

HOTELS & RESTAURANTS INDIA fhrai magazine

FEBRUARY 2017

Vol 17 Issue 02 Pages 72 - 150

A MONTHLY ON HOSPITALITY TRADE
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A 'TABLE' AU
OF ART

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HOPES
DASHED AGAIN



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K. Syama Raju
President, FHRAI

Dear fellow members,

Total investment for infrastructure in Union Budget 2017 stands at a record ` 3,96,135 cr. Under the said budget, 3,500 kms of railway lines will be developed. As an incentive to boost railway passenger traffic, service charge on rail tickets booked through IRCTC will be withdrawn. This will further increase the occupancy of hotels located in smaller cities that lack air connectivity. We hope that the implementation will be timely, enabling the projects to materialise as planned.

Another welcome decision is the announcement of the Incredible India-2 campaign, which envisages the setting up of five special tourism zones to attract more tourists. These special tourism zones would be created as Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) in collaboration with the state governments which would act as a catalyst in spurring growth.

The Budget does not directly offer much for the hospitality industry; however, the huge outlay on the development of infrastructure will benefit us in the long run.

We also await a positive outcome from the GST. FHRAI presented the 19th annual edition of the Indian Hotel Industry Survey, in collaboration with HVS South Asia.

This in-depth survey includes information about the performance and positioning of hotels across various cities and provides several benchmarks for comparing hotel performance in India.

Net income, as a percentage of total revenue, crossed the 30 per cent mark in 2015-16. Primarily driven by the increase in average rates and, therefore, increase in room revenue for hotels across all star categories barring one, the increase in net income arrests the downward trend witnessed over the past three years.

Occupancy continued to witness a rise, at 62.1 per cent in the previous fiscal year. The survey highlighted that domestic travellers continued to be the majority generators of room demand in India.

Domestic business travel also witnessed a year-on-year growth, forming 34.4 per cent of the total demand witnessed by Indian hotels, but the contribution of domestic tourists or leisure travellers declined from 21.7 per cent in 2014-15 to 19.8 per cent in 2015-16. Foreign demand, on the other hand, remained stable at 20.6 per cent among the business, leisure, and tour group segments.

In spite of the temporary glitch faced by the tourism industry due to demonetisation, the situation for the hospitality industry looks positive.

With warm regards,
K. Syama Raju
President, FHRAI

“
Domestic business travel also witnessed a year-on-year growth, forming 34.4 per cent of the total demand witnessed by Indian hotels
”

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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, Vidyaranyaपुरा Post,
Bangalore-560097 (Karnataka)

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Picture on Cover

Courtesy: Atlantis, The Palm, Dubai



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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

Tushar Upadhyay
Raashi Ajmani Girdhar

MARKETING & SALES - DELHI

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

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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

“
We hope that the infrastructure development promises in the Union Budget take traction soon. Better connectivity and good infrastructure is sure to ensure a growth in travel and hospitality
”

Dear fellow members,

The 2017-2018 Union Budget, presented by Arun Jaitley, the Hon'ble Union Finance Minister, did not touch the tourism industry, except with regard to a few incentives.

For tourism, it was announced that the government will establish five special tourism zones in the next financial year. "Tourism is a big employment generator and has a multiplier impact on the economy. Five special tourism zones anchored on SPVs (Special Purpose Vehicles) will be set up in partnership with the states," Jaitley said. There are to be dedicated tourism or pilgrimage trains, 500 stations to be made differently-abled friendly, 'Coach Mitra' facility to be introduced, bio-toilets for all coaches to be completed by 2019, competitive ticket-booking facility to be provided, and no service charge to be levied on tickets booked on IRCTC. The new metro rail policy is also to be announced soon.

In a boost to infrastructure development, Jaitley announced allocation of ₹ 64,000 crores for national highways; he also announced ₹ 2 trillion for the transport sector.

It was also declared that head post offices will now be used as front offices for passport services. We hope that the infrastructure development promises in the Union Budget take traction soon. Better connectivity and good infrastructure is sure to ensure a growth in travel and hospitality.

On December 14, 2016, the Supreme Court of India ordered a ban on all liquor shops located within a distance of 500 metres from national

and state highways. It also made it clear that licenses of existing shops will not be renewed after March 31, 2017. We have obtained legal opinion from Justice Ajit Prakash Shah, Former Chief Justice, High Court of Delhi and Former Chairman, Law Commission of India and Justice (Retd.) BN Srikrishna, Former Judge, Supreme Court of India. The order does not affect bars, restaurants, and hotels, but only liquor vendors.

Foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) continue to show an increase. There was a 13.6 per cent growth in FTAs in December, 2016, over that seen in December, 2015. USA accounts for the highest share of tourist arrivals, followed by UK.

₹ 16,805 crores of foreign exchange was earned through tourism in December, 2016. FTAs, during the period of January-December, 2016, accounted for ₹ 88.90 lakh (US\$0.31 Million) with a growth of 10.7 per cent as compared to that of ₹ 80.27 lakh (US\$ 0.12 Million) with a growth of 4.5 per cent in January-December, 2015, over January - December, 2014.

It was indeed a disappointment that no concrete action was taken by the Ministry of Finance, to include hotels in the infrastructure list and extend the benefits of Section 80 IA.

Let us continue to hope for better business in the second quarter of 2017.

With kind regards,
Vivek Nair
Honorary Secretary, FHRAI



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EC Meeting in Delhi

An emergent EC meeting was held on January 13, 2017, at the Pride Plaza Hotel Aerocity, New Delhi. Here are a few glimpses from the same. The meeting was held to discuss certain issues: MRP of water bottles served in hotels and closing of liquor vends 500 mtrs from national and state highways.





INDIAN HOTEL INDUSTRY SURVEY – A SYNOPSIS

The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India presented the 19th annual edition of the Indian Hotel Industry Survey, in collaboration with HVS South Asia.

The Indian Hotel Industry Survey includes in-depth information about the performance and positioning of hotels across various cities and provides several benchmarks for comparing the performance of hotels of India. We would like to thank the participating hotels for all the detailed information they have provided, thereby helping to improve the quality of this research.

The survey analyses the performance of the Indian hospitality industry across parameters, such as facilities, manpower, operational performance, and marketing trends. The information is based on data received from FHRAI hotel members and the authenticity of this data helps us in providing a clear picture of the operating statistics of India's hospitality sector.

Amitabh Devendra, Secretary General, FHRAI, says, "Data

collected from our member hotels, our extensive historic database, and the credibility of our research have helped make this report a preferred tool for hotel professionals, consultants, investors, bankers, researchers, government officials



Amitabh Devendra
Secretary General
FHRAI

in the tourism department, media persons, and all those interested in studying the Indian hotel industry."

The current edition includes an analysis of seven major cities for which we have received detailed information and thirteen other cities for which information was already available with us, though

not in sufficient numbers for all the star categories. We earnestly request all our members to be more forthcoming with sharing the required information as this helps to take up various issues confronting the industry, both at the centre and state levels.

It is only when armed with accurate data that we can convince the policy-makers to give us the importance and priority that our industry deserves, to fulfil its potential in India's economic growth. In the current survey, while we have basic data for 1,517 members, the financial data is not available for all of them.

Though the major reason for each of these members to not share required information may be the confidentiality of their data, members should be rest assured that HVS provides complete security of the data.

We encourage feedback on the presentation and content of this report to enable us to improve it each year. We are thankful to HVS South Asia for their continued support for this project.

KEY SEMINARS AT AAHAR DELHI

Keynote Series, a series of seminars, will be held at AAHAR, India's largest HORECA expo. The seminars will be held each morning at Pragati Maidan, between March 8-11, at Hall 8.

March 08: Hospitality Policy (Legal challenges, opportunities & solutions for today's hotelier). **March 09:** Culinary Custodian (India's food legacy on today's dining business).

March 10: Housekeeper's

Masterclass (Impact of modern design & guest experience). **March 11:** Buy in India (Maximise new legal opportunities for procurement, production, and sales).

Each morning, an industry legend will present a keynote address, his or her frank perspective on the sector, and a thought-provoking insight. On the panel discussion that would follow, four members will debate and engage with the audience

with the aim of arriving at practical solutions, each bringing a wealth of supporting data and experience. Co-hosted by HOTREMAI, the Keynote Series has wide industry support.

The main supporting associations include the FHRAI, ICF, and the PHA, providing support to each of their respective seminars. Seats are limited to 200 delegates at each seminar. Registration is free and all are invited.

DECODING THE UNION BUDGET 2017-2018

Even though there are no direct provisions in the Union Budget 2017-18 for the hospitality industry, the sector is a significant beneficiary of the government's measures aimed at bolstering connectivity through its enhanced focus on aviation and railways, opined **Sudesh Poddar**, President, HRAEI in a post-budget analysis.



Sudesh Poddar
President
HRAEI

Senior HRAEI members, while discussing the key points of the current Union Budget, rued the fact that the finance minister had barely mentioned the hospitality sector, which employs a large number of people in the unorganised market segment. There were some big expectations from the budget this year, especially after demonetisation had significantly affected the food and beverage business.

There still seems to be a slim ray of hope, though. **T.S. Walia**, MC Member, HRAEI, says, "The increased investments in infrastructure and five special tourism zones will spur growth for the hospitality and tourism industry." Regional connectivity is also poised to improve as select airports in Tier-2 cities will be developed or ramped up for

operations through the Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode.



T.S. Walia
MC Member
HRAEI

There are also plans to establish five special tourism zones in partnership with the states in the next financial year and introduce Incredible India's second global campaign to strengthen India's position as an attractive tourist destination. **Vinaay Malhotra**, Senior Vice President, HRAEI, said, "This spurs inbound and domestic

“
The finance minister has barely mentioned the hospitality sector
”

tourism, driving significant growth opportunities for the hospitality industry. The budget also focused on developing road infrastructure, giving impetus to the manufacturing sector and affordable housing."

Poddar added, "We see this push on infrastructure development as a catalyst for emergence of a greater number of new industrial cities around India's industrial



Vinaay Malhotra
Senior Vice President
HRAEI

transport corridors, thus creating new development opportunities for hoteliers."

Pranav Singh, Honorary Secretary, HRAEI, felt that in addition to infrastructure development, the budget also gave importance to technology development. "Focus on improving internet and broadband connection in rural areas will go



Pranav Singh
Honorary Secretary
HRAEI

a long way to digitise a cashless economy and connect them to the main stream. When the country moves towards a cashless economy and is inclusive, it will promote tourism in the long run," he said.

HRANI & FSSAI JOINTLY ORGANISE MASTER TRAINER SESSIONS



Session concluded at Lucknow

Food safety is a key factor in the hospitality experience. Our nation considers food to be divine and the main challenge is in creating awareness of the scientific and safe-handling of food.

Sanjay Sood, President, HRANI, says, "Access to safe and hygienic food is a pre-requisite for a healthy and happy citizenry. Working towards the endeavour of providing safe food to all, FSSAI has initiated a Food Safety Training and Certification (FOSTAC) programme under the capacity building scheme." The programme also examines the need for having at least one trained and certified food safety supervisor in each food service establishment, including the catering industry.

The food safety supervisor will be nominated by the owner of a food business organisation and may be the business owner, manager or an employee in charge of food safety in their organisation. The supervisor will also be responsible for ensuring hygiene and food safety implementation in the establishment. FSSAI is looking forward to empanelling a pool of master trainers, who would be used to train the food safety supervisors across the country.

HRANI



Participants busy in activity during the session

HRANI, being the lead training partner of the organised sector in the northern region, aims to extend all its support and assistance towards this initiative. "The training programme will prove to be a learning experience for all experts of food safety & security. On behalf of HRANI, I

“
The training programme
will prove to be a learning
experience for all experts
”

would like to congratulate FSSAI for initiating the same," says Sood.

FIRST SESSION HELD ON JANUARY 31, 2017

The first session of the programme, organised jointly by HRANI and UPHRA with the support of FSSAI, was held in Lucknow, at Hotel Deep Palace. The event was graced by the presence of Vishnu Kant Verma, Assistant Commissioner (Food), Kanpur Mandal, Kanpur. It was also attended by AP Verma, Chief Food Safety Officer, Lucknow and Syed Shahnawaz Haider Abidi, Designated Officer (Kanpur), Food Safety and

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(L-R) Garish Oberoi, Vice President FHRAI, General Secretary UPHRA & Treasurer HRANI; Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, President UPHRA, Hony. Secretary HRANI & Hony. Jt. Secretary FHRAI; Ravi S. Khanna, Treasurer UPHRA and Dr. V. Pasupathy, Scientist

Drug Administration, Government of Uttar Pradesh. Dignitaries from the hospitality industry included Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, President, UPHRA, Hony. Secretary, HRANI and Hony. Jt Secretary, FHRAI;. Garish Oberoi, Vice President, FHRAI, General Secretary, UPHRA and Treasurer, HRANI; and Ravi S Khanna, Treasurer, UPHRA. The event also witnessed the presence of Suneeti Toteja, Director, FSSAI and Pritha Tripathi, Scientist (Training).

The session was conducted by the eminent trainer, Dr Venkat Pasupathy, a scientist who has spent the last 18 years specialising in food safety implementation in hospitality. He is also the National Advisor (Food

Safety) for FHRAI. Other trainers included Imtiaz Jawed and Neeraj Chandhok.

SECOND SESSION HELD ON FEBRUARY 3, 2017

The second edition of the programme was held in the financial and technological hub of Gurugram. The event was graced by V Umashankar, Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Gurugram as the Chief Guest. Other dignitaries included Suneeti Toteja, Director, FSSAI; Luv Malhotra, Former President, HRANI; Vishvapreet Singh Cheema,

Member, Managing Committee; Renu Thapliyal, Secretary General, HRANI; Pritha Tripathi, Scientist (Training). The event was also attended by KK Sharma, Food Safety Officer, Gurugram. The session was conducted by Dr Venkat Pasupathy, Dr Aviekal Kakkar, and Neeraj Chandok. The closing ceremony, held right after the assessment of the candidates, was graced by Vinay Pratap (IAS), Additional Deputy Commissioner, Gurugram. Other dignitaries included Vivek Kalia, Joint Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Gurugram; and MS Mittal, Managing Director, Ramada Gurgaon Central.



