

HOTELS & RESTAURANTS INDIA

fhrai magazine

Vol 21, Issue 8, August 2021 Pages 44 ₹50

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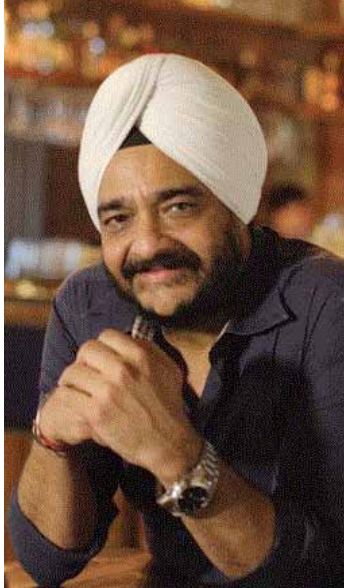
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Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President
FHRAI

“
According to JLL, industry had witnessed a fall of 38.7% in RevPAR during January-March 2021 as compared to Q1 2020
”

Dear fellow members,

We know it has been a difficult time for most industries since the outbreak. Questions are being raised as now everyone is fearing the supposed onslaught of an inevitable third wave, is the hospitality industry ready for it? According to Statista, a German online portal for statistics, the market size of the resort and hotel sector worldwide had reached significantly high in 2019. As the hotel industry is majorly divided into two types of hotels – business hotels and leisure hotels, Business hotels account for the majority of supply (60-70%), while the remaining supply is shared by leisure hotels i.e. 30-40%. Leisure hotels saw some resurgence after two waves as despite the fear, many ventured out, as a ‘revenge outing’ and restaurant bookings seem to have resurged, with diners frustrated of living practically under house arrest craving to go out to a safe place for a meal, alas restrictions in capacities and needless time restrictions have not helped at all. This urge amongst people to get out should be enough for the authorities to realise the potential this industry has to kick start the economy.

The hotel sector (led by the leisure segment) has been witnessing a mild revival of sorts with the business hotels being hit severely by the pandemic. According to global real estate service firm JLL, India’s hospitality industry had witnessed a fall of 38.7% in RevPAR during January-March 2021 as compared to Q1 2020. This figure could have been more alarming had the leisure hotels not driven the economy slightly. But owing to the above reasoning, it is wrong when so called experts opine that only the leisure hotels may be able to manage the third wave better because not only have they experienced a rebound, they have more experience now, in preparedness and confidence. However, business hotels, which saw only limited resurgence after the first two waves, are still struggling. It is expected that many business hotels around city centres may permanently shut down, as available supply will reduce. So far in excess

of 40% of properties, both hotels and restaurants have permanently shut down. Given the situation, the sector will need to re-emerge with a renewed or revised plan. The hotels will need to view the situation from a larger microscope i.e. to explore how best they can sustain their businesses. The third wave if it comes, can potentially be a final nail in the coffin for business hotels, where the last hope for survival will give way to complete restructuring. Therefore, it could be devastating for the sector if they were not able to fully reopen asap, most of the sector is haemorrhaging cash and any further delay in its resurrection would push the sector closer to business failure.

The industry is completely geared up for a return after being closed for more than 18 months. The governments need to walk their talk and their series of trial events of restricting capacities, timings etc. have shown customers can be held safely, with almost no COVID impact, so there is no reason to keep the sector closed or restricted any longer. Meanwhile your association is exploring and knocking every door for any kind of facility or stimulus this sector can get. We have been partially successful due to our lobbying and hope that we will be able to make those in power see the situation and its grave future for what it is.

Be safe.

Note: The August 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

AUGUST 2021

IT'S TIME TO BE AGILE & INNOVATIVE

12

Pinning Raffles Udaipur on Accor's global map, Kerrie Hannaford, VP – Commercial, Accor India & South Asia talks about raising the bar with immersive hospitality.

COVER IMAGE:
RAFFLES UDAIPUR



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Consuming proteins on a daily basis is fundamental to growth. Yet, despite its availability, India remains a protein deficient country, why?

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INSTILLING CONFIDENCE 20

Sudeep Jain, MD, South-West Asia, IHG Hotels & Resorts, talks about the brand's growth plans & ensuring it attracts business while maintaining the talent pool within the organisation.



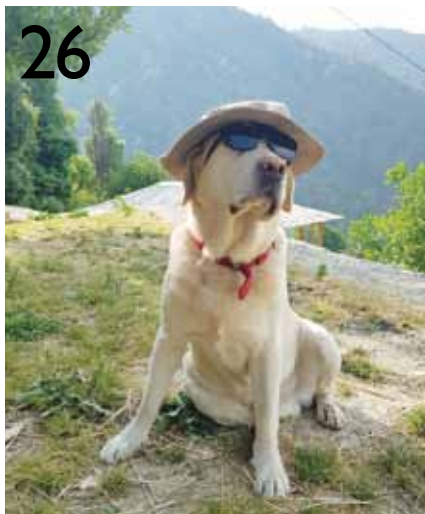
DEEP IMPACT 24

FHRAI EC members talk about the immediate measures which should be taken by the government to unburden the financial stress of hotel & restaurant owners.



HOLIDAYS GET FURR-TASTIC 26

Pet-friendly properties have been a large segment of business for a while now; a step further is imagining hospitality accommodations designed especially for pet getaways.



STAYING AHEAD OF THE GAME 32

We need to continue to innovate every month to come out with some thought process to stay ahead of the game, says Sumeet Suri, General Manager, JW Marriott Kolkata.



PROGRESSIVE HOTEL DESIGNS 36

We need to eradicate ad-hoc practices and come up with a more sustained approach in hotel designs and a standardised implementation of the same across the industry.

FHRAI

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FHRAI Magazine is printed, published and edited by Devika Jeet on behalf of Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Association of India and printed at Modest Print Pack Pvt. Ltd., C-52, DDA Sheds, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase - I, New Delhi - 110020 and published at Durga Das Publications Pvt. Ltd. 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110 001
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This issue of FHRAI Magazine contains 40 + 4 pages cover

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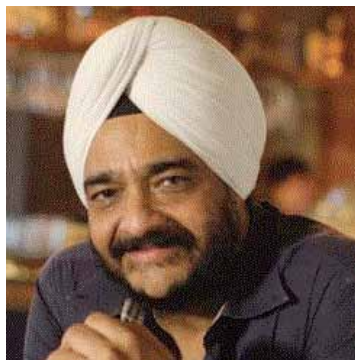
‘Notify Loan Guarantee Scheme’

Over a month since its announcement, the ₹60,000 crore Loan Guarantee Scheme for COVID affected sectors has not been notified. FHRAI has requested FM to take cognizance.

FHRAI has submitted a representation to the Hon'ble Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman requesting her intervention for notifying the ₹60,000 crore sanctioned under the Loan Guarantee Scheme for COVID affected sectors. The announcement was made by the FM in a Press Meet held on June 28, 2021. FHRAI has expressed disappointment about the fact that over a month has passed since announcing the scheme but it has not yet been notified by the Finance Ministry.

The association has stated that neither the operational guidelines nor any other details of the scheme have been announced by the Ministry so far. It has also pointed out that the Loan Guarantee Scheme introduced simultaneously for the health sector has been notified and necessary guidelines have been introduced by NCGTC.

“The hospitality sector is one of the worst affected sectors by the pandemic. But the government’s negligence really compels us to doubt the seriousness in its approach towards the industry’s hardships. The hospitality industry has faced severe restrictions and lockdowns, protocols and suffered maximum losses during the last 16 months due to COVID-19. The unprecedented second wave



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI

“Notify the scheme with 100% govt guarantee & repayment options”

has caused a strong ripple effect that has destroyed the entire hospitality eco-system in the country. It will take many years for the industry to recover from the damage.

We therefore request the Hon'ble FM to kindly notify the ₹60,000 crore Loan Guarantee Scheme with 100 per cent government guarantee and long-term repayment options with immediate effect as an effective measure

to address the colossal damage suffered by the tourism and hospitality sector in the country,” says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI.

The FHRAI has also submitted the industry’s grievance about many of its members from different parts of the country having reported that the banks and financial institutions are not processing the applications submitted for loans under ECLGS 3.0 and the applications for loan restructuring.

“Such conduct of the financial institutions defeats the very purpose of the flagship initiatives launched by the government to provide relief to the beleaguered MSMEs. The banks and NBFCs are taking advantage of the ceiling limit fixed by the RBI and are not ready to extend any concession to the MSMEs which are in deep distress. They are unmindful of the fact that the loans under ECLGS are completely guaranteed by the Finance Ministry and the banks or NBFCs have nothing to lose if they provide the loans at concessional rate of interest to the customers.

We urge the Hon'ble FM to urgently intervene to provide relief to the highly beleaguered MSMEs by providing loans at concessional rate of interest,” concludes Kohli.

'Revise timings for restaurants'

HRAWI has requested Maharashtra government that restaurants be allowed to operate through the week between 7 am and 12:30 am including Saturdays and Sundays.

HRAWI has submitted a representation to the government of Maharashtra pleading for revision in timings and protocols to operate restaurants without restrictions in cities and districts with very low COVID-19 cases. The HRAWI has asked that restaurants be allowed to operate through the week between 7 am and 12:30 am including Saturdays and Sundays. "These operation timings are likely to benefit a large number of players in this sector," says **Sherry Bhatia**, President, HRAWI.



Sherry Bhatia
President, HRAWI



Pradeep Shetty
Sr. VP, HRAWI

"We assure the government that only because of this time relaxation, there won't be any increase in COVID-19 infections," says **Pradeep Shetty**, Sr. Vice President, HRAWI..

New operational timings may benefit many players

There won't be any increase in COVID infections

HRAWI

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‘Increase commercial retail space’

HRANI has submitted a representation to Delhi Development Authority (DDA) requesting an increase in the allowable commercial retail space in hotels from 20 per cent to 40 per cent.

HRANI has submitted a representation to Delhi Development Authority (DDA) requesting an increase in the allowable commercial retail space in hotels from 20 per cent to 40 per cent in the Master Plan Delhi (MPD)-2041. The association has pointed out that in the earlier MPD-2041 draft, the DDA had provisioned for the increase and also had proposed including the same but has now left it out. This has brought much disappointment to the hospitality industry in the capital city.

Through its representation, the HRANI has attempted to throw light on the several reasons justifying the need for increased FAR. It has appealed to the government to consider the same for a progressive and vibrant development of Delhi. The letter also mentioned that due to the economic fallout from the pandemic, the tourism sector, especially the hotel industry has been the worst hit.

The hotels and restaurant business enterprises are facing an existential threat. Therefore, the business entrepreneur should have full liberty to change/shift the land use/building plan from existing business to some other lucrative business. It is high time now that existing business houses in the hospitality industry should be allowed to change

their business and land use from hotels to other commercial activities such as malls/hospital/residential towers/office complex/commercial complex etc. The land use/building plan of the hospitality industry should stand changed as per the modern requirement/necessity.

The representation also stated that in the last Master Plan for Delhi, the policy for cinema was changed. In the same way, for the hotel industry, a new policy may be formulated for the existing

hotel to be allowed to change the land use/building from one business to another.

