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Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President
FHRAI

While the world and the industry have begun to return to normalcy, BMI has emerged as an option for recovering from COVID-19



Dear fellow members,

As we emerge from the most trying times of our business life, I would like to share a few thoughts on recovery, revival, and crisis management. The pandemic has posed significant challenges to governments, society, and businesses worldwide. Our industry has almost completely lost revenue for months, resulting in the abrupt shutdown of a huge number of hospitality firms. Due to the nature of products and services, both hotels and restaurants have suffered greatly, with no possibility to compensate for lost earnings. A meal that was not served during the crisis, or a hotel room that was not sold for the day, cannot be sold again. Moreover, given the new rules and regulations about sanitation, social distancing, and restricted hours that are beyond comprehension, not to mention hesitant and worried guests, the lockdown may have impacted how business in hospitality will be done in the future. On account of the severity of this acute and still-ongoing crisis, the hospitality sector needs effective adequate recovery mechanisms.

While the world and the industry have begun to return to normalcy, initial observations indicate that business model innovation (BMI) is one of the options for recovering from COVID-19. Many hospitality firms have already begun to reinvent their business models to create new revenue streams. The importance of loyal and regular guests or Stammgasts, cannot be undermined. Stammgasts are people who are not just frequent returning guests of a hospitality firm, but are also emotionally and personally tied to the owner and staff. Such stammgasts reflect upon the strengths and weaknesses of a firm and openly communicate potential ideas for innovation.

The industry is no stranger to crisis, which results in a dearth of incoming travel and tourism. Early ideas to cope with crises play a key role in survival, which include increased marketing efforts, dismantling of infrastructure, cost reductions and the call for the governmental support. Innovation evolving out of crisis management sees strengthened marketing for local consumers, and the reduction of infrastructure and costs. Even established businesses are being forced to rethink existing business models to survive.

What does a firm offers and to whom? How is the value proposition created? How is value captured? And most importantly, how does a firm generates profits from this so that it can stay afloat? The BM may be a temporary or permanent phase as a potential solution to recover. If a BM is innovated through substantial changes or re-configuring the elements, new opportunities can be addressed that increase performance.

We cannot say how long it will take for the pandemic to disappear. Developed countries are learning to live with it, and vaccination is driving this change. Most of European countries have adopted travel policies for their residents as well as for receiving foreign tourists. Everyone who has been vaccinated with WHO-approved vaccines is free to travel. As the world doors slowly open, many countries see it as an opportunity to welcome tourists and kickstart their economy. By focussing on the Meetings Incentives Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) segment, countries like Dubai are already holding various events to become the meeting capital of the world. Vaccine recipients and those with COVID negative certificate can attend events in closed spaces with up to 1,500 people wearing masks. The number is 2,500 for open spaces. Travel and tourism must be prioritised in our country, with vaccines for people working in the hospitality, travel, and tourism industries being encouraged. As the world yearns to travel, so must our country. There is no point in waiting for the epidemic to subside. With the gates of Europe almost open, we expect our tourism sector to wake up accordingly. We need to fill the gap of the presently non-existent foreign tourists with domestic tourists. One of the most severely impacted sectors by the pandemic is tourism. Let the post-COVID growth get impetus from there.

While hoping that the worst is beyond us and looking at a brighter future, I wish you all a safe and prosperous future.

With kind regards,
Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI

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FHRAI

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Conflicting hospitality power tariffs

FHRAI apprises the Home Ministry of issues faced by the hospitality industry in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands pertaining to electricity tariffs.



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli

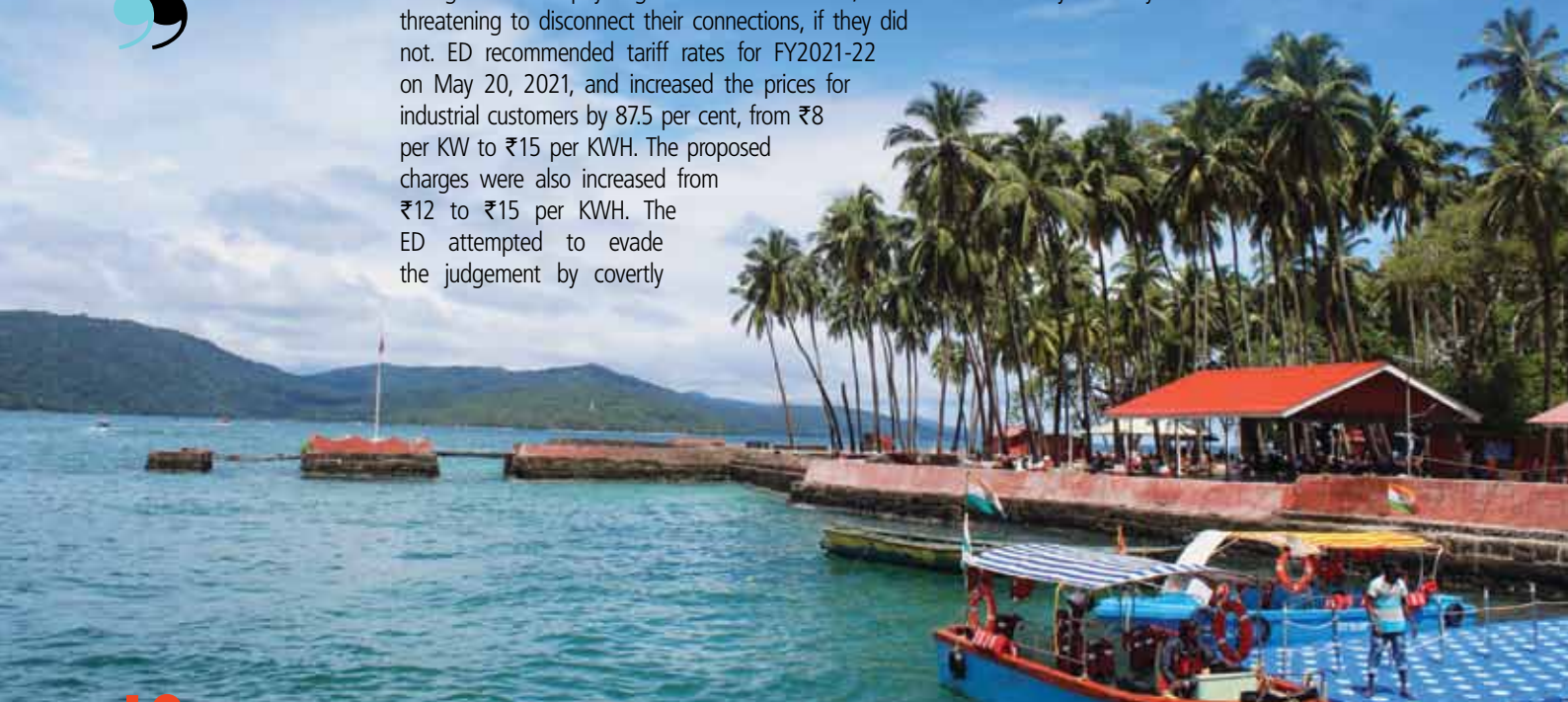
JERC ruled that the sector in the Islands must be charged industrial rates

FHRAI, in a letter to the Ministry of Home Affairs, has shed light on issues faced by the hospitality industry in the A&N Islands pertaining to the electricity tariffs being charged by the Electricity Department (ED) of the Islands. "Until May 2019, the industry was charged at industrial rates. However, the A&N ED began charging commercial rates. A few of the FHRAI members challenged this decision in JERC and through its order dated December 2, 2020, it was ruled that the hospitality sector in the Islands is, in fact, an industry that must be charged industrial rates," says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI. "Instead of enforcing the decision, which would have provided some relief to the already ailing tourism and hospitality sector, the A&N Administration/Electricity Department continued to charge commercial rates to hospitality units in direct contravention of the JERC order," adds Kohli.

The Hoteliers Association of the A&N Islands (HAANI) wrote to the Administration, urging that they rectify their power bills and charge industrial rates in accordance with the JERC's directives. The Administration refused to execute the orders and sent notices to the members asking them to pay higher commercial rates, and threatening to disconnect their connections, if they did not. ED recommended tariff rates for FY2021-22 on May 20, 2021, and increased the prices for industrial customers by 87.5 per cent, from ₹8 per KW to ₹15 per KWH. The proposed charges were also increased from ₹12 to ₹15 per KWH. The ED attempted to evade the judgement by covertly

bringing industrial costs at par with commercial charges through the proposed levies. The JERC, however, did not agree with the ED's prices and raised industrial rates from ₹8 to ₹9 per KWH and commercial rates from ₹12 to ₹12.75 per KWH. The JERC requested that the ED follow its order of December 2, 2020.

But the A&N Administration violated the directives again by issuing electricity bills at higher commercial rates rather than industrial prices. In addition, the administration petitioned the JERC for a review. The JERC issued numerous negative remarks against the ED of the Andaman & Nicobar Administration in an order dated August 23, 2021. In an order dated August 31, 2021, the Hon'ble Calcutta High Court ruled in favour of the members of HAANI, directing ED to issue bills based on industrial rates rather than commercial prices. ED was also ordered by the High Court to rectify prior power bills and provide them based on industrial rates retrospectively from December 2020. FHRAI is now informed that the A&N Administration intends to file a petition with the Appellate Tribunal and is also spreading false information. FHRAI urges for the ministry's intervention and direction to the A&N Administration for charging the hotel industry electricity tariffs.



