

HOTELS & RESTAURANTS INDIA

fhrai magazine

APRIL 2017

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A MONTHLY ON HOSPITALITY TRADE
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K. Syama Raju
President, FHRAI

Dear fellow members,

These are challenging times for the hotel industry. The liquor ban remains uppermost in everyone's mind, with all wondering whether it is wise to be in this industry at all. National and state highways are considered prime locations for hotels, with real estate value being very high in these areas. People have invested vast sums in the hotel business and such rulings are sure to spell doom and derision. On April 3, 2017, I, along with Rajindera Kumar, EC Member, FHRAI; and Amitabh Devendra, Secretary General, FHRAI, met **Dr. Mahesh Sharma**, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Tourism and Culture, to find a solution to the problem. The minister has assured us that they would find a middle path to resolve the issue.

Amitabh Kant, Chairman, NITI Aayog, responding to the news, tweeted, "Tourism creates jobs. Why kill it? Supreme Court's highway liquor ban verdict may hit one million jobs..." Even marquee hotels like The Oberoi, Trident, and Leela, and properties like CyberHub, which are in close proximity to the highway, are covered by the ban in Delhi-NCR. The only silver lining is that the SC has modified its order, reducing the distance from 500 metres to 220 metres in areas having a population of upto 20,000.

The Hotel and Restaurant Guide India 2017, that will be circulated to all our members this month, has some new features such as our past Presidents and city briefs where our members have hotels, useful website links and services, list of hotels classified by MoT, and list of domestic and international brands operating in India. This

additional information will surely be useful for our members.

The FHRAI National Convention returns to the IT city of Bengaluru after a gap of 28 years and is scheduled to take place from September 14 to 16, 2017. The theme for the convention is "**Hospitality-2025 - The future is NOW**".

Guruji Sri Sri Ravi Shankar ji has consented to preside over the inauguration ceremony and bless the function in the august presence of Dr. Mahesh Sharma, who will be our keynote speaker. We will also be honoured to have M. Venkaiah Naidu, Union minister for Urban Development; Ananth Kumar, Parliamentary Affairs Minister; and Pinarayi Vijayan, CM of Kerala, as Guests of Honour. The sessions at the National Convention will broadly cover varied areas dealing with finance, marketing, social media, technology, design, and restaurants. We will keep apprising you with new developments in forthcoming issues of the magazine.

For many travellers, a hotel is their home away from home. Ensuring a comfortable stay for guests is one of the most important duties of the housekeeping staff. In our cover feature, we find out from hoteliers about trends in housekeeping, staff to room ratios, latest technologies being used, the benefits of outsourcing, and what lies behind retention of skilled manpower.

With warm regards,

K. Syama Raju
President, FHRAI

“These are challenging times for the hotel industry. The liquor ban remains uppermost in everyone's mind”

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Works I: Plot No. 58, Sector-6, IIE,
Pantnagar, Rudrapur,
Udham Singh Nagar-263153 (Uttarakhand)

Works II: B-7, Sector-3
Noida-201301
(Uttar Pradesh)

Works III: Gala No. R-8 & 9, Mahaveer Complex,
Dapoda Road, Village-Val, Taluka Bhiwandi,
Distt. Thane-421302 (Maharashtra)

Works IV: Plot No. 35, Shamrajpura Layout,
1st Main Road, 1st Cross, Vidyaranyapura Post,
Bangalore-560097 (Karnataka)

APRIL 2017

FHRAI DESK

24

FHRAI: THE INDUSTRY'S BEACON

K. Syama Raju, President, FHRAI, throws light on the Association's endeavour to successfully lead the way for the Indian hospitality industry.

Picture on Cover

The Gateway Resort Damdama Lake Gurgaon



24 FHRAI DESK

26 NEWS



30 COVER STORY

CONTENTS

THIS MONTH

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	03
SECRETARY'S MESSAGE	08
FHRAI DESK	14
NEWS UPDATES	26
PRODUCTS & SERVICES	68
EVENTS	70
APPOINTMENTS	72

FEATURES

OPINION	52
STIMULUS TO SUCCESS	
Regional heads give their take on the key issues that the association must address in these turbulent times	

SECRETARY GENERAL

Amitabh Devendra - sg@fhrai.com

PUBLISHER

Gunjan Sabikhi - gunjan@ddppl.com

MANAGING EDITOR

Peden Doma Bhutia - peden@ddppl.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Kanchan Nath - kanchan.nath@ddppl.com

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Tripti Mehta - tripti.mehta@ddppl.com

CREATIVE DESIGN

Raashi Ajmani Girdhar

MARKETING & SALES - DELHI

Mayank Jain - mayank.jain@ddppl.com
Manager Advertising (+91965039928)

Jaspreet Kaur - jaspreet.kaur@ddppl.com
Sales Coordinator (+919650196532)

MUMBAI

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

Priyanshu Wankhade - priyanshu@ddppl.com
Manager Advertising (+919619499170)

FHRAI - MARKETING

S.P. Joshi

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Anil Kharbanda

ADVERTISEMENT DESIGNERS

Vikas Mandotia
Nitin Kumar

FEATURES

COVER STORY 30

KEEPING THE HOUSE IN ORDER

We take a look at how housekeeping forms the backbone of the hotel industry, maintaining a fine balance between staff and technology

POLICY 48

'SPIRITS' DOWN POST LIQUOR BAN RULING

A press briefing by the travel and hospitality industry to analyse the implications of the recent SC decree on the sale of alcohol

BRAND 50

PASSAGE TO THE EAST

A look at MAYFAIR Hotels and Resorts, a group that has successfully established itself as the pioneer of luxury accommodation in eastern India

GUEST COLUMN 54

EVERY DROP MAKETH AN OCEAN: BE RESPONSIBLE

Seeking answers to some key questions: Why the shortage of water? What it means for us? How can it be tackled?

INTERVIEW 60

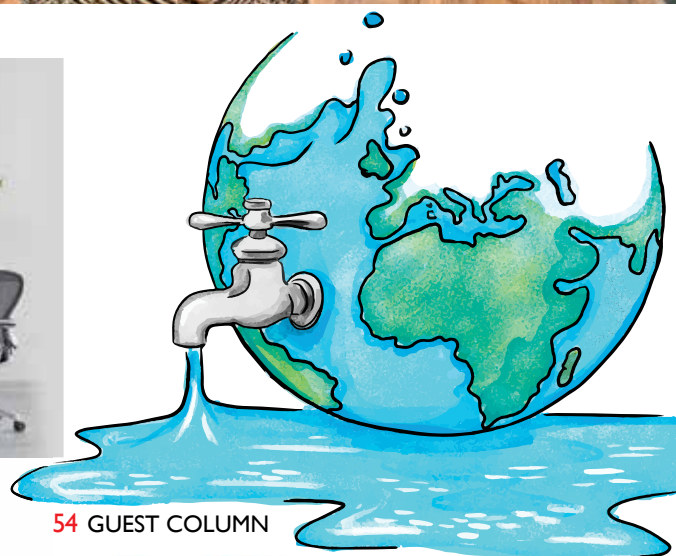
RESORT TO RELIGIOSITY

Shri Radha Brij Vasundhara, The Resort and Spa, Mathura, offers luxury and comfort to religious and weekend travellers to the sacred city



50 BRAND

68 PRODUCTS



54 GUEST COLUMN



66 EVENT



62 SUPPLIER TALK

FHRAI

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

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Email: fhraimag@ddppl.com
Tel : 91-11-23344179

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Vivek Nair
Hony. Secretary
FHRAI

“
Closure of hotels
would not only hit
tourism in a big way,
but would also cause
huge revenue loss to
the exchequer
”

Dear fellow members,

The number of Foreign Tourist Arrivals in February, 2017, was 9.56 lakh as compared to FTAs of 8.47 lakh in February, 2016, registering a growth rate of 13 per cent in comparison to the previous year. The highest arrival numbers were from Bangladesh (17.46%), followed by UK (12.20%), USA (11.83%), Russian Federation (4.29%), and Canada (4.26%). Delhi Airport received the most number of FTAs (31.86%), followed by Mumbai Airport (16.10%), Haridaspur Land checkpoint (9.44%), Chennai Airport (6.72%), and Goa Airport (5.58%). FTAs during the period January-February, 2017, were 19.40 lakh with a growth of 14.7 per cent, as compared to the FTAs of 16.91 lakh in January-February, 2016.

However, inbound tourism to the country may take a hit with the recent Supreme Court order banning sale and service of liquor by hotels and restaurants located within 500 metres of the national and state highways. We, as an association, are working to get some relief for hotels as well as restaurant owners. Closure of hotels would not only hit tourism in a big way, but would also cause huge revenue loss to the exchequer.

FILM TOURISM

The e-Visa facility for film enthusiasts has been principally approved by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The visa can now be availed under the category of film tourism. This was informed by Shri Suman Billa, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism. He further added that the procedure of availing this facility will be similar to those for eTV, for both business and medical tourism. On the need to increase accommodation facilities

in the country, Billa said, "The last time we counted, we were short of almost 200,000 hotel rooms in India. This gap has to be filled at a rate faster than the time taken to build these properties. A regulatory framework will be introduced by the Ministry of Tourism to uphold acceptable standards and quality of service and open lucrative accommodation choices for the travellers. We will accredit these accommodations as per the standards required.

MEDICAL TOURISM

As many as 201,333 FTAs in India on Medical Visa were recorded in 2016, while there were 134,344 FTAs in 2015, and 75,688 in 2014. In order to simplify and speed up the procedure of obtaining visa for tourists coming to India for medical purposes, the Government of India has extended the facility of e-Medical Visa. Other measures taken by the government to facilitate the tourists coming through e-Medical Visa are extension of duration of stay for up to six months (to be granted on case-to-case basis) by the Foreigners Regional Registration Officer (FRRO) or Foreigners Registration Officer; triple entry to be permitted as against the earlier norm of single entry; in an emergency, if Medical Visa is recommended by an accredited hospital in India, Indian Missions or Posts abroad should decide on such requests within 48 hours of receipt of application.

With kind regards,
Vivek Nair
Honorary Secretary, FHRAI

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The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India



REDRESSAL ON LIQUOR BAN SOUGHT

At the recently held press conference in New Delhi on April 11, 2017, FHRAI deliberated on the Supreme Court directive banning hotels and restaurants located within 500 metres of state and national highways from selling alcohol, and came to the decision of seeking a legal course of action for the same.

Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) is exploring legal remedies with regard to the recent Supreme Court order that has been applied from April 1, 2017, banning the sale of liquor at establishments that fall within 500 metres of state and national highways. Speaking at the occasion, **Dilip Datwani**, Vice President, FHRAI, said, "A ₹200,000

crore loss to the exchequer and closure of more than one lakh establishments is not a small thing. We would not have minded sacrificing if the ban were to yield results. But the reality is that all the job losses and other damages would only be wasted if such a ban were to continue being implemented. The objective sought will not be achieved."

"Total consolidated loss to both state and industry will be around ₹220,000 crore. The entire MICE industry including weddings and corporate events will be negatively affected," said **Garish Oberoi**, Vice President, FHRAI.

"There has been an unprecedented blanket ban along all national highways across the country



has hotels stretched over 77 kms from the very base of the town of Siliguri, and is directly affected," further continued **T.S. Walia**, Vice President, FHRAI.

"The judgement has affected those establishments that operated legally, were not takeaway vends, and served alcohol for consumption on the premises itself. Many entrepreneurs who have taken loans will be placed at a disadvantage. It will render their properties non-performing," further continued **S.M. Shervani**, EC member, FHRAI.

While agreeing that the judgment may "in spirit" be good, it does not cohesively look at other related issues. Datwani said, "Statistics

(L to R): Sanjay Sood, T.S. Walia, Sudesh Poddar, Garish Oberoi, Dilip Datwani, Surinder Jaiswal, S.M. Shervani

have total prohibition; yet there are innumerable accidents due to drunken driving. No country has ever banned hotels and restaurants to curb drunken driving."

"Most of the entrepreneurs who bid as part of government PPP tourism projects along national and state main roads and highways had modelled their cash inflows on these experiences considering room conferencing, food, and beverage revenue over their concession periods. But a lot of these establishments with significantly reduced business will end up with distressed financial assets, leading to a large scale NPA situation for our banking and financial system and may severely impact the investment climate in tourism, hospitality, and the overall business environment in India. It will stall the

“

While agreeing that the judgment may "in spirit" be good, it does not cohesively look at other related issues

”



without seeing the practical aspects of topography and terrain of cities, having affected hotels and restaurants in the process that have invested crores of rupees towards the development of the tourism industry in the country. For example, Darjeeling, which falls on NH 55,

prove that there is a correlation between drunken driving and enforcement, but not between drunken driving and existence of hotels or restaurants. If this weren't true, there would be no drunk driving cases or resultant accidents in Bihar and Gujarat where we

Indian growth story for many years to come," added **Sudesh Poddar**, EC Member, FHRAI.

"We see a huge concern of liquor bootlegging and it's emergent social evils of a black market economy and a corruption driven parallel economy which the governments are trying so hard to battle and weed out of our system," further added **Sanjay Sood**, EC Member, FHRAI.

Banning sale of liquor within 500 metres of the highways has affected at least 1,000 star hotels in Maharashtra, including the VIP Lounge at the domestic airport. Maharashtra is expected to lose an estimated yearly revenue of ₹7,000 crore.

Almost nine million tourists visit India, resulting in almost 27 million foreign visitations across Indian

Liquor ban: What now?

FHRAI members provide their opinion on the way forward for hotels and restaurants that have been affected by the liquor ban.



“ A ₹200,000 crore loss to the exchequer and closure of more than one lakh establishments is not a small thing. We would not have minded sacrificing if the ban were to yield results ”

Dilip Datwani
Vice President
FHRAI



“ Total consolidated loss to both state and industry will be around ₹220,000 crore. The entire MICE industry including weddings and corporate events will be negatively affected ”

Garish Oberoi
Vice President
FHRAI



“ There has been an unprecedented blanket ban along all national highways across the country without seeing the practical aspects of topography and terrain of cities, having affected hotels and restaurants in the process that have invested crores of rupees towards the development of the tourism industry in the country ”

T.S. Walia
Vice President
FHRAI



“ The judgement has affected those establishments that operated legally, were not takeaway vends, and served alcohol for consumption on the premises itself. Many entrepreneurs who have taken loans will be placed at a disadvantage ”

S.M. Shervani
EC Member
FHRAI



“ A lot of these establishments with significantly reduced business will end up with distressed financial assets, leading to a large scale NPA situation for our banking and financial system and may severely impact the investment climate in tourism, hospitality, and the overall business environment in India ”

Sudesh Poddar
EC Member
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“ We see a huge concern of liquor bootlegging and it's emergent social evils of a black market economy and a corruption driven parallel economy which the governments are trying so hard to battle and weed out of our system ”

Sanjay Sood
EC Member
FHRAI



states. These, along with 1.8 billion frequent domestic visitations constitute a significant portion of guests at these establishments. All of this will be put to risk if the overall food and beverage experiences are compromised at such legitimate establishments, which pay direct and indirect taxes and levies to both the central and state governments. After decades of independence, India, despite all its natural geographic and cultural heritage, still has only 0.67 per cent of the tourism market share, which is now set to further reduce drastically.

