

HOTELS & RESTAURANTS INDIA

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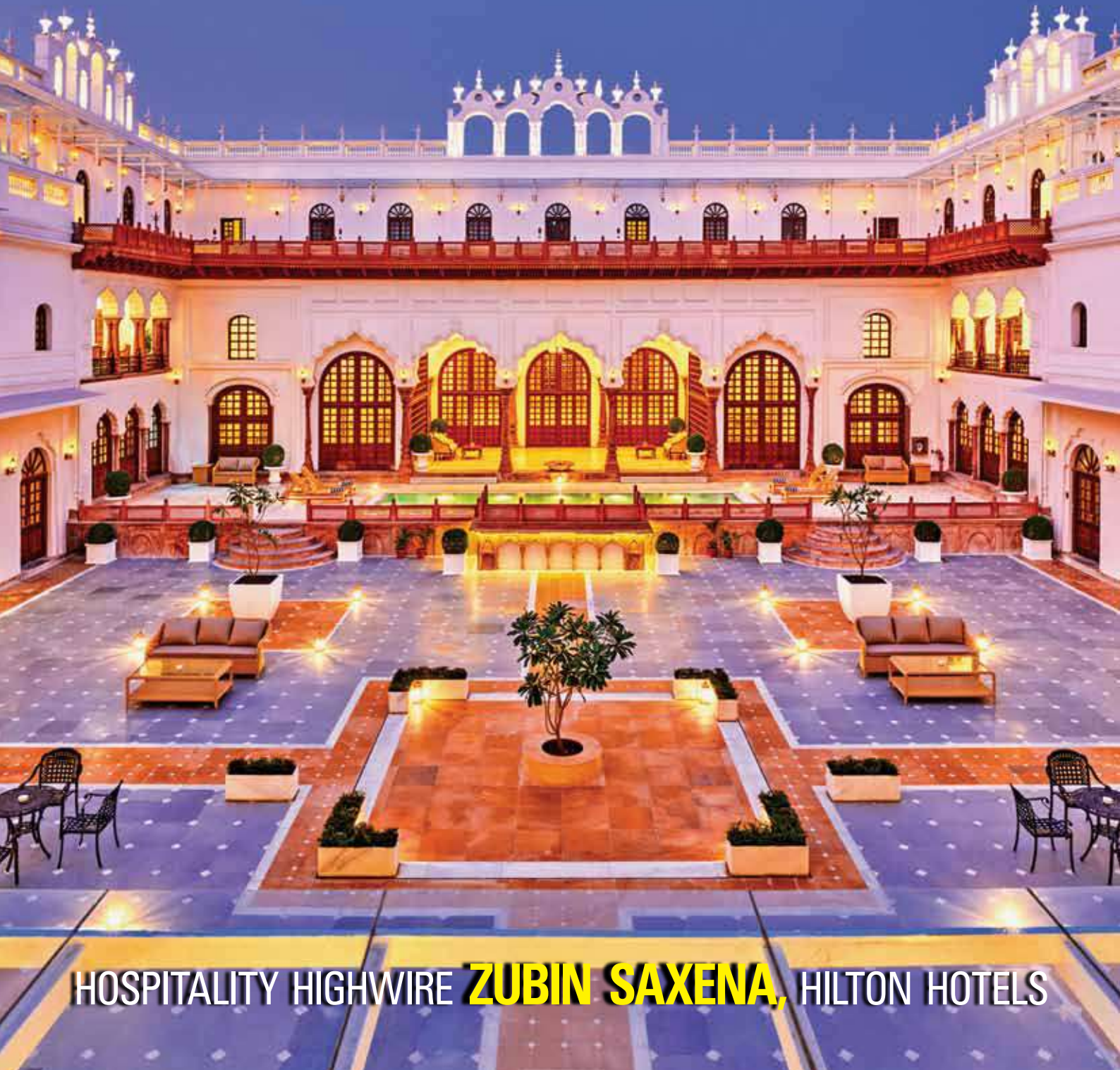
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A MONTHLY ON HOSPITALITY TRADE

By DDP Publications



GST Reforms can boost govt revenue



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President's Note



Dear Members and Stakeholders,

The tourism and hospitality sector is experiencing a momentous transformation, driven by the need for collaboration, innovation and sustainability. These three pillars are increasingly recognised as fundamentals for creating a thriving future that benefits both the industry and the communities it serves. Across the globe, as travel habits evolve and consumer expectations shift, the focus has turned to not only boosting the economic potential of the tourism sector but also ensuring that it operates in an environmentally and socially responsible manner. Karnataka, a state renowned for its rich cultural heritage, diverse landscapes and vibrant tourism offerings, has emerged as a shining example of this shift. The state has steadily established itself as a premier global tourism destination, and the Karnataka International Travel Expo (KITE) has played an instrumental role in this evolution.

KITE has become more than just an event; it has evolved into a critical platform that brings together industry stakeholders from across the globe. KITE has played a significant role in introducing lesser-known destinations to global audiences, generating interest and driving footfalls to Karnataka's iconic landmarks.

At the Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI), we are proud to continue championing the cause of sustainable tourism through initiatives like the second edition of the Tourism Sustainability Summit. As an industry body, FHRAI has long been at the forefront of advocating for responsible tourism practices. We are committed to facilitating meaningful dialogues that can bring about positive change and promote the long-term health of the tourism sector. The second edition of the summit promises to be a powerful forum for discussions on the future of tourism and the importance of sustainability. This year's theme, "Reimagining Tourism: Towards a Regenerative and Sustainable Future," will delve into how the tourism industry must evolve to meet the growing demands of an increasingly mobile global population, while also ensuring that the resources—both natural and cultural—upon which the sector depends are regenerated and preserved.

In addition to our efforts at promoting sustainable tourism, FHRAI has also been proactive in addressing pressing challenges within the hospitality industry. We recently submitted a representation highlighting the concerns of the hospitality sector regarding the growing issue of private label food delivery services operated by platforms like Zomato and Swiggy, highlighting data misuse and the impact of their private labels on the livelihoods of local businesses. In response, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's DPIIT has forwarded the matter to several



"As an industry body, FHRAI has long been at the forefront of advocating for responsible tourism practices."

other key bodies, including the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, the Competition Commission of India and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, for further investigation and necessary action.

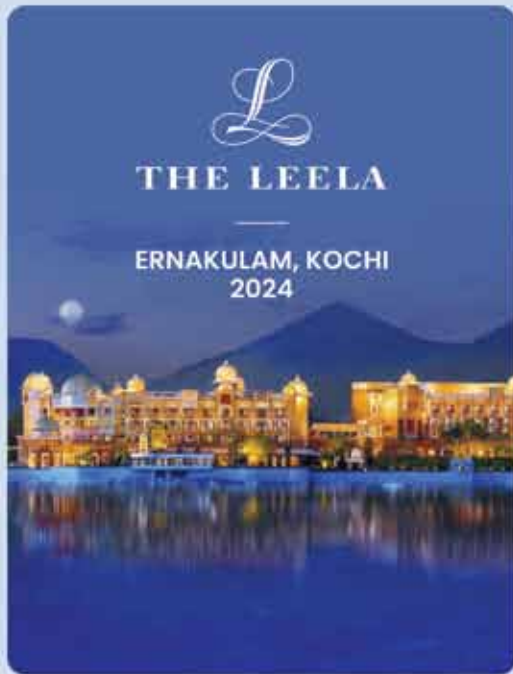
Furthermore, FHRAI has submitted another important representation to Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Hon'ble Finance Minister, Government of India, requesting that the government consider delinking food & beverage (F&B) rates from accommodation charges. We believe that this move would greatly benefit the industry and its stakeholders. We remain optimistic that the Ministry will look favourably to our request.

As we look ahead, FHRAI remains dedicated to ensuring that the tourism and hospitality industry not only thrives but also contributes positively to the preservation of the world around us. We are working towards a future where tourism benefits everyone—businesses, communities and the environment alike. Together, we can strive to make this vision a reality.

Warm regards,
K Syama Raju
President, FHRAI

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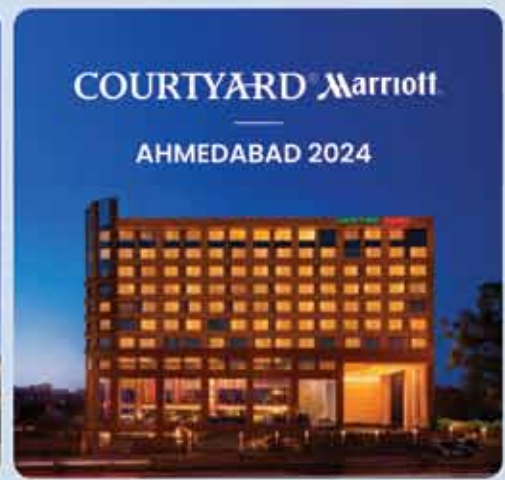


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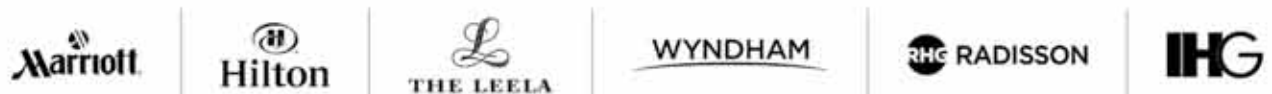




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Reform NCHMCT admission framework

FHRAI delegation presses Union Tourism Minister to introduce quota in B.Sc. programme for private institutes of hotel management under NCHMCT.

 DDP Bureau

A delegation of FHRAI under the leadership of **Garish Oberoi**, Hony. Treasurer, FHRAI, held a meeting with **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat**, Minister for Tourism, at New Delhi on 10 March 2025. Oberoi apprised him about the need for introducing

management quota in Bachelor of Science in Hospitality and Hotel Administration (B.Sc. H&HA) for private institutes of hotel management under National Council for Hotel Management & Catering Technology (NCHMCT), Noida. The Minister has assured the delegation that the government will consider the request favourably. Oberoi was accompa-

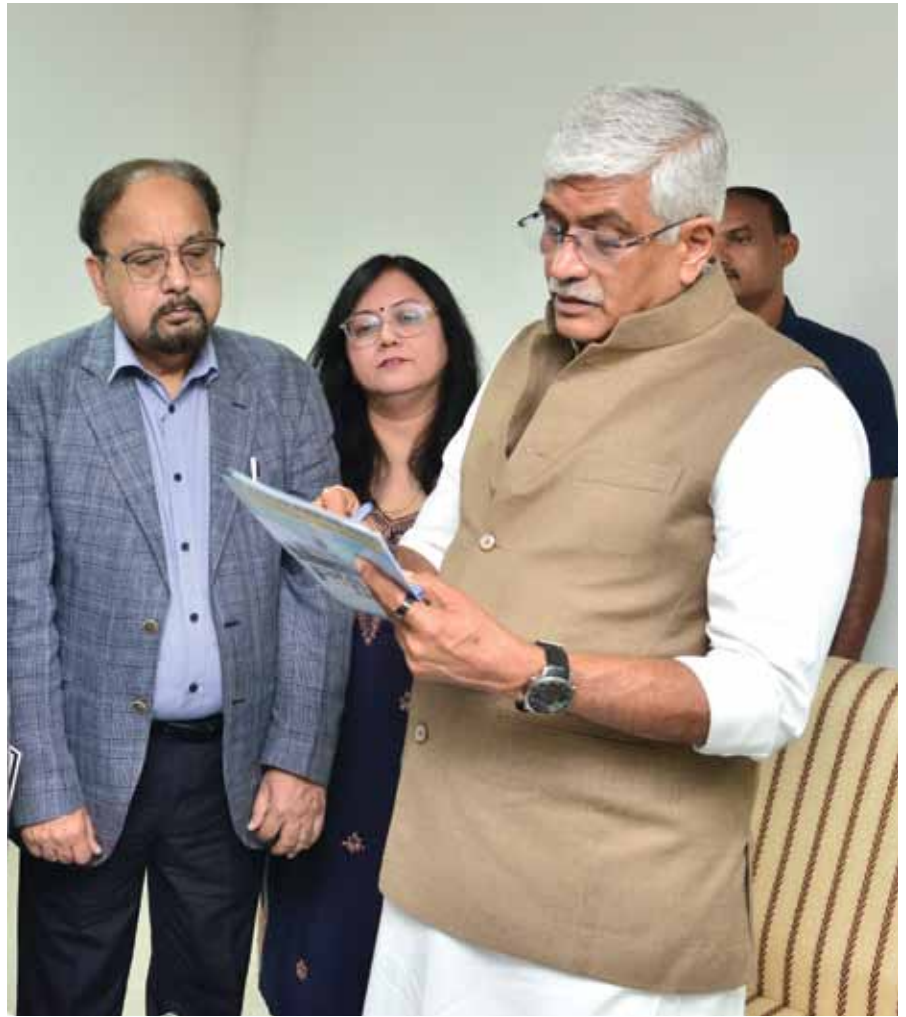
nied to the meeting by **A K Singh**, Director, FHRAI-IHM; **Renu Thapliyal**, Secretary General, HRANI and **Jaision Chacko**, Secretary General, FHRAI.

The delegation also shared a representation to the Minister for the same which also highlighted the existing practice in different states in B.Tech/MBA/BBA/BHM programme.