Resume international flights

If international flights are resumed, it would greatly help the tourism sector's survival efforts, or the industry might lose yet another season of business amid mounting losses.

The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) has written to the Government of India, requesting that the restriction on international flights to India, which is in effect until September 30, 2021, be lifted.

The travel and tourism industry has experienced a nearly two-year drop in revenue, and a timely opening of foreign travel will help the industry capitalise on the next season, which runs from October to March.

The Association in the letter asserts that under the current challenging circumstances resulting from COVID-19, restoring a tourism-friendly environment and normalcy in the tourism sector will take much longer.

It is dependent on a number of external factors, such as the resumption of foreign travel, freedom of movement and no travel

restrictions, vaccination of the majority of the population, and finally the absence of social distancing measures.

It further states that the vaccination campaign is gaining traction across the country, with more than half of India's eligible population – around 523 million people – having received at least one dose of the COVID vaccine, resulting in a decrease in COVID infections reported across the country.

If international flights are resumed, it would greatly help the sector's survival efforts, and a timely decision can allow travellers to prepare for the next season well in advance, or the industry might lose yet another season of business amid mounting losses.



Restoring a tourism-friendly environment in the sector will take much longer



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Election of HRAEI President

HRAEI re-elects **Sudesh Poddar** as the President. Under his leadership, HRAEI has provided maximum aid to the industry during the most trying times of the pandemic.

The HRAEI has re-elected **Sudesh Poddar** as its President in the Managing Committee meeting held after the recently concluded Annual General Meeting of HRAEI in Kolkata on September 10, 2021. He is an eminent hotelier with business interest in the hospitality industry in Assam and West Bengal. Under Poddar's leadership, the Association has provided maximum aid to the industry during the most trying times of the pandemic. He has made sincere efforts to raise concerns with various government bodies and individuals about the issues that are affecting the industry. Chief ministers, tourism ministers

and regional secretaries are among them. He has organised a mass vaccination drive for hospitality workers, launched a privilege health card in collaboration with AMRI Hospitals for HRAEI members and their immediate families, and facilitated hotel-hospital collaboration to meet bed shortages during the COVID second wave.

Poddar has served as President of HRAEI for four years in a row

Poddar is an expert in the hotel sector and is well-versed in the industry. He has 36 years of experience, as well as extensive knowledge and experience in the field. He has previously worked extensively with HRAEI and FHRAI in a variety of positions. He has served as President of HRAEI for four years in a row, beginning in 2014-2015 and ending in 2017-2018. Poddar has also served as the treasurer of FHRAI for two consecutive years, 2014-15 and 2015-16, and as the Honorary Secretary of HRAEI for the 2019-2020 period. He is also a member (Catering Expert) on the Board of Governors of Hotel Management and Catering Technology, Kolkata.

Meeting with Additional DGFT

FHRAI delegation highlights, in a meeting with Reddy, that after 2007 hotel occupancy plummeted by 20-40 per cent and forex earnings continued to decline.

A delegation from FHRAI met with SBS Reddy, Additional DGFT, on September 14, 2021, to discuss the long-pending issue of the hospitality industry's waiver of secondary condition with reference to average foreign exchange earnings under the EPCG Scheme retrospectively from the fiscal year of 2007-08 onwards.

The delegation highlighted that hotels under Service Sector experienced a significant drop in business after 2007. Due to the acute recession, 26/11 terrorist attack, and a continual reduction in forex earnings, occupancy plummeted by 20 per cent to 40 per cent and forex earnings continued to decline. This resulted in a sharp drop in foreign tourist arrivals.

Despite the fact that most hotels were able to meet specified EO despite a y-o-y reduction in business, the annual average over and above EO could not be maintained effectively. The y-o-y reduction in foreign exchange earnings

over this time was more than 5 per cent, as FHRAI had previously stated in its submissions to the DGFT.

Hence, it was requested that the earlier provision of exemption as per FTP 2002-07, Para 5.7.6, which exempted hotels under Service Sector from annual export maintenance, be reinstated with retrospective effect from FY2007-08. Reddy advised the FHRAI to compile data of around 25 hotels from different cities to showcase the income of hotels vis-à-vis forex earnings/decline from 2005 onwards. He also assured that after receiving this data by the FHRAI, he would issue an official notice waiving the secondary condition in accordance with EPCG Scheme rules.

The FHRAI delegations was comprised of Manav Goyal, Director; Adyar Gate Hotels, Chennai; S. Prabhakaran, Director, The Residence Group of Hotels, Chennai; and the Secretary General.



Hotels under Service Sector saw a drop in business

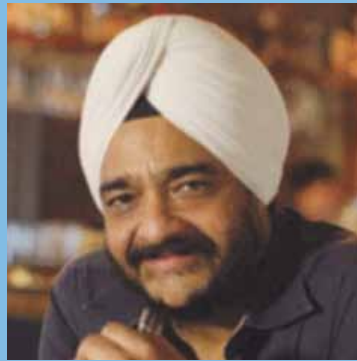
A request for a permanent RD

In order to improve efficiency and reduce the backlog burden of the present RD, FHRAI has proposed the appointment of a permanent and dedicated regional director for South India.

Since the end of 2020, the India Tourism Office for the Southern Region has been without a full-time regional director. In order to improve efficiency and reduce the backlog burden of the present regional director, the FHRAI has suggested the hiring of a dedicated and permanent regional director for South India. The move comes after The Federation of Kerala Hotel Association asked FHRAI to urge the minister for a dedicated and full-time regional director, so that classification inspections of 4-star and above hotels in Kerala be completed at the earliest. Hence, the Association has written to G Kishan Reddy, Hon'ble Minister of Tourism, Government of India.

"The state's policy stipulates star classification of hotels as criteria for obtaining liquor license and it has definitely helped in promoting tourism significantly while supporting affordable tourism. However, many of the hotels depend majorly on the revenue generated from liquor sales as income from rooms and banquet services is nominal. Therefore, obtaining star classification has become imperative for the survival of these hotels," says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI.

"The total waitlist for 4-star classification inspections in Kerala has been soaring.



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI



The hotel industry in the state is undergoing great turmoil

Kerala's hotel sector is in serious danger as a result of this, hence we request the Hon'ble Tourism Minister to urgently set up an efficient mechanism to expedite the classification inspections of 4-star and above hotels in the state," adds Kohli. The waiting period for 3-star hotels has been reduced thanks to the introduction of two specialised teams. For 4-star and above hotels, however, classification inspections are still taking time."While the present regional

director for south is doing a commendable job of trying to expedite the classifications, he is already burdened with holding charge of more than 10 states as well as union territories. It is unrealistic to expect him to complete all of these states' and UTs' classification inspections in a timely and effective manner on his own. The hotel industry in the state is undergoing great turmoil due to the extraordinary surge in infections and frequent lockdowns, and this has led to huge financial losses to hotels. Urgent measures need to be taken to ensure that all pending classification inspections in Kerala are cleared on priority. It would greatly help if the minister considers creating more simultaneous committees, which will help expedite the process. Therefore, we humbly request that a permanent regional director be appointed at the India Tourism Office for the Southern region to ensure that the classification inspections are conducted without inordinate delay," concludes Kohli.

Kerala, being a major tourist destination, clearly needs a special regional director dedicated solely to the southern region. This is a time for rebirth, and the Association believes that their appeal will assist the sector and the region in re-establishing tourism as a viable industry, for which FHRAI has made a formal request to the government.



A plea for concessions

HRANI has urged the govt for waiver of various statutory charges, including property tax and minimum water charges, electricity bills along with full relief in excise fees.

HRANI

The HRANI has submitted a representation to the chief ministers and chief secretaries of all the 10 states and UTs of the northern region for granting concessions to the hospitality industry in the wake of the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic. The Association has requested for waiver of various statutory charges, including property tax, and minimum water charges, electricity bills along with full relief in excise fees. HRANI has also supplicated for one time automatic renewal of all statutory licences due from municipal corporations, police and fire department. The government's stringent order of nationwide lockdown has led to permanent closure



Surendra Kumar Jaiswal
President, HRANI



We are hopeful the govt will take measures to help

of several hotel and restaurant facilities in different parts of the northern region. The Association has also cited an example of Gujarat, where the state government has waived off property tax as well as fixed charge in electricity bills of hotels, resorts, restaurants and water parks for one year, from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022.

"We have been constantly pursuing the central and the state government to provide relief as the industry is in a dire need of survival after the second wave. We are hopeful that the government will take pragmatic measures to help our sector", **Surendra Kumar Jaiswal**, President, HRANI and Vice President, FHRAI, has said.

Chalking out tourism revival

The Tamil Nadu government has earmarked ₹187.59 crore for tourism revival on SIHRA's demand in the pre-Budget and Tourism Revival Committee meetings.

SIHRA

Balakrishna Reddy, Vice President, SIHRA, has met with Kishan Reddy, Hon'ble Minister for Tourism and Culture, GoI, in Tirupati, and handed over a memorandum with suggestions to revive tourism in the country.

SIHRA, along with SKAL Club Coimbatore and several other associations, organised a mega vaccination camp for hoteliers, restaurants and tourism workers, and vaccinated 2,750 industry colleagues in two days.