India's tourism, travel, and hospitality is estimated to contribute US \$200 billion, 9.5 per cent of Indian GDP, around five crore employment opportunities, i.e., nine per cent of Indian employment, and more than US \$30 billion investment at 5.5 per cent of total capital investment in India. This capital investment is immobile and cannot be relocated or picked up and moved, driven by decisions which overnight challenge their business models on a retrospective basis.

Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) is the apex body of the Indian hospitality industry and represents nearly 4,000 members including hotels, restaurants, and associates,



The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India



and a Union Territory in Eastern India. These comprise Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Sikkim, Tripura, and West Bengal; **HRAWI** (Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India) was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee and not having share capital.

The Association, over the last several years, has taken effective steps to encourage, promote and protect the interest of member establishments. It covers five Western states of

spanning the length and breadth of our vast country. Founded in 1955 by the legendary hotelier Rai Bahadur M.S. Oberoi, the organisation has diligently built on its glorious legacy and is today recognised as the pre-eminent national voice of our industry and is also proud to have played a seminal role in shaping the growth trajectory of India's vibrant tourism sector. FHRAI enjoys the distinction of being the third largest hotel and restaurant industry association in the world.

The association comprises four regional associations- **HRANI** (Hotel and Restaurant Association of Northern India), a Northern outfit of FHRAI, representing the hotel and restaurant industry of the

“ There is a correlation between drunken driving and enforcement, but not between drunken driving and hotels or restaurants ”

nine North Indian states. Since its birth, the organisation has been effectively working for the cause of hospitality industry and plays an important role in developing tourism in the states which come under its purview. These nine states are Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand; **HRAEI** (Hotel and Restaurant Association of Eastern India) was established on 18 July, 1961, and represents the hotel and restaurant industry of twelve states

Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Goa, and two Union Territories of Daman and Diu, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli; **SIHRA** (South India Hotels and Restaurants Association) was incorporated in 1951. It has been rendering professional advice and assistance from time to time to all its members on topics of vital importance. The Association covers states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala, and Karnataka, and UTs of Puducherry and Lakshadweep.

Meetings & Agenda

Glimpses of the panel discussion by FHRAI members on 'Hospitality Policy', at the recently-concluded AAHAR 2017 in New Delhi.



Sanjay Sood, President, HRANI; K Syama Raju, President, FHRAI & SIHRA; Dilip Datwani, President, HRAWI



Hoteliers attending the discussions



Alan D'Mello moderates the session



Hoteliers from Telangana



Students are all ears



(L to R): Pradeep Shetty, EC Member, FHRAI; Sanjay Sood, President, HRANI; K. Syama Raju, President, FHRAI & SIHRA; Dilip Datwani, President, HRAWI; Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, EC Member, FHRAI





FHRAI members greet R. Kumar, Owner, Continental Equipments



Pradeep Shetty, EC Member, FHRAI;
Sanjay Sood, President, HRANI



FHRAI Team



FHRAI members at the event

AAHAR 2017

Glimpses from AAHAR 2017, that was held at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, from March 7-11.



AAHAR 2017



Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Union Cabinet Minister, Food Processing, inaugurates AAHAR 2017



Representatives from RATIONAL



"It's all about Lavazza"

HRANI PROPOSES INCLUSION OF TOURISM AS PRIORITY AGENDA



(L to R) Renu Thapliyal, Secretary General, HRANI; Sanjay Sood, President, HRANI; Garish Oberoi, Treasurer, HRANI; Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, Hony. Secretary, HRANI; RD Anand, Hony. Jt. Secretary, HRANI

Hotel and Restaurant Association of Northern India has come to be known as a model trade organisation and its members include well-known names of the hospitality industry. The medium and small level hotels, which are also members of the association, are given equal opportunity to safeguard their interests along with the bigger names.

HRANI diligently works toward the promotion of tourism in the states under its ambit, just one of the many responsibilities that the association shoulders. The tourism tag has always placed the state of J&K in the limelight at the national and international levels. Hotel and Restaurant Association of Northern India organised a press conference on March 2, 2017, at Hotel Asia, Jammu Tawi, to address the issues pertaining to the hospitality industry in the state. Tourism is the mainstay of J&K's fragile economy and a vital source of employment.

HRANI is well aware of the industry's impact on other service sectors such as transport, hospitality, horticulture, and small-scale industries. Keeping in mind the significance of the hospitality and tourism sector,

HRANI proactively took up some crucial issues concerning the sector.

POTENTIAL SITES FOR GROWTH OF TOURISM

Jammu & Kashmir has various sites that are still unexplored. HRANI submitted that development of sites like an artificial lake on River Tawi, twin lakes of Mansar and Surinsar, Patnitop Ropeway Project, and Gandola cable car between Mubarak Mandi and Mohamaya will contribute towards attracting tourists in large numbers.

INDUSTRY STATUS

HRANI requested the implementation of the New Industrial Policy and package of incentives for substantial expansion and upgrade of the existing infrastructure of hotels.

STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD

Taking overall view of the situation into consideration, the J&K government took a cabinet decision to construct common sewage plants in the city of Srinagar and Jammu to treat waste water or solid waste generated from hotels, commercial establishments, and the civil population. The hotels and guest houses connected to the common

STPs agreed to pay the usage charge reasonably fixed by the concerned authorities. However, the same has been enhanced by the department unilaterally. This enhancement of user charges should be rolled back to reasonable limits.

The SPCB is thus requested to modify and relax its guidelines and allow hotels and guest houses in the valley to operate to the extent of their full room strength.

INPUT TAX REFUND

The input tax refund on cooking gas at the rate of 14.5 per cent is not credited to the establishment. A number of representations have been submitted to the authorities but till date nothing has been finalised.

RELIEF PACKAGE

HRANI proactively demanded the provision of soft loans to hotels and guests, wherein soft loan was provided with an interest of four per cent for a period of 10 years.

The hotel and restaurant industry should be granted a complete tax holiday with respect to VAT, Service Tax, or any other tax for at least five years till tourism restores to its pristine glory.



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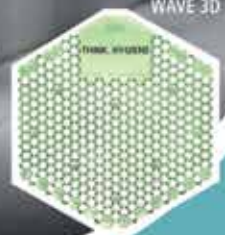
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REVISION OF LIQUOR BAN POLICY A MUST FOR STABILITY

The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Eastern India (HRAEI) aims to make the eastern region comprising of 12 states and a Union Territory, a flourishing destination for domestic and foreign tourists by projecting their captivating tourism assets.



Sudesh Poddar
President
HRAEI

“Hotels, restaurants, clubs and standalone bars that pay huge sums towards fees, duties, etc., for liquor licenses have been badly hit”

Its mission is to be a common voice for hotels, restaurants, and related associations for unhindered progress of the hospitality industry in the country's eastern region.

The recent Supreme Court verdict banning liquor vends along national and state highways has led to several unexpected consequences and HRAEI seeks to bring balance back to the affected hotels and restaurants of the region. It is a decision that will adversely affect a number of

establishments, making the business of hospitality in the country a volatile and unpredictable one.

Sudesh Poddar, President, HRAEI, says, "Hotels, restaurants, clubs and standalone bars that pay huge sums towards fees, duties, etc., for liquor licenses have been badly hit. Close to 2,000 establishments have had to close sale of liquor."

The regulations that apply selectively to locations near highways are primarily meant for preventing drunken driving that causes accidents leading to fatalities on Indian roads. There is no arguing against the social principle of curbing driving under the influence of liquor.

"Drunken driving is a global phenomenon that is tackled by governments in most other countries with strict police action through temporary driving bans, revoking of driving licenses, or prosecution in a court of law besides pecuniary penalties depending on the gravity of the offence," says an activist who prefers to stay anonymous.

"In India, however, the drive against drunken driving is given little importance, except when an accident involves mass casualties and attracts public attention," he adds.

Excise department officials have sprung into action ever since the verdict was passed on December 16, 2016. Restaurants, bars, and liquor shops have been served notice to either shut shop or relocate.

T.S. Walia, Managing Committee Member, HRAEI, says, "Relocation is not an easy solution for most of the establishments. There are restrictions on opening liquor shops near educational institutions, places of worship, and medical establishments.



T.S. Walia
MC Member
HRAEI

“Relocation is not an easy solution for most of the establishments. Besides, the location has to be appropriate to get enough business”

Besides, the location has to be appropriate to get enough business to make it profitable."

A number of residential areas are also averse to allowing bars to come up in their locality. In Nuapada, Odisha, local villagers ransacked and destroyed a few liquor shops and bars when these were relocated after the ruling on ban of liquor vends within 500 metres of highways.

The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Eastern India has always sought to create value for its members by ensuring government policies remain supportive of tourism and the industry. In these tumultuous times, HRAEI hopes that things change for the better and a balance can again be established in the industry.



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RESTAURANTS FEAR CLOSURE POST LIQUOR BAN RULING

Reacting to the Supreme Court's recent decision upholding the ban on liquor vends along the highway, HRAWI has said that it would spell doom for the industry when it gets implemented. "An estimated number of 35,000 restaurants and bars could face closure or downsizing in the western region alone. Businesses cannot be run in an environment of flux or state of uncertainty.

Capital intensive businesses like hotels and restaurants work on wafer thin margins. An abrupt cancellation of sale of a core



Dilip Datwani
President
HRAWI

“An estimated number of 35,000 restaurants and bars could face closure or downsizing in the western region alone”

product will create havoc. Many of the hotels are in heavy debt and they may not be able to sustain this change of regulation," says **Dilip Datwani**, President, HRAWI.



Kamlesh Barot
Past President
FHRAI

“About 290 bars shall be hit in Mumbai, 2,000 in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, and 9,925 in the state of Maharashtra”

In December 2016, the Supreme Court had also directed the governments to "cease and desist" from issuing excise licenses after March 31.

"Maharashtra alone has 13,655 bars and shops of which about 290 bars shall be hit in Mumbai alone; 2,000 in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, and 9,925 in the state of Maharashtra are at a risk of losing business," says **Kamlesh Barot**, Past President, FHRAI. "The Indian food service industry would lose close to ₹200 thousand crore on account of this verdict. If the figures are to be extrapolated to the whole of India, we are staring at sheer catastrophe. Excise revenue from alcohol is ₹12,000 crore per annum, which would also reduce to half," he adds.

"People who are really keen on consuming alcohol will find ways and means to procure it, and these steps may not turn out to be sufficient deterrents. Drunken driving is a problem across the world and most countries have evolved more efficient and less harsh measures to counter the menace," says **Bharat Malkani**, Immediate Past President, HRAWI.

"While we do not question the wisdom of the Hon'ble Court, the order is in direct contrast to initiatives like ease of business for promotion of tourism in the



Bharat Malkani
Immediate Past President
HRAWI

“Drunken driving is a problem across the world and most countries have evolved more efficient and less harsh measures”

state and facilitating of a single window clearance for simplifying procedures by the state and central governments," concludes Datwani.

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HRAWI LAUNCHES SOCIAL INITIATIVE — PROJECT PICKLE

HRAWI has collaborated with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to provide support for Dalit women to start and sustain their own enterprises. The medium chosen for this social initiative is the ubiquitous everyday food item, the pickle.

The hotel body will conduct an advocacy programme with both its member and non-member hotels and restaurants to purchase pickles from self-help Dalit women groups.

"With more than 10,000 hotels and restaurants operating in Mumbai, at least statistically, 'Project Pickle' could provide employment to 6.5 lakh women from the weaker section. A month's supply of pickles in three to five hotels can provide employment to women of at least 10 self-help group communities,"



said **Bharat Malkani**, Immediate Past President, HRAWI.

The project was announced at the conference and panel discussion, 'Women Empowerment and Social Transformation - Justice for Weaker Sections' held by Indo-American Chamber of Commerce with the support of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Govt. of India.

The conference saw participation from Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Ramdasji Athawale and Dr. Geeta Ibrahim, Principal, College of Home Science, Nirmala Niketan, among others.

"I thank HRAWI for taking this initiative and coming forward with this innovative idea," said Athawale.

HRAWI

EXPLORING 'GOD'S OWN COUNTRY'

Thirty influential online travel writers from around the world began a 15-day long exploration of 'God's Own Country', Kerala, with Tourism Minister Kadakampally Surendran flagging off the fourth edition of Kerala Blog Express (KBE) from Bolgatty Palace in Ernakulam as part of a campaign to present the state to a wider international audience. "The Blog Express is an innovation that we

have pioneered and will continue to raise the bar for tourism marketing in the future," the Minister said. "I hope, as participants, you enjoy this trip and share the wonderful stories and culture of our land with the international audience," he added. The 30 bloggers this year represent 29 countries. They will traverse hills, beaches, and backwaters and experience life in villages and cities as part of the promotional campaign

of Kerala Tourism. Besides UK, Germany, Italy, and Spain, travel writers from Europe this year include those from regions such as Moldova and Gibraltar.

The only Indian in the group is Dipanshu Goyal from New Delhi, and the most experienced blogger is Carla Mota from Portugal, who has travelled around 82 countries over the years. Most of the bloggers are visiting India for the first time. With participants from around the globe, Blog Express 4 has already grabbed the attention of various social media platforms and online travel and tour forums. Kerala Blog Express 4 travelled through Alleppey, Kumarakom, Thekkady, Munnar, Thrissur, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Kannur, and Kasaragod before concluding on April 3 in the capital.



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FHRAI: The industry's beacon



K. Syama Raju
President
FHRAI

FHRAI was constituted in 1955 with the consent of four regional associations as the national body to espouse the cause of the hotel and restaurant industry.

Over the decades, FHRAI has been instrumental in developing harmonious relations with governmental and other regulatory bodies. Challenges have arisen because of changes in the laws impacting the hospitality business or because of incorrect interpretation of the existing guidelines and directives which are issued from time to time.

While giving the keynote address at the seminar of the 32nd edition of AAHAR, which took place from March 7 to 11, K Syama Raju, President, FHRAI, said, "I would like to emphasise that it was the advocacy of FHRAI which resulted in the government giving the hospitality industry a boost when it created the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation in 1967, separating it from the Ministry of Transport and Shipping, thereby recognising that tourism was not simply about transporting people from one point to another but

had a much wider role to play in the nation's economy."

In order to ensure a level playing field between all star categories of hotels as well as to regulate hotel tariffs, it was mandated by the Ministry of Tourism that room rates should be calculated using the Hubert formula, which basically laid emphasis on rationalising the Average Room Rate (ARR), keeping in mind the quantum of investment in the project. This practice was discontinued in the late 80s and rates were left to market forces at the insistence of FHRAI, which repeatedly emphasised that the ministry approving the tariff of a hotel was an incorrect business practice.

Goods and Services Tax (GST) aims at uniformity of tax rate and structure leading to greater transparency, improved competitiveness, and reduced cost of compliance for the tax payer.



