

HOTELS & RESTAURANTS INDIA

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A MONTHLY ON HOSPITALITY TRADE
By DDP Publications

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Dear fellow members,

Internationally the indirect tax levies in tourism are mostly less than 10 per cent overall while in India they are estimated to be between 20-30 per cent. The GST rate of tourism internationally is understood to be half of the standard GST rate. We hope for the classification of tourism and hospitality businesses (hotels and resorts, tour operators, travel agents, tourism transport operators, convention centres and destination/amusement/entertainment and infrastructure creation companies) in the lower GST slab which is understood to be the six to eight per cent GST slab.

According to the report of the National Skill Development Corporation entitled *Human Resource and Skill Requirements in the Travel, Tourism & Hospitality Sector (2013-17, 2017-22)* the sub-sector wise break up of employment in the year 2022 is as follows: Manpower requirements for hotels will be 2.30 million in 2022, for restaurants, 10.49 million while travel agents and tour operators will require 0.66 million.

Employment in the tourism and hospitality sector is market-driven. The Ministry of Tourism, on its part, aims to sustain the effort to skill the targeted groups for employment. The Ministry of Tourism also aims to sustain the efforts to test and formally certify the skills of the existing service providers in the sector.

It is we who would be most affected. I'm sure many of you are reeling under manpower shortage and attrition problems. It remains for us to take the onus to help educate the youth with skills and provide opportunities.

In a tech-savvy metropolitan world we often become aloof from the boundless beauty and solace that nature can offer to

us all. Visits to nature parks can open the path to a natural world from which many of us are alienated. In the cover story we find out the highs and lows of safari lodges and tiger habitat tourism in India.

Less business has meant that many hotels and resorts in the country are reeling under a financial burden since long. It is difficult for hotels to meet their financial commitments and operating costs. Today, they are finding it difficult to refurbish and renovate or upgrade the properties, which should otherwise be a continuous process. We may face a grim situation in the future with below par facilities.

With six consecutive years of downslide, hotels are finally showing small signs of recovery. Domestic tourism has got the occupancies rising and domestic corporate travel has been a significant contributor that has boosted demand in the domestic market, as per STR Global, a company that tracks the demand and supply data for hotels. Room demand has increased 10.7 per cent while room supply grew 4 per cent year-on-year.

Everyone was betting big on the fourth quarter of 2015, but the maximum rise of business is expected by the last quarter of financial year 2016.

The Indian economy has grown 7 to 7.5 per cent, despite the global slowdown. Let us hope this growth rate accelerates in 2016.

With warm regards,

Bharat Malkani
President, FHRAI



Bharat Malkani
President, FHRAI

“ I'm sure many of you are reeling under manpower shortage and attrition problems. It remains for us to take the onus to help educate the youth with skills and provide opportunities ”

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THE WILD + LIFE EXPERIENCE WITH TIGERS AND SAFARI LODGES

In our cover story we discover the highs and lows that tiger habitat tourism and safari lodges face in India.

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CHANGING DYNAMICS OF AEROCITY

We find out how Aerocity is changing and how the hotels currently open are faring

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Vivek Nair
Hony. Secretary
FHRAI

“The government is making efforts on this issue of women’s safety. However, it is important for us hoteliers to make our guests feel secure so that they spread the true positive story by word of mouth when they return home

Dear fellow members,

A total of 83,501 foreign tourists arrived in the country on e-Tourist Visa in November 2015 as compared to 2,968 during the same month in 2014, registering a growth of 2713.4 per cent. This high growth may be attributed to the introduction of the e-Tourist Visa for 113 countries as against the coverage of the earlier TVoA scheme for 12 countries. The the top five source countries availing e-Tourist Visa facilities during November, 2015 were UK (23.93 per cent), USA (16.33 per cent), Russian Federation (8.17 per cent), France (7.64 per cent) and Germany.

The top five ports that received the highest tourist arrivals on eTV were New Delhi Airport (45.04 per cent), Mumbai Airport (17.72 per cent), Goa Airport (14.62 per cent), Bengaluru Airport (5.57 per cent) and Chennai Airport (5.16 per cent).

The Government of Gujarat has granted the status of an industry to tourism through its new innovative Tourism Policy and will now aggressively promote investment opportunities in that state. The state government held an investors’ meet to apprise them on the state’s new Tourism Policy, which will be in effect till March 31, 2020.

This new policy will provide investment opportunities in eco-tourism projects, beach tourism and water sports projects, heritage tourism projects, international Buddhist sites, wayside amenities/cafeteria, cleanliness projects and Greenfield properties for development. Gujarat is also taking initiatives like PPP in tourism projects, special tourist police and annual recognition through excellence awards in the Tourism Industry.

We hope that all other states of India will follow suit and give tourism an industry status as was done by Goa three decades ago as a

result of which power and water are charged at industrial rates. This has a salutatory effect on energy costs which as we know constitutes the second highest cost component after patrol and other benefits.

Negative publicity in the international press regarding the safety and security of the women tourist is a major point of concern for tourists who decide whether to visit India or not. The government is making efforts on this issue. However, it is important for us hoteliers to make our guests feel secure so that by word of mouth they spread the true positive story when they return to their homes. As independent hoteliers, we all also need to gear up and follow through with the right kind of safety arrangements for all guests.

A Comprehensive Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India (STCI) for three major segments of tourism industry has been launched by the Ministry of Tourism (MoT). The three segments are Accommodation, Tour Operators, and the Beaches, Backwaters, Lakes and Rivers sectors. Guidelines for approval of hotel projects at the implementation stage have also been launched which require hotels to incorporate various eco-friendly measures like Sewage Treatment Plants (STP) and Rain Water Harvesting Systems at the project stage itself.

Let us pledge in the New Year to fully implement sustainable tourism practices consistent with the best environment and heritage protection standards, so that the present tourism resource requirements optimise both local community benefits and future sustainable uses.

With kind regards,
Vivek Nair
Honorary Secretary, FHRAI



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HRAWI APPEALS FOR A SINGLE WINDOW FOR DEADLINE EXTENSION APPROVALS



Bharat Malkani
President, HRAWI

The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) had welcomed the Maharashtra Government's decision to allow hotels and restaurants to operate till 5 a.m. on December 24, 25 and 31, 2015. However, it had expressed apprehension about being able to host Christmas Eve programmes as the necessary permissions had yet to be granted by the police prior to these dates.

HRAWI has appealed for blanket approvals on extension of timings on these days by default, as against ad hoc approvals given each year. It has also requested the government to provide such approvals through a single window rather than from multiple departments like the police, excise and others. "Firstly, we wish to express our thanks to the state government for granting an extension on the deadline. But without all the approvals in place we cannot conceive special programmes for our patrons. This not only affects the city from a business point of view in terms of revenues lost, both to the exchequer and the

establishments, but also restricts revellers from enjoying the spirit of the season to the fullest," said **Bharat Malkani**, President, HRAWI and Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI).

"Each year hotels face the dilemma of whether or not to proceed with making any special arrangements as we are unsure if all the permissions will come through in time. Even if the permissions do come through, it does no good for us to receive it at the eleventh hour because then



We sincerely hope that the state gives this issue of deadline extension approvals coming at the last minute due consideration and includes this in the ambit of ease of doing business in the state



we have very little time to make the required arrangements. Hence, we request all departments to expedite the process of giving permissions and extend the permissions through a single window," added Malkani.

Earlier in 2015 the Chief Minister (CM) Devendra Fadnavis had announced his commitment to promote tourism and create ease of doing business for the hotel industry in the state.

Based on the proposals submitted by HRAWI, the government in principle resolved to reduce the

operating licences from 75 to 25, with the requirement of only five forms for obtaining all these licences, to abolish event licences for pre-designated locations and permission for live performances, among other steps. "We are thankful to the Maharashtra state and especially Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis for acknowledging some of the more critical issues faced by the hotel industry. However, this particular issue of deadline extension approvals coming at the last minute remains unaddressed. HRAWI has been requesting for a blanket deadline which will do away with the need for issuing notifications every year on these three days. This will not only bring in out-of-state tourists but also



Kamlesh Barot
Past President, HRAWI

bring back the lost lustre of Mumbai, being the country's megapolis. We sincerely hope that the state gives this issue due consideration and includes this in the ambit of ease of doing business in the state," concluded **Kamlesh Barot**, past President, HRAWI.

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GOA HOTEL WINS NATIONAL TOURISM AWARD



The Resorte Marinha Dourada, Goa received the National Tourism Award for being the Best 2 Star category hotel at the National Tourism Awards 2013-2014 held on 18 September, 2015 in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The Director of Resorte Marinha Dourada, Goa, Menino Goes Proenca, received the award from his excellency Pranab Mukherjee, President of India.

The Resorte Marinha Dourada, Goa has won this National Tourism Award six times now.

Representatives of Tourism Departments of States/ Union Territories, travel and tour operators, hotels, travel agents, tourist transport operators and officials of the Ministry of Tourism were present at the function.

FLOODS CRIPPLE CHENNAI



The crippling floods in the city of Chennai have caused huge losses to the city, its people and industry as a whole. The automobile industry chambers have estimated the possible losses to be around ₹ 15,000 crore. According to Assocham, small and medium enterprises, engineering, textiles and the tourism sectors have also been badly hit by the flooding.

The rain came and Chennai responded by opening its doors. As the streets got flooded and increasingly dangerous to

navigate, the city responded with overwhelming generosity. Locals posted their addresses online, offering food and shelter to anyone who needed it. Theatres, malls and restaurants threw open their doors. Impromptu rescue teams were formed to help those who were stranded.

The gestures ranged from families cooking food all night to hotels, large and small, setting up community kitchens in their premises to help the flood-affected Chennai residents, to thoughtful Chennaiites with Internet access offering to

recharge phones with talktime for people with no balance or electricity.

The Tamil Nadu Hotel Association contributed 20,000 water bottles, five ton rice, 1,000 blankets and other relief material for the Cuddalore flood affected people. The drive was launched by **M.Venkada Subbu**, Executive Member, SIHRA and President, Tamil Nadu Hotel Association. The hospitality Industry across the city has scaled down celebrations for this time of year ensuring respect to the city and societal sentiments.

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HRANI RECOMMENDS EASE OF DOING BUSINESS TO GOVERNMENT

The travel, tourism and hospitality industry is currently passing through a very challenging phase due to multiple headwinds such as high interest rates, a visible domestic slowdown, multiple licensing, high competition at marketplace and so on.

In the present scenario ease of doing business is the need of the hour. It will not only allow more 'avenues for revenues' for the hotel and restaurant industry but also for the government.

Luv Malhotra, President HRANI, has recommended 'ease of doing business' as one of the parameters to reflect each states' suitability for attracting investment and propagating travel and tourism development. With ease in licensing norms and the



Luv Malhotra
President
HRANI

eradication of heavy taxes, there would be immense opportunities for the new entrants to get established in the

marketplace without any fears. Apart from providing scope for new businesses to set up, the introduction of single window clearance for fast and easy processing is the long pending plea for the fulfilment of which the industry is yearning, Malhotra added.

HRANI is hopeful that the government will provide a boost to the entrepreneurs, who are reeling under pressure, by creating policies friendly to them. This will not only overcome the tough battles of sustainability but will also provide motivation for more start-ups to rise. So HRANI hopes that members aim to reignite a higher growth rate and evolve the tourism and hospitality sector into one of the key drivers of growth and employment generation.

UPHRA appeals for ease to business in U.P.

In a meeting with **Alok Ranjan**, Chief Secretary, Government of Uttar Pradesh, UPHRA President **S.K. Jaiswal** and Treasurer **Ravi Khanna** put forward their suggestions for Ease to Business for the tourism industry in U.P. It was submitted that inspite of several efforts being taken by the government for the betterment of tourism in the state, there are numerous difficulties which are still hampering the state's efforts towards tourism development.



UPHRA apprised Ranjan about the problems faced by the hotels and restaurants of U.P. That originate from various government departments like labour, food & safety, energy, property tax, P.W.D and so on, appealing for the provision of sustainable tourism criteria to accelerate the growth of the tourism industry in U.P.

Uttarakhand initiates tourist sailing jetty in Nainital

In a first of its kind, a Tourist Sailing Jetty was initiated at Nainital in Uttarakhand.

The picturesque setting of Nainital mountains and the misty jheel was the perfect destination for the various colourful yachts that were



seen sailing on Naini lake. Uttarakhand Chief Minister **Harish Rawat** inaugurated the tourist jetty after which he said, "This initiative is a tremendous boost to the sports loving fraternity of Uttarakhand. Along with increase in tourism in Nainital and its nearby areas, a boost to water sports will also be there."

The Boat House Club of Nainital which was buzzing with activities and preparations for the yacht sailing competition welcomed all the members and tourists who had come from outside Nainital to witness the jetty inauguration. Tourists present at the event were doubly excited as free yacht sailing training was available for local folks and tourists for the next 60 days.



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Suman Billa
Joint Secretary
Ministry of Tourism

MOT'S FOCUS ON NATIONAL TOURISM POLICY

As the New Year begins with assurance of progress in the tourism sector, Suman Billa, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, gives a preview of what MOT has in store for 2016.

Ahana Gurung

2015 has been a chapter of establishing and promoting growth in the Indian tourism industry as several initiatives were undertaken by the Ministry of Tourism, such as the development of the eTV, release of the National Tourism Policy draft and formation of the Swadesh Darshan and Prasad schemes, among many others. Ushering in the New Year with gusto, the MOT is all geared up to make tangible changes that will enhance the overall focus of the industry.

