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HRA Today

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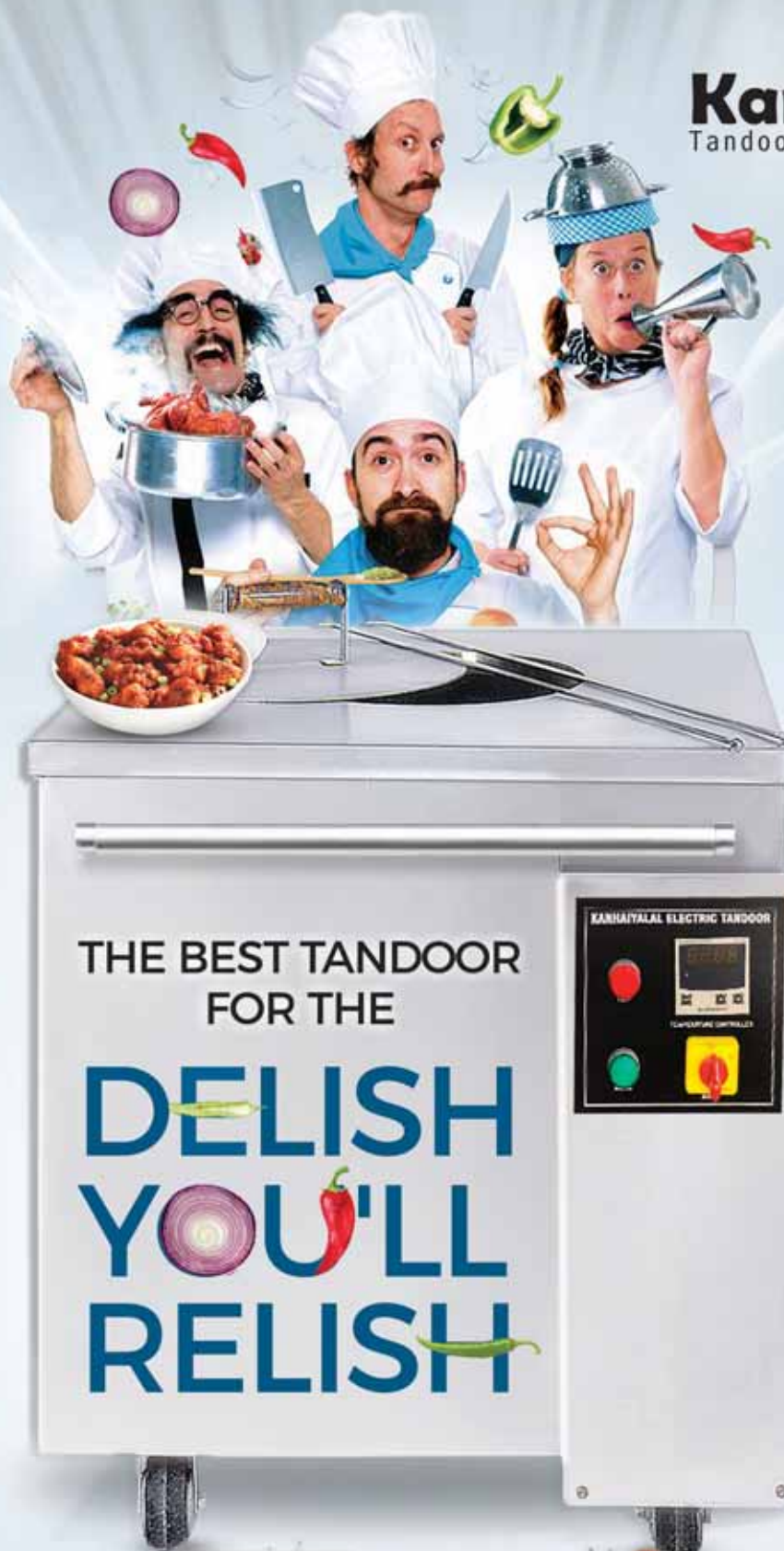


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President's Note



My Dear Members

HRAWI extends its heartiest congratulations to **Shri Narendra Modi** on the remarkable victory in the Lok Sabha elections for the second time, and for being re-elected as Hon'ble Prime Minister to the Parliament of India. We are confident that Modi ji will continuously inspire the fraternity in promoting the unity of the country, prosperity, happiness, and security of its people.

Hospitality and tourism are important sectors for any economy. As identified by Hon'ble Prime Minister, out of the five pillars (five Ts), tourism is one of the most important and, in India, it aims to achieve greater heights and new milestones. We are confident that under his phenomenal leadership, our country will accomplish the ambitious agenda and visionary roadmap envisaged by the government and industry for the hospitality and tourism sector.

HRAWI takes the privilege and honour to offer its heartiest congratulations to **Shri Prahlad Singh Patel** for being allocated the portfolios of the Minister of State for Culture and Tourism (Independent Charge). We are convinced that under the guidance of Patel ji, the Indian tourism sector will flourish and attain new heights. HRAWI looks forward to working closely with the state and central government in making the western region the hub of tourist activity in India, attracting both foreign as well as domestic travellers.

HRAWI represented FHRAI in the meeting called by a new ministry, the Ministry of Renewable Energy. Our EC members interacted with **Praveen Kumar**, Additional Secretary, Ministry of New & Renewable Energy, and other ministry officials and convinced them that their directive for hotels to compulsorily produce a certain amount

of renewable energy was not workable. We have since earned two seats in the panel of the particular board for this purpose and are working with the government as well as representing the hospitality industry as their voice on-board the committee.

Along with members of the OB and our Advisory Council, we recently met the Chief Minister and briefed him of the issues faced by the industry. We handed him a docket under Ease of Doing Business, informing him about the issues and our suggestions, including revival of the HDPB board under his able leadership, which can take hospitality and tourism to new heights and be a huge revenue earner for the state as well. I am happy to inform you that he was very proactive and highly receptive, and has ordered the issues pointed by us in the docket to be looked into immediately. If required, a soft copy of the docket can be emailed to you on request to the SG.

Being the voice of the industry in western India, HRAWI continues its interaction with the government, voicing its concerns while continuing to interact and liaison with the various ministries and government departments to ensure stakeholder participation in every decision. We also look forward to working with the government, both State and Central, to take hospitality and tourism to greater heights. For that, I would need your valuable and continuous support, as we have been getting in the past.

Warm wishes,

Gurbaxish Singh Kohli

President, HRAWI
(president@hrawi.com)

The Fern Residency Karad opens in Maharashtra

The Fern Hotels & Resorts has opened The Fern Residency, Karad in Maharashtra, taking the tally to 60 hotels managed by the company. The new 42-room hotel boasts of elegant accommodation in two categories - Winter Green and Hazel Suites. Conveniently located, The Fern Residency, Karad is within five kilometres from Karad bus stand, nine kilometres from Shirravde Railway Station, and 13 kilometres from Shinoli Railway Station.



Commenting on the opening of the hotel, **Suhail Kannampilly**, Chief Operating Officer, The Fern

Hotels & Resorts, said, "We are increasing our presence

in Maharashtra rapidly, and people of the State are

responding to our hospitality in a positive manner."

