

HOTELS & RESTAURANTS INDIA fhrai magazine

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A MONTHLY ON HOSPITALITY TRADE

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Dear FHRAI Members,

I hope this message finds you well. As we navigate the ever-evolving landscape of hospitality industry, I wish to address two critical matters that directly impact our businesses and our commitment to responsible practices.

Firstly, we must address the escalating issue of fraudulent activities on online platforms, particularly on Google, which has a direct impact on the hotel industry and the safety and trust of our customers. In recent times, we have seen a significant rise in fraudulent actions targeting hotel bookings through Google My Business (GMB). These activities not only harm our valued customers but also have legal implications and damage the reputation of our hotels.

Fraudsters employ various tactics, including phishing emails, deceptive phone calls, fake bank accounts and manipulation of online photos to deceive both hotel staff and unsuspecting customers. The consequences of such fraudulent activities are far-reaching, leading to mistrust among consumers, tarnishing our industry's reputation and resulting in financial losses.

To address this pressing issue, we request Google's support in advocating for the following corrective measures:

Stringent validation of Google

Listings: Advocate for a thorough validation process for all establishments on Google, involving document verification, video call verification and website checks. This will ensure that credentials are sent to the correct individuals.

Real-time complaint resolution: Push for a mechanism that resolves complaints regarding listing hacking within 24 hours, as the current process is slow and burdensome, allowing fraudsters to exploit delays.

Public awareness campaigns: Encourage regular public awareness campaigns, conducted through Google's out-

reach channels, including social media, to educate the public about this serious issue.

These endeavours will help safeguard the integrity of our industry and ensure a secure online environment for our valued customers.

Secondly, we turn our attention to the recent directives issued by various pollution control boards and the National Green Tribunal (NGT) regarding the mandatory installation of retrofitting emission control devices (RECDs) on diesel generator (DG) sets already in operation. While we acknowledge the importance of environmental conservation and compliance with emission standards, these mandates pose challenges to our industry.

Our industry faces serious challenges in complying with these mandates, including limited manufacturers and suppliers, exorbitant costs, performance limitations, non-compliance with CPCB 4 Plus norms, space constraints and unproven technology.

Considering these challenges, we have requested for support in advocating for the following actions:

Review mandates: Advocate for a review of the blanket implementation of retrofitting all operational DG sets with emission control devices in NACs and address concerns raised by our industry.

Focus on compliance: Encourage authorities to prioritise solutions that comply with CPCB 4 Plus norms, which will be in force from July 1, 2023.

Together, we can protect the integrity of our industry, provide a secure environment for our customers, and foster sustainability and responsible growth.

Thank you for your continued commitment to FHRAI and our industry's well-being.

With best regards,
Sudesh Poddar
President, FHRAI



Sudesh Poddar
President,
FHRAI

“
We must address the escalating issue of fraudulent activities on online platforms, particularly on Google, which has a direct impact on the hotel industry and the safety and trust of our customers
”

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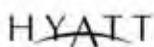


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India's hotel sector soars high in H1 2023

JLL's latest report shows India's hospitality sector experienced significant recovery, with total deal volume of ₹1,432 crore in H1 2023.



Crafting menus: The art of culinary excellence

The meticulous process of designing menus within the hospitality sector significantly influences the overall success of a dining establishment, contends Nikhil Bhanot.

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Reign of regional dishes

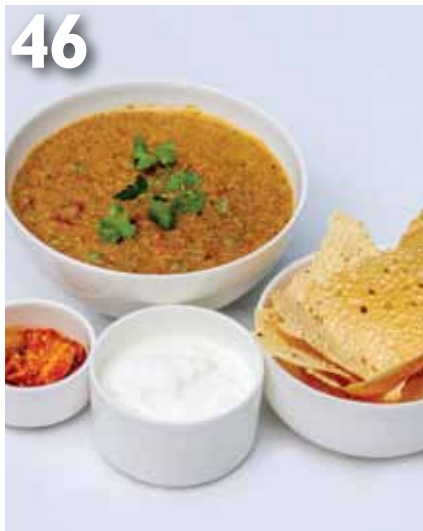
Capturing culinary diversity of India, here's how some of the best five-star kitchens in capital scripted global dominance of regional flavours during G20 summit.

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Himachal's hotel industry bounces back

Hill state faced adversity with floods but showed remarkable resilience as communities united to rebuild the region, including its vital hospitality sector, reckons Sumeet Taneja.

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THE FEDERATION OF HOTEL & RESTAURANT ASSOCIATIONS OF INDIA

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New leadership takes the reins

FHRAI also elects new office bearers, who will oversee day-to-day operations at the Federation.

In a defining moment for the Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI), **Pradeep Shetty**, Director, Maharaja Hotels was unanimously elected as the President during the 67th Annual General Meeting held on 28 September 2023. Shetty's journey within FHRAI has been marked by unwavering dedication, as he has served as Vice President and actively contributed to the Federation for over a decade. Moreover, he currently holds the position of President at the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI).

Set to assume office on 1 January 2024, Shetty brings a formidable understanding of corporate law and an in-depth grasp of the legal and regulatory intricacies surrounding the tourism and hospitality industry. His impact on FHRAI's legal interventions over the years is undeniable, with landmark achievements such as the MRP judgment by the

Hon'ble Supreme Court, CCI's crack-down on anti-competitive practices by industry giants such as MakeMyTrip and OYO, securing Cable TV tariff relief against broadcasters, and obtaining a High Court order staying the CCPA guidelines on levying service charges—all of which bear the indelible mark of Shetty's commitment to championing the hospitality sector's cause.

**Newly elected
President of FHRAI is
set to assume office on
1 January 2024**

"In the role of President at FHRAI, I am committed to addressing several pressing priorities with a sense of urgency. We intend to actively engage with the government for creating a more conducive regulatory framework for the hospitality sector and the long-pending request of the sector for granting infrastructure status is top of our agenda. This can be a gamechanger by



facilitating long-term loans at competitive interest rates to accelerate growth in the sector. More stimulus packages and incentives are required from the government to equip the sector to achieve the ambitious target of welcoming 100 million international tourists by 2047, which include a favourable GST regime and Ease of Doing Business measures in hospitality,” stated Shetty.

More stimulus packages & incentives are required from the government to equip the sector

Beyond these key objectives, Shetty has been diligently working on addressing issues related to music copyright, ser-

vice charges and anti-competitive activities by tech giants that adversely affect FHRAI members.

“I am deeply honoured to take on this role and lead FHRAI, an organization that has played a pivotal role in shaping the hospitality landscape of our country. I thank all the regional associations and Executive Committee members for reposing faith in me. We are committed to advancing the interests of our members and the entire industry. Together, we will strive for excellence, nurture innovation and create a thriving environment for hospitality in India. FHRAI will embark on proactive policy advocacy in the space of online travel, GST rationalisation for restaurants and creation of an energetic environment for the growth of tour-

ism in India through favourable fiscal policies and ease of doing business,” Shetty affirmed.

The Executive Committee also elected the new Office Bearers of FHRAI, who will supervise the routine affairs at the Federation. **Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, K Nagaraju** and **T S Walia** were elected as the Vice Presidents from Hotel & Restaurant Association of Northern India (HRANI), The South India Hotels & Restaurants Association (SIHRA) and Hotel & Restaurant Association of Eastern India (HRAEI), respectively. **D V S Somaraju** has been elected as Honorary Treasurer and **Nirav Gandhi** as the Honorary Secretary, while **Sudesh Poddar** and **Amarvir Singh** will serve as Joint Honorary Secretaries of the Federation. □





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Reconsider emission *Rules*

FHRAI highlights several challenges in complying with RECDs on DG sets, including limited manufacturers, high costs, and performance concerns.

In a letter addressed to **Leena Nandan**, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MOEFCC), FHRAI has urged for the development of a fair and logical policy concerning the retrofitting of emission control devices (RECDs) for operational DG sets.

FHRAI stated in the letter, "Serious challenges faced by the hospitality industry in complying with the RECDs on DG sets are enumerated below:

Limitations of RECDs

Limited number of manufacturers or suppliers: With only three to four known suppliers or manufacturers, serving the



Sudesh Poddar
President,
FHRAI & HRAEI

humungous installation base, comprising lakhs of DG sets that are already in operation is a herculean task and practically impossible.

Exorbitant cost: Prices quoted by the suppliers range from 40 per cent to 80 per cent of DH costs. Clearly, shortage of supply base is at the play here.

RECDs are expected to reduce PM 2.5 by approx. 70% (again on the border line). Other pollutants are not reduced

Performance: RECDs are expected to reduce PM 2.5 by approximately 70 per cent (again on the border line). Other pollutants are not reduced. One leading supplier has expressed this in its offer



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as follows: “The use of RECDs does not guarantee any percentage change in gaseous emissions, though a reduction in PM emission up to 70 per cent is expected.”

Non-compliance to CPCB 4 plus norms:

Despite all these limitations, if one were to install these RECDs and incur these high costs, they will be back to square one since these devices do not ensure compliance to CPCB 4 plus norms. Compliance to CPCB 4 plus norms is required from 1st July 2023.

Space required: ESP type RECDs require large space, accommodating the same in the existing locations would be a major challenge.

Technology: Entities manufacturing these items keep on changing the technology, indicating that the technology is not matured. Further, the number of suppliers of RECDs in the market is limited,

the technology is not proven, and the performance is not robust. Appears to be a stop-gap arrangement that is being foisted on hapless consumers to comply with some interim short-term solution that is being sought to be implemented to control pollution.

Desist from implementation of the order of retrofitting all operational DG sets with Emission Control Devices in NAC areas

b) Standby usage or application

In the hospitality (and similar industries), DG sets are used as a backup, with few hours of operation during a month and their contribution to the pollution would be minimal. Also, such intermittent operation does not permit RECDs to stabilise its output, defeating the whole purpose of combating the pollution.

c) CPCB 4 plus norms

Since the CPCB 4 plus norms have already been notified effective 1st July 2023, it will make sense to focus on a solution that is compliant with these norms rather than implementing partial, semi-effective and interim solutions. It may be noted that MOEFCC had extended the date for supply of DG sets with old standards up to 30 June 2024 against purchase orders issued on or before 30 June 2023 since the technological changes required are complex and time consuming.

The Association requested the authority to advise state pollution control board from implementing the order of NGT in a blanket manner, and further added, “Desist from implementation of the order of retrofitting all operational DG sets with Emission Control Devices in NAC areas and look into the concerns raised so as to ensure compliance of the orders of National Green Tribunal.” □





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Sounding alarm on hospitality frauds

FHRAI raises concerns about the increasing instances of fraudulent activities on online platforms related to the hospitality industry.

The FHRAI has written a letter to **Sanjay Gupta**, who serves as the Country Head and Vice President of Google India highlighting the growing concerns regarding the increasing instances of fraudulent activities occurring on online platforms related to the hospitality industry.

In the letter, FHRAI stated, “As highlighted in our earlier communication, the menace of fraudulent activities taking place on the online platforms, including Google has been on the rise in the recent



Sudesh Poddar
President,
FHRAI & HRAEI

period. The fraudsters are increasingly targeting the hotel bookings thereby causing immense hardships and financial losses to the customers along with legal trouble and damage of reputation or brand value

“**The fraudsters are increasingly targeting the hotel bookings thereby causing immense hardships and financial losses to the customers**”

to the hotels. As you are aware, the hotels can do their business listings on Google platform which is called as Google My Business (GMB). As per Google protocol, anyone can do this listing by uploading some pictures, address and contact details and verification happens through courier code or through video call. Most of the time, these listings are created by the hotel and they manage it efficiently by replying to reviews or uploading some latest pictures or offers, time to time.”