Imparting the same message, Suman Billa, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism says, "In a way, 2015 has marked new beginnings for MOT—it was a build-up phase where we put several plans in play. It was a year where we consolidated and did a lot of ground work for a number of initiatives to take off." Furthermore, he gives a preview of 2016 and expresses that MOT will bring about substantial changes in the tourism industry. "2016 will be the year where all the initiatives we introduced in 2015 will come about in full swing," he states. "Things such as the new tourism policy and a different approach to publicity and social media will set into play. The National Tourism Policy, most likely to come into effect by early 2016, will definitely change the face of the Indian tourism industry."

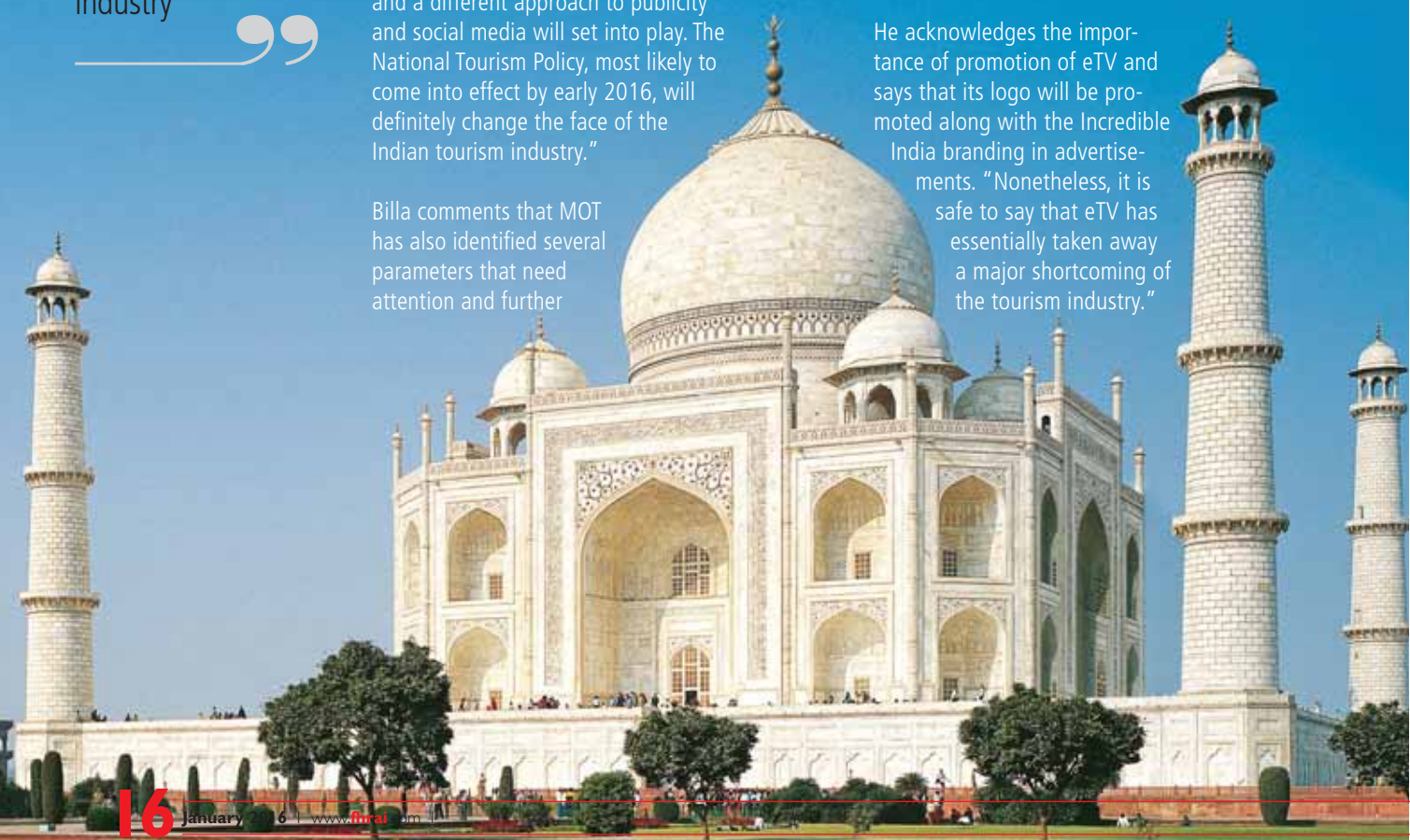
Billa comments that MOT has also identified several parameters that need attention and further

enhancement. He says, "We are going to focus on a lot of areas that require enhancement such as cruise and film tourism, to name a few. We have already started working on both aspects, especially with customs and immigration to simplify the procedures and norms and have assigned a task force as well. For film tourism, we launched the single window clearance for film producers in Goa in November and significant results are expected in 2016," he elaborates. Similarly, he mentions that the Ministry is also working on an ambitious digital presence, especially on social media. "Soon enough, India will erupt on the digital platform," he says. "We strongly feel that the digital age is the future and expect to get vendors on board by February 2016."

About infrastructure, Billa said that significant work has already begun. "By the end of the financial year, funds to the tune of ₹ 1,900 crore will be approved. Till date, approximately ₹ 1,100 crore funds have been sanctioned for the development of tourism infrastructure," he states.

He acknowledges the importance of promotion of eTV and says that its logo will be promoted along with the Incredible India branding in advertisements. "Nonetheless, it is safe to say that eTV has essentially taken away a major shortcoming of the tourism industry."

“The new tourism policy and a different approach to publicity and social media will set into play. The National Tourism Policy...will definitely change the face of the Indian tourism industry”



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MAYA IN THE NORTH Salutes the Best

The best known faces and brands of the travel industry gathered to commemorate the achievers of North India Travel Awards on December 8, 2015. The awards ceremony was held at Crowne Plaza Jaipur Tonk Road.

Gajendra Singh Khimsar, Cabinet Minister of Industries, DMIC, NRI, Sports & Youth Affairs, Government of Rajasthan was the Chief Guest for the evening. The black tie event brought together more than 120 attendees for an exciting evening celebrating tourism excellence.

Jaipur was chosen for the awards because it is an enthralling historical city and the gateway to India's most flamboyant state. The city's colourful, chaotic streets ebb and flow with a heady brew of old and new. **SanJeet**, Mentor, India Travel Awards said, "These awards signify the growth of the industry, which has developed immensely in the last few years. Encouraged by the enormous success of India Travel Awards in other regions, we wish to continue with this. India Travel Awards is a platform which recognises and applauds the true leaders of the fraternity, to acknowledge the emerging leaders. We are proud to have been instrumental in helping it flourish, and will continue with our endeavours."

Radha Bhatia, Chairperson, Bird Group, joined the Gallery of Legends, while Bhim Singh, Managing Director, Rajasthan Tours and President Federation of Hospitality and Tourism of Rajasthan, was declared the DDP Trailblazer. DDP Game Changer was Ajeet Bajaj, Founder and Managing Director, Snow Leopard

Adventures, while Mittu Chandilya, CEO and Managing Director, AirAsia India, was announced as the Face of the Future. Pankaj Nagpal was pronounced the Entrepreneur of the Year.

India Travel Awards supports and promotes the Indian travel and tourism industry by identifying and rewarding excellence, and inspiring its practitioners to continuously raise the standards of their products and service offerings. Based on a unique system of jury judgment and voting, these awards are fair and unbiased. The formal ceremony was glitzy, glamorous and was graced by the who's who of the travel industry. India Travel Awards is supported by the Government of India, Ministry of Tourism and is now hailed as one of the most esteemed awards in the tourism industry of India. These awards are also braced by esteemed trade bodies like Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI), Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI), Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) and IATA Agents Association of India (IAAI).

India Travel Awards runs and governs a comprehensive programme across a range of awards developed to recognise the industry's most vital sectors and product offerings. Awards are presented across four regions—South, East, West, and North.





GALLERY OF LEGENDS
Radha Bhatia, Chairperson, Bird Group



DDP GAME CHANGER
Ajcet Bajaj, Founder & Managing Director, Snow Leopard Adventures



DDP TRAILBLAZER
Bhim Singh, Managing Director, Rajasthan Tours & President, Federation of Hospitality and Tourism of Rajasthan



FACE OF THE FUTURE
Mittu Chandilya, CEO & Managing Director, AirAsia India

FITNESS

ANANDA INTRODUCES 'ANANDA ACTIVE'

Ananda's new Ananda Active programme is designed to combine personal fitness, outdoor treks, yoga, aqua fitness and therapeutic spa experiences to create a complete rejuvenating and strengthening experience. Ananda is in partnership with **Sumaya Dalmia**, a leading wellness professional in India and a pioneer in the fitness industry, and the fitness experiences within the Active



Programme are now individualised, consultative and follow a goal-oriented fitness approach.

The new Ananda Active programme evaluates a person's current fitness level and identifies treks best suited to both his or her physical condition and the type of landscape and experience he or she seeks. Outdoor fitness activities also help people understand how their bodies respond to the outdoor terrain and uncontrolled exercise environments. This makes it easier for them to identify their problem areas and weaknesses so that they can begin



strengthening them all once they are back in the gym. The menu for the Active Package features cuisine rooted in Ayurvedic principles, adapted to international signature dishes and customised for each individual's needs, supporting the activities and intense training of the overall Active package. Using only seasonal and organic fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and legumes, as well as other carefully selected ingredients, Ananda's new Active menus deliver a satisfying balance of high protein, healthy fats, fiber, and carbohydrates to fuel the body for optimum performance while training.

MERGER

ACCORHOTELS ACQUIRES FRHI FOR US\$2.9 BILLION

AccorHotels has announced the signing of an agreement with the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), Kingdom Holding Company of Saudi Arabia and Oxford Properties, the real estate division of the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System, for the acquisition of FRHI Holdings Ltd (FRHI), parent company of Fairmont, Raffles, and Swissôtel chains. The US\$2.9 billion deal will include FRHI's three global luxury hotel brands, covering 155 hotels and resorts—of which 40 are under development—and more than 56,000 rooms spanning 34 countries. According to **Sébastien Bazin**, Chairman and CEO of AccorHotels, the acquisition of these three global brands will strategically

enhance the group's portfolio and its geographic reach, in particular in the United States—the primary issuing market for international tourism. With its new portfolio of nearly 500 luxury and upscale properties, AccorHotels aims to generate about US \$65 million in revenue and cost synergies in the medium-term from the amalgamation of brands, the maximisation of hotel earnings, and the increased efficiency of marketing, sales and distribution channel initiatives. The deal comes shortly after Marriott's US \$12 billion takeover of Starwood, and continues with the rising trend of consolidation in the hotel industry.

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DEAL

CARLSON REZIDOR HOTEL GROUP SIGNS SEVEN HOTELS IN J&K



In a multiple-property deal, the Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group has announced the signing of a portfolio agreement with the Mushtaq Group of Hotels to open seven hotels with 817-rooms under the Radisson Blu, Radisson and Country Inns & Suites By CarlsonM brands in the northern Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. The seven hotels will be located in the main gateway markets throughout the state and will position the Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group as the largest international hotel operator in Jammu and Kashmir. The first hotel is expected to open in the fourth quarter of 2016 in Srinagar.

"This multiple-hotel portfolio deal underscores the rapid rate of Carlson Rezidor's expansion and reinforces our leading position in India, a key market that we are deeply committed to. We are

pleased to be forging a new partnership and will employ our proven strategy of signing conversions as well as new builds to establish a strong brand presence efficiently," said **Thorsten Kirschke**, President, Asia Pacific, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group.

Raj Rana, Chief Executive Officer, South Asia, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group added, "The region enjoys strong domestic leisure demand and is home to some of the most visited leisure destinations in India. Integral to our growth in India is an emphasis on expanding in leisure markets and state capitals. With the signing of this portfolio, we will make inroads into the summer and winter capital of Jammu and Kashmir, as well as provide our Club Carlson members an international brand choice in high demand leisure driven markets such as Srinagar, Pahalgam and Gulmarg."

REBRANDING

IHG TO REBRAND A HOTEL AT T-3, IGIA

InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) has signed a management agreement with Radius Developers to rebrand an existing 93-room hotel at Terminal 3 of India's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA). Currently operating as Eaton Smart—New Delhi Airport Transit Hotel, this was India's first hotel to open in the transit area of an airport terminal. The rebranding of this hotel to Holiday Inn Express New Delhi International Airport Terminal 3 will mark the brand's entry into New Delhi.

Forty million passengers pass through the airport each year and this is projected to more than double following the completion of the expansion programme by 2030. **Shantha de Silva**, Head of South West Asia, IHG, said: "We always look for the right partner to grow our brands with



and are delighted to be working with Radius Developers to launch our Holiday Inn Express brand at a great location in New Delhi. We see a real opportunity to draw transit guests into our hotel with our Holiday Inn Express brand offering and look forward to delivering great guest experiences to even more people."

Ujjval Desai, Director, Radius Developers, said: "As the hotel is located in the heart of India's busiest aviation hub, it is important for us to have the right brand offering transit guests exactly what they need—a fuss-free, convenient stay and great night's sleep—before they take off the next day. IHG has had great success with Holiday Inn Express which is now one of the fastest growing hotel brands in the world and we look forward to working with them to draw more guests through our doors."