Now, visitors to Taj Mahal get only a three-hour time limit



Post successful trial runs of the new turnstile gates at Taj Mahal, the three-hour ticket validity rule for visiting the monument has been enforced. The move has been confirmed by the superintending archaeologist, ASI (Agra circle), **Vasant Swarankar**. Visitors will now get three hours to finish their sightseeing, from time of entry to exit. The monument complex now has 14 entry gates, seven each on its eastern and western sides, as well as 10 exit gates. Furthermore, if tourists exceed the time limit of three hours, they will have to pay extra fee equivalent to the value of the ticket, at the exit gate. Entry time will also be enforced, and visitors not arriving on time will have to buy a new ticket to visit the monument.

Business travellers to generate maximum revenue



Revenues from business travellers will grow significantly over the next few years, according to a CII-PwC report. Although MICE has not been a significant contributor to the Indian hospitality sector so far, this trend is likely to change with better planning as well as improved infrastructure. On the other hand, few CEOs believe that leisure travel will keep pace with growth seen in business travel and MICE. A large section of leisure travellers continue to perceive hotels as a luxury.

Budget and luxury hotel bookings to surge in 2020

According to a report titled 'Demystifying the Indian Online Traveller' commissioned by Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and Google, the Indian hospitality space is expected to accelerate to \$13 billion worth of gross bookings in 2020, \$10 billion of which constitutes hotel bookings and the remaining is constituted by bookings of short-term rentals and other lodgings. Players in these alternate spaces have the potential to innovate, as travellers, both domestic and foreign, become more open to alternate stay options. In 2020, budget and luxury hotels are expected to be



areas of growth. The former is expected to grow at 13.5 per cent driven by the growth of the 'Aspirers' segment on the

demand front, and consolidation, standardisation and branding of currently up-branded properties through aggregator-based start-

ups on the supply front. Mid-scale hotels or the two and three-star properties will continue to maintain their dominance.

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India's second Fairmont to open in Mumbai with 646 rooms



Fairmont, Jaipur

As part of the expansion of its luxury portfolio, Accor will open its second Fairmont hotel in India, in Mumbai. Though a date for the launch of the hotel is yet to be revealed, the 646-room luxury property is said to be under construction already. Earlier this year, Accor also announced the debut of its new luxury brand – Raffles – in the Indian market, which will make its debut in 2020 in Udaipur.

Hema Malini rejuvenates at Mercure Goa Devaaya

Actress **Hema Malini** recently visited Mercure Goa Devaaya Retreat to rejuvenate and relax, away from city life. The hotel, dedicated to traditional healing, is situated on Divar Island and offers authentic Ayurveda, naturopathy, and yoga treatments. The actress enjoyed her stay at the retreat property, evident from her social media posts. She was seen doing yoga by the river and enjoying her organic *satvik* meal. Speaking about her visit, Malini said, "It was a wonderful experience at the retreat property. Nothing compares to unwinding and rejuvenating in such a fresh environment. The Ayurveda therapies and yoga sessions were amazing and refreshing. I look forward to visit this property again." Mercure Goa Devaaya offers focused integrated health programmes using both Ayurveda and naturopathy for various healing treatments.



Orchha on UNESCO's tentative list for heritage



Orchha, the historical town in district Niwari, Madhya Pradesh, has been included in UNESCO's tentative list of World Heritage sites. **Surendra Singh Baghel**, Minister of Tourism & Narmada Valley Development Authority (NVDA), shared in a statement that a detailed proposal was made by the tourism department in collaboration with Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and was sent to UNESCO in this regard. Orchha is the only place in India where Lord Ram is worshipped as king, and has a dedicated temple called Sri Ram Raja Mandir. The town has fairly good connectivity with all major cities and other tourist destinations via road and railway routes. The nearest airports are Khajuraho and Gwalior.

High disposable income driving India's domestic travel

According to a report - Hospitality insights from the Indian CEOs' desk, by CII and PwC - the biggest driver in the growth of domestic travel in India is high disposable income of the Indian middle class. This has been identified by about 94 per cent of the respondents as a key factor for the increased domestic travel across the country. Over 40 per cent of the respondents believed that the increased demand would come from new locations largely due to better access and improved infrastructure. Therefore, a significant supply is being developed and likely to develop



at such locations. Affordability and quality of experience are key factors in defining this shift from five-star to more budget category

hotels. Although travellers value loyalty programmes and promotional schemes, survey participants do not

see it as a key determinant in selecting their accommodation. Other factors include access to online travel and hotel bookings.

Upsouth opens new outlets in Pune and Ahmedabad

Upsouth, Pune's South Indian destination, has now launched its eighth outlet in Undri, Pune, and operations in Gujarat with its first QSR outlet in Navrangpura, Ahmedabad. Other than Undri, the brand's outlets have been operating in

Wakad, Chandani Chowk, and Phoenix Market City. The hospitality brand has been operating more than 12 outlets across Bengaluru and Pune.

Kumar Gaurav, Vice President, Upsouth Hospitality, says, "After



seven other locations in Pune namely Viman Nagar, Pune Airport, Wanowrie, Aundh,

the huge success in Bengaluru and Pune, we see Ahmedabad as a potential target market for



Upsouth. A major portion of the population in Ahmedabad is vegetarian. However, the real taste of South Indian food is not being served here, which is why we planned to launch Upsouth. Navrangpura is a perfect target location for us due to the mixture of working professionals and students.

We are planning to launch four or five more outlets by year-end, and are looking forward to creating an impact in cosmopolitan areas in Gujarat through franchising options. Beyond these locations, we are also planning to launch operations in Mumbai and Hyderabad."

ibis Styles, second ibis in Goa, to open with 145 rooms

JB Singh, President and Chief Executive Officer, InterGlobe Hotels, has said that the group is looking to develop a second ibis in Goa, under the ibis Styles brand.

"In fact, we are also looking for sites to develop a third property there. We are going to start a new project in Bandra Kurla, which will be a 150-200 room project. We are looking at developing more hotels in Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Pune," he added.



Hans Hotels to expand presence in Goa and Rajasthan

Hans Hotels is looking at opening new properties in Goa and Rajasthan. **Rita Shah**, CEO, Hans Hotels, says, "We are currently in the planning stages and want to expand the company further. We are deciding on the destinations and are looking at Goa and Rajasthan for opening new properties. The new properties will either be built by us or will be acquired. The company believes in owning its properties and running them, and not going in for management contracts."



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Sommet Education invests in DUCASSE Education

Sommet Education has announced an agreement under which it will become the majority shareholder of DUCASSE Education. This joining of forces between Sommet Education, a hospitality management education group and ambassador of the Swiss education model, and DUCASSE Education, a network of schools by celebrity chef Alain Ducasse, creates shared perspectives and long-term synergies between the two organisations.

