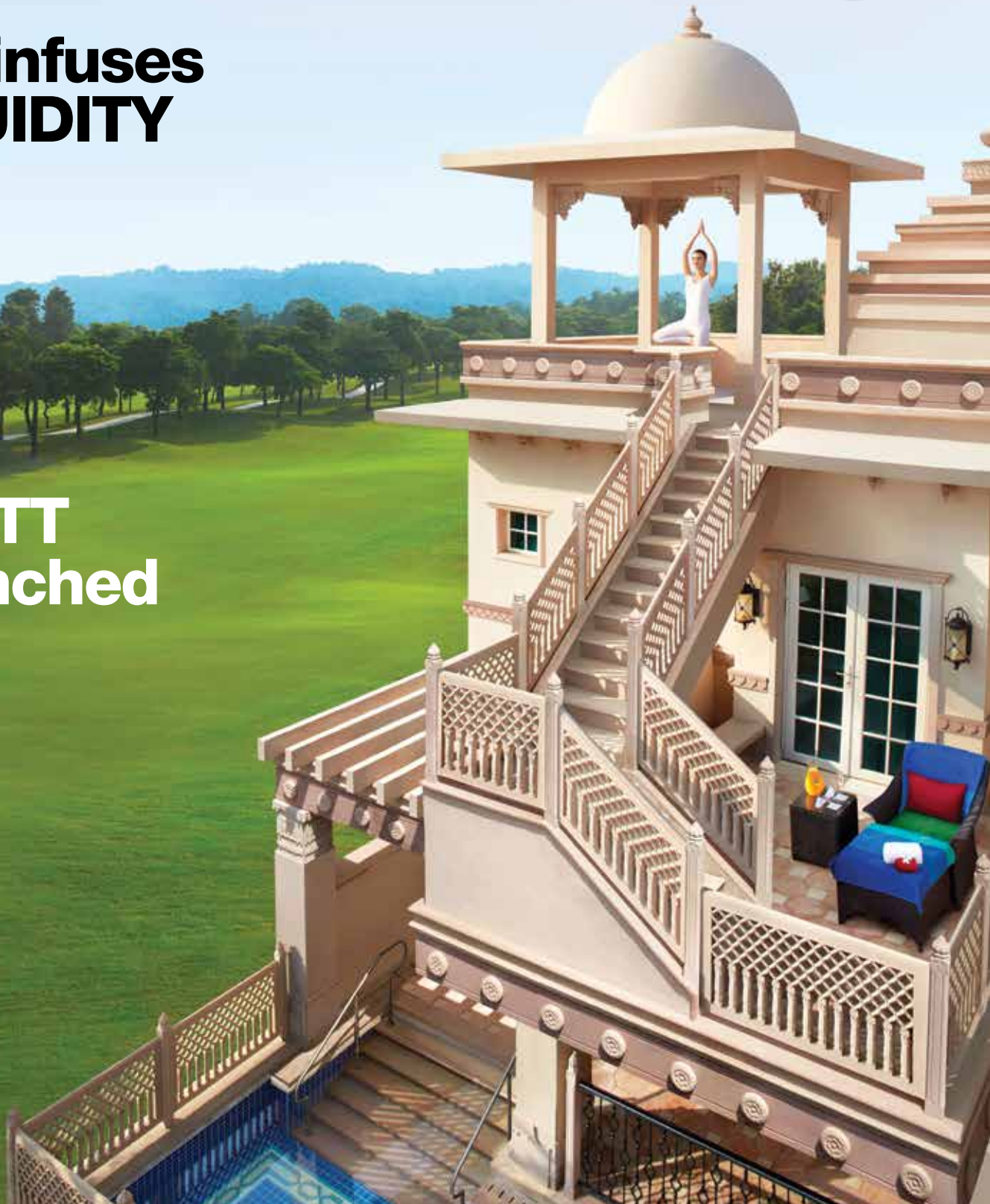
Pages 44 ₹50

A MONTHLY ON HOSPITALITY TRADE
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RBI infuses LIQUIDITY

CHATT Launched



POST THE SECOND WAVE

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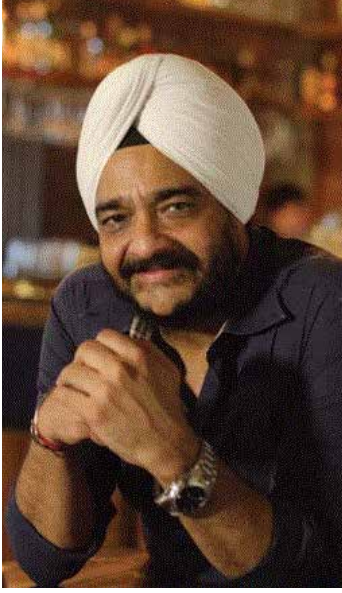


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Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President
FHRAI

Most do not see a return to 2019 international tourism levels before 2023-2024. Rumours of a third wave are doing the rounds



Dear fellow members,

Numbers are dropping everywhere but hospitality and tourism have taken a huge hit. World over, at an average, international tourist arrivals were down 83% in the first quarter of 2021 as widespread travel restrictions remained in place. However, the UNWTO Confidence Index shows signs of a slow revival. In 2020, the fall in international tourist arrivals was 73%. As compared to the first quarter of last year, 180 million people travelled less internationally between January and March 2021. Asia and the Pacific continued to be the greatest hit with an alarming drop of 94% in international arrivals over the above three-month period, with Europe recording the second largest decline at 83%, Africa at 81%, the Middle East at 78% and the Americas at 71%, making it the worst year on record for the sector.

As per the UNWTO, as more and more people get vaccinated, confidence will return and the significant existing pent-up demand will slowly drive recovery. For resurgence in arrivals, testing must become easier and more affordable. Availability of vaccines, the pace at which people will get vaccinated in some important markets as well as government policies on safety for travellers and restarting tourism, notably the EU Digital Green Certificate, will help boost a rebound in some markets. According to the latest survey of the UNWTO Panel of tourism experts, already some markets are showing slight improvement for the May-August period. But continued imposition of travel restrictions and the lack of coordination in travel and health protocols seem to be the main obstacle to the sector's rebound. While some see a potential of revival around the last quarter of 2021, international tourism may only see some revival by 2022. Most do not see a return to 2019 international tourism levels before 2023-2024 or later. Rumours of a third wave are doing the rounds. Some states in India have clamped down really hard in anticipation

of this wave which may or may not come. The impact of COVID on tourism has had a devastating effect and taken a colossal economic toll, reducing overall international tourism receipts in 2020 by 64% and reducing the overall worldwide exports value. The total loss in export revenues from international tourism, amounts to nearly US\$ 1.1 trillion. Asia and the Pacific (-70% in real terms) and the Middle East (-69%) saw the largest drops in receipts.

Indian tourism industry is probably the biggest hit in Asia and Pacific. Though the scenario for the industry remains grim due to lack of sector-specific relief, our endeavours are on. We met the Hon. Minister for Tourism a couple of weeks ago and the MSME Minister as well and charted out core issues as well as offered solutions to them. We are also set to meet the Hon. Commerce Minister for certain related issues in the next few days. We are hopeful of some outcome from these meetings. I am a strict believer of the maxim "After nightfall there is always daylight" as this is the eternal truth. I wish to see a happier and more economically viable future where there exists a healthy public private participation to resolve the issues created by the pandemic. I trust all of you are well and vaccinated. Take care, together we shall defeat this and win the battle against the dreaded virus.

Be safe.

Note: The June 2021 edition of the FHRAI magazine will be available as a printed version on request. And, the e-version of the same shall be available on the FHRAI website and circulated to all members as broadcast on registered email.

With kind regards,
Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI

JUNE 2021

CHATT LAUNCHED

20

Prahlad Singh Patel, Minister of State and Tourism Culture (I/C), recently launched CHATT – a platform to empower small operators, travel and hospitality tech players.

COVER IMAGE:
ITC GRAND BHARAT



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FHRAI EC members talk about RBI's special liquidity window of ₹15,000 crore and how the funds will help in restarting hotels.

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A PHASED RE-OPENING 27

Keeping in mind the circumstances, we have strengthened our safety standards & protocols further through the 'WeAssure' initiative, says Rajat Sethi, GM, ITC Grand Bharat.



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Hoteliers talk about the impact of COVID's second wave on the industry.



BETTER CONVERSATIONS 35

By mapping hotels' business & customer requirements, conversational messaging can improve the hotelier's customer engagement, says Beerud Sheth, Founder and CEO of Gupshup.

TRENDS POST-COVID 36

There will be more challenges along the way. However, COVID-19 has shaped the industry for a better, sustainable, & enriching future, says Patrick Taffin, Assistant Dean, SHMS Leysin.



LAUNCHING FOOD BRANDS 37

Dhaval Udeshi & Pawan Shahri of London Taxi have developed a cutting-edge programme for home delivery.



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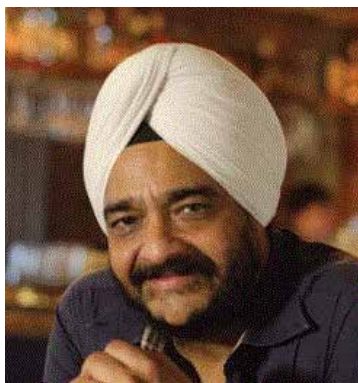
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FHRAI for key policy changes

FHRAI delegates met Hon'ble Tourism Minister, PS Patel & Hon'ble Minister of MSME, Nitin Gadkari, submitting representations suggesting policy changes for the revival of the sector.



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI



The recommendations include complete waiver of interest on loans



Pradeep Shetty
Jt. Hon. Secretary, FHRAI



We request timely payment of cash flows under SEIS scheme



D V S Somaraju
Hon. Treasurer, FHRAI



We have requested provisioning a window for restructuring



Senior delegates of FHRAI met the Tourism and MSME Ministers on June 8 to discuss the deteriorating state of the hospitality and tourism industry and to recommend immediate fiscal measures to save it from imminent collapse. The association submitted representations suggesting key policy changes for the revival of the sector. The FHRAI was represented by Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, Pradeep Shetty, D V S Somaraju and Narendra Somany. The delegates apprised the Ministers about the dismal state of the industry on account of the two lockdowns. The association representatives also met and submitted the

representation to Arvind Singh, Secretary, MOT and Rakesh Kumar Verma, Joint Secretary, MOT. The association recently also held a virtual meeting with the Principal Economic Advisor, Ministry of Finance – Sanjeev Sanyal with recommendations specific to the hospitality sector. The Tourism Ministry acknowledged the industry's concerns and assured that necessary help will be extended to support the hospitality industry. The MSME Minister too has expressed that they will look into the industry's concerns favourably with regards to the ECLGS scheme & RBI's Resolution Framework. "The pandemic has devastated the hospitality sector, businesses are steadily

closing and NPAs are rising. In our meeting with the Ministers, we recommended a well-made sector specific stimulus package that addresses the most critical aspects of reducing financial loss, mobilising loans and retention of employment. The recommendations include complete waiver of interest on loans beginning March 2020 till business normalcy resumes," said **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI.

"We request timely payment of cash flows under the SEIS scheme and refund of income tax payment that is due to the hospitality sector. This will make a big difference to the ability of hotels to pay the workforce employed in the sector, meet the operational expenses and manage loan repayment obligations," said **Pradeep Shetty**, Jt. Hon. Secretary, FHRAI.

"It is imperative to make some additional provision of funds under the ECLGS and align the tenure and moratorium facilities of ECLGS 1.0 and 2.0 in line with ECLGS 3.0 to support the survival efforts of sector. We have requested provisioning a special window for restructuring for the sector without any cap on loan exposure," concluded **D V S Somaraju**, Hon. Treasurer, FHRAI.



FHRAI suggests revival measures

FHRAI has submitted a representation to the Hon'ble Finance Minister suggesting measures to make the On-Tap Liquidity Window for contact-intensive sectors more impactful.