Federation further pointed out that, “However, some fraudulent practices are continuously attempted on the Google platforms by the scamsters and some of them are enumerated below:

Through email: These fraudsters request access to the listing via email. If a hotel is actively monitoring their emails, they may identify this as suspicious activity and reject the request. However, the fraudsters often use names similar to Google or other online portals, causing confusion for the hotels. Consequently, some hotels inadvertently grant access to the request. In some cases, hotel staff mistakenly click on the “respond” button at the top instead of the “reject” button, automatically accepting the request and placing the Google listing in the hands of the fraudsters.

Hacking through call: Sometimes, the scamsters call the hotels during nighttime or odd times, claiming to be from Google and ask some common questions just to

look genuine. At the end they ask the front office personnel to provide the code or accept the listing request email sent by the scamster.

Bank Account and G Pay: In some cases, the scamster open bank accounts in the name of the hotel to look genuine and they open multiple bank accounts with different IFSC codes. A traveller cannot suspect this since the name of the bank account is in the name of the hotel only.

Google should work with law enforcement agencies to track down and prosecute scammers who use the platform to commit fraud

Photo on Google & TripAdvisor with scamster number: In case the fraudster is unable to get access of the listing, they resort to another easy mode of cheating by uploading lots of pictures on Google listing of any hotel with their contact number. An unaware customer is easily trapped in this manner.”

For the redressal of abovementioned concerns, FHRAI suggested following corrective measures:

Strict validation of Google Listings: It is imperative to have strict validation process for listing of all establishments on the plat-

form. This will prevent a large number of fraudulent activities taking place on online platforms. The process could be strengthened by deploying adequate resources to check and verify all the documents of the applicants, do video call verification.

Real time complaint resolution: Google needs to establish a mechanism to resolve a complaint within 24 hours regarding hacking of the listing by a scamster. The fraudsters understand that as per the existing practice, it will take approximately two weeks or more for the hotels to get the listing back and they use this window to commit the fraud. The present process of complaint resolution by Google is very slow and cumbersome which has become torturous for the hotels and the guests.

Public awareness campaigns: It is also very important to undertake regular public awareness activities through the extensive outreach channels of Google, including social media to make the public aware about this serious issue.

In addition to the abovementioned measures, FHRAI further suggested that Google needs to provide hotels with more control over their listings. This could include giving them the ability to block certain users from making changes to their listings or to require two-factor authentication for all changes and Google should work with law enforcement agencies to track down and prosecute scammers who use their platform to commit fraud. □



Hospitality's future discussed at AGM



HRANI's 72nd AGM marked a significant event in hospitality industry's calendar, bringing together industry leaders & stakeholders from Northern India.

HRANI, the northern wing of FHRAI, convened its 72nd Annual General Meeting (AGM) amidst much anticipation and enthusiasm on 27 September 2023. The prestigious gathering took place at the elegant venue of The Umrao in New Delhi, underscoring its significance as a pivotal event in the hospitality industry calendar.

Garish Oberoi, President, HRANI, presided over the meeting, orchestrating proceedings in strict accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013, with guidance from **Ravi Gupta**, a seasoned Chartered Accountant from Gupta Dutt & Associates.

Garish Oberoi, President, HRANI, presided over AGM, orchestrating proceedings in accordance with provisions of the Companies Act, 2013



At the heart of this AGM were key decisions, discussions, and resolutions that would shape the future trajectory of the hospitality industry of North India. Members were given the unique opportunity to participate through both E-voting and in-person voting, ensuring that the collective voice of the industry's stakeholders was heard and honoured. Underlying the success and prominence of HRANI's AGM is its distinguished

leadership team, composed of industry veterans who bring a wealth of experience, insight and expertise to the helm of the association.

Beyond the formalities of the AGM, the event was also marked by the presentation of HRANI Awards of Excellence to its esteemed members, recognising their outstanding contributions and accomplishments within the industry. □





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K Syama Raju re-elected as President

At the 72nd AGM of SIHRA, several significant resolutions were passed with an overwhelming majority.

The 72nd AGM of SIHRA was held on 16 September 2023 at Feathers (A Radha Hotel), Chennai with the presence of 100 association members from Chennai and also from other states. Members were provided with the facility of remote e-voting as well as voting by ballot at the AGM. All the resolutions were passed with an overwhelming majority.

At the Executive Committee Meeting held after the AGM, the Committee re-elected **K Syama Raju**, Managing Director, Hotel Maurya, Bengaluru and Chairman, Hotel Maruthi, Bengaluru as President, SIHRA. Under his leadership, the association has provided maximum support to the hotel industry, especially during the most trying times of COVID. Raju was instrumental in securing "industry status" to classified hotels in Karnataka.

The Executive Committee also elected **K Nagaraju**, **Suresh M Pillai**,

D Srinivasan and **M Balakrishna Reddy** as Vice Presidents, **K Murali Rao** as Hon. Treasurer and **T Nataraajan** as Hon. Secretary of the association for a period of one year.

SIHRA has been approved as a training partner in Green Channel by the Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation

Skills training

SIHRA has been approved as a training partner in Green Channel by the Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation. To address the issue of shortage of skilled manpower in the hospitality sector, SIHRA has plans to organise workshops for imparting skills training to its own member hotels to start with and thereafter set up training centres to motivate school and college students to opt for hospitality and tourism as a career.



SIHRA organised its first such leadership skills training workshop on 21 September 2023 at Madurai to its member hotel staff. 30 participants from hotels in and around the city of Madurai participated in the workshop and completed the training. The participants included Supervisors, Executives and Assistant Managers of hotels in and around Madurai. **Kapilan Ramarajan**, Founder and CEO, Kapilan Institute of Training, Trichy was the trainer and topics covered in the session included communication skills and listening, team building, planning and execution, goal setting, delegation and empowerment. The participants were given a certificate for completing the training successfully. **G Vasudevan**, Managing Director, Pandiyan Hotel, Madurai and Executive Committee Member, SIHRA and **S Sundar**, Director, Operations, SIHRA addressed the participants and introduced the theme of training.

Prestigious accolade for S Sundar

In a testament to his industry expertise and dedication, Sundar, Director, Operations, SIHRA has been nominated as one of the jury members of the awards committee for the second edition of the Tamil Nadu State Tourism Awards. This initiative, spearheaded by the Department of Tourism, Government of Tamil Nadu, aims to recognise and celebrate outstanding achievements, exemplary leadership and innovative contributions within the state's thriving tourism industry.

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During 73rd AGM, the association re-elected **Pradeep Shetty** as President & renewed its commitment towards the planet.

In the dynamic world of hospitality leadership, HRAWI has once again placed its trust in a seasoned industry stalwart. During the 73rd Annual General Meeting held on September 16, 2023, **Pradeep Shetty**, Director, Maharaja Hotels was re-elected as the President of HRAWI.

Shetty brings a wealth of experience in his role as the President and has been an active member of the Association for over a decade. His longstanding commitment to the industry is further underscored by his role as Vice President of the FHRAI. He was also recently elected as President of FHRAI.

In this new term, HRAWI retains a stellar team, with Nirav Gandhi as Senior

Vice President, Chetan Mehta as Vice President, Jimmy Shaw as Honorary Secretary and Paramjit S Ghai as Honorary Treasurer. Additionally, Gurbir Bedi steps into the role of Joint Honorary Secretary.

Under Shetty's leadership, HRAWI has led impactful campaigns across hospitality spectrum, encompassing food safety, regulatory advocacy

Under Shetty's leadership over the past year, HRAWI has led impactful campaigns across the hospitality spectrum, encompassing food safety, regulatory advocacy, talent development and sustainability. In an earnest commitment to environmental sustainability, HRAWI has partnered with

the government's Mission Life initiative, furthering its dedication to eco-conscious practices within the industry.

Shetty expressed, "In our ongoing commitment towards environmental sustainability, HRAWI is proud to join hands with the government's Mission Life initiative. Our pledge to save the environment underscores our dedication to adopting environmentally conscious practices within the hospitality industry. Our recent collaboration with IGBC is a significant step in this direction, reinforcing our commitment to reducing our environmental footprint and promoting sustainable practices. Together, we aim to create a greener and more eco-friendly future for our industry and our planet." □



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INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MILLETS 2023

Barnyard Millets and Crabstick Gimbap



Ingredients

Barnyard Millets	100 gms	Sweet pickled raddish	50 gms
Crabsticks	100 gms	Eggs	2 nos
Seaweed aka gim	2 nos	Zucchini green	60 gms
Sesame seed oil	20 ml	Salt	to taste
Carrots	25 gms		

Method

1. Soak the Millets for 30 mins. After that boil the Millets for 8-10 mins.
2. When cooked, take the Millets in small batch and add 15 ml of sesame oil and salt, mix well.
3. Cut and slice carrots zucchini and pickled radish into thick long strips.
4. In a bowl break eggs, add salt and 5 ml sesame oil, whisk well. Then make a plain omelette and then cut into strips.
5. Take a bamboo mat. Lightly heat seaweed over fire and place it on bamboo mat.
6. Spread warm Millets over gim and make sure to spread it evenly.
7. Place carrots radish eggs crabstick and zucchini over Millets and start rolling.
8. Roll tightly with bamboo mat. The roll should be firm.
9. Cut into equal slices and serve it with rolled sweet pickled radish and light soy sauce.

Paan and Millets pudding with sauf crumble, rose sauce and vanilla tuille



Ingredients

Barnyard Millets	20 gms	Agar agar	8 gms
Foxtail Millets	15 gms	Rose syrup	30 ml
Milk	1 litre	Cream	30 ml
Sugar	75 gms	Rose water	few drops
Saunf	20 gms	Kewra	few drops
Flour	100 gms	Betal leaf	3 nos
Butter	100 gms	Eggs	15 gms
Vanilla essence	few drops		

Method (for pudding)

1. In a sauce pan add milk and bring it to boil. In a grinder bowl add both Millets and one betal leaf along with 5 gms of saunf. Grind till green coloured Millets powder is obtained. Add the grinded Millets powder to milk and stir continuously. Add 45 gms of sugar. The milk will thicken. Add 15 ml beaten cream, rose essence, kewra essence and switch off the gas. Add agar agar, mix well. Add the mixture into desired moulds and chill overnight.
2. **For crumble:** Mix 20 gms refined flour, 20 gm butter, pinch of salt, 5 gms of sugar and saunf powder and mix until crumbly texture. Bake for 30 mins at 170 degrees Celsius. When cooled down, break it into small crumble.
3. **For rose sauce:** Bring rose syrup to boil and then add remaining cream, cool down.
4. **Tuille:** Mix 15 gms egg with 15 gms of flour, 15 gms of sugar with some vanilla and 15 gms butter. Whisk well until sugar is mixed well. With the help of a spatula, spread mixture over tuille mat and bake at 180 degrees celsius for 7 mins.
5. After 7 mins take out the mat from oven and carefully remove tuille from mat and use.
6. **Assembly:** On a dessert plate, place a clean and dry paan leaf.
7. Over leaf place the frozen pudding, pour the sauce and sprinkle the crumble. Garnish with rose leaves and vanilla tuille.



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Putting sustainability first in hospitality

Travel for LiFE programme is launched with aim of promoting sustainability in hotel sector while benefitting local economies & communities.

The Union Ministry of Tourism (MoT) celebrated the World Tourism Day 2023 with the global launch of Travel for LiFE programme, at the recently opened Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. Travel for LiFE is a sectoral programme under Mission LiFE, targeted towards the tourism sector, which the MoT has unveiled in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).



V Vidyavathi
Secretary, MoT,
Govt. of India





A booklet on Travel for LiFE was launched with its digital inauguration by **Ajay Bhatt**, Minister of State of Tourism and Defence, Government of India. He said, “The recent G20 Leaders’ Summit has demonstrated India’s commitment to forging global unity and collaboration, and the deliberations echoed the collective aspirations of nations for a sustainable future. Every traveller, every business, and every citizen to adopt this programme and pledge to

Travel for LiFE programme shows our commitment towards a sustainable resilient and inclusive hotel sector

travel responsibly, to respect our environment, and to understand and appreciate the diverse cultures that make our world so beautifully complex. The Travel for LiFE programme, which is a part of

Mission LiFE, sets out the path to a sustainable planet Earth.” Commenting on the venue of the event, he said, “Bharat Mandapam and recently inaugurated IICC in Dwarka are two world-class facilities for MICE. They are ready to host conferences from all parts of the world.”

