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An Exclusive Business Magazine for the Hotel Industry



Business

Employees' Impact on Hospitality Industry

Feature

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Developing Concept

Technology

Benefits of Automation

Housekeeping

Sweeping Changes

Operations

Challenges of Renovating

Union Budget 2023

Impact on Hospitality and Travel & Tourism Industries

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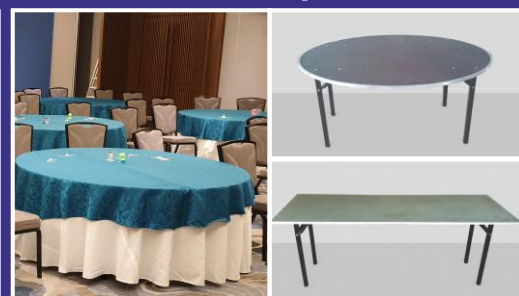
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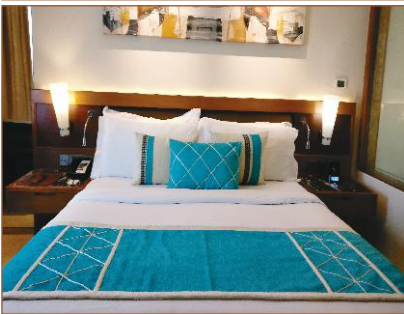
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The travel and tourism industry is believed to have received a boost in the current budget. The Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, releasing the budget 2023, stated that being aware of the potential of the sector in creating jobs and opportunities for the youth, promotion of tourism would be taken up in mission mode.

She revealed that, to boost the sector, 50 tourist destinations would be chosen through a challenge to be developed into a whole package for domestic and international tourism. For domestic tourism "Dekho Apna Desh" has already been promoted very widely now similarly international tourism too will be revived with these initiatives. The tourist infrastructure will also be provided on the border and in North East India which will be highly beneficial for the inflow of tourists. The finance minister spoke about enhancing opportunities for private investment in infrastructure. She revealed that initiatives would also be taken to set up tourism in villages adjacent to the border.

Budget shows that the mood of the government to allocate resources for the development of tourist circuits and revival of regional air connectivity will further help revive the footfall of tourists and provide a boost to the tourism industry. The need to support One District One Product (ODOP) concept by creating sufficient infrastructure would be realised by the government's initiative to encourage states to set up a Unity Mall in their tourist circles. This would help MSMEs and artisans to formally market their products to domestic and foreign tourists in a targeted manner.

Income tax rebates announced in the budget will result in an increase in disposable incomes which will further enhance the tourists. The initiatives taken in the current budget expected to revive the pandemic-affected hospitality and tourism sector and mark a significant step towards a more sustainable future.

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Frankfurt Consumer Goods Fairs Set New Standards

ambiente **christmasworld** **creativeworld**

The leading international consumer goods fairs Ambiente, Christmasworld and Creativeworld joined forces for the first time from February 3-4 to 7, 2023, to inspire as the global hub for upcoming lifestyle trends. They reflected the increasing merging of lifestyles and focus on the top theme of sustainability. 4,561 exhibitors occupied the entire Frankfurt exhibition center on 352,950 gross square meters and impressed 154,000 retailers from all over the world with their innovations. Participants from more than 170 nations celebrated the personal encounter.

Frankfurt became the home of the global consumer goods market, inspired by innovations. For five days, the fully booked exhibition halls were buzzing with reunions and an energetic ordering mood. The buyers came to Frankfurt to experience trends live and to order for their collections, with which they stimulate the consumer mood.

"With an overwhelming participation and tremendous internationality, we have made an incredible comeback for the global consumer goods world after two years of pandemic. Frankfurt has strengthened its leading position and is the comprehensive inspiration, ordering and networking event. Our new concept One-Stop-Shop is working" says Detlef Braun, Member of the Executive Board.

Buyers benefited from a unique variety of fresh business impulses: at Ambiente Dining, Living and Giving were expanded by the new working section with a view to modern working worlds. Christmasworld inspired the sector with seasonal eye-catchers and festive decorations with a wow effect for the most beautiful and best-selling time of the year. With numerous creative offerings and interactive workshops, Creativeworld celebrated the ongoing DIY boom like no

other trade fair. The greatest possible efficiency is the focus for all participants.

Well Accepted

The high level of internationality exceeded all expectations: 70 percent of visitors came from abroad. In addition to Germany, the strongest participating nations included Italy, France, the Netherlands, the USA, Great Britain, Spain, Turkey, Switzerland, Greece and Poland.

The entire spectrum of German and international retail trade was on site. In addition, the mega event attracted the who's who of major international buyers such as Amazon, Illums Bolighus, Galeries Lafayette, El Corte Ingles, KaDeWe, John Lewis, E.

brought together a large number of top international speakers and designers such as Karim Rashid, Ross Lovegrove, Olivier Lapidus, Tassilo von Grolmann, but also promising young talents, was praised as a valuable source of inspiration.

Through special presentations, lectures, workshops or guided tours, the exchange on the most important meta-topics such as sustainability, new work, design, lifestyle, future retail and digital expansion of trade was stimulated. In this way, all forms of trade were given targeted approaches to solutions as well as practical and implementable ideas to take with them on their way.

The Focus

A particular highlight was the Future of Work area in the new Ambiente Working section, which presented individual solutions for modern working environments. After all, the workplace is increasingly merging into social places where interaction and social exchange take place.

The establishment of co-working spaces as a new form of office organization meets the urgent need for flexibility and mobility. Buyers found a variety of offers and impulses for this.

The topic of sustainability was omnipresent at all three trade shows with innovative products - according to the ZukunftsInstitut, it is increasingly in demand among consumers and is becoming a decisive purchasing criterion.

Digital Extension

The decisive factor in inspiration remained the physical experience, which was clearly in focus in 2023 - and continues to be meaningfully supplemented digitally before and after the trade shows. On the online platform Digital Extension, a total of 80,242 participants were virtually on the move, there were over 8,000 networking interactions, around 4,000 chat messages were sent and over 1,000 hours of content were watched.



Leclerc, Marks & Spencer, Museum of Modern Art, Rinascente and Staples.

Moreover, major distributors of hotel and restaurant supplies from around the world, as well as hotel chains such as Marriott International, Hilton Hotels & Resorts and Hyatt Hotels, were also attending. The fact that the trade sees Ambiente, Christmasworld and Creativeworld as its new platform for success is also confirmed by Messe Frankfurt's visitor survey. The satisfaction ratings are at a very high level and currently stand at 94 percent.

New Ideas

The extensive supporting program, which



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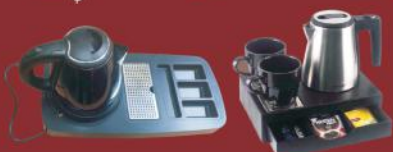
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Second Pillar of Aujasya by The Leela

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts launched the second pillar of their signature wellness programme - Aujasya by The Leela - "Renew - Mindfulness." The programme has been curated in partnership with ThinkRight.me by JetSynthesys, India's leading meditation and mindfulness platform guiding people to live a happy and balanced life.

Inspired by the ancient Sanskrit word that describes "vigour of life", Aujasya by The Leela is a wellness programme designed as an authentic and holistic journey. Built on the 2 Rs' of wellbeing Restore- Food and Nutrition and Renew - Mindfulness, Aujasya aims at strengthening vitality or energy allowing guests to embrace an enriching and healthy lifestyle. The brand launched the first pillar Restore in partnership with food and nutrition Jalori last year.

The second pillar, Renew-Mindfulness, is platform which presents four segments of a body. Exclusively created by ThinkRight.me, (Loving Kindness), Samskara (Inner Refinement), Ekaa (Being One) and Sukh (Mind and Body Balance). Each segment consists of guided Meditation, Sound Healing and Yoga. Guests can seamlessly access these exclusively curated sessions during their stay at The Leela properties. The program also has a special section for children called Aujasya Junior that encourages children to take mindful steps towards a happier and calmer future.

Aujasya by The Leela is a unique program that stays true to the brand's ethos of Atithi Devo Bhava - placing the guest at the center of everything, while curating experiences that resonate with the evolving needs of today's discerning luxury travelers.



consultant Dr Ankita



built as an online balanced mind and these include Maitri

Sterling Holiday Resorts Debuts in Haridwar

Sterling Holiday Resorts is a leading leisure hospitality brand, announced the launch of Sterling Mantra Haridwar, their fifth property in Uttarakhand. The hotel is easily accessible considering its proximity to the Chandigarh-Haridwar and Delhi-Haridwar highways making it convenient for various types of travellers. It is a quick drive away from Delhi NCR and forms the base for pilgrims on the Char Dham yatra.

Sterling Mantra Haridwar offers spacious rooms which are comfortable for families on a holiday. The 40 fully equipped rooms provide all the contemporary amenities and thoughtful touches for a business traveller as well. Golden Leaf, the onsite multi-cuisine restaurant opens out into the lawns for guests to savour an indoor/ outdoor dining experience. It serves authentic local specialties and popular comfort food.

Its purpose-built banquet hall, outdoor lawns and ample parking spaces, make the hotel the perfect venue to host conferences, weddings and social events.

Speaking on the inauguration of the property, Vikram Lalvani, Managing Director and CEO of Sterling Holiday Resorts said, "We are delighted with the launch of Sterling Mantra Haridwar. With Sterling's traditional hospitality and service levels we seek to provide guests with an unforgettable experience. Whether you're a traveller seeking a spiritual retreat or a businessperson in need of a convenient and comfortable stay, Sterling Mantra Haridwar is the ideal destination for you."



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Pride Hotels Group Expands

Pride Hotel Kanpur

Pride Hotels Group has signed "Pride Hotel Kanpur". Centrally located the property will be easily accessible to all major leisure and commercial establishments in the city. The property will have well-appointed



rooms, two large banquets, 4 meeting and conference rooms, a 24 Hours Coffee Shop, a rooftop open sky restaurant and in-house laundry. The new property will be operational from November 2023.

Announcing the signing, Atul Upadhyay, Senior Vice President, Pride Hotels Group said, "We are delighted to sign the Pride Hotel Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh largest city and epicentre of commercial and

industrial establishments in the State. Tourist attractions in Kanpur give visitors the chance to see things that aren't as glamorous as those in bigger cities. Kanpur receives frequent business travelers and other working professionals due to its industrial environment. Leisure tourists visit Kanpur to learn about Indian history in the most ideal setting".

Pride Biznotel Digha

Pride Hotels Group has also announced the signing of 'Pride Biznotel Digha'. The hotel is prominently located at Digha, the most well-known beach and tourist destination in West Bengal, which is located southwest of Kolkata. The hotel will have well-appointed rooms, a multi-cuisine restaurant, an open terrace specialty restaurant, banquet facilities, and a swimming pool. The new property will be operational from February 2023.

Announcing the signing, Atul Upadhyay, Senior Vice President, Pride Hotels Group said, "Digha has always been an extremely popular weekend getaway for tourists and



widely referred to as the Goa of the East. One of the best features of this hamlet is its varied and diverse tourist attraction spots including the Marine Aquarium, serene beaches, museums, and temples. With the signing of 'Pride Biznotel Digha' in West Bengal, we are thrilled to expand operations in North East India. Once it is up and running, the new hotel will provide the best possible accommodations for travelers thanks to its excellent location, mouthwatering menu options, banqueting, and a variety of hospitality services.

Pride Hotel Group has a presence in around 51 great locations with 5,075 rooms, 102 restaurants, 134 banquets, lawns, and conference halls.

An Industry Initiative Launched at Taj

Founded in 1903 Indian Hotels Company Limited's (IHCL) iconic brand Taj with the opening of The Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai. For over a century it is renowned for its world-class service of genuine warmth and sincere care. In today's dynamic environment, with ever changing consumer behaviour and in keeping with its legacy of service excellence, India's largest hospitality company sharpens its focus on customer experience with the introduction of Care@Tajness.

Care@Tajness is addressing emerging trends of the new age traveller who seeks a balance between digital led service delivery and warmth of human connect, customised experiences and a seamless journey. The framework is designed around Re-engineering service standards, Re-imagining the offerings through innovation backed by a strong culture of Responsiveness. Guest experience will include a set of rituals built with a sense of place honouring the local

culture unique to every hotel; be it reliving the bygone era at the Royal Palace in Jaipur or partaking in the lighting of a thousand lamps around a lagoon in Kumarakom. Taj's legendary service known for its intuitiveness



and high level of customisation will delight guests with curated magical moments.

This framework is enabled by a centralised customer contact hub that besides monitoring and responding to

multi-channel feedback, also looks to listen, learn and leverage insights for product and service enhancement, i.e. Carecations for those who want to leave a light footprint when they travel or Woyage catering to the single lady traveller.

Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, IHCL said, "Taj now in its 120th year, has been the custodian of Indian hospitality and the recent dual honour of Taj being rated as World's Strongest Hotel Brand and India's Strongest Brand across sectors is a testament to its journey of excellence. With the rapidly evolving marketplace and keeping our guests at the heart of the business, IHCL continues to carry its glorious past to the consumer of the future by introducing Care@Tajness. A holistic approach to guest delight at the core of which lies the commitment and dedication of all our colleagues guided by the ethos of Tajness."

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IHG Builds on Voco Brand Debut in India

IHG® Hotels & Resorts, has signed a management agreement with Atharva Hotel Superfluities India Pvt. Ltd. for a new build voco hotel - voco Gurugram Golf Course Extension Road. The hotel is currently in advanced stages of construction and will open soon, adding 204 keys to IHG's premium portfolio in the country. The signing of a voco hotel in a Tier 1 city such as Gurugram will support the company's growth ambitions for the brand in the South-West Asia region and build on the recent debut of the brand in India.

As one of IHG's fastest growing premium brands, voco allows guests to enjoy a unique and refreshed experience. Since launching globally in 2018, voco has enjoyed rapid growth with multiple signings across Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia (EMEA).



The hotel will be located just off the main Golf Course Extension Road, My Den, M3M Urbana, an established business and commercial area of Gurugram. In addition to modern guestrooms offering premium comfort, the hotel will feature all day dining restaurant, lobby lounge, a bar, an outdoor pool and a gymnasium. To cater to the increasing demands of corporate guests, the hotel will also offer meeting rooms and

a business center equipped with the latest technology.

Commenting on the second signing of voco brand in India, Sudeep Jain, Managing Director, South West Asia, IHG Hotels & Resorts said, "We are delighted to partner with Atharva Hotel Superfluities India Pvt. Ltd. to sign our second voco hotel in India. This signing of voco Gurugram Golf Course Extension Road hotel is a testimony to IHG's commitment to grow footprint in India and introduce global brands with strong synergies for guests in the right locations.

IHG® currently has 44 hotels operating across five brands in SWA, including Six Senses, InterContinental Hotels and Resorts®, Crowne Plaza®, Holiday Inn®, Holiday Inn Resort® and Holiday Inn Express®, and has a strong pipeline of 37 hotels due to open in the next 2-3 years.

Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, Maldives to Develop Floating Solar Park

Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, Maldives has signed an agreement with Swimsol, the global leader in offshore marine photovoltaics, to induct a floating solar park.



Speaking on this occasion, Gaurav Pokhariyal, Executive Vice President, Human Resources, IHCL, stated,"

This partnership is in line with IHCL's ESG+ framework of Paathya with its commitment towards energy conservation and long term goal of deriving no less than 50 per cent of energy across all hotels from renewable sources by 2030. Once the floating solar park goes on stream in 2024, Taj Exotica Resort & Spa will operate with one of the lowest carbon footprints in Maldives."

The 1.05 MW solar park will save 1,189 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per annum. It will help reduce 4,39,000 litres of diesel consumption annually while simultaneously decreasing noise pollution by 40%. It will have an extraordinary battery backup, making Taj Exotica Resort & Spa the first-ever Maldives resort to completely shut down generator operations between 8 am to 5 pm. Along with reducing the resort's carbon footprint, the floating solar platforms will stay well above the precious coral reefs and offer shelter to young aqua fauna.

Greenpark Hotels and Resorts Acquire New Hotels

Greenpark Hotels And Resorts Limited has announced the acquisition of Fairfield by Marriott Chennai OMR and Four Points by Sheraton Ahmedabad. This marks the South Indian group's entry into the West Indian region with Ahmedabad being one of the fastest growing and promising cities in the country.

Fairfield by Marriott Chennai OMR would be the group's second hotel in Chennai and first association with Marriott



K. Mohan Krishna

Hotels. The acquisition would result in the addition of 210 keys to the existing portfolio of over 1000 rooms under management and award-winning F&B outlets like Mekong, Ohm and Once Upon A Time spanning 8 hotels across 5 cities.

"2023 is an exciting year for the group as we are expanding our footprint in newer territories with a Greenpark property slated to be operational early this year in Bengaluru which incorporates our new brand identity and design sensibility. We aspire to expand our presence and extend our trademark hospitality across major metropolitan cities in the country" says K. Mohan Krishna, President, Greenpark Hotels And Resorts Limited.

