

HOTELS & RESTAURANTS INDIA fhrai magazine

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A MONTHLY ON HOSPITALITY TRADE

By DDP Publications



**FHRAI demands
reprieve in
EPCG scheme**

**Stimulating
Change**

**Prioritising
talent retention**

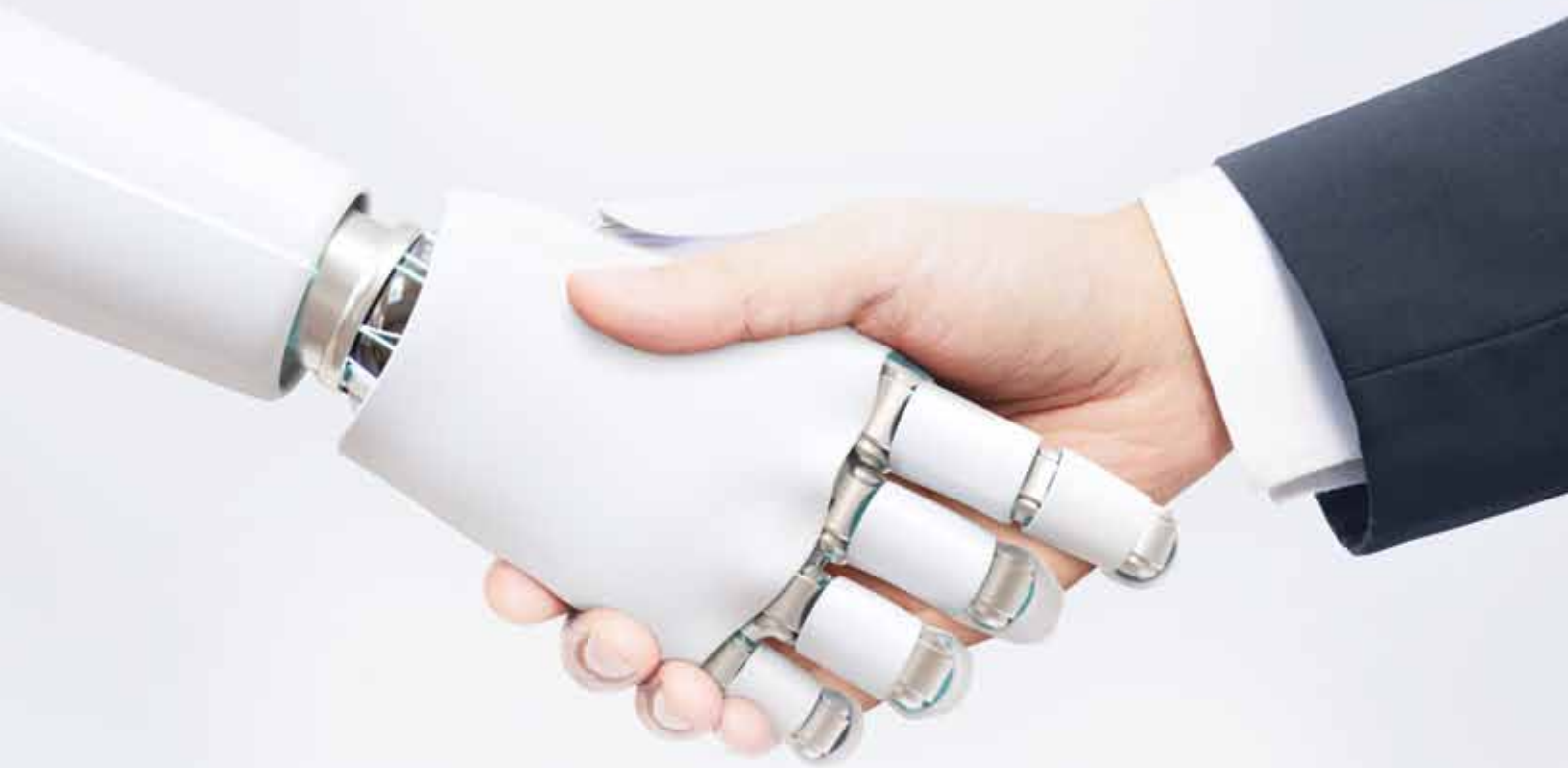


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Dear members,

The hospitality sector in India has been grappling with multiple issues, ranging from compliance of Minimum Guarantee Quantity (MGQ) to the inadequacies of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) for MSMEs. In this editorial, we will be discussing these issues in detail and highlight the need for the government to provide immediate relief to the hospitality industry.

Firstly, let's discuss the compliance of MGQ by the hospitality establishments serving liquor. The Excise Department of Odisha had applied the entire year's MGQ in FY 2019-20, even though the operations of these establishments were restricted due to nationwide lockdown in view of COVID restrictions. Similarly, in FY 2020-21 and FY 2021-22, the restaurants were unable to fulfil the MGQ requirements for the year due to COVID restrictions and hence witnessed reduced footfalls. Maintaining yearly MGQ requirements has become increasingly difficult for the restaurants, and the compliance is adding to their financial liabilities and adversely affecting business sustainability. Therefore, the Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) has requested the government to waive off the MGQ fulfilment requirement for FY 2019-20, FY 2020-21, FY 2021-22, and FY 2022-23 on genuine and reasonable grounds. We hope the government will take necessary steps to address this issue and provide much-needed relief to the hospitality sector.

Secondly, let's discuss the inadequacies of the ECLGS for MSMEs. While the ECLGS has played a crucial role in the survival efforts of millions of MSMEs in the country, the specific issues of the hospitality sector still persist and continue to trouble its beneficiaries. The repayment period of six years is too short for a sector that was the first to get affected by COVID and was also the biggest sufferer. The extension of ECLGS without a long-term repayment option has only increased the credit burden of the industry, and the additional loans taken through ECLGS that needed to be repaid in a short duration are very badly impacting the business viability of the industry members who are still struggling to service the previous loans. The business environment of the sector is highly volatile and unpredictable, and only a long-term credit facility can help the industry to withstand the challenges arising out of the prolonged effects of COVID.

In conclusion, the hospitality sector in India is facing unprecedented challenges due to COVID, and the government needs to provide immediate relief to the sector. Waiving off the MGQ fulfilment requirement and providing a long-term credit facility through the ECLGS are some of the steps that can help the sector to survive and recover from COVID's adverse effects. We urge the government to take necessary steps in this regard and support the hospitality sector, which is a vital contributor to the country's economy.

With best regards,
Sudesh Poddar
President, FHRAI



Sudesh Poddar
President
FHRAI

“Waiving off MGQ fulfilment requirement & providing a long-term credit facility through ECLGS are some of the steps that can help the sector to survive & recover”



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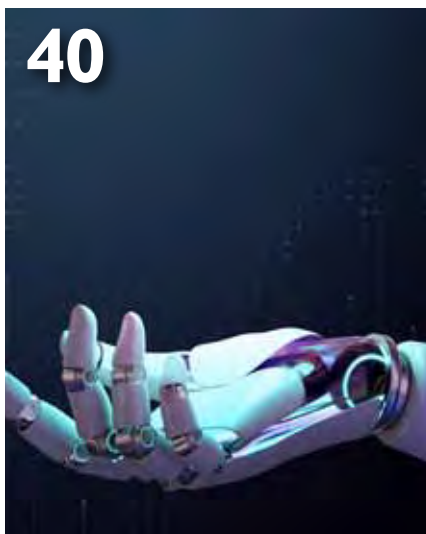
Ananta Hotels & Resorts launches Richmonde Ananta Elite Goa, an upscale hotel focussed on extended stays and destination weddings.



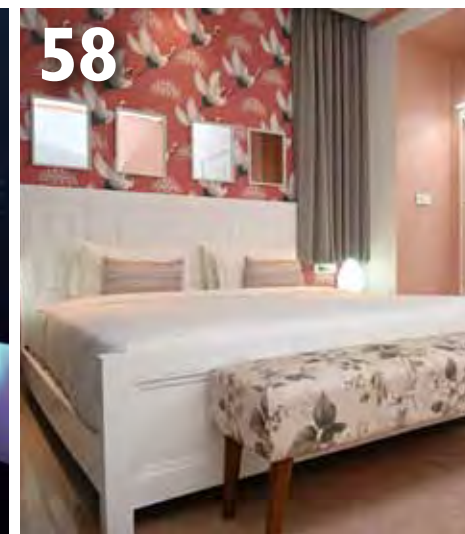
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TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF

One of the biggest & powerful hospitality associations in the country, FHRAI is ready to usher in a new dawn of tourism under the leadership of its newly elected President Sudesh Poddar.

 **Nisha Verma**

In his new role as President, FHRAI, Sudesh Poddar claims that the key area of focus will be to urge the government to have more MICE tourism on the lines of G20 events as well as national and international games in India. “Once such mega events happen in the country, the direct benefit goes to the transport and the hospitality industry. Recently, the 2023 Men’s FIH Hockey World Cup happened in Bhubaneswar. All the hotels were full for almost 45 days and with the G20 meetings happening in the country, right from Arunachal Pradesh to Leh-Ladakh and Kashmir, and down to Kerala, all the hotels in small and big places are being benefitted. Thus, the government should focus more on MICE tourism, so that the hospitality sector gets its share of business,” he suggested.

MANPOWER CHALLENGE

Poddar highlighted that the biggest challenge in the hospitality industry is shortage

of manpower, which would be another focus for him. “To me, it appears that this shortage is due to the lower payscale in the hospitality industry. The people working in the hospitality industry are skilled workers, just like lawyers, MBAs, engineers, among others. Skilled workers include chefs, captains, stewards, front office managers, among oth-

We are requesting more entrepreneurs to come into hospitality industry and bring more hotels, homestays, among others

ers as they all come from hotel management institutes. However, their pay is on the lower side. Hence, my focus would be urging the hotels and restaurants to increase ₹10–20 on a plate of food or drink and then increase the salary structure, so that people from other fields are keen to work in hospitality industry. Currently, there is an exodus from this industry and people are going to differ-

ent industries, resulting in acute shortage of manpower,” he added.

HOSPITALITY FUTURE

Claiming that hotel rates have gone up and availability is an issue, he said, “Any tourism place in India today has acute dearth of hotels. As we are poised for a huge growth in the hospitality industry, we are trying to request more entrepreneurs to come into the hospitality industry and bring more hotels, homestays, guest houses and places of accommodation.”

POST-COVID OUTCOMES

Stating that the industry has changed drastically after COVID first hit the world, Poddar suggested, “The most important thing we have learnt is not to jump and go overboard in terms of money. During COVID, many industrialists or hoteliers who did not have big pockets, had to shut down their businesses. We cannot repeat this mistake in future. Hence, our expenses should be limited as far as day-to-day running of the hotel is concerned. Also,

we must look into our pockets and then go for expansion.”

JOURNEY

Sharing his journey in hospitality, Poddar said, “I started very early in this industry, with a nine-room hotel in Dibrugarh, Assam, which was a very small property. Now it is a recognized four-star hotel with 55 rooms. I have four restaurants in Kolkata, including the 70-year-old Chinese restaurant, Songhai. We are coming up with another four-star hotel in Kolkata.”

FOCUS ON NORTHEAST

Poddar says that Northeast is closest to his heart. “I was born and brought up in Dibrugarh in Assam and now I am based out of Kolkata. All my businesses are in Northeast and Eastern India. The region has so much to offer for tourism and now with PM Modi’s focus for growth of tourism there, I am sure there will be a growth boom. Be it Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Kaziranga, Kolkata, Darjeeling or Sandakphu, Northeast is going to be the sought after destination for all the tourists in the country and abroad. Most importantly, it is still a virgin territory, which needs to be explored,” he mentioned.

SPORTS TOURISM

Poddar believes that sports tourism is one of the major tourism growth engines for any country. “The recent hockey matches in Odisha were successful. There are many tier II cities such as Guwahati, Indore, Jaipur, among others, which have stadiums and tournaments can happen there. There is no dearth of space, and only some renovation or upliftment is required. However, it is a gradual process. Once there is an event, it keeps improving and gets bigger. We cannot just build up huge infrastructure and then wait for people to come in,” he claimed.

PPP MODE

Speaking on the importance of Public Private Partnership (PPP), Poddar suggested, “There are thousands of properties with the government, which were either lying idle or not being run properly. The only option in such cases is PPP model. The investor or the entrepreneur does not need to invest in the land or the structure that comes from the government, but he must improvise, revamp, renovate or add on to that. Thus, his investment becomes lesser, and the property becomes a destination



Sudesh Poddar
President,
FHRAI

Communities are very important for the projects and plans that we make. Every ministry needs to keep community event

property. There are thousands of properties that are lying idle and not being utilized or under-utilized and under the PPP model, those can be developed very well.” □



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Federation writes letter indicating that post implementation of secondary condition (average obligation) of EPCG Scheme, hospitality industry underwent huge downturn.

FHRAI has sought relief in secondary condition (average obligation) of EPCG Scheme from Union finance ministry. In a letter written to Dr. T V Somanathan, Finance Secretary, Ministry of Finance, the Federation, said, "In 2007-8, DGFT in the new exim policy, introduced an additional condition which not only meant that over and above the primary condition, the industry needed to comply with

a secondary condition of maintaining three years of average past performance continuously over and above the specific EO and the average had to be maintained for the entire block of 8/6 years till the redemption of license. Unfortunately post the introduction of the secondary condition, the hospitality industry suffered a huge decline and thereby reduction in the forex due to which the industry has not been in a position to fulfill the secondary condition of maintaining the three years average past performance."

"Herein, we would like to once again reiterate that the sector has primarily been able to satisfy the condition of fulfilling the obligation of 8/6 times of the duty saved over the respective corresponding years, therefore there has been no financial loss to the government exchequer. Since, there has been

a continuous decline of forex of hospitality sector year on year, we humbly request to the Ministry of Finance to favourably consider the following long pending request of the

Unfortunately post introduction of secondary condition, hospitality industry suffered huge decline

hospitality industry: Relaxation in Average Export Obligation by adjusting the preceding 3 years annual average performance for all years commencing from financial year 2007-8 onwards, as per Para -5.19 (a) of the Handbook of Procedures, be granted at the earliest," Federation advocated. ❑

FHRAI urges enhancement of ECLGS loan term

Federation writes letter to MSME ministry & says repayment period of six years for ECLGS loan is too little for hospitality sector.

FHRAI has demanded enhancement of the ECLGS loan term for hospitality sector for maximum period under current provisions. In a letter written to Narayan Tutu Rane, Minister for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, Govt. of India, Federation requested, "We would like to reiterate the concern areas of the hospitality sector with regard to the ECLG Scheme as the following: the repayment period of six years is too little for a sector that was the first to get affected from COVID and was also the biggest sufferer from COVID; extension of ECLGS without long-term repayment option has only increased the credit burden of the industry; the additional loans taken through ECLGS that needed to be repaid in a short duration is very badly impacting the business viability of the industry

members who are still struggling to service the previous loans and the business environment of the sector is highly volatile and unpredictable

Enhance repayment period of ECLGS to 10 years or as per loan repayment period of Principal Loan, whichever is longer

and only a long-term credit facility can help the industry to withstand the challenges arising out of the prolonged effects of COVID."

Federation further said, "a) Enhance the repayment period of ECLGS to 10 years or as

per the loan repayment period of the Principal Loan, whichever is longer: the six-year period is too short for the hospitality sector to reap the desired benefits of an otherwise well-intended scheme. Most of the beneficiaries of the scheme had already mortgaged their properties as surety for the Principal Loan and if the ECLGS loan is not in sync with the earlier loan, that would lead to default of payments and high volume of NPAs in sector. Therefore, in order to make ECLG Scheme fruitful and effective, it is imperative that the tenure of the loan term be increased to at least 10 years or in accordance with loan repayment period of the Principal Loan, whichever is longer, in interest of hospitality sector and b) Rationalize the norms for all ECLGS loans by hospitality sector." ❑

Federation seeks review of MGQ in excise

FHRAI demands resolution regarding compliance of Minimum Guarantee Quantity in excise, says compliance adversely affecting business sustainability.