SIHRA believes that 100 per cent vaccination is the only way to resume business and, hence, it has organised over 13,000 vaccination camps in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, so far. The Tamil



K. Syama Raju
President, SIHRA



Bars attached to hotels are now open in the state

Nadu government has reopened bars affiliated to hotels, which can operate till 10 pm, as a result of SIHRA's constant follow-up.

On SIHRA's demand, the state government has earmarked ₹187.59 crore for tourism in the pre-Budget and Tourism Revival Committee meetings. SIHRA participated in the meeting organised by CII at Coimbatore with the Hon'ble Minister for Public Works Department, Government of Tamil Nadu and shared tourism related development in the region.

The Association also participated in the SKAL National Committee meet to discuss the revival of tourism with the Hon'ble Minister of Tourism, Government of Tamil Nadu.

Exempting electricity fixed charge

HRAWI welcomes the Gujarat government's decision of exempting the hospitality industry from paying fixed charge on electricity bills.

Taking into account the massive losses suffered by the hospitality industry and the closure of several hotels and restaurants across the state, the Core Committee, chaired by the Hon'ble Chief Minister, decided to exempt hotels, resorts, restaurants, water parks, cinema houses-multiplexes and gymnasiums from paying the fixed charge on electricity bills. The exemption will be in effect from April 1, 2021, until March 31, 2022. The HRAWI has expressed gratitude to the Gujarat government for offering leeway to the industry. The relief will offer hospitality establishments to lower their operating costs. The government has also decided that if any consumer



Sherry Bhatia
President, HRAWI



The relief will lower the operating costs



has already paid bills for the period after April 1, 2021, the amount of fixed charge paid by them would be adjusted in the subsequent electricity bill. The financial burden on account of exemption granted to the consumers will be paid by the state government to the electricity distribution companies.

HRAWI



Noida
International Airport

RFQ(Request for Qualification) for “Selection of Licensee to Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer the City Side Hotel” at NIA

Yamuna International Airport Private Limited (“YIAPL”) has been granted the right to develop, operate and maintain the Noida International Airport (“NIA”) on DBFOT basis.

YIAPL intends to select a Licensee to award the right to “**Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer the City Side Hotel**” at NIA (the “Project”) pursuant to and in accordance with open bidding process.

YIAPL wishes to receive Applications in response to this RFQ to short-list experienced and capable Bidders for the RFP Stage. In line with the same, YIAPL has Published RFQ(Request for Qualification)for above captioned project on NIA e-tendering Platform.

Interested parties can download the RFQ upon successfully registering at YIAPL's e-portal, accessible at:
<https://niaairport.abcprocure.com>

For further clarification, interested parties can communicate at tenders@niaairport.in.



A major concern of Job revival

G. Kamala Vardhan Rao, the newly appointed Director General, Tourism, observes that the fundamental concern is to ensure all tourism stakeholders are employed.

 Nisha Verma



G. Kamala Vardhan Rao

Claiming that after the COVID-19 pandemic the tourism sector has suffered a lot across the world, **G. Kamala Vardhan Rao**, Director General, Tourism, said that they are looking signs of revival wherever they can. "For the last two months, vaccination drive is happening at a rapid pace. When compared to other countries, India is performing quite well. Because of this, we are seeing a revival of domestic tourism in the last 3-4 months. Hence, we are concentrating on promoting and incentivising travel. It is needed to boost the hotel sector, tour operators, guides, taxi drivers, and all the stakeholders, who have lost jobs," he says.

The fundamental concern, according to Rao, is to ensure that once the tourist engine is turned on, all tourism stakeholders are employed. We want to reclaim this employment, restore the hotel sector's trust, and restore the faith of hoteliers and other stakeholders. This confidence-building exercise is crucial.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Rao shares that they are regularly interacting with the stakeholders at various levels.

"Whether it is the aviation sector, tour operators, tourist guides or state governments, we are conducting outreach programmes. Recently, we have conducted major programmes in Ladakh, and there were several stakeholders who attended it," he says.

INITIATIVES

Apart from outreach programmes, another focus of



The intention is to increase number of homestays & build capacity for locals



5-star hotels everywhere in such environment, as it is an extremely delicate ecosystem. Hence, one of the key takeaways from the event is capacity building in the form of homestays, in order to avoid disturbing the environment."

He further adds that since the development is already taking place in the area, local residents will have to be employed for receiving the benefits, which is critical for our programmes. All projects and programmes are aimed at employment generation for the locals. Capacity building of the homestays is crucial in this situation. Many homestays are being built in Kargil, Nubra Valley, and other areas, according to the LG.

International tourists are showing interest in staying at these places. They have discovered around 30-35 helipads and would expand this number, as well as the essential infrastructure for adventure tourism and medical aids.

To expand tourism, we want to conduct holistic development with good synergy amongst all relevant departments. We do not, however, wish to bring mass tourists into such a sensitive location. Controlled, rational, ecologically balanced and responsible tourism is required, according to Rao.

MOT is to implement their major flagship programmes of PRASAD and Swadesh Darshan.

"The idea is to oversee these projects and go for domestic publicities and develop infrastructure, wherever it is required in tourism and conduct more research. We would like to concentrate more on research this year, in terms of how the pandemic has really impacted the tourism industry as well as the hospitality industry," Rao observes.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Stressing that capacity building is essential for them, Rao shares that right from Northeastern areas to Ladakh, the homestays industry is witnessing tremendous growth.

"As a result, MOT would like to focus more on capacity and skill development, starting with languages to hospitality – F&B and guides. We want to maintain their international reputation. We will review these initiatives every month with the stakeholders. Under Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, celebrating 75 years of Independence, we are taking up major activities."

LADAKH TAKEAWAYS

MOT recently organised an event in Ladakh, which according to Rao was a very good experience.

He says, "We interacted with the local stakeholders in the presence of the secretary and LG of Ladakh. With 17 flights every day, it is seeing a significant increase in tourists. Adventure, trekking and skiing are available apart from Buddhist activities. One cannot expect

ON BORDERS OPENING

Rao is hopeful that both outward and inbound tourism will occur once the borders open, in line with the current revenge tourism.

"However, it also depends on how the pandemic has affected other countries, and if movement between India and any of those countries is possible. We expect increased inbound travel in the near future, as a result of vaccination programmes and lower number of cases than other countries," he asserted.

Keeping the spirit of tourism alive is the motto of the Ministry of Tourism and the tourism sector's survival and revival are important.

ITDC

AS CMD of ITDC, he is dedicated towards expanding the business and go beyond just hospitality.

"We are looking at expanding our business. Now that we are going slowly beyond the hotel industry, we would like to focus more on other services, such as Ashok Tours & Travels, consultation, engineering, event management, and medical value tourism," he insists.

"We would like to include non-medical services in the medical-value tourism category. We are focussed on developing different services other than hotel services," concludes Rao.

FHRAI-IHM affiliates with NCHMCT

FHRAI-IHM becomes the first private institute managed by India's apex hospitality association to be affiliated with NCHMCT, Noida.

The FHRAI-IHM is now affiliated with the National Council of Hotel Management & Catering Technology (NCHMCT), Noida. "This development reinforces our commitment to offer students the best in HM education. FHRAI-IHM

is fully-equipped to provide students with aptitude formation and personality development, and brings the right value-add for building careers in hospitality," says **Arun Kumar Singh**, Director, FHRAI-IHM. The industry stalwarts welcome the move by FHRAI-IHM.



K. A. Madhava
Advisor
SRM-IHM
Kaatungalathur
Chennai

FHRAI has taken a major initiative in associating FHRAI-IHM with NCHMCT to introduce a Bachelor's in Hospitality Management from 2021-22 session. The institute has a key role to play in hospitality education in the new normal. FHRAI should be an enabling agent for change in deliverance of contactless services with personalised application and in the curriculum structure. FHRAI-IHM would add to its core strength of trained faculty by inducting serving managers and executives on deputation. The industry should come forward to invest in the growth of the institute by way of providing internship and scholarships.



Rishi Puri
Sr. VP – Operations
& Development
Lords Hotels &
Resorts

It is a pleasant news and as part of the fraternity, we welcome this move as it will iron out issues between actual operations and classroom teachings. FHRAI-IHM could offer more inputs on the ever-changing hospitality industry, especially in the post-COVID era. This seamless integration would also mean more jobs for budding hoteliers while ensuring that industry-trained associates are available. With this 'golden hand shake' FHRAI-IHM would be able to tweak the study material in association with NCHM-Noida, which would be more in line with today's demands, rather than limiting it only to classroom studies.



Rishabh Tandon
Area Director –
Human Resources,
Intercontinental
Hotels Group

The latest collaboration of FHRAI-IHM with NCHMCT will create a great platform for producing quality hospitality professionals in the increasing demand market of Delhi-NCR. With focus on quality industry exposure in operations and support departments, the FHRAI Institute can create a niche for themselves amongst the top hotel chains operating in India and abroad. The expectations of the industry is to provide a consistent platform for degree students through quality internship and opportunities for full-term employment. The fourth quarter with weddings, festivals and social events in the business pipeline.



Ranjit Chaudhury
Former Principal,
Institute of Hotel
Management
Kolkata

I am happy to hear the news of affiliation of FHRAI-IHM courses by NCHMCT, Noida to conduct one degree course in hospitality and hotel management, and three diploma courses from the academic session 2021-22. I am sure, with able leadership of its Director and full support from the world's second largest hotels and restaurants federation, it will become a world-class 'Centre of Excellence' in short time. I expect that the institute will develop world-class pedagogy for teaching and learning, so that the students are industry-ready. I expect that the institute would give due emphasis to entrepreneur skills.



