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A MONTHLY ON HOSPITALITY TRADE

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2023: Forging ahead

G20 Presidency to boost hospitality

Cloud-based tech: Windfall for hotels

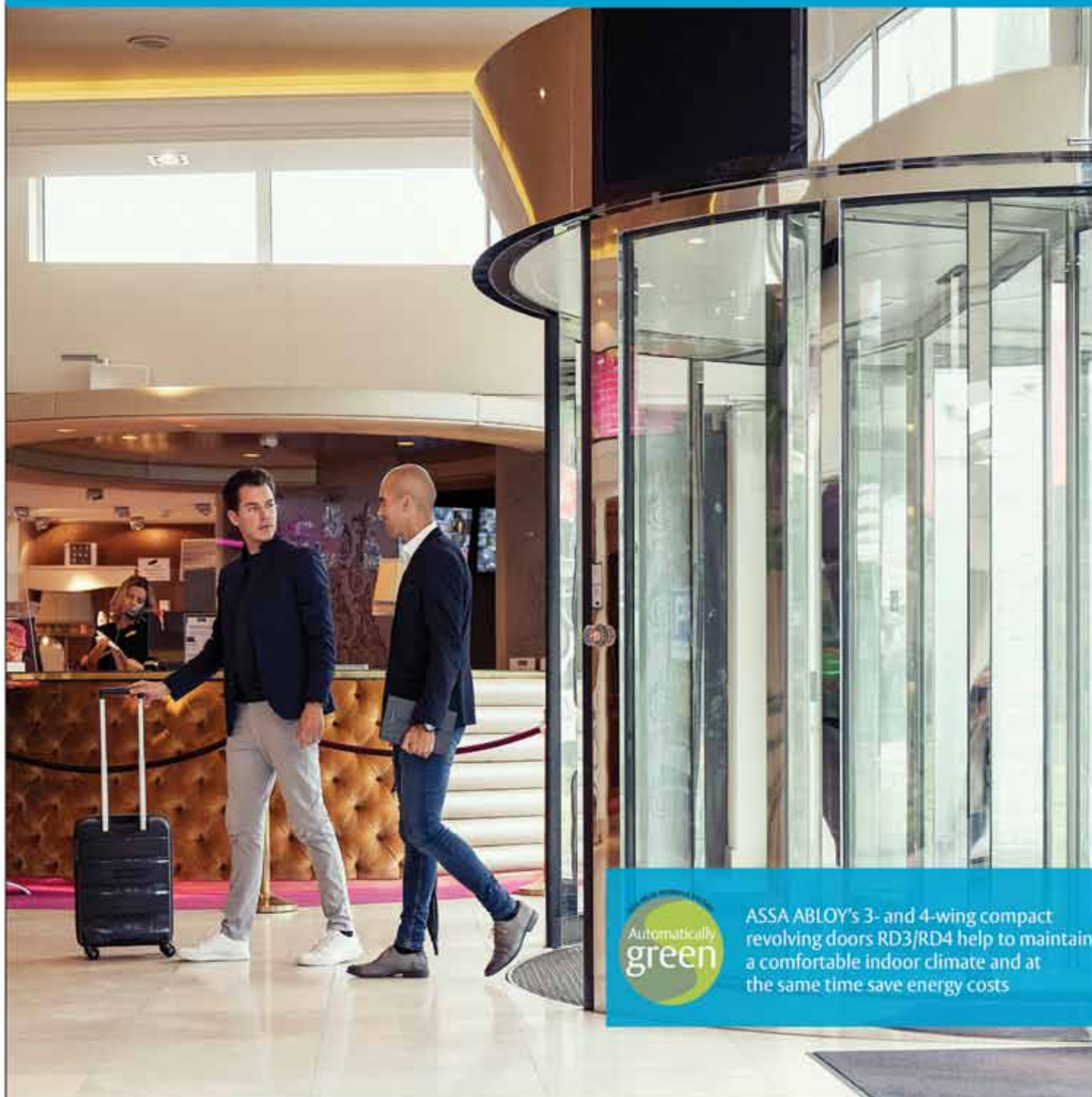


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Vijendra Khinvasara - National Manager- Healthcare and Hospitality

Dear FHRAI Members,

At the outset, I take this opportunity to wish FHRAI members a very happy new year 2023. May the new year unfold splendid experiences of prosperity and happiness for all of you.

The year 2022 was like a roller-coaster ride for the hospitality sector in India. While looking back at the events, we find it was quite a mixed bag that comprised of positive developments along with some big challenges for the hospitality sector. There has been a gradual recovery in business, which was heartening considering the tough times the sector had to face during COVID. Broadly, the first half of 2022 was majorly spent on reviving the sector that withstood Omicron scare early in the year.

Post the resumption of the international flights in March 2022, there has been a constant improvement in business environment, on the back of India's successful vaccination drive, something that was admired by the developed economies as well. India's vaccination drive turned things around for tourism and hospitality sectors as travelers flocked their way into popular destinations in the country. Domestic tourism gained significant momentum in the year with people resuming their travel which was halted for almost two years. Leisure travel segment has gained significant traction, while business travel has also picked up steadily by the second half. There has been an increasing demand in the MICE segment as well which has further boosted the morale of the hospitality sector.

It is safe to say that the spirit of the Indian travelers is not dented from the high costs of flights and travel expenses. According to a study by Kayak, flight ticket prices have shot up by at least 66 per cent on domestic routes and about 23 per cent on international routes as compared to 2019. However, the surge in tourism related activities is a positive sign that people are eager to explore

every travel opportunity, despite the costs shooting up considerably. The Christmas and New Year season yielded robust growth as travelers flocked to all major tourist destinations.

We are very happy to inform that the Government of Assam accorded 'Industry Status' to tourism, which is a positive and progressive step that will go a long way in transforming the tourism sector in the State. Industry status to hotels, restaurants, cafeterias, wellness centres, and other tourism services will make them eligible for incentives under the industrial policy which would give a tremendous fillip to the growth of the tourism sector in the State.

As per the declaration of the United Nations General Assembly, year 2023 shall be celebrated as the International Year of Millets (IYM) with an objective to spread awareness on the contribution of Millets to food security and nutrition along with a focus on increasing Millet's production across the country. The Ministry of Tourism and FSSAI have requested the hospitality establishments to actively participate in promoting IYM by introducing some Millets dishes in their menus along with setting-up of Experience Centres at the hotel and restaurant premises to spread awareness about this initiative. IYM is an apt opportunity for the hospitality sector to show its pledge and commitment to such an important initiative. Hence, we request all FHRAI members to participate in IYM to make it a grand success.

If the last quarter of 2022 is any indication, 2023 is poised to be an exciting year for hospitality sector, which would immensely benefit from the G20 Presidency being hosted by our country.

With best regards,
Jaison Chacko
Secretary General, FHRAI



Jaison Chacko
Secretary General
FHRAI

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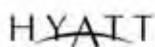


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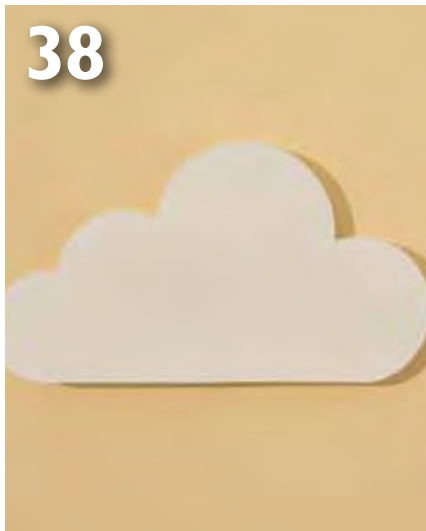
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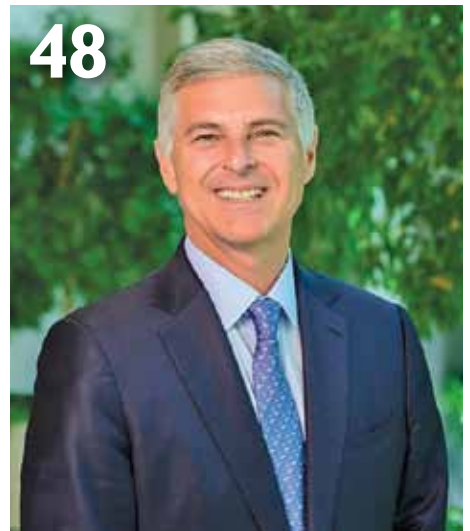
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G20 Presidency to boost hospitality



FHRAI urges government to leverage G20 Presidency as it provides best advantage to promote tourism and hospitality sector under Incredible India flagship.

With India assuming the G20 Presidency, Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) anticipates the yearlong event as a golden opportunity for the tourism and hospitality industry to shine on the global podium. The Federation has urged the government to intensify promotional initiatives under Incredible India to attract as many foreign tourists as possible during the year and leave an indelible mark on the tourism map of the world. The G20 Summit is expected to host over 200 meetings and conferences in over 50 destinations. In anticipation of its spill over benefits, FHRAI has requested the government to also reactivate the Champion Sector in Services Scheme (CSSS) to give a boost to the MICE tourism in India.

“India’s G20 Presidency brings with it a great opportunity for the tourism and hospitality industry. The country will host delegates from the 20 participating countries over the duration of a year and this might also pique the interest of tourists to travel to India. After two years of absolute stalling, this has come as a golden opportunity for the tourism and hospitality industry. This is the time that the government should go full throttle to promote tourism under the Incredible India banner. The hospitality industry is raring to showcase its world-class standards and facilities to the world while celebrating the country’s rich and varied heritage and diversity,” said Jaison Chacko, Secretary General, FHRAI.

Echoing the same sentiments, Pradeep Shetty, President, HRAWI & Executive Committee Member, FHRAI, said, “The series of meetings and yearlong activities will give a big boost to the industry and its allied sectors. India is already gaining much popularity for its medical tourism and MICE is another such niche space which can catapult India into one of the major tourism hubs in the South-East Asian market. Just before COVID broke out, the Ministry of Tourism had set up a MICE fund under the CSSS to boost MICE tourism in the country by encouraging the meetings and conference operators to bring more international conferences, meetings, and seminars to India. This was initiated with the objective of increasing foreign tourist arrivals, employment, and foreign exchange earnings for the country. Unfortunately, the project got stalled due to COVID, but we now request the government to reactivate the scheme to make the most of the opportunity.”

“As per the World Travel and Tourism Council, tourism generated ₹13.2 lakh crore (US \$170 billion) or 5.8 per cent of India’s GDP and supported 32.1 million jobs in 2021. Prior to the COVID, tourism and hospitality contributed close to 10 per cent to the country’s GDP and supported approximately 90 million jobs directly and indirectly. By the end of the third wave of COVID, the hospitality industry had suffered a whopping ₹1.40 lakh crore loss and millions lost jobs. FHRAI strongly feels that this is the most opportune time for the industry if steps are taken in the right direction. We are certain that G20 Presidency will help the cause of the industry and the industry is aligned with the government in its mission to present India’s hospitality prowess to the world,” concluded Chacko.