FHRAI has requested Odisha government to resolve excise license issue regarding Minimum Guarantee Quantity (MGQ). The federation wrote a letter to Ashwini Kumar Patra, Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge), Excise Department, Govt. of Odisha drawing attention of the Minister and said, "In FY 2021-22, the hospitality sector was partially functional but was yet struggling to do decent business due to COVID still looming large with periodic outbursts of different variants, and business being affected majorly by reduced footfalls. The restaurants were constrained to operate with several COVID restrictions. During the period, bar operations were allowed till 8 pm only for initial six months and then till 10 pm for the remainder of six months, due to which restaurants were unable to fulfill the MGQ requirements for the year."

"It is pertinent to mention that, as per the current government guidelines, the food to liquor ratio is 70:30 and, hence it is a herculean task to fulfill the MGQ requirements, especially at a time when the restaurants are adhering to responsible alcohol sales practice. FHRAI further wish to state that our member establishment are being pressurized to pick

As per current government norms, food to liquor ratio is 70:30 and, hence it is herculean task to fulfill MGQ requirements

up liquor that is beyond their selling capacity, failing to which they are asked to pay exorbitant duty to get permission to serve liquor. This is despite paying the license renewal fees





for FY 2023-24. Federation humbly reiterate that maintaining yearly MGQ requirements is not only becoming very difficult for the restaurants, but the compliance is also adding to financial liabilities and adversely affecting business sustainability. FHRAI therefore humbly request to kindly look into the matter and waive off MGQ fulfillment requirement for FY 2019-20, FY 2020-21, FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23 on genuine and reasonable grounds as stated above," FHRAI said. □





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HRANI meets Arvind Singh, Secretary, MoT

Association members put forth concerns of industry to Arvind Singh, Secretary, MoT; he assures best possible cooperation in the matter.

A delegation from HRANI, led by Garish Oberoi, President, HRANI, comprising members Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, Hony. Secretary, HRANI and Vice President, FHRAI and Renu Thapliyal, Secretary General, HRANI recently called on Arvind Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India. The delegation briefed him about the concerns of industry. The Hon'ble Secretary assured of best possible support in the matter.

DELHI EXCISE COMMISSIONER

A delegation, led by Garish Oberoi, President, HRANI, comprising members Renu Thapliyal, Secretary General,

Excise, Entertainment & Luxury Tax, Govt. of NCT of Delhi. The delegation informed the Commissioner about the concerns of member units on account of licencing. A detailed representation was submitted to the Commissioner and following was requested for which the Commissioner gave a patient and positive hearing.



HRANI delegation informed the Delhi Excise Commissioner about concerns of member units on account of licensing


HRANI and Amarjit Ahuja, Director, Le Meridien recently met Krishna Mohan Uppu, Commissioner, Department of

SUBMITS REPRESENTATION

A representation was submitted to Vinai Kumar Saxena, Hon'ble Lt. Governor, Govt. of NCT of Delhi, for his intervention on delay in issuance/renewal of various trade licences through Unified Common Portal. The letter specified that the hospitality industry continues to experience significant obstacles/delays for the same.

MEETING WITH ED, FSSAI

A delegation from HRANI, led by Garish Oberoi, President, HRANI,

comprising members Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, Hony. Secretary, Pranay Aneja, Member Managing Committee and Renu Thapliyal, Secretary General, HRANI recently met Insohi Sharma, Executive Director (Regulatory Compliance, TICD, Regional Office), FSSAI. The delegation had a detailed discussion with Sharma on industry issues such as auditing, menu labelling, hygiene rating, including FOSTAC. She agreed to extend support to the association in the best possible manner. 

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HRANI co-organizes Hotelier Summit

Association members and industry experts witness presentations and panel discussions on enhancing the brand visibility of hotel units on search engine.

To disseminate the detailed information amongst members and fraternity, HRANI partnered for the first Google Hotelier Summit 2023 in India which was held on 29 March 2023 at The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel

& Residences, Gurugram. The Summit witnessed the presence of experts and industry professionals from the travel and hospitality sector. The members of the Managing Committee from all 10 states and UTs of northern region attended the event.

During the event, the welcome address was delivered by Chaitanya Chunduri, Head, Shopping Partnerships, Google.

Garish Oberoi, President, HRANI in his keynote address welcomed Google for recognizing India's potential and investing in the hotel industry. He said HRANI has been a vibrant interface between Google and the association members were looking forward to more such collabora-

tions to help the industry in the future.

Oberoi added, "Google is a friend of hoteliers who want to build their online presence, grow direct bookings and guests for a personal experience. Take advantage of Google's free tools and products to grow your direct bookings."

Summit witnessed the presence of experts and industry professionals from the travel and hospitality sector

Devanshu Bhatia, VP Marketing, Oberoi Hotels and Sundar Singaram, Secretary General, SIHRA also spoke.

Presentations and panel discussions included Deep-dive for Hotels: How to establish presence on Google; Taking ownership of your Google Business Profile; Getting the Best Out of Your Connectivity to Google, among others. □





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SIHRA proposes industry status for hotels in Puducherry

Association members interact with **K Lakshminarayanan**, Hon'ble Minister for Tourism and Aviation, Govt of Puducherry & discuss hoteliers' issues in Union Territory.

SIHRA organized a stakeholder meeting at Puducherry on April 21, 2023, at Radisson Resort Pondicherry Bay. The Chief Guest for the meeting was K Lakshminarayanan, Hon'ble Minister for Tourism and Aviation, Govt of Puducherry and other officials from the tourism department of Puducherry and Ministry of Tourism,

Hon'ble Minister assured his support to SIHRA & invited SIHRA to hold its next annual convention in Puducherry

Govt of India. Over 100 hoteliers and restaurant owners from Puducherry participated in the event and interacted with Hon'ble Minister and SIHRA EC Members. K Syama Raju, President, SIHRA and T Nataraajan, Honorary



Secretary, SIHRA addressed the gathering and emphasised the need to unite in tough times. Raju, in his speech, requested the Puducherry government to extend industry status to hotels in

Puducherry. Hon'ble Minister assured his support to SIHRA and the hospitality sector in the Union Territory and invited SIHRA to hold its next annual convention in Puducherry. ❑



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HRAWI & FSSAI join hands to promote food safety

HRAWI organizes FoSTaC programme in which 38 hospitality professionals received training in food handling and preparation, hygiene & sanitation & waste management.

The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) in collaboration with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) recently conducted its latest Food Safety Supervisor Training in Advance Catering (FoSTaC) programme on 27 April at The Dukes Retreat, Chalet Group Hotel, in Khandala, Maharashtra. The inauguration for the training was done by Stephen D'souza, Cluster General Manager, The Dukes Retreat; Rakeshwar Guleria, General Manager, The Dukes Retreat; Rushikesh Sanap, HR Manager, The Dukes Retreat and Ashutosh Balodhi, Executive Chef, The Dukes Retreat. Attended by 38 participants,

the training conducted by Divya Bhaskaran was a resounding success. Through the initiative, FSSAI and HRAWI aim to promote safe and healthy food practices in the hospitality industry.

FoSTaC is crucial initiative aimed at improving quality & safety of food practices in F&B industry

FoSTaC is a crucial initiative aimed at improving the quality and safety of food practices in the F&B industry. The pro-

gramme equips hospitality professionals with the necessary skills and knowledge to identify and mitigate potential food safety risks, ensuring that customers are served safe and healthy food.

"This collaboration between FSSAI and HRAWI is a valuable initiative that highlights the commitment of both organizations towards promoting safe and healthy food practices in the hospitality industry. We are thrilled with the success of this initiative and are proud to have trained and certified over 2,500 hospitality professionals across the Western region. We look forward to continuing our efforts in this direction," said **Pradeep Shetty**, President, HRAWI. □

HRAWI seeks stronger online regulation

HRAWI raises concerns over rising incidences of online hotel booking frauds and targeted smear campaigns on social media against hospitality brands.

The Association has identified smear campaigns that list fake hotels websites on popular search engines that appear to be authentic and dupe unsuspecting customers into making payments for room bookings. Member establishments of the Association have voiced concern about their brand reputation being tarnished by social media influencers creating fake videos or posting fake reviews in a bid to attract more views and followers.

Taking into account the rapid recurrence of such instances over the last one year, HRAWI has planned to take up the issue with the concerned Government authorities and law enforcement agencies. "Such activities not only cause financial loss to customers but also severely damage the reputation of the hospitality establishments. HRAWI will

approach the Government to enact laws to protect citizens and commercial enterprises from social media influencers who misuse their following to blackmail honest establishments," said **Pradeep Shetty**, President, HRAWI.

Association advised customers to book only through authentic websites & social media pages of hotels & restaurants

The Association also advised customers to book only through authentic websites and social media pages of hotels and restaurants and to report any suspicious activity to the concerned authorities. □



Pradeep Shetty
President,
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INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MILLETS 2023

Mix Millets Carrot Uttapam



Ingredients

Barnyard Millets	100 grams
Little Millets	100 grams
Pearl Millets	100 grams
Urad dhuli dal	100 grams
Fenugreek seeds	01 tsp
Salt	05 grams
Oil/Ghee/Butter	15 grams
Carrot	50 grams

Method

- Take 3 parts of each Millets & 1 part of Urad dhuli dal.
- Wash it well & soak it overnight.
- After soaking, grind it well and make into smooth paste & allow it to ferment for whole day.
- Prepare the griddle (dosa tawa) for the Uttapam.
- Pour batter on tawa and do not spread and then top it with grated carrot.
- Apply butter/ghee/refined oil as per the choice and let it cook from both side with nice golden brown colour.
- Serve hot with tomato/coconut/peanut chutney.

Nachni Dosa/Ragi Masala Dosa

Ingredients

For Dosa Batter

• Ragi Flour	150 grams
• Semolina	50 grams
• Sour Curd	30 grams
• Cooking Soda	2 grams
• Salt	As per taste

For Dosa Stuffing

• Refined oil	40 ml
• Mustard seeds	10 grams
• Urad dal	10 grams
• Chana dal	10 grams
• Dried Red Chilli	2 nos
• Curry leaves	2 sprigs

• Asafoetida (Hing)	4 grams
• Green Chilli (finely chopped)	As per taste
• Ginger (finely chopped)	10 grams
• Onion (sliced) (medium size)	2 whole
• Turmeric	4 grams
• Salt	As per taste
• Potato (boiled & mashed) (medium size)	5 whole
• Tomato (chopped) (medium size)	1 whole
• Coriander (finely chopped)	15 grams
• Lemon juice	3 tsp

Method of Preparation:

Dosa batter preparation:

- Firstly, in a large bowl take 150 gms of Ragi Flour and 50 gms of Semolina.
- Add 30 gms sour curd to it and mix it properly.
- Add water to the mixture to get it into a nappy consistency.
- Rest the mixture aside in a warm place for at least 30 minutes to begin fermentation.
- Once the batter is rested, add cooking soda and mix gently, without disturbing the air pockets so as to boost the fermentation.
- Transfer 4 cups of fermented batter to a small bowl and add 1 tsp salt.
- Mix well until the salt is well combined. Dosa batter is ready. Keep aside.

Stuffing preparation:

- Firstly, in a large kadai heat 40 ml oil and splutter 10 gms mustard, 10 gms urad dal, 10 gms chana dal, 2 dried red chilli, 2 sprigs of curry leaves and pinch hing.
- Now add finely chopped green chillies (as per taste) and finely chopped ginger. Sauté them well.
- Also, add sliced onions and sauté until onions shrink slightly.
- Further, add 4 gms turmeric and salt (as per taste). Sauté well.
- Now add 5 boiled potatoes, and mix well, mash slightly making sure everything is well combined.
- Turn off the flame and add finely chopped coriander and 3 tsp lemon juice.
- Mix well and masala for dosa is ready. Keep aside.

Ragi Dosa preparation:

- Firstly, add a ladleful of batter on hot tawa.
- Spread as thin as possible making a crispy dosa.
- Take 1 tsp of butter and spread uniformly.
- Also, place 2 tsp of prepared masala in the centre.
- Roast until the dosa turns dark brown and crisp.
- Scrape the sides of dosa and roll the dosa.
- Finally, instant ragi masala dosa recipe is ready to serve with assorted coconut chutneys, sambar podi masala and ghee.



Recipes Credits:

Ashima Chatterjee Misra

Assistant Lecturer, FHRAI IHM

Rohit Singla

Teaching Associate, FHRAI IHM



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FORGING AHEAD



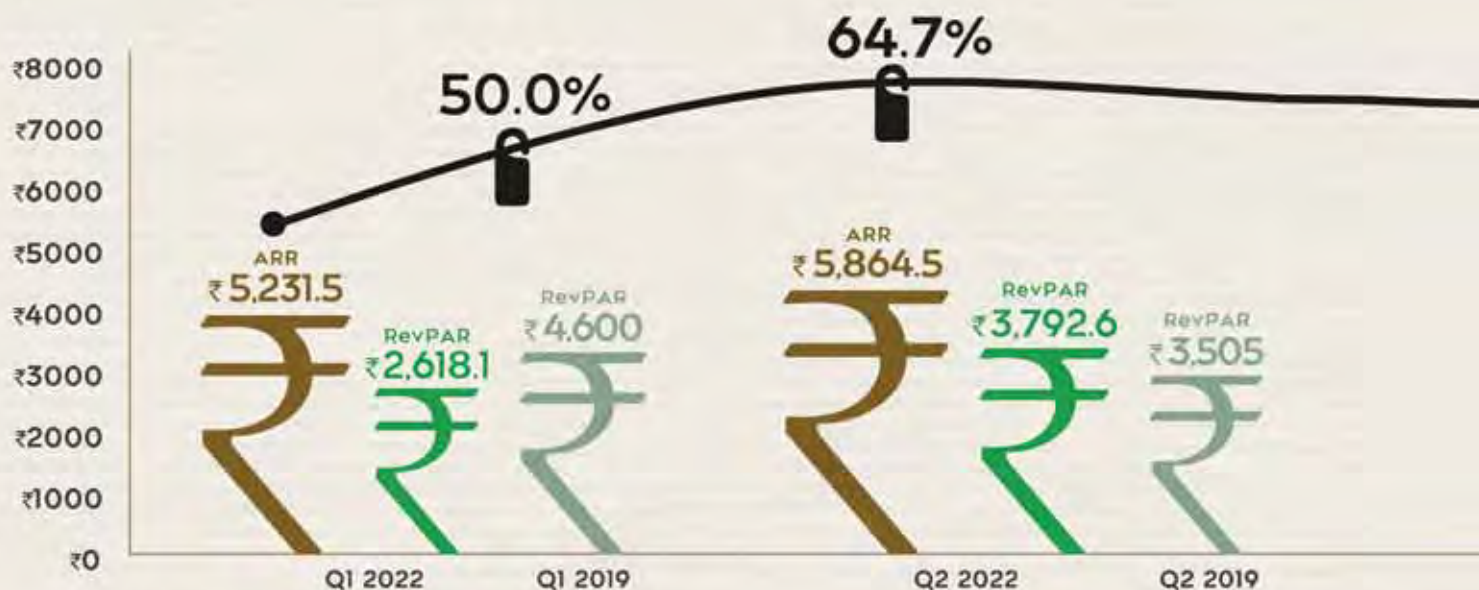
Q1
2022

2022 had a disappointing start because of the 3rd COVID wave in the country, which due to its predecessor's impact coupled with the unfortunate war in Ukraine, led to a significant decline. However, propelled by the country's vaccine program and the pent-up demand, the recovery in the sector was swift, quietly leaving behind its woes.

By March 2022, the recovery in the hospitality sector was steadfast with ARR's recovering by 22-24% in Q1 2022 against the same period in 2021, despite the occupancy rate for the same period remaining flat.