"We are thrilled to embark on this brand-new partnership between the world leader of Swiss hospitality management training and the French leader in culinary and pastry arts. DUCASSE Education is founded and driven by Alain Ducasse, who has inspired and continues to inspire generations of chefs across the world. This agreement will help us broaden our training options and expand our area of expertise," explains **Benoît Etienne Domenget**,



CEO of Sommet Education. Meanwhile, DUCASSE Education is set to open its brand-new Meudon campus in Paris. "The decision to join forces was extremely natural,

given our strong synergies and shared values. Our highest value is passion: passion for hospitality and gastronomy, and passion for our educational mission," remarks Ducasse.

Taj's Campton Place gets second Michelin Star



Taj's iconic Campton Place Restaurant in San Francisco earns its second Michelin Star, establishing it as the only Indian-

influenced restaurant in the United States and Europe to obtain this recognition. Year 2019 marks Campton Place Restaurant's 10th consecutive year as a Michelin-starred restaurant, firmly instituting it among the culinary elite. Campton Place Restaurant is located within Taj Campton Place, one of San Francisco's most prominent landmark hotels.

Srijith Gopinathan, Executive Chef of Campton Place Restaurant, says, "We are honoured to be recognised

by the Michelin Guide with two stars. We're proud of our unique Californian-Indian cuisine and incredible team, and hope to continue delighting our guests with one-of-a-kind dining experiences with exploratory spices, refined techniques, and fresh ingredients."

Srijith has continued to refine his signature Californian-Indian cuisine, artfully fusing California produce and cooking techniques with the regional inspiration, aromatics and traditional spice blends of India.

Run for Traffic Heroes

On the occasion of 100 years of Hilton, Conrad Pune organised a five kilometre marathon honouring the Pune Traffic Police, titled 'Run for Traffic Heroes'. **Pankaj Deshmukh**, DCP of Traffic Police, inaugurated the marathon that saw a gathering of 300 participants. The event commenced with a warm-up session by a dance troupe organised by the hotel.

At the conclusion of the marathon, **Shubham Chandra**, General Manager, Conrad Pune, felicitated the winners, and the ceremony was followed by a healthy breakfast for all.

Chandra said, "Hilton Group's 100th year has been its most dynamic year with the launch of new brands, innovations like the first truly mobile-centric connected rooms, and the group's expansion into eight new countries. With such consistent development, Hilton is pioneering its way for the next century of hospitality. We, at Conrad Pune, wanted to celebrate this milestone anniversary by commemorating our everyday unsung heroes who work day in, day out to ensure safety on the roads." Conrad Pune also hosted the Pune traffic policemen for breakfast.



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Italian fiesta at Prego

Prego, the Italian specialty restaurant at The Westin Mumbai Garden City, recently hosted a gastronomic sojourn with two Italian chefs coming together for a culinary face-off called 'Clash of the Italians'. While **Chef Antonello Cancedda**, hailing from Genoa, showcased his expertise in seafood, **Chef Marouane Rahali** from Milan presented the specialities of this hilly province.

The menu during this 10-day festival featured an amalgamation of scrumptious creations from the two talented chefs. Cancedda,

Chef De Cuisine at Prego, said, "I feel delighted to introduce Chef Rahali, an incredibly talented maestro of the cucina (kitchen). He is able to perfectly capture every flavourful essence on a plate that the fine cuisine of Milan has to offer. As an Italian and a local of Italy's ancient port city - Genoa, Genoese cuisine is ingrained in me since my childhood. It is authentic, flavourful, and extraordinarily enticing. I felt it would be exciting to be able to showcase both our cuisines to the Indian palate, as I know Indians are extremely appreciative of fine dining at its best."



Happy Thai in Worli

Happy Thai, India's first indigenous authentic Asian fast-casual dining chain, opens its first restaurant at Atria Mall, Worli. It aims to offer authentic Thai and Japanese cuisine for an evolved palate and for a new experimental customer. The new Asian restaurant is the brainchild of businessman **Aditya Kilachand**, who has put together a stellar and previously successful team of **Samir Chhabria** as CEO and celebrated chef **James Biaka** as Executive Chef of Happy Thai.

Happy Thai promises to deliver a cultural experience with its vibrant interiors that are designed and curated by Founder and Principal Designer at Essajees Atelier, **Sarah Sham**. The 85-seater, 2650 sqft restaurant features design from the prevailing colours and pieces of Thailand, and has a dash of South Asia's essence into its interiors. The team has integrated cane and wood into the space, lots of plants, and the Happy Thai colours of black and red, along with gold accents that pay homage to the royal roots of the elephant.



Turkish delights at Sofitel Mumbai

Sofitel Mumbai BKC Hotel hosted a 10-day Turkish Food Festival at its Pondichéry Café in association with Raffles Istanbul and low-cost carrier IndiGo, where a special menu was curated by expert chefs.

Sofitel Mumbai BKC hosted its Turkish Food Festival from June 14-23, 2019, at its all-day dining Pondichéry Café. The culinary affair showcased the best of Turkish cuisine, presenting a chance for guests to savour authentic and delicious Turkish delicacies. But that's not all! The boutique hotel also gave them the opportunity to be a lucky winner to win an all-expense paid trip for two to Istanbul, sponsored by the food festival partners Raffles Istanbul and IndiGo.

The festival was inaugurated with a cultural dance performance by a professional Turkish Dance Troupe, who had been specially flown down by the luxury hotel. To make it a more immersive food sojourn, the 10-day exotic food festival had chefs coming all the way from Raffles Istanbul to give guests an authentic taste of their homeland. A special menu was curated by expert chefs **Mehmet Ogurtan** and **Hakan Guzelkokar** from Raffles Istanbul for this food festival.





In Lords, we trust

Lords Hotels & Resorts is looking at joining hands with individual and branded hotel owners across the western region who are looking for a brand shift, and bring them under the Lords brand. **Ajay Pawar**, Regional Manager (Gujarat), Lords Hotels & Resorts, throws more light on this.

Hazel Jain

What is your outlook for the hospitality landscape in the western region?

The hospitality landscape in this region is witnessing a rapid transformation. It was dominated by small-time local brands for a long time. New industrial

What kind of hotels are you looking out for to bring them under the Lords banner?

We are looking at upcoming hotel owners, branded hotel owners looking for a brand shift, and individual hotel owners across the western region to come under the Lords brand. By

Scope of responsibility

Pawar heads the Gujarat region for Lords hotels located in Gir, Chotila and Vadodara, as well as upcoming properties at Morbi and Ahmedabad. He has also contributed in bringing the above properties under the Lords banner along with Lords Inn Porbandar.



Ajay Pawar

clusters with large concentration of multinational companies have now emerged, giving renewed impetus to business travel into this region. These commercial and industrial developments have led to a surge in demand for quality hotel chains.

opting to come under our banner, these hoteliers can become part of a reputed chain and gain access to national advertising. We also offer initial training and ongoing support, customer lead-generation through website and a centralised booking team, dedicated marketing and

“

By opting to come under our banner, hoteliers can gain access to national advertising; we also offer initial training and ongoing support

”

social media support, and strong sales infrastructure.

How many properties do you currently have here?

We have operational properties in Gujarat at Ankleshwar, Bharruch, Bhavnagar, Chotila, Dahej, Dwarka, Gandhidham, Gir, Saputara, Somnath, Surat, Porbandar, Rajula, and Vadodara.