(L-R) Luv Malhotra, Immediate Former President & Managing Committee Member, HRANI with Dr. V. Pasupathy, Scientist, presenting the Food Safety Handbook to V. Umashankar, Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Gurgaon, Govt. of Haryana



(L-R) K. K. Sharma, Food Safety Office, Gurugram; Renu Thapliyal, Secretary General, HRANI; Dr. V. Pasupathy, Scientist; V. Umashankar, Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Gurugram, Govt. of Haryana; Luv Malhotra, Immediate Former President & Managing Committee Member, HRANI; Suneeti Toteja, Director, FSSAI; and Vishvapreet Singh Cheema, Managing Committee Member, HRANI

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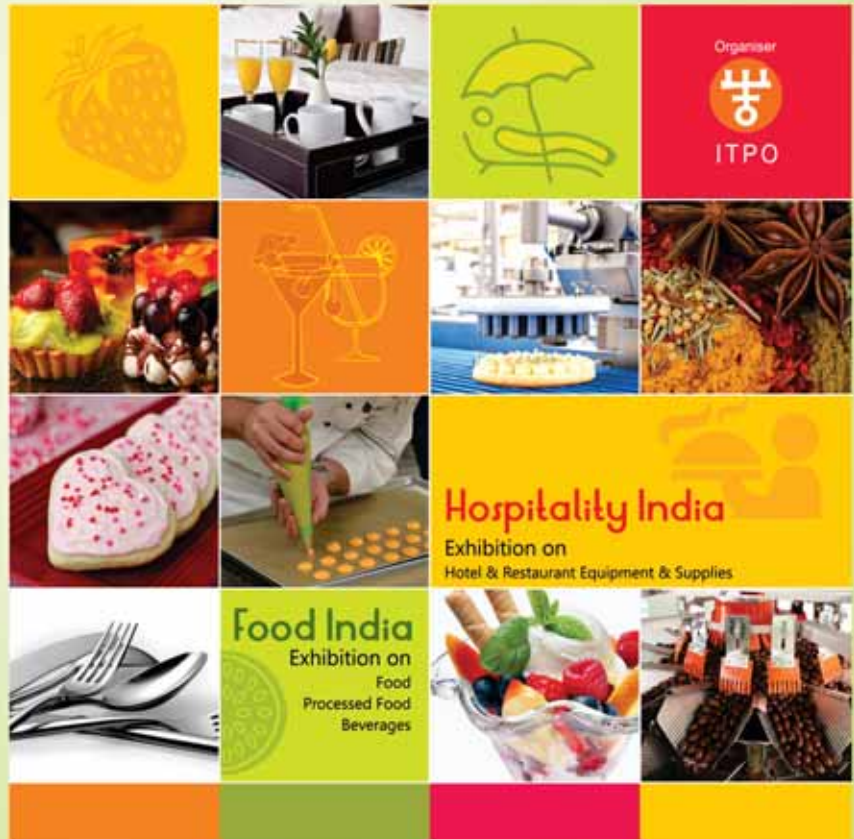
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ACQUISITION

LOUVRE JOINS HANDS WITH SAROVAR

French hospitality major, Louvre Hotels Group, has announced its acquisition of a majority stake in the Indian hospitality chain of Sarovar Hotels & Resorts. A subsidiary of Shanghai-based Jin Jiang International, Louvre Hotels Group considers the deal to be more of a joint venture than an acquisition, with the existing management of Sarovar Hotels remaining intact. While Sarovar will continue to expand its presence in India and Africa, the deal is expected to lead to synergies in worldwide distribution, loyalty programmes, sales and marketing initiatives, and procurement services between the newly merged entities.

Ajay K Bakaya, Executive Director, Sarovar Hotels, seems happy with the liberty that Louvre has given to their brand and that probably is the reason for the brand to consider Louvre. "The level of independence and autonomy that we continue to have is the reason that we chose Louvre. They saw a group with a strong reputation and made us

believe that they would make it easier for us to take things to the next level."

Explaining how things in the industry become passé too soon and how innovation is the key, Bakaya says, "Right from reaching out to patrons, to offering them the kind of loyalty programmes as we do now, this merger will surely help us move forward. Also, we will now have better use of technology and can negotiate with the OTAs across the table, better."



FESTIVAL

KITE FESTIVAL GATHERS CROWDS



The Delhi International Kite Festival was held in the capital from January 14-16, 2017, and was inaugurated by Kapil Mishra, Minister for Tourism, Government of Delhi.

This one-of-a-kind festival, organised annually by Delhi Tourism, is meant to resuscitate the age-old tradition of patangbazi (kite flying) and revive the spirit of Delhi and its residents. Over the three days of the spectacle, crowds poured in from all parts of the capital city. The skies were adorned with some of the most unique kites ever seen.

An exhibition on the history of kites enlightened visitors about this age-old art, showcasing kites of all sizes and shapes, made from tissue paper, bamboo, cloth, etc. The highlights of this year's festival were night kite flying with LED-equipped kites and trails of more than 100 kites. The event also saw participation from countries of Germany, Korea, USA, China, Thailand, Ukraine, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Netherlands, and Malaysia. Indian kite flyers hailed from states of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Jaipur, Chennai, Kerala, and Punjab, besides Delhi.

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FESTIVAL

RED FORT WITNESSES BHARAT PARV-2017



To mark the 68th Republic Day and evoke a feeling of patriotism amongst citizens, 'Bharat Parv', a six-day long festival showcasing the rich culture and heritage of India was organised at the Red Fort grounds from January 26, 2017 to January 31, 2017. Organised by Ministry of Tourism, the festival was managed by Ashok Events, an event management and creative division of India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), a public sector undertaking under the aegis of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. The main purpose of organising the event was to generate a patriotic mood, promote the country's cultural diversity, and to popularise the idea of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'.



V P Bhatia, General Manager, Ashok Events Division, ITDC, said, "We feel proud and honoured to be designated as Ministry of Tourism's executing agency to organise this six-day long extravaganza. Each time, we strive to make the event as memorable as possible, ensuring visitors have a wonderful experience."

Another major highlight of the celebration was the food festival that displayed 50 food stalls set up by various state governments, the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI), and several institutes of hotel management.



LAUNCH

HYATT'S ANDAZ DEBUTS IN INDIA

Hyatt Hotels Corporation has announced the opening of Andaz Delhi, marking the Andaz brand's first hotel in India and 16th worldwide. Conveniently located in Aerocity, the hotel is within easy reach of downtown Delhi and the business hub of Gurugram. Andaz Delhi opens with a partial inventory of 401 residential-style guestrooms, including 45 suites. The hotel will also offer 129 serviced apartments, expected to open later.

Designed to capture the spirit of Delhi, renowned architecture firm Bauer Latoza Studio, Chicago, and interior designer Virgile and Partners, London, have integrated traditional Indian elements, colours, and flavours into a modern design inspired by the unique craftsmanship of India. **Kurt Straub**, Vice President of Operations-India, Hyatt, said, "The opening of Andaz Delhi marks a significant milestone for the brand. Each location offers guests a fresh and stimulating hotel experience that fuels creativity and inspires them to engage in their own personal sense of luxury and style."



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STATE

KARNATAKA TOURISM'S 'YEAR OF THE WILD'

Karnataka Tourism is declaring 2017 as the 'Year of the Wild' for tourists who not only want to explore wildlife, but also experience the wild side of life. The campaign was launched by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, in the presence of Priyank Kharge, Minister of State for IT, BT, S&T, and Tourism, along with several others.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister **Siddaramaiah**, said, "I am happy to know that Karnataka Tourism, in its endeavour to promote the state, has declared 2017 as the 'Year of the Wild'. We are committed to preserving our precious natural heritage and this is one of the many steps taken to fulfill this objective."

Kharge said, "These days, most people are passive spectators to the gradual ruination of the earth and the extinction of species and habitats that we inherited from our forefathers. However, unless we do something, we won't be able to leave behind a livable world for our children and grandchildren. There is an environmental crisis at hand and we are living through it. We, at Karnataka Tourism, are doing our duty in conserving our environment in every possible way. Today, JLR is a laboratory for green practices. Our endeavour is to ensure that all of these entities are green-compliant, with a passionate commitment to nature and the environment."



OPENING

KST SAROVAR PORTICO TO OPEN WITH 48 KEYS



Sarovar Hotels has signed an agreement for a new hotel, KST Sarovar Portico, a 48-key hotel located in the lush and captivating area of Chhatarpur. Beautifully designed rooms, excellent F&B options, and unmatched banquet facilities make the hotel an ideal choice for weddings, conferences, and events.

Ajay K Bakaya, Executive Director, Sarovar Hotels, says, "We are excited to be strengthening our presence in the NCR region. Chhatarpur is the most prominent wedding destination of the city and this hotel is an ideal option for all social gatherings or staycations of city dwellers. We look forward to offering our signature hospitality to give guests a memorable experience."

The hotel provides personalised service, from a 24-hour concierge and personal assistant, to a round-the-clock in-room dining service that offers Indian and Mediterranean cuisines. The hotel is located at a convenient distance from major shopping & entertainment centres, religious spots, and corporate hubs of South Delhi and Gurugram. Nido, the hotel's bar and lounge facility, takes guests on an incredible gastronomic journey.



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SKILL

ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT CENTRE IN MP



The Entrepreneurship Development Centre of Madhya Pradesh, under the State Skill Development Mission (MPSSDM), Department of Technical Education and Skill Development, was inaugurated in the presence of Deepak Joshi, Minister of State for Technical Education and Skill Development. The centre has been established using a hub and spoke model, with EDC being at the centre and a network of Training and Entrepreneurship Officers (TEOs) providing a last-mile support at the district levels.

Sanjeev Singh (IAS), Director, Directorate of Skill Development, Government of Madhya Pradesh, informed that the centre had been set up under technical assistance provided by the Government of United Kingdom, under their Skills for Jobs programme. Under the new National Policy on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship has emerged as a priority. The state of MP, through this centre, aims at establishing infrastructure and a capacity to support entrepreneurship development among youth.



COLLABORATION

DELHI TOURISM COLLABORATES WITH BOOKMYSHOW

In order to promote tourism in the capital city, Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation (DTTDC) have entered into an agreement with BookMyShow for an online ticketing platform on pilot project basis. In this maiden collaboration, DTTDC, through BookMyShow, will offer online ticketing for major tourist attractions, the Delhi hop on-hop off shuttles (HO-HO), and all other entry tickets for events and paid shows.

Kapil Mishra, Minister of Tourism, Government of Delhi, said, "With increased smartphone and internet penetration, the convenience associated with online ticketing can definitely be leveraged across different sectors today. Tourism is centred on providing great experiences and we are confident that with this pilot project, DTTDC will be able to add tremendous value."





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SELF-REGULATION: THE NEED OF THE HOUR

Numerous regulations and appeals have repeatedly affected the hospitality industry. We try to find out from hoteliers if self-regulation by the industry, with the government stepping in only when required, will help the industry to grow.

Kanchan Nath



Greesh Bindra

Greesh Bindra Regional General Manager (North & West India), IHG

The recent developments induced by the legislative to regulate the operations of the hospitality industry are quite astonishing, especially when the industry is due to have an optimum level of support from the government to facilitate its operations. Per the recent ruling of the GST council, the government has proposed the imposition of taxes under various slabs, depending on the levels of services the consumers are seeking and it is not unknown that the taxes for hotels would be on the higher-end, owing to their automated classification under luxury services.

With guests at luxury hotels becoming more

“

The government should focus on regulating trade in a constructive way so as to promote the sector

”



experience-oriented than product-oriented, hotels have started laying an unprecedented focus on services that call for various ancillary costs. In such a scenario, hotels should have the liberty to manage charges in accordance with their cost of operations. Instead of unnecessary interference, the government should focus on regulating trade in a constructive way to promote the sector which supports FOREX and the exchequer, significantly.

Vijay Wanchoo

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

Prohibition is absolutely not acceptable as far as the hotel industry is concerned. For instance, there has to be a rationale behind the huge excise duty that is being levied on

each item undergoes the complete process of ordering, procuring, and storing till it is served to the guest, and hence, the cost needs to be marked up.



Vijay Wanchoo

the sale of alcohol. The excise department and the government should be lenient with five-star hotels that already have strong control procedures and are abiding by the law. Whether it's a simple water bottle or a platter of bananas,

“The government should be lenient with five-star hotels that already have strong control procedures”



Ajay K. Bakaya

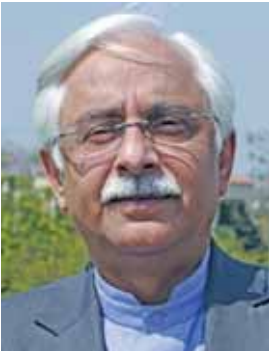
Executive Director, Sarovar Hotels

Self-regulation would definitely increase the scope of smooth functioning in many areas of hotel operations. It can be a more effective way of addressing issues that arise in the current fast-moving market and can present a more effective, flexible approach to consumer protection and quality than that provided by statutory models of regulation. It is important for the government to continue examining existing regulations and whether they can be adapted to apply to new models of product and service delivery. We think, the government can align itself to more pressing issues at the macro-level and act as a catalyst towards driving demand and creating a level playing field for taxation.



Ajay K. Bakaya

“Self-regulation would increase the scope of smooth functioning in many areas of hotel operations”



Rattan Keswani



Rattan Keswani
Deputy Managing Director, The Lemon Tree Hotel Company

Barring few licensing and environmental concerns, the remaining segments of the

hospitality sector must be self-regulated, particularly if the process of classification is correct and not subjective.

“
Most classified hotels act responsibly in most areas, enhancing business and local area value
”

Most classified hotels act responsibly in most areas, enhancing business and local area value, and an interference from the government is not required in these spheres of operation.



Narendra Prabhu

Narendra Prabhu
General Manager, Signature Club Resort

The hospitality industry of India is ranked as one of the fastest growing industries of the country. It has made substantial contributions to GDP, with almost 2.4 per cent being made in the last few years. When an industry is on an upward path to growth, the government must ensure that the policies it frames are such that support the betterment of the same.