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Fortune Hotels Expands its Footprint

Fortune Hotel at Haldwani

Fortune Hotels, a member of ITC's hotel group, announced the opening of Fortune Walkway Mall Haldwani pegged to be the first branded hotel of the city in the segment, and the upscale hotel chain's third hotel in the state of Uttarakhand. Strategically located on the high street of Haldwani, atop a premium mall, the stylish hotel boasts of contemporary well-



appointed and elegant rooms and suites that open into the lush green views of the scenic Himalayas and the buzzing street below.

An aesthetically designed lobby, thoughtfully crafted food and beverage experiences, a relaxing spa, a well-equipped fitness centre, a plush club lounge, and other modish amenities add a touch of class to the other modern, contemporary comforts that the warm and trendy hotel exudes.

Being in close proximity to the nearest industrial hub of Sitarganj and just 35 kms from Nainital, makes Fortune Walkway Mall Haldwani, a perfect stop for guests looking for a relaxed business or leisure stay. Easily accessible by air, rail and road the hotel is just 2.6 km away from Kathgodam, and around 35 km from Pant Nagar airport.

Guests can choose to dine at Zodiac, the all-day dining multi-cuisine restaurant that showcases an extensive a-la-carte menu featuring the best of Indian, European, Western, and pan-Asian cuisines; relax and meet close friends at Neptune the chic bar and lounge serving a wide selection of wines, spirits, and appetising food in a chic and contemporary setting; or enjoy a stone fire pizza in the panoramic alfresco area and get awestruck by the mesmerising mountain

views it has to offer.

Additionally, the hotel has an aesthetically appointed banquet hall embellished with modern interiors, ornate and elegant décor that opens into a stunning terrace courtyard to help guests celebrate their special occasions in style. With a capacity to host up to 250 guests, the hotel is a perfect destination for small weddings, company off-sites, social events, celebrations, conferences and more.

Besides Fortune Walkway Mall Haldwani, Fortune has two other hotels in Uttarakhand—one each in Mussorrie and Haridwar.

Fortune Hotels Signs a new hotel at Siliguri

Fortune hotel also signed a new property in Siliguri, West Bengal. Situated at a 15 min drive from the Siliguri airport, the upscale 'Fortune Select' hotel is surrounded by breath-taking views of majestic tea gardens and mountains.

Set to open in December 2025, the new picturesque hotel will offer 120 stylish well-appointed rooms with incomparable enchanting views from its confines. Strategically located on Sevoke road, the new growth corridor of Siliguri, the hotel will also enjoy enviable connectivity as it will have direct access to the main Eastern Bypass Road.

Together with an all-day diner, a specialty fine dine restaurant, a trendy bar, large banquets and a swimming pool, the contemporary hotel is sure to turn into a coveted hotspot for city residents and the business and leisure travellers alike.

Siliguri has always been a city of importance in West Bengal for it connects the Northeast to the Indian mainland and is a major trading hub of the region. Known for its timber, teas and tourism, and its accessibility to Jalpiguri, Darjeeling and Kalimpong, it is needless to say that the destination rates very high on guest travel wish lists.

Fortune Park Hotels Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of ITC Ltd. is India's leading chain of first-class, full-service business and leisure hotels, with 56 signed alliances and over 4300 plus rooms, across 48 cities in the country.

Vitskamats Group to Launch a Hotel in Daman

Daman has always been an ideal destination for every Mumbaikar or Gujrat traveler to visit on their weekends. With the number of tourists increasing month after month, the F&B industry is evidently making a mark in the Daman market. One such hotel chain is The Vits Hotels and Resorts.



With their hotel chains being all over the country, they are soon to launch their second resort in Daman and this time it's going to be a serene and picturesque boutique hotel. What sets this hotel apart is its 28 quaint cottages apart from the deluxe and family rooms with access to a beautiful infinity pool and gymnasium. This property with its lip-smacking menu and innovative cocktails is the perfect destination for a relaxing staycation.

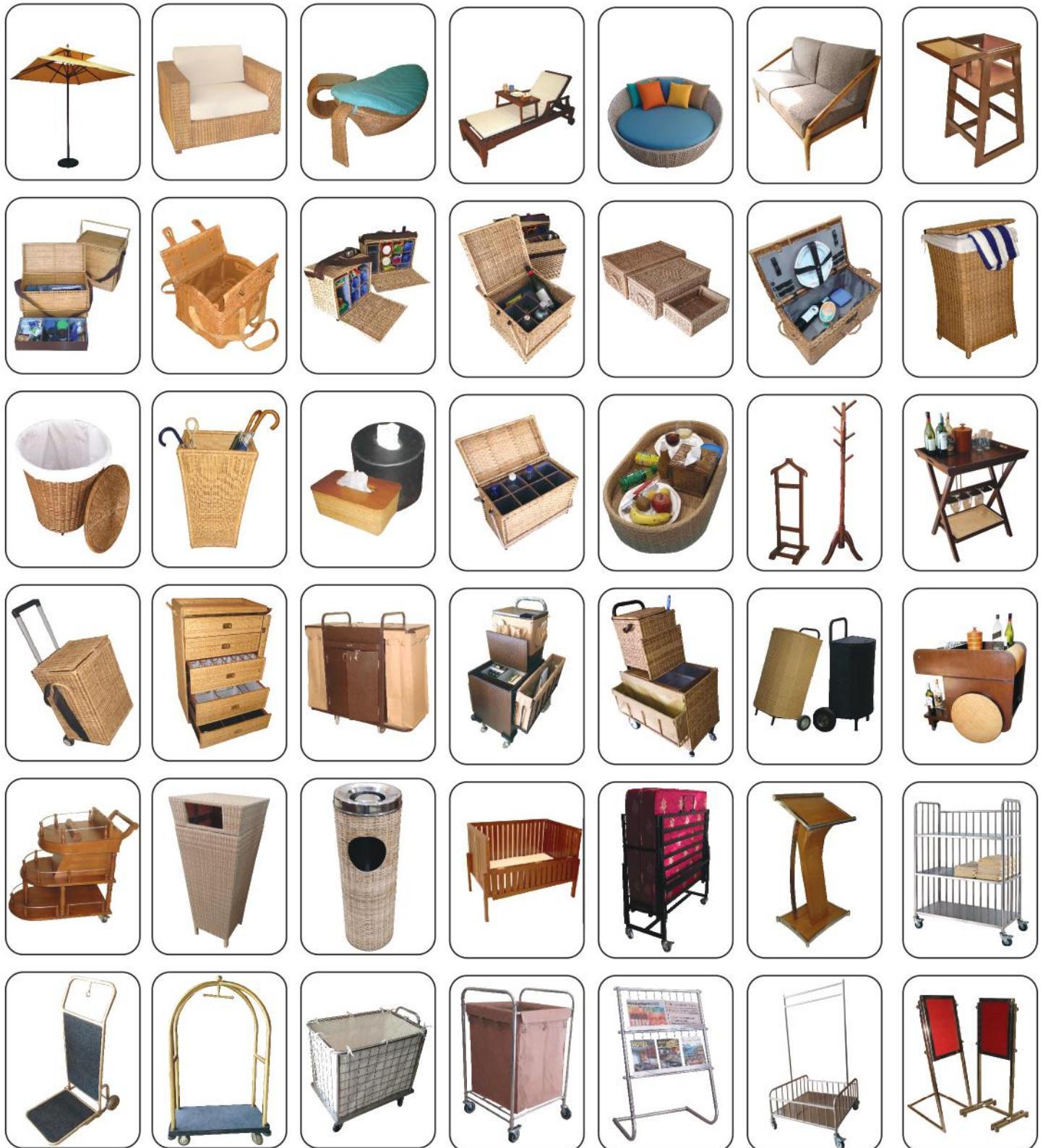
When asked Dr. Vikram Kamat, Founder, and Chairman of The Vitskamats Group about this new boutique hotel, he mentioned. "VITS Hotels and Resorts have always tried to provide impeccable hospitality for all our guests and with VITS Devka Beach, we aim to take it to the next level by giving our patrons a luxurious experience that adds to their happy beach vacation. We have ensured that the resort is filled with all modern amenities to make the stay of our guests as comfortable as possible. This resort encapsulates the vibe of living at a villa, and will be fully operational from the 1st of February as we launch it with a bang."

The popular restaurant 'Urban Dhaba' is going to be added to this property. The property offers 2 separate pools to choose from and a fully equipped gymnasium. Be it for a lazy drink by the pool or scrumptious food at the restaurant, it offers something to each guest.

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The Oberoi Rajvilas, Jaipur Celebrates 25 years

The Oberoi Rajvilas, Jaipur celebrates 25 years of luxury Oberoi hospitality in the Pink City. To commemorate this milestone, it also announces a new accommodation category: Premier Rooms with Private Garden. Now guests can enjoy

and bathrooms with a freestanding bathtub.

At the resort's signature fine dining venues: The Surya Mahal or the Sun Palace, guests can relish authentic international cuisines with an Oberoi signature. Italian, Mediterranean, and Thai classics feature

What makes every stay at Oberoi Hotels & Resorts truly exceptional is not simply the exquisite accommodation, the decadent dining options or the authentic cultural activities, but the personalised touches, warm hospitality and painstaking care taken to deliver the most unforgettable experience.



not only the resort's 32 acres of beautifully landscaped gardens, but also their own private garden space to relax or dine al fresco.

The Oberoi Rajvilas, Jaipur presents a palatial fort setting of traditional domed pink architecture, dramatic flaming torches and tranquil reflection pools. Its spacious grounds are dotted with clusters of accommodation that allow for maximum privacy. Each room or villa is luxuriously furnished with a four-poster bed, features a sunken marble bathtub and is afforded round-the-clock service. Inspired by the majestic caravans that crossed the desert in bygone times are the Luxury tents that feature a king size bed, teak wooden floors

alongside seasonal Rajasthani specialties that are made with ingredients from the resort's kitchen garden. The Raj Mahal is a specialty Indian restaurant that offers dishes from the remote corners of India. The restaurant spans a grand indoor dining hall and an outdoor dining area with sandstone feature fireplaces and a tree-fringed courtyard. At the Rajwada Library Bar, fine wines, classic cocktails and single malts can be enjoyed with a game of backgammon by the fireside. The bar also hosts bi-weekly, interactive history sessions under the noble gaze of ancient Maharajas captured in lithographs on the walls.

The Oberoi Rajvilas also offers specially curated experiences. From private dining to cultural activities, personalised spa therapies and more. Romantics can renew their vows in a full-day experience for bride and groom.

Ecstatic to celebrate the 25th anniversary of The Oberoi Rajvilas, Jaipur Vishal Virmani, General Manager says, "We constantly endeavour to offer personalised experiences to all our guests and make their time with us memorable. As The Oberoi Rajvilas, Jaipur celebrates its silver jubilee, we look forward to offering another 25 years of unparalleled luxury, unforgettable hospitality and ever more beautiful memories."

Seclude Launch New Resort

Seclude ahs announced the opening of its latest property in the off-beat tourist destination of Pangot. Situated at a height of 6300 feet, Seclude Pangot Perch is the newest addition to Seclude's enviable portfolio of luxury home-style hotels across India. Pangot is a village in the Kosya Kutoli tehsil of Nainital district, Uttarakhand, well connected by road and just under a 6-hour drive from New Delhi.

Additionally, the eight-cottage resort was built entirely using locally sourced materials and employed local workers



to complete the project. Following a scenic drive through the rich forested area of Naini Peak Range, vacationers will be able to experience the beauty of the Himalayas, with its abundance of outdoor activities and serene atmosphere.

"We are excited to launch Seclude Pangot Perch, as we aim to further scale up the niche category of branded homestays, being pioneered by us. We aim to double our room count to over 200 rooms and 200 employees by the end of 2023. The latest launch sets Seclude up for an optimistic 2023, and we are excited to see what the year ahead has in store for us," says Ramit Sethi, Founder, Seclude.



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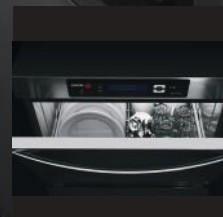
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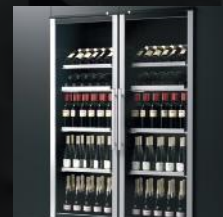
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Distribution



IHCL Expands in New Cities

IHCL has announced new SeleQtions hotels in Rajkot, Jaipur, Dudhwa & Kullu.

IHCL group has announced the signing of its first hotel in Rajkot, Gujarat. This is a conversion and will be rebranded an IHCL – SeleQtions hotel after extensive renovations. The 120 key hotel is situated in the city centre on Yagnik Road and is a convenient and central location from all parts of this growing city. It will house an all-day diner, speciality restaurants and a lobby lounge with a deli. The hotel will offer 750 sq.mt of banqueting space along with small meetings rooms. Other recreation facilities will include a swimming pool, fitness centre and a salon.

Devi Ratn, an IHCL SeleQtions hotel located in the bustling city of Jaipur, is now ready with additional 82 new rooms and recreational facilities including a lobby bar, restaurant, spa and meeting spaces. With these additions, the hotel more than doubles its existing inventory to a total of 145 rooms and suites offering views of the surrounding Aravalli hills. Located within a new block, the 82 additional rooms will include premium luxury accommodation while Oriental Pavilion, the new restaurant, will offer guests an expansive range of Asian cuisine; thereby complimenting the hotels existing all-day dining restaurant, Vyom; Mandala, an eclectic bar; and Jal, the poolside café.

IHCL also marked its debut in Dudhwa, Uttar Pradesh with the opening of Jaagir Manor – a SeleQtions hotel. With design inspired by Victorian elegance, the hotel is a serene oasis in the heart of the rainforests of the Terai Himalayas bordering Nepal. Featuring a combination of heritage rooms dating back to the 1940's and luxury villas, the 20-room hotel is nestled within tranquil orchards and surrounding forests. Located at a comfortable driving distance from Lucknow, guests can delight in a leisurely vacation away from the bustle of the city or embark on an adventure to explore all that the destination has to offer. From glocal and Indian delicacies at the all-day diner, The Pavilion, to intimate barbeque evenings, Jaagir Manor's culinary offerings will satiate one's tastebuds.

The group has put its foot in Manali. It has opened Baragarh Resort & Spa, an SeleQtions hotel. Nestled in the lap of the majestic Himalayas, the hotel offers magnificent views of the Pir Panjal and

Dhauladhar ranges. Located on a hill and set amidst 70 acres of lush orchards, Baragarh Resort & Spa overlooks the river Beas and offers a 360-degrees view of snow-capped peaks and picturesque valleys. The resort is a comfortable driving distance from Kullu airport. The spacious 33 rooms are spread over European style chalets with touches of the local design ethos. The spa and the outdoor heated pool are ideal for rejuvenating. Guests can enjoy Indian, international and authentic Himachali delicacies at Tentu, the all-day diner. The bar, Mulkila, serves small bites with stunning views.

IHCL strengthens its presence of Ginger Hotels in Asansol, Durgapur, Kochi & Nagpur

IHCL announced the signing of two Ginger branded hotels in Durgapur and Asansol in the state of West Bengal. The 55 keys Ginger Durgapur and the 80 key Ginger Asansol, both are strategically located on the Delhi- Kolkata highway, a short driving distance from Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport. Both hotels will house Qmin, the all-day diner serving local and global cuisines, a bar and fitness centre. They also offer banqueting and meeting spaces. Both the hotels are fully fitted leases with Ginger Durgapur a Brownfield project while Ginger Asansol is a Greenfield project.

The group also signed its fourth Ginger hotel in Kochi, Kerala. The hotel is a fully fitted lease. The 73-key hotel is strategically located in the central business district at MG Road. It is at a drivable distance from Cochin Airport as well as important tourist destinations. The hotel will house an all-day diner – Qmin, offering a variety of global and local favourites, a banquet hall, swimming pool and a fitness centre.

The group also announced the signing of its second hotel under the Ginger brand in Nagpur, Maharashtra. The Brownfield project, a fully fitted lease is slated to open in April 2024. The 100-key hotel is strategically located at Wardha Road, Jaiprakash Nagar, a short driving distance from Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar International Airport as well as important business hubs. It is a part of a mixed-use development, spread over the top three floors of an eleven-storey complex. The hotel will house Qmin, the all-day diner serving local and global cuisines and a fitness centre.

IHCL has announced new Vivanta hotels in Rajamundry, Jamshedpur & Indore

The group announced the signing of its first hotel in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh. The Greenfield hotel will be branded Vivanta. The 120 keys hotel is strategically situated at a comfortable driving distance from the Rajahmundry International airport as well as the satellite city of Kakinada, an important port. The hotel will have the signature all day diner Mynt, a bar and recreational facilities including swimming pool and fitness centre. It will also offer over 550 sq. mt. of state-of-the-art banqueting space including meeting rooms.

It also announced the signing of its fourth hotel in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand. This is a conversion and will be rebranded Vivanta after extensive renovations. The hotel will be operational in 2024. The 94 key hotel is strategically situated on Golmuri Road in the centre of the city. Other facilities at the hotel will include an all-day diner, specialty and roof top restaurants, bar, swimming pool and a fitness centre. It will also offer over 1,000 sq. mt. of banqueting space spread across three halls.