In the letter, the association stated, "In most of the states of country, there is a provision of management quota in defined percentage of seats in B.Tech, MBA and BHM programme. These private institutes work round the year for the marketing of those seats in particular institute. This quota in private institutes is a tool to ensure reasonable admission in different courses being offered in institute, as promoter of the institute have invested in huge infrastructure and also meeting recurring grant out of the revenue of the institute."

The letter also underlined, "The management quota range between 15-50 per cent in different states, but on an average 25-30 per cent of the total seat allocated to the institute, under management quota and remaining 70-75 per cent of seats are to be filled by joint entrance examination



"Quota in private institutes is a tool to ensure reasonable admission in different courses being offered in institutes."

(JEE) and vacant seats. If any, after JEE is to be filled through direct admission, only on the merit of qualifying examination i.e. class 12th, strictly on the guidelines of NCHMCT."

The Minister was informed that in private IHMs under NCHMCT, Noida, not more than 10-15 per cent seats are filled through JEE and about 20-30 per cent of the seats on an average are filled through subsequent test by NCHMCT. With this, in gen-

eral not more than 40 to 45 per cent admissions are in B.Sc. programme on an average in last four years. The association said, "With the grant of 25-30 per cent seat under management quota in private institutes of hotel management, NCHMCT on one hand will reduce the number of seats available in JEE and on the other hand will give freedom to private IHM to plan to fill those 30 per cent seats under management quota through round the year marketing."

The association requested the Minister to relook into NCHMCT's admission policy. They also emphasised to consider granting 25-30 per cent seats to private institutes of hotel management under management quota for admission in B.Sc H&HA programme on prescribed admission criteria and fee as per NCHMCT norms. They shared the report on management quota in B.Tech programme in different states. □

Seeking policies for level playing field

FHRAI voices concerns against Zomato and Swiggy's violation of e-commerce rules, seeking govt's attention to enforce market neutrality.

 DDP Bureau

To ensure fair competition in the industry, FHRAI has written to **Piyush Goyal**, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry and **Amardeep Singh Bhatia**, Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry, raising their concerns on the unethical practices in the food delivery space. The association expressed dissatisfaction with food aggregators Zomato and Swiggy with their foray into private labelling, food manufacturing and the sale of products through quick commerce apps such as Blinkit, Bistrot, Swiggy Café and Snacc.

FHRAI said that these developments do only violate e-commerce regulations but also undermine the principles of marketplace neutrality, posing serious consequences to the restaurant industry.

The association highlights the following key concerns:

Marketplace neutrality violation

Evidence: Both platforms were originally designed as neutral marketplaces to provide equal opportunities to restaurant partners. However, by creating their own private-label products, they are now directly competing with the restaurants they claim to support.

Impact: It reduces the visibility of restaurant partners and skew consumer redirection towards private label products, undermining their competitiveness and survival in the industry.

Precedent: This practice has been prohibited in other sectors, such as e-commerce, where popular platforms like Amazon and Flipkart faced regulatory scrutiny for engaging in similar behaviour.

Misuse of restaurant data

Evidence: They have access to de-

tailed consumer and restaurant data, such as demand patterns, popular cuisines and pricing strategies. By leveraging this data to promote their private-label brands, they are exploiting a clear conflict of interest.

Impact: Restaurants lose their competitive advantage, as these plata-





Safeguard and protect the interests of thousands of restaurants and millions of livelihoods tied to the hospitality industry

forms replicate their offerings while undercutting prices.

Legal violations

Evidence: Mimicking popular dishes or formats from established restaurant brands, infringing on intellectual property rights.

Actions: Similar practices have led to legal actions globally, such as copyright infringement lawsuits in the retail and e-commerce sectors.

Consumer redirection

Evidence: Platforms use algorithms to prioritise their private labels, re-directing consumers away from restaurant partners.

Impact: Restaurants lose revenue, and consumers are misled into purchasing private-label products without clarity about their origin.

Assurance breaches

Evidence: Both assured industry stakeholders that they would refrain from entering private labelling businesses, emphasising their role as neutral aggregators. Their current actions erode trust and credibility within the industry.

Besides, FHRAI has sought urgent intervention of the government to address the following issues:

Regulatory oversight: Enforce strictly marketplace neutrality and prohibit

platforms from competing with their partners by introducing private labels in the market.

Transparent practices: Mandate full disclosure of private-label products and their differentiation from partner restaurants' offerings.

Data usage regulations: Prevent platforms from misusing proprietary data of restaurant partners for their competitive advantage.

Consumer protection: Ensure consumers are clearly informed about the origin of products, particularly in cases of private-label promotions.

FHRAI stated, "We believe that with your support, we can ensure fair practices within the food delivery ecosystem." The federation emphasised the importance of safeguarding the interests of thousands of restaurants and millions of livelihoods tied to the hospitality industry." □



GST reforms can boost govt revenue

FHRAI informs govt that excluding F&B rates from room tariffs will augment its GST collections instead of causing revenue loss.



DDP Bureau

Seeking urgent intervention to GST taxation, FHRAI has written to **Nirmala Sitharaman**, Union Finance Minister, highlighting delinking of F&B rates of restaurants from the room tariffs will not lead to revenue loss to the government but will increase the GST collection substantially from the hospitality sector.

FHRAI spotlighted the following points to consider:

Growth luxury segment: According to the Indian Hospitality Trends and

The growth of luxury and upscale markets will lead to substantial revenue improvement for the government

Opportunities Report 2023 by Hotelivate, 17 per cent of the hotels charged more than ₹7,500 in 2018-19, which has increased to 23 per cent in 2022-23. Moreover, there has been a sizeable increase in the number of hotels

charging an average rate of ₹15,000 or more from 34 hotels in 2018-19 to 100 hotels in 2022-23. It indicates the luxury and upscale markets in the hotel sector are expanding steadily and with a burgeoning tourism sec-



FHRAI continues its campaign with state governments to delink F&B rates from room tariffs

FHRAI has undertaken an initiative to meet the authorities from the finance and GST departments from the central and state governments to apprise them about the problems being faced by the hospitality industry due to linking of F& B rates of restaurants with hotel room tariffs.

With this objective, a delegation of FHRAI including **Pradeep Shetty**, Vice President and **Hari Arumugam**, EC member, met **Ajit Pawar**, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister (Finance), Government of Maharashtra in Mumbai. **Hari Arumugam** also met **K Lakshminarayanan**, Hon'ble Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation, Government of Pondicherry, and sought his support to provide relief to the hospitality industry.



tor in recent times, the growth of this market will further multiply. This will lead to substantial revenue improvement for the government.

Advantage of ITC benefits: As per the list of Classified Hotels by the Ministry of Tourism, there are 208 hotels in the 5-star deluxe category and 209 in the 5-star category, all charge a room tariff of above ₹7,500 per day. These hotels operate multiple restaurants within their premises. As per the present provisions in the GST rules, the restaurants on hotel premises having room tariffs of ₹7,500 and above per unit per day are

required to charge 18 per cent GST with full ITC. The major expenditure heads in the hotel operational expenses attract larger GST obligations, and by opting for 18 per cent GST with ITC inputs, the hotels have the advantage of setting off their GST payouts with the inputs.

Midscale hotels increasing room rates: To avoid compliance and accounting issues, hotels avoid crossing the room tariff threshold of ₹7,500. If the delinking of F&B rates from room charges is implemented, midscale hotels may likely increase their room tariffs as per the market dynam-

ics, which will lead to higher GST collection for the government.

Opting 18 per cent GST with ITC: Like upscale and luxury category hotels, branded restaurants and restaurant chains have large operational expenditures from raw materials to annual maintenance costs. ITC can be a big relief as it will allow them to claim credit for the input tax paid on the operational expenditures against the tax due on F&B. There is a possibility a good number of restaurants may move on to the higher bracket of 18 per cent GST with ITC inputs to set-off their operational expenses. □



Hotels push for fairer and transparent GST rates

Seeking urgent intervention, FHRAI urges govt to delink F&B rates from room tariffs to avoid ambiguity and ensure equitable taxation practices.



 DDP Bureau

FHRAI has written a letter to **Sachin Jain**, Joint Secretary (TRU-11), Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs, Minister of Finance, Government of India, flagging concerns regarding the unfair linkage of GST on food and beverage (F&B) services in restaurants to hotel room rates. The federation requested for recommendations of appropriate measures to the GST Council to address long-pending issues affecting the industry. FHRAI highlighted the following key challenges faced by the industry:

Regularise past GST payment on "as is basis": The confusion around

The discrepancy unfairly impacts restaurants operating in hotels compared to standalone counterparts

"Value of Services Received" and "Declared Tariff" has led to issuance of huge number of demand notices to hotels by the GST department. The government should consider regularising payment of GST during the past period on an "as is basis" which has a precedent in other services.

Delink F&B rates from room tariffs:

The sudden jump in GST rates from 5 per cent to 18 per cent when room rates exceed ₹7500 creates a lot of confusion and uncertainty for guests. Therefore, clarity is needed to avoid placing hotels at a major disadvantage. This discrepancy unfairly impacts restaurants operating in hotels compared to standalone counterparts offering similar high-end experiences and cuisines.

Enhance the threshold limit of hotel room tariff: Raise GST rate from present ₹7500 to ₹12500 to bring parity of rates between the rupee and the dollar. While the threshold was fixed at ₹7500 in 2017, the exchange rate of dollar per rupee stood at ₹64, but the same has reached at ₹87 per dollar today. □

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Hospitality's shifting trends: Rewriting the rulebook

Zubin Saxena explains about trajectory of Indian hospitality intricately woven with innovation, navigation of multifaceted challenges and unwavering commitment to curating exceptional guest experiences.



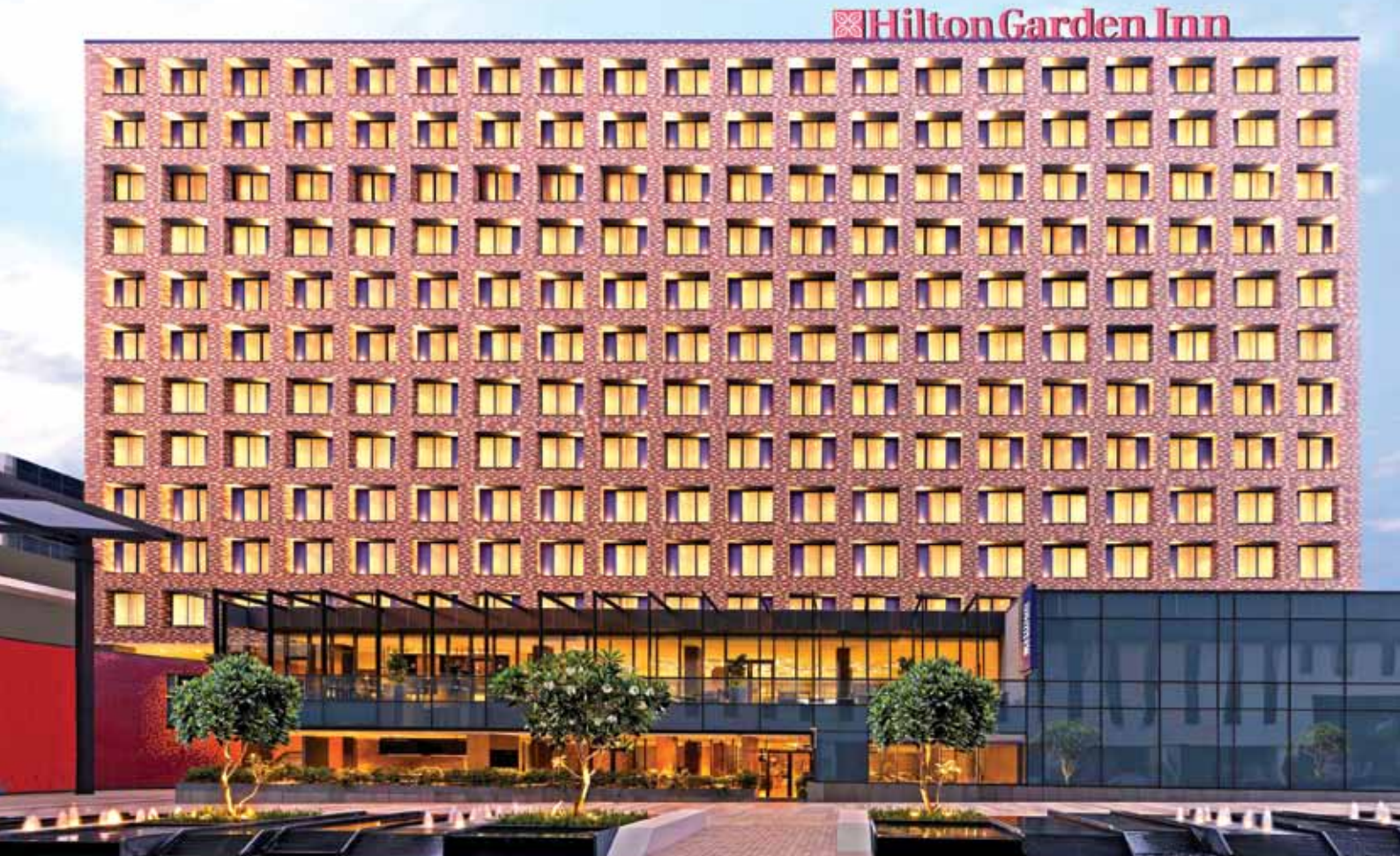
India's hospitality industry is not just growing—it is undergoing a fundamental transformation to meet the needs of a new generation of travelers. The traditional formula of location, price and convenience is giving way to deeper, more nuanced expectations. Today, a hotel is not merely a place to stay; it is an integral part of the journey, an immersive space for cultural discovery, personal connection and values-driven choices. For global hospitality leaders, this shift demands more than just enhanced service—it calls for a bold reimagining of product strategy, brand positioning and operating models to engage an increasingly discerning and digitally savvy audience.