Indian Hotel Sector: Quarterly Performance

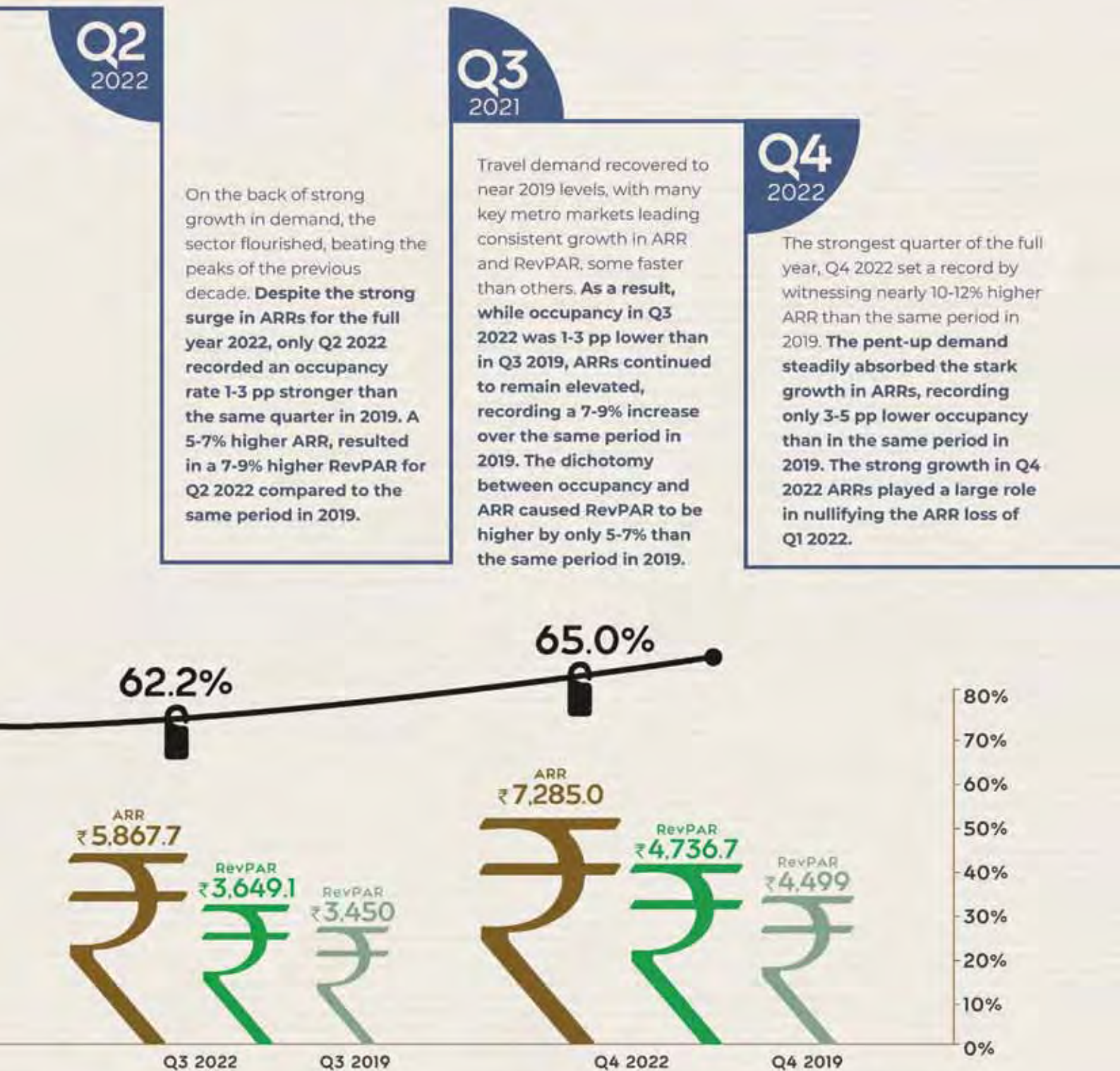
- ARR (AVERAGE ROOM RATE)
- RevPAR
- OCCUPANCY



*All data shown is an approximation and for calendar year

Graphics courtesy: HVS Anarock

Driven by the strong recovery in demand, hotel companies accelerated their growth plans in 2022, states HVS Anarock's India Hospitality Industry Overview 2022 report.



Graphics courtesy: HVS Anarock

RevPAR increase across India's key markets (2022 vs 2019)

India RevPAR - 2022

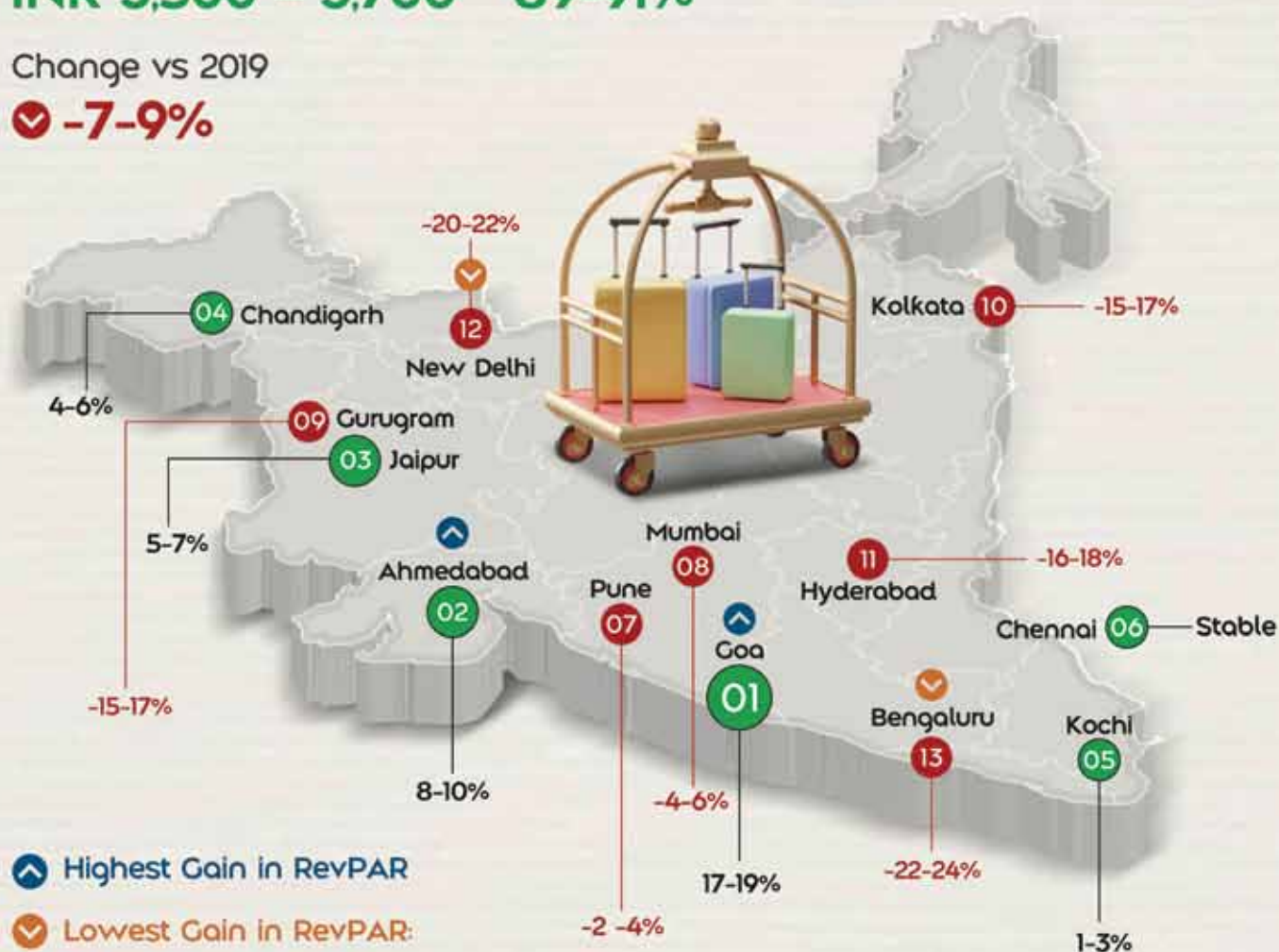
INR 3,500 – 3,700

Y-o-Y change

89-91%

Change vs 2019

✓ -7-9%



	City	RevPAR Growth (2022 vs 2019)	Ranking [#]
India	Goa	17-19%	1
RevPAR	Ahmedabad	8-10%	2
	Jaipur	5-7%	3
2022	Chandigarh	4-6%	4
	Kochi	1-3%	5
INR3,500 – 3,700	Chennai	<Stable>	6
	Pune	-2-4%	7
Y-o-Y change	Mumbai	-4-6%	8
89-91%	Gurugram	-15-17%	9
	Kolkata	-15-17%	10
Change vs 2019	Hyderabad	-16-18%	11
-7-9%	New Delhi	-20-22%	12
	Bengaluru	-22-24%	13

Ranking as per RevPAR Growth

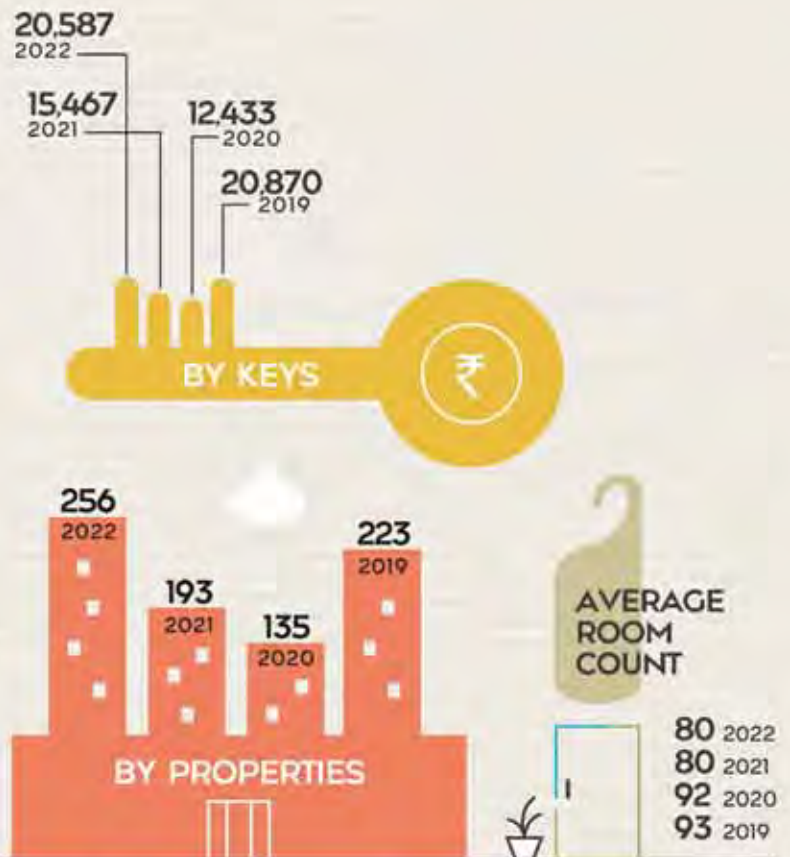
Graphics courtesy: HVS Anarock

* All data shown is in approximation and for calendar year. Map not to scale, for representative purpose only

2022 BRAND SIGNINGS*

BRAND SIGNINGS
DURING 2019 TO 2022

Hotel companies accelerated their growth plans in 2022 because of the strong recovery in demand, which led to a 33% year over year increase in brand signings by keys. **166 new hotels with 14,885 rooms were added to the branded hotel market, while 90 hotels with 5,702 rooms underwent rebranding.** The average room count is declining as hotel operators enter smaller markets.

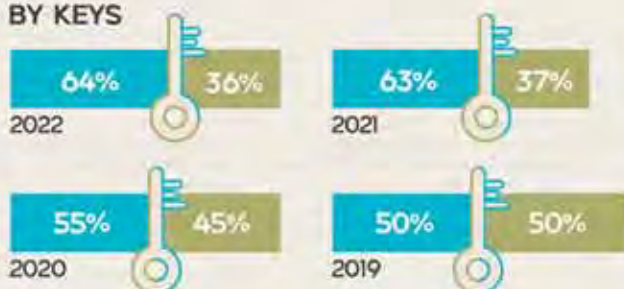


*Note: Four properties that were renewed (approx. 300 keys) have not been included in new signings; Data received from 23 hotel operators.

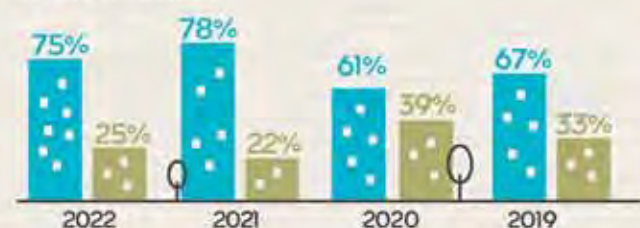
INTERNATIONAL VS DOMESTIC BRANDS

Domestic hotel operators continued to sign more properties (75% of the total signings by property) than their international counterparts, with an average key count of 68 keys during the year. Similar to domestic chains, international hotel operators have also begun signing smaller properties than they traditionally did, as they continue to expand their footprint in Tier 2, 3 & 4 cities. The average number of keys per hotel for international hotel operators, therefore, decreased from 133 keys in 2021 to 119 keys in 2022. □

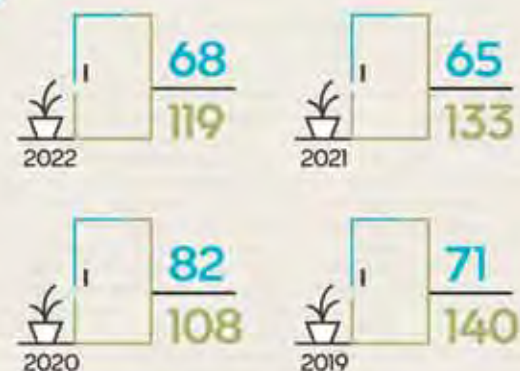
BY KEYS



BY PROPERTIES



AVERAGE ROOM COUNT



● DOMESTIC ● INTERNATIONAL

Graphics courtesy: HVS Anarock

Capitalizing on opportunity

Plethora of G20 summits this year will be fuelling huge business for hospitality firms & India will emerge as preferred leisure & M!CE destination, reckon industry experts.



DDP Bureau

G20 Presidency: Silver lining for Indian hospitality industry

After years of struggle and immense challenges inflicted by COVID, the Indian hospitality industry is expecting robust growth as India took over the presidency of G20 in December of 2022.

As the year progresses, more than 200 meetings involving officials from different countries will be organized in India across 50 cities. Around 30 heads of states and government from the G20 nations are expected to participate in the summit. To celebrate India's G20 Presidency, the Ministry of Tourism (MoT) is planning to organize several events engaging government-level stakeholders and also the travel trade and hospitality sector. This month, MoT will be organizing the first Global Tourism Investors' Summit (GTIS) in New Delhi.

The G20 CEO Forum alongside the Ministerial Meeting will be held at Goa in June. The Ministry of Tourism will also be organizing a M!CE Global Conference and event on adventure tourism in May and June, respectively in 2023.

These events will open big opportunities for the hospitality sector, especially for the lesser-known destinations, which may also be enhanced by the G20 Presidency. This will surely increase footfalls and inbound travellers, including foreign diplomats and dignitaries. Hotel room rates are also likely to



Sudesh Poddar
President,
HRAEI

increase during the G20 Presidency due to increased demand for rooms. This will be an opportunity for the country to showcase its rich heritage and cultural diversity, as well as plethora of tourist attractions ranging from historical sites, monuments, and temples to pristine beaches, wildlife parks, and mountains to this global audience, which may boost the country's share of global international arrivals in the future. It is an opportune time for our host hotels to present the highest levels of service in order to attract more business in future.

India will host the meetings at key tourist attractions such as Rajasthan, Goa, and Jammu

& Kashmir regions, and some places in the East, including the temple city of Bhubaneswar, erstwhile India's capital Kolkata, Siliguri and Guwahati.

As the G20 will see a lot of corporate meetings happening in India, the M!CE segment will surely get an impetus due to this. Against the backdrop of India's G20 Presidency, the tourism ministry has also declared 2023 as a Visit India year to draw more international tourists. In short, while domestic travel will continue to drive domestic leisure business, showcasing India's rich cultural heritage on the sidelines of the G20 Presidency, it will also help drive leisure inbound business, as well. RevPar and occupancy are expected to rise. Some industry experts

As G20 will see lot of corporate meetings happening in India, M!CE segment will surely get impetus due to this

believe that as the demand surges (especially in September) there might be a supply constraint scenario in the shortlisted destinations.



Brightening prospects for Indian hospitality sector

The G20 Presidency of India in 2023 is likely to impact the country's hospitality sector constructively. The G20 summit is an international event that attracts many delegates and visitors from around the world, and this presents a massive opportunity for the Indian hospitality industry.