Elaborating on FHRAI's role, K Syama Raju said, "FHRAI has been giving representation advocating that GST on hospitality service should be levied at a lower rate. We have requested for a five per cent slab rate, place of supply for corporate clients to be aligned, and challenged the exclusion of alcohol from GST coverage."

To facilitate imports at concessional custom tariffs, FHRAI, in the 1990s, pressed upon the government to enhance the scope and ambit of the Export Promotion of Capital Goods scheme (EPCG, 1991), which was initially designed to cater to the manufacturing sector. The government, by consenting to extend the scope of the scheme in 1993, gave an opportunity to hoteliers classified by the Ministry of Tourism to import capital goods for pre-production and post-production at zero duty or three per cent custom duty, subject to an export obligation equivalent to eight times of duty saved on capital goods to be fulfilled in eight years from date of authorisation. However, this has now been reduced from eight times of duty saved to six times of duty saved and the term has been

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FHRAI has recommended that hotel development should be permitted in the CRZ-II category up to 200 metres

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(L to R): Pradeep Shetty, EC Member, FHRAI; Sanjay Sood, President, HRANI; K. Syama Raju, President, FHRAI; Dilip Datwani, President, HRAWI; Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, EC Member, FHRAI

"FHRAI has been pursuing the Ministry of Tourism that benchmarks and guidelines should be specified at two levels- for owner partners and aggregators. It is heartening to note that the ministry is actively considering our recommendation and India may issue suitable guidelines to regulate them in order to ensure the safety, security, and service standards being meted out to guests."

Beach resorts or hotels on the coastal waters have always been popular with tourists worldwide and before the demarcation of the Coastal Regulation Zones (CRZ) under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, declaring coastal stretches as CRZs and regulating activities in the CRZ, it was relatively easier to secure permissions to build hotels on the waterfront. Under this Act, CRZ-II

reduced to six years. The second condition is to maintain Annual Average of Export Earnings over and above the EO fixed for the licenses. Unless the two conditions are met, redemption or completion of licenses will not be met and duty with interest will have to be paid after the stipulated EO period. This license is issued based on the foreign exchange earnings of three preceding years and hotels are required to maintain the annual average of foreign exchange.

Initially, the EPCG scheme gave a tremendous boost to hotel development in the country, which was the need of the hour if tourism had to grow exponentially at the turn of the century.

Subsequently, Served from India Scheme (SFIS) was introduced in 2003, where all service providers were entitled to Duty Credit Scrip equivalent to 10 per cent of free foreign exchange earned during the current financial year. Duty Credit Scrip became very popular with approved and classified hotels and could be used to import any capital goods including spares, office or

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FHRAI has been pursuing the Ministry of Tourism that benchmarks should be specified for owner partners and aggregators
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professional equipment, office furniture, and consumables.

Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2015-2020 replaced Service Exports from India Scheme (SEIS) with Served from India Scheme (SFIS). SEIS scheme was detrimental for hoteliers as service providers, as the rate of reward under SEIS based on net foreign exchange earned was reduced from 10 per cent in the earlier scheme to three per cent. Hotels were not able to even fulfil their operational import requirements of liquor, consumables, spares, etc. K. Syama Raju adds, "FHRAI has been requesting the government for withdrawal of maintenance of average level of exports and to reinstate the reward from three per cent to 10 per cent."

Another cause of concern for hoteliers is accommodation aggregators like Airbnb and OYO. He elaborates,

norms forbade any construction within 500 metres of the high tide line, bringing to a standstill development along India's impressive 3,500 miles of coastline. The President of the Association states, "FHRAI has recommended that hotel development should be permitted in the CRZ-II category up to 200 metres."

K Syama Raju adds, "In the current year, we have developed the Food Safety Handbook which describes in detail the food safety management system and its implementation in compliance with the FSSAI Act."

FHRAI also met with the Ministry of Tourism and Culture to find a solution to the SC ruling on the ban on liquor sale by hotels and restaurants lying within 500 metres of state and national highways. The minister has assured them of a feasible solution.

MARRIOTT COMMITS TO GUEST EXPERIENCES

Marriott International has announced its investment in PlacePass, a pioneering provider of travel technology solutions offering travellers a leading online meta-search platform for in-destination experiences. Global travellers will soon be able to choose from an additional 100,000 plus authentic local experiences in 800 destinations worldwide when they book direct on Marriott.com or SPG.com or their respective applications.

“The addition of PlacePass activities and tours beginning later this year reflects Marriott’s commitment to giving its guests a complete travel experience, whether they are in the planning mode, staying at our hotels, or are in-between stays and are thinking about travel. We want our guests to count on Marriott to give them access to more destinations and things they love to do when they travel,” said **Stephanie Linnartz**, Global Chief Commercial Officer, Marriott International.



PARTNERSHIP

ACCORHOTELS PARTNERS WITH RIXOS HOTELS



AccorHotels and Rixos Hotels have announced a strategic partnership illustrating AccorHotels’ strategy to expand its presence in the upper-upscale and luxury markets, with a primary focus on developing global activities in the resort segment. Under a long-term joint venture, both parties intend to collaborate, develop, and manage Rixos branded resorts and hotels worldwide. Upon closing, AccorHotels will own a 50 per cent interest in the joint venture management company. Through this joint venture, AccorHotels will integrate in its network 15 iconic hotels that are located in premium resort markets of Turkey, UAE, Egypt, Russia, and Europe, and benefit from strong room rate performance.

Sébastien Bazin, CEO and Chairman, AccorHotels, said, “This new partnership enables us to become a leading resort operator in a growing market and to complement our offer with attractive leisure destinations to our guests and loyalty members. Moreover, we are going a step further in our ambition to be the best provider of multi-nature services to guests by operating hotels in major entertainment complexes that offer new opportunities both in terms of customer experience and development strategy.”

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LAUNCH

CARLSON REZIDOR'S NEW HOTEL IN BENGALURU



Carlson Rezidor has announced the opening of its new hotel, Radisson Blu Atria Bengaluru, featuring 167 guest rooms and suites with modern amenities. The hotel has four F&B outlets for guests and over 1,250 square metres of flexible room configurations with its six meeting spaces and two boardrooms.

The meeting spaces are capable of accommodating large wedding receptions or intimate team meetings complemented with state-of-the-art presentation and audio-visual tools. Other

facilities available at the hotel include a business lounge, business centre, swimming pool, spa, and a fully-equipped fitness centre.

Raj Rana, Chief Executive Officer, South Asia, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group, said, "Bengaluru is a progressive market and continues to thrive on high economic activity, an international focal point of India's growth momentum. The opening of the new hotel is a testament of our footprint in the region and a reflection of the unique brand identity that we bring to the city."

LAUNCH

RADISSON BLU JAMMU OPENS WITH 119 KEYS



Designed with the modern traveller in mind, the recently opened Radisson Blu Jammu offers comfort, style, and sophistication to its guests through its 119 rooms and suites. The hotel features flexible meeting spaces including a 25,000 sq. ft. Royal Ballroom that accommodates up to 2,000 guests with additional pre-function space and a lawn for pre-event cocktails. Radisson Blu Jammu brings together a combination of striking design, premier accommodation, and contemporary comfort. The hotel, which is part of the Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group, has been developed in partnership with Skyline Hotels.



Vikram Gupta, Managing Partner, Skyline Hotels, said, "We are confident in the strong leadership of Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group and its South Asia team. Their proven track record, experience, and expertise in the Indian market will benefit the hotel and we look forward to a mutually rewarding long-term partnership with the group."

EVENT

FIRST AP TOURISM CONCLAVE HELD IN NEW DELHI

The first Arunachal Pradesh Tourism Conclave 2017, organised by the Department of Tourism, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, was held in New Delhi. The conclave was graced by Kiren Rijiju, Union Minister of State for Home, and PD Sona, Parliamentary Secretary Tourism, Government of Arunachal Pradesh. The event was part of the state government's efforts to boost domestic and international tourist inflow in the state that received over 3.5 lakh tourists in 2016.

Speaking at the conclave, **Dr Joram Beda**, Tourism Secretary, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, said, "Arunachal Pradesh is investing to become the adventure and exotic tourism hub of India. We have been organising theme-based events like the Tawang Festival, Ziro Festival of Music, Arunachal Spring Carnival, Mechuka Adventure Festival, and the Kameng River Festival. In 2017, we expect the number of tourist arrivals to grow exponentially. We thank our tourism partners and urge them to continue promoting the rich biodiversity and ecotourism attractions that Arunachal Pradesh offers."



EXPANSION

NEW CLUB WING AT NOVOTEL GOA SHREM HOTEL

Novotel Goa Shrem Hotel, from the AccorHotels group, has announced the opening of its new luxury wing. Located in North Goa, it serves as an idyllic getaway that perfectly blends style and comfort. The all-new Club Wing houses 64 tastefully-designed opulent rooms with private balconies overlooking the serene pool and the hillocks of the greenest belt of Candolim.

The wing features an all-day dining restaurant, a pool bar, lobby lounge and deli, cycles on rent, an Apple iMac corner, and an interactive kid's activity room as part of the Novotel Hotel.

The exclusive Wing Genie, who will be a guest's first point of contact while check-in, will personally guide visitors and customise their stay experience at the Club Wing.

"The launch of the new wing at Novotel Goa Shrem Hotel further expands the presence of Shrem in the state. The new wing boasts of a strong design-oriented perspective and a contemporary personality that offers guests a spectrum of unique activities," said **Nitan Chhatwal**, Managing Director, Shrem Group of Companies.



Keeping the **HOUSE** in **ORDER**

We dig deeper into the workings of the housekeeping department and upcoming trends that help keep hotels as polished and stylish as they are.

Kanchan Nath

The housekeeping department forms the backbone of a hotel. Its staff works round-the-clock to ensure that impeccable rooms are available to guests at all times, the public areas are well-maintained, and guest needs are always fulfilled.



Smita Rathod

Smita Rathod

Director of Services, Renaissance Mumbai Convention Centre Hotel and Lakeside Chalet, Mumbai - Marriott Executive Apartments

FOCUS ON LOCAL

Hotels are moving towards optimum utilisation of resources and increasingly playing with local elements to reduce costs. Many eco-friendly measures are being introduced in a bid to adopt the cause with small changes at a time such as using herb-based soaps. Brands are also moving away from single vendor policies to localised vendors for amenities and guest supply purchases in order to save cost on freight octroi and time.

ancient Indian epics such as the Ramayana and the Ganesh Puran, which render local elements to the grand lobby and also provide a fun photo opportunity for guests.

STAFF TO ROOM RATIO

At Renaissance, we maintain a ratio of 1:15 of staff to room to ensure maximum utilisation of resources. In the peak season, we generally provide 25-30 minutes for the staff to turn around a room.

SENSORY LOBBY ELEMENTS

A hotel lobby essentially represents the essence of the brand. For instance, wine-coloured lilies provide a refreshing view for the guests. We also use bright cushions with abstract prints that complement our seating with sober colours. We use Shiso tea fragrance and light music throughout the day to allow guests to feel relaxed and welcome as they step into the lobby. The lobby also houses brass sculpture walls representing

STABILITY THROUGH TRAINING

During the recruitment process, we gauge the interest levels and commitment of candidates towards taking up housekeeping as a career. We undertake rigorous personal training sessions for employees to ensure stability and lower rates of attrition. We assign different tasks to every employee in addition to their daily chores to ensure competition is kept alive and employees are continuously learning, thereby benefitting both department and employee growth.

FAVoured FRAGRANCES

- Citronella oil with reeds
- Shiso tea leaf with gardenia lily

“

We assign different tasks to every employee to ensure competition is kept alive

”

OUTSOURCING EASES WORK

At Renaissance, we are open to the concept of outsourcing services, but only for services that are within the domain of public areas. We do associate with housekeeping agencies on a contractual basis for additional manpower, but they are personally supervised by the internal hotel staff.





Deepak Sarin

Deepak Sarin

Executive Housekeeper, The Taj Mahal Hotel, New Delhi

SOFTWARE THAT EASES PROCESSES

Improvement in communication tools helps the housekeeping department save a great amount of time. Investing in information technology and relevant software applications aids in streamlining processes. The right software can help automate and simplify a number of tasks such as setting the cleaning sequence, providing associates with guest preference information, and updating room status on real-time basis.

Guest satisfaction is also increased when services are personalised to suit their needs; whether it is personalised welcome platters or a choice of pillows to cater to varied preferences, personalisation and customisation are slowly emerging as important trends in the hospitality industry.

STAFF TO ROOM RATIO

The staff to room ratio at the Taj Mahal Hotel is 1:15. It usually takes an associate 35 minutes to clean a room. This includes changing the linen, cleaning the room, and restocking necessities.

AUTOMATIC SYSTEMS

At the Taj Mahal Hotel, we have installed automatic cleaning substance dispensers on each floor. This allows our associates to extract the exact quantity of water, soap, and other

cleaning agents required for cleaning the rooms. Additionally, each room at the hotel has been facilitated with air purifiers and humidifiers for increased guest comfort.

GOOD WORKING CONDITIONS

One of the key steps towards maintaining employee satisfaction is through proper scheduling of shift timings. If we help employees maintain their work-life balance, it automatically helps increase employee satisfaction and stabilise the workforce.

Ensuring good working conditions for all associates is another key factor in helping stabilise new staff. We also regularly plan training initiatives for our associates. For instance, the housekeeping team recently adopted a one of its kind initiative, the International Housekeeping Week, which was observed by all the housekeeping associates.

The initiative combined learning and fun for the team. Innovative and fun-filled activities were planned for the team including floral rangolis, creating best of waste, and a lot more.

We also regularly organise trainings for room associates to ensure their development as desk attendants, alongside an inter-departmental training programme for housekeepers to understand the various core departmental functions including laundry, horticulture, and maintenance. Additionally, the hotel organises sessions for new housekeepers to make them aware of the special features in the guest rooms.

“The right software can help automate and simplify a number of tasks”



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Dinesh Sansare

Dinesh Sansare

Executive Housekeeper, Express Inn, Nashik

NEW TRENDS IN HOUSEKEEPING

Hotels have now started following eco-friendly practices that are not just pocket-friendly but also help maintain a proper ecological balance. Other than that, some new trends have also set in. It has increasingly been seen that hotels are now dedicating an entire floor to single women travellers, thus giving them the benefits of safety and security. We, at Express Inn, have also moved in this direction with a number of eco-friendly practices put in place and the launch of our "EVA FLOOR" of 21 rooms, where special facilities and amenities have been placed for the comfort and well-being of female guests travelling alone, along with dedicated women associates to service the floor.

THE LOBBY - EVER RESPLENDENT

A 'wow' ambience along with clean, fragrant surroundings gives our guests a lasting first impression upon entering the lobby. We refurbish the upholstery from time to time and make sure all furniture and fixtures are well maintained as per standards. Various cleaning schedules are strictly followed in order to maintain cleanliness at all times. Flora and fauna are specifically placed to enhance the beauty of the lobby. The presence of a water body at the centre of the lobby also gives one a feeling of being closer to nature and boosts the lobby décor.

