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A MONTHLY ON HOSPITALITY TRADE
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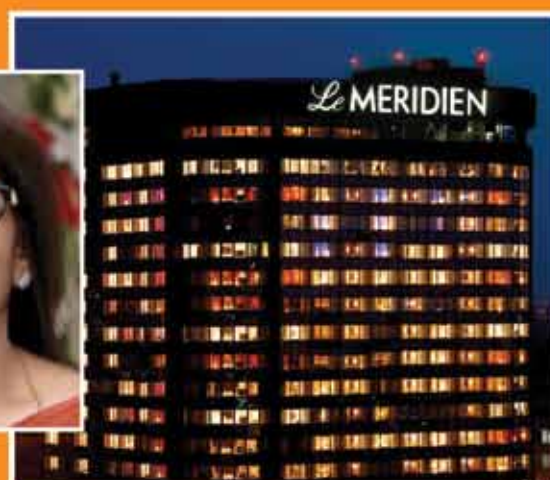


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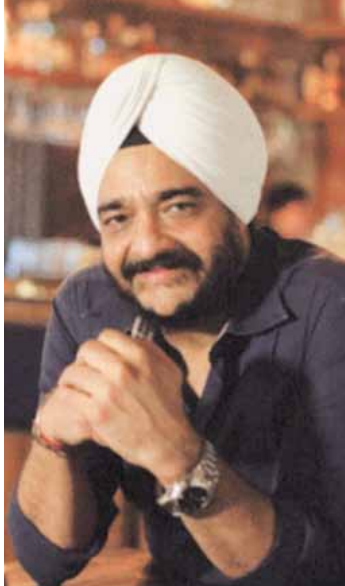
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Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President
FHRAI

The months of November and December 2021 had the highest occupancy and tourist arrivals. This presents new avenues for Indian tourists to travel within India rather than overseas

My Dear Members,

Firstly, I wish each and every one of you a very happy and prosperous New Year. Omicron is expected to emerge by the end of 2021, but what is encouraging is that, while this variant is expected to be just as infectious, if not more so, it will be less fatal, thanks to a record of ₹140 crore being vaccinated at least with the first dose.

To safeguard its citizens and keep the spread under control, each state is releasing new restrictions and updating existing ones. Children aged 15 to 18 will be vaccinated starting this month, with booster shots for frontline and health professionals, as well as people over the age of 60. The Hon'ble PM made this announcement in the wake of an increase in Omicron cases, and this kind of aggressive vaccination drive is now vital in our country.

The J&K Real Estate Summit for the Development of Housing and Tourism Infrastructure in the State was recently held in Jammu on December 27, 2021, by the centre and the J&K government to encourage people from across India to invest in real estate and property and to develop tourism infrastructure in the region. The J&K government invited the FHRAI to participate in a panel discussion and sign a joint memorandum of understanding with the state government to assist in the development of tourism in the state.

It was an honour to represent FHRAI at this summit and interact with dignitaries such as Hardeep Singh Puri, Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs; Jitendra Singh, Minister for Technology and Earth Sciences; and Lt. Governor for J&K, Manoj Sinha, as well as top J&K government officials. This meeting follows the state government's recent decision to permit the sale and purchase of non-agricultural land.

This opens up a lot of opportunities for our members who wish to invest in and expand their businesses. Personally, I believe that gaining the

confidence of both locals and investors will take some time, but it is a step in the right direction.

In the period after the second wave, Srinagar, Gulmarg, Sonmarg, and Pehalgam all had record sales. From July onwards, the valley has seen a substantial rise in tourists, particularly in the high-end range. The months of November and December 2021 had the highest occupancy and tourist arrivals in the state's history. These would be tourists who would normally be on vacation in another country. Not only does this present new avenues for Indian tourists to travel within India rather than overseas, but it also raises the prospect of an expedited industry revival if Indians embrace tourism within the country.

The FHRAI had an exclusive opportunity to interact with ministers, states, L.G., principal secretary, R.D., and tourism officials during the event. We discussed state promotion and business opportunities. The FHRAI was also invited to Srinagar and examined the infrastructure as well as the newly constructed Exhibition Centre.

This invitation elevates your Federation's importance to the government, as well as the fact that the FHRAI is increasingly breaking ground and earning recognition with the government as the apex body representing both hotels and restaurants, which is something to be proud of. The application form and other formalities will be made available to the FHRAI as soon as they are issued by the J&K government, and they will be provided to all of you to undertake if you like.

I wish you all a very happy 2022 and hope that this New Year brings the much-needed impetus for our industry.

With kind regards,

Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI

JANUARY 2022

OUTLOOK FOR 2022

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The regional heads share their outlook for 2022. What looked like a revival year now seems to be another fight for survival

COVER IMAGE:
RAFFLES UDAIPUR



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SECRETARY GENERAL
Jaison Chacko - sg@fhrai.com

PUBLISHER
Devika Jeet - devika@ddppl.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Lipla Negi - lipla.negi@ddppl.com

DESK EDITOR
VVN Murthi - vvn.murthi@ddppl.com
Devika Seth - seth.d@ddppl.com

CREATIVE DESIGN
Rashi Girdhar

MARKETING & SALES - DELHI
Nikhil Jeet - Nikhil.jeet@ddppl.com
Director Advertising (+91 9910031313)

Gaganpreet Kaur - gaganpreet@ddppl.com
Marketing Manager (+919650399934)

Ankit Endlaw - ankit.endlaw@ddppl.com
Manager Sales (+919650399928)

MUMBAI
Harshal Ashar - harshal@ddppl.com
General Manager (+919619499167)

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Anil Kharbanda

ADVERTISEMENT DESIGNER
Nitin Kumar

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Just as the industry was starting to recover, the Omicron threat appeared. The industry and domestic tourists have shown remarkable resilience in the aftermath of the early waves.



32 NEED TO EXPAND TOURISM HORIZON

COVID-19 has had a severe impact on the tourism and hospitality industries. Experts are skeptical about why, when, and how the industry will evolve in the post-COVID-19 era.



FHRAI

B-82, 8th Floor, Himalaya House
Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi 110001
Tel: 91-11-40780780, Fax: +91-11-40780777
Email: fhrai@fhrai.com

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Editor: Devika Jeet

Email: fhraimag@ddppl.com
Tel: +919818767141

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Creating a level playing field

FHRAI submits representation to MOT requesting a clear line of demarcation between B&Bs and homestays, aiming to level the playing field for players in the organised sector.

Following up on a meeting with the Ministry of Tourism (MoT) on December 14, 2021, the FHRAI has submitted suggestions to Arvind Singh, Secretary, MoT, on the 'Revised National Standards and Guidelines of Incredible India Bed & Breakfast (B&B) and Homestay Establishments'. The recommendations seek to improve the efficiency and visitor friendliness of B&B and homestay facilities while also pointing out flaws in the draft guidelines. One of the most urgent issues is the lack of clear definitions between B&B and homestay establishments in the guidelines, as well as any definitive features to identify the schemes. The FHRAI has included proposals in its presentation to make the schemes more economically feasible, tourist-friendly, and to provide a level playing field for all players in the hospitality ecosystem.

"The current dual definition of homestay and B&B is almost identical and is causing a lot of confusion. The FHRAI suggests that the guidelines clearly demarcate B&B as purely restricted to the limited use of residential premises for limited commercial purposes. It should stay true to the original brief, which was for the owner to reside and provide both accommodation and breakfast to guests within the same premise, thus providing a local experience and cuisine flavour to guests under the aegis of 'Incredible India'. The other, homestay, should be identified as a commercial use of a residence without restricting the owner from residing in the same premise while offering similar services to guests through 'safe and responsible' tourism campaign," says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI.

The FHRAI has requested that the differentiating features of B&Bs and homestays in terms of eligibility criteria, application process, classification or reclassification,



regulatory compliance, and incentive policy be established clearly and unequivocally. "There are discrepancies, such as who the assigning authority will be to prescribe electricity or tax rates. In one part of the draft, it prescribes authority to the regional classification committee, and in another, it states domestic rates for electricity and the rate of property tax will be those prescribed by the appropriate authorities for residential purposes. There is also ambiguity between the terms 'caretaker', 'agent', and 'operator'. In one section of the draft, the standard guidelines for both types of accommodation state that the owner or caretaker should reside in the property, whereas the detailed guidelines for B&B state that the owner or promoter does not reside at the establishment, but an agent or operator designated by the owner resides on the property premises to provide the necessary services to the guests," adds Kohli.

The FHRAI has discovered missing crucial information in the standards for homestays, among other flaws. As per the association,

the standards in their current form essentially encourage the expansion of room inventory by enabling agents or operators to handle it. This is anti-organised-sector discrimination. Hotel chains in all segments are governed by strict state, central, and local laws, while B&Bs and homestays are not. "Through our suggestions, we aim to bring a few important points to the attention of the ministry. Because the new guidelines will supersede all previous standards and guidelines and be regarded as the single standard document containing all binding principles and policies on the subject matter. As a result, it is critical that the draft guidelines provide a clear definition of B&B and homestay establishments to avoid any confusion among stakeholders. It has missed out on homestays, which require the submission of details of foreign guests to local police within 24 hours of arrival. It does not state that a single applicant will not be able to register more than one B&B establishment in the same premises, building, or colony; nor does it ask that employees in homestays wear designated uniforms and name badges, among other criteria. It is pertinent to have a level playing field for the organised sector, and the new guidelines should not be detrimental to the survival, growth, and existence of one of the most important stakeholders in the tourism sector in the country," concludes Kohli.



It is vital that draft guidelines provide a clear definition of B&Bs and homestays



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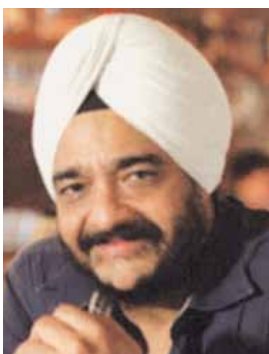
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An urgent urge to spur growth

The FHRAI has proposed detailed pre-budget recommendations with the objective of providing impetus to the hotel and restaurant members' cash flows and competitiveness.



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli



We urged the government to encourage domestic travel



The Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) has submitted a comprehensive list of recommendations to the Finance Ministry for the upcoming Union Budget 2022–23, addressing some of the industry's most pressing needs.

The association has proposed that the industry be allowed to carry over business losses for a period of up from the existing eight years to 12 years and continue to benefit from the Service Exports from India Scheme/ Export Promotion Capital Goods (SEIS/EPCG) benefits without any rate reductions or capping. It also expects the budget to extend the deadline for fulfilling export obligations under the EPCG scheme and grant the industry export status, to include hotels and tourism-related sectors in the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP), to place a special emphasis on promoting meetings and conferences at hotels in light of the pandemic's massive setback, to grant infrastructure status to the hospitality industry, and to provide special tax incentives for domestic travel.

"We are requesting that hotels and tourism-related sectors be included in infrastructure projects listed in

the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) set up by the Development Financial Institution (DFI) by the Ministry of Finance to promote infrastructure funding. This will enable the COVID-19-hit hospitality sector to avail funds with extended repayment periods at a low rate of interest," says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI.

Elaborating further, he adds, "The hotel industry is a long-gestation industry, which incurs losses in the initial years of operations and profitability improves only after a few years. Because of this, most hotels carry forward business losses with the expectation of setting them off over the coming years. However, the industry's profitability took a massive hit due to the unprecedented pandemic conditions and expects businesses to post losses for the next few years. This may result in hotels being unable to set off past business losses within a period of eight years, adversely impacting cash flow and RoI. Hence, we request that business losses be carried forward from the existing eight years to 12 years."

The hospitality industry is experiencing an existential crisis as a result of the twin lockdowns and restrictions due to the ongoing pandemic. According to the

FHRAI, the recovery of the industry is mainly reliant on government backing and favourable policies.

According to the association, hotels in the service sector experienced a significant drop in business after 2007. Occupancy plummeted by 20 per cent to 40 per cent, and foreign exchange earnings dropped by more than 5 per cent year-over-year during this time.

"Increasing SEIS entitlement from the existing 3 per cent to 10 per cent of the net foreign exchange earnings for the next three to five financial years will help the industry mitigate some of the damage inflicted on it due to the pandemic. Also, to accelerate and incentivise all-round development of tourism infrastructure catering to foreign tourists, fiscal incentives in the form of SEIS certificates and imports against EPCG should be continued for the near future," says **Pradeep Shetty**, Joint Honorary Secretary, FHRAI.