V Vidyavathi, Secretary, MoT, Government of India, also spoke at the event and said, “This shows our commitment towards a sustainable resilient and inclusive tourism sector. This programme will encourage tourists to take simple actions that result in conservation of the environment, biodiversity, improvement in the local economy and preservation of the socio-cultural integrity of the local communities. It aims to create mindful and deliberate utilisation of resources by the stakeholders in the tourism value chain.” Also present on the occasion were **Leena Nandan**, Secretary, MoEFCC and **Rakesh Kumar Verma**, Additional Secretary, MoT. □



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India's hotel sector soars high in H1 2023

JLL's latest report shows India's hospitality sector experienced significant recovery, with total deal volume of ₹1,432 crore in H1 2023.



In the realm of India's hospitality sector, the story of resurgence is one that deserves a standing ovation. After navigating the stormy seas of COVID, this vibrant sector is making waves once more. JLL's latest report unveils a remarkable comeback with 2022 witnessing a total deal volume of ₹580 crore marking a triumphant return to form. But that is not all; this exhilarating trend has continued its resolute march into the first half of

2023, with hotel transaction volumes now soaring to an impressive ₹1,432 crore.

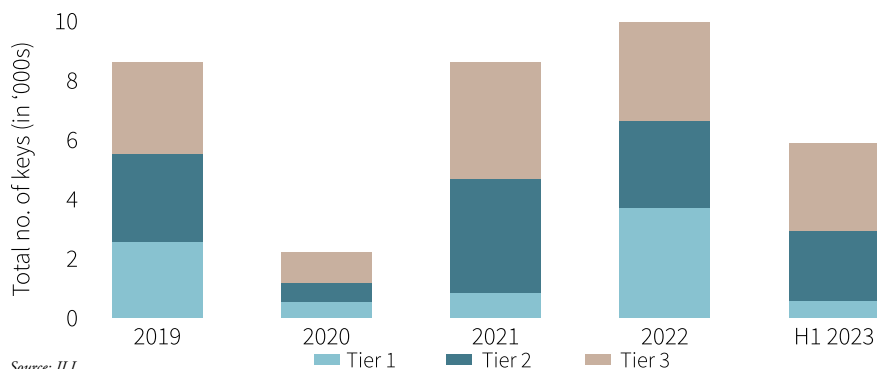
"We are encouraged by the strong recovery in hotel investment volumes and

HNI's are increasingly diversifying their investment portfolios by entering the hotel asset class

anticipate this positive momentum to continue in the coming years. The investment landscape remains attractive due to favourable macro-economic factors, an expanding commercial market and improved air connectivity. As investors evaluate their options, we expect further diversification into the hotel asset class by high net worth individuals (HNIs). We see increased interest from hotel investors for both operating assets and portfolios. The other rising trend is retail investor confidence in hotel stocks which is further encouraging

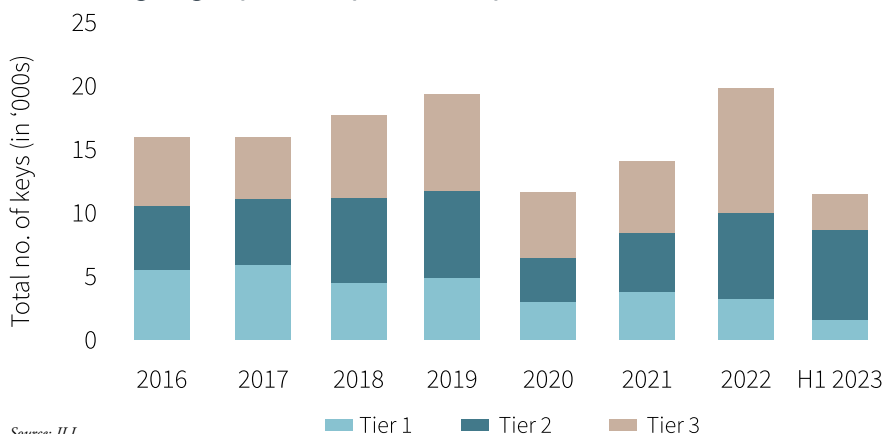


Hotel Openings By Tier City (No. of Keys)



Source: JLL

Hotel Signings by Tier City (No. of Keys)



Source: JLL

privately held hotel owning companies to enter public markets,” remarked **Jaideep Dang**, Managing Director, Hotels and Hospitality Group, India, JLL.

Unlike 2021, which saw mainly consolidations in the hotel transactions landscape, the year 2022 displayed a variety of transactions, encompassing single asset deals and lease agreements for land for greenfield airport-terminal hotels. In the first half of 2023, there has been a notable increase in investment activity resulting

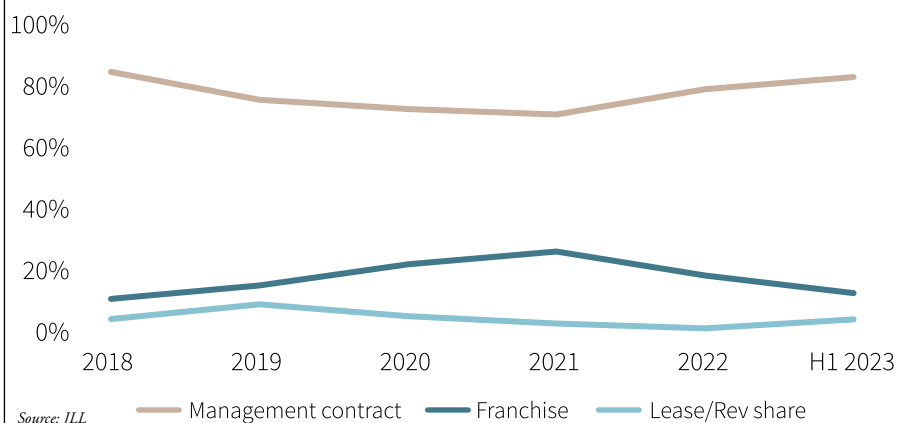
from National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) proceedings, especially involving high-value assets burdened with debt in strong performing markets such as Mumbai and Bengaluru.

JLL foresees that the investment momentum in the hospitality sector will continue in the second half of 2023

JLL foresees that the investment momentum in the hospitality sector will continue in the second half of 2023, with an anticipated volume of around ₹722 crore, and extend into 2024. This optimistic outlook is founded on the outstanding performance of the hospitality industry, bolstered by strong macro-economic fundamentals, a thriving commercial market, and improved air connectivity.

Key highlights from report titled ‘Hotel Investment Trends – India H1 2023’ indicate several noteworthy trends in the Indian hotel investment landscape. HNIs are increasingly diversifying their investment portfolios by entering the hotel asset class. Furthermore, portfolios and operating assets are attracting more investors compared to greenfield projects. There is a growing traction in NCLT resolution cases, particularly emphasising operational assets in sought-after destinations. The conclusion of the ECLGC may lead to an increase in tradable assets that can be found in the market, creating fresh opportunities for investors inbound institutional investment continues to gain momentum as well. □

Share (%) of different contract types in total signings (2018-H1 2023)



Source: JLL

Grand India debut

Atmosphere Core, known for its award-winning resorts in Maldives, has unveiled an aggressive plan of building a portfolio of 25 properties by 2025 in India.



Lipla Negi

Atmosphere Core kicks off its spectacular India entry with the announcement of eight new properties in Bhopal, Kolkata, Bhubaneswar, Goa, Bengaluru, Coorg and Kannur. Leveraging on its award-winning resort experiences in the Maldives, the company aims at heralding a paradigm shift in the Indian hospitality landscape through unique and unforgettable experiences. The grand unveiling took place in New Delhi, which witnessed a strong attendance of the brand's senior leadership.

The company will bring three distinguished Atmosphere Core brands to India—THE OZEN COLLECTION, Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts and COLOURS OF OBLU. With a goal to create a distinctive identity, the brand aims to tap into the rising demand for unique experiential luxury properties in the country. Sharing the brand vision,



Dipti Ranjan Patnaik
Chairman,
Atmosphere Hospitality

Dipti Ranjan Patnaik, Chairman, Atmosphere Hospitality said, "India's rich cultural tapestry and diverse landscapes offer immense potential for extraordinary hospitality. With our commitment to sustainability and the Joy of Giving, we aim to create a hospitality legacy in India."

Talking about the legacy of the brand, he further added, "My goal has been to forge a partnership that will allow

me to further expand and fulfill my dream of becoming a dedicated hotelier. Atmosphere Core has already established a strong presence in the Maldives and I am confident that the legacy will endure, and together as a team, we will make a significant impact in India."

With our commitment to sustainability and the Joy of Giving, we aim to create a hospitality legacy in India

Focussing on the upper scale and luxury segment, the leadership team is focussed on handpicking properties that match the brand's high standards of hospitality. **Souvagya Mohapatra**, Managing Director, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka & Bhutan, Atmosphere Core, highlighted the company's expansion plans in South





Asia, echoing the ethos of giving joyfully from the heart and soul, and refining and elevating the individual experiences crafted for guests. “It will be our endeavour to redefine the luxury hospitality experience in the country.”

The brand boasts of a successful journey in the Maldives, where it has a strong portfolio of three brands and eight resorts opened within a span of 10 years. The

eight new properties in India will be: Ozen Mansion Kolkata, Ozen Privado Goa, Ozen Nandi Hills Bengaluru, Sadar Manzil Heritage by Atmosphere Bhopal, Stillwood Retreat: A Signature Atmosphere Coorg, Varsa Elements of Nature by Atmosphere Kannur, Atmosphere Bhubaneswar and Atmosphere Lake View Kolkata. “Blending the brand legacy and service excellence with the distinctive individuality of these destinations, we wish to curate

the highest hospitality experience for our guests,” shared **Stephane Laguette**, Chief Commercial Officer, Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts.



Souvagya Mohapatra

MD, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka & Bhutan,
Atmosphere Core

It will be our endeavour to redefine the luxury hospitality experience in the country

The properties will also house the famed ELENA Spa from the brand, which is an acronym for elements of Nature. **Heidi Greenwood**, Vice President, ELENA (Spa & Wellness), said, “I will be spending some time at our resort in Coorg, where I will try to understand the indigenous plants and nature to curate therapies that resonate with the place.” □



MILLENNIALS CRAVE

special dining experiences

In competitive premium hotel industry, standing out has become crucial as millennials seek unique dining experiences beyond accommodation, writes **Chef Rayomund Pardiwalla**.

As the number of premium hotels is surging, each with its own signature style and chef-driven restaurant, the dire requirement to stand out has become vital. The expectations of the guests have also radically changed, and with millennials in the picture, the demand to have seamless culinary experiences beyond the accommodation has just increased. Millennials are making waves in the hospitality industry with their vivid preferences to get treated in a personalised fashion. And in a bid to cater to these demands, the hoteliers are using innovative ways to grab their attention.

Dining experience

Today's dining has transformed into providing a holistic experience to the customer. Renowned restaurants can provide eclectic options for guests to choose from for an exclusive dining and wine experience, which can include vineyard tours, wine tastings and gourmet dinners. As millennials prefer a seamless experience, they can be offered chef-accompanied dining, where a chef cooks a curated meal while deconstructing the



Chef Rayomund Pardiwalla
Executive Chef,
The Den Bengaluru

process and technique for an informed audience. Moreover, guests can be offered a personal Chef who creates customised meals for them in the comfort of their accommodation.