STAFF TO ROOM RATIO

Taking cost into consideration, the staff to room



FAVOURED FRAGRANCES

- Mandarin by Pure Veda
- Lemon Grass oil by Ripple
- Aromatic candles by Pure Home+Living
- Green Apple by Taski
- Floral air freshener by Mystair

ratio is 1:4 and individuals who can multi-task are often recruited. During peak season, the staff takes 20-25 minutes to turnaround a room and on an average, each staff turns around between 13-14 rooms a day.

RECRUITMENT AND STAFF RETENTION

Besides having a steady flow of walk-in interviews, we have tied up with various hotel management institutes to recruit new staff. In order to retain staff, we conduct regular trainings at all levels in the department beginning with a proper orientation, carry out staff welfare activities like picnics and parties, celebrate "International Housekeeping Week", encourage creative ideas, and reward staff for their efforts to help build the department in many ways.

“

It has increasingly been seen that hotels are now dedicating an entire floor to single women travellers”





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Mandeep Aasht

Mandeep Aasht

Deputy General Manager – Housekeeping, Lemon Tree Hotels

REDUCING PILFERAGE

Hotels are gradually switching to outsourcing services that are more cost-effective. The usage of high-end equipment such as robotic vacuums that self-operate and save on manpower is also being considered. Few hotels have also opted for linen and uniforms on rental basis, ensuring that linen quality and quantity are always maintained.

Such practices help prevent linen-depletion by pilferage as the company that provides this service replenishes the missing linen instantly. Free-flowing lobby spaces are also in trend. They enable maximum space utilisation and make the lobby appear larger and more elegant.

STAFF TO ROOM RATIO

At Lemon Tree Hotels, we have three brands that operate with appropriate staffing ratios. For Lemon Tree Premier, it is 1.2:1; for Lemon Tree Hotel, it is 1:1; and at Red Fox Hotels, it is 0.8:1. We have a

FAVOURED FRAGRANCES

- Fruity lemon
- Floral aromas

fixed-bed concept across all our hotels that saves us time as cleaning under beds is out of the equation.

EFFICIENCY THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

At our hotels, we have installed the Cansys software that keeps track of all guest requests and services. Requests get escalated to the higher authority each time they are delayed. This facilitates efficient guest services.

We have also upgraded our entire software with the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) feature, where a database of reports and information from all departments is created and can be accessed on a common platform. This facilitates access to all reports from our existing 40 hotels to our corporate office, resulting in better control of budgets and guest services.

OUTSOURCING FOR HOUSEKEEPING

These days, hotels outsource a number of services. Some of the ones that we outsource are cleaning of public and guest areas, façade cleaning, etc.

“

Hotels are gradually switching to outsourcing services that are more cost-effective

”



Reetha Thomas Executive Housekeeper, Radisson Blu MBD Hotel Noida

ECO-FRIENDLY AMENITIES

Going green is an emerging trend as environment-friendly policies increase the monetary health of the property. There is an increasing awareness about the use of eco-friendly amenities, commodities, and practices and housekeepers are developing and adopting new ways to conserve water and energy. Latest technologies like Wi-Fi and use of software that has comprehensive housekeeping applications is being used nowadays.

STAFF TO ROOM RATIO

Hotels in India have started reducing their employee-to-room ratio to cut costs. But, we are still on the higher side when compared to hotel chains abroad. It is essential for hotels to research and rationalise their room to staff ratio, decide on their service offerings, and man the hotel accordingly. At MBD Group, we are already encouraging multi-tasking in order to manage our employee costs. In housekeeping, one room attendant can usually clean between 14 and 16 rooms in a single shift and half an hour is a reasonable time to clean a double or twin standard room.



FAVoured FRAGRANCES

- Floral Blossom
- Fresh aromatic tones

DYNAMIC RETENTION STRATEGIES

The housekeeping sector needs to focus on implementation of dynamic retention strategies. In today's scenario, training and motivating employees is a fundamental tool to stabilise new staff.



Reetha Thomas



There is an increasing awareness about the use of eco-friendly amenities, commodities, and practices



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Venugopal

Venugopal Executive Housekeeper, Radisson Blu Atria Bengaluru

TECH-INNOVATIONS

The housekeeping department has actually been one of the last ones to catch up on the boom in technology. This year will see a lot of technological implementations in the way tasks are carried out in housekeeping. Outsourcing will be on the rise as finding the right employees and retaining them is getting more difficult. Outsourcing will leave that responsibility on manpower agencies. Safe work practices such as using environment-friendly chemicals are becoming a trend and many hotels make it a point to use approved chemicals only.

RESPLENDENT LOBBIES

It is very important to keep the lobby of a hotel

“This year will see a lot of technological implementations in the way tasks are carried out in housekeeping”

as fresh and lively as possible to make a lasting first impression. Lavish flower arrangements in the lobby is one way to do it, constant changing of flowers and trying new trends will make it even more interesting. Many hotels have marble floors in the lobby which should be polished at least once a month to maintain the shine.

STAFF TO ROOM RATIO

Luxury hotels should have a 1:2 ratio to maintain the high standards of the brand. However, 1:1.7 or 1:1.8 is enough to operate a five-star hotel. These ratios may seem steep, but due to the current trend in the hospitality market, it is hard to train and retain quality manpower. Turnaround time is relative; it depends on the usage of the room by the guest. Normally, it takes anything around 25-45 minutes per standard room. Suites need more time to be cleaned. Each employee cleans about 15-16 rooms in a day, which is at par with industry standards.

FAVOURED FRAGRANCES

- **Floral:** Jasmine, Lavender, Ginger Lily
- **Aromatic:** Citrus, Sandalwood, Lemon
- **Fruity:** Apple, Orange, Bergamot

SMART DEVICES FOR HOUSEKEEPING

We are presently using carpet shampoo machines, floor polish machines, buffing machines, and hand vacuum machines. The new technology we have started at the hotel, Prologic First, offers housekeepers easy-to-navigate tools such as activity planning, maid assignment, and guest response management. Hotels can expect to see an increase in the use of smart devices connected to property management systems and room management systems. The use of this new technology will enable housekeepers to view guest comments on their departure, provide a daily check list for each room, give access to CRM, automatically allocate rooms, and monitor budgets.

MAINTAINING QUALITY THROUGH OUTSOURCING

Due to heavy demand, many hotels are moving towards outsourcing. At Radisson Blu Atria, we have handed over public area maintenance to outsourcing companies and we supervise them constantly to ensure quality of service is maintained. A major concern in outsourcing room attendants is safety and security. Since the turnover in outsourcing is higher, it is a risk to put them in guest rooms where guests leave all their valuables.





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Dibyajyoti Majumder

Dibyajyoti Majumder

Executive Housekeeper, Radisson Hyderabad Hitec City
(a unit of Sarovar Hotels and Resorts)

VOICE COMMANDS FOR CONTROL

The housekeeping department determines whether guests are comfortable during their stay and whether they will want to return. In the future, internal facilities provided by hotels will be controlled by voice commands. Other trends would be carpets being replaced by wooden flooring and bath tubs being replaced by shower cubicles. This year, services will be more technology-based than labour-based.

STAFF TO ROOM RATIO

Our staff to room ratio is 1:2. In peak hours, a room associate takes 25 to 30 minutes to make one room and each associate is assigned 17 rooms a day. We also make sure that compensatory-offs are given if a person works extra hours. On busy days, we allow two associates to work together, enabling faster turnaround of rooms.

MORE MACHINES, FASTER CLEANING

Apart from regular vacuum cleaners, scrubbing and polishing machines, and shampooing machines, we have other machines that are being used in the rooms, such as air purifiers. We will also soon be introducing backpack vacuum cleaners. All public areas have automatic air purifiers and fresheners, reducing the constant involvement of a person for spraying of fresheners.

FAVoured FRAGRANCES

- Royal Lavender
- Green Apple
- Lemon Grass
- Citrus

OUTINGS FOR MOTIVATION

We recruit from hotel management colleges and are able to retain staff for more than one year. Training is the most important part of retaining them. Promoting deserving employees internally also helps a lot in retaining them. Apart from this, we do monthly team outings, weekly motivational activities inside the hotel, and 15 minutes of games for refreshing them. Employees are also rewarded for the exceptional work they do.

OUTSOURCING FOR CHALLENGING TASKS

Outsourcing provides a better economic balance to the housekeeping department where there is invariably a high level of staff turnover. Also, there are always those tasks like façade cleaning, horticulture, and pest control that are best left to experts. Architectural design can sometimes be a challenge, making outsourcing the only option. Most housekeeping departments find a balance between what can be handled internally and what must be farmed out to a professional, based on manpower, skills, and time. Today's building designs are innovative and energy-efficient but they involve considerably more complex shapes and detailed architectural features such as cantilevered glass elevations and double-skinned climate walls. These make cleaning more challenging. Presently, we are outsourcing pest control and façade cleaning services.

“

Architectural design can sometimes be a challenge, making outsourcing the only option

”

Varalakshmi D
Executive Housekeeper
Signature Club Resort

GUEST COMFORT IS PRIME

At our hotel, we believe that turning the hotel into a destination rather than just a place to stay through exceptional housekeeping and hospitality, can provide a competitive advantage to the hotel.

To provide the best experience to guests we try enhancing our standard by adopting practices such as use of high thread count linen, shower cubicle and bath tub combinations, more greenery in rooms, use of aromatherapy products, and theme-based décor.

WOW LOBBIES

A lobby is the face of any hotel for guests and needs to be maintained in a way that it always gives a 'wow' feeling to them. It represents the complete atmosphere of the hotel.

We maintain the lobby by way of floral decorations and continuously refreshing it with new flowers. Beautiful artefacts and colourful cushions also help in adding to the appeal of lobbies.



FAVoured FRAGRANCES

- Apple Cinnamon
- Lavender
- Orange Blossom
- Lemon Grass
- Mandarin

STAFF TO ROOM RATIO

At present, the staff to room ratio is 1:12. We try utilising the manpower in both public areas and rooms, helping us reduce cost. During peak season, our staff takes 20-25 minutes to turnaround a room.



Varalakshmi D



Beautiful artefacts and colourful cushions also help in adding to the appeal of lobbies



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Rekha Sharma

Rekha Sharma

Executive Housekeeper, Crystal Sarovar Premiere, Agra

OPTIMAL OUTPUT

Various tools are used to generate optimum output in hotels, but there is a strong need for optimum utilisation of available resources, manpower, supplies, and new scientific trends. Presently, hotels are more focused on outsourcing services in hotel housekeeping that help reduce manpower-related issues like filling the gap due to attrition of manpower, unavailability of suitable personnel, and unionisation.

SEMBLANCE PROMOTES BEAUTY

To enhance the beauty of the lobby at our hotel, we have placed different kinds of exotic flowers and artefacts in the lobby. Upholstery also adds beauty to lobbies. The alignment of the furniture should also be such that it helps a lobby look cosy and lively at the same time. Lighting that is soothing to the eyes and a subtly fragrant environment is also beneficial. Cleanliness must also always be maintained.

STAFF TO ROOM RATIO

Our staff to room ratio is 1:15, and the turnaround time for each room is close to 25 minutes. When we represent our organisation, we want to generate more revenue with fewer resources. It is not always

easy to define and measure productivity as it changes with the job.

TECHY-HOUSEKEEPING

Housekeeping is vital to the success of any hotel. To make housekeeping more efficient, we are regularly adopting new technologies and techniques such as vacuum cleaners, Taski ergodiscs, dispensers in air conditioners, and air purifiers in corridors. We also have Taski Swingo machines for scrubbing of bigger areas.

OUTSOURCING CONTROLS COSTS

With outsourcing, there is a more finite cost structure that every company wants. Another reason to choose outsourcing is that the housekeeper doesn't have to handle continual occupancy fluctuations. The way people travel, booking hotels at the very last minute means that occupancies can change quickly; this burden then becomes the outsourcer's problem to fix. The housekeeping department usually has the highest turnover rate and outsourcing the staff helps reduce not just direct wages and benefits, but also recruitment and training costs. We have outsourced staff for public areas, pest control, and facade cleaning.

“

Hotels are more focused on outsourcing services that help reduce manpower-related issues

”

FAVOURED FRAGRANCES

- Mandarin
- Lavender
- Lemon Grass
- Green Apple
- Rose



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Sharad Dixit

Sharad Dixit

Executive Housekeeper, Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel

OUT-OF-THE-WORLD TECH

A number of trends are being followed in housekeeping these days. Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) uses electromagnetic fields to automatically identify and track tags attached to objects. These tags contain electronically stored information and are attached with the linen. The coding of the tag is done in such a way that it can read each of the linen pieces and tell about the history of the product. The advantage of the product is that it's a one-time investment and counts the number of washes of a particular item.

STAFF TO ROOM RATIO

Associates who are there for the morning shift are allocated 15 rooms each. Nowadays, most business travellers tend to demand late checkouts,

resulting in busy hours of operation to go beyond the usual. During such peak hours of the day, the associates can turnaround rooms within 25 minutes each, ensuring all standards are met.

SMARTPHONE HOUSEKEEPING

Almost all associates and team leaders are equipped with smartphones as a basic need. They have been assigned a particular application that is available to them at all times on their smartphones. We have also created official closed groups where we can share important information like guest requests, guest preferences, departure rooms, etc. This ease downs the flow of information to team members and is the most effective use of technology.

BELONGING FOR RETENTION

While recruiting, one needs to keep in mind that there has to be a mix of talent. We cannot recruit all high potential candidates for one position as it may become difficult later to give them growth within the organisation. Also, one

“Hotels are open to outsourcing of manpower to meet various operational needs”



FAVOURED FRAGRANCES

- Mandarin
- Jasmine
- Lavender
- White Tea
- Lemon Grass

important aspect is to engage them by dividing housekeeping responsibilities into smaller tasks and giving them exposure by way of additional responsibility, creating a sense of learning and making the workplace environment more inclusive.

MORE EXPOSURE FOR STAFF

Hotels are open to outsourcing of manpower to meet various operational needs. We currently outsource maintenance of public areas to third parties. However, there are many challenges that we face when it comes to outsourcing, the biggest being the rate of attrition. The companies that work is outsourced to may not act professionally at all times, hampering the retention of staff. To overcome this hazard, we have started giving these associates an opportunity to be exposed to other areas of housekeeping. We treat them as our own staff members so they have a feeling of belongingness. We have also absorbed many of the hardworking outsourced associates on our payrolls, in turn creating competition among the rest of them to perform better.

Ajay Kanojia
Executive Housekeeper, The Gateway
Resort Damdama Lake Gurgaon

REAL-TIME UPDATES

One of the most prominent trends is the application-based property management system to clear rooms faster. Another trend is placing amenities in a basket in front of rooms with a DND sign so that the guest supplies can be replenished as and when the need arises. Using eco-friendly products for cleaning and adopting other eco-friendly practices is an upcoming trend.

CLEANLINESS IS KEY

To keep the lobby resplendent, there has to be a regular cleaning protocol in place, keeping in mind the guest footfall. Flower arrangements also add great charm and energy to the lobby.