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LAUNCH

TAJ BANGALORE OPENS

Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces has announced the opening of Taj Bangalore, the latest addition to the group's luxury portfolio and the sixth Taj group hotel in the Garden City. Conveniently located minutes from the Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru, Taj Bangalore offers guests a world of sophisticated luxury.

"Bangalore is the epicentre of India's entrepreneurial wave and an emerging centre for international conclaves and conferences. As the city continues to grow and thrive, we are excited to add to the momentum by welcoming the newest Taj hotel to the city. Taj Bangalore reflects the city's unique urban identity



and will extend to its guests the unmistakable Taj warmth and elegance," said **Prabhat Verma**, Senior Vice President - Operations - South, Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces.

"Taj Bangalore is designed to give entrepreneurs, business professionals and those in search of rest and relaxation the very best of the Taj's legendary service. Our services are centred on the guest experience: Spacious rooms, expansive conference and events spaces, dedicated start-up friendly zones and round-the-clock gastronomic treats encourage the mind-space to think and create. On-the-go food and the anti-jet-lag menu at the elegant Jiva spa are designed with our multitasking guests in mind," said **Ian Dubier**, General Manager, Taj Bangalore.

Through its contemporary, sleek and spacious design, the Taj Bangalore offers a window into the progressive spirit of the Garden City. The melding of indoor and outdoor space and use of natural light is a tribute to the city's temperate climate.

In dedicated collaborative work-life zones, guests will be able to work, network, dine and socialise against the backdrop of extensive green lawns and open spaces. The high ceilinged event spaces lend themselves to making it the ideal setting for large meetings, conference and weddings events alike.

LAUNCH

THE LEELA EXPANDS WITH THIRD LUXURY HOTEL IN NCR

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts has announced a new addition to the group's luxury portfolio with the reflagging of the Ambience Group's five-star deluxe hotel in East Delhi. Renamed The Leela Ambience Convention Hotel, Delhi, the 480-room property offers one of the largest conference and event spaces in India.

With the newest addition, The Leela group now operates three unique properties in Delhi-NCR totalling over 1,150 rooms, further enhancing its brand appeal and market penetration.

Commenting on the development, **Rajiv Kaul**, President, The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts said: "The addition of The Leela Ambience Convention Hotel Delhi to our portfolio further consolidates our presence in the Delhi-NCR region and underscores our asset light growth strategy. The hotel is designed to offer a seamless experience for large conferences, weddings, exhibitions and product launches to guests from here and overseas. As India



emerges as a significant destination for world-class banqueting, conventions and events, this property shall further assist in making Delhi a preferred upscale MICE destination."



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THE WILD LIFE EXPERIENCE WITH TIGERS **AND** SAFARI LODGES

Sustainable wildlife tourism can not only act as a check against poachers but also becomes a means of livelihood and progress for the tribal as well as local populations. India has the largest number of tigers in the world. The majestic tiger has been part and parcel of Indian life and folklore for long and is also our national animal. In our cover story we discover the highs and lows that tiger habitat tourism and safari lodges face in India.

Kanchan Nath



Julian Matthews
Chairman
TOFT Tigers

The wildlife conservation efforts of the Indian government appear to be bearing fruit, particularly in some of the most well visited tiger reserves in the country. Tiger numbers are up to nearly 2,200 from 1,400 a decade ago according to latest census figures, and protection efforts and village relocations have helped to extend tiger territory further. In fact so much that many reserves like Ranthambhore are now bursting with tigers, and, being territorial, the young tigers have to move out and find new jungles to live in.

The nature tourism industry has been pivotal to this protection success. Over the last decade its sheer economics—new local jobs and support together with visitors' park fees—has had a huge impact on once neglected landscapes and regions, ensuring that politicians, media and agencies take far greater interest in once neglected wilderness destinations. These new 'economic hotspots' galvanise energy, jobs, enterprise and industry where once there was no hope. The Kanha Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh, as an example, is calculated to generate ₹1,650 crore per annum in benefit, and a single famous tigress was calculated by a nature action charity, TOFTigers, to have been responsible for generating over US \$103 million dollars and 3,500 jobs for parks, local businesses and bordering villages over a decade. Field Directors in some of the most visited parks now have up to two or three times their allocated budgets to use for protection and village support thanks to park revenues from the many visitors.

The hotel and lodge industry needs to do better to ensure wilderness areas are protected and not overused. Sustainable certification of accommodation providers is a clear benchmark, setting standards for lodge providers besides parks and driving a new more responsible format of nature tourism for the long term.





Belinda Wright
Owner
Kipling Camp

LAWS & CONSERVATION

Preservation is a very large and long sustaining process, campaigns have been largely media offerings or corporate initiatives that aim at the civil society, but what they do is create awareness and mobilise groups like kids for tigers and so on. They raise funds and bring to light the plight of the tigers in the wild. The hard work rests with organisations like WPSI, WTI, WFF and others and their initiatives, however local Initiatives have to be applauded as well. Some of the lodges make it a part of their DNA to sustain local economies by offering jobs, education and also by creating awareness among the villagers about the legacy of the tiger and its role in holding up the ecology of the jungles. This awareness I believe will help protect the forests and the tigers in the wild.

INCREDIBLE TIGER SAFARIS@KIPLING CAMP

Kipling has always aimed at community involvement, with all their employees from the local villages. The naturalists as they are from the local communities offer a native knowledge of the forest, it's flora and fauna which works both ways. Kipling Camp also encourages local activities like nature walks, village visits and other attractions like excursions and encourages people to seek other gates to ensure that there is less crowding at the popular gates. Besides being set in a large acreage with a lake within

“With the change in regulations for safaris, one of the biggest challenges we face in Kanha is non-availability of safaris”



its premises, the atmosphere at Kipling Camp is that one is staying within touching distance of the surrounding Kanha forests.

BRIDGING HOSPITALITY WITH MINIMUM IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

It is quite simple really, by ensuring comfort and quality over extravagance and unnecessary trappings of luxury—Kipling Camp in service, ideology and concept ensures that the impact on the surroundings is minimal. Just 12 cottages, under a tree cover. With cottages inspired by local architecture, open spaces to sit out and the pavilion, Shamiana, for dining and as a lounge ensure that there is minimum need for air conditioning.

THE WILD + LIFE EXPERIENCE

Kipling Camp encourages guests to take nature walks and excursions to nearby areas not only for safaris in the jungles but also to see life as it is in and around the forests which are inhabited by villagers and tribal settlements. It is a wonderful insight into challenges faced by organisations that work on conservation issues both for the habitat as well as saving the big cat.

TIGER- SIGHTINGS

Kipling Camp promotes jungle experiences which are holistic and are inclusive of the jungle with its birds, trees, insects and other animals of the wild rather than promote safaris that focus on seeing the tigers. Having said that



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tiger sightings are subject to many factors and change depending upon the age of the animal and time of the year.

MAIN CHALLENGE OF RUNNING SAFARI LODGES

With the change in regulations for safaris, one of the biggest challenges we face in Kanha is non-

availability of safaris as bookings for jeeps are now online and open three months before the date of the safari. This means by the time guests confirm their stay with us and make the payments, safaris are no longer available.

2015 VIS-À-VIS 2014/ GROWTH/VISITOR PROFILE

Kipling Camp has always had more foreign tourists as we are the oldest lodge in India and have a reputation for conservation and service. Having said that, over the last few years we have been promoting our concept strategically to the domestic travellers and we have seen an increase in domestic guests to Kipling Camp.



Amit Sankhala
Owner
Jamtara Wilderness
Camp

LAWS & CONSERVATION

Campaigns have definitely created the awareness about protecting and saving the tiger. The momentum has to be kept up and maintained each year so that people do not forget. However, it is the government which has to implement the projects and this sometimes takes time. This is reason enough for the 'save the tiger' campaigns to continue focusing on the preservation of the tiger.

INCREDIBLE TIGER SAFARIS@ JAMTARA WILDERNESS

We pride ourselves in the safari experience, which not only includes trying to spot the tiger, but also other animals—the flora and fauna. It is important to offer a wholesome jungle and wildlife experience. We hire, knowledgeable naturalists who accompany all clients on their jungle safari; they bring the jungle alive with their knowledge and stories and contribute to educating the visitors.



“ We have used only a small part of the land we own to put up our tents and have allowed the forest to grow back in ”

SAFARIS, BUT WHAT OF SUSTAINABILITY?

It has always been our endeavour to have minimum impact on the land and our surroundings. We have used only a small part of the land we own to put up our tents

and allowed the forest to grow back in, moreover, during the months that the parks are closed we pack up our tents, leaving the land as is. Jamtara Wilderness Camp-Pench is also contributing towards the economy of the local village of Jamtara, being the only property located at Jamtara Gate, hence is able to employ local staff and use farmers' lands for our 'Star Bed' experience, for visitors.

TIGER- SIGHTINGS

Wildlife exploration in the parks is limited to the jeep safaris as envisaged by the M.P. Forest Department. Tiger sightings are unpre-

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dictable but have their moments. On the whole, they are pretty good and are on the increase due to the number of cubs born each year. At Jamtara we promote drives in the main park and buffer zone area, lessening the pressure on the main park. We also encourage guests to take the birding walk with our naturalist and visit the village to be enchanted by the stories, local culture, flora and fauna of this region.

REMARKABLE /UNEXPECTED/BIZARRE EXPERIENCE

Difficult to remember the surprise sighting of a tiger on the road, coming out of nowhere, without

any alarm calls! Or sometimes an unexpected turn and walk towards the jeep by the tiger or his just coming close enough to touch ! Which is rare.

CHALLENGES AND MORE

The main challenge of running a jungle lodge is trying to make the client understand the importance of nature and of staying without televisions! Other challenges are of coordination with the forest department for the safaris and jeeps and other matters, taxes that are increased, changes in government policy and so on. We have also committed ourselves to working with locals. While there

are advantages in doing so there are limitations too in terms of training, following procedures, holidays and working during festivals and so on.

2015 VIS-À-VIS 2014/ GROWTH/VISITOR PROFILE

Growth has been very slow this year. We will probably close at the same figures as last year, if we are lucky. We have a mix of both domestic and foreign clientele but have definitely seen an increase and interest from the domestic market more this year. If safaris were easier to book, we would see an increase in the numbers of foreign tourists too.



Bhaskar J Barua
Owner
Agoratoli Resort and
Luit Holidays

LAWS & CONSERVATION

I believe the campaigns have achieved the purpose of creating awareness among people who are active in the social media or generally people who are in the know of things. I believe that campaigns even in the schools (a very good initiative) are only in the urban areas. But we have to contemplate whether these campaigns have been able to influence the real stakeholders—the people living in the fringe areas of the tiger habitat.

INCREDIBLE TIGER SAFARIS@AGORATOLI RESORT

Kaziranga, as you are well aware, boasts of the highest density of tigers among all protected areas in



the world. However, unlike places like Ranthambore and Kanha for instance, tiger sightings are rare here given the very thick foliage. Our tiger safari experiences are based on educating the visitors about the the huge prey base for the tigers here, their territorial

nature, man-animal conflict and so on.

HOSPITALITY WITH MINIMUM IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Our hospitality is based on the following parameters: (a) All our





staff are drawn from the neighboring villages and not from any hotel management institutes. (b) We do not have air-conditioners, swimming pools, television sets, electronic music and other such things. (c) Most of our raw materials are sourced from the nearby villages, thus encouraging organic cultivation. (d) We organise nature orientation and capacity building training among the local youths and schoolchildren from the villages.

TIGER- SIGHTINGS

We undertake birding trails in the

nearly Panbari Reserve Forest and the Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary. Tiger sightings have increased over the years.

REMARKABLE /UNEXPECTED/ BIZARRE EXPERIENCE

A couple of years back, I was inside the park with two Swiss Nationals—waiting near a tiger trail. The area belonged to a prominent male tiger. The trail was on the left of the area where our gypsy was parked. We spent about an hour waiting for the tiger to appear and had given up hope, when suddenly we noticed

“

Our tiger safari experiences are based on educating the visitors about the tigers here, man-animal conflict and so on

”



the tiger was observing us all the while from behind us, hiding under a bush. This was typical tiger behavior at its best.

MAIN CHALLENGE OF RUNNING SAFARI LODGES IN INDIA

Unruly and neo-rich Indian tourists who only come to the field to party.

2015 VIS-À-VIS 2014/ GROWTH/VISITOR PROFILE

Slightly better. We had a growth percentage of 12 per cent. RevPAR was around Rs. 5,000.00. We had more Indian tourists.

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Yadavendra Singh
Managing Partner
Samode Safari Lodge
Bandhavgarh

The success of 'save the tiger campaign' can be measured with the tiger population growing across India.

TIGER SAFARIS@ SAMODE SAFARI LODGE

Wildlife enthusiasts from across the globe travel to India to sight tigers. We at Samode Safari Lodge educate the traveller about the tiger and the other wildlife present in the Bandhavgarh National Park. The inhouse naturalists at the Lodge have fantastic wildlife knowledge of the area which they share with the traveller. The safari experience for the traveller is unique and satisfying as they are briefed and spoken to about the flora, fauna, birds and the other wild animals in the park.