"In view of the volatile economic environment, the timeline for meeting export obligations (EO) should also be extended by at least four years for all the EPCG licences that have an EO period falling from February 2020 onwards. The granting of export status to the hospitality industry with tax incentives and benefits would enable the sector to be more competitive and help the sector jumpstart its growth," Shetty expounds. In light of the significant losses caused by the pandemic, the FHRAI has requested that a special emphasis be placed on promoting meetings and conferences at hotels in India.

"Incentives should be offered to corporates for organising meetings and conferences at hotels in India. This may include giving partial or full tax exemptions to corporations on the expenses incurred. This will encourage corporations to hold meetings and conferences within the country, which will be a win-win situation for both. Expenses incurred by corporates for meetings and conferences abroad should not be considered as business expenditure. This will discourage MICE events abroad and help conserve foreign exchange while boosting the sales of domestic hospitality businesses. This will also help in generating employment at home," adds Shetty.

The FHRAI has once again pleaded with the Finance Ministry to provide infrastructure and industry status, which has been a long-standing demand of the industry.

"We request the government to classify hospitality under the RBI's infrastructure lending norms criteria for accessing long-term funds to enhance quality accommodation supply. This will stimulate higher global and domestic travel demand. Currently, hotels built with an investment of ₹200 crore or more have been accorded infrastructure status. This threshold has to be brought down to ₹10 crore per hotel to give a fillip to hotels in the budget segment. This will enable hotels to avail term loans at lower rates of interest and also have a longer repayment period," says Kohli.

"Under the prevailing conditions, the post-pandemic business environment strongly demands facilitative measures from the government to provide enough incentives to encourage more than 28 million people who travel out of India to stay back and holiday in India. We had requested that the government encourage domestic travel by promoting local destinations because the opening of foreign travel remains a point of contention. Incentivising domestic travel through tax cuts or by way of tax deductions for a pre-agreed duration, say two to three years, will fill the void and help local tourism survive until international travel resumes. Of the over 28 million who travel outside the country, if the domestic market can tap into even a part of this segment, it will help promote domestic travel and also retain the outgoing foreign exchange from India.

We need to encourage people to spend within the country to aid the hospitality industry's revival. For this, we request the Hon'ble Finance Minister to allow tax deductions in the IT returns of individuals and corporates for expenses incurred for travel within the country. Also, we request that the decision to introduce LTC cash vouchers in lieu of LTC fare for central government employees be reviewed to boost domestic travel and help the hospitality industry on its path to recovery," concludes Kohli.



Pradeep Shetty

“**Incentives should be offered for organising MICE events**”



Enhancing J&K tourism landscape

For the first time, FHRAI and the J&K government have inked an MoU to boost the public-private partnership in the region to maximise the territory's hospitality and tourist potential.

The FHRAI and the Government of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish hotels and other hospitality infrastructure in the Union Territory. This is the first time in history that an MoU has been signed between a hotel and restaurant association and the government. The MoU was signed at the Jammu Convention Centre on December 27, 2021, at the Real Estate Summit 2021, which was jointly hosted by the Government of Jammu & Kashmir, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), the Government of India, and the National Real Development Council (NAREDCO).

Thirty-nine MoUs were signed for the development of housing, hotel, and commercial projects, with four MoUs sanctioned for hospitality projects. The hospitality industry was represented at the event by Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, Vice President, who signed the FHRAI memorandum of understanding. Hardeep Singh Puri, Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs, was present at the event, which aimed to provide a useful platform for showcasing possible real estate investment prospects and to have in-depth discussions on the policy and regulatory framework. Jitendra Singh,

Union Minister of State for PMO; Manoj Sinha, Lieutenant Governor of J&K; and Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs, Gol, were among the dignitaries who attended the summit.

"The FHRAI is honoured to have received the opportunity to represent the hospitality industry. We thank the MoHUA, the J&K government and NAREDCO for inviting us and signing the MoU to develop hospitality infrastructure in the region. J&K is a very promising venue with wonderful people and a hospitality-friendly ecosystem. With this MoU, we look forward to strengthening further the public-private partnership in the region to leverage the enormous potential the region has to offer for hospitality and tourism. We are hopeful that this will facilitate the J&K government providing land to the FHRAI members for various projects and extend incentives and other benefits as per



New developments in hospitality will give a strong push to economic growth



existing policies and rules. New developments in hospitality will give a strong push for economic growth through increased investments and will create more employment opportunities in the region," says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI.

At the event, Kohli was felicitated with an award for his leadership at the FHRAI and contribution to the industry. He also participated in a panel discussion titled, 'Next Destination J&K: Tourism, Films & Entertainment, Logistics, Commercial, and Warehousing'. He, along with the co-panelists, stressed the need to promote the region as an untapped destination for the growth in infrastructure, tourism, hospitality, and real estate.

The panel discussion witnessed participation from Rohit Kansal, Secretary, Information Department, Government of J&K; Sarmad Hafez, Secretary, Tourism Department, Government of J&K; Anoo Malhotra, Director-I&C, Jammu; Mahmood Ahmad Shah, Director-I&C, Jammu; Sanjay Sethi, MD and CEO, Chalet Hotels Ltd.; Nitin Desai, Art Director and Producer; Rajesh Gupta, Executive Committee Member, LEAD; and Khair Ull Nissa, Executive Director-WTC and WTCA Board Member.

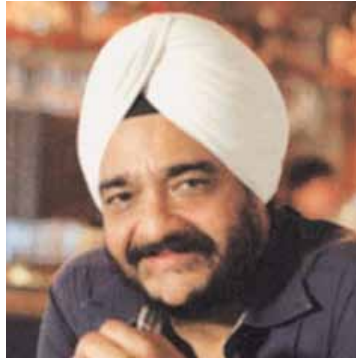


'Relieve the beleaguered industry'

Participating in a pre-budget consultative meeting with Nirmala Sitharaman, Finance Minister, FHRAI has reiterated its list of recommendations.

The FHRAI reiterated their list of suggestions during a pre-budget consultative meeting with, Nirmala Sitharaman, Union Finance Minister of India. The association outlined the hospitality industry's primary expectations and emphasised their most pressing needs. "We hope that the government will take our representation into consideration. This is a crucial budget for the industry since lockdowns hit it the worst. We sincerely hope that our recommendations will be included in the government's budget. As a follow-up to the meeting, we submitted a letter to the FM. We have prioritised our suggestions and created a list of 11 key points to include in the budget," says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI.

The points highlighted were: the inclusion of hotels and tourism-related sectors in the national infrastructure pipeline; special tax



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI



The forthcoming Union Budget is one of the most crucial budgets



Pradeep Shetty
Joint Secretary, FHRAI



Some of our suggestions can be implemented without any major loss



example, giving infrastructure status to hotels established with an investment of ₹10 crore, rather than the current threshold of ₹200 crore, will boost the budget category significantly. Allowing restaurants to take advantage of the ITC is another critical necessity for the sector. We propose two structures, one composite and one with an option for the restaurant to claim ITC, similar to the previous service tax regime," says **Pradeep Shetty**, Jt. Hon. Sec., FHRAI.

"One of the most important budgets is the Union Budget 2022-23. Not only the major and small hoteliers, but also the millions of stakeholders, have their hopes pinned on this. We hope that the Ministry will take these recommendations seriously and give much-needed relief to the beleaguered hotel industry," concludes Kohli.

incentives for domestic travel; special emphasis on promoting meetings and conferences at hotels in India in view of the massive damage caused by COVID-19; granting infrastructure and industry status to the hospitality industry; allowing Input Tax Credit (ITC) for restaurants; treating payments made by foreigners in Rupees in hotels as foreign exchange earned for the purpose of the EPCG scheme; modifying the present criteria for hotels for infrastructure funding; allowing carry forward business losses

from eight years to 12 years for a fixed period in the future; deduction u/s 35AD-proposed withdrawal of various incentives under the Income Tax Act; and allowing exemption from Section 17 in CGST for the hospitality sector.

"Some of our recommendations can be implemented without any significant cost to the government. The benefits to the industry, stakeholders, and long-term revenues to the government, however, will be tremendous. For



'Abort proposed IPO of OYO'

FHRAI submits a rejoinder to OYO's reply dated November 11, 2021 to objections of the association, along with additional objections to the proposed IPO of Oravel Stays Limited.

The FHRAI has submitted a rejoinder to the SEBI chairperson to point out inadequacies in the reply of Oravel Stays Limited (Oravel/OYO) dated November 11, 2021 to the association's objections raised in its letter dated October 18, 2021, as well as to add to the record additional facts relevant to the proposed initial public offering (IPO). The FHRAI further draws attention to the objections highlighted in their letter of October 18, 2021. To begin with, it is critical to emphasise that all of OYO's explanations provided in its November 11, 2021 response are false and misleading, and should be rejected.

NON-DISCLOSURE OF INVESTIGATION BY DGGI

The FHRAI expresses its dismay in the letter after discovering that the Directorate General of GST Investigation (DGGI) had filed a complaint against M/s Oravel Stays Private Ltd., and its group firms for evasion of service tax/GST. The CGST department has notified several members of the FHRAI that they must participate in the inquiry and present records related to their transactions with OYO. The company did not reveal this information in its DRHP. Because such non-disclosure is a blatant infringement of OYO's responsibilities, the FHRAI urges that its DRHP should be rejected on that basis alone. Several investigating authorities are actively looking into OYO and its management for possible breaches of the Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017, the Competition Act, 2002, and the Indian

Penal Code, 1860. The Supreme Court has issued a notice against the order of Ld. NCLAT allowing CIRP against OYO Hotels and Homes Private Limited to be withdrawn. The FHRAI has filed a Civil Appeal No. 7367 of 2021 with the SC, challenging the Ld. NCLAT's order dated July 7, 2021, which allowed the withdrawal of the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process admitted against OYO.

OYO FAILS TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES RAISED BY FHRAI

A huge number of hotels around the country have filed different complaints against OYO and its management for fraudulent conduct and unfair trade practices. Therefore, any claim based on its economic stability must be supported by OYO's own financial accounts. While OYO argues that it has fully disclosed the CCI-DG inquiry into its conduct, it has neglected to reveal the actual scope of the ramifications

of a finding of culpability. Furthermore, the disclosure of the CCI inquiry in the DRHP itself is unsatisfactory and appears to have been created solely to confuse unimportant matters and misdirect a reasonable investor who does not have access to legal counsel. OYO has also failed to disclose the number of litigations/arbitrations arising out of its cancelling, revoking, reneging, or avoiding contractual obligations by claiming COVID-19 to be a force majeure event. Any authority decision on the problem is likely to have an influence on the outcome of every comparable process brought against OYO, making it a material lawsuit that must be notified in accordance with its own materiality policy. It is worth noting that during the CIRP proceedings against Oravel, claims totalling over ₹160 crore were claimed to have been lodged against OYO. The company has maintained that its over 80 subsidiaries are engaged in genuine commercial operations and are not just shell firms, but it has yet to reveal what businesses these subsidiaries are involved in or how they differ from Oravel's.

In conclusion, the FHRAI urges the SEBI to halt the IPO process until all the issues are addressed to safeguard the interests of all stakeholders and the general public. The FHRAI maintains the right to point out any additional breaches or weaknesses in the DRHP as they become apparent. In addition, the FHRAI expresses its availability to assist the SEBI in any manner that is deemed necessary.



OYO maintains that its 80 subsidiaries are engaged in genuine commercial operations



FSSAI unveils online programme

The workshop addressed all of the basic principle laws of personal hygiene and safety, as well as the FSSAI's licencing requirements for personnel employed in hotels and restaurants.

On December 15, 2021, the HRAWI, in partnership with Parikshan, held an online Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) Food Safety Supervisory Training in Advance Catering (FoSTaC) programme. Led by Dr. Pashupathy, the programme drew a total of 33 participants. The workshop addressed all of the basic principle laws of personal hygiene and safety, as well as the FSSAI's licencing requirements for personnel employed in hotels and restaurants. It focussed on some basic and essential aspects of cleanliness and maintenance in hospitality establishments.

"FSSAI's training programmes cover a wide range of topics that are valuable to all hospitality professionals. The



Sherry Bhatia
President, HRAWI


**HRAWI has trained
and certified 1,791
professionals** 

HRAWI's most recent session discussed some of the more routine yet incredibly important topics. Many of the skills we learned in hospitality schools are reintroduced in specific contexts in FSSAI's programmes, and professionals get to stay up to speed with the current industry norms. We are glad that members are proactively participating in these programmes, and the HRAWI will continue to host them for the benefit of its members as well as the industry as a whole," says **Sherry Bhatia**, President, HRAWI.

The training also addressed scheduled housekeeping and disinfection methods, as well as the need to procure raw materials from FSSAI-licensed or registered vendors, among other food handling topics.

HRAWI

Omicron casts shadows, again

HRAWI has urged its members to follow COVID Appropriate Behaviour (CAB).