STAFF TO ROOM RATIO

The staff to room ratio at our hotel is 1:12, though it does vary on busy days. The time it takes to turnaround a room depends on many factors. Hence, it may take 30 to 40 minutes for a business room and 45 to 50 minutes for a leisure room to be done up completely.



FAVOURED FRAGRANCES

- Green Apple
- Citronella
- Taski R5
- Gardenia



Ajay Kanojia

OLD INTRODUCES THE NEW

Recruitment should be through word-of-mouth from old employees as they can highlight the benefits of the work. They can then teach new employees informally, and help get better results.

“To keep the lobby resplendent, there has to be a regular cleaning protocol in place”



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Narendra Kumar Kasana

Narendra Kumar Kasana Housekeeping Manager, Jaisalmer Marriott Resort & Spa

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS

An overall impression created by any hotel is based largely on the servicing by the housekeeping department that can either win the hearts of guests or be a reason for backlash. The major trends in this department for this year would include technological innovations, personalised services, and user-friendly designs. Attention to detail is a must and can help achieve desired results. Web-based housekeeping software is also employed to keep the housekeeping department aware of bookings and reservations of the room for smooth co-ordination. Minimal furniture setups that aid quicker clean-ups and removal of bed covers have simplified bed-making and contributed towards reducing the turnaround time of hotel rooms.

STAFF TO ROOM RATIO

Currently, we have one staff per room for the hotel. We believe that housekeeping is a form of art and to ensure maximum efficiency, we have restricted the room limit for every associate. Each associate is responsible for 14 rooms a day and they generally take 30-35 minutes to turnaround one room.



FAVOURED FRAGRANCES

- Black currant
- Bright citrus, crisp apples

BUDDY SYSTEM FOR STAFF

The team members are not our employees but associates who form an integral part of the hotel family. An effective daily training programme that helps staff be aware of future growth and development can help achieve this. Such trainings keep them motivated and challenge them to go the extra mile for the organisation. At Marriott, we have formulated a special buddy system for new joinees to help them settle in the new job. We understand that recognition and appreciation is important to keep employees motivated.

“
At Marriott, we have formulated a special buddy system for new joinees to help them settle in the new job”

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‘Spirits’ down post liquor ban ruling

‘Make it to India’ before ‘Make in India’. This ironical statement reflects the mood of the travel and hospitality fraternity, post April 1, 2017. The Supreme Court issued a decree wherein no alcohol could be served by hotels and restaurants situated within a distance of 500 metres from national and state highways.

Kanchan Nath

In the wake of the recent Supreme Court judgement, concerned restaurants and hotels have severely been impacted, resulting in a major loss of business.

To find a plausible solution to this challenging situation, the travel and hospitality industry came together to address the press on April 2, 2017.

The panel included **Ankur Bhatia**, Executive Director, Bird Group; **Arjun Sharma**, Chairman, Le Passage to India; **Kapil Chopra**, President, The Oberoi Group; **Manbeer Choudhary**, Past President, FHRAI; **Rahul Singh**, Founder and CEO, The Beer Café and Regional President, NRAI; **Sarabjit Singh**, Vice Chairman, FAITH; and **Dipak**

Deva, CEO, Kuoni Destination Management - India and South.

The panel said that they were trying to come to grips with the situation and studying their options. They are not planning to take a legal route yet.

LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT

Citing the gravity of the situation, Kapil Chopra said, "Loss of employment is staring at us. The whole state of Goa is around a national highway. Thousands of bars have been impacted; the same situation is also prevalent in

“

If our business and the public have been hit, the revenue of the government has also been affected

”



(L to R): Ankur Bhatia, Arjun Sharma, Kapil Chopra, Manbeer Choudhary, Rahul Singh, Sarabjit Singh, and Dipak Deva

a choice that must always stay with the consumer."

PROHIBITION NOT LINKED TO DRUNKEN DRIVING

While believing that the spirit of the judgment that drunken driving must be curbed was correct, Chopra added, "Stricter implementation of the law on drunken driving is essential. Today it is 500 metres but is just a deterrent. People can go two kilometres away and take a drink and come back. People can drink at their room and then start driving. With this judgment, employment and foreign exchange are impacted. The tourism image of the country is impacted. The real problem is with the genesis of drunken driving and highway fatalities. There are states in India that have had prohibition for years and still have the highest number of fatalities; there is no direct linkage."

BLACK DAY FOR INDUSTRY

Speaking on the plight of hoteliers and restaurateurs in Haryana,

Taking about the situation, Ankur Bhatia says, "At our hotels, the liquor stock rooms have already been sealed. This has a social impact as well.

The way the urban infrastructure is built in Delhi, all marriage halls are located on highways. Their business will also be affected. Tourism is impacted and the image of the country is also impacted."

TOURISM TO BE HIT

Elaborating on inbound tourism, Deva says, "Keeping aside the social implications and court order, with a message like this, people from overseas will not understand that in some hotels alcohol will be available while in some others it won't be. Inbound tourism growth is always impacted whenever any kind of hindrance is created.

People go to beach resorts for holidays and do not want to be told that they will not be served alcohol.

“

We also need to be sensitive to the fact that a message like this gives a serious negative image to future investors

”

Maharashtra. In Gurugram, the entire stretch of NH-8 has so many hotels and restaurants and everything has been impacted.

Our biggest concern today is the level of loss of employment that this will result in. Hotels and restaurants will start downsizing when bars start closing down. The second concern is the impact this will have on tourism to India. There are so many global movements that are expected as the season gets over.

We have been receiving inquiries from people on how we are going to serve them. Stating that these are very challenging times for the hospitality industry, he adds, "It's very hard to tell the guest that you cannot have a glass of wine or beer,

Manbeer Choudhary adds, "This is a black day for the hotel industry. If our business and the public have been hit, the revenue of the government has also been affected. If we get fewer customers, the tax collected will be lesser. Liquor is a state subject. Four states have already gone ahead and de-notified some highways."

"The sentiment of the judgment was to curb drunken driving. The spirit of the judgment is completely correct. There are some fundamental points we want to bring up. A liquor vend is 300 to 500 square feet. It can be relocated beyond 500 metres. However, how does one relocate a hotel? Millions of dollars have been invested in building hotels," adds Chopra.

Goa is going to be hugely impacted. We already know that Kerala tourism suffered due to the liquor ban.

We have to be really careful how we portray this, especially when it goes overseas. People get nervous and they wonder what will happen next.

"We also need to be sensitive to the fact that a message like this gives a serious negative image to future investors.

We have 156 countries on e-Visa. Without future investments, growth will be hampered. "In the last few years, there has been a lot of focus on indigenous manufacturing. However, to 'Make in India', one must first 'Make it to India', concluded Chopra.

Passage to the EAST

Souvagya Mohapatra, EC member, FHRAI and Executive Director, MAYFAIR Hotels and Resorts, tells us about the logistics of establishing a hotel business in the eastern sector of India and how the group has managed to tap this market.



Souvagya Mohapatra

PLEASE TELL US ABOUT MAYFAIR'S GROWTH STORY SO FAR.

Since its first step into hospitality in 1982, MAYFAIR Hotels and Resorts has successfully added nine properties located at Rourkela, Puri, Darjeeling, Bhubaneswar, Gangtok, Goa, and Gopalpur-on-Sea. We have been catering to the growing need for refined luxury and fine dining of the upwardly mobile affluent class as well as the needs of business travellers. We have maintained international standards in our offerings, differentiated our services, and widened the choice of our guests, thereby winning new customers and retaining the loyalty of existing ones.

HOW HAS MAYFAIR CARVED THE WAY FOR HOTELS IN THE EASTERN REGION?

MAYFAIR is pioneering the growth of the hospitality industry in the eastern region of India. It has distinguished itself by the uniqueness of its

architecture, design, accent on ecology, and attention to aesthetics. Our hotels in Bhubaneswar, Puri, Rourkela, and Gopalpur-on-Sea along with our resorts in Darjeeling and the upcoming one at Kalimpong, West Bengal, have virtually redefined the business of hospitality in eastern India. Our property in Gangtok, the MAYFAIR Spa Resort and Casino, is the only five-star deluxe property in the entire north-eastern region. It has given us prominent presence, globally.

WHAT ARE YOUR EXPANSION PLANS?

We are consolidating our position in the eastern region with five-star properties planned to be set up at Raipur, Kolkata, and Siliguri. Our new property at Kalimpong is all set to start operations in June.

HOW EFFICACIOUS HAS THE MICE SEGMENT BEEN FOR YOU?

The MICE segment has been one of our key drivers of growth. It has shown a consistent growth rate over





the last three years. We have outpaced the overall growth rate in the industry because of our pre-eminent position in the market and our capability to cater to the MICE needs of the growing number of clients from the corporate sector. Demand for MICE has grown due to extension of business activities to newer geographies and expansion of business networks. We have a dedicated unit at MAYFAIR Convention with state-of-the-art infrastructure, cutting edge high-tech equipment, and audio-visual systems that help us cater to the many events we conduct. Our growth in this segment could be attributed to the well-managed facilities at all our hotels.

HOW WELL DO YOUR RESTAURANTS PERFORM?

The volume of business we receive at our restaurants is as much as we expect it to be. We have consistently been meeting the target sales growth at all our restaurants. We have also introduced new cuisines and innovative practices to keep guests satisfied, ensuring retention of regular clients and addition of new ones.

WHAT CHALLENGES DOES THE EASTERN SECTOR POSE TO HOTELS?

For operations to be sustainable in the eastern sector, one has to adopt a price-sensitive model. Although high-end hotels that serve a niche segment of customers may have lesser hurdles, the small

“

MAYFAIR is pioneering the growth of the industry in the eastern region of India

”

and medium category of hotels find it difficult to sustain operations due to the high cost of operation, inconsistent flow of customers, and lack of effective marketing.

WHAT IS THE AVERAGE STAY DURATION AND MIX OF GUESTS AT THE HOTEL?

The average stay period of guests is two to three days. Most of our guests are domestic, though we also continuously receive international guests who prefer staying with us. To put it into numbers, the ratio of domestic to international guests would be somewhere around 80:20.

HOW LUCRATIVE IS A HOTEL INVESTMENT THESE DAYS?

With growth in travel and tourism as well as MICE clientele, the demand for hotels is bound to escalate. Consequently, the hospitality industry is also bound to grow. So, there is natural scope of growth for the industry and investment in the sector is likely to be profitable.

Stimulus to success

The hospitality industry is increasingly being churned in a highly regulatory environment. We take an opinion on the key issues that FHRAI, as the premier association for hotels and restaurants in India, must focus on.



Sanjay Sood
President
HRANI

FHRAI plays a seminal role by taking up key issues of the industry and by supporting the growth trajectory of India's hospitality and tourism. Being the authentic voice of the hospitality industry, FHRAI must strive to lobby on the following issues to foster growth in the sector.

GST at the lowest level:

Payment of GST should be on receipt basis and reversal of tax be allowed in case of a non-recoverable amount. Services for which payment is received in convertible foreign exchange should qualify to be zero-rated.

Environmental laws: The standards to be fixed for the hotel industry by the State Pollution Control Boards should be based on the level of discharge and the standards so fixed should be consistent. The hotel industry should be removed from 'Red Category' as the same is not justifiable.

In fact, it should be treated as 'White Category' or at the most, 'Green Category' only.

EPCG and SFIS norms: Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) and Served From India Scheme (SFIS) licensing norms be revisited and made simpler for the industry so that they can be complied with by the industry. When hotels were getting 10 per cent under SFIS, 80 per cent to 90 per cent of the entitlement was being utilised by hotels. By reducing it to seven per cent, the cost of imports has increased. Tourism and travel related services should be at five per cent.

FSSAI: With the advent of the FSS Act, there are a number of challenges being faced and difficulties arising in implementation of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2011. As per the regulation, Part V conditions are to be read with Part II, and this induces lack of clarity in understanding. Inspection checklist is another major challenge for the industry that FHRAI needs to take up with FSSAI.



Being the authentic voice of the hospitality industry, FHRAI must strive to lobby to foster growth



Sudesh Poddar
President
HRAEI

Even though the hospitality sector is the biggest employment generator among different sectors of the industry and one of the largest contributors to the government exchequer, it has to encounter the most speed breakers in the form of regulation in India.

Right from the stage of land acquisition to that of starting restaurant operations, one must overcome scores of hurdles. Any new restaurant needs 30-odd licences and NOCs and then needs to keep renewing them each year. The increasing restrictions of alcohol and meat are making things even more complicated. Moreover, rules and regulations vary a lot from one state to another.

For instance, in some states an excise license can cost several lakhs of rupees, but there are others where one can get a license by spending just a few odd thousands. Likewise, in most Indian states, the legal

drinking age is either 18 or 21, but in Delhi, Punjab, and Chandigarh, it is 25. Some states don't approve of alcohol being served in open spaces while some do.

The Bombay Prohibition Act of 1949 states that anyone who takes a drink in Mumbai must have a drinking permit from the state's excise department.



Any new restaurant needs 30-odd licences and NOCs and then needs to keep renewing them



Such archaic legal strictures override a huge revenue-generating opportunity. The present system of licenses has to be replaced by a registration system requiring restaurants to update their licenses every three or five years and not every year, and also allow a single-window clearance system for them. The FSSAI must not be allowed to restrict the restaurant sector. The system of getting an annually renewable license from the weights and metrology department must end.

We don't see any end to the 'license raj' that was unleashed on India by the erstwhile British colonial masters, a century ago.



Dilip Datwani
President
HRAWI

The main issue we are facing today is the liquor ban. The travel and tourism sector, which includes hotels, restaurants, and bars employs more people than most industries in the country. The food service sector alone provides direct employment to six million people and indirect employment to another nine million, making it one of the largest employers in the country. We do respect the noble intentions of the honourable Supreme Court to make our country's roads safer but it still is a black day for us. The judgement will have a huge social and economic impact with serious revenue implications for the state governments.

International tours and events are planned months in advance; this new move will seriously hurt India's image if we go back to international tour operators and event management companies and say certain hotels in the country can't serve alcohol.

The fall out of the order brings in its wake its own bag of surprises. For instance, many of the arterial roads in our cities merge with national highways. Anna Salai, for instance, is on NH-45, so the hotels and restaurants on it

are in the shadow of the ban. Hotels and restaurants on NH-19 and the New Delhi Aerocity hotels on NH-48, among several others, will have to pay the price for their proximity to the highway.

The learned judges have not taken into account the logical argument that drunken driving has less to do with the availability of liquor on the national and state highways, than with the poor enforcement of laws.

The centre and state governments have to answer for how much they have (or haven't) invested in making our highways safe. Why have they not created a strong network of well-equipped, well-connected highway patrol units with the power to take



The judgement will have a huge social and economic impact with serious revenue implications for the state governments



action against drunken driving and other violations of the traffic laws on the highways?

Banning the sale of liquor on the highways is the easy way out, and there's an easy way of circumventing it.