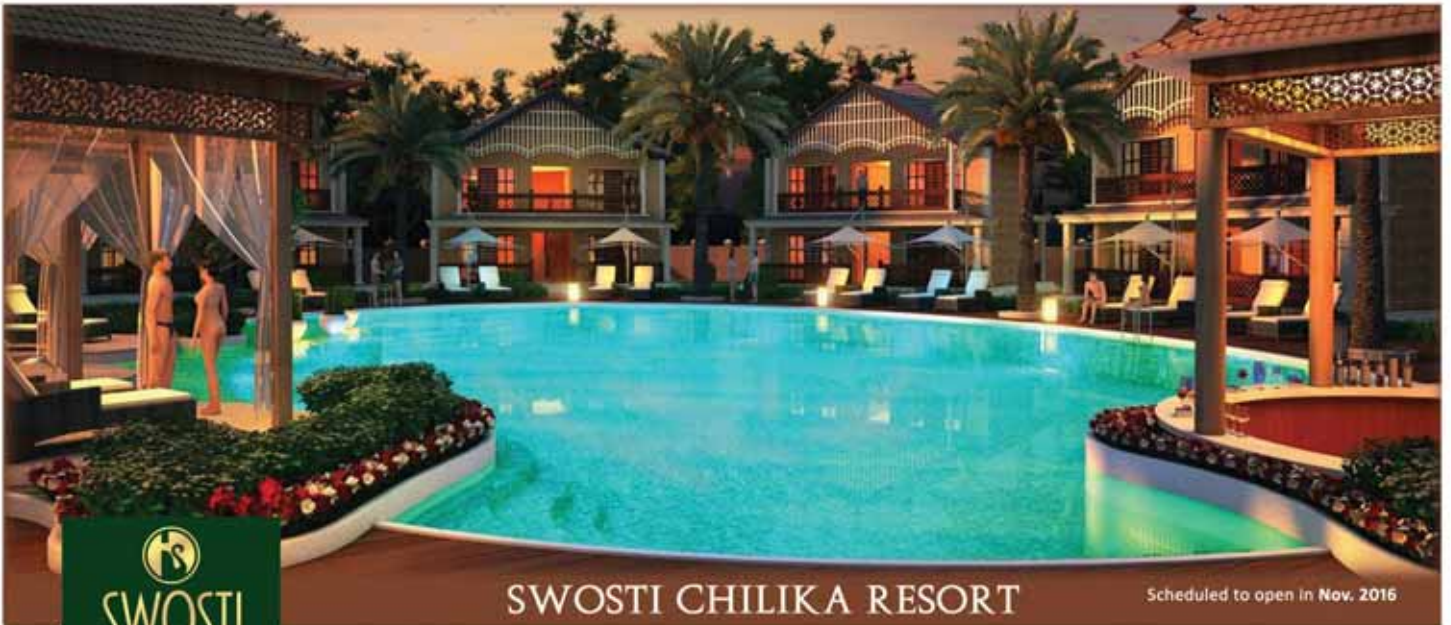


“ The challenge for the lodges across India is connectivity and forest rules that vary from one park to the other ”

ECO-TOURISM

We, at Samode, largely work with the community and the maximum number of employees are from the nearby village, close to the Samode Safari Lodge. Yearly educational events are held for the kids of these villages regarding the importance of flora and fauna. We also provide transportation





WHERE PASSION LIVES

SWOSTI CHILIKA RESORT

Scheduled to open in Nov. 2016

Moving forward, Swosti Group would be unveiling a world class Luxury Resort on Chilika Lake, the 2nd largest lagoon in the world and admired for its irresistible beauty and tranquility. To allow travellers to soak in and experience this magical sight in its full glory and grandeur, **Swosti Chilika Resort**, with 82 finely crafted cottages and innumerable amenities has been planned to be amongst the best that the country has experienced!! The construction work at site is fast in progress and scheduled to **open in November 2016**.

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for medical emergencies for the villagers to the town and financial help in major medical emergencies to the village people.

TIGER- SIGHTINGS

We only operate at the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve and the sightings have increased over the years since the population of tigers has increased.

REMARKABLE /UNEXPECTED- BIZARRE EXPERIENCE

Every guest and naturalist has had some wonderful experience during the safaris. The sighting of the tiger right next to the Samode Safari Lodge or of a tigress sitting close to the village, next to the Lodge is the most unexpected experience for all of us.

MAIN CHALLENGE

The challenge for the lodges across India is connectivity and forest rules that vary from one park to the other.

2015 VIS-À-VIS 2014/ GROWTH/VISITOR PROFILE

The occupancy for 2015-16 has gone up and so has the Revpar. The balance between domestic and foreign traveler is a 50:50.



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Changing dynamics of AEROCITY

Aerocity still remains largely a construction site even as a few hotels have opened doors and started operations here. We find out how this active space is changing and how the hotels currently open are faring.



Antony
General Manager
JW Marriott
New Delhi Aerocity

“Aerocity as a destination is still a construction site. Hence, the buy in from customers to believe in this destination takes longer”

JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity started operating by October 2013

NUMBER OF OPERATIONAL ROOMS

There are 523 rooms and all the rooms are functional.

ARRS, OCCUPANCIES AND REVPAR

While the hotel has been in a ramp up phase, we have seen a tremendous growth in volumes at the hotel. The pricing has been rationalised and that has helped increase the occupancy of the hotel by almost 65 per cent compared to 2014. The ARR's are now more in line with the market and immediate competition set. The ADR has seen a slight dip of five per cent over last year.

THE HOTEL SEGMENT THAT MAKES THE MAXIMUM REVENUE

Rooms and F&B, including catering, contribute 50:50 currently. The main segments that the hotel focuses on are MICE, special corporate as well as the wedding segment for banqueting.

CHALLENGES OF OPERATING OUT OF AEROCITY

Aerocity as a destination is still a construction site. Hence, the buy in from customers to believe in this destination takes longer. But, the location of Aerocity is central as it is equidistant (approx 20-25 mins) from three major hubs in Delhi NCR namely : Gurgaon Cybercity, Vasant Kunj as well as Central Delhi.





Tristan Beau De Lomenie
General Manager Delegate
Pullman Novotel
New Delhi Aerocity

“ Industry experts foresee an increase in stiff competition as Aerocity will be crucial for hotels in the next two or three years ”

The Pullman and Novotel New Delhi Aerocity opened its doors to guests on 1 November 2015.

NUMBER OF OPERATIONAL ROOMS

Pullman & Novotel New Delhi Aerocity are a unique premium combination offering from AccorHotels. Together both the hotels add up to an expansive inventory of 670 rooms, the largest under a single roof in Aerocity.

Individually, Pullman New Delhi Aerocity has 270 keys and Novotel New Delhi Aerocity boasts of 400 keys. However, currently Pullman has 99 rooms and Novotel has 207 operational.

CONFERENCE CAPACITY OF THE HOTEL

The hotel is well positioned to attain a large segment of the increasingly important Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) market. The property offers a convention space spread over a vast expanse of more than 40,000 sq ft with the pillarless Peacock Ballroom measuring 12,719 sq ft. Guests have the option of hiring out the entire ballroom or in parts as it can be partitioned into three separate halls.

We bring to you state-of-the-art meeting and convention spaces with 13 fully-equipped meeting rooms, three boardrooms with



flexible room layouts and one of the largest pillarless ballroom spaces in the Delhi—National Capital Region measuring over 1,181 sq.m. The versatile meeting rooms can be adapted to suit various requirements with flexible seating layouts.

The guests at Pullman New Delhi Aerocity have access to an elaborate range of facilities and services for meetings and events:

- ✦ State-of-the-art A/V technology with lights installed on trusses that drop down from the ceiling
- ✦ Maximum utilisation of floor space
- ✦ Plug & Play from laptop and tablet devices onto high resolution ceiling projectors
- ✦ Elegant and contemporary, the design and décor is inspired by the Indian peacock—vibrant, stately and majestic
- ✦ Themed coffee break, lunch, dinner and cocktail options
- ✦ High-speed Wi-Fi internet access
- ✦ Large pre-function area measuring 1,651 sq. m.

CHALLENGES OF OPERATING OUT OF AEROCITY

With top of the line 14 luxury hotels and more than 5,000 hotel rooms, the 43-acre hospitality and commercial district named as the New Delhi Aerocity is expected to usher in volumes and growth for the hospitality industry. Industry experts foresee an increase in stiff competition as Aerocity will be crucial for hotels in the next two or three years with some top hotel brands being fully operational and others being launched soon.

Besides offering quick access to the airport and being centrally located between the business areas of Delhi and Gurgaon, the area provides incentives for business and for long distance travellers. However, security still remains a concern for hotel operators in this area. The proximity of the hotels to the airport has always been a cause of concern for security agencies. Hotels are undertaking a slew of measures like bulletproof windows to intruder detection systems that have been strongly recommended by security agencies.





Matthieu Firmin
General Manager
ibis Delhi Aerocity

The ibis New Delhi Aerocity commenced its operations on 25 August 2014

NUMBER OF OPERATIONAL ROOMS

Currently we are operating on 316 keys. Additionally, we are working to launch the hotel's new wing of 129 keys by early next year, thus bringing the total room inventory to a massive count of 445 guest rooms. This second phase also brings in additional covers in our vast range of F&B.

ARRS, OCCUPANCIES AND REVPAR

It's been little over a year now, from when we have seen continuous growth on average daily rate. As a strategy it was our cautious approach of penetrating all the segments with our competitive price points. Once that was done we kept altering our approach which is yielding a higher on Average Daily Rate with sustainable occupancy.

In our endeavour of providing our guests with value for money and to support our strategy of yielding higher ADR, we have

“ A major challenge is the underdeveloped infrastructure. Due to ongoing construction, roads are mostly not cleaned resulting in a lot of dust and debris ”



introduced a new room category called 'Room with Extra Benefits'. On an incremental value of ₹ 1,500 we are offering the following value add-ons.

- ✂ A 24 hours check-in and check-out



- ✂ Individual car for airport pick-up and drop
- ✂ Full range of bathroom amenities (Dental Kit, Shaving Kit, Slippers, Loofah, Moisturiser, Shampoo, Lip Balm, Shower Gel, Conditioner) in a trendy bag
- ✂ Premium wi-fi (with speed of 2 mbps)
- ✂ Two drink vouchers per person
- ✂ Buffet Breakfast

We have rolled this room category on 11 December, 2015 and the response has been very encouraging so far.

THE HOTEL SEGMENT THAT MAKES THE MAXIMUM REVENUE

So far the room revenue is contributing the highest to the overall hotel revenue, with contracted and transient performing quite well as sub-segment. However our F&B is not very far behind as we are exceeding the expected covers per month in our multi-cuisine restaurant Spice it. Our F&B is expected to achieve higher revenue in the near future, as we are one of the very few hotels in Aerocity serving mid-night buffet. An interesting fact is that we serve buffet 18 hours a day. To start your day we have extended breakfast hours to cater to early risers as well as the late risers; it extends from 04.00 am

to 12.00 pm. We serve buffet lunch from 12.30 pm to 16.00 PM, buffet dinner from 19.00 pm till midnight and mid-night buffet is on from 01.30 am to 03.00 am. So we are always ready to satisfy the belly of our guests on a 24X7 basis with our classic a la carte menu which works as fillers between our buffets.

CONFERENCE CAPACITY OF THE HOTEL

The hotel can accommodate 170 pax in theatre style seating. It's maximum space is 285 square metre, further divisible into three sound-proofed halls with state-of-the-art conferencing facilities to a minimum capacity of 40 pax and a maximum capacity of 100 pax in a single hall.

CHALLENGES OF OPERATING OUT OF AEROCITY

A major challenge is the underdeveloped infrastructure. Due to ongoing construction, roads are mostly not cleaned resulting in a lot of dust and debris. This also clearly leads to the neglect of landscaping. GMR is still in the planning phase for the provision of basic amenities like drainage and water supply. Hopefully, with the opening of the much awaited project, 'World Mark', early next year our guests will get abundant options for shopping and other recreational activities.



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for your
tongue



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Sukhbeen Singh Tara
Hotel Manager
Lemon Tree Premier
Delhi Airport

Lemon Tree Premier, Delhi Airport, commenced operations on 26 December 2013.

NUMBER OF OPERATIONAL ROOMS

Lemon Tree Premier, Delhi Airport has 280 rooms and is operating with full inventory.

ARRS, OCCUPANCIES AND REVPAR

We have only grown from strength to strength. There is a significant increase in both our ARRs and occupancies as compared to last year. We have seen a growth of 20 per cent in RevPar over last year.

THE HOTEL SEGMENT THAT MAKES THE MAXIMUM REVENUE

Since we do not have very large conferencing spaces at this hotel, 70 per cent of our revenues come through rooms. However, we are strategically targeting small to medium MICE groups to increase our banqueting revenues.

CONFERENCE CAPACITY OF THE HOTEL

Lemon Tree Premier, Delhi Airport is a perfect place to organise small events and celebrations. With a beautiful poolside that is surrounded by alfresco seating, a group of 250 guests can be

easily accommodated. Besides this, the two fully equipped conference rooms with individual capacities of 100-120 guests respectively are also a great place to hold corporate seminars and team building exercises.

CHALLENGES OF OPERATING OUT OF AEROCITY

With multiple hotels opening in its vicinity, there is definitely a lot of competition. There are limited local residences in Aerocity's periphery. There are also no malls, entertainment or shopping options around the hotel presently, which are added attractions to draw leisure travelers and FITs.

“ We have only grown from strength to strength. There is a significant increase in both our ARRs and occupancies as compared to last year ”





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WHAT DOES GST MEAN FOR US?