Delegates from 29 nations are expected to attend G20 summits across 200 venues in 55 cities this year. All these cities are prepared for the infrastructure upgrade for the G20 meetings. The government expects over 150,000 international delegates for the summits officially, but the number could be higher since many invitees may bring their families along. Several top leaders may also go on private trips, expanding business activity. Ministry of Tourism (MoT) highlighted the tourism offerings, and delegates were taken to nearby tourist attractions. MoT conducted soft skill training for tour guides, taxi drivers, hoteliers, travel agents and other stakeholders in these destinations. Renovation and upgradation of archaeological monuments and heritage sites are being done.

The G20 summits aim to pull India out of COVID's adverse effects and push India's tourism sector to the pre-COVID level by 2024. It also aims to position



K Syama Raju
President,
SIHRA

India as a major tourist destination in the upcoming G20 meetings. The Government of India is committed to bringing about necessary interventions, including visa reforms, ease of travel and friendly immigration facilities.

Hotels in the cities where G20 meetings have been organized witnessed 50 per cent more bookings. Banquet and restaurant spaces are also booked for the side meetings by various companies and embassies, bringing additional revenue to hotels during G20 meetings. The hospitality sector in India has already been growing steadily

in recent years, with an increasing number of international hotel chains entering the market and a growing focus on luxury and high-end hospitality services. The G20 Presidency is expected to boost this growth further, as the demand for hotel rooms, restaurants and other hospitality services will likely increase significantly during the summit.

In addition, the G20 Presidency will also provide an opportunity for Indian hospitality companies to showcase their services to a global audience, which could help boost their brand recognition and attract more business. The event could also encourage more investment in the sector, as domes-

G20 summits aim to pull India out of COVID's adverse effects & push India's tourism sector to pre-COVID level by 2024

tic and international investors may see the potential for growth and profitability in the Indian hospitality market.



Much-needed fillip for hospitality sector

India's G20 Presidency has given the country's hospitality sector—the biggest fillip since the lifting of COVID restrictions two years ago. The hospitality industry is on the way to recovery and has started to meet the pre-COVID levels.

India took over Indonesia's G20 Presidency on 1 December 2022. It is holding the G20 Presidency from 1 December 2022 to 30 November 2023.

India tourism has a visible growth which we all can see in 2023 and the G20 Presidency has been a fantastic chance for India to promote itself to the world as a complete travel destination.



Garish Oberoi
President,
HRANI

India's G20 Presidency is not only strengthening hospitality sector but will further increase visibility & exposure on a global stage

G20 events held across the country have seen arrivals of foreign dignitaries and domestic movement of people, pro-

viding the hospitality industry a much-needed push.

Various working groups, initiatives and engagement groups will participate in discussions during meetings and conferences scheduled across 50 destinations as a build-up to the final G20 summit at New Delhi in Sep 2023. The destinations, include Tier II & III cities that offer a picturesque landscape and rich cultural heritage to showcase.

India's G20 Presidency is not only strengthening the domestic tourism and

hospitality sector but will further increase visibility and exposure on a global stage.

The significance of G20 Presidency in fuelling investments in tourism and hospitality sector can further be enhanced by the government by delivering industry-friendly policies such as Infrastructure Status for the hospitality sector, single-window clearance, ease of doing business by reducing number of licenses and approvals, among others.

We are optimistic that the industry-related issues will be considered favourably and the efforts by the government and other organizations with the support of G20 events will help to market India as a top tourist destination.





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+919813056184





Energizing India's hospitality sector

India's G20 Presidency has positively impacted the Indian hospitality sector. It is attracting leaders, delegates and media from around the world. The increase in demand is seen as an encouraging sign for the industry and we believe that India's G20 Presidency is complementing the efforts made to boost domestic tourism. As the host country, the spotlight is on India and it is showcasing its culture, heritage and tourist attractions to international guests. This exposure is leading to increased interest and demand for the hospitality sector.

Post-COVID, Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) has been gradually increasing and the industry is experiencing growth once again. India recently celebrated a significant milestone in its G20 Presidency by hosting its 100th G20 meeting. The meetings have been held in over 40 cities across 28 states and Union Territories covering various themes such as employment, tourism (including medical tourism), agriculture and culture. In the Western region alone, G20 summits have so far been held in Mumbai, Pune, Goa, Bhopal, Indore, Khajuraho, Gandhinagar, Panaji and Rann of Kutch, among other cities.



Pradeep Shetty
President,
HRAWI

To host the G20 meetings and events, India is investing in infrastructure improvements such as airports, roads, public transportation and venues. These improvements are benefitting everyone, including the hospitality sector by making it more accessible and attractive to tourists. The hospitality industry too is playing a crucial role in hosting these G20 meetings and providing world-class facilities and experiences to the delegates. These meets have brought together the best minds from various industries

and have paved the way for new opportunities and collaborations. This is a testament to the industry's capabilities and there is a hope to host many more such events in the future.

The tourism sector is optimistic and upbeat and India's G20 Presidency has arrived at an opportune moment, which the government recognizes as a low-hanging fruit. The Ministry of Tourism has proposed launching a global Visit India 2023 campaign to promote India as a favoured tourist destination in Asia. The launch of new Metro trains

Hospitality industry is playing crucial role in hosting G20 meetings & providing world-class facilities & experiences to delegates

and Vande Bharat trains across cities and states, the illumination of streets and highways and the beautification of public spaces, among other initiatives truly are making a positive impact. ■



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Hospitality industry set to make big stride

India's hotel sector is growing at fast pace & expanding footprints post-COVID. It will continue its good run witnessing robust growth in 2023-2024.



DDP Bureau

Well positioned to take quantum leap

During COVID, the hotel industry was the worst hit, grappling with huge losses both on the monetary and manpower front. The last few months have brought relief since the Indian government lifted restrictions and people started travelling again. Both domestic and international travel picked up, and hotel occupancy rates slowly increased. Hotels started reporting an uptick in their businesses owing to sustained travel surges, weddings, workcations, staycations, revenge travel, corporates opening up for MICE, along with other corporate events and the normalisation of international travel.

The Indian tourism sector has started showing signs of recovery after two long years of COVID-induced challenges, as per the Economic Survey 2023. It also mentioned, "Tourism sector is showing signs of revival, with foreign tourist arrivals in India in FY23 growing month-on-month with the resumption of scheduled international flights and easing of COVID regulations. The hotel occupancy rate has improved from 30–32 per cent in April 2021 to 68–70 per cent in November 2022." The report also mentions that



Vineet Taing
President,
Vatika Hotels

most cities have bounced back their growth from pre-COVID levels. It also states that Mumbai, Delhi and Bengaluru are likely to lead revenue per available room growth and in addition to that Tier-II & III cities have seen a fair amount of development too.

Furthermore, in a bid to further provide impetus to the hospitality and tourism industry, G K Reddy, Hon'ble Minister of Tourism, Culture and DoNER, Govt. of India rolled out Visit India Year 2023

initiative. On the launch, he mentioned, "This is an important year as India is heading towards G20 Presidency and more than one lakh foreign delegates would be visiting India this year and they would showcase India's culture, festivals and monuments."

With G20 Presidency, the Ministry of Tourism is on a mission mode and has unlocked the untapped potential of tourism in India, making India, a 365-day destination which has given the tourism industry a massive push with an endeavor

Indian tourism sector has started showing signs of recovery after 2 years of COVID-induced challenges, as per Economic Survey 2023

our to recover the losses. The industry has always been cautiously optimistic about the future and with all the current scenarios coming up together, things are changing for good.

Hospitality sector has bounced back post-COVID

As we have just entered the new financial year, things in general are looking good for the overall economy. Since the hospitality industry is also a part of it, the sentiment is good here as well. This is for the first time in the post-COVID phase where the ARR's as well as the occupancies are hitting great numbers. Earlier only the occupancies were doing good, however the ARR's were not as per the expectations. This is for the first time in the last four years where both the parameters are escalating. Moreover, the growth is happening across all segments. Previously,

This is for first time in post-COVID phase where ARR's as well as occupancies are hitting great numbers

only the leisure sector was doing well. Now the growth is being witnessed everywhere. Even the city-centric business hotels are doing good numbers.

Globally, everyone is saying good things about India and this is boosting the sentiments



Param Kannampilly
Executive Chairman,
Concept Hospitality, The
Fern Hotels & Resorts

across all sectors. The fact that India is currently holding G20 Presidency is also helping a great deal. There is a surge of global travellers coming to India. The MICE sector is also doing good. As everything looks great, no one wants to miss this opportunity. Even all the hotel companies at the BSE are hitting high numbers. Nearly all of them are out of the red.

Hoteliers are extremely optimistic about the future and growth potential of their respec-

tive brands. Almost all the hotel companies are opening hotels and expanding at a brisk pace.

The biggest hurdle which the growth will face is the lack of trained manpower. There is already a shortfall of talented and trained hospitality professionals. With the expansion happening now, the industry will face a talent crunch and need to prepare accordingly.

As many more hotels are built and hundreds of rooms are added to the inventory, all the hoteliers must ensure that sustainability becomes hallmark of growth. We cannot afford to be reckless and disregard the environment's concern. We must adopt the practices of reduce, reuse and recycle. We must safeguard our environment and preserve it for our future generations.



Indian hotel industry is expanding footprints

Good times seem to be coming back! There is no doubt that domestic leisure and business travellers are on the move... and business graphs are moving north! In India and going overseas. There has been a veritable explosion. At the same time, the hotel and hospitality industry are also growing, expansion plans which had been put on the backburner are now being given top priority. This is certainly good news and I hope our hospitality industry cannot only create more best-in-class infrastructure but also concentrate on the service and hygiene standards. COVID has taught us the value of hygiene and safety



Dr Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar
Executive Director,
HRH Group of Hotels

are mushrooming. The big global brands are showing the way and the rest are ready and eager to follow. Undoubtedly, the hotel industry offers fine investment opportunities for the future; at the same time, the world today is conscious about over-development, the increasing carbon footprint, the sustainability regulations, issues of climate change... we have thus a lot more to look after than just the brick-and-mortar establishments we wish to create.

I am happy that we taken it on and will

Not merely in metro-cities, but in mini-metros and smaller towns, hotels and restaurants are mushrooming



which cannot be forgotten. It will be the responsibility of the hotel industry to ensure that COVID lessons are learnt and re-learned every season.

I may not have the figures to discuss the subject of hotel expansion but clearly in every segment there is a pent-up desire to build more and grow more. Not merely in the metro-cities, but in the mini-metros and smaller towns, hotels and restaurants

continue to offer new products in the hotel and tourism industry, just as we have been doing over the last four decades. Sustainable, eco-friendly and guest-friendly measures all the way... Let us say cheers on that note and give 2023 our best! ❑

Stunning debut

Surrounded by Aravallis range, Mementos by ITC Hotels, Ekaaya Udaipur is all set to emerge as top destination for M!CE & Weddings segment, explains **Sandipan Bose**.



Lipla Negi

What are your key focus areas for now?

Being a part of 1st luxury brand managed by ITC Hotels and the debut hotel is exhilarating. Creating, establishing and opening our resort and watching the efforts of the team come to life when we serve our guests is a prize in itself. Our key focus area at Mementos Udaipur is ensuring the satisfaction and contentment of both our internal and external guests.

Mementos by ITC Hotels is a unique collection of luxury hotels focussing on modern marvels, hidden retreats to historic treasures. Every Memento hotel endeavours to create everlasting memories and special moments which become prized mementos long after the guest's visit. Staying true to our promise, Memories Available, the brand focusses on constructing the residue of sensory experiences where everything during a guests stay is intricately customized and curated to conjure a vivid picture of the past event. We are not just a brand but an experience that lives with you forever.



Sandipan Bose

General Manager,
Mementos by ITC Hotels,
Ekaaya Udaipur

How do you define your category & type? And what is your target audience?

Mementos by ITC Hotels, Ekaaya Udaipur is a luxury resort. The hidden gem offering the unseen Udaipur. Nestled away from the noise and chaos of city life, we cherish the serenity of the Aravallis, and the abundant beauty of nature that surrounds us. Our target audience is an intrepid traveller, a luxury connoisseur in the search for a haven of serenity. While your marketing strategies come hand in hand with every launch and sustenance, our purpose is to create guest loyalty

through our team and the services that we offer. Forming an abiding emotional bond with the guest is our approach.

How do you plan to carve niche for debut brand in Indian wedding market?

Weddings are a time of celebrations for everyone involved, including the teams helping the families to make their dreams come true. At our resort, whatever wedding the guest is dreaming of, we have the venue to cater to every request. Be it a glamorous big fat Indian wedding or an intimate family affair. The backdrop of the Aravalli Hills, the skies from sunrise to sunset, the elysian

At Mementos Udaipur, whatever wedding guest is dreaming of, we have the venue to cater to every request

views and surroundings not only offer the best décor but also helps you in controlling the cost of the décor. The extensive food and beverage expertise and offerings is a



crowning achievement for all weddings and celebrations. The weddings for a buyout are from ₹1 lakh onwards, excluding taxes per room which also gets you our dedicated wedding team that goes above and beyond to corroborate ideas or desire.

Luxury travellers, today, are seeking unique, immersive experiences. How are you working towards this?

Each Mementos Hotel is being designed to offer the true experience of the destination, celebrating the traditions, arts, crafts and cuisines of the region it belongs to. At Mementos by ITC Hotels, Ekaaya Udaipur, each experience is thoughtfully crafted to offer inspiration and solace, whether you are here on business or simply seeking a reprieve from the monotony of everyday life. Being in the midst of the marvellous Aravalli Hills, paired with the luxury of bewitching views, there is no end to the things that can be offered. Be it a hike to the waterfalls, private dining options on a hilltop with a specially curated gourmet meal, stargazing or rejuvenating yourself with midnight Yoga on a full moon night, Mementos Hotel ensures all.

In your opinion, how can challenge of talent crunch & retention be overcome?

The hospitality and service industry are led by the human touch. No matter how technologically inclined and progressive the world becomes, the soul of our indus-

try lies in compassion, considerate behavior and kindness towards one another. If we can instill these qualities in our teams and the coming generations, the talent and passion for hospitality will continue to rise. The skillsets can be taught and practiced.

Driven by the purpose and values of ITC Hotels, we strive to not only focus on retention but also drive talent to the brand. This is only possible when we create programmes to train and offer growth within our organizations. ITC Hotels was one of the very few companies to keep employment values intact during COVID and has earned an additional reason for being one of the sought after names to work in. Our effort at Mementos Udaipur in coordination and support with the brand is to create opportunities within the region and have consistent manpower for operational departments.

What are your leadership strategies as GM of debutant property?

As a leader, for me the happiness quotient of my talent and team is of utmost importance. A happy family at work directly results in great and exceptional service. Taking care of your internal and external guests is imperative. My focus here as a leader is to educate and promote sustainability and renewability not just within the resort and the team but also in our local areas. With the support of my team, we are

also largely concentrating on building the infrastructure in the neighbouring areas of the resort. While the major revenue stream for any hotel continues to be rooms and food & beverage, we wish to offer designed experiences to stimulate all senses and create unforgettable memories.

In your view, what travel trends will dominate domestic market this year?

There has been a great shift in the consumer mindset while planning their travels, be it corporate events or vacations. A few trends that have been growing and will only increase is the demand for solo travelling, places that offer authentic local experiences, accelerated interactions with digitalization and sustainability. My outlook is that as brands we must constantly seek inspiration to update ourselves and do better. With the rise of social media's presence, it has become significantly important for all of us to have relevant and consistent content to ensure our presence and create brand recall. ❑





Prioritising talent retention

As young hospitality professionals seek high growth company culture that promises stability & recognition, hotel brands are betting big on talent nurturing programmes.



Lipla Negi

It is an agenda on everyone's mind. A hot topic that is being discussed on almost all hospitality platforms. Talent retention is a shared pain. While occupancy and ADRs continue to soar high, getting the right talent has become a tough challenge post-COVID. "The hotel industry has always struggled to find and hold onto great talent. The current scenario not only in India but across the globe continues to be a challenge to us," reckoned **Govind Sharma**, Director, Human Resources, JW Marriott New Delhi. Indeed, COVID changed the business of hospitality in more ways than one, and recruiting the right talent became an uphill task with a shrunk pool of talent.

EMPOWERING EVERYONE

Today, many see the future of hospitality intertwined with the future of talent.