IT seminar in Mumbai

A single successful attack on IT systems could damage business and cause financial loss for not just hotels and restaurants but also customers. To help members learn how to protect their business against cyber security threats, HRAWI will conduct a seminar in Mumbai on July 9, 2019.

HRA Today Bureau

Wi-Fi in hotels and restaurants is now a norm and one of the basic services provided to clients across hotels and restaurants. However, the world of online business brings along with it potential security

risks as well as scams. A single successful attack could seriously damage your business and cause financial burden for you and your customers, as well as affect your business's reputation, and it is extremely important that you protect your business against cyber security threats.

In this regard, HRAWI will organise an IT seminar which will be very impactful and will be simple and easy to understand. These sessions will guide hotel and restaurant owners with ways to safeguard these problems.

The first session on 'Managed Guest Internet Service for Hotels, Restaurants and Cafés and Revenue Monetize Models on Wi-Fi' will be conducted by **Rajesh Pillai**, CEO of Treya Wireless. Session two titled 'Cyber threats, liabilities and ways to safeguard all Stakeholders' is specifically designed for hospitality and tourism. It will be conducted by **Ravish Jhala**, Post Graduate in E-Business and currently studying Hotel Planning and Design from Cornell University. Jhala is a hospitality consultant in the field of low voltage, up-skill, wireless technologies and security.



Seminar details

Date : July 9, 2019

Time : 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Venue : Hotel Sahara Star,
Mumbai

For registration, please write to Christine Mannas at pa@hrawi.com and Glenford Pinto at info@hrawi.com.

Converting it right

Noesis Capital Advisors, a hotel investment advisory firm, has recently unveiled a research report on the hotel rebranding phenomenon in India. Titled 'The Conversion Landscape', the report takes a closer look at many of its facets like performance evaluation, brand positioning, and striking a perfect balance in this act.

Steps involved in converting your property

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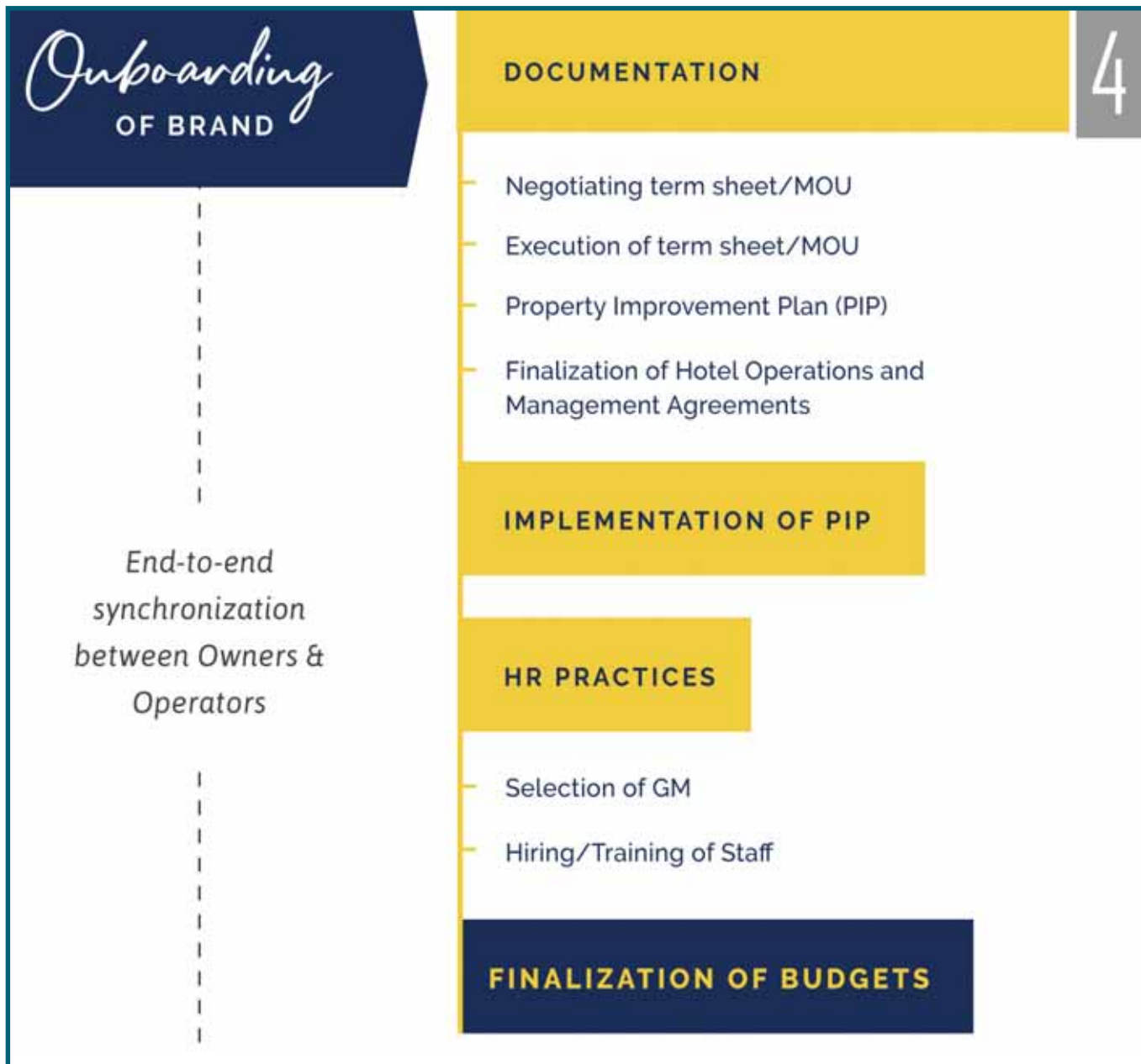
'The Conversion Landscape' reveals the evolution of conversion phenomenon in India, property operational plans, and top conversions by prominent hotel groups over the last three years. The study also provides insights into various opportunities for conversions growth and common disruptors. A key aspect of the report, that we highlight here, are the five detailed steps involved in the conversion of a property, including the scope for renovation in economy to luxury hotels.

Nandivardhan Jain, CEO, Noesis Capital Advisors, says that conversion has been widely resorted to as an expansion tactic by hoteliers, in order to increase their market share quickly with minimum investment of time and resources.