A sustainable approach

Modern-day travellers, especially millennials, have become more conscious of their environmental impact. Therefore, integrating the best sustainability practices is the need of the hour. For instance, the restaurant in a hotel can serve dishes with seasonal ingredients and source

them locally to cut down on emissions. Moreover, in a bid to entice the guests, implementing zero-waste cooking, which leaves no scraps behind, is a viable strategy. Overall, the food inventory can be efficiently managed to decrease waste, the food menu can be planned to maximise the use of ingredients and portion management can be leveraged to limit spoilage.

Implementing zero-waste cooking, which leaves no scraps behind is a viable strategy to entice guests

Make it experiential!

The days of merely serving a delicious meal are over; as for millennials, it is all about the experience. In this regard, the guests can be offered culinary immersion stays where they get immersive cooking classes as a crucial part of the guest experience. In a bid to make the guests embrace the local traditions and savour the regional delicacies, they can be taken on culinary





tours and food festivals. Furthermore, for health-conscious guests, culinary tourism options must be offered that are specifically focused on healthy eating, wellness and nutrition.

In a bid to connect more with their guests, it has become crucial for hoteliers to capture spontaneous spirit of millennials

Build connection

In a bid to connect more with their guests, it has become crucial for hoteliers to capture the spontaneous spirit of millennials. In an age where youth are driven by the Internet, social media can be leveraged to build an emotional connection with them. The social media pages and channels can be featured with the stories of local food entrepreneurs, street vendors and artisans who are initiating culinary tourism in their community. Moreover, snippets from the culinary challenges and competitions can be shared on the online platforms to give

the guests an overview of what they can experience on their vacation.

Unique culinary experiences

The new-age guests, aka the millennials in the hospitality landscape are upbeat, moody and always exploring new kinds of delicacies. For the hoteliers to cope in vibrant environment, it is essential to deliver a unique culinary experi-

ence. This can be done by providing a bespoke dining experience, following a sustainable approach to cooking, making the stay experiential and constantly building connections with them. As it is anticipated that the preferences of millennial guests will keep changing, it is best for the participants to keep the offerings personalised, simplified and authentic. ❑





Zero Bin innovation

Bars embrace sustainability

By redefining garnishes in the bars, we not only reduce our environmental impact but also elevate overall beverage experience, points out **Harsh Shenoy**.

In the ever-evolving landscape of hospitality, redefining garnishes and embracing sustainability has become a paramount goal for bars worldwide. This shift not only showcases creativity but also reduces environmental impact, aligning perfectly with the rising tide of eco-conscious consumers. Here, we explore how a Zero Bin approach, eco-friendly straws and championing local beverages can transform the bars while contributing to a greener future.

Revolutionising garnishes

Redefining garnishes offers an exciting opportunity to showcase creativity while reducing environmental impact. Fresh fruits, locally sourced herbs, hand-carved wood, and even edible candies can



Harsh Shenoy
F&B Manager,
ITC Kohenur

transform a drink's presentation without resorting to plastic props. Additionally, exploring the use of biodegradable paper for garnishes aligns with eco-conscious

practices and resonates with socially conscious customers who seek Instagram-worthy aesthetics.

Minimizing waste

The Zero Bin approach not only minimises waste but also fosters innovation in the kitchen and bar.

Encouraging cross-team collaboration between chefs and bartenders to maximise ingredient utilisation I find is a great approach. Banana peels, for instance, can be transformed into unique syrups that lend distinct flavours to cocktails. Documenting such innovative recipes and promoting them on the menu highlights a commitment to sustainability while engaging guests in the creative process.

Fresh fruits, locally sourced herbs, hand-carved wood can transform a drink's presentation without resorting to plastic props

Eco-friendly alternatives

Transitioning to eco-friendly straws and swizzle sticks is undoubtedly a commendable step toward sustainability. However, the next logical progression is to provide these alternatives only upon request. This proactive approach significantly reduces the environmental burden associated with single-use plastics as it eliminates unnecessary waste. Furthermore, it communicates the hotel's dedication to sustainability, encouraging guests to consider eco-friendly alternatives or even forgo straws altogether further reducing waste. □



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Crafting menus

The art of culinary excellence



The meticulous process of designing menus within the hospitality sector significantly influences the overall success of a dining establishment, contends **Nikhil Bhanot**.

The crafting of a menu is a meticulous and dynamic process that influences every aspect of a dining establishment's success. The menu is more than just a list of dishes; it is a carefully curated culinary journey that reflects the hotel's commitment to excellence and innovation. The process of crafting the menu involves a collaborative approach that combines the principles of seasonality, expert culinary input, thematic alignment, guest feedback and dietary inclusivity. These factors come together to offer a diverse dining experience that sets the bar for culinary excellence in the hospitality industry.

Culinary expertise

The expertise of the master chefs is invaluable in the menu-planning process. These chefs play a pivotal role in suggesting dishes and culinary concepts that reflect their regional expertise. Their input is not



Nikhil Bhanot

Director, Food & Beverage,
JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity

limited to merely suggesting dishes; they also bring their creativity and innovation to the table, often reinventing traditional recipes with a contemporary twist. This collaboration among the chefs ensures a diverse and authentic dining experience for the guests.

In today's health-conscious world, dietary restrictions & preferences play a significant role in menu planning



Catering to diverse tastes

One of the primary factors influencing flavour selection is the clientele's preferences and demographics. The menu should be designed to accommodate a diverse group of guests, including locals and international travellers. Understanding their preferences and cultural backgrounds is crucial to offering a menu that appeals to a broad audience.



Dietary inclusivity

In today's health-conscious world, dietary restrictions and preferences play a significant role in menu planning. The hotels should offer options for guests with specific dietary needs such as dairy-free, gluten-free and sugar-free dishes. These choices reflect a commitment to catering to a range of dietary requirements while still delivering on flavour and taste.

One of the cornerstones of menu planning is emphasis on using seasonal & locally sourced ingredients

Guest preferences

The menu planning process considers guest preferences and feedback. The hotel should value the opinions of its patrons and frequently conduct surveys and gather feedback through various channels. This valuable information helps in fine-tuning the menu, introducing new dishes and retiring ones that no longer resonate with the clientele. It is a dynamic process aimed at ensuring that the menu always delights and surprises guests.



Seasonal ingredients


One of the cornerstones of menu planning is the emphasis on using seasonal and locally sourced ingredients. This approach ensures the freshness and quality of the dishes served, aligning with the global trend towards sustainability and farm-to-table dining. The culinary team should keep a close eye on changing seasons to determine which ingredients are at their peak in terms of flavour and availability. By utilising ingredients that are in season, the culinary team should ensure that each dish bursts with flavour and vitality. Seasonal ingredients are a key driver of flavour selection. Using fresh, seasonal produce not only enhances the taste of dishes but also supports sustainability efforts.



Dietary trends

The hotels should keep a keen eye on dietary trends and requirements. As dietary preferences evolve, the hotel should ensure that its menu caters to a wide range of dietary needs, including vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free and low-calorie options. This inclusivity ensures that every guest can enjoy a memorable dining experience.


Authenticity & hygiene

Several factors contribute to the popularity of menu items. First and foremost, regional dominance plays a pivotal role. Dishes such as Kachori and Jalebi, deeply rooted in the local culture, are cherished by both locals and tourists seeking an authentic culinary experience. Their presence on the menu connects guests with the rich flavours of the region. Hygiene is another critical factor. Street foods such as Paani Puri, Tikki and Shakarkandi chaat are adored across India, but concerns about cleanliness often deter diners. The hotels should ensure these street classics are prepared and presented in a hygienic manner, eliminating potential health worries while preserving the beloved flavours. The popularity of menu items is a result of a delicate balance between regional authenticity, hygiene, Instagram-worthy aesthetics and the enduring appeal of comfort food. These factors combine to create a dining experience that resonates with a wide range of tastes and preferences. 



Addressing evolving consumer needs in luxury F&B

Technology use in fine dining is becoming more & more popular & includes elements such as digital food plating and AI support.

 Sara Haque

The luxury food and beverage sector in India has witnessed significant growth, particularly in the post-COVID era. The industry has undergone positive transformations and advancements, thanks to the integration of global technologies and enhanced guest accessibility.

Haramohan Bora, Assistant Director, Food & Beverage, Aloft Outer Ring Road, Bengaluru, mentioned, “One of the biggest trends now is the adoption of technology in fine dining, where guests can order and view the food plating digitally before placing an order. Technology is playing a major role with AI, and it can assist guests with things such as 3D viewing for a particular dish, thus enhancing the ordering experience.”

The most emergent trend in the F&B industry across the country is the demand for farm-to-table menus with locally grown ingredients. There has been a growing insistence on sustainability and local sourcing for luxury dining post-COVID and is a possible long-term trend that the industry is taking seriously. **Noel Mendes**, Manager, Food & Beverage, Four Seasons Hotel, Mumbai, said, “Sustainability and ethical sourcing are gaining importance in the luxury food sector. Fine dining restaurants are increasingly sourcing their ingredients locally and emphasising sustainability in their menus. This includes using organic and seasonal produce, reducing food waste and supporting local farmers and artisans. Chefs and restaurateurs are also exploring the diverse culinary traditions of the country, showcasing lesser-known regional dishes and ingredients in their menus. This trend aims to provide a more immersive and culturally rich dining experience for consumers.”

Chefs have also been focussing on regional cuisines and local flavours in luxury dining. It is increasingly being favoured by consumers across the country, with a heightened preference for menus that incorporate unique regional flavours and locally sourced ingredients. **Amit Chawla**, Director, Food & Beverage, Hyatt Regency Delhi, says, “Luxury restaurants and fine dining establishments have been increasingly collaborating with local farmers and artisans to provide fresher, more sustainable and unique ingredients. Chefs across the country in luxury dining are exploring innovative



Haramohan Bora
Assistant Director, F&B, Aloft Outer Ring Road, Bengaluru



Noel Mendes
Manager,
F&B, Four Seasons Hotel, Mumbai

“One of the most prominent trends currently is the integration of technology into fine dining

“Fine dining restaurants are increasingly sourcing their ingredients locally and emphasising sustainability in their menus

fusion cuisines that combine traditional Indian flavours with global culinary influences. This trend has gained momentum especially after COVID, when more and more travellers are experimenting with a lot of traditional flavours mixed with a touch of global cuisine.”

Similarly, in the beverage sector, locally sourced and crafted beverages are gaining popularity amongst consumers, along with an attraction towards specialty drinks with customisation, which include craft beers, wines and spirits. “Customers are moving towards innovative specialty cocktails. Creative and unique cocktails

are becoming the focal point of hotel beverage menus. A lot of hotels have been employing the best mixologists to craft signature cocktails that reflect the hotel’s identity. We at Hyatt Regency Delhi have also been laying emphasis on weekly trainings and hiring the best talent, so we are able to offer our guests world-class cocktails,” Chawla added. **Rahul Chaudhary**, Director, Food & Beverage, Conrad Pune, also added, “Sustainable and technique-forward cocktails supported by storytelling are gaining more interest. Zero-proof beverages are slowly gaining interest in India. Worldwide, the popularity of sour cocktails made with





fermented, gut-healthy ingredients such as kombucha, miso and sake are also predicted to rise. Simultaneously, local spirit is gaining interest in India and will continue to develop.”

As mentioned, the creative re-imagination within the F&B sector also seems to extend to building an experience that is both creative and experiential for the luxury F&B consumer. Guided tours which let the guest see every step in the spirit-making process, cooking sessions with chefs that give them an insight into the intricacies of food up to its plating, among others, are recent innovations adopted by hotels. “Today, people are open to experimental dining and love to try new innovations. Conceptual dinners

in collaboration, food and wine pairing events, and beverage appreciation sessions will continue to engage patrons,” Chaudhary believed. Fine dining is now considered a serious affair, with focussed efforts from hotels towards curating a wholesome experience for their customers, which includes providing distinctive menus, a wide range of options to cater to different palates, and heeding sustainability along with nutrition.