India has a plethora of taxes levied by the centre and the states which have been a deterrent and have discouraged business. GST, when introduced, may make the country more business-friendly. However, there are some concerns in the hospitality industry.



Amitabh Devendra

To make the country more business-friendly the government mooted the idea of a single Goods and Service Tax in the year 2000 which would subsume the various state and central taxes and would apply uniformly across the country. It was felt that such a measure would encourage a potential business to invest in India. Under GST there would be only one tax

rate for both goods and services.

There would be the Central GST, State GST and Integrated GST applicable on interstate supplies and imports.

Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST)

In keeping with this idea Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) would subsume the following Central Taxes: CENVAT; service tax; central excise duty; additional excise duties; excise duty levied under the Medicinal Toilet preparations (Excise Duties) Act, 1955; service tax; additional customs duty (Countervailing duty or CVD); special additional duty of customs (SAD) and central surcharges and cesses.

State Goods and Services Tax (SGST)

State taxes that would be subsumed would be VAT; state

sales tax; entertainment tax not levied by local bodies; luxury tax; taxes on lottery, betting, and gambling; tax on advertisements; state cesses and surcharges related to



Goods & Services Tax

17-18%: STANDARD RATE FOR GST, THE RATE AT WHICH MOST PRODUCTS ARE

12%: LOWER SLAB OF GST FOR ESSENTIAL ITEMS

40%: RANGE FOR THE GST RATE (THE HIGHER RATE IS APPLICABLE FOR SELECT PRODUCTS SUCH AS LUXURY CARS AND TOBACCO PRODUCTS)

Impact of GST on Tourism Arrivals and Receipts

Sr. No.	Country	Standard Gst Rate (SR) for others	Tourism Gst Rate (Tr) for Tourism Industry	Tourism Inflow	Tourism Foreign Exchange Earnings
1	Austria	20%	10%	23m	\$20bn
2	Belgium	20%	6%	8m	\$12bn
3	Czech Republic	19%	9%	9m	\$8bn
4	Finland	22%	8%	4m	\$3.5bn
5	France	19.60%	5.50%	80m	\$55bn
6	Greece	19%	9%	15m	\$14bn
7	Iceland	25.50%	7%	0.8m	\$0.5bn
8	Italy	20%	10%	46m	\$43bn
9	Israel	15%	0%	3m	\$5bn
10	Portugal	20%	5%	8m	\$12bn
11	Spain	16%	7%	57mn	\$60bn

Cont...

Impact of GST on Tourism Arrivals and Receipts

Sr. No.	Country	Standard Gst Rate (SR) for others	Tourism Gst Rate (Tr) for Tourism Industry	Tourism Inflow	Tourism Foreign Exchange Earnings
12	SWITZERLAND	7.60%	3.60%	9m	\$18bn
13	SWEDEN	25%	12%	11m	\$14bn
14	THAILAND	10%	7%	20m	\$30bn
15	MALAYSIA	10%	6%	25m	\$21bn
16	SINGAPORE	7%	7%	11m	\$20bn
17	HONG KONG	Nil	NIL	60.8m	\$43bn
18	JAPAN	10%	8%	19m	\$16bn
19	AUSTRALIA	10%	10%	8.5m	\$33bn
20	TURKEY	18%	8%	31.5m	\$34bn
21	INDIA	25-30%	25-30%	7m	\$18bn

Source: <http://www.vatlive.com/vat-rates/international-vat-and-gst-rates/>
<http://www.tradingeconomics.com/hong-kong/tourist-arrivals>
<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.RCPT.CD>

supply of good and services; and entry tax not levied by local bodies.

GST also proposes to exclude certain type of products and services from taxation. These presently are real estate, alcohol, petroleum products, electricity and tobacco products. This is counterproductive as the very purpose of GST is to have a consolidated goods and services tax.

In its pre-budget memorandum FHRAI has voiced these concerns to the Ministry of Finance and has advocated that these items should be included under the GST scheme.

GST advocates a major shift in taxation from goods being taxed at the point of origin or manufacture to being taxed at the point of consumption.

As such, the place of service or point of sale will decide the payment of GST. This will be a challenge for service providers especially for hotel chains operating pan-India as they will be required to register in each state from which they operate.

For chains that have multiple hotels they would face difficulties in tracking the credits that are due to them as it is possible that the company has credits in one state and is depositing tax in another. Further, it is anticipated this will also increase the compliance burden on the service providers.

It has also identified a revenue neutral rate—the rate at which there will be no loss to state and central governments after the adoption of GST at 15 per cent to 15.5 per cent.

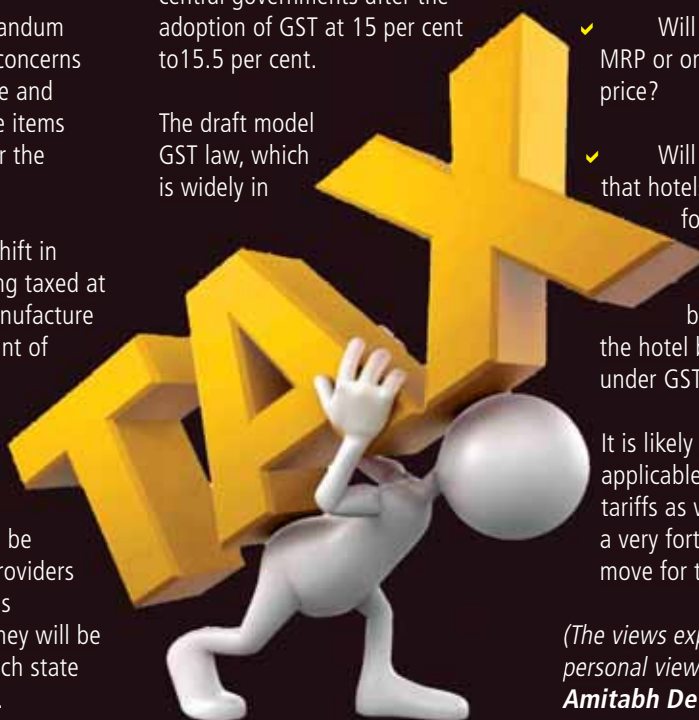
The draft model GST law, which is widely in

circulation, provides some indicators of how 'Point of Sale' will be determined under GST. Some of the concerns that need to be addressed are cited below:

- ✓ If a company organises a business conference in Delhi (where it is not located), if the hotel treats it as a 'local supply' in Delhi and charges Delhi GST, how will this company claim credit?
- ✓ Will GST be levied on the MRP or on the discounted rate/price?
- ✓ Will barter transactions that hotels at times enter into for promoting their food festivals and other events that are being conducted by the hotel become chargeable under GST?

It is likely that GST will be applicable to the discounted tariffs as well. This would be a very fortunate and welcome move for the industry.

(The views expressed are the personal views of the author, Amitabh Devendra)



► Contd. from page 18

north india TRAVEL awards



BEST HOSPITALITY SALES & MARKETING PROFESSIONAL
was awarded to **Dhananjay Saliankar**



BEST HOSPITALITY PROFESSIONAL
was awarded to **Tekla Maira**



MOST ENTERPRISING HOSPITALITY PROFESSIONAL
was awarded to **Amit Rana**



BEST BUDGET HOTEL BRAND
was awarded to **Clarks Inn Group of Hotels**



BEST HOTEL IN THE MIDDLE EAST
was awarded to **JW Marriott, Deira, Dubai**



BEST WEDDING AND MICE HOTEL
was awarded to **Crowne Plaza Jaipur Tonk Road**



BEST BUSINESS HOTEL
was awarded to **Hyatt Place Gurgaon Udyog Vihar**



BEST MID-MARKET HOTEL
was awarded to **RK Sarovar Portico, Srinagar**



BEST LUXURY RESORT
was awarded to **Namah, Jim Corbett National Park**



EXCELLENCE AWARD FOR BEST FOOD & BEVERAGE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA
was awarded to **JW Marriott, Deira, Dubai**



BEST DEBUT MID-MARKET HOTEL
was awarded to **Crystal Sarovar Premiere, Agra**



BEST HERITAGE HOTEL
was awarded to **Ajit Bhawan Palace, Jodhpur**



BEST MID-MARKET HOTEL CHAIN
was awarded to **Mansingh Group of Hotels**



EMERGING HOTEL CHAIN
was awarded to **DS Hotels & Resorts**



BEST HERITAGE RESORT
was awarded to **WelcomHeritage Khimsar Fort & Dune**



BEST CITY HOTEL
was awarded to **Holiday Inn Amritsar Ranjit Avenue**



BEST LUXURY HOTEL
was awarded to **ITC Grand Bharat, Gurgaon**



BEST AIRPORT HOTEL
was awarded to **ibis Delhi Airport**



BEST TRAVEL RETAIL STORE
was awarded to **Craft House, The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa**

ACQUISITION FALLOUT IN THE INDIAN MARKET

Will the major acquisitions and mergers (Marriott & Starwood and Accor & FRHI) taking place globally bring about the disruption of the Indian market? Will the market become more competitive? Let us read what the members have to say.



Luv Malhotra
Vice President
FHRAI

Two big mergers in the past month have caught the attention of the travel trade. The Marriott Starwood merger makes it the largest hotel company in the world with over 5,000 hotels and over a million rooms. It also brings together two of the largest

“
The marketing and reservation networks of the new entities will be more powerful than before
”

customer loyalty programmes (SPG and Marriott Rewards) with over 70 million members combined and brings over 30 brands under one roof. The Accor FRHI deal is a bit more straightforward. It is an

acquisition of Luxury Brands (Fairmont, Raffles, Swissotel) with little overlap with existing Accor brands.

The merged entity of Marriott and Starwood is possibly equal in size to the biggest Indian hotel company if not bigger. The marketing and reservation networks of the combined entities will be more powerful than before and will have a stronger impact on the profit and loss statements of the hotels they manage. A merged company will have less of a customer acquisition cost and, higher returns from each customer. The impact will be felt on upscale and luxury brands in India and, over a period of time, on the mid-market and budget segments.

Growth, being the key driver for most businesses and business investors, has been hard to come by in the Indian hospitality industry recently. Organic growth is ideal but if that is difficult then acquisition is the way to go. Unfortunately, in India most deals happen for single unit properties. It will be interesting to see how Indian brands compete with the international brands who have size, scale and distribution capabilities and also have the knowhow of the Indian consumer after being here for many years.



Dilip C Datwani
Senior Vice President
HRAWI

Marriott International acquisition of Starwood hotels and resorts worldwide for US \$12.20 billion has led to speculation about its impact on the Indian hospitality industry. While a few industry experts think that this consolidation will lead to fierce competition with other brands becoming aggressive, many feel that there will be no disruption.

The Starwood-Marriott merger will see fierce com-

“
Starwood-Marriott merger will see fierce competition with all brands becoming aggressive
”

petition with other brands to combat the combined strength of the merged entity and their ability to offer 30 brands touching every market positioning or product requirement. The new entity will control the largest inventory of rooms with their number one status. Starwood Hotels and resorts has a strong hold with a host of upscale and luxury brands.

As for Marriott International, it has been ruling the upscale and luxury segment.

The creation of this combined entity will definitely result in operational economies and make it competitive with an advantage over the other chains. The larger presence with a bigger products portfolio will attract corporate clients who constitute the chunk of the customer base.

It will have a strong presence through its combined marketing and reservations network with its strong customer loyalty programmes.

I am sure the hotel chains and operators are aware of the hard work ahead.



K Syama Raju
Vice President
FHRAI

The merger and acquisition of Marriott-Starwood and Accor/FRHI will result in a major upheaval, impacting the growth of the Indian hospitality industry by providing uniform services and facilities to the guests with greater distribution at competitive cost. The other hotel chains will have to face stiffer competition when marketing their products and



The mergers will impact the Indian industry by providing services and facilities with greater distribution at competitive cost

services and in maintaining uniform tariffs and services. The guests will have the opportunity to get rooms at competitive price with increased facilities. This will also enable Indian hotels to compete with global destinations to attract more visitors to India.



Sudesh Poddar
Honorary Treasurer
FHRAI

The Marriott-Starwood and Accor-Fairmont (FRHI) mergers—even though the deals await final nod from regulators—are likely to start a lot of M&A (merger and acquisition) activity on the hotel front across the globe.

The mergers of the behemoths are also going to shake up the luxury hotel segment in India. Simply because the first combo now turns into India's largest hotel operator. The combined entity of Marriott and Starwood will have over 14,000 guest rooms in 33 and 47 hotels respectively as separate brands.

Moreover, as they have over 52 properties in the pipeline, the impact will be greater in the days to come. In specific markets—such as Pune, they will together own a major part of the inventory.

Marriott's strong processes and Starwood's reservation network will

surely work wonders after the merger. The merged entity will not only have the advantage of scale, but a far wider brand reach. Their strong loyalty programmes will also help retain a large number of customers. In short, the efficiencies of

The merged entity will not only have the advantage of scale, but a far wider brand reach

scale that the combine will bring to all brands in the Marriott-Starwood fold will help the hotels offer better 'deals' either in terms of direct room rates or in terms of value-added services that travellers crave for.

At a time when the hotel industry is dealing with the rising clout of Online Travel Agents (such as Expedia) and short-term home rental websites (such as AirBnB), the combined entity will have

bigger distribution to attract guests on their own. The airlines sector has done a very good job—Delta Airlines (in the US) and Jet Airways (in India) encourage customers to book their tickets directly through their sites or mobile apps.