“Needless to say, by increasing commercial FAR from 20 per cent to 40 per cent, the hotels can generate revenue needed to offset colossal losses during these pandemic years but also have fiscal confidence in refurbishing existing rooms and infrastructure / adding rooms to meet the need of the next few decades. The state too would gain from various tax revenues so generated,” stated **Surendra Kumar Jaiswal**, President, HRANI and Vice President, FHRAI.

“Major metropolises outside India have realised and incorporated the need of the modern business travellers. All amenities are within easy reach and today’s hotels offer them a variety of services, the lead amidst them being quality shopping.

Added FAR for commercial retail activity will mitigate the strain on fiscal resources. It will allow generation of resources for much-needed refurbishment or added room capacity to meet the needs of international travellers and put Delhi firmly as an international destination in itself. As a result, the state will also benefit significantly through increased inflows of tax revenues and duties through various instruments,” added Jaiswal,

“The pandemic has changed/alterd the fundamental concept of hospitality business environment, keeping in view this unprecedented times, the hospitality business entrepreneurs should be given full liberty to change/shift the land use/building plan from existing business to some other lucrative business,” commented Past President FHRAI & HRANI **Garish Oberoi**.



Surendra Kumar Jaiswal
President, HRANI



**Added FAR will
mitigate the strain on
fiscal resources**

HRANI



FHRAI-IHM: NCHMCT affiliated

FHRAI-IHM has become the first private institute managed by FHRAI to be affiliated with the National Council of Hotel Management & Catering Technology (NCHMCT), Noida.

The FHRAI-Institute of Hospitality Management (FHRAI-IHM) is now affiliated with the National Council of Hotel Management & Catering Technology (NCHMCT), Noida an organisation of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. NCHMCT, Noida presently has over 75 affiliated Central, State and private hotel management institutes in the country. FHRAI-IHM becomes the first private institution that is run by India's apex hospitality association – Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) to be affiliated with the NCHMCT. FHRAI-IHM will offer a three-year B.Sc. in Hospitality and Hotel Administration, 18-month Diploma in Food



Arun Kumar Singh
Director, FHRAI-IHM



FHRAI-IHM brings the right value-add for building careers

Production, 18-month Diploma in Bakery and Confectionary and 18-month Diploma in Food & Beverages Service.

"India's only private hospitality institute that's run by the country's apex hospitality association is now also affiliated with NCHMCT, Noida an organisation of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. This development

reinforces our commitment to offer students the best in hospitality management education," says **Arun Kumar Singh**, Director, FHRAI-IHM.

FHRAI-IHM is founded by FHRAI comprising of its four regional hotel and restaurant associations in the North, East, West and South. FHRAI is the world's third largest hospitality association. FHRAI-IHM offers the best-in-class training infrastructure backed by experienced and learned faculty for carving out a great future for students in hospitality.

"FHRAI-IHM is fully equipped to provide students with all necessary inputs in the area of aptitude formation, personality development and brings the right value-add for building careers in the hospitality domain. We are also updating and incorporating the technologically advanced practices prevalent in hospitality industry.

Hopefully, we will soon have put this phase of lockdowns and restrictions behind us and pray that tourism bounces back to health. Hospitality has and will continue to play a major role in the progress of education and continue to be a great avenue for students aspiring to make a career in the field," concludes Singh.

ABOUT FHRAI-IHM

FHRAI-IHM was established in 2005 with the aim of improving the standards and skills of the human resource in the hospitality industry in India along with increasing availability of quality manpower for the industry in the country. The institute is founded by FHRAI, the world's third largest hospitality association.



FHRAI approaches NITI Aayog

The FHRAI has submitted a representation to the CEO of NITI Aayog – Shri Amitabh Kant, highlighting hospitality industry’s plight with reference to Oyo’s business model.

FHRAI’s representation to the NITI Aayog is with reference to Oyo’s business model that has caused irreparable damages to the hospitality ecosystem in the country. The association has specifically pointed out that certain recent activities conducted by Oyo to earn goodwill have actually come at the expense of partner hotels. It has stated that any such humanitarian activities organised by the foreign funded entity is just an image repairing exercise to cover up its unfair, anti-competitive and criminal activities.

The FHRAI has shared with the NITI Aayog copies of FIRs filed by hotel owners across the country along with details of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code proceedings in the NCLAT and the investigation against Oyo by the CCI. “OYO operates its business under the maze of more than a dozen subsidiary entities. These individual entities have agreements



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI



We have data of hotels that have reported payment defaults



Pradeep Shetty
Jt. Hon. Sec., FHRAI



Oyo takes over small hotels in the budget segment



with independent hotels, mostly in the budget segment. FHRAI has the data of hundreds of such hotels that have reported payment defaults and other unethical business practices by Oyo. The systemic depredation of the budget segment hotel business and its market as a means to achieve notional billion-dollar valuation for OTAs is a serious cause of concern for the hospitality ecosystem of our country. In the interest of the hospitality sector we want to bring to your attention Oyo’s unscrupulous

business practices that have annihilated the livelihood, investments and entrepreneurial initiatives of thousands of hoteliers from the mid and lower segment,” says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI. The FHRAI has submitted several cases reported from across the country about arbitrary cancellation or breach of contract by Oyo causing immense mental and financial trouble on account of non-payment of dues to hotel owners. “Oyo, with its humongous

funding, mainly from international PE funds takes over small hotels in the budget segment. They artificially create demand and supply on their portal and manipulate prices. With deep discounts and predatory pricing, they vitiate and degrade the hospitality market.

Based on artificial and inflated valuation, the company promotes itself as a ‘Great Indian Success Story’ on the back of which it tries to get more funding. There is a clear pattern to its business model, first get the hotel under their branding and later create a dispute to avoid paying the hotel owners. This pattern came to light when several hotels owners across the country filed FIRs with similar complaints. Oyo has managed to fend these complaints so far by pleading them as ‘civil disputes,’” says **Pradeep Shetty**, Jt. Hon. Sec., FHRAI.

“The FHRAI has also filed a complaint before the Competition Commission of India (CCI) against Oyo and MakeMyTrip for cartelisation. We wish to bring to the attention of the NITI Aayog the facts pertaining to Oyo and request a meeting with Shri Amitabh Kant for devising a system or policy to safeguard vulnerable hotel and lodge owners from all parts of India,” concludes Kohli.

G Kamala Rao is new DG, Tourism

G Kamala Vardhana Rao has become the new Director General (Tourism). He will be taking up the position after Meenakshi Sharma moved on from MOT to CAG of India.

G Kamala Vardhana Rao has become the new Director General (Tourism). The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has announced it as an additional charge for him. He would remain as the Chairman & Managing Director, India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) till the



G Kamala Vardhana Rao
Director General, Tourism

Rao would remain as Chairman & MD, ITDC till further orders

appointment of a regular incumbent or until further orders, whichever is earlier. Rao is a 1990 batch Indian Administrative Services (IAS) officer of Kerala cadre, who has earlier held positions within the state of Kerala and has even been the Director and Secretary Tourism in Kerala.

In the last 30 years, Rao has served multiple positions including Chairman of Indian Tobacco Board; Director of Fisheries Department; as well as Director, Department of Tourism and Culture, Andhra Pradesh government; Managing Director of SC /ST Corporation in Andhra Pradesh, Revenue Secretary of Kerala; and District Collector, Kollam, Kerala.

Rao will be taking up the position after Meenakshi Sharma moved on from the Ministry of Tourism (MOT) to CAG of India.



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It's time to be agile & innovative

Pinning Raffles Udaipur on Accor's global map, **Kerrie Hannaford**, VP – Commercial, Accor India & South Asia talks about raising the bar with immersive hospitality.

 Lipla Negi



Kerrie Hannaford

What have been your considerations behind coming to India?

We strongly believe that the future of luxury hotels is very bright in India. Raffles is the 10th brand that Accor is introducing in the country. There is a promising future for such brands in the region as there are discerning customers that are looking for memorable, inimitable luxurious experiences which a brand like Raffles delivers.

Were MICE, big fat Indian weddings, a consideration for entering India?

MICE and weddings are segments that remain a focus area for most hotels. In a country like India,

weddings will always see traction, as they are firmly entrenched in the culture. The ongoing global pandemic has brought in a wide range of new trendsetting patterns in the big fat Indian weddings industry. There has been a complete shift towards contactless food services, micro wedding ceremonies, in addition to the present norms of socially distanced gatherings, with a focus on highly sanitised venues.

Our brands have a strong focus on the meetings and conventions market as well as an extremely high brand recall in the weddings and socials market.

Raffles Udaipur will extend the largest ballroom in the city facilitating big meetings, weddings, conferences and product launches while the smaller meetings rooms can be used by the corporate groups staying with us, for their board meetings, giving us an opportunity to engage with the business segment.



We have curated a blend of our signature offerings with local Indian traditions



moments and unique experiences – from a celestial cruise under the moon, to imaginative destination dining framed in the picturesque hills that surround the lake.

Why you chose a season specific market like Rajasthan?

Rajasthan is a place with a vibrant culture and a rich history. It is the perfect destination to explore for leisure travellers who are on a constant quest for peace, calm and discovery. One of the most preferred domestic as well as international tourist destination, Rajasthan is brimming with cities such as Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Mount Abu, Bikaner, that boast of beautiful and inviting landscapes, delectable cuisines, and warm people. It was all these elements that helped us choose Rajasthan for India's first Raffles.

What made you go ahead with the decision to launch the hotel this year?

It has been our long-term vision to operate in the ultra-luxury and premium segments, and we've always had a forward-looking attitude towards new signings and openings. Yes, the recovery is going to be slow, but we are already seeing a return of luxury travel across the globe, in countries that are opening up. Things are looking bright for the luxury segment, especially because after all the uncertainty and chaos that people have been through because of the pandemic, now they are looking for ways to indulge in lavish but mindful experiences.

How do you plan to sustain for next two years when the property would majorly be relying on domestic business?

We will certainly see more caution, and guests will be more prudent while making travel plans. The hospitality industry will remain dynamic but will now be extra cautious, agile and innovative. The future is still unknown, but we are cautiously optimistic. Under the current circumstances, with travel restrictions, more and more Indians are exploring domestic destinations.

We strongly believe that this will help us sustain bookings and attract more traffic to the hotel. In an environment where you only have the opportunity to travel domestically, people will choose luxury, as travellers are looking for meaningful experiences that allow them to develop deeper connections with their loved ones.

The news of Raffles Udaipur has given the industry reason to cheer. What keeps you motivated?

There is the belief that people love to travel and celebrate together and ultimately, they will return to places that offer holistic experiences that have a strong focus on safety, security and well-being. The discerning traveller continues to look for bespoke, meaningful experiences, and that is what keeps us motivated.

Do you think Raffles Udaipur will give you an edge over others?

Our aim is to deliver the Raffles legendary brand experience in India and to match with the other most prestigious Raffles Hotels & Resorts worldwide. We are confident that our immersive hospitality and unparalleled experiences is what will charm our guests. We want our guests to see what we have created, amalgamating Raffles' global ethos with local Indian sensitivities.

How does Raffles Udaipur plan to carve a niche for itself?