Among the suggestions made, the FHRAI has requested an extension on the tenor of the ECLGS scheme from three years to 5-10 years. It has also asked for a 100 per cent guarantee from the Central Government to banks and NBFCs and the formation of a redressal forum to look into issues relating to non-implementation of the schemes by banks. "For reviving the sector we request the Finance Ministry to extend the tenor of the scheme from three years to 5 to 10 years," says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI. "We request the government and the RBI to set up a redressal forum like the Champion Portal of the Ministry of MSME to address the specific issues faced by the tourism and hospitality industry in availing the ECLGS scheme, says **Pradeep Shetty**, Jt. Hon. Secretary, FHRAI.



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI

“**Extend the tenor of the scheme from three years to 5-10 years**”



Pradeep Shetty
Jt. Hon. Secretary, FHRAI

“**Set up a redressal forum to address issues faced by the industry**”

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HRAWI pleads for concessions

The HRAWI has submitted a representation to the Hon'ble CM, Uddhav Thackeray, for granting concessions to the hospitality industry in the wake of the second pandemic wave.

The association has requested that hotels, restaurants and bars be allowed to re-open with permission to operate the restaurants and bars till at least 11pm with dine-in services. It has also pleaded for waiver of various statutory charges including property tax and minimum water charges, electricity bills along with full relief in excise fees. HRAWI has also asked for SGST be temporarily waived off and that re-payment of loans, bank EMIs, and interest deferred for a period of 12 months.

"The government's stringent lockdown order has severely impacted and affected the hospitality industry. Businesses of majority of hotels, restaurants and bars have come to a complete standstill making even survival a challenge. Of the approximately 2 lakh restaurants in the state, almost 50 per cent have permanently shut. Post the seven month-long lockdown last year, loss of employment in the sector has risen up to 50 per cent.

Hospitality industry is at a tipping point and needs immediate government intervention. We request to allow us to operate till at least 11pm with dine-in services. Hotels and restaurants will continue to operate while strictly adhering to the SOPs. To give a boost to business in pandemic times, the government should waive off state GST until the situation normalises," says **Sherry Bhatia**, President, HRAWI.

The association has requested that the existing moratorium be extended through a notification for an additional six months. The HRAWI has previously appealed to the government to compensate employees engaged in the industry and their families for the loss of income, and also support hoteliers and restaurateurs by waiving off all statutory fees, taxes and utility bills. "At present



Sherry Bhatia
President, HRAWI



The government should waive off state GST

the only revenue for a restaurant is coming through home delivery services which is barely eight to 10 per cent of our actual business. This arrangement is not sustainable since restaurants have infrastructure and fixed costs. Under the circumstances the industry will require a waiver on payment of FL3 license fees and we request for facility in payment of excise fees by way of installment. We also request for waiver in property tax, and energy and water charges should be billed on the basis of actual consumption. This will only help us cut our losses," says **Pradeep Shetty**, Sr. Vice President, HRAWI.

With regards to financial matters, the HRAWI has cited Kerala where its government has asked banks in the state to stop all revenue recovery and property attachment proceedings for the next couple of months. The government of Kerala has also directed the Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) and Kerala Water Authority (KWA) to stop collecting penalties and dues of consumers for next few months.



Pradeep Shetty
Sr. Vice President, HRAWI



Soft loans should be given to restart operations

"The additional debt burden on business due to continued lockdown restrictions has brought upon coercive action, threats of NPAs and likelihood of business establishments shutting down thereby causing immense revenue and job losses. The government should also direct banks and statutory authorities to stop revenue recoveries till such time that the industry is allowed to function as usual. The government should announce soft loans to all hospitality establishments to restart the operations post lockdown," says Shetty.

"We recommend that open spaces and terraces be used for restaurants to serve food to compensate for the loss of licensed space utilisation. We also request that 100 guests be allowed to participate in a weddings or meetings to reduce loss of revenue. Many hotels have large banquet halls where larger gatherings could be held with all social distancing norms. We assure that the industry will abide by all restrictions and follow the SOPs prescribed," concludes Bhatia.



RBI's policy measures inadequate

FHRAI has submitted a representation to the RBI Governor seeking a special restructuring window for hospitality and removal of specific conditions to avail loan restructuring.

The FHRAI has stated that the RBI's latest policy measures are grossly inadequate to address the problems of the hospitality industry and that the sector has yet again been ignored. Tourism and hospitality business being seasonal and dynamic, the industry is looking to receive specific tweaks in the RBI's Resolution Framework 2.0. The FHRAI has submitted a representation to the RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das requesting to provision a special window for restructuring for the tourism & hospitality sector without any cap on loan exposure. It has also asked that the benefit of loan restructuring under Resolution Framework 2.0 be extended to include even those who had applied for restructuring under Resolution Framework 1.0 but were not able to do so.

"We welcome the RBI Resolution Framework 2.0 allowing individuals, small businesses and borrowers, and MSMEs exposure of up to ₹25 crore. While this is good news, the RBI should take into consideration that the hospitality industry is presently the most affected sector in the country. Relief measures announced in the previous restructuring schemes by the RBI have provided no succour to the sector. The Kamath Committee recommendations for restructuring have made the restructuring plan unfavorable for the hospitality industry. Discretions provided to lending institutions by the RBI in loan restructuring scheme have provided no relief to hospitality players. Lending institutions are either reluctant or impose unreasonable



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI

“We request for a special restructuring window for the sector”

conditions to avail the restructuring. We request for a special restructuring window for the tourism and hospitality sector that provisions the removal of ₹25 crores cap for restructuring," says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI. In the Resolution Framework 2.0, the RBI has mandated accounts be classified as Standard as on March 31, 2021 to be eligible for restructuring. The FHRAI has pointed out that this condition onerously goes against hotels and restaurants who had already applied under the Resolution Framework 1.0 but were not able to restructure their loans.



D V S Somaraju
Hon. Treasurer, FHRAI

“Many of our member hotels had applied for restructuring”

"Under the Resolution Framework 1.0, many of our member hotels and restaurants had applied for restructuring of their stressed exposures with their banks, but the applications were not processed in majority of the cases. This specific condition now works against the hospitality industry for availing the restructuring scheme under Resolution Framework 2.0. In view of the abysmal situation of the hospitality sector, we request the RBI to extend the benefit of loan restructuring to all including to those who had applied for restructuring under Resolution Framework 1.0," concludes **D V S Somaraju**, Honorary Treasurer, FHRAI.

‘Mass vaccination at banquet halls’

FHRAI has suggested to MoHFW to make necessary changes in the vaccination guidelines to include banquet halls in hotels as venues for mass immunisation of the corporate sector.



of Health & Family Welfare to consider our suggestion and make necessary changes in the vaccination guidelines to include banquet halls in hotels as venues for mass immunisation of corporates,” says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI.

The Indian hotel industry’s total revenue fell roughly 75 per cent in the last financial year. The industry has taken a revenue hit of close to ₹1.30 lakh crore in FY 2020-21 which in FY 2019-20 stood at ₹1.82 lakh crore. The hospitality industry’s revenue at the beginning of 2021 was below 20 per cent of pre-pandemic levels and since April 2021 the revenue hasn’t even crossed five per cent. Engulfed in massive losses and mounting debts due to the pandemic, the hospitality sector in the country is undergoing a very gloomy economic situation.

“Hotels have been at the frontline and have been serving doctors and other health workers since the first lockdown and are fully aware of operating with the required safety guidelines. The financial repercussion of the lockdown has dealt a severe blow to the hospitality industry.

We were the first sector to be affected by the pandemic and will be the last to revive. Under these extraordinary circumstances, we are hoping that the government could extend its support by allowing us to open banquet venues for mass vaccination. This will give our industry some source of revenue while contributing to the nation in its vaccination drive.

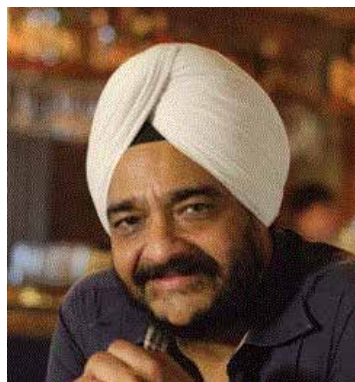
The hospitality industry is committed to follow all the health and safety protocols issued by the government and it has our unwavering support in its efforts to combat the present pandemic,” concludes Kohli.

The FHRAI has expressed regret with reference to some hotels letting out premises to private hospitals for carrying out mass immunisation programmes for corporates. The apex association has advised all its member hotels to not indulge in any such endeavour that contravenes the National COVID-19 Vaccination Guidelines.

In its letter to the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), FHRAI has suggested making necessary changes in the vaccination guidelines to include banquet halls in hotels as venues for mass immunisation of the corporate sector. FHRAI’s letter states that banquet halls in hotels are better equipped than schools, colleges, or community halls for the purpose.

The association further said that during the first lockdown many hotels were requisitioned by local authorities for accommodating doctors and medical workers and also for quarantining COVID patients. Hence, they are aware of all the safety protocols and are fully capable of conducting mass vaccination at their venues.

“Our country is carrying out one of the world’s biggest vaccination drives. Time is of the essence and the quicker we manage to vaccinate the entire population, the better it will be for the nation. The availability of vaccines is anticipated to only increase from here during which safe and controlled environments will be required



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI

“**Banquet halls in hotels will facilitate the vaccination drive**”

to accommodate and vaccinate citizens. Banquet halls in hotels offer just the right kind of venue that will facilitate and expedite the vaccination drive. We request the Ministry

'Reopen restaurants & bars'

HRAWI has stated that the orders under 'Break The Chain' and subsequent orders by the local authorities may not bring in any certainty as to the definite time of reopening.

In view of the state's latest 'Break The Chain' order dated June 10, 2021 the hospitality industry has expressed disappointment that despite Mumbai achieving a level 1 status, restaurants are still not allowed to be opened as usual. The HRAWI has urged the Hon'ble Chief Minister, the Hon'ble Tourism Minister, the Municipal Commissioner, the Hon'ble Chief Secretary and the Hon'ble Principal Secretary, Tourism to reconsider its decision and allow the reopening of restaurants and bars in the city.

The association has stated that the orders under 'Break The Chain' and subsequent orders by the local authorities may not bring in any certainty as to the definite time of reopening, timings of operations



Sherry Bhatia
President, HRAWI



Extended operation timings will have to be considered



Pradeep Shetty
Sr Vice President, HRAWI



Hotels & restaurants are safe in terms of protocols



and other restrictions that may or may not be imposed. Under such uncertain circumstances, mobilising operations of a hotel or restaurant property, recalling of employees who have yet again migrated due to the uncertain situation and restarting of operations will be an arduous task. "A new parameter or condition is being proposed now that requires the numbers to reach 200

positive cases per day or below. To meet this condition under the given circumstances will be very difficult since the vaccination of 50% of the population might take some time. In fact, even after the end of the first wave such levels had not been achieved with regularity. Thus, such a condition will bring added uncertainty to the already beleaguered hotel and restaurant

industry that is looking for survival. Also, there needs to be an element of certainty for the hotels and restaurants to restart and revive. For restaurants, extended operation timings will have to be considered as curtailed timings of 11am or 4pm do not compliment this business. It only adds to the losses being incurred by restaurants due to the lockdown," says **Sherry Bhatia**, President, HRAWI.

"Restaurants and hotels follow all SOPs prescribed by Union Ministry of Tourism, FSSAI, Ministry of Tourism, Maharashtra state, local Municipal and other regulatory bodies. Hotels and restaurants are in fact one of the safest in terms of COVID-19 protocols as compared to other industries. Under the circumstances, we request the government to have due consideration and accordingly allow reopening of all restaurants in the city and save the livelihoods of the millions of owners and employees engaged in this trade," concludes **Pradeep Shetty**, Sr Vice President, HRAWI.

‘Allow 50% seating capacity’

The HRANI in its letter to Arvind Kejriwal, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Govt of NCT of Delhi, has requested to allow restaurant & bars to re-open with 50% seating capacity.



In its letter dated June 8, 2021, HRANI has stated that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the hospitality industry has been extremely disruptive. Among all the core sectors of the economy, hospitality was the first one to fall and is going to be the last to recover, hence becoming the biggest causality of the pandemic.

With the second wave of COVID infection resulting into more severe restrictions imposed by various state governments and local authorities on the hospitality sector, it is really impossible for the hospitality sector to stay afloat.