India will host delegates from the 20 participating countries over the duration of year 2023 in G20 summits



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FHRAI recommends DPIIT measures for reducing compliance burden

Steps such as single window clearance systems, infra status to hospitality sector, promotion of self-certification, among others have been proposed by the Federation.

FHRAI has put forth many recommendations for reducing compliance burden and cost of regulations of hospitality sector. **The highlights of the recommendations are as follows:**

- Single window clearance systems at Centre and state levels: Two separate single window clearance systems separately for the state government licenses /compliances and the Central Government specific approvals and permissions, need to be put in place. The state level single window system should set a common national standard and protocol for hospitality sector projects.
- e-Central repository for tourism and hospitality: To prevent tourism and hospitality enterprises to fill multiple paperwork for different permissions, certifications and licenses across central and state governments—an e-Central repository of such information may be created which can auto populate preliminary documents through a standardised template and thus save immense documentation time and resources.
- Promotion of self-certification: An environment of trust should be the basic foundation for all permissions and approvals for ongoing enterprises and thus they should be made available on a self-certification basis against certain timelines. A post facto compliance review can be undertaken after self-certification through mutual understanding.

- Deemed approvals: For all permissions and approvals for new projects or greenfield enterprises, they should be made available on a deemed approval basis against pre-defined timelines published on a national approval checklist state wise for tourism.
- Common national tourism ID: A common national tourism ID can be generated for all enterprises which is applicable across India like the GST ID which classifies tourism business by state and by value chain and fast tracks approvals across all departments.
- Infrastructure status to hospitality sector: The infrastructure status will allow hotels to avail loans with longer repayment schedule of 15 or even 25 years.
- Classification in the Concurrent List: Tourism, travel, and hospitality should be classified in the Concurrent List of the Indian Constitution to ensure a national shared common framework between Centre and states for tourism and all its verticals.
- Granting of industry status by state governments: It is important that all states grant industry status to tourism, travel, and hospitality sectors to ensure rationalisation, standardization, and harmonisation of all levies while making the industry bankable and organized.
- Harmonisation of classification norms: This needs to be undertaken between all tourism departments aligned to the Ministry of Tourism which will create a single national tourism enterprise profile which must be acceptable by all other departments and ministries across states and Centre thus reducing information redundancy.

It is imperative for tourism, travel, and hospitality to be classified in the Concurrent List



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Policy measures for EoDB advocated

Measures such as grievance redressal mechanism, single window clearance system, among others should be implemented for boosting EoDB, says FHRAI.

FHRAI has stated that Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) initiative by the Central government could prove a gamechanger for the tourism and hospitality sector in India if its recommendations are implemented. **Here are the recommendations put forward by FHRAI:**

- India needs to traverse an arduous path in unwinding a host of reformist measures and facilitative policies to put the tourism sector in the next phase. Among these, bringing EoDB in tourism and hospitality by reducing compliance burden and cost of regulations is the most opportune measure which can work wonders for the sector.
- Absence of a uniform system for approvals and compliances is a serious issue that is hampering the growth of tourism and hospitality sector in the country today. From inception of a hospitality project to day-to-day running of the establishments, the sector is tangled in the complex web of bureaucratic processes. Different states

in the country follow different licensing and compliance requirements making the process very cumbersome and time and cost consuming. Therefore, two separate single window clearance systems separately for the state government licenses/compliances and the Central government specific approvals and permissions, need to be put in place. The state level single window system should set a common national standard and protocol for hospitality sector projects.

- Enforcement of regulations in construction permits remains complex and asymmetric in India, which need to be simplified and standardised to the extent possible for the benefit of all stakeholders.
- In India, inspections are conducted separately by various departments, adding to delays in getting permits. There is scope for placing higher reliance on technology for cutting down processes and procedures for construction permits.
- To save tourism and hospitality enterprises to fill multiple paperwork for different permissions, certifications, and licenses across Central and state governments—an e-Central repository of such information may be

Absence of uniform system for approvals and compliances is hampering growth of hospitality

created which can auto populate preliminary documents through a standardised template and thus save immense documentation time and resources.

- An environment of trust should be the basic foundation for all permissions and approvals for ongoing enterprises and thus they should be made available on a self-certification basis against certain timelines. A post facto compliance review can be undertaken after self-certification through mutual understanding.
- Currently, the regulators/authorities are overburdened with regulating/monitoring activities of various businesses, which in turn reduce effectiveness of the entire process. However, the same can be easily and effectively managed if there are provisions of self-regulation with clear accountability of the businesses. The accountability can be established by getting the businesses submitting self-declaration forms along with an affidavit and an undertaking.
- Even during the course of operation, the hotels on a regular basis need to obtain/renew a number of licenses and approvals. Around 30–35 such licenses/approvals are required by the hotels regularly. Each of these licenses has different renewal timelines, making the hotels to undergo the tiring process of renewal for each approval every time, throughout the year. This needs to be simplified through measures such as single window clearance system deemed approvals, self-regulation, merging of multiple approvals, and licenses and fixing validity of five years for the licenses.
- For several years now, liquor license fees are charged based on the star category of the hotels. Tax and license fee based on star classification should be avoided. This will enable more hotels to apply for higher star classification by improving the quality of their product and services.
- Another major challenge the hospitality industry face today is in the copyrights in music exploitation. The Copyright Act, 1957 was brought in force to not only recognize the rights of copyright owners and to increase copyright protection, but also to ensure that the public may be able to enjoy the creative works in a hassle-free manner while ensuring monetary gains for the owners of the copyright. The proviso to Section 33(3) of the Act provides that the Central government shall not ordinarily register more than one copyright society to do business in the same class of works. Despite such a clear provision, many societies have been registered, leading to multiplicity. Some other assignees are also charging the fee from the hotels. As a result, for playing music, the hotels are getting demands

from IPRS, PPL, ISRA, copyright owners, agents or assignees of copyright owners, among others. Setting up a single window system to administer copyright licenses along with one copyright society for each category of work and requisite amendments in law to reinforce the authority of Section 30 and to weed out the lapses in Section 33 of the Copyright Act are the immediate measures required to ease the burden of the sector.

- It is also imperative for tourism, travel, and hospitality to be classified in the Concurrent List to ensure a national shared common framework between the Centre and states for tourism and all its verticals.
- As part of introducing EoDB for the sector, the need for granting infrastructure status for the hospitality sector becomes most critical. Currently, hotels built with an investment of ₹200 crores or more are eligible to avail the benefits under this facility. The infrastructure status will allow hotels to avail term loans with longer repayment schedule of 15 or even 25 years. Though, industry status has been granted to hospitality by many state governments, the incentives and privileges associated with an industry are not conferred to the sector properly. Providing the industry status will enable the sector across all states to pay the tariffs on industrial rates instead of commercial rates presently.
- There exist a number of Central and state laws that are either redundant or have lost their significance in today's context. Prevalence of such laws such as the Sarais Act, 1867 are antiquated and should be repealed. Even today, KYC documents are required to be submitted at multiple windows or authorities. As part of the EoDB endeavour, a mechanism should be put in place to ensure that hospitality enterprise should submit just once in a common repository and the same should be accessible to multiple authorities.
- Along with all these measures, a grievance redressal mechanism should be brought into place for conducting regular stakeholder meetings and immediate resolution of the complaints received.
- The government is making proactive measures in promotion and development of tourism sector in the country. But, for the sector to make a big leap towards becoming a tourism powerhouse on the global arena, it is imperative that EoDB be implemented on ground. Tourism should be declared as a priority sector with special incentives and benefits to help the sector to realise its true potential.

Industry status will enable hospitality sector across all states to pay the tariffs on industrial rates

Critical points highlighted in pre-budget meeting



FHRAI discusses with Hon'ble Union Finance Minister, **Nirmala Sitharaman** various issues and submits recommendations pertaining to hospitality and tourism sector.

FHRAI delegates recently attended a pre-budget meeting chaired by the Hon'ble Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman along with the trade and service sector representatives. FHRAI put forth to the Hon'ble Minister specific requests for granting of infrastructure status to the hospitality industry. Among other critical representations, the Association requested Sitharaman for continuation of the Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) Scheme for another 10 years and extension on the repayment period under the ECLG Scheme of 10 years or based on the loan repayment period of the principal loan.

Currently, hotels built with an investment of ₹200 crore or more have been accorded infrastructure status under the RBI Infrastructure lending norm criteria. The Association has requested that this threshold be brought down to ₹10 crore to give fillip to budget segment hotels. This will enable hotels to avail term loans at lower rates of interest and also benefit from longer repayment period. It has also requested for hospitality to be classified an industry that is applicable across India and create a corpus which compensates States for any notional loss.

The Association has also requested for the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) loan term for the hospitality sector to be extended for maximum period under the current provisions. The Association has requested

that the repayment period be either enhanced to 10 years or as per the loan repayment period of the principal loan, whichever is longer.

In view of the volatile economic environment brought upon the industry due to COVID, FHRAI has requested the Government to continue the current benefits for the hospitality industry under the EPCG Scheme for another 10 years. It has also asked for export status to hospitality sector to accelerate the growth of the sector.

Among other recommendations, FHRAI has requested for:

- Waiver of secondary condition with regard to average Foreign Exchange Earnings under EPCG Scheme retrospectively from FY 2007-8 onwards.
- Placing tourism and hospitality on the Concurrent List of the Constitution.
- Uniform GST @12 per cent across all hotel categories and room tariffs.
- Relaxations in Section 115JB - Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT) thereby allowing a waiver on it for two years from April 2023 to March 2025.
- Extension on investment linked benefits under Section 35AD for brownfield hospitality projects also.
- Modification in the Leave Travel Allowance (LTA) rules to include amount spent on hotel stays to be considered as LTA expense.
- Treating payments made by foreigners in INR in hotels as foreign exchange earned for the purpose of EPCG Scheme.
- To be allowed to set-off business losses for up to 12 years under Section 72.

FHRAI has requested for ECLGS loan term for the hospitality sector to be extended for maximum period

Industry status to tourism in Assam



FHRAI lauds conferring of industry status to tourism sector in Assam, a positive and proactive step for promotion of sector in State.

FHRAI has expressed its gratitude to Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam, Himanta Biswa Sarma for the Assam Government's decision granting industry status to the tourism sector in the State. Welcoming the decision, the Association called it a positive and progressive step that will go a long way in transforming the tourism sector in Assam. Industry

status to hotels, restaurants, cafeterias, wellness centres, and other tourism services will make them eligible for incentives under the industrial policy which would give a tremendous fillip to the tourism sector.