Hitesh Verma
Chief Operating
Officer, Morpho
Hotels and Resorts
India Pvt. Ltd.

We are excited for the tie-up between FHRAI-IHM and NCHMCT, Noida. The collaboration brings together the best of intellect, infrastructure, faculty, leadership and environment for budding hotel aspirants. It will enhance the technology knowhow, expertise of great academicians along with training and exposure to the industry for the students. The recent changes in hospitality should be incorporated in the curriculum. The business and financial acumen should be the focus areas with their respective domains. The experienced leadership at the institute will be able to draw a sustained flow of industry stalwarts to share their insights.



**Chef Parvinder
Singh Bali**
Corporate
Chef – L&D
OCLD

I am pleased to know about the association. This move will help to crossbreed talent and create more learning opportunities for the students. During this pandemic we have realised that we must introduce methodologies on experiential learning. We are seeing a major shift in the career aspiration of a budding hospitality graduate. Since hotels are the end users of the students, it will be a desire to have an industry-ready student, who can be a part of the operational team, but at the same time have an agility of a leader. We would like the students to be business managers, who truly believe in team work, commitment and humility.



**Souvagya
Mahapatra**
MD
Atmosphere Hotels

The Indian travel and tourism market, one of the fastest growing sectors, is on the verge of a major breakthrough. A professional degree in this field can lead one into countless possibilities. Conventionally, career in hospitality has been a less sought-after choice, but thanks to the efforts of institutes like FHRAI, the scenario is changing. Availability of skilled manpower is necessary and no amount of appreciation would be enough for the role of NCHMCT. The industry will benefit from this association and we hope that FHRAI-IHM will make efforts and leverage this affiliation to scale our sector to new heights of success and growth.



Sameer Sud
General Manager
The Leela Mumbai

My congratulations to A. K. Singh and the faculty of FHRAI-IHM for their recent affiliation with NCHM. With the vast experience A. K. Singh has, I am sure IHM will do exceedingly well and produce the finest professionals in the hospitality industry. Few of my expectations from FHRAI-IHM are: the gap between theory and practical hospitality needs to be bridged; there is more emphasis on case studies for students to make their understanding of business needs better; focus on revenue management; more guest lectures from hospitality professionals for the students; and distinguish skill development and management aspects for the students.



Dheeraj Kukreja
Chief Operating
Officer
Piccadily Holiday
Resorts Ltd.

Heartiest congratulations to FHRAI-IHM affiliation with NCHMCT! FHRAI works closely with the industry and knows the needs and challenges. Hopefully, they will create industry-ready candidates. The focus should be more on practical aspects of business with emphasis on exposure to hotels and resorts. The courses can have a separate section on the deliverables. Since many students also work in industries and not core hotels, it would be beneficial to discuss what it takes to succeed in alternate careers. The divide between what is being taught and industry expectations of candidates should be bridged to be able to deliver premium services.



Amit Sharma
General Manager
Hotel Fern
Pune

I congratulate FHRAI-IHM on affiliation with NCHMCT. My expectation is that FHRAI-IHM will provide a strong foundation for the youths, who aspire to take hospitality as a profession. I am sure that it will include emerging trends in the curriculum and focus on the areas like revenue management, marketing, entrepreneurship, social media management along with stakeholder relationship management. The focus should be on imparting quality hospitality education in line with the latest trends, so that the graduates passing out from FHRAI-IHM can also opt for other career paths apart from hotels and restaurants.

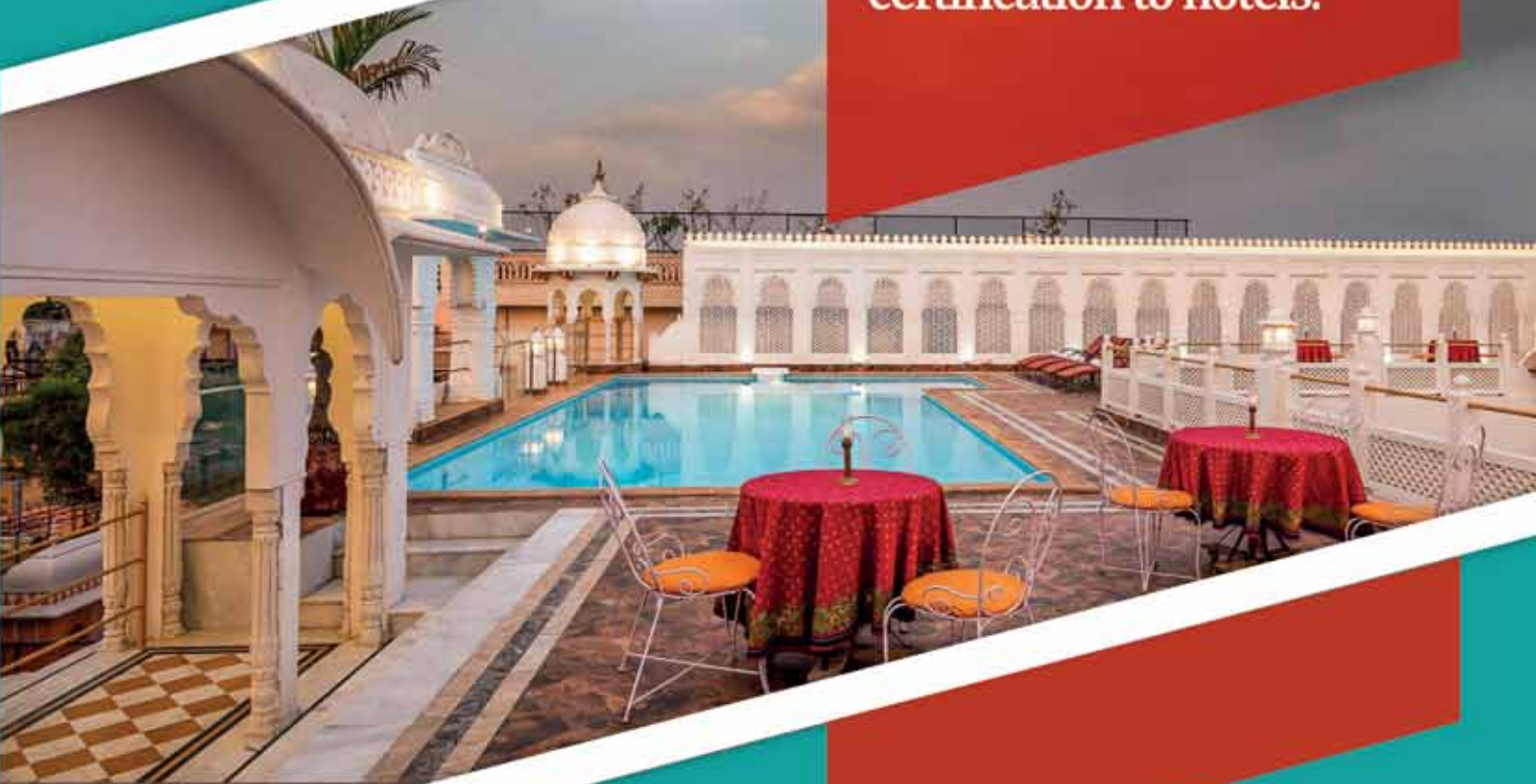
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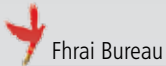
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A welcome move

Regional Presidents welcome the inclusion of tourism in the concurrent list and urge the govt to bring reforms to encourage the tourism and hotel sector.



Sherry Bhatia
President, HRAWI

A LONG PENDING DEMAND

The inclusion of tourism in the concurrent list was an overdue demand of the sector, for which FHRAI has been urging the government for the last two decades. We have also been campaigning for the sector to be recognised as an industry. Over the last year and a half, the hospitality sector has been incurring massive losses. Anticipating a challenging future ahead, it has now become all the more essential for the sector to be included in the Concurrent List of the Constitution. This move can ensure that effective policies are formulated to regulate the sector and help simplify issues involved with ministries and organisations.

The hospitality sector needs to be given industry status

OPPORTUNITIES

We thank the Hon'ble Tourism Minister, G Kishan Reddy for accepting the inclusion. The government has opened great prospects for employment, and forex and revenue. The exchequer stands to earn three times the current earnings by increasing the base with a pragmatic taxation policy. The inclusion means effective legislation for placing tourism on the national agenda. It will clearly define responsibilities for state tourism departments and the central Tourism Ministry. Bringing tourism under the concurrent list will eliminate uncertainties pertaining to demarcation of responsibilities between the centre and states.

EXPECTATIONS FROM THE GOVT

The hospitality sector needs to be given industry status. Hotels and restaurants, by way of food production, are involved in production. Investing in a hotel and/or restaurant, and employing housekeeping qualifies for it to be a process industry. But, the sector is treated as a commercial customer and, hence, is deprived of the privileges extended to industries. Hotels and restaurants should be able to apply for land allotment earmarked for industries and avail industrial tariffs on utilities like electricity, water and drainage. The sector needs stimulus from the government during COVID times. The decision is welcome.