Today, hospitality has become the most unviable and unsustainable business in the country and is heading towards closure of thousands of establishments in many parts of the country and massive job losses. The letter stated

“The restaurant and bars should be allowed to open with 50% capacity”

further that given the circumstances, HRANI is expecting strong support from the Govt of NCT of Delhi by way of extending relief for the survival and revival of hotels, standalone restaurants with bars and standalone bars.

The sale in food and liquor in a restaurant and bar is a key source of revenue and is also taken into account while calculating the operating cost of hospitality units. In fact, food and liquor is an integral part of hotel and restaurant operations which is seen as a value addition in increasing sales including rooms. The sale of liquor by vends is already allowed in the state. Therefore,

following the SOPs for restaurants, the restaurant and bars should be allowed to open with 50% capacity at par with hotels and liquor vends to ease the hospitality industry of the state. The letter also mentioned that the government of Haryana has already allowed restaurant and bar operations with 50% capacity.

The letter went on to say that there's no revenue during the lockdown, yet the rentals and essential fixed expenses including statutory payments have to be paid. The establishments have to spend more on hygiene & safety measures & worse, social distancing rules may just cut the guest capacities into half.

In this worst condition the industry needs support now more than ever, and HRANI looks forward to immediate relief as a ventilator to the aftermaths of the severe consequences of COVID-19, the letter concluded.

FHRAI for fair market competition

In the ongoing row over unethical business practices involving MakeMyTrip & GoMMT giving the preferential listing to Oyo, FHRAI is pitching for open and fair market competition.

In the ongoing row over unethical business practices involving MakeMyTrip and Golbibo (GoMMT) giving the preferential listing to Oyo and putting other budget hotel franchises at disadvantage, a division bench of the Gujarat High Court has directed the Competition Commission of India (CCI) to afford Oyo Rooms an opportunity of hearing.

An interim order was passed earlier by the CCI through which Fab Hotels and Treebo were relisted on Go-MMT portal. But a Stay Order was given by the Gujarat High Court on the Interim Order passed by CCI.

However now, with the order given by the division bench of Gujarat High Court on June 14, 2021, the previously ordered stay by the Gujarat High Court has been vacated and the matter has returned to the CCI and will be resolved there. FHRAI is one of the respondents in the matter and Advocate Sameer Parekh appeared on behalf of FHRAI.

"Fab Hotels, Treebo and Oyo are good competition to each other. But because Oyo devised an internal arrangement with GoMMT, Fab Hotels and Treebo were delisted from the GoMMT portal. GoMMT is a dominant market player which holds roughly 60 per cent of the hotel bookings market share.

Such a dominant entity abused its dominance to discriminate between competing hotel chains in India. It denied market access to Fab Hotels and Treebo and entered into monopolising arrangements with OYO. The OTA has been indulging in similar practices to disadvantage standalone and small budget hotels by offering preferential listing to others for skewing the market in their favour," says **Pradeep Shetty**, Jt. Hon. Sec., FHRAI.

The CCI in an order dated March 9, 2021 had ruled in favour of Treebo and Fab Hotels, directing GoMMT that the two hotel chains be relisted. However, a single-judge court of Gujarat HC granted interim relief to Oyo, staying the CCI order. "With the case going back to the CCI, the



Pradeep Shetty
Jt. Hon. Secretary, FHRAI



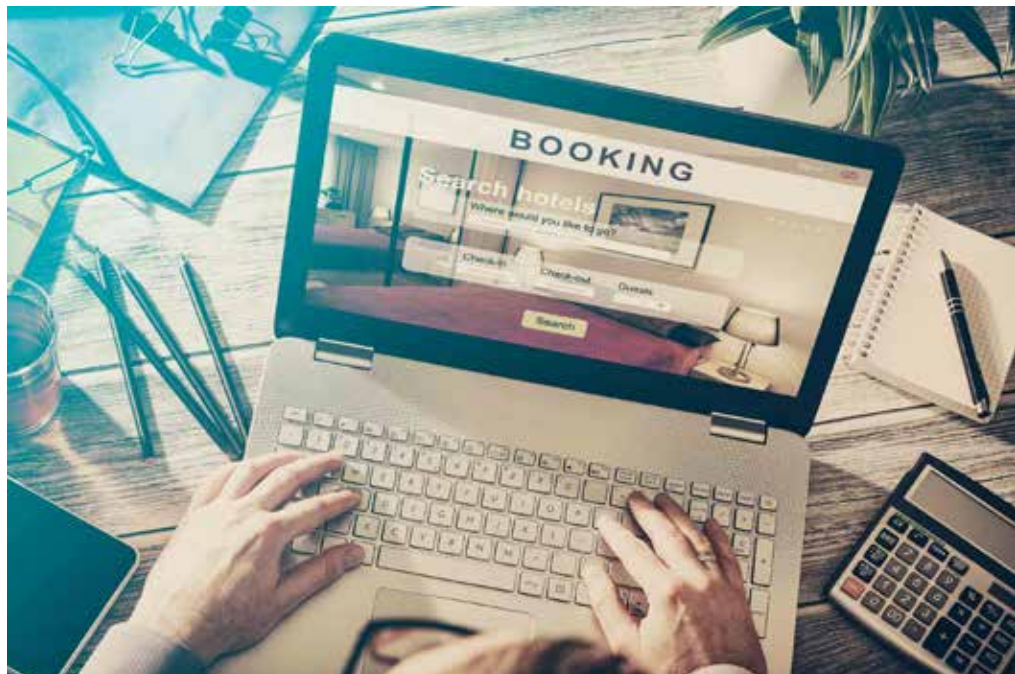
Fab Hotels and Treebo were delisted from the GoMMT portal



Paramjit Ghai
Jt. Hon. Secretary, HRAWI



FHRAI intends to put an end to the disruption caused by Oyo



FHRAI is confident about exposing the tacit agreement between Oyo and Go-MMT depriving other hotel players fair and equal access to a free market. Go-MMT abused its dominant position by imposing unfair trade terms and conditions on Fab hotels and Treebo Hotels, subsequently de-listing the two from its online portal. We will submit

more evidence of dominance and unethical practices by the OTA and Oyo to the CCI investigation team substantiating how local entrepreneurs and hotels are being destroyed. FHRAI is pitching for open and fair competition in the market and intends to put an end to the disruption caused by Oyo," concludes **Paramjit Ghai**, Jt. Hon. Sec., HRAWI.

Mumbai moves up to level 1

FHRAI has appealed to the Maharashtra government and the BMC to allow restaurants in Mumbai to re-open as per the guidelines listed in the level 1 unlock order.

FHRAI has requested the Maharashtra government and the BMC to allow restaurants in the city of Mumbai to re-open for business as per the guidelines set in the govt's latest Break the Chain order. With the positivity rate at 3.79% and the oxygen bed occupancy at 23.56%, Mumbai has moved up to level 1 classification. Restaurants in the city have been operating with level 3 restrictions whereas most cities in the state have been offered relaxations. The association has appealed to the govt to allow restaurants to operate as per permissible guidelines listed in the level 1 unlock order. "Now Mumbai is in level 1 and it is extremely unfair to restaurants in the city to be not allowed to operate as per the permitted relaxations," says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, VP, FHRAI. "Almost 40% cent of restaurants and hotels in the state have been closed & several more are walking a tightrope," adds **Pradeep Shetty**, Sr Vice President, HRAWI.



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI



It is unfair to restaurants in the city to be not allowed to operate



Pradeep Shetty
Sr Vice President, HRAWI



Almost 40% cent of restaurants and hotels have been closed



HRANI bats for relief measures

In its letter, HRANI has requested Himachal CM Jai Ram Thakur for relief measures ranging from refund of excise duty to extension of statutory compliances for hotels & restaurants.



HRANI in a recent representation which it presented to the Chief Minister of Himachal, Jai Ram Thakur, asked for a number of measures to improve the condition of the state's crucial hospitality industry. The HRANI, in its letter, asked for a refund or adjustment of excise fees paid for the period when hotels could not function, between March 22, 2020 to November 4, 2020. Further, with the current restrictions due to the second wave and its disastrous and tragic fall out, since one of the excise licensees in the state have been open since the beginning of the FY till date, HRANI

asked that excise fee should be waived off for next six months. In case of advance payment of the fees, they should either be refunded or adjusted. The association requested a complete waiver of fixed charges since the contracted capacity of power consumption had not been used by the hotels. Fixed charges at the applicable rate had still been billed based on the contracted billing demand which included non-operations period. It asked for relief from property tax/house tax by extending a waiver for hotels and hospitality establishments for a suitable period during the current financial year, citing the example of the government of Gujarat which had granted complete waiver of property tax for financial year 2021-22 and also waived off fixed charges levied on electricity bills for hotels, restaurants, resorts and water parks.



In case of advance payment of the excise fees, they should either be refunded or adjusted



Sustainable tourism roadmap



The Ministry of Tourism (MOT) has come up with the first draft of the national strategy & roadmap for sustainable tourism with a focus on adventure and eco-tourism.

Arvind Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, shared that the national strategy has been drafted by the Joint Secretary, his team and other Ministry officers. "It can be a starting point. We will share it with stakeholders and then we will take it forward and see how we can have this kind of mainstreaming of environment in our tourism policy. The national strategy will include a certification scheme, capacity building and we are also thinking of a system of assessing the states and ranking them as we have done in many programmes like 'Ease of Doing Business'."

Singh revealed that they have already developed a sustainable tourism criteria, giving indicators for the accommodation sector and tour operators, where they will work with the Responsible Tourism Society of India (RTSOI) for implementation through a certification scheme, which is also there for some other processes.

"With the RTSOI, we are promoting a traveller campaign and we will see responsible behaviour by travellers. Once the tourism sector opens up again after this lockdown, we'll take this responsible traveller campaign further," he shared.

He added that under the strategy, they will also help the states in marketing, setting up safety standards, and also in some cases work with the local government to develop the local destinations and products there. "In addition, the private sector and the community want to be roped in and all this has to be backed with a campaign for responsible travellers we have done with the RTSOI."

Saying that there is a special relationship between tourism and environment, Singh added, "Tourism plays a positive role and we all know that tourism can play

a negative role also. Currently our country is ranked very low on environment sustainability, while our rank in the overall world travel and tourism competitiveness is 34, under the environment sustainability it is 128, which is a poor reflection on us. Most of our neighbouring countries do very well in this regard.

There is no denying the fact that more needs to be done for sustainable tourism. There is a need to mainstream the theme of sustainability in our policies, both at the national and the state level."

Talking about aviation, he shared that as far as airlines are concerned, it's a very serious matter because the use of fuel inefficient aircraft, old aircraft and fuel lead to high toxic emissions. "We will take this up with MoCA and support industry talk with them, because they are the ones who regulate the airlines. As far as the state governments are concerned, most of the states like Sikkim, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, and Andaman have taken steps because sustainable tourism is their bread and butter."

He concluded, "Once this national strategy and roadmap is there, it will be a document in the public domain. We will encourage the states to frame policies, which are in line with this national strategy, so that sustainable tourism and eco-friendly tourism is encouraged in the states. Since all states are different, we will handhold and work with them once this national strategy is in place, by campaigns, capacity building, skill training and other soft skills that need to be developed in this case."



Arvind Singh



With the RTSOI, we are promoting a responsible traveller campaign





Training on food production, soft skills

The recent training sessions organised by FHRAI-IHM comprised capacity building programmes on standards for Food Production and interpersonal skills.

CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME ON TRAITS, SKILLS AND STANDARDS FOR FOOD PRODUCTION

FHRAI-IHM conducted a four-module training on traits, skills and standards for Food Production staff of hotels and restaurants. The training series comprised of the following four sub-modules.

HOSPITALITY AND CHEF AS A PROFESSION (SESSION 1)

This session was for those looking for a career in hospitality. The traits and skills needed to be a good hospitality player and chef and the role they play in the hospitality industry were highlighted.

FOOD SAFETY – UNDERSTANDING CONTAMINANTS (SESSION 2)

Food is the essence of life and having good and safe food is a necessity. This session focused on understanding about the contaminants of food and reducing those to a minimum; and learning about the different standards followed in the industry.