According to Mendes, the most important thing for hotels right now is to encourage these trends and keep a regular tab on shifting consumer needs. “The emphasis on health and wellness is a global trend and consumers are seeking healthier and more sustainable dining options. We will



Amit Chawla

Director, F&B, Hyatt Regency Delhi

Chefs in luxury dining are exploring innovative fusion cuisines that combine traditional Indian flavours with global culinary influences

also have to continue prioritising sustainable practices—from sourcing ingredients to waste reduction, as environmentally conscious practices are increasingly attractive to consumers. It is very important for us as hoteliers and chefs to stay attuned to evolving consumer preferences and adapt menus and offerings accordingly, so as to meet the demand for healthier, sustainable, and unique dining experiences,” he said. □



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Tech reshaping hospitality's kitchen ops

AI-driven solutions, IoT & blockchain technology have improved the operational efficiency, from sourcing to delivery, in the F&B segment.

 **Sakshi Singh**

A few decades ago, the idea of connecting kitchens with data sets and integrating food with blockchain technology was beyond comprehension. Even the most visionary leaders in the hotel industry could not have predicted a future where the kitchen would evolve into a hub of diverse technologies. The food & beverage sector has quietly found itself at the epicentre of a technological revolution. Technology adoption has been on the rise across various aspects, spanning from customer-facing departments such as food delivery and ordering to behind-the-scenes areas such as kitchen operations and sourcing.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven solutions primarily in kitchen automation, the Internet of Things (IoT) and the use of blockchain to improve traceability are some of the major technologies that are likely to witness increased adoption in the F&B space. Besides AI and IoT, advanced order management systems, digital invoicing and real-time inventory management have found widespread acceptability in hotels.

“In the ever-evolving landscape of the hotel industry’s F&B segment, several noteworthy technological breakthroughs are shaping the way hotels provide their services. These include contactless ordering and payment systems, AI-driven personalisation, smart kitchens, sustainability initiatives and food safety technologies,” said **Ranjan Rajani**, Director, Food & Beverage, Sahara Star. An industry that thrives on impeccable service quality with zero tolerance for error was the perfect fit for a technological disruption. For instance, digital order and inventory management systems help improve the uniformity of the processes starting from sourcing to delivery of the prepared food. “Kitchen automation technologies such as advanced cooking equipment and order management systems, have expedited food preparation and minimised errors, ensuring consistent quality,” Rajani pointed out.

The impact of new-age technologies on the food and service quality can be gauged only if one takes into consideration the level of disconnect that prevailed between the various departments of large F&B operations. Without an integrated system, procurement, ordering, preparation and delivery all used to take place separately. The advent of digital solutions such as integrated order and inventory management systems has ensured that procurement is synchronised with the order volume. Digital screens are replacing printed tickets inside kitchens. It has ensured that the front end, i.e., the restau-



Ranjan Rajani
Director,
Food & Beverage, Sahara Star



Mihir Kane
Executive Chef,
Fairmont Jaipur

“Kitchen automation technologies have expedited food preparation & minimised errors, ensuring consistency

rant floor, is integrated seamlessly into the back-end kitchen. With an integrated system, outstanding orders, inventory level, necessary checks and processes and the estimated time besides other key information are displayed clearly. It helps in simplifying operations in a high-pressure zone like the kitchen which has to handle scores of unique orders at any given time.

The use of integrated systems in F&B operations also helps in capturing relevant data which is sorted by AI-powered software leading to the identification of pat-

“Blockchain in hotel industry’s supply chain creates immutable record of every step in sourcing & distribution process

terns that help in operating efficiently. “Data analytics plays a pivotal role in understanding guest preferences and behaviour. Hotels leverage this data to tailor their F&B offerings, optimise pricing strategies, and allocate resources effectively,” said **Gaurav Bisht**, Assistant Food & Beverage Manager, Hyatt Regency Pune. With the right merger of hardware and software coupled with data, hotels have been able to personalise orders for high-value guests. A recent incident at a large hotel in NCR has become the talk of town within hospitality circles. The



AI-powered system deployed by the hotel uses available data to inform the kitchen staff about the guests' preferences going as far as identifying ingredients that a guest is allergic to. The data is relayed in real time ensuring that guests do not have to inform the hotel staff about their preferences on every visit.

Efficiency gains are at the core of every emerging technology solution for the F&B industry and one of the most critical issues plaguing the sector is food wastage. IoT-enabled appliances and devices have emerged as a sought-after solution to limit wastage. Connected pods for cooling and heating devices automatically maintain the optimum temperature and alert the

hotel staff in case of microbial or bacterial growth. It helps in better utilisation of resources and reduces wastage.

A tight control on spoilage and wastage coupled with traceability ensures that guests are served quality products. Some hotels have started using blockchain technology to ensure the authenticity of suppliers and the purity of ingredients. "Blockchain ensures transparency in the hotel industry's supplychain by creating an immutable record of every step in the sourcing and distribution process. This transparency allows hotels to verify the authenticity and quality of their food & beverage, reducing the risk of counterfeit products and ensuring that guests are served only the highest-quality item," claimed **Mihir Kane**, Executive Chef, Fairmont Jaipur.

New-age technologies have, without doubt, helped large as well as medium-sized hotels better manage their food & beverage operations, however, deploying cutting-edge technologies require significant financial heft. The biggest players in the country have the financial firepower to use the latest technologies but does it make sense for independent operators to fork out a substantial amount for some-



Gaurav Bisht
Assistant Food & Beverage Manager,
Hyatt Regency Pune

Hotels leverage the data analytics to tailor their F&B offerings, optimise pricing strategies, and allocate resources effectively

thing that may not generate immediate returns? It is estimated that hotels spend a minimum of 2.5 per cent of the net room revenue on technology.

The returns from investment in technology accrue in the form of cost savings in the long run, but the savings in time are apparent immediately. "By digitising a few aspects of restaurant and hotel kitchens, such as daily safety checklists, business owners of small premises alone can save more than 10 hours per month by removing paper-based reporting," Bisht pointed out. On the financial front, technologies such as digital invoicing can help in better cash flow management of hotels. With the digitisation of invoices, it has become easier for F&B players to tap invoice-based financing options, which can be a boon for small-scale F&B establishments.

With the rapid emergence of new technologies, it is hard to predict the evolution of food technologies and their adoption. However, technology has seeped into the core of F&B operations and it is likely to remain the same for the foreseeable future. An increasing number of routine tasks such as cleanliness and hygiene checks are going to get automated, freeing up crucial human resources for more important tasks. And if one looks at the cost of technology, it will come down as the technology matures. It has happened in other sectors such as energy and consumer durables and it will happen in hospitality too. □

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Reign of regional cuisines

Capturing culinary diversity of India, here's how some of the best five-star kitchens in capital scripted global dominance of regional flavours during G20 summit.



Lipla Negi

While India's rich culture and heritage was on the showcase during the G20 Summit, it is the famed culinary prowess of the country that stole the show, and rocked the global palate. Covering the regional cuisines from North to South and East to West of India, the top culinary minds of some of the most prestigious five-star hotels in the capital city brainstormed to curate a "one-of-its-kind" gastronomic experience for the G20 delegates and guests. From Millets to indigenous ingredients, the regional flavours elevated the "India experience" for the guests and visitors. Scaling the length and breadth of the country, the Indian chefs of these hotels left no stone unturned or state-specific cuisine (often lesser known) untouched to whip up a storm for every meal menu conceptualised and served during the event. We asked top chefs of four five-star hotels to share the behind the scenes trysts and triumphs moments of their kitchen.

A dal that had no lentils



Chef Vaibhav Nehra
Executive Sous Chef,
Roseate Hotels & Resorts

While designing the menu for G20 summit, we tried to cover cuisines from maximum states along with their cooking techniques to show the authenticity of Indian flavours in which Marwari and South Indian cuisines inspired me the most. At the same time, we carefully tried to curate the dishes that offer a subtle taste preference for a global palate without sacrificing the essence of the flavours.

A few regional dishes which really amazed me and also were mostly loved by the delegates during their visit were *Anaj ki Dal*, *Kodo Bati*, *Jowar Bhakri* and *Tilkute Ragi ke Ladoo*. But of all the dishes, *Anaj ki Dal* turned out to be the most pleasant surprise for the delegates also as it tasted like dal but had no lentils.

Indian cuisine is vast and renowned for its rich diversity, complex flavours and impeccable tastes that cater to a wide range of taste preferences. Indian cuisine is one of the most diverse and celebrated culinary traditions in the world and that is why I feel that India's regional cuisines will be the game changers for food tourism.

Millets were definitely in the spotlight. In today's time we have to keep yourself fit and healthy and Millets have multiple health benefits. We must be vocal for local as well to support our local farmers too. To make the regional dish iconic, I believe showcasing regional cuisine with its innovative flavours, without compromising the authenticity of the dish and their health benefits is the best way.

A few regional dishes loved by the delegates during their visit were *Anaj ki Dal*, *Kodo Bati* and *Jowar Bhakri*, among others



Barnyard Millets: A tasteful revelation



Ankur Gulati
Executive Chef,
The Claridges New Delhi

We meticulously crafted a menu for the G20 summit that showcased the richness of Indian and global cuisine. Classic North Indian Punjabi and South Indian dishes such as Butter Chicken, Dal Makhani and a diverse array of South Indian delicacies graced the menu. Regional Thalīs, such as the Jain Thali, Devbhoomi Thali, Marwari Thali and Gujarati Thali, were thoughtfully curated to cater to diverse palates, incorporating unique elements from each region. This culinary journey celebrated India's flavours, balancing spice levels and highlighting locally sourced ingredients, ensuring a global culinary representation.

The delegates were pleasantly surprised by dishes such as *Bhatt ki Churkhani*, *Ker Sangri*,

Panchkutiya Saag, *Dahi Bhalle*, *Mewa Pulav* and *Dahi Bhalle*, in particular, elicited delightful reactions with every bite. Our special *Jhangora ka Kheer*, made from Barnyard Millets, and buckwheat flour pooris added unique elements to the menu. Ragi or Finger Millets, featured prominently with options such as Ragi Dosa, Ragi Idli, and various Ragi pasta choices. These additions emphasised the use of Millets in our cuisine, creating a memorable dining experience for the delegates.

The regional cuisines we showcased featured remarkable ingredients that are often overlooked on the global stage. These included superfoods, nutrient-rich lentils, and a variety of greens. Bhatt ki Daal, black horse gram, Barnyard Millets and Ker Sangri were used in our dishes, offering a delightful introduction to these unique flavours and their exceptional nutritional value. India boasts a rich culinary heritage filled with such ingredients, and it is a privilege to share them with a global audience.

Regional flavours stand on their own, each with a distinct taste, preparation and set of ingredients. These culinary treasures not only offer exquisite flavours but also carry significant nutritional benefits. It is an opportunity to not only savour these unique tastes but also support a sustainable food industry.

“The regional cuisines we showcased featured remarkable ingredients that are often overlooked on the global stage



Buckwheat pasta was superhit



Chef Rajesh Wadhwa
Executive Chef,
Taj Palace, New Delhi

Indigenous Millets took centre stage along with a host of well-researched treasure recipes and time-honoured culinary techniques

Our endeavour was to spotlight local delicacies and regional cuisines while ensuring that we appeal to global palates and showcase the might from our hotel's inimitable culinary repertoire. We are usually given dietary preferences and allergies, among others well in advance and that provides us a base to create menu selections. In terms of regional flavours, cuisines from the heart of the North that we offer at Loya, our newest restaurant, delicacies from the Eastern and Western coastlines of India and the nuanced, flavourful cuisines from the South are what had inspired us. We took various elements from these cuisines and created the menus. We did a lot of trials in our kitchen before finalising the menu selection. The result is a highly nuanced, thoughtful menu selection.