Sudesh Poddar
President, HRAEI

PROVIDING LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

The inclusion is expected to help the sector battered by the pandemic. We are looking forward to a swift implementation. It will provide a level playing field to all hotels. Since tourism activities and products vary from state to state, placing tourism in the concurrent list will facilitate seamless coordination. Both the centre and states will be able to formulate beneficial policies.

lead to the rationalisation of multiple levies and improved coordination between the central and state governments, vis à vis tourism promotion policies. Security clearances, which are required for visiting some states, would be easier to get. Hence, once implemented, the inclusion will play a key role in post-COVID recovery.

OTHER REFORMS

We earlier requested the Finance Ministry to give infrastructure status to hotels with above ₹25 crore investment, excluding land. Only hotel projects with an investment of more than ₹200 crore qualify for infrastructure status, limiting the benefits to

The measure will provide a level playing field to all the hotels



This may also expedite the implementation of schemes.

Currently, the travel and tourism sector is largely treated as a state subject. However, industry bodies, including CII, suggest that the sector needs to be included in the list, so that effective policies can be formulated for regulation. It will

luxury hospitality companies.

The committee also recommended that levy of taxes on hotels should be rationalised, and that industrial rates for power and water be levied instead of commercial rates, as well as property tax. This measure will undoubtedly help the ailing industry.



Surendra Kumar Jaiswal
President, HRANI

urgent policy steps to grant hotels industry status, so that the benefits of cheaper power, water, and property tax rates may be extended to hotels, and hotel taxes can be rationalised and made globally competitive.

Tourism services provided to international visitors in India on receipt of foreign currency should be treated as Deemed Exports, with GST exemption possible.



A POSITIVE STEP

There are variations in tourist activities and products between states. Placing tourism in the concurrent list will facilitate seamless coordination.

This step will help both the central government and the states to develop effective policies that will aid the industry, which has suffered a major setback as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It will result in the simplification of numerous taxes imposed on the hotel and tourism sector. It will help in the simplification of issues involving various ministries and organisations at the central level, as well as states and UTs, leading in faster scheme implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The government should take

Govt should take urgent policy steps to grant hotels the industry status

Granting financial and monetary relief to the tourism and hospitality sector would provide the required growth stimulus.

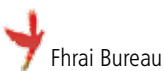
It is necessary to delink hotels from commercial real estate and infrastructure status for hotel projects with a threshold of more than ₹25 crore (excluding land costs) in order for such projects to be eligible for long-term financing at low interest rates. Rationalisation of GST and the provision of input credit on all services provided by the hotel and restaurant sector is the need of the hour.

Innovation



in a crisis is key

FHRAI EC members talk about the innovative measures which should be taken by the businesses to unburden the financial stress.



Vineet Taing

Vineet Taing President, Vatika Group

REBUILDING THE BUSINESS

The hospitality industry needs to rethink the way business is being done and devise innovative ways to be back on their feet. The industry needs to be more innovative, not just in terms of technology and sanitation, but also the modes of revenue generation and marketing themselves more effectively. Even though travel has resumed at a slow pace, there is still a long way to go for recovery.

Nevertheless, there are few additional measures that can be taken: restaurants can offer unutilised areas to office space providers or day packages to startups or

small organisations for more revenue generation; home delivery of food should be pursued aggressively for more lucrative offerings. JW Marriott has already begun its own food delivery service, 'Marriott on Wheels'. Other players have partnered with food aggregators, like Zomato and Swiggy, to remain in touch with their customers; offering packaged room prices for early bookings with advance payment could produce revenue.

In the case of buffet packages, the same method might be used; HNIs can be offered training sessions for their personal butlers, exclusive staff and cooks; hotel rooms can be rented out for ad, web series and film shoots; and HRANI has been developing a vendor programme to reduce operating costs while also enabling the sector with ways to boost profitability.



The industry needs to rethink the way business is being done

Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar Executive Director, HRH Group of Hotels

SUSTAINING THE BUSINESS

The harsh reality of the pandemic has driven home the message that we must stay inside the confines of government regulations for surviving.

There can be no compromises when it comes to health and safety. In normal times, innovation and out-of-the-box ideas are intriguing.

We were able to pull concepts out of thin air and create memorable cultural experiences for our visitors. That is no longer the case! We must concentrate on maintaining the ship's stability.

OTHER SOURCES OF REVENUE

Certainly F&B is a great option for large and small hotel chains. In metropolitan cities, we have seen how large hotel groups are venturing out with their F&B offerings.

In heritage towns like Udaipur, such activities are usually not lucrative. At the HRH Group of Hotels, we have explored several ideas, but often these remain only ideas!

REPURPOSING MULTIPLE SPACES

For both international and Indian visitors, our palace-hotels and heritage-venues have been the preferred

choice. Attempting to convert the use of hotel rooms for other purposes is not recommended at such times. Long stays are the most reliable alternative. It varies from big cities to heritage cities.

CAPITALISING ON DOMESTIC TOURISM

Over the last decade, domestic tourism has been on the rise. We are on the rise in 2021, and are excited to welcome our visitors to 'Experience the Original in the Abode of Kings.'

FOCUSSING ON LOCAL GEMS

Today's travellers want authentic cultural experiences that are not limited to the cost of a hotel room. Over the last four decades, we have created our HRH brand through authentic culinary festivals, dance and music, drama and theatre, sports and adventure, and spiritual experiences, among other things.



Lakshyaraj Singh
Mewar



We have to concentrate on keeping the ship steady





A complete solution

The hotel reflects the vision of modern India, says **Jaideep Anand**, VP & GM, The Leela Gandhinagar Gujarat.



Lipla Negi



Built on the airspace of a conventional railway station, 22 meters above ground, The Leela Gandhinagar is touted as an engineering marvel. And why not! Offering a blend of architectural antiquity and famed opulence of Indian hospitality, it is India's first-of-its-kind 5-star hotel with 318 rooms built atop railway tracks.

"The architecture combines modernity with tradition. The lavish interiors are inspired by Gujarat's rich archaeological and architectural antiquity and the art decor by the state's rich flora and fauna. Each of the 318 rooms offer unrivalled opulence, state-of-the-art facilities and luxurious amenities to guests," says **Jaideep Anand**, Vice President and General Manager, The Leela Gandhinagar.

The hotel complements the country's largest Convention Centre, Mahatma Mandir Convention and Exhibition Centre (MMCEC) Managed by The Leela, seamlessly blending state-of-the-art facilities with the graciousness of Indian hospitality to offer a complete convention solution.

A highly talked about and anticipated project, The Leela Palaces Hotels Resorts partnered with the Government of Gujarat, Ministry of Railways and IRSDC to redevelop Gandhinagar capital railway station along with the luxury hotel atop the tracks, the country's first such project.

"The inspiration behind The Leela Gandhinagar is the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of transforming the urban landscape with state-of-the-art infrastructure. The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts is honoured to play its role in realising this vision," adds Anand.

Located near the Dandi Kutir museum, the hotel provides spectacular views of the Central Vista. From elegant ballrooms to stately meeting rooms, guests can choose from the hotel's indoor and outdoor event spaces spanning across 30,000 sq. ft.

The world-class facilities at the hotel are perceived and conceptualised keeping the sophisticated global traveller in mind.

It seamlessly blends cutting-edge facilities with the graciousness of Indian hospitality and is ideal for all categories of guests. Be it families, leisure travellers, or solo business travellers, the hotel ticks all the boxes. It offers a relaxing and idyllic stay making it ideal for family staycations as well.

"It is located in one of the greenest cities in the country and away from the urban hustle and bustle, making it the perfect choice for leisure travellers. With its world-class meeting and conference options, The Leela Gandhinagar also meets the requirements of business travellers," explains Anand.

Talking about the inspiration behind the look and feel of the hotel, Anand credits the rich and vibrant culture of Gujarat curating the mood board for the hotel's design and interior.

"The flooring is inspired by the Adalaj Stepwell and features elements like the famous Tree of Life at Sidi Saiyyed Mosque, traditional glass beadwork, textile craftsmanship of Bandhej, Ajrakh and Batik, among various other art inspirations embellishing the complex," says Anand.

In addition to bevy of suites consisting of Royal and 4 Presidential Suites, the hotel also features a holistic



The lavish interiors are inspired by Gujarat's rich archaeological antiquity



world-class spa, a state-of-the-art gymnasium, and an outdoor pool.

Together with Mahatma Mandir Convention and Exhibition Centre, it is expected to boost economic activity in the region. The Mahatma Mandir Convention and Exhibition Centre is built over an area of 34 acres and offers both choice and flexibility with leading-edge facilities to host conventions for up to 15,000 delegates.

Four seminar rooms, three exhibition centres, seven conference halls and a meeting room, are all equipped with every modern amenity imaginable.

"The Leela Gandhinagar and Mahatma Mandir Convention and Exhibition Centre Managed by The Leela, will generate demand for the destination and position it as one of the most sought-after convention destinations in the world," says Anand.

He also feels that the hotel will add to the global allure of Gandhinagar as it attracts thousands of business travellers every year. A luxury hotel like The Leela Gandhinagar that can cater to their needs was very much needed.



Jaideep Anand

Safe festivities

Despite crippling challenges due to the pandemic, the hospitality sector is looking forward to making a significant recovery this festive season.



Rajiv Kapoor

Rajiv Kapoor
General Manager, Fairmont Jaipur

FESTIVE SEASON BRINGS HOPE

With vaccination efforts and people's desire to travel again, we are optimistic that things will return to normal. Fairmont Jaipur is a popular weekend getaway among our guests from Delhi-NCR. Every year at this time, we see a steady demand from the markets of Gujarat. People enjoy treating themselves to a staycation over the holiday season, and this year they want to make up for missed travel chances from the previous year. As a result, we anticipate a favourable response.

