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# HRA Today

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JUNE-JULY 2022

# Contents



- 06 Union Government's Recent Initiatives to Boost Tourism & Hospitality Sector in India
- 10 Sunny Days to Greet Indian Hospitality Industry
- 14 FHRAI requests GST Council to evaluate hospitality sector's tax structure
- 16 Increasing Dreams and Plans to Explore International Destinations
- 20 Agro Tourism Centres the way forward Aiming to connect more farmers with tourism
- 26 News
- 42 Appointments



## President's Message

*Dear Members,*

The last two years were one of the worst times that the industry had experienced. However, as things stand today, the outlook is positive and this is largely because the hospitality industry is resilient. We continue to remain positive amidst the possibility of another wave of the pandemic hitting us. The industry is in the first leg of recovery with strong demand being witnessed in corporate and leisure segment. A proper revival, for the restaurants to attain pre-pandemic levels of momentum may take somewhere around six months.

Last month senior delegates of your Association met with Shri G. Kishan Reddy, Hon'ble Union Minister for Tourism, Culture and Development of North-Eastern Region on his visit to the city. The delegation presented the Minister with a comprehensive wish-list of the Hospitality industry highlighting concerns and recommendations for the revival and growth of the sector. We requested the Minister to consider making tourism a National Priority Sector since tourism and hospitality are the key drivers to accelerate socio-economic development of the country. Also, as part of the celebrations of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', with the support of the Ministry of Tourism we have proposed organizing Food Festivals across the Western region. The Minister appreciated our suggestion on preservation of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) managed monuments by the private sector especially, by hospitality players. The Minister also reciprocated and suggested that the Hospitality Industry participates in such CSR activities that aid in the maintenance and preservation of historical places and monuments and directed the ASI to prepare a report on the subject.

With reference to the new signage policy for shops and establishments in the State, HRAWI has submitted a representation to the Government requesting for any new rules and regulations to be made effective with prospective effect and not with retrospective

effect. We have further suggested that immediate compliance with the new rules may be enforced for all new establishments and signage of existing establishments be excluded and have requested an extension for the new rules and regulations to come into effect.

HRAWI has requested the Maharashtra Government to immediately withdraw the online Air Suvidha Form requirement. We have submitted a representation to the Government highlighting problems faced by inbound tourists in filling the form and have requested for the mandatory requirement to be either withdrawn or physical forms to be provisioned for travellers.

HRAWI continues to hold Food Safety and Standards Authority of India's (FSSAI) Online Food Safety Supervisory Training in Advance Catering (FoSTaC) programme with the most recent session held on 22nd June 2022. HRAWI is thankful to the hospitality establishments for proactively enrolling their personnel in the programme. We wish to thank the trainers deputed by FSSAI for imparting the requisite knowledge to hospitality professionals. We have made tremendous progress over the last few years with the programmes across the Western region and plan to continue organizing these programmes on an on-going basis in the future. The HRAWI has successfully trained and certified 2182 hospitality professionals across India's Western region in FoSTaC and FSSAI's Management Training Program.

Last month, a seminar on Revenue Management for hoteliers and restaurateurs was organized to help overcome challenges of declining revenue and to maximize yields. The hospitality industry is regaining meaningful business today after almost two years of pandemic induced lockdowns and restrictions. We organized the seminar specifically to help such hotels and restaurants that need to do exactly this.

**Sherry Bhatia**  
President - HRAWI



# UNION GOVERNMENT'S RECENT INITIATIVES TO BOOST TOURISM & HOSPITALITY SECTOR IN INDIA

Our Bureau

The Government of India has recently taken several steps to make India a global tourism hub, realising the country's potential in the tourism industry. The following are some of the major initiatives planned by the Government of India to boost the tourism and hospitality sector of India.