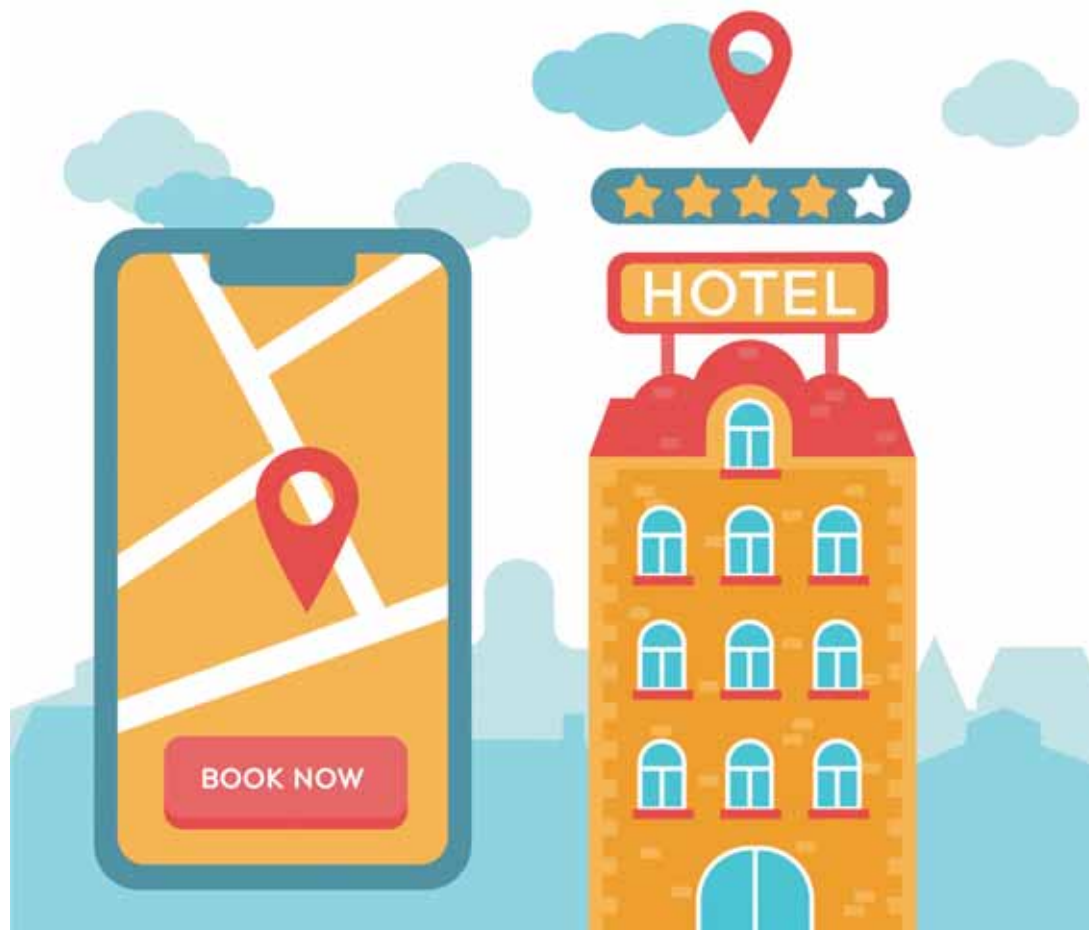
"While stand-alone hotels undergo conversion for a multitude of reasons like a shift in corporate strategy, aging of the property or demographics, the most popular reason remains empire building. Strategically, the phenomenon of hotel rebranding is quite logical, given the intensity of competition in the hotels industry. However, successful hotel conversions take more than just change of hands - they need a carefully crafted strategy with underlying market awareness," he says.



Source: Noesis Capital Advisors



Source: Noesis Capital Advisors



Eyeing Tier-II & III

Rajan Kehar, Managing Director, Hotelexpertz.com, talks about his plans to target huge growth in the next one year, riding on new technology and increased hotel inventory in Tier-II and III cities of India.

HRA Today Bureau

Kehar Travel Ventures closed last year at \$20 million, purely on online travel platforms by achieving a remarkable response from the B2B market, claims Kehar. "Kehar Travel Ventures has a portfolio of online systems, namely www.hotelexpertz.com, www.faretripbox.com and www.travelarmour.com, which have captured a good and quality market share," he claims.

He says that the aim is to offer the best in service and business to clients. "We want to do something new for our clients — be it the launch of our air ticket portal or our travel insurance

portal," he says. The company expects good growth this year. Kehar asserts, "With India's travel spends expected to grow at 13 per cent to \$136 billion by 2021, we will be looking for a tremendous growth in our business portfolio. We are expecting multiple growth as well as targeting \$60 million business by end of 2019."

He believes that technology plays an integral role in the business. Kehar says, "Technology plays a tremendous part in creating innovations in products. We are coming up with our new version of www.hotelexpertz.com. We will emphasise on the new

technology platform, from a new look for the website to a pre-payment module to book for our travel partners. But, we strongly believe that our contribution, dedication, and involvement always make us stand out from our peers."

In terms of promotions and strategic planning, Hotelexpertz.com plans to focus on all the major Tier-II and III markets. "We are aggressively focusing on creating new business and setting eyes on Indian hotel inventories whilst aiming for all major destinations in India for the summer. The new version will have all our contracted inventories," he informs.



Rajan Kehar



It's tough being organic

Chef **Sanket Gore**, Head of Department - Food Production and Vice Principal of ITM Institute of Hotel Management, talks about the challenges that chefs face in including organic products in a regular menu.

While there is growing traction towards organic farming among the farming community in India, it is still a very small percentage. Indian farmers are largely tuned to farming using chemical fertilizers because of the inherent risk involved in organic farming; they find it risky to switch from traditional farming to organic farming. The storage infrastructure for organic products has also not evolved fully in India, and as the volume of organic products is not as big compared to normal products, per unit transportation cost tends to be high.

There is also an issue of spoilage, so most suppliers in the market anyhow do not stock too much at one time. Cost continues to be a limiting factor and while there is a pull for organic products from the high-end hotels and restaurants, the price sensitive mid-level market is yet to look the organic way. Food

“While there is a pull for organic products from high-end hotels and restaurants, the mid-level market is yet to look the organic way”

is considered a cost-driven item across service industries excluding luxury hotel business. This is because nowadays, customers are more quality-conscious than price-sensitive when it comes to food. It is always with good intentions that organic food is introduced into menus, but restaurants, whether part of a hotel or a stand-alone, have to sway to market forces and most importantly, make money. Organic food products are expensive and

therefore reflect on the food cost, which is a major concern for any chef.

There is also a gap in the understanding of certification standards and labelling requirements, as well as lack of market for pre-certification produce. The farmers growing organic products are not given enough incentives as compared to other farmers. The limited availability of organic food products in the market is also posing a serious challenge to the growth of the organic food industry.

There are very few retail shops in India that store and sell organic food items. Many fake organic products are also available in the market. Governments can play a role in encouraging the adoption of organic agriculture by funding R&D and education.

(Views expressed here are the author's own. The publication may or may not subscribe to the same.)



Sanket Gore



Out in the open!

Radisson Blu Pune Hinjawadi is evolving the events landscape with its customised banqueting services for its ballrooms and the lovely open-air venue – The Lawns – in the city.