In response to a circular published by the Maharashtra government on December 24, 2021, the HRAWI has issued an advisory to its members, encouraging them to strictly follow the guidelines outlined in the circular. As per the advisory, all F&B establishments must display the full capacity as well as 50 per cent of that capacity prominently, as required by their permissions. At any given time, the total number of guests in confined spaces must not exceed 100, and in open-air spaces, no more than 250, or 25 per cent of the capacity. The circular also prohibits festivities and requires all enterprises to follow COVID Appropriate Behaviour (CAB). "This is in the interest of the government and to ensure that we do not go under another lockdown. At this juncture, it would be extremely critical that we do not let our guard down. HRAWI requests all its members to commit to ensuring our own safety and, thereby, our guests' safety when ushering in the New Year by not letting this virus win," says **Sherry Bhatia**, President, HRAWI.

HRAWI



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Boosting the region high and far

SIHRA continues to strengthen the sector in the region by clearing the long-overdue payments of hoteliers and K. Syama Raju receiving an award for his services, among others.

SIHRA

In recognition of his entrepreneurship, the Karnataka government has conferred K. Syama Raju, President, SIHRA, the Kannada Rajyotsava Award. The Rajyotsava Awards are presented by the Government of Karnataka based on public nominations to laud unsung heroes who have made significant contributions to the citizens of Karnataka in the fields of arts, literature, culture, education, industry, sports, medicine, science, social service, and public affairs.

PENDING DUES FINALLY SEE THE LIGHT OF THE DAY

The Government of Tamil Nadu has released a sum of ₹109.92 crore from various government expenditure accounts as a result of SIHRA's continued efforts and follow-up, allowing hotels to get their reimbursements for hosting physicians, nurses, and paramedical workers.



IN THE INTEREST OF HOTELIERS

K. Syama Raju presented a memorandum to G. Kishan Reddy, Minister of Tourism and Culture, emphasising the importance of the MOT's issuing clarification on licence fee demands by PPL, Novax to protect hoteliers' interests, and simplification of

classification norms, reduction of GST to 5 per cent for the next two years.

NOMINATION TO FHRAI EC

Members of the SIHRA EC have been nominated to the FHRAI EC. The nominated SIHRA EC members include K. Nagaraju, D.V.S. Somaraju, Dr. M. Venkadasubbu, B.D. Prabhushankar, Jose Pradeep, and M. Balakrishna Reddy to the Executive Committee of FHRAI. Manav Goyal, Executive Director, Crowne Plaza, Chennai, has been nominated to the FHRAI Executive Committee as a co-opted member representing the South.

TN govt releases pending payments to the hoteliers

P.C.M. Santhanam passes away

The South India Hotels and Restaurants Association is saddened to inform of the passing of P.C.M. Santhanam, the doyen of the Southern Indian hospitality industry.

Santhanam was Chairman and Managing Director of Pandyan Hotels Limited, Madurai, which owns the Fortune Pandyan Hotel, one of Madurai's oldest hotels, and Director of PCM Hotels Pvt. Ltd. Santhanam has also been a member of SIHRA's Executive Committee since 2012, when he was co-opted as an Additional Executive Committee Member.



On December 23, 2021, hoteliers in Madurai joined SIHRA Executive Committee members and paid rich

P.C.M. Santhanam
Chairman & MD, Pandyan
Hotels Limited, Madurai

tributes to the late Santhanam in Madurai. Santhanam's family received a souvenir from President K. Syama Raju.



The need of the hour

Next-gen hoteliers must be physically, mentally, and emotionally capable of dealing with any crisis, opines **Abhinay Sharma**, Teaching Associate, FHRAI-IHM, Greater Noida.

The soul maxim of the hotel industry, *Atithi devo bhava*, is a citation from the *Taittiriya Upanishad* which states, "Guest as God." This stands true to the test of time as it forms the basis for the hospitality industry. The endless social events around us are possible due to this industry. Being in the utopia of modernisation, we have hotels with state-of-the-art architecture, embedded with top-notch luxuries and with a touch of the latest technological advancements. This further uplifts guest needs and expectations, but raises a red light over the increasing guest expectations due to changing times. Such situations entail a great deal of responsibility on the part of hoteliers, particularly the frontline associates of their respective core areas, who bear the brunt of the consequences of any adverse situation.

Upon taking a close look, we see that these associates are none other than the freshly graduated students who have till now imagined the industry and its work process through the pages of their text books. They have a serene imagination of the industry, and all they are aware of is the sheen and shine of the soft floors, but they are seldom aware of the close-knit working process behind the doors. During the graduation years, institutions teach various service and culinary skills, such as serving wine to a guest in a fine dining restaurant or completing a guest's check-in or check-out formalities, but the most important skill development, that of

emotional quotient, is somehow overlooked throughout the journey. It becomes necessary to highlight the workload, tiring shifts, and tedious situations in the day-to-day working process that are bound to take a toll on the emotional health.

In these budding years of these upcoming hoteliers, they should not only be made well-polished in terms of knowledge but also be given a fair knowledge of tricks and tact to survive in this industry. As "the guest is always right," it becomes important for the managers and supervisors to groom their teams and strengthen their armour so as to keep their cool in high-pressure situations and deal with any uneven situations. There are many instances where the guests know their mistakes but hesitate to accept them. Hence, it is at these times that the emotional quotient of the staff is tested to the core, where the associate is expected to carry a well-balanced demeanour with a courteous apology to the guest. Taking the obstacles posed by COVID-19 in the hotel industry into consideration, we have to ensure that the upcoming generation of hoteliers are physically, mentally, and emotionally able to tackle any adverse situation.



Abhinay Sharma



The most important skill development of emotional quotient is overlooked



Devising strategies to revive tourism

Despite the emergence of the Omicron variant, domestic tourism has soared, and the Ministry of Tourism (MOT) is optimistic and is chalking out plans to provide a fillip.



G. Kamala Vardhan Rao

G. Kamala Vardhan Rao
Director General, MOT

READY FOR A ROARING RECOVERY

Vaccination will play a critical part in steering India towards a road to recovery. The most crucial factor is vaccination. Hence, safety standards must be followed, and only then will tourists have confidence. Ultimately, tourism thrives only when people travel, which occurs when people have higher confidence and safety levels.

I believe that the vaccination effort, which is now taking place in the country will instil trust in tourists who will be visiting the country. Domestic tourism has soared as a result of the pandemic.

Despite the fact that there are fewer international tourists due to the prohibition on overseas travel, local tourism has exploded with 80 per cent of hotels fully booked. When you look at the instances of Omicron

around the world, you will find that it is contagious, but it is not as fatal as the Delta variant, and it is the sole ray of hope. We are confident that this will not be present for a longer length of time. We anticipate brighter days in February and March.

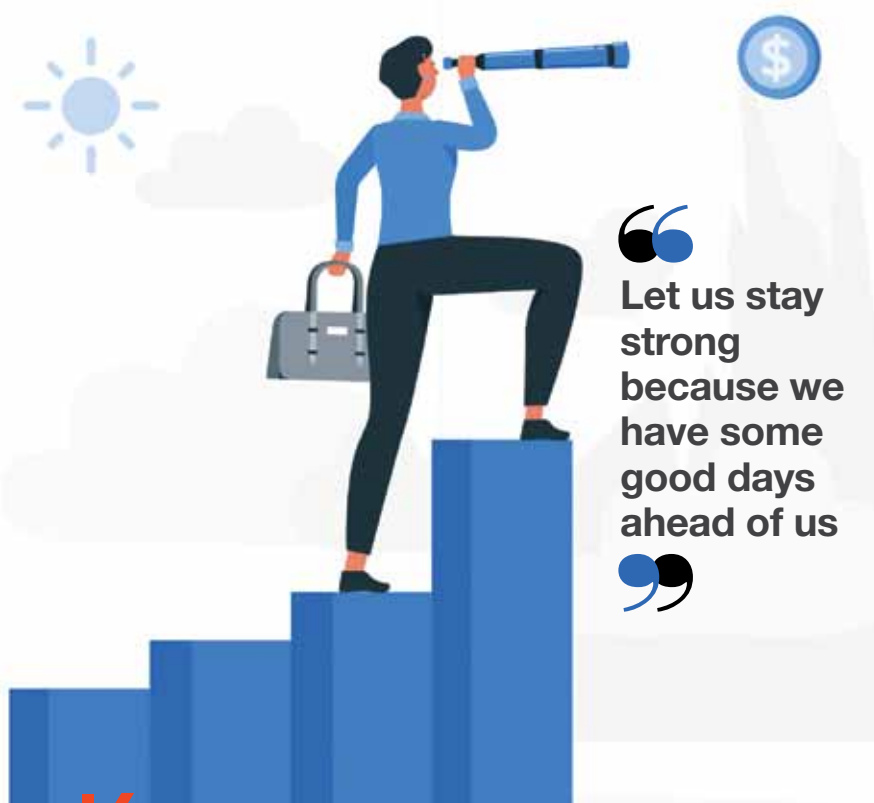
By utilising our digital platforms, publicity materials and divisions, we are informing people all around the world. We have posted our personnel to more than 20 Indian embassies. We have asked the embassies to allocate one person to deal solely with the tourism sector. Hence, these individuals are trying to disseminate whatever strategies we have in place in our country. We are also informing people all across the world about the health measures we are following currently.

We understand the inbound industry's concerns about the Omicron issue, which is why the government's intent at all levels, including at the MOT, is to track the daily number of cases and vaccinations, which has now surpassed 100 crore.

On a daily basis, we examine all issues in order to find a method to reopen the aviation industry. Jyotiraditya Scindia, Union Minister of Civil Aviation, has stated that our ability to travel internationally is solely dependent on Omicron infections.

As a result, daily monitoring is carried out in order to analyse the condition. G. Kishan Reddy, Minister of Tourism, Culture & DoNER, was keen to hand out cheques as part of the loan guarantee scheme for guides and tour operators, realising the impact the pandemic had on the sector.

We must not lose sight of these two things as we move on. Let us stay strong because we have some good days ahead of us. While the incoming season has been lost this year, the domestic season has been a boon, and we are hoping for a booming revival in the tourism sector of this country.



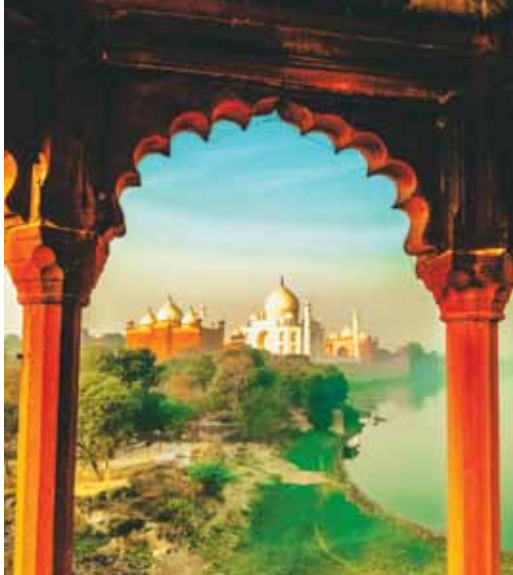
Rakesh Verma Additional Secretary, MOT

FIVE-POINT TOURISM POLICY

The MOT has been contemplating introducing a new tourism policy, and in light of the pandemic, the ministry has proposed a draft National Tourism Policy that aims to bring new structural changes to the industry while also laying out an ambitious framework for tourism growth in the coming decades. At the heart of the draft policy are five missions.

The first is the National Green Tourism Mission, which focusses on mainstreaming sustainability in the tourism sector. The second initiative is the National Digital Tourism Mission, which aims to digitalise the sector and open up a slew of new prospects. It has the potential to boost our industry's competitiveness and growth.

The Tourism and Hospitality Sector Skill Mission is the third mission. We are looking at skills as a general framework here, but the sectors must be aligned with the skill development framework for the industry to be ready from a manpower supply standpoint. The fourth mission is concerned with destination management. The goal is to ensure that public and private agencies at the destination collaborate to bring all stakeholders together, develop a strategic plan for each destination, and champion it.



Rakesh Verma

As we have a large number of small-and medium-sized businesses in our sector, the fifth mission is to strengthen tourism and hospitality MSMEs. The objective is to understand how to formalise that sector, as well as how to address the needs of MSME units in terms of capital, credit, and digital scaling. These five missions will offer a strong foundation for the sector's future growth. That is how our draft policy has been organised. We are now consulting with the central government, state governments, and industry. I am certain that with the feedback, we will be able to finalise it soon.