According to some analysts, Starwood's connect to millennials is one of the factors that inspired Marriott to acquire it. Starwood's commitment to innovation and new technology makes it more appealing to young customers. Perhaps the one blind spot of the traditional hoteliers is that growing numbers of travellers are looking for authentic and meaningful experiences through a seamlessly connected interface.

So the merger has some broad pointers for the entire hospitality sector in India: embrace new online technology and learn to innovate if you want to lure young customers and retain them for years.



One stop solution for **MODERN HOTELS**

Concierges have become more like storytellers—they weave the right contents into guest requests. **Satish Gaikwad**, Chief de Concierge, The Taj Mahal Palace Mumbai tells us more.



Satish Gaikwad

WHAT IS THE MAIN ROLE THAT THE CONCIERGE PLAYS IN THE MODERN HOTEL? HOW CAN THE CONCIERGE ADD TO THE 'WOW FACTOR' IN A HOTEL?

The concierge role has evolved as a versatile one stop solution for modern hotels. Today's luxury traveller wants to discover destinations where they can be truly inspired. Our concierges enthusiastically communicate and connect with our guests, right from pre-stay to in-stay. We have trained our team members and empowered them to make thoughtful

recommendations, stepping away from the standard transactional relationship between a concierge and a guest. Our concierges have become more like storytellers. They weave right contents into a guest request giving our guest an individualistic and personalised approach.

WHAT NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN TECHNOLOGY/NEW SOFTWARE ARE AIDING THE FUNCTION OF THE CONCIERGE?

The **Concierge Assistant or Go Concierge** Software platform is a boon for a modern-day



concierge. They ease the way guest requests are handled and save time for concierges and guests.

Confirmations are now printed and personalised and sent out in swish via email. With the advent of Google maps, concierges can plot a location and make a personalised route map for guests. The Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai has 'Concierge Assistant' Software at the Concierge desk along with an iPad which has several tour ideas and itineraries embedded on it, hence the concierge is on go. He can now share and interact with guests.

With the impact of the millennial generation—travellers raised with technology and highly interested in experiential travel—concierges have harnessed and linked technology to their profession. They are well versed with guest request well in advance and deliver seamless and well-crafted recommendations. Les Clefs d'Or India Mumbai Concierges Association has also developed their own application available on several mobile platforms for guests. The app not only

gives guests insider information about the city, restaurants and shopping but also helps in connecting directly with the concierge's hotel.

HOW WELL VERSED IS YOUR CONCIERGE WITH LOCAL TOURIST KNOWLEDGE?

Our concierges have a sound local knowledge of the city, its pulse and trends. They inculcate several innovative offerings. For example, the Mumbai bicycle tour was a novel trend introduced at our hotel. Keeping in mind the centrality of rich local culture and history, our concierges are well equipped to handle and deliver. We, at the desk, have at least 15 bespoke, well researched and unique itineraries to choose from.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES FOR A CONCIERGE? KINDLY CITE AN EXAMPLE.

The best part of being a concierge is that it is never the same. Every day we have different people with different and challenging requests. It is never boring.

No request is strange or challenging, The concierges at The Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai take every request with a stride and deliver on it enthusiastically.

One couple who was on a honeymoon wanted to see an elephant and ride one in Mumbai. As elephant rides are now discontinued in Mumbai, the concierge sought guest permission to check as to what he can do about it. He returned to the guest with an option of having an elephant brought over to the hotel all the way from neighbouring district but the only problem was that the elephant would have to walk for 150 km to

Trends

- Virtual Concierge
- Concierge Assistance Software
- Exploring local trends and insider information.
- Shopping Concierge
- Concierge Apps

come to the city. The other option was of booking a flight to Jaipur to watch the elephant polo there. Feeling pity for the animal, the guest chose the latter option. The concierge then assisted them in booking a flight and arranged their stay at our sister hotel at Jaipur.

ARE THERE COURSES FOR BECOMING A CONCIERGE? WHAT ARE THE GROWTH AND CAREER PROSPECTS?

They are an integral part of diverse hotel operations but unfortunately the work of a concierge as subject is not taught extensively in hotel management schools. However, many colleges have now come forward and offer one day workshops at their colleges with trained concierge professionals from hotels.

A concierge learns through on the job training. We have a successful buddy programme in which a concierge is teamed with a senior concierge associate. Some of the finest hotel general managers in the country were once concierges! Thus, this is the biggest motivation factor for an aspiring concierge.



IL INDUSTRY: A FRAGMENTED BRAND PLAY

Neelima Burra, Chief Marketing Officer, Cargill Foods India Pvt. Ltd, leads a motivated team of marketing specialists to drive brand leadership for the company. She tells us about the company's brands and trends in consumer oils in India.



Neelima Burra

What are the core products and services that Cargill Foods offers in India?

Cargill Foods India operates across a wide array of oil categories, spanning sunflower and soyabean, groundnut and mustard, largely as non-refined oils, as well as olive at the top end of the market. Sunflower and soyabean together constitute 67 per cent of the CFI B2C business.

Apart from consumer brands, CFI also offers a wide range of food ingredient solutions for bakery and food manufacturers through B2B business. In terms of brands, CFI enjoys a national presence through its brands Gemini, Nature Fresh oil and packaged flour (atta), Sweekar, Rath, Sunflower (hydrogenated fats) and Leonardo Olive oil. Gemini is Maharashtra's leading sunflower brand, built on the platform of heritage.

It was the first branded oil to be vitamin fortified. Nature Fresh is positioned as a light oil for active life. Sweekar Advance is a high oleic sunflower oil, while

the Leonardo Olive oil comes in all variants including the recently launched new variant—Leonardo Olive Oil-Extra Light which is best suited for day-to-day Indian cooking.



E-retail is an upcoming channel trend and we are looking at partnerships to expand our consumer reach through this platform



What are your expansion plans and distribution scale in India?

We are present pan India and our products and brands are widely distributed in leading stores in modern trade and general trade. E-retail is an upcoming channel trend and we are looking at partnerships to expand our consumer reach through this platform.

Which of your brands is the growth driver for the company in India?

Brands in Cargill India's portfolio cater to varied consumer segments with differentiated demographics, psychographics and geography. Oil industry is a very fragmented brand play. Every state has its own choice of brand pertaining to their choice of oil, which in turn is governed by ethnicity and heritage of taste. Brands in Cargill like Gemini and Sweekar sunflower oil and Rath are iconic leaders in their respective markets. We also have Leonardo Olive Oil in our portfolio which is leading the olive oil category.

Can you please tell us about the consumer trends in the category of edible oils in India?

The demand for a variety of oil is very region-specific. The attached infographic best describes this trend. For the urban population, we have been witnessing a preference which is skewed towards healthier refined oils like soyabean, sunflower and newer oils like olive oil.



How has the popularity of olive oil grown in the country in the last five years?

Olive oil is a rapidly growing segment gaining much popularity as a healthy cooking oil option. As per the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, total olive oil imports by India during April-March 2014-15 witnessed a growth rate of around 17.75 per cent over the same period last year. This is primarily on account of an increased health orientation and also higher exposure to multiple cuisines.

Leonardo Olive Oil in use is one-third of the other refined oils because of its high MUFA content (over 75 per cent). MUFA forms a thin crust over the food item cooked in olive oil and inhibits oil penetration, making it light, tasty and healthy.

In addition, it has zero cholesterol and is trans-fat free. These benefits are being recognised by consumers adding to the growing popularity of olive oil.

What is the toughest part of marketing and sales in India? Your strategy to stay ahead!

If you look at India geographically, food, lifestyle,

culture and choice of oil changes every 500 km. South India consumes more of sunflower oil; North and East consume soya and mustard oil respectively.

It becomes very difficult to make a generic campaign which will resonate well from North to South and East to West. Looking at the way the oil industry



We have seen changes in the consumption pattern over a decade. Internet education has led consumers to seek knowledge about the product



is fragmented, our strategy has always been to speak to consumers one-to-one in their language and in a manner which reflects their culture and tradition, to make it relevant to them.

In addition, we have seen changes in the consumption pattern over a decade. Internet education has helped people to gain more information and the consumers are seeking knowledge and understanding about the product they want



to use. Their demand from the product and the manufacturers is very specific and hence our strategy is also to actively engage with the consumers on the digital platform through e-retail and e-marketing campaigns.

Brands in the CFI portfolio enjoy good equity in their respective markets and we will continue to create more engagement opportunities with consumers.

On brands that are still early in their life cycle, we plan to take them to more households, leveraging our wide presence of distributors.

What has the growth been for the company in 2015 and what's on the agenda for 2016?

The CFI strategy is to emerge as the most preferred consumer brand in the food space through our brands—Gemini sunflower oil, Sweekar sunflower oil, Nature Fresh, Leonardo Olive Oil and Rath.



Help your Guests have a **TRULY REFRESHING BREAK**

Hotels offer a long list of services like pools, spas, 24 hour coffee shops with soothing music, and more that are aimed at helping guests relax and unwind. However, there's one thing that matters a lot more—the mattress they sleep on.

THE FIRST THING A GUEST CHECKS OUT IN HIS OR HER ROOM AFTER HE OR SHE CHECKS IN, IS THE MATTRESS. IS IT COMFORTABLE? IS IT WARM AND COSY? HOWEVER, THE RIGHT MATTRESS IS NOT JUST WARM AND FLUFFY AND COSY. IT NEEDS TO SUPPORT THE BACK, LIMBS AND NECK AND ALLOWS FOR PROPER BLOOD CIRCULATION WHILE AVOIDING PRESSURE ON THE SPECIFIC BODY PARTS OF ANYBODY WHO SLEEPS ON IT.

Peps, the maker of complete sleep systems, presents sleep solutions built using the finest international technology and crafted with a legendary attention to detail. Peps' sleep solutions are crafted in a sprawling facility located across 11 acres in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, with cutting-edge machinery from Sweden, Germany and USA, featuring the world's best manufacturers like Gribetz International, Leggett & Platt & Spuhl Anderson. After 10 years in the business of helping Indians sleep great and wake up well-rested, Peps is now the leader in the industry. All of Peps' sleep systems are products



of meticulous research into why and how people sleep and the effect the sleep has on individuals. As a result, a Peps mattress is quite simply engineered to be the highest quality sleep products in the world. In addition to mattresses, Peps also offers a range of sleep accessories like pillows, neck guards and comforters that make sleep an even more enjoyable experience. With 10

years of experience, Peps assures you of an expert partnership that you can never go wrong with.

Make sure you get in touch with Peps for advice on how to provide the best quality sleep to guests at your hotel so they wake up refreshed and ready for the #pepslife. Visit www.pepsindia.com for more details.



CHERISH 'NOT JUST A BRAND BUT A STATEMENT'



Naveen Sachdeva
Director, Cherish

Brought into existence in 2004, Cherish offers complete hospitality solutions and has grown from a small base to earn the trust of consumers not just pan India but in the global area.

A renowned and well recognised hospitality brand of North India started with a small base in the year 2004. Expanding its wings from Delhi to NCR, and to Karnal, it encompasses Splendid Outdoor Caterings, Royal Lush Wedding Pandals, Resort and Amusement Park, Exclusive Banquets, Fine Dine Restaurants, with the vision and courage to build a company that stands for delivering Complete Hospitality solutions under its banner.

Recently they have been awarded 'Excellence in Customer Service' (Cherish Banquets and Outdoor Caterings) and 'Best Fine Dining Restaurant in North India' (Sufiaana by Cherish) by India Hospitality Awards.

Cherish banquets and fine dine restaurants are a fusion of ethnicity and modernity with royal interiors and majestic artistry. Cherish gives you a glance of glory and allows you to experience unmatched décor, unbeatable taste and unparalleled hospitality. Skilled chefs and their team have an obsession with perfection and offer a wide range of culinary services ranging from Indian Regional Cuisines to popular global cuisines like Mexican, Italian, Oriental, Japanese, Thai and Mongolian and

cater to celebration details exactly as envisioned by the patron.

Naveen Sachdeva, Director, Cherish, used his entrepreneurial skills to build this brand over a period of time and had not considered a different career path since his teen age. Along with graduation he started gaining an insight into this industry through on job exposure and he developed more understanding of this trade, with the future goal of establishing this brand that stands for delivering complete hospitality solutions.

He said, "It has been proven by the team that with big goals, hard work and perseverance, one can make anything happen. The group started expanding its presence by strategic networking with partners in the year 2010. It took us about a year of backend work for conceptualising the business model and putting in place both the backend and the front as per the new emerging trends of this trade, which requires huge a amount of planning, preparation and dedication."

The Cherish brand will continue the legacy, earning the trust of millions, not only pan India but also in the global arena.

“The group started expanding its presence by strategic networking with partners in the year 2010. It took us about a year of backend work for conceptualising the business model”



Country Inn PLANS ACTIVE EXPANSION

The group is also launching four brands in the mid-segment: Violet Hotels, Plumeria Hotels, Coleus Hotels and Nestling Lodges. The brands shall operate these hotels in the smart hotels, business hotels, leisure resorts and jungle lodges categories respectively.

Country Inn celebrated its 25th foundation day on 23rd December 2015. The venue for the event was the beautifully landscaped lawns of the residence of Sadhana Rai, Chairperson, Country Inn in Lutyen's Delhi. Manoj Gupta, Vice President, Country Inn mentioned that in the past 25 years, Country Inn has grown from a humble beginning in Bhimtal to its current position of strength. The organisation today operates six hotels and resorts

Violet Hotels, Plumeria Hotels, Coleus Hotels and Nestling Lodges. The brands shall operate hotels in the smart hotels, business hotels, leisure resorts and jungle lodges categories respectively. Kurup also announced the group's plans to launch a portal MarwadiMaharaj.com.