REGAINING THE CLIENT'S TRUST

The only way to regain a traveller's trust is to be cautious about their safety and reassure them of a clean and sanitary stay. Earlier, guests would venture out in the city, but now they want a well-curated itinerary that

keeps them engaged inside the hotel or includes trips to remote spots.

As a result, we have curated exciting on-site experiences to reduce the need to step out. Our guests can create their own leisure plans. We also have an exclusive Butler programme to meet the needs of our visitors..

KEY CHALLENGES

Ensuring the safety of our guests and heartists is one of our core responsibilities. We have taken various measures to offer a comfortable and safe stay. Our colleagues are undergoing timely trainings to ensure that guests make the most of their celebratory experience at Fairmont Jaipur. We have introduced a variety of on-site experiences to encourage people to travel again.



Ensuring the safety of our guests and heartists is one of our core responsibilities





Sudeep Sharma
General Manager, Hyderabad Marriot Hotel & Convention Centre
& Courtyard by Marriott Hyderabad

PREPARING FOR THE THIRD WAVE

There is a need to be cautious as the third wave approaches. With the loosening of travel restrictions and vaccination efforts, we are seeing customer optimism for short journeys. We are maintaining cleaning and hygiene practises to ensure the safety of our associates and guests, and meet the demands of the festive season. To offer a safe and seamless visitor experience, our personnel is well-trained and better equipped with safety measures/cleanliness protocols.

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES

Due to unavoidable travel restrictions, business hotels, such as ours, are seeing a slower recovery due to high dependency on international travel. Domestic travellers also remain conservative with customers opting to visit closer destinations.

Regaining our guests' confidence during this time is definitely a primary focus. We have been working at curating a variety of safe and engaging staycation experiences allowing guests to relax and rejuvenate, while we provide contactless stay and dining services.

PRECAUTIONS AT THE FOREFRONT

Our team continues to adhere to strict hygiene and cleanliness procedures. While almost all of the front-of-the-house associates are fully vaccinated, our team also regularly undergoes temperature checks, and are provided with sanitised uniforms and protective gears. Continued efforts to ensure the highest hygiene and safety levels are being followed, including

disinfection and sanitisation of all high-traffic touch points, contactless check-in, contactless dining with digitalised menus, and redefined seating at our dining and event venues to ensure physical distancing.

CURATED EXPERIENCE FOR CUSTOMERS

With an increase in the number of vaccinated travellers and easing restrictions, the overall travel sentiment seems positive. Our present focus has been on offering customised stay experiences with attractive inclusions for those looking for a safe and luxurious getaway within the city. To keep up with the festive demand, we have also curated a variety of dynamic food and beverage offerings, featuring both restaurant dine-in and online delivery through our Marriott Bonvoy on Wheels programme.

SPECIAL OFFERS

We provide a variety of weekend packages for residents of nearby cities and those who live in the city. For our dining venues we continue to offer a plethora of options from theme brunches and new menu offerings. We have also resumed our take-away and home delivery offerings for safe-at-home dining with value meal choices – brunch boxes, festive meal menus and healthy meals.



Sudeep Sharma



Business hotels, such as ours, are seeing slow recovery



Ajit Jose

Ajit Jose
General Manager, ibis Kolkata Rajarhat

CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC

The pandemic had taken the industry by surprise, but our adaptability and resilience taught us to adjust quickly to the changing environment. Our prime focus has always been the safety of our guests and staff.

I am glad to inform that the ibis Kolkata Rajarhat, under the leadership of Accor, was swift to adapt and was awarded the ALLSAFE label in 2020 and 2021. Bureau Veritas, which represents Accor's increased hygiene and sanitation processes, designed and vetted ALLSAFE.

Expectations are high for the upcoming festive season. On the back of a nationwide vaccination drive, there is a hope that the festive spirit will not be dampened. We are gearing up for the holiday season with all safety protocols in place to comply with the government's restrictions and the ALLSAFE safety rules.

After a two-year hiatus, travellers are stepping out and opting for staycations or dining. Staycations from the Kolkata market are already rising, with families and young travellers staying with us.



REINSTATING TRUST IN TRAVEL

All the 19 ibis hotels across 13 cities in India have received the ALLSAFE label. Our primary goal is to provide guests with positive experiences in a safe atmosphere.

We have implemented contactless experiences across all touch-points at our hotels, including check-in and check-out, payment procedures, and F&B offering at the restaurant and in-room dining.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

To maintain a safe and secure environment within the hotel premises, we ensure the following measures:

- Certified ALLSAFE by Accor for safety and hygiene standards
- Collaborated with AXA for any immediate medical assistance to guests
- Installed sanitisation stations at every guest touch-point of the hotel
- Providing ALLSAFE sanitisation kits to all guests
- Adhering social distancing policy by organising small gatherings in large/open spaces
- Encouraging hybrid model events in case of larger crowd

SHIFT IN CONSUMER SENTIMENT

Customers have prioritised their health and safety. It is crucial to communicate what measures are being taken, but consistency and execution are even more important.

Guests had qualms about travelling again, but they are now well informed of the government's protocols. People have adjusted to the new normal, and hotels may now anticipate a busy holiday season.

SAFETY AND BUSINESS GROWTH

We intend to produce tailor-made celebratory packages that will entice our customers while also taking into account the current situation. Along with the culinary festival promotions, we are advertising: a promotional offer for Accor loyalty members (ALL), 2x reward points on stays, and staycation packages designed for the festive season in October.



All 19 ibis hotels across 13 cities received ALLSAFE label





Satish Kumar P. **General Manager, The Leela Goa**

SURGE IN DOMESTIC TOURISM

Given the ongoing restrictions on international travel, the current business is thriving due to surge in local tourism. While the third wave is expected, we are still receiving a large number of reservations for the upcoming festive season. The Leela Goa is India's most popular beach resort. We have curated unique packages at The Leela Goa to ensure they have a memorable festive celebration while staying with us, all while assuring of safety with 'Suraksha by The Leela', our comprehensive safety program.

HOLISTIC APPROACH TO SAFETY

At The Leela, we put our guests first in everything we do, and are committed to providing an unmatched level of personalised service. In order to do this, we strive to provide not only the most memorable but also the safest stays. As a result, as part of our complete safety programme, 'Suraksha by The Leela,' we have implemented enhanced safety standards. All of our employees are vaccinated, and Bureau Veritas has recognised our hotel as 'Platinum'.

ENSURING SAFE GUEST SERVICE

The safety and well-being of our guests and associates is our priority. As shared earlier, we have implemented stringent hygiene and safety measures with 'Suraksha by The Leela'. Wearing masks and gloves all the time, regular sanitising of hands, maintaining social distance, intensive cleaning of guest contact areas and rooms, and regular temperature checks are some of the protocols that are being strictly followed.

ADAPTATION IS KEY

Business was heavily based on foreign markets prior to the pandemic, but the first lockdown taught us to re-calibrate and adapt to the available markets. Our services have been repackaged to make them more personalised for our guests. We had a great season last year, and the early trends for this year appear to be just as encouraging.

FAVOURABLE INWARD TOURISM

Prior to COVID, the Leela Goa guest profile included a large number of international travellers, but this is no longer the case. Indian travellers formerly had the option of visiting international destinations, but they are now focusing on domestic locations. As we approach the festive season, this inward tourism is favourable for us.

STAYING RELEVANT

We have revamped our package for our new target audience of Indian guests. The Club, for example, has been repositioned in Indian markets and is the first to sell out ahead of our base categories. To promote longer stays, we have unveiled more curated offers, as Enchanting Monsoon and Blissful Escapes. We have re-opened our restaurant Jamavar with a new look, and re-introduced the Sunday Brunch with a live band.



Satish Kumar P.



We have redesigned our packages to stay more relevant





The

India Factor

The lockdown phase made travellers want to get out and explore. Most Indian states are targeting this avenue, by chalking out plans to aggressively lure Indians to explore the country.



Charmaine Fernz



Travel is to a wanderlust like food to a connoisseur. The pandemic was a bitter lesson for the Indian tourism industry, but on a positive note, was also a boon for domestic tourism. The lockdown phase made travellers want to get out and explore. This opportunity is what most Indian states are targeting currently. Plans are being chalked out to aggressively lure Indians to explore the country – be it Kerala Tourism or Tamil Nadu Tourism, or even IRCTC collaborating with Cordelia Cruises to offer luxury cruise services within India.



V. R. Krishna Teja

THE FIRST STEP

Several state departments are currently looking at aggressive promoting different aspects of the destination in a bid to encourage travellers to explore something new. **Sandeep Nanduri** IAS, Director, Tourism and MD, Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation Limited explains, "To ensure the creation of a safe and secure tourism environment, a committee was formed by the Tamil Nadu government to draw a 'revival plan for the tourism sector in Tamil Nadu post lockdown of COVID-19'. This was done with line departments officials and non-officials of tourism stakeholders."