In Goa, for instance, the owners of highway vends are moving into the nearby villages to dodge the 500 metre rule. It's not physically possible for hotels and restaurants to relocate with such ease. They have to suffer in silence.



K. Syama Raju
President
SIHRA

The Government of India has taken and is taking various initiatives to strengthen the industry. It has realised the country's potential in the tourism industry and has taken several steps to make India a global tourism hub. The "Clean India" campaign and development of inland waterways for transport and tourism are projects that have gained momentum over the previous years. Additionally, programmes, such as "Make in India" and the "Smart Cities" initiative have highlighted the Government's support to skill development and investments in hospitality and tourism. However, the Indian hotel industry is facing many difficulties, including challenges being faced by owners, and management and operational staff. Still, the industry is gradually growing at a constant rate of about five to seven per cent per annum.

With each passing day, competition among hotels for their own survival is becoming fierce and they are facing some modern day challenges in their daily operations, those that are directly or indirectly related to revenue generation through customer satisfaction, retention, and loyalty. I have highlighted some of these.

Taxation policies: In India, hotels are taxed anywhere between 20-25 per cent, depending on the state they are operating in. We would pursue fixing a floor rate of tax under the GST. This will have a neutral to marginally positive impact on the restaurant business and would ensure that parity is maintained for all.

Debt-funding by banks: Debt-funding for hotel projects in India is characterised by a relatively short loan term, typically of 10-12 years, but with high interest rates of 12-14 per cent. A project typically only has 5.5-6 years to pay for the debt service, which is unrealistic. Debt repayment begins as soon as a project hits the ground and hotel owners are unable to access public capital, making repayment cycles longer than before. We would pursue this with the competent authorities.

Visa issues: As per the new policy, India is offering Tourist Visa-on-arrival and Electronic Travel Authorisation to the



Competition among hotels is becoming fierce and they are facing some modern day challenges in daily operations



citizens of many countries. The revised visa norms are a game changer for the tourism and hospitality industry in the days ahead but hotels have to gear up to adapt to various technologies that change quite frequently.

Every drop maketh an ocean: Be responsible

The shortage of water in the country is not an issue that can be taken lying down. It needs immediate attention and each industry must step up to use resources judiciously. Through this article, we seek to build awareness among hoteliers on the issue and instil a sense of creative solution formulation in them.



Niranjan Khatri

Tankers have suddenly come back into business. Traffic jams due to these four-wheeled menaces seem to have begun on the streets of all metros of India. Ever wondered what the underlying reason behind their sudden appearance is?

IDENTIFYING THE ISSUE

Water shortage has been building up and is here to stay. It is the new normal that we must all get used to. We must pause and think why this is happening. The reason is perfectly simple and extremely dismal. Poor groundwater management, poor water treatment laws, sheer audacious

polluting by industries that goes unchecked, and some inefficient farming methods are just few of the reasons that have contributed to this situation. From a policy perspective, subsidised water and pilferage in supply systems, and lack of a clear vision for the country have all contributed to this shortage. It can be said that concern and action from key stakeholders at all levels happens only when crisis hit us hard. This reactive approach, which is tougher to handle, is increasingly becoming commonplace.

PAVING THE ROAD TO BETTERMENT

The way out of this mess must be different from the way we got into it in the first place. The problem is huge and that means the solution cannot be anything short of a Marshall plan, one that needs to be put in place with clear steps of action and monitoring mechanisms to ensure success. This is the only way to drought-proof our country and mitigate social tension.

Fortunately, there is a precedent. We needn't reinvent the wheel in terms of modalities. The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), which was established more than a decade ago, right when India kicked in its growth curve that led to a hockey stick-like consumption pattern, came into the system and established order. It brought in equipment rating systems, put caps on consumption and standards on everything around energy production, supply, and consumption.

While there is still scope for improvement, it is a great start and brings in savings by taking it to the consumers directly, assuring far-reaching outcomes.



CONSTITUENTS OF BEE'S FUNCTIONS

The Energy Conservation Act led to the establishment of the BEE in 2002. Functioning under the aegis of the Ministry of Power, BEE has been given all the power needed to become the go-to body with regards to producer as well as consumer-related decisions on energy consumption and conservation.

The stakeholders in the power sector range from producers to DISCOMS, citizen consumers, students, appliance manufacturers, and other energy professionals. Over a period of time, BEE recognised that it needed to be an influence on each and every one of them. It also understood that it needed to provide the right tools and information to help them learn and adhere to standards.

For each of these stakeholders, activity and information has been created and is constantly updated. For instance, creating star-rating for appliances was an excellent start and made to be so simple that a layman could understand that purchasing a higher-star rated appliance would make sense. Thus, both producers and consumers benefitted and energy conservation became a norm when it came to appliances like air conditioners, refrigerators, etc. Though there is still a long way to go, it has proved to be a great programme with significant success so far.

On a similar note, education programmes have been created for professionals and students alike. These are helping them learn and be ready for the industry as well as become experts in the space.

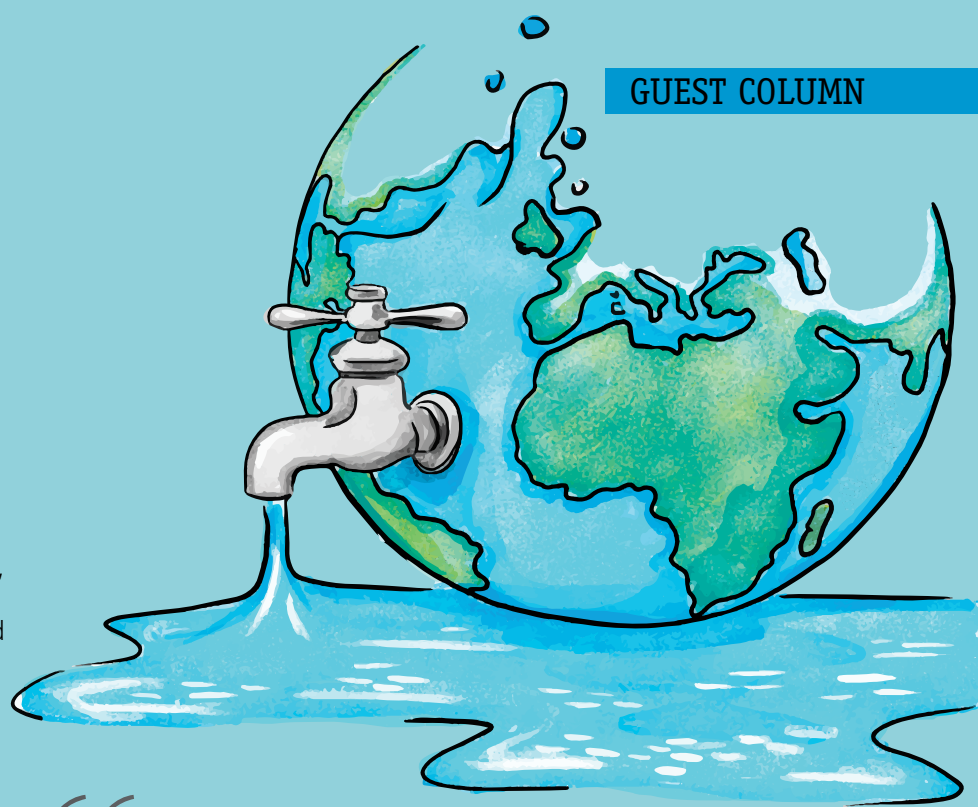
One of the key model initiatives that has achieved success has been the creation of an Energy Audit Professional programme. This has led to energy experts seeking to be certified auditors, not only creating new jobs, but making businesses adopt energy audit easily.

The government also continues to create and add new financial schemes through incentives and grants. These initiatives help meet the many challenges that consumers (both citizens and businesses) face when implementing energy-efficiency projects.

This has a far-reaching benefit for the country as India is one of the signees to the Paris Treaty and needs to adopt measures that keep the global temperatures under 2 degree Celsius.

WHAT LIES AHEAD

The concerted effort put in by BEE has led to India being a power surplus country today. Though it is



“
A top-down approach under the umbrella of MoEF is the only way India can tackle its water crisis
”

still a work-in-progress, the dedication and focus shown by BEE has made it possible.

Today, water challenges are worse than energy issues of 2002. The deterioration is palpable and citizens and businesses are waking up and noticing it. UNEP, in its study of India and water consumption, suggested that per capita consumption needed to be 125 litres in urban centres. We are consuming, on an average, nearly 50 per cent more than that. As a result, our resources are rapidly evaporating.

A top-down approach under the umbrella of MoEF is the only way India can tackle its water crisis. This has become the need of the hour. Constant awareness activities can be a starting point, but they must be coupled with focus on areas that need immediate attention to help India become water positive.

What is to be learnt from BEE's success is that there lies a fantastic opportunity to convert this crisis into a livelihood, creating and becoming a global trendsetter for sustainable living.

*(The authors are: **Niranjan Khatri**, Founder of iSambav, a sustainability training organisation; and **Sriram Kuchimanchi**, CEO of Smarter Dharma, a social enterprise operating in the field of social and environmental sustainability. The views expressed above are the authors' personal views).*



Sriram Kuchimanchi



Beyond beautiful

BEAMS

When one thinks of a hotel, the image of an ornate room with a comfortable bed comes to mind. We find out from hoteliers how bed settings are designed to simultaneously ensure comfort and grandeur for guests.

Kanchan Nath

A bed setting is as important as the décor of a room. Being the biggest piece of furniture in a room, a bed needs to look and feel luxurious. While some elements of the bed spread are common among hotels, each one has its own characteristic charm.



Shilpa Kosambia

Shilpa Kosambia
Executive Housekeeper, Sofitel Mumbai BKC

COMFORT WITH 'MYBED'

Known for its contemporary French luxury with an Indian touch, Sofitel Mumbai BKC ensures guests have a good night's rest with 'MyBed'. Providing guests with a royal experience, MyBed is designed to lend a tribute to the French bedtime and rising ritual of the medieval era. MyBed is made up of seven layers. The arrangement consists of a mattress, soft over-mattress, sheets, and duvet. The over-mattress can be removed if someone prefers a harder bed. With made-to-measure comfort, it offers a unique nocturnal experience to customers.

Adding to the grandeur, guests at the Sofitel suite can treat themselves to the pillow menu, My Pillow, which allows them to pick a comfortable pillow of their choice. The vast range of pillows

has something for everyone, and guests have the freedom of selecting the one that best suits their body contour.

THE EVERGREEN WHITE

White is a sign of purity and hygiene that is evergreen, regardless of the design, decor or theme of the hotel. The advantages of having white linen are manifold. Firstly, the colour doesn't fade during the stain removal process or during wash cycles; secondly, stains are easily visible, making the process of maintaining sheets easier; thirdly, if the sheets get stained beyond repair, they can easily be replaced. One doesn't have to undergo the ordeal of matching the replacements with old sheets, an activity that often times ends in replacement of an entire set of sheets. This process also turns out to be costly.

Indrani Sanyal

Director Housekeeping, Swissôtel Kolkata

LAYERING FOR ADDED COMFORT

Swissôtel Kolkata's promise of comfort and luxury is accomplished by knowing the different elements that go into creating a five-star bedding and finding feel-good fabrics that are soft and plush but aren't exorbitantly priced. We include a number of elements in our bedding to ensure guest comfort at all times. The bed skirts are used as a decorative solution to hide box springs; mattresses feature a medium to firm innerspring coil that offers excellent support; feather toppers enhance the comfort quotient of the mattresses; and mattress pads are used to keep these feather toppers in place. For added guest comfort, we use cotton sheets of a high thread count to achieve the desired ever-so-soft cloud-like feel and employ multiple layers of cotton linens and fluffy soft covers, and plush pillows to create luxury bedding. As a final touch, bolsters, decorative pillows, and boudoir pillows are added to the arrangement to make the bedding look inviting.

TEXTURED LINEN

The largest element in most guest rooms, the bed is naturally the focal point of décor. Its appearance is crucial to the aesthetic appeal of the room. Bed linen is integral to not only ensuring a comfortable sleep but also enhancing a room's décor. Interior designers specialising in hospitality predict that

some current trends will continue to hold strong while other new and exciting elements will gain traction soon. Printed embellishments have become more prominent. Manufacturers are also now increasingly doing graphic prints on textiles for throw pillows or bed runners and top sheets. It seems large architectural graphics and custom patterns will become more accessible and extensively used in the near future. Essentially, things will stay neutral with bold pops of colour.

Bedding, however, will remain white. A classic colour, white goes with everything. With other colours, getting an exact match can be difficult as different batches naturally tend to take on different shades. Most guests also prefer white bed sheets over any other colour. That said, more jacquards (intricate patterns in fabric), including the hotel's logo or brand-specific designs are increasingly being incorporated for texture and subtle patterns in top sheets and duvet covers.



Indrani Sanyal

“

Some current trends will continue to hold strong while other new and exciting elements will gain traction

”





Manish Chakraborty

Manish Chakraborty

Executive Housekeeper, Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield

THICKNESS ENSURES RELAXATION

At Marriott, we have a revived bed programme that perfectly suits international travellers. Beds are made with special coil technology and foam that keep guests cool while they sleep. They sit atop an environmentally responsible, sturdy base. We use thick eight-inch mattresses, accompanied by a three-inch feather topper that makes the bed feel soft and adds extra comfort.

We also use duck down-feather pillows that help retain a proper neck posture. The linen used has an added fragrance that provides freshness to guests, helping them relax after a long day.

WHITE PROMOTES HYGIENE

At our hotel, we always use white bed linen that gives a sense of peace, calm, and hygiene. White proves to be cost-effective when it comes to changing bed sheet sets in rooms. At times, due to unrelenting stains, sheets need to be replaced. Since white does not need to be matched to existing sheets, it can easily be replaced. It also assures guests of good hygiene standards being maintained at the hotel.



At Marriott, we have a revived bed programme that perfectly suits international travellers



Sangeeta Guleria

Sangeeta Guleria

Manager Housekeeping, Crowne Plaza Today Gurgaon

COMFORT MEETS LUXURY

Keeping up the high standards we maintain at our hotel, all our rooms have mattress toppers for added comfort and luxury. We also place mattress protectors before the bed sheets are laid. Besides comfort, it is also equally important for the setting to look luxurious. For this, we use colourful bolsters, bed runners, and duvets to give the final finish to beds.

LONG-LASTING FABRICS

Hotels often use white bed linen that gives a fresh look and is fairly easy to maintain. It also symbolises hygiene and luxury. Some other benefits of white linen are that it can easily be ordered, does not have to be matched, and lasts longer than coloured spreads. This trend will not go out of style any time soon.



Hotels often use white bed linen that gives a fresh look and is fairly easy to maintain



Rimi Verma
Director of Services, JW Marriott Hotel New Delhi Aerocity



HYGIENE IS ESSENTIAL

We use posturepedic mattresses and hypoallergenic feather bedding that provide the right support to the body posture and ensure hygiene, respectively. Plush mattress toppers and white crisp cotton bed linen with a thread count of 300 is used to add comfort and make bedding look luxurious.