The group debuts in Indore, Madhya Pradesh with signing of its first hotel in the city under the Vivanta brand. The Greenfield project is slated to open in 2026. The 115 key hotel is strategically situated at a short driving distance from the airport and industrial areas. Other facilities at the hotel will include an all-day diner, a bar, swimming pool, fitness centre and a spa. It will also offer over 550 sq. mt. of banqueting space including meetings rooms.

IHCL Sets Foot in Lakshadweep

IHCL also announced the signing of two Taj-branded resorts on the islands of Suheli and Kadmat in Lakshadweep. The Greenfield projects are slated to open in 2026, and will be developed by IHCL.

Suheli is a ring-shaped island with a coral reef rim that encircles a lagoon and is rich in marine life. The Taj at Suheli will have 110 rooms including 60 villas on the beach and 50 water villas. A coral island with a large lagoon, Kadmat Island, also known as Cardamom Island, is a marine protected area with seagrass beds, which are a nestling ground for marine turtles. Featuring 110 rooms, the Taj hotel at Kadmat will comprise of 75 beach villas and 35 water villas.

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Abhijeet Gadgil

Novotel Pune has appointed Abhijeet Gadgil as the Director of Sales & Marketing. With over 12 years of experience, he is a performance driven professional. Abhijeet did BBA in Hospitality and Tourism Management from Kohinoor IMI - School of Hospitality Management and started his career with The Pride Hotel Pune as a Management Trainee in 2010. His last assignment was

at Fairfield by Marriott Goa Benaulim as a Director of Sales and has been a part of the Marriott family for over 10 years.



Nitin Gosain

Nitin Gosain is the new front office manager at Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach. Nitin brings a decade of experience in front office operations and has been awarded Manager of the Year 2014-15. He had a diverse career in the hospitality industry, having worked with Pullman and Novotel New Delhi Aerocity, Accor Hotels, and the Taj Hotels group of resorts and palaces. Alongside

his operational duties, he will have a significant impact on financial management and coordination at the hotel.



Sunil Kumar

Sunil Kumar joined the The Ritz-Carlton, Pune as Engineering Manager. With an experience of over 14 years, he has spent 9 years in the hospitality industry. He has worked his way up in the Engineering department with hotel brands like Marriott International, Hilton and Sarovar. Sunil served as Engineering Manager at W Goa. Sunil has a diploma in Electrical Engineering from Government

polytechnic college Sundernagar Himachal Pradesh, and joined Marriott Hotel & Resort, Goa in 2011 as an Engineering Executive



Gautam Khanna

Raffles Udaipur has announced the appointment of Gautam Khanna as the new Director of Operations. Gautam brings an experience of over 14 years. He has been associated with ITC Hotels and Marriott International. His last assignment was as the Director of Food and Beverage of Pullman and Novotel at the Aerocity in New Delhi. Gautam spent 8 years with ITC Hotels where he graduated as

a Management Trainee from the Welcomgroup Management Institute, and was an integral part of the F&B for ITC Maurya.



Aniket Jadhav

Aniket Jadhav is the new Executive Housekeeper at the The Ritz-Carlton, Pune. Aniket comes with an experience of 7 years in the hospitality industry, having worked The Westin Chennai Velachery, St. Regis Mumbai and W Goa. He also served as the Deputy Housekeeper with Grand Hyatt Mumbai. Aniket graduated in Hotel Management from IHM, Aurangabad. He was selected

for the Graduate Management Associate Program at The Westin Chennai Velachery.



Sohil Bhargava

Raffles Udaipur has appointed Sohil Bhargava as the Food & Beverage Manager. Sohil brings an experience of over 9.5 years in F&B operations. Sohil began his career as a Corporate Leadership Trainee with the Hyatt Hotels Corporation, and later became Assistant Restaurant Manager at Grand Hyatt Goa. He was the Assistant Director of Restaurant Operations at Andaz Delhi and

relocated to the Grand Hyatt Gurgaon where he took the post of Outlets Manager before being promoted to Assistant Director Food & Beverage.



Sharin Joseph

Hilton Bangalore Embassy GolfLinks has appointed Sharin Joseph as Commercial Director. With over a decade of experience in the hospitality industry, Sharin brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the role. Sharin has a proven track record in sales and marketing, having held various positions at Marriott International, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, Hyatt Regency, Lemon Tree Hotels and Royal

Orchid Hotels. Sharin served as the Director of Sales and Marketing at Courtyard and Fairfield by Marriott Bengaluru, Outer Ring Road.



Siddharth Noronha

Chef Siddharth Noronha is the new Executive Chef at Sheraton Grand Pune. With over 16 years of experience, he has been spearheading myriad kitchens across leading brands. He completed his Diploma in Hotel Management Catering Technology from Rizvi College and started his career as a trainee with the Taj Mahal Hotel and later worked at Hyatt Regency Mumbai, Grand Hyatt Goa, Grand Hyatt

Mumbai and Sofitel BKC. He has been at the helm of kitchen operations for restaurants including Soma, Celini and China House.



Sukhbir Singh

Novotel Hyderabad Airport has appointed Sukhbir Singh as the new General Manager. With an experience spanning over two decades in the hospitality industry and financial consulting services, Sukhbir's background includes a strong track record in managing hotels, maximizing revenue and improving guest satisfaction. He has worked with the Accor Group, ITC Hotels, Oberoi Hotels and Resorts. Sukhbir has worked at Novotel Hyderabad Airport as the Director of Sales and Marketing and then as the Ex. Assistant Manager



Amol Singh Reel

Amol Singh Reel has been appointed as the Director of Sales at Conrad Pune. He will be developing revenue and marketing strategies. Associated with the hotel industry for over 15 years, Amol has worked with Hyatt Regency Pune, Taj Group of Hotels - Vivanta by Taj Coral Reef Maldives, Vivanta By Taj - Blue Diamond Pune and Vivanta By Taj - Panaji Goa. He holds a Postgraduate degree in Marketing Management(PGDMM), a Bachelor degree in Tourism Studies and a Diploma in Hotel Management.



Mohammed Imran Khan

The Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach has appointed Mohammad Imran Khan as their Cluster Revenue Manager. He has decade of knowledge in e-commerce, branding, distribution strategy, and channel marketing. He will be responsible for managing and optimizing revenue for Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach, Novotel Vijayawada Varun, and The Bheemili Resort managed by Accor. He held positions at The Imperial New Delhi, Carlson Rezidor and many more



Siddharth Mann

Siddharth Mann is the new Commercial Director at the iconic 201 inventory hotel, DoubleTree by Hilton Gurugram Bani Square. He will lead strategic sales and marketing endeavors. Siddharth brings more than 15 years of industry experience to the position with renowned hospitality brands in India. He pursued post-graduate diploma in Business Management from IMT Ghaziabad in 2018 and Bachelors in Hotel Management and Catering Technology from Institute of Hotel Management, Shimla in 2007.



Kunal Jain

Kunal Jain has joined Sheraton Grand Pune and Le Meridien Mahabaleshwar Resort & Spa as the new Cluster Director of Revenue. With over ten years of experience, Kunal has worked with IHG Hotels and Resorts and The Leela Group, starting with Courtyard by Marriott Gurgaon. Kunal completed his Bachelor's Degree in Hospitality Management from IHM Kurukshetra and has a Post Graduation in Revenue Management from Vedatya Institute. His last assignment was with Holiday Inn New Delhi International Airport as the Director of Revenue.



Disha Shah

Disha Shah has taken over as the Director of Marketing and Communication at Conrad Pune. She has worked for Marriott International and Hyatt Hotels, across their brands. Her core areas of expertise include brand building, strategic communications, managing alliances, media management, social media marketing, digital marketing and crisis communications. In her current role, Disha will continue to build, maintain and sustain the integrity through positioning strategies for the first flagship hotel of Hilton in India, Conrad Pune.



Ena Roy

Four Seasons Hotel Mumbai appoints Ena Roy as its new Director of Rooms. She will oversee the operations of departments - Concierge, Front Office, Housekeeping and Spa, Health Club operation. Ena has been a part of Park Hyatt Chennai, Novotel Kolkata, Hyatt Regency Chandigarh and Radisson Blu Hotel, New Delhi. Since joining The Oberoi Amarvilas, she graduated from being housekeeping executive to managerial roles across Chandigarh, Dubai, and New Delhi. She last served at the Grand Hyatt in Kochi.



Tapajit Bhattacharjee

DoubleTree Hilton Goa has appointed Tapajit Bhattacharjee as the new F&B Manager. Tapajit brings a wealth of experiences both in India and abroad, has risen to the ranks from being a restaurant server to leading a team, engaged with numerous hospitality brands. In his last assignment, he was overseeing of a heritage property offering bespoke hospitality. Having worked in Goa in the past, he is well aware of market dynamics of this populace state, which is renowned for its concept restaurants and bars.

Top Travel & Hospitality Trends for 2023

By Sharmila Chand

The good news is that the post-pandemic complete rebound is on the cards for the travel and hospitality industry. Going forward, we expect to see better business growth and revival of the economics. Here is a take on key trends as shared by known professionals that will shine in the year ahead.

Mukesh Singh, MD, The Tattwa Corbett Spa & Resort, Uttarakhand

Long Stay

A very encouraging trend in the Travel and Hospitality industry that we are seeing is how people are increasing their days of stay. More



Mukesh Singh



Sarbendra Sarkar



Vishal Lonkar

and more guests are staying Long Weekends; either they come in on a Thursday/Friday or extend their stay after the Weekend to Monday. People now want to experience the destination in leisure or spend time relaxing in the hotel/resort they are staying. They spend lot of time inside the resort, enjoy all the facilities like the pool, spa and also do local sightseeing in a more relaxed and leisurely manner.

Destination Wedding

Having a Destination Wedding in a different city has become the most prominent travel trend and is ever-increasing. It is not only the uber rich in India who are doing Destination Weddings. It is like most Indian families want a Destination Wedding and it has moved beyond Goa or Rajasthan wedding. Newer destinations like Uttarakhand are fast becoming Destination Wedding hotspots. People usually book into a resort with a 2night / 3day package and do all their functions and the wedding under one roof.

Group Travel

We have seen in recent times, people are travelling in groups with friends and family to celebrate festivals. For Holi, Diwali, Rakhi and other festivals, people are travelling away from their homes to spend some exclusive time. They lock their travel calendar much in advance and escape to have a good time away from the hustle and bustle of their cities. Holi celebrations, particularly, away from the city have become very common. It is either a small group of friends or a couple of families who book a resort and spend fun time together.

Vishal Lonkar, General Manager - Business Development, Renest Hotels & Resorts

Nature Retreats

The pandemic caused many people to rethink what's important to them, including

their travel plans. People now prefer to travel off the grid, visit wellness retreats, experience culture and nostalgia, and travel on bucket list trips. Holidays that reconnect with nature are gaining popularity after the pandemic. More travellers are now seeking peaceful getaways, whether it's a wellness retreat or living in nature's lap.

Fine Dining

With travel being in the foray, the evolution of fine dining continues. There is a huge opportunity for restaurants after the pandemic to focus on what can make a difference and what matters most to everyone. At the beginning of the year, we saw that restaurants were trying to be creative in providing a nostalgic experience to their consumers while maintaining the highest standard of hygiene.

Destination Wedding

Having been disconnected from the world for the last two years, consumers are definitely looking forward to a more intimate experience. Another important aspect of the travel and hospitality industry is the 'Wedding Season', which is finally here. Apart from the usual destinations such as Goa and Udaipur, the wedding destinations have evolved this year, with new entrants such as Mahabaleshwar, Puri, Pushkar, and Ranthambore added to the mix.

Sarbendra Sarkar, Founder & MD, Cygnett Hotels and Resorts

Domestic market to remain strong:

The last year registered domestic markets as a key segment for Indian hotels. The year 2023 is going to witness the domestic markets remain at the forefront of a strong Indian hospitality resurgence. Inbound tourism is recovering slowly and in its absence hospitality players are going to focus more on business opportunities within the country.

Wellness tourism to thrive:

The pandemic has raised the awareness

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Mehul Sharma



Vichin Sehgal



"Bleisure - Today Hybrid Work Culture has become a common trend with major companies like Amazon, Facebook, Google etc allowing their employees to work from home. Locals are looking for a change of environment and Bleisure travellers are looking to hotel venues as make-shift offices. In the hospitality sector, the next chapter of corporate travel is here with the modern-day business traveller who believes in bleisure - the concept of business meets leisure, adding on a few days to a business trip to enjoy the destination. We need to capitalize on this trend by customizing our offerings to meet the needs and wants of this emerging segment as part of our strategy for 2023."

Pranay Verdia, Cluster GM of Sheraton Hyderabad Hotel

level of people about their health which has catapulted wellness tourism in the country. The year 2023 will see wellness as one of the key reasons for Indians to travel. So, hotels and resorts with a good wellness offering will find many takers.

It's all about the experience:

Travelling in 2023 will go beyond mere 'sightseeing'. Indians will travel with a purpose it can be food and beverage, spiritual or adventure driven. Hotels that are located near immersive natural settings are well-positioned to gain from this trend. I expect northeast India to grow in popularity manifolds in 2023.

Sustainability is present and the future:

Sustainability is in the spotlight. Travellers are now aware of taking a sustainable holiday like never before. More and more hospitality players will be highlighting their sustainability efforts in 2023 to attract this new generation of environmentally aware tourists

Mehul Sharma, Founder & CEO – Signum Hotels & Resorts

Sustainability

Climate change still is one of the most global issues. Guests would prefer staying at a hotel that prioritise sustainable offerings. This would mean hotels would have to look into their eco-certifications, eco-friendly amenities, being energy efficient, conserving water, using sustainable clean products.

Wellness Travel Getting Popular:

We have observed the shift in focus and priority of guests towards Wellness in last few years and that will continue to happen. Hotels should work towards offering more holistic packages. This could include offering Yoga classes, healthy menu, in-room spa treatments, diet consultations, etc. Leveraging low-season wellness retreats can be a good idea to boost revenue.

Smart Technology in Hotels:

Hotel Industry has a love-hate relationship with technology. This sector still struggles with seamless integration with technology. Airports, OTAs segments have been growing in terms of technology. Hotel sector needs to be focussed on developing and seamlessly integrating & streamlining tech in the processes.

Immersive Experiences On The Rise

Consumer Behaviour is evolving all the time and, today we are dealing with

customers who are prioritising lifestyle experience over extravagance.

Micro-travel:

Short distance travel demands are rising. Operators of caravan and holiday parks have seen a growth in bookings compared to major city-based hotels.

Vichin Sehgal, Vice President of Rajasthali Resort & Spa, Jaipur

Rajasthan has always been the pioneer of new hospitality trends that redefine the industry at large. And thus, it does not come as much of a surprise to me that in the next couple of years we might be able to experience a lot more of these trends that will define the hospitality industry of this state.

Destination Weddings

Rajasthan, specifically Jaipur, is the hub of experiential, royal weddings. And this trend will grow exponentially in the oncoming years. Destination weddings are about selecting the perfect city or place for your wedding which may be not your local locale. But marrying beyond the known locales, as per one's dream or preference is adding to the trend of destination weddings.

Staycations

The foundation of a staycation is rooted in the broader themes of smaller families, larger room setups, customized services, curated gourmet preparations and experiential luxury to add to their weekend plans. More and more families are opting for a quiet staycation to escape their busy lives at times and simply take the time to reconnect with their loved ones. The trend can grow up to 100% in the next couple of years in the industry.

Intimate Weddings

Gone are the days of larger, more than 100-people weddings, when people would book the entire inventory of the hotel for their weddings. Weddings have become much more experience-oriented, where in people want to invite only their loved and near ones, ranging from 50 to maybe a hundred people. This is a trend to stay for a longer period.

Closed family groups travelling

Besides the practice of friends travelling together, we are seeing more and more families travelling to a destination for the weekend with their members to curate an experiential stay.