These five missions will offer a strong foundation for the sector's growth



Rupinder Brar Additional Director General, MOT

A NEW YEAR, A NEW CAMPAIGN

The year 2021 will be remembered as a year of preparedness. By the end of the year, we had already started chartered flights on October 15 and were planning to start regular flights on December 15. However, for the time being, it has taken a backseat, and in the interim, 500,000 free visas are being distributed, and a narrative is being built around how Incredible India is expanding beyond its usual destinations, adding many more to itineraries. The



hotels and homestays have prepared, and the trade has been ready as well. There are several communication strategies in place. It has been a year of preparation and a lot more aggressive use of digital technologies. Hence, there are encouraging signs for 2022.

The MOT is slated to unveil a number of active and dynamic campaigns in 2022, both digitally and through roadshows and physical events. The MoT is working on a campaign that will promote India as a safe destination that is ready to welcome visitors. There will also be a Namaste Campaign. All of these campaigns will help to promote Incredible India by highlighting new products, destinations, sites, airports, highways, inland cruises, and much more that are coming to the country.



Rupinder Brar



The most important message to send out is one of assurance





Opportunities in the midst of a crisis

Anuraag Bhatnagar, COO, The Leela Palaces, Hotels & Resorts, shares how they upgraded themselves, riding the wave of rapid technology adoption amid the global crisis.



Nisha Verma



Anuraag Bhatnagar

Covid-19 has not left anyone untouched, observes Anuraag Bhatnagar. "The pandemic has affected the entire hospitality and travel trade equally. It was agnostic to the brands and hotels," he says. However, he claims that for Leela, it was a time for growth.

TIME FOR OPPORTUNITIES

"For us at Leela, since we have been growing and adding hotels, we were slightly insulated. We created opportunities out of this adversity and opened three hotels—The Leela Gandhinagar, The Leela Palace Jaipur, and The Leela Bhartiya City in Bengaluru. Overall, we

added 900 keys to our portfolio, and we used this time to also bring a lot of technology; hire some of the best talent in the industry; set up our systems and processes in the organisation; and bring in some cost synergies to bring in efficiencies. We tried our best to make sure that we used these 18 months to build for the future. As a representative of true Indian luxury, we believe that Leela personifies all the values of *Atithi Devo Bhava* and service from the soul of our guest," adds Bhatnagar.

SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

Detailing the survival strategies they employed during this period, he shares, "The first step was to get through the pandemic and survive. Hence, we made our fixed cost structures as variable as possible. Secondly, we used this time to deploy our people because Leela is one of the very few organisations where we ensured that jobs and roles were not impacted."



We used this time to acquire hotels and expand our portfolio

"We want to make sure that people who have been working with us for so many years and were part of our growth plans are taken care of along with their families. We were one of the first companies to ensure that a hundred percent of our employees were vaccinated along with their families. We brought in a lot of people-centric strategies, training, and development technology, so that when business starts returning, Leela has an advantage," asserts Bhatnagar.

Taking into account the rapid adoption of advanced technologies all across industries at a time of ongoing global crisis, they also upgraded themselves, so that they could offer a high-tech and high-touch experience without taking the personalisation away. "Although the world was moving away from contact and social distancing, we brought in the technology that will enable our services to be delivered more efficiently. We rolled out The Leela Palace Butler Services Programme; Ceremonial Rituals as a representation of true Indian luxury; the Pride Pins that we wear; and the 'I am Leela' campaign. We used technology to make our HR, accounting, and finance processes more efficient," he shares.

Most importantly, claims Bhatnagar, "We used this time to acquire hotels and expand our portfolio. All our hotels are doing exceptionally well. The Leela Palace Jaipur, which we opened during the pandemic, is now topping the Jaipur market as the preferred destination for FITs and weddings. Leela Gandhinagar hosted the renowned IATO Convention. We have a lineup of international and domestic events at this hotel along with Mahatma Mandir."

Elaborating on efforts to recover, he says, "The Leela Bhartiya City, spread over a sprawling 130 acres, has amazing food and beverage restaurants. Hence, we have worked on all these strategies to make sure that when the new normal returns, we come out leaner, more efficient, and far more agile to own this upswing,"

ONLY LUXURY

When asked if they would enter the budget space, he denies it, saying, "I think Leela is synonymous with true Indian luxury and that is where we have made a niche. We are clear that we want to grow in this space. We believe there is a lot more opportunity for strategic growth. Our customers' mindsets are now increasingly consuming luxury. Our resort hotels, especially during the pandemic, have been doing 120 to 140 per cent of the revenue that they were achieving in 2019. We see all this continuing and we are optimistic. Hence, we believe that we have a job to do and a lot of opportunity to further grow our footprint in the luxury space."

NEW VENTURES

After opening three hotels during the pandemic, there is no stopping for new ventures. "We are working on some



interesting and exciting openings. While it is too early to divulge much, all of them will be in the luxury segment. We are looking at destinations where we can offer bespoke, curated experiences and not just products. We promise a world-class product at existing destinations or we will create the destination," he says.

"I think Leela is all about creating luxury experiential personalised programmes for every individual traveller, group or even wedding that happens at one of our properties, which ensures that they are well taken care of. Hence, the company is looking at destinations focussing on wildlife, wellness, or beachside, for which we have an active pipeline," he claims.

Bhatnagar confirms that The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts is open to all possibilities – whether the new properties are under management contract or owned by the brand.

Outlook for 2022

As the dark clouds of Omicron cast over the world, regional heads share their outlook for 2022. What looked like a revival year now seems to be another fight for survival.





Sudesh Poddar
President, HRAEI

SURVIVAL AT STAKE

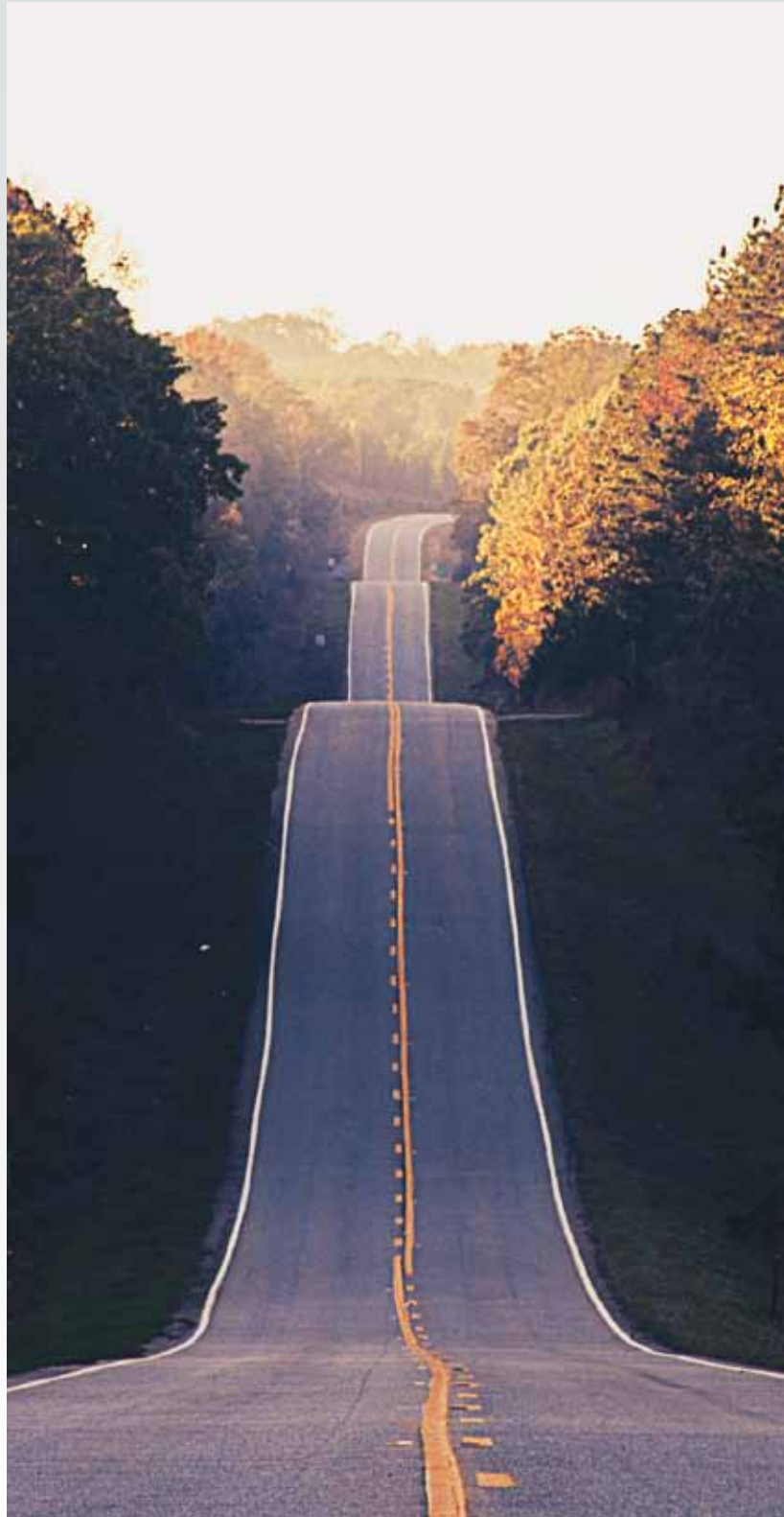
Just as the industry started to find a way out of a long period of hiatus at the end of 2021, the Omicron variant has come as a shock. This happened just a week before international flights were due to be resumed in the country. For more than a month, this would have resulted in inbound tourist arrivals reopening the previously closed MICE market. Till January 31, 2022, scheduled international passenger flights are suspended.

In the last couple of years, our industry has been among the hardest hit. Across the country, nearly 30 per cent of establishments have closed


Hotels are the most capital-intensive element of the sector 

their doors. The capital of most of our members has been depleted; now even the contingency fund is getting exhausted. Another 15 per cent will follow suit if the pandemic continues for another few months. Unfortunately, despite our repeated appeals and multiple letters to various departments of the central and state governments, we did not receive any impetus to revive the ailing sector. So there is no question of any revival at the moment. Our survival is at stake now.

Hotels are the most capital-intensive element of the sector. The loan repayment period for hotels is usually seven to 10 years, which is way lower compared to other capital-intensive sectors, where the debt repayment period is as long as 20 to 25 years. The problem can only be solved if our industry is given infrastructure status with long-term loan repayment. We must also get scope for internal debt restructuring based on pre-payment, repayment, or foreclosure patterns. Besides, our GST input credit was removed at the time of its implementation. Giving us our input credit back would bring relief. Unless this basic support is given by the government, the industry will not be able to overcome the hurdles and survive the pandemic and its aftermath.





Sherry Bhatia
President, HRAWI

RE-EMERGENCE ON THE CHARTS

The year 2022 is a year of hope, yes, but revival seems far-fetched at the moment. The hospitality industry is barely managing to survive.

Without the government's support, the situation remains grim, and for now, our hopes and expectations hinge on the upcoming Union Budget. In 2022, the hospitality

and its apex association, the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI), we plan to promote education in the hospitality sector.

The industry had just started to see some movement, with restaurants witnessing a gradual increase in footfall and hotels seeing bookings over the last few months.

However, with the emergence of the Omicron threat, things have again started to slow down. Hotels have begun to receive cancellations, and restaurant footfalls are declining.



In 2022, the industry will try to re-emerge from the slump of 2020 and 2021



industry will make efforts to re-emerge from the slump of 2020 and 2021. It will take efforts to drive domestic tourism with support from the government.

Most importantly, through the joint efforts of the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI)

Irregularity and uncertainty are bad for any business.

The tourism and hospitality industries understand the gravity of the Omicron threat and will, once again, support the government by following its orders to limit the impact of the third wave.



Surendra Kumar Jaiswal
President, HRANI

We need survival policies in terms of GST correction, export status, infrastructure status, industry status, secured refunds including refunds/adjustment of bar licence fee, waiver of demand/fixed charges levied on electricity bills, including property tax/house tax. The renewals of licences and NOC should be extended automatically, and a policy of one-time special renewal should be provided



A NEW CRISIS

Things were looking up for the sector after Diwali and the wedding season, but now with the threat of Omicron, the sector has again been hit. Also, the government has deferred the resumption of scheduled international flights to January 31, 2022 from December 15, 2021. Domestic travel has been a key demand driver and the primary source of business for hotels across all categories, and we expect this trend to continue in 2022. With inbound tourist arrivals unlikely amidst COVID-19, the industry wants the government to incentivise domestic travel with income tax benefits for a limited period to help the sector tap into the pent-up demand for holidays. Incentives through tax cuts or by way of tax deductions for a duration of two to three years will help local tourism survive until international travel resumes.