Driving this transformation is the growing influence of a younger generation in shaping travel decisions. Hilton's 2025 Travel Trends Report shows that 93 per cent of Gen Z and Gen Alpha in India actively contribute to family travel plans—bringing with them a demand for hyper-localised experiences, digital-first interactions and a strong desire for authentic, experience-led



ZUBIN SAXENA
SVP and Regional Head
Hilton, South Asia

stays. Their influence extends far beyond destination choices, they are reshaping how hospitality brands craft experiences, communicate their values and adopt technology to create seamless, intuitive stays—both physically and digitally.



This evolving shift in consumer preferences is also mirrored in the geographic diversification of India's hospitality landscape, which is steadily expanding beyond traditional metropolitan hubs. With a surge in hotel signings and developments across Tier II and emerging cities such as Bhopal, Siliguri, Surat, Jabalpur, Udaipur, Mussoorie, Ranchi, and Tirupati. These rising destinations are no longer secondary markets—they are becoming epicenters of hospitality growth, fuelled by improving infrastructure, enhanced connectivity and the rising aspirations of India's growing middle class, who are increasingly seeking distinctive experiences—from spiritual travel, grand destination weddings, to corporate retreats and immersive leisure escapes. As brands recalibrate their growth strategies, these high-potential markets are transforming into critical growth engines, unlocking opportunities for experience-led hospitality.

Revolutionising hotel operations

In response to these shifting dynamics, hotels are rewriting their rulebook on operations and guest engagement. Technology has become the invisible yet indispensable

backbone of guest experience—from contactless check-ins and smart rooms to AI-powered personalisation that anticipates preferences based on past behaviour. Digital Key and Digital Key Share exemplify this trend, enabling guests to bypass the front desk entirely and unlock their rooms using their smartphones.

Simultaneously, ancillary services are being reimagined as significant revenue streams in their own right. Hotel restaurants are transcending their traditional roles—no longer just in-house amenities but standalone culinary destinations attracting both guests and locals. Similarly, wellness offerings are being redefined, expanding from standard spa menus to curated retreats that blend traditional therapies with modern rejuvenation techniques.

To maximise profitability in this dynamic environment, forward-thinking properties are implementing hyper-personalized offers, dynamic pricing models, and experience bundles that combine stays with dining and local activities. Strategic co-branded partnerships with credit card companies, airlines and lifestyle brands are emerging as game-changing revenue and loyalty drivers, creating 'burn and earn'



Purpose, People & Profit

Zubin Saxena, a seasoned veteran with over two decades of experience in the global and Indian hospitality industry, currently serves as the Senior Vice President & Regional Head for Hilton in South Asia. In this pivotal role, based at the Hilton corporate headquarters in Gurgaon, he leads a team of over 3700 team members across 28 hotels, steering growth and enhancing Hilton brand's presence in more than 15 Indian cities. An alumnus of the University of Glasgow, he holds a master's degree in business administration.



ecosystems that keep guests engaged across multiple platforms.

Leadership & management strategies

As the industry navigates complexity, hospitality leadership must evolve beyond traditional management approaches. Today's leaders must fuse financial expertise with deep emotional intelligence, nurturing a culture of empowerment, inclusion and innovation across all organisational levels.

Effective leadership embraces a mindset that sees every employee as a brand ambassador and co-creator of guest experiences

The ability to empower frontline teams has emerged as a particular game changer. In an era where personalised service is the ultimate differentiator, every staff member, from housekeepers and chefs to concierges and security personnel, must be equipped to deliver moments of surprise and delight. This requires a leadership mindset that treats each employee as a brand ambas-

sador and co-creator of guest experiences, not merely an operational component.

Agility in decision-making has become another non-negotiable leadership trait. From pandemic recovery to supply chain volatility, hospitality leaders must excel at scenario planning, ensuring operational resilience while maintaining impeccable guest satisfaction. Workforce well-being and development are equally vital, especially in a sector grappling with talent shortages. The industry's most forward-thinking brands are placing DE&I, mental health support, and structured growth pathways at the heart of their people strategy.

Future-proofing Indian hospitality

Indian hospitality stands at an inflection point, facing interconnected challenges across cost structures, shifting guest expectations and sustainability mandates. Winning brands are those that take a holistic, cross-functional approach—where revenue management, guest experience, sustainability and workforce strategies operate in concert.

Sustainability has transcended its role as a standalone CSR initiative to become a source of competitive advantage. Properties that adopt energy-efficient technologies,



water conservation systems, locally sourced ingredients and community engagement programmes are not only meeting regulatory requirements but also resonating deeply with environmentally conscious travellers, particularly younger demographics.

Economic volatility has likewise triggered a paradigm shift in revenue models. Beyond traditional room revenues, brands are now crafting experience-driven business verticals—from wellness retreats and elevated F&B concepts to curated wedding and adventure travel packages. These diversified offerings help buffer against fluctuating room rates while simultaneously enriching the overall guest experience.

Technology is serving as the great equaliser, helping hotels enhance operational efficiencies without diluting service quality. From predictive analytics for demand forecasting to AI-driven inventory management and automated housekeeping schedules, hotels are leveraging technological solutions to boost efficiency without compromising service quality.

Beyond Check-Ins: What Lies Ahead

The future of travel is being shaped by a confluence of trends that reflect evolving consumer demands and broader societal

shifts. Conscious, experiential and tech-driven travel will dominate the landscape, with wellness, personalisation and inclusivity emerging as defining factors. Success will hinge on leveraging technology for personalised experiences, integrating sustainable practices, and fostering meaningful connections with local cultures. By anticipating these shifts and responding with agility and foresight, hospitality brands can not only secure loyalty among a new wave of explorers but also redefine the very essence of travel in a rapidly changing landscape.

The very concept of luxury is shifting—it is no longer about material excess but rather about space, time, peace and purpose. Travellers now and will continue to value bespoke, deeply personal experiences over ostentatious amenities—demanding hotels that curate moments of cultural discovery, wellness and connection.

As Gen Z and Gen Alpha cement their position as primary travel influencers, hospitality brands must become digitally intuitive, socially aware and culturally intelligent. The era of templated guest experiences is definitively over. Tomorrow's successful hotels will function as experience curators, offering everything from food walks and sustainability workshops to live music events and personalised wellness regimens.

Tier II and III cities will continue to drive future growth, as midscale and upscale hotels expand their presence to meet the evolving aspirations of India's new-age travellers. The expansion of MICE tourism, destination weddings and spiritual tourism will provide additional momentum to this geographic diversification. Ultimately,

Strategic co-branded partnerships with credit card companies & lifestyle brands are emerging as revenue & loyalty drivers

the most successful hospitality brands will be those that view themselves not merely as service providers but as custodians of experiences, culture and community. They will master the delicate balance between innovation and authenticity, profitability and purpose, global ambition and local relevance. □

FHRAI-IHM marks International Women's Day

FHRAI-IHM organises special event to commemorate International Women's Day, acknowledging outstanding contribution of women.



DDP Bureau

To recognise the achievements of women leaders in the hospitality industry, FHRAI-IHM celebrated the 'International Women's Day' on 7 March 2025. With an aim to empowering future generations of women, the event acknowledged exceptional contributions that women have made to the industry.

With a warm welcome address, **AK Singh**, Director, FHRAI-IHM, set the right time for the event. "Women have long been at the forefront of driving growth, innovation and sustainability in the industry. Their

The event provides a platform to empower future generations of women

leadership has served as an inspiring example of what women can achieve, especially in sectors dominated by men," emphasised Singh. Some of the distinguished speakers at the event, included **Manoj Kumar Arora**, IRS, Principal Director General, Directorate General, Export Promotion, Govt of India, Ministry of

Finance, Indirect Taxes and Customs; **Dr Sanjana Jon**, philanthropist and filmmaker; **Gurmeet Singh**, Chairman, Bel-lamonde Hotels Group; **Vedika Sharma**, Director, Baidyanath Group; **Shalu**, PVR INOX Cinemas.

Manoj Kumar Arora, IRS, Principal Director General, Directorate General, Export Promotion, Govt of India, Ministry of Finance, Indirect Taxes and Customs who was the Chief Guest, led the felicitation ceremony. AK Singh, Director, FHRAI-IHM, FHRAI, gave the formal vote of thanks.

The event served as a platform for women to lead, collaborate and inspire while promoting inclusivity and diversity in the workplace. □





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Luxury sets sail

Unprecedented boom in yacht and cruise tourism is set to propel India into premier global luxury hotspot, anticipates **Subhakar Rao Surapaneni**.



Twelve years ago, Champions Group embarked on a journey to redefine luxury tourism in India, bringing yacht and cruise experiences to the country's most scenic waters. The brand started its operations in Goa and expanded to Amaravati, Dubai and now to Bali and Singapore. "We got into it to creating experiences for our 5000 plus team via yachts and helicopters or private planes. We then saw the potential of India's stunning coastline and untapped waterway

tourism. We are pioneering private yacht charters and cruise tourism and air charters and the concept is still in its infancy in this part of the world," stated **Subhakar Rao Surapaneni**, Founder & Chairman, Champions Group. According to him, Goa provided the perfect launchpad to introduce yacht experiences that blend leisure, adventure and luxury.

As luxury travel evolves, yacht charters and private air charter are no longer a niche offering but a preferred choice for premium travellers. Private yacht charters and sunset cruises to corporate retreats and ex-

travagant celebrations on the water, Champions Club continues to lead this transformation, offering world-class experiences. "The pristine waters of Goa have been the foundation of our journey, and we are committed to expanding India's yacht and cruise industry further," he revealed.

Evolution of maritime tourism

The demand for unique, experiential travel has skyrocketed, fuelled by a growing preference for exclusivity, adventure and seamless luxury. With increased investments in tourism infrastructure, favourable





**SUBHAKAR RAO
SURAPANENI**

Chairman, Champions Group

government policies and rising disposable incomes, India's yacht and cruise sector is witnessing unparalleled growth. "Luxury cruising is no longer a dream for few but a lifestyle transformation in India. The demand for exclusive yacht charters and destination cruises is soaring, and we are committed to delivering unparalleled experiences including flying in to your property or yacht via a

Demand for bespoke yacht charters and private air charter is growing

helicopter. Our vision is to make India a global luxury hotspot, where travellers can indulge in bespoke yachting and flying experiences," asserted **Hema Malini Nidamanuri**, Co-Founder & Managing Director, Champions Club.

Crafting unique experiences

Speaking about the exclusive experiences at Champions Club, Surapaneni shared, "We are redefining luxury on the water, offering premium yacht experiences, themed destination cruises, exclusive family and team retreats, corporate events, private celebrations, and bespoke sailing adventures—all crafted for an unparalleled journey. Whether it is an intimate escape or a grand corporate

gathering, we ensure every voyage is truly unforgettable."

The brand is dedicated to curating bespoke luxury experiences, offering everything from onboard fine dining and entertainment to adventure-packed cruises, ensuring a world-class maritime journey for every guest. "We are now introducing beach lagoon cities powered by crystal lagoons, each featuring a helipad atop yacht-shaped beach clubs at every location," he said.

The future of luxury cruising lies in destination-driven and highly personalised experiences. "From Mumbai to Lakshadweep cruises to fully customised private celebrations, large group gatherings and pre-wedding events, we are redefining luxury on the seas," he stated. With eco-friendly yachts and premium cruises, India's vast coastline is unlocking new possibilities. "We are incorporating Champions Club heli experiences, allowing VIPs to reach their yacht or cruise liner directly while at sea, creating a seamless luxury experience across air and water," he concluded. □

SIHRA Insightful meeting with SIDBI

With more than 100 members, SIHRA along with SIDBI enlighten about financial assistance schemes.



SIHRA organised an interactive meeting with top officials from SIDBI (Small Industries Development Bank of India) to raise awareness about SIDBI's funding for hotel projects. To support the hotel sector, SIDBI introduced new products to provide financial assistance at competitive interest rates.

More than 100 members attended the virtual meeting and interacted with SIDBI officials. With support and guidance from SIDBI officials, many hoteliers have applied for financial assistance.



Urging to ease bar restrictions

SIHRA members approach Chennai police commissioner to discuss restrictions on hotel bars.



Following the suspension of the FL-3 bar licences of five-star hotels, SIHRA received requests from its members expressing challenges related to bar operations beyond midnight. **Sundar Singaram**, Director, Operations, SIHRA, along with general managers, met **A Arun**, IPS, Commissioner of Chennai Police, to discuss the operational difficulties faced by hoteliers. SIHRA noted that the police commissioner addressed their concerns, assuring them support for the smooth conduct of business.