WHITE TOPS ALL

White is the most prominently used colour for bed linen throughout the world. It gives a look of cleanliness and hygiene; when it gets dirty, the stains are clearly visible, making it easier to ensure that the whole sheet is properly cleaned; cleaning is faster as there is no segregation and all sheets can be washed together without the risk of any bleed of colour.



Rimi Verma

“

We use posturepedic mattresses that provide the right support to the body posture

”

Nitin Tanwar
Executive Housekeeper, The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel and Residences



LIGHT COTTON ADDS STYLE

We provide guests with posturepedic plush mattresses at the hotel so that guests sleep

comfortably. The mattress provides the right support to the back, ensuring that guests feel fully relaxed the next day.

We also use cotton linen that makes bed settings look luxurious and is easy on the eyes.

SAVING TIME

We use plain-pattern white cotton linen at the hotel because it promotes hygiene. Even the smallest of stains are easily visible on white and this makes the cleaning process easier and faster.

Rooms are often ornately designed and white brings a sense of serenity to them. It calms the senses and is a recess from chaos.



Nitin Tanwar

“

We use cotton linen that makes bed settings look luxurious and is easy on the eyes

”



Tanya Agrawal

Resort to **Religiosity**

Tanya Agrawal, Director, Shri Radha Brij Vasundhara, The Resort and Spa, Mathura, tells us how the property aims to capture the barrage of guests received every year.



WHAT MAKES BRIJ VASUNDHARA SO UNIQUE?

The resort is a perfect mix of modern luxury and traditional spirituality. It overlooks the Govardhan Hills, providing the perfect ambience for meditation. Bhagwat Kathas are also a regular feature at the resort. Spread across a vast green zone, the clean air and calm, quiet atmosphere help refresh one's senses, de-stress, and provide the perfect getaway from everyday city life. To keep pollution at bay, we keep motorised vehicles away. For movement within the resort, we have battery-driven buggies. We are also an apt venue for destination weddings.

HOW ACCESSIBLE IS THE RESORT FOR TRAVELLERS?

The resort is located approximately 25 kilometres away from the railway station. In addition, a number of tourist destinations such as Barsana, Gokul, Nandgaon, Vrindavan, and Deeg are just a short, 30-minute drive away.

HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE THE ARCHITECTURE?

The resort has been designed in the form of tree branches. The vast and spacious cottages, each 1,275 square feet in area, have been conceptualised to revolutionise the essence of guest-stays.

WHAT ARE YOUR INDIAN VEGETARIAN FOOD OFFERINGS?

Mathura is famous for its *kachoris* and *pedas*, and that is exactly what we offer to our guests first and foremost. We also serve seasonal vegetables that are farm-fresh, being grown within the resort itself.

WHAT KIND OF WELLNESS AMENITIES DO YOU OFFER?

We have all the wellness luxuries that one looks for in an upmarket resort. Guests can take advantage of massages and therapies at Anubhuti, our spa; fitness enthusiasts can make use of our well-equipped gymnasium or spend time at the all-weather swimming pool. For those interested in indoor sports,

we have billiards and table tennis rooms. In addition, we have adopted a number of steps to keep the resort pollution-free, enabling us to greet our guests with clean and fresh air.

WHAT ABOUT ROOM TARIFFS? DO YOU WITNESS A LEAN SEASON?

While single bedroom cottages can be rented at ₹4,500, two-bedroom cottages and bedroom suites are available at ₹6,500 and ₹5,500, respectively. We do not have a lean season, but in peak summers the occupancy slows down a bit. On an average, our occupancy rate stays between 70-80 per cent.

WHAT KIND OF CLIENTELE ARE YOU TARGETING?

We are targeting both religious and leisure travellers in equal measure. Mathura's proximity to Delhi brings a plethora of weekend travellers, giving us an opportunity to announce special tariffs with added benefits to attract this segment of guests.

HOW DO YOU AIM TO CAPTURE MORE MARKET SHARE?

To further our presence in the market, we have tied up with tour operators and made special arrangements with online booking sites. We have made our website e-payment enabled.

“

Spread across a vast green zone, the clean air and calm, quiet atmosphere help refresh one's senses

”



The KETCHUP Caterers

Akshay Bector, Chairman and Managing Director, Cremica Food Industries, throws light on how the company's product line has been positioned in the market and how it is continuously being innovated.



Akshay Bector

HOW DIVERSE IS YOUR RANGE OF PRODUCTS?

Cremica Foods is well-positioned in the food service industry and its complete range of products such as mayonnaise, salad dressings, ketchup, liquid condiments, cooking sauces, and other syrup and dessert solutions have a special place in kitchens. Given the diversity of products and variants, Cremica has become a well-integrated and well-distributed brand in this category. Our food service product range includes single-serve, table top products such as bottles, blisters, and sachets, ready-to-cook Indian gravies and curries, tomato ketchup, mayonnaise, blends, dips and

sauces, salad dressings, fruit crushes, and hot sauces. Cremica is one of the most visible brands in the condiment business and our penetration and surge in retail sales is expected to be phenomenal in the coming years.

DOES A PARTICULAR PRODUCT BRAND DRIVE THE GROWTH OF CREMICA?

We are the largest manufacturers of mayo and lead players in ketchup as well. We are India's largest producer of ketchup portion packs, capable of packing 2.5 million sachets per year. Our Indian-flavoured sandwich mayo has also proved to be a huge hit in the market. Other products such as Opera crisps, salad dressings, and sandwich spreads have gained popularity and are predicted to be the high growth categories of the brand. We believe this is because we understand the taste and preferences of Indian consumers and innovate on flavours to please their palates.

“ Given the diversity of products, Cremica has become a well-integrated and well-distributed brand ”



DO E-RETAIL PARTNERSHIPS FEATURE ON YOUR AGENDA?

Cremica has plans to associate with companies such as Big Basket and Grofers to widen its distribution and capture a greater geographical market systematically. Besides this, the entire retail range is already available in stores across India.

WHICH OF YOUR PRODUCTS ARE MOST POPULAR IN TIER-III AND TIER-IV CITIES?

Cremica is presently selling the tomato ketchup in Tier-III and Tier-IV cities of India. However, we are working on a portfolio of products to make this segment of the business grow further in the near future.

HOW DO YOU CATER TO CHANGING CONSUMER PREFERENCES?

Owing to an increase in awareness, consumers have become very selective in quality and taste of their food. They have become more demanding and hence, traditional offerings and approaches do not work in keeping them loyal to a particular product or brand.

Category enhancement and increasing shelf space for newer categories like Tombo ketchup, Opera crisps, and new flavours of mayonnaise are going

to increase average cart-size of shoppers, in turn offering better and healthier margins than traditional categories being sold under these formats. For example, our spicy Tombo ketchup adds the perfect tangy experience to food.

The food service industry is growing fast; with more and more QSRs and entrants in the industry, we see a huge business potential for companies like Cremica.

HOW DO YOU ENSURE FOOD SAFETY AND FSSAI COMPLIANCE?

Cremica is one of the leading brands that adheres to strict compliance to all prevalent food safety regulations and norms. We make sure each and every product that ships out of our factories is of the highest quality. We like to believe that this is the reason Cremica products have been loved for years.

TELL US ABOUT CREMICA'S PAST PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH PLAN.

Cremica has achieved a growth of about 25-30 per cent in FY 2015-16. We are targeting a turnover of ₹1,000 crore by year 2020.

We are also expecting to reach an outlet-base of about 1.2 lakh retail stores by the end of FY 2020.

AROMA on the internet

Vedic Aroma Lab has always sought to bring the best innovations to customers through convenient channels of procurement. **Vishesh Vijayvergiya**, Perfumer and Scent Branding Consultant, Vedic Aroma Lab, enlightens us about their newly designed website, The Aroma Depot.

THE USP

The Aroma Depot is an exclusive website focused on aromas and allied products for use in hotels, spas, restaurants, motels, offices, and banquet halls, among other sectors. It aids hoteliers in sourcing the company's products directly, ridding them of the trouble of first locating the products online and then buying them through intermediary channels.

The website aims to deliver high-quality products at the best prices from Vedic Aroma Lab and partner companies. It is a one-stop-shop for all your fragrance needs.

EASING PURCHASES

The website is so designed as to assist customers in optimal inventory management. It offers a complete range of fragrances of every perceivable application.

OUR RANGE

We provide bespoke fragrances that can induce pleasant feelings, stimulate appetites, trigger memories, and instil relaxation and alertness. We also offer customised fragrance solutions that give a sensory edge that distinguishes itself from the rest.

Visit us at thearomadepot.com



Vishesh Vijayvergiya





A synergy of ELEMENTS

The right mix of ingredients gives the perfect flavour to food, but are ingredients meant to do just that? We explore the science behind these delicious blends.

Indian cuisine is as diverse as the Indian culture, evident from the regional cultural influences that form the basis of these differences. Condiments and ingredients used in our dishes are

meant to not just please the appetite but also boost health with the abundance of nutrition they provide. The combinations are far too many and each is deliciously different from the other.



**Somasundaram
Gopalakrishnan**

Somasundaram Gopalakrishnan

Executive Sous Chef, Courtyard by Marriott and Fairfield by Marriott Bengaluru

AUTHENTICITY IS KEY

The diversity in Indian culture is evident in the diversity of our regional cuisines as well. Where South Indian guests prefer food with curry leaves, mustard, and chilli flavours, North Indian guests are more bent towards using *ghee* (clarified butter), coriander leaves, and saffron in food preparation. For us, the key is to understand the requirement of guests and prepare dishes in the desired authentic flavour. These days, popular condiments among guests include homemade *chutneys* and pickles.

A BOOST TO HEALTH

Beetroot *chutney* is rich in nutrients that help boost the immune system and produce new blood cells. *Gongura chutney* is rich in vitamins A, B1,

B2, and B9. Garlic *chutney* helps regulate blood pressure and blood sugar levels. Curry leaves, often used by us, are rich in carbohydrates, energy, fibre, calcium, phosphorous, iron, magnesium, copper, and minerals.



Ramesh GV

Executive Sous Chef, Novotel Hyderabad Airport

DELICATE MIXES

Indian guests usually prefer sweet, tangy, and spicy flavours. Our buffets are a predominant mix of Indian dishes from all over the country. They include South Indian delicacies such as *sambhar*, *avial*, and *sundal*; and North Indian delicacies such as *do pyaza* and *makhna* that help cater to diverse Indian palates. The ingredients that I usually prefer using are Worcestershire sauce, wasabi, *sambal*,

and Chermoula sauce. It is interesting to note that Indians are now gradually shifting towards traditional Indian flavours.

POWER-PACKED INGREDIENTS

Our nutrient-packed condiments and sauces not only make food delicious but also help in keeping us healthy. Condiments used in Indian preparations are often rich in vitamins, minerals, and fibre.



Ramesh GV



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Crafting CONCOCTIONS

The five-day gastronomic trail, 12th Culinary Art India 2017, held between March 7 and 11, 2017, was concluded with a gala award ceremony at Pragati Maidan, Delhi.

Organised by Indian Culinary Forum in association with Hospitality First and ITPO, Culinary Art India has specially been created to recognise the excellence of culinary skills in India.

The 12th edition of the competition saw more than 300 chefs including 14 entries from the south, participating and showcasing the best of their skills and talent in cooking and display of culinary expertise.

The five-day affair saw competitions in 16 categories including two additional categories of Chocolate Mania and Sushi Platter that were judged by WACS (World Association of Chefs Societies) certified chefs and renowned food critics. Chef Willment Leong, Chairman - World

Chefs without Borders, Founder Chairman - Thailand Culinary Academy, and Vice President - Thailand Chefs Association, was the Chairperson of the jury. Hotel Le Méridien New Delhi bagged the most awards.

Chef Davinder Kumar, President, Indian Culinary Forum, said, "It gives me immense pleasure to announce the success of 12th Culinary Art India, a professional culinary challenge where chefs are given a platform to demonstrate their culinary skills and develop them further to meet international standards.

I would like to assure all participants and members of total transparency through structured rules, regulations, systems, and panel of WACS certified judges. ICF will constantly thrive to bring our fraternity closer and continue





WINNING CHEFS

- **Artistic Pastry Showpiece:**
Arun Kumar Sharma (Radisson Blu Hotel New Delhi Dwarka)
- **Artistic Bakery Showpiece:**
Chef Inderpal Singh (The Imperial)
- **Fruit and Vegetable Carving:**
Jitender (The Ashok ITDC)
- **Plated Appetizers:**
 - Nitesh (Hotel Le Méridien)
 - Rakesh Kumar Dubey (Radisson Blu Hotel New Delhi Dwarka)
 - Naresh Kumar (Sanjeev Kapoor Restaurant)
- **3-Tier Wedding Cake:**
Ramesh Ranwar (The Royal Plaza)
- **Petit Fours and Pralines:**
Avneet Kaur (Cook and Bake Academy)
- **Three Course Set Dinner Menu:**
Varun Chauhan (Hotel Le Méridien)
- **Desserts:**
 - Avinash (Hotel Le Méridien)
 - Sagrika Kochar (Cook and Bake Academy)
 - Akash Khandelwal (ITC Maurya)
- **Authentic Indian Regional Cuisine:**
T Ramakrishnan (The Royal Plaza)
- **Contemporary Sushi Platter:**
Jiwan Bhujel (Double Tree By Hilton)

our commitment to encourage the betterment of the culinary profession in setting new benchmarks in the hospitality industry."

Chef Vivek Saggur, General Secretary, Indian Culinary Forum, said, "This event has evolved from a competition venue to an educational platform for chefs to learn, exchange, and showcase their culinary skills. The previous year saw close to 300 participants from not only Delhi NCR but other northern, western, and southern states.

This year's event was the biggest ever with newly added categories and an expanded competition venue, being accredited by a panel of internationally acclaimed judges."

Winners at the event included Anand Singh Bisht (Trident, Gurgaon) and Gaurav Maity (Oberoi Hotel) for Live Cooking; Shyam Sunder AB (IICA, Hauz Khas) under the Enthusiastic Cooks category; and Kheemanand Fulara (Radisson Blu Hotel New Delhi Dwarka) for the Chocolate Mania category.

Other category winners were Surbhy Rauniyar (The Hampstead Cake Studio) for Dress the Cake Live; and Hari (Crowne Plaza New Delhi Rohini), Karan Dilsher Dhaliwal (IHM, Pusa), and Kuber (Crowne Plaza New Delhi Rohini) for Mocktails.





A-ONE AERON

◆ Global design manufacturer, Herman Miller, has unveiled a new Aeron chair that has a re-engineered tilt mechanism, adjustable PostureFit SL spinal support, and groundbreaking 8Z Pellicle zoned suspension that together deliver enhanced comfort. With the input of original co-designer Don Chadwick, and a dedicated team of scientists, engineers, materials specialists, and researchers who worked on the project for over two years, Herman Miller has enhanced the chair by combining the latest insights in anthropometrics and ergonomics with two decades of advancement in materials, manufacturing, and technology. The resulting chair is recognisably an Aeron, but features stronger and smarter materials and better adjustment capabilities.