"The granting of industry status by the Assam Government indicates its broader vision for the tourism sector in the State. We thank the Hon'ble

CM, Himanta Biswa Sarma for his dynamic leadership that has made this possible. It is very encouraging news for the hospitality sector that the new policy gives more thrust to public private partnerships for sustainable and environment friendly investments and creation of gainful employments. We would like to extend our wholehearted support to the government in all its endeavours for the promotion of tourism sector in the state of Assam," said Jaison Chacko, Secretary General, FHRAI.

The granting of industry status by Assam Government indicates its broader vision for the tourism sector in the State

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Reassess EPCG scheme

FHRAI seeks respite from show cause notices being issued to hotels for not able to comply with arbitrary conditions added in FTP in 2008.

FHRAI has submitted suggestions to Piyush Goyal, Hon'ble Minister of Commerce and Industry urging him to review the current Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) scheme pertaining to the hospitality industry.

In the letter with the subject line “Long pending request for relief in secondary condition of EPCG scheme as per provisions of the foreign trade policy”, the Association said, “We would like to seek your urgent intervention and support to save the hospitality sector from demand notices served by the authorities with exorbitant amount sought towards customs duty and interest amount for not being able to comply with an arbitrary condition added in the foreign trade policy in 2008.”

FHRAI further added, “The hospitality sector in the country would like to present this request on the basis of the principle of natural justice which the sector is entitled for and also as per the provisions available in the foreign trade policy guidelines of the Government of India.” The recommendations of FHRAI are as follows:

1. The request is well within the provisions of the foreign trade policy guidelines

- a) As per Para 5.19 of Handbook of Procedures 2015–2020, relief in average export performance can be granted where total exports in that sector/product group have declined by more than 5 per cent and such sectors shall be notified by

the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT).

- b) A report on “Performance of Hotel Industry in India” (2004–2018) was submitted to DGFT and the Ministry of Tourism in March/April 2020, respectively. From the report it is observed that there was a steep decline in the foreign earnings in the year 2011, and it has taken more than eight years to reach around the base level of 2010 until a drastic downfall was again witnessed in 2020 due to COVID. The same has also been endorsed by the Ministry of Tourism in their letters dated 24 June, 2020 and 27 July, 2021.
- c) Meanwhile, since there was no official data available with the finance ministry or RBI to authenticate this decline suffered by the hospitality sector, FHRAI undertook a nationwide sample survey of the member hotels from 2005 to 2020. The survey clearly illustrates that there has been continuous decline of more than 5 per cent from 2009 onwards until 2020. All the financial data shared by the hotels were authentic figures that were disclosed as part of their compliance with Ministry of Corporate Affairs and other authorities.

2. Similar relaxations were granted to other sectors for decline of more than 5 per cent

As per the provisions mentioned above, DGFT granted relaxations to other service sectors where total exports in that sector/

There has been continuous decline of more than 5% from 2009 onwards until 2020



product group have declined by more than 5 per cent, compared to the previous year and accordingly the average export obligation for the year was reduced proportionate to reduction in exports of that sector during the relevant year as against the preceding year.

3. No factual loss to the government exchequer on account of the relaxations

Since the hotels had already met the primary condition of export obligation by fulfilling the necessary Forex for the licenses granted, approving of the request of providing relaxations in meeting of the secondary condition will not bring any factual loss to the government exchequer.

4. The request is not a timed out one

- a) The secondary condition of maintaining the average foreign exchange earned during the first three years from the date of issue of EPCG license over and above the export obligation fixed for the license was added only in 2008 as part of the foreign trade policy.
- b) Subsequently, the subject matter arises only after eight years for the licenses issued from 2008–2013 and six years for licenses issued from 2013 onwards.
- c) FHRAI had brought this issue of decline in foreign contribution of the hospitality sector to the notice of DGFT way back in February 2017 itself and that coincided with completion of 1st block of the eight years when the license expired post the introduction of the secondary condition in the year 2007-8.
- d) Since then, numerous representations were sent and several meetings were held with DGFT, Ministry of Commerce, and Ministry of Tourism.

5. The industry is under deep stress due to

show cause notice and penalties being served by the authorities

Now show cause notices are being issued to the hotels for failing to comply with the condition by the DGFT offices and these hotels have been put in Denied Entity List. Additionally, Commissioner of Customs in various locations have also started issuing Order-in-Original to the hotel license holders demanding recovery of amount towards the duty saved along with interest and penalties.

As informed by one of the members from Gujarat, DGFT office has recently sent a deficiency letter to pay custom duty with interest total amounting of ₹7,35,850 (Duty: ₹2,52,323 and interest ₹4,83,527). Hundreds of such notices are being issued by DGFT/ Customs to hotels across the country.

On account of the facts stated above, FHRAI requests to grant the following relief measures as per the provisions of the 5.19 of the Handbook of Procedures 2015–20, to the hospitality sector at the earliest:

- a) Relaxation in Average Export Obligation in case total Forex has shown a Year-on-Year decline of more than 5 per cent.
- b) Relaxation in Average Export Obligation by adjusting the preceding three years annual average performance for all years commencing from FY 2008-9 (Para - 5.19(a) of the Handbook of Procedures).

Allow to offset any shortfall in the Average EO in any year by using the excess export done above export obligation for fulfilment of an EPCG license (Para - 5.19 A of the Handbook of Procedures).

Hundreds of show cause notices are being issued by DGFT/Customs to hotels across the country

FoSTaC in Navi Mumbai conducted

Over 40 hospitality professionals take part in FoSTaC programme and were instructed on several new industry practices by Dr V Pasupathy, Trainer.



The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) in collaboration with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) conducted its latest Food Safety Supervisory Training in Advance Catering (FoSTaC) programme on 10 January 2023, at the Four Points by Sheraton in Navi Mumbai, Vashi, Maharashtra. 40 hospitality professionals participated in the training programme that was conducted by Dr V Pasupathy, Trainer. Dr V Pasupathy, Stephen D'souza, Cluster General Manager, Abdul Wahab Kazi, F&B Services Manager, Chef Meraj Ansari, Executive Chef and Hemanshu Chauhan, Assistant Secretary General inaugurated the training programme. Over the years, HRAWI has trained and certified 2397 hospitality professionals across India's Western region in FoSTaC and FSSAI's Management Training Program.

"The programme was insightful, and participants were guided on a lot of new industry practices. There has been a tremendous progress over the last few years with the FoSTaC programmes and we are glad that the participation from hospitality establishments has been witnessing a gradual increase. FSSAI's training programmes are a big value-addition to all hospitality professionals since it prioritizes education in food safety and handling SOPs. HRAWI will continue to organize the programmes as often as it can," said Pradeep Shetty, President, HRAWI.



Over the years, HRAWI has trained and certified 2397 hospitality professionals across India's Western region

HRANI meets UP Tourism Minister

Delegates of HRANI commends UP Tourism Policy 2022-32, during meeting with Tourism Minister and also discuss issues concerning hospitality sector.

Applauding the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Policy 2022-32, HRANI along with its state chapter UPHRA advocated to work with the state government to promote hospitality and tourism in the state. To discuss the same further and to address the issues concerning the hospitality sector, a delegation comprising of Immediate Past President, HRANI and President, UPHRA, Surendra Kumar Jaiswal along with Ravi Khanna, Treasurer, UPHRA met Jaivir Singh, Minister for Tourism, Government of Uttar Pradesh.



UP's new tourism policy has been proposed to transform hospitality

and tourism sector in the State and aims to attract investments of

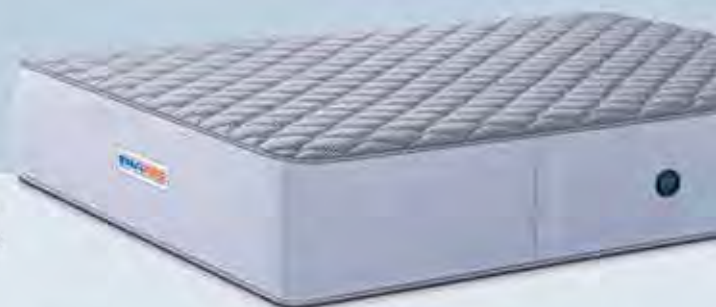
₹40,000 in the next five years. The policy recommends industry status for the sector so as to draw in benefits, subsidies, and exemptions offered to MSME sector.

HRANI advocated to work with UP government to promote hospitality sector in the State



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Spiritual tourism pushing forward

FHRAI reveals most popular spiritual destinations and observes that not only elderly people, but youngsters are also traveling to these sites.



The recent spiritual tourism trends by FHRAI indicated that Amarnath, Gaya, Amritsar, Rishikesh, Haridwar, Mathura, Varanasi, Puri, Dwarka, Somnath, Shirdi, and Tirupati witnessed highest footfall for spiritual tourism.

“Over the years, due to improved infrastructure and convenience in travel, the number of tourists visiting such destinations has only increased. We presently do not have data to ascertain if the numbers are better than that in the pre-COVID times but, like most other tourist destinations, these places too have been receiving better footfalls,” said Jaison Chacko, Secretary General, FHRAI.

Chacko noted that not only senior citizens, but young people are also visiting

religious places. “Traveling to spiritual destinations is no longer perceived as the retired community’s activity. Travel and exploration are the new norm. The youth today is more curious to learn about various cultures and explore geographies that may include places of religious worship of all faiths. So, it is not just senior citizens, quite a few young people too are traveling to spiritual destinations,” emphasized Chacko.

He further added, “Spiritual tourism is one of the largest contributors to the growth in domestic tourism. Since 2014, the government has focused on identifying and developing pilgrimage sites and promoting sustainable spiritual tourism. This also includes promoting local art and cuisines, heritage sites and culture, which have expanded the scope of offerings in the segment. As a result, travelers are not limited to experiencing only the places of worship, but they now can explore and enjoy the region better than before.”

Spiritual tourism is one of the largest contributors to the growth in domestic tourism

FHRAI-IHM kickstarts Millets campaign

Pledging support to International Year of Millets campaign, FHRAI will publish Millets-based recipes in next 12 editions of FHRAI magazine.

After United Nations declared 2023 the International Year of Millets (IYM), India has started various initiatives to promote Millets. These include spreading awareness about the effectiveness of the grain, positioning India as the global hub for Millets, awarding of focus month to central ministries, states, and embassies to endorse IYM, among others.

The Government of India has declared to make the campaign—a people’s movement—so that the Indian Millets, recipes, and value-added products are accepted globally.

FHRAI-IHM is also celebrating 2023 as the International Year of Millets. In the next 12 issues of FHRAI magazine, the Association will

be publishing various recipes, especially prepared from Millets, to promote the IYM campaign.