Jose Pradeep, Executive Committee Member of SIHRA, with Union Tourism Minister **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** and Kerala Tourism Director **Sikha Surendran** at OTM and TTF, Mumbai



Dr MB Patil, Minister for Commerce, Industries, and Infrastructure of Karnataka, and **K Syama Raju**, President, FHRAI & SIHRA, visited Chennai.

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Maha Kumbh 2025 takes centre stage at HRANI Conclave

HRANI Conclave serves as premier platform for industry leaders to share and exchange insights into trends and innovations influencing hospitality sector.



DDP Bureau

The 10th edition of HRANI Conclave, hosted by HRANI, was held in Kanpur recently. Centred on the theme, “Hospitality and Tourism: A Catalyst for Economic Growth,” the

event brought together policymakers, industry leaders and hospitality professionals for thought-provoking discussions ranging from Maha Kumbh 2025 to sustainable practices and innovative strategies shaping the hospitality sector.

The conclave was inaugurated by **Satish Mahana**, Speaker, Uttar

Pradesh Legislative Assembly, who underscored the role of the hospitality industry in supporting India’s economic growth. Mahana said. “Maha Kumbh is not just an event; it is a grand festival of our culture, unity, and traditions. It reflects the essence of our values and heritage. The hospitality and tourism sectors



Distinguished dignitaries present at the event, included **Vikas Malhotra**, Managing Committee Member, HRANI and Managing Director, The Landmark Hotel; **Ankit Gupta**, Vice President, HRANI; **Rakesh Roy** and **Vinod Gulati**, Honorary Joint Secretaries; **Animesh Kumar**, Managing Committee Member and Director, Franchise Operations-Eurasia, Wyndham Hotels and Resorts; **Meena Bhatia**, Managing Committee Member and Vice President and General Manager, Le Meridien, New Delhi, among others.

Talking about HRANI's mission, **Renu Thapliyal**, Secretary General, HRANI, said "HRANI acts as a vital link between the government and stakeholders. Through these conclaves across 10 states, we aim to educate members on policies, trends and sustainable practices. Together, we strive to elevate industry standards and promote responsible tourism."

With impactful discussions and actionable insights, the conclave reaffirmed its role as a premier platform for industry collaboration and sustainable growth. HRANI will continue to champion initiatives that drive excellence and ethical business practices in the industry. □

have a vital role in ensuring that every pilgrim and visitor experience the true spirit of our hospitality."

Akhil Kumar, IPS, Commissioner of Police, Kanpur, and **Rakesh Kumar Singh**, IAS, District Magistrate, Kanpur, graced the event as the guests of honour.

Urging hoteliers to prioritise cultural and ethical values, HRANI President **Surendra Kumar Jaiswal** stated, "Maha Kumbh represents our

The conclave featured insightful sessions and presentations highlighting various approaches and strategies of the hospitality sector. Some of the key topics discussed at the event, included transformative potential of Maha Kumbh 2025, strengthening 'Farm-to-Fork' collaborations, technological advancements in hospitality, financial solutions for business growth and risk management in the hospitality sector.

"Maha Kumbh is a celebration of our collective spirit and values."

heritage and emotions. I appeal to hoteliers to prioritise guest experiences alongside commercial success as Maha Kumbh is a celebration of our collective spirit and values."

Garish Oberoi, immediate Past President and Treasurer, HRANI, emphasised, "Maha Kumbh 2025 is a unique opportunity for the hospitality industry to demonstrate India's tradition of excellence. It requires meticulous planning, collaboration and a shared focus on delivering meaningful experiences."



Taking hospitality excellence to new heights

Organised by HRAWI, “Empowering Hospitality Conclave & Awards,” the event recognises Nashik’s commitment to innovation in elevating hospitality.



DDP Bureau

Celebrating excellence in the hospitality industry, HRAWI held its 4th edition of the ‘Empowering Hospitality Conclave & Awards’ at the Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa in Nashik on 28 February. The event honoured and recognised hospitality professionals and organisations for their transformative contributions to the tourism and culinary landscape of Nashik.

The conclave commenced with an inaugural session by Chief Guest **Dr Sagnik Chowdhury**, Regional Director, India Tourism, Mumbai, Ministry of Tourism. It was followed by knowledge-driven sessions that brought together industry experts to share key insights. The first session, “Empowering Hospitality through NextGen Technologies,” was led by **Rajesh Chopra**, Head, Hospitality Business Vertical, Ingram Micro India, who provided insights into the role of emerging technologies in shaping the hospitality sector.

The second session, “Smarter Revenue Strategies for Your Hotel’s Growth,” featured **Sainath Vernekar**, Founder Director, Revnomix Solutions, and **Prakash Singh**, Director and Co-Founder, Revnomix, who shared strategies for maximising hotel revenue. The final session, “An Insight on Latest Updates on Maharashtra Tourism Policy 2024,” was conducted by **CA Julfesh Shah**, former Vice Chairman, WIRC of ICAI, offering a comprehensive overview of policy changes and their impact on the industry.



The event also organised an awards ceremony honouring industry pioneers, entrepreneurs and businesses that have made remarkable contributions to eco-tourism, wine tourism, hospitality leadership and culinary excellence. **Kiran Chavan**, CMD, Grape County Eco Resort & Biodiversity Park; was recognised for his efforts in promoting sustainable practices and nature-centric luxury hospitality in Nashik. Preserving Nashik's culinary heritage, **Shadab Fallah**, Owner, Inayat Café, and **Pankaj Dilip Rahane**, Owner, Mazda Restaurant & Café, were both recognised under the Legacy Restaurants category.

Other recipients across various categories included **Shailendra Pai**, Founder, Vallonné Vineyards; **Adwait and Uttara Kher**, Founders, Utopia Farmstay, **Rishi Mehra**, Owner, Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa Nashik and **Tej Takle**, Director, Hotel Emerald Park, Nashik.



JIMMY SHAW
President
HRAWI



DR SAGNIK CHOWDHURY
Regional Director India Tourism
Mumbai Ministry of Tourism

"I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the hospitality professionals for their exceptional dedication and remarkable contributions. Your relentless efforts have been instrumental in advancing the tourism and hospitality sector not only in Nashik but across the entire state. The industry

celebrates your achievements and draws inspiration from your pioneering spirit," said **Jimmy Shaw**, President, HRAWI.

Shaw added, "I also extend my sincere thanks to all esteemed guests and professionals who graced the event. Your participation has en-



"Your relentless efforts have been instrumental in advancing the tourism sector not only in Nashik but across the entire state."

riched our dialogue and reinforced our shared commitment to elevating hospitality excellence. A special thanks to **Dr. Sagnik Chowdhury**, Regional Director, India Tourism, Mumbai, Ministry of Tourism, for his invaluable support and presence, which has greatly contributed to the success of this event."

The awards celebrated Nashik's rising prominence in the hospitality and tourism space. HRAWI reaffirmed its commitment to promoting growth and innovation, recognising the efforts of individuals and organisations that continue to elevate the sector. □

HRAWI partners with FDA for food safety training in Dadar, educating 59 hospitality professionals on industry best practices.



HRAWI, in collaboration with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), conducted FS-SAI's Food Safety Supervisor Training in Basic Catering on 21 February 2025 in Dadar, Mumbai. Attended by 59 members, the programme pro-

vided practical insights to strengthen food safety measures within their establishments, reinforcing industry best practices.

Speaking about the significance of food safety, **Jimmy Shaw**, President, HRAWI, said, "Ensuring the highest standards of food safety is a fundamental responsibility of the hospitality industry."

He added that through collaboration with the FDA, HRAWI remains committed to equipping hospitality professionals with essential knowledge

and skills to maintain best practices in food safety and hygiene. □



"Food safety is a fundamental responsibility of the hospitality industry."

Driving tourism development in Saputara

Industry leaders discuss various challenges and solutions to boost Saputara's tourism at Membership Ride Meeting, organised by HRAWI & SHARA.



HRAWI, in collaboration with the Southern Gujarat Hotel & Restaurant Association (SHARA), hosted a 'Membership Ride Meeting' in Saputara on 1 March 2025. At the event, prominent industry stakeholders discussed various key challenges and proposed solu-

tions aimed at enhancing Saputara's tourism, hospitality infrastructure and economic growth.

The meeting saw participation of key members of the Saputara Hotel Owners' Association and SHARA including **Upendrabhai Patel**, President, Saputara Hotel Owners' Association; **Arun Shetty**, President,

SHARA; **Sanat Relia**, Vice President, SHARA; **Trupti Pawar**, Secretary General, HRAWI, among others.

"HRAWI, along with SHARA, is committed to working with the government and industry stakeholders to implement sustainable solutions that will drive economic and tourism development," said Patel. □

"Implement sustainable solutions that will drive economic and tourism development."





Luxury amidst nature

While sustainable travel is buzzword in the industry, Swosti Chilika Resort has been offering environment-friendly hospitality for a while.



DDP Bureau

Nestled just a stone's throw away from the renowned Chilika Lake, Swosti Chilika Resort is the best way to experience the beautiful vistas and tranquil natural beauty around this green jewel. The largest wintering ground for migratory birds, the lake is also the largest coastal lagoon in India. It houses several endangered plants and animal species, attracting nature lovers from both India and abroad.

Luxurious haven

It is the pristine environment that one can experience from Swosti Chilika Resort, while offering state-of-the-art comfort, contemporary amenities and dedicated services. Boasting 78 elaborate rooms, the property takes luxury a notch higher for those who are looking at an escape into nature.

With four categories of rooms spread out in verdant surroundings, guests are spoilt for choice. The highlight of the property is The Sanctuary, which is the presidential pool villa, spread across 2000sq ft.

Services galore

Despite being away from crowds, the property offers everything the

guests can ask for. The culinary experience is heightened with four different restaurants—Orana, Bean Hive, Pool Bar & Grill and The Harbour-Bar. The wellness experience is unmatched here, offering both traditional and modern therapies. The huge swimming pool is perfect for an escape from the mundane.

The meeting and conference spaces can outshine any big city hotel, with its state-of-the-art banquet, conference and meeting spaces. The lush green surroundings and lawns act as the perfect backdrop for social as well as corporate gatherings.

Eco experiences

Just a walk away from Chilika Lake,

Boasting 78 elaborate rooms, the property is ideal for guests, who want to stay close to nature

guests staying at the resort can opt for a sunset cruise or even try their hand at fishing. They can witness the varied migratory birds on their visit and even catch the spectacle of the rare phenomenon of Olive Ridley Turtle Nesting. Nature walks and outdoor sports are also available. □



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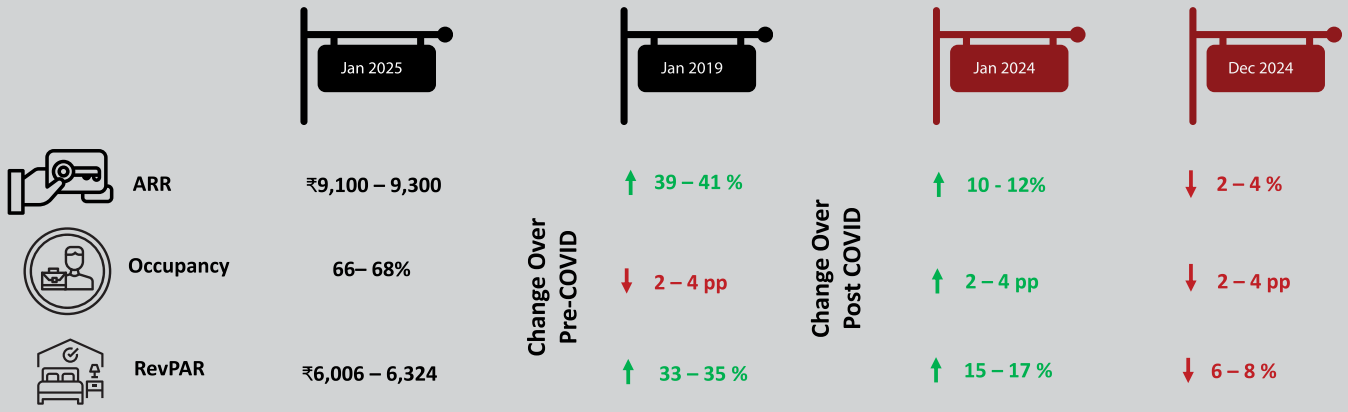
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Source: HVS Research; Data for Calendar Year

New Delhi and Bengaluru lead in occupancy growth

Hotel industry kicked off on positive note in January with occupancy rates consistently exceeding ₹14,000, attributing it to Coldplay concert.



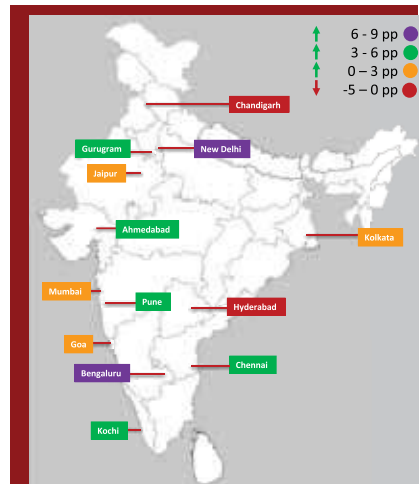
As per the HVS Anarock Hotels and Hospitality Monitor for February 2025, the year has begun on a strong note for the Indian hotel sector, with occupancy rising by 2-4 percentage points year-on-year (y-o-y) in January 2025. Average Room Rates (ARR) also continued their upward momentum, registering a 10-12 per cent y-o-y growth, reaching ₹9,100-9,300. These increases have resulted in RevPARs also increasing by 15-17 per cent, reaching ₹6,006-6,324.