There is an immediate need to showcase the bright possibilities, this sector offers to the young generation who thinks differently. Acknowledging this need to engage, motivate and nurture talent, the top hotel chains have already launched programmes providing training and well-planned staircase for career growth. "Accor is a global employer and has its presence across the globe in more than 110 countries, with more than 40 brands, offering a very broad spectrum of career opportunities across the functions, suiting every ambition for internal talent. We foster a culture of empowering our team members, thereby helping them step into the role of responsibility and accountability, helping them explore, experience, learn and grow in the careers of their choice. Our Holistic Talent Management Strategy, including scientific identification of talent, providing early responsibilities, transparent communication and Talent Management strategy helps us to retain and engage top talent. We have also



Puneet Dhawan
SVP, Operations,
Accor India and South Asia

We have invested hugely in providing cutting edge virtual learning platforms helping talent to learn at their pace



Govind Sharma
Director, HR,
JW Marriott New Delhi

Current scenario not only in India but across the globe continues to be a challenge to us

invested hugely in providing cutting edge virtual learning platforms helping talent to learn at their pace,” explained **Puneet Dhawan**, SVP, Operations, Accor India and South Asia.

From mentorship programmes to rewards, brands are leaving no stone unturned to acknowledge and appreciate talent in order to make their workforce feel valued and significant. Employees are being offered varied opportunities to grow within the company. Talking about several talent-nurturing policies that are being offered at JW Marriott New Delhi, Sharma said, “We offer ongoing training and development opportunities for our employees, as well as mentorship programmes to help guide their career growth. We also have a recognition and rewards programme to acknowledge and celebrate our employees’ achievements every week (Standing Ovation), every month (Townhall), and the annual town hall. In terms of retaining talent, we focus on creating a positive work environment and promoting a healthy work-life balance. We also offer competitive compensation and benefits packages to ensure our associates feel valued and supported.” He strongly feels that acknowledging and promoting the talent internally within the organization is a way to empower associates and allow them the opportunity to grow

within the organization. “This also makes sure that your highly trained talent continues to work with you toward achieving service excellence for our guests. The focus is also on grooming leaders so that they can further carry your vision and approach to their respective teams.”

BALANCING ACT

With health and work-life balance becoming the top priority of professionals across the industry, companies are not shying away from going an extra mile in order to assist employees meet their wellness goals. “We have regular activities such as yoga, meditation, zumba, fun-Fridays, among others which allow the mind to relax and body to remain fit. Our team members regularly visit an NGO to ensure we remain humble and are able to assist those who require assistance,” shared **Kush Kapoor**, CEO, Roseate Hotels & Resorts. In addition to training and development, brands are also focusing on creating a positive work environment that fosters collaboration, creativity and innovation. “We believe that when our employees feel valued and supported, they are more likely to stay with us long-term. We have a range of employee engagement programmes, including team-building events, recognition and rewards programmes, and regular feedback sessions,” said **Rajan Kalra**, Director, Sales, India, Suba Group of Hotels.



Kush Kapoor
CEO,
Roseate Hotels & Resorts

We help our associates upskill with up-to-date and relevant skills and certifications that help them advance their careers



Rajan Kalra
Director, Sales, India,
Suba Group of Hotels

We have range of employee engagement programmes, including team-building events, recognition and rewards programmes

Upskilling as well as reskilling now underline the vision for the hospitality brand ensuring that the right attitude is encouraged for an overall development. Agreed Kapoor, “We nurture talent by providing adequate cross-exposure whether it is across departments or across our hotels. This allows them to understand the functioning of other departments better and how to work together smoothly. We also help our associates upskill with up-to-date and relevant skills and certifications that help them advance their careers.” Another challenge in front of the industry is to be able to make the sector more attractive to potential job seekers who are not part of the normal talent pool for hospitality and thereby draw in superior talent. Emphasizing on the need to collaborate and work together to overcome this challenge, Dhawan believes, “The hospitality industry of today still suffers from some serious challenges such as stereotyped myths related to hospitality, poor work-life balance, stress at workplace and uncompetitive salaries at entry level all of which tend to stem inflow of talent from other industries. The entire industry needs to collaborate to drive the strengths of hospitality over other industries and work on the challenging areas to position hospitality as the rightful best career option for young talent across all geographies and industries.” □

'India remains crucial market'

Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts is planning to expand its luxury & midscale portfolio in India & at same time implementing best practices to make mark, reveals **Souvagya Mohapatra**.



DDP Bureau

What are your expansion plans?

Having our successful ventures in Maldives with already eight operational luxurious properties, we are all set to expand in Asia Pacific regions. The priority countries for us are India, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka. Our business development team in these regions are aggressively looking out for the properties at strategic locations with a flavour of Atmosphere touch and exclusivity.

We have already signed Hotel Management Agreement for three properties at Kolkata, Bhopal and Gangtok. Our topmost brand OZEN will make a mark in India in form of OZEN Mansion Kolkata scheduled to be launched during Q4 2024. Bhopal will witness an Atmosphere heritage property with the refurbishment of Sadar Manzil—the erstwhile Darbar of Begam ruler in Bhopal by end of the year 2023. A boutique property with the Sikkimese and monastery architecture at Gangtok will soon have a brand of Atmosphere under the name Thangka House Gangtok by Atmosphere by October 2023. The destinations that we are already in dialogue with our partners are Goa, Nagpur, Jaipur, Udaipur, Bhubaneswar, Guwahati, Konark, Gopalpur, Kathmandu, Thimpu Bhutan, among others.

What is your strategy for growing the brand's footprint in India?

Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts has a very



Souvagya Mohapatra
MD, India, Nepal, Bhutan
& Sri Lanka, Atmosphere
Hotels & Resorts

ambitious expansion plan in India mostly in luxury and midscale category as we believe that there lies great opportunity in Indian market, especially for the hospitality and tourism domain. So far, we have a three-pronged strategy to establish and subsequently expand our footprints in India. One is to own and operate, second is the lease model and third one is management contract model. Our team is already in the job for identifying the properties in potential Indian cities. A few of them have already matured and the Hotel Management Agreements are signed with the developers/owners.

India is very close to our heart, and we are very excited to make our footprints in this incredible country. As I said, India is a virgin market and have got lot of hidden potential. We have been trying for a long time for expanding into India and was looking for the right oppor-

tunities. My induction in Atmosphere Group and the passion of Sali Panigrahi (Group Managing Director) as a hotelier from Indian origin are the perfect combinations to fulfill our dreams together. I am sure we will achieve the objective that we set for ourselves within the stipulated timeline.

Are you planning to add more hotels to your Northeast portfolio?

I would like to convey my gratitude to the Central and state governments in India for having lot of focus in upgrading the infrastructure and logistics in our country such as building roads, introduction of luxury trains such as Vande Bharat and developing airports in strategic locations. I am sure that this is

Our topmost brand OZEN will make a mark in India in form of OZEN Mansion Kolkata scheduled to be launched during Q4 2024

going to boost the tourism and hospitality industry in India manifold. Government is also very keen and doing their bit to highlight North-eastern part of our country which has been untapped for many years.

We have been getting invitations from various North-eastern states for investment opportunities and our business development



team has already started exploring in these regions. As we have a hotel with 300 rooms coming up at Kolkata and a small inventory Boutique hotel at Gangtok Sikkim by the end of this year, hence we are aggressively exploring northeast and eastern parts of India such as Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, North Bengal, Odisha, among others. Govt of Mizoram invited us to participate in a State Investment Workshop which was held on 4 May 2023 at Aizwal.

How has COVID transformed partnerships and associations when it comes to signings?

Management Contract is our strongest business module and most of our upcoming properties will be under this modality. It is true that after COVID, the hotel companies are keener now on asset light model, but management control still remains one of the most preferred arrangements for operational control. Though Management contract module remains our preference, we are open to accommodating the concerns of hotel companies, if any for a more beneficial and fruitful association. However, having said so, we shall focus more on having our own properties at certain locations in India provided we get good support from the state governments.

As the travel bounces back, the things are falling in track and the stakeholders are proactive in reviving the dead projects. To evaluate the right investment opportunity in a region we have to identify what the destination has

to offer to a prospective tourist; what makes that particular destination stand out from others, assess the connectivity to that place via air, rail and road with major cities and locations; and whether there exists a favourable business ecosystem backed by a supportive policy framework and with all these boxes checked, a place is ripe for investment.

However, many times, great business decisions are based on intuitions and therefore,

Atmosphere Hotels Resorts is committed to creating sustainable future through efficient use of resources

though above mentioned are the standard criteria that we usually follow while determining an investment decision, nevertheless, if we get a good resort wherein, we see a great business opportunity, we shall definitely go for it.

M!CE and wedding business had great year (2022) revenue-wise. How do you see it growing this year?

M!CE and wedding industry play a key role in the future growth of businesses, cities, destinations, and other covered spectrums. Wedding segment is doing amazingly well in India, and I could visualize a further growth in wedding segment revenue in 2023. M!CE has also started doing very well with the shift-

ing of medium from hybrid to physical mode. India's G20 Presidency brings with it a great opportunity for the tourism and hospitality industry. The country will host delegates from the 20 participating countries over the duration of a year. A commitment of 200 meetings across 50 odd cities during G20 Presidency in India is a real economy booster for tourism and hospitality businesses. Large medical conferences, big exhibitions, trade fairs, among have started to take place across the cities making M!CE a successful segment in 2023.

Our upcoming properties in India have extensive M!CE facilities to encourage this particular segment. Our Kolkata property, OZEN Mansion Kolkata is scheduled for opening in December 2023 has approximately one lakh square feet of banqueting/conferencing areas. This is done keeping in view of attracting destination weddings and large conferences into the city. All other cities wherever we plan to start our operations are going to have extensive banqueting and conferencing areas, thus making M!CE business a major revenue producing segment for us.

Sustainability remains key priority for global hospitality. What concrete steps Atmosphere is taking in this direction?

Atmosphere Hotels Resorts is committed to creating a sustainable future through the efficient use of resources. We ensure conservation, preservation, and restoration of local biodiversity. For instance, we have coral reef restoration projects led by marine biologists at our resorts in the Maldives. □



PEARL OF WISDOM

Industrial exposure in hospitality management programmes has evolved over years—equipping students with technical & soft skills for successful career, writes **A K Singh**.

Industrial training is an insightful opportunity for students pursuing Hospitality Management programmes. This is probably one of the best professional training modules, where one semester (17/20 weeks) is devoted to industrial exposure.

Despite several shortcomings, industrial training was and will remain a crucial part of all young hospitality professionals. In 80s and 90s, industrial exposure was of two months in Ist and IInd year of the hospitality programmes and it was having low weightage in academic consideration but later on, a structured system of industrial exposure was deliberated, and concept of 17/20 weeks' industrial training was introduced. This was a noble concept and way ahead in comparison to other undergraduate programmes such as Engineering, Architecture, Management, among others.

This process had opened window for excellent and detailed industrial exposure to the trainees but at the same time some hotels exploited this opportunity in a wrong way



A K Singh
Director, FHRAI Institute of
Hospitality Management

and started using students for casual work in Banquet, Housekeeping, among others. And thus desired outcome of training had not been achieved and unknowingly base level staff was using the trainees to getting their work done. The system of providing 10 months industrial training in a year had forced hotels to be dependent on the train-

ees. This practice is not there in the field of management education where students pursuing summer training of 1-2 months are keenly observed by Senior Management and students who showed high potential are appointed or are recommended for placements in other organizations.

Despite several shortcomings, industrial training was and will remain a crucial part of all young hospitality professionals

There are few recommendations for hotels, providing industrial exposure to students for 17/20 weeks in IInd/IVth year of the programme:

- **Number of hospitality trainees:**
Hotels are suggested to take trainees

limited to 10–15 per cent of total number of rooms thus making use of training resources in a better way and provides rightful exposure to the trainees and base level staff of the hotel will not depend on them for routine work.

• **Treat them as young professionals:**

Large number of hotels are giving due importance to the trainees and making them realise that they are integral part of the ecosystem. These young talent needs recognition, appreciation of good work and time to time moral boosting to do their best during industrial exposure and retain their interest in this industry.

• **Monitoring of training:** Institutes need to monitor training outcomes with the support of Learning & Development (L&D) department time to time so that if any shortcoming is there in training, it should be corrected immediately without effecting the moral of trainee.

• **Stipend & duty hours:** Training establishment should understand that stipend during training should be decent

one so that trainee also feel proud in working while check on duty hours by L&D Manager and department heads will be helpful in keeping their inspiration and moral high.

Institutes need to monitor training outcomes with support of Learning & Development department time to time

Institutions and trainees also have responsibility and need to craft training experience carefully. Some of the points which should be considered:

- Design the process of training objective/outcome clearly which should be achievable.
- An extensive session should be held by concerned faculty and industry experts before students are sent for industrial exposure to brief them about what they should learn and how they monetise this experience.
- The outcome of learning should be

recorded in a proper manner so that it can be helpful for future references.

- Students are required to do proper planning about their learning and should be punctual and take keen interest in task allocated to him or her, show eagerness to work and learn while having industrial exposure.
- The design and execution of structured training module is the responsibility of all stakeholders, including hotels, institutes and above all, students for whom this process has been designed.
- We need to look into the possibility of industrial exposure in different levels such as Operational Level/Supervisory Level and Managerial Level.

The structure of industrial training has changed with the times, hotels also moulded their functioning in a great way but in my opinion, lot is still needed to be done to give a structured training as per the need of the hour. Students are also needed to take keen interest in training process as all these efforts are for enhancing their knowledge, skills and shaping their attitudes for this versatile industry. □



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Digital takeover

From AI to Big Data, heads of premier hospitality institutes across country underline vital role of digital skills in staying relevant in rapidly changing world of hospitality.



Lipla Negi



Crucial learning tool



Davinder Pal Singh Sodhi
Principal,
SIHM Jabalpur

By providing comprehensive training in digital skills, we aim to prepare our students for changing landscape of industry

Digital skills are crucial in the hospitality industry, as technology is rapidly changing the way that businesses operate and interact with their guests. At our institution, we provide training for both new and experienced professionals in digital skills such as social media management, online reputation management, revenue management systems and data analysis. We also offer courses to help professionals stay up-to-date with the latest digital tools and platforms. By providing comprehensive training in digital skills, we aim to prepare our students and professionals for the changing landscape of the industry and help them stay competitive in the job market.

The demand for skilled content creators is only increasing with the rise of digital media and the need for businesses to engage with their audience effectively. Content creation can be a stand-alone career for young professionals who are passionate about writing and possess a creative flair. However, it can also be an added skill for professionals in other fields who want to enhance their marketing and communication abilities. As long as people continue to consume content, the need for skilled content creators will remain constant.

Digitalization is vital for hospitality education

as it prepares students for the changing landscape of the industry. At our institution, we incorporate digitalization in our curriculum by introducing courses that focus on the use of technology in the hospitality industry, such as revenue management systems and customer relationship management. We also use digital tools for learning and engagement, such as online simulations and virtual reality experiences, allowing students to gain practical experience in a safe and controlled environment. Additionally, we use online platforms to deliver course materials and assignments, creating a more flexible and accessible learning environment for our students.



Solution-oriented approach



Sangeeta Sehgal
Principal,
SIHM Udaipur

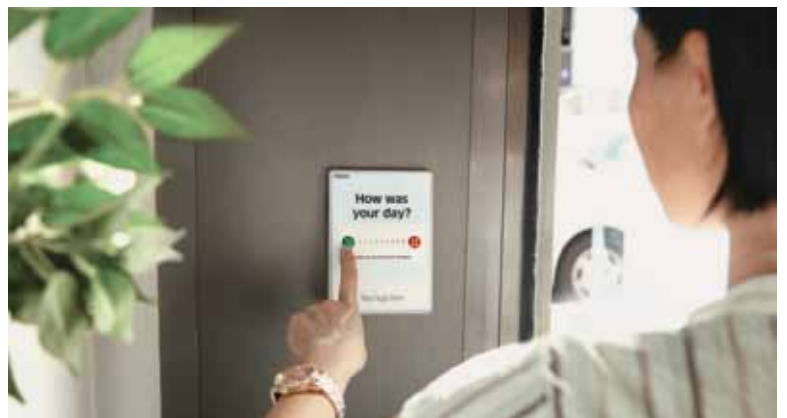
We regularly incorporate technology studies in our curriculum to expose students to latest advancements in service industry

The technological aspects of the service industry are simply growing exponentially, however the hardware needs and expenses involved often result in a slower pace of change, hence for most professionals in the hospitality sector this is currently going to remain an added desirable skill. In the hospitality industry, video technologies are being utilized in many areas, including security, virtual booking and virtual travel experience which may help train fresh aspirants and enthuse experienced professionals.