Kickstarting the campaign, AK Singh, Director, FHRAI-IHM, said, “FHRAI-IHM is pledged to promote and participate in the IYM 2023. It is a great initiative to spread awareness on the contribution of Millets to food security and nutrition. Millets are nutritionally superior to popular grains such as



wheat and rice due to higher protein levels and a more balanced amino acid profile. As part of our initiative to promote IYM 2023, FHRAI-IHM team would be sharing Millets-based recipes in the next 12 editions of the FHRAI magazine. We hope that FHRAI members would find it useful and introduce Millets dishes in their menu and actively participate in IYM 2023 campaign.”

It is a great initiative to spread awareness on the contribution of Millets to food security and nutrition



RAGI VEG. QUICHE

Ingredients (Serves 4 portion)

Ragi Floor – 200g
Butter – 60g
Spinach – ½ cup (200g)
Amul Processed Cheese – 200g
Mushrooms – 300g
Onion – 2 nos.
Garlic – 7-8 cloves
Chili Flakes – 20g
Thyme (dry) – 20g
Olives – 7-8 pcs
Oregano – 20g
Salt – to taste
Ragi Veg. Quiche

- First, mix ragi flour and add butter. Rub with hands properly. Add water in a way that the dough does not gets loose.
- Take the tart molds and grease them. Then fill the molds with the dough and blind bake at 180°C for 20 mins.
- On the other hand, finely chop spinach, mushroom, onion, garlic and grate cheese.
- Now take a pan and add oil. Sauté onion first followed with garlic, onion, spinach and finally mushrooms.
- Add oregano, chili flakes, thyme and salt to it.
- Keep it aside for cooling down and add cheese to it to make a filling of it.
- Pre heat salamander.
- Spread some cheese, thyme and sliced olives on top and gratinate it for 5-7 mins. Serve hot.



LITTLE MILLET PUDDING WITH CARMELIZED PINEAPPLE SAUCE

Ingredients (Serves 4 portion)

Little millet – 1/2 cup
Milk – 1L
Condensed milk – 6 tablespoons
Rose water – 2 teaspoons
Kewra water – 2 teaspoons
Sauce – As per taste
Chopped pineapple – 2 cup (300g)
Brown sugar – 1 cup (200g)
Unsalted butter – 1 teaspoon

- First take a pan, add chopped pineapple and brown sugar and cook until it gets caramelized and after that add butter in it and keep it aside.
- Now take a fresh pan and roast the millet for about 2 mins and then grind them to fine powder.
- After that take a sauce pan and boil the milk till it becomes thick, and then add the millet powder in it and whisk properly to avoid any lumps.
- Now add milkmaid in it and brown sugar (for taste), cook for about 2 mins.
- After that add rose water and kewra water and then cool it and serve it cold with caramelized pineapple.

Recipes credit: Rishabh Misra, Lecturer, FHRAI Institute of Hospitality Management

Easing of licensing processes welcomed

FHRAI terms move to permit eateries in 5-star, 4-star hotels inside airport, railway station, and ISBT premises to function 24 hours as progressive.

FHRAI has written to Vinai Kumar Saxena, Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor, Government of NCT of Delhi, expressing gratitude towards the Government for easing out the licensing processes and operating norms for hotels and restaurants in Delhi. FHRAI commended the progressive and industry-friendly measures taken by the Delhi Government including the decision to allow restaurants in 5-star and 4-star hotels, those within airport, railway station, and ISBT premises to operate 24 hours. The Association stated that the initiative will be immensely beneficial to the hospitality sector as well as to the customers.

"These steps will provide a much-needed fillip to the hospitality business which has undergone tremendous losses

in the last two years due to COVID. The decision to ease out licensing requirements for restaurants and hotels with a provision for deemed approvals is laudatory," said FHRAI.

The Association thanked the Government for cutting down the number of documents required for obtaining a license, terming it an excellent step towards ease of doing business.

FHRAI also pointed that the initiative is a remarkable step towards the



development of the hospitality sector as it coincides with India's G20 Presidency which offers a golden opportunity for the sector to showcase its world-class standards and facilities to the world. Such a guest-centric approach by the Delhi Government will certainly attract a lot of tourist traction in the capital along with inviting more investments towards the sector.

FHRAI praises Delhi Govt for slashing number of documents required for obtaining license for hotels and restaurants

SIHRA meets TN Tourism Minister

To boost tourism and hospitality industry in Tamil Nadu, SIHRA delegation puts forward several proposals to **K Ramachandran**, Tourism Minister.

SIHRA members recently met K Ramachandran, Minister of Tourism, Government of Tamil Nadu, in Chennai. The members submitted various recommendations to boost tourism and hospitality industry in the State. These are as follows:

- Industry status for hotels, along with industry subsidies.
- Single window clearance for new investments in hotels.
- Destination development in Tamil Nadu.
- Fund allotment to tourism department at par with neighbouring states.
- Marketing Tamil Nadu as a destination jointly with



- stakeholders.
 - Guide availability and necessity to produce more language-speaking guides in Tamil Nadu.
 - Decades-old permit issue for transport in Tamil Nadu.
- The Minister has assured

his support for the cause of tourism development in the State.

Hoteliers' meet in Tiruchi

SIHRA EC members had an interactive session with hoteliers in Tiruchi on 18 December 2022. More than 40 hoteliers from in and around Tiruchi district participated in the session.

K Ramachandran, Tourism Minister has assured his support for cause of tourism development

No copyright music license needed: Rajasthan Police

Rajasthan's wedding industry welcomes Jaipur Police's circular stating that licenses to avoid violating Copyright Act will not be needed by hotels or wedding venues for playing music.

A statement from Jaipur Police has come in response to many local agencies asking for money from the organisers and venues to avoid the infringement of Copyright Act, 1957, claiming that playing songs of any artist/media company would be considered as violation without their consent. Many facilities had to secure a license in advance to avoid this harassment at the time of the event.

The circular clearly states that under Section 52 (1) (ZA) of Copyright Act 1957, "The performance of a literary, dramatic, or musical work or the communication to the public of such work or of sound recording during any bonafide religious ceremony or an official ceremony held by government or local authority shall not amount to copyright infringement. Therefore, no license is required in furtherance of the same."

WELCOME MOVE

Jaison Chacko, Secretary General, Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India

(FHRAI), said, "Section 52 (1) (ZA) of the Copyright Act 1957 provides an exemption on payment of royalty or licence fees for any bonafide religious functions including marriage processions and other social festivities associated with a marriage. Yet, certain copyright license agencies intimidate hotels and patrons to bully them into paying for licences. FHRAI has been campaigning to create awareness about this law and has been reaching out to law enforcement agencies across the country to make them aware of the illegal activities of such agencies."

APPEAL FOR COUNTRY-WIDE RULE

Lauding the move, Rajeev Jain, Founder & MD, Rashi Entertainment, has said that this is a lawful thing that Jaipur Police has done. "Organizations such as PPL and NOVEX were extracting money



Jaison Chacko
Secretary General,
FHRAI



Rajeev Jain
Founder & MD,
Rashi Entertainment

like anything under this guise. It is a law that the Police has now endorsed. What is surprising is that they are not even registered organizations or societies themselves. On what claim could they do anything like this?" he questioned.

He added, "We appeal that it should be implemented in every city in every state."

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HOSPITALITY sector set for BOOMING 2023

After gaining momentum and strong recovery in 2022, hospitality industry is geared up to witness uptick in inbound tourism cashing in on India's G20 Presidency.



Pradeep Shetty
President,
HRAWI

G20 PRESIDENCY AUGURS WELL FOR HOTEL INDUSTRY

Socio-economic indicators point to 2023 being a great year for the hospitality industry. The last six months have witnessed a good growth which has boosted the morale of the industry. 2022 witnessed some positive developments and also had its share of concerns but there was a recovery in the business. The year-end festivities, including Christmas and New Year's celebrations ended on a high note and the outlook for 2023 is definitely optimistic.

Other than domestic and international travel having come back in full swing now, we strongly believe that India's G20 Presidency too will help add to the tourism momentum. This is a golden opportunity for the tourism and hospitality industry to shine on the global platform. We urge the government to intensify promotional initiatives under Incredible India to attract as many foreign tourists as possible during the year. At the end of the event, Indian tourism and hospitality should be able to leave a lasting impression on the tourism map of the world. The country will host delegates from the 20 participating countries over a year and this should pique the interest of tourists to travel to India. This is the time that the government should go full throttle to promote tourism under the Incredible India banner. The hospitality industry is eager to showcase its world-class standards and facilities to the world while celebrating the country's rich and varied heritage and diversity.

Last year, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade successfully launched the pilot phase of Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC). We are expecting a similar platform to be launched for the hospitality industry which will ensure a level playing field and break the monopoly of Online Travel Aggregators (OTAs) and Food Service Aggregators (FSAs). When this kicks off, it will be a revolutionary step in the larger interest of the hospitality ecosystem and will change the dynamics of the online market in the country. A platform like ONDC for the hospitality industry will ensure a mechanism to protect the interest of hotels and restaurants across India against the predatory pricing and anti-competitive tactics of OTAs and FSAs. Needless to say, it will immensely benefit millions of customers with better deals and better customer experience.

Lastly, hospitality is very close to being granted industry status which will help it to become an economic powerhouse. Presently, the status has been granted to hotels by many state governments, however, the incentives and privileges associated with an industry are not conferred to the hospitality industry properly. For instance, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Maharashtra governments have accorded industry status to hospitality, but this status remains merely on paper. We are confident that tourism and hospitality will be declared as an industry by the Central Government in 2023. Alongside, we are also expecting tourism to be placed in the Concurrent List of the Indian Constitution for effective legislation to make tourism—a national agenda.

Hospitality industry is eager to showcase its world-class facilities to world

HOSPITALITY SECTOR WILL MAKE A STRONG COMEBACK

The Indian hospitality industry is all set for a buoyant 2023—expected to fly high after a smooth takeoff in course of India's rise to G20 Presidency. Over 200 G20 meetings are expected to be held across 55 destinations in the country during the grand event till its run up to November 2023.

After a severe blow by COVID that crippled the industry, there will be substantial incremental demand for hotels to boost the industry. We expect a gradual rebound of domestic travel and the Indian government's renewed emphasis on the expansion of the tourism industry may contribute US \$250 billion to the country's GDP by 2030.

The government's release of the National Tourism Policy soon to promote sustainable and inclusive tourism growth in the country will be an icing on the cake.

According to an industry estimate, recovering from the impact of COVID by the third quarter of 2022-23, the hospitality industry had touched the occupancy of 70 per cent, while the average daily rates had moved up to ₹7,260 as compared to ₹6,540 in the same period in FY 20. Also, the revenue per available room had increased to ₹5,085 against ₹4,499 in Q3 FY 20.

2023 offers an opportunity to take learnings from previous years and upgrade from legacy

systems and the traditional way of doing things to be data-driven and open to new markets and segments beyond the core markets. The blending of work and play into combined bleisure trips and remote work locations have permanently changed the way guests use their hotel rooms and public areas and this trend will continue to lead us to constantly adapt the way we design spaces and how customers interact with them.