- From November 15, 2021, India allowed fully vaccinated foreign tourists to visit India, which in turn will help revive the Indian travel and hospitality sector.
- In the Union Budget 2022-23, an additional US\$ 316.3 million was earmarked for Ministry of Tourism.
- In November 2021, the Ministry of Tourism signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation to strengthen hospitality and tourism industry.
- In November 2021, the Indian government planned a conference to boost film tourism in the country with an aim to establish domestic spots as preferred filming destinations. This move is expected to create jobs and boost tourism in the country.
- In October 2021, Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi launched the Kushinagar International Airport in Uttar Pradesh to boost tourism.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly disrupted the Tourism industry. In September 2021, the Ministry of Tourism announced plans to allow international tourists to enter India and formal protocols are under discussion. According to the previous announcements, the first five lakh foreign tourists will be issued visas free of cost.
- In September 2021, the government launched NIDHI 2.0 (National Integrated Database of Hospitality Industry) scheme

which will maintain a database of hospitality sector components such as accommodation units, travel agents, tour operators, & others. NIDHI 2.0 will facilitate the digitalisation of the tourism sector by encouraging all hotels to register themselves on the platform.

- In July 2021, the ministry drafted a proposal titled 'National Strategy and Roadmap for Medical and Wellness Tourism' and has requested recommendations and feedback from several Central Ministries, all state and UT governments and administrations as well as industry partners to make the document more comprehensive.

- In May 2021, the Union Minister of State for Tourism & Culture Mr. Prahlad Singh Patel participated in the G20 tourism ministers' meeting to collaborate with member countries in protecting tourism businesses, jobs and taking initiatives to frame policy guidelines to support the sustainable and resilient recovery of travel and tourism.

- Government is planning to boost the tourism in India by leveraging on the lighthouses in the country. 71 lighthouses have been identified for development as tourist spots.

- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has introduced a new scheme called 'All India Tourist Vehicles Authorisation and Permit Rules, 2021', in which a tourist vehicle operator can register online for All India Tourist Authorisation/Permit. This permit will be issued within 30 days of submitting the application.

- In February 2021, the Ministry of Tourism under the Government of India's Regional Office (East) in Kolkata collaborated with Eastern Himalayas Travel & Tour Operator Association (resource partner) and the IIAS School of Management as (knowledge partner) to organise an 'Incredible India Mega Homestay Development & Training' workshop. 725 homestay owners from Darjeeling, Kalimpong and the foothills of Doors were trained in marketing, sales and behavioural skills

- On January 25, 2021, Union Tourism and Culture Minister Mr. Prahlad Singh Patel announced plan to develop an international-level infrastructure in Kargil (Ladakh) to promote adventure tourism and winter sports.

- The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) runs a series of Bharat Darshan tourist trains aimed at taking people to various pilgrimages across the country.

- On November 4, 2020, the Union Minister of State (IC) for Tourism & Culture Mr. Prahlad Singh Patel inaugurated the "Tourist Facilitation Centre" facility constructed under the project "Development of Guruvayur, Kerala" (under the PRASHAD Scheme of the Ministry of Tourism).

- Under Budget 2020-21, the Government of India has allotted Rs. 207.55 crore (US\$ 29.70 million) for development of tourist circuits under PRASHAD scheme.

- The Ministry of Tourism's 'DekhoApnaDesh' webinar series titled '12 Months of Adventure



Travel' on November 28, 2020, is likely to promote India as an adventure tourism destination.

- On January 26, 2021, Maharashtra Chief Minister Mr. Uddhav Thackeray inaugurated Balasaheb Thackeray Gorewada International Zoological Park in Nagpur. It is India's largest zoological park spread over 564 hectares and expected to attract ~2.5 million tourists a year.

- The Ministry of Tourism developed an initiative called SAATHI (System for Assessment, Awareness & Training for Hospitality Industry) by partnering with the Quality Council of India (QCI) in October 2020. The initiative will effectively implement guidelines/SOPs issued with reference to COVID-19 for safe operations of hotels, restaurants, B&Bs and other units.

- Statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, also known as 'Statue of Unity', was inaugurated in October 2018. It is the highest standing statue in the world at a height of 182 metre. It is expected to boost the tourism sector in the country and put it on the world tourism map.

- Under Budget 2020-21, the Government of India has allotted Rs. 1,200 crore (US\$ 171.70 million) for development of tourist circuits under Swadesh Darshan for eight Northeast states.