He further added that the Tamil Nadu Department of Tourism has launched many social media campaigns. These campaigns showcase hidden tourism potential and promote emerging tourist segments. "Recently, a reel contest titled #MyTNMyStory was launched on Instagram to highlight the tourist destinations of various districts through creative reels. The contest garnered great appreciation and active participation from social media users. Another campaign was the #AtoZofTNTourism Facebook Photography Contest, aiming to tap into lesser-known tourist places through the Alphabet encyclopedia of Tamilnadu Tourism as a part of World Tourism Celebrations. Social media users have been actively sharing photos of lesser-known tourist spots of different districts of Tamil Nadu, starting with the 'Alphabet of the Day'. By September 27, 2021, i.e. the World Tourism Day, Tamilnadu Tourism would have a unique repository of hidden tourism gems of the state."



This is just one of the many initiatives by the different state departments. Kerala Tourism, too, has reopened its doors to tourists and is looking at welcoming tourists differently. As **V. R. Krishna Teja** IAS, Director, Department of Tourism, Government



Kerala is the first destination in India to go active on social media





of Kerala, explains, "We have rolled out an efficient and meticulous bio-bubble by creating a protective layer of fully inoculated service providers and local communities, to receive and host tourists in all destinations across the state. We have also listed out many unique activities. Domestic marketing campaigns such as the drivecations, wherein tourists visiting Kerala can explore the state by road with the fly and drive packages. Once the pandemic situation eases, Kerala Tourism will launch its next set of campaigns to be promoted across OTT, digital, social media and radio

campaigns. The focus of these post-COVID campaigns being planned will be on Drive holidays, honeymoon experiences, long stay /workcation packages." Many others such as Rajasthan Tourism has joined hands with Incredible India to promote the destination showcasing lesser-known places, Rajasthani cuisine, dance forms, and spiritual journeys/circuit. Ladakh's Department of Tourism with the Tourism Ministry is planning an event to promote tourism in the region.

THE MEDIUMS

Krishna Teja asserts, "Kerala is the first tourism destination in India to go active on social media and the mainstay of future campaigns will be social media and online campaigns. Influencer campaigns, innovative product promotion contests, live broadcasts are some of the digital interventions. The idea is to dominate this space with more video content." Other states are also looking to capture a share of the marketing pie through innovative and strategic campaigns. Plans are underway by Maharashtra Tourism to take on a head-on approach for tourism.

TECHNOLOGY & TOURISM

The use of technology in many ways has been very restricted within the tourism industry. Nanduri explains, "Tamilnadu Tourism is incorporating emerging technologies like AI and VR through the creation of VR-based booklets and pamphlets for online platforms. The Department of Tourism envisages integrating virtual reality on the newly launched website for publishing various promotional videos for



Tamil Nadu govt is drawing a revival plan for the sector



highlighting the attractiveness of tourist destinations." Today, travellers, when booking today want a realistic view of the destination. This is where VR or AR comes into play. These advanced technologies are also being adopted by several states across India. "We have already showcased VR videos of our famed backwaters at International trade fairs and the Mumbai and Delhi airports. Avenues in AI are being explored and Kerala Tourism will soon unveil its plans on this. Very recently, Kerala Tourism had launched its Mobile App, which apart from having all tourist and destination-related information, enables users to themselves upload content about local unexplored destinations, thereby allowing such places to grab global attention. The KT Mobile App will also have a Voice Assist facility," said Krishna Teja.

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

The general Indian mindset is to travel internationally, keeping India last on their bucket list. Going beyond the regular trails, let us explore some unique facets of the states of India such as the recent campaign by IRCTC 'Shri Ramayana Yatra' Trains under the Dekho Apna Desh initiative of the government promotes

point of traveller interest in a post-COVID scenario. We are also looking to tap into a new segment such as honeymooners, drive holidays, wellness seekers, long stays, and active vacations. An exciting set of innovative events are also being planned while existing events in the cultural, sporting arena will be further promoted. Kerala is also looking to tap into destination weddings. "Plans are underway by the Indian Railways to leasing or even sell coaches to private parties, in a bid to promote tourism within the country. There is a strong need to promote railway-based tourism and this initiative will achieve just that."

Nanduri charting out TN's plans says, "Tamil Nadu has plenty of options starting with its five UNESCO World Heritage monuments. The state also offers a vast array of experiences on varied niche tourism themes." The best way to explore a destination is to immerse



AI is being explored and Kerala Tourism will unveil its plans on this




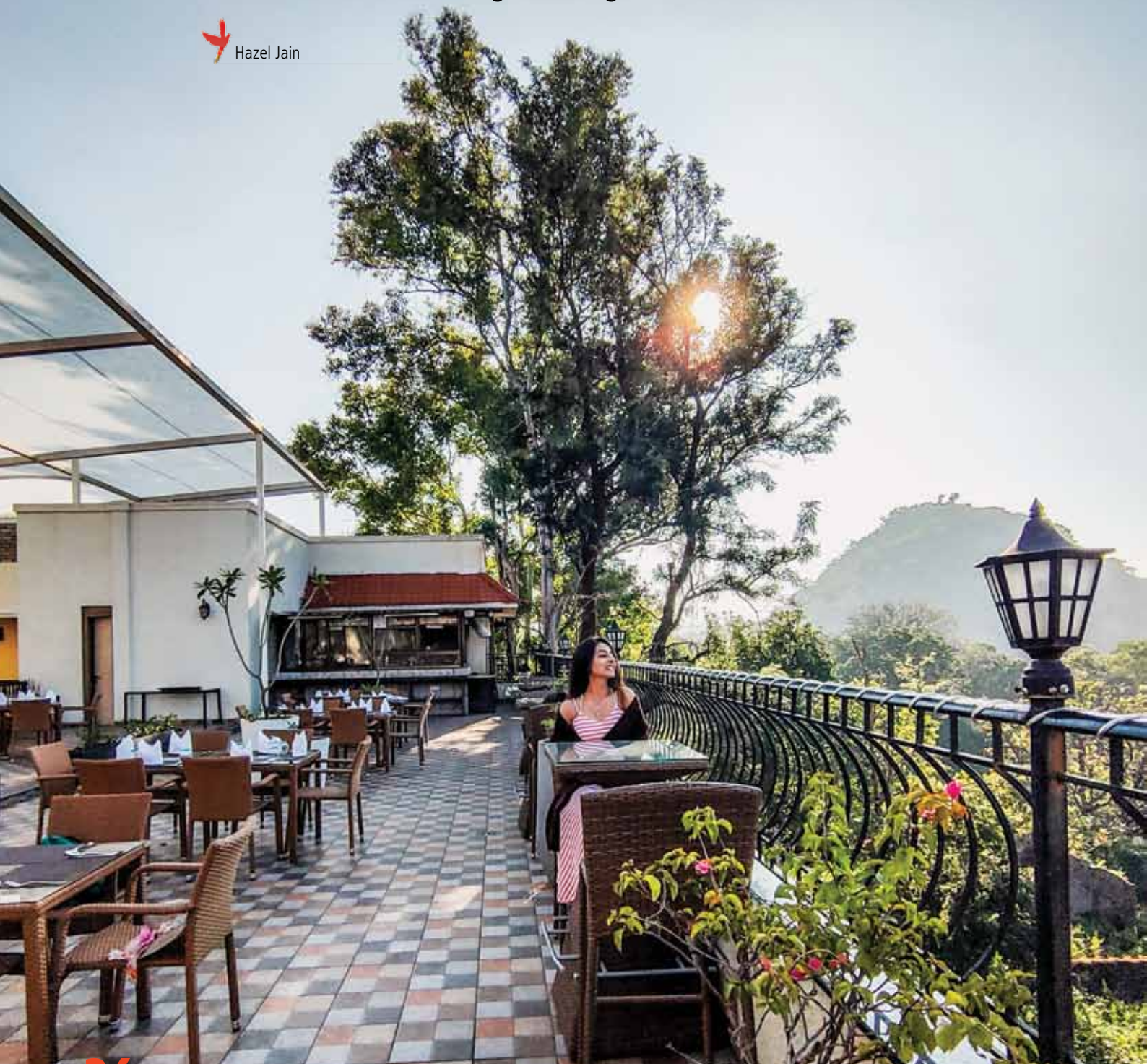
religious tourism. The Northeastern region is looking to promote theme-based tourist circuits while also injecting a huge sum of money into projects under the National Mission on PRASHAD schemes. Krishna Teja says that Kerala is now moving beyond the concept of being just a few destinations spread across the state, and focus will be on showcasing Kerala as a single destination, where each locality, village, and its community will be a tourist draw. Homestays, farm stays, and boutique properties may be the next

yourself in the culture and its people. Very rightly stated by UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili, "Tourism can be a driver of positive change for rural communities all around the world." Interestingly, three Indian villages Ladhpora Khas in Madhya Pradesh, Kongthong village in Meghalaya, and Pochampally village in Telangana have made it to the nominations for 'Best Tourism Villages' by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Each of these villages has a unique story of their own.

Growing our PORTFOLIO

The AM Hotel Kollection is aggressively building onsite facilities to cater to niche as well as large weddings at its hotel locations.

 Hazel Jain



The hospitality landscape in India continues to be uncertain, but it has also brought new perspectives and opportunities, says **Randhir Narayan**, Director and CEO, AM Hotel Kollektion. "We have seen growth in boutique and experiential hotel landscape. There is reasonably good opportunity in investing at holiday destinations, such as beaches, hills and jungle retreats. They have seen quite a few transactions and investments and new openings both big and small. We see good opportunity for hotels between 25 to 70 keys, especially the ones built keeping in mind their surroundings," he says.