Indigenous Millets took centre stage along with a host of well-researched treasure recipes and time-honoured culinary techniques. In fact, over the last couple of years, there has been a renewed interest in hyperlocal, regional cuisines and what one can call, forgotten foods. Some of the most talked about Indian dishes that we incorporated were: *Gud aur amaranth ke laddoo*, *Ragi badam pinni*, *Bajre ki barfi*, *Ragi paniyaram*, *Kakum mathri*, *Nigella Cannoli*, *Bajre ki kheer*, *Bhapa Doi* and *Kaju Matar Makhana*. We

also showcased Millets with international cuisines for instance, our Buckwheat pasta was immensely popular.

Over the last couple of years, there has been a renewed interest in the discovery of lesser-known cuisines across the country. In the constant search for the 'new', Indian regional cuisine is now having its moment.

With the growing interest in regional cuisine, I do believe that this is the ideal time for us as a country to showcase our culinary prowess and diversity through our restaurants, menus and experiences. Menus can be not just cuisine but ingredient forward, for example: the Cocktail Program at Loya – PAANCH, where we have used regional flavours and indigenous ingredients such as Mulethi, Gulab, Sandalwood and Saffron as core elements of our creations. Showcasing cooking techniques is a great way to make regional experiences immersive and fun.



Sweet surprise: Kodo Mango Tart



Ravi Kant
Executive Chef,
The Lalit New Delhi

Regional cuisines have immense potential to be game changers for food tourism in India



We drew inspiration from our concept of 'unified flavours of India' that showcases various regional cuisines from across the country. Each region in India has its unique flavours, ingredients and cooking techniques. We have incorporated elements from North Indian, South Indian, Bengali, Punjabi, Rajasthani and Coastal cuisines, among others to create a well-rounded representation of India's regional flavours. These cuisines inspired us to craft a menu that would offer delegates a culinary journey through India's diverse culture.

Several regional dishes left a lasting impression on the delegates as well as on us. Special dishes such as Kodo Berry Tart, Kodo Mango Tart and Buckwheat Golden Bag Dimsums, among others showcased Millets as an important element. Balancing the flavours of regional cuisine for the global palate is a delicate art. We carefully consider factors such as spice levels, textures and the overall composition of each dish. For instance, the preferences for Japanese guests were taken into consideration while preparing their favourite dishes. Additionally, we focus on presentation and portion sizes to make the dining experience more appealing and accessible to international guests, ensuring that they can savour the essence of regional cuisine while feeling comfortable.

Regional cuisines have immense potential to be game changers for food tourism in India. They offer a unique and authentic taste of each region's culture and heritage. By promoting these unified flavours, we aim to attract food enthusiasts and travellers from around the world who seek immersive culinary experiences. These cuisines not only introduce visitors to diverse flavours but also

support local economies and communities. When marketed effectively, regional cuisines can be a significant driver of tourism, creating opportunities for food-related businesses and cultural exchanges.

To make regional flavours iconic, effective marketing strategies are essential. Here are some key approaches:

- **Culinary events:** Host regional food festivals or events that highlight specific regional cuisines, featuring traditional dishes and cooking demonstrations.
- **Collaborations:** Collaborate with local food influencers, bloggers and chefs to create buzz and promote regional flavours through social media and content marketing.
- **Cooking classes:** Offer cooking classes or workshops where guests can learn to prepare regional dishes themselves.
- **Storytelling:** Share the cultural and historical stories behind each dish to create a deeper connection with diners.
- **Menu innovation:** Continuously update and innovate your menu with new regional dishes and fusion creations to keep diners excited and engaged.
- **Sustainability:** Emphasise the use of sustainable, locally sourced ingredients in our regional dishes to attract environmentally conscious diners. For example, at The Lalit, we proudly embrace the concept of We Serve What We Grow, enabling our guests to savour home-grown greens.





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Sustainability at the heart of operations

Hotels are committed to sustainability, making significant environmental impact through initiatives & best practices, highlights **Vaishali P Sinha**.

The Fern Hotels and Resorts believes in the power of small steps leading to significant changes. Various initiatives and practices have been put in place to optimise sustainability in housekeeping operations. By focussing on efficient resource usage, green cleaning practices, waste reduction and recycling, staff training, and awareness, the hotel chain aims to make a tangible impact on the environment.

Efficient resource usage

A primary goal is to promote responsible consumption of water and energy. This is achieved by employing energy-efficient appliances across the properties and implementing water-saving measures. In select hotels, it has introduced bottling plants to reduce plastic bottle usage and promote sustainable practices. The organization conducts regular rainwater harvesting and ensures the use of safe, skin-friendly cleaning chemicals. Proper waste segregation is also integral to their sustainable approach. Additional initiatives, include installing water-



Vaishali P Sinha
Cluster Executive Housekeeper,
West, The Fern Hotels and Resorts

saving aerators on taps and cafeteria programmes that encourage food waste reduction. Furthermore, LED lights, rice straws and eco-friendly pens are utilised throughout to further reduce the environmental impact.

Green cleaning practices

To ensure a healthier indoor environment, the hotels have adopted green cleaning practices. They utilise eco-friendly cleaning products and tech-

niques that minimise the use of harsh chemicals. This not only reduces the environmental impact but also creates a safer space for guests and staff. The hotels also employ paper-based food parcel boxes, dual dustbins for recycling and segregated waste management systems to complete their comprehensive sustainability efforts.

Adoption of green cleaning practices, utilising eco-friendly cleaning products that minimise harsh chemical use

Waste reduction

Proper waste management is essential for minimising the environmental footprint. The hotels have implemented robust waste management systems that include recycling programmes and proper waste segregation. By diverting recyclables from landfills, it contributes to a

more sustainable future. Their commitment to waste reduction and recycling extends to all areas of their operations, including housekeeping.

Staff training

The housekeeping team plays a vital role in driving sustainability initiatives. The hotels should ensure that all staff members are equipped with the knowledge and skills to implement sustainable practices through comprehensive training on waste management, sustainable practices and the importance of environmental stewardship. By fostering awareness and a sense of responsibility, hotels create a collective effort towards sustainability.

Best practices

The hotels should believe in adopting best practices that prioritise sustainability and reducing carbon footprint. By combining innovative approaches and proven techniques, the hotels should continuously strive to enhance their environmental performance. Here are some of the best practices they should follow:

Green cleaning products: To maintain a healthier environment for guests and staff, the hotels should use environment friendly cleaning products that are free from harsh chemicals. This not only reduces the environmental impact of their operations but also ensures a cleaner and safer space for everyone.


Energy-efficient equipment: Grasping the importance of reducing energy consumption and minimising their carbon footprint, the hotels employ energy-efficient appliances and technologies. By using energy-efficient equipment, the hotels contribute to a greener future by reducing carbon emissions.

Recognising water as a precious resource, hotels takes every opportunity to minimise water wastage

Water conservation: Recognising water as a precious resource, hotels take every opportunity to minimise water wastage. They have implemented various

water-saving measures, including the use of low-flow fixtures and water-efficient laundry systems. These initiatives help them minimise their water consumption while maintaining their commitment to sustainability.

Waste management: Proper waste management should be an integral part of their sustainability efforts. They should have a comprehensive waste management system in place, which includes recycling programmes and proper waste segregation. By diverting recyclables from landfills, they contribute to a circular economy and reduce their overall environmental impact.

Innovative approaches: In addition to following best practices, hotels should also explore innovative approaches and techniques that align with their sustainability goals. For instance, they are currently experimenting with smart sensors and automation to optimise energy usage in guestrooms. These innovative solutions not only enhance their environmental performance but also improve the guest experience. 



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Challenges & triumphs of hotel engineering

By keeping costs under control & promoting sustainability through eco-friendly construction methods, the engineering team greatly improves the hotel's bottomline.



Ananya Kukreja

The primary aim of any hotel is to provide the highest level of comfort and contentment to its valued guests. To achieve this, from an engineering perspective, it is essential to establish a rigorous system of regular inspections across all services to consistently meet and even surpass global service benchmarks. Moreover, the team should highly appreciate the feedback provided by guests after their stay. This feedback not only serves as a source of motivation for the dedicated engineering team but also offers a valuable chance for improvement and learning for aspiring engineers.

An overview of engineering departments' approaches to guest satisfaction includes:



Dinesh Pareek

Chief Engineer,
Trident, Jaipur

In the realm of hotel engineering, a paramount challenge is the pursuit of sustainability and operational excellence

- **Maintenance and infrastructure:** "The engineering team is responsible for maintaining a property's infrastructure and facilities to the highest standards," said **Tarun Kumar Sharma**, Chief Engineer, Courtyard by Marriott Aravali Resort. This includes regular inspections, preventative maintenance and an immediate response to any issues that may arise. The goal is to provide a seamless and comfortable environment for guests.

- **Safety and security:** Guest safety is paramount. The team works tirelessly to ensure that all safety measures are in place, from fire safety systems to emergency response protocols. The guests can relax knowing that they are in a secure and well-maintained environment.

- **Efficiency and sustainability:** Sustainability must be practiced in every

organization and this extends to an engineer's role in resource management. By optimising energy usage, water conservation and waste reduction, the hotel can not only reduce operational costs but also contribute to a more environmentally conscious experience for guests.

- **Technology and innovation:** One must leverage cutting-edge technology and innovation to enhance guest comfort from smart room controls to high-speed Wi-Fi, the team is responsible for providing modern amenities that align with the guests' expectations.

- **Responsive service:** Should a guest encounter any issues or have special requests; the team is available 24/7 to provide prompt and attentive service.

- **Feedback and improvement:** The team actively seeks feedback from guests to continuously improve the services and facilities. This input is invaluable in shaping the guest experience and ensuring that the establishment meets and exceeds their needs.

Essentially, the roles of all departments in a hotel are aligned with serving guests and their satisfaction. Engineering plays a huge role in terms of guest experiences for it fulfill the comfort of the primary product of hotel rooms; and allow for a spectacular ambience from their controls and experience. They take care of the assets of a property which are the backbone of all operational efficiency and effectiveness.

Pre-eminent challenges

"In the realm of hotel engineering, a paramount challenge is the pursuit of sustain-



Chander Prakash Sharma

Director, Engineering,
Shangri-La Eros, New Delhi

The commitment to achieving Net Zero energy consumption is a hallmark of responsible corporate practices

ability and operational excellence," pointed out **Dinesh Pareek**, Chief Engineer, Trident, Jaipur. Hotels must invest in eco-friendly technologies such as LED lighting and advanced HVAC systems to reduce their carbon footprint. Simultaneously, rigorous maintenance schedules and proactive protocols ensure the seamless functioning of the facilities, elevating the guest experience. Moreover, security takes precedence. The safety of guests and their possessions is upheld through state-of-the-art surveillance and access control systems.

Some challenges that engineering faces on a day-to-day basis are: breakdown of machinery, hotel maintenance, skilled manpower, meeting compliances as per current industry norms, and support from principal companies for big

equipment and machinery. As a Chief Engineer, it is very important to keep tabs on the maintenance and upkeep of the property, including machinery and equipment. Attaining skilled manpower is one of the major challenges that the industry faces today and retaining them is even more challenging. It is therefore imperative to ensure that the team members are not only consistently developed in their careers, but also ensure they are engaged positively at their workplace and learning constantly. Sustainability continues to be a day-to-day endeavour.

Contribution to bottomline

The engineering team contributes significantly to the hotel's bottomline as they are the ones responsible for Heat Light Power (HLP), water and maintenance expenses; they must ensure that the expenses are monitored and controlled. Periodic energy conservation trainings, and effective preventive maintenance schedules can significantly reduce costs.

"High guest satisfaction contributes to repeat business and a positive reputation, ultimately increasing revenue," advised **Anoop Vijayaraj**, General Manager, Kairali-The Ayurvedic Healing Village. By investing in maintenance that promotes sustainability such as green building practices and energy-efficient systems, the retreat can not only reduce operating costs but also appeal to environmentally conscious travellers who are willing to pay a premium for eco-friendly accommodations.