The financial stability of a number of Indian states depends on tourism. Therefore, the government must formulate such policies and regulations that encourage more state governments to invest in marketing their state.

In 2014, the government had announced certain laws that benefitted the tourism and hospitality industry, like visa-on-arrival, tax-free destinations, etc. In the present scenario, the industry is



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The industry is governed by certain self-regulatory norms and government intrusion is required only when these regulations are not followed
”

governed by certain self-regulatory norms that help maintain control over the business environment and government intrusion is required only when these regulations are not followed.

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Vivek Kumar Thakur



Vivek Kumar Thakur General Manager, The Chancery Pavilion

The hotel industry in India is very disciplined and well-regulated in the organised star category, functioning on ethics and principles. The government must step in only when required and not make statements or policies on trifling matters that create a scope of ambiguity.

Levying service charge: This practice secures the interests of both the parties - the restaurant and the guests. A menu always highlights the percentage of service charge that will be levied by a particular restaurant. Instead of being optional, service charge must become mandatory in a developing country like ours, where people tend to take the service provided for granted.

Government norms say, "Service charge is completely discretionary and should a customer be dissatisfied with the dining experience, he or she can have it waived off. Therefore, it is deemed to be accepted voluntarily". If we need to regulate the paying of service charge as per this norm, we must first lay down guidelines discerning who is a satisfied or dissatisfied guest in terms of dining experience. Something so arbitrary and ambiguous cannot be regulated by the government, and will only lead to disputes that cannot be settled amicably. On the contrary, if restaurants continue to

charge customers for the service rendered to them, by highlighting the same in the menu, it is really up to the educated and informed customer to decide if he or she wants to avail the service or not.

Ban on liquor vends: The road accident data from 2015 shows that around 1,374 accidents and 400 deaths take place every day on Indian roads, resulting in 57 accidents and 17 lives being lost on an average, every hour. In such a scenario, the government's effort to regulate the sale of alcohol makes sense. However, there do exist a large number of people who may not have purchased alcohol from liquor shops within a distance of 500 metres of national and state highways, but continue to drink and drive on the roads. Instead of stopping the sale of alcohol on or near highways, the policy of the government should be one that focuses on conducting campaigns that educate people of the perils of driving under the influence of alcohol.

Water bottles sold above MRP: We are neither retail shops selling water bottles nor do we have a guest base that purchases its daily quota from here. People come to us for unique dining experiences and we provide them with the right kind of experience, at a premium. In my opinion, it is not in the government's purview of duties to dictate to hotels the rate at which they can sell premium services or dining experiences.

Instead of regulating inconsequential issues, the government must focus on improving the quality of life for the citizens of the country.

“

It is really up to the educated and informed customer to decide if he or she wants to avail the service or not

”



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ECONOMICS OF GREEN

With the long-drawn battle between growth and sustainable growth, we try to establish the importance of 'green' factors that economists of the world often miss out on.



Niranjan Khatri

World economics has always taken a simplistic approach to measuring outcome - red or black, determined by the bottom-line. We believe this to be an incomplete view; for a critical component of the current world is the anthropogenic-induced climate change. This is one of the biggest, if not THE biggest threat to humanity and the very continuation of the human race. However, is it being represented well enough? We think otherwise.

Keeping this in mind, we would like to

introduce the much loved colour- Green. Global economy with ecological challenges intersect at multiple levels, and the engagement of the numerous stakeholders is of paramount importance. Science has not just dictated, but made obvious the impact and challenges of climate change.

However, the political climate in the world, especially the hard-line decisions made in the United States, urge us to include 'Green' in our view of the world. The actions taken by the new American President, Donald Trump, with

respect to climate change, LGBT challenges, and other fundamental issues, and his unprecedented, hasty decision to eliminate them from the official White House website is a great example of the appalling denial mode of the modern-day powers.

Given this dismal scenario, where the richest nation has gone into a denial mode, how do others work towards inducting green? How do we sensitise book-keepers of accounts so that exponential changes take place in the industry? How do we redefine the very basics of economics- investments, return on investments, right deal, ethical pricing, etc.? And how do we move away from the glacial pace that we have witnessed in the last two decades and address the sense of urgency?

People are crucial here and top-down policy level approach is as important, if not more, as community and grassroots level engagement. The key stakeholders who can bring about transformational changes are governments, industry bodies (and relevant associations), and religious leaders.

These leaders have substantial powers to make lasting changes, as witnessed in December, 2015, when, at the COP21 summit, 177 countries signed a pact to do anything needed to keep global temperatures from rising beyond 2 degrees Celsius.

A precedent has been set and it can only be positive. While religious institutions are not in the same mould as the others, religious heads have great informal soft-power, which, if leveraged, can bring transformational change at this point of time.

It is a paradox, wherein on one hand, US administration has gone into denial mode, but on the other, China and India have ramped up their ambition in setting renewable energy targets in their own interest in addition to the commitment made in 2015.

Developing nations like China, India, Brazil, etc., need to understand that it is not feasible for them to rely on the United States to lead on this front, anymore.

What is encouraging though, is that some of the businesses in US are continuing to set the trend and showcasing leadership by becoming economically more conscious. One example which stands out is Walmart. They have taken numerous decisions within their

operations for going green, such as redesigning packaging, replacing light sources with their LED alternates, and adopting renewable energy sources aggressively. They have also forewarned their supply chain that if they do not comply with Walmart sustainability standards, they risk losing shelf space in Walmart stores. This has a long-lasting impact, for it's not just the 65,000 current suppliers of Walmart, but the other 100,000 or more vying for their business.

A number of other Fortune 500 companies have also recognised these eco-challenges, and formed the WBCSD - World Business Council for Sustainable Development, to spread the agenda of sustainable development across geographies. The very fact that business professionals have taken this up is heartening, and we believe bodes well for the future.

Wall Street already sees a US\$8.7 trillion boom in sustainable investments. One in every five dollars invested in the US today, targets sustainable investments.

Private capital is also flowing in this direction. Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, Jeff Bezos, Jack Ma and



Sriram Kuchimanchi

“

The key stakeholders who can bring about transformational changes are the governments, industry bodies (and relevant associations), and religious leaders

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We need to sensitise book-keepers of accounts so that exponential changes take place in the industry

”

other tech-titans have committed US\$1 billion to launching a new, low-carbon energy fund. Warren Buffett's company is busy investing in new solar and wind energy projects, including the world's largest solar plant. Eighty-four other major corporations have also pledged to source 100 per cent of their energy from renewables, going forward.

This trend is fast becoming a norm in not just the developed markets, as smaller, developing markets are following suit through incentives and other programmes encouraging economic growth through the adoption of sustainability. Sweden has induced

tax laws which encourage repair of material, while Costa Rica is giving incentives to hotels showcasing real and tangible sustainability, thus ensuring economic viability.

With this backdrop, we persuade Indian policy makers to develop a path for GDP growth fuelled by a green economy.

Our suggestions are as follows:

1. Effective from financial year 2018, announce a green GDP policy.
2. Initiate a green procurement policy that helps move from an L1 approach to L1 + Sustainability.
3. Maturity of all suppliers, especially of and for the SMEs, who contribute 45 percent of the GDP.
4. Mandate resource consumption footprint data for energy, water and waste management in every company's annual report.
5. All ministries to have a checklist of green strategies with timelines.

We believe that adhering to these methods and monitoring their performance will fuel the required 'Green Economy' movement in the country.

*(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.)*





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Nalayiram Subramanian

COINING A MODEL of Change

Integrated Financial Modelling is an aid towards implementing effective financial governance. We unravel the efficacy of the tool and how it works.

Owners of properties, CFOs, and financial controllers need to design and implement financial strategies that maximise the wealth of stakeholders. Strategies may involve expansion, acquiring or relinquishing of an existing property, adapting a franchise or lease model, or entering into management contracts. In each of these scenarios, the owners and acquirers strive to value property in a reasonably accurate manner.

As hoteliers, we also take decisions on various aspects of the business, such as opening of additional outlets that have long-term returns and short-term outcomes. We often realise that our strategies and plans miss out on certain factors that should have been considered and that the gaps are inexplicable. The possibility for these gaps can be minimised by designing and implementing an integrated financial model that incorporates a scientific approach.

FINANCIAL MODELLING

Financial Modelling refers to the process of preparation of financial models. These models enable process managers to integrate their planning and operational activities with organisational objectives, in the same manner as they integrate strategic financial management objectives with the vision and mission of an entity.

If one follows the traditional approach, a financial model can be prepared on the basis of historical information, with a guesstimated increase or decrease of base figures. Even when financial models are followed for new projects, a scientific approach that makes models more reliable is often ignored. Reliability of financial models increases when they are prepared in an integrated manner.

INTEGRATED FINANCIAL MODELLING

Integrated Financial Modelling may be defined as "a scientific process of design and development of financial models that builds-in statistical validation, maps internal scenarios with external environments and uncertainties, integrates individual process objectives with that of the entity's objectives, recognises respective constraints, enhances automation, and minimises the probability of bias."

INTEGRATED FINANCIAL MODELLING: METHODOLOGY

- Define the scope of financial models
- Study the external environment
- Analyse the internal processes
- Validation of objectives
- Collection of data
- Design models in a spreadsheet software
- Build up assumptions and scenarios
- Define controls
- Generate the models
- Prepare the reports

INTEGRATED FINANCIAL MODELLING: PROCESS FLOW AND BENEFITS

Strategies and business plans

Integrated financial models

Business or property valuation, acquisition, management contracts, franchise, lease, expansion, financing and asset management decisions, budgets, performance review, goal congruence, etc.

Maximisation of stakeholders' wealth

The definition comprises of the following key components:

- **Validation of internal processes:** An entity or a conglomerate is a part of a bigger hierarchy. An integrated financial modelling process verifies internal processes and capabilities in the light of external environment, such as economic growth, inflation, market size, competition, etc.
- **Mapping of process objectives:** A well-designed financial modelling process requires synchronisation of financial and operational objectives of an entity with organisational goals.
- **Inculcating an integrated approach:** Since validation or synchronisation of individual parts of an entity or conglomerate take place in terms of objectives, planning, and utilisation of resources, a culture of evaluation of each individual activity evolves across the entity or group.
- **Incorporating a control mechanism:** An integrated approach in financial mod-

elling requires identification and building up of constraints, parameters, thresholds, alerts, etc. This naturally helps in instilling a holistic approach in terms of formulation of objectives and outcomes, thereby helping in optimal utilisation of resources.

- **Building statistical concepts:** Integrated financial modelling provides scope for building-in statistical validation of assumptions and values of variables against other independent variables in

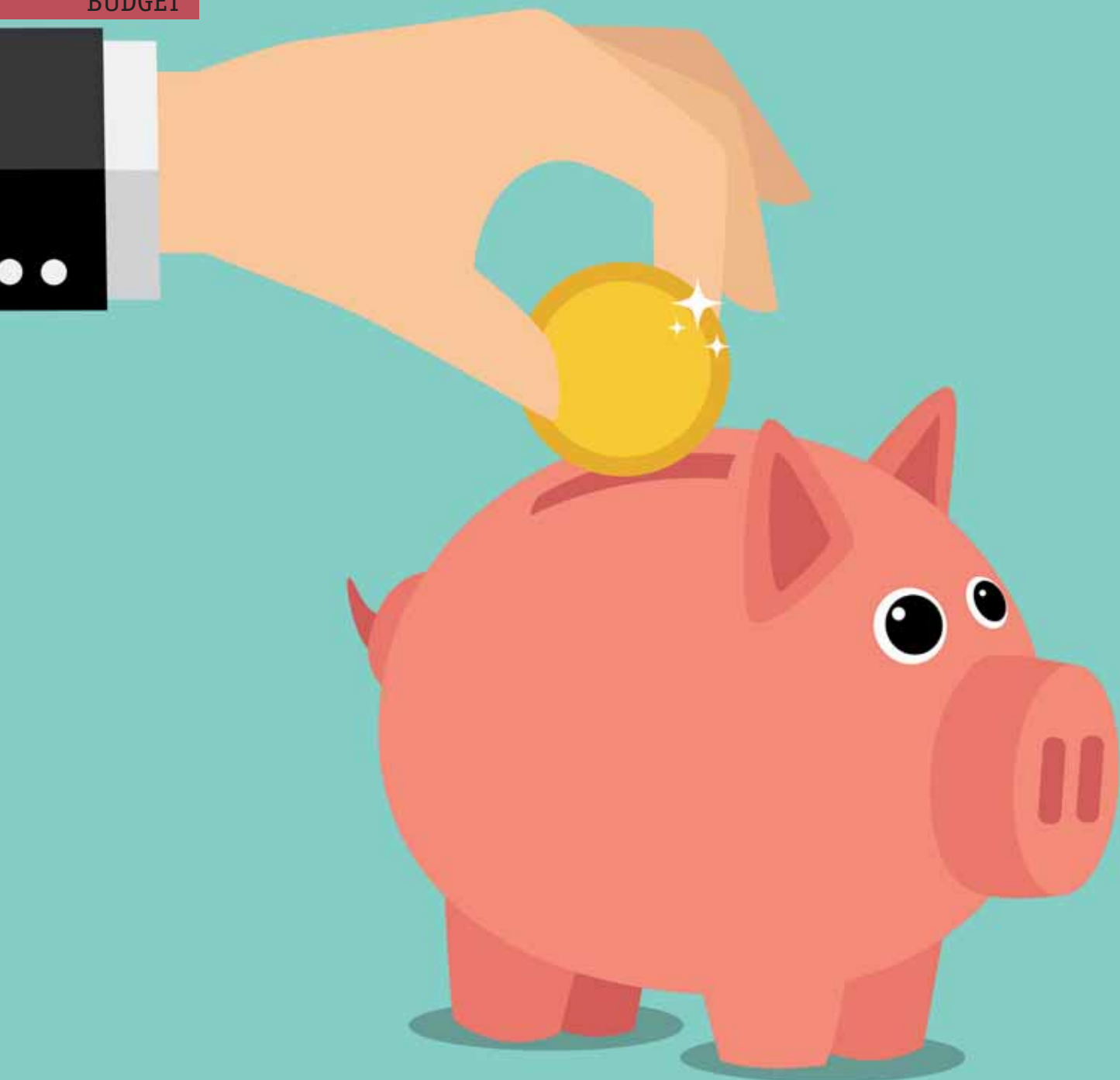
light of their behaviour in the past and expectations from the future.