With the pandemic having receded, signs demonstrating a significant revival of the tourism and hospitality sector are aplenty.

# SUNNY DAYS TO GREET INDIAN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

N.Vijayagopalan

**T**he last two years were largely challenging for the Indian hospitality industry, which encountered problems after problems. But with the gradual relaxation of travel curbs and other restrictions, prompted by the success of the vaccination program, the industry witnessed a return of demand and volumes picked up as 2021 bid farewell.

There are a few contributing factors behind the gradual recovery of the hospitality industry, the prominent among them being the emergence of hybrid working models, enabling professionals and leisure travellers to work from anywhere, in-city staycations, weddings, special purpose groups and some

traction in domestic business travel towards the final quarter of last year. Between managing health precautions and ever changing consumer trends, the hotel industry is embracing innovation and smart technology to cater to consumers' new travel preferences.

According to McKinsey, the pandemic has hastened digital transformation by 10 years, and today's travellers are far more tech-savvy than ever before. From online planning and booking to preferences for contactless check-in, mobile keys, voice assistants, and texting with hotel employees, many of today's tourists' service expectations revolve around self-service and do-it-yourself.



There are a few clear emerging trends that are expected to continue and shape the industry in 2022 and beyond. Let us have a look at them.

### **1. More Hi-tech Smart Rooms**

Services offered in a guest room are now being enhanced by leveraging Internet of Things (IoT). Hotel amenities are now increasingly going digital by streaming content from smartphones on the in-room television, e-concierge, temperature and light controls on the smartphone, digital keys etc. Completely voice activated controls could be a distinct possibility in the near future. Most of these innovations require

minimal changes to modern guest rooms and the 'smart hoteliers' would be quick to implement the newest technologies to stay ahead in the game. This is another factor that will enhance the pace of tech adoption is that

### **2. Increasing Focus on ESG & Sustainable Practices**

Focus on going green and environmental sustainability is not something new. But the importance today's travelers and hotel guest attach to a brand's attitude and actions towards sustainability, has increased quite a lot. Today's informed customer prefers to stay in hotels that have integrated green practices in every aspect of their business. Simply

offering guests to opt out of daily linen change and other token gestures are not enough anymore. Today's guests want hotels to adopt environment friendly practices and invest in green tech like installation of solar panels, offering vegan/vegetarian menu choices, LEED certifications, waste management, water conservation, minimize plastic usage, to name a few.

The hotel architecture too is undergoing changes. Instead of including as many rooms as possible in a large structure, importance is given to environments that promote physical and mental wellness to their guests. The use of material innovation also helps us create



more virus-resistant surfaces with the goodness of natural raw materials is also on a rise. Going green not only increases the guest's satisfaction levels but also helps hotels bring down the operating costs substantially. Focus on ESG is gaining traction amongst hotel companies and investors, customers, and even prospective employees.

### **3. Changing Workforce & Talent Management**

Thanks to increased integration of technology in hotels, an employee's tasks are changing and the workforce itself is changing. There is a growing focus on health and safety, work-life balance, and human resources technology.

Many businesses and sectors other than hospitality are undergoing

transformation and adopting a customer-centric approach. This has necessitated a need of employees with a customer centric mindset and better honed soft skills. Having already undergone specialised trainings and worked in a totally customer focused industry, hotel employees are a natural fit for these new jobs in other industries and sectors like banks, insurance, financial services and even hospitals. These sectors often offer better compensation and seemingly an overall better work life balance. There has been an exodus of hotel employees to other industries in the past few years creating a talent crunch for hotels. Hotel leaders are aware of these changes and trying to attract, retain the right talent and keep employees 'happy'.

### **4. Technology Coming to the Centre Stage**

The pandemic prompted the hospitality industry to leverage technology quickly to tackle the new challenges thrown by the pandemic. Several tech innovations like electrostatic sprayers to sanitize guest rooms, digital keys, e-concierge, e-menus helped the industry in dealing with the challenges and meeting new customer expectations. In the last two years, many traditionally customer facing services have become contactless to reduce the transmission of the virus with contactless mobile check-in/check-out and contactless payments.