Net Zero Emission

"The commitment to achieving Net Zero energy consumption is a hallmark of responsible corporate practices," affirmed **Chander Prakash Sharma**, Director, Engineering, Shangri-La Eros, New Delhi. Organizations must deliver to their dedication towards this goal through comprehensive Corporate Social Responsibility programmes aimed at raising awareness and driving implementation among team members. At the unit level, efficient, effective, and sustainable sound hotels adhere to a robust Reduce, Reuse, Recycle (3R) policy, which includes recycling water to its entirety for purposes such as flushing and gardening. Moreover, environmentally conscious initiatives extend to the installation of solar systems for water heating and the efficient management of chiller plants to minimise energy consumption.





Some practices to enhance a hotel's pathway toward Net Zero Emission are:

- Regularly conducting energy audits to identify areas of energy waste.
- Upgrading lighting to LED and install energy-efficient appliances and HVAC systems.
- Implementing smart energy management systems to optimise heating, cooling and lighting.



Anoop Vijayaraj
General Manager,
Kairali-The Ayurvedic Healing Village

- Implementing comprehensive recycling and composting programmes for both guests and staff.
- Minimising single-use plastics and encourage reusable alternatives.
- Diverting food waste from landfills through composting or waste-to-energy programmes.
- Installing low-flow fixtures and water-saving technologies in guestrooms and public areas.



High guest satisfaction contributes to repeat business and a positive reputation, ultimately increasing revenue

- Utilising rainwater harvesting systems for landscape irrigation.
- Educating guests about the importance of water conservation.
- Sourcing food and products locally and sustainably to reduce the carbon footprint of transportation.
- Considering organic and fair-trade options for food.

- Collaborating with suppliers committed to sustainable practices.
- Offer electric vehicle charging stations.
- Incorporating natural ventilation and lighting to reduce energy usage.
- Engaging with local communities on sustainability initiatives and support local conservation efforts.
- Educating guests about local ecosystems and encouraging responsible tourism practices.
- Educating, training, engaging and encouraging staff towards the common goal of all humanity.

Eco-friendly amenities and waste reduction programmes, in addition to all the aforementioned steps lead to a hotel becoming green. Investing in organic waste compost machines, water aerators, rain water harvesting, heat recovery systems, sensor taps for public areas and using recyclable glass bottles over plastic are some more examples of initiatives taken by green



Sukhbinder Singh
Chief Engineer,
The Lodhi, New Delhi

Helping promote research and development in eco-friendly technologies will lead to innovative solutions

hotels,” averred **G Kannappan**, Chief Engineer, MGM Beach Resort, Chennai.

Way forward

Sustainability and environmentally ben-

eficial practices are not just a trend but an expectation—an expectation of guests, staff, shareholders, vendors and all stakeholders. For an organization to succeed or rather exist, they must endeavour to keep mother earth in existence and every little step creates a ripple impact.

Our governing and decision-making bodies can assist such endeavours by offering incentives for hotels to obtain green certifications for adopting sustainable practices. “Helping promote research and development in eco-friendly technologies will lead to innovative solutions,” said **Sukhbinder Singh**, Chief Engineer, The Lodhi, New Delhi.

Subsidising bulk solar panel installation can transform and improve energy consumption throughout the country generously. Increased infrastructure support for electric vehicle charging stations and sustainable transportation options benefits both hotels and guests, contributing to the reduction of carbon footprint. Collaboration between the government and industry is pivotal in driving meaningful progress towards sustainability. □



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Himachal's hotel industry bounces back

Hill state faced adversity with floods but showed remarkable resilience as communities united to rebuild the region, including its vital hospitality sector, reckons **Sumeet Taneja**.

Nestled in the Himalayas, the pristine Himachal Pradesh, known for its scenic splendour, snow-capped mighty mountains and plentiful wildlife, recently saw adversity testing its mettle. The incessant downpour and subsequent flooding have left an indelible mark on the region.

Resilience amid adversity

As the floods receded and life limped back to normalcy, we find ourselves at a crucial juncture. The challenges are mammoth but the spirit of communities is upbeat. United, the people have showcased unbreakable resolve to rebuild, restore and rejuvenate the hill state. The hospitality sector, a cornerstone of this region's economy and culture, is ready to lead the way. Local businesses, hotels and homestays have not only adapted swiftly to the evolving circumstances but have also taken proactive measures to ensure the safety and well-being of both guests and staff.

Prioritising safety

In a post-COVID world, the safety and well-being of our guests and team members has assumed prime importance. Commitment to impeccable cleanliness and sanitation is unwavering as the industry is leaving no stone unturned in implementing rigorous health and safety protocols. In the wake of the calamities, the Himachal Pradesh hotel industry exemplified adaptability and innovation. The managements swiftly reassessed



Sumeet Taneja
Area Director, Chandigarh,
Punjab, HP, J&K, and Ops &
GM, Taj Chandigarh

their operational strategies, incorporating stringent health and safety checks. From contactless check-ins to enhanced cleaning protocols, the industry demonstrated a commitment to providing guests with a secure environment while maintaining the warm and welcoming atmosphere for which the region is known.

Rebuilding hospitality

As we roll out the rebuild plan, our vision transcends beyond bricks and mortar. We look to not only restore the physical infrastructure but to enrich the entire experience. So, the esteemed guests can expect an even more refined level of service, an even deeper connection to the local culture. One of the most inspiring aspects of resurgence of hill state's hospitality has been unmov- ing support of local communities. From

offering their labour for rebuilding efforts to patronising local businesses, residents have played a pivotal role in the industry's recovery. This collective spirit has not only

In the wake of the calamities, the Himachal Pradesh hotel industry exemplified adaptability and innovation





expedited the restoration process but has also fostered a sense of unity and solidarity, reaffirming the region's reputation for hospitality.

Government initiatives

Recognising the crucial role of the hospitality industry in the state's economy, the government of Himachal Pradesh has taken proactive steps to support its recovery. Various relief packages, financial aid and incentives have been provided to businesses, allowing

them to stabilise and rebuild. Additionally, streamlined administrative processes and regulatory relaxations have facilitated a smoother transition towards normalcy.

Sustainability in focus

The sprawling beauty of Himachal is more than a treasure trove. In the wake of recent developments, commitment to sustainability assumes even greater significance. Hotels across the country are putting into place eco-friendly practices, from energy conser-

vation to waste management. The idea is to preserve the splendid environs for the generations to come.

Promoting local tourism

The industry is now pivoted towards promoting local and domestic tourism. Renewed focus is on collaborative efforts between hotels, tour operators and local authorities to curate experiences that showcase the natural beauty and cultural richness of the Himalayan state.

Hotels across the country are putting into place eco-friendly practices, from energy conservation to waste management

Hospitality resurgence

The resurgence of the Himachal hotel industry stands as a testament to the indomitable spirit of its people and the enduring allure of the region. Through adaptability, community resilience, government support, and a renewed commitment to sustainability, this vital sector is not only bouncing back but emerging stronger than before. As guests return to the embrace of Himachal's breathtaking landscapes and warm hospitality, they are met with an industry that has not only weathered the storm but has also emerged more resilient, vibrant and prepared for the challenges that lie ahead. ▢





Guest preferences drive revenue growth

Hotels should collect guest data & use technology to anticipate & meet guests' preferences, ultimately enhancing customer satisfaction, avers **Sharad Dutta**.

As General Manager of JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity, my team and I are always looking for ways to improve the guest experience and drive revenue growth. In recent years, I have seen a growing trend towards personalisation in the hospitality industry. This is no surprise, as guests are increasingly demanding personalised experiences that meet their individual needs and preferences. As awareness of healthy lifestyle grows, guests would discern their loyalties towards properties where their health and fitness preferences are met.

We understand that personalisation is essential for providing a truly memorable stay. That is why we go the extra mile to collect data on our guests' preferences and use this information to create tailored experiences. By anticipating guests' needs before their arrival, we can provide them with their favourite amenities and recommend activities that they are likely to enjoy. We have also embraced the usage of technology to capture and implement personalisation. This allows us to gather and analyse guest data, enabling us to offer a more personalised service.

Guests have become more communicative about their specific needs, and we have trained our associates to use cues to gather personal preferences. This level of personalisation not only creates a sense of care and attention, but it also helps us build more meaningful connections with our guests. The result is increased customer satisfaction, loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth referrals.




Sharad Dutta
General Manager,
JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity

In addition to personalisation, we are also committed to sustainability. We understand that sustainability is important to today's travellers who are increasingly looking for hotels that are

committed to environmental responsibility. By embracing sustainability practices, we position ourselves as a leader in the hospitality industry and meet the expectations of environmentally conscious guests. Furthermore, sustainability helps us protect the environment and save money, making it a win-win situation.

Personalisation and sustainability are two key trends that are driving revenue growth in the hospitality industry

Personalisation and sustainability are two key trends that are driving revenue growth in the hospitality industry. By focussing on these areas, we are able to provide our guests with memorable experiences that meet their individual needs and preferences.

At JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity, we are committed to the Marriott Take Care culture, which means putting people first—both our guests and our associates. 

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Hotel rates skyrocket amid cricket frenzy

FCM India's research indicates a 31% rise in average hotel room rates during the ongoing cricket world cup in India.

In the world of hospitality, some trends come and go, while others entrench themselves firmly in our lives. One such trend that shows no signs of fading away is Bleisure—the fusion of business and leisure travel. And when it comes to a nation where cricket is nothing short of a religion, this fusion reaches its zenith during the ICC World Cup.

Intriguingly, FCM India's findings reveal a remarkable surge of 31 per cent in the average hotel room rates compared to the same period in 2022. This surge extends even further, presenting a 19 per cent price increase as compared to 2019, proving that the allure of cricket has only grown stronger with time. **Gaurav Luthra**, Managing Director, FCM India, remarked, "Given the immense popularity of cricket in the Indian subcontinent, it is no surprise that FCM India has seen an average of 31 per cent price surge in corporate hotel bookings during the ICC

World Cup 2023 versus the same period in 2022 as Bleisure is here to stay."

Despite the price hikes, there is 58% surge in the number of nights booked within the ten cricket-centric cities

FCM India's keen eye extends to the geographic spectrum, comparing 10 cities across India hosting the cricket World Cup matches. The results are staggering, with the most significant price increase recorded at a staggering 472 per cent in Lucknow, followed by an 82 per cent increase in Pune, a 77 per cent surge in Hyderabad, a 47 per cent uptick in Mumbai and a 20 per cent escalation in Ahmedabad. Despite the price hikes, there is an astonishing 58 per cent surge

in the number of nights booked within these ten cricket-centric cities when compared to the year before.

But it is not just the hotels that are seeing a boom. The aviation sector is also riding high on the cricket wave. Domestic air tickets have experienced a whopping 38 per cent increase in bookings compared to the same period in 2022. Kolkata emerges as the frontrunner with a remarkable 104 per cent surge, trailed by Lucknow at 97 per cent, Delhi at 49 per cent and Bengaluru at 46 per cent. According to Luthra, the optimism is palpable, "Lately, due to the increase in air seat capacity, domestic airfares in India have started to dip in prices. The average increase in prices is just 7 per cent as compared to 2022. With airlines planning to expand their capacity to meet the heightened demand during cricket matches, there is optimism that airfares may not see a spike as drastic as hotels." □



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Grand Mercure Agra

Where luxury meets **Taj Mahal**

Accor introduces the Grand Mercure Agra, a property offering 168 meticulously designed rooms & unparalleled view of Taj Mahal.



Step into a world of timeless elegance and unparalleled luxury as Accor recently unveiled the Grand Mercure Agra—a haven of sophistication nestled in the heart of Agra. With 168 meticulously designed rooms and an unrivalled view of the Taj Mahal, this property stands as a testament to uncompromising excellence in hospitality, promising an unmatched experience in one of the world's most iconic destinations.