Narayan, however, cautions, "There is trouble for large inventory city hotels. The ones in the luxury segments are still benefitting with social events. However, the ones in the budget space will have to improvise in the medium term and may have to look at converting themselves to mixed-use properties or becoming a spacious serviced apartments, as there is significant drop in transient corporate business which largely filled these hotels."

Growth of the portfolio is a priority for the company and Narayan reveals that they are on schedule to announce at least four more launches before the end of the year.

"For business growth we have developed curated and destination weddings. Our select hotels have achieved good success in first half of this year. We are aggressively building onsite facilities to cater to niche as well as large weddings at our hotel locations. The company is looking forward to rest of 2021 as a growth year," he adds.

The company is also working with travel agents and has offered them special rates and packages including – bundled offers, curated experiences, discounts, benefits on extended length of stays and higher commissions to get the incremental room nights.

CURRENT DEMAND

Sharing his thoughts on the kind of demand they are seeing right now from travellers, **Shashi Razdan**, COO, AM Hotel Kollektion says that individuals, friends and family groups have shown healthy growth. Long weekends are in demand at resort locations, while corporate and mid-segment traveller has slowed down due to negative sentiment, as well as the pandemic-driven curbs by corporations and due to state restrictions.

"Celebrations and weddings have shown positive growth over 2019 and corporate/industry segments such as BFSI, pharma, MLM and textiles groups are again showing signs of recovery and travel activity. Organisations, such as the Rotary, have organised residential member programmes at resort locations," Razdan adds.

Meanwhile, hotels under AM Hotel Kollektion continue to maintain the highest levels of sanitised and safe

environment for all guests. To start with, the entire staff is vaccinated with at least single dose and follows all COVID protocols while dealing with guests.

The measures undertaken start from the arrival experience where temperature is checked for all guests, touch-free sanitisation machines on hotel entry with complete sanitisation of luggage. Check-ins are ensured with maximum contact-free procedures, keeping in mind guest safety and convenience. Rooms are thoroughly disinfected on each check-out with surface disinfectants, and industry-best sanitisation procedures and products. Food and beverage areas are special care areas with complete sanitised and safety protocols followed in our kitchens, introduction of touch-free procedures (QR code-driven menu selection, etc.). Guest conveniences and other areas are regularly cleaned and sanitised to ensure highest level of COVID protocols.

The company also continues to engage with the travel agents. Razdan says, "Engagements with travel fraternity has been continuous; it was high in August followed by September. Regular educational trips have been organised for the key decision makers with special curated experiences and supportive rate contracts have been issued to support business through this segment of the industry. Weekly meetings and calls are fixed not only with sales team but with unit managers to enhance the engagement and ease of business at all levels."

INDEPENDENT HOTELS

AM is a 'collection' of individually owned, unique and independent boutique hotels and resorts. Each AM Hotel has its own character. It is a hotel services platform that provides hotel asset owners with management expertise and effective end-to-end operational service solutions.

Explaining the ethos behind the company, **Sanchit Wahi**, CMO, AM Hotel Kollektion, says, "AM Hotel Kollektion's talent pool assists at every stage of development – from inception to project completion and operationalisation. Our solutions are aimed at improving the positioning of hotels, which are distinguished yet complimentary, AM Hotel Kollektion caters to premium and experiential segments of business. We see substantial growth by building long-term relationships and value for our partners, associates, employees and customers. Our services include – facility planning, technical advisory and pre-opening, hotel operations and management, backed by effective communication, marketing, distribution and sales."

Wahi reveals that the company is in the process of adding to its collection of hotels. "All new hotel announcements are made on our social media platforms and website. Recently, we have added six new locations: Gurgaon, Goa, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Kufri and Panchkula, we are now operational in 15 cities across India," he shares.



Randhir Narayan

Boutique hotels are growing



Shashi Razdan

Long weekends are in demand



Sanchit Wahi

We cater to experiential segments

Festive table settings by L'Objet

◆ Founded in 2004, L'Objet is the life work of Founder and Creative Director Elad Yifrach. Emery Studio brings festive tableware setting by L'Objet to India. All L'Objet collections are made with exceptional materials, and with proper use and care, which will last for generations. L'Objet shares that a striking table setup using their tableware that will create a lasting impression at your festive dinners with your loved ones. This festive tableware setting showcase pieces from the L'Objet collections – Fortuny, Alchemie, Tabriz and Oro. Emery Studio specialises in bespoke decorative lighting, tableware and home decoration solutions for interior designers and architects.



4607 Chandelier by Barovier & Toso

◆ 4607 Chandelier by Barovier & Toso, a classic Venetian chandelier, has been brought to India by Emery Studio. Flowers in multi-colored glass paste, a multitude of decorations and the transparent purity of the crystal make 4607 Chandelier suitable for the most important palaces on the Grand Canal. The 4607 Chandelier is available in various sizes and a number of hues and finishing.

Mi Casa Collective

◆ Mi Casa Collective is back with its annual physical exhibition. Featuring 30 labels, it will be held at Bikaner House, India Gate on October 15 and 16, 2021. The Mi Casa Collective show aims to showcase a mélange of traditional and modern Indian homeware brands. From fine art, carpets, furniture, décor, tableware, outdoor living, home textiles to floral arrangements, bath and bedding linen, and gifting – the two-day exhibit will capture the gamut of products in the interior space.



Housekeeping Finesse

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.

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,



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

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



IHE goes physical



Rakesh Kumar

India's one of the largest B2B hospitality expo, IHE 2021 opens on September 24 at IEML and will be a 100 per cent 'physical show'.

The India Expo Mart & Centre (IEML) in Greater Noida is all geared up for the 2021 edition of the India International Hospitality Expo (IHE 2021). The Expo, to be held on September 24-27, 2021, will be a 100 per cent 'physical show'. It is their goodwill that gives **Rakesh Kumar**, Chairman, IEML, and Director General, Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), the confidence not to move away from organising a 100 per cent 'physical show' and its

full complement of the concurrent events. The IEML is now fully operational and thoroughly sanitised. Spread across 58 acres (2,35,000 sqm), it is truly a 'bio-bubble'. The management has institutionalised practices, such as fumigation of public spaces at regular intervals, easy access to no-touch hand sanitisers, CCTV-controlled monitoring of body temperature, and mandatory use of the Arogya Setu app. The flow of visitors will be managed in a way that there is no crowding at any time.

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Appointments



GOPINATH GOPALAN

General Manager
Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa, Nashik

★ Gopalan has been responsible for overseeing multiple pre-opening hotels, repositioning of luxury brands and played pivotal leadership roles in iconic luxury hotels like Park Hyatt, Goa; Grand Hyatt, Mumbai; The Leela Palace, Bangalore; and Oberoi Hotels & Resorts - Mumbai, Udaipur and New Delhi. His proficiency in operational techniques will play a significant role in establishing Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa, Nashik as one of the most sought-after lifestyle-led leisure destinations in Western India.



RAJAN KALRA

Director of Sales
The Click Hotels by Suba

★ Kalra will be responsible for the development and implementation of sales strategies to drive revenue, increase visibility and further enhance the perception of Click & 1589 hotel brands. He brings with him an experience of over 15 years in the industry. Having successful work tenures with leading national and international hotel chains has given Kalra an in-depth expertise from diversified markets of India, Asia and Africa. He has earned accolades like 'Sales Person of the Year' by Sarovar Hotels and Resorts.



HARDIP MARWAH

General Manager
Andaz, Delhi

★ He brings almost two decades of experience in the hospitality business to the hotel. Marwah will focus on redefining the experiences offered by Andaz Delhi, drawing on his leadership abilities, experience with multiple businesses, and evolved understanding of the industry. He will oversee and guide the Andaz brand's cornerstone hotel in India, Andaz Delhi. He has worked across countries and with both the Grand Hyatt and Hyatt Regency brands. He joined Hyatt Hotels Corporation in 2005 in different key roles.



MADHAV SEHGAL

General Manager
The Leela Palace, Bengaluru

★ Madhav is an accomplished hotelier and brings with him over two decades of diverse hospitality experience having worked across markets like India, UAE, and Canada. His multi property operational experience, leadership skills and comprehensive understanding of the business are distinguishing facets of his career. In his role, Madhav will lead the operations of The Leela Palace Bengaluru, and work towards strengthening its leadership positioning within this highly competitive luxury market.



ABHISHEK PRABHAKAR

Associate Director of Sales-Leisure
Eros Hotel, New Delhi, Nehru Place

★ Prabhakar will play a pivotal role in strategically aligning and leading the business development goals in Travel Trade. He comes with an experience of 10 years in the industry. During his tenure, he has worked with brands like Taj Hotels & Resorts, Hilton Worldwide, Grand Hyatt Mumbai and Roseate Hotels & Resorts. He has also been a part of pre-opening assignments, regional sales and pan India sales. In his new role, he will be responsible for uplifting the segment and generating new business opportunities in Tier-II and III cities.



DIETMAR KIELNHOFER

General Manager and Area VP
Grand Hyatt Mumbai Hotel and Residences

★ Hyatt India and Grand Hyatt Mumbai Hotel and Residences appoints Dietmar Kielnhofner as Area Vice President of Hyatt India and General Manager of Grand Hyatt Mumbai Hotel and Residences. A career that has seen Kielnhofner circle three continents and 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, is truly a veteran in the hospitality industry.



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