- **Utilising the power of a spreadsheet:** Designing an integrated financial model requires application of a spreadsheet software that incorporates validation logics, measures probable outcomes against metrics, and creates alerts.

BENEFITS OF THE PROCESS

Integrated financial modelling provides a holistic and scientific approach that increases the reliability of a model. The more reliable a model is, the more effective and efficient the planning and decision-making process gets. For example, your performance level increases, your valuation becomes acceptable, your lender makes a quicker and favourable lending decision, and ultimately, the investor's confidence in the entity increases, thereby increasing the value of the entity.

*(The author is **Nalayiram Subramanian**, Director, SN Corporate Management Consultants. The views expressed in the article are the author's personal views.)*



HOPES dashed again

The Union Budget 2017-18 was presented by the Union Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley, on February 1, 2017. The Budget disappointed the tourism and hospitality sectors, with a majority of their needs being ignored, and leaving them dependent on the impact of other sectors of the economy. Hoteliers share their interpretation of the Union Budget 2017-18 and how, if at all, their position in the economy will change.

Kanchan Nath



T.S. Walia
Vice President
FHRAI

RELIEF IN TAX FOR SME

One positive is that the government has provided tax reliefs and benefits to small and medium scale entrepreneurs by reducing the percentage of taxes levied on them. Another appreciable decision of the government is the imposing of reasonable restrictions on the donations and endowments received by political parties. This sounds good, but could only prove to be effective if implemented properly, because as witnessed in recent history, the more stringent the laws, the more creative the evaders are with ways to elude them.

LUKEWARM RESPONSE

The finance minister has given a very equivocal statement regarding a change in the structure of the excise and customs duties and it is common belief that it will be taken care of as part of the GST provisions. All-in-all, the entire Budget can only be classified as satisfactory because it hasn't been able to meet the expectations people had from it.

“The entire Budget can only be classified as satisfactory because it hasn't been able to meet the expectations people had from it”



Garish Oberoi
Vice President
FHRAI

FIVE SPECIAL ZONES

We are certainly disappointed that the Union Budget did not accede to our long pending and well-reasoned demand of granting infrastructure status to hotels with a project cost of ` 20 crore as against the present ` 200 crore. The finance minister has announced development of five special tourism zones including the launch of the second version of the extremely well-received Incredible India campaign. However, there is a lack of clarity on what or where the government plans to execute the same.

STRENGTHENING INFRASTRUCTURE

The Union Budget 2017 strongly focuses on strengthening rail-road connectivity and building airports in Tier-2 cities in order to support the tourism eco-system in the country. This will result in boosting the inflow of foreign as well as domestic tourists. The reduction of corporate tax from 30 to 25 per cent is a benefit for young start-ups and is in line with the 'Startup India' initiative. This will remove various headwinds for the new players entering the industry, making it easier for their business to establish, run, and survive in the competitive marketplace.

GST EXPECTATIONS

It is a bit disappointing that neither a package or incentive nor anything significant for the promotion of the sector was marked out in the Budget. The Indian hospitality sector is already one of the most heavily taxed

industries globally, which reduces its competitiveness vis-à-vis other destinations. The industry hoped that the Budget will provide some ease to hospitality industry by reducing the tax burden, but there is no relief on the tax front that has been levied on the sector.

We are hopeful that the new GST tax regime will be implemented soon and at the lowest slab of 5 per cent.

“The Indian hospitality sector is already one of the most heavily taxed industries globally, which reduces its competitiveness vis-à-vis global destinations”



Rajindera Kumar
EC Member
FHRAI

TOURISM IGNORED

The Budget spoke about every sector except tourism, which I feel is very upsetting. The hotel industry, too, is very disappointed with this Union Budget. I have to say, that running a hotel is not a joy anymore. If the government can offer a single-window clearance for FDI, why can't they do the same for the hospitality industry? We can just hope to be an active part of the five Ts, with tourism being one of them.



Luv Malhotra
EC Member
FHRAI

GOOD IN THE LONG RUN

In my opinion, this is a good Budget for the country and the tourism industry in the medium to long-term phase, with a focus on connectivity (via roads and airports in Tier-2 cities through the PPP mode and tourist trains to pilgrim areas) and new tourist zones. The government will also launch the Incredible India 2.0 Campaign across the world. However, with the recurring requirement of hotels to be given an infrastructural status being ignored and failure to reduce Service Tax and GST that are to be rolled out later this year, I have my doubt if GST for the tourism industry will be at 5 per cent; in my opinion it is more likely to remain around 18 per cent.

“
Current requirement of hotels of infrastructure status has been ignored
”



Bharat Malkani
EC Member
FHRAI

NOT MUCH HAS CHANGED

The hospitality industry, which had huge expectations from Union Budget 2017, has found itself in an unchanged situation, still continuing to be the most taxed industry, globally, and not being able to compete with the immensely successful neighbouring countries.

“
The hospitality industry has found itself in an unchanged situation
”





Souvagya Mohapatra
EC Member
FHRAI

DEPENDENT ON IMPACT OF OTHER SECTORS

Agriculture, rural development, employment generation, and infrastructure will get a great impetus following higher allocations to these sectors. The Budget seeks to ensure a universal basic income for all segments of the population by broadening the reach of development programmes and bringing transparency in the administration. Higher allocations for railways, shipping, and highways will boost connectivity, bring qualitative excellence, and generate better user-experience. The lower income group will now have more purchasing power as the tax rate for their slab has been slashed. Reduction of corporate income tax by 5 per cent for small companies with a turnover of 50 crore will make more funds available with them to plough back and grow. Hospitality will benefit from the overall positive impact of the Budget on the economy, expected rise in disposable income of people, and an upgraded communication infrastructure.

“ Hospitality is likely to benefit from the overall positive impact of the Budget ”



DVS Somaraju
EC Member
FHRAI

ONLY FEW SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

This year's Budget is a step forward in achieving greater stability for the macro economy. Facelift of travel components like roads, Tier-2 airports, railways, and better connectivity will enhance employment opportunities. In spite of being one of the major contributors to the GDP of the country, the travel and tourism sectors stand largely ignored. The only notable announcements have been the creation of five special tourism zones and the revival of the Incredible India campaign, hoping to portray India as a more accessible destination for global travellers.

“ The travel and tourism sectors stand largely ignored ”



SM Shervani
EC Member
FHRAI

AN UNVIABLE INVESTMENT

The industry was waiting with bated breath that the slab for GST would remain low, in turn providing a boom to tourism. It is a good sign that the finance minister has termed tourism as an important economic activity. However, this was also first acknowledged by Prime Minister Modi in his first Independence Day speech, as tourism was part of the five Ts that were meant to revive Brand India. We had also hoped that Leave Travel Allowance (LTA) would have been made tax free for companies, resulting in employees being able to travel more, thereby providing a boom to domestic tourism. While surplus liquidity may increase the credit limit of banks post demonetisation, hospitality industry will still continue to be a highly taxed industry, making it an unviable option to invest in. If hotels had been given an infrastructure status, the situation would be different. So, once again, our never-ending hopes are pinned on the roll-out of GST at the lowest slab for tourism and hospitality.

“ Our never-ending hopes are pinned on the roll-out of GST at the lowest slab for tourism and hospitality ”



HIGHWAYS or BYE-WAYS

On December 14, 2016, the Supreme Court ordered a ban on all liquor shops located within a distance of 500 metres of national and state highways. While there remains ambiguity in the interpretation of the judgment, we find out what hoteliers have to say.

Kanchan Nath



Nirupa Shankar
Director
Brigade Hospitality

A number of hotels are located close to highways, making this ruling extremely damaging for the hospitality industry. Though the intention behind this change seems good, banning liquor shops altogether is not a plausible solution. A shop at a distance of 510 metres (10 metres beyond what the policy states) is not going to discourage drunken driving. The main issue is an increased number of people driving under the

influence of alcohol. But, there is no harm if a person in the passenger seat has a drink. If the policy does get implemented, the hospitality industry is going to face a considerable setback, as hotels are meant to come up on highways. Brands, such as Holiday Inn, are intentionally built close to highways and that is their selling point. Also, a hotel cannot get a five-star classification without a liquor license.

“A shop at a distance of 510 metres (10 metres beyond what the policy states) is not going to discourage drunken driving”



Bharat Malkani
EC Member
FHRAI

Drunk driving has nothing to do with the vending of liquor. If you are a liquor vendor and someone is flouting the law, the location of a liquor store or any such store at a distance of 500 metres, or for that matter, 5 kms away from the highway is not going to matter much. It's not just the highways; you have the same problem on city roads and other locations.

Thus, more than an issue of selling liquor on the highway, it is an issue of law and order. We do not see a co-relation between the two. Nonetheless, we agree with the government that drunken driving must not be allowed and that strict and effective laws are needed to curb this menace. However, if repeated measures and rules that cast negative aspersions on the hospitality industry are put in place, and continuously played out across national and global media, the industry will adversely be affected.



More than an issue of selling liquor on the highway, it is an issue of law and order



The liquor policy is not a policy of the government; it is an order of a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court of India. They have said that no liquor or alcohol can be served within 500 metres of the outer edge of a national or state highway. In my opinion, the order could have



In my opinion, the order could have been restricted to country-wine shops



been restricted to country-wine shops and 'thekas.' A number of countries do have restrictions on the sale of liquor near highways, but the distance varies. It is not 500 metres, but 100 to 200 metres. In conclusion, the current policy is going to adversely affect business.



Sudesh Poddar
EC Member
FHRAI

Ibelieve the regulation is directed more towards vending of liquor on highways, than anything else. It's a good move because it provides a safer environment for everybody. Hotels under our purview, whether on the highway or not, are operating with valid



Hotels under our purview, whether on the highway or not, are operating with valid liquor licenses



liquor licenses. We are keeping a watchful eye on the situation to understand what the final interpretation is going to be. But, so far, it has only seemed that the regulation is intended to apply to the vending or retail sale of liquor along highways rather than hotels themselves.



Raj Rana
CEO, South Asia
Carlson Rezidor
Hotel Group

My opinion is that this policy does not apply to us. The judgement clearly talks about vendors and does not refer to hotels and resorts. It's entirely a question of interpretation; we can go back to the excise commissioners of various states



The judgement clearly talks about vendors and does not refer to hotels and resorts.



or to the Supreme Court. Norms for granting licenses to retail outlets are very different from those that govern the granting of licenses to restaurants and bars. This distinction is a critical differentiator, making our representation more valuable.



Amitabh Devendra
Secretary General
FHRAI

At the moment, there isn't much clarity on whether or not the regulation on banning liquor vends within a distance of 500 metres of state and national highways is going to impact hotels, as hotels do not resort to retail selling.



Hotel bars are part of the overall hospitality milieu being provided to guests



Hotel bars are part of the overall hospitality milieu being provided to guests. However, if hotels are required to close their bars, the industry will be severely affected. I sincerely hope this doesn't hold true at the end.



Naveen Jain
Managing Director,
Nouvelle Knowledge
Services

2017: Sculpting the mould of hospitality

How are mergers and acquisitions going to impact Indian hospitality? Is China, a fast emerging leader, going to own most of the mid-segment space in India? Our regional presidents provide us with their answers.



Sanjay Sood
President
HRANI

MORE CONSOLIDATIONS LIKELY

India's hospitality sector has undoubtedly entered the next up-cycle as many hotel brands are moving towards mergers and acquisitions to capture a larger market share. Only a few mergers have substantially impacted the industry.

M&A deals put hotel brands in a stronger position to negotiate management agreements, gain access to a significantly higher base of loyalty members, flex a stronger distribution muscle, capitalise on a larger marketing footprint, and mitigate operational costs across geographies.

GROWING MID-MARKET SEGMENT

Mid-market hotels today offer almost the same services to their guests as luxury hotels, only lacking grandeur and space

that is synonymous with luxury hotels.

Hotels have also come up with innovative ways to control operating costs, by multi-tasking, better control of energy costs, maintaining staff to rooms ratio to control HR costs, offering customers what they are looking for, and doing away with frills. These changes have ensured better returns for promoters of their investments, without compromising on guest experience.

UNCERTAIN EMERGENCE OF CHINA

It is too early to say that China will own most of the branded mid-segment hotel space in India, especially with new international brands making their debut in the Indian marketplace. Mid-market hotels offer the full spectrum of services at an affordable price, and any hotel brand that would continue to gain popularity in a value-conscious market, such as India, will prevail.



It is too early to say that China will own most of the branded mid-segment hotel space in India



Sudesh Poddar
President
HRAEI

RISING COMPETITION

Expansion, consolidation, adaptation, and obsolescence are all part of a natural sequence of events in business life cycles. As of late, however, we've seen a record number of consolidations in the travel and hospitality sphere in India and abroad.

The luxury hospitality market in India has turned more competitive as a result of mergers. Indian brands in the luxury sector have already been affected and the mid-market and budget segments are also feeling the heat. This is more of a wake-up call for a lot of Indian brands. Soon, properties in smaller markets will also face competition from these brands.

FAST-GROWING CHINESE DOMINATION

It's not unknown that China is playing a key role in shaping the consolidation of the hotel industry in the Asia Pacific region and

beyond. Chinese companies recognise the significance of hotel and tourism industries as the global middle class swells, particularly in emerging markets like India. Some Chinese players are aggressively acquiring hotel management companies to establish vertically integrated travel and tourism businesses (including travel



The luxury hospitality market in India has turned more competitive as a result of mergers



agencies, transportation, and accommodation). Chinese companies are also looking to enhance and extend their domestic hotel businesses by acquiring hotel management platforms with recognised brands and world-class expertise.

WAY FORWARD FOR INDIAN HOTELS

Independent hotels should brace themselves for the ensuing battle. They must upgrade their payment systems, form alliances, and utilise advanced tools of big data management to stay ahead in the game. Above all, they must re-skill their staff to offer better services of an international grade.