FOOD SAFETY, HYGIENE, PRESERVATION AND GOOD PRACTICES (SESSION 3)

This session emphasised that food safety and hygiene are the basis of any food industry and elucidated on the basics of hygiene and safety and also the good practices followed in the kitchens across the industry.

GENERAL CONCERNS AND THE SPIRIT OF HOSPITALITY (SESSION 4)

The session stressed on understanding general concerns of today and preparing for a better tomorrow. The sessions were conducted by **Rishabh Misra**, Lecturer at FHRAI IHM. He said, "It is no secret that the COVID-19 pandemic has hit the hotel industry hard. While lockdown and economic slowdown may have been beyond our control but this pandemic has made hotels focus more on health and safety measures especially when it is related to guests and food. FHRAI IHM with support from FHRAI and all its associates conducted a capacity building programme based on skills and standards for Food Production staff. The programme was divided into four sessions comprising all the skills needed to become a good chef and a better hospitality player. Originally planned to be held once a week, each session was conducted thrice in the week due to the overwhelming response from around the country."

CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME ON INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Hospitality is a people's industry, where personalised service is the key to retain guests despite tough competition. A hospitality professional needs a high level of emotional intelligence to understand guests' needs and deliver accordingly. A good hold on one's Interpersonal skills

helps a hotelier to achieve the required level of emotional intelligence, helping him to communicate effectively. Keeping these needs in mind, FHRAI-IHM also conducted a five-module training on interpersonal skills for professionals working in Rooms Division and Food & Beverage Service. The training series comprised the following modules.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS – NEED OF THE HOUR (SESSION 1)

Interpersonal skills are important in proper display of a person's qualities & behaviour we exhibit while interacting with others, showcasing the knowledge within and effective communication, hence such skills makes a person more approachable.

SUB-MODULE 1: BODY LANGUAGE (SESSION 2)

Our body language conveys so much that people can understand or interpret what we are saying even while we are not talking and form perceptions about us. Hence, we need to understand this saying, "It's what you don't say that counts".

MODULE 2: LISTENING SKILLS (SESSION 3)

Listening is an important side of a conversation and is usually the neglected side. We listen with our ears but most importantly listening with our eyes and heart makes it more effective. Minimising the barriers during listening is a skill and helps us to understand our guests better.

MODULE 3: EMPATHISING SERVICE (SESSION 4)

Personalised service can be offered if we understand a guest's requirements and empathise with him. In simple terms we need to understand the saying, "Put yourself in my shoes".

MODULE 4: MINDFULNESS (SESSION 5)

Mindfulness is a difficult skill to practice, as our brain carries out multiple functions enabling us to be aware about our surroundings always. Being present in the present helps us to be focused and in sync with the external environment. The sessions were conducted by **Ashima Chatterjee Misra**, Assistant Lecturer – Rooms Division, FHRAI IHM, who said, "For the employees working in Rooms Division and Food & Beverage Service, a series of five modules was formulated on interpersonal skills. To be an efficient member of such a competitive industry, it's important for every individual to be at the peak of their game, let it be standard or attitude, skills or communication, every team member needs to possess them to interact with guests effectively. Interpersonal skills have been marked as an important trait in a hospitality professional, as they become the bridge to connect with our guests, understand them and serve them with customised services."



Rishabh Misra



Today hotels focus more on health & safety measures especially when it is related to guests & food



Ashima Misra



Interpersonal skills are an important trait as they become the bridge to connect with our guests



Hospitality education

Regional Presidents opine that the learning environment will be enhanced by technology. Students will have to develop skills for customer interactions & engagement with digital tools.

Neha Rawat



Sherry Bhatia
President, HRAWI

TECH WILL BE VITAL

Technology is the key to hospitality education in the future. The current crises have only helped propel its use and the small changes will lead to bigger ones as time goes by.

The way we learn, interact, and conduct our professions will be significantly driven by technology. Education in hospitality too like for most other disciplines will be imparted and received with the aid of technology. A major part of the education will migrate and be imparted through online learning or e-classes while practical learning will probably continue to be in person. Students will have to develop skills for customer interactions and engagement with digital tools. New verticals in marketing will require students to gain an understanding of social media and other digital platforms to remain relevant. Hence the use of technology along with impeccable service



Sudesh Poddar
President, HRAEI

TRAINED AND QUALIFIED MANPOWER

As the hospitality industry opens up post the second wave, there will be a surge in travel. Trained and qualified manpower will be needed

fresh recruits should be open to Gig employment and accept work arrangements such as freelancers, independent contractors, project-based workers, and temporary or part-time hires for a year or so. This time can be an investment for the future – in



Employers will look for talents who can be groomed into efficient professionals

in the industry. In the initial stage salary packages, designation, or brand may not be too attractive for hospitality graduates but being employed will be the wisest thing to gather work experience and strengthen one's CV for future employment prospects.

SPECIALISED TRAINING

Even if there are no full-time employment opportunities,

a hotel, standalone restaurant, or in any establishment of repute. Focused specialised training under an expert will enhance skills, knowledge, and capabilities. Also, with this kind of training experience, getting a good job will not be a difficult task as recruiters prefer to select highly skilled and knowledgeable professionals. When the industry opens, hospitality employers will look for good talents who can be groomed into efficient professionals for the new normal. In the initial phase, salary and emoluments could be modest, but in the long run – say a career span of about 35 to 40 years – this experience will be valuable.

Technology along with impeccable service will always be the requirement in the hospitality sector

will always be the requirement in the hospitality sector. Industry and catering institutes have to closely collaborate in creating different modules pertaining to focused skills required by the changing hospitality trends and customer requirements.



K. Syama Raju
President, SIHRA

NEED FOR GRANTING INDUSTRY STATUS

Hospitality industry is one of the worst hit industries due to COVID, however, it is important to note even before the pandemic the hotel industry in south India was bleeding and hotels were selling rooms at very low costs. COVID added to the hardships and many hotels were closed. Due to the fixed costs like taxes, interest on borrowings, salary etc., this

help reduce costs but it will not increase the cash flow. Every state in India should grant industry status to the hospitality sector and extend support for its survival.

RELEVANT SKILLS POST-COVID

SIHRA has submitted representations requesting all state governments to vaccinate hotel staff on a priority basis to open up the sector soon. To this end, we have also organised various vaccination camps in the southern states. When the industry opens up, the key question will be, what should the young students and educational institutions do, to keep with the times? There is a widespread



Curriculums of institutes will need to be updated



industry has always had to face problems. We have represented our grievances to state and Central governments, but no relief has been considered as yet. Unless we aim for growth in the domestic tourism hotel industry, we will face major challenges. States like Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra have given some concessions to the hotel industry and that will

need to understand that every young professional or graduate will have to be equipped with technical skills, entrepreneurial skills and soft skills in the post-pandemic world. These three vital skills encompass a perfect recipe for success and staying relevant. Moreover, it is imperative for hospitality education institutes to update and revamp their curriculums.



Surendra Kumar Jaiswal
President, HRANI

TECH WILL BE THE KEY CHANGE AGENT

Technology will shape the way of learning, the way of interaction and the way to do work. The future of hospitality education will certainly take a different form. Curriculums will have to adapt to understand the needs of the traveller and society of tomorrow. Hospitality graduates will have to identify how to balance the offer of technology to enhance the customer experience. They will require the skills to engage guests with digital tools and take advantage of systems such as geo-targeting, new social media platforms, virtual and augmented reality devices.

The learning environment will be enhanced by technology. Students will spend less time in class and more time in a virtual reality world to develop their creativity and risk-taking mindset. Students will be more prepared for the work life as they would have had the chance to experience case studies with augmented reality.

FROM TEACHER-LED TO STUDENT-LED EDUCATION

The next great shift will be to move from teacher-led education (pedagogy) to student-led education



The faculty will move from being lecturers to facilitators



(andragogy). The faculty will move from being lecturers to facilitators. The institutes will have to develop online videos, and upload student presentations, role plays, student projects, discussion boards, chat rooms, and simulations.

ATTRACTING TALENT TO THE INDUSTRY

Investing in young talent in the hospitality industry is important for the growth and sustainability of establishments. To tap the productive potential of a generation and to attract new talent, the industry should try to give more information to people about the industry and how it helps to build the career of young talent, hence it will give the industry a wider choice of candidates and help in retention also. Placement opportunities need to be created for youth who are pursuing an internship in the industry. It will not only help youth gain knowledge and develop skills required for the industry but also help to build their confidence.

CHATT launched

Prahlad Singh Patel, Minister of State and Tourism Culture (I/C), recently launched CHATT – a platform to empower small operators, travel and hospitality tech players.



Prahlad Singh Patel

“CHATT will boost India’s domestic tourism market”



Arvind Singh

“We look forward to closely working with CHATT”



Confederation of Hospitality, Technology and Tourism Industry (CHATT) is the result of the combined efforts of Airbnb, EaseMyTrip, OYO and Yatra, who came together to back and enable an industry association. Speaking at the virtual event, **Prahlad Singh Patel**, Honourable Minister for Tourism and Culture (Independent Charge), Government of India, lauded the efforts of the new-age technology, travel and hospitality companies who joined hands to promote the interest of the smallest and often under-represented operators and work together with the government on various fronts in this space.

“I congratulate CHATT founding members who have come together to put India on the global map. CHATT’s formation is a landmark decision to boost India’s robust domestic tourism market and support small hotel partners, homeowners, agents to expand their offerings catering to the needs of tourists. The Tourism Ministry is continuously making efforts to make the data available in case of hotels, homestays on the unified portal – NIDHI, to benefit tourists and CHATT will play a crucial role in it. Vaccination is

going to drive the tourism sector’s revival and we are working on a uniform policy and setting up protocols for travellers getting vaccinated against COVID-19. The consolidated efforts by CHATT will be highly beneficial for SMEs, MSMEs, hotels, homeowners, partners and I welcome them to join the various government committees to represent the unified voice of the industry,” he said.

Patel also shared that they have sent nine memorandums to UNESCO, out of which six were accepted. Arvind Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism (MOT), Government of India, also was present at the event, along with Rakesh Verma, Joint Secretary, MOT and Rupinder Brar, Additional Director General, MOT.

Arvind Singh said, “The efforts of CHATT are highly inclusive and once the impact of the second wave subsides – a group like CHATT will present greater economic impact. Technology is at the forefront of many initiatives at the Ministry of Tourism and we look forward to closely working with CHATT to strengthen the sector.”

Industry sees 38.7% decline in RevPAR

India's hospitality industry witnessed a decline of 38.7% in RevPAR during Q1 2021 as compared to Q1 2020, according to JLL's Hotel Momentum India (HMI) Q1 2021.

The quarterly hospitality sector monitor, JLL Hotel Momentum India (HMI) Q1 2021, stated that RevPAR in the top six cities has decreased by 48% in Q1 2021 as compared to Q1 2020. The recovery of the sector has been primarily driven by leisure segment performing notably well. Total number of signings in Q1 2021 stood at 28 hotels comprising of 2,064 keys, recording a decline of 53% compared to the same period last year. International operators dominated signings over domestic operators with the ratio of 54:46 in terms of inventory volume.