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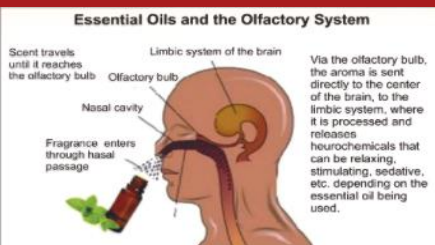
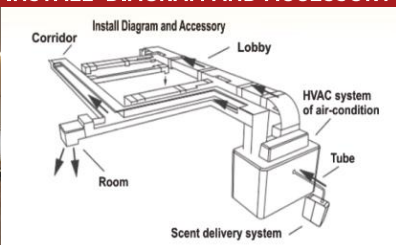
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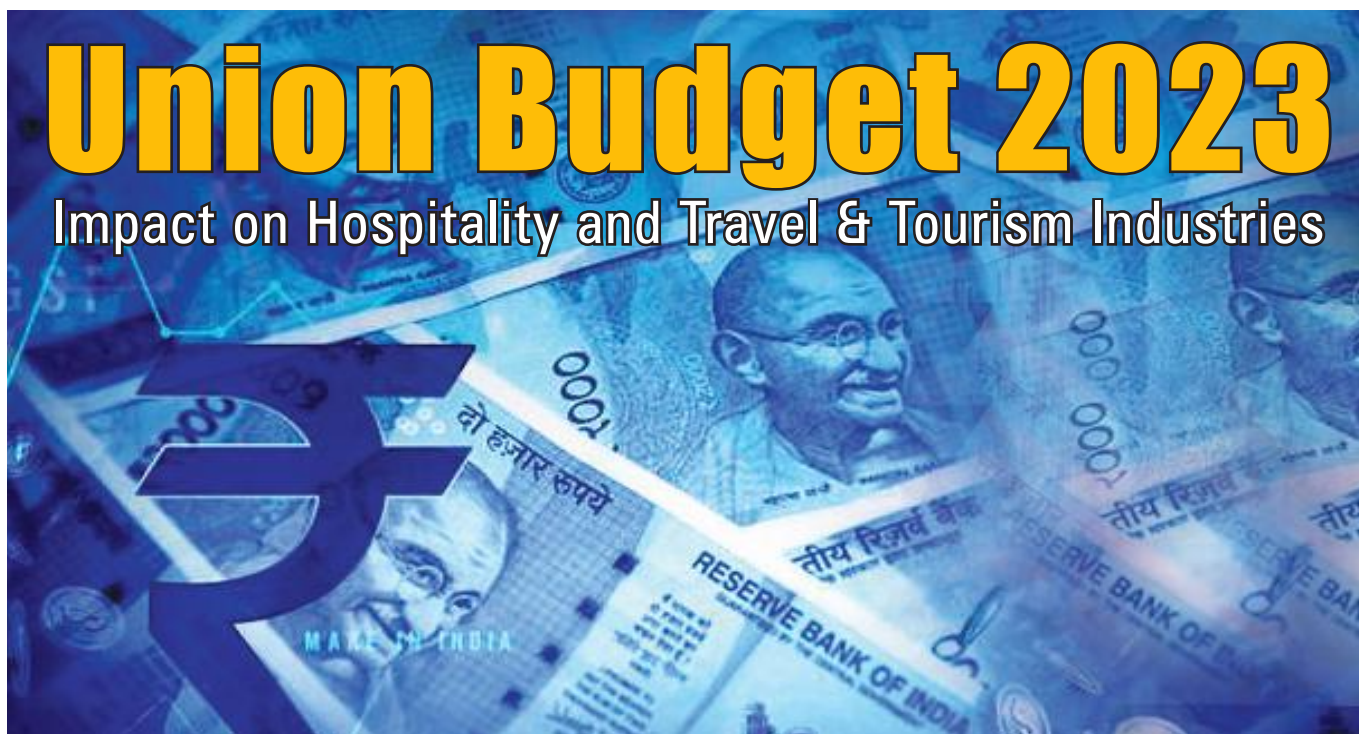
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Hospitality and Travel & Tourism industries are closely linked and among the major industries contributing to the economic development of the country. Hospitality industry, which is one of the foremost providers for skilled and semi skilled jobs in the country was, over the last few years, due to the pandemic, adversely affected. Many F&B outlets, even hotels had to be shut and a few of them still remain so, in spite of the industry slowly returning back to normal. Due to the industry still being under stress, it was looking up to the Finance Minister announcing some concessions in the budget. The FM has, to some degree, come up with some measures which are welcome by the hospitality industry. **Ashok Malkani** examines the concessions that the industry has hailed.

Hospitality and travel and tourism industries have contributed to the not only the economic growth of the country but also to the rise in GDP (Gross domestic product). Both the sectors underwent a difficult time during the pandemic. According to the UNWTO (United Nations' World Tourism Organisation), COVID-19 pushed back international tourism by almost 30 years. However, slowly and steadily, both sectors have recovered. Today, the hospitality sector accounts for more than 8% of the country's work force.

According to World Travel & Tourism Council's (WTTC's) latest Economic Impact Report (EIR) the sector's contribution to the nation's economy is believed to have been about Rs 15.9 trillion (\$ 215 billion) in 2022, 1% above 2019 levels. The forecast also reveals the sector is expected to create over 24 million

jobs over the next decade, averaging more than 2.4 million new jobs every year. "The hospitality industry is one of the foremost providers of skilled and semi-skilled jobs in the country, claims Ruchyeta Bhatia, Co-Founder of Brewworks Pvt. Ltd. The Food & Beverage industry accounts for about 3% of India's GDP and almost two-third of the overall retail market in India, discloses Nesco Foods' Vice President, Bhushan Anant Jalgaonkar.

Under India's G20 Presidency, the Indian tourism sector will contribute \$ 65 billion forex to GDP and generate 140 million jobs. The Ministry of Tourism will be organizing the country's first Global Tourism Summit in New Delhi from April 10-12, 2023, where all G-20 member countries will be invited to participate.

Investment Information and Credit Rating Agency (ICRA) expects the hotel industry's

revenues and margins to return to pre-Covid levels in FY2023. This would be due to several factors like increase in domestic leisure/transient travel, pent-up demand from Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions MICE (including weddings) and gradual recovery in business travel and foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs).

The stalwarts of the hospitality industry and the travel & tourism industry, which is closely linked to the former, were eagerly awaiting the union budget 2023 to see whether there were some concessions and incentives offered to the industries concerned so that they could determine, formulate and align short and long terms goals for their organizations. A favourable budget for the hospitality industry was eagerly awaited as, according to Aji Nair - Chief Advisor and Consultant at Mirah Hospitality. He

discloses that in spite of the F&B industry slowly coming back to normalcy after the pandemic; most of the restaurants were still not financially balanced and were still trying to pay the liabilities accumulated during the Covid and post-Covid period.

Travel & Tourism Industry Reaction

The travel and tourism industry is believed to have received a boost in the budget. The Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, releasing the budget 2023, stated that being aware of the potential of the sector in creating jobs and opportunities for the youth, promotion of tourism would be taken up in mission mode. She revealed that, to boost the sector, 50 tourist destinations would be chosen through a challenge to be developed into a whole package for domestic and international tourism. She revealed that initiatives would also be taken to set up tourism in villages adjacent to the border.

In the Budget Rs 2400 crore (\$309.13 million) has been allocated to Ministry of Tourism. This was 18.42% higher than what was allocated in FY 2021-22. The Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned 76 projects worth \$678.39 million under the Swadeshi Darshan Scheme for the growth of tourism infrastructure in the country.

What has been the reaction of the tourism sector? Here are some reactions from the stalwarts of the industry:

Vishal Suri, Managing Director, SOTC Travel Limited:

The Union Budget 2023-24 presented by Hon'ble Finance Minister provides a positive focus on infrastructural development/ investment, digital enhancements, sustainability, agriculture, domestic tourism.



Vishal Suri



Nirmala Sitharaman

We appreciate the Government's plan of continued focus on domestic tourism, railways, new airports, heliports, water aerodromes that will improve regional connectivity and be one of the key drivers of the domestic tourism sector.

Further the announcement on the launch of an app to enhance domestic tourism experience reiterates our country's focus on digitization. The 'Dekho Apna Desh' initiative focusing on sector specific skilling and entrepreneurship development while the facilitation of tourism infrastructure under the Vibrant Villages Programme, and setting up a 'Unity Mall' in state capitals/ popular tourist destinations to promote 'One District, One product' for GI products and other handicrafts will strongly support domestic tourism.

The travel & tourism industry supports one in 10 jobs and provides livelihoods for a significant number of people, therefore the Government's support on prioritizing tourism with active participation from local authorities, sustainable practices and encouraging public-private partnerships is a positive pivot towards revival/road to recovery.

However this Union Budget did not provide the travel & tourism industry the respite we anticipated with respect to rationalization of taxes. Instead the proposals increased TCS on outbound travel and other LRS transactions from 5% to 20% without any threshold exemption. In our view, such high rates of taxation are an added liability to outbound travellers and negatively impacts tour operators recovering from the pandemic. We request the Government to reconsider this proposal.

We also hoped this budget would offer elimination of the 5 crore capping for the SEIS benefit and incentives to Corporates for organizing meetings and conference in India through partial or full tax exemptions.

Madhavan Menon, Chairman & Managing Director, Thomas Cook (India) Limited:

The proposal in the Union Budget 2023, to increase the rate of TCS from 5 to 20 per cent for purchase of overseas tours & overseas remittances other than education will significantly increase the upfront cash outflow for end customers. It will drive more of these customers to use alternate channels that are outside the domestic tax net. We urge the Government to reconsider this.

On the positive side, Income tax rebates announced in the budget will result in an increase of disposable incomes which is welcome.

Tourism promotion being taken up on a "mission mode"- with active participation of states, public-private partnerships and convergence of government programs will drive domestic tourism growth.

Strong infrastructural focus in the announcement of 50 new airports, heliports, water aerodromes and revival of advanced landing grounds will enhance regional access and connectivity.

Financial support via loans to be provided to states for developing enhanced road and rail connectivity will help uplift of the domestic tourism sector.

The selection of 50 destinations to be developed as holistic tourism packages – combined with the focus on local level tourism & the promotion and sale of GI products & handicrafts will give a boost to local arts and artisans.



Madhavan Menon



Vinay Dube



Pradeep Shetty



Jaision Chacko

Vinay Dube - Founder and CEO, Akasa Air:

The Union Budget presented by the Finance Minister is growth oriented and will steer India towards holistic development across all pillars. The announcement of 50 additional airports and ramping up of air transport infrastructure is a welcome move and will support the nation's growing demand for air travel. The focus on promoting domestic tourism will provide impetus to further revival of the sector and aligns with our vision to strengthen India's transportation system. As India's greenest airline, we are delighted to acknowledge Green Growth as one the key priorities of this Union Budget and be at the forefront of creating green job opportunities in the country.

Hospitality Industry Response

The announcement for the boost in tourism industry was well received by hospitality industry. Veterans in the industry were happy with the budget announcements. Their upshots on the budget were thus:

Pradeep Shetty, President, Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI):

The fact that Tourism got attention in the Union Budget is a big welcome. The Hon'ble FM recognized the country's potential for domestic as well as foreign tourists and the huge opportunities the sector holds for jobs and entrepreneurship. The Hon'ble FM stressed on promoting tourism on mission mode, with the active participation of States, the convergence of Government programmes and public-private partnerships. This is especially good news for regional tourism and hospitality. Developing new airports, heliports, water aerodromes and advanced landing grounds to improve regional connectivity will unlock the vast potential for growth in the Western region of India. An integrated and innovative approach through challenge mode will be a game changer for the destinations in the Western region selected through this route.

The Unity Mall initiative too is a great step in the right direction that encourages States to promote regional tourism and sale of their own ODOPs (one district, one product), GI products and other handicraft products. The Credit guarantee scheme for MSMEs with an infusion of Rs.9000 Cr into the corpus is expected to help small and medium-scale

hotels and restaurants.

Jaision Chacko, Secretary General, Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI):

It's encouraging to note that the Union Budget has recognized the immense potential of the Tourism sector in the country to be tapped. The announcement of the Minister that promotion of tourism will be taken up on mission mode, with active participation of States, convergence of Government programmes and public-private partnerships is an extremely crucial announcement and the industry believes that this will benefit the sector in the long term.

The Unity Mall, other tourism promotion initiatives through States and the development of 50 tourism destinations as a whole package will help in the growth of domestic as well as international tourism. Also, the announcement of additional airports, heliports, water aerodromes and advance landing grounds to improve regional connectivity is a great step. Like the Golden triangle, regional connectivity will give a major boost to the dedicated tourism corridors. This will help promote local tourism whilst giving a boost to investment in hospitality projects in the region. The industry is expecting appropriate allocation to be made to hospitality as per sector-specific planning envisaged by the Ministry of Tourism in conjunction with the industry.

The enhancement of ease of doing business by reducing more than 39,000 compliances will also help to create a positive business environment. Lastly, the revamped Credit guarantee scheme for MSMEs with an infusion of Rs.9000 Cr into the corpus is expected to help small and medium-scale hotels and restaurants.

The Hospitality industry's long pending requests for Infrastructure status, uniform GST, and placing Tourism on the concurrent list of the constitution have not been met but the new announcements are positive signs of the Government's intent about working on them in the near future.

Sarbendra Sarkar, Founder & MD, Cygnett Hotels and Resorts:

The Union Budget 2023-2024 presented by the Finance Minister (Nirmala Sitharaman) is a growth-oriented one aimed to help India weather the current global economic challenges. With the FM announcing plans



Sarbendra Sarkar

to renew 50 additional airports, helipads, water aero drones, and advanced landing grounds, it will boost regional connectivity. Moreover, the announcement to develop 50 destinations for domestic and international tourists will also help to draw attention to the country's tourism and hospitality sectors. The Finance Minister said that these tourist destinations will be selected through challenge mode. The impetus on

Dekho Apna Desh will provide a further boost to the growth of domestic tourism in the country. The FM also highlighted that states will be encouraged to set up a "Unity Mall" in the capital city or most popular tourist destination for the promotion of the 'One District, One product' theme. Such initiatives will also help unleash the potential taped in the tourism sector.

S P Jain, Chairman & MD, Pride Hotels Ltd.:

The Honorable Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman has announced the development of tourist places jointly by public and private partnerships. This will give a much-needed boost to the domestic tourism segment. The budget specifies that 50 tourist destinations will be selected and developed as a whole package for domestic and international tourism. We welcome this announcement. For domestic tourism "Dekho Apna Desh" has already been promoted very widely now similarly international tourism too will be revived with these initiatives.

The tourist infrastructure will also be



S P Jain

provided on the border and in North East India which will be highly beneficial for the inflow of tourists. The industry can harness the direct and multiplier effects of tourism in employment generation to the youth of India as the sector creates direct and indirect job opportunities. We believe these implementations will play a pivotal role in overall economic development. This is a good budget for the hospitality and tourism sectors.

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Tarak Bhattacharya

Paritosh Ladhani, Joint Managing Director, Sincere Developers, owner Taj Hotel & Convention Centre Agra:

The Union Budget 2023-24 presented by the Finance Minister highlighted that the Indian economy is on a growth trajectory in spite of the global economic challenges. In her Budget speech, the FM emphasised that the country offers “immense attraction” for both domestic and international tourists. With the government announcing that states will be encouraged to set up a “Unity Mall” in the capital city or most popular tourist destination for the promotion of ‘One District, one product’ theme, such initiatives will help to unleash the potential vested in the tourism sector. I also expect that the change in tax regime announced in the Union Budget will result in more disposable income in the hands of middle-class consumers – which I expect ultimately will spur consumption in activities like travel. Regional connectivity will see a boost with the plans to renew 50 additional airports, helipads, water aero drones and advanced landing grounds.

Ashley James, General Manager at Angsana Oasis Spa and Resort, Bangalore:

The government’s promise to take up promotion of tourism on ‘mission mode’ is very encouraging and much needed to bring the sector back after the adverse impact of Covid. We are excited to know more about the programs the finance minister spoke about during the budget announcement and look forward to working with the government. We feel the public-private partnerships the government proposed, is the way forward to fastrack development of infrastructure, facilities, to give tourism a boost. We hope among the 50 destinations that are likely to be developed for domestic and international tourism, Karnataka will have a few locations.

Nandivardhan Jain, CEO & Founder, Noesis Capital Advisors:

The Union budget has shown positive signs for the Hospitality, Travel, and Tourism industries, the Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, has encouraged the states to set up a ‘Unity Mall’ in the state capital or at an attractive tourist destination in the state for the promotion and sale of ‘One District, One product’ (ODOP) and Geographical Indication (GI) products along with other handicrafts.

While the Minister announced 50

tourist destinations will be selected and developed as a whole package for domestic and international tourism, the overall development with this vision is an impetus to the sector. The FM, Sitharaman, stated, ‘Dekho Apna Desh’ initiative was launched by the Prime Minister to the middle class to prefer domestic tourism over international tourism whereas ‘Swadesh Darshan Scheme’ was launched for integrated development of theme-based tourist circuits.

Moving towards, emboldening the active participation of states, convergence of government programmes and public-private partnerships. The future seems bright and an exciting one with 50 additional airports, and helipads to be revived to increase connectivity with the budget of 3,114 crores to the union civil aviation ministry. This will further increase the passenger movement and boast the hotel room inventory across the region which will increase employment opportunities and parallelly uplift the community, promoting sustainable tourism.