With technology innovation continuing to evolve, hospitality institutions will need to adapt to remain ahead of the curve,

for instance, fingerprint or face recognition could soon become an expected convenience for guests accessing their hotel rooms, much like how it is expected with smartphones. Implementation of smart technologies like IoT and AI helps optimise costs, improve productivity and predictive maintenance. Most of these technologies start yielding returns within a short span of time and have short payback periods.

As technology innovation continues to evolve, hospitality institutions will need to continuously adapt to remain ahead of the curve. Fingerprint or face recognition could soon become an expected convenience for guests accessing their hotel rooms, much like how it is expected with smartphones

## 5. Changing Traveller Preferences

Today's travellers are looking for new experiences, whether through activities, gastronomy, sporting activities, or specific interests like music, etc. Armed with internet sourced knowledge and with an open mind, the global traveller of today is choosing funky motels, camping/glamping, even emerging destinations that are not popular yet, and lifestyle hotels. With more diverse options on offer and travellers selecting destinations and hotels based on multiple different criteria it's important that the hoteliers stay on top of the changing traveller preferences.

## 6. Hotel Business

The last two years witnessed a lot of changes in the industry and the way forward for hotels is going to be different from the past. Focus has shifted from over-pampering

guests with often meaningless frills (that came at a heavy cost and added little value) to offering services that today's guest values and appreciates. Hotels will have to shift to leaner cost structures and invest in automation and technology. With increasing wage costs, it is also imperative that brands evaluate their services and not waste money on irrelevant brand standards. For example, why waste money on an alarm clock in guest rooms when everyone today uses their

guestrooms all need to showcase nature as people today appreciate nature more than ever before. Hotels are treating lobby and public areas as social spaces and designing these as experiential spaces with unique designs incorporating shared workspaces to open kitchens to game rooms.

Many brands are focusing on eco-friendliness and designing 'green' hotels. Guests want to dine, work, and rest in environments that promote physical and mental



smart phones to set alarms & reminders! Minimising Capex and maintaining flexible Opex will be the way forward.

## 7. Transforming Hotel Design

Hotels design trends have a lot to say about art, local community, uniqueness and sustainability. Many travellers want to stay in hotels whose design captures the character of the destination, whether with local art or the architecture itself. Lobby, public areas, open spaces, and

wellbeing. Material design can help achieve this, whether through the development of more bacteria/virus resistant surfaces or more natural materials.

The fast changing hotel industry scenario necessitates hoteliers focusing on building resilient and more responsive business models. If the Corona virus doesn't strike again through a fourth wave, the hospitality industry stands poised for a strong bounce back.

*(With inputs from CEO Insights India.)*



## FHRAI REQUESTS GST COUNCIL TO EVALUATE HOSPITALITY SECTOR'S TAX STRUCTURE

Citing the unprecedented rise in inflation, the Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) has requested the GST Council to evaluate the present GST structure for the hospitality sector and appealed for it to be rationalized. With prices of edible oils, cooking gas, fuel, transport and other essentials going through the roof, FHRAI has asked the government to consider simplification of GST rules to enable the establishments to avail of Input Tax Credit (ITC). It also suggested that all F&B revenue of hotels be delinked from their hotel room tariff slabs and allowed to

charge GST at 5 per cent without ITC under the composite scheme and 12 per cent GST with ITC. Similarly, also for standalone restaurants, it has asked that two slabs of GST rates be maintained as stated above as was being done in the earlier Service Tax regime.

The hotel body suggested a reduction in GST on LPG used in hotels and restaurants from 18 per cent to 5 per cent to bring down the operational costs which will benefit customers. It has also asked for either the removal of GST on rent payments or be allowed input credit on rent payments to cushion the blow of

the rising inflation.

“All F&B revenue should be delinked from any room tariffs, if they are part of hotels, by allowing 5 per cent composite scheme for units that are not availing ITC and 12 per cent GST for units that are availing ITC. Simplification of GST rules will lead to greater compliance especially from small units. A mechanism should be in place to enable the establishments to avail input of GST paid on rent and other GST costs. This will make the businesses more viable. For restaurants too, two separate GST slabs should be allowed; a composite slab rate at the present 5 per cent GST without ITC and the other, at 10 per cent. The steady rise in the prices of commercial LPG almost every month, fuel, oil and essential

commodities are hampering the revenue. The industry is trying to overcome the crisis of over two years and is only trying to make a recovery. At such times, rationalizing the GST rates for the industry could make a difference,” says Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, vice-president, FHRAI.