The report highlighted that January showed steady occupancy growth across most major markets,

Mumbai retained its position with the highest occupancy in the range of 82-84 per cent.

Occupancy Trends Across Key Indian Markets

(Year-on-Year Growth: January 2025)

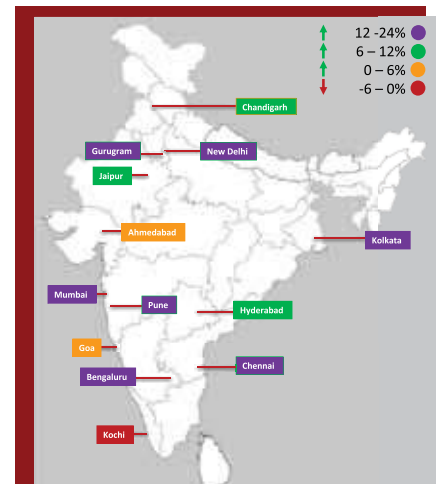


Source: HVS Research; Data for Calendar Year

led by New Delhi, Bengaluru and Pune, while Hyderabad and Chandigarh saw minor declines. Mumbai retained its position with the highest occupancy in the range of 82-84 per cent. New Delhi and Bengaluru posted the strongest y-o-y occupancy growth, increasing by 6-8 percentage points. In contrast, Hyderabad and Chandigarh experienced declines.

ARR Trends Across Key Indian Markets

(Year-on-Year Growth: January 2025)



Source: HVS Research; Data for Calendar Year

Meanwhile, ARR saw a general increase across most key markets, with Mumbai commanding the highest average rate in the country, consistently exceeding ₹14,000, while also recording the strongest y-o-y growth of 21-23 per cent. This surge could be attributed to the Coldplay concert drawing in a large crowd from across the country. □

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Sustainable tourism: Pivotal force for responsible growth

Besides ethical commitment, sustainable tourism provides strategic benefits related to social equity, eco-protection and economic growth.

Green practices key for business strategy: HRANI

“

Sustainability is not a trend; it is the present and the future.”



SURENDRA KUMAR JAISWAL

President
HRANI

The hospitality industry is one of the key pillars of global economic development, providing employment, driving investment and fostering cultural exchange. However, as tourism continues to expand, it is crucial to ensure that this growth remains sustainable. Sustainable tourism is not just an environmental necessity but also a business strategy that leads to consistent, long-term growth in the hospitality sector.

Sustainable tourism focuses on minimising the negative impact of travel and hospitality on the environment, local communities and cultural heritage. It promotes responsible tourism practices that balance economic benefits with environmental and social well-being. Hotels and

resorts that integrate eco-friendly measures are gaining a competitive edge while contributing to the preservation of resources.

The hospitality industry is inherently resource-intensive, consuming significant amounts of water, energy and raw materials. Implementing sustainable practices such as energy-efficient lighting, waste management systems and water conservation not only reduce operational costs but also enhance brand reputation. Many travellers prefer eco-conscious establishments and governments worldwide are offering incentives for businesses that adopt green initiatives.

Sustainable tourism helps in maintaining the natural beauty and cultural authenticity of destinations. Over-tourism has led to environmental degradation in many iconic locations. By adopting measures such as controlled visitor numbers, community-based tourism and eco-certifications, the industry can ensure that destinations remain attractive and economically viable for future generations.

Sustainability is not a trend; it is the present and the future. After all, a world that takes care of its wonders is a world where travel never loses its magic. □

Incentivise green investments: HRAWI

“

Sustainable tourism has emerged as the linchpin for long-term growth.”



PRADEEP SHETTY

Hon. Secretary, HRAWI &
Immediate Past President,
FHRAI & HRAWI

The hospitality industry stands at a critical juncture where sustainability is no longer a choice but a necessity. As climate change accelerates and traveller preferences shift toward eco-conscious experiences, sustainable tourism has emerged as the linchpin for long-term growth. As the global travel industry expands, the sector must lead the way in reducing environmental impact, adopting sustainable practices and ensuring long-term economic viability. For India, a nation blessed with unparalleled natural and cultural wealth, harmonising tourism development with environmental stewardship is imperative. At HRAWI, we believe that sustainability is not just an ethical obligation but a strategic advantage, one that drives operational efficiency, enhances brand value and secures the future of our destinations.

To institution-alise sustainable practices, HRAWI has partnered with the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) to spearhead a green building movement across the hospitality sector. This collaboration empowers our members to adopt IGBC's globally recognised frameworks for energy efficiency, water

conservation and waste reduction. IGBC-certified hotels and restaurants not only contribute to environmental conservation but also enjoy reduced operational costs and a strong competitive edge.

Furthering our commitment, HRAWI has recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Atal Incubation Centre–Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (AIC-BARC) to deploy sustainable solid waste management technologies across member hotels and resorts. This collaboration supports the government's 'Swachh Bharat Mission' and focuses on reducing the environmental impact of waste by promoting BARC-developed technologies.

Beyond infrastructure, the hospitality industry must focus on reducing food waste, sourcing locally, adopting renewable energy solutions and promoting community-driven tourism models. Sustainable tourism demands collective action. While HRAWI is committed to equipping members with tools and knowledge, policymakers must incentivise green investments through tax rebates and streamlined approvals. □



Local engagement boosts inclusive growth: SIHRA



K SYAMA RAJU

President
SIHRA

“

Sustainable tourism is not just an option; it is essential for the future.”

The hospitality and tourism sector has emerged as a key driver of economic growth, generating employment and fostering cultural exchange. However, the rapid expansion of tourism also brings challenges related to environmental degradation, resource depletion and socio-cultural disruptions. As industry leaders, it is our responsibility to adopt sustainable tourism practices that ensure long-term, consistent growth while preserving our rich heritage, natural ecosystems and local communities.

Sustainable tourism is not just an option; it is essential for the future. It involves balancing economic growth with environmental stewardship and social responsibility. The principles of sustainability—economic viability, environmental protection and social equity—ought to steer our strategies for tourism development.

A major step towards sustainability is promoting eco-friendly infrastructure. Hotels and restaurants must integrate energy-efficient designs, renewable energy sources and waste management systems to minimise their carbon footprint. Water conservation measures, the elimination of single-use plastics and responsible sourcing of local produce can significantly reduce environmental impact.

Green certifications and adherence to global sustainability standards will further enhance our credibility as a responsible industry.

Local community engagement is essential for sustainable tourism. Ensuring that the benefits of tourism reach the grassroots level through job creation, skill development and fair wages will build a more inclusive economy. Besides, governments, industry stakeholders and tourism boards must collaborate to develop policies that promote sustainable tourism.

At SIHRA, we are dedicated to promoting sustainable tourism initiatives that align with India’s vision of responsible growth. Together, let us create a future where tourism thrives in harmony with nature and communities, ensuring a lasting impact for generations to come. □



Mainstream sustainability for tourism growth: **HRAEI**



SUDESH PODDAR
President
HRAEI

“Balancing economic benefits with environmental and social responsibilities.”

Sustainable tourism is defined by the UN Environment Programme and UN World Tourism Organisation as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.”

According to the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, “Sustainable Tourism is tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.”

National strategy for sustainable tourism aims to mainstream sustainability in the Indian tourism sector and ensure a more resilient, inclusive, carbon neutral and resource efficient tourism while safeguarding natural and cultural resources. As the tourism sector in India continues to grow, it is crucial to ensure that this growth is sustainable, balancing economic benefits with environmental and social responsibilities.

However, there are some challenges in the path ahead in turning theory into practice. Unchecked expansion and a focus on mass tourism have led to environmental degradation, including pollution, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and cultural erosion. So, there is a need for greater awareness about sustainable tourism practices among tourists and stakeholders.

Government of India’s “Travel for LiFE Programme” has already

started working at the ground level. Launched under the Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment), this programme encourages tourists and tourism businesses to adopt sustainable practices. The goal is to ensure that tourism contributes positively to the economy while safeguarding the environment and benefiting local communities.

‘Zero Waste Tourism Model’ in Sikkim is an example of how communities can lead the way in sustainability. Kerala’s Responsible Tourism Mission is another prime example, where community-driven initiatives like PEP-PEP and STREET create employment while preserving cultural heritage.

India’s path to sustainable tourism is a journey that requires the collective efforts of the government, industry stakeholders and local communities. By adopting sustainable practices, promoting community participation, and addressing the challenges, India can ensure that its tourism sector continues to thrive while preserving its rich cultural and natural heritage for future generations. □





Transcending borders

Art of luxury

Setting sights on 50 properties across India, Minor Hotels plans to foray into destinations with high demand for luxury hospitality, opines **Puneet Dhawan**.



Lipla Negi

Minor Hotels plans to open 50 properties in India. What is your blueprint for achieving this goal?

Anantara Jewel Bagh Jaipur is the first of the 50 new openings we target within the next ten years. We are in various stages of discussions with partners nationwide and are humbled by the overwhelming interest in our brands. India has many untapped tourism hotspots and the ability to create new destinations that appeal to domestic and international tourists. We will focus on emerging destinations with demand for pre-

mium and luxury hospitality with our Anantara, Avani and NH Collection brands.

What steps could be taken to revive India's inbound numbers?

More targeted campaigns tailored to luxury, adventure, heritage, and wellness travellers could help India attract high-value visitors. Additionally, simplifying the e-visa process or introducing visa-free travel for select markets, following the example of Sri Lanka and Thailand, will make India far more accessible.

Strengthening collaboration between the central and state governments is crucial to developing world-

class tourism infrastructure, ensuring better visitor facilities, conserving heritage sites and enhancing connectivity to lesser-known destinations. At the same time, expanding direct international flight connectivity, particularly beyond the major metros, will help spread tourism's economic benefits across the country.

What are the key challenges facing India's growing luxury market, and where do you see the opportunities?

Despite its rich heritage and cultural depth, India has a notable gap in experiential luxury properties. We see a tremendous opportunity to bridge this by introducing world-aaclass



PUNEET DHAWAN

Head of Asia
Minor Hotels



“Collaboration between the central and state governments is crucial to developing world-class tourism infrastructure.”

luxury experiences honouring the country’s history and revitalising legacy properties such as forts and palaces. With its expertise in

seamlessly blending heritage with contemporary luxury, Anantara is uniquely positioned to bring these stories behind the landmarks to a global audience while preserving their authenticity.

What is your target audience and how you are reaching them?

There are two approaches for us to consider—independent travellers and MICE guests.

We have been nearly booked out since opening in November, hosting more than 30 weddings in three months. Guests who chose Anantara Jewel Bagh Jaipur have highlighted how our venues’ architecture and

design capture the essence of Rajasthan’s past. The hotel’s spaces provide many options for large-scale events, with venues accommodating up to 1,100 guests outdoors and 300 guests indoors.

Outside of wedding season and events, we also need to create a compelling proposition for individual guests. Anantara Jewel Bagh Jaipur’s grand design and intricate decoration offer a window into a bygone era. Our on and off-property activities invite guests to experience the authentic side of Rajasthan, beyond Jaipur’s typical attractions, like private safari and heritage excursions or discover the region’s culinary heritage by joining our chef on a spice market tour.

How do you plan to carve out a unique niche in Rajasthan’s highly competitive wedding market?

Anantara Jewel Bagh Jaipur aims to provide our guests with an immersive and authentic Rajasthani experience true to Anantara’s positioning. Our wide range of wedding services offer a blend of classic opulence and contemporary comforts against traditional Rajasthani backdrop. The range of venues and flexibility allows us to cater to various indoor and outdoor functions. Our location is also an advantage, providing a serene escape while giving guests seamless access to historical and cultural wonders of Jaipur. □



Growth momentum to persist into 2025

With 80 projects in pipeline, Sarovar Hotels is well-positioned for continued growth in domestic and global markets, say **Ajay K Bakaya** and **Jatin Khanna**.



Surbhi Sharma

Sarovar Hotels has experienced substantial growth in recent years, expanding its presence both domestically and internationally. 2024 was a record-breaking year, with 27 new hotels opened and 43 new properties signed.

With a strong government policy and increased infrastructure spending, **Ajay K Bakaya**, Chairman, Sarovar Hotels, foresees a steady growth trajectory over the next four years, positioning the brand as a leader in the mid-market segment. By 2025, Sarovar Hotels is expected to surpass 150 properties, with over 10,000 rooms across 90 destinations.

While Sarovar Hotels is often associated with the mid-market segment, Bakaya emphasised that the brand also has premium properties, though it remains committed to its core mid-market audience. The brand currently maintains a balance of 80 per cent mid-market hotels and 20 per cent premium properties.

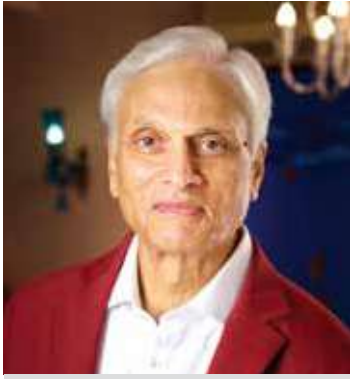
Brand's success strategies

In an increasingly competitive hospitality landscape, Sarovar Hotels has maintained its edge by staying true to its roots. Bakaya attributed much of the brand's success to its early entry into tier II and III markets, where many multinational chains were hesitant to venture. The mid-market segment, especially in tier II, III, and IV cities, remains a key area of growth for the brand. Sarovar is

well-positioned to cater to the rising demand for high-quality, affordable accommodation and grow faster than most of their competitors.