The guests included VIPs such as parliamentarians, ministers from the Government of Uttarakhnad and top police personnel. The strong contingent from the travel trade had major players such as Dinesh Garg - Tour D' Grand, Sunil Kumar Bassi - Coordinators Tours, Harleen Kaur - Jetways Tours, Naveen Mehta - Country Roads Travels, Ajay Aggarwal - Jayashree Holidays, Sangeeta Mahurkar - Beacon Change, Sanjay Saini - Escapade Adventures, Sanjay Lakhera - WNY holidays, Bhaskar Thyagarajan - GIO, Capt. Solanki - Foursight Hospitality, Pankaj Bansal- Maitri Holidays, Rashmi Sharma - Honeygold, Ranjan Jain - Top Travels, Kamal Gandhi - Transglobal Holidays, Ankit Miglani - Welcometrips, Niranjana Senapaty - Wow Club, Humesh Sharma - TUI, Dinesh Joshi - Shaan World, Naveen Nahar - Travels Factory, Ravi Luthra - Landmark Tours, Rakesh Lamba - Prakriti Holidays, Rajat Shahaney- Rave Tours, Reena Chopra - Magical Holidays, Sudhir Sachdeva - Holidays to Treasure, Gulshan Chawla- Hi-Life Tours and Amit Batra - Bonton Holidays.



in North India. However, the real wealth generated has been the tremendous goodwill and brand value built over the years.

Welcoming the more than 400 strong guest list was Dinesh Kurup, Director of Sales & Marketing, who talked about future plans. The group is planning active expansion via the management and marketing tie-up route. The group is also launching four brands in the mid-segment:

NRAI co-hosts TechIt 2015

National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) co-hosted the first of its kind food technology seminar—TechIt—in the capital. ‘Essential technology—that’s the future of restaurants and foodservice’ was the underlying thought behind NRAI TechIt where new tech companies showcased concepts and products to a houseful of restaurateurs and foodservice owners.



The Delhi edition of TechIt 2015 was hosted by Rahul Singh, MD Beer Cafe and Hon. Secy of NRAI. It was presented by Dineout in association with Mobikwik. TechIt focussed on topics like *New revenue areas - what are they and how do we get it?*, *Being customer focused - where they're going and what we need to do*, *Efficient operations - how and where tech can help* and *Money Men - Top VCs explain why they funded food tech start-ups*.

Rahul Singh, MD, Beer Cafe and Hon. Secy. NRAI said, “TechIt is perfectly timed for the Indian restaurant industry which is at a crucial stage of evolution. In my view, technology is like a ‘Duck’s Effect’. If you see a duck in a pond, the duck will seem to be floating at ease. But below the water, she is paddling away like crazy to stay in place. In our enterprise, we have more than a dozen technology

“
Technology not only helps us complement traditional methods of operations but makes us relevant in the ever-changing consumer world”
”

partners who work behind the scenes and enable considerable amount of work. Technology not only helps us complement traditional methods of operations but makes us relevant in the ever-changing consumer world”

Eight companies, each with their special value offering to this growing industry, engaged directly with owners as part of TechIt’s

theme of ‘adoption’, the need to try out and accept technology to improve profitability in this challenging business.

Industry majors believe that the TechIt concept would work because it’s a much-needed platform, where the next revolution of restaurant tech is coming together. Stalwarts of the Indian restaurant industry like Zorawar Kalra (Massive Restaurants), Rohan Jetley (TGIF), Prasanjit Singh (Studio Gourmet Services), Kabir Jeet Singh (Burger Singh), Samir Kuckreja (Tasanaya), Sagar Daryani (Wow! Momo), Sharad Sachdeva (Lite Bite), Kabir Suri (Mamagato); as well as Venture Capitalists like Vivek Chhachhi (CX Partners), Archit Garg (Rabo Equity), Ashu Agarwal (BW Accelerate), Vishal Jindal (Carp Diem Capital) came together at NRAI TechIt to bring about another revolution in the food industry with the adoption of technology.



A TREND TO EXPLORE:

The entrepreneur CHEF

Coming out of the kitchens, chefs are now seen on flamboyant cookery shows on television. They judge competitions, write for food magazines, customise recipes for special occasions and they also run their own restaurants. Continuing from last month's cover story, we bring you more on the entrepreneur chefs.

Kanchan Nath & Ambica Gulati



Gurmehar Sethi is a well travelled chef with a wealth of international experience. Ziu's team of chefs led by Sethi are continuously putting their creative skills to test to come up with the most exciting and unexpected dishes for the Ziu menu. Sethi's personal experimentation with new working methods has unearthed bold and complex flavours which are infused in each dish to surprise and delight the guests.

BURGEONING F&B MARKET

Four months ago, when I studied the market for a standalone



Thai restaurant, I could not find many such restaurants as most restaurants serving Thai cuisine serve pan-Asian along with it. And, as apparently Thai food has become very popular among people and specially

delights, so it was the perfect time and place.

WHAT OF BUSINESS?

It is not an easy task as it took a lot of hard work with right time management skills. Cooking being my passion I have not left my kitchen and taken over the role of the businessman completely. I am managing both with the determination, ensuring quality in the kitchen and devoting time and hard work to the business.

SKILLS AFFECTED?

I have still the same passion for cooking. And, as I said earlier, I have not given up my chef's hat. In fact, I give proper time to my chefs and maintain the quality in delivering the food to my customers.

QUALITY CHECK MEASURES

All our products are stamped and approved by FSSAI and even our suppliers provide the same. As I have an international professional background, I am well aware of all the rules and guidelines and duly respect them and follow them completely.

CHEF-OWNED AND RUN RESTAURANTS

It is a successful model and

doing well as these are not just alcohol-oriented restaurants but have a little extra to offer as a chef-cum-owner would always be concerned about the quality and taste of food and manages the guests and the front as well. And I personally believe that each customer who enters my restaurant should leave with a smile.

INSPIRATIONS

My role model would always be my dad, seeing him cooking on Sundays I got inspired to be a chef. And I was working with chef Nobu earlier, who owns a chef-owned restaurant. I have a tremendous amount of respect for him. He is a gem of a person and, seeing him I also got inspired to open my own.



Chef Gurmehar Sethi

Owner of Ziu, an 'Innovative Thai Cuisine' restaurant



IN ONE SHOT

Speciality cuisine: Thai, Japanese and French

Favourite ingredients: I use only fresh ingredients like lemon grass, banana flower and so on

Favourite dish: Lamb Shank as I love red meat and Fish in spicy sea food sauce



Dharmender Singh
Owner, Biryani Art
Gurgaon



A graduate from IHM Lucknow, he has worked with brands such as Radisson MBD Noida, Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi, Park Plaza Gurgaon and Clarks Group of Hotels. With a specialisation in Garde Manger, Indian kebabs and curries, he opted to open a special place for biryanis.



IN ONE SHOT

Speciality cuisine:

Indian

Favourite ingredients:

Cinnamon

Favourite dish:

Biryani

are high and people visit the restaurant for the high standard of food and beverage. So one has to keep the skills fine-tuned.

QUALITY CHECK MEASURES

We have the following quality check measures in place: Personal hygiene of F & B staff, method of cooking, colour coding, no repetition of raw material and check on cross contamination.

CHEF-OWNED AND RUN RESTAURANTS

Cooking is my passion and profession and I enjoy it with other responsibilities. This transition boosts my skill to make the foodie patrons happier.

FUTURE PLANS

We have opened a unit in Hyderabad and have decided on spreading the chain internationally.

We are not thinking of franchisee but working on 'owned outlets' concept.

INDEPENDENT VENTURE

This is a booming industry in the world. Every single day there are people coming up with new ideas. Earlier people only stepped out for fine dining. Nowadays they opt for casual dining, pubs and bars too, so opening a standalone restaurant seemed like the right thing to me.

TRANSITION TO BUSINESS

The combination of passion for cooking and a never-

ending desire for learning triggered this move to become a businessman.

CHANGES IN CORE SKILLS

Innovation plays a big role in our industry. With a chef-owned restaurant, expectations



CSML

We make fun, a business...

THE ONE STOP CENTER FOR AMUSEMENT AND LEISURE EQUIPMENT

Being a key player in supplying Brunswick Bowling equipment and games, CSML (Complete Sports And Management India Pvt. Ltd.) is known for setting up the 7000 sq. ft. Entertainment Center for JW Marriott, Mussorie and operating it entirely.

Established in 2002, CSML has become one of the leading providers of various products and services in the Amusement and Leisure sector. Assuring high quality in gaming segments such as Brunswick Bowling, Pool Tables, Air Hockey Tables, Foosball and Kids Indoor Play Zone, we cater from entertainment supply to layout and operations.

Providing talent, experience, energy and resources in planning, management, optimisation and lucrative returns, CSML walks the extra mile by giving tech support for its quality games all across India!

ELANPRO LAUNCHES COUNTER TOP FREEZERS



◆ Elanpro has launched the Elanpro Counter Top Freezer, which is a space saving, energy efficient and cost effective solution for all commercial cold storage needs. With a small footprint and a portable, lightweight design, the Elanpro Counter Top Freezer is ideal for super markets, restaurants, delis, bakeries and convenience stores looking to expand their offerings display, while saving valuable counter space. The freezer is available in two sizes—50 and 60 ltr. The user-friendly freezer is compact in size and can be cleaned easily for maintaining high standards of hygiene. It features a micro-processor based control for precise temperature and heated/low emissivity glass for zero condensation and perfect display. The freezers are user-friendly.

MARSHALLS WALLCOVERINGS INTRODUCES GLOBAL LOVE COLLECTION

◆ Marshalls Wallcoverings, a wallpaper company, has launched 'Global Love', an ensemble of super exclusive signature series wallcoverings that showcases the most celebrated international designer, Karim Rashid. Inspired from the vibrations out of the speakers, this collection showcases an array of designs which represents loud, quite, compact and many other variations in sounds in an artistically interpreted computer

design. The silver netting on psychedelic graphics or on dark background lends the wall an edgy and sophisticated look. The experimentation by artists of merging streams adds to this multi-hued cultural canvas. Marshalls Wallcoverings, known to bring art and a sensibility to revolutionise wallcoverings, brings a blend of colours, patterns, shapes and designs created to fit within the exact dimensions of a wall.



OUTDOOR FURNITURE FROM VETRA

◆ To add quality and glamour to its furniture, Vetra has tied up with a leading US-based company called Sunbrella, which manufactures fabric made of acrylic fibre that is excellent for the outdoors, requiring minimum care and maintenance. The company offers years of carefree warranty for its product against fading. Vetra has been a part of the outdoor furniture market for many years. They had introduced their synthetic wicker line in 2008 and have now introduced Sunbrella strap furniture and teak line. The strap and teak collection can comfortably be used indoors as well. Vetra has supplied furniture to numerous hotels, restaurants, cafes and other public places around the world. Being a manufacturer, every particular requirement can be customised and made according to personal needs. The raw materials used



are environment-friendly and recyclable. The USP of the furniture is that it is maintenance free—just basic cleaning will keep it looking sharp for a lifetime.



FIRE RATED METAL DOORS FROM OZONE

◆ Ozone offers Fire Rated Metal Doors for installation in all types of buildings and structures. These metal doors are manufactured in its newly established state-of-the-art manufacturing facility having world's best brand machines installed such as CNC Laser, shearing and bending machines and automatic paint shop. The Ozone range of metal door includes Fire Rated Metal Doors, Clean Room Doors, Industrial Doors and office doors and Partition system suiting to varied requirements. These metal doors are manufactured as per site condition depending on door size available and safety norms laid out by the National Building Safety Authority and local fire-fighting and municipal authorities. These fire doors are tested for two hours (120 minutes) fire rating by CBRI, Roorkee. Ozone Fire Rated Metal doors complement existing passive fire-fighting systems. All fire doors are factory finished with epoxy primer and polyurethane-finish paint as per size. Ozone's team of engineers support the hotel by site inspection, recommendation of right solution to ensuring the installation and proper functioning of the Fire Rated Metal Door as per client's satisfaction at the same time complying with fire safety norms laid out by concerned authorities. Modern day hotels need higher level of safety solution that not only provides safety to human lives and property in case of a fire emergency but also prevents fire from spreading further. Fire doors or Fire Rated Metal Doors are an ideal solution for such type of safety threats or concerns. These metal doors can also be integrated with high-tech building safety and management systems.

MARRIOTT REWARDS LAUNCHES 'MAX!'

Marriott Rewards, Marriott International's award-winning loyalty programme, has launched 'MAX!', a new and exclusive kids programme which aims to enrich the travel experiences of children through holistic activities that inspire and nurture. The programme has been available to members staying at participating Marriott International properties throughout the Asia-Pacific region from 21st December 2015. Created for children between ages of five to 12 years, MAX! is founded on four activity pillars: Be Active offers action-packed sessions, ranging from pool activities to dance lessons; Stay Curious encourages intellectual curiosity with activities such as cooking and arts-and-crafts; Go Explore will appeal to the children's sense of adventure; while Just Relax offers more tranquil

pursuits. The four pillars are consistent throughout all the properties that offer the programme. "By introducing MAX!, Marriott Rewards aims to exceed the high expectations parents have when they choose a hotel for their family vacation," said Anka Twum-Baah, Vice President, Customer Loyalty & Content, Asia Pacific at Marriott International.