Goa grew to be the RevPAR leader in absolute terms, despite the single digit decline of RevPAR by 1.1% in Q1 2021 compared to Q1 2020. This was due to a 6.4% increase in occupancy levels. Demand for domestic leisure travel amidst international travel restrictions continues to make Goa the fastest recovering market in absolute term. Bengaluru saw the sharpest

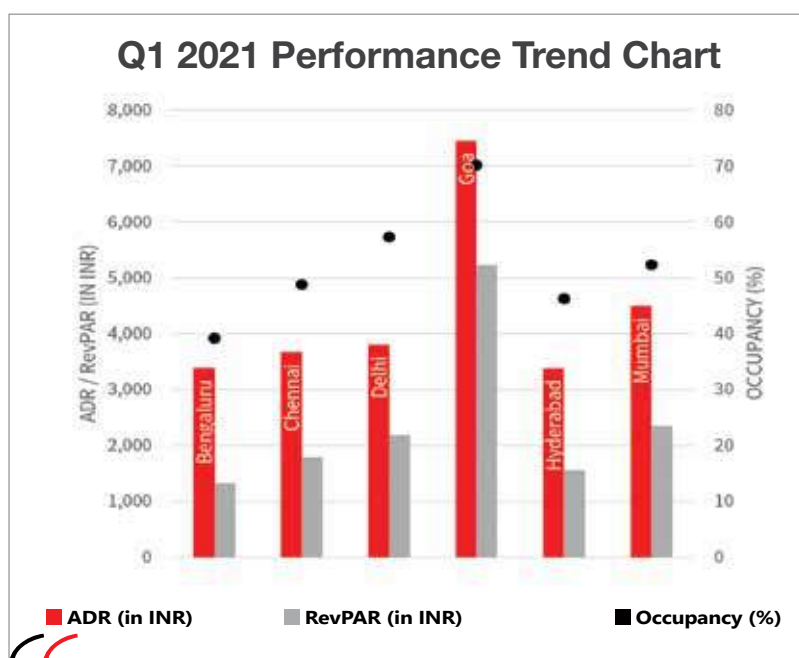
decline in RevPAR in Q1 2021, with a 60.6% decline compared to the same period of the previous year. Demand and supply of operational inventory in six major cities declined by 6.7% and 4.2% respectively in the first quarter of 2021. "In Q1 2021, hospitality industry witnessed a revival, with most leisure markets performing exceptionally well. The pace of recovery started picking up due to increase in corporate travel, but it was short-lived as the onset of the second wave brought back travel restrictions and derailed the recovery. We expect that the hospitality sector in India will mostly remain under stress in 2021. However, the hotels are much more nimble and better prepared in terms of their SOPs and cost structures to navigate business interruptions this year. A few trades may emerge in the hotel investment space given the dynamic cash flow situations," said **Jaideep Dang**, Managing Director, Hotels and Hospitality Group, South Asia, JLL.



Jaideep Dang

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- As per STR, Goa emerged as the RevPAR leader in absolute terms, despite the single digit decline of RevPAR by 1.1% in Q1 2021 as compared to Q1 2020
- High demand from domestic leisure travellers make Goa the fastest recovering market in absolute RevPAR terms
- Bengaluru saw the sharpest decline of 60.6% in RevPAR compared to the same period of the previous year
- Total number of hotel signings in Q1 2021 declined by 53% compared to the same period last year
- International operators dominated signings over domestic operators with the ratio of 54:46 in terms of rooms inventory



Source: STR

Industry witnessed a revival in Q1 2021, with most leisure markets performing well

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Government of India



Ministry of Commerce
& Industry



Quality Council of India



NABCB
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QualSTAR
COVID COMPLIANCE

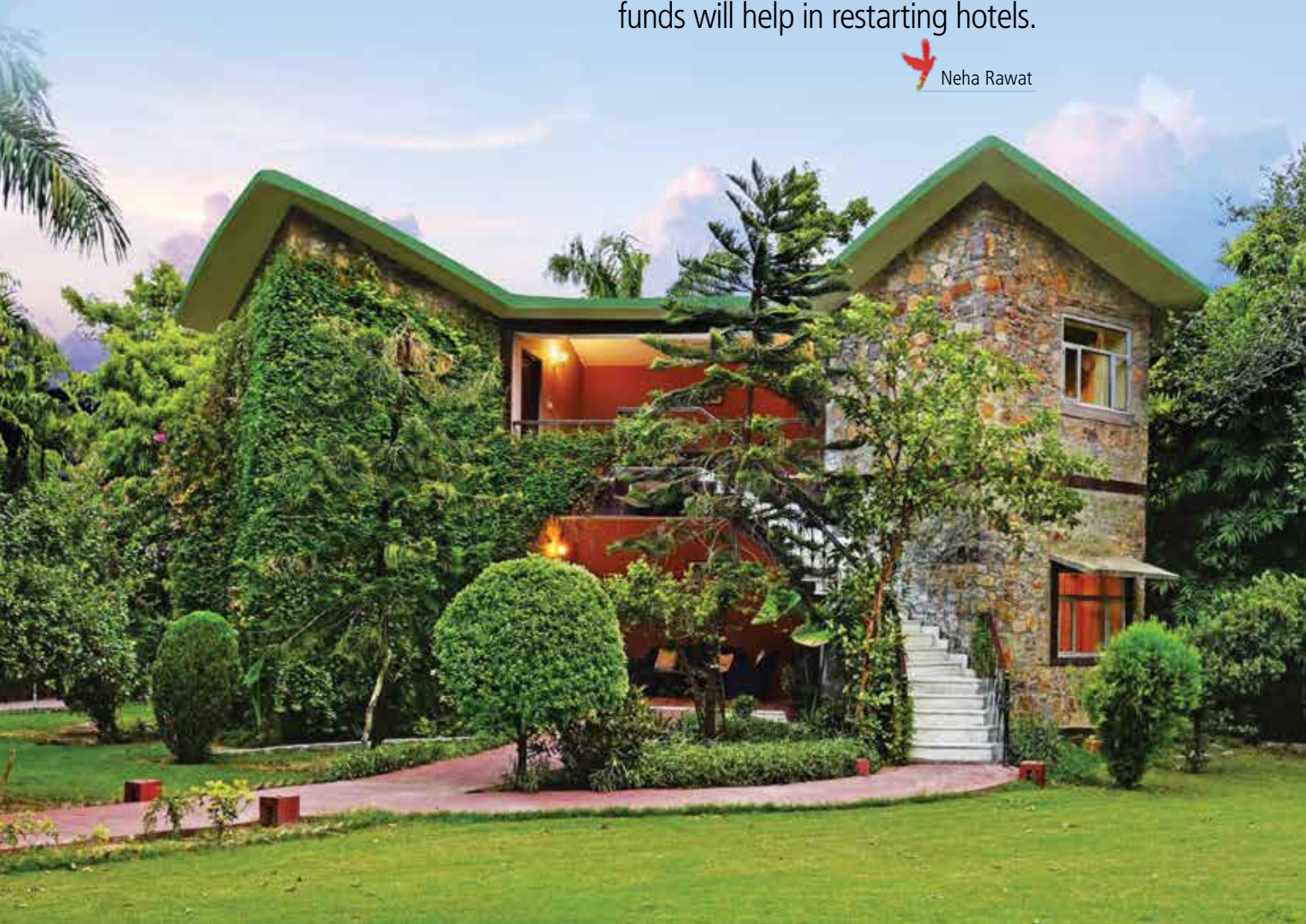
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Infusing liquidity to revive Industry

FHRAI EC members talk about RBI's special liquidity window of ₹15,000 crore and how the funds will help in restarting hotels.

 Neha Rawat



Vineet Taing President, Vatika Hotels

LIQUIDITY SUPPORT TO CONTACT-INTENSIVE SECTORS

"In order to mitigate the adverse impact of the second COVID-19 wave on contact-intensive sectors, a separate liquidity window of ₹15,000 crore is being opened till March 31, 2022, with tenor of up to three years at the repo rate," with these words of Shaktikanta Das, Governor, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) came a big relief for the hospitality sector, which has been the worst hit during the pandemic.

This package would help in providing liquidity support to the contact-intensive sectors like restaurants, hotels and those involved in the tourism sector, among others. However, it still misses out on providing support to large business houses despite them being the biggest employers.

Under this scheme, banks would be able to provide fresh lending support to hotels, restaurants, tourism and travel operators, aviation ancillary services and various other services that include private bus



operators, car repair services, rent-a-car services providers, event/conference organisers, spa clinics, beauty parlours and saloons. All these sectors have been impacted the most due to the second wave. With the announcement of this scheme these sectors will be permitted to park their surplus liquidity, equivalent to the size of the loan book created by them under this scheme, under the reverse repo window at a rate which is 25 basis points (bps) lower than the repo rate, or 40 bps higher than the reverse repo rate.

A WELCOME MOVE

Since the pandemic hit the country, this has been the ever first acknowledgeable step taken by the government to ease the impact on the hospitality industry. The industry looks up to this as a welcome



move which would surely remove a little stress off the shoulders of many.

However, RBI has decided to expand the coverage of borrowers under the scheme by enhancing the maximum aggregate exposure threshold from ₹25 crore to ₹50 crore for MSMEs, non-MSME small businesses and loans to individuals for business purposes. This capping would certainly be of great help for small business houses, but large business houses that are providing support and employment to a large number of manpower, should also get the requisite support in return. Hence, this capping should be removed for the benefit of employment generation.



Vineet Taing

SETTING AN EXAMPLE

Furthermore, the government of Gujarat has recently set a great example by waiving off the property tax and fixed charges on electricity bills of hotels, resorts, restaurants and many others for the next one year. This should certainly be replicated across all states of India. Not only would this help the entire industry walk the path of revival, but it would also help generate more employment and better livelihood in many households.



Large business houses should get the requisite support





Param Kannampilly

Param Kannampilly **Chairman & Managing Director, Concept Hospitality**

AN EXISTENTIAL CRISIS

The hospitality industry is under phenomenal duress. The scenario which was already pretty disturbing has gone from bad to worse after the second wave. This is surely the worst phase which I have witnessed as a hotelier in the last four decades. The sector, which contributes a large portion of India's annual GDP, has been hit hard by the restrictions and curfews imposed by states. With many states imposing localised lockdowns and night

big established hoteliers with healthy balance sheets and right connections with the bankers are able to avail the maximum advantages. These big players have other resources as well to deal with the crisis. It is the small hoteliers who have been suffering the most. Then there are a lot of unorganised hoteliers in small towns and cities. They are the ones who have become bankrupt and have no other source of income. Something needs to be done about this unorganised sector which is pretty big.



curfews, restaurants and similar establishments in the country are again staring at an existential crisis. Many businesses have been brought to a standstill as they are merely allowed to deliver food that qualifies as an essential service. In places where restrictions are less severe, footfall has reduced sharply in view of the COVID-19 health crisis.

The RBI's recent announcement about the special liquidity window of ₹15,000 crore with a tenor of three years at the repo rate is a small step in the right direction. It is surely going to help the travel and hospitality industry. However, these kinds of schemes generally end up benefiting the big daddies of the industry. All the

REVIVING THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Any infusion of liquidity is surely going to help an enterprise. However before jumping to any conclusions, I would like to say that economic activity has to start first. The hotels can open their doors, but where are they going to find the guests? Unless and until the businessmen start moving and travelling then only a hotel can welcome people.

Once the economy is on the up and people start moving for work, only then will the recovery of the hospitality industry begin. The leisure sector has not performed so badly, it is the business hotels that are bleeding. In fact, we witnessed very good bookings at our leisure destinations before the second wave. Once the vaccination drive is completed, people will feel safe and will start travelling. Only then will the industry return to pre-COVID days.



RBI's special liquidity window is going to help industry

A phased re-opening

Keeping in mind the circumstances, we have strengthened our safety standards & protocols further through the 'WeAssure' initiative, says **Rajat Sethi**, GM, ITC Grand Bharat.

As part of a phased re-opening, ITC Grand Bharat is ready to welcome guests with the assurance of stringent health, safety, and hygiene measures. Reinforcing its globally acknowledged Responsible Luxury ethos that seeks to create a better and secure world, the retreat opens its doors with the assurance of ITC Hotel's 'WeAssure' initiative. The initiative will provide the discerning guests of ITC Grand Bharat worry free stays with the added assurance with the recent 'Platinum Level Certification' under DNV's 'My Care' infection risk management programme for WeAssure. DNV gave the certification for the rigorous health, hygiene and safety protocols being implemented to ensure the safety of guests and associates at ITC Grand Bharat.

Rajat Sethi, General Manager, ITC Grand Bharat, says, "The consistent support of our guests has been the bedrock of our strength. Keeping in mind the present circumstances, we have strengthened our safety standards and protocols even further through the 'WeAssure' initiative. Designed in collaboration with medical professionals and disinfection experts to further enhance the existing hygiene and cleaning protocols, the 'WeAssure' programme reassures guests of visibly stringent cleanliness and disinfection processes which benchmark clinically hygienic standards, offering guests' unparalleled comfort with peace of mind.

Additionally, the DNV Platinum Level Certification brings a great sense of confidence to our discerning guests as we look forward to welcome them."