ARTY MINIMALISM

◆ Ficus Fine Living brings to you its latest range of porcelain crockery that ranges from tea, coffee mugs, and saucers to dainty snack-plates and dip dishes, all artistically decorated in soft Scandinavian colours. The classic dinner set in the collection features contemporary designs and complements any occasion with a touch of elegance. This beautiful crockery collection will definitely ensure that your guests and you dine in style.



A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

◆ Hicare has launched a new series of air purifiers that comprises three models -- iClassic 280i, iClassic 480i, and iClassic 680i with patented HEPASilent technology that ensures whisper-silent delivery. All three models are Wi-Fi enabled and can be controlled from the Blueair Friend App on Android and Apple devices. The purifiers help battle the menace of air pollutants that are hazardous to health, and sometimes fatal.

LIGHTING UP EVERY CORNER

◆ The Great Eastern Home introduces its range of stylish chandeliers that will add sparkle and elegance to any space. The range includes various designs – crystal, Moreno glass, mission, antler, beaded, iron, Victorian, and antique. The chandeliers have magnificently been crafted in brass with gold wash and coloured glass, laying emphasis on design, proportion, detail, and finish. The chandeliers are available in different styles and sizes to suit your need. Classical décor styles have been reworked by contemporary designers to add panache to spaces.



THE CRAFT OF LOFT

◆ Loft series by Vitra is a new range of faucets that the company has brought into the market. This series artfully showcases the designs of ceramic washbasins finished with brilliant metallic coatings. The product delivers a flow of water at a pre-set temperature, preventing risk of burning due to sudden release of hot water. Loft has brought a new dimension to bathrooms with its sharp lines and minimalist design details. With pioneering designs and ergonomic use, this new range of faucets maximises control over water with in-built and standard basin mixers as well as bath or shower mixers.

ONE-STOP-SHOP FOR COOKTOP

◆ Usha International introduces the Usha Induction Cooktop IC 3616. The cooktop comes with pan-sensor technology where the heat turns on only when the cooktop senses the utensil. It also prevents overheating by auto-switching to the power-saving mode, maintaining an optimum temperature. The cooktop offers a pre-set menu for five Indian dishes besides a manual menu control option. Another highlight of the product is its resistance to voltage fluctuation of up to 1,500 Volts. Usha Induction Cooktop IC 3616 comes with a 1,340 mm long cord for ease of placement.



CARNIVAL FOR A CAUSE FOR THE TAJ MAHAL HOTEL

The Taj Mahal Hotel, New Delhi, joined hands with Elle to organise Carnival for a Cause. The annual initiative led by the Ogaan Cancer Foundation aims to spread awareness about breast cancer. Funds raised through the evening will help support the foundation as well as the Women's Cancer Initiative - Tata Memorial Hospital that works in the area of breast health. The theme for this year's carnival was 'The Music Series' and the

evening saw spirited performances by Sonam Kalra and Jordan Johnson. On display were fun wares from 24 young and exciting brands which included designers and brands like Dhruv Kapoor, Anomaly, Guapa, Quo by Ishita Mangal, Dhora, A Vintage Affaire and many more. The section on silent auction included brands like Hermes, Shantanu and Nikhil, Gucci, Christian Louboutin, Carpet Cellar, and Good Earth. Speaking at the occasion, **Satyajeet**

Krishnan, General Manager, The Taj Mahal Hotel, New Delhi, said, "The Taj Mahal Hotel is proud to be associated with the cause of sensitising people about breast cancer, considering the need for awareness being absolutely essential. We are pleased to offer our meaningful support to this initiative by organising Carnival for a Cause. The event aims at spreading awareness about breast cancer in a way that educates, creates an impression, and celebrates the determination of women."



COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT SPREADS A POSITIVE MESSAGE

An edible chocolate earth was created using over 120kgs of dark chocolate to deliver a powerful message on climate change as Courtyard by Marriott International Airport, Mumbai, observed the Earth Hour on March 25, 2017. The hotel served free chocolate desserts to all guests and associates. Each one of these desserts was prepared using chocolate scraped from the chocolate earth. Thus, every dessert ordered deformed the chocolate earth.

By the end of the Earth Hour, this chocolate creation no longer resembled the earth. However, guests could have stopped this deformation by taking action. Just one Instagram post using #ReviveTheSweetEarth and the exact quantity of chocolate that had been used to prepare the dessert was added back to the earth.

Chef Sanjay Kachave, Pastry Chef, Courtyard by Marriott International Airport, Mumbai, said, "We wanted to demonstrate the effects of over-indulgence by humans on climate change. Although, in a positive way, chocolate best represents indulgence. Thus, the message here is that human over-indulgence is a major contributor towards global climate change and we can stop climate change by taking action and raising awareness. It was our initiative to give guests a visual portal of climate change."



'Serving our world' is one of the brand's core values. These values have played a major role in their Earth Hour initiative. Industry professionals have also appreciated this initiative. That Amul readily sponsored the chocolate is a stellar example. Earth Hour is a movement where organisations and individuals across countries switch off their lights to raise awareness about climate change.



AAHAR 2017

A-fair to remember

The 32nd edition of AAHAR that was held in New Delhi between March 7 and 11, 2017, was concluded successfully. The fair showcased an array of products, food technologies, and services to both national and international buyers.

Organised by India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO), the premier trade promotion body of the Government of India, AAHAR is one of Asia's best known brands in food and hospitality shows. The event has grown by leaps and bounds in recent years and is today a well-known destination for global vendors and sourcing professionals.

Speaking at the occasion, **Rajneesh**, Executive Director, ITPO, said, "I extend my compliments to the Minister, Harsimrat Kaur Badal, for the landmark decision of allowing 100 per cent FDI and multi-brand retail of food items produced and processed in India in the previous year. I also take this opportunity to welcome the CMD of ITPO and compliment him for his vision to steer the redevelopment plan, to transform Pragati Maidan into a world-class integrated exhibition cum convention centre with state-of-the-art facilities. I extend my warm

welcome to all participants of this edition of AAHAR. Debuting in the year 1985, AAHAR has grown into a mega international event with more than 1,500 exhibitors covering 17 halls belonging to 18 countries. I am confident that events like this will create avenues for showcasing connections among the business community."

Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Union Cabinet Minister, Food Processing, Government of India, looked extremely pleased with the participation. She said, "We are the world's second largest producer of fruits, vegetables, and cereals and have an agricultural base that surpasses most countries of the world. While the credit goes to hardworking farmers, it is saddening to see that a country like Poland exports 30 percent of its agricultural produce to 70 countries with 38 million people, while in contrast, a country like ours with a population of 1.3 billion, has a processing level of only 10 per cent."

Indian agriculture is repeatedly faced with challenges and obstacles. Our farmers and other industry stakeholders are continuously striving to overcome them, but it is a hard task at hand. Challenges, such as those of transport and infrastructure, limit our processing power to only 10 per cent of the total agricultural produce. The present government lays special focus to give impetus to this sector. "India has the potential of becoming the global food factory of the world, which is why I am so happy to see the growing interest in AAHAR. The ministry has decided that from November 3-5, 2017, it will organise World Food India, the first-of-its-kind food fair on the lines of Anuga and SIAL, which are renowned international food fairs.

We need a platform where all countries interested in connecting with us are facilitated. We aim to provide a platform for states and countries to connect to each other and take their business forward. There will be a participation from all states, each of them depicting their own potential. I will personally be visiting different countries to encourage them to participate here and hope that this platform helps India take the next big leap," she added.

“

India has the potential of becoming the global food factory of the world

”



appointments



JOSH LESNICK
President and CEO
Associated Luxury Hotels

★ Associated Luxury Hotels has appointed Josh Lesnick as its President and CEO to oversee all business operations and subsidiaries of Associated Luxury Hotels. Lesnick will assume his new role in April and will be based out of the company's New York City office and at its headquarters in Orlando, Florida. In his previous role, Lesnick was with the Wyndham Hotel Group, where he served as Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer, responsible for all aspects of revenue generation for the group's 18 brands.



MARK SERGOT
Chief Sales Officer
Associated Luxury Hotels

★ ALH has expanded its executive leadership team with the appointment of Mark Sergot as Chief Sales Officer. In this new role, Sergot will be responsible for leading the ALHI GSO sales team and business development for members, along with strategies, direction, membership, and training programmes for ALHI. His primary focus will be on ALHI sales operations, team development and deployment, and account services in order to address the demand for its worldwide hotel and resort membership.



RAJIT SUKUMARAN
Chief Development Officer (AMEA)
IHG

★ IHG has appointed Rajit Sukumaran as the Chief Development Officer in the Asia, Middle East, and Africa region. He brings more than 12 years' experience in development, acquisitions, and feasibility from his previous role as Senior Vice President, Acquisitions and Development - Asia Pacific, Starwood Hotels and Resorts. Prior to joining Starwood, he worked in the corporate finance division of PwC Singapore, where he was involved with several cross-border corporate transactions including mergers, acquisitions, and initial public offerings.



JATIN KHANNA
Multi-Property VP and GM
Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield

★ Jatin Khanna has been appointed as Multi-Property Vice President at Bengaluru and General Manager at Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield. In his capacity, he will be in charge of all Marriott properties in Bengaluru, which consist of eight operating hotels and several hotels that are under development. Prior to his present role, Khanna occupied the position of General Manager at JW Marriott Hotel Pune. He orchestrated the growth of the property, which received numerous awards under his ambit. A seasoned hotelier with an experience that spans over 22 years, Khanna started his career in the year 1995 and has since worked for brands like Imperial, IHG, and Taj.



VIKRAM GOEL
Managing Director
RATIONAL International India

★ RATIONAL International India has assigned Vikram Goel the role of Managing Director. In this role, he will be responsible for formulating and successfully implementing company policy. Goel has been a member of RATIONAL since its first hour. The group is the world market and technology leader in the field of hot food preparation for professional kitchens. Founded in 1973, the company employs more than 850 people in Germany and a total of over 1,500 worldwide. RATIONAL has been listed in the Prime Standard of the Frankfurt Stock Exchange since its IPO in 2000, and is currently included in the SDAX.



SACHIN DIDOLKAR

Director of Business Development
Conrad Pune

★ Conrad Pune has appointed Sachin Didolkar as the Director of Business Development. He will be responsible for overall sales and marketing including strategic management of key revenue streams of the hotel. Prior to taking up this new appointment, he was part of the Sheraton Grand in Pune, and Le Méridien, Mahabaleshwar, as Complex Director of Sales and Marketing. Didolkar comes with 12 years of experience in the hospitality industry, having worked with some of the most renowned hotels across the world. Conrad Pune is one of the city's most iconic structures in its dynamic central business district.



BHARAT RATANPAL

Director of Sales and Marketing
JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu

★ Bharat Ratanpal returns to the Marriott family as Director of Sales and Marketing, JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu, Marriott's five-star property located overlooking the Arabian Sea. His main responsibilities would entail organising and directing all sales and marketing efforts towards achieving objectives and operational goals for the property. With over 13 years of experience in the hospitality industry, his primary expertise lie in sales and marketing along with customer servicing, strategic planning, and people management. His last assignment was with Park Hyatt Goa Resort and Spa as the Director of Sales and Marketing.



SHERYL DE SA

Director of Sales
ibis Styles Goa Calangute

★ Sheryl de Sa joins ibis Styles Goa Calangute, a unit of the AccorHotels hospitality group, as Director of Sales. In this role, she will be responsible for strategising and implementing sales and marketing related activities to drive the property's success. A seasoned hotelier, Sheryl brings with her over a decade of domain expertise in the hospitality industry and a deep understanding of the Goa market. She started her career with the Goa Marriott Resort and Spa and through the years went on to hold key positions with various leading hospitality brands, gaining proven skills in client engagement, revenue, and team management.



AMIT RANA

General Manager
Holiday Inn Amritsar Ranjit Avenue

★ Holiday Inn Amritsar Ranjit Avenue has appointed Amit Rana as General Manager. He brings with him over 15 years of experience with IHG. His last assignment was with the Holiday Inn Chandigarh conversion project as General Manager. Rana has completed his higher education from Blue Mountains Hotel Management School, Australia, and has worked in various locations including USA, Australia, and the Middle East. He brings with him valuable experience in revenue management, opening of new hotels, and conversion hotel projects.



PUSHP DWEEP BHARGAV

Food and Beverage Manager
Radisson Blu Kaushambi Delhi NCR

★ Pushp Dweep Bhargav has been appointed as Food and Beverage Manager at Radisson Blu Kaushambi Delhi NCR. Bhargav has 15 years' experience in the hospitality industry and has worked with brands like Jaypee Hotels, IHG, and Hyatt Hotels. In the new role, he will head the food and beverage division for the signature restaurants, bar, and banquets. He will be responsible for the planning and execution of the annual promotions calendar and managing and executing events held at the hotel that is at a convenient distance from several places of interest.



Products with **ÉLAN**

Elanpro has reiterated its commitment to providing technologically advanced products to the food service industry with the addition of five new products to its range, which were launched at AAHAR 2017.

“
With our new products, we aim at delivering the best possible service to the hospitality industry”

In 2016, Elanpro entered into a strategic alliance with leading Italian brand SPM for the distribution of their products in India. Enhancing its innovative beverage dispenser portfolio, the company has introduced two new products – SP, with patent I Tank technology, and stainless steel-bodied U GO.

The elegantly-designed SP is capable of producing chilled specialties like creamy desserts, sherbets, mousses, etc. Available in one, two and/or three bowl configurations, the machine can simultaneously prepare more than one specialty. This user-friendly product is easy-to-clean and is powered by a safety stop-button. The high overrun results in high ROI. U GO, a compact countertop machine, dispenses soft-serve ice cream and frozen yoghurt. The unique machine can dispense up to 170 cones per hour. Its capacitive LED-lightened control board helps the product remain fresh when not in use.

Addressing issues of inadequate space and plumbing constraints at small eateries and restaurants, Elanpro’s new additions, EIM 61BW and EIM 101TT provide the perfect solution. EIM 61BW, a portable ice machine, is uniquely designed to work without an online water connection. EIM 101TT is a 100kg machine that has a built top for use as a table top. The new generation Elanpro chest type blast freezer features an in-built fan which integrates seamlessly for faster cooling and can be used in various applications for the hotel and retail industry.

At the 32nd edition of the International Food and Hospitality Fair, AAHAR, the company also showcased its most popular products from each segment like frost-free and static reach-ins, under-counter freezers, glass top freezers, chest freezers and countertop display freezers, wine coolers, back-bar display chillers, ice machines and ice flakers, and coffee machines.

Speaking at the occasion, **Ranjan Jain**, Managing Director, Elanpro, said, “We have slowly transitioned into a company with customer satisfaction as the utmost priority. The new offerings by Elanpro are a step towards providing a diversified product range to our customers. All new models are equipped with advanced technology. With all top-notch features and abilities, our new line-up will help consumers save time and energy, and also solve specific problems such as water connections and space constraints. With our new products, we aim at delivering the best possible service to the hospitality industry.”



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