Dark clouds of 2020-2022, opened up silver linings of hope inspiring us to adapt to the latest trends in hotel technology. This in turn meets the growing need for guest engagement booking until check out. By continuing to stay ahead of the technology curve, we can expect more personalisation and an opportunity to leverage our tech leap by being able to use data to provide a smooth customer journey right from the journey planning stage.

In short, we must take a holistic approach to streamline operations in 2023 to continue to elevate the guest experience using hyper-personalisation, automation and training that is cross-functional and focussed on social learning.



Garish Oberoi
President,
HRANI

“Dark clouds of 2020-2022, opened up silver linings of hope inspiring us to adapt to the latest trends in hotel technology



New diversified products in offering

Fortune Hotels has gone through makeover from business brand to leisure and even wedding and MICE brand today, while expanding its portfolio.



Nisha Verma

The hospitality business, said Dhananjay Saliankar, Head, Sales & Marketing, India, Fortune Hotels and Welcomheritage, has not changed much after COVID. “We are coming back to normalcy, but the way we approach towards business in different segments has changed a little bit, simply because of our dependency on corporate travel, leisure travel, and MICE travel, which were some of the basic fundamental segments that used to feed businesses in the past. COVID has taught us to look at things differently. Since then, one has started exploring all other opportunities available in the marketplace such as weddings and social events. Every Hotelier and Event Manager were running behind that business. It continues to be a good opportunity. Segments such as movies, Bollywood, OTTs, sports are new avenues, which we did not focus on much before, and used to do only if something came our way. Now, it is becoming one of our core businesses. We are now looking at how to change our segmentation and our market mix. It is a balanced approach more than depending on few segments,” he said.

Samir MC, MD, Fortune Hotels, shared, “We have opened some interesting hotels at some exciting locations. We have launched a hotel in Katra and opened another hotel in Kufri. As we go into this year, the most interesting thing to see is that travel has rebounded and it is great to see everybody traveling again.”

FOCUS SEGMENT

Saliankar revealed that earlier, Fortune Hotels, as a company used to be a business brand. “However, now our footprint is going to leisure locations more including secondary cities as well as tertiary cities, where we are looking at new business coming in. We have started concentrating on pilgrimage sector as well and we have properties in Tirupati, Haridwar, Katra, Amritsar, among others,” he added.

MC claimed, “We will move from what was a very heavily business hotel portfolio a few years back, to a good and equal mix between business and leisure hotels. It offers a great variety of choice to our guests, so they do not need to look elsewhere when they want to book a stay, be it for leisure or for business or for a MICE event. Thus, we are almost becoming the one stop shop for our guests and thanks to a lot of loyal guests who have been using us over the years, and who have



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



Samir MC
MD,
Fortune Hotels

“Corporate travel, MICE travel, and everything looks much better. We now focus on that and see where we can optimise the situation

“We are extremely positive for the New Year because we see the travel upswing continuing over the next couple of years

been staying with us at various locations, as well as our club ITC members. We are now on track to offer great choices.”

PRICES SURGED

The ADR in hotels has skyrocketed after business resumed. However, the question remains if this scenario will change or not. Commenting on the same, Saliankar, added, “There is no MRP in the industry, and hence it is very dynamic which fluctuates with demand and supply. Having said that, I agree that the industry is seeing an upward swing on pricing. We must sustain that for some time at least because during COVID, the prices had hit rock bottom. One could go and relax on a weekend in a five-star hotel for as low as ₹3,000. However, if you look at the cost, everything has gone up and it is more than the inflation rate.”

2023 BODES WELL

Saliankar stated that 2023 should take tourism industry to the next level. “Corporate travel, MICE travel, and everything looks much better. We now focus on that and see where we can optimise the situation. Let us hope that things will

get much better and we can sustain everything we have done—the occupancy levels, pricing levels and everything in 2023,” he claimed.

MC added, “We are extremely positive for the New Year because we see the travel upswing continuing over the next couple of years. It is going to be a very positive few years in terms of travel, primarily because demand is going to continue increasing at a faster pace than supply coming into the market. That is something. From our perspective at Fortune Hotels, we continue to focus on two things—delivering great service experiences to our guests at our existing hotels and growing our portfolio. We are looking forward to opening some very interesting hotels across some very exciting locations starting with Haldwani, Kalimpong, Hoshiarpur, and Tirupur soon.”

TRADE AGREEMENTS

Sharing that they have been working very closely with the travel trade over the last couple of decades, MC added, “I think we will continue doing so because the travel trade forms a very important component of how we connect with our guests and our customers.”

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2023: Forging ahead

New Year brings new hopes and plans! Upbeat about 2023 and prospects of growth it brings, hoteliers reveal biggest hospitality trends they are most enthusiastic about.



Lipla Negi



Kush Kapoor
CEO, Roseate Hotels & Resorts

TREND THAT WILL DRIVE REVENUE: WEDDINGS & MICE EVENTS

The year 2023 will see continued focus on domestic travel and tourism along with weddings and MICE events and these will be the drivers of revenue for the coming year. Technology is another focus area for us. We are engaged in various R&D activities with start-ups wherein we roll out initiatives at a small scale to test and enhance and then quickly scale these up across the brand.



STRATEGY FOR 2023

For us at Roseate Hotels and Resorts, the focus will be on enhancing guest personalisation, rolling out many more of our own Roseate products that can create a meaningful impact in the lives of our guests. Initiatives include meet and greet at the airport, evolving our guests loyalty program to the next level which provides a very high level of service and benefits to guests and greater focus on the wellbeing of our guests and employees. Our room occupancies have been around 85 per cent in the last five years and our focus will be on enhancing RevPar and ARR by offering superlative service and products to our discerning guests.

“Our focus will be on enhancing RevPar and ARR by offering superlative service and products

TREND THAT WILL DRIVE REVENUE: F&B EXPANSION

I think that the expansion of the F&B brands of various hospitality groups, both inside the hotel premises and outside, will pick up pace in the coming year. COVID witnessed the emergence of cloud kitchens of big hospitality groups, such as ITC. Now one can easily order Dal Bukhara and enjoy it in the comfort of one's home. In my opinion, the entrepreneurial hospitality brands have seen the immense potential of the food business space in the last couple of years and therefore this segment will see a much greater push and development going forward.



STRATEGY FOR 2023

Since we are not talking to a standing army but to a moving parade, I do not think it is wise to follow a single strategy. In my opinion, it will depend on the market scenario, customer demands and seasonal trends. So, we will evaluate the situation every quarter and accordingly develop the strategy for the next quarter. In fact, we plan to have a strategy for every quarter, every month, every week and further divide it by weekdays and weekends.



Ashish Vohra
Founder & CEO,
juSta Hotels & Resorts

“Hospitality brands have seen the immense potential of the food business space

TREND THAT WILL DRIVE REVENUE: WORKCATION

In the era of remote work, workcation has emerged as a new trend that is here to stay, in 2023 and beyond. The idea of leisure time combined with work is an excellent way for people to escape their routines. Be it long weekends, festive times, or weekdays, workcations are a flexible way of functioning, which will go a long way, especially for the passionate travelers who enjoy roaming around the world. In 2023, we expect more travelers to join the travel bandwagon.



STRATEGY FOR 2023

Our core idea is to extend our support to the hotel partners on overall performance and revenue management. We have various resources and tools that are there to help hotels drive their revenue performance and adapt to market changes in these evolving times. Our expansive structure of support is backed by our years of experience, and we will continue to include more initiatives in the future.



Nikhil Sharma
Regional Director,
Eurasia, Wyndham Hotels
& Resorts

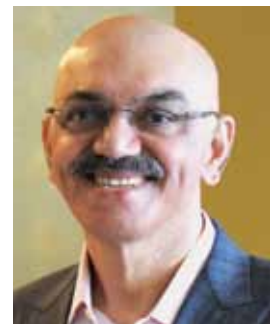
“In 2023, we expect more travelers to join the workcation bandwagon

TREND THAT WILL DRIVE REVENUE: DRIVECATION AND WEEKEND TRAVEL

Domestic leisure travel will keep expanding between waves, and stays will generally be longer than they were before COVID. The weekend performance and high occupancy and rates of resorts within driving distance of major cities will continue. With properties set to open in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Rajasthan, to name a few, Sayaji Hotels will be able to expand its presence across the country. 15 properties are part of the Sayaji Group, which also owns three flagship brands: Sayaji Hotels, Effotel by Sayaji, and Enrise by Sayaji. Additionally, Sayaji Group will continue to rely on domestic demand for a while longer, given that international tourism is still below its pre-COVID level.

STRATEGY FOR 2023

Given how strongly ADR recovered in 2022 across the majority of our hotels compared to previous downturns, maintaining this trend will be a focus and priority for 2023 as well. As a result of product upgrades that enhance the guest experience, we are now observing an increase in the number of leisure travelers staying in a number of our hotels. This has strengthened customer loyalty and increased yield through business drivers such as OCC, ARR, and RevPar. In order to maintain demand, we will work to exceed guests' expectations and meet their facility needs.



Raoof Dhanani
Managing Director, Sayaji
Hotels Ltd.

“Weekend performance and high occupancy within driving distance of major cities will continue



S P Jain
Chairman & Managing
Director, Pride Hotels Ltd

TREND THAT WILL DRIVE REVENUE: WORK-FROM-ANYWHERE

ADR recovery has been very strong across most of our hotels in 2022 compared to previous downturns, and it will remain a focus and priority for 2023 as well to keep this streak going up. We have performed exceedingly well in 2021-2022 compared to 2020-2021. The ADR and occupancy have gone up from 65 per cent to 80 per cent for the current season 2022-2023. We are expecting to clock a turnover of ₹250 crores this fiscal year. We believe that by maintaining a good combination of occupancy and ADR, we will be able to maintain our recovery and profitability. Also, work-from-anywhere options and hybrid working have significantly altered business travel, and we are now seeing an increase

in the number of leisure travelers staying in several of our hotels. To keep demand growing, we will work to meet their facility needs and exceed their expectations.

STRATEGY FOR 2023

The hospitality industry continues to evolve, adapting to new realities and consistently viewing trends as opportunities. With the industry's surge in demand in recent quarters, we would invest our time in cultivating the power of analytics and understanding of the guest data in hand to drive more direct and profitable business for our hotels. We would also invest our time in understanding the digital landscape and choosing the right partners for our brand. The ADR growth streak is still going strong and is driving the recovery; this will be a priority again in 2023. Domestic travel has been strong, and as one of India's largest hospitality brands, we will continue to seek our fair share of the market.