COVID-19 has been a real baptism by fire for the industry



to hotels and restaurants. COVID-19 has been a real baptism by fire for the industry, and after facing nearly two years of the pandemic, the industry is now better prepared to face any adversity. Vaccination cover is spreading, and hopefully, even if new variants hit us, the impact will be less. We are cautiously optimistic about 2022.

We sense an inclination towards personalisation of experiences, staycations at untapped destinations, hybrid models for corporate meetings, and an inclination towards intimate weddings and small-scale social events to continue in the future.

Reimagining the future

Puneet Chhatwal, MD & CEO, IHCL, believes tour operators are a pivotal factor in their business.



Nisha Verma



Puneet Chhatwal

Puneet Chhatwal recently participated in a panel discussion at the 36th Annual Convention of the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, where, while discussing how hotels can walk hand in hand with tour operators, he agreed to give a dedicated promo code for IATO members to get rates for all the IHCL properties in advance to quote to their FTOs in time.

PROUD PARTNERS

Tour operators are an essential element of their business, both internationally and domestically. "It is an association that we are proud of, and it has done a great job for us over the years. Hence, we must continue to create the same platform and formula for decades to come. As an industry, we have been able to overcome the worst, which we feel is behind us. As history has proven, I think there will be volatility in the short-term, but eventually, the sector will emerge as a winner," says **Puneet Chhatwal**, MD and CEO, IHCL.

NAVIGATING THE PANDEMIC

While different companies have adopted different strategies to flounder during the pandemic, Chhatwal says that they have followed an extremely strong multi-brand strategy. "Today we have a portfolio of 230 hotels, of which 177 are in operation. Recently, we launched a property entirely run by women – our extended stay

product, Taj Wellington Mews, Chennai. Every month, we open one to two of our homestays – amā Stays & Trails. Within two months, we will reach a portfolio of 60. Our home delivery platform, Qmin, is now present in 20 cities. We also have 15 quick-service restaurants under the Qmin brand, of which 11 opened in Bengaluru last month. We are proud of how the company has progressed," says Chhatwal.

TO SERVE THE ETHOS

However, he acknowledges that COVID-19 has deterred their progress. "Some of our performance has been diluted, but during the pandemic we also indulged in the service of the community, based on the philosophy of the founder of the Tata Group, who believed that the community is not just another stakeholder, but rather the purpose of the existence of every business. We are proud of how we stood up to the occasion, served more than five million meals, hosted more than 100,000 bed nights and raised ₹70 crore to ₹80 crore. By taking salary cuts for them, we paid for all the contractual staff of different contractors who worked with us and were laid off. Hence, under the banner of Taj for Families, the pandemic gave us an opportunity to reimagine, reinvent, restructure ourselves, and serve," he apprises.

He also highlights that Taj was rated as the world's strongest hotel brand. "This shows that the market has given us a thumbs up on our values. Taj stands for trust, awareness, and joy, and what better time to have trust in our brands than in the time of the pandemic," he claims.

BRAND IDENTIFICATION

Despite being lauded for its branding strategy a few years back, under which the IHCL hotels were divided into a couple of sub-brands, including Vivanta by Taj, the company today is following a different path. "We have moved away from the strategy of a brand house, where there was a bit of Taj in everything, to a house of brands. Now, one would not see the Taj connotation with any of our brands. One principle we have maintained is that within that category, we must be premium in whatever segment we are positioned. Just like Taj is a premium in luxury, and this is the principle we are following without attaching the Taj connotation to any of these brands," Chhatwal concludes.



We are a rapidly growing company, changing our business model every day





The way forward

In the wake of the New Year, the FHRAI EC members share their predictions for the industry and whether they foresee a rebound or another shutdown due to Omicron causing more disruption.



Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar

Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar of Udaipur Executive Director, HRH Group of Hotels

KEY EXPECTATIONS FROM 2022

The 'H' word! Few have realised how significant, important, and crucial 'H' for 'health' is. Over the last 20 months, the message of this oldest cliché, that 'health is wealth', has become the newest, and most stringent, standard to live up to. Yes, I pray and sincerely hope that as a nation and as communities we are able to adhere to healthy living protocols as they have been regulated. Whether at home, work, or in public places, we have to be cautious, strict, and alert to keep ourselves healthy and maintain a healthy environment at all costs. That is the real challenge and expectation for 2022: How healthy are you?

COVID-19 is far from over, and as a nation we have to maintain a state of full alertness. The travel, tourism, and hospitality industries will have to take the lead in maintaining the regulatory protocols of the Central and State governments. There can be no let-up on that score. The Union Budget is a complicated exercise and, not being a finance whiz kid, all I can say is that the Union Government has to demonstrate compassion towards the industry and be kind to wage-earners at all levels. If tax relief and benefits are required, so be it. In several countries, direct cash benefits have been made available. The hospitality industry may be considered for such benefits over the next three to five years by both the state and central governments. The impact of the pandemic has been felt and will be felt over the next few years. Let's be strong enough to withstand the impact. Jai Hind!



The government has to show compassion towards the industry



Vineet Taing President, Vatika Hotels Pvt. Ltd.

STRIVING FOR UPWARDS TRAJECTORY

The hospitality sector has taken a beating over the last two years, and it needs a lot of aid to get back on track. We do not expect any bans on domestic travel, but rather that strict precautions be exercised. Before boarding a flight or checking into a hotel, travellers should get both vaccinations and furnish an RT-PCR report. Hotels should only be allowed to open when their staff have been fully vaccinated and have agreed to have their tests done every 15 to 30 days. Similarly, restaurants, bars, and events should be allowed with 50 per cent occupancy and fully vaccinated teams.

The second wave had just given some respite, but the threat of the Omicron variant has begun to spread over the world, and the danger seems to be imminent. Hence, the industry has sought further tax relief from the government to help it recover from the acute slowdown it faced during the pandemic's peak. Some of the pre-budget recommendations by the FHRAI include: allowing the industry to carry forward business losses up from the existing eight years to 12 years and avail the SEIS/EPCG benefits without any capping or rate reductions; providing an extension on the timeline for export obligations under the EPCG scheme; granting infrastructure status and the provision of special tax incentives for domestic travel;



Vineet Taing

hotels and tourism-related sectors to be included in infrastructure projects listed in the NIP; increasing SEIS entitlement from the existing 3 per cent to 10 per cent of the net foreign exchange earnings for the next three to five financial years; and incentives to corporates for organising MICE events at hotels in India, among others. We urge the government to grant our requests. In return, the sector would play a key role in nation-building through investments, employment, and forex, which would translate into GDP growth.



The industry will be key in nation-building through investments



Param Kannampilly Chairman & MD, Concept Hospitality Pvt. Ltd., The Fern Hotels & Resorts

STAYING STRONG

Like everyone else, I am also hoping that the threat of Omicron disappears without further damaging the economy and the hospitality industry. It has already inflicted heavy damage on the Christmas and New Year seasons in Europe and America. The hotel and airline industries have suffered massive losses in the last fortnight of 2021. There has been a significant increase in COVID-19 cases in India as well, and I am afraid that the start to the New Year has not been as encouraging as all of us had hoped. If you had asked me the same question a month ago, the answer would



have been very different because we had very good bookings during and after Diwali. However, right now, there is uneasiness among the business community because of the rising number of COVID-19 cases. If the situation does not get out of hand, we could see positive growth.

The recovery has already started and we are expecting good numbers if the situation is under control and the virus is kept in abeyance. As of now, everyone is just waiting and watching the situation. The government is trying its best to ensure that the virus does not spread. Beyond that, I do not think that the government is going to do much. Most of the budgetary framework is decided in advance. So they must have already made the decision. There will almost certainly be some tax breaks. But it is too early to predict anything.



Param Kannampilly



The start to the New Year has not been as encouraging as we hoped





Onwards & upwards

Sudeep Jain, MD, South-West Asia, IHG Hotels & Resorts, hoping for a strong recovery, shares his expectations for what is on the charts for the hospitality sector in 2022.



Nisha Verma



Sudeep Jain

As 2021 comes to a close, Sudeep Jain believes that it was a mixed bag of business. He claims that after the second wave started settling, the situation improved further. "Starting June 2021, we have seen an encouraging 30 per cent jump in the wedding average per coverage (APC) and a 25 per cent surge in residential weddings. Leisure destination travel demand has also recovered. Our InterContinental Chennai Mahabalipuram Resort recorded occupancy levels close to Q1 2020 levels in Q3 2021, along with a higher ADR. Our business performance has been quite strong in Q4 2021, with occupancy levels, in some cases, reaching above 2019 levels. Although the rates are still slightly reduced, we have witnessed a substantial surge in overall gross operating profit," he adds.

GROWTH CONTINUES

Jain shares that given the attractiveness of the tourism and hospitality sectors, they have progressed with their growth plans. "This year, we opened Holiday Inn Zirakhpur, Chandigarh, and Holiday Inn Goa, Candolim. We signed Holiday Inn Express & Suites in Jalandhar, and we debuted Holiday Inn Express in Jaipur in October. In addition, we announced the debut of our world-renowned extended stay brand, Staybridge Suites, in

India with the signing of Staybridge Suites Bengaluru Thanisandra. We also launched our first Six Senses hotel in Rajasthan," he reveals.

INDIAN MARKET

When asked about the major developments in the industry in 2021, he says, "In the last couple of years, with restrictions on international movement, domestic travel has gained even more traction. Quick weekend getaways, staycations, and intercity vacations have emerged as key trends. Also, the concept of 'intimate weddings and social events' has played a crucial role in helping the industry move towards a stronger recovery. F&B has seen rapid growth since last year."

PLANS 2022

Jain shares that for this year, they are looking at a stronger recovery. "We expect domestic travel demand to continue to rise in 2022 and a further easing of international movement. We are optimistic about a stronger return of corporate travel. We are also enthusiastic about the emphasis on GOP for the owners as the hotel investment trading volume increases," he reveals. He concludes by saying, "We also expect to continue with our growth momentum across key Indian markets. Our mainstream portfolio will continue to drive this growth, but we also see opportunity in launching our global brands at the right time, with the right partners, and in the right location."



We will focus on leveraging technology to enhance our offering to guests



The North-east rising

North-east has it all! And **Sumit Mitraka**, Founder & Director, Summit Hotels, is set to bring it all to new-age travellers.



Lipla Negi

The north-east India is a paradise waiting to be experienced, with pristine and emerald green scenery filled with majestic mountains, rolling hills, and teeming with rich wildlife. COVID-19 has helped domestic travellers see it in a new light: Safe and secluded. Sumit Mitraka believes the north-east India offers visitors some of the country's most charming Himalayan nooks and a variety of unique experiences. While the entire industry was reeling from the COVID-19 curveball, the young hotelier continued to look 'east' and ahead.

VISION FOR 2022

It is difficult to formulate strategies in such uncertain times. The aim is to keep fixed costs low and make operations as flexible as possible. Focussing on our core business and markets has been our most important strategy. COVID-19 changed our expansion plans, and we decided to confine ourselves to the east. Adding inventory to our existing operations worked well for us when travel resumed.