Puneet Dhawan, Senior Vice President, India and South Asia, Accor, expressed, “Agra, with its deep historical significance holds a special place in our hearts. We take immense pride in introducing the property in this iconic city, reaffirming Accor’s commitment to offering exceptional hospitality experiences and strengthening our presence in India.”

Located on Fatehabad Road, the hotel is just a stone’s throw away from the Taj Mahal in the rich tapestry of Agra’s cultural heritage. The hotel offers an array of exceptional dining options, including



Puneet Dhawan
Senior VP,
India and South Asia, Accor

Lattice, a delectable all-day dining experience, Bello-Italiano, a haven for lovers of authentic Italian cuisine and Sky Grill, a rooftop oasis providing an ethereal view of the Taj Mahal, creating lasting dining memories. For coffee enthusiasts, the Brew Café is a delightful stop.

Whether you are planning an event or a gathering, the hotel boasts an impressive selection of banquet spaces, highlighted by the Grand Crystal Ballroom, accommodating up to 500 guests, along with two fully equipped meeting rooms. Guests can also unwind in the roof-

top swimming pool, set against the Taj Mahal’s mesmerising backdrop, pursue fitness goals in the state-of-the-art gym, and experience profound rejuvenation at Nirvana Spa.

“We are proud to introduce Grand Mercure in Agra, reaffirming Accor’s commitment to exceptional hospitality experiences in India”

Vivek Mahajan, General Manager, Grand Mercure Agra, added, “Our hotel is more than just a destination; it is a testament to exceptional service, and a gateway to discover the beauty of Agra. Every guest who walks through our doors will experience the essence of Agra’s rich history and vibrant culture, reimagined through the lens of unparalleled comfort and unmatched service. It reflects Accor’s dedication to providing contemporary travellers with premium comforts and cultural reconnections. It invites guests to experience the uniqueness of the local culture from iconic dishes to cherished rituals.” □



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KalingaStone Quartz

Inspired by timeless Italian marble designs, Classic Marble Company has launched an all-new collection in KalingaStone Quartz. The collection is a range of seven white Quartz products in varying tones of grey, brown and black veins, including Calacatta Lazza, Calacatta Pristine, Calacatta Venezia, Calacatta Nero, Crystal Bliss, Crystal Serene and Calacatta Rivolo. The white Quartz collection offers a perfect synergy between elegant Italian craftsmanship and the enduring strength of Quartz. The new Quartz products are ideal for countertops, backsplashes, window sills, furniture and stairs, as well as in wall clads and bathroom applications.



Outdoor Chair Collection by Works of Heaven

Works of Heaven has launched Outdoor Chair collection. The collection effortlessly fulfills various requirements, ranging from vibrant and bold colour choices to the utilization of sustainable materials and modular shapes. It encompasses a construction of robust aluminum and metal frames, complemented by quick-drying, water-repellent cushions encased in polyester canvas slipcovers. To ensure durability, the furniture undergoes a weatherproof powder coating process. Within the collection, you will discover the Aster chair, Marie chair, Star chair, Tango chair, and Terra chair, all of which are perfectly suited for placement in diverse outdoor settings.

Tea Set Collection by Smokey Cocktail

Smokey Cocktail has unveiled its latest Tea Set Collection. The collection comes in wide variety of designs, materials, and colours, making them a perfect fit for any recipient's taste and style. Whether it is delicate porcelain set with intricate patterns, a modern and minimalist glass set, or a rustic ceramic set, you can find a tea set that matches the aesthetic preferences of the person you are gifting it to. The Mystical Tea Set arrives to reign supreme in your serving collection. This set comprises a teapot, several cups & tray.



One for the pasta lovers

The Pastalinda machine for homemade pasta is manufactured for those who love homemade and fresh pasta. Pastalinda offers two models of pasta machine, Classic 200 with 200 mm of width and Classic 260 with 260 mm of width. With an appealing design and high durability, it permits to easily prepare 200 mm or 260 mm wide sheets of laminated dough of the desired length, noodles, tagliatelle, ribbons, dough sheets, ravioli, ravioloni, cookies, sorrentini, pastry discs for turnovers, phyllo dough, farfalle, pappardelle, lasagne, fettucine and many more.



Seashells Collection by Eris Home

Eris Home has unveiled its latest creation: the hand-crafted table linen seashells collection. Beyond elegance, it is a tribute to their dedicated artisans, blending traditional and modern design. These linens elevate every occasion in vibrant colours such as mineral blue and blush pink. The seashells collection is a seamless extension of this design philosophy, artfully blending finesse, aesthetics, and comfort. It is a masterful fusion of sequins, glass and acrylic beads, infusing this collection with texture. This collection draws inspiration from the limitless and mesmerizing sea.



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Celebrating 25 years of gastronomic brilliance

Event was marked by various offers and experiences that showcased the Great Kabab Factory's legacy and dedication to dining.

The Great Kabab Factory's 25th anniversary was graciously celebrated at the Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport recently. The celebration was a joyful occasion, with patrons enjoying a variety of offers and experiences that showcased the establishment's legacy and commitment to dining.

and now has over 22 outlets, making it one of the largest Indian restaurant chains in the casual dining category.

The celebration of the 25th anniversary of the bistro was infused with entertainment, which added a unique charm to the festivities. Renowned Sufi

singers, the Ali Brothers, performed at the event, filling the air with their soulful music. A mentalist also performed, leaving the audience spellbound. The Qawwali performances at the restaurant added a captivating dimension to the

celebration, enchanting the audience. The music created a magical ambience, enriching the atmosphere of the event.

Nitin Kapur, Managing Director, Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport, expressed his gratitude, stating, "I am



profoundly thankful to our loyal customers and dedicated team for 25 years of culinary excellence."

The month-long celebration was not only a time to reflect on the restaurant's past achievements, but also to look forward to the future. The celebration was filled with memories and it left a lasting impression on everyone who attended. The anniversary underscored the bistro's commitment to excellence, culinary innovation and its role as a hub for creating exceptional dining experiences.

The end of the celebration marked a new chapter in the restaurant's legacy. The celebration not only honoured the restaurant's rich history, but also set the stage for future culinary marvels, promising continued excellence in food and hospitality. ■




During the events, a diverse lineup of individuals honoured the occasion. Dignitaries including ambassadors, diplomats, and notable figures from the gastronomic world, alongside senior journalists, influencers, media personalities, and the patrons of restaurant, all came together to commemorate the anniversary. The variety of guests brought together different perspectives and created an atmosphere of shared appreciation for food.

Dignitaries including ambassadors, diplomats & notable figures from the gastronomic world attended the celebration

Ashna Kapur, Managing Director, Brand Development, Umak Hospitality, said that eatery has grown organically



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MOVEMENTS



SHWETANK SINGH

**Chief Growth & Strategy Officer,
Chalet Hotels**

★ Shwetank Singh has been appointed as the Chief Growth and Strategy Officer at Chalet Hotels. In this strategic role, Singh will lead the Chalet Hotels project development team and spearhead business development initiatives. Prior to joining Chalet Hotels, Singh played a pivotal role at Golden Sands LLC in Dubai, skillfully managing a portfolio of hotels affiliated with brands such as Hilton, Marriott, and Taj through astute asset management practices. Singh brings with him nearly 25 years of diverse experience in the hospitality industry.



HIMANSHU SHARMA

**Director, Sales & Marketing,
Pullman & Novotel New Delhi
Aerocity**

★ Himanshu Sharma has joined Pullman & Novotel New Delhi Aerocity as Director, Sales and Marketing. He will be heading the sales, marketing and brand communication mandate for the hotel and will take charge of driving commercial objectives as well as enhancing the brand positioning. With over 21 years of experience in having strong analytical abilities to monitor market trends, Sharma has worked with hotel chains such as JW Marriott Aerocity, Shangri-La New Delhi and Leela Ambience Gurugram, among others.



VAIBHAV VERMA

**Chief Revenue Officer,
jūSTa Hotels & Resorts**

★ Vaibhav Verma has been appointed as the Chief Revenue Officer of jūSTa Hotels & Resorts. He will have the overall responsibility of overseeing Sales, Revenue, Distribution and Marketing for the company. In 2011, Verma became the Director, Operations and Sales, South Asia for Taiping Carpets India. He re-joined Jaypee Hotels in 2013 as their Vice President, Sales and spent nine years heading Sales and Marketing as well as growing the revenues of the Group. His last stint prior to joining jūSTa Hotels & Resorts was the Chief Revenue Officer, Team Hotels and Resorts.



GAURAV REGE

**GM, Radisson Blu Palace Resort &
Spa, Udaipur**

★ Radisson Blu Palace Resort & Spa, Udaipur has announced the appointment of Gaurav Rege as their General Manager. In his new role, Rege will focus on the sustained success of the brand through his strategic leadership and will strive for overall operational excellence. A seasoned professional, Rege brings with him over two decades of experience in the hospitality industry with expertise in spearheading both high-end luxury resorts and large city hotels. Rege has earned a reputation for positively turning around business over the years.



PANKAJ YADAV

**GM, Fortune Park Airport Road
Hubballi**

★ Fortune Park Airport Road Hubballi has appointed Pankaj Yadav as General Manager. In this role, he will oversee all aspects of the hotel, operations, guest services, team management and stakeholder relations. Yadav brings over two decades of expertise in Food & Beverage, hotel revenue and operations. Starting as a Mixologist at ITC Kakatiya Hyderabad, he quickly transitioned into F&B operations and worked at hotel chains such as Green Park and Lemon Tree Hotels in India and Dubai.

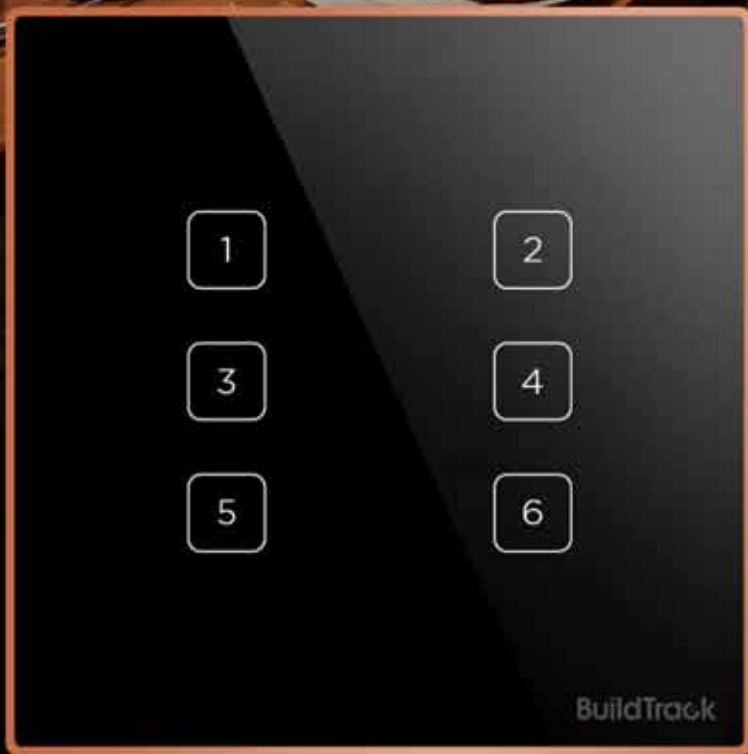


VIVEK MAHAJAN

**GM,
Grand Mercure Agra**

★ Grand Mercure Agra has announced the appointment of Vivek Mahajan as its General Manager. With a career spanning over 20 years in the luxury hospitality sector, Mahajan is set to lead this new venture in creating a benchmark for excellence in Agra. Mahajan's extensive journey in the hospitality industry has been characterized by exceptional leadership roles at renowned establishments. He has previously worked at Oberoi Group, Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces, Wyndham Hotel and Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, among others.

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