“By maintaining of occupancy and ADR, we will be able to maintain our recovery & profitability



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

TREND THAT WILL DRIVE REVENUE: BLEISURE

As people are becoming more conscious of nature and its long-term importance, travelers are expected to book more environment-friendly travel alternatives in 2023. As tourists try to balance their environmental and social concerns with their desire to travel, sustainable travel will remain a top focus. Another emerging trend is bleisure, the combination of business

and leisure travel. Travelers are also expected to invest more on overall wellness and holistic experiences. Health and wellness will remain integral in 2023 due to travelers' desires for personal wellness, social wellness, and community wellness in general.



STRATEGY FOR 2023

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“Travelers are also expected to invest more on overall wellness and holistic experiences



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Accelerated growth beckons hospitality industry

Buoyant domestic demand will prove a master stroke for Indian hospitality sector in 2023, reckons industry experts.

OCCUPANCY RATE & ARR_s INDICATE POSITIVE TIME AHEAD



Sharad K Upadhyay
General Manager, Crowne
Plaza Greater Noida

The hospitality sector has been on the path of recovery since COVID ended. After being crippled by COVID, the hospitality industry witnessed a year full of growth and prosperity in 2022. Collectively in India, the RevPAR in Q2 of 2022 saw a major growth. Most of the recovery has been in the form of corporate off-sites, weddings, team meetings, and training, and not to forget, domestic leisure which was driven by the demand of travelers who had not traveled for very long time because of COVID.

According to industry experts, the hospitality industry will be successfully flying in the year 2023 and will see rapid growth. The industry has undoubtedly done a tremendous job in bouncing back from the hard times it went through because of COVID. Industry players believe that international arrivals are also going to pick up the pace. The resumption of international flights and a gradual return of corporate travel have also played a very significant role in bringing the industry back on track. The average rates, occupancy rates, and all other aspects indicate a positive time coming ahead for the industry.

Though demand-supply mismatch continues to be a problem for the hospitality industry but hopefully, that will be tackled in this year. Currently, the industry is growing and prospering on domestic demand and the gradual increase in international travel will add more growth to it. The demand for this FY has increased by 15 per cent in comparison to the pre-COVID levels and is expected to rise with double growth over the next 3–5 years.

With the vast demand for quality hospitality products and services and the opportunities ahead, 2023 is indeed going to be a year full of growth for the hospitality industry.

On trends, I find the guests becoming increasingly clear about health and well-being and this is seen across the guest segments. Another trend is that the guests want an experience rather than just a regular stay/event or dine-in. They do not want to miss a chance to celebrate life while also keeping a check on health and well-being simultaneously.

Sustainability is another mega trend that we will see not just in hotels but across the industries. Major corporates will make their choice of hotels also based on a hotel's initiatives on sustainability.

“2023 is indeed going to be a year full of growth for the hospitality industry”



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INBOUND TRAVEL WILL SEE HUGE GROWTH



Shibil Malik
General Manager,
Sheraton Grand Bangalore
Hotel, Brigade Gateway

There is an increase in demand for travel for all market segments, including leisure, corporate, and MICE. Domestic and revenge tourism have been helping to drive demand for hotels. The year 2023 is predicted to be a year of hope, growth, and optimism where we project to see substantial growth in occupancy and demand for hotels which will be strongly driven by the increase in international travel. Though we see a positive projection for international travel, the growth will remain slow due to COVID, Russia-Ukraine war, inflation, job cuts, among other things.

The government's efforts are aimed at increasing inbound travel. This is through numerous international large format events, including the G20 Presidency, that provides an opportunity to showcase India, raise the country's tourism profile, and rise in international visits. During India's G20 Presidency until November 2023, over 200 meetings are expected to be held in 55 different locations across India. Even so, it appears that domestic markets will continue to be the primary feeder for the tourism industry. Aero India 2023 is scheduled in the first half of the year, which is a fantastic opportunity to welcome international travelers, bureaucrats,

private and public aerospace companies, and aerospace enthusiasts.

Though the work-from-home culture remains prevalent, corporates are now transitioning to work-from-office, and as a result, corporate movements across the country have increased. Demand for outdoor catering from corporates has shot up in the last few months. After a long hiatus, corporates are back organizing mega events inviting employees. Some large MNCs are back with organizing large format events such as family day, annual day, among others. The wedding industry has also had a promising start, and multiple inquiries have been flowing in for the same.

The food and beverage industry will continue to see an increase in the number of restaurant bookings and demand for niche events. The demand for healthier artisanal food and vegan food options made with fresh ingredients continue to grow as a trend in the local market. We also aim to increase the hotel workforce to its full strength to meet the surge in demand. Sustainability amenities such as EV charging station and water bottling plant have been added to the hotels facilities to be on par with the current trends and contribute towards a greener future.

We are optimistic for 2023, but we are also cautiously monitoring the international travel regulations.

The government's efforts are aimed at increasing inbound travel through many international events

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Infra development coupled with G20 events will push India's hospitality sector growth to greater heights, opines Nandivardhan Jain, CEO, NOESIS Capital Advisors.



Nandivardhan Jain
CEO,
NOESIS Capital Advisors

After a difficult 2020 and 2021, the year 2022 showed positive signs for the hotel industry. Continued demand for domestic leisure destinations, rise in demand among the top 20 business cities in the second half of 2022 and strong demand for social and wedding events in Tier II, III, and IV cities were the real game changers of the Indian hospitality industry in 2022. This demand will continue to rise in 2023 as well due to strong infrastructure development work across India starting from airports, roads, and railways, which will add fresh demand. The G20 summit in India encompassing 200 events across 50 cities in the next 12 months is further

icing on the cake for the hospitality industry. These events will generate 100,000 direct room nights and 200,000 indirect room nights requirement in 2023. In addition to this, these 50 cities have an opportunity to showcase themselves on a global platform.

Goa's second airport development is a classic example of infrastructure development correlated with the growth of the hotel, hospitality, and travel industry. The existing Dabolim Airport, being a naval airport, has limited slots for civilian flights, due to which Goa's air connectivity growth was disrupted for the last few years. With the newly built Mopa Airport, air connectivity with new domestic and international destinations will improve substantially this year. One new inbound flight introduction to Mopa Airport will generate additional demand for 70,000 room nights annually.

Goa's second airport development is a classic example of infrastructure development



2023 bodes well for Indian hospitality sector

In FY 23-24, hotels in Goa will witness a rise in average daily rate and occupancy by 10 to 12 per cent due to enhanced air connectivity.

One more such example of hospitality investment correlated with infrastructure development is the commencement of construction work for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train corridor. A few months back when bullet train development work commenced in Gujarat, it immediately gathered the attention of domestic and foreign investors for hotel acquisitions around bullet train station terminals in cities such as Surat, Vadodara, and Ahmedabad.

Domestic leisure travelers fuelled up the leisure market with high demand due to uncertainty and restrictions in 2020 and 2021. In 2022 also, leisure travelers preferred to plan travel closer to the date and domestic travel was preferred to avoid uncertainty. In the domestic experiential leisure market, offbeat locations, home/villa stay, farm stay, staycation, and coastal destinations are the ones, which reported high demand. This market was largely driven by the young domestic travelers.

Based on the data of 150 villa owners across India, collected by the NOESIS research team, the reasons for strong demand for villas/homestays at rural and offbeat destinations were value for money, privacy, among others. The average return on investment (ROI), these villa owners are making, is within the bracket of 6 per cent to 10 per cent on the Capex incurred by them on today's valuation. In a few cases, ROI is as high as 14 per cent as well. Due to limited regulatory approvals and low Capex requirements in comparison to traditional resort/hotel developments we foresee strong supply adding up. Land cost is quite low in offbeat locations, which makes these projects quite profitable for the investor.

We foresee in 2023 all the hospitality and lodging formats at the macro level will break all their records of ADRs, occupancy, revenues, profitability, new project announcement, and fundraising. It is time to be prepared for the golden year.

“In 2023, all hospitality and lodging formats at macro level will break all their records

Windfall for hotels

Cloud-based PMS/CRM provide manifold advantages to hotel staff as they can access and update system easily leading to enhanced guests' experience.



Ananya Kukreja



Amlan Ghose
Managing Director,
Prologic First

Hoteliers are challenged with providing a personalized guest experience, while operating an effective hotel business. Today's cloud-based hotel PMS/CRM solutions help hoteliers deliver the experience guests want, while efficiently managing their business. Simply by making it feasible to update and examine centralised records from numerous computers and devices, computer record keeping, Cloud PMS have considerably boosted the efficiency of the hospitality sector. For the needs of the hospitality sector, PMS systems have been modified to further improve operational efficiency through various methods. The first reservation system to ever hit the hotel sector was in the 1940s, and there were many property management system replications all the way up until the 1970s. Software solutions were not included in the property management system especially until the 1990s. Prior to the 1990s, the existing property management systems relied on laborious spreadsheets, handwritten registers, and other paper-based techniques to coordinate simple operating tasks. The use of technology in property management grew rapidly in the 1990s and

2000s, and the traditional PMS method was modernised and made available in the form of PMS Softwares. The first version of Cloud PMS was introduced in 2010. After more than ten years, PMS is still developing and offering property management solutions that have transformed how hoteliers and property managers conduct business. The sheer effort into making business and guest satisfaction more efficient by the day depicts the importance cloud technology holds. Managing properties that operate in the cloud do not need any servers or other hardware systems. One may access one's property management software from any location with an active internet connection by simply logging into it from any gadget. "Cloud solutions free hotels from IT infrastructure and administration issues, while offering easier payment terms," said **Amlan Ghose**, Managing Director, Prologic First. Hotel staff can access IT functionality even when away from their desk and managers/owners are able to oversee and act from wherever they are. Cloud technology allows guests to save time with solutions such as self-check-in and on-demand/pre-ordering room service, amongst others. It also allows staff to save more time from reports and entries and utilise more time enhancing guest experiences. A cloud software helps exhilarate better guest experience from their pre-arrival to post-

“Cloud solutions free hotels from IT infrastructure and administration issues

departure experience—it helps a hotel team understand their guest better, make note of their preferences, nurture guest relationships, and surpass their guest expectations and satisfaction. With cloud software, one has the freedom to tailor property management systems to meet the needs of each user type, while also keeping it simple enough for everyone's use.

USEFUL AND RELIABLE

Choosing a sincere and efficient cloud service provider which proves to be the right fit for one's business can be a hard nut to crack. As mentioned, there are countless benefits to the cloud technology that is so widely (and rightfully) used. These include being able to login to and from anywhere and anytime (remote access), enabling one to have more interactions with the guests by systematizing and logging daily tasks, and keeping the data secure through heavy encryptions. One of the main motives of the hospitality industry is to enhance guests' experience and ensure that they leave satisfied and that they come back. Aligning with this motive, most sought-after goal of implementing a cloud technology as a part of the hotel processes is the enhancement of guest experiences. Through a cloud-based PMS/CRM, monitoring a guest's likes, dislikes and spending habits can be an assistance in curating a specially tailored experience for the guest.