Every Raffles hotel promises bespoke experiences which are thoughtful, designed to deliver 'emotional luxury' to the well-travelled guest. Raffles Udaipur, unlike any other hotel in the city, is built like a grand country estate on a private island. With breathtaking views of the Udai Sagar lake from every room, unparalleled culinary experiences, largest ballroom in the city, brand's signature offerings such as the Raffles Spa, Writers Bar and Long Bar, as well as the legendary Raffles service, our guests will have a reason to discover the city anew. At Raffles, the distinction is the brand essence, and our guests simply feel that connection. We have curated a perfect blend of the brand's signature offerings with local Indian traditions to create a memorable experience for our guests.

The Raffles brand carries forward a persona that is regarded prestigiously all over the world. It promises extraordinary experiences, curated itineraries and luxurious stays complemented by the signature Raffles butler service. What sets us apart are the breathtaking

Green shoots 2.0

A surge in business before the second wave saw tourism stakeholders in Punjab rejoice. But, the state still has a long way to go. Industry stalwarts share their views.



Paramveer Singh



We saw an increase in bookings



Narayan Tharoor



We host a lot of leisure travellers at our hotel



Sonica Kandhari



50% occupancy was good in the new normal



In Punjab, while the second wave saw business dropping for most hotels and tour operators, things were not that bad before March, especially in the domestic sector. **Paramveer Singh**, General Manager, Taj Swarna, Amritsar, shares, "Post the phase-wise unlocking across the country last year, green shoots of travel began to emerge driven by an increase in demand for domestic travel, with people keen to explore all that India has to offer. Further buoyed by the festive season combined with facilitation of interstate travel, leisure domestic travel saw a steady growth, and our hotel saw a significant increase in bookings."


Narayan Tharoor, General Manager, Holiday Inn Chandigarh Zirakpur, also says that they were getting domestic bookings at the hotel before the second wave. "Chandigarh attracts a lot of transient travellers. Hence, we have seen a good demand for the hotel in the market. Zirakpur is a convenient location for a halt for pre and post-travel to the northern belt of India. Hence, we host a lot of leisure travellers at our hotel," he shares. Speaking on behalf of Radisson Blu Hotel MBD Ludhiana, **Sonica Malhotra Kandhari**, Joint Managing Director, MBD

Group, says, "The rollout of vaccination did bring back the confidence of travellers for staycations, leisure and business trips during the second wave in Punjab. It was good in terms of the road to recovery, as 50 per cent occupancy was good in the new normal during the second wave."

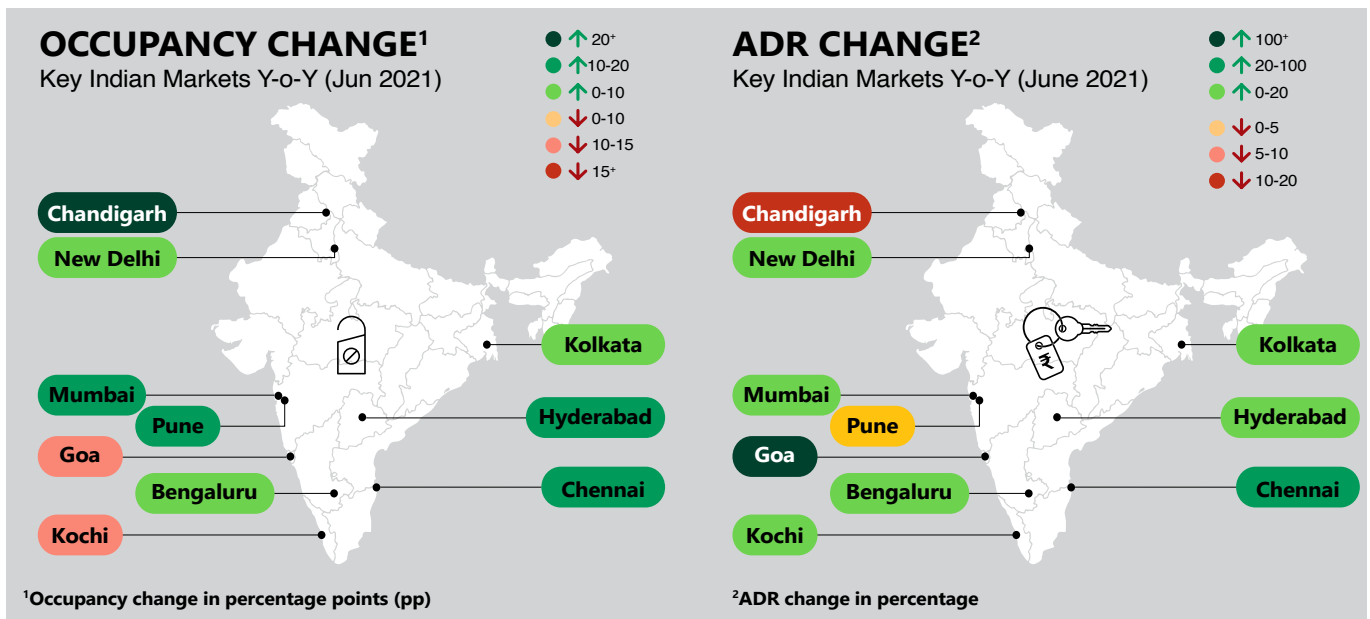
"After the second wave, queries for banquets and corporate bookings started flowing in. Even the restaurants could operate at 50 per cent capacity that brought the regular guests back to the hotel," claims Kandhari. Even Singh accepts that the recent phase-wise unlock and ease in travel restrictions has seen domestic travel begin to resume. The same goes for Radisson Blu Hotel MBD Ludhiana. "There are a lot of queries that have been converted into confirmed bookings. The queries for rooms, social events, corporate events and business meetings are there in the market and people are showing faith in the brand for following all the new normal safety protocols," adds Kandhari. Holiday Inn Chandigarh Zirakpur has started receiving wedding, transient and corporate enquiries again. Tharoor shares, "We foresee that the trend will continue for the next few months before it starts getting stable and consistent over a period of time."

Hotel occupancies see m-o-m increase

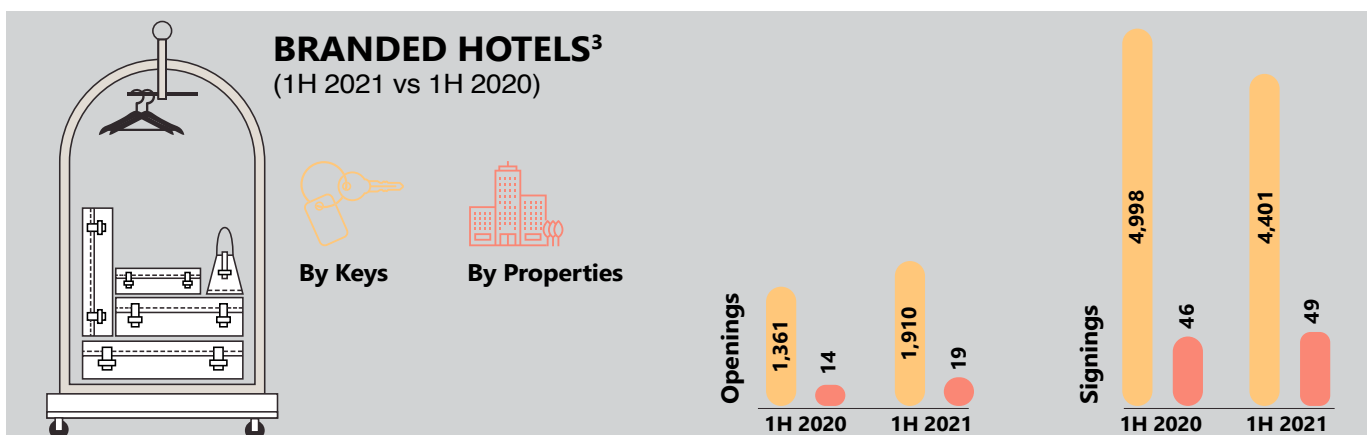
HVS ANAROCK's recent stats reveal that hotel occupancy in all the major cities witnessed a m-o-m increase. Mumbai observed the highest occupancy (51-53%) in June 2021.

HOTEL SECTOR		Key Stats (India Average)						
		JUNE 2021	M-o-M (%)	Y-o-Y (%)	JUN 2021	MAY 2021	APR 2021	MAR 2021
	ADR	₹3,600 - ₹3,800	↑ 14-16%	ADR	↑ 17-19%	↓ 2-4%	↓ 4-6%	↓ 22-24%
	Occupancy	30% - 32%	↑ 12-14pp ¹	Occupancy	↑ 10-12pp	↑ 3-5pp	↑ 18-20pp	↑ 17-19pp
	RevPAR	₹1,080 - ₹1,250	↑ 93-95%	RevPAR	↑ 78-80%	↑ 22-24%	↑ 149-151%	↑ 21-23%

Source: HVS Research



Source: HVS Research




³Data collated by HVS from 18 hotel operators and media reports as of 20th July 2021

Source: HVS Research

High expectations

Regional Presidents opine that hit hard by COVID-19, the tourism and hospitality sector need as much attention as possible from the government.

 Fhrai Bureau



Sherry Bhatia
President, HRAWI

FOCUS ON REVIVING TOURISM

The GOI has been always in staunch favour of promoting tourism in the country and has been very vocal about it. We are looking forward to interacting and working

with the newly appointed Union Minister for Tourism – Shri G Kishan Reddy. The Minister too has stressed that tourism and hospitality are one of the most important pillars for the nation's growth and that it will be his endeavour to ensure that the sector receives as much attention and support from the government as possible. The Ministry has assured us that it will come out with a National Tourism Policy outlining the roadmap for the fast recovery of the sector.

Our hopes are pinned on Shri G Kishan Reddy as much as on the GOI for its support to the hospitality industry. Regular interactions with the Ministers, maybe thrice a year, will help the industry in its recovery



Sudesh Poddar
President, HRAEI

A POSITIVE SIGN

It's been a positive sign that a Union Minister and two Ministers of State (MoS) have sworn in the latest Cabinet shuffle. This raises hope that the government will take special care of a sector that's

scheme be extended by five years. Service Exports from India Scheme (SEIS) of 10% to all foreign exchange earning members in tourism should be made applicable for five years to ensure a post-COVID recovery. The industry also needs rationalisation of GST. Hotels should be allowed to




On top of the wish list features the support required under EPCG and SEIS schemes 

been hit the hardest by the pandemic. Expectations from these ministers is quite high and on top of the wish list features the support required under EPCG and SEIS schemes. We request for treating payments received from international tourists as foreign exchange for the purpose of Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) scheme and that the time to perform export obligation under the

charge 12% GST with full set-offs irrespective of their tariff categories which will ensure that Indian hospitality GST becomes more competitive globally as in most tourism focused countries it is below 10%. Tour operators should be allowed a special presumptive GST rate of 1.8% with full GST set-offs. The current rate of 5% without set-offs structurally implies that tour operators have an inbuilt margin of around 27.8% which is an inherently flawed assumption in the internet economy. The pandemic has completely battered the hospitality industry and to put it back on track the sector needs as much attention and support from the government as possible.