Dilip Datwani
President
HRAWI

Globally, the tourism industry is responsible for one out of 11 jobs. Needless to say, the travel industry is enormous, and is going to continue to change and expand. The next generation of travellers will reshape tourism in the coming years as it seeks to replace sand, surf, and sea luxury vacations with meaningful life-changing experiences.

In the midst of all this change and proliferation, the US\$7.6 trillion industry is seeing an uptick in consolidations, including the merger that took place between Destination Hotels and Commune Hotels & Resorts. As of late, we've seen a record number of consolidations in the travel sphere.

Let's start with capital intensive airline companies, which have long been dependent on mergers. By merging, airlines hope to capture economies of scale, sustain their profitability, find business model convergences, and improve their product quality. This boost in merger and acquisition activity in the hospitality sector is a new development, implying increased competition and a run to secure market shares,

especially in emerging destinations. Companies are under pressure to show growth. The easiest way for large entities to access new customers and new markets is to take advantage of established assets. Under pressure from innovative online start-ups, shifting traveller preferences, deregulation, and an increasing number of competitors, companies are consolidating to preserve their futures.

To be successful in today's lodging space, a wide distribution of brands and hotels across price points is critical. Increased size proves beneficial by eliminating duplicate functions and centralised procurement. Staffing can be streamlined

“
The need of the hour is to innovate new methods to keep guests coming back for more
”

and processes standardised. It also increases the muscle needed for leveraging negotiations and creating pricing power.

A major concern has been voiced by independent hotel owners. With conglomerated companies expanding their reach into small neighbourhoods, independent hotel owners are worried that they won't be able to fill their rooms and, more importantly, meet their bottom-lines. The need of the hour is to innovate new methods to keep guests coming back for more.



K Syama Raju
President
SIHRA

SOARING COMPETITION

One tactic that has found favour as a means of gaining a competitive edge is that of mergers. Airlines are swallowing up airlines, online travel agencies absorbing online travel agencies, and car-rental companies wolfing up car-rental companies. Nowhere is the merger trend more visible than in the global hotel industry, which has seen a flurry of acquisitions over the last few months. Growing competition from new age disruptors such as Airbnb, and the need to strengthen their negotiating position with online travel agencies is driving hoteliers into deals.

OVERLAPPING BRANDS

If brands are clearly differentiated and have a clear understanding of the market, a company can effectively operate various properties across different brands in the same market. For larger companies, there is undoubtedly some overlap between brands and it is their responsibility to show owners that they can drive revenue and bottom-line growth, in spite of this. In emerging markets, where demand is growing while supply is limited, it is possible

to benefit from having more brands in a merged portfolio.

COMPLEX STRUCTURES

Another challenge of any post-M&A scenario is aligning and embedding brand cultures. If an acquired brand has a vision and set of values that are very different from that of the new owner, it can become difficult to adapt them into the new brand and still operate optimally. There's never a one-size-fits-all approach in terms of what to do with a new set of brands and management contracts; so much of it depends on overall size, existing portfolio of brands, geographic spread and much more.

ACCELERATED EMERGENCE OF CHINA

Chinese companies are looking to park funds in foreign industries and companies that have strong returns on investment amid economic stagnation in China, and hotel chains offer big names and prime real estate that appeal to overseas investors, experts say. Creation of brand and brand-

“
Chinese companies have realised that they have the monetary muscle for acquisitions
”

value takes decades and can be done either organically or through acquisitions. Chinese companies have realised that they have the monetary muscle for the latter, quicker way to become the leaders. The biggest American companies are now owned by the Chinese.

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A'Table'au



OF ART

A well laid-out table perfectly complements the ambience of a restaurant. Hoteliers tell us how table settings can be innovated on.



Gautam Miglani

Gautam Miglani
Assistant Director (F&B), Taj Mahal, New Delhi

UNCONVENTIONAL CHOICES FOR THE TABLE

The setting of a restaurant table holds a lot of importance as it provides a holistic dining experience to guests, allowing them to soak in the ambience of a place before they get to the food.

In today's times, tableware is constantly evolving and professionals are often seen making some unconventional choices for the table. Innovation and differentiation are the key in setting up the perfect table, being triggered by changing lifestyles, evolving needs of guests, and their exposure to global trends.

Hotels and restaurants strive to serve a piece of art on plate. At Varq, the award winning modern Indian restaurant at the Taj Mahal Hotel, expert chefs have mastered the art of giving a visually stunning twist to Indian delicacies by adding an element of surprise to delight guests.

A tableware setup should do justice to all elements of an event. For example, we recently hosted a bespoke luxury Ayurvedic dinner for members of the Taj Inner Circle, the guest recognition programme of the Taj group. The culinary journey was tailored to suit each guest's dosha of vata, pitta, and kapha.

The table was also set to complement each of the these doshas- white gladiolus and birds of paradise with bamboo, hibiscus flowers, and pomegranate seeds being set for those with the vata dosha; red anthurium, red rose with peacock feathers, and white lilies for those with the pitta dosha; and



jasmines, white roses with figs, and gladiolus with bay leaves for those with the kapha dosha.

HANDCRAFTED CROCKERY

To create a memorable dining experience, social function, or official conference, tableware plays an integral role in adding to the décor and setting of the venue. Although chinaware is still popular, tableware options are gradually diversifying by experimentation with metalware, stoneware, and earthen crockery to achieve that perfect alliance of food and setting.

Another trend which we believe would rule the year 2017 is that of handcrafted crockery. Crockery reflects originality and authenticity and holds a lot of relevance if a certain cuisine belongs to a particular region or a country. At the House of Ming, the premier Chinese restaurant at The Taj Mahal Hotel, New Delhi, food is served in traditional bowls to offer a truly spirited experience.

Santosh Shetty

Director (F&B), Taj Santacruz, Mumbai

A PERSONAL TOUCH

Thematic presentations are a very popular trend when it comes to table settings. From crockery, napkins, and centrepieces, to the ambience of the venue, each element has a role to play in providing an indelible experience to guests. Inexpensive decorating materials, like red felt rectangles being used as place mats, and matching lengths of ribbon, add to the appeal of the setting without adding much to cost. Intimate settings are achieved by scattering votive candles around the table and laying pretty table runners. A very prevalent trend of these times is personalisation of the innumerable elements of dining. Guest seating is often marked with magnetic letters to mark each guest's spot and menus are personalised by including their names and zodiac signs.



Santosh Shetty

COPIOUS CUTLERY

Serving dishes and drink-ware provide innumerable opportunities for experimentation. One can play around with quirky dessert plates, classic dinner plates, and hoards of asymmetrical salad and side plates. A range of saucers to accompany plates and bowls, designed to go with teacups, coffee cups, demitasses, and cream soup bowls also add a touch of style to fine dining.

Beverage, too, is an important part of the culinary journey, making drink-ware an integral part of

the presentation. Not only does it spark curiosity among customers but also enhances their dining experience. For example, Port wine glasses, beer glasses, brandy balloons, aperitif and liqueur glasses resonate well with guests who truly appreciate the art of mixology.

The coffee and tea culture of a region reflects robust social rituals. Hence, the choice of tea or coffee cups is derived based on the ethos of a specific region or influenced by the environment in which the drink is consumed.



Ashvani Jain

Ashvani Jain

Manager (F&B), Jaypee Residency Manor, Mussoorie

SPACING – AN ESSENCE

A trend is simply the refurbishment of an existing phenomenon, an important tool for customisation and standardisation. In today's competitive world, one needs to have an edge over others when creating unique layouts for a table. Appropriate platters for various dishes, different jars for different drinks, and distinctive bowls for desserts are important to facilitate quality of service.

Another subliminal trend is that of spacing in the cutlery set-up on the table. Crockery must be placed with exact measure of gaps in between, making it more appealing to the eye.

Quirky and attractive table accessories have also become an integral part of table-setting. Each element is made to complement the theme of the restaurant and this is something that one sees increasingly, everyday. Tasting menus expertly prepared by chefs have also gravitated to an upcoming trend, providing lavish spreads of food where smaller quantities are being served.

CUTLERY CONCEPTS

Tableware depends on the style of a restaurant. A wide range of tableware options are now available in the market. Electric cruet sets, fusion crockery, and authentic antiques being used as showpieces are few such examples. Place mats and designer cutlery have also replaced old-fashioned tablecloths.

A number of coffee shops and fast-food restaurants keep minimal cutlery or linen on the table. In contrast, authentic cuisine restaurants use tableware that is true to their region, like Chinese & Thai restaurants provide chopsticks with food and Chinese teacups made of pottery.



Samuel Massey

Samuel Massey

Director (F&B), Vivanta by Taj, Dwarka, New Delhi

FASHIONABLE SPREADS

Tableware trends follow lifestyle influences and fashion trends. Just as fashion has become more relaxed and casual, restaurant table settings have also followed suit. We have now moved away from formal place settings of show plates, crested logo dinnerware, and de rigueur white tablecloths that were prevalent a few years ago. In an all-day dining setup (traditionally called coffee shops), where guests come in more frequently and service is quick, we came up with the idea of a casual & smart table setup. Bonsais and succulent plants have now taken the place of old votives. However, speciality and fine dining restaurants still follow the same legacy of restaurant service. Show plates, trendy centrepieces, and unique napkin folding ideas together make a restaurant exceptional. New restaurants keep experimenting with table setups, but the old and popular ones prefer following the classic styles they are used to.



INNOVATING ON STYLE

The basic principles of table-laying continue to be the same, only the styles keep changing. Creativity is now practised more in food presentation to make food seem evermore appealing to customers.



Atish Baral Assistant Manager (F&B), Signature Resorts

STYLED BY THE CUISINE

Dining out at restaurants is an enjoyable pastime that surpasses both cultural and national boundaries. People across the world visit restaurants with family and friends, but just as important as the food they consume is the service they receive and the setting of the restaurant itself. With the right design, a restaurant can attract clients and retain them as regular and occasional customers. With the wrong layout, lighting, and décor, you're putting off customers no matter how great your food and service are.

Street-food style restaurants often follow the style of the region the cuisine hails from. Spanish restaurants often incorporate warm red and yellow hues in their colour palette with lots of ceramic patterned tiles; Japanese restaurants, on the other hand, have a minimal colour palette and sharp furniture; in contrast, one can see ornate and dainty tableware in a traditional English tearoom setup.

ECCENTRIC FORMS

An oval bone china dinner plate, neoclassic flatware, a hexagon platter, glass dipping dishes, tasting plates, a brilliantly coloured table runner, a patterned stoneware serving bowl that doubles as a dessert bowl, and blue-tinted wine glasses- all these disparate pieces could appear on the table during one dinner service. This is done in an effort to create a social environment that makes diners feel at home. Multicultural styles and multifunctional items are part of the mix. A plate that serves an appetizer or an entrée can also be used for a last-minute choice for dessert.

A notable aspect of changing tablescape is the variety of tabletop treatments; options range from basic white to neutral or vividly patterned tablecloths, intricately woven runners, handsome placemats, and large luxurious napkins on a bare surface. The versatile runner has stepped-in with stylish answers for plain woodgrain tabletops.



Atish Baral



Kunal Pawar

Kunal Pawar

Assistant Manager (F&B), Hilton Bangalore Embassy GolfLinks

EYE-CATCHING LAYOUTS

The old saying, “we eat with our eyes”, is more evident now with the increased focus on presentation of food. Gone are the days of the traditional Russian or French-style settings, with an extensive array of glassware, crockery, and silverware.

Many restaurants have now moved away from formal settings of show plates, crested-logo dinnerware, and white tablecloths that existed a few decades ago.

Today, table settings play a significant role in the entire dining experience. Be it for an appetizer or an entrée, the important thing is to not only have an excellent presentation of food but also to present the food on an astounding surface. We are now witnessing decorated rims, small plates for small bites, such as sushi or tapas, organic shapes, and oversized plates.

With all the unique options available today, we adopt a more customised approach for the table



settings with innovative display setups during meetings and events. Yesteryear designed metal, wood, and stone tableware is widely used with a contemporary twist in the hospitality industry now.



Deepak Shettigar

Deepak Shettigar

Assistant Director (F&B), Pullman & Novotel New Delhi Aerocity

CONTEMPORARY STYLES

Contemporary styles and sleek designs that imbibe elements of nature are trending these days. A lot of restaurants use classic designs to replicate the concept of fine dining.

Elements of nature, like air, water, fire, earth, etc., are also being incorporated into designs and ornamenting tables to reflect a broader outlook.

Wooden pieces and earthenware also make for interesting choices for setting up tables.

GETTING CREATIVE

Rustic, homemade cutlery from the local vendor, hand crafted glasses, wooden table mats, bonsai plants, brass glasses, show plates with gold work, funky artwork like paper roll, folded menu in news-paper, are being used in table settings.





Surender Singh Thakur

Director (F&B), The Imperial, New Delhi

RETURN OF RUSTIC

The re-emergence of colour and the continuance of a somewhat rustic theme are key trends for 2017 in table settings. Natural and rustic themes are being explored with a back-to-basic sensibility. Ombré table settings are a new trend that provide a modern twist to rustic themes with vibrant colours. Brightly coloured rims or napkin edges, fading towards the centre, creates a look that is easy on the eye and classy.

In all the rich hues and the sparkling splendour of the Imperial, we like to shake things up by having some contemporary table flower arrangements, like the coarse lava rock vases at Spice Route adorned with a humble delicate orchid, or our them of hanging marigold garlands at Daniell's Tavern, our pan-India restaurant. This is a trend that we have maintained and it never goes out of style. We always strive to ensure our tableware complements our decor and together they offer a quality experi-

ence to diners. Our glassware is quite the conversation starter, from the slightly off-set shape of the 1911 water tumbler to the towering Schott Zwiesel wine glasses at Spice Route.

DRAMATIC DISPLAYS

Tableware is key to design. The style of tableware not only influences the guest but also the chefs, as it gives them the tools to present food in keeping with the style of the restaurant. Vintage plates are something that we are noticing as an emerging trend. Clients now expect more drama to be injected into their dining experience and this trend is fast picking pace. Breakfast could be served on a chalk slate, lunch on a clipboard, and dinner on a wooden cutting-board shaped like a clover leaf. Pots and pans are shrinking and being used to present food on the table. Miniature versions of cooking pans in copper, cast iron, chrome, and aluminium make for quirky food presentation. Traditional pottery with a contemporary twist is another trailblazer to watch out for in 2017.