"When selecting a cloud system for a hotel business, the ability to integrate the guest journey so that every interaction can be measured or monitored is crucially important," averred **Karim Mawani**, Director, BookingWizz. The most obvious point of integration is the online booking engine where the ability to recognise the guest as a repeat customer or a member of the hotel loyalty program is very important for most hotel businesses. The system also needs to be closely integrated with the financial management processes in order to have close fiscal control and accurate administration. With the option to purchase a PMS/CRM as a software as a service (SaaS) or a capital expenditure with a software support agreement, hotels should consider the total lifetime costs associated with each commercial model.

A minimum of five years should be expected from any PMS/CRM investment, so the calculation should be easy to make in order to choose the best value commercial model. Essentially, user friendliness and the ability to generate all operational reports/data are some factors hotels consider, while choosing a cloud software.



ENHANCING HOTELS' REVENUES

The industry of cloud technology itself is quite extensive. This means that for a variety of different needs of a hotel, there are many options of priced models available to adopt into growing one's business. This technology has the flexibility to allow the addition of multiple users as well as locations/properties. "As it is based on a hotel's requirements and the required storage, workload/uptime capacity and network bandwidth, the investment into the cloud technology is usually done via a pay-per-use method," stated **Manoj K Mohanty**, Senior Vice President, Sales, South Asia & South East Asia, IDS Next. Initial costs for cloud-based software can be described as implementation, configuration, and training fees to set up and integrate the software solution into the hotel operating environment. These fees scale up according to the relative complexity of the project, including number of software integrations, number of users to be trained and size of the hotel business (in terms of hotel software users or the hotel room count). Once initial set up costs have been accounted for, the ongoing fees for cloud-based solutions tend to be monthly, quarterly or annually based on the size of the hotel business (as measured by total number of rooms) or the number of software users. The total investment for cloud-based software is scalable based on the relative complexity and size of one hotel business versus another. The payoffs for value and great experience are tangible, and data says that up to 16 per cent price premium on products and services are sold with increased loyalty. Seeing the result and reward of guest satisfaction and



Manoj K Mohanty
Senior VP,
Sales, South Asia & South
East Asia, IDS Next

“Investment into the cloud technology is usually done via a pay-per-use method



thereafter retained revenue, investment into cloud technology seems negligible for many hotel brands.

Cloud hotel software act as a boon for hotels' revenue by allowing properties to select just the right number of add-ons and features required along with regular updation to keep up with the latest technology in the market. PMS/CRM software is at the heart of revenue generation and cost savings for any hotel business. With room revenue being the largest contributor to total revenue of the hotel, it is the ability for the hotel to efficiently and profitably manage all accommodation bookings which is the main objective of a hotel PMS application. By integrating the reservation data creation from multiple sources—travel agents, online portals, email, phone enquiry, cloud softwares—contribute to one of the largest saving (time and money) of manual entries of reservation. “Cloud technology is a saved money, make money investment since there is no direct investment in hardware or tech infrastructure, no maintenance by manpower, and saved time towards guest experience enhancement,” said **Zubin Bilimoria**, CEO & Founder, Bingoforge.



Zubin Bilimoria
CEO & Founder,
Bingoforge

SHAPING FUTURE

Cloud technology has been here for a while and has played a very important role in shaping the future of the hospitality industry. It continues to evolve every day and offer multiple ways to connect, process, and protect customer data. In a world where everything is possible and everyone wants to do more, it is no wonder that hotels are looking for ways to stay ahead.

The good news is that there are plenty of ways to do so, and one of the most effective ways is cloud software. Cloud technology offers greater flexibility in terms of scalability and adaptability than traditional IT infrastructure, which enables businesses to scale up quickly when needed or downsize when necessary, with minimal disruption or downtime. All major industries are switching from local databases to cloud services. The hospitality industry is where the most momentous changes have been seen. “Cloud-based solutions are transforming the fabric of the hospitality industry,” said **Karim Mawani**, Director, BookingWizz. Cloud solutions have aided in removing many concerns and resistance across the entire ecosystem. From being cost-effective to improving the guest experience, cloud solutions are showcasing operational efficiency. One of the major advantages that cloud technology provides is cost reduction. Cloud solutions eliminate the need for hardware and software maintenance costs, reducing overall maintenance costs by up to 90 per cent. This helps hotels save money on initial investment and also reduces operating costs over time. The cloud also improves data security by providing end-to-end encryption at all levels of processing, storage, and transmission. This ensures that only authorized personnel can access sensitive data or perform any action on it.

There are so many ways cloud technology is making an impact in the world from server-less architecture, and data management capabilities, to exponential artificial intelligence growth and quantum computing. Even though we could not conceive Cloud 20 years ago, it is a part of our reality now and it is definitely more than a trend. This software has established itself as a brand-new space full of possibilities and opportunities, and it has come to stay, and shape future.

Cloud technology is saved money, make money investment as there is no direct investment in hardware

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Air traffic picks up momentum in 2022

Global airline traffic recovery continued in 2022 with India's domestic recovery catching up with 2019 numbers, reveals IATA and remains buoyant in its 2023 outlook.

IATA has revealed that the total traffic in November 2022 [measured in revenue passenger kilometres (RPKs)] rose 41.3 per cent compared to November 2021. Globally, traffic is now at 75.3 per cent of November 2019 levels. International traffic rose 85.2 per cent versus November 2021. The Asia-Pacific continued to report the strongest year-over-year (YoY) results with all regions showing improvement compared to the last year. November 2022 international RPKs reached 73.7 per cent of November 2019 levels.

Domestic traffic for November 2022 was up 3.4 per cent compared to November 2021 with travel restrictions in China continuing to dampen the global result. Total November 2022 domestic traffic was at 77.7 per cent of the November 2019 level. In India, domestic RPKs increased by 11.1 per cent YoY and ASKs by 0.5 per cent. November RPKs were 12.2 per cent short of 2019 results, it was revealed. "Traffic results in November reinforce that consumers are thoroughly enjoying the freedom to travel. Unfortunately, the reactions to China's reopening of international travel in January reminds us that many governments are still playing politics when it comes to COVID

and travel. Epidemiologists, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and others have said that the reintroduction of testing for travelers from China can do little to contain a virus that is already present around the world. And China's objections to these policy measures are compromised by their own pre-departure testing requirements for people traveling to China. Governments should focus on using available tools to manage COVID effectively—including improved therapeutics and vaccinations—rather than repeating policies that have failed time and again over the last three years," said **Willie Walsh**, Director General, IATA.

PREMIUM AND ECONOMY PROGRESSED WELL

Recovery trends for international traffic in the Premium and Economy cabin classes remain broadly aligned. Economy class RPKs—which include premium economy (and accounts for 92 per cent of total RPKs)—reached 79.6 per cent of their January 2020 level in July 2022. Premium RPKs—which capture travel in first and business class cabins—fared nearly as well at 74.2 per cent of the January 2020 level. Latest IATA figures show a minor divergence in the recovery between cabin classes. Such divergences are frequently observed during high and low activity periods. Travel in Economy tends to lead during the northern hemisphere's summer, and lag during the winter months.

Traffic results in November reinforce that consumers are thoroughly enjoying freedom to travel



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Crystal clear: Good ecological practices

Human relationship with ecology remains on tight leash in view of numerous ecological disasters, writes **Niranjan Khatri**, Founder, iSambhav.

I was very privileged to be posted in a remote island called Port Blair where I was surrounded by untouched tropical forests, tequila clear sea water embracing the shores with mangroves, and a combination of so many aspects of natural systems; it was a visual feast for me. In Port Blair, I was introduced to the various nuances of nature which I was oblivious of.

Transferable jobs, like in the army, give diverse experience with a very wide view of the world. Similarly, working in a large diverse hotel location exposes individuals to rich experiences, some of which cannot be taught in the education system.

It was courtesy the Late Vice Admiral S P Govil and the then Chief Conservator of the Forests, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, who nudged me to address the negative externality of the tourists-discarded packed lunch boxes, which were littering the islands and damaging the corals and sensitive forests. These two external stakeholders were instrumental in inducting me, very politely, into my journey of transformative change in operating the hotel mindfully.

I was not conscious of the word mindful although the hotel industry is very mindful of the needs of the guests in the hotel. I was not equipped to understand what being mindful of the external ecosystems meant at that time because I was an ecological illiterate!

The first step we took to gently make the tourists also mindful of nature was by putting messages on the packed lunch boxes that were taken by the guests for picnics to different islands. The message was please do not litter the island, please leave the corals for the fish. Without consciously knowing the terminology sustainable development, we stumbled into circular and regenerative economies, which is getting traction today, albeit at the pace of a tortoise.

The hotel, perched on a hilltop, commands a breathtaking view of the distant islands; in a manner of speaking, I had the opportunity of acquiring a world view of being mindful in the waste domain and in making our guests mindful of the different elements of nature. We developed a resource modest service design, which has withstood the litmus test of time. The ideas implemented over a period of four years from 1988 are so pertinent today, with intense heatwaves, droughts, floods, and arctic chill affecting us in different geographies. Scarcity of various resources such as water, sand, aggregate, and chips are the latest in the list of declining resources beginning to impact human activities.

There are some very good examples of governments being mindful of flora and fauna. Some two decades ago, a large machine was imported to be sent from the Kolkata port to an oil refinery in the Northeast by a narrow road through the Kaziranga National Park. The state authorities did not give permission to broaden the road through the park, instead a one-time permission was taken from Bangladesh to use their road network to bypass Kaziranga, without disturbing the wildlife.

Water, sand, aggregate, and chips are the latest in the list of declining resources beginning to impact human activities



Similarly, the German government was worried that the frogs who were crossing the autobahn were getting killed in significant numbers, hence they made bores under the roads so that the frogs had a safe passage.

In homes, we are mindful of the need of other members' silence when they are working from home. In apartments we try not to make noise which will affect neighbours. In the hospitality industry, we anticipate the guests needs and fulfil the same before they even ask for it. In the hospitality sector, staff are trained to be mindful of guests' needs which are addressed even before they ask for something!

With this brief background, I will share some thoughts on how to make guests mindful of their heavy negative carbon footprints.

MINDFUL USE OF RESOURCES

In 2022, we saw the *tandav* of climate change from California to China in the form of severe fires, droughts, and floods. The Seine, Rhine, Po, and the Yangtze rivers dried up impacting power production, farming, and disrupting supply chains. One-third of Pakistan was flooded and looked like the sea.

ADDRESSING ECOLOGICAL IMBALANCE

The global forest cover is currently 30 per cent, it was 47 per cent in 1947. As per the Internet, the USA alone consumes 45 billion tissues per annum to wipe their nose and the drops of water falling on the ground, stains, among others. Manufacturing toilet paper consumes 37 gallons of water, 1.3 kWh of energy and chemicals, which has a huge impact on climate change.