Shedding light on the brand's development strategy, **Jatin Khanna**, CEO, Sarovar Hotels, said, "The brand is built on consistency and





AJAY K BAKAYA

Chairman
Sarovar Hotels



JATIN KHANNA

CEO
Sarovar Hotels



clarity of purpose. We have always been true to our identity as a mid-market brand.” He further stressed that their ability to consistently deliver value to both guests and hotel owners has been a key driver of the brand’s success.

Expansion plans

Sarovar Hotels continues to focus on balanced growth across city and leisure hotels, with a 70:30 ratio. Domestically, the brand has a strong presence in major cities like Goa, Bangalore, Delhi NCR, and Mumbai. The hotel chain plans to expand in cities like Lucknow, where the number of hotels will increase from three to six or seven in the coming years.

On the international front, the brand is expanding its footprint in Africa from existing three to five hotels by 2025. With a strong presence in Nepal, the brand plans to increase its portfolio from one to four hotels by the end of 2025.

Sharing the brand’s upcoming projects that guests and stakeholders can look forward to this year, Khanna said, “We have almost got 80 hotels in pipeline now. We have been consistent in our performance. To strengthen our footprint in Uttar Pradesh, we recently launched our first branded hotel in Pilibhit and are soon going to open a new resort in Maharashtra’s Sindhudurg.”

Sustainability initiatives

With concrete steps to minimise its environmental impacts, the brand launched several green initiatives, from transitioning plastic to glass water bottles and introducing paper cartons for water. The brand’s most ambitious sustainability initiative will be the installation of purified water dispensers in guest rooms, which will debut at a new property in Chennai in 2025. “We believe we will be the first hotel in the country to offer this,” Bakaya revealed.

Emphasising the significance of sustainability in the development of new properties, Khanna added, “We have incorporated sustainable practices into our day-to-day operations, from installing electric vehicle charging stations to using bulk and



plastic-free amenities in guest rooms. Sustainability is not just a buzzword but a necessity for long-term success in the hospitality industry.”

Leveraging digital innovation

Embracing technology is crucial to improve both guest experiences and operational efficiency for Sarovar Hotels. For example, the use of robots at their Lusaka property in Zambia, which serve drinks and

snacks at banquet. The brand is also exploring more practical applications of robotics, such as cleaning banquet halls and corridors. With labour shortages becoming a growing concern in the hospitality industry, technology could help alleviate some of these challenges.

Bakaya envisioned a future where technology plays a larger role in guest interactions, such as the increased use of digital keys and auto-

Sarovar Hotels eyes to surpass 150 properties with over 10,000 rooms across 90 destinations by 2025

mated check-in processes. However, he acknowledged that the industry still has a long way to go in terms of widespread adoption.

Growth expectations

Reflecting on the past year, Bakaya expressed satisfaction with Sarovar Hotels’ performance in 2024, which saw a growth rate of over 9 per cent, surpassing the initial forecast. The addition of new properties further boosted the brand’s overall growth to around 13 per cent year-on-year. Looking ahead, he expects the growth momentum to continue in 2025 and beyond, driven by a combination of new hotel openings and increased demand in both city and leisure markets. □



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New Leadership at King Koil Hospitality

With focus on delivering premium comfort and rest, King Koil strengthens its leadership team to meet evolving needs of hospitality sector.



DDP Bureau

The hospitality industry thrives on comfort, and for leading mattress brand King Koil, redefining luxury and durability in sleep solutions is a mission. With over a decade of experience, the brand has established itself as a trusted name, delivering high-quality mattresses crafted with cutting-edge innovation, meticulous craftsmanship and an unwavering commitment to excellence.

Setting sights on the growing hotel sector, **Archit Gupta**, Managing Director, King Koil, said, "The hospitality industry in India is experiencing unprecedented growth, driven by increased business and leisure travel. Unlike earlier trends where people stayed with relatives, today's travellers prefer hotels, creating endless opportunities for industry suppliers like us. With a projected 15 per cent CAGR growth over the next decade, the future of hospitality sector is incredibly promising." To expand into new markets, the brand has restructur-

ed its leadership team to cater to both luxury and mid-segment hospitality businesses.

Equipped with decade-long industry expertise, **Aman Goel**, Business Head–Hospitality, spearheads the budget segment, strengthening key partnerships. **Mayank Sharma**, Business Head–Hospitality (Premium Segment), has been appointed to lead the premium and luxury segment.

According to Goel, the mid-scale segment is experiencing unprecedented growth, with both international and domestic brands rapidly expanding their budget hotel footprints in India. "My primary focus is to empower our hospitality channel partners, enabling deeper penetration into emerging markets. We are strategically targeting small, home-grown hotel chains with 8-10 properties across the country, aiming to establish annual contracts with them. We believe that strong partnerships will further enhance our brand dominance in this dynamic segment."

Emphasising the demand for premium-quality products, Sharma



Aman Goel, Business Head–Hospitality



Mayank Sharma, B.Head (Premium Segment)



stated, "Today, top-tier hotels prioritise guest comfort and luxury, even curating specialised pillow and mattress menus. At King Koil, we do not just understand the concept of 'restful sleep,' but we truly revere it. As pioneers in sleep solutions, we elevate the guest experience with tailored products. We have invested significantly in state-of-the-art manufacturing, where 90 per cent of materials are produced in-house, ensuring exceptional quality while continuously evolving to meet our clients' specific needs." □

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New awakening of India's spiritual tourism

As Maha Kumbh emerges as a game changer in spiritual tourism, hotel brands are compelled to craft globally competitive offerings and yield economic gains.

 Lipla Negi

As millions of devotees and spiritual seekers from around the world took a holy dip in the Triveni Sangam—the sacred confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati rivers, in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, the dynamics and economics

of spiritual tourism in India experienced nothing short of a 'rebirth.' From celebrities to devoted pilgrims, the Maha Kumbh has redefined the future of spiritual tourism in India, setting it on an upward trajectory. It has highlighted India's often-overlooked strength in spiritual tourism, transforming it into a sustainable and ever-growing revenue stream.

"Events like the Maha Kumbh Mela have led to a 21.4 per cent rise in spiritual





tourism visa applications to India, indicating a growing interest among both domestic and international travellers,” said **Arjun Baljee**, President, Royal Orchid Hotels.

Recognising the burgeoning demand, both international and domestic hotel chains are increasingly focusing on spiritual destinations. **Mandeep S Lamba**, President and CEO (South Asia), HVS ANAROCK, explained, “As of early 2024, there were approximately 5,700 branded hotel keys across major religious destinations, with an additional 4,700 keys expected to be added over the next four to five years. Notably, in the calendar year 2024 alone, of the over 45,000 branded keys signed, nearly 18 per cent were in religious destinations, taking the total pipeline for these locations to a significantly higher number.” Spiritual tourism in India is expected to grow at 16 per cent CAGR between FY2024 and FY2030. According to Lamba, this surge is driven by travellers seeking authentic and immersive experiences, coupled with enhanced connectivity and infrastructure developments.

A leap of faith

While the spiritual heritage of India has always been a significant contributor towards tourism, in recent times, an increase in interest in both traditional and emerg-

ing spiritual circuits has been observed. “Post-pandemic, there has been a surge in travellers prioritising introspection and reconnection with culture, making India a favoured destination. Key steps to further enhance this segment include improving infrastructure at spiritual sites, enhancing accessibility through better transportation networks and creating globally competitive promotional campaigns,” highlighted **Rahul Gupta**, Project Head, Eyak Venture.

As yoga, meditation and wellness continue to gain global traction, India’s offerings resonate with travellers seeking an immersive journey. “Developing immersive experiences like meditation retreats, spiritual tours and wellness packages can significantly enhance visitor satisfaction. Embracing eco-friendly practices while engaging local communities will preserve the authenticity of spiritual tourism and contribute to its socio-economic impact,” suggested Gupta.

Samir MC, Managing Director, Fortune Hotels, pitched in, “Integrating wellness and personalised immersive experiences can further enhance the appeal with cultural authenticity and technology at the core.” Collaborations with religious institutions and tourism boards, along with enhanced connectivity and infrastructure, will drive accessibility and seasonal footfall.



ARJUN BALJEE

President
Royal Orchid Hotels



MANDEEP S LAMBA

President and CEO (South
Asia), HVS ANAROCK

**SAMIR MC**

Managing Director,
Fortune Hotels

**RAHUL GUPTA**

Project Head
Eyak Venture



Expanding spiritual horizons

While timeless pilgrimage sites like Tirupati, Amritsar, Vaishno Devi and Shirdi continue to draw devotees, comparatively lesser frequented and emerging circuits such as Ayodhya, Dwaraka, Vrindavan, Nashik and Bodhgaya, that offer a blend of heritage, wellness, and immersive experiences, are also the sought-after places. "A lot of it is owing to the government's push for development of such pilgrimage places," said Samir, adding "We have already inked operating agreements to open hotels in many new as well as prevalent destinations like Ayodhya, Rishikesh and Deoghar. We are also in discussions to close hotel deals in other key locations."

Hotels are also setting their sights on the 'wedding segment,' as more couples are choosing religious destinations to tie the knot. "Our expansion strategy includes upcoming properties in Tirupati and Khatu

Shyamji, among others, that are designed to meet the needs of spiritual travellers along with the rise in weddings events in these spiritual locations.," shared Baljee.

Challenges and opportunities

While India's deep-rooted spiritual heritage and evolving hospitality present immense opportunities, there are challenges that need to be addressed such as maintaining the environmental sanctity of the spiritual site and upgrading cleanliness and service quality. Samir stated, "Limited transport options, inadequate infrastructure and paucity of quality and safe accommodation options still pose a problem in some regions, which as India works its way through it, we will see progress."

Besides, Maha Kumbh highlighted the growing demand for luxury experiences at spiritual destinations. Historically, devotees sought basic facilities, but today, luxury travellers demand premium accommodations that match international standards. Citing this void in luxury experiences, Gupta explained, "They seek a blend of comfort, privacy, and curated spiritual experiences, reflecting the growing experiential travel trend." □

The surge in spiritual tourism in India is driven by travellers seeking authentic and immersive experiences



Epitome of grandeur and luxury

Reviving the historic charm of Bhopal, Atmosphere Core unveils its first couple-only luxury property Sadar Manzil Heritage in the city.

 DDP Bureau

Atmosphere Core marked its debut in India with the inauguration of its first couples-only hotel, Sadar Manzil Heritage by Atmosphere Bhopal, in February 2025. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister **Dr. Mohan Yadav** inaugurated the much-awaited ceremony, who officially opened the doors to guests.

Strategically positioned between Bhopal's historic Old City and its vibrant New City, the property offers an experience steeped in history. Originally the grand hall of audience for the Begums and Nawabs of Bhopal, this 19th century residence has been restored to provide a luxurious retreat exclusively for couples.

Speaking about the inauguration, Yadav said, "Sadar Manzil Heritage stands as a testament to the rich

Sadar Manzil Heritage stands as a testament to the rich identity and pride of Madhya Pradesh

identity and pride of this city and the entire state of Madhya Pradesh. With 126 years of history and heritage brought back to life, let us all embrace and celebrate this magnificent reminder of our past."

The property boasts 22 meticulously designed vintage rooms and suites adorned with antique furniture and finished in opulent turquoise and cream hues. They also provide special services for couples from welcoming them with traditional greeting at the airport to a chauffeured

city drive and a rose-petal reception at the mansion's gates.

"Our extensive Maldives experience has naturally inspired us to expand our presence and bring joy of giving ethos into India, which has been witnessing a consistent growth in its tourism industry. As the first historical property in our portfolio, Sadar Manzil holds a special place in my heart," noted **Salil Panigrahi**, MD, Atmosphere Core.

In addition, Sadar Manzil takes centre stage with a vegetarian culinary philosophy. Guests can enjoy gourmet, meat-free dishes with global influences at Diwan-I-Khas, an all-day dining venue with frescoed ceilings and shimmering chandeliers.

The alfresco Charbagh Courtyard offers both local and international vegetarian delicacies for lunch and dinner. The property offers a wine cellar, Maikhana, for guests for a refined experience. ▣

Reinterpreting heritage with contemporary touch

Hemendra Singh Kushalgarh discusses The Claridges's transformative journey from revamped branding to digitised F&B, highlighting reimagined guest experience.



Lipla Negi

Q: Tell us about the revamped identity of Claridges in Delhi?

A: The repositioning of this iconic property in the heart of the capital has been a transformative journey, driven by our deep understanding of the evolving needs of today's luxury travellers. Our goal was to strike a perfect balance between tradition and a contemporary edge. We redefined the guest experience by upgrading the interiors while preserving the rich heritage that defines 'The Claridges New Delhi.' We introduced modern design elements and cutting-edge technology, while maintaining the timeless charm of our signature old-world hospitality.