Our hopes are pinned on Shri G Kishan Reddy as much as on the GOI for its support 

and eventually, its progress. The meetings, even if virtual, will improve communication and consultation between the decision-makers and the industry stakeholders. At present, tourism and hospitality need as much attention as possible from the government.



K. Syama Raju
President, SIHRA

GETTING SUPPORT FROM STATE GOVT

Hospitality sector is happy to get a Cabinet Rank Minister G Kishan Reddy and two Ministers of State, which is a good sign. The Cabinet Minister is quite a pro tourism person, and we would like to meet him in Delhi. He is from South India and very well understands the region vis-à-vis tourism, which is an important industry in India today. The tourism and hospitality sector is not doing

travel restrictions, so it is a little challenging for the tourism industry. We are trying to get permission from the deputy collector. We have been emphasising the importance of vaccination. Safety is of utmost importance. Guests are demanding assured safety.

WAIVING OFF CHARGES

In Karnataka, we have been able to make a few changes, charges have been waived off such as six months property tax, electricity charges, etc. In addition to this, the hotels and restaurants can now pay the liquor license fee in two installments. Likewise, we request the Central

Financial support from the government is crucial at this hour



well in Karnataka. We have been trying to meet the Chief Minister of Karnataka Shri. Basavaraj Bommai but due to COVID-19 restrictions, we haven't been able to meet him.

We are touring other southern states to get concession and as much state government support as possible for the tourism industry. There are

government for interest waiver and concession on power and water. The properties are not doing well and are in dire need of support from GOI. Interest waiver would be quite a relief for the industry. Financial support from the government is crucial at this hour. It could be loans to the hotel industry with one-year moratorium or zero interest.



Surendra Kumar Jaiswal
President, HRANI

INCLUDE TOURISM IN CONCURRENT LIST

The appointment of a Cabinet Rank Minister for Tourism along with two Ministers of State is a welcome move. The sector currently needs support in fiscal, correct policies, incentives and safety procedures and the new team will bring hope and optimism for our industry. This pandemic-ravaged industry could see "independent hotels and restaurants with limited financial resources facing closure" in the immediate term. It is high time for the Central government to offer stimulus packages immediately. To mitigate the impact and revive the industry, waiver of statutory levies for FY 21-22 without any penalties needs to be coordinated between the Centre and the states. Also, the Central government needs to accord infrastructure status to the tourism sector which will help boost tourism and attract investment. Tourism in the concurrent list needs to be considered for an early recovery of the sector. Grant of 'industry' status with direction of its mandatory implementation at all state levels across country will ensure lower rates of electricity, excise fees, property and other local taxes including other utility charges and levies.



Govt could consider a waiver of taxes till March 31, 2022

LOAN RESTRUCTURING & FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The sector needs rationalisation of GST with simplification and standardisation of the complex tax structure. In the short term, to support this sector, which has been the worst affected by the pandemic, the government could consider a waiver of all taxes up to March 31, 2022. Many hotels need loan restructuring and financial support, and a more conducive cost of capital to survive. We request the hotel industry be given extended tenures and preferential interest rates, which will allow many owners to keep the keys of their assets and survive through to recovery.

For MSMEs in tourism sector, grants or interest free loans with long payback period should be announced. It is high time that all the stakeholders should come and work together to rebuild the industry and support the government in their new plans.

India's Protein



DILEMMA

Consuming protein on a daily basis is fundamental to growth and development as healthy individuals. Yet, India remains a protein deficient country, why?



According to surveys, a whopping 70 per cent of Indians consider themselves as 'meatarians'. Yet, ironically, India is also a protein-deficient country. A survey by the Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB) reveals that nearly 73 per cent of Indians are protein deficient. Eating meat, especially chicken and eggs, is one sure-shot way to get the required protein for your body. India's consumption of poultry and eggs is low. While the required protein intake for an average Indian is between 0.8 to 1gm per kg of body weight, the amount consumed is actually only 0.6gm.

Protein consumption on the international front is on the rise, averaging 68 gm per person, per day but India is at 3kg/person/year, compared to 10-11kg/person/year, for most countries. ICMR advises every Indian to consume 10.5 kg of poultry meat and a total of 180 eggs, every year.

KNOWLEDGE GAP

Studies and surveys conducted in a number of Indian cities have shown that people lack the essential knowledge when it comes to understanding proteins and the importance of consuming it as part of daily diet. Poultry meat and eggs are a source of Vitamin B12, which helps in T-cell production, immunomodulation and intestinal immune regulation, among other things. They are also loaded with the goodness of zinc and selenium and help in reducing oxidative stress.

HOPE ON THE HORIZON

In recent years, the growth of the middle-classes with disposable incomes, busy schedules of young working generation, urbanisation, and a growing need for ready-to-eat products, has led to an increase in demand for a variety of, and less expensive proteins, such as poultry meat. Keeping the momentum, the government too has started running promotional programmes on the significance of proteins in the diet. It has advised people to include poultry and eggs in regular meals along with other food products to build immunity. The importance of poultry meat in contributing to the essential nutrients required for the body has also been emphasised by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (UNFAO). It regards poultry meat as a relatively inexpensive source of protein in developing countries because of its easy availability.

TOWARDS A PROTEIN POWERHOUSE

There are four important sources of poultry proteins—chicken, duck, turkey, and eggs. We enumerate below the health benefits of each.

CHICKEN

The health benefits of chicken meat are enormous. One big advantage is that chicken protein is easily digestible

and provides excellent nutritional quality. The meat is rich in amino acids and helps in building stronger muscles and healthier bones, thereby preventing osteoporosis. Most importantly, chicken meat does not contain undesirable trans-fat (nearly half the amount of chicken fat contains the desirable monounsaturated fats) that can cause coronary/heart disease. What's more, it's also rich in Vitamin B12, choline, zinc, iron and copper and also contains serotonin, the feel good hormone.

EGGS

Eggs are one of the best sources of protein. They are not only low-carb and low-calorie but also a low-cost source of protein. A single egg provides 6 to 8 grams of protein and just 70 calories.

Following are the protein contents provided by various eggs depending on its size:

Small egg (approx.38 grams): 4.9 grams of protein;

Medium egg (approx.44 grams): 5.7 grams of protein;

Large egg (approx.50 grams): 6.5 grams of protein;

Extra-large egg (approx. 56 grams): 7.3 grams of proteins;

Jumbo egg (approx.63 grams): 8.2 grams of protein.

DUCK

Duck meat is a rich source of high-quality protein, iron and fat. The meat provides about 17.42 gm of protein per 100 gm, with an array of non-essential and essential amino acids. Duck eggs can also cater to the protein needs, with one single egg serving up to 18 per cent of the daily required amount of protein. Since duck eggs contain a higher concentration of Omega-3 fatty acids compared to chicken eggs, they are also a favourite among paleo dieters who are looking for high fat foods. Even though duck eggs and chicken eggs conform to a similar nutrient chart, duck eggs have an edge over chicken eggs, owing to their bigger size.

TURKEY

Turkey is a large bird grown in farms, particularly for its meat, which is rich in protein. It is estimated that 100 gm of turkey meat contains 28 gm of protein. This is more than half of an adult's recommended daily intake of protein. For a vegetarian, this is equivalent to eating two large broccoli heads. In addition to this, turkey meat also contains many beneficial nutrients such as niacin, choline, selenium, zinc, Vitamin B-6, Vitamin B-12, potassium, calcium, magnesium, iron and unsaturated fatty acids. Eating turkey meat keeps insulin levels stable and helps maintain lean muscle mass. So, if ensuring adequate intake of protein is what you are looking at, turkey is the meat to go for.



Supported by USSEC.

Poultry meat

- It plays a vital role in the body's healing and recovery.
- It is a rich source of Vitamin B12, which helps in keeping gut microbiota healthy, T-cell production, immunomodulation, and intestinal immune regulation.
- It is loaded with zinc and selenium, which helps reduce oxidative stress.




ICMR advises every Indian to consume 10.5 kg of poultry meat and a total of 180 eggs in a year





Instilling confidence

Sudeep Jain, MD, South-West Asia, IHG Hotels & Resorts, talks about the brand's growth plans & ensuring it attracts business while maintaining the talent pool within the organisation.

 Nisha Verma



Sudeep Jain

What are IHG's plans for the year?

As the situation stabilises in India, we are well-positioned to capitalise on the returning demand and remain committed towards our growth and expansion strategy. Earlier this year, we opened Holiday Inn Chandigarh Zirakpur and announced the debut of our world-renowned extended-stay brand, Staybridge Suites, in India with the signing of Staybridge Suites Bengaluru Thanisandra. Recently, we also signed Holiday Inn Express & Suites in Jalandhar to strengthen our footprint in Punjab and Holiday Inn Express Pokhara Lakeside in Nepal. We are optimistic about the year ahead and are in active discussions to meaningfully expand our presence across key markets in the country.

What made IHG sail through the pandemic?

Through these challenging times, the strength of our business model and the speed & effectiveness of our actions helped us support all our stakeholders, including guests, hotel owners, colleagues and communities. We were quick to innovate and evolve our offerings to meet the demands of the market. We identified new revenue centres and forayed into the food delivery segment

Packages@IHG

IHG is looking at launching a special summer campaign to capitalise on the demand in the coming months. Additionally, as part of its IHG Dining Deals promotion, the group is offering a 25% discount to its IHG Rewards members at participating restaurants in its hotels, to further enhance their experience.

across our hotels, which has seen rapid growth since last year. We also partnered with preferred vendors to lease our outdoor venues for intimate weddings and social events to generate incremental revenues. These offerings, together with IHG's Way of Clean programme that promises a clean and safe environment to guests, helped us instil consumer confidence. We continued to capitalise on domestic travel in both leisure and corporate sectors to drive business. Our effort towards protecting our hotel owners, managing stable revenues, rationalising operating costs, and flexibility to adapt whilst taking care of our colleagues helped us sail through the crisis.

What about maintaining the talent pool within IHG and the industry at large?

In the current scenario, the business environment has changed significantly and the concept of hospitality is being redefined. In order to serve our guests in the new context and make sure the talent is fully equipped to do so, we believe it is important that we train all members of our workforce extensively across all hotel operations to adapt to the new normal. Keeping this in mind, we have provision for extensive operational guidance on health, safety & cleanliness, and changes to hotel Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for all existing and new employees. Efficient talent management will continue to remain an important consideration for the hospitality sector. Keeping this in mind, we are investing in tools for workforce optimisation and labour efficiency as we look to set up for success in 2021 and beyond. Additionally, training of workforce and investing in professional development will continue to remain important. Our aim as a company is to come out of this crisis much stronger and it is important that we have the right talent, with the right resources and right training to help us achieve this.



Efficient talent management will continue to remain an important consideration



Good housekeeping

Since 1984 Mehta Furnishers has been adding value, style and convenience to housekeeping with customised carts, caddies, hampers & outdoor furniture.



What stands behind impeccable clean hotels is the eagle-eyed housekeeping department and its management. Good housekeeping is essential for the safety and good health of the people. Adding value, style and convenience to good housekeeping are compact housekeeping carts and caddies from Mehta Furnishers. These equipments organise supplies and are essential in hospitality businesses around the world. These allow housekeeping staff to bundle fresh and used linens, guest essentials, chemicals and cleaning supplies, all in one unit.