Surender Singh Thakur



Sandeep Singh

Sandeep Singh
 Manager (F&B), The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences

TWEAKING OPTIONS

We believe less is more. Table setting needs to be clean and uncluttered. We keep homemade salts and spices along with high-end organic oils and extra virgin cold pressed olive oil on the table, to enable our guests to alter dishes according to their taste buds.

Our freshly baked bread basket acts as the centrepiece.

HANDY CUTLERY

When it comes to cutlery and crockery, we use handmade pottery, which is procured locally. We'd rather use stainless steel cutlery than expensive silverware that is difficult to clean and handle.

Cutlery needs to be handy and best fit the kind of food or dish being served. For example, steak knives must be served with meats for ease of breaking the steak into smaller pieces; good quality chopsticks



give an authentic touch to Japanese cuisines; for soups, a restaurant must resort to using chinaware soup spoons that prevent the soup from dripping onto the table.





Sunil Kumar

Director (F&B), JW Marriott Mussoorie Walnut Grove Resort & Spa

ALLURING TABLETOPS

The tabletop has a great deal of influence. People have become accustomed to determining the atmosphere of a venue by merely glancing at tabletops. For example, white linen tablecloths are synonymous with fine dining.

Exposed timber tops are also rapidly becoming the norm. Restaurants are using quality wood to help ensure the food is the focus of the dining experi-

ence (as it should be), and to again promote a relaxed, casual vibe.

EXTENSIVE CHOICE IN TABLEWARE

Cutlery offers a wide range of options that can be innovated and utilised in tandem with the ambience of a restaurant and the style of cuisine being served.

From wooden serving spoons and knives that have a vintage finish to copper-finish cutlery with wooden handles, each item adds elegance to the table setting. Showpieces such as antique artefacts, short bouquets, and potted herbs, help create a comfortable ambience.

Pottery also offers a great deal of options. It is essential that a restaurant utilises pottery in a way that complements the ambience and setting of the place, completing the look of the room.

Some options that restaurateurs can imbibe in their table settings are marbelised dinnerware, that adds an ethereal touch to the decor; and stoneware, that brings a modern yet rustic look to the setting.



Sunil Kumar





PRESS CONFERENCE

Radisson **BLU**
FARIDABAD

Harpreet Vohra, GM, Radisson Blu Faridabad; Raj Rana, CEO, South Asia, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group; Akshay Sood, Director, Eros Group

EXPLORING UNCHARTED TERRITORY

The Carlson Rezidor group recently opened its first five-star hotel in Faridabad. We explore the hotel's USP and what drove the group to foray into this market.



Faridabad is one of India's largest business and industrial hubs in the National Capital Region (NCR). The city is home to many industries and corporations as well as centres of attraction for leisure travellers with the presence of striking places of interests, including the Badhkal Lake and Raja Nahar Singh Palace.

Raj Rana, Chief Executive Officer, South Asia, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group says, "We are delighted to be opening the first Radisson Blu hotel in the city of Faridabad, which does not have any five-star deluxe property yet. This gives us an advantage in the market. We are looking forward to ensuring that this hotel is a success."

DEMONETISATION- AN INTERIM TREND

Talking about the impact of demonetisation on the hotel group, Rana adds, "In the rooms business, with lead-time being longer due to bookings being received in advance, the impact has been negligible.

We have seen some impact on the footfall traffic in the restaurants and our outlets and in some cases, the count for the guaranteed number of weddings was lower. But we do believe that this is only an interim trend. We are watching this very carefully to ensure that once consumer behaviour changes, our hotels continue to get the footfall and the business that we expect."

DESPITE THE INTERIM BUMP, 2017 TO BE A GOOD YEAR

Enumerating the group's plans for 2017, he concludes, "We ended the year 2016 with nine openings, with a total of 84 operating hotels, including 140 hotels in the pipeline. In 2017, we expect to sign another 10 to 12 hotels. We are targeting 170 hotels by 2020.

What we have seen so far is that the occupancy is still strong. Average rate has also started gaining some traction. I think it will be a good year for the industry, despite the interim bump due to demonetisation."

HOTEL BUILT AT 160 CRORE MINUS THE LAND

Akshay Sood, Director, Eros Group, says, "The hotel took three years to build. We had purchased the land at a government auction some time ago and we thought the time was right to build a five-star hotel property. The total cost to build the hotel was 160 crore minus the land. Being a 124-key property, it comes to about ` 1 crore and ` 10-15

“

We are delighted to be opening the first Radisson Blu hotel in the city of Faridabad

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“
 We intend to target corporates in Faridabad Industrial Area (FIA), right up to Palwal”

lakhs per key. Carlson Rezidor is one of the most recognisable and dynamic brands in the industry. There were a lot of synergies between the Carlson Rezidor brand and Eros. The brand fit really well with the Faridabad market.”

Talking about the Eros group, he adds, “In the last 70 years, Eros Group has built a legacy, diversifying our business into real estate development and hospitality. Faridabad, with a huge population of over a million people, a number of industrial setups, and an absence of any five-star hotel option, proves to be an ideal location for the entry of a new branded hotel.”

TARGET CORPORATES IN FIA
Harpreet Vohra, GM, Radisson Blu Faridabad, says, “Our USP is our location and our room

capacity of 124. Being bang opposite a metro station provides us with good connectivity.

We intend to target corporates in Faridabad Industrial Area (FIA), right up to Palwal. For the residents of Faridabad, the nearest five-star hotel meant going either up to Okhla or New Delhi.

We are also targeting social business with MICE and corporates being feeder markets. Faridabad, as a market, has a lot of standalone banquet halls and marriage gardens. We see that the shift in trend here. Right now, it’s at a very nascent stage.”

Talking about their MICE facilities, Vohra adds, “We have a 6,000 sq. foot pillar-less banquet hall with a clear ceiling height of 30 feet, 3,000 sq. foot area of pre-function space, and a 300 sq. foot lawn. This can accommodate upto 1,000 guests.”

Telling us about pricing he concludes, “We work on dynamic pricing. We work on best available rates and not a printed tariff rate. Our rates are very dynamic. When the demand goes up, the rates go up; if demand is less, rates reduce,” he says.

FusionResto: All in one tap

With a clientele of over 20,000 across 30 countries, Rancelab FusionResto is the most trusted brand when it comes to a one-stop solution to manage your restaurant business.



Nilesh Shah
Co-founder, Rancelab

Be it fine-dine or cafe, take-away or home delivery, sweet shop or bakery, single or chain of outlets, FusionResto helps you make profits sooner, reach break-even faster, and open new restaurants quicker. Rancelab FusionResto helps you to face the competitive market and live up to industry and customer standards with its stable and bug-free software that manages all operations efficiently. From managing POS to controlling inventory, recipe management to food costing, efficient administration using financial accounts and insightful analysis reports to check company health, FusionResto has all the tools that you're looking for. It further helps you to engage your customers effectively with its built-in CRM module and smart payroll tool.

WHAT'S MORE?

Rancelab® FusionResto topped with FusionMobi, the coolest suite of mobile apps, adds fuel to your restaurant's growth engine and ensures you stay ahead of your competition. The mobile apps are available on both Android and iOS and include:

- **Mobile POS:** Speedy service with zero errors resulting in quick table turn
- **Kitchen display:** Real-time digital KOT's, to avoid printing



nightmares in the kitchen

- **Feedback:** Digital feedback forms that work
- **Mobile wallet:** Convenient mode of secure digital payments
- **Mobile reports:** Real-time reports on the move
- **E-menu:** View dishes before ordering for faster decision-making
- **Customer Loyalty:** Engaging the customers, increasing repeat sales

Foraying 'Inn'to NASHIK

Express Inn Nashik recently tied-up with Preferred Hotels & Resorts to put Nashik on the global market for luxury travellers. **Narayan Shelar**, CMD, Express Inn Hotels & Resorts, tells us more.



Narayan Shelar

OUR USP

Express Inn Nashik provides diverse accommodations to cater to needs of business travellers. We also have a variety of dining options and an EVA floor specifically meant for single women travellers. Our unique floor, the Presidential Enclave, has state-of-the-art interiors and consists of the Presidential Suite, Chairman Suite, and Freesia Library for our elite guests.

A conference space that can cater to more than 1,000 guests; Club-X, our fitness centre; and our spa and salon (managed by O2), give guests the best of options for recreation and leisure.

OUR OCCUPANCY

In 2016, the occupancy level at our hotel was about 72 per cent. A dynamic pricing structure of rooms and F&B options have been put in place for this year, with an aim to cross an occupancy of 80 per cent.

OUR LATEST STRATEGIES

We are now focusing more on social media. Our recent alliance with Preferred Hotels & Resorts will help us take our marketing strategy to the next level. We are also focusing on a loyalty programme for our guests, called iprefer, where guests can avail benefits of over 600 hotels across 85 countries.



barBeque Binging



Chef Ashish Massey

Chef Ashish Massey, Director, The Ancient Barbeque, Gurugram and Noida, talks about his passion for food, his restaurants, and the recently-held "Grills on Fire" food festival.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO DON THE CHEF'S HAT?

My love for food inspired me to pursue the career of a chef. I took admission in engineering, but then dropped it after my first year because of my passion for food and thereafter, took admission in IHM Lucknow to pursue my dreams.

OF THE DISHES YOU SERVE, WHICH ARE THE MOST POPULAR? ANYTHING NEW WE CAN WAIT TO BINGE ON?

Our most popular dishes are salsa potato, crispy corn, and grilled cinnamon pineapple.

We plan to add a dish called Brazilian churrasco to our menu, making it a one-of-a-kind dish at the restaurant.

DO CONSUMER TASTE BUDS CHANGE OFTEN?

Consumer trends at our restaurants have been very consistent. Those who have tasted our food and drinks haven't requested changes and continue to prefer the same each time they visit. We do keep making amends to our menu in terms of what we offer, so our dishes don't look repetitive and guests can be presented with different options.

HOW DO YOU MANAGE INCREASED FOOTFALL?

I have been running The Ancient Barbeque, Noida; The Ancient Barbeque, Gurugram; and Smoked Biryani House, Noida, where we get maximum footfall on weekends, i.e., Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. We follow the concept of two shifts- lunch and dinner

hours- to manage the influx of guests through the week.

DO TELL US ABOUT SOME NEW TRENDS IN FOOD PRESENTATION.

These days, along with serving food of excellent quality, presentation of food is also what gets more customers to a restaurant. Some food presentation trends that one should follow are:

- Serving small portions
- Highlighting food on big plates
- Giving your dish a rustic look
- Using asymmetric products

WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES OF RUNNING A RESTAURANT IN INDIA?

Running a restaurant in India becomes a little difficult because there are several government-related issues, massive competition, and regular entry of new cuisines in the market. Manpower retention and irregular guest movement are also major challenges for restaurants in India. Every day, we see new restaurants being opened and rates of dishes being manipulated to attract crowds, which in turn leads to loss in business for others.

Steep rentals also make the business unstable.

HOW DIFFICULT IS IT TO RETAIN MANPOWER?

There is a lot of competition in the food industry. Workers have a number of options for switching jobs. At our restaurants, we have had the same staff working since we launched ourselves into the market. Having said that, switching places of work is still a major hindrance to our industry as junior-level staff is often motivated to switch at bare minimum salary differences.

WHAT IS YOUR TAKE ON LEVYING OF SERVICE CHARGE?

Well, I believe service charge plays an important role in encouraging the staff to work more efficiently and happily. Removing it from the bill will only add a factor of cost for restaurant owners, pressing them to make marginal changes in staff salaries to compensate for the change and keeping employees happy and content.

TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT THE GRILL FESTIVAL THAT YOU ORGANISED.

We organised a one-of-a-kind "Grills on Fire" food festival from February 2-12, 2017, where people could come and enjoy our new grilled menu. We, along with some MasterChef contestants, curated a massive menu for the fest and served a variety of dishes from starters and main course to desserts. We were the first to offer a range of 26 different starters at a fest. The fest also showcased a fusion of international and Indian flavours.

KNOW YOUR CHEF

Your favourite ingredient: **Cardamom**

Favourite Indian fast-food dish: **Idli sambhar**

Favourite city to travel to for food: **Hyderabad**

Favourite Indian non-alcoholic drink: **Chaos (Butter Milk)**

One tip from your grandma's kitchen: **Khana itmenan se banana chahiye**

Hospitality trends & performance surging optimally

We take a brief look at how the performance of the hotel industry stood in the year that has gone by, giving hoteliers a chance to recognise areas of development.

The Indian hospitality industry has emerged as one of the key industries driving the growth of the services sector and, thereby, the Indian economy. The FHRAI Indian Hotel Survey 2015-2016 aims to provide the most comprehensive guide to all-India performance trends for this industry.

Results of the survey will empower industry stakeholders such as owners, investors, operators, business analysts, and researchers with information on the operational aspects of the industry. It will also help owners benchmark the performance of their operations against industry standards and seek professional help if corrective measures are required.

The data for the survey has been contributed by the member hotels of FHRAI. This edition of the survey has been culled from 1,517 responses.

METHODOLOGY

The data received from hotels participating in the survey is sorted and filtered according to the objectives of the survey. The data is then processed and analysed to extract important information pertaining to the performance of the Indian hospitality sector across crucial parameters. These parameters, such as guest segmentation, hotel finances, marketing, sources of reservations, and seasonality, among others, are then represented in the survey.

KEY TRENDS

The survey aims to highlight countrywide trends and statistics using data from the past five years'

surveys, analysing the performance of the industry across parameters such as facilities, manpower, operational performance, and marketing trends.

INDIAN HOTEL INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE

Growth in operating performance indicators: The average rate registered in 2015-16 was ` 5,128, the highest recorded since 2009-10. Similarly, the occupancy continued to witness a rise, recorded at 62.1 per cent in the previous fiscal year.

Contribution to total revenue: The last few years had witnessed a steady decline in the contribution of the rooms division to the topline. However, 2015-16 did not follow this trend, with the rooms revenue showing an increased contribution of 51.7 per cent to the total revenue. On the other hand, contribution from food & beverage and banquets declined to 41.5 per cent from 42.6 per cent recorded in 2014-15. The contribution of the other operating departments has remained range-bound for the past five years.