We have made significant enhancements to the property, including the expansion of our signature restaurant, Jade, which now accommodates 90 guests, up from 45, allowing us to host larger gatherings and offer a more refined culinary experience. Additionally, our Cinqtuair spa has been upgraded to provide a more luxurious space for relaxation and rejuvenation, while our rooms have undergone comprehensive renovations to ensure they remain both comfortable and exquisite. Our transformation goes beyond just structural enhancements.

Q: What are your revenue strategies in the F&B segment?

A: With eight F&B outlets on the property, we have created dining experiences that appeal to a broad



**HEMENDRA SINGH
KUSHALGARH**

General Manager
The Claridges, New Delhi

range of taste palettes and preferences, not just for our in-house guests but also for the local visitors in Delhi. The diversity of our outlets—from the rustic North-Indian flavours at Dhaba to the Mediterranean allure of Sevilla—helps us cater to different segments of the market, driving foot-fall from outside the hotel as well.

Besides, we have introduced chef's tables, exclusive tasting menus, and special themed nights to attract food enthusiasts who want a culinary experience rather than just a meal. These initiatives allow us to offer premium pricing and create memorable, bespoke events that drive up both revenue and repeat visits. Furthermore, we have integrated our F&B outlets into the digital space more aggressively, ensuring online reservations are seamless and promoting exclusive offers through digital marketing. This helps us capture



the growing number of diners who book experiences online and prefer personalised deals.

Q: What are the key areas that set your brand apart?

A: What truly sets us apart is our charming blend of culture, culinary, heritage, luxury, and personalised service. Housed in a beautifully restored building that showcases classic architecture, the hotel exudes historical elegance while offering all the modern comforts guests desire.

The dedicated staff goes above and beyond to ensure every visitor feels truly valued and cared for.

With a focus on fresh, locally sourced ingredients, our eight F&B outlets cater to a wide range of tastes. For those looking to unwind, the wellness amenities, including a gym and spa, provide the perfect escape.

Located in the vibrant heart of New Delhi, The Claridges offers easy access to top attractions and business districts. Whether for social gatherings or corporate events, the hotel's

Our diverse F&B outlets enable us to cater to different segments of the market and drive footfall from outside the hotel.





elegant spaces are designed to make any occasion special. All these elements come together to create an exceptional experience for discerning travellers seeking a home away from home.

Q: Who is your competitive set and how do you aim to ace them?

A: In the competitive landscape of

luxury hospitality, the competition takes place with leading five-star hotels in the heart of Delhi. To distinguish ourselves from these luxury brands, we leverage our unique strengths and focus on the personalised experiences we offer to our guests. One of our key differentiators is the level of personalised service provided by our dedicated staff.

At The Claridges, we take pride in anticipating our guests' needs and delivering tailored experiences that create lasting memories. We aim to not just compete but excel in our competitive set. We are committed to ensuring that every guest who walks through our doors feels valued and cherished, making their stay with us unforgettable.

Q: What are your current and future plans of the Claridges?

A: Our focus is on sustaining and enhancing the legacy of the hotel as a premier destination in the heart of the city. Looking ahead, we are committed to elevating the guest experience through innovative offerings, personalised services, and continued investments in our facilities. Also, sustainability remains at the core of our values. We are actively implementing eco-friendly practices, ensuring we contribute positively to both our community and the environment. Overall, our plans centre on fostering a culture that prioritises excellence and guest satisfaction while continuously adapting to the evolving landscape of the hospitality industry. □



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Symbiotic bond of art, architecture & nature

Amaraanth is where modern comforts, mindful luxury and local aesthetics come together to create immersive experiences, says **Shradha Binani**.



DDP Bureau

What inspired you to create Amaraanth, Goa, and what is the vision behind this retreat?

During the pandemic, we found ourselves rediscovering travel within India, often seeking larger chain hotels and trusted hotel brands, whom we felt would prioritise safety and cleanliness. In doing so, we noticed that while Indian travellers had evolved with increased international expo-

sure, however, the luxury experience in India had not kept pace. Many properties were still catering to a pre-globalised market, offering outdated services. This gap inspired the creation of Amaraanth. Our vision was to offer a personalised and exclusive experience for discerning Indian travellers. With a focus on design, art and local experiences with curated food and drinks to accompany, Amaraanth aims to be a destination in itself, providing a comprehensive Goa experience that goes beyond just a stay.

Can you tell us about the design philosophy and architectural influences behind Amaraanth, Goa?

Amaraanth was designed by aa-George Seemon from the award-winning architectural firm Stapati. The design philosophy was rooted in adaptive architecture—honouring the existing structure while minimising the environmental impact on construction. The family property was thoughtfully transformed into a luxurious, light-filled space that blends contemporary design with



“Amaraanth serves as a sanctuary for guests to slow down, reconnect with nature and enjoy the simple pleasures of life.”

traditional Goan elements. Seemon and his team achieved a seamless integration of outdoor living and the natural beauty of the locale, creating a space that encourages guests to connect with nature while experiencing modern comforts.

What is your definition of sustainable luxury? Your advice on choosing eco-luxe experiences?

Sustainable luxury is about offering indulgence and relaxation without compromising and damaging the planet or local communities. Luxury does not



have to come at the expense of nature or people. At Amaraanth, we have repurposed a family property to reduce environmental impact, using natural materials, minimising construction and ensuring zero plastic usage on-site.

We also implement water reuse systems to be more eco-conscious. Sustainable luxury means creating a space where guests can enjoy lavish experiences while respecting and preserving the environment.

Since Amaraanth, Goa, is an extension of your holiday home, what are your most cherished moments?

When we visited Goa as a family, it was all about being present, enjoying the surroundings, playing on the beach, swimming in the pool and savouring fresh food of the season. Those were carefree and magical moments, and they shaped our vision for Amaraanth.

Now, in a world that is constantly moving and connected, Amaraanth serves as a sanctuary for guests to slow down, reconnect with nature



SHRADHA BINANI

Founder
Amaraanth, Goa

and enjoy the simple pleasures of life. We want people to wake up to the soothing sounds of the ocean, indulge in local flavours, enjoy wellness experiences and immerse themselves in the relaxed yet vibrant culture of Goa.

Our goal is for every guest to leave feeling rejuvenated, refreshed and with a renewed sense of appreciation for the present. □

AAHAR continues to be hospitality's biz magnet

Upbeat about industry's steady growth, businesses flocked to AAHAR 2025 to showcase their latest innovations and build long-term strategic relationships.



DDP Bureau

We are the top manufacturers in high-quality stainless steel. AAHAR exhibition is the must-attend event on our annual calendar for the past 12 to 13 years, providing networking opportunities. In the kitchen, chefs demand products that come with ease of doing work. Our non-stick pans with anti-slip handles are in demand. The steel finish is resistant to scratch and gives a satin finish look. The eco-friendly products are also high in demand. The product's quality and practicality comes first for us as we aim to innovate products to make kitchen space efficient and stress-free.



KAMAL M SHAH
Partner
King Metal Works

For the past 25 years, we have been manufacturing advanced kitchen ventilation systems, pioneering innovative solutions in India. Our state-of-the-art hoods, including UV hoods, water-wash hoods and mist hoods, are non-conventional in designs. These products are 100 per cent Indian-engineered, with no foreign collaboration, ensuring superior quality and reliability. Our front cooking station has received rave reviews from chefs, thanks to its four-level filtration system that effectively treats fumes, making it an ideal choice for front-of-house areas such as breakfast stations. As a consultant-driven business, AAHAR has immense significance for us, providing a valuable platform to engage with brand owners and hotel operators.



PA PRABHU
Managing Director, Revac
Systems (Chefmate)

Eclipse is a US-based company known for maintaining high mattress standards in the US market—standards that were previously unavailable in India.

We brought this quality to India and established our own manufacturing unit to source and produce the best raw materials. By manufacturing these materials in-house, we have achieved the same high standards in India. Today, we have launched five new products, redefining the hospitality segment with innovative sleep solutions. Eclipse has about 19 patents and we are using currently 12 in India.

AAHAR plays a vital role in networking, socialising and business expansion, particularly in penetrating tier I and tier II markets. It provides a perfect opportunity to connect with industry stakeholders and introduce our latest innovations. It serves as an ideal platform for showcasing new technologies, allowing industry professionals to experience our products firsthand and understand the value they bring to hospitality businesses.



KARAN KHANNA
Director, American Bedding
(Eclipse)

We offer a comprehensive range of gelato-making machines, including pasteurisers, batch freezers, emulsifiers and portion-control dosing machines. To support the gelato-making process, we also provide blast freezers, refrigeration units and storage solutions.

With a pan-India presence and a dedicated support team, our factory in IMT Manesar also houses an experience center, allowing customers to explore our innovations firsthand. We have observed a growing interest in our products from emerging markets such as Raipur, Bhubaneswar, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Vizag and Pondicherry. Our machines are highly regarded for their energy efficiency, space optimisation and unmatched versatility. Top hotels like The Leela Palace Hotel, Hyderabad trust us to give their artisanal creativity the attention it deserves.

Events like AAHAR play a crucial role in introducing new technologies to the market. This platform boosts market awareness, keeping both customers and industry players informed about the latest advancements.



GAURAV MITTAL
CEO and Director
Antarctica Equipment

Our primary focus at AAHAR exhibition was to showcase two of our latest innovations. The first was our compact combi oven, a one-of-a-kind 10-tray model with a built-in boiler, designed as a tabletop series.

Typically, such models are not available in a tabletop format, but our innovation addresses the growing need for space-efficient kitchen solutions.

The second highlight was our smart dishwashing series, which is IoT-enabled and can be preheated online via a web-based application. Connected to the cloud, it allows users to monitor power consumption, water usage and washing cycles in real time.

AAHAR as an event has been evolving each year, offering improved facilities and opportunities for exhibitors. As an international company, I have witnessed significant advancements in the platform's ability to support manufacturers in showcasing their products to the wider audience and reach the right audience. The event has been significant in accelerating our growth in diverse markets.



SREEKUMAR PRABHAKAR
Regional Director, (Middle East
& SAARC), Fagor Professional

We have supplied more than 3000 units of our food holding machines to Vande Bharat. Our solution ensure to provide synchronised meal services. The highlight of our product is that the entire meal can be pre-plated and placed in a holding machine. It allows to keep the meal fresh, and ready to be served all at once. Whether it is 1, 10 or 100 guests, the system allows to do simultaneous services efficiently. Thus, it can be counted as one of the best solutions for effective meal management.

Currently, holding food at the right temperature is a major challenge in the industry. Our products provide innovative solutions that help address this issue, ensuring a seamless dining experience.

Our combi oven also allows to cook multiple items simultaneously, but most models do not let you set different temperatures for each section—only different timers. However, our machine is unique because it enables you to set three different temperatures, three different timers and cook three different types of food at the same time.



VIJAY PAWAR
Director, Key Accounts
Alto Shaam

We introduced Ther-aWrap Hybrid, a premium mattress featuring three-zone pocket layers combined with memory foam.

Designed for the luxury hospitality segment, this product is already being supplied to esteemed hotel chains such as Ananta Group and Mayfair Group. In addition to our standard offerings, we specialise in customised solutions tailored to the specific needs of premium and luxury hotel brands across the country.

AAHAR has proven to be the most significant and engaging platform for companies targeting the hospitality industry in the Indian subcontinent. We have not only expanded our presence in India but also gained clients from Nepal and Bhutan.

Some of our biggest partnerships have been established through AAHAR event. This exhibition attracts hoteliers from all segments—from boutique hotels to large properties, consequently helping us to reach the diverse hospitality brands.



RUPESH SRIVASTAVA
CEO
Therapedic India

Testo is a trusted name in the food industry, known for its reliability in testing and measuring instruments. We have been serving this sector for years, offering a wide range of solutions—from digital thermometers to cloud-based and digital food safety systems—helping restaurants and retailers maintain the highest food quality standards. One of our most popular products, the Testo-270, ensures food safety while optimising oil usage, leading to significant cost savings.

With growing consumer awareness around food safety and quality, the demand for precise testing and measurement tools is increasing rapidly.

AAHAR as an event provides an excellent platform for us to connect with new customers, industry colleagues and key stakeholders in the sector. It is an invaluable opportunity for networking and business discussions. So far, our experience has been highly rewarding at this event, turning our discussions into valuable business deals.



BALAJI GIRI
Manager, Food Business Unit
Testo India

Romio Technologies has been revolutionising the hospitality industry for over 15 years by automating billing processes and providing cutting-edge digital display solutions.

Our digital displays cater to both indoor and outdoor spaces, whether compact retail outlets like quick service restaurants or expansive resort properties.

Understanding space constraints in retail environments, our digital displays function as information kiosks or strategically placed digital signages, ensuring guests stay informed about ongoing offers and promotions.

These solutions add significant value to large properties and resorts, enhancing guest engagement. Our displays have become a popular choice for banquet halls, clubs and hotels, offering versatile placement options on walls, outdoor areas and lobbies to effectively push promotions. All displays can be centrally managed through an integrated app for seamless content control.

Like every year, AAHAR 2025 provided an engaging platform to reach our customers and showcase our products to the right segment of customers.



MOHIT SHARMA
Founder
Romio Technologies

We launched the touch series this year with the touchscreen-based dishwasher, glass dryer and polisher being our top showcase.

We showcased a wide range of products, from small glass washers to large machines. We are a one-stop shop for all dishwashing and ware-washing solutions. All of our products are made in India. In terms of quality and efficiency, our machines are designed as per international standards.