There is a lot of scope as it will increase digital revenue and website traffic. It would help in reducing operational cost and improve product and service quality, which will increase the customer base and revenue. We are considering some key stand-alone courses which could deal with the hotel software and hotel

technology resulting in valuable future proof skillset to desiring students.

Hotels are expected to be the pioneers in technology adoption and being the manpower providers, we are expected to produce a workforce ready for all new technologies. We regularly incorporate technology studies in our curriculum to expose the students to the latest advancements in the service industry. It offers the students the capability to measure their performance in detail and come up with relevant solutions on their part.



Future lies in digitalization



R Parimala

Principal I/C, IHM Chennai

Education has advanced because of emergence of new technology-assisted learning tools

The hotel sector will undoubtedly be dependent on several other digital technologies such as Big Data analytics, artificial intelligence, machine learning, web analytics, simulations, cloud computing, robotics, and so forth. For various operations, including data mining of guest information, all these skillsets are crucial. These skillsets will not only give a professional a competitive edge in the job market, but they also give them the chance to pursue a stand-alone career once they have gained complete understanding and competence in their use.

A profession in hospitality necessitates being technologically savvy. In the near future, using laptops, computers, and a few more devices could not be enough. A product, process, or mechanism's digital architecture needs to be thoroughly understood. As one advances in the hospitality sector, Digital Delivery skills such as web development, user interface design, data visualization, and other related ones become increasingly important to stay competitive in the market. Hands-on training is provided in the fundamentals of digital delivery such as building wikis, podcasts, blogs and digi-

tal posters, to assist both new and seasoned professionals in this field. This makes it possible for one to become comfortable with digital dynamics and get over any anxiety or discomfort they may have when using digital technologies.

Education in hospitality establishments has advanced because of the emergence of new technology-assisted learning tools such as mobile phones, smartboards, MOOCs, tablets, laptops, simulations, dynamic visualizations and virtual classrooms. Students can get the necessary data from the plethora of digital resources or contribute their own materials. Wikis, podcasts, blogs and other web 2.0 technologies help students create content, collaborate with others, evaluate each other's work and progress towards co-learning.



Skill stacking is must



Dr. Bhupesh Kumar

Principal,
IHM Ranchi

The ability to extract data & analytics is significant benefit of digitalization

We are now experiencing the fourth industrial revolution, a period marked by emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), robotic engineering, virtual reality (VR) technology, the Internet of Things (IoT) and fifth-generation wireless technology, the demand and use of which has accelerated post-COVID. This period has significantly transformed our hospitality industry and will continue to do so.

The ability to extract data and analytics is a significant benefit of digitalization. None of the customers these days like to wait for service confirmation and delivery expecting a personalised touch to that. Digital skills are one of the vital elements in a hospitality career and the new syllabus designing has become important in today's scenario. In today's world, the digitalization of hospitality and services is a must and the budding hoteliers must be trained to face the challenges. Personally, I am a tech-

nology enthusiast who works on Algorithms and AI and keep on conducting development classes for my team and if requested for other universities' faculty development also.

The future is for a multi-talent Stacker who is possessing one of the skillsets from digital know-how or having a pro-level knowledge of the digital technology. This cannot be a stand-alone career for the future workforce, this will supplement the professional skillsets in a person and will help him or her in an unparalleled successful career. Skill stacking is the most efficient way to multiply their employability.



Digital upgrade boosts growth



Ashok Kumar Prasad
Principal I/C, IHM Kolkata

Digital skills are of utmost significance in hospitality career because digitalization is here to stay

Digital and technological transformation in the luxury hospitality industry is proving highly beneficial to both the stakeholders and the luxury consumers. The level of efficiency and the reliability of the services offered in the hospitality industry have been greatly enriched by technological and digital developments. In this backdrop, it is vital that the curriculum of hospitality education has included subjects related to this. More stress is given on the practical aspect of it rather than just theoretical inputs. Digital application to all hospitality related services forms the core of such efforts and this is replacing the traditional mode of education.

Irrespective of the fact whether the professionals are new or experienced, there is a visible gap between the advent of technology in the hospitality industry and the knowledge to handle digitalization. Thus, they must be facilitated with real-life situations which make them familiar with the technological upgradation of the hospitality industry. It is almost like simulation training. All this will be fruitful only when there is upgraded infrastructure and properly trained facilitators to suit such needs. In our curriculum, the syllabus, includes the modes and procedures of using various software which help in digitalization of the industry.

Digital skills are of utmost significance in the hospitality career because digitalization is here to stay and with the advent of AI, the future of hospitality looks more mechanised. In future, many services rendered by human hands will be rendered by machine hands. Keeping such a scenario in mind, the hospitality training institutes must upgrade their infrastructure and train their faculties to ensure that the students are getting all the opportunity to handle the digitalized platforms of the hospitality industry and provide more value-added service to the guests, clients and customers. In our curriculum, the syllabus, includes the modes and procedures of using various software which help in digitalization of the industry.



Change with times



Sanjay Arora
Principal I/C,
IHM Jaipur

Digital skills can be both stand-alone career & added skill for young professionals in hospitality industry

The constantly evolving technology for booking and reservation systems is one way that digitalization is changing the hospitality sector. The hospitality business is also being affected by digitalization in data analysis, where tools are helping to forecast and make data analysis even more effective. Businesses in the hospitality industry are now using data to analyse consumer behaviour and preferences in order to better personalize their products and services to match client needs. Social media, where digitalization has a tremendous impact on the hospitality business, is one area we cannot even fathom to ignore. Students need to be taught how to use social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, as they are crucial marketing tools for businesses in the hospitality industry.

Digital skills can be both a stand-alone career and an added skill for young professionals in the hospitality industry. There are now a wide range of career opportunities available for professionals not just in the core departments but also in the corporate sections of the industry with digital skills, including roles in digital marketing, data analysis and technology management. For young professionals starting their careers, digital skills can be a valuable addition to their skillset, helping them stand out

in the competitive job market and providing them with the opportunity to explore a range of different career paths within the hospitality sector. For experienced professionals, digital skills can be a way to expand their career options and take on more advanced roles. Professionals with digital skills are often better equipped to lead digital transformation initiatives within their organizations, making them valuable assets to their employers. At IHMs, we offer training to on and off campus enthusiasts in basic digital skills important to the hotel sector, such as property management software, Excel and basic computer literacy, social media marketing and online booking systems.



Enhancing customer experience



Krishna Gopal Dubey
Principal,
SIHM Jodhpur

Digital skills can be used to optimize operational processes, provide better customer service, among others

The future growth in digital skills in hospitality careers is on an upward trend and is expected to continue. This is due to the growing emphasis on digital technology in hospitality operations and the need for skilled professionals to use, manage and develop these technologies. Digital skills can be a stand-alone career for young professionals, or they can be an added skill that is beneficial to those who are already working in the hospitality industry. Digital skills can be used to optimize operational processes, provide better customer service, enhance marketing strategies, and create more efficient data management systems. Additionally, digital skills are becoming increasingly sought after by employers, so having them will give young professionals a competitive advantage in the hospitality industry.

In our curriculum, digitalization is incorporated in a variety of ways, including online course modules, digital resources and tools, virtual internships, and simulations of hospitality scenarios. We also provide students with access to online industry databases, which allow them to gain insights into the latest hospitality trends, best practices, technologies, and customer preferences and data analysis that helps our students gain insights into customer behaviour and develop actionable strategies to improve the guest experience.



Career enhancing skills



Dr. M K Dash
Principal,
IHM Lucknow

Future manpower of the hospitality industry can never work in absence of digital technology adoption

Digital skills in the hospitality industry can be used in a number of ways to improve guest experience, operational efficiency and many more bottom-line performances such as digital check-in and check-out processes, online reservation with preferences for add-on facility as per choice and many more alike. The new generation of students are trained with developing new mobile apps with myriad features to provide seamless experience for guests and marketing through social media which is the order of the day now in every field. Digital technology helps in increasing website traffic, lowering operational cost, improves product and service quality, improves customer outcomes and boost staff retention.

The future manpower of the hospitality industry can never work in absence of digital technology adoption. Digital technology in the hospitality industry might include facial recognition to help with things such as check-in, guest relations and security. Using

chatbots to help with things such as reservations, concierge services, and providing information about the hotel and its amenities. Voice activated assistants and robots can perform most of the queries and tasks smoothly for any guests as the upcoming advances in this field. Mobile apps will be the one-point solution for booking the room, choosing room number from the digital floor plans, obtaining the mobile key and selection of housekeeping services, among others and finally checking out without spending time at all. A drastic change is certainly going to be visible in the entire hospitality sector. ❑



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STIMULATING CHANGE

Hospitality industry is going through digital transformation fuelled by technologies such as AI, Machine Learning, chatbots to enhance guest experience and operations.

 **Sakshi Singh**

Over two millennia ago, Greek philosopher Heraclitus is supposed to have said that change is the only constant in life. Centuries later, new-age technologies such as machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI) are reinforcing the strength of Heraclitus' idea. Age-old business practices and systems are facing disruptions with the advent of digital technologies. Digital transformation has become the latest buzzword and the hospitality industry is no anomaly. From multinational players to independent hotels, everyone is deploying digital tools such as AI-powered chatbots and voice assistants to improve guest experience and optimise operations.

There are multiple facets of digital transformation sweeping the hospitality industry. "The latest buzz is all about AI. By leveraging the power of AI, hotels and other hospitality businesses can now analyze vast amounts of data to deliver personalized recommendations and services to their guests," said **Amar Albuquerque**, Director, Operations, DoubleTree by Hilton Goa - Panaji. It must be noted that data collection and analysis is not new to the hospitality sector. Personalised deals

and loyalty points have been a mainstay of the industry for some time now, however, the existing digital tools had limited capabilities. For instance, existing models used to work on simple algorithms which would ensure that a guest is offered discounts and deals after a specific level of expenditure. AI is helping hotels move beyond simple discounts by analysing complex customer data and providing personalised offers and services.

Some of the more visible changes after widespread adoption of digital tools by hotels have been chatbots that have simplified everything from bookings to refunds. Similarly, AI-powered services such as voice command-enabled lighting and curtains have become a rage with guests. These services have vastly enhanced guest experience on one end, while simultaneously helping hotels save costs and improve margins on the other end. "AI will significantly contribute to the transformation of the hotel sector by increasing productivity, boosting the visitor experience, and bringing in more money," said **Lakshmi Sridhar**, General Manager, Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach and The Bheemili Resort.

While customer-facing tools are the visible aspects of the digitisation of the hospitality sector, an equal magnitude of

technological solutions are being deployed at the operational end. "Some common use cases of AI in hospitality are revenue management and predictive maintenance," said **Saarang Vikas Amritkar**, Sales Manager, Courtyard by Marriott Pune-Chakan. Hospitality players are using AI to analyze market data, pricing trends, and demand patterns to optimize room rates and maximize revenue. Additionally, AI-powered sensors and predictive analytics can be used to monitor equipment and detect potential maintenance issues before they become serious, reducing downtime and improving guest satisfaction. Artificial intelligence has also found adoption in security and safety-related operations. "AI-powered facial recognition and biometric scanning can enhance security and safety measures, such as verifying guests' identities, tracking movement, and detecting potential threats," Amritkar added.

While new-age technologies cannot be ignored, the cost implications of using advanced digital technologies have to be taken into consideration. The initial cost of deployment gains significance as hotel bottom lines have turned green in recent quarters after suffering heavily during COVID. Hotels will have to make balanced decisions taking into



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Ramandeep Marwah
General Manager,
Hyatt Regency Pune

Digital strategies do more than just cut costs. It drives strategic growth. It saves mundane expenses

account the seasonal nature and low margin of the business as the strong demand for travel and tourism witnessed after COVID may normalise in the near future. “There may be upfront costs associated with digital transformation, such as hardware and software purchases, employee training, and maintenance costs; the long-term benefits can make it a cost-effective investment for hotels,” Sridhar said. Transforming legacy systems and processes requires substantial investment as it involves purchasing proprietary software besides training the staff to use it efficiently.

Some hotels are looking beyond the binary of upfront investment and cost saving. “Digital strategies do more than just cut costs. It drives strategic growth. It saves mundane expenses,” **Ramandeep Marwah**, General Manager, Hyatt Regency Pune. Digital tools are quickly becoming the USP of certain players as it is helping them stand out in terms of productivity, efficiency and guest experience. While the larger hospitality players have deployed advanced tools for a range of tasks from streamlining operations to improving guest experience, it is the smaller, independent properties who make the bulk of hotels in India that may find the upfront costs too steep.

The needs of independent hotels, too, differ from that of large hotels. Digital solutions developed for large multi-property chains may not be suitable for independent properties and hence technology providers will have to come up with tailor-made solutions for small hotels. Hotels, on the other hand, can start with a small pilot project to test the suitability of the digital solution and then proceed to full-scale deployment. “One way that individual hotels are integrating new technologies is through partnerships with technology vendors and startups. These partnerships can provide hotels with access to cutting-edge technologies and expertise, as well as support and guidance in implementing these tools into their operations,” averred Amritkar.

Other technologies like AI-powered lighting and room controls have negligible impact on existing human roles but help in enhancing the guest experience. Industry experts opine that the efficient utili-



Saarang Vikas Amritkar
Sales Manager,
Courtyard by Marriott
Pune-Chakan

AI-powered facial recognition and biometric scanning can enhance security & safety measures

sation of digital tools could herald a new era for the sector where age-old hospitality practices are amplified by technology and both digital systems and humans are used to improve the experience for the guests. Being one of the oldest industries, the hospitality sector has been at the forefront of technological innovations. Hotels and restaurants have not just adapted to changes over the centuries but have embraced them and thrived.

The rapid adoption of digital technologies, however, raises a pertinent question for the industry that prides itself on the importance of human touch: what will be the role of humans? The future remains promising for the 80 million people that earn their livelihood through travel and tourism in India as AI and other technologies will complement rather than eliminate human roles. “While AI can certainly enhance and streamline interactions, it should not be viewed as a replacement for the personal touch that guests expect in the hospitality industry. At the end of the day, the human touch is what makes guests feel welcome, valued, and appreciated,” said Albuquerque. For instance, AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants can be used to handle basic guest queries while trained employees can focus on more complex tasks and building relationships. □





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Accelerating growth

Indian hospitality industry has started embracing digitalization in a big way, feel hospitality heads & reckon it will play key role in automation of tasks, analyzing customer data, among others.



DDP Bureau

Digitalization augurs well for Indian hotel industry

Digitalization acts as a catalyst by providing information for its guests which was once handled by hotel associates. The selection process of a guest to stay at a hotel depends largely on reviews, ratings, and user generated content, and with this the digital algorithm has transformed the way guests choose a hotel or a restaurant be it for dining or for their upcoming staycation.

Guests inform and inspire themselves on the Internet via search engines— that is where the digital guest journey begins. A well-designed website with all the significant information about a hotel and relevant content will entice the attention of the visitors. Guests also expect a digital experience on site.

Therefore, the contact between guests and the hotel should not be intermittent after the booking but should be continued via e-mail or messenger.

There are many benefits of digital transformation within the framework of the industry. It is an all-in approach that can help to reduce the costs of operations, making it more competitive in the market. The hospitality industry has always been a pioneer in the realm of the guest. However, the industry has taken a leap of interest and transformed customer experiences with digital transformation solutions.

Digital transformation in the hos-



Subhankar Bose
General Manager,
Kochi Marriott Hotel

pitality industry has improved guest experience, operational efficiency, and bottom-line performance with digital check-in and check-out processes, as well as online reservations and guest self-service portals. Additionally, hotels can use analytics to glean insights about guest preferences and behavior and use these insights to improve marketing and operations. This data pool will still grow in future, which will add more value and convenience to guests due to the progress of digitalization.