SUPERMENU FROM CAFÉ COFFEE DAY

In an endeavour to delight the taste buds of food and coffee lovers, Café Coffee Day (CCD) has launched its all-new, 'SuperMenu'. The 'SuperMenu' is studded with a delicious variety of cupcakes, soups, sandwiches and burgers that have CCD's signature all-day appeal and a youthful feel.

The super flavoursome fun begins with two slurpy soup variants served with a side portion of garlic bread—Mushroom Marvel Soup and Tangy Tomatina. The indulgence continues with cupcake—Berry Bite Cupcake and Cocoa Cupcake.

Adding to the fun is an irresistible range of cakes and pastries as well—Hazelnut Carrot Celebration Cake, Pure Indulgence Celebration Cake and Cocoa Fantasy Slice Cake. CCD has also unveiled a fiery range of sandwiches in this special menu. The Chunky Chicken Roast Sandwich packs together perfectly roasted herbed chicken, onion rings and a cheese slice wrapped in a crisp chipotle bread. Vegetarians can feast on the Couch Potato Sandwich made from potatoes smothered in gram flour and fried to perfection with onion rings under freshly baked chipotle bread that tingles the taste buds like nothing else. The Tandoor Chicken Sandwich and Tandoori Paneer Sandwich are an added delight to this delicious and scrumptious range of sandwiches that are sure to leave the food lovers asking for more.

Sanjiv Mediratta, Group Advisor F&B Solutions, Coffee Day Global said, "Café Coffee Day thrives on the love and loyalty we garner from the coffee lovers who consider our outlets their preferred meet-up places. SuperMenu is our gift of the season to all the food lovers, especially the youth, to ensure they have some super awesome time treating themselves over a delectable range of options.



BOLLYWOOD DISCO CARNIVAL AT BARBEQUE NATION

Barbeque Nation presented a 'Bollywood Disco Carnival', which was a tribute to the golden era of Bollywood disco. Bappi Lahiri, King of Bollywood disco, grooved with customers and guests to kick start Barbeque Nation's Disco Carnival. The carnival took place at all of Barbeque Nation's 11 outlets in the Delhi-NCR region (Connaught Place, Jangpura, Saket, Vasant Kunj, Pitampura, Janakpuri, Vivek Vihar, Noida, Faridabad, Sohna Road and Sushant Lok) between 18th December, 2015 and 3rd January, 2016. Barbeque Nation turned into an entertainment hotspot with an ambience that reflected discotheques, with giant disco ball-shaped entrances decorated with strobe lights to welcome customers. Vibrant interiors decorated with flashy disco balls, glow-in-the-dark headbands and colorful LED dance floors transported customers and guests back to the disco age. Guests were invited to enjoy karaoke and Bollywood themed activities such as quizzes, contests and games.

Barbeque Nation offered disco-inspired dishes such as *Machli Dance*—succulent *Lahsooni* fish, *Jimmy Jimmy Chingri*—a divine combination of garlic and prawns and *Disco Khisko*—fruit chat soaked in Indian spices for perfect sweet and tangy blend. For desserts dig into *Le Halwa Le-moong dal Halwa*; Emotional *Atyachaar*—white chocolate Cheese Cake and more. From the Live Counter came the delicious Zubi Zubi Guchi mushrooms; Exotica De *Guru*—exotic meats like duck, turkey and quail available in different sauces.



GET FILMY AT FILMY CAFÉ & BAR

Connaught Place in New Delhi is flourishing with new restaurants and café's and the latest entrant is Filmy Café & Bar by DEEZ. Filmy Café & Bar is a fresh venture by Thakur Bhuvan Singh who pioneered DeeZ Biryani | Kebab | Curry. Filmy Café & Bar is a place for all those who enjoy the simpler elements of life—good food and great music and believe in Be Filmy!

Eat Filmy! "Since cooking is my passion and after helping my dad in DeeZ, I wanted to open something funky for all the Delhites. And what best other than opening a Bollywood and Hollywood themed café and bar in one of the oldest buildings in CP and next to massive cinema hall" said **Thakur Bhuvan Singh**, co-owner Filmy Café & Bar. Walls embedded with famous Bollywood and Hollywood movie posters with quirky dialogues and props like Amir Khan's PK and the radio and war helmet from 300, amongst others, will surely catch your attention immediately. It has a simple seating arrangement, with cushions printed with bolly-holly movie scenes that match the essence of the place.



"When it comes to Food, Delhi wants to have it best. Our place is a Bollywood - Hollywood Cuisine Cafe & Cocktail Bar where you can enjoy delicious food along with mouth-watering mocktails and cocktails. The menu includes a diverse range, from pizzas to burgers, biryanis to chilli chicken and more so there is something for each palate", said **Daleep Singh**, co-owner, Filmy Café & Bar.



appointments



SUNIL GUPTA

**Chief Executive Officer
WelcomHeritage Hotels**

★ Sunil Gupta has taken over as the Chief Executive Officer of WelcomHeritage Hotels with effect from December 2015. He brings along an experience of 30 years in the hospitality industry and has been associated with ITC Hotels since 1995. He has served in various positions at ITC Hotels in the span of 20 years. For the past seven years, he was the General Manager at ITC Rajputana, Jaipur which was a rich tenure.



SANDEEP BASU

**General Manager
Jameson Inn Hotel at Kolkata**

★ In his new role Sandeep Basu has taken charge as General Manager of first Jameson Inn Hotel at Kolkata, managed by Cygnett Group of Hotels. He is a HM graduate from NIPS School of Hotel Management and with a Post Graduate Diploma in Marketing Management and has had a successful career spanning 17 years in the hospitality industry. He started his career with the Park Hotels and was mostly associated with ITC Hotels. His expertise includes personnel administration, client relationship management and profit and loss management.



ANIL KUMAR

**Director Engineering
The Imperial**

★ With 22 years of experience, Anil Kumar joins The Imperial New Delhi as Director of Engineering. He has experience in design review, project management and architectural and interior finishes. Earlier at The Park New Delhi, Uppals Orchid Hotel, Piccadilly Group, Aman Resorts New Delhi, Hilton Group New Delhi along with Globacom Ltd. Nigeria, Kumar has successfully executed projects with effective leadership. An IIM alumni, Kumar is a social welfare activist who cares immensely for nature. He brings to The Imperial his expertise in handling a gamut of activities.



FAISAL NAFEEES

**Director Operations
Hotel The Royal Plaza**

★ Faisal Nafees has taken over as the Director Operations at Hotel The Royal Plaza. He has more than 15 years of extensive experience in the hospitality industry. He is a consistent performer with a proven track record of increasing revenues and streamlining workflow. In his current role, he will be responsible for developing procedures, business finance, overseeing day-to-day operations and operational policies. In his previous role at Hotel The Royal Plaza, Nafees was Executive Assistant Manager, he set up Sky the city's highest lounge and bar. With his expertise and background of working with the best hotels and bars, as the creator of this magnificent party place, he has raised the bar and set extreme standards for others in the industry to follow.



ERUM KHAN

**Manager Marketing
Fraser Suites, New Delhi**

★ Erum Khan has been promoted as the Manager Marketing Fraser Suites, New Delhi. She has marketing specialist with 12 years of experience with leading companies. She has previously worked with *Political Express* (newspaper & magazine), the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs, and *Bureaucracy Today* magazine (producer of the popular crime-busting television show *India's Most Wanted*). Apart from marketing, she is skilled at events management, PR and office administration. Khan holds a Master's degree in English Literature from Kanpur University. She has been awarded 35 appreciation letters, medals and trophies across various fields.



ABHISHEK SAHAI

**General Manager
Courtyard by Marriott, Agra**

★ Abhishek Sahai has been appointed the new General Manager of Courtyard by Marriott Hotel, Agra. In his new role, Sahai will effectively leverage his experience of managing diverse leadership responsibilities of guest services, rooms division management, f&b operations, administration, project management, conceptualizing events, driving revenues and managing human assets at Courtyard by Marriott, Agra. Sahai has over fifteen years of experience in the core hospitality and customer oriented operations with luxury hotel chains like The Oberoi Group and The Leela Hotels. Prior to joining Marriott International, Sahai held the role of General Manager at The Leela Palace Udaipur. He worked with The Leela Group for over five years. Earlier he was associated with The Oberoi Group for a decade, where he had started his professional career.



ABDUL NASIR AHMED SHAIKH

**General Manager
Courtyard by Marriott Pune Chakan**

★ Nasir Shaikh has recently joined Courtyard by Marriott Pune Chakan as the General Manager. Prior to joining Courtyard by Marriott Chakan Pune, he was the Director of Operations at Renaissance Mumbai Convention Centre. With excellent leadership skills, innovative thinking and a creative approach, Shaikh has over 15 years of work experience to his credit. Since his first stint at Le Royal Meridien in 2000 as a management trainee, Nasir has worked across various verticals in the hospitality sector with leading brands.



ABHISHEK RAJAGOLKAR

Multi Property Director of Sales & Marketing, Kochi Marriott Hotels

★ Abhishek Rajagolkar joins as the new multi-property Director of Sales & Marketing for Marriott hotels in Kochi - Kochi Marriott hotel and Courtyard by Marriott Kochi Airport hotel. Rajagolkar has over 11 years of experience in the hospitality industry. In his new capacity, he will lead in developing and implementing sales and marketing strategies for both hotels in Kochi. Prior to joining Kochi Marriott hotels, Rajagolkar was the Director Sales at the Courtyard by Marriott Hinjewadi. He has been through various roles and brands with Marriott India as well as other major hospitality names like Accor and Taj. During his leisure time Abhishek enjoys a varied set of activities and is quite an outdoor person.



GUHANESHWARAN V

**Assistant Executive Housekeeper
DoubleTree by Hilton Pune-Chinchwad**

★ Guhaneshwaran V is the Assistant Executive Housekeeper at DoubleTree by Hilton Pune-Chinchwad. He has a work experience of above 10 years. He started his career with the Leela Palace Bangalore. Along with the housekeeping operations he was also taking care of the upkeep and maintenance of the interiors of that property. Later he moved on to the Oakwood Premier Bangalore. He was rewarded the best Manager in cost controlling. And then he moved to The Fortune JP Palace Mysore. He has been associated with DoubleTree by Hilton Pune-Chinchwad since May 2015. He believes that keep the staff happy by motivating and training and they will take care of the guest and the department in return.



ARZOOMAN IRANI

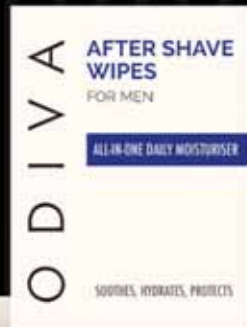
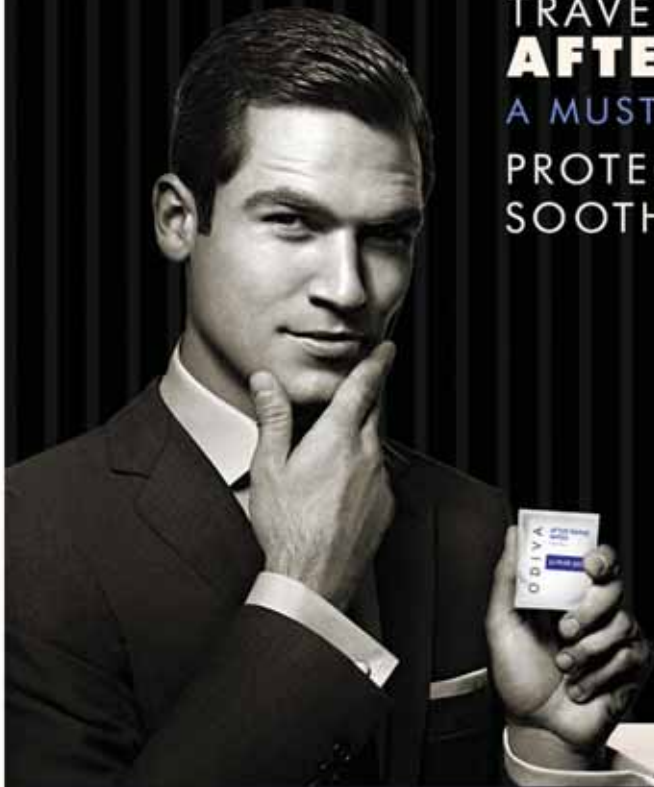
**Executive Chef
Vivanta by Taj, Gurgaon**

★ Vivanta by Taj, Gurgaon recently appointed Chef Arzooman Irani as the Executive Chef of the hotel. Chef Irani joins the 100th Taj property in the country after his last assignment in Sri Lanka as the Executive Chef of Vivanta by Taj, Bentota. With 22 years of culinary experience, Chef Irani started his journey with the Taj Group in 2005. His stint with the Taj has taken him to various Vivanta properties including Vivanta by Taj - Fishermans Cove, Chennai; Vivanta by Taj - Green Cove, Kovalam; Vivanta By Taj - Fort Aguada, Goa and Vivanta by Taj - Whitefield, Bangalore. Chef Arzooman Irani has taken over the reins from Chef Neeraj Chaudhry and will overlook the entire F&B for the hotel including the iconic Thai Pavilion; the all-day diner Latitude, the high energy bar Tease, banquets and in-room dining.

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