HRA Today Bureau



Pankaj Saxena

Radisson Blu Pune Hinjawadi presents its open-air banqueting space, The Lawns, a great venue for weddings, social events, cocktail dinners, and corporate events in the city. Spread across an area of 12,000 sqft, the spacious venue provides ample scope for customisation of any event with an accommodating capacity of 1000 people. The team of experts at the hotel assists in planning and conducting events from start to finish. It offers specialised services of renowned wedding planners, decorators, home chefs, and audio visual equipment partners for wedding clients. The banquet offers unique gastronomic experi-



ences, and clients can select from a range of menus featuring local and global cuisines or design their own menu in consultation with the chefs here. There is an emphasis on fresh ingredients,

live stations, innovation and authenticity, and the décor is further enhanced with exquisite detailing and stage co-ordination. The hotel also offers customised packages and a host of services



to pamper guests with spa and beauty salon services, to complete the grand experience of a celebratory occasion.

Speaking about the changing trends he sees with respect to weddings, **Pankaj Saxena**, General Manager, Radisson Blu Pune Hinjawadi, says, "Today, weddings have evolved into an event requiring a high level of customisation along with a first-of-its-kind experience that can create everlasting memories for families. This reflects in many ways – from creating modern Indian cuisine menus to lots of

“

Weddings have evolved into an event requiring a high level of customisation along with first-of-its-kind experiences that can create everlasting memories

”

surprise elements included as part of the ceremony to make it a fun-filled and lifestyle event. The wedding market in India will become more promising in the years to come with nearly US\$ 2 billion expected to be

spent in food and hospitality requirements alone. Since most of the times weddings take place during weekends, it's a great opportunity for business hotels to increase their occupancy levels and overall revenues."

About the venues

Radisson Blu Pune Hinjawadi offers sprawling 21,000 sqft of wedding venues including two ballrooms (indoor) and an open-air venue - The Lawn, business lounge, and sufficient break-away venues for MICE requirements. The ballrooms and The Lawn are perfect venues for weddings as they have a higher seating capacity.

Ballroom 1 is 2800 sqft with 1500 sqft of pre-function space. This accommodates around 210 pax in theatre style, 130 pax in round tables, and 250 pax in casual dinner style.

Ballroom 2 & 3 together form 2800 sqft with 1500 sqft of pre-function area. This, too, accommodates 210 pax in theatre style, 130 pax in round tables, and 250 pax in casual dinner style.

The Lawn is an 11,000 sqft open-air venue. It can fit 500 pax in theatre style and 350 pax in round tables. The capacity goes to 700 guests in casual dinner style.





Edgy, yet classy

Two brand new launches in Mumbai this June from the Sumesh Menon Associates stable show that the F&B industry is ready to experiment not just with food but with design as well.

HRA Today Bureau

Sumesh Menon, a name synonymous with aesthetics, luxury and off-beat designs, is the designer and founder of Sumesh Menon Associates, an interior design firm. Conceived more than a decade ago, the firm specialises in high-end, bespoke interiors. Menon has launched three amazing properties this June 2019.



Sumesh Menon

Speaking about trends in the F&B industry, Menon says, "Restaurant interior design is predominantly fashioned according to the cuisine/theme of the restaurant space as much as the kind of crowd it caters to. As far as trends are concerned, these two factors play a major role in defining current styles and ones that are passé. The concept of open kitchens is catching on fast and hence, the

otherwise neglected kitchen wall aspects now given serious contemplation."

He has revamped Radio Bar in Khar which embraces a stylishly retro look evident in the black and white geomet-

Upcoming projects in Mumbai

- ❖ 145, Andheri
- ❖ The Flying Saucer, Andheri
- ❖ 1522, Andheri
- ❖ Seeds of Life, Bandra

ric flooring and the vibrantly quirky wall artwork. A one-of-its-kind inward curved bar with bolsters as bar apron and the DJ placed bang in its centre, promise a high-energy vibe to the entire space. Middle of June saw the launch

of the beautifully-designed Dragonfly restaurant at JW Marriott, Andheri. The clients' brief was to create a high-energy bar. The design of the space was achieved in collaboration with Bent Chair, with their furniture design and pendant lights custom-made in the shape of flying dragonflies.

He adds, "DragonFly has a nightclub/bar vibe and so we have used edgy design elements including a full-height X-ray wall design and a stunning back-lit curved texture glass bar apron revolving around the theme of dragonflies. Scooping out private spaces, mix of various seating styles, bar seating, etc., are all designed as per the high-energy vibe of the space." The space creates a private dining seating with beautiful custom-textured paper lights suspended above them.



French love in Mumbai

With outbound tourism at an all-time high and city-dwellers open to experiencing new cultures, it helps restaurants to conduct cultural evenings and bring a new country closer to India – a lot like what Out of the Blue did with France in Mumbai.

Hazel Jain

Bandra's restaurant, Out of the Blue (OOTB), recently brought France to Mumbai's coastline with a 10-day festival on French food and culture. Guests experienced the magic of French culture, cuisine, flavours, music, wine and heritage at the debut French Food Festival in May. Kick-starting with interesting events like French Riviera Drunch, post-card-making workshop, and wine and cheese workshop to crepe-making workshop and more, the

festival took patrons on an expedition across the French province without visiting it. Each day had a unique event based on France's art, music, and food.

Talking about the thought process behind this event, **Rahul Bajaj**, Director and Conceptualiser, Out of the Blue (OOTB), said that he wanted to bring people from France to work with people in India and understand each another's culture. "Food and cultural festivals help bring people together.

Uniqueness is very important. For example, we have taken French onion soup and re-created it into a fondue, which is bizarre. We also have a lot of French liquors. There are workshops like dessert workshop, chocolate-making and calligraphy workshops, etc. So, along with just bringing people together, this festival also aims at educating everyone about the other culture," he informed.

OOTB regularly experiments with thematic menus, and sharing his perspective about the evolution of the F&B scene in Mumbai, he said that it takes years of practice and learning to understand what works best for a restaurant. "Our hotel, Le Sutra Hotel, is a French name; we have been successful for over 19 years now and it has taken a lot to be at this position. Since we are not really an alcohol-centric restaurant, we have worked majorly on our food," Bajaj added.



Rahul Bajaj



On a **healthy** note

With its second outlet launched in Bandra recently, Kale & Kaffé aims to bring about a revolution of healthy eating out in Mumbai, as more and more people turn to hearty, yet guilt-free food options.

Hazel Jain

Everything on the menu of Kale & Kaffé is healthy. They also have a Keto-centric menu which is designed by nutritionist Dhriti Udhesi. This was the brainchild of three founders - Abhishek Chhabria, Karan Chhabria, and Aditya Wanwari. With the expeditious lifestyle of Mumbai city dwellers working to meet deadlines, health is often pushed to the back seat. So, a healthy eating-out option deserves patronising.



Aditya Wanwari

With the nutritional value of each dish mentioned below its name, this place helps guests keep calories in check. The interiors of the place complement the menu with Instagrammable pink walls with prints of kale, and windows with wooden frames that light seeps through. Sharing more details is **Aditya Wanwari**, Founder Partner, Kale & Kaffé,

“Our Keto meals are properly measured and proportioned, and their macros count is mentioned before the meal is served to customers”

who says, “With our ‘superbowl’ menu, we want to promote Kale & Kaffé as a place that is not just for munch-ins and coffee but also a place where people can have a hearty guilt-free meal.

Although Keto is a fad, eating healthy is not. Honestly, the new cafés that are coming in the city serve 90 per cent healthy food.