It is just as important to take care of enquiries, bookings, and arrivals as it is to take care of guests during and after their stay. This continuous and consistent communication creates a guest connection that would not be possible in an analog

situation. The hospitality industry is still largely run on people and their service which is irreplaceable. Once the guest is at the hotel, it is all about people, creative touch points and curated experiences, among others.

With the latest advancement in artificial intelligence, service robots have become more commonplace in hospitality. Service robots are system-based autonomous and flexible interfaces that interact, communicate and deliver service to an organization's guests. The core interactive and communicative features differentiate service robots from other self-service machines, which result in unprecedented

With latest advancement in artificial intelligence, service robots have become more commonplace in hospitality

human-technology interactions in the hospitality industry. Over the last few years, the hospitality industry has continued to grow and evolve, with new technologies, while these new technologies are exciting and have the potential to revolutionize the way we do business, hospitality industry still have a long way to go before they become mainstream.



Digital transformation: Revolutionizing guest experience

The hospitality industry is currently undergoing a major digital transformation, thanks to cutting-edge technologies and the Internet of Things. With the increasing adoption of new technologies, hotels and restaurants can now provide a personalized and seamless experience to their guests. As the industry continues to expand, businesses are embracing digital transformation to enhance their guests' experiences, and the digital landscape in the hospitality sector is growing rapidly.

One of the most exciting ways in which digital transformation is revolutionizing the hospitality industry is through the use of mobile apps. Guests can now book tables or rooms, order food or services, and make payments via their smartphones, offering an unparalleled level of convenience. At the same time, businesses can gather data on guests' preferences and behaviors, enabling them to personalize their services accordingly. This not only helps to serve guests better but also to retain and gain trust in the long term. For instance, hotels can send personalized welcome messages to guests via mobile apps and provide tailored recommendations for dining or sightseeing based on their previous bookings.

Social media and online reputation management have also become essential



Rahul Joshi
General Manager,
Taj Hotel & Convention
Centre

components of hospitality industry business and marketing plans. The use of platforms such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook have significantly increased when it comes to reviewing hotels or restaurants before visiting them. Social media is also being used to gather feedback from guests and monitor their sentiment towards the brand. Through social listening tools, businesses are tracking brand mentions, analyzing customer feedback, and identifying areas for improvement.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) are also making a significant impact and by harnessing these technologies, hotels can pro-

vide more personalized experiences. For instance, AI-powered chatbots can offer guests immediate responses to their queries, while ML algorithms can predict what services or amenities a guest might want based on their past behavior. An AI-powered recommendation engine can suggest spa treatments or activities to a guest based on their previous bookings and preferences.

In conclusion, the digital transformation of the hospitality industry is paving the way for a remarkable evolution in how hotels and restaurants interact with their guests. By embracing new technologies to

AI & ML are making significant impact & by harnessing these technologies, hotels can provide more personalized experiences

enhance guests' experiences and streamline operations, businesses are positioning themselves to thrive in the future. The future of the hospitality industry is undoubtedly digital, and those businesses that adopt this transformation will be best positioned to succeed in the years to come.

Hospitality industry is digitally transforming itself

The term digital transformation refers to the ability of an organization to change its approach to technology, people and processes. Digital transformation is closing the gap between what digital customers already expect and what analog businesses deliver.

The role of digital transformation is creating a more efficient, effective business that can better meet customers' needs and wants. It helps to reduce the costs of operations and make hotels more competitive in the market. Digitalization is helping the hotel industry tremendously. It allows hotels to gather, analyze and interpret customer data, trends and needs and thus increase revenue by placing personalized offers. On the other hand, hotel guests are satisfied by the tailored services, complete control and ease of use.

Digital transformation in the hospitality industry is being used in several ways for improving the guest experience, operational efficiency and bottom-line performance. For instance, hotels are using digital check-in and check-out processes, as well as online reservations and guest self-service portals. Additionally, hotels are using Big Data and analytics to glean insights about guest preferences and behavior. Also, using these insights to improve marketing and operations.

Digital transformation is closing gap between what digital customers already expect & what analog businesses deliver

Finally, they are using mobile apps to provide a seamless and convenient experience for guests from booking to check-out.

In digital transformation, OTAs and B2B portals have also played a major role. Expedia, Booking, MMT, GTA, Hotelbeds, among others offered best offers to hotel guests with easy bookings and payment options.

Mobile phones are important key in digital hotel transformation. The reason it is stuck around for so long is that guests appreciate the opportunity to use their own mobile device and feel more comfortable and connected doing so. Most hotels that use mobile phones as part of their digital transformation strategies

have created branded, user-friendly and straightforward hotel apps with a great design. A hotel mobile app provides hotel guests the ability to effortlessly check-in or check-out, open their hotel rooms with mobile room keys, order services, book appointments, and communicate with hotel staff without physical contact. However, hotel mobile apps are not the only way to use mobile devices. Creating a mobile-friendly web app for guests to check-in without downloading a native app might be a huge relief for them. Another popular trend is using QR codes to quickly access hotel menus, activity schedules, booking appointments or get customer feedback.

Many leisure and business travellers preferred hotels that offer more digital services throughout COVID. Mobile



Sanzeev Bhatia

VP & GM,
The Metropolitan
Hotel & Spa

check-ins and check-outs, contactless payments and orders, and avoiding physical key transfers were all factors that played an essential role in people's safety and sense of security.



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Hospitality industry is set to leverage digitalization

Out of all the roaring developments in technology, digitalization must be the most innovative and future-oriented of them all. Digitalization cannot be just limited to technological advancements, but it is about how an industry reorganizes its operations and structure to adapt to the empowering innovations happening around them while delivering value to its customer base. It would be an understatement to say that digitalization has transformed the way various businesses operate and interact with their customer base, as such businesses are expected to add to more than half of the GDP by 2023.

A recent report by Gartner focussed on the fact that 91 per cent of the major businesses are engaged in some kind of digitally handled initiative, thus, it is safe to say that the hospitality industry is not so far behind in the race of technological advancements. With the idea of achieving new levels of growth in the industry, hospitality businesses are diving head-first in with the idea of making business strategies that revolve around a digital-first mindset. Not only is this framework going to help them increase the efficiency of their work, but also their revenue, and credibility in the market.

Chatbots and AI are helping hospitality businesses in providing their guests with an easy-going experience

Key areas where digitalization is helping the hospitality industry:

Automation of tasks: Chatbots and AI have taken over the world of automation and are helping the hospitality businesses in providing their guests with an easy-going experience from 24/7 online customer service to helping the guests with their reservations and even setting their room temperatures. Many luxury hotels even have chatbots that register human speech and answer their queries such as Hilton Hotels chatbot Connie. The Hotel Management System of HotelFriend is a software that behaves like a virtual office, helping the staff to manage operations



Tanu Singh

Associate Director, Marketing Communications & PR, Signum Hotels and Resorts

nesses in targeting specific audiences which not only has helped them with the increase in lead conversion but also has increased the website traffic and thus, the revenue collection.

Analyzing customer data: With the new technologies, it is now possible to collect and analyze trends in customer behaviours and preferences. This gives them insight regarding what needs to be worked upon, so they can create more targeted marketing strategies and more personalized experiences. According to a recent report by PwC, most of the businesses' main aim



from anywhere at any time.

Contactless technology: By keeping the rules and regulations imposed due to COVID in mind, digitalization has made the check-in process smooth with the help of mobile check-ins, digital keys, and contactless payment options. A survey showed that 92 per cent of the hotels have unanimously agreed that COVID did help speed up their digitalization process.

Increasing traffic and revenue: Digital advancements and mobile technology have assisted hospitality busi-

nesses to start a digital transformation begins with improving customer experience and customer satisfaction.

With 73 per cent of people feeling that hotels should use the latest technologies to make their guests feel at ease, it is safe to say that digitalization is set to introduce the hospitality industry to new levels of growth. It is now becoming imperative more than ever for hospitality businesses to take a leap and bring about digital transformation to stay ahead in their lane. ❑

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Blended travel in vogue

Ananta Hotels & Resorts launches Richmonde Ananta Elite Goa, an upscale hotel focussed on extended stays and destination weddings.



Lipla Negi

Combining comfort of a home-away-from-home and luxury services of a resort, Richmonde Ananta Elite Goa is a strategic move towards expansion, taking Ananta Hotels & Resorts beyond Rajasthan. “As a brand, we have been primarily based out of Rajasthan. However, now we are fast growing to be a national player and Goa is one destination from where we thought to move ahead with our pan-India expansion vision,” said **Gagan Katyal**, VP, Sales & Strategy, Ananta Hotels & Resorts.

Katyal added, “Goa, which is one of the most preferred destinations for domestic as well as international travellers, has always



Gagan Katyal
VP, Sales & Strategy,
Ananta Hotels & Resorts

HNIs and domestic travellers are preferring to take on apartments and villas for their stay in Goa

been the top pick to cast an impression on India about the growing presence of Ananta.”

The juggernaut of domestic tourism maintains its strong pull, driving occupancy across the country. “Domestic tourism continues to be a high trend as Indians have started exploring the country. And they will continue to do so,” observed Katyal. Adding to it, he highlighted that bleisure has given way to blended travel. “Family &

friends holidays and extended business stays are coming out as top travel trends at the moment. This apart, weddings have also been driving business for leisure properties throughout the year,” he said.

The luxury hotel, consisting of styled villas and apartments in Saligao, a picturesque village close to Baga beach in North Goa, is designed for a lifestyle of pure indulgence. Developed on the concept of home-away-from-home, the luxurious villas offer a blend of Goan *joie de vivre* and all the contemporary amenities and comforts that one craves for. “We converted the villa residential complex with some apartments into hotel, which is the trend these days,” he informed.

Over the years, the demand for luxury villas as well as service apartments in Goa has seen a substantial rise. An increasing number of travellers are booking for extended stays. Agreed Katyal, “We have seen that the average length of stay in Goa is more than three nights. HNIs and domestic travellers are preferring to take on apartments and villas for their stay in Goa. This establishment is going to be the perfect place for travellers seeking an accommodation near the hustle and bustle of North Goa with all the modern amenities.”

The banquet facility is offered to cater to the ever-growing wedding segment, as Goa is also one of the top wedding destinations in the country. There are more plans underway to make this property more immersive in terms of experiences. Right now, the brand is focussed on its vision—offering a home-away-from-home to its discerning travellers for whom the lines between business and leisure stand comfortably blurred. □



Step forward

Hotel-Spider is constantly innovating & enabling hoteliers to improve performance, maximize revenue and provide good guest experiences.



Hotel-Spider began operations as a family business and has maintained this value at its core. “Relationships and people are at the centre of all we do. As a dedicated and passionate team, we use our diverse knowledge, perspectives, and experiences to create solutions. Sharing and being open and flexible are the keys to our products and team evolving along with our customers. We have received fantastic feedback from the industry for being the software as a service (SaaS) company, which offers focus on product development always with a vision to run customer care approach in parallel for our customers,” said **Shveta Sharma**, COO, Hotel-Spider.

The company has been at the forefront of leveraging innovation. Explained Sharma, “We are a cloud-based online distribution platform with a deep-rooted presence in the hotel technology market. We empower hospitality distribution as we imagine, develop and deploy customer-driven software solutions. Our goal is to simplify the complex distribution landscape through our systems. Our Online Distribution Platform, includes a channel manager, a booking engine, metasearch connection, global distribution system (GDS) connection, Central Reservation System (CRS) and payment solutions. In addition, we offer interfaces with a variety of property management (PMS) and revenue management (RMS) partners. We would like to position ourselves as knowledge provider providing services, tools to manage, automate, optimize hospitality online distribution.”

Talking about how Hotel-Spider is helping hotels to be future-ready and more visible in the online space, Sharma elaborated,



Shveta Sharma
COO,
Hotel-Spider

“We are helping hotels by providing robust solutions which would help them to automate their distribution. Our simple goal is to increase hotel’s visibility and online sales all while saving their time. Hotel-Spider is completely transparent with full access to all change logs gives hoteliers a security through transparency. They can even drill down to the messages that have been sent out or received by our system. Our intelligent troubleshooter, allows hoteliers to understand the data exchanges before the reservation took place. We are connected with over 80+ OTA’s and 160+ partners with various offering such as Property Management Systems, Revenue Management Systems & so on globally.”

Further, the company is also assisting hotels in rebooting their revenue models by connecting to multiple distribution channels through a single platform and by increasing occupancy, implementing online OTA’s promotional strategies, reducing the risk of overbooking, simplifying channel management, and enhancing visibility across multiple channels. “Any category

of accommodation providers can invest in our products. However, our products are best suitable for the mid-segment hotels to 4 Star category hotels,” said Sharma.

Sharma further pointed out, “Industry has observed tough times during COVID and realized a need of technology to support smooth operations during unavoidable circumstances. Always looking for reliable solutions with regular automation and development. Major requirement of industry at moment I feel remains as—quick troubleshooting with a strong customer support team for faster resolutions.”

What are the trends that Sharma foresees shaping the industry in near future? Sharma replied, “Automation of online distribution with seamless synchronization with the OTA’s and META Search

We are helping hotels by providing robust solutions which would help them to automate their distribution

Platforms to boost online sales for the hotels. A great combination of talent and technology to run the show for online visibility of the hotels consistently boosting their revenues. A “customer-first” strategy to put the hoteliers’ needs at the centre of everything. Any decision made by the company is assessed in terms of how it may affect the customer experience. Be open to the feedbacks and market trends to evaluate and grow with a responsible pace along with the customers and connectivity partners.” □



Industry to see double-digit revenue growth next year: ICRA

Forecasts positive outlook for Indian hotel industry & predicts pan-India premium hotel occupancy at 70–72 per cent in FY2024 vis-à-vis 68–70 per cent in FY2023.



DDP Bureau

ICRA has predicted 13–15 per cent revenue growth for Indian hotel industry in FY2024, notwithstanding the potential impact on demand with further COVID waves, if any.

The demand recovery has been strong in the last one year, and ICRA anticipates it to continue in FY2024 as well. Sustenance of domestic leisure travel, higher bookings from meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE), and business travel, along with an increase in foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs), would support revenues. The industry is also likely to benefit from specific events such as G20 summit and the ICC World Cup 2023. ICRA estimates pan-India premium hotel occupancy at 70–72 per cent in FY2024, after recovering to 68–70 per cent in FY2023. Pan-India premium hotel average room rates (ARRs) are expected to be at ₹6,000–

6,200 in FY2024. While the occupancy is expected to be at decadal highs, the RevPAR is expected to remain at a 20–25 per cent discount to the FY2008 peak.

Demand in leisure destinations has been strong since Q3 FY2022, while markets such as Chennai and Hyderabad have benefitted in FY2023 from MICE

Hotel supply pipeline is expected to grow only at three-year CAGR of 3.5–4 per cent, adding approximately 15,500 rooms

(including weddings) and pick-up in business travel. However, FTAs are yet to reach pre-COVID levels. Gateway cities such as Mumbai and Delhi reported occupancy of over 75 per cent in FY2023. Pune and Bengaluru, which are business travel markets with a large part of the demand from

the service sectors, have also picked up in the last few months, although they still lag behind other markets. The ARR has also inched up sharply across markets, consequent to the demand improvement. However, despite this, the ARR remains lower than the FY2008 peak. The sharp rise in ARR of premium hotels also resulted in the spillover of demand to mid-scale hotels.

Vinutaa S, Vice President & Sector Head, Corporate Ratings, ICRA, said, “Sustenance of a large part of the cost-rationalization measures undertaken during the COVID period, along with operating leverage benefits, resulted in a sharp expansion in margins. ICRA’s sample comprising 12 large hotel companies is expected to report operating margins of 28–30 per cent for FY2023, against 20–22 per cent pre-COVID. While there could be some moderation in margins from the current levels with an increase in some cost-heads, including refurbishment/maintenance, the margins are still expected to be

higher than the pre-COVID levels over the medium term.”

The healthy demand uptick resulted in a pick-up in new supply announcements and the commencement of deferred projects over the last 6–9 months. However, the hotel supply pipeline is expected to grow only at a three-year CAGR of 3.5–4 per cent, adding approximately 15,500

The lending environment, which was cautious in FY2022, has improved considerably in the last three quarters

rooms to the pan-India premium inventory of 94,800 rooms across 12 key cities in India. This will facilitate an upcycle, as demand improves over the medium term while supply will lag demand. The current inventory growth is significantly lower than the growth of approximately 18 per cent witnessed during FY2009–2013, after the global financial crisis.