Decrease in departmental expenses:

Departmental expenses as a percentage of total revenue decreased for the third year in a row, mainly driven by the percentage decrease in rooms and other expenses. However, F&B expenses increased to an all-India average of 64.1 per cent, a sharp increase from the previous year.

Cost analysis: Except for F&B expenses, the survey results depict that the expenses, as a percentage of total revenue, remained stable or declined in 2015-16. However, on a per available room (PAR) basis, marketing costs, rental & other incomes, and management fees increased by 23 per cent, 18 per cent, and 14 per cent, respectively, over those recorded in 2014-15.

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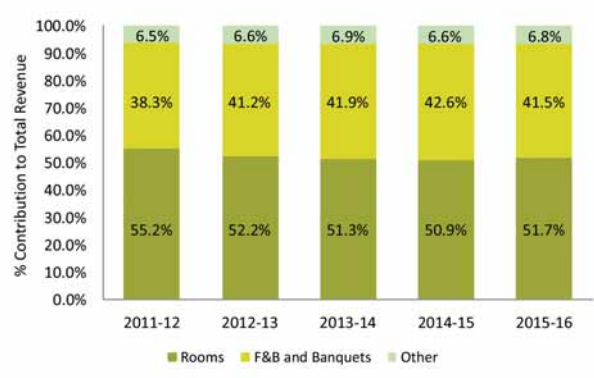
F&B expenses increased to an all-India average of 64.1 per cent

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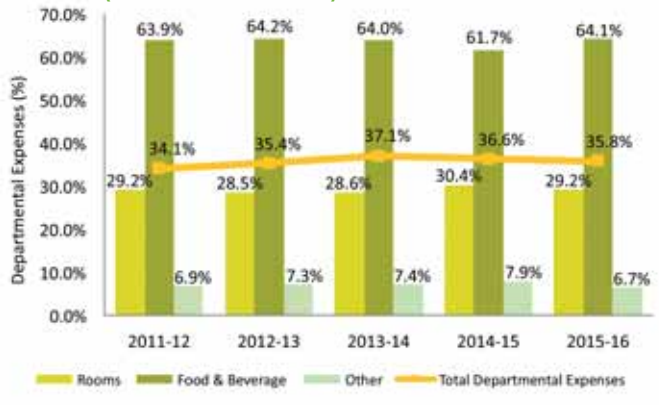
OCCUPANCY AND AVERAGE RATE (2011-12 TO 2015-16)



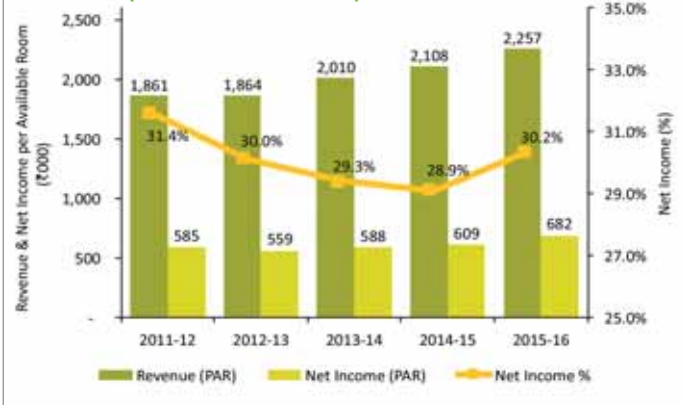
SOURCES OF REVENUE (2011-12 TO 2015-16)



DEPARTMENTAL EXPENSES (2011-12 TO 2015-16)



REVENUE & NET INCOME (2011-12 TO 2015-16)



Source: HVS

Fixed expenses, conversely, portray an 18 per cent decline on PAR basis over that in the previous fiscal.

Food & Beverage: F&B and banquets revenue as a percentage of total revenue declined in 2015-16. This corresponded to an increase in F&B expenses as a percentage of total revenue over that registered in 2014-15. The F&B expenses on a per available room basis have increased by 9 per cent.

Guest analysis: Domestic travellers continue to be the majority generators of room night demand in India. It is important to highlight that the domestic business traveller segment has displayed a year-on-year growth to form 34.4 per cent of the total demand accommodated by Indian hotels, whereas the contribution of domestic tourists or leisure travellers has declined from 21.7 per cent in 2014-15 to 19.8 per cent in 2015-16. Foreign demand, on the other hand, has remained stable, contributing 20.6 per cent between the business, leisure and tour group segments.

Online reservations as a source of advance bookings: Another integral trend highlighted by

“ All-India average net income as a percentage of total revenue crossed the 30 per cent mark ”

the survey results is the increasing contribution of online reservations systems as a source of advance bookings for hotels in India. In 2015-16, 12.4 per cent of the total advance reservations were made via these channels, compared to 8.5 per cent during 2014-15. This trend is expected to gain traction, as more travellers adopt the ease and convenience offered by online reservations.

Net income: All-India average net income as a percentage of total revenue crossed the 30 per cent mark in 2015-16. Primarily driven by the increase in average rates and, therefore, increase in rooms revenue for hotels across all star categories (barring one), the increase in net income arrests the downward trend witnessed over the past three years.

NESTING TRENDY WITH Vitra



◆ Vitra introduces a new range of modular bathroom furniture— Nest Trendy, designed by Pentagon Design, a leading Finnish design agency. The Nest Trendy series by Vitra offers family-sized comfort with a wealth of features such as child step, laundry cabinet night light, and easy-to-reach storage areas. It also offers a heat gauge for the digital bathroom mixer that displays accurate water temperature. Equipped with smart functionality, the Nest Trendy series by Vitra allows users to keep a track of water flow and consumption via a digital display, facilitating increased savings and efficient consumption.

COOK SAFE, COOK HEALTHY

◆ Franke is revolutionising domestic and professional cooking with its exclusive Dynamic Cooking Technology (DCT), which offers optimal heat distribution inside the oven, guaranteeing perfect cooking, eliminating the risk of burning, and keeping flavours and aromas intact. The technology replaces traditional, armoured electric heating elements with extremely reactive, electronically controlled bare wire heating elements, which heat the air quickly. The mesh structure formed by the heating element filaments further guarantees efficient thermal exchange. Equipped with a removable FULLGLASS inner door and an LCD display, the oven comes in varying capacities of 30 to 77 litres, and two exclusive cooking styles— Wellness Menu and Complete Menu.



THE KRAFT OF GRILLING

◆ Kraft unveils its latest master chef Jumbo Grill Toaster that adds elegance to your kitchen with its sleek, aesthetic design. This 2000W toaster has a non-stick coating, an oil collector tray that collects excess oil, and a light indicator which tracks the progress of your sandwich. It also has a lid-lock feature that keeps it firmly closed while being used. Adding to convenience are the anti-skid feet of the toaster that ensure the appliance stays balanced on any surface, providing maximum user safety. The toaster is built with a sturdy, heat-resistant body, that not only provides overheat protection but also keeps the outer surface cool when in use, making it less prone to accidents, especially with kids around.

FLOORED BY VISTA

◆ Junckers, established in 1930, has launched an exotic Vista Grey collection of flooring, which is perfect for your living space. The gently-textured oak planks are a subtle combination of light grey and white tones. The fusion of the two colours beautifully enhances the natural grain structure of the oak. Made exclusively from solid hardwood, each plank exhibits rich colour and structural graining variation, characteristic of specific wood species and grades. Junckers solid hardwood flooring is produced and categorised in Junckers own factory standard. The company's primary goal is to produce top quality products on the basis of dialogues exchanged between architects, builders, contractors, and owners. It is the close collaboration with industry professionals that enables Junckers to maintain its position as Europe's leading supplier of solid hardwood floors.



HONEYCOMBED WITH BENEFITS

◆ APIS India, the largest producer, distributor, and exporter of quality honey, has introduced two healthy variants of honey brands in the Indian market— APIS Himalaya and APIS Himalaya Gold. For health-conscious customers, APIS Himalaya is a nutritious replacement of sugar and has a diverse mix of health benefits. It has the ability to enhance your endurance and boost immunity. APIS India is a pioneer in honey production, both domestically and internationally.



S'H'ELF-HEATED BY ALTO-SHAAM

◆ Alto-Shaam's newest merchandiser product line now includes individually controlled heated shelves that keep food warm for hours, simultaneously maintaining the highest level of quality. Featuring exclusive Halo Heat® fan-less technology for precise, even temperature, these merchandisers hold a variety of grab-and-go products, including rotisserie chickens, pizzas, and sandwiches. Fresh meals are displayed to sell to customers in the aesthetically pleasing and customisable merchandiser. Countertop models are available in 24-inch and 36-inch widths. Floor-standing units are offered in widths of 24, 36, and 48 inches. They can be purchased separately or as part of a full system package.

TANTALISING TREATS

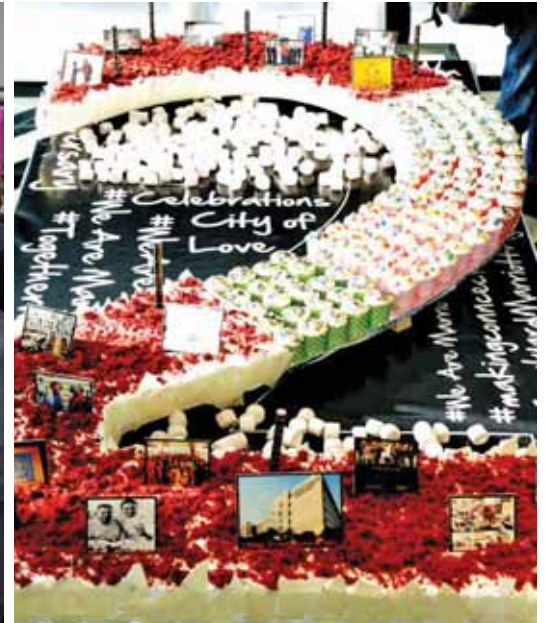
◆ Cornitos introduces its latest range of tri-colour snacks— Hot and Spicy Coated Green Peas, Lightly Salted Premium Roasted Cashews, and Wasabi Coated Green Peas, to make the weather more enjoyable. This range of peas & nuts is the perfect winter snack to refresh your palate with exotic flavours. The wasabi coated peas, a fiery hot Japanese flavour, will unleash an intense and extremely different experience. Premium Roasted Cashews are available in easy-to-open, resealable, stand-up pouches of 200g that lock in freshness while still delivering the same great taste. Cornitos nuts are cholesterol-free and have zero trans fat, making them heart-friendly.



COURTYARD MARRIOTT AGRA TURNS TWO

Courtyard Marriott Agra celebrated its second anniversary in a magnificent way with the longest cake in the history of Agra, breaking its own record of the previous year. This exclusive 50 ft long cake that was in the shape of the numerical '2', was prepared by the culinary team of the hotel under the guidance and leadership of Executive Chef Vivek Kalia. Guests at the hotel, along with Marriott associates, had the honour of cutting the elegantly crafted cake that depicted the hotel's achievements over

the last two years. Speaking about the celebrations, **Abhishek Sahai**, General Manager, said, "This was the longest cake ever baked in Agra and showcased the hotel's achievements in the last two years. We assure our guests that Courtyard Marriott Agra will continue to set new benchmarks in hospitality services and creative events in the city. The third year of the hotel's operations will be even more exciting." To mark the occasion, the hotel also held a number of promotions at its food & beverage outlets.



NOTES AND STROKES ENTERS ITS SIXTH SEASON



After five successful seasons, Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre and HICC unveiled their sixth season of 'Colours of Novotel'—themed, 'Notes & Strokes', at the serene La Cantina terrace. Supporting a community of immense talent, the signature event brought artists together under one roof and presented them with a platform to showcase some of their best works. Exhibiting over 30 paintings, the season was curated by a renowned connoisseur of the field and an artist herself, Rangoli Garg. The exhibition also featured the works of artists like Anuradha Thakur, Iruvan Karunakaran, JM Patnaik, Poonam Agrawal, and Sadaf Khan.



At the inauguration, **Neil Paterson**, General Manager, Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre and HICC, said, "Our signature series, 'Colours of Novotel', is dedicated to recognise art and artists from across India. The response to this initiative has always been very encouraging, and the artists are pleased to have their work showcased on such a platform. This event highlights our dedication towards encouraging others to take an interest in contemporary art."



MADAME TUSSAUDS DELHI TO OPEN IN JUNE

The 23rd edition of Madame Tussauds is all set to open this June at Regal Cinema, Connaught Place, New Delhi. The wax attraction will exhibit over 50 figures from diverse leagues, such as history, sports, music, cinema, etc. Sixty per cent of the wax figures at the attraction will showcase local celebrities, while the remaining 40 per cent will be of international leaders. Merlin Entertainments, the operator of the attraction, plans to offer competitive ticket fares in order to attract large segments of Indian visitors. Once open, Madame Tussauds will also offer special fares for students and group entries.

Anshul Jain, General Manager and Director, Merlin Entertainments India, said, "The wax attraction will provide an immersive and exhilarating experience of the glittering world of renowned celebrities and personalities of the likes of Amitabh Bachchan, Narendra Modi, Sachin Tendulkar, Kim Kardashian, and many others. We will also have a broader focus on Indian celebrities and I am sure that all locals and tourists will cherish meeting their idols." The attraction, once completed, will be able to accommodate 500 visitors at a time. The tickets will also be available online for the same.