The trend is changing now to substituting full fat milk to almond or soy milk. Vegan cafés are opening up and Keto menus are high in demand. That shows that the trend is setting and is here for good.”

He says that the biggest mistake people make is they think that a sugar-free dessert or a gluten-free sandwich is a free pass to eating two or even three of them per day. “That is wrong! Our Keto meals are properly measured and proportioned, and their macros count is mentioned before the meal is served to customers so they know how much carb/fat and protein they are consuming in a single serving and accordingly plan their meals for the day,” Wanwari explains.

Bandra is their second outlet after opening one in Andheri a year ago. The trio now plans to open one in South Mumbai.

Make water to save it

The industry can greatly benefit from this invention that is now closer to them than ever. WaterMaker, a contraption based on atmospheric water technology, can be a potential game changer for hotels and restaurants.

Hazel Jain

This could be just what the industry needs right now. After being in the tourism industry for over three decades, this dynamic lady has ventured where few have the courage to go. **Meher Bhandara**, Director, WaterMaker (India), is now dedicated to conserving and 'making' water.

"I ventured into this quite by chance when my brother heard about atmospheric water technology from a scientist and innovator in USA in 2004. At that time, I was in Travel Corporation India, partly owned by the Katgara family of which I am a part. We decided to introduce this

Please Save
Water



had to learn about the technology from scratch and being a pure humanities person with a tourism background, it was quite a challenge to go into manufacturing," says Bhandara.

Talking about how hotels or F&B outlets could install this in their premises, she says that

They need to figure out how many litres they would require per day and advise the location of installation after which we would be able to guide them as to the right model for installation. These WaterMakers are ideal for decentralised use," she adds.

The cost and waiting time depends on the model(s) selected. They could also be used in CSR activities by donating them to schools, health clinics, and community centres.

"The tourism department could set them up at tourist spots where safe drinking water would be welcome instead of vendors selling bottled water and creating more plastic waste. We also plan to approach the Ministry of Water," Bhandara reveals.

She adds that the hospitality industry is aware of conservation, and is doing whatever it can to save water and go green as far as possible.

"Our technology adds to existing water resources, is environment-friendly as no plastic bottles are required, no RO purification is involved (which actually wastes 60 per cent of water in the purification process which results in 'reject water' which re-contaminates the ground), no transportation is needed, thus saves on fuel and reduces the carbon footprint," she says. Her message to everyone is, 'There is no life without water. Do your bit to save water.'

How the technology works

The technology uses optimised dehumidification techniques to extract and condense moisture in the air to produce healthy purified drinking water as per IS 10500 (2012) standards. The atmospheric water generators require a stable 24x7 power source and function best in coastal areas that are hot and humid. Temperatures between 25 to 32 degree Celsius and RH levels of 65-70 per cent or over are ideal climatic conditions for the WaterMakers to perform as per their capacity. If conditions are higher, more water will be made and vice versa. They are plug-n-play machines and easy to maintain. The larger machines are the outdoor ones.

technology to India as the country needed safe and clean drinking water which required no water source and thus actually conserved the existing water resources.

It was a futuristic business which not many had heard of. I

it would surely be an innovative step towards conservation of water if hotels, restaurants, and corporate offices install WaterMakers ranging from 25 litres to 2,500 litres per day.

"If the requirement is more, they can be used in multiples.

“
The tourism department could install WaterMakers at tourist spots instead of vendors selling bottled water and creating more plastic waste”



Meher Bhandara

Appointments



★ **Rishi Puri**
Senior Vice President
Lords Hotels & Resorts

Rishi Puri has been promoted to the role of Senior Vice President from Vice President at Lords Hotels & Resorts. In the new role, he will direct, administer, and coordinate the internal operational activities of the company in accordance with policies, strategies, and objectives established by the COO and the Director of the company. He will also assist the COO in the development of strategic organisation goals for hotel operations, to include evaluating the effectiveness of management practices, processes, and activities. Puri has been with Lords Hotels & Resorts for eight years.



★ **Chirag Sheth**
Chief Financial Officer
Keys Hotels

Keys Hotels, a part of the Los Angeles-based Berggruen group, has promoted Chirag Sheth to Chief Financial Officer. A Chartered Accountant by profession, he brings 14 years of leadership experience in finance, accounting, and analytics. Sheth joined Berggruen Hotels in 2015 and rose to many ranks from General Manager, Special Projects to VP, Business Strategy & Analytics, and eventually Head of Finance to take the position of CFO at Keys Hotels. In the new role, his focus will be on ensuring adequate risk assessment and mitigation in compliance with the necessary regulatory and legal requirements.



★ **Gorav Arora**
General Manager
Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach Hotel

Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach has appointed Gorav Arora as the General Manager of the property. With 18 years of hospitality experience, Arora will be responsible for spearheading operations at the 203-room hotel. His well-versed knowledge and dynamic guidance make him accountable for steering beneficial strategies for Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach. Under his leadership, team building skills, comprehensive knowledge of international standard service procedures and a strong background in sales and marketing, the team will be able to provide a strategic depth to the property. Arora is an alumni of Institute of Hotel Management, Jaipur.



★ **Akhilesh Sharma**
Finance Controller
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Pune

Akhilesh Sharma has been appointed as Finance Controller at the 115-room DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Pune - Chinchwad. With over 20 years of experience, Sharma comes in as a seasoned professional in the hospitality sector. In the new role, he will be heading the financial operations of the property and managing the day-to-day operations of the accounts department including preparation and management of the hotel's financial budgets. Sharma has extensive work experience, and during his tenure worked with various well-known brands such as Sarovar Hotels & Resorts, Radisson, and Pride Hotels.





★ **Rejoie Francis**
Director of Sales
Novotel Imagica Khopoli

Rejoie Francis has been brought on board as Director of Sales at Novotel Imagica Khopoli. In this role, he will be responsible for leading and further evolving all aspects of sales, driving revenues, and promoting brand strategies. Prior to joining Accor, Francis was associated with Caravela Beach Resort, Goa, as Director of Sales – West India. He has also worked for renowned hotels like Radisson Blu Resort Goa Cavellissim Beach, Radisson Goa Candolim, Novotel Dona Sylvia Goa and Mercure Devaaya Ayurvedic Retreat, as well as Le Royal Meridien Mumbai (now Hilton). Francis’s understanding of the hospitality industry is critical to his role as Director of Sales at Novotel Imagica Khopoli.



★ **Balaji Srinivasan**
Executive Chef
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Pune

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Pune - Chinchwad has appointed Balaji Srinivasan as Executive Chef. In the new role, he will be responsible for taking the culinary scene at the property to a new level. Srinivasan will oversee the daily operations of the restaurant and hotel kitchens, while ensuring promptness and quality of dishes, hiring and training kitchen staff, and setting and monitoring performance standards. With an experience of over 20 years, Srinivasan is a quintessential culinary personality who brings with him passion, energy, and expertise in the kitchen and F&B department. In the past, he has worked with various brands.