"Moreover, as part of the 'WeAssure' initiative, ITC Hotels also provides guests the option of 'The Safe Car Promise' under which all vehicles undergo stringent daily deep-cleaning protocols with accredited surface antimicrobials. Hand sanitiser and face masks are offered to guests at the time of pick-up, chauffeurs undergo regular temperature checks and wear prescribed PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) at all times among other precautions," he adds.

At ITC Grand Bharat, one can experience unhurried luxury at its best with the Responsible Luxury experience of contact light dining, digital check-in & check-out, safe distancing, stringent sanitisation protocols, QR codes and safe staycations. "Ensuring hotel employees are prioritised during the vaccination drives has been a key focus area for us at ITC Grand Bharat as we believe this will help keep both employees and guests safe as restrictions ease. We are committed to delivering world-class luxury experiences that address the most important needs of well-being and safety through responsible practices that are immensely relevant in the unprecedented circumstances we face today," concludes Sethi.



Rajat Sethi



The support of guests has been the bedrock of our strength

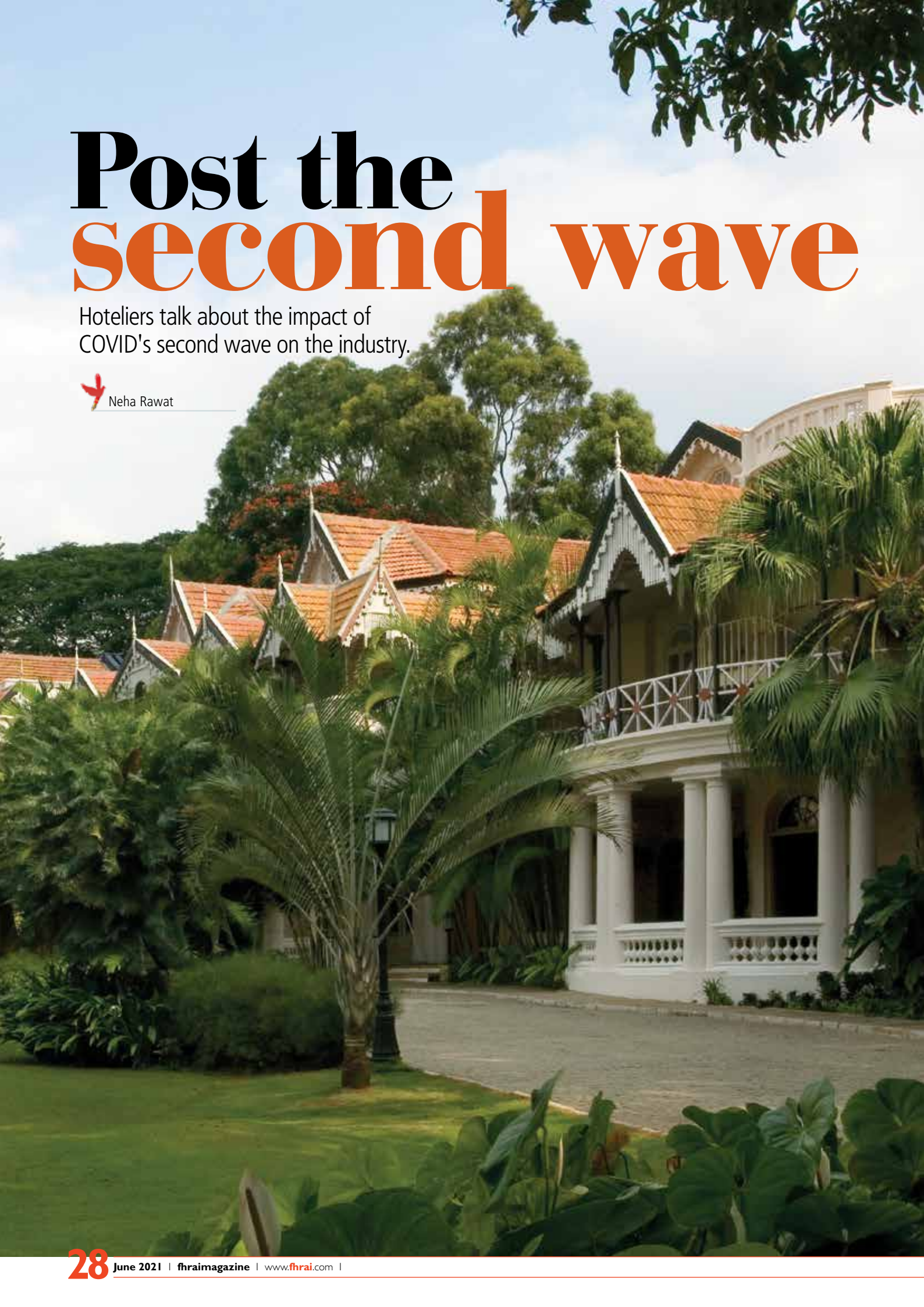


Post the second wave

Hoteliers talk about the impact of COVID's second wave on the industry.



Neha Rawat



Somnath Mukherjee

Area Director, Karnataka and General Manager, Taj West End, Bengaluru

DEALING WITH THE SECOND WAVE

World over, the entire travel and hospitality industry is going through one of its toughest times. The second wave has had a significant impact on our business as well. While the industry was seeing green shoots towards the path of recovery, the severity of the second wave has resulted in a slowdown in business. Our strategy throughout the pandemic has been community, people and driving alternate revenue initiatives throughout. Taj has partnered with healthcare professionals to provide clean and sanitised rooms and nutritious meals, while the hospitals provide all medical assistance.

Catering to the changing needs of the market, we launched curated INNERgise menus via Qmin – IHCL's contactless, gourmet culinary and food delivery platform – a special immunity-boosting menu designed in consultation with experts from Arya Vaidya Sala - Kottakkal. The customised menu focusses on wholesome and flavoursome meals consisting of immunity boosting super foods that provide a nutrient-rich addition to our daily meals. We also introduced subscription-based homely meals on Qmin, giving consumers easy access to a variety of home-style comfort everyday food. Customers can choose flexible combinations of lunch and dinner menus ranging from a Single Day Delivery to Daily Meals Subscription of seven days and beyond to relish delicious favourites.

FOOTFALL POST REVISED GUIDELINES

With the revised guidelines, we have started seeing footfall at our hotels across Bengaluru. It is an encouraging trend and we are confident that it is bound to see a steady uptick to result in a gradual, positive paradigm shift in terms of footfall, as per the current government norms. We are optimistic that the forthcoming vaccination push will further boost travel sentiment and result in an increase in domestic travel.

HYGIENE & SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Our hotels are effectively implementing enhanced hygiene and safety procedures by augmenting stringent protocols. We reimagined our safety protocols for guests, colleagues and vendors with the launch of Tajness – A Commitment Re-strengthened during the onset of the pandemic. IHCL's Zero-Touch Service Transformation: I-ZEST has been implemented across our hotels. From zero-touch check-in's and check-out's, digital invoicing, online payment options and QR codes to digital menus in restaurants, I-ZEST's digital features will further ensure social distancing for both, guests and associates, while maintaining secure and seamless services

NEW LAUNCHES

We have recently announced the signing of a 775-room hotel at Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru (BLR Airport) along with Bengaluru Airport City Limited (BACL). The hotel will be a combination of a 450-room Vivanta and a 325-room Ginger hotel. Earlier in the year, we also announced the signing of a new Vivanta resort in Hampi. Vivanta Hampi will be spread across 11 acres and will feature 80 well-appointed guestrooms, a multi-cuisine restaurant, a bar, recreational facilities including a pool and spa, meeting rooms, a banquet hall among others. We also announced the signing of the first upscale hotel in Manipal – Udupi under the brand Vivanta. The hotel will provide a contemporary suite of offerings for both, business and leisure. We are also looking forward to introduce the reimagine Chambers, our exclusive business club, at Taj West End in Bengaluru soon.



Somnath Mukherjee



Vaccination will boost travel sentiment



INDUSTRY STATUS

The state government has conferred industry status to the hospitality industry, which is a very encouraging development. With this, hotels in the tourism sector will enjoy subsidies and levies applicable for industries; thereby leading to positive outcome in the long-term. This will not only help unlock the immense potential of the travel and hospitality industry but also boost the sector's contribution to the state's overall GDP and employment, helping the post-pandemic economic revival of the region.



Mehul Sharma

Mehul Sharma Founder & CEO, Signum Hotels & Resorts

TAKING A CAUTIOUS APPROACH

The second wave has been very devastating for us. We were just coming out of the negative impact of the first wave, and also did a massive sign up of new properties in the month of April 2021. However, the entire plan came to a standstill during the second wave. However, we are hopeful that the scenario would normalise soon. Yet, we are also very cautious now and shall wait for another two months to execute our expansion strategy.

MINIMAL FOOTFALL

Footfall since lockdown has eased is very minimal as now people are much more cautious and careful in terms of travel as compared to last year. However, one thing is clear that once people get fully vaccinated then travel would surely pick up.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Stringent safety and hygiene protocols and SOPs were put in place during the first wave and we continue to follow these at all Signum properties. But more strictly, we are now encouraging people to get vaccinated.

Similarly, we are ensuring that every Signum employee is vaccinated and also assisting them with booking vaccination slots. Our vision for the safety and health of our employees and guests is focused and clear.

EXPANSION PLANS

Yes, we do have massive expansion plans, covering both Indian and international markets. We feel that this is a great time for expansion in the hospitality space. We will share more announcements on our expansion plans soon.

RELIEF PROVIDED BY GOVT TO HOSPITALITY & TOURISM

Well, honestly it hasn't reached us so far. Although we came to know that there is a substantial amount committed to the industry, on ground, the banks are totally unaware of this.

DOMESTIC TOURISM

This is a good time for brands to push domestic tourism. However, let's be very cautious about each step taken. The second wave has been really devastating; costs now have to be controlled drastically. Yet, we also would encourage to help small players within the industry and help them grow; push and promote domestic tourism numbers because the inbound business is unlikely to pick up for the next two years.



Inbound business is unlikely to pick up for next two years



Ashish Vohra
Founder & CEO, jüSTa Hotels & Resorts

THE SECOND WAVE

COVID-19 has affected the hospitality and tourism sector in big way. As an industry we have seen unprecedented times since the last 15 months. Some green shoots cropped up during the first quarter but then the second wave struck, hitting the industry harder than the first wave.

As an organisation, we had the intuition that there could be a second wave and we took strict measures to bring down operational and procurement costs without compromising on quality.

FOOTFALL SINCE LOCKDOWN HAS EASED

As for footfall since lockdown has eased, there is some amount of positivity among people and our hotels in the hills have seen some momentum picking up. People are cautious and are taking short trips to drivable distances and we have seen occupancies rising during weekends.

EXPANSION PLANS

We were focused on expansion for the group and have added seven new resorts in the last year and are dedicated to signing at least two resorts every quarter. We have launched jüSTa Mukteshwar Retreat & Spa in Uttarakhand and two resorts in Himachal Pradesh, one in Palampur on the foothills of Dhauladhar mountains and the second one, Justa Birding Dharamshala on Indrunag Road which is also known as paragliding take off point. The resort has 22 Deluxe rooms and suites with a 270-degree view of Dhauladhar mountains on one side and Mcleodganj on the other side.. We will be launching two resorts in Mysore, one in Rishikesh and one in Jawai within the next couple of months.



Ashish Vohra



We have seen occupancies rising on weekends



SAFETY COMES FIRST

By now as all of us have learnt that the spread of virus happens through air and it is important that all of us get ourselves vaccinated as early as possible. We have mandated all our colleagues to get vaccinated before they resume work. All those who are at work have been already vaccinated.

Structured hotels & resorts were always known for high level hygiene and cleaning methods and we are advocating to our employees that safety comes first so that our guests are safe when they are with us. We follow WHO prescribed norms and are insisting that all our guests share their first dose vaccination certificates before they check-in with us at any of our resorts.

RELIEF PROVIDED BY GOVT

Though government has extended some relief to small and medium scale enterprises, it is not sufficient for an industry like tourism wherein most of the cities get reasonable revenue as taxes from this sector. Unfortunately, hospitality and tourism industry have been among the first ones to be affected and will be the last one to recover. We would like to request the government to extend relaxation on taxation on GST and other allied services like liquor license fee etc. Also, the government needs to extend income tax relaxation for people spending money on tourism within India for the next two to three years, so that footfall can increase and the industry can sail through.