Tarak Bhattacharya - Executive Director and CEO at Mad Over Donuts:

There were no significant direct takeaways from the union budget 2023 related to the F&B or the QSR industry. Still, there are some interesting aspects which will help our business. Government will select 50 destinations, to promote tourism on mission mode. The Finance Minister said that with an integrated and innovative approach, at least 50 destinations will be selected through challenge mode. This will increase the movement of people towards these locations thereby giving a chance to increase travel and hospitality businesses that will help us too. This is positive news for the F&B industry as more tourism indicates higher footfalls. Regional air connectivity will be improved in the country allowing more flights, helicopters, and water aerodromes to operate. This again increases tourism and can benefit the F&B as well as the QSR industry. The government has also reduced the income tax rate and raised the income tax limit to 7LPA, allowing people more disposal income to spend more on food and leisure. A positive sign for the F&B industry. ■



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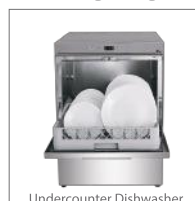
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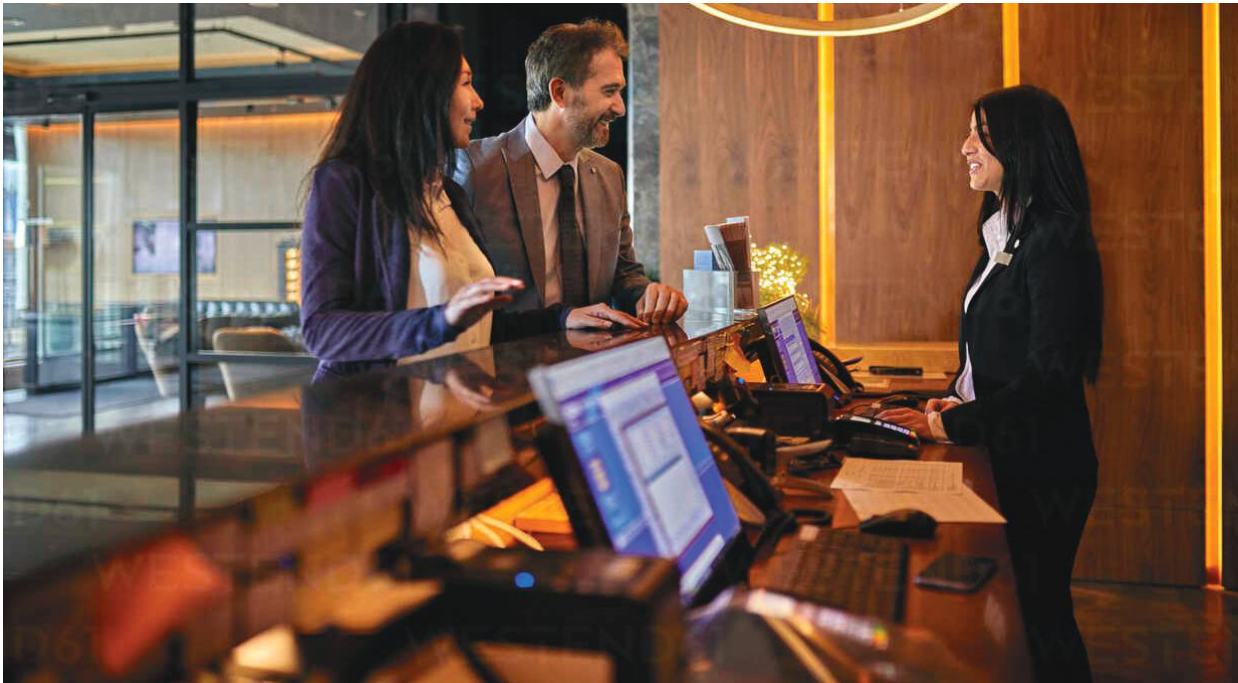
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Employees' Impact on Hospitality Industry

Hospitality industry is one of the most volatile industries as far as employment is concerned. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, Hospitality and Travel Industry employs more people than automotive, mining, financial services and manufacturing combined. But hospitality demands its employees to be epitomes of cordiality, friendliness and conviviality, for establishing an amicable relationship between the guests and the hotel. **Ashok Malkani** takes a look at how the industry, with the help of the employees, establishes a healthy rapport with the guests and the essential aptitude and attitude that the employees must possess.

Hospitality industry and travel and tourism have been among the major employment oriented sectors in the country. Since each of these industries has a dynamic nature there is immense scope for job opportunities. Over the last few years, due to the pandemic, hotels had to bid goodbye to several of their employees, but as the industry, slowly and gradually, is returning back to normalcy the market for jobs within the industry is progressing steadily.

However, since hospitality industry is based on the relationship that is established and shared between the host who provides different services to its consumers in return for goodwill for the establishment, the employees have to have expertise in different fields.

Shreya Khatri, Director HR, Signum Hotels and Resorts, Faridabad, commenting on the joblessness in the industry receding says, "Hospitality industry is still under a recovery stage. Hence, job loss percentage has reduced." But she is optimistic about the future prospects as human resources are required to run the business.

Shreya continues, "Hotel industry being the epitome of hospitality, personal touch and wow experience by people is required to fulfill the objective. For this the employees must be suitably trained. Currently hotel industry is still under a restricted mode; however, probability of it to boom again is highly expected, soon in times to come."

Sahil Lilaramani, Social Media Coordinator, The Westin Mumbai Garden City, elaborating on the joblessness in the industry caused

by pandemic states, "The pandemic has indeed resulted in significant job losses in the hotel industry, as travel restrictions and a decrease in demand for hotel services have led to a sharp decline in revenue for many hotel companies. However, the situation has improved in recent months as more people have been vaccinated and travel restrictions have been lifted in most of the countries. As a result, the hotel industry has started to recover, and there are signs that employment in the industry is beginning to pick up again."

He is, however, cautious about predicting future prospects as the situation remains fluid and is dependent on the course of the pandemic. With the rollout of vaccines, the hope is that the pandemic will eventually be brought under control, and travel demand will increase. This, in turn, should lead to resurgence in the hotel industry and an increase in job opportunities in the sector. In the longer term, the hotel industry is expected to continue to be a key player in the global tourism and travel industry. The rise of online booking platforms and the growth of budget-friendly hotel options is also likely to create new job opportunities in the industry.

Speaking about the future employment potential of the industry he states, "It is expected to be impacted by a variety of factors, including technological advancements, changing consumer preferences, and shifts in the global economy."

Though the employment would be impacted by various factors, the industry is expected to continue to offer a wide range of employment opportunities, particularly in areas such as customer service, hospitality, and experience management."

Promoting Goodwill

Even though many business establishments, including hotels, are making changes in their business models, the main criteria for a hotel's success depends on the rapport and goodwill that it establishes with its guests. Thus almost all segments of the employees are responsible for the property's success.

Shreya claims "Hospitality sector is compared more with emotional touch to build trust and retain guests, thus employees are the main factor for making the hotel a success. One can say that the marketing and sales departments are the ones that help in promotion of a hotel."

Sahil believes, "Sales and marketing team is responsible for promoting the hotel's brand, attracting new customers, and retaining existing ones. They use various marketing strategies and tools, such as social media, email campaigns, and event planning, to increase visibility and generate interest in the hotel."

Shreya avers, "Employees are responsible for the success of a hotel and they should be kept satisfied and happy. Hospitality being considered as a people industry, we need to understand that happy employees are more productive and creative than unsatisfied employees. Pleased and blissful employees lead to a higher yield and profitability to the organization. For this training, better salary offering, happy working culture and appreciating employees regularly are keys to achieve employee



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satisfaction.”

Sahil contends, “The employees of the hotel industry play a crucial role in helping the industry achieve its objective of providing top-notch hospitality. Here are a few ways in which they do this:

Customer service: Hotel employees, such as front desk staff, housekeeping, and bellhops, are often the first point of contact for guests. They are responsible for creating a welcoming and friendly atmosphere, addressing guest concerns, and ensuring that guests have a comfortable and enjoyable stay.

Attention to detail: Hotel employees are trained to pay close attention to detail, such as ensuring that rooms are clean and well-maintained, and that guests have everything they need for a comfortable stay. This includes providing amenities like towels, toiletries, and other essentials.

Problem solving: Hotel employees are expected to be quick-thinking and able to resolve any issues that may arise during a guest’s stay. This could include fixing a broken appliance, handling a complaint, or finding a solution to a guest’s request.

Teamwork: Hotel employees often work as a team to ensure that guests receive the best possible experience. This includes coordination between different departments, such as housekeeping and maintenance, to ensure that guests’ needs are met.

Adaptability: The hotel industry is dynamic, and employees must be able to adapt to changes in the business and in guest needs. For example, they may need to adjust their approach to customer service during a busy period or in response to a new policy.

Overall, the employees of the hotel industry play a vital role in creating a hospitable environment for guests and helping the industry achieve its objective of providing exceptional service.

An Ideal Platform for a Career

With hotels relying on the employees for its success, does it provide a good platform for job seekers?

Shreya affirms, “Yes, hospitality will remain lucrative for job-seekers.”

Sahil too is of a similar view. He explains, “It is a good platform for job seekers as it offers a wide range of employment



Shreya Khati

opportunities across various departments and skill levels. Here are some reasons why the hotel industry can be a good choice for job-seekers:

Diversity of Roles: The hotel industry is made up of many different departments, including front desk, housekeeping, food and beverage, sales and marketing, and more. This diversity means that there are many different job opportunities available, regardless of an individual’s skills and interests.

Career Opportunities: Many hotel employees start in entry-level positions and work their way up the career ladder. The hotel industry provides ample opportunities for employees to advance their careers, including management positions, supervisory roles, and specialist positions in areas such as marketing or human resources.

Flexibility: The hotel industry operates 24/7, and many hotels offer flexible work schedules to accommodate employees’ needs. This can make it a good choice for individuals looking for flexible work arrangements, such as part-time or evening

and weekend shifts.

Travel Opportunities: The hotel industry is a global industry, and some hotel employees have the opportunity to work at hotels in different locations, including international destinations. This can be an attractive option for individuals who enjoy travel and exploring new places.

Employee Benefits: Many hotels offer competitive salaries and benefits packages, including health insurance, retirement plans, and paid time off.

Overall, the hotel industry can provide a good platform for job-seekers, offering a wide range of employment opportunities, career advancement prospects, and benefits. However, as with any industry, job prospects and conditions will vary depending on the company and location”

Current Trends

But for the employees to succeed they have to be aware of the trends in the hospitality industry.

Sahil says, “The hospitality industry is constantly evolving, and new trends are emerging that are affecting employment in the sector. Here are some of the key trends that are currently affecting hospitality jobs:

Automation and technology: The use of automation and technology is increasing in the hospitality industry, and it is likely to continue to do so in the future. This could lead to some job losses in certain areas, such as front desk and housekeeping, but it may also create new opportunities in areas such as technology and data management.

Increased focus on sustainability: As consumers become more environmentally conscious, hotels are focusing increasingly on sustainability and eco-friendliness. This could lead to new job opportunities in areas such as energy management, waste reduction, and sustainable tourism.

Remote work: The pandemic has accelerated the trend towards remote work, and it is likely that some hotels will adopt flexible working arrangements in the future. This could impact employment in the hospitality industry, as some roles may become more virtual and decentralized.

Increased demand for personalization: As consumers become more discerning and demand more personalized experiences,



Sahil Lilaramani



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hotels are focusing increasingly on customization and personalized service. This could create new job opportunities in areas such as guest relations and experience management.

Hybrid models of work and travel: The pandemic has resulted in a shift in consumer behavior, with many people seeking to balance remote work with travel. This could lead to new job opportunities in areas such as digital nomad support and work management.

Overall, the hospitality industry is constantly evolving, and new trends are emerging that are affecting employment in the sector. However, the industry is expected to continue to offer a wide range of employment opportunities, particularly in areas such as customer service, hospitality, and experience management.

Shreya discloses "Virtual experience, Automatic Chatbots, Mobile check in, Contactless payments gateways, Safety and Hygiene, Robot service are the trends, which one can expect in the near future."

Special Skill Set

To be a part of the advance sectors in hospitality industry one has to possess certain skill sets. Hospitality employers want employees who have a combination of hard and soft skills for delivering the ultimate experience to a guest. Some of the important skills that one must possess if one is seeking an employment in this sector for digital marketing are:

Coding: One must have the coding skill to set up a website.

Data analysis: an employee must also have the ability to gather and analyse data. This will help identify the experiences that

are valued by the guests.

Social media management: This has become extremely necessary as there is a growing guest community now relying on views on this platform. Reaching out to these guests is essential.

Content creation: Customer acquisition and retention can be achieved through videos and blog posts.

SEO: You must be well versed in search engine optimization (SEO). This will help one engage beneficially with the customer.

Pros and Cons

As employees are the essential elements for making a hotel or an F&B outlet a success one would believe that working in the hospitality industry would be a cushy job, is that true? One has to understand that there are pros and con for every job.

Shreya cites them thus:

"Pros: Lot of employment opportunity with minimal educational level; High scope of working with local and international brands

Cons: Salary variation is too high as per position; Job security rate as per current trend is too low."

Sahil is more elaborate. He states, "Working in a hotel can be both challenging and rewarding. Here are some of the pros and cons of working in the hotel industry:

Pros:

Customer interaction: Working in a hotel provides the opportunity to interact with a diverse range of people and make a positive impact on their experience.

Career advancement opportunities: Many hotels provide opportunities for employees to advance their careers, including management positions, supervisory roles, and specialist positions in areas such as marketing or

human resources.

Employee benefits: Many hotels offer competitive salaries and benefits packages, including health insurance, retirement plans, and paid time off.

Dynamic work environment: The hotel industry is fast-paced and dynamic, and employees have the opportunity to work in a variety of settings, from hotels and resorts to restaurants and event venues.

Travel opportunities: For employees who enjoy travel, working in the hotel industry can provide opportunities to work in different locations, including international destinations.

Cons:

Long hours and irregular shifts: Hotel employees may be required to work long hours, including evenings, weekends, and holidays. The nature of the industry can also result in irregular shifts and changes to work schedules.

Physical demands: Some hotel jobs, such as housekeeping or bellhop, can be physically demanding and require employees to be on their feet for long periods of time.

High-pressure environment: The hotel industry can be fast-paced and demanding, and employees may be under pressure to deliver high-quality service and meet customer expectations.

Seasonal nature of the industry: Depending on the location, the hotel industry can be seasonal, with peaks and valleys in business throughout the year. This can result in reduced hours or layoffs during slower periods.

Overall, working in a hotel can be a challenging and rewarding career choice. It provides opportunities for customer interaction, career advancement, and employee benefits, but also involves long hours, irregular shifts, and physical demands in a high-pressure environment."

Conclusion

Popularity and prosperity of a hotel depends mainly on the capabilities of the employees. The hospitality industry, in exchange for their dedicated services, offers them various incentives. However one may state that there are several pros and cons for those seeking employment in this industry. ■

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Gearing for Adventure

India has a plethora of tourist attractions having spellbinding and ethereal beauty. Whether you want to talk to the hills or have a passionate affair with the sea waves; whether you prefer to explore the solitude of the vast expanse of desert and thereby explore the solitude within amidst the hustle-bustle of life, or whether you want to listen to the call of the wild within you through the chirping and roars of wildlife abounding around the dense foliage, India can easily be the preferred destination of your choice, irrespective of the fact whether you are an Indian, NRI or a foreign tourist venturing into this exotic land, an ancient civilisation and a modern nation.

India's bounty of diverse natural splendours can make it one of the most sought after destinations for adventure tourists. The country has a number of destinations which can satiate the spirits of intrepid tourists of both domestic and inbound varieties.

In January this year Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the MV Ganga Vilas, which embarked on a 51-day river cruise that is among the world's longest. He also inaugurated a tent city for tourists and laid foundation stone for a series of inland waterways projects worth Rs.1,000

crore. The projects will not only bolster cruise tourism in India, but will also bring development and employment opportunities to cities established on the banks of the Ganga.

Soon after the flag the MV Ganga Vilas left for Dibrugarh (Assam) from the Ravidas Ghat in Varanasi. Its route passes through five states and 27 river systems of India and Bangladesh. The cruise starts from Varanasi and reaches Patna on the eighth day of the journey, through Buxar, Ramnagar, and Ghazipur. From Patna, it leaves for Kolkata and reach there on the 20th day. It then heads for the Bangladesh capital Dhaka, and passes through Guwahati and Sibsagar on its way to its final destination Dibrugarh.

MV Ganga Vilas is 62 metres wide and 12 metres wide, which has three decks. It has 18 suites on board for a total of 36 guests. In its maiden voyage, 32 tourists from Switzerland have signed up for the entire journey. The cruise is run by luxury travel firm Antara River Cruises.

The cruise will kick-start a new era of tourism in India. Today the Indian Tourism industry is largely focused on domestic tourists. These kinds of concepts will motivate Indians to have a unique experience

domestically, for which they otherwise travel to different nations. Historically waterways have been an active mode of transport since ancient times, and such innovations will restore our heritage by redeveloping the waterways. In 2014, there used to be five national waterways in India and today there are more than 111 waterways in more than 24 states in India. Of these, more than two dozen waterways are operational.

Also the Tent City which has been conceptualised on the banks of the River Ganga, will tap the potential of tourism in the region. The project, by the Varanasi Development Authority, has been developed across the city ghats to provide accommodation and cater to the increased tourist influx in the city. It will be operational from October to June every year and will be dismantled for three months due to rise in river water levels in the rainy season.

The PM also inaugurated several projects connected to inland waterways in Bihar, West Bengal and Assam.

During the recent years, there has been significant growth in adventure tourism in India, though the market for adventure tourism in India as compared to the west is miniscule.