“ICRA expects the uptick in earnings and cashflows to support the capital struc-



ture going forward. However, strengthening of credit metrics is likely to be gradual owing to the high debt levels and ongoing capital expenditure plans for select players. The asset monetisations, if any, would largely pertain to non-revenue generating assets. Further, even as the industry has started registering operating margins higher than pre-COVID levels, the extent of improvement in return on capital employed (RoCE) remains constrained by the high

capital cost of new properties owing to high land and construction cost. The RoCE for ICRA's sample is likely to remain sub cost of capital at least for FY2024. About 97 per cent of ICRA's ratings have a stable outlook at present, similar to pre-COVID levels. The lending environment, which was cautious in FY2022, has improved considerably in the last three quarters, with sharp uptick in the industry operating metrics,” added Vinutaa. ■



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ACING DIGITAL SPACE



Redefining rules of brand marketing, next-gen hoteliers are making most out of their digital skills to upsell their properties with a click.

 **Lipla Negi**

When COVID struck, the traditional ways of brand marketing in the hospitality sector were rendered ineffective. As digital marketing became the norm in the new normal, a section of young and tech-savvy hoteliers already knew how to get the world in the palm of their hand. These next-gen hoteliers, well aware with the know-how of technology and digital tools, made the most out of this opportunity to not just give a 'shout out' but also 'upsell' their properties to mil-



Akshita M Bhanj Deo
Co-owner,
The Belgadia Palace

Using digital tools to reach your target audience is critical to surviving post-COVID

lennial travellers. "The world is consuming travel from screens. Using digital tools to reach your target audience is critical to surviving post-COVID," affirms **Akshita M Bhanj Deo**, Co-owner, The Belgadia Palace, Mayurbhanj, Odisha, who further emphasizes, "Mobile integration helps create a direct connection between clients and the business, and assists real-time communication. Through mobile apps, hotels can enhance their client engagement and boost staff efficiency. With the help of Augmented Reality or VR, restaurants and hotels can show potential clients what the surroundings look like."

NEW TARGET AUDIENCE

As flights were grounded and travel came to complete standstill, the next-gen hoteliers identified a new legion of new age domestic travellers who were hungry for immersive travel within the country. "COVID was a major shift for us because previously we were heavily reliant on foreign guests. We understood that our domestic guests had a different demographic: 10-15 years younger, more tech savvy and responded more to visual appeal than written reviews or word-of-mouth. We used this to focus on Instagram content creation as a major chan-



Upasana Todi Prakash
Owner,
The Lodge at Wah, Palampur

Make the property feel more appealing versus another cut-and-paste version

nel for promotion to reach this demographic,” explains Siddarth Saikia, Managing Partner, Gratitude Heritage, Pondicherry (Gratitude Consultants LLP).

As domestic travelers sought an escape from the city after a series of lockdowns, the owners of homestays, boutique and heritage properties in tucked away destinations saw an opportunity to thrive, and thus tweaked their marketing strategy accordingly. According to Saikia, focusing more on promoting ‘work from home or away from home’ aspects to a younger demographic who wanted to get out of the major cities created a new revenue source that worked in the off-seasons as well. Today, Instagram and Facebook are the biggest marketing avenues for properties in distant locations. “It is completely organic, free, and true. There is currently no better way to get the word out and keep us on people’s minds,” states **Upasana Todi Prakash**, Owner, The Lodge at Wah, Palampur, Himachal Pradesh.

AUTHENTICITY IS KEY

The numero uno rule to dominate the digital space is to stay original and true to your roots, believe these young hoteliers. Saikia advises to focus on the experience as a whole, rather than just the accommodation. He adds, “For our target audience, it was seeing themselves within the space. For example, pictures that featured young Indians enjoying the swing in the courtyard or content featuring our staff and their work. We knew we were on the right track when we found that many of our guests would replicate similar pictures for their own social-media profiles. Our property became highly “Instagrammable” and that in itself became a value addition for potential guests deciding where to book their stay.” According to experts, Mobile integration, Internet of Things, (Search Engine

Optimization, web traffic analytics, Digital Marketing and customer relationship management, Augmented Reality, and automated purchasing solutions are some ways to promote your property in digital space.

According to Bhanj Deo, creating digital experiences goes a long way in revenue generation. “Most travelers are already interested in browsing the internet for quick getaway trips with experienced hosts who can guarantee safety and have stringent health checks. The increased interest is influenced by the demands of millennial clients expecting excellent digital experiences.” So, who can learn and master the art of content creation? “It is not necessarily young hoteliers, but just anyone who has ensured to keep up with changing digital trends will have an advantage. Someone



Siddarth Saikia
Managing Partner,
Gratitude Heritage

Our domestic guests were more responsive to visual appeal, so we focussed on Instagram for promotion

who has a unique ‘voice’, and who can make the property feel more appealing versus another cut-and-paste version,” answers Prakash. □



ENHANCING HOTEL'S PERFORMANCE

Prologic First's hospitality technology solutions, which includes PMS, POS, Hospitality ERP Systems, among others help hotels to boost operational efficiency.



Success in hospitality heavily depends on being able to map your guest experience and guest journey and being able to deliver the desired experience. This is a daunting task, add to it the challenge of maintaining efficiency, preventing leakage, selling higher margin items, reducing wastage.

"Hotels and restaurants have various touchpoints with guests where important data is collected, but the data sits in silos. We are seldom aware of guests' overall needs. In past, we used to have someone specially to enter data manually into guest profiles from various systems and manage guest profiles. Using an integrated system with the ability to pull data from different touchpoints and then unify the data gives an advantage to solve the missing puzzle that can provide convenience, efficiency and cost benefits to the hospitality industry. A feature rich, integrated solution provides far more efficiency and convenience than having standalone systems and people who have manually transfer data between each system. By leveraging the integrated solutions, hospitality businesses can stay competitive and meet the evolving expectations of their customers," said **Amit Sharda**, COO, Prologic First.

RESTAURANT SOFTWARE

Choosing the right restaurant software is an important decision that can have a significant impact on the efficiency and success of your restaurant. It is important to clearly define the needs of your business and then map your required features to the software that is available. For instance, if you have a bar, you may need a POS system that can handle complex drink orders, while if you offer delivery, you may need software that includes routing and dispatch tools.

The restaurant software you choose should integrate seamlessly with your existing systems and processes such as ordering, integration with various food aggregators, payment gateways, among others. Reliable cus-



Amit Sharda
COO,
Prologic First

tomers support from the software provider is the utmost important point one should consider.

"Look for software that is tried and tested, meets industry standards for data security, is compliant with local taxation standards, backed by robust support and is regularly updated to address new threats," explained Sharda.

UNIQUE OFFERINGS

Prologic First has been in the hospitality technology business for more than 25 years and our software has evolved since inception. The products are functionally rich and technologically advanced. Prologic First has not stopped innovating for the hospitality sector. "Our unique product offerings include Central Guest Profiling, e-wallet, loyalty as part of unique offerings for

F&B business. Business Intelligence Reporting, other than more than 200 plus canned reports is an important tool for the management to take right and timely decisions. Our users also benefit from advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and Robotic Process Automation which help automating mundane tasks and detecting outliers and anomalies automatically. Our products are available on cloud as well as on premise, giving users a choice of what suits their businesses the most. Prologic First's products, include PMS, POS, Hospitality ERP Systems, Purchase, Inventory, Menu Management, Guest Request Management and much more," pointed out Sharda.

Our products are available on cloud as well as on premise, giving users choice of what suits their businesses the most

FUTURE PRODUCTS

"We are in the process of training our chatbot to better respond to guest and customer needs. I would not be able to speak much about it, but it will be a gamechanger for hospitality industry," said Sharda. Please write in to info@prologicfirst.com, if you have any queries. □



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'Strong recovery for Indian hotel industry'

Despite challenging period caused by COVID, Indian hotel industry is gaining momentum, observes NEOSIS' India Hospitality Overview 2022 report.



DDP Bureau

Recently released report India Hospitality Overview 2022 by NEOSIS has predicted strong recovery and significant growth for the Indian hospitality sector in 2023. "There has been a long wait for the recovery of the hospitality industry since COVID struck and 2023 is forecasted to be the year and Asia is pre-

When it comes to metropolitan cities, Mumbai has shown resilience & stability on hospitality front

dicted to be the first continent to return to 2019 levels. India is a major player in this revival. The wedding destinations such as Jaipur are already leading the charge, with

ADR almost double the tariff in 2019, however, the occupancy levels are still 7 per cent below par. Udaipur on the other hand has shown much more consistency with its ADR already crossed pre-COVID levels in 2021, it has further increased by 16 per cent and yet around 15 per cent less than its occupancy in 2022," the report stated.

The report further noted, "When it comes to the metropolitan cities, Mumbai has shown resilience and stability on the hospitality front, while the occupancy levels are almost the same as in 2019, ADR is heading upward towards 9k. On the same note, Bengaluru and New Delhi have definitely improved their ADR by 46 per cent and 32 per cent, respectively compared to



2021 performance, however, projected to cross the 2019 figures in 2023 with a strong start. The leisure market must include the country's favourite destination, Goa. It had few hurdles in 2021, however the market bounced back strongly in 2022 with an 11 per cent premium on the ADRs along with a steady rise from the 60 per cent occupancy mark, including immense growth with the launch of Mopa International Airport." □

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SILVER HOME DECOR ACCESSORIES BY FRAZER AND HAWS

Silver home decor accessories by Frazer and Haws are a perfect way to accessorise your home this season. These exquisite pieces in silver are ideal to decorate your spaces. Home accessories are what give your home personality and character and it is the accessories you choose that make you feel like you are really home. Add silver bowls, platters, vases, photo frames, timepieces and much more to make your space sparkle with charm. So, it is time to glam up your space with a wide range of silver home decor accessories from Frazer and Haws.



LUCARIS DESIRE CRYSTAL STEMWARE

Indulge in your passion for wine and enhance your restaurant with the exquisite Lucaris Desire crystal stemware. Crafted with meticulous attention to detail, the Desire collection features Aerlumer innovation, which encourages micro-oxidation and softens the wine while swirling to allow diversified interaction between wine and air. The bottom curl lines at the bowl create an unprecedented appreciation experience, while the fine rim, colorless and transparent glass, oversized bowl, seamless stem, and flat base offer 100 per cent lead-free quality with the finest looks.

FRENCH INSPIRED VINTAGE FLORAL DRAPERIES

Zynna has recently introduced French inspired vintage floral draperies by Thevenon, a range of drapes that embodies elegance, simplicity and the energy of nature. With this collection, Zynna has transcended the energy of nature through its materials, sophistication, and minimalism. The Vintage Floral collection by Zynna brings a fresh and vibrant touch to your home décor with its warm colours and tender, energetic patterns inspired by spring. From the classic floral pattern to modern geometric designs, these draperies add a touch of elegance and sophistication to any room in your home.



OZONE RFID HOTEL LOCKS

OZONE RFID Hotel Locks are specially designed for modern and fashionable hotels to ensure the lock perfectly blends into the modern hotel environment. The locks have free structure handle, thicker than ordinary hotel locks in the market. It also features plastic cover which has been treated for anti-scratch. There is no external wiring and installation is easy. They are powered by four AA batteries that provide up to one-year average lifetime.

Acutely mindful of nature

Natural sweeteners such as Stevia are fast catching on with people who want healthy life without compromising on taste. It is safe for diabetics, children and pregnant women.

Stevia is a 100 per cent natural, zero calorie sweetener. It can allow one to save around 400 calories a day, without compromising on sweet taste. It is ideal for weight watchers and health-conscious people. It is safe for diabetics, children and pregnant women. Said Leena Mittal, Director, Herboveda India, “Besides Stevia, we offer Erythritol and Xylitol, both are natural sweeteners with very low to zero Glycemic Index, making them safe for diabetics. Besides having zero Glycemic Index, Erythritol also has zero calories and can be used for cooking, boiling and baking and tastes exactly like sugar. Xylitol has half the calories of sugar and has very low Glycemic index. It tastes exactly like sugar and is cookable, boilable and bakeable.”

Mittal further added, “Our company deals in new age sweeteners which makes it possible for the industry to manufacture lower calorie products, without compromising on



Leena Mittal
Director,
Herboveda India

Our company deals in new age sweeteners which makes it possible for industry to manufacture lower calorie products

taste and health. More and more companies are wanting to replace sugar with various healthy alternatives, amongst which Stevia is at the top. By reducing

the calories of their products, various companies are spreading health to their customers. This is equivalent to investing in health of the nation.”

She reckons that the world is moving towards bio-based products. “The whole world is rapidly shifting towards consumption of bio-based products. More and more people are getting conscious about the origin of the products that they are consuming. The love for Mother Earth is increasing by the day, hence the biodegradability of each product is under scanner. Hence in the coming future, the success of any company would considerably depend on the origin of the products they use. We can proudly say that our products are bio-based and are the products of present and future.” □



MOVEMENTS



REEMA KHAN

**Group Head
Grape County and Viveda
Wellness**

★ Reema Khan brings with her track record of envisioning and implementing ideas that have fuelled market presence and driven revenue for multiple hotels and resorts. As Group Head, Grape County and Viveda Wellness, Khan will further enhance the brand's position as purveyors of sustainability, excellence and unparalleled experience in the hospitality industry. In her new role, Reema will be instrumental in achieving the resort goals of strengthening the brand's imagery, elevating unique and unforgettable experiences for the guests with strong focus on eco-tourism.



JATINDER PAL SINGH

**Executive Chef
Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield
Hotel & Convention Center**

★ With experience of over 20 years, Jatinder Pal Singh has worked with hospitality brands, including Taj, The Leela, Le Meridian, Westin and Sheraton. He has joined Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Center as Executive Chef. His cooking expertise range from distinct evolution of Indian to global cuisines. He is a maestro of innovative buffet set-ups, fine dining presentations and voluminous catering for banquets and conventions. Singh is a graduate in International Hospitality Management from Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh.



SURIYA PHUSIRIMONGKHONCHAI

**Master Chef for OKO
The Lalit**

★ Chef Suriya Phusirimongkhonchai has been appointed as Master Chef for OKO, The Lalit. Chef Phusirimongkhonchai has previously worked in hospitality brands such as JW Marriott, The Westin and Hilton. In his last assignment, he was associated with The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group as a specialty chef for OKO – A Pan Asian Destination. Chef Phusirimongkhonchai's 25-year-old journey started with a love for cooking and his immaculate affair with food made him a spontaneous success. He has catered for numerous high-profile events and has bagged many prestigious awards.



JAIVEER SINGH RATHORE

**Director, Human Resources
JW Marriott Kolkata**

★ JW Marriott Kolkata has announced the appointment of Jaiveer Singh Rathore as Director, Human Resources. He brings with himself over 16 years of experience in corporate experience in HR, with a deep-rooted experience in developing, recommending and implementing Human Resource Strategies with complete accountability of Goal Setting, Leadership Development, Manpower and Staffing. In his current role, he will be responsible for driving strategic HR initiatives and enhancing employee engagement in the pursuit of organizational objectives.



MALLIKA SEHGAL

**Marketing & Communications
Manager
The Westin Kolkata Rajarhat**

★ A highly experienced and passionate Marketing Strategist with over 11 years of experience in the space of content creation and marketing, Mallika Sehgal has joined The Westin Kolkata Rajarhat as Marketing and Communications Manager. Armed with a Postgraduate Degree in Marketing Management, Sehgal has worked across diverse industries, which has honed her expertise. Her leadership and people management skills make her a strong team player. She has a great track record, with excellent communication skills, strong analytic and presentation abilities.



ARJUN DEOSKAR

**Manager, Food & Beverage
W Goa**

★ W Goa has appointed Arjun Deoskar as Manager, Food & Beverage. With over 15 years of experience in the Indian hospitality industry, Deoskar has a deep understanding of global and regional cuisines, a keen eye for detail, and a passion for creating memorable dining experiences. As Manager, Food & Beverage, Deoskar will be responsible for overseeing and managing all aspects of the hotel's food and beverage operations. Deoskar joins W Goa from The St. Regis Goa Resort where he was the Food & Beverage Manager.

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