INTERNATIONAL YOUNG CHEF OLYMPIAD TAKES-OFF IN DELHI

Delhi witnessed the commencement of the third edition of the International Young Chef Olympiad on January 28, 2017. Forty-five countries participated in the event, competing in three culinary challenges of varying difficulty levels. The competition was held over five days across four cities - Delhi, Bengaluru, Pune, and Kolkata. Speaking at the occasion, **Chef Sanjeev Kapoor**, an International Young Chef Olympiad mentor, said, "Being a professional chef is a very demanding and extremely competitive job. A platform like the Young Chef Olympiad is a great way to showcase one's talent. It also provides a brilliant learning curve because it gives you an insight into what is going on in the industry. Winning, or merely participating in such an event, can boost the level of confidence and motivation of a young chef." The concluding ceremony was held in Kolkata. Tham Jiajun Mathew of At-Sunrice GlobalChef Academy, Singapore, won the competition. Andrew Ou Kai Peng of Taylors University, Malaysia, bagged the first runner up and Selah Schmoll of Canadian Food And Wine Institute, Canada, took home the second runner-up trophy.



appointments



CÉDRIC GOBILLIARD

Head, Lifestyle division
AccorHotels

★ AccorHotels has announced the appointment of Cédric Gobilliard to head their lifestyle division consisting of the Jo & Joe, Mama Shelter, and 25hours Hotels brands. Gobilliard joined the AccorHotels group in 2009 after ten years with Club Med. At AccorHotels, he was responsible for internet activities, the launch of the Le Club AccorHotels card, global sales in France, and Novotel and Mercure brand operations in the French provinces. Cédric helped transform the guest experience in this segment by rolling out digital tools.



JEAN-MICHEL CASSÉ

Chief Operating Officer-
India and South Asia
AccorHotels

★ AccorHotels has promoted Jean-Michel Cassé as its Chief Operating Officer- India and South Asia. He will lead teams in the region to ensure the group's continued growth momentum in India and South Asia, ardently focussing on the needs of guests, while ensuring a robust performance for its owners and investors. A seasoned hotelier, Jean-Michel brings over three decades of industry experience and deep understanding of varied cultures, having worked across multiple international markets of Europe, Asia, Middle East, and Africa.



MADHU JOSHI

Director of Marketing
AccorHotels India

★ AccorHotels has appointed Madhu Joshi as the Director of Marketing for AccorHotels India. In this role, Joshi will be responsible for providing marketing leadership for AccorHotels' growing portfolio of brands operating across a fast expanding network in the country. Joshi has over 16 years of experience in corporate communication, brand management, and digital marketing. After a brief stint outside the group, Madhu returned to AccorHotels in 2013 as the Director, National Marketing & Communications for Hotel Formule1.



RANJAY RADHAKRISHNAN

Chief Human Resources Officer
IHG

★ Ranjay Radhakrishnan has joined IHG as Chief Human Resources Officer. He moves to this role from Unilever, where he was the Executive Vice President Global HR (Categories and Market Clusters), responsible for leading the HR for all of Unilever's eight market clusters and four global product categories. He has worked and lived in many different countries, including the Netherlands, Singapore, Dubai, London, and India. He has a Bachelor's degree in Commerce and Accounting from Mumbai University, and a Master's degree in Personnel Management from Tata Institute of Social Sciences.



SUDEEP JAIN

Vice President (Development)
IHG, South West Asia

★ IHG brings aboard Sudeep Jain as Vice President, Development, South West Asia. In the new role, Jain's immediate remit will be to further strengthen IHG's presence in the region encompassing India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bangladesh. Starting his career with Bain & Company, he most recently moved to the role of Vice President (Acquisitions & Development), Starwood Hotels & Resorts, South Asia. Sudeep brings to the table 15 years' experience of working across brand management, asset management, strategy, planning, and real estate development.



SHASHI RAZDAN

**Director of Operations and Commercial
Golden Tulip Hotels and Resorts,
South East Asia**

★ Golden Tulip Hotels and Resorts has promoted Shashi Razdan to the role of Director of Operations & Commercial, South East Asia. In this role, Razdan will be responsible and accountable for the region's balanced scorecard, collaborating with function specialists to review performance and drive execution across all hotels in the South East Asia region. Razdan would continue playing a key role in driving guest experience delivery programmes, global operation initiatives of managed and franchised hotels, planning and development of promotional strategies, managing and mentoring the sales and marketing team, implementing revenue generating measures, and driving hotel performance.



FAIZ ALAM ANSARI

**Complex General Manager
Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield
and Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business
Park**

★ Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park has announced the appointment of Faiz Alam Ansari as Complex General Manager for Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Centre and Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park. With over 20 years of experience, he has established his position in the industry as an innovative manager in the hospitality space. Prior to moving to this role, Faiz was the Hotel Manager of the flagship Westin Hotel in India at the Westin Gurgaon, New Delhi. His earlier projects included stints at Raffles Hotel, Singapore, as Director of Food & Beverage and later as Executive Assistant Manager at Le Meridien, Kuala Lumpur.



GIULIO D'ALBERTO

**General Manager
The Chedi Mumbai**

★ The 316-room Chedi Mumbai, GHM's highly anticipated hotel opening for this year, will come under the leadership of Italy-born Giulio D'Alberto. His first encounter with GHM was in 2007, when he was promoted from the role of Director of Finance to General Manager, The Chedi Milan. He returned to the GHM group in 2012, where he was assisting with pre-opening task force activities for new hotels. Giulio was earlier with the Ahn Luh team for the Qiandao Lake project before taking on this exciting project in Mumbai.



VINITA KHAR

**Director of Sales and Marketing
Park Hyatt Goa Resort and Spa**

★ Park Hyatt Goa Resort and Spa, the award-winning destination resort, has announced the appointment of Vinita Khar as the Director of Sales and Marketing. She became part of the Hyatt family in 2007 and now returns after a brief stint of 18 months as part of the pre-opening and launch team of Conrad, Pune, as Director of Sales and Marketing. In her new role at Park Hyatt Goa Resort and Spa, she will be heading the sales, marketing and events team.



JAY LADWA

**Assistant Manager (Marketing)
Lords Hotels & Resorts**

★ Lords Hotels & Resorts has appointed Jay Ladwa as the new Assistant Manager (Marketing). An experienced professional in brand solutions and marketing, Ladwa will assist the hospitality group in the development and implementation of marketing strategies. His core functions will be to engage with each of its properties across the country and ideate and execute marketing strategies that drive revenue growth and brand visibility. Proficient in analysing brand communications and marketing needs of an enterprise, Ladwa has previously worked with several renowned brands in the course of his tenure with brand management and solutions companies.

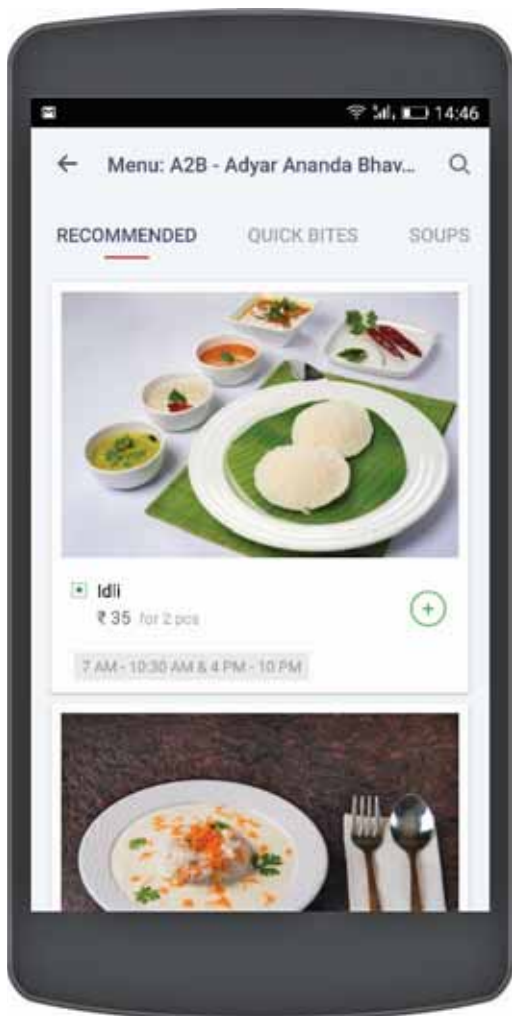


Mayank Bidawatka

GOODBOX

at your **DOORSTEP**

Within a year, Bengaluru-based Goodbox has enabled more than 4,500 shops and businesses to get their business online, using Mini-App, a do-it-yourself online platform, the first-of-its-kind to enter the market.



For more than 100,000 customers, Goodbox is an app that helps search and explore a range of trusted businesses to buy from, directly. Iconic restaurants like Maiyas, Shri Sagar CTR, Veena Stores, Kota Kachori, Anand Sweets, Nandhana Restaurant, A2B, Ammi's Biryani, The Hole in the Wall Café, Vasudev Adigas, Sampige Adigas Saraswathi, Pista House, Hallimane,

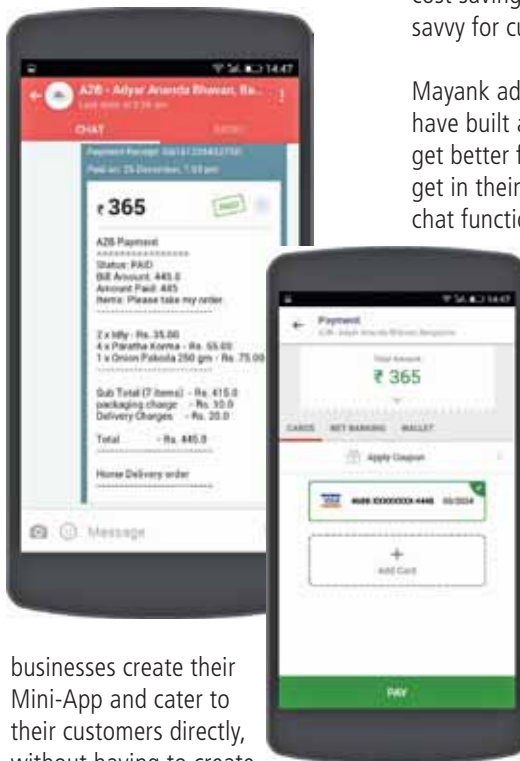
Vidyarthi Bhavan, and Empire also have their mini-apps on Goodbox.

A number of traditional shops are also available on the app, including newspaper vendors, laundry outlets, flower vendors, home bakers, and shops from more than 100 other categories.

Mayank Bidawatka, Co-Founder, Goodbox, says, "Goodbox helps

and Goodbox makes that possible without charging a commission.

Restaurants and hotels get a good part of their business from repeat customers. However, when these customers want to book a room or order food online, they make use of OTAs and other aggregators. This results in businesses losing heavy commissions. Using our app helps them invite regular customers to buy from them directly, resulting in huge cost savings and looking online-savvy for customers."



businesses create their Mini-App and cater to their customers directly, without having to create their own app. Goodbox Mega App is the only platform that customers need to interact with multiple businesses. Every business wants to connect directly with its customers,

Mayank adds, "The technology we have built allows businesses to get better features than they can get in their own app. They get a chat functionality that's similar

to popular chat applications, menu and catalog management, online payments, analytics, loyalty modules, automated marketing features, among many others.

Their Mini App gets created on Goodbox within five minutes and looks as good as many global apps. It's not viable for businesses to create

this technology themselves. We want to democratise this technology among millions of SMEs in India, help them take control of their online business and become independent."

CREATING AMBASSADORS FOR HOSPITALITY EXCELLENCE



IPS Academy is the pioneer institute offering Graduate & Masters qualification in hotel management and operation, culinary arts, chef training and travel & tourism with international quality standards and a leading human resource provider in hospitality and tourism sector.

The food in Indore is a rage all over the Indian subcontinent for their fine flavor, taste as well as variety. The fantastic Indore cuisine is certain to make the gourmand's taste buds water. A treasure trove of culinary information, Indore food and drinks are undoubtedly sublime.

The state-of-the-art infrastructure provides the perfect ambience for learning at IPS. Classroom teachings paired with adequate practical training makes the students industry ready. The institute boasts of multiple hi-tech food production units, F&B training restaurants, kitchens, bakeries, confectionary, a front office lobby and a guest room, all fully equipped to impart practical training to the students.

Courses offered:

BHM (Bachelor of Hotel Management), BBA (Hotel Management) and MBA Tourism.

FACILITIES:

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- Front Office Training Lab • Executive Classroom • Mind Room
- Accommodation Operation Lab • Seminar Hall • Automation
- Personality Development Lab • Food & Beverage Service Lab



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- Arun Nanda, Chairman, Mahindra Holidays and Resorts India*
- Ashish Jakhanwala, Managing Director and CEO, SAMHI*
- Binod Chaudhary, Chairman, CG Corp Global*
- Christopher J Nassetta, President and CEO, Hilton Worldwide*
- Craig Smith, President and MD - Asia Pacific, Marriott International*
- David Scowhill, President and CEO, World Travel and Tourism Council*
- Deep Kalra, Chairman and Group CEO, MakeMyTrip.com*
- Jonathan Vanico, Managing Director Asian Special Situations Group, Goldman Sachs*
- Kavin C Bloomer, Executive Director, Morgan Stanley*
- Mark Hoplamazian, President and CEO, Hyatt Hotels Corporation*
- Michael Issenberg, Chairman and CEO - Asia Pacific, AccorHotels*
- Peter Henley, President and CEO, Onyx Hospitality*
- Peter Kerkar, Group Chief Executive Officer, Cox and Kings*
- Rakesh Sarna, Managing Director and CEO, Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces*
- Thorsten Kirschke, President - Asia Pacific, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group*
- Vikram Oberoi, Managing Director and CEO, The Oberoi Group*



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NOTABLE SPEAKERS

- Ashish Jakhanwala, Managing Director and CEO, SAMHI*
- Anuraag Bhatnagar, Area General Manager - India, Marriott International*
- Camellia Panjabi, Group Director, Masala World / MW Eat Group*
- Devendra Bharna, Executive Vice President, Oberoi Hotels & Resorts Mumbai*
- Jean-Michel Cassé, Sr. Vice President Operations - India, AccorHotels*
- Kurt Straub, Vice President Operations, Hyatt Hotels Corporation*
- Raj Rana, Chief Executive Officer - South Asia, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group*
- Rajeev Menon, Chief Operating Officer - APAC (ex. Greater China), Marriott International*
- Rakesh Sarna, Managing Director & CEO, Taj Hotels Resorts & Palaces*
- Shantha De Silva, Head - South West Asia, InterContinental Hotels Group*
- Shridhar B Nair, General Manager, The Leela Goa*
- Tristan Beau de Lomenie, General Manager Delegate, Pullman & Novotel Delhi Aerocity*
- Vir Sanghvi, Co-Founder & Chief Critic, EazyDiner*



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