SUCCESS IN SUSTAINABILITY

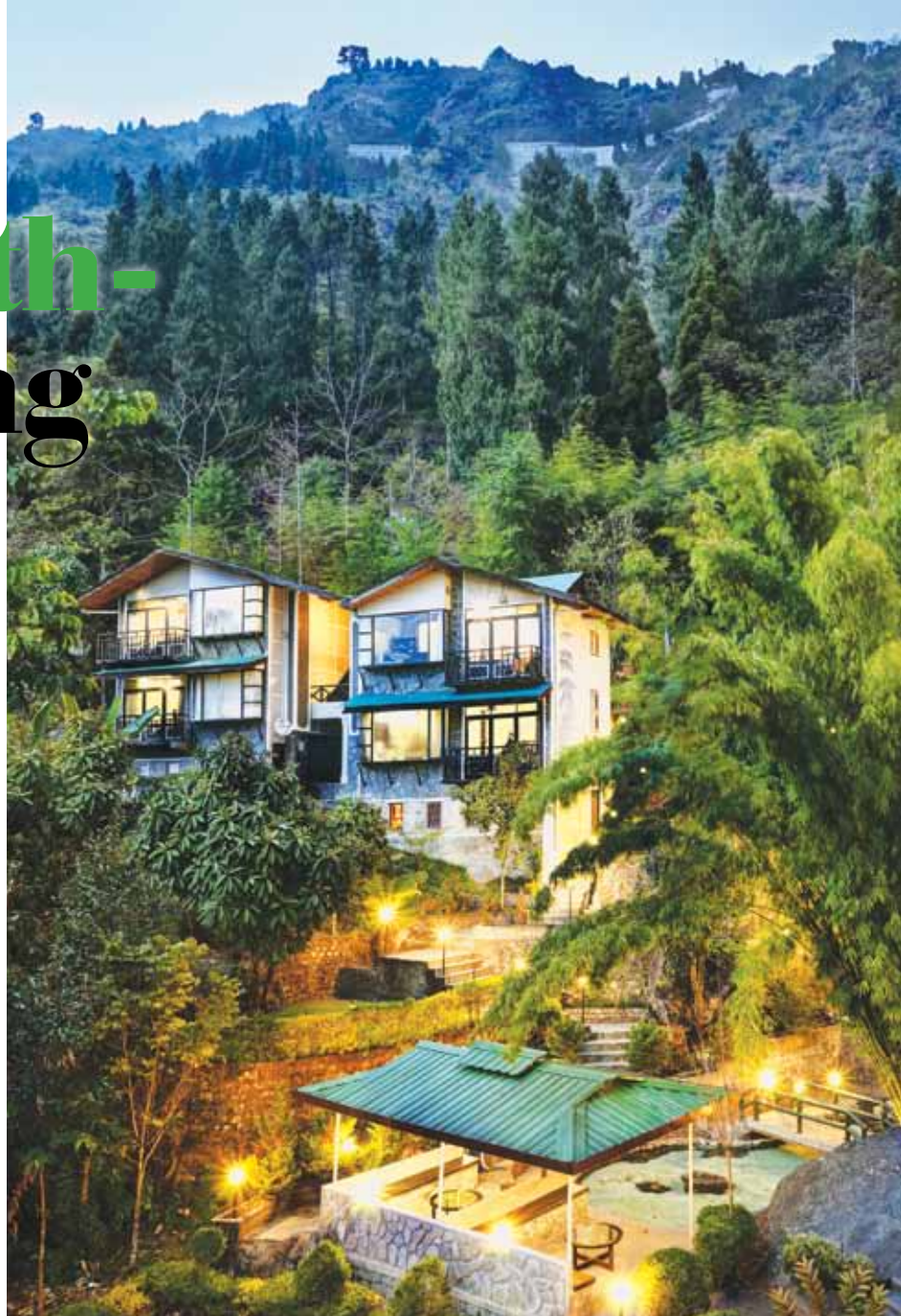
The ability to adapt to the ever changing conditions of the tourism industry is vital for sustenance, which is what we have been working on. We have tried to keep fixed costs low and to bring flexibility into our operations so they can respond promptly to the conditions, even if that means suspending operations or resuming them at very short notice.

NORTH-EAST FOR NEW-AGE TRAVELLERS

The north-east is among the lesser-known destinations in the country, which is what new-age travellers are looking for. There is a wide range of adventure activities like trekking and wildlife, which are a huge draw for the new-age traveller. Better connectivity is vital for the region to attract more tourists.

WELCOME VISTADOME

Vistadome train services are another product that



enhances the bouquet of offerings in the region. Although you might not have too many tourists coming specifically to ride the vista dome coaches, there is a large section that will be open another night for this, which is what the region needs.

BE PREPARED FOR THE UNEXPECTED

We need to keep our fixed costs as low as possible and be ready for any unexpected business changes. When a natural calamity hits, the hospitality sector is the first to close and the last to reopen. We have always made budgets and forecasts based on low revenue, but the past two years have taught us to make estimates based on zero revenue.



Sumit Mitraka



Focussing on our core markets has been our most important strategy





TRACKING the ROADMAP 2022

Just as the industry was starting to recover, the Omicron threat appeared. The industry and domestic tourists have shown remarkable resilience in the aftermath of the early waves.



Amit Thakur

Amit Thakur

General Manager, Pilibhit House-IHCL SeleQtions, Haridwar

THE OMICRON UNCERTAINTY

More personalised experiences for our guests are planned for 2022, including private Navgraha Pooja with our priests overlooking the holy river Ganges, our auspicious and sublime private aarti at the hotel's bathing ghat, and more destination experiences are being considered and will be added in addition to the pre-existing ancient temple visits, wildlife safaris, and visits to the Beatles ashram for our guests, among other things. We are also gearing up to offer wellness and augmented spiritual experiences; Saatvik and artisan food, with a greater emphasis on local produce and the various ways in which it can be incorporated into the menu; more unique dining experiences; and enhanced leisure experiences rather than just spiritual. As we enter another year of hope and revival, our

vision for the industry in 2022 is to focus on multi-generational travel with unique offerings for guests of all ages and interests; motorable distances would be preferred over air and train travel, given that the pandemic is here to stay even as we move into 2022; sustainable travel; wellness travel with unique spa experiences such as the Paarshiv Snaan offered by the Jiva Spa at Pilibhit House; and re-connecting with nature and wildlife via our curated visit to the Rajaji National Park for animal spotting.

After a period of struggle, just as the industry was beginning to show signs of recovery, the Omicron threat reappears. The industry and domestic travellers have shown remarkable resilience in the aftermath of the early waves, and we are seeing a similar pattern emerge. Travel may be cautious, but it will continue as long as economic and industrial sentiments remain positive. There may be a minor fluctuation in the graph due to travel limitations on and off throughout the last quarter, but no major downturn is likely.



Travel will continue as long as economic sentiments remain positive



Vijay Wanchoo

Sr. Executive Vice President & General Manager, The Imperial New Delhi

NEW YEAR, NEW OFFERINGS

The new offerings will include curated F&B experiences for embassies, Bollywood celebrities, corporates, and domestic guests. These experiences will be carried out based on the changing pandemic situation. If a lockdown is in the offing, we have our home deliveries in place so that the Imperial dining experience can be delivered to our discerning guests in the city.

Our staycations will include comprehensive packages for both lodging and dining at the Imperial Salon, with significant savings. We are also grabbing an opportunity to offer outdoor lunches in the courtyards of The Spice Route and San Gimignano restaurants, and also the 1911 Terrace, for curating peaceful dining experiences.

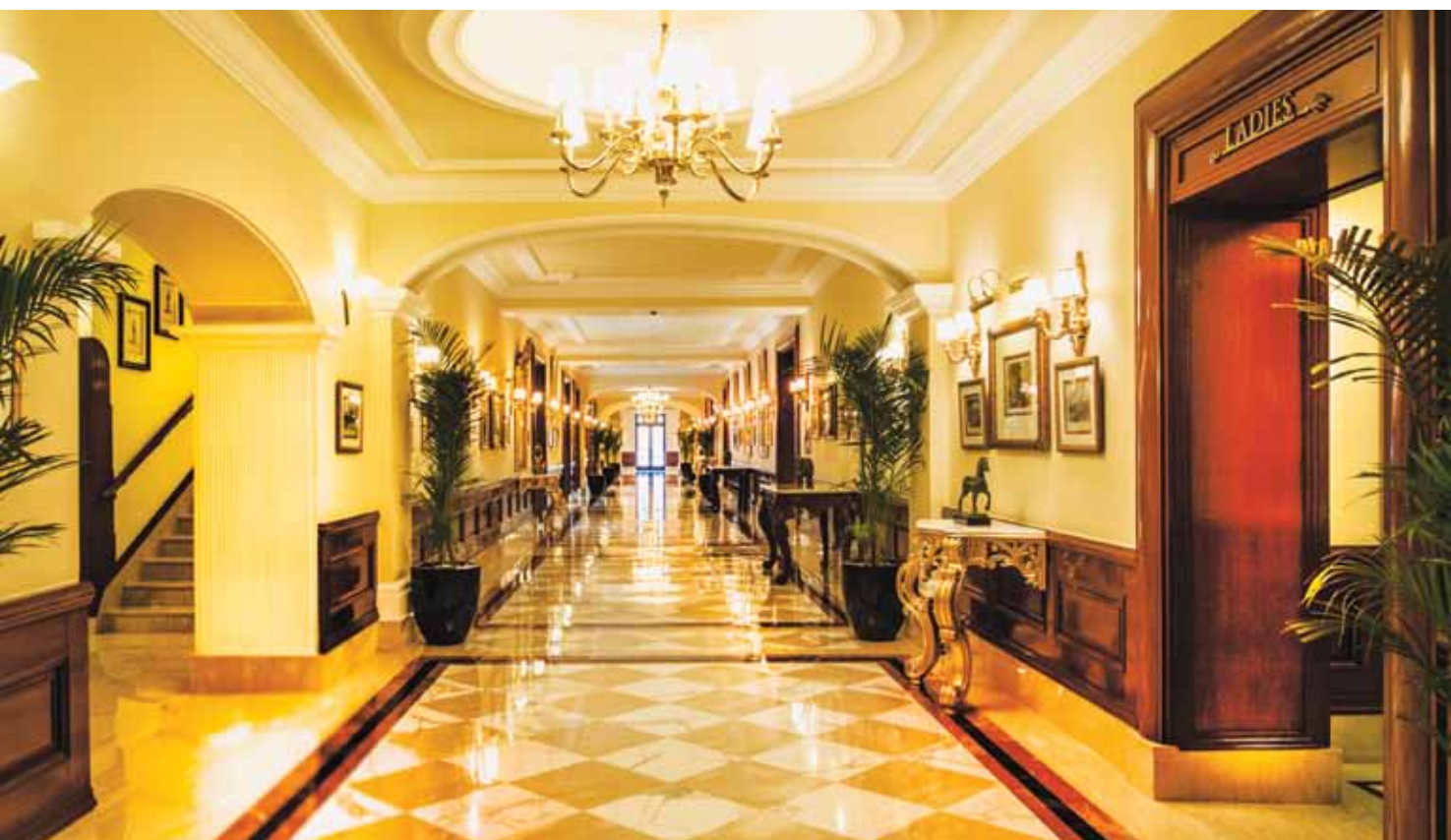
hopefully it will slow down after its peak in a shorter period of time this time. Based on the current data available, I do not see the impact of Omicron as severe as the second COVID-19 wave that started earlier this year and believe that slowly we will get back to our pre-COVID-19 times with stable conditions. This seems to be the last hit, leading us to the endemic. The new variant has seen a sudden rise in the country. Although we are still better than the rest of the world currently due to



Vijay Wanchoo



It seems the pandemic may see a substantial rise in the coming months



We will continue to remain flexible in giving our venues for photo shoots and banquet events, subject to Delhi government guidelines for hospitality.

The situation is volatile for everyone in the industry. We must take each day as it comes, strategise, and be prepared for adversity well in advance. Fortunately, most of the industry players are quite aware of what can go wrong and what changes can reap revenues based on the industry guidelines. It seems the pandemic may see a substantial rise in the coming months of 2022, but

our aggressive vaccination drives, the industry can only combat this with proper safety and hygiene protocols at all levels and at all times. Even after we start seeing cases drop, the implementation of COVID-19 protocols cannot be put at ease, from events to restaurants to wellness and beauty.

At The Imperial, we have an 'I Care' programme that takes care of the safety and hygiene of the guests at all touch points, and the associates are trained to ensure its proper adherence at the operational and internal levels.



Abhishek Sharma

Abhishek Sharma General Manager, Raffles Udaipur

PERSONALISATION WILL PROPEL GROWTH

Following the easing of travel restrictions and rising demand for domestic tourism across the country, the hospitality industry saw a significant recovery in Q3 and Q4 of this year.

As we enter 2022, we are optimistic that this recovery will gain momentum and help the sector not just resume full operations but also restore its growth trajectory. We anticipate that the biggest trend in 2022 will be that guests will increasingly seek personalised experiences.

While weekend trips, staycations, workcations, and intercity vacations will continue to be popular, 'exclusivity' will become a key concept in luxury hospitality. Intimate culinary affairs and curated tailor-made experiences that ooze grandeur are on the agenda for luxury travellers.

Mindful travel experiences that give back to communities and provide access to nature will be in high demand. Weddings, celebrations, and social events will also play a key role in the sector's rebound in 2022.

Since opening its doors in August 2021, the iconic Raffles Udaipur, nestled on an exclusive island in the

centre of Udai Sagar Lake, has enchanted domestic travellers seeking calm and discovery.

The hotel has emerged as a preferred choice for those eager to rejuvenate and spend quality time with loved ones while being surrounded by breathtaking vistas and serenity. Further, tourists see Raffles Udaipur not only as a luxurious stay destination but also as the ideal location for weddings and festivities.

Through the implementation of Accor's safety label, ALLSAFE, our top priority will remain to be adherence to stringent safety protocols. At the same time, every stay at Raffles Udaipur will continue to create immersive experiences for holistic wellness and sumptuous pampering, from the brand's signature Raffles Spa, to the well-equipped fitness centre and the swimming pool. Guests can also enjoy a variety of outdoor activities.