High-grade castors chosen as per their application make movement of carts effortless which are also designed and sized to fit into the standard size elevators. With the possibility of so many models, one is sure to find a maids' cart to work as per the requirement of their purpose. Workably priced for the value these carts deliver and are made with edge protectors for professional jobs, one can choose from a range of housekeeping carts, mobile caddies, baskets and hospitality products.

"I humbly thank all those who are associated with us for a long time, guided us and expected more in this never-ending learning journey that continues. We make carts, caddies, baskets and accessories with value additions that work as desired units for the best of convenience and situations. Carts are designed to take care of

customers' requirements with bumpers, lockable doors, additional storage, operational needs and a variety of desired features that add value to the style and smiles to good housekeeping," says **Y K Mehta**, Owner, Mehta Furnishers.

Other products Mehta Furnishers makes are minibar-replenishment carts, linen and luggage carts beside housekeeping and picnic baskets, strollers, bins, trays, front-office carts and several accessories using wood, cane, wicker and steel, and all outdoor furniture and umbrellas. Products at Mehta Furnishers are compact, maneuverable, practical and offer visible support for disturbance free housekeeping, provide upmarket ambience and are essential for safety and good health of the people these are made for. Solid steel structure, durable liner and cabinet for linen and amenities, robust shelves, sturdy bars for handling and moving, hardwearing-coated fabric bags in choicest colours, heavy-duty non-marking castors for effortless carting and parking, and edge-protectors on all customary carts go a long way in building trust of the company since 1984.



Castors chosen as per their application make movement of carts effortless



“We are truly honoured to be recognized by this leading certification body for our safety precautions and hygiene practices which is the most important factor especially during these Covid times. We would like to thank QualStar for recognizing us and certifying our practices.”



Mr Kush Kapoor
CEO, Roseate Hotels & Resorts



*Mr Kush Kapoor, CEO, R
receiving the ce
Mr M.S. Chawla*



QualStar is India's first and only certification body accredited by the **Quality Council of India** (NABCB) to provide COVID compliance certification to hotels.

The QualStar Edge

- Promotions at international fairs like WTM, ITB, FITUR, etc
- Monthly email blasts to all global travel trade agent partners
- Enhanced social media activities
- Promotion in travel trade media



*oseate Hotels & Resorts
ertification from
a, CEO QualStar*



ation, contact:

star.co.in, meenakshi.bairagi@qualstar.co.in

Deep impact

FHRAI EC members talk about the immediate measures which should be taken by the government to unburden the financial stress of hotel & restaurant owners.



Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar

Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar
Executive Director, HRH Group of Hotels

TRYING TIMES

Yes, these are challenging times, no doubt! We may begin focussing on the hospitality industry, but one has to take a national or global perspective. The entire nation has regressed in terms of economic growth. That's the given, the new normal. As countries slowly inch their way towards normalcy, we will find the old avenues of growth opening up. I would not say that we have been 'driven to the edge'; certainly, we have been pushed to dig deeper, remain optimistic and not lose hope. Every segment of the travel and tourism industry has been adversely affected. Each one is trying to find the solutions best available for them. Optimism, positive thinking and confidence in ourselves will give us the answers we seek.

NEWER WAYS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Our industry is a very sensitive industry and at this time rather than depending on the government

for a relief package, we have to think out of the box and use technology in terms of online booking promotions so that we can encash on the domestic travellers. During situations like these we cannot act helpless but find newer ways to sustain.

Please remember, the hospitality industry has been one of the biggest employers in the country: there is a need to help the smaller and medium enterprises with financial assistance to maintain their staff. In these times, we have to think compassionately and act with speed and benevolence.

SHORT & LONG-TERM MEASURES

Pray! Prayers are powerful. I pray that we all adhere to the government regulations, maintain social distancing and ensure that elders and people in the high-risk categories are healthy, safe and secure and vaccinated. On the professional front, we need to continue with what we have, optimise the resources. These challenging pandemic times will not last forever.



Every segment of the industry has been affected





Vineet Taing President, Vatika Group

MAJOR SETBACK

In the current unprecedented situation, the second wave of COVID-19 has created a huge impact on industries wherein the hospitality sector has been hit the hardest. The hotels have yet not recovered from the impact of the first two waves and the hype of the third one is deepening each day. With travellers fearing to go out and lockdown like situations arising the hotels suffered a major setback.

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

This is the time when the government should support the hospitality industry. FHRAI has already been pushing a lot of recommendations and is following-up with the Ministry to revive the tourism and hospitality industry. The top recommendations being: extension of term loan repayment by five more years, reversal of GST input scheme, reduction of fixed charges in the electricity bills, a rebate of trade licence fee by 50%, waiver in property tax by 50% for the next two years and reduction of liquor fee by 50% for the next one year for hotels and restaurants, but nothing has happened to date.

MEASURES TAKEN BY STATE GOVTS

According to World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), India's hospitality, travel, and tourism

accounts for roughly 10% of the GDP. The industry had supported 87.5 million jobs which is close to 12.75% of total employment generated in 2019. Furthermore, many state governments are setting great examples of supporting the hospitality industry. The government of Gujarat announced the waiving-off of property tax and fixed charges on electricity bills of hotels, resorts, restaurants and many others for the next one year. Maharashtra gave 'industry status' to the hospitality sector and industrial rates were offered on electricity rates, water charges, property tax, development tax and non-agricultural cess. Kerala is yet another example, wherein the government has sanctioned a 'Tourism Loan Assistance Scheme' of ₹500 crores and provided a 25% waiver on liquor license fee. Even Delhi is not far behind and is planning along the same lines. This should certainly be replicated across all the states of India with immediate effect before the third wave hits the country. Not only would this help the entire industry walk the path of revival, but it would also help generate more employment.



Maharashtra gave 'industry status' to hospitality





Holidays get Furr-tastic



Pet-friendly properties have been a large segment of business for a while now; a step further is imagining hospitality accommodations designed especially for pet getaways.



Ananya Kukreja

The rising number of pets is a major factor for driving growth of this segment. According to the American Pet Production Association, 67% of households globally, as of 2020 are pet parents. Indian households, as of 2021, have been surveyed to have 59% pets of the total population and the same is only growing with the prolongation of the pandemic. The current scenario with its travel restrictions across geographies has shifted focus to vacations at drivable and nearby locations often as a getaway, if not a long vacation, and in either travel choice, people want their pets accompanying them. This led to a surge in pet parents travelling to safer or more serene locations around and beyond with their complete family. While some are making ongoing efforts towards pet inclusions, various brands earlier anticipated this demand to provide exceptions in welcoming pet parents and including provisions above and beyond for both guests, and their pets. Properties across the industry provide such inclusions and establish protocols; brands discussed further on in this light include IHCL, Marriott, Hyatt, Tree of Life Resorts, and Ibis hotels.

PET-FRIENDLY PROPERTIES

The main difference between pet-friendly hotels and conventional hotels is the fact that extra care is taken to ensure that needs of pets and pet parents are met, all the while not compromising the comfort of other guests in the hotel. Exceptional thought and care goes into ensuring the comfort of everyone involved, and as



Sonali Chauhan



It is a joy to have animals around



understood from many hoteliers, pet accommodation inclusivity only adds to their brand value, occupancy levels and competitive advantage. It is the preference of the brand/ property to encompass as much for their splooting guests to substantiate the comfort and experience for each of their guests, whether two or four legged. IHCL prides over its brand portfolio, SeleQtions, which includes pet accommodation as a part of all properties under it. **Sonali Chauhan**, General Manager at The Connaught, New Delhi, IHCL SeleQtions who is an avid pet-lover and parent to a dozen pets herself says, "The Connaught, New Delhi is delighted to welcome guests who move around with their pets through a variety of services and while it is a welcoming step, it is also a joy to have animals around."

The Gateway Resort Damdama Lake, Gurugram by Taj is a delightful option and opportunity for guests to unwind with their furry little companions. "We are witnessing an up-thrust both in sentiment and in business which is mostly driven by domestic leisure travellers. The demand still remains relatively higher over weekends, but we have also observed more movement during the week since guests have the option to work-from-home and are happy to combine business & leisure with their pets." shares **Mandeep Surie**, General Manager at The Gateway Resort Damdama Lake, Gurugram. Taj Mahal, Lucknow recently repositioned and re-emphasised themselves as a pet-friendly hotel. They have accommodated long staying pet guests with pets and pet parents

co-living in the hotel for more than two months. In a conversation with **Amit Kumar**, General Manager at Courtyard by Marriott, Pune Chakan, it was understood that cleaning after pets and their rooms is a challenge, where the room must be deep cleaned so as to not cause successive guests any allergic reactions, if at all and also not apprise the room as previously used by a pet; this holds true for all pet-friendly properties. Another such challenge the property faced at the inception of its pet-friendly services is developing the mindset of all team members toward pet inclusivity and training them with the added policies and protocols. These challenges have been easily eradicated by following the SOPs, regulations, and policies put in place before the programme launch. Most brands which are pet-friendly are more residential, avers **Nagesh Chawla**, Cluster General Manager at Marriott International for Renaissance



Mumbai Convention Centre Hotel & Lakeside Chalet Mumbai – Marriott Executive Apartments. In terms of guest experience, the biggest trend in the market right now is staycations which allows people to enjoy some time off work and enjoy an outing with their pets. Not all hotels are pet-friendly, and so the ones that are, create a positive, joyous, and memorable experience for guests and their chosen companions. Chawla further states that their team focuses on the positive and with the Indian demographic increasingly adopting pets, it poses truly little quandary.

As mentioned by **George Bennet Kuruvilla**, General Manager at The Westin Pune Koregaon Park, pet accommodations lead to a revenue generation boost and competitive edge, if not necessarily an occupancy increase. The initiative here was taken by the then General Manager after combining guest feedbacks, preferences and request given by the sales and marketing team, primarily comprising the marketing and innovations cell. Their inclusion of pet-friendly accommodations has helped them partner with various companies and foundations across the city to engage with pet lovers around the region. This



Mandeep Surie

“
We have long staying pet guests
”



Amit Kumar

“
The room must be deep cleaned
”



Nagesh Chawla

“
Pet-friendly brands are more residential
”



inadvertently allows them a strong standing with residents, improving their footfall. The property like many others has a robust pet agreement policy, but also goes beyond by providing luxury amenities like Heavenly Beds for pets. Andaz Delhi, a luxury lifestyle hotel by Hyatt encourages their free-spirited travellers to enjoy their stay at the property sans the worry of leaving pets at home as the hotel is ready to welcome the furry companions with pet-friendly facilities.