The body also stated that post the easing of restrictions worldwide, GST in most countries that depend on FTAs has been reduced. However, GST rates in India continue to remain one of the highest in the world, making both domestic and inbound tourism extremely expensive.

“At present, the threshold limit of hotel room tariff with GST at 18 per cent is INR 7500. This needs to be increased to INR 9500. At

the time, when the threshold was fixed at INR 7500, the exchange rate of USD per INR stood at INR 64, but the same has breached INR 76 per USD today. Raising the threshold limit will bring parity of rates between the INR and the USD. Also, the threshold limit for zero GST on hotel rooms should be increased from INR 1000 to INR 2000 per room per day. This will help give boost to the budget segment hotels, encourage more domestic tourists to travel and promote tourism in the country. IGST billing also should be allowed to hotels for corporate bookings and MICE. This will enable the companies to avail GST input credit which will incentivize them to spend their annual budgets in Indian cities other than holiday destinations of South East Asia,” Kohli concluded.



# INCREASING DREAMS AND PLANS TO EXPLORE INTERNATIONAL DESTINATIONS

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V.N.Nair





**N**ew research undertaken by YouGov and commissioned by Airbnb shows that ever since the pandemic started receding, Indian travellers started dreaming about and planning their next international trip.

The recent months saw international border restrictions gradually easing, inspiring many to start planning their next international getaway. The research shows that almost three-quarters of Indians have plans to travel internationally in

the foreseeable future and more than a third of those plan to do so in the next six months. More than 70 percent of Indians are excited about being able to travel internationally. International travel corridors have long played a major role in strengthening the economic vitality of destinations throughout the globe.

Almost three-quarters of working Indians say they would consider combining work and travel, underscoring the fundamental changes in how people are living and working since the pandemic.

**Key findings from the research include:**

- Many Indians are excited about travelling internationally again and plan to do so more often
- More than 70 percent of Indians surveyed reported being excited about once again being able to travel internationally, with more than a third (37 percent) strongly agreeing with this.
- Many Indian travellers are looking to make that next international trip a reality very soon
- A vast majority of Indians surveyed (75 percent) reported having plans to travel internationally in the foreseeable future.
- More than a third of those (34 percent) planning to travel internationally plan to do so in the next six months.
- The majority of respondents in India also expressed a desire to travel internationally as soon as they're able to.

**The Asia-Pacific region is front of mind for many Indian travelers.**

- Almost half of the Indians (48 percent) surveyed said they would consider visiting international destinations within the Asia-Pacific region when they're able to.
- Australia, Thailand and Indonesia are the most searched for destinations in the Asia-Pacific region by Indians.





As the travel revolution continues to unfold, the way we think about international travel is also changing

Throughout the pandemic, we've seen major shifts in the way that people think about travel and living, with the lines between them continuing to blur. For many, that also appears to apply to international travel.

- In India, more than half of those surveyed (59 percent), said they were more open to travelling internationally during off-peak times of the year than they were before the pandemic.
- Moving forward, many people who are currently working are also open to the idea of combining work and travel while abroad. That was the case for almost three-quarters of Indian respondents. Many Indian travellers believe that international travel remains an important means of expanding their horizons and connecting with other cultures
- That's true for more than half of the Indian respondents (51 percent).
- Almost a third of Indians (32 percent) surveyed also noted that international travel plays an important role when it comes to connecting with their friends and family.

- A significant number of those respondents looking to travel internationally also expressed a desire to experience off-the-beaten-path destinations they hadn't visited before. This included more than a quarter Indian respondents (27 percent).