Adventure Tourism

India always had a great many destinations for lovers and flirts of adventure. Thankfully, despite rapid ecological degradation and environmental erosion, some of these wonderful destinations still retain their wild thrill and pristine charm. The country with its boundless and diversified natural beauty ranging from tall sombre mountains to bewitching sun-kissed and wave-caressed beaches, to lonely golden deserts and dense green jungles teeming with enticing range of flora and fauna, provides a wonderful backdrop for the intrepid tourists and travellers to indulge in their essential adventurous spirit. And now the country also has a number of exciting resorts and retreats and adventure tourism options where the adventurous spirit can thrive, to complement these destinations.

However, this is not to say that the adventure tourism options and properties conducive to adventure tourism have enough diversity in India. Yes, there is lot of scope of development in this regard. With the increase in the number of adventurous domestic and



MV Ganga Vilas

inbound travellers, the hospitality industry must make earnest effort to fully harness the adventure potential of India, through both properties and packages.

Thankfully, this wealth of supply is now getting some responses from the demand

side also as far as our domestic tourism goes. Now there is a sizeable number of Indians who are thinking of unconventional holidaying options; beyond the package tours and yearly visits to the home town. More Indians are opting to go for rafting, bungee jumping and



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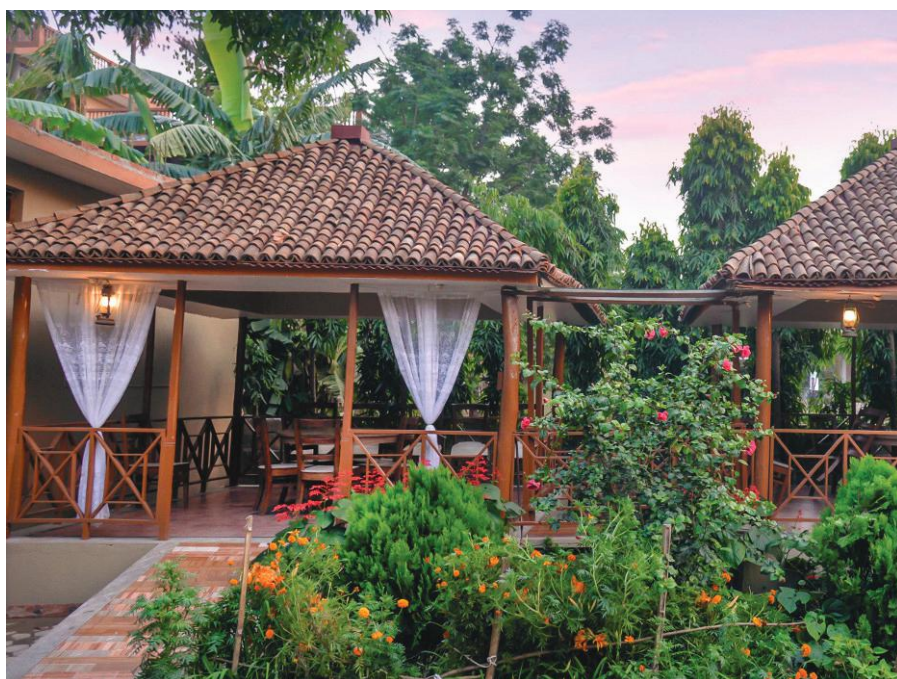
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paragliding than they did a decade or two before.

If hotels in India start organising more adventure activities in and around their precincts, if adventure activities are more proactively promoted among corporates for team building and motivational training, and more tour operators in India began organising adventure tours, the adventure tourism in India can receive a fillip.

Furthermore, if we promote the concept of adventure tours to test one's fitness level, the adventure tourism would garner more popularity as people want to challenge their fitness level and be happy about it.

Today, more and more women want to go on adventure vacations so that they can meet new people and challenge themselves by learning a new skill or activity. They want a vacation that is out of the ordinary. Women are more enthusiastic about adventure and they would not mind a go at anything. Moreover women are more enduring and consistent than men. These traits make them better adventurers than men, on an average.

Sometimes not only awareness but supply can also fuel demand. Setting up more resorts, camps and tents meant exclusively for promoting adventure tours, and taking adequate measures for safe adventure tours by all stakeholders are other important ways to give a boost to adventure tourism in India.

The growing demand for adventure tourism in the country can lead to greater potential

demand for those hospitality properties in the country, which reflect the spirit of adventure. It is because a person or a group of persons travelling to satiate her/his latent spirit of adventure would obviously prefer a tree top resort or a desert safari camp or say a floating hotel, than a conventional hotel. The setting, the built, the location and the ambience of the hotel or resort do play a significant role in strengthening or weakening (as the case may be) the fun and spirit of adventure among the travellers.

Need for Innovation

However, all said and done, we not only need many more adventure tourism resorts



and retreats but much more innovation and diversity in adventure tourism properties in India. More futuristic adventure tourism properties are the need of the hour; simply tree top houses and desert safari camps would not suffice to enable us to compete on an international level. Thus innovations like MV Ganga Vilas, will surely further catalyse the demand and growth for alternative tourism products.

In the Europe, there are fascinating options of staying in an all-ice hotel or in a snow village; concepts which are perhaps not even in the realm of imagination of the Indian hospitality industry. The construction and operations of ice hotels require sub-freezing temperatures, for they are made from ice and snow. They generally have to be rebuilt every year. Construction of ice or snow hotel generally begins between November and March, and their walls, fixtures, and fittings are made entirely of ice or compacted snow.

And what about Jules' Undersea Lodge in Florida, US where you can enjoy the thrill of seeing marine life from where they belong, that is underwater! This unique hospitality option is located 30 feet deep, located on the bottom of the Emerald Lagoon. The guests have to scuba dive to get to their rooms.

Just to enter the lodge, one must actually scuba dive 21 feet beneath the surface of the sea. The underwater hotel (which the website claims as the world's only underwater hotel till date) is spruced with comforts too; here you can get hot showers, a well-stocked kitchen complete with refrigerator and microwave, books, music, and video movies.

India has more than 70 percent of Himalayas and it has a plethora of water bodies. If the Union and the state government/s and the private players in the Indian hospitality industry make a concerted effort, there is no reason why India can't have its ice hotel up in the Himalayas and its underwater lodge; say under the Chilka lagoon! These types of singular expressions in hospitality are needed to effectively tap the growing demand for adventure among Indians.

Besides, we need more cruise-hotel options in Sunderbans which can help people enjoy the wonderful adventure of Sunderbans' fascinating wildlife. Vivada Cruise's M.V. Paramhansa vessel is a wonderful cruising

option to explore Sunderbans in luxury. However, presently cruise liners or cruise-hotels is a fairly unexplored segment in the Indian hospitality industry. Cruise-hotels in Andamans and Goa with adequate water sports infrastructure are also the need of the hour.

The Infrastructure

Overall, adventure tourism in India is growing tremendously. A vast and diverse country like India has great potential for adventure tourism. Mushrooming of many exclusive adventure tour companies and resorts in the last few years’ shows that this branch of tourism is growing in a big way. A sure shot way by which we can further the growth of adventure tourism in India is by effectively improving the infrastructure and involving individuals who are specially trained, skilled and experienced in this segment. This will also increase among the adventure tourists a sense of having a ‘secured’ and yet adventurous holiday.

However, despite many such wonderful

facilitative infrastructure for adventure tourism we must add that the adventure tourism options and as well as the hospitality infrastructure in terms of adventurous resorts and retreats which are still highly limited in diversity as compared to that of the Europe and the US, though they are developing fast. It would be apt to say that adventure tourism in India, though a fast developing field is still in its nascent stage. But that in no way compromises on its huge potential in the country.

The status of hospitality properties pertaining to adventure tourism is still not very satisfying. Most of the resorts catering to adventure tourism are not up to the mark, except for wildlife resorts in certain parks, but even they do not give the adventure in the true sense due to too many governmental restrictions or due to the crowding of too many people.

The true wildlife lovers in India, if they can afford, go overseas to Africa to satisfy their passion for the wild. Basically each and every component in the adventure tourism chain in

India needs immense improvement to bring it to that of the world class level. However, if we can deliver the same quality as overseas, we can see appreciable growth in the adventure tourism segment.”

Thankfully, adventure tourism is gaining momentum in India, due to the efforts by the Union and some state governments, the hospitality industry and also some enthusiastic domestic and inbound travellers who want to explore beyond the obvious and also beyond their limits. But still a lot needs to be done.

The need of the hour is also a national adventure tourism policy which should be endorsed by all the states, as tourism is a state subject. At the same time, much greater investment on tourism in general and adventure tourism in particular by the states is required. The quality of our adventure tourism infrastructure, in most cases, is also a cause of concern. Some tailor-made courses specifically for adventure tourism are also welcome from the part of the government and the Indian hospitality industry.

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Developing Concept

Two aspects which contribute towards making a successful restaurant are location and the concept. Here we would explore the latter in some detail. The concept of a restaurant is a composite term and entails several factors. It is important to have a dynamic concept for a restaurant and also the means of implementing that concept in order to create a successful restaurant.

Whether or not you are an experienced restaurateur, you must start with a clear, good concept for your restaurant. This is valid for a restaurant in a hotel also. Experts reiterate the fact that for successful food service operations, it is crucial to have a suitable concept. Therefore restaurant operations in a hotel too must be leveraged on a suitable concept.

The concept includes the crucial elements which are the theme of the restaurant, the overall vision of the menu, the pricing and the standard of the services, the name of the restaurant, and the ambience and décor of the facility. Together they create a first impression and also an enduring impression on the guests.

It also involves planning details for multiple practical issues, not just choosing a style of cuisine. Understanding the market segment other critical issues in developing concept include planning restaurant design, studying competitive challenges, researching

market demographics, and developing a financing strategy.

For a stand-alone restaurant or a restaurant in a given five-star or four-star property to work effectively, it is important that all of these elements work together. Here we are discussing some of the elements of the concept that a successful restaurant within a hotel or otherwise must have.

Theme Planning

It is important to start a restaurant with a clear theme and define its purpose at the very first outset. In other words, every food service operations must begin with the 'conception of a theme'. The theme is the central idea of the restaurant.

The theme of a restaurant is not only limited to culinary styles like Chinese,

has an element of uniqueness or manages to make the restaurant stand out from the crowd.

For example, the Hard Rock Cafe is probably one of the most famous chain of theme restaurants; it is known for its focus on American rock-'n'-roll. The other notable example is the 'Rainforest Café' which presents a singular jungle experience to its customers, with animals and volcanoes adding to its authentic wild quotient.

Menu Planning

Menu planning is crucial to any restaurant. The menu must reflect the theme that one wishes to create. It is a major factor in reinforcing the theme of the restaurant. Each potential menu item must be scrutinised on two aspects:

the way it is actually done in the region from where the theme of the restaurant is derived.

For example, in a restaurant with a Brazilian steakhouse theme, the meats have to be cooked on skewers and served by carving the meat from the skewer on the table.

Deciding what to serve is a tricky affair. The food concept of the restaurant should comply with the local culture and eating habits, and yet it has to be innovative and creative. The menu items and decor help to create a high perceived value for the customers.

Beverage Concept

The beverage concept is equally important, which should match the theme and compliment the food items on the menu. The drinks should also be served



Mexican, Mediterranean, etc. though that can also be the essential part of the theme. Choosing your restaurant theme influences your business plan, and you make other decisions based on the style of cuisine, targeted customers and available locations.

Research your style of cuisine and industry financial predictions before settling on a concept or theme. Reinforce your concept with complementary kitchen, bar and dining area designs, mainly in hotel properties. The theme can be of a western bar, or a forest makeover, or a snow resort or can encapsulate any other idea/s that stimulates the desire in a diner's mind.

Restaurants attract customers through internet media, so develop a clear, engaging philosophy and unique personality for your restaurant. It is always better if the theme

- Does it fit into the theme?
- Is it a profitable item?

One must remember to respect the theme when planning food presentation and defining portion sizes. The details about how the food items need to be garnished, what is to be served hot and what is to be served cold need to be taken note of. Moreover, all these need to be coordinated along with the representation of the theme. The menu planning can be subdivided into two segments, the food concept and the beverage concept.

Food Concept

Food is the most integral and important part of any restaurant's concept. Actually the complete concept of the restaurant revolves around the food and the food should be prepared, presented and served according to

in appropriate glasses. For example, the glasses for serving beer and red wines are different, and that should be taken note of while serving.

The drinks in a restaurant should be available in both alcoholic and non-alcoholic form and should have the ingredients that are specific to the theme of the restaurant.

Marketing and Pricing

The pricing of the products must be carefully developed according to the theme or status of the restaurant. A fine dining outlet can demand a better price than a casual café, though both can be great in their own way.

In fact, a formal restaurant with a particular culinary focus (say Chinese, Mexican, Mughlai, etc.) with exotic ambience and decor would be treated with suspect if



its prices were below those of a coffee shop. So pricing of the products in a restaurant has to be done very carefully.

The concept of the restaurant needs to be marketed intelligently though. We can create a great concept for a restaurant but the same has to be priced and marketed appropriately, keeping in mind the need and demand of the market/target guests. There are various means of marketing. Correct marketing & pricing is the key to success for any F&B outlet.

The restaurant's pricing should match the concept. You can always charge a bit of premium for innovation and creativity but you have to keep evolving.

The Name Game

The name of the restaurant, no doubt, should be easy to pronounce or spell. It is not very pragmatic for the restaurant business to keep difficult names of the restaurant, which are not identifiable by an average diner.

Spend some hours or if necessary days to come up with an innovative name that is easy to pronounce and spell and preferably begins with one of the first letters in the alphabet. For example, 'Coffee Culture' can be a catchy name for a coffee shop in a hotel, where the hotel guests may be tempted to visit to refresh their soul.

Ambience and Décor

The visual part of the restaurant should be

given great importance while planning any concept of a restaurant. It has to be based on the cuisine being offered and should include the basic elements pertaining to the country/ specific area from which the cuisine being offered stems from. The guest should be able to feel as if he/she has entered a unique area and visibly feel the theme even before ordering his food.

For example, if the focus of the restaurant is on grill or spit menu then a rustic type of ambience with wooden tables is ideal. Such a facility should be ideal with an open kitchen, with a spit roast grill as a central feature. Wall shelves, salad bar & soup station should also be simple and rustic in style in such a restaurant. Take the example of Barbeque Nation chain of restaurants. They have very apt set up with live kitchen and barbeque

grills at every table.

However, ambience and décor need not be simplistic but should have the ability to seep into the minds of the diners. Décor of a restaurant is more than just a few things hanging on the wall, it is about creating a visual effect which evoke certain feelings and tickle taste buds. Few important elements to take care in terms of ambience and décor in a restaurant are lighting effect, kitchen display and the colours used.

Special Skills

Even if all the other elements of the concept, that is the theme, its marketing and pricing, menu planning, ambience and décor gel well, bad service can mar the business potential of the restaurant.

Service is the key and often special skills are required to give outstanding service that leaves an enduring impact on the guest. Also it is extremely important that the service staff, managers, supervisors & Chefs have complete knowledge of the concept of the restaurant and should be able to proactively explain the cuisine and concept to the guests, if such a demand occurs.

Special skills are always a plus and give the value for money to the guests. Chef standing in a live kitchen, doing flambé or carving meat, or a bartender flaring the bottles are expected to attract the guests. These displays can serve as wonderful marketing tools as well. ■



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Benefits of Automation

In the changing business environment with the rise in operational costs due to attrition, higher labour cost, have made it imperative for the hospitality industry to adopt technology that would not only be able to cut costs but also be guest-friendly. Hotels abroad have not only installed automated self service check-in and check-out kiosks for guests in a hurry, but also robots as concierges and for other duties.

In India, robotics has not yet been introduced but technology is definitely being employed in almost all operational fields of the hospitality industry to ensure expediency while at the same time, adhering to the need for user-friendliness. Technology and automation also helps improving communication with the guests as well as among the management and employees.

Virtually every industry is being transformed by technology and hospitality industry is no different. Technology is playing an important role in today's hospitality and tourism industry. Both customers and businesses can benefit from advances in communication, reservations and guest services systems. Technology allows continuous communication and streamlines the guest experience, from reservation to checkout.

Automation has been a hot topic in the hospitality industry over the past few years. Globally, it has resulted in introduction of not only robotic concierges and electronic

butlers but to fully robotic hotels. The global hospitality industry has been embracing this technology to improve their operations and revolutionise the guest experience.

Technology has been introduced in all segments of hotel operations. The hotel operations are divided into two areas: front office and back office. The front office area includes reservations, registration, guest history, guest accounting, telephones, room service, restaurant, accounting, housekeeping and night auditing. The back office area includes accounts, receivables, inventory control, food & beverage cost control, purchase management, payroll, personnel and budgetary cost control, etc.

Role of Technology

It has been calculated that even a 5 percent saving made through the use of computers over a period of one year for a hotel of the magnitude of approximately 400 rooms shall pay for the computer system cost. The justification of computer installation is not only in terms of economy and control but it provides improved service and guest handling. This eventually means a more satisfied guest, which in turn entails potential for more revenues for the hospitality property.