Guests can indulge in personal culinary experiences such as a midnight BBQ beneath the stars or a private romantic breakfast experience at the Belvedere Point, which overlooks the majestic Udai Sagar Lake, for a gourmet sojourn. With the opening of 'Harvest' in 2022, we will also be unveiling our unique farm-to-table experience, which will honour local ingredients picked from the island's organic farm. The menu will delight guests with a progressive take on Indian cuisine and a reinterpretation of traditional recipes using the freshest fruits and vegetables every day.



The biggest trend will be that guests will seek personalised experiences



Raooof Dhanani
Managing Director, Sayaji Hotels Ltd.

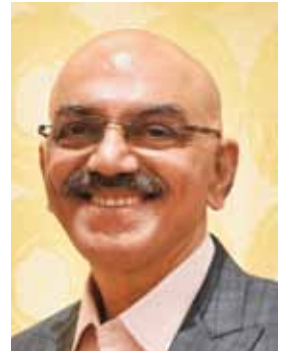
VISION FOR 2022

The hospitality industry has shown signs of revival and has bounced back much faster than expected in 2021, and that will pave the way for a robust business plan in 2022.

While we may have inbound travel starting June 2, 2022, domestic tourism will rule the roost for the hospitality industry as well, just the way it was in 2021, as the

the rollover of the weddings, to be very precise, has given us a boost in business in terms of the banquet as well as the rooms associated with that.

There are a few restrictions regarding large events, and people are erring on the side of caution. For now, having said that, it has been said that large conventions as well as physi-cons have also come in for the benefit of the hospitality of the industry for the past quarter or so.



Raooof Dhanani



effectiveness of a price-discount strategy in mitigating economic damage to the accommodation sector caused by the pandemic is high. Domestic tourism has yielded much greater revenue than international tourism in the regular period. In order to combat the sudden rise of the Omicron variant, the industry will focus on the nice and social segments.

Yes, there are going to be initial jitters, but being the second largest population and having the highest number of fully-vaccinated people, people are eager to experience new things and take the required precautions.

Hence, domestic tourism will continue to grow and give us a robust platform to grow our business on. Customers pay more attention to the safety measures and hygiene of the place, and what was once taken for granted as a 'clean' room has now changed to a 'virus-free' room.

Edge-to-edge business details up till now clearly indicate that the social segment has bounced back and



We are currently operating at roughly 80 per cent of our 2019 business levels



We recorded a high search in business after successful vaccination drives around the country and globally around the world.

The hospitality sector was adversely affected by COVID-19 due to travel and quarantine protocols, and the financial recovery part is very uneven due to the unexpected upswing in business from all the segments that have been recorded till date in the hospitality sector.

In the case of Sayaji Hotels, we are currently operating at roughly 80 per cent of our 2019 business levels. In 2022, we hope to surpass previous business levels and establish a benchmark for years to come.

Need to EXPAND tourism HORIZON

COVID-19 has had a severe impact on the tourism and hospitality industries. Experts are skeptical about why, when, and how the industry will evolve in the post-COVID-19 era.



Charmaine Fernz



As we enter the New Year 2022, there is nothing but despair in the regular reports on Omicron. Despite all the gloom, the industry is reminded of one strong quote by the late Desmond Tutu: "Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness." This is very true as, though the industry has been bruised and battered time and time again over the last two years. If there is one known fact, it is that the Indian tourism and hospitality industry is very resilient.

THE YEAR THAT WAS

As **Vinod Kannan**, COO, Vistara, explains, "2021 started on the note of a gradual revival in traffic. However, the second wave had huge implications for operations and business." Despite the blow, H2 2021 showed recovery. "We saw demand for domestic air travel steadily grow. The factors were streamlined travel restrictions and vaccination drives. The surge can also be attributed to the Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) segment or people travelling for leisure. Corporate travel also saw an uptick," he adds. Kannan adds that recovery was also seen in international travel.

From a tourism destination perspective, **G.B. Srithar**, Regional Director, India, Middle East & South Asia, International Group (IMESA), Singapore Tourism Board says, "2021 saw the launch of the India-Singapore Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL), which made it possible for fully vaccinated travellers to travel to Singapore from India on the VTL flights. Almost 2,000 agents from India attended two trade update webinars for VTL jointly organised by the STB, Singapore Airlines, and Changi Airport Group. This underscored the strong interest within the Indian travel trade community in promoting Singapore as a top-of-mind destination for Indian tourists."

Srithar further explains that 2021 also saw a series of innovative marketing initiatives. The activities included an artistic collaboration between Indian Gond artist Bhajju Shyam and Singaporean artist Sam Lo in January 2021, under the curatorial direction of St+art India Foundation, to create one of the tallest murals in Little India in Singapore. This was followed by the Voot Kids and Green Gold Animation collaboration, the 28th edition of the Singapore Food Festival with FoodHall, and the Instagram reel campaign with the Khoye Se song. "On the B2B front, we organised a virtual roadshow and a FAM trip, setting the benchmark for a truly engaging virtual initiative with immersive interaction. We also reached out to MICE corporate decision-makers from various sectors through a virtual lunch session," adds Srithar.

Several initiatives were also seen in the MICE industry. As **Meera Charnalia**, Senior VP and Head, MICE, Thomas Cook (India) Ltd., explains, "We have

witnessed a strong recovery in the MICE sector with a clear increase in demand for business groups, sporting events, and weddings in 2021 as compared to 2020. Our corporate engagements towards driving MICE demand also resulted in the delivery of physical groups of between 20 and 200 delegates per group in 2021."

Nikhil Sharma, Regional Director-Eurasia, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, says, "Since May 2021, the occupancy of our business and mixed-demand properties has doubled, with business hotels reaching slightly lower occupancy than leisure. Even our leisure hotels across Eurasia achieved a 58 per cent uptick in occupancy in February and July 2021. We also recorded 10-30 per cent growth in ADR over the last 10 weeks and achieved more than 100 RGI during Diwali."

OPTIMISTICALLY 2022

Many hurdles have to be overcome as the sector begins to revive. Despite the Omicron, the industry is hopeful about the year 2022. "We remain optimistic about Singapore's tourism sector's long-term prospects, both for leisure and MICE as well as business travel," Srithar adds. "Before COVID-19, STB India was successful in luring the Indian Family with Children sector, and this will be one of our priorities. We believe that sailing from Singapore will once again be popular among Indian leisure travellers. When the time comes, we will review our Cruise Development Fund support plan to see if we can assist cruise agents in resuming their marketing efforts by providing a pre- and post-cruise experience package," he says.

He goes on to say that STB is committed to the Indian market and has several projects in the works. "Two of our award-winning marketing projects will be used to push us to achieve even better in 2022," he says. On the MICE front, the STB has reviewed a slew of our MICE support schemes to help corporates and MICE travel agents develop a higher-value M&I itinerary in Singapore and make a quicker destination selection decision. "Many inquiries have been received from India about the possibility of meeting and incentive group movements as early as the first quarter of 2022," Srithar says.

Every airline, like a destination, is seeking the right chance to grow its numbers, and Etihad is no exception. As **Neerja Bhatia**, VP-Indian Subcontinent, Etihad Airways, argues, "Sustainability initiatives will be key." Our Green Loyalty Programme exemplifies this. We plan to enforce more programmes in 2022 to stimulate the adoption of a sustainable way of travelling."

Kannan takes a different approach, stating that our clients are everywhere and have access to content on a range of platforms. The level of digital content consumption is the major change in a post-pandemic



Vinod Kannan

“
2021 began on a positive note in the form of gradual revival in traffic
”



G.B. Srithar

“
We remain confident in the long-term prospects of Singapore's tourism sectors
”



Neerja Bhatia

“
We hope for
the industry
to reach pre-
COVID-19
levels with
the required
policies
”

world. As we adjust to this trend, the platforms we use will become increasingly dependent on their relevance and our target audience. "Regional news outlets, community communication, engaging with influencers, cross-promotion, and partnering with like-minded firms are just a few of the new methods that have acquired traction. Adopting a customer-first strategy and tailoring marketing and communication efforts to better cater to it is also vital," he adds.

THE RESURGENCE

The tourism and hospitality sectors, which have been severely affected by the pandemic, remain optimistic. As per reports, Indian visitors are likely to be among the most sought-after travellers who have shown a strong desire to travel and an intent to travel in the coming six to 12 months, says Srithar. "Among the key concerns in destination selection will be safety, security, and hygiene," he adds.

Srithar says tourists will be more interested in sustainable travel options, and environmental sustainability will be top-of-mind. By rewarding staff, distributors, and business partners, incentives will play a key role in the corporate business relationship process for MICE. Travel as an incentive will be sought after, but the types of trips and places available may be limited, especially for medium-haul destinations. However, we expect a surge in foreign travel in the next two years," he adds.

On a positive note, Bhatia adds that the sector should be able to return to pre-COVID-19 levels with the required rules in place, especially in terms of maintaining safety and hygiene standards. With increased business around the globe, the MICE sector appears to be in overdrive,

and technological advancements have only boosted the growth potential.

TREND SETTERS

The future is all about trends that will or may change the direction of the industry, with a ray of hope lurking in every vertical. Experiential MICE, luxury stays, and longer-duration stays, says Charnalia, will all continue to be popular this year. "In 2022, we expect a strong return of international MICE, with experiential MICE as our key focus. Hybrid events, as well as the wedding segment, will continue to rise through 2022," she adds.

Top domestic destinations include key metros such as Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, and Hyderabad, followed by top conference favourites such as Goa and Jaipur, as per Charnalia. Leisure favourites such as Udaipur, Puri, and Mahabalipuram will remain popular, while on the international front, destinations such as Dubai, Maldives, France, and Germany have hosted MICE events with group sizes ranging from 20 to 200 people. She adds, "There is also a growing need for private events and increasing spending."

The pandemic, as per Kannan, has accelerated digitalisation across the travel ecosystem. "This trend will continue in the future, with new technologies transforming the way we travel," he says. Kannan also observes a notable travel trend: A growing demand for nonstop, direct connectivity, especially on long-haul routes. "This is due to a number of factors, including minimising the risk of infection while in transit, the evolving complications of foreign travel, and quarantine rules, among others. There has also been a shift in client booking patterns," he continues.

Based on technological advancements, various safety measures will shape how many parts of social and corporate activities can be conducted at the same time, says Srithar. To future-proof our sector and prepare for the new normal, we will need to rely on innovation and technology. "The digital transformation has given the tourism sector a significant boost and changed tourist expectations. People are increasingly turning to digital tools to have a better experience. The rise of slow, immersive travel options follows," he adds. Srithar cites a MakeMyTrip study, according to which more people will opt for travel that balances their itinerary with a relaxed pace, allowing them to explore more while avoiding the stress of running around trying to check off all the boxes.

Bhatia shares a similar technological mindset, saying that sustainability will take centre-stage in 2022 as it is not a trend but a matter of relevance. "At Etihad, we are constantly researching new technologies such as data science, analytics, and digital transformation that

will be adopted quickly on a global scale to improve overall performance," she adds.

Chopra adds that every year, rapid advances in technology and changes in customer demands introduce new trends in the industry. As the sector continues to innovate on health and sustainability practices, there will be a greater emphasis on innovation and sustainability. Furthermore, travellers' health and well-being will continue to be top priorities. Increased technology integration will follow, ensuring contactless services and personalised experiences.

THE TECH REVOLUTION

Chopra explains that technology has already played a pivotal role in our sector, and COVID-19 has accelerated the rate of digital adoption. "We have rolled out a few advanced technologies at Wyndham, including the Wyndham mobile app, which offers low and in-stay capabilities. The Oracle Hospitality OPERA Cloud Property Management platform, which is mobile-enabled, helps hotels boost guest personalisation, cut costs, and improve operational efficiencies. We estimate roughly 20 per cent of our full-service portfolio to migrate in the next 12 months, with the rest in the next few years," says Chopra.

Kannan makes the point that Vistara has adopted many seamless and hassle-free experiences for customers travelling within India, including trial runs of a biometric face recognition entrance and boarding system. "Our IT infrastructure is entirely cloud-based, allowing us to increase the efficiency of our operations while lowering expenses through seamless workflows. We have also created Big Data solutions to get a full picture of our clients and their requirements," he adds.

Srithar discusses the new aspects of VR and AI in tourism, claiming that recreating experiences with VR can give brands an edge. In the travel and tourism industry, Big Data and the IoT are also used. "This implies that brands now have access to a huge amount of data, which can be used to monitor, track, and analyse behaviour patterns to help in planning and decision-making," he explains.