The idea of making Tree of Life Resorts not just pet-friendly, but pet-loving came about when **Himmat Anand**, Founder of Tree of Life Resorts, frustratingly, came across hotels labelled “Pets Not Allowed” while travelling with his pet Labrador, Jugnu. With its inception over a decade ago, the resorts are the first branded group to take the segment of pet accommodation rather seriously, than merely an attractive tagline. Anand believes that pets are the most accommodating guests one can serve; they demand nothing and are happy with whatever is done for them. The Tree of Life Resorts are today well recognised and highly regarded in this segment of travel. Another recognised smart and economic



hospitality brand that recently announced its new tail-wagging offering which is perfect for a pet parent's getaway is Ibis India hotels. Their latest pet-friendly policy will help pet parents enjoy their next stay at Ibis hotels, with their 'pawsome' friends. **Sylvain Laroche**, Director of Operations at Ibis and Ibis Styles India, says, "We are excited to announce this new initiative for our guests and their four-legged roomies. Our pet-friendly hotels will make it easier for our guests to travel with their furry friend. By offering a space that can be enjoyed by both, guests can travel with ease knowing they can bring their best friends along." To further shed light on pet-friendly hospitality, **Elena Dede**, Co-Founder and CEO at Woof Together expresses that, "Allowing pets or tolerating pets is not being pet-friendly." She states that there are four basic pillars that comprise pet-friendliness namely, pet policy, pet amenities, emergency preparedness, and training personnel. There are many other things that need to be addressed which cover each aspect of having a pet-friendly environment where a set of rules and regulations must always be pre-decided. This must also include provision for any emergency circumstance which



George Bennet Kuruvilla

We engage with pet lovers in the region



Himmat Anand

Pets are happy with whatever is done for them



Sylvain Laroche

Guests can travel with their furry friend



could occur. It is very touching for guests when their pets are treated right and with respect because the same is rarely expected and tends to drive the guest insanely happy. This further helps hoteliers create a healthy image of their brand. Travelling with pets is a legal barrier which the industry must encounter, however, foundations like Woof Together are working towards preparing certificates which can legalise having more pets on board, making travel with them more convenient.

PET GETAWAYS

Pet-friendly hotels are the ultimate niche, with major players of the industry actively adopting inclusivity. Brands in India are emerging to provide pet getaways and accommodations designed specifically for one's woofers. A Dog's Story founded by Himmat Anand provides pets that getaway, where one's dog is the focus and the time spent with them is the priority. Critterati, founded by Deepak Chawla and Jaanwi, is India's foremost luxury hotel for canines and felines that reclassifies the very culture of pet keeping in the country. Situated amid the opulent avenues of Gurgaon, the hotel aims to be a pet's favourite destination. With a team of world-class pet-care experts who provide remarkable nurturing and caring services, Critterati makes sure that pet parents' little bundle of joy finds the most exquisite place for the end of the week getaways or longer stays. Through their overall expanded inclusivity, they are amidst the top tier luxurious pet accommodations in the country. TopDog Luxury Pet Resorts is an enormous and spacious resort, specially designed for fur balls by U.S. trained Animal Behaviourist, Gautam Kari. This place has a splash pool and small challenge fields to allow one's pet dog that much-needed adrenaline rush. They also offer overnight stays, behavioural modification programmes, a Scoopy Scrub Grooming Lounge, private events, an On Call Veterinarian and their very own pet boutique.

WAY FORWARD

With no huge investments required, pet getaway properties really do pose to have a prominent future and a potential "need of the hour." There is a debate on whether pet-friendly is the focused niche to follow, or must companies expand their horizons towards specially designed getaway accommodations for pets. While some believe that it is a nourishing niche to provide higher avenues for revenue, others consider this segment a matter of heart, only to be indulged in with true passion. Pets, as mentioned are one of the most accommodating guests a hotel could ask for and more hoteliers should look favourably towards their involvement. Inclusivity and diversity are major criterions in today's growth, and regarding this segment, holiday with a difference embraces the same, through one's love for animals.

INDeco and Blusaz collaborate

Steve Borgia, Founder & Chairman of INDeco Hotels, has signed an agreement with Sanjay Sharma, Founder & CEO, Blusaz Hospitality, to manage his hotels.



Nisha Verma



Steve Borgia

Steve Borgia has passionately pioneered rural tourism. "It wasn't just for a hotel business, but because I wanted tourism to be a socio-economic tool for rural development and therefore sustainable tourism was left far behind. I was talking about regenerative rural tourism. In the last 40 years, the growth is very organic. We were not aiming to make big money, but wanted to see development in our rural areas and we have achieved a lot," he says.

Today, claims Borgia, people are rushing to rural areas. "People want to go to rural areas because they believe it is safe. Now, people look for what we offer. The organic growth is not needed. Hence, we need to find people who can add shine to rural tourism. It is time we have many more rural hotels, and hence we need to find operators.

Probably in the beginning we need to handhold them, but we need to have operators to manage the beautiful heritage and eco hotels," he adds.

Since everybody is asking for experiences, Borgia says, "India has gone one step beyond experiences. We are the only country in the world that can sell emotion. We need to exploit that. When the pandemic rush will die eventually and we will go to normal times, the whole world will start coming here. That time we have to be ready with the shine on rural hotels. We need to add luxury to the rural hotels. I thought that was very critical and this was a key reason why I looked at various operations and management companies. We narrowed down on Blusaz to operate our hotels because I think most hoteliers and tourism people know Sanjay Sharma's credibility in managing hotels. He has pulled many dead hotels out of the grave. Great in operations, he himself has gone through a big awakening. He has operated India's flamboyant hotels. Suddenly, he felt the need to have a rural experience and was looking to promote rural India. After meeting them I said that this is the kind of company that I would like to operate my hotels with, and we signed an agreement. Now we must make the agreement work."

When asked if he won't be actively involved in the hotels after the MoU with Blusaz, Borgia shared, "Just like you can't separate the dancer from the dance, I have been such an integral part of the hotel, its story, history, museum, etc., that I will handhold the soft features for some time. I am there, but it's just that a lot of work must be put into the hotel. I want that shine and luxury to come in. Blusaz will be operating, managing and marketing the hotels entirely, we don't need to interfere in that. Of course, if the concept is changing, we can bring to their attention, but they are professional and they understand the concept very well. We have discussed that enough. They will have the liberty to run it the way it should be run."

Borgia claims that Blusaz knows the brand value that is already being created, and that it would be best to carry that forward.



We are the only country that can sell emotion; we need to exploit that





‘Promote destinations & hotels’

Hotels need to provide confidence to the clients that they are willing to work with them as a partner, says **Hema Hariramani**, Founder & Director at Iskra Events & Celebrations.

We are already witnessing smaller gatherings as the new normal and particular trends include weddings in destinations. Now, this also includes city hotels where guests prefer staying in the hotel rather than having people travel for functions even if they are within the city. Domestic markets and demand has grown. However, the NRI audience will stay away from India until 2022 due to the uncertainty about how long the pandemic will last.

Due to the uncertainty and travel restrictions, the wedding clients are looking at destinations within India with a very few willing to explore international destinations. However, 2022 will witness many clients eager to book international destinations since they have not been able to do so for past two years. We are already witnessing clients who are eager to know when international destinations will open up. Further, these destinations are working towards making travel seamless for the wedding groups who are keen to host their weddings in their countries. For corporates clients, virtual and hybrid meetings is the new normal until 2022.

Hotels need to provide confidence to the clients that they are willing to work with them as a partner. Due to the current times, clients both corporate and weddings are reluctant to confirm events in hotels due to the heavy deposits and stringent deposit schedules. Additionally, for the domestic market it is imperative for the hotels to build these partnerships to result in repeat business. Even for city hotels, their reliance on domestic market is extremely

high. Communities which have the propensity to spend have a fixed mindset on certain requirements, if the hotels are able to look at these with an open mind they will definitely witness the surge in their revenue streams. Adaptability to change needs to work from both sides.

With the pandemic going on for over a year, it is our collective responsibility to promote domestic destinations and hotels. There is a large menu to offer. If you want to have caviar, then you will have to pay for it. And the reality is that since we love to have big fat weddings, the hotels which have a huge demand will charge more. Isn't it always about demand and supply? Today, when we check airline rates for international travel, we do raise an eyebrow. But if we have to travel and we have the moolah, we buy the ticket. Then why should we look at hotels differently? There are huge costs involved when running a hotel, not to mention the additional expenses incurred towards maintaining the health and hygiene aspects due to COVID. Hence, if hotels are charging higher it is because the clients want their weddings there. When you want a brand, you don't look at the price tag – it is about what you want!



Hema Hariramani

(Hema Hariramani is the Founder & Director at Iskra Events & Celebrations. Views expressed are her own.)



It is vital for hotels to build partnerships which result in repeat business





Staying ahead of the game

We need to continue to innovate every month to come out with some thought process to stay ahead of the game, says **Sumeet Suri**, General Manager, JW Marriott Kolkata.



Sumeet Suri

How has the pandemic changed the leadership's perspective towards success?

I feel that although we understand that the revenues and profits are significant for the hotel and also, we need to be ahead of the competition, there are a few important things which have changed from a perspective of profits. We realised that the cash flows have become far more critical than just showing great profits. Doing business and showing an increase in the incoming cash flow has attained significance. There's no point showing huge profits and hence struggling for cash. At this hour, it's important to recognise what kind of business we should take and how we deal with credit situations in this vulnerable market. The second point of consideration is

talent retention. While we've all been wanting to look at optimisation of manpower, I think at the same time it has become more and more important to have the right kind of talent. I also think the supply chain is a principal concern. We may not be able to depend on the same suppliers or we may not be in a position to get everything we want.

Therefore, it's necessary to look at a lot of local supplies today and the various available resources in the market. Looking into fixed costs has become predominant as a large part of the hotel runs on fixed costs. How do you make your fixed costs go down is an important element, which I think as leaders we are all looking at. Focusing on the utilisation of revenue per square foot has gained continuous importance than just the revenue of the hotel. How we are utilising its space, which areas we should operate and which areas we should



The salient characteristic of a leader lies in the power of listening



not operate – I think these questions have become matters of foremost concern for leaders. There's also a great need for agility and spontaneity because the state government rules are changing every few weeks. Different states have imposed different restrictions and we need to think ahead on how our cost & revenue might be impacted & what kind of decisions we need to take.

The pivotal interest is to stay ahead of the game. The salient characteristic of a leader lies in the power of listening & showing empathy. We must listen to our customers, associates, stakeholders, and our owners.

How has the role evolved to adapt to new changes in the past one-and-a-half years?

The past one-and-a-half years have been greatly unpredictable. With the first wave of the pandemic ending, a lot of us thought that things were getting back to normal until the severe second wave hit us and now the third wave is a rising concern. I think it is important

that we understand what our customers are thinking, what do they want in this new environment, are we adapting ourselves to give them new offerings? What they are looking at, what will work, what will not work.

The second is it's never been so important than today that how critical it is to stay connected with local markets; whether it is from the rohu cockpits or the regular clients we have or the customers from the same city – I think it's extremely important to stay deeply connected with the local markets because that's where the maximum business is coming from. Innovation has become the key.

We need to continue to evolve and innovate every month to come out with some thought process to stay ahead of the game. Where is the pent up demand, where are people who want to go out? They are also looking for new options, safer options and how do we come up with new products to fill this gap. Going digital, in my point of view, is vital because today



It's important to stay deeply connected with the local markets

with the lack of personal meetings, we have to reach out to customers using digital marketing.

How can leaders take care of Emotional Intelligence?