Technology has brought with itself paradigm changes in the workings of the hospitality industry. Technology has influenced every aspect of the business framework at

hotels – be it the front office that is powered to seamlessly monitor the traffic of inbound and outbound guests or be it a guest who is now in a position to select from a variety of rooms available on the web and make a digital check-in. Technology has played a crucial role in facilitating the business to have a more convenient, conversant and valued relationship with its customers, besides facilitating seamless internal communication and processes within the organisation.

Express check-in and mobile check-ins are seen being used by more and more guests. Quick and efficient service has become ever important in order to cater to the on-the-go business traveller who stays at the hotel; all of these have been possible owing to the rapid evolution of technology.

Point of sale systems has become more sophisticated, allowing hotels and restaurants to work more efficiently. Today, information relating to guest preferences (through customer relationship management softwares), loyalty points and programs, room and table inventories available, reports and analytics – everything is available on the click of a button, thereby facilitating prompt decisions in the interest of the business and guests.

The smart phones and other smart appliances have enabled hotels to showcase their property and venues within, through engaging virtual tours, 360 degree videos,

virtual walk-throughs and high quality audio visuals. Mobile applications, travel websites are some of the several platforms by which guests receive customised offers and discounts. The hospitality space has become very competitive with increased personal communication between hotels and the guests.

Selected hotels have started deploying tablets in place of traditional F&B menu cards. This is helping guests understand the F&B items of the hospitality properties in an interesting way, using visual communication with details of a dish supported by a video and pictures, calorie content, preparation method, serving time and more.

Just like the web check-in service at airports, guests now want to check-in at a hotel and use the automated kiosk to order room service with a digital device, instead of standing in queues or moving around the hotel premises to order food.

The role of technology in the hotel industry can be easily manifested by the occupancy sensors, which can detect when the guests have entered the room and activate the lights

and temperature control. Alternately, lights and temperature can be controlled by having the guests insert their room key into a reader near the door.

Technology has played a vital role in the growth and development of the sector and has impacted the hospitality industry for good in bringing about ease in operations, from planning to the execution of the task at hand. Various tools of technology which have brought about the change in several departments of hotels are:

Revenue Optimisation System (ROS): It calibrates and formulates suggested room rates and prices based on the history and forecast information fed into software.

Revenue Plan (Rev-plan): The system generates important reports like a pace report, establishment's productivity and is of great assistance in accurately forecasting the revenues for the company.

Property Management Systems (PMS) and Reflex: Gives the users a holistic overview of the complete property's progress by generating department specific reports and displaying the information in the form of an

interactive dash board, which is monitored by the respective departments.

Property Reservations Systems Network (PRS Net): It is the intermediate between the bookings received and the property management system (PMS) as it tracks the inventory and flow of reservations from one system to another.

Automation Benefits

The effect of automation has helped hotels in various ways. Most of the hotels – be they a part of the chain or a stand-alone hotel – have adopted automation to help them meet the demands of the guests and maintain their profitability level.

Automation has encouraged the rise of online booking systems where guests are now able to reserve a room, restaurant table or even an event ticket without going through the hassle of picking up the phone or even physically going to a point of sale. This implies a much larger volume of bookings as automated systems offer superlatively quicker and efficient bookings as compared with any manual effort.



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Automation in general has brought a whole new dimension of customer service that allows for fool-proof transactions, data security, customer relationship management and consolidation of insightful consumer statistics. This in turn helps the business control costs, invest intelligently for optimal returns and healthy profit margins, and facilitates to table newer innovations.

The efficiency automation has brought to the table is remarkable and has left everything required literally on the fingertips of guests. It is because of these initiatives that costs which were borne by the company before, like paper, and hours of work by the associates, have reduced drastically and thus eventually saved costs immensely.

By having a successful presence online properties have the chance to improve and build the relationship with their guests. Having a platform that allows guests to speak directly to a hotel – or to any business – and to be able to receive a swift response makes people feel heard and does wonders for customer satisfaction.

Thus automation does help in cost reduction and increased revenue for hotels. For instance, mobile-based request menus allow guests to easily ask for products and services using their personal devices, which can translate into more sales.

Industry leaders even suggest that automation can help minimise the energy costs associated with running a hotel, as keycard-activated lighting and air-conditioning in guests' rooms means electricity won't be used while the guests are out of their rooms.

Automation has helped in generating business and profitability for hotels. It also gives clarity to goal settings and business processes that are to be executed. Moreover, automation facilitates personnel to effectively execute on their tasks and provide an efficient reporting mechanism.

Facilitating Communication

Besides helping the industry give a better service to the guests, technology in the hospitality industry is also improving internal communication.

Technology today has introduced various

avenues for more efficient communication. For example, instant messaging platforms, specifically texting and of course the more convenient 'Whatsapp' have improved communication within the organisation. It makes for a great forum to not only instantly share ideas, leads and feedback, but also for sharing pictures (like those of guests for recognition) and videos, that can be taken at any part of the hotel from the ambassador's phone and then instantly shared with the entire team via groups.

Automation has certainly assisted in communicating the vision and mission of the brand to their employees through portals, internal newsletters, and HR activations. In terms of processes, it has inculcated a certain discipline and rigour to work. Most employees are happy with the clarity that automation provides. Of course, the trick is



to ensure that managers do not lose their personal equation with employees and guests to automation.

Robust hardware and high speed Internet have led to hassle-free electronic communication between management and employees. Not to forget mentioning that instant messaging platforms have assembled the management and on-ground personnel in one place, making sure that teams work in tandem with each other.

As mentioned earlier, we believe that technology has played the most significant role in unifying communication. It has only improved the ease in communicating across scalar chains and hierarchical structures. These advancements have only brought the management closer to the employees.

Most establishments have a common platform or system to which all associates are given access to when they are enrolled into the company. This platform and system not only promote communications coming in from the company directly to its associates but also provide messages and updates. Automation has given employees more time to focus on minute details in the tasks they perform. The automated systems and gadgets not only reduce the time taken to perform the work but also significantly reduce the energy and effort required to accomplish the same.

Improving Customer Relations

Besides improving internal communications and giving better service to the guests, automation has also improved customer relations. Technology has also created an environment for guests where services can be delivered without being intrusive. For instance, when a guest reviews us on an online review platform, hotels can instantly reply in acknowledgment. The progress of digitisation has only brought us closer to the customers wherein we are able to engage with them on real time basis.

Nowadays, guests no longer need to wait in line at the front desk to check-in or check-out of a hotel. Through automation, they can use their smartphones

or an on-site kiosk and save time. There are apps, for instance, which have already automated the web check-in process with just a few simple clicks. This helps users save considerably on time and effort.

Through their PMS system, the hotel can store data about a guest's preferences and use it to design an experience tailored specifically for them. For example, if the hotel learns that a guest enjoys pedicures at the spa, it can configure its marketing software to automatically send her/him a special offer for a pedicure at the hotel's spa.

And it seems automation in the Indian hospitality industry is fast becoming the norm. The hotels which would not switch to automation in a big way have high potential of losing revenues to the competition. ■




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Sweeping Changes



From sophistication in operations through increased application of technology and automation to refinement in attitudes towards the workers, housekeeping in hotels in India of today has substantially enhanced its role during the recent years.

There shouldn't be any room for doubt that housekeeping is the edifice of the hotel industry. Without a clean restroom, or a spic and span lobby, the best of facilities and amenities of a five-star hotel are likely to be unable in attracting discerning guests.

It is because without sanitation, luxury or rather the entire concept of hospitality loses its significance. Similarly, the aesthetic décor of the room wouldn't appeal to the guest if she/he comes to the room after the meeting and see that her/his bed sheets are still as dishevelled as it was before she/he left in the morning, and the depleted toiletries in the bathroom are not yet replenished.

Yes, the major chunk of the revenue

of hotels in India still comes from rooms (though F&B segment is fast catching up, and MICE and wedding are other important revenue earning segments), but without good housekeeping standards, the best of hotel rooms will fail to attract repeat visitors.

However, it doesn't mean that housekeeping is important only for five-star hotels, which are normally characterised by high-end amenities and decor. It is essential for all hotels, but for five-star properties, the housekeeping standards should be nothing short of impeccable, as here you are catering to guests who are likely to have experienced high standards of hospitality across the globe and naturally they have become habituated to not settle for anything ordinary.

Role Extension

What is more, housekeeping in hotels these days is not just about cleaning and maintenance, as it was years ago.

Though cleaning and maintenance are still of extremely crucial importance in housekeeping, but today the role of housekeepers in hotels in the country, especially in high-end hotels operating in India, include some other facets too.

The roles of the department have expanded over the years to include such aspects as guest security and increasing profitability of the hospitality property. For example, the now extended role of housekeeping in many hotels and resorts in the country may also involve reporting of any untoward elements or about any suspicious person/luggage/activity in order to facilitate the security concerns of those hospitality properties. At the same time, the housekeeping department in hotels needs to ensure that the guests' privacy is not in any way compromised because of the rigmarole of security.

Similarly, if the guests get impressed by the wonderful horticulture of the hospitality property, many of the hoteliers should thank her/his housekeeping staff for that. And if the hotel is an environmentally friendly property, the challenges of waste disposal and waste recycling can assume very crucial role in the purview of housekeeping, in today's times. Succinctly, today housekeeping plays an important role in forming the overall reputation of a hotel among its guests and potential guests.

But it is not just mere expansion of roles that the housekeeping department in the Indian hospitality industry has experienced during the recent years.

The major changes have mainly to do with how the housekeeping jobs in hotels are now being done and attitude of employers and guests towards the rank and file housekeeping personnel. The

increased use of information technology (IT) – which was unheard of few years ago – and advancement towards automation in many areas of housekeeping operations, along with rise in professionalism, have changed the face of housekeeping in Indian hospitality, during the recent times.

Housekeeping in India has witnessed and experienced a huge transformation in the last two decades. To be precise, later 90s era had been the major turning point for this field. With the usage of new technologies, there has been an enormous change in the department’s functioning process and the way of working. Nowadays various types of housekeeping applications software are being used in the hotels. This has certainly improved the work culture and enhanced professionalism. Today, housekeepers can help achieve a property’s profit maximisation through scientific and well programmed accommodation operations.

Housekeeping in hospitality, in the present day and age is not only confined to cleanliness and upkeep of the hospitality

property. Today, housekeepers are showcasing themselves in guest area, and their interaction with guests is more than ever. With new technologies and innovations they have become more tech-savvy and customer-oriented.

The housekeeping department in a hotel is not just a backroom operation any more. It is also a key segment that can help a hospitality property stand out in the crowded market of the hospitality industry by creating a ‘home away from home’ feeling for every guest.

Apart from their day-to-day jobs, housekeepers in hotels are today engaged in promoting responsible tourism and environment-friendly practices which are not restricted on reusing bed sheets or towels.

Specialisation and Training

The entry of specialised agencies has also contributed positively towards improving housekeeping services in the Indian hospitality industry. Increased automation, entry of new specialised agencies for

various jobs like glass cleaning, façade cleaning, pest control, sanitisation, etc. are the trends in housekeeping in the realms of the Indian hospitality industry.

Another key area that has seen improvement over the years is training, which in turn has ensured a fulfilling career for the dedicated housekeeping workers, engaged in hotels.

Certain hotel chains also offer programmes that help groom room attendants to enhance their skills to grow to the next level with incentives and benefits. There is also a structured Executive Development Program (EDP) for room attendants to get promoted to supervisory position and Managerial Development Program (MDP) for housekeeping supervisors to become managers.

Employees are the major beneficiary of such programmes and have grown from the position of an Executive Housekeeper to a Rooms Division Manager. In the past, many housekeepers or room attendants engaged in hotels had lived their lives as housekeepers or attendants till they retired.

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Thankfully, the situation in this respect has changed much for the better, as far as the Indian hospitality industry is concerned.

Moreover, the housekeepers in the Indian hospitality industry are slowly, but surely, getting the recognition that they deserve, though a long way needs to be traversed in this direction. From a support department, housekeeping has evolved to become one of the major operational departments of hotels in India, over the last two decades. Housekeeping teams are now being recognised more for their efforts, and are now seen participating in major decision making of the hotels.

Major Challenges

Despite these changes, most of which are of course welcome, the housekeeping department across the Indian hospitality industry still grapples with some age-old challenges.

Attrition has always been a huge challenge in the Indian hotel industry. Employee turnover and retention are the major challenges in the Indian hospitality industry and for the housekeeping department in the Indian hospitality industry and the challenge is even more hard-hitting. Long working hours, limited compensation, high job pressure, physically demanding tasks are contributing towards such challenges.

Paucity of trained manpower, cost

management in the constantly changing business environment, managing staff efficiently with continued motivation, talent retention, lack of updated infrastructure, ensuring consistency in performance and productivity are some of the formidable challenges that housekeeping managers in hotels in India face today.

With the improvements in standards in the Indian hospitality industry there has been an equivalent increase in guest expectations. This has enhanced the challenges for the

housekeeping professionals working in the Indian hospitality industry.

There is very less tolerance when services and accommodation do not meet guest expectations. In the current scenario where there are a lot of options available to the guests, one small mistake on the part of housekeepers can become a direct financial loss for the organisation, these days. Housekeeping teams in hotels thus have to keep working continually and consistently to maintain the exacting standards.

The Way Forward

To further improve housekeeping operations in hospitality properties operating in India, and also for the betterment of lives of those engaged in these services(both of which are interlinked), providing better work-life balance and better pay structure for housekeeping professionals engaged in the Indian hospitality industry are the need of the hour.

Moreover, training of housekeepers from time to time is needed by the hospitality industry at large, not only because many of the housekeeping jobs are moving towards automation but also because the boundaries of guest satisfaction are changing as the guests are becoming more discerning in this globalised age. ■



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Idyllic Haven in the Lap of Nature!



WelcomHeritage Tadoba Vanyavillas Resort & Spa

By Sharmila Chand

WelcomHeritage Tadoba Vanya Villas Resort & Spa, is an elysian haven amidst the enchanting woodlands of Tadoba. The property seamlessly blends exclusive luxury and tranquility making it an ideal getaway for nature and wildlife lovers.

Spread over 65 acres amidst a private lake at Chimur Taluka of Chandrapur District in Maharashtra State, the Resort is located just 1.5 kilometers away from the Tadoba National Park, the home of the largest number of tigers in India. The resort offers a wholesome experience for the guests and stands as one of the highly regarded resorts in the region.

The Accommodation

The Resort promises a comfortable stay with the most modern and premium facilities. The exteriors and interiors of the cottages and rooms are adorned with a homely stay feel.

The eight 'Executive Cottages' spread over the area of 355 sq. ft., are perfect to unwind after an exhausting jungle safari. These cottages blend sophisticated interiors with the natural surroundings, each opening out onto a private porch to enjoy the exotic landscape and chill out.

There are 18 'Premium Cottages' at the Resort – each perfectly designed to transport you to the wilderness of Tadoba, with every facility thoughtfully planned to provide guests extensive comfort and an unparalleled experience. These cottages are spread over the area of 750 sq. ft. and are laced with all modern amenities. Each premium cottage has a private sitting area with a garden.

Spread across 1200 sq feet are eight 'Luxury Tents', each offering a distinct experience, focusing on the back-to-nature appeal without compromising on all modern comforts. While the design radiates the ethos of wildlife, staycation

in these tents in the nature's lap is truly a cherished experience. All the tents have a private entrance and allocated a separate smoking gallery. The sit out area can be used for dining and relaxing.

Gastronomical Experiences

The Resort offers traditional and world cuisines served with panache.

'Royal Oak' is the multi-cuisine restaurant where food and beverage team makes sure every meal is cherished by the guests. The diverse menu is highlighted by authentic Indian delicacies and an assortment of Continental specialties to suit any palate. Here guests get to enjoy a wide spread of sumptuous buffet for breakfast and dinner.

'Mehfil Bar' near the poolside provides the perfect setting for a memorable evening, serving the best range of mocktails and cocktails.

'Jungle Grill' is another beautiful

outdoor dining venue with glorious views of the sunset. Here guests enjoy meeting each other over High Tea. A favourite spot at the property, one can thoroughly enjoy the fresh piping hot snacks and masala tea here over establishing great camaraderie with fellow in-house guests.

Conference & Events

The Resort boasts of 2300 sq. ft. spacious conference hall, named ‘Sanyaojan’- ideal for conferences and events. The team offers various seating arrangements to engage differently on different occasions. There is a highly professional team to provide seamless service. Modern advanced quality AV equipments further facilitate the programs and events. It is indeed an ideal destination for corporate groups to indulge in team-building activities and offsite meetings in peace.

In-House Activities

Staying at the resort you can indulge in indoor and outdoor activities like



Bonfire, Barbeque, Table Tennis, Billiards and Carrom. Reconnect with nature and enjoy star gazing. For great bonding, the Resort provides guaranteed quality time with family and friends. Enjoy a dip in the outdoor stunning pool, indulge in the plethora of indoor and outdoor games, or just enjoy the thrill of watching a night sky with stars.