★ **Aniket Das**
Executive Sous Chef
The Westin Mumbai Garden City

Aniket Das has been appointed as the Executive Sous Chef at The Westin Mumbai Garden City. A seasoned culinary professional with an illustrious 13-year career in the hospitality industry, Das is a dynamic and hard-working individual with a passion for cooking and a deep understanding of kitchen operations. In his new role, he will develop menus, oversee daily operations, as well as supervise and train the team. Prior to joining The Westin Mumbai Garden City, he worked as the Executive Chef at Aloft Bengaluru and was previously Head Chef at Fairfield by Marriott, Rajajinagar in Bengaluru. Das has also been associated with properties like Mövenpick Hotel in Qatar and JW Marriott in Mumbai.



★ **Gautam Singh**
Spa Manager
Hyatt Regency Pune

Gautam Singh has been appointed as Spa Manager at Hyatt Regency Pune. With over seven years of experience in the hospitality industry, he brings with him immense passion, energy, and expertise. He is remarkably knowledgeable, with a great background in understanding new business opportunities developing in the market and performing and managing the day-to-day activities of a spa. Singh’s last assignment was with Radisson Blu Resort and Spa, Alibaug, where he worked as Senior Spa Manager. In his career, he has consistently delivered results that contribute to the mission and overall success of hotels by accomplishing performance objectives focused on business revenues as well as guest and associate satisfaction.

Products

The bigger, the better

Address Home, the luxury home décor brand, goes big with its latest range of décor accessories, which are all about an oversized style. The brand has introduced a new look which spells cool and quiet elegance. This new collection of décor accents ranges from large sculptures and tall planters to big stellar decorative accents and more. Designed to blend with both contemporary and modern room design, Address Home's new collection is sure to lend a statement-making character and oomph to a living space.

The collection includes the Conus black and gold planter, Trigon stainless steel planters, Ebony planters, Vena floor vase, Navajo décor horns, and Pablo gold brass décor among other products.



Not far from the ground

Mirania, a super luxury furniture store, has announced the presence of 'Hosu Lounge Collection' designed by Patricia Urquiola for Coalesse (now Steelcase), at its premium store of multi-luxury brands. The Hosu Collection challenges traditional seating typologies by converting from a traditional lounge to a floor-based seat and was inspired by the tendency creative people have to spread out on the floor. Hosu Chair is an innovative version of the classic lounge chair, merging lounging and work into one design. With a built-in ottoman; hidden pockets for magazines, notebooks, and tablets; and a hidden threading system for the cords of electronic devices, the Hosu Chair is a digitally-wired, worker's dream chair.

Patterned drapes

Alhambra has launched a new collection of floral furnishing fabrics that are available in India through RR Décor. The collection is available in more than 100 countries within the textile sector for interior design. Famed for their luxurious hand-woven silk fabrics with designs rooted in Indian traditions, yet exuding universal appeal, RR Décor stands apart in the furnishing world. With these new launches, RR Décor reaffirms its commitment to offering eclectic, world-class contemporary choices. Alhambra's floral offerings cover inspirations from a botanical garden and traditional damasks translated into contemporary designs to paisley patterns with metallic thread embroidery, digital large flower patterns and more.



Step into serenity

CJ Living, the brand renowned for bringing to India avant-garde interior designs, has unveiled maverick designer Karim Rashid's signature kitchen line for Rational, Germany. Titled Floo, it is a combination of pioneering and ingenious creativity with cutting-edge technology. With its understated look and virtually invisible joints, Floo is a breathtakingly beautiful, light, airy, and inviting kitchen. It showcases natural, rounded contours and monolithic elements. One of the highlights of the design is the elegantly-formed front that also provides a smooth handle function. The rounded fronts are in harmony with square blocks that appear to provide a seamless transition from the island to the floor, creating a feeling of space defined by openness and lightness.





One stop for design

Interior design firm HS Ahuja & Associates (HSAA) doesn't just provide design consultancy for hotels and restaurants, but also adds a special touch through bespoke furniture, furnishings, and artwork.

HS Ahuja & Associates believes in providing its customers with a 'total' solution for design, one that comprises interior and exterior design consultancy as well as bespoke furniture, customised furnishings, accessories and wall art, supplemented with the services of a personal shop-

important to listen to the needs of clients and the team to come up with the perfect design solution. "If you can master the skill of connecting with those outside of your profession in a way that is inclusive and inspiring, you will allow the work of architects and interior designers to come

requires special focus on details so that the end-result is a perfect symphony of design aesthetics and functions. Sharing some tips, she says that for high-end contemporary design, local Indian art and crafts, sculptures, as well as Indian techniques of textile, handcrafted stone work and carpentry can bring out the essence of a place.

“With our turnkey services available pan India, we create spaces that are worth appreciating”

“We don't just renovate a space, we transform it by ensuring every aspect of creation and development is dealt with in synergy”

per for an experience that is tailor-made to the last detail.

According to **Hema**, Principal Designer and Creative Director, HS Ahuja & Associates, it is

to fruition. It is important to be supportive of the team," she says. Hema adds that right from planning the design to its execution, material and artefacts selection, every step of the process

Over a span of 30 years, Hema has completed more than 500 projects ranging from hotels, (including three to seven-star properties) and residences to corporate offices and high-end show apartments for developers. She believes in working alongside end-users to deliver a product that satisfies them in terms of aesthetics, functionality, and budget. HSAA offers a seamless turnkey service to clients and investors. It has gained reputation for stimulating designs.



Hema



ANCHALIKA KIJKANAKORN

Founder & Managing Director | Akaryn Hotel Group, Thailand

I exercise regularly and practise yoga. Reading also relaxes me, but the best way I de-stress is by baking and painting. I paint murals and canvas, and also bake homemade bread for my kids once every few days. I love travelling and have many beautiful

holiday moments with my kids - tree runs (skiing through trees), trail riding on horses, and bicycling along the coast of Pranburi. We are going sailing and diving together next. In India, I visited Goa many years ago and it was fantastic. I also enjoyed Sikkim and Assam where I visited the tea plantations.

“ I visited Goa many years ago and it was fantastic ”

SHRITI CHHAJED

Founder | BookEventZ.com

When I am stressed, I usually talk it out and then distract myself by either watching movies or going out for a drive. Now that I have a child, he is the best stress-buster for me. I love travelling, and my most memorable holiday was when I visited

Iceland - one of the most beautiful countries I have ever been to. I was on an eight-day road trip around the island, staying in countryside properties or being on the road at night, gazing at the Northern Lights.

“ Iceland is one of the most beautiful countries I have ever been to ”



RAJESH MALLIYA

General Manager | Hyatt Centric Candolim Goa

My pet is my biggest stress buster. Working out in the gym is another way I de-stress. One thing about me not many know is that I am actually a graduate in chemistry. I love to travel and explore unmarked trails. On my visit to Thailand, I did more

than just beaches; exploring the lesser-known interiors and visiting the biggest sleeping Buddha statue is one of the most memorable holidays so far. Currently, Goa is one of my favourite holiday destinations in India.

“ One thing about me not many know is that I am a graduate in chemistry ”



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