I strongly believe that as leaders we should first discover ways to relieve our stress. We should understand how we can cope up with our internal challenges and communicate effectively down the line and empathise with others. We must value our emotional well-being and perfect it before we can even use this in our work area and help others. Empathising with others is sensitive. Every time we do not have answers for all the problems. But sheer listening and acknowledging people's issues will do wonders. .

Any positive change in particular that you have experienced in leadership roles?

We have been at the bottom of the pyramid for the last one-and-a-half years. It's been one of the worst years that we have witnessed, and I think in this time the power or the risk of experimentation has played a significant role across the hospitality industry. I think this is a great positive change because a lot of myths have been broken. Things which we felt were right and practised earlier, have changed now. The way we look at our business has transformed and that is undoubtedly the result of experimentation, which is leading to the birth of new technologies, new products, new processes and I think that's a great change we have seen.

Acquisition mode

Click Hotels by Suba has acquired 35 hotels across 22 new destinations in India. By 2023, the hospitality conglomerate targets to cross 3,000+ rooms.



Mansur Mehta



Our focus is on ultramodern hospitality services



Nandivardhan Jain



The acquisition enables Click Hotels to fast track growth



In a major breakthrough for the hospitality segment following the COVID-19 outbreak, Click Hotels by Suba has successfully added 35 new properties to its portfolio across 22 prime destinations in India which marks the milestone of total 2,000 rooms. Some of the destinations include Ranthambore National Park, Dalhousie, and Jim Corbett National Park alongside others. Marking one of the biggest acquisitions in the budget hotel segment, the latest expansion drive is a part of Click Hotels' acquisition of 1589 Hotels, GenX, RNB, and RNB Select.

Following its acquisition, Click Hotels by Suba has marked its transition to an asset-light business model. The hospitality conglomerate has further forayed into the leisure segment building on its 'Bed, Breakfast, and Broadband' and affordable luxury model. The new-age midsegment hotel chain will now directly manage 50 prime hotel properties across India, UAE, and Nepal.

The brand believes in going the extra mile for each of its guests. Hence, in addition to iPads and BYOD (bring your own device) technologies to name a few for easy check-ins, the brand's online booking system comes equipped with artificial intelligence and other avant-garde technological enhancements. The brand also harnesses the power of data and analytics,

which forms the base of its key decision-making. Speaking on the development, **Mansur Mehta**, Managing Director of Suba Group of Hotels, said, "At Suba, we are on a mission to acquaint hotels across the country with ultramodern hospitality services. Our latest acquisition drive is in line with this vision. The majority of our acquired properties cater to the leisure segment and perfectly complement our existing portfolio of business hotels. We have also worked towards the diversity of destinations and included prime holidaymaking spots to delight Indian vacationers. A new loyalty programme for our brand patrons, called 'Click Smiles', is now live as well and will further add to our core value proposition."

Nandivardhan Jain, CEO of NOESIS Capital Advisors who acted as an exclusive transaction advisor said, "The opportunity to acquire 1589 Hotels attracted the Suba Group of hotels due to their presence in the leisure destinations. This transaction is a reflection of a great Indian entrepreneurialism creating a sustainable & conversion friendly hotel management platform which aims at suiting to independent hotel owners and domestic travellers requirements. The acquisition of this portfolio enables Click Hotels by Suba to fast track its growth across South Asia. By 2023, Click Hotels by Suba envisions crossing 3,000 rooms and strengthening its presence on the national level."



Incentive travel

Decision makers from leading hotel chains talk about how incentive travel will take shape in the post-pandemic era.

Ritika Gupta Vice President Market, North & West India, IHCL

We believe that as the vaccination level starts increasing exponentially around the world, travel will come back into its own. The need for human connection is very high. Incentive travel is a shared and joint experience to learn, discover and rejuvenate. The key point which will make a difference is the uniform policy adopted across the world on vaccination and vaccination-related travel. Governments should ease the infrastructure around the process.



Rohit Chopra Regional Director of Sales – India Accor

We have received good number of queries; groups will very soon start travelling outbound. It depends on which country or NTO invites Indians with open arms. Government is taking a lot of efforts to make things better. More relaxed travel norms will lead to more travel. Everyone shall get their share as we approach Q1 2022, but domestic will kick-start first as international borders will open slowly. Queries for international travel are expected to increase by December.



Ananya Sinha Director Commercial – South West Asia, IHG

Incentive travel is selling experiences. In the last couple of months, brand India has taken a huge hit amongst the foreign markets. So, going forward, to turn things around, we need to change the perception of the country in the minds of foreign travellers. Good things have happened and that needs to be spoken about. The trend of competing will become more aggressive because countries are desperate to revive tourism. If we need to compete, we need to open soon.



Dhananjay Saliankar Head Sales & Marketing – India, Fortune Hotels & WelcomHeritage

What I see in the future is that companies not making major profits will look at cutting costs and hence they will take a hybrid approach to doing events. Companies are now used to technology, so we might see hybrid events becoming more popular. IT companies have done well, so incentive travel-wise, they will be very eager to travel. Domestic travel will move faster as international travel for MICE will still take another year to pick pace.





Progressive hotel designs

We need to eradicate ad-hoc practices and come up with a more sustained approach in hotel designs and a standardised implementation of the same across the industry.



Ananya Kukreja



The advent of the current and ongoing widely known prognosis has led to profuse and diverse ad hoc practices implemented across hospitality industries. Whilst disasters over the years have incited consequent disruptive contrivance, Sars-CoV-2 with its mutations has yet again begot an opportunity for hotels and parallel establishments to redesign and improve their services in order to better suit and provide for guest expectations, convenience and satisfaction. Hygiene and sanitation must prevail without intruding or making the traveller experience inconvenient; recognising that said precautions will be followed for a long term and a foreseeable future, hoteliers ought to better plan the same durably.

CONVERSION IN CRISES

Diseases, or rather disasters have had a habit of impacting design and architecture throughout ages. Pertaining to emergency propelled transformation of this industry, COVID-19 is perceived to have similar impacts on the design of hotels in the 21st century. Despite having a considerable amount of experience in tackling crises over centuries, the recent pandemic betided as a surprise. Crises generally have the nature of affecting a particular region; in that case, territories around the globe can pool in resources and choose to extend help to the distressed. COVID-19 however, emerged as a disaster that struck all mankind and crippled strongest of economies. With no prior knowledge, and the entire planet struggling, no standard procedures could be executed and the industry, through trial and error, learnt and adapted to the evolving needs. Unlike any other viral diseases which were spread by a vast majority of birds or mammals, this was communicable by humans, which made it ever so difficult to contain.

Geeta Ahuja, Interior Designer and Architect at Caryatid Design Studio sums up this pandemic by stating, "One careful human can save another human being, but one careless human can spread and kill 70".

Hospitality, and all its various segments, as widely acknowledged, survive and thrive on human interaction. After the initial disruption of travel and accommodation sectors, business gradually improved; greater information on the virus was circulated and guidelines were issued by authorities. Hotels in the Indian demographic adhered to the same whilst also complimenting the procedures with higher safety protocols, so as to compete with international standards.

All the while, one thing remained constant, and that was the provision of ad hoc practices; even through practiced safety, sanitation and hygiene, guest experience was yet to be thoroughly fulfilled. This has led to an outlook of improving services beyond guest expectations and incorporating new ideas throughout hotel operations in terms of design.

PROGRESSIVE DESIGNS

The notion of luxury has in the recent past shifted from power and opulence to more inclusive experiences with a focus on generosity, flexibility and support. In a conversation with **Gautam Sen**, Associate Professor – Operations Management at Institute of Hotel Management, Aurangabad (IHCL), it was derived that, significant changes in design and space allocation is the way forward where major markets across the world are utilising ergonomic designs to enhance staff productivity and guest convenience.

The significant rise in awareness about benefits of exercise, health and wellness has now steered the way for biophilic designs which will prove intrinsic in redesigning public spaces. Allocation for natural light penetration and air circulation will not only provide for an acoustic sensory experience, but will also assist in reassuring the guests with flexible facilities whilst working wonders against the incubation virus. This includes inclusion of outdoor spaces like open terraces on lower floors and rooftop lounge bars, or at minimum, provision of windows in all closed spaces like guest rooms and staff quarters for air circulation and sunlight imbued decontamination.

Ahuja, in continuation states that hotels over the last year, started a revolution of outdoor catering and services and realised the importance of open spaces due to aerosol contamination. To add to her assimilation, research suggests that there is an increasing consideration and ensuing implementation of open kitchens, non-invasive decorative screening and private booths in dining areas, lounges, and lobbies, especially in upcoming properties. Guestrooms, at least a select designated, are claimed to change in design and become larger in order to accommodate sleep, work, dining, work out and any other guest requirements, all in-room and in a confined space, till their confidence restores. This may include lock secured cut out in walls to deliver any room services. Corridors are also likely to become wider to facilitate the ease of movement following distancing.

Rishi Puri, Senior Vice President – Operations & Development at Lords Hotels & Resorts mentions that while existing hotels may not be able to fully benefit from these unviable structural changes, upcoming emerging hotels can very well inbuilt such ideas into design planning. He further mentions, assembling of cabins for temperature checks along with sanitation stations located conveniently around the property, which does not require exceptional redesigning. Lobbies and guest areas should be designed to generate more revenue now and allow guests to meet one another in isolation; cluster seating here will be eradicated with compact seating spaces becoming widely acceptable. Additionally, with business travel reduced, hoteliers can create revenue by converting certain public areas, and even guest rooms into spaces for prevailing virtual meetings.



Geeta Ahuja

“**Hotels realised the importance of open spaces**”



Gautam Sen

“**Changes in design is the way forward**”



Rishi Puri

“**Public areas can be used for meetings**”





Dheeraj Kukreja



We have revamped procedures



One of the greatest changes the hotel industry continues to witness is FF&E (Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment) specifications. Interior designers here will have the most influence in terms of sensitive selections of materials and finishes that respond to the threat of contamination without losing the intrinsic human desire for warm, welcoming and tactile surroundings. FF&E specification is always in the front line, and this is especially true now. What the guest sees, touches and feels can make or break a stay and confidence about a brand, and to administer so with variable and moveable instalments will prove lucrative.

Dheeraj Kukreja, Chief Operating Officer at Piccadily Holiday Resorts has made considerable changes to their properties in terms of entry/ exit points of employees and guests and reorganised the FF&E configuration in high footfall and frequent touch point areas like cafeteria,

sufficient to mitigate all potential risks; new hotels should as requirements capture infrastructural as well as technological designs for seamless efficiency.

DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGY

In a continuing conversation with Singh, it was understood that with the repeated waves of the virus, the major focus now is on improving the indoor air quality through augmentation in HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems, improvisation in waste water systems, thermal scanning, instant identification of carriers and sustainable disinfection of the rooms and public areas by exploring new methods replacing/minimising the chemicals usage. Room collateral is predicted to disappear in favour of digital apps. High touch areas such as door handles, elevator buttons, toilet flushes, knobs and light switches will and should be replaced by sensor or gesture operated



Sanjay Singh



Hotels need technological designs



restaurant and lobby. In their PASS (Piccadily Assured Safety & Security) programme initiated last year, they have established easily accessible sanitation stations, standardised masks, PPE kits, sanitisers and disposable gloves as amenities, revamped safe procedures for buffet service otherwise discouraged, optimally spaced public area seating, and advisedly allowed sunlight in circulation. Kukreja believes that such provisions and more should be incorporated as a part of hotel design instead of seemingly ad hoc practices and be standardised throughout the industry.