Amanpreet Bajaj, General Manager - Airbnb India, Southeast Asia, Hong Kong, said: "As border restrictions gradually ease across many countries in the region, we're seeing a lot of enthusiasm for cross-border travel. After being unable to travel abroad for so long, many people are excited to take that long-awaited overseas trip - something we've seen reflected in the searches on Airbnb, following a number of border reopening announcements. We're committed to continuing to work collaboratively with governments and communities around the world to rebuild tourism and maximise the benefits of this travel revolution for our community of Hosts. We're incredibly excited to welcome travellers' to an Airbnb Home and make their much awaited international trip a memorable one. We continue to focus on innovation so guests can experience both well-travelled and new destinations in fresh ways."

(Courtesy : Airbnb, Travel Trends Today)

# AGRO TOURISM CENTRES THE WAY FORWARD AIMING TO CONNECT MORE FARMERS WITH TOURISM



On the occasion of 15th International Agri Tourism Day, Maharashtra Tourism in association with Agri Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) celebrated a full day event on 16th May, 2022 at Yashwant Rao Chavan Centre, Nariman Point, Mumbai. Director and Joint Director of Directorate of Tourism (DoT) Milind Borikar and Dr. Dhananjay Sawalkar respectively, along with the founder of Agri Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) Pandurang Taware and farmers from all over Maharashtra were present for the event. The theme of the day was 'Sustainable Economic, Cultural

and Environmental Development of Villages through Agriculture Tourism'.

The program started with lighting the lamp by Milind Borikar, Dr Dhananjay Sawalkar, Pandurang Taware and Avinash Jogdand. In his welcome speech, Milind Borikar said that the cycle of nature has been affected to a great extent which has affected farmers and agriculture. This further has a negative impact on their emotional and financial status. Hence, under the guidance of Hon. Tourism Minister Aaditya Thackeray, the agri tourism policy was created. Because of this policy,

several famers are coming forward and registering their agro tourism centre and have an alternative source of income.”

He took everyone back down the memory lane where during childhood days everyone visited their native place and enjoyed the rustic and village life. That pleasure of living a village life must be brought back.

Hon. Minister for State, Aditi Tatkare in her video byte wished everyone for the 15th International Agri Tourism Day said, “Maharashtra being the first state to create and implement Agri Tourism policy, it is crucial that farmers take this opportunity to get associated with tourism and have an extra source of income. Tourists visiting Maharashtra from India and abroad will also get a taste of the state’s culture, tradition and history. This policy has received tremendous response and hence I congratulate and wish best to all the agri tourism centres that have been honoured today.” Pandurang Taware addressed the guests. He said, “International Agro Tourism Day first began in 2008 and in its celenbration we have seen several positive changes. Corona brought a bad phase in the lives of everyone but there was one silver lining when Maharashtra Tourism department announced Agro Tourism policy. This policy gave confidence to our farmers to start their own agro tourism centres, and guidance to

those who already owned one.” The highlight of the event was the tips shared by the experts for running agro tourism centres along with the success stories narrated by the agri tourism centre owners and their award ceremony. The agri tourism centre owners spoke about how their journey began, their struggles, their learning, their unique selling point and how successfully they are running their centres. Sanjay Pawar, Director of Pawar Agro Tourism centre, Nashik, Anand Pindarkar, CEO, SROUTS, Saurabh Krishna, PHD degree holder in Agri Tourism, Dr Sainath Hadawale, Director, A.S.Aqua and Rutuja Achle Sapre, owner of Eco Ville were the experts who provided guidance to the farmers during the program.

8 agro tourism centre owners from all over Maharashtra were awarded for their initiative, hard work and success in running the centres. Mentioned below are their names:

1. Sukhdev Shamrao Giri, Devgiri Farm, Kolhapur
2. Anandrao Ganpat Shinde, Anand Agro Tourism Centre, Satara
3. Aaditya Prabhakar Saave, Saave Agro Tourism Centre, Dahanu, Palghar
4. Mohan Jagtap, Mamcha Vavar Agro Tourism Centre, Buldana
5. Ravindra Bhimrao Patil,