Sushma Khichar

Sushma Khichar Hotel Manager, Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park

COVID'S SECOND WAVE

The hospitality industry has been one of the worst hit again due to the pandemic and the next round of lockdowns. Business had just started picking up before the second wave hit. Everything has now come to a standstill. One thing however that we are sure about again is that we will come out of this, stronger than ever, just how we have done post the last wave.

LOW OCCUPANCIES

Occupancy definitely took the hardest hit when the crisis occurred. Q1 of 2021 saw an improvement with the markets opening across, and domestic travel rising. With the recent surge because of the second wave, occupancies are now at an all-time low. Whilst some hotels, like ours, have managed to maintain a healthy occupancy by means of Business Continuity Plans for corporates; most hotels have seen a downfall again. Dine-in is still not permitted, and so footfall at the hotel is non-existent at the moment.

SAFETY OF GUESTS AND STAFF

Marriott International's Commitment to Clean is a

constant effort to keep the premise clean, safe and hygienic. With the pandemic changing the hospitality landscape, it became all the more relevant to further step up the safety protocols and implement necessary measures to ensure all round safety of both, guests and staff. Health and safety protocols were something that were always followed, even prior to the pandemic and only needed a few additional tweaks and add-ons to be in-line with the latest government norms.

FEEDBACK SESSIONS WITH TEAM MEMBERS

The team at the hotel is the main reason for us still standing tall today and keeping the morale high is so important. We have moved all critical members of our team in-house, into our guestrooms, to ensure they are safe and do not need to travel in these circumstances. We also organise monthly virtual townhalls with the entire team, for all of us to catch up and just have a little bit of fun. Collecting team feedback is also one of our highest priority now – keeping this in mind, we have started organising feedback sessions with myself and department heads. This enables the team to put forward anything at all that they need to share in a completely open forum. This feedback is then collected and implemented to the best of our abilities, to ensure they are happy and motivated.



Footfall at the hotel is non-existent at the moment



Mohit Sharad

GM, Sales & Marketing (North & East India), The Fern Hotels & Resorts

WE NEED TO START FROM SCRATCH

Once again the entire hospitality sector got badly affected after the second wave knocked on the doors of the country. Our brand also suffered and the recovery which was happening at a good positive pace, dissolved and slowed down drastically. However, most of our hotels were operational even during the lockdown period and we tried to run our operations in the best possible manner.

We have suffered a lot in terms of business in the last three months and again need to start from scratch now and build up both operations and sales.

safety protocols which were formulated after the opening of the first wave last year. Staygiene was introduced by us in which all health and safety SOPs were defined and implemented in all our hotels. Adding to this, post the second wave all our hotels are getting their entire teams vaccinated, which will ensure safety of not only the guest but even for our frontline teams.

EXPANSION PLANS

After launching two properties in January 2021 in Junagadh (Gujarat) and Kevadia (Statue of Unity), The Fern Hotels & Resorts have plans for expansion in the states of Maharashtra, Madhya



Mohit Sharad



AN UPTICK IN FOOTFALL

All our leisure properties that are three to six hours (driving time) from main cities have started getting good footfall. Gujarat particularly has shown promising travel figures. Daman, Lonavala and Dapoli in Ratnagiri are booming over weekends. Our leisure properties in i.e. Mussoorie, Dharampur (Kasauli hills), Bhimtal have picked up after lockdown eased and our hotels in these destinations are running full during weekends. Metro & business hotels have also shown a little improvement.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

We have put into place enhanced hygiene standards and all our hotels are following a set of health and



Leisure properties in Mussoorie, Bhimtal have picked up



Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh this year.

RELIEF PROVIDED BY THE GOVT

Though all states are trying their best to reopen the economy, the hospitality sector needs more attention and relief from the government. Few steps were taken recently but the expectations are higher as the losses faced by the industry are too high to count.

GoVIRTUAL from Sept 15-16

This year InfoComm India GoVIRTUAL promises a streamlined user experience, empowering business end-users & stakeholders to discover much-needed products and solutions.



Richard Tan

CCOVID-19 infections remain high in India, bringing about a volatile and uncertain situation. The conditions to deliver a safe and successful show for both local and international participants remain challenging. As such, show organiser InfoCommAsia has decided to deliver the 2021 show as a fully digital edition powered by the AI-enabled



GoVIRTUAL. InfoComm India GoVIRTUAL will take place from September 15-16, 2021. InfoComm India was the first show of InfoCommAsia to be delivered on GoVIRTUAL in 2020. The platform is capable of performing intuitive business matching as well as hosting live product demos, virtual showcases and knowledge-driven webinars. InfoComm India 2021 GoVIRTUAL promises an even more streamlined user experience, empowering business end-users and stakeholders with capability to discover much-needed products and solutions for a post-COVID world. Through the harnessing of AI, live-streaming and Professional AudioVisual technologies, InfoComm India GoVIRTUAL elevates the digital experience of a live exhibition. **Richard Tan**, Executive Director of InfoCommAsia, explains, "GoVIRTUAL addresses two critical aspects of exhibitions. One, to provide visitors with advanced intelligence that will facilitate the effective matching of their needs with solutions provided by exhibitors. Two, to allow exhibitors to connect with and demonstrate solutions to influencers and decision-makers who are unable to visit in-person events."



GoVIRTUAL allows exhibitors to connect with decision-makers



Trendy designs in chef wear

Zubin Mehta, MD, Uniforms Unlimited & creator of the brand Chefs Unlimited believes in creating designs that play a vital role in perfectly complementing a chef's personality.



Zubin Mehta

Zubin Mehta's designer brand 'Dezenzia' creates a unique blend of chef wear that is uber stylish yet practical for use even in the most challenging industrial kitchens. Mehta believes in bringing in inspirational chef wear that enhances the pride of a chef exponentially.

He emphasises that the designs created by him are unique and charming and play an important role in perfectly complementing a chef's personality. Be it the functional everyday chef wear or a statement jacket for the celebrity chefs, he creates them with equal élan.

Today, all chefs desire to flaunt stylish uniforms. Designer chef wear is the latest trend. However, chef wear needs to be practical and durable too. The brand Chefs Unlimited



comes with decades of manufacturing experience and a state-of-the-art facility to back the production. The brand has a reputation to keep up with trendy designs in chef wear. They are forever experimenting with bright coloured coats, denims, dry fits, digital prints, fancy trims etc. while maintaining the utilitarian value of the garment as well as maintaining the utmost comfort of the end user.



Dezenzia creates chef wear that is uber stylish yet practical



Better conversations

By mapping hotels' business & customer requirements, conversational messaging can improve the hotelier's customer engagement, says **Beerud Sheth**, Founder and CEO of Gupshup.

Customers depend on hotels to provide a hassle-free stay experience at economical prices. But with expanding customer bases and customers being geographically dispersed, it becomes more challenging for hotels to promote their offers, resulting in declining customer engagement and retention. Hotels need a solution that allows them to market various promotional offers, get customer feedback, effectively manage opt-in and opt-out, run COVID safety campaigns and other marketing activities. Conversational messaging is a key step to achieving these goals. Conversational messaging can help increase customer engagement for hotels and provide a more satisfying customer experience post-pandemic. It can provide hotels with an integrated messaging solution, especially international chains. For example, international hotel chains can leverage conversational messaging channels to meet their need for better engagement and conversations with customers and partners who are spread across multiple geographical locations. These channels can also include mobile web widgets

for customer surveys, as well as direct feedback from customers to help hotels refine their services. Conversational messaging can also provide hotels with mobile marketing tools like link tracking, which helps them introduce and track various promotional offers at scale. Another feature that conversational messaging can provide to hotels is a unified dashboard for tracking real-time usage statistics, as well as a single panel to browse through all their cross-geo marketing campaigns. These features can help hotels seamlessly expand to new untapped markets and increase their global presence.



Beerud Sheth

Additional features that conversational messaging can provide hotels include:

- **PANDEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS:** The pandemic found many travellers scouring various apps for safe temporary living spaces. Conversational messaging can keep consumers informed & secure in their travels.
- **GOING GLOBAL:** Messaging can get tricky when multiple languages & customs are at play; conversational messaging can overcome international barriers.
- **BELLHOP BOTS:** Customer service bots are taking over hotel call centres & online customer service chats, handling customer interactions more quickly and efficiently.
- **MESSAGING INTEGRATION:** By mapping hotels' business and customer requirements, conversational messaging can improve a hotelier's customer engagement, leading to a considerable improvement in customer delight.

Overall, by employing a conversational messaging platform, hotels can successfully deploy promotional offers, get customer feedback, enforce COVID safety campaigns and complete other marketing activities on a single global solution – completely automated through chatbots.

(The article has been written by Beerud Sheth, Founder and CEO of Gupshup. The views expressed are the author's personal views.)



Messaging can improve a hotelier's customer engagement





Trends **post-COVID**

There will be more challenges along the way. However, COVID-19 has shaped the industry for a better, sustainable, & enriching future, says **Patrick Taffin**, Assistant Dean, SHMS Leysin.



Patrick Taffin

There's no doubt that the past year has challenged the industry to find innovative solutions to adapt and survive, not only by our own experience but also through shared experiences with different hospitality professionals worldwide. Let's take a look at some trends with the most favourable outcomes.

REMOTE LOCATIONS AND FEWER INTERACTIONS

Across the hotel industry, the common trend that clients searched for was minimising contact with other guests. From Swiss ski resorts to luxury villas in the Maldives, guests have flocked towards these locations to limit their contact with others. It is not hard to see the logic here: the less human interaction, the lower the risk of getting the virus. Another common preference is hotels that offer open-air spaces, expanding their gardens, limiting the chances of contamination. Hotels that cannot provide this have kept the promise of social distancing by providing additional room service options.

TAKEAWAY VERSUS SUSTAINABILITY

The industry needs to innovate its engagement with customers. Seizing this opportunity, hotels and restaurants have expanded takeaway offerings to external guests. However, one element that needs to be considered is removing single-use plastic from takeaway services and sourcing ingredients from local farms. As travellers look for

remote and open spaces, they tend to migrate to locations surrounded by nature. Sustainability has always been an important topic, and with the impact of the pandemic, consumers have opted for secluded destinations while remaining conscious of reducing the impact of human activities.

LOCAL NOW MORE THAN EVER

Aside from locally sourcing, local inbound travel is booming. Boutique hotels have reached peak levels of occupancy. The good news is that people will always want to travel. Still, with mandatory quarantines, constant changing of red-listed countries, fear of contamination, many have decided to enjoy and explore their own countries. This translates to the success of local and independent hotels. Outbound tourism is not gone, and with the vaccination campaign in full swing, there will surely be a comeback, but the focus on local 'pearls' is a critical success strategy.

DIGITAL MEDIA

The importance of investing in digital media presence has never been so evident. Hospitality businesses can assert themselves into the virtual environment to promote their mastery of guest service experience to the online world. There will be more challenges along the way. However, COVID-19 has shaped the hospitality industry for a better, sustainable, and enriching future. As the industry returns to its sources, traditional experiences are on-trend, and the local community will source new experiences.



As of now, the focus on local 'pearls' is a critical success strategy

(The article has been written by Patrick Taffin, Assistant Dean at SHMS Leysin. The views expressed are the author's personal views.)



Launching food brands

Dhaval Udeshi & Pawan Shahri of London Taxi have developed a cutting-edge programme for home delivery.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the nation's restaurant industry -- from diners and restaurants to giant chains and small businesses -- where nearly 40% of restaurants shut shop due to the outbreak last year. With the purpose of supporting small businesses, promoting entrepreneurship and fixing the damages done by the pandemic in the F&B business, the city's award-winning restaurateurs Dhaval Udeshi & Pawan Shahri of Lower Parel's London Taxi have developed a cutting-edge incubator programme for home delivery, inviting aspiring food entrepreneurs to realise their life-long dream of starting their very own food brand. This is the first time that a restaurant is opening up its kitchen to become an incubator. London Taxi's incubation programme will enable five entrepreneurs to launch their ideated brands from its 650 sq ft kitchen space, while utilising the restaurant's existing resources, experienced head chefs, R&D and vendor management teams. The incubation programme will give them 100% funding along with giving them

access to support functions like marketing, advertising, aggregator relationships, finance and accounting. "We've been getting a lot of calls lately from entrepreneurs who always wanted to start their own ventures but had hiccups like shortage of funds, infrastructure, marketing and brand-building issues," say founders and entrepreneurs, **Dhaval Udeshi** and **Pawan Shahri**. "Hence we decided to start this incubator programme to give back to the hospitality industry via the spirit of entrepreneurship that will from there lead on to creating the next big brand of tomorrow. The idea of the incubation programme is to mentor young entrepreneurs, bring in good concepts and create jobs."