The energy consumption and cleaning are all well controlled. Major brands such as Starbucks, Blue Tokai, Hyatt and Marriott are our regular buyers.

Our products are sustainably focussed as they save 70 per cent of the water used in cleaning. We are registered with e-waste recycling and the chemicals used in our machine do not harm the environment. In addition, our washers save 70 to 80 per cent labour, and the cost of large machines is half the imported machines.

AAHAR has been quite significant for us in terms of growth and in reaching the hospitality brands by showcasing our evolving products.



JACOB GEORGE
CEO
Washmatic India

Zanuff Industries manufactures premium quality gasoline pans, chafing dishes and cooking utensils. This year we have launched a unique product in gasoline pans, which is made of pure copper keeping in mind the good old way of cooking. The premium utensil can be used in combi ovens as well. The new launch gives an extremely unique flavour profile for the guests who seek new and exciting flavours. This year we have also started a new range in the EN trays that are made of aluminium for baking purposes. We also have stainless steel base trays for steaming. All our products are made from stainless steel. Stainless steel is an extremely durable and we use the finest grade of food grade stainless steel with heavy thickness to give a long life to our products. It has a longer life cycle compared to cheaper and non-durable products. For the future, we keep adapting and adding new products inspired by market trends. We have new exciting products lined up. AAHAR has always been great for us. It is a great place to meet potential and regular clients and offers us regular business.



SHRENIK GADA
Partner
Zanuff Industries LLP

At AAHAR 2025 this year, we presented our live teppanyaki station. We offered a live personal dining experience where you would see no exhaust hood. The teppanyaki plate comes up with a self-suction system. Newly launched in the market, it caters to both vegetarian and non-vegetarian needs. Within the same teppanyaki plate, you get a vegetarian and non-vegetarian station. To enhance your property, you must incorporate this new concept of live cooking. We also presented a Japanese robata grill, Argentinian parrilla grill and Brazilian churrasco grill, each of them having different mechanisms. Our focus on grills comes from the growing demand for quality food with enhanced textures and flavours. We received good responses on our new launches. With teppanyaki tables or high-end grills, we target the luxury hotels and premium restaurants.



SOHANI SACHDEVA
Director, Marketing
HAKS

AAHAR has been pretty good for us. We had some on-the-spot deals and conversions. We met new connections who are interested in our new products.

At AAHAR 2025, our top showcase was the digital print HoReCa crockery. Being microwave safe, it comes with a varied range of digital prints and can be customised creatively. Pioneering in India, it is a creative substitute to traditional prints. Additionally, we launched 10 to 12 new designs and 4 to 5 new shapes in our crockery range. Our products have an attractive appeal and are suitable for restaurants, cafes, and HoReCa outlets. The new digitally printed and fine porcelain crockery are directed to star category hotels and premium restaurants. We have a gold-plated crockery range focussed towards premium top end caterers and banquet halls. Our company has an innovative and advanced production technology that enables us to give the best quality product. We offer designs and colours that are time resistant. In efficiency parameters, we produce well tested products that are the top choice of professionals in the HoReCa industry. AAHAR is the most important exhibition for us that is focussed towards the HoReCa industry. We showcase our latest developments every year.



MANOJ SHARMA
Manager Sales
Clay Craft India

In operation since the last four decades, Mehta Furnishers customises and supplies to hotels of all levels globally. AAHAR has consistently improved, gaining global standards and getting better every year. Since our initial days, we have diversified into a wide range of housekeeping products.



YK MEHTA
Chief Executive
Mehta Furnishers

Now we are coming up with steel and glass trolleys. We have been providing the world class outdoor furniture and outdoor materials. We are coming up with more innovations as per the changing preferences our customers in the hospitality world.

Our products are highly efficient and are labour-intensive products, which makes our deliveries delayed. Our products are our biggest assets. They are highly sustainable and durable, supplying to prominent brands where they are utilised for years.

We also offer refurbishing and maintenance services for our products. Besides, we work with product users, housekeepers, general managers and engineering heads to bring the best customisation for our customers and understand industry's evolving needs.

With 20 years of expertise and market trust, we craft premium front-of-house kitchen equipment. This year's showstopper was our exclusive induction, 'Invisible Induction Warmer,' which is made in India, specially crafted for hospitality brands to improve aesthetics at serving counters. Next was the innovative Bain-Marie, offering both water and air heating-solutions as per cuisine. Our third product was the seamless countertop, which looks like a regular table but when you switch it on, ice forms on the top. In case of a buffet counter, this product can serve as a serving counter.

Our USP is that our products are made in India, offering high utility at competitive prices without compromising quality, aesthetics or service. Unlike costly imports, our machines are built to last 10-15 years, ensuring durability and reducing global waste by minimising frequent replacements—sustainability through longevity. This was our third year at AAHAR and being relatively young here, it gave us the best reach in the market.



SHARON MATHEW
General Manager
Cornell India

We operate across major Indian cities and have expanded globally, reaching Malaysia, Nepal, Bangladesh, the Maldives, and now the Middle East.

This year, our key focus was on providing sustainable and energy-efficient solutions for branded hotels, helping them achieve LEED certification.

Our standout innovation: an eco-friendly lock that features a wooden card mode is a unique product. Made from bamboo, the card is free from Poly Vinyl Chloride (PVC) or plastic and self-dissolving, blending security measures with sustainability. We are also offering products that can be self-charged or solar charged because our solutions are focused on e-based products.

We are different from others as we offer products that are innovative in terms of finish and technology. Every other player in the market is changing their products but we are upscaling the products. So, the customer is investing in the same product but an upgraded version of it, with a marginal investment.



ROHAN VASA
Director Sales- South Asia,
Wyntronix Innovations, India

We started in 2013 with the 'Air Sanitization' product and expanded into bespoke fragrances, crafting scents for brands like Taj, Marriott and ITC. We also sell automatic scenting machines, anti-smoke odour neutraliser and carpet-scented powder, a natural anti-bacterial powder that can remove carpet odour. Our products are unique as we customise our sanitisation machine and fragrances as per customer preferences. With 150+ fragrances, our popular fragrances include Georgia Peach and White Oath. Our products are made in India. The in-house production cuts down transit time for us in comparison to importing it from China. With BIS-certified machines and IFRA-certified fragrances, we are redefining scenting. Our new launches include a luxury car diffuser, a compact plug-in for small offices and an innovative scent display machine that syncs fragrance with the display unit.

AAHAR was a great promotional platform. We have seen a 15-20 percent surge in sales every year at AAHAR, contributing 10-20 per cent to our overall revenue.



ATUL PANDEY
Director, Aerocide Herbal
(Gralit India Biotech)

We are the manufacturers of the laundry equipment of the hospitality sector as well as the health sector. We procure best-suited inventory of raw materials and utilise cutting-edge manufacturing technology to develop remarkable quality products.

Our core concerns are mostly on practicable costs, durable performance, elegant design and appealing looks. So that we can give our customers the best results and best products in an economical way. Our products are different from other players in the market as they are made in India, and we are available locally with great product quality. The accessibility and the quality of our products are the core attributes that has helped us earn the loyalty and trust of our customers. Few of the major brands that we have served include Le Meridien, Radisson, Marriott, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts.

AAHAR was a great platform to showcase our products and reach a wider audience. We were able to do a great business last year here and the numbers are increasing every year with the help of this exclusive platform. □



KULJEET SINGH
Director
Cleancare

Cheers to excellence

On sidelines of AAHAR 2025, hotel and restaurant equipment manufacturers gather to celebrate excellence and innovation in hospitality.



Products & Services



◀ Comfort meets Sustainability

Designed to redefine luxury and comfort, Rêve Rattan has launched its latest collection of cane dining chairs. The collection comprises four dining chair designs, including Dun, Eclipse, Medallion and Whisper. These chairs are ideal for dining spaces, breezy terraces and intimate rooftop settings. With sustainable materials, the collection offers a perfect balance of style and comfort.

Timeless elegance ▶

Talenti, Italy's outdoor furniture brand, has officially forayed into India, exclusively at World Bazaar. Talenti's outdoor collections are not only about aesthetic appeal but also about creating environments where people can relax without compromising on comfort. The collection includes sofas, armchairs, dining sets, sun loungers, lamps and daybeds—each a testament to Italy's rich design heritage and craftsmanship.



◀ Touch of artistry

East Lifestyle has unveiled an exquisite side table collection that seamlessly blends aesthetics with practicality. These side tables are more than mere functional pieces; they enhance the visual appeal of any room. From sleek, modern pieces crafted from polished metals to warm and inviting designs made from solid wood, the collection offers something for every taste and décor.

Cocktail of elegance and creativity

Lucaris's RIMs collection is a fine crystal barware that enhances the cocktail experience. Inspired by vintage elegance and modern creativity, the collection features four styles and categories. The Pillar range provides a versatile foundation for mixology, with spacious glasses ideal for classic cocktails. The Proud boasts saucer and tulip glasses. The Classic comes with vintage-inspired shapes for stirred or shaken cocktails. The Orient captures the essence of Southeast Asia with its intricate detailing.



Multi-purpose design

Free Lounger by Spin is designed to be a comfortable and easy-to-use chair/lounger. Made of multi-layered foam and memory foam, the product can retain its shape even after a long use. The product's versatility makes it suitable to use in a living room, bedroom, and public places. It can be used as a part of a setup or as a standalone to create a cozy corner. ■



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Movements



Ashutosh Chhibba
Chief Executive Officer
Welcom Heritage

Ashutosh Chhibba has been appointed as the CEO of Welcom-Heritage. With over 30 years of experience, Chhibba is focusing on growth, and operational excellence. "I look forward to leveraging my experience to enhance our offerings and deliver unparalleled guest satisfaction," Chhibba said.



Harsh Rawat
F&B Manager
Pilibhit House, Haridwar

Pilibhit House, Haridwar-IHCL SeleQtions, has appointed Harsh Rawat as their new F&B Manager. Rawat will oversee F&B operations and upholding the highest standards of service. He is a highly experienced professional with a proven track record in managerial and leadership roles across diverse culinary environments.



Suman Gulia
Director of S & M, Renaissance
Bengaluru Race Course Hotel

Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel has appointed Suman Gulia as the Director of Sales and Marketing. Gulia will focus on spearheading innovative sales and marketing strategies to drive revenue growth, identify new business opportunities and ensure execution of annual budgets.



Prem Singh
Corporate Chef
Monday Hotels Group

Monday Hotels Group has appointed Prem Singh as its Corporate Chef. He will supervise menu planning, recipe formulation, cost management, concept development and safety standards. Singh said, "I am excited to create memorable gastronomic experiences for our valued guests through my culinary expertise."



Nikhil Bhanot
Hotel Manager
Marriott Gurugram

Courtyard by Marriott Gurugram Downtown has appointed Nikhil Bhanot as the Hotel Manager. To reinforce Marriott's brand positioning in the market, Bhanot will oversee hotel operations and guest experiences. His deep understanding of consumer preferences will be key in enhancing customer satisfaction.



Sujit Kumar Giri
Food and Beverage Manager
Marriott Hotel, Bengaluru

Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield has announced the appointment of Sujit Kumar Giri as the new Food and Beverage Manager. Giri will head the food & beverage operations, curate innovative dining experiences and implement industry-leading standards to elevate the hotel's culinary offerings.

Form - IV

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Sd/
Devika Jeet
Signature of the Publisher

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20 YEARS

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Abdulla Al Abdouli
Chief Executive Officer
Marjan



Anil Chadha
Managing Director
ITC Hotels



Anuraag Bhatnagar
Chief Executive Officer
The Leela Palaces
Hotels & Resorts



Ashish Jakhnawala
Chairman, MD & CEO
SAMHI Hotels



Armand Meyer
Senior Interior Designer
Bentel Associates



Arjun Sharma
Chairman
Select Group



Arun K. Saraf
Chairman and MD
Juniper Hotels



Atul Jain
Chief Operating Officer
India, Sri Lanka, & Bangladesh
Best Western Hotels



Bhanu Chopra
Chairman & MD
RateGain



Carina Chorenge
Senior VP - Commercial
Asia Pacific
Hyatt Hotels and Resorts



Dillip Rajakarier
Group CEO, Minor International
& CEO, Minor Hotels



Dimitris Manikis
President - Europe,
ME, Eurasia, & Africa
Wyndham Hotels & Resorts



Dr. Sanjay Sethi
Managing Director & CEO
Chalot Hotels



Gaurav Bhushan
Co-CEO
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Chief Executive Officer
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Kevin Goh
Chief Executive Officer
The Ascott Limited



Nathan Andrews
Strategic Advisor
DS Group



Nikhil Sharma
Managing Director &
Area SVP - South Asia
Radisson Hotel Group



Pooja Ray
Managing Director
Mayfair Hotels & Resorts



Rajeev Menon
President - Asia Pacific
(excluding China)
Marriott International



Rajesh Magow
Co-Founder & Group CEO
MakeMyTrip



Sébastien Bazin
Chairman & CEO
Accor



Shridhar Nair
Senior Vice President & GM
The Leela Ambience Gurugram



Suma Venkatesh
Executive VP Real
Estate & Development, IHCL



Vibhas Prasad
Director
Leisure Hotels Group



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The Oberoi Group



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