The Spa

The Spa is a serene haven at The Resort for those looking for ayurvedic healing and relaxing therapies. For complete relaxation, especially after the early morning safari, one can go for a therapy at the beautiful spa. Here, you can indulge in a classic Oil Therapy or a host of other treatments for rejuvenation.

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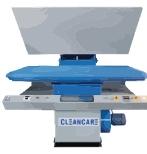
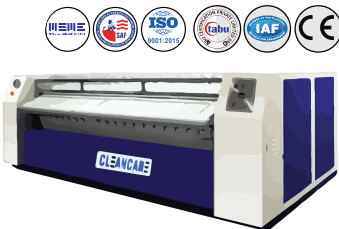
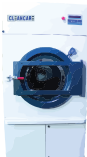
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The Safari

As with all wildlife sanctuaries, Tadoba Park too brings with it much excitement, fun and sightings. There is always climax built up in expectation of a rendezvous with the Lord of The Jungle.

The Park was created in 1955 as The Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve at the epicenter of Chimur Hills, spread across 1727 sq. km. over the Chandrapur district of Maharashtra, is known for its majestic Bengal Tigers. The illustrious southern tropical dry deciduous trees and patches of grassland are also home to Indian leopard, sloth bear, nilgai, striped hyena, small Indian civet, sambar, barking deer, chital and more.

The word lore of Tadoba comes from "Taru", the God worshipped by the tribes, and "Andhari", which refers to the river running across the forest. The dwellers of this forest worship God Taru till this date and fairs are held annually between the months of Dec-Jan. The main attraction of this National park is the Jeep Safari for wildlife sighting.

To Conclude

A staycation at WelcomHeritage TadobaVanyavillas Resort & Spa is not to be missed. It is a perfect destination for couples, friends and families alike in the buffer zone of the outstanding sanctuary. It has it all – great location, luxurious spacious rooms, gorgeous views, wonderful dining, and a fantastic spa, and it's less than 20 minutes from the Park. Home to the largest concentration of the Big five in the region, the Resort with top safari experiences is one that leaves guests with a lifetime of treasured memories.

A Passionate Hotelier!

Rakesh Sinha, General Manager



A core hotelier at heart and hospitality professional with more than 18 years of experience in Business and Leisure Hotels & Resorts, Rakesh Sinha looks after the property as the primary strategic business leader shouldering the responsibility of all aspects. He is also accountable for strategy execution and guides the team providing impetus and training for their professional development.

He says, "As a true hotelier, my passion is to train the new generation in the hotel industry so that they will be torch bearers for their current and upcoming roles." He further adds, "As I love to be in the lap of nature, so my present position in the Nature resort, that too in the buffer zone of Tadoba Forest, is something truly gifted to me so I am cherishing every moment of my work here." In an exclusive chat with **Sharmila Chand**, he points out his work philosophy and more..

What is the USP of your property?

It is the size and location of the Resort in the buffer zone which gives us a distinguishing position

which is truly in the lap of nature. To see how guests revel in the glory of sunshine and facilities here. What more can one ask for?

What are the green initiatives the hotel has taken?

We use natural water resource, harvesting vegetable and herbs, utilizing perishable garbage as fertilizer

What has been the most rewarding moment in your career?

To have served honorable late APG Abdul Kalam

How do you de-stress?

Through on job training class to my team and holding motivational discussions

What are the 'Differentiating Factors' of your F&B outlets?

Multi Cuisine Restaurant offering traditional and world cuisine

Stunning Outdoor Bar at the pool side
Biggest Event Space venue

What is your working Mantra, your guiding philosophy in work?

Self motivation

What is the most crucial issue to tackle in the Hospitality industry today?

To find dedicated team members and retain them

One advise you would like to give youngsters aspiring to excel in Hospitality?

Work with dedication and learn something new every day. Minimize the uses of social media

What do you enjoy most about being at the helm of affairs at the hotel?

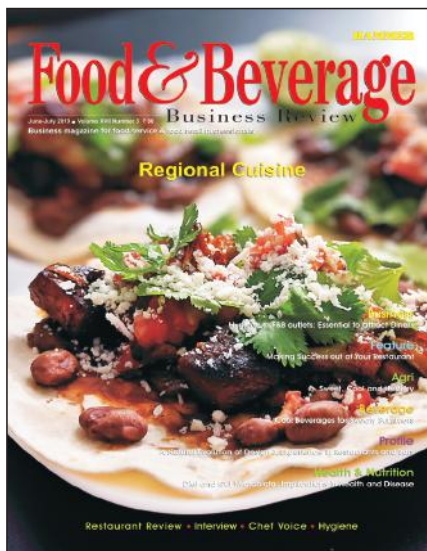
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It is true that restaurants and discotheques/nightclubs are eventually judged by their food & beverage options, and fun factors. Nevertheless, the decor and ambience too make for a big impression on the guests. Planning the renovation of a restaurant or a discotheque/nightclub in a hotel is no doubt, a daunting task. But by methodical planning, one can execute a seamless renovation strategy.

However, it is essential to cross check a few crucial points while beginning the renovation process in a hotel's restaurant or a nightclub/discotheque. The experts in the field have pointed out some important questions, which must be answered at the time of planning their renovation. In fact, these factors can be applicable for a host of hospitality renovations.

Points to Consider

A renovation is a major step and should not be taken lightly. It can be costly, time-consuming, and have an impact on current customers and the perception of the brand. It is difficult to pinpoint what specific changes would be good and reinvigorate buzz. Sometimes, though, the change needed is right in front, a good renovation can be just what property needs to stay relevant and profitable.

The most important question is to first analyse why the renovation is needed in the property and secondly what is the right time to begin it. This question has several questions in its ambit. Sometimes it is necessary to give it the right facelift to keep up with the ever-evolving landscape.

Is the renovation being done to update the look and feel of the ambience, or to improve the function of the space available or to change the use of the space, needed to be clarified specifically, and to be answered satisfactorily.

Moreover, what is the budget for renovation of the property, who is the clientele, and whether the objective is to serve the clientele to the best of the ability, also need to be answered before undertaking a property renovation.

There is no denying the fact that budget is the key differentiator to decide on the scale of renovation. Every renovation project should begin with a fixed budget and one should establish the parameters of the project within that budget. Keeping project within the budget is important, and based upon the budget one need to decide on the extent of renovation.

Remodeling a restaurant can drive more sales as compared to continuing the old concept. It is important to correctly visualize the concept and develop a functional property meeting all parameters of the vision and theme.

Knowing clientele and what type of experience are they looking for is also very important. Considering those décor and ambience ideas that can help serve clientele better and exploring how staff can successfully service clientele better are questions worth exploring.

To minimize the losses consider renovating during the low season, especially when the property is operated on seasonal business. Otherwise arrange to have a

majority of the contracting work done at night, during non-business hours.

Expert Advice

Experts say that these questions may vary depending upon the scale and nature of the hospitality business. But if one considers them as the checklist, they will help to start in the right direction.

Current customers are the most valuable resource available ahead of a renovation. Before even considering contacting a contractor, gather some information and feedback from current guests. One can even do an online survey through e-mails to current customers. To ensure a perfect plan for renovation, hire a survey company or a brand management specialist.

After gathering information from reliable sources begin creating a comprehensive plan for renovation. A contractor will help bring these ideas to fruition and make suggestions for space, but it's a good idea to go into the renovation with a sense of direction.

The plan devised after considering realistic data will not only be foolproof but will also be readily accepted by customers. At the same time, ensure that the core concept of the restaurant is not lost in the renovation unless rebranding the image is the target. Take target audience, idea, brand image, and format into account before finalising any changes.

There is a consensus that a professional should be consulted for the renovation in the hospitality sector. Professionals can help save resources by taking advantage

of their planning, design and construction experience.

Renovation may include repairing and replacing furniture, finishes, soft furnishing and fittings that have become obsolete or need attention.

Consulting an architect or an interior designer helps prioritise renovation and decide on a layout and choose finishing materials. One should look for a designer whose portfolio includes several previous property renovation projects.

Challenges to Tackle

No doubt, there are several challenges involved in renovation of a restaurant or a discotheque/nightclub or any other segment of a hotel property. The challenges of renovating a restaurant in a hotel include, deciding on the theme and décor, scheduling the re-opening, deciding on the menu and the USP, and staff engagement.

While renovating a restaurant in a property it is very important to ensure that the loyal guests stay with the property.

Proper information should be passed to the restaurant regulars to avoid any disappointing situation for the guests when they walk-in to the renovated restaurant.

A detailed study must be conducted before renovating the hospitality space. Choosing the trend which has a longer shelf life and yet not simulates the existing trend is a challenge. Renovation is an opportunity to introduce something new to the market.

One of the challenges of renovation of a hospitality property is that the renovation work in one part of the property should not affect other areas. The management needs to ensure that the movement of the work force is very discreet. Disturbance to guests during renovation stage may affect the other guest experience.

Limited space poses another challenge towards hospitality renovation. For example, the new concept that is decided for the restaurant renovation in a hotel has to be adjusted according to the previous space available.

Of course, renovation entails challenges involved in budgeting, especially for the managed hotels. Managed hotels need approvals from owners that may be lengthy and time consuming. Owners need to buy the new concept for renovation, but also need to agree on the capital expenditure involved, in order to make the idea of the given renovation a reality.

Moreover, adhering to the time line is a big challenge, while mentioning that various factors could negatively influence the timeline. They can be funding problems, movement in other parts of the hotel, the lack of coordination with various vendors, etc.

Renovation of hospitality property may also include inclusion of new personnel, which may pose another challenge, especially for the Indian hospitality industry, which is faced with a perpetual human resource shortage. For example, the renovation of a restaurant in a hotel may also involve bringing in a new specialty Chef, which can take time to find.

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IT Solution Provider

Founded in 2008, Romio Technologies Pvt. Ltd. is one of the leading IT solution providers for the Hotel and F&B industry. The wide range of products include variation of Hardware and Software solutions.

Under Hardware the solutions include POS(Point of sale machine), Bill Printer, Kitchen Printer, Cash Drawer, Scanner, Card Reader. The touch based POS comes with the latest configuration with a smooth Touch experience and an option of dual screen display. The POS is compatible with majorly all software. With more than 36 support centres PAN India, Romio Technologies is providing POS with 3 years onsite warranty.



As a part of software there solution includes ERP, Front Desk, Room Booking, Restaurant POS, Card based solution, CRM, Inventory Management, Feedback Application, Club Management System. Managing Theft control and a complete set of Analytical Reports are some of the key features of the product. The entire application is simple to use with an extremely low learning curve.

The complete solution under one umbrella with a unique service commitment leads them to be a perfect choice for the entire IT solution.

With a vision of Quality standard, compliance and meeting customer expectation, they have emerged as a market leader for over a decade.

Romio Technologies Pvt. Ltd.
info@romiotech.com

Luxurious Bed & Bath Linen



Quality and sophistication are the hallmarks of Home Zone's bed & bath linen range, which is used in the star category hotels in India.

The company makes exquisite bed linen for hotel rooms with different infill materials like down & feather, soft microfibre & hollow fibre. The company provides a comprehensive range of pillows, cushions, duvets, comforters, mattress toppers and mattress protectors.

In the bath linen category, the company provides an awesome range of towels & robes.

Succinctly, Home Zone's superb quality linen can enhance the guests' comfort while adding a fashionable touch to the hotel's bedroom too.

Home Zone India, based in Panipat, Haryana, has marketing offices in New Delhi (Central Office), Punjab, Srinagar, Hyderabad, Kathmandu & Kolkata.

Home Zone India
marketing@homezoneindia.com

Designer Furniture

S.K. International Est. itself in 1984 i.e. 38 Years ago with a group of well qualified and competent Professionals, Hotel executives & engineers with hardcore Professional streams. Today the company has the state of the art well equipped plant to produce undisputed quality products, varied spectrum of design for customised usage and timely delivery.



The company specialises in hotel furniture, equipments and custom made products and now the enters a vast market of office furniture as well as Interior design and execution, which includes complete interior solution from designing to planning, furniture, paint & polish, stone work, ceiling,

complete turnkey, etc. It is after continuous process of hard work, research & development the brand SKI evolved further to other Companies i.e. SKI PROJECTS which undertakes the interior designing & execution work and EURO MOBEL for the office furniture and desking solution. The company setup includes a well experienced team of architects, Interior designers, 3D designers, etc. and latest modular furniture manufacturing plant for the quality, finishing and timely delivery of the products. Known for the quality, reliability and environmental responsibility the company steps in the vast field to cater a larger clientele.

S.K. International
info@skiglobal.in

Exquisite Conference Tables

Stackwell is the leading name in the banquet furniture industry, known for exquisite contemporary designs with finest quality finishing & long lasting product.

It has a wide product range of banquet furniture - to name the few: Aluminum Framed Powder Coated Stacking Chairs, Steel Framed Powder Coated Stacking Chairs, Flat Fold Banquet Tables, Flexi-back/ Action-back Chairs, Frill-Less (Laminated Top) Conference Tables, Glass Top Tables for Buffet arrangement.



Frill-less (Laminated Top) Conference Tables: Another unique product of Stackwell known for the Innovative design is the Frill-Less Laminated Top Conference Tables. These tables have removable modesty front panels. The peculiarity of this table is that its legs are made of stainless steel. Hence, even after extensive usage it will look as fresh as new. The front and side modesty panels are not like Chinese metal panel but provide the matching / same as top. This makes the product look very decent and elegant. Look wise and also durability wise products are far better than the Chinese products. So far, company has supplied more than 5000 tables to the reputed Convention Centers & Five Star Hotels.

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A Passionate and Seasoned Hotelier!

Ajay Kanojia, General Manager, Sayaji Hotels Pune



A well-recognized industry veteran with almost 15 years experience, Ajay Kanojia has worked successfully in the luxury and upscale hotel segment with chains like Hotel Park Plaza, Hotel Jay Pee Residency and Lemon Tree Hotels. Born and brought up in Dehradun, he is adept and well-acquainted in the industrial know-how and has completed his Bachelor's Degree in Hotel Management from Institute of Hotel Management, Punjab. He is highly skilled in sales & marketing and is known for his deft approach in revenue analysis, yield management and property management systems. As a passionate leader, he enjoys taking risks and imparting his knowledge through varied training programs. He is known to be a strategic manager, with an astute business sense, whilst delivering the highest standards of service for all stakeholders.

A recipient of many awards, Kanojia is also responsible for curating strategic initiatives that will lead the hotel to continue its guest-focused approach and consolidate its leadership position. He has the additional responsibilities to deliver year-on-year growth, staff engagement activities and spearhead corporate social activities.

staff engagement activities and spearhead corporate social activities.

In an exclusive interview with **Sharmila Chand**, he talks about his work philosophy and more ...

What is the USP of your property?

Location of the property and the popularity of our F&B outlets, having no tip policy.

Please tell us about the green initiatives the hotel has taken?

We have installed Plastic bottle crusher machinery which makes the granules ready for recycling. We also do tree plantations every year in the premises and have waste compose machine to convert manure for our usage.

What are the sustainable processes in your property?

We always reuse and recycle water for nursery and other utilities. We have the Electric vehicle charger installed at all the places.

What is the marketing strategy to promote your property?

We have easily searchable on online platform as the guests rely on the internet more than local agents these days. We also ensure tapping the right target audience on apt platforms of the media.

What distinguishes your property from others in the same bracket?

The location of the property is strategically chosen and it has paid us the upper hand to be more competitive. For us guest is the paramount against every service and we

take care selflessly for the basic need of each guest walks in the property by providing the packaged drinking water without charge along with warm hospitality. No tip policy. Being highest inventory we have different category of rooms which suits business guests, leisure, long staying, couples & social guests.

Your future plans and new initiatives you wish to undertake in your property?

Our future plans are to renovate the F&B outlets and planning to add one on the rooftop. We will focus on the health friendly best practices & introduce healthy food and drinks in our menus. We will strive to promote safer and cleaner ambience and environment.

What is the most crucial issue to tackle in the Hospitality industry today?

Staffing and manpower are the crucial issues these days. But we are continuously working on human resource management best practices such as masterstroke – which makes employees feel proud of themselves at work place. Such activities help them feel recognized and develop good spirit and camaraderie at work.

What do you enjoy most about being at the helm of affairs at the hotel?

I enjoy meeting different guests, chat with them and get their feedback. It helps me to communicate and train my team from the

experiences and provide guidance. I also like to spend quality time with the team through onsite and offsite meetings.

What has been the most rewarding moment in your career?

Successfully launching the brand and get recognition in the industry. The confidence the management has shown in my decisions and operations, is very self fulfilling.

How do you de-stress?

My biggest stress buster is my daughter at home. Also I am a People's Man, so spending time with others, be it guests or my team, is enjoyable and relaxing for me. I also relax by spending sometime in the recreational room.

What is your working Mantra, your guiding philosophy in work?

Learn from the experiences of people. Delegating the responsibility to staff but keeping myself in the loop in all activities. Create healthy environment by empowering employees.

One advise you would like to give youngsters aspiring to excel in Hospitality?

Always have an attitude to learn more and more. Keep yourself updated with new trends and train yourself to face the challenges every day by keeping them in your stride.

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