Pawan Shahri



Dhaval Udeshi



The idea to mentor, bring in good concepts & create jobs



Customising designs

Our major clients are from automobile & hospitality industries. We have designed space for some of the most reputed names, says **Moisen Evarist**, Founder, Charms Classic Deco.

What is the USP of your brand?

Since its inception in 2005, Charms Classic Deco has taken on the mantle of introducing its clients to state-of-the-art interior products. Today we are one of the leading companies specialising in floorings and cladding materials for all sectors. We are synonymous with the highest standards of quality, reliability, and services.

Are you planning any new ventures?

Yes, we have been in touch with dealers pan India and now the numbers are increasing gradually.

Who are your major clients?

Our major clients are from automobile and hospitality industries. Mahindra and Mahindra showrooms,

Volkswagen showrooms, McDonald's Restaurants, are some of our success stories.

Anything else you would like to mention?

Volonté – created by us for luxury vinyl tiles and premium wooden floorings, has appealed to a number of our clients. Volonté looks like wood but performs like stone. We also customise designs as per a client's requirements.



Moisen Evarist



Though Volonté looks like wood, it performs like stone



Office desks at Ashley Furniture

◆ Ashley Furniture Home Store has launched a new collection of chic home office desks that cater to the contemporary urban design lovers. They are brought to India by Dash Square. Starmore 63" Home Office Desk has a dark bronze-tone tubular metal base and a tabletop crafted with a mix of acacia veneer and wood, which give this desk a charming urban-industrial appeal. Arlenbry Home Office Desk, an L-shaped desk with a metal frame in clean lines is perfect for smaller spaces. The compact Gerdanet 47" Home Office Desk with the light wood tone top offering a striking contrast to the sleek black metal frame, makes a bold statement.



Swarovski unveils a statement light

◆ Sacmeh International has unveiled in India, Bagatelle, a statement-making light from Swarovski Lighting. Coming from the Swarovski and Schonbek stable, Bagatelle is a delicate light that combines the formal aesthetics of traditional style with contemporary flair resulting in a timeless piece with an ephemeral character. It offers a new interpretation of a classic lantern full of dreamy ornamentation and fanciful dance of crystal rosettes and drops around a sculptural crystal basket.

Emery unveils tableware

◆ Emery Studio brings to India, an exquisite new collection of porcelain tableware – Aegean – by the eponymous brand L'Objet. The Aegean dinnerware collection features a decidedly classic motif, reimagined for contemporary tables. The exquisite collection comprises a charger plate, a dinner plate, a dessert plate, a soup bowl, a sauce boat, a coffee pot, a mug, a tea cup, a saucer, a rectangular platter, an oval platter, a serving bowl and more. The Aegean collection is available in white, 24K gold and platinum. Evocative of the highly sculptural and beautifully detailed porcelain of the 19th century Empire period, L'Objet's Swan bowls proudly nod to antiquity with unmistakable modern grace.





MADS Creations' reading nooks

◆ MADS Creations has unveiled a collection of chic reading nooks that bring back the romance associated with sitting curled up in a cosy chair with a book. One look at these pretty reading nooks, and you will rediscover your love for flipping through the pages whether physical or digital, all over again. Thoughtfully located in intimate spaces, these stylish reading nooks are also ideal to just sit by yourself. Perfectly curated design elements, colours and textures create delightful spaces. Candy pink to aqua blue, cheery yellow to grey – the chairs are the most attractive part of the reading nooks. They are fashioned in many imaginative contours. Complementing these chic chairs are side tables, foot rests and accessories that complete the picture-perfect spots to engage in some me-time or reading.

Mortar & pestle range

◆ A modern take on traditional mortar and pestle, Ellementry's Erebus Mortar and Pestle is crafted from black marble. This handmade kitchen essential has a square-shaped mortar, while the pestle has an ergonomic round shape – ideal for crushing black pepper and making mixed salts and dry masalas. White Marble mortar and pestle is your go-to tool for extracting goodness from herbs, spices and roots.



Sculptures from Ochre at Home

◆ A latest collection of sculptures unveiled by Ochre at Home (OAH) promises to add a unique character to your environment. These sculptures designed for modern homes bring an element of fun and playfulness to your space. Some of the sculptures are inspired by famous vintage European sculptures but are given a surprising contemporary flavour. Perfectly crafted using resin, clay, fibre glass, metal, polycarbonate, etc. these chic sculptures evoke a range of emotions. Though mostly conceived in black or white, they come with elements that add a sudden burst of colours.



Unique wallpapers

◆ Source Unlimited's newest offering for the Indian market are a distinctive series of wallpapers from Italian brand, Wall & Deco. From the Contemporary Wallpaper Collection (CWC) of Wall & Deco, two designs – Static Shades and Likeminds designed by Mae Engelgeer are available at Sources Unlimited. Static Shades can create an explosive atmosphere with a base tonality that alludes to materials like aluminium. The coldness of this metal is offset by warm tones to create an elegant and contemporary effect. Likeminds on the other hand is like a family meeting, where varied elements come together in harmony.

EESL signs MoU with Lemon Tree

EESL has signed a MoU with Lemon Tree Hotels for implementing energy efficiency and energy conservation measures at a selected number of the latter's properties in India.

As a part of its ongoing efforts to create an energy-efficient economy, Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a joint venture under the administration of the Ministry of Power, has signed a MoU with Lemon Tree Hotels for implementing energy efficiency and energy conservation measures at a selected number of the latter's properties in India. Sharing views on this engagement, **Saurabh Kumar**, Executive Vice Chairperson (EVC), EESL, said, "Energy efficiency is a vital, indispensable part of our vision for a sustainable future. We have a roadmap for getting there, and we need more and more willing partners from across industries to keep moving the needle on progress. Lemon Tree Hotels is one of the largest hotel chains in India, and we hope that the success we



will achieve through our projects will encourage many more players to explore avenues for strengthening their energy efficiency and conservation initiatives."

Patu Keswani, Chairman & Managing Director, Lemon Tree Hotels, said, "We are committed to our ESG focus at Lemon Tree. Our partnership with EESL will enable us to enhance the impact of these measures and find ways to further reduce our carbon footprint, in order to move closer to our goal of being carbon neutral."



“
The partnership will enable us reduce our carbon footprint”

‘Quality Culture’ at KGOCC

For over six decades, we have been manufacturing products that help to 'join, fix or cut' through our brands, says **Uday Vavwala**, Zonal Business Manager, KGOCC Global.

KGOCC Global is an ISO 14000 certified company having six state-of-the-art manufacturing hubs pan India. The hubs are equipped with high quality machinery for precision engineering. All units are vertically integrated, wherein all manufacturing operations are performed in-house, right from manufacturing of the smallest parts such as spring, rivet etc. to complex multi-part components. "For more than six decades, we have been helping the world to organise businesses and assisting people

to bring out their creative best with innovative and high precision products that help to 'join, fix or cut' through our brands – Kangaro, Miles, Munix and Kohe. We are one of the largest manufacturers and suppliers of high-quality staplers, staples, staple removers, paper punches, gun tackers, tape tool, pneumatic tools, industrial staples, stitching wire, scissors & kitchen essentials etc.," says **Uday Vavwala**, Zonal Business Manager, KGOCC Global.

"Kohe is an ISO 9001 & 14001, HACCP-certified company which offers a wide range of knives, peelers & kitchen essentials for homes as well as a professional range for Horeca customers. Every product is carefully manufactured and backed by years of expertise which is why today, Kohe is the brand you can trust for your kitchen needs. We are committed to satisfying our customers by manufacturing and supplying products that match their expectations the first time, and every time. 'Quality Culture' runs in every segment of our factory's processes, supported by a team of 4,000 highly qualified professionals, engineers, technocrats and dedicated workers," concludes Vavwala.



“
Kohe offers a wide range of knives, peelers & kitchen essentials for homes”

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Appointments



DEBOPRIYO SEN

National Head of Sales
Tamara Leisure Experiences

★ Tamara Leisure Experiences has announced the appointment of Debopriyo Sen as their National Head of Sales for the group. He has over 15 years of expertise in sales, strategic planning, marketing and team management with brands like Taj, Starwood, Marriott and ITC Hotels. His responsibilities will primarily include planning & implementing the group's sales strategy across its three brands i.e. Tamara Luxury Resorts, O by Tamara, and Lilac (the mid segment hotel brand of the group).



PRANAY VERDIA

Cluster General Manager
Sheraton Hyderabad

★ Pranay Verdia has been appointed as the Cluster General Manager at Sheraton Hyderabad, effective June 7, 2021. In his new role, Verdia will oversee the hotels under the ownership of SAMHI. He has an illustrious career of close to two decades in Senior Management roles with brands like Marriott International, Hyatt International, Taj Hotels and Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts. In his last role as Multi-Property General Manager with Marriott International, he led four hotels in the city of Bengaluru.



AMANDEEP KAUR

General Manager
WelcomHotel by ITC Hotels, Bengaluru

★ Amandeep Kaur is the new General Manager of WelcomHotel by ITC Hotels, Bengaluru from June 1, 2021. Earlier, the Resident Manager, ITC Gardenia, Bengaluru, Kaur was responsible for the operations of the hotel including the Front Office, Food & Beverage, and Housekeeping. Along with operational excellence, her core skills constitute excellent people management & team building skills while driving a result-oriented, passionate, and ethical work culture.



JOYJIT CHAKRAVORTY

General Manager
Hilton Garden Inn, New Delhi/Saket

★ Hilton Garden Inn, New Delhi/Saket has appointed Joyjit Chakravorty as the General Manager of the hotel with effect from June 15. Bringing with him an incredible track record of over two decades in the hospitality industry, Chakravorty has worked with numerous renowned hotel chains in India including Marriot, and The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts. His last stint was with Hilton in Lucknow where he has been instrumental in building a talented team and driving strong all-round performance of the hotel.



MEGNATH PADAMLAL GAUTAM

General Manager
Royal Orbit The Fern, Jabalpur

★ Megnath Gautam has joined as General Manager at Royal Orbit The Fern, Jabalpur. A Hotel Management & Catering Technology professional with level three HACCP certification and 20 years of experience, Gautam has held top management positions in Kamat Hotels, Hivision Foods, Victoria International Hotel in countries like Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE & India. He brings in advanced management techniques with his rich international experience in best practices in quality and cost control and operations.



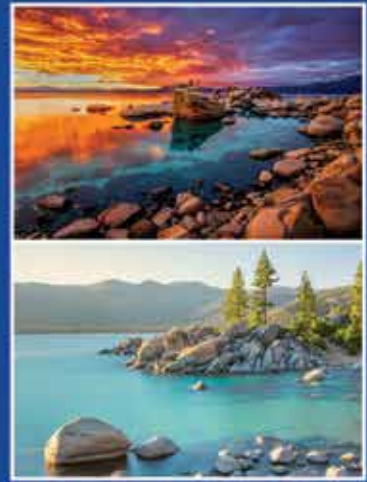
AKANKSHA KATIYAR KHANDARE

Front Office Manager
Hyatt Regency, Chennai

★ Hyatt Regency Chennai has appointed Akanksha Katiyar Khandare as the Front Office Manager. She brings with her over 11 years of hospitality experience where she will be seen spearheading front office management and guest experience in the hotel. Khandare joined Hyatt Regency Chennai as Assistant Manager Front Office and has grown today to lead the front office team. She has been recognised for her work and has been awarded as Covid Warrior by IHC London and IHM Bengaluru.



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