There is a need to educate guests to not use Category-A resources for a Category-C need, causing huge difficulties for two billion poor people due to its negative impact; instead, they must be encouraged in becoming mindful by using the hygiene faucet, using a handkerchief for personal use and a mopping cloth for wiping the floor. This is being mindful in very simple known ways. Just these two practices cause decimation of 270,000 trees per day as per Wikipedia!

There is great opportunity to migrate from the use of 650 grams per sq meter (GSM) towels to 100 GSM towels, the former requires 22 litres of water per wash. According to WWF, one towel requires 20,000 litres of water to be produced. Considering 1.6 billion people do not have access to clean water globally as per UN data, there is an urgent need to embrace super mindful behaviour in order to not make the life of the poor more comforting on account of climate change. This issue has been talked about since the last 30 years in the Conference of the Parties meetings.

Transformative change is urgently needed today. All these decisions are akin to industries which practice ABC analysis while handling resources; the same principle must be applied keeping natural resources on their business dashboard. Here are some solutions:

- a. Bathtub should only be seen in the London Museum.

In 2022, we saw the *tandav* of climate change from California to China in the form of severe fires, droughts, and floods



- b. Water timers should be installed in the shower cubicles: if the shower is used for more than three minutes, the meter should run for luxury use of water at a scarcity mindful rate, for billing purpose.
 - c. Bedsheets to be changed in hotel rooms once in three days—should be made a default standard.
 - d. Suppliers must mandatorily disclose their water footprint!
 - e. The operations team to be educated in energy/water nexus.
 - f. B2B green advocacy—a new tool can be deployed—when the going gets tough, the tough get going.
 - g. Considering that the hotel industry has contacts with different industries, they may take the initiative to suggest to the car industry to feature the following in their manual:
 - i) Do not use a hose pipe to wash the car, dry clean the car, except when needed with a wet cloth on rainy days.
 - ii) While traveling on roads people throw out bottles and garbage on the roads. The car industry can design a small
- space for keeping garbage which can be responsibly reused, or a communication to car owners to keep their own bag for waste generated in the car.
- iii) The film industry should be directed to not use water in shooting scenes and instead replace it with digital water. The digital water will not be comparable in quality with natural water, but this lacuna can be overcome by explaining that every drop of water is too precious to be wasted, thereby raising the mindfulness bar of the masses which is still lacking, in spite of so many real time shortages experienced by stakeholders!
 - h. Offer small pegs of water in restaurants, a simple and humorous way of bringing scarcity-value pricing in conversation in industry's service design. We do not have a thirst quotient meter to gauge the guests thirst level, therefore the old habit of offering a full glass of water needs to be abandoned as soon as possible. As per conservative estimates, India wastes 200 crore litres of unconsumed water per day.

All the above illustrative steps, if scrutinised, will help in bending the emission curve, without any cost and will ensure that the excesses of the affluent do not make the lives of the underprivileged of the world more difficult, due to increasing impact of climate ferocity.

As per conservative estimates, India wastes 200 crore litres of unconsumed water per day

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President & CEO,
Hilton

The 18th Edition of the Hotel Investment Conference-South Asia (HICSA) in Bangalore from 11 to 13 April 2023 will witness Chris Nassetta, President & CEO, Hilton as a keynote speaker. Nassetta's keynote session will take place on Day 1 of the Conference.

Commenting on his participation in HICSA, Nassetta said, "HICSA is an institution in South Asia's hospitality space and Hilton is excited to host this year's event. As the world's third largest economy, India presents a



tremendous opportunity for travel and tourism, and all of us at Hilton are optimistic about the future of this incredible market. We are working to double our portfolio here by 2027 and introduce more of our award-winning brands to travelers throughout India. I am looking forward to connecting with India's hospitality leaders at HICSA as we define the next golden age of travel, and our

team is excited to share our signature hospitality with the conference attendees at the Hilton Bengaluru Embassy Manyata Business Park and Hilton Garden Inn Bengaluru Embassy Manyata Business Park."

Nassetta was recognised by the International Hospitality Institute as one of the 100 Most Powerful People in Global Hospitality in

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June 2022 and serves on multiple boards, including the World Travel & Tourism Council, where he recently held the position as the former Chairman.

“This year’s edition will be unique and special in many ways. Over the years we have had a similar format, but change is truly the only constant! Artificial Intelligence is bringing a new perspective to the table, and we must be ready to embrace it. We are delighted to have the best industry minds in attendance and are extremely happy to welcome Chris back at HICSA once again,” said Manav Thadani, Founder Chairman, Hotelivate.

HICSA since its inaugural edition in 2005, has been a gathering platform for the hospitality industry the world over. The conference is valued for its content-rich sessions and excellent networking opportunities attracting the hospitality industry’s top brands, hotel owners, bankers, developers, and professional advisors from around the globe.

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MOVEMENTS



DEEPAK DANDGE

**Executive Chef
Orchid Mumbai**

★ With an experience of 21 years, Deepak Dandge, Executive Chef, Orchid Mumbai has worked with brands such as Sofitel, JW Marriott, Taj, Starwood, and InterContinental Hotels and has mastered the art of various cuisines ranging from Mughlai to Mediterranean and more. Italian, Mediterranean, Lebanese, French, and Progressive are some of the cuisines that Chef Dandge enjoys cooking. He believes that these cuisines give him a lot of room to innovate.



FARHAN HAMIDANI

**Director, Sales & Marketing
The Westin Goa**

★ A seasoned manager, Farhan Hamidani has 13 plus years of experience in the hospitality industry and has worked with hotel chains such as Hyatt and Accor. He joins The Westin Goa as Director, Sales and Marketing. Hamidani will be leading a country wide sales team and strategically directing the marketing roadmap for The Westin Goa. In addition, he would also be responsible for collaborating with key stakeholders and business partners to define the competitive strategy in line with the hotel's charted intent.



ABHIJEET ADURKAR

**Hotel Manager
The Resort**

★ Abhijeet Adurkar brings with him extensive experience of over 14 years in the hospitality industry. As Hotel Manager, The Resort, Adurkar will be overlooking all operations at the hotel and ensuring that it continues to deliver the highest level of guest satisfaction. Before joining The Resort, Adurkar was General Manager, Yauatcha Mumbai. Prior to this, he has worked with Le Méridien Resort and Spa, Courtyard by Marriott, Ritz Carlton, JW Marriott Hotel Mumbai Sahar, JW Marriott Juhu, and JW Marriott in Aerocity, New Delhi.



RAKESH NAIDU

**Chief Engineer
Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport**

★ Rakesh Naidu holds extensive knowledge and understanding in technical services and asset management ensuring sustainable practices and increasing efficiency throughout the hotel. As Chief Engineer, Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport, he will be implementing policies, standards, and procedures pertaining to engineering and technical work across all departments. He has 10 years of vast experience in the hospitality sector with brands such as the Taj, Hyatt and Lemon Tree Hotels. Naidu's last stint was with Sodexo Facility Management, Jio World Convention Centre.



KKEYUR SANGANI

**Crowne Meeting Director
Crowne Plaza Greater Noida**

★ With a wealth of experience in enhancing sales, marketing, and revenue streams, Sangani has worked with hotel chains such as JW Marriott, Jin Jiang International Hotel, and InterContinental Hotels Group. His last assignment was with PVR Ltd, Mumbai as a General Manager, Operations. As Crowne Meeting Director, Crowne Plaza Greater Noida, Sangani will act as the one point of contact for Meetings and Events requirement of the guests. Kkeyur holds a bachelor's degree in Hotel Management and an MBA in Hotel Management.



ROHIT CHHOKAR

**Director, Sales & Marketing
The Westin Rishikesh Resort & Spa**

★ Rohit Chhokar has held key positions across hospitality brands, including Marriott International, Starwood Hotels & Resorts, JHM Interstate Hotels & Resorts, and Wyndham Hotels & Resorts. As Director, Sales & Marketing, The Westin Rishikesh Resort & Spa, Chhokar will be instrumental in implementing strategies to enhance the brand reputation by driving innovative campaigns. Being a seasoned sales leader, he will spearhead business plans to deliver profitability and continue the successful growth trajectory for the hotel brand.



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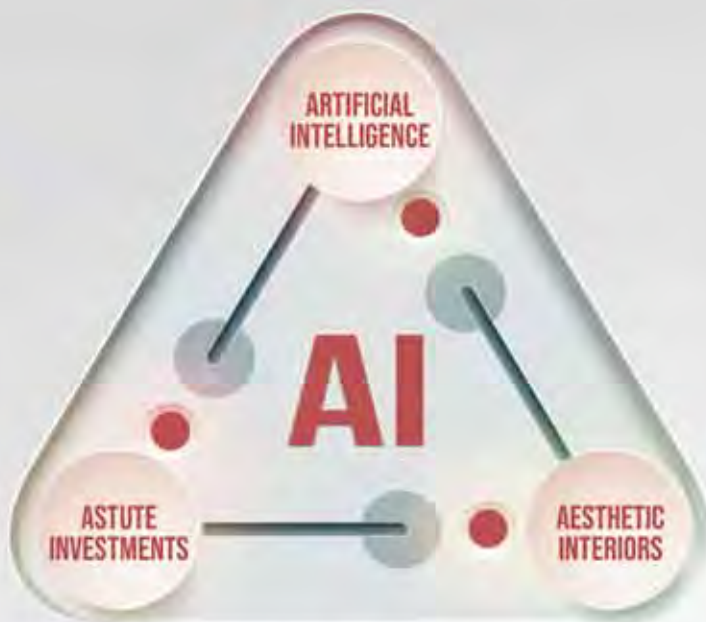


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18TH HOTEL INVESTMENT CONFERENCE - SOUTH ASIA

11th - 13th April 2023

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Regional VP Development - India/SW Asia
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Anil Chadha
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ITC Limited Hotels Division



Anthony Capuano
Chief Executive Officer
Marriott International



Anuraag Bhatnagar
Chief Operating Officer
The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts



Chris Nassetta
President and CEO
Hilton



Dillip Rajakarier
Group CEO
Minor International



Dimitris Manikis
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Lada Shelkovnikova
Partner Hotels & Hospitality
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Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar
Executive Director
Historic Resort Hotels



Laure Morvan
Chief Development Officer
India/ME/Africa/Turkey, Accor



Priya Paul
Chairperson
Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels



Puneet Chhatwal
Managing Director and CEO
IHCL



Rajeev Menon
President - APAC (excluding Greater China)
Marriott International



Rajesh Magow
Co-Founder & Group CEO
MakeMyTrip



Sanjay Sethi
Chief Executive Officer and MD
Chalet Hotels



Suhail Kannampilly
Chief Executive Officer
The Fern Hotels and Resorts



Zubin Saxena
MD and VP Operations - SA
Radisson Hotel Group

For more information please visit www.hicsaconference.com