According to **Sanjay Singh**, Chief of Projects at Sterling Holiday Resorts, existing hotels, till such definitive time will have to augment their systems. SOPs which entail Capex (capital expenditures) infusion and recurring Opex (operating expenses) will not be

technology. Facial recognition, automatic doors and elevators, voice-activated TV & room controls, amongst others are some technologies which have already gained momentum of implementation across the industry. One of the most striking updates here will be the introduction of electrostatic sprayers; the same machines used for fogging airplanes, to sanitise surfaces both inside hotel rooms and in public areas like the lobby and gym. Many hoteliers encourage the use of UV lights as a means of sanitation, while others deliberate the idea. An alternative to treat air is by using UVC (ultraviolet-C) light; this can be consciously placed above or below the ceiling tiles to avoid direct contact with human epidermis. These lights can provide continuous sterilisation across the hotel and particularly in buffet service restaurant, and banquets/conferences. Marriott International is the first hotel company in this regard to include UV light cleaning

and sanitising sprays. While there is a huge focus on reducing manual intervention, robots are actively being used for sanitising incoming vehicles, baggage, supplies, amongst others in front and back of the house areas. According to practicing hoteliers, luggage scanners should be upgraded and doubled as baggage sanitisers. This may be implemented in back house resource scanning devices and storing areas as well.

Additional disruptive technologies that can be implemented in the industry are virtual views or footfall insights of public areas, especially lobbies, restaurants and bars to see the atmosphere and avoid crowds. Robust data gathering through large cloud based technology is already being done in global brands because online bookings do not communicate required data collection feasibly; TFA (two factor authentication) can be used here for increased security. Puri suggests inclusion of

WAY FORWARD

“While its impact has subconsciously reduced, COVID-19 is not gone”, states Puri, and to palliate the same, “greater use of mentioned practices will drive bulk manufacturing, increase competition and subsequently reduce prices of the same”, recommends Kukreja, who further adds that governments must devise guidelines and encourage hotels towards said practices with slight rebate on taxes and subsidy provisions, which would elevate the execution.

Moving forward, hoteliers must consciously design for intentional flexibility that will offer the least amount of disruption to the guest experience and operations in a time of need and make processes seamless. One must be cautious of unsustainable over-correcting practices and allow progressive ideas due gestation time for research before heavily investing in expensive designs



DIY (do it yourself) stations where guests can input their information in standalone counters with the help of PMS infused tablets. This will not only make sure that technology is used at its optimum best, but also ensure complete transparency, guest privacy, protection of staff and guests and boost employees’ multi-tasking skills.

While travel is being authentically facilitated through health/vaccine passports and similar, Kukreja regards software upgradation as a high priority where hotels can retrieve COVID-19 related information through government portals, reducing fudged reports and increasing ease of information delivery for informed decisions. Likewise RFID (radio frequency identification) technology may be used by hotels to track guest movement while in transit and around the property for more quick and personalised experience.

and technologies; in the meantime, training and staff skill development is the way to go. There has evidently been a shift in business travel from pre to post COVID-19 with orientation heavily shifting to leisure; city hotels are providing leisure provisions and amenities to guests to sustain business and adhere to guest comfort. Guests and staff here must have a two way commitment towards each other in terms of safety, with both parties actively taking necessary precautions for the well-being of the other.

At the end of the day, one must think if such provisions are worth the expense, a rumination especially for small-scale properties. Hoteliers must ensure that such inclusions lead to their progression, not regression, and technologies as well as designs implemented are disruptive in its intended meaning.

Appointments



ALLEN MACHADO

Chief Executive Officer
Niraamaya Wellness Retreats

★ Niraamaya Wellness Retreats announces the appointment of Allen Machado as the Presiding Chief Executive Officer, a prominent name amongst hoteliers having worked with premium and uber luxury brands with over two decades of experience in the hospitality industry. Machado specialises in developing profitable business models, luxury hotel operations, strategic revenue management & fund raising. Heading trendsetting luxury hotels in India & the ME and delivering top-quality service has been his forte. Machado will endeavour to take the company through higher growth, transforming it into a global wellness and luxury destination with a worldwide footprint. His vision is turning Niraamaya properties into showcases of wellness and bespoke architecture and expanding the portfolio across key destinations



DIETMAR KIELNHOFER

Area Vice President
Hyatt India

★ Hyatt India and Grand Hyatt Mumbai Hotel and Residences are pleased to welcome Dietmar Kielnhofer as Area Vice President of Hyatt India and General Manager of Grand Hyatt Mumbai Hotel and Residences effective July 21, 2021. With over four decades of experience and a career that has seen him work in major and exuberant cities such as Tokyo, London, Sun City – South Africa, Istanbul, Bangkok, Vienna, Mallorca, Zermatt, Lugano and more, in various roles, Kielnhofer can surely be defined as a globe trotter. Kielnhofer's last assignment was in Mumbai where he was General Manager at the JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar. Apart from his passion for hospitality, Kielnhofer is also an avid learner with a doctorate in Philosophy in Business Management, as well as a Master's Degree in Business Administration in Marketing.



VIKAS KUMAR

General Manager
Four Points by Sheraton Kochi Infopark

★ Four Points by Sheraton Kochi Infopark has appointed Vikas Kumar as General Manager. With an extensive gamut of experience of more than 19 years in the hospitality industry, with a decade spent with Marriott International Hotels, Kumar shall lead the executive team of the hotel. In his new role, he brings his progressive experience of hospitality and dynamic knowledge base to make this hotel a brand icon in Kochi. In his most recent role as General Manager at The Westin Pushkar Resort and Spa, Kumar scaled up the positioning of the resort to its deserved prominence which resulted in a 24% ADR increase. Kumar commenced his professional journey with Ananda in the Himalayas and worked his way up with prestigious hospitality chains globally as part of the pre-opening & well-established hotels.

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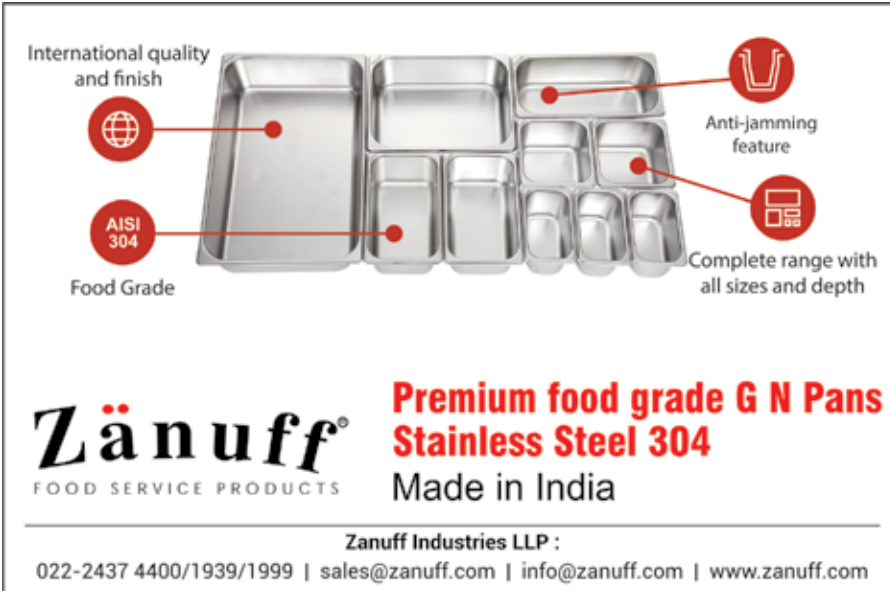
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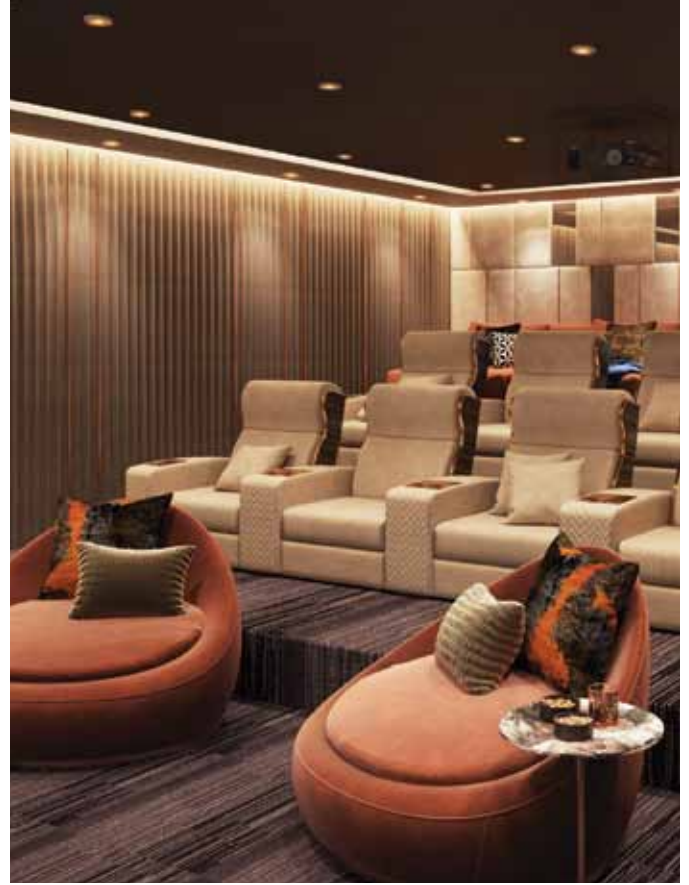
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MADS introduces home theatres

◆ MADS Creations has introduced full-fledged, luxury home theatres that offer many inspirations to home owners to create their own entertainment hub in-house. A lot of thought has gone into creating acoustically sound environments that are also fitted with plush seating, all custom-created for the projects by MADS Creations. The home theatres offer super comfortable seating at different heights for convenient viewing of the screen. The recliners are made of wood with leather upholstery and metal details on the sides. Wall panels made of fabric with metal strips and carpet tiles on the floor take care of sound-proofing.



Dining room furniture

◆ Ottimo has launched in India 'Starlight' dining room furniture by the Italian luxury brand CPRN Homood. The Starlight collection is conceived to showcase the harmony inherent in nature, and it is evident in the way the disparate materials, shapes and forms merge to give the collection a refined edge. The collection comprises a dining table, chairs, sideboard and stools. Perfect proportions lend the imposing dining table a graceful look. The rectangular marble top has a base made of saddle leather and metal. Made of metal top and base, the sideboard boasting simple lines has saddle leather doors.

Faux leather furnishings

◆ RR Decor have launched a new collection of faux leather furnishings. The new collection promises a beautiful range of colours and luxurious surfaces that bring a sense of refinement to any interiors. Rustic tones, bright hues and neutral shades offer an earthy palette of colours ideal for a range of applications. The new furnishings are ideal for upholstery of all kinds of furniture pieces including headboards, console tables, etc., and of course for cushions and wall claddings.





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