Chopra concludes by stating that a new industrial revolution is underway, which has a significant influence on the industry. As AI has advanced, service robots have become more widespread in the industry. Their key interactive and communicative capabilities set them apart from conventional self-service machines, resulting in the most exceptional human-technology interactions. He goes on to say that, however, a team member's personalised touch cannot be replaced. By using technology to accomplish tedious chores, team members can spend more time connecting with visitors and providing excellent customer service.



Meera Charnalia

“
We have seen a strong recovery in MICE with a high demand for business groups
”



Rohit Chopra

“
In 2022, there will be an increased focus on innovation and sustainability
”





Luxury's new address

While Odisha has fewer star-rated hotels, Swosti Group's latest offering is set to provide the Indian events industry with a new address and entice investment in tourism infrastructure.

The Swosti Group's latest offering, Swosti Premium Beach Resorts, the first five-star premium luxury beach resort in Sipasurubuli, Puri, is poised to provide the Indian events sector with a new address.

The property features large open-air landscaped lawns and is equipped to host mega conferences and elaborate wedding ceremonies. Foodies may sample cuisine from several Indian states, as well as Chinese and global cuisines, at the food court.

The Sky Lounge bar, which is 150 feet above ground level and overlooks the Bay of Bengal, is the property's centrepiece. If you have some leisure time, go for a swim in the infinity pool. The 125 luxurious rooms (including five premium luxury long suites on the 12th floor) all have a view of the sea with no obstructions.

More similar, cutting-edge amenities may be found throughout the completely air-conditioned property. Each banquet hall will be attached to an open-air lawn.

There is also a gaming zone near the food court area for the young and young-at-heart to ensure that there are enough activities to keep the guests entertained. The resort will also have a state-of-the-art wellness spa and gym, making sure that fitness and wellbeing remain at the forefront of everyone's minds. In addition, the

basement has enough parking to accommodate huge weddings and conventions.

Swosti Group, led by J.K. Mohanty, has been effectively marketing Odisha's tourism sector since 1981, employing over 1200 people through offices in Delhi, Kolkata, and Ahmedabad, and affiliated offices in Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Chennai.

The new Swosti Premium Beach Resorts will employ 375 people directly and around 700 people indirectly, including all vendors. Locals with expertise in the hospitality industry or who have undertaken hotel management courses at Swosti Institute of Management & Social Studies will be prioritised.

Apart from Swosti Grand, Swosti Premium, and Swosti Palm Resort in Bhubaneswar and Gopalpur-on-Sea, Swosti Chilika Resort on the banks of Chilika Lake has established itself as a key tourist attraction in the state and has become a popular leisure and MICE destination in only four years.

While Odisha has a shortfall of star-rated hotel rooms in comparison to other states, Swosti Group's latest offering will attract investors to invest in tourist infrastructure. The government of Odisha has taken a number of steps to encourage investment in the tourism sector, which is the world's largest employer.

Swosti Group has been effectively marketing Odisha's tourism sector since 1981



The choice of supremes

Patel's Chhappanbhog has expanded over the years as a result of a strong dedication to offering the best taste, quality, and new recipes to ensure customer satisfaction.

Patel's Chhappanbhog is a well-established food brand in Vadodara, Gujarat, since the year 1989. It has dedicated 30 years of service in the field of making sweets and food products in the hospitality and food and beverage (F&B) industries. We have carved a niche in the hospitality industry by offering customised and value-based products through a diverse selection of food and sweets that meet the Indian taste and quality.

Patel's Chhappanbhog has grown over the years with a strong commitment to serving our valued customers with the best taste, quality, as well as innovative recipes, to their fullest satisfaction. Our diverse customer base consists of all leading multinational companies, government organisations, banks, railways, Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), hostel cafeterias, and corporate institutes, and we have their loyal support through business references.

We brought in ready to eat food products for our numerous chef-less cloud kitchens in 2018-19, but now our objective is to bring the delight of Indian food and the intricacy of flavours to the farthest reaches of the globe.

We aim to expand into India's defence sectors by providing ready-made, high-quality meals through Amazon and grocery stores. This will allow our

border and other army personnel to enjoy the flavours and comforts of home-cooked meals regardless of where they are stationed. We plan to grow at an exponential rate, from 500 tons of ready to eat products in the first year to 1,500 tons in the next three years.

However, in 2021, we started catering our ready-to-eat meals on trains and also have a contract with the IRCTC. We wish to bring the joy of eating home-cooked traditional Gujarati and North Indian food to people all over the world. The Gujarati people are one of India's most enterprising communities. Gujaratis have emigrated all over the world, but they have remained true to their core values.

We have launched ready to eat food products with a shelf life of nearly six to nine months to honour our community and to further propagate this innate, true-to-ourselves mindset. Kichdi, Kadhi, and Dal, a traditional Indian meal, may now be enjoyed anywhere in the world! Our vision is for this innovative model to reach new heights, with a revenue forecast of ₹90 crore in the next five years.



We have carved a niche in the industry by providing customised products



Beyond Dreams' Versailles range

◆ Beyond Dreams' Versailles collection is packed with craftsmanship, harmony, and taste. The collection has an old-world charm and a traditional style, tastefully re-envisioned for today's modernism, with the richness of woven silk and rich jewel tones in the background of complex French motifs. Impeccable textiles in rich colours, vivid patterns, and accents, with textures full of character and a definitive feel, have developed unique aesthetics. The line manages to keep a traditional aesthetic of casual sophistication without being overbearing, embracing the grandeur and extravagance of the Provincial style. Whatever you need, be it curtains, pillows, or upholstery, this traditional European assortment is unbeatable in pricing.



A love story bound in luxury

◆ The Francesca line from SV Casa, the home of beautiful interior accessories inspired by exotic travel, is now available. The SV Casa anthology is a global epic romance, with each collection serving as a chapter in which every object plays a role. Every piece is a labour of love, crafted from the finest materials, conceived with passion and brought to life in the hands of expert artisans. Our aesthetic is to strike a balance between architectural clarity and finely detailed rendering.



Eris Home's table linen

◆ Eris Home has crafted a selection of utilitarian and durable table linen in ethereal tones. The set includes table runners, placemats, and napkins in beautiful pastel tones of green and blue with designs of cranes and ginkgo—East Asian symbols of happiness and longevity. The collection is divided into three edits: Ginkgo, Everlasting Ginkgo, and Dreamy Cranes. Its superior materials and warm colours instantly take you to the happy and quiet environs of Japan and China on nice fall nights.

Vintage Value by TRR

♦ Winter has come! With our soft and warm rugs, we have got you covered. TRR's Vintage Value line is the right blend of powerful tones, impeccable craftsmanship, and fascinating origin stories. The Drake is a one-of-a-kind rug with an overall geometric pattern and a vintage fading surface design, as the name implies. This rug is made of wool and polyester in a jacquard weave, making it both durable and stylish. This winter, update your home with our Drake rug.



Design forecast: Orange Tree

♦ Orange Tree stresses the use of natural materials that may be made with artistry, elegance, and skill to refresh and recreate your interiors in its design forecast for 2022. The lighting and furniture categories in this trend edit have been curated. The whiff of Mediterranean influence, which has become a catch-all for all interior designs and is here to stay, is in harmony with the minimalist chic approach. The Mediterranean-inspired Aphro Collection mixes characteristics that combine the finest of old-world design with modern lifestyles.

Cashing in on green dream

Greenware gloves, unlike standard gloves, are created from plant-based renewable materials. After the product has been exposed, it will begin to decompose.

The long list of business benefits of plant-based, compostable products continues to grow day. One of those products is premium-quality, biodegradable gloves. Our gloves are made of renewable plant resources. Once the product has been used, thrown away, and exposed to enough moisture, it will start the process of composting. This is unlike traditional plastic gloves such as vinyl or nitrile, which can take up to 1,000 years to decompose.

MONETARY BENEFIT

With a switch to Greenware gloves, the waste management costs will plummet. Just think



how easy it will be to toss these gloves into the trash and not have to worry about the rest.

BRANDING BENEFIT

Another benefit is the green image they can project onto your customer base. Now, customers favour businesses that make an effort to protect the environment. Compostable gloves is a great way to start to improve profits and your bottom line.

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Pilibhit meticulously reflects the authentic atmosphere and spiritual essence of the town in all parts of the design, using sustainable practices.



Rudraksha is prominently depicted in the decor and styling



Pilibhit House, a mesmerising hospitality project in Haridwar by Designers Group, seeks to enthral everyone entering the town in search of liberation (Moksha). The Pilibhit House Hotel's contemporary design grammar was heavily influenced by Haridwar's cultural and religious significance. The descendants of the royal family of Pilibhit owned this vintage property on the banks of the Ganga River. The design was conceptualised by highlighting the four phases of life, or *Purusharth*, as per Hindu Philosophy, i.e., *Dharma* (righteousness), *Artha* (prosperity), *Kama* (pleasure, love), and *Moksha*, translated into a contemporary setting. Multiple design influences were incorporated as a homage to Lord Shiva and the gateway for the *Chardham Yatra*. The cultural and spiritual significance of Haridwar plays a

considerable part in the contemporary design grammar of the Pilibhit House by IHCL SeleQtions. The hotel is divided into four sections: the entry, courtyard, lounge, and dining area, which all face the holy river. The hotel's central hub, the courtyard, includes the lounge, lobby, reception area, and coffee shop. All guests are ensured a celebratory welcome, adorned with a symbolic *Rudraksha Mala*. The treatment and control of air and water pollution were employed through the use of sustainable architectural practises. The hotel authorities are working on the maintenance of the *Ganga Ghat* and the vicinity as part of their goal to give back to society. The hotel encourages the use of lost native cuisines and local art and culture, as well as provides proper skill training to trainees and employed personnel.

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Appointments



VICTOR CHEN

General Manager, Courtyard by Marriott
Mumbai International Airport

★ Chen is a seasoned hotelier with strong operations experience, having spent 21 years in the field. He began his career with Hyatt Hotels in the Corporate Leadership Programme after graduating from hotel school in Kolkata. He joined Marriott International in 2016 as Resident Manager at JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu, where he was responsible for effectively developing the brand strategy and upgrading the guest experience. He was elevated to General Manager at the Le Meridien Calangute Goa as a result of this.



DEVENDRA SHARMA

General Manager
Swosti Premium, Bhubaneswar

★ Sharma is a seasoned hotelier with robust operational experience, having spent 17 years in the industry. He began his career with the Taj Hotels in the Corporate Leadership Programme. He joined Marriott International in 2007 as the Food and Beverage (F&B) Manager at Le Meridien Jaipur. Sharma's focus on genuine care, a clean, well-maintained hotel, and empowering colleagues has improved the visitor experience, resulting in increased brand preference and several hotel accolades.



RAYAN ARANHA

General Manager, Novotel ibis Chennai
OMR & Novotel Chennai SIPCOT

★ An industry veteran, Aranha has over two decades of hospitality experience in sales, marketing, distribution, and operations. He is currently in his 10th year at Accor, where he started as the Director of Sales & Marketing at Grand Mercure, Bangalore, swiftly moving to operations as Executive Assistant Manager. He has also worked with Pullman & Novotel New Delhi Aerocity before heading operations at ibis Mumbai Airport. His last assignment was with Grand Mercure Bangalore and Grand Mercure Mysore as Cluster GM.



SANDEEP UDUPA

Assistant Director of HR
JW Marriott Bengaluru

★ Udupa has effectively strategised, co-created, and implemented business transformation via people processes to boost business and maintain organisational effectiveness, bringing over 14 years of expertise in the sector. He began his career in 2012 at the Goa Marriott Resort and Spa, eventually moving into HR at the Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield. He has worked for prestigious brands such as Fairfield by Marriott Rajajinagar Bengaluru and Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel in various managerial capacities.



SOHRAB KHAN

Senior Revenue Manager, Sheraton Grand
Pune & Le Meridien Mahabaleshwar

★ Khan has a diverse skill set, including building successful company strategies, distribution optimisation, and revenue forecasting. Prior to this position, he worked for Marriott International, Radisson Blu, and Ascott Limited, among others hospitality companies. His new role will entail developing and implementing the brand's entire revenue management plan. He will be responsible for the formulation and execution of a proper rate plan, assisting the company in maintaining a positive growth trajectory.



SUSHIL AMLANI

Head-Business Development
Espire Hospitality

★ Amlani is an industry veteran with over two decades of experience in business development, hotel operations, and sales. He has worked with leading hospitality brands such as Accor, Sayaji Hotels, Sterling Holidays, and Best Western Peninsula. In his role at Espire Hospitality, he will be supporting the growth objective of the company and achieving the goal of 20 resorts in the next two years. Espire Hospitality owns and operates Six Senses Fort Barwara, as well as Country Inn Hotels & Resorts.



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