Vrakshamitra Agro Tourism Centre, Aurangabad

6. Abhilash Santoshkumar Nagla, Nandgram Godham Agro Tourism Centre, Nashik

7. Roshan Rajendra Daga, Ranwara Agro Tourism Centre, Nagpur

8. Pratibha Sanap, Srushti Agro Tourism Centre, Aurangabad

Dr. Dhananjay Sawalkar, Joint Director of Directorate of Tourism (DoT) concluded the program by thanking all the Agri tourism centre owners for attending the program. He further asked them to provide videos/photos of their agri tourism centres that can be uploaded on Maharashtra Tourism’s and DoT’s digital media. He requested them to also be a co-exhibitor with Maharashtra Tourism and promote their products in various trade shows. “The agro tourism centres can also be a part of our FAM tours where we can build the bridge between media, influencers and your agro tourism centres which will also market their centres. We can also incorporate district level festivals being celebrated on state level.” “I’d like to announce here that with the help of our Regional Deputy Directors we will soon organise an award ceremony for Agri tourism centres of each region for being an ‘Ideal agro tourism centre’ in the state and guiding others towards the path of Agro Tourism,” he concluded.





# MAHARASHTRA TOURISM KICKS OFF AN EXHAUSTIVE ANNUAL TOURISM SURVEY WITH A TRAINING & LAUNCH EVENT ORGANISED BY MOT

## SURVEY TO SOON BEGIN IN THE STATE

**W**ith an intent to measure Tourist arrivals across all States/UTs in a uniformed manner, earlier this year the Ministry of Tourism (MoT) created a methodology for collecting tourism statistics. As part of this initiative, Directorate of Tourism (DoT) along with MoT, organised a training workshop to officially kick-off the Annual Tourism Survey in Maharashtra. This training took place on 27th and 28th July, in the historic city of Aurangabad known for its UNESCO heritage monuments.

This exhaustive Annual Tourism survey will be carried out for 13 months during which surveyors will be stationed at each major tourist attractions, accommodation units, exit points

of all the districts to get an estimate of the number of tourists coming into each of the tourist locations. This survey will help the tourism department understand the travel behaviour, the triggers and barriers when it comes to visiting Maharashtra. It will also help connect with industry stake holders to get an in-depth understanding of the challenges and opportunities that exist in the tourism ecosystem in the state.

Maharashtra is one of the most popular tourism destinations/states within the country with approximately 14 crores and 92 lakh domestic tourist arrivals, whereas, the state ranks number two in terms of foreign tourist arrivals with 55 lakhs and 28 thousand tourist visits in 2019,

as per MoTs statistics. A survey of this size & scale will go a long way in creating new policies and initiatives to make Maharashtra the most preferred tourism destination in the country.

Dr. Dhananjay Sawalkar, Joint Director, Directorate of Tourism (DoT), "We have appointed Datamation Consultants (survey agency) to conduct the Tourism survey in Maharashtra from August 2022. This survey will not only help us get updated data, but will also take us closer to the industry and understand them better in the post covid era. Hence, I request all the stakeholders to co-operate and share authentic and relevant data with the surveyors."



## TERMS & CONDITIONS

### FHRAI SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR MEMBERS TO PURSUE HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT FROM FHRAI – IHM, GREATER NOIDA

#### Eligibility Criteria

- Children of FHRAI / Regional Association members along with children of employees working in the member establishments who fulfil the age and eligibility criteria for admission as per NCHMCT norms will be eligible for the scholarship scheme.
- The scholarship offer will be applicable to the present employees of the member establishments of FHRAI and its Regional Associations only.
- The application for scholarship should be accompanied by a letter of authorization duly signed by the Authorized Signatory of the member establishment.
- The recommending member establishment should have renewed their membership of FHRAI / Regional Association at the time of submitting the application for scholarship.
- Only one scholarship will be awarded to one member establishment during one financial year.
- The scholarship offer will be applicable only to the hotel & restaurant members of FHRAI/ Regional Associations.

#### Selection Process

- Admission to FHRAI – IHM will be strictly based on merit of class 12th result and approval of affiliating organization NCHMCT, Noida.
- Only a limited number of scholarships will be available under the scholarship program of FHRAI – IHM and the same will be awarded on first-cum-first-serve basis.
- Students who fulfil the eligibility criteria as per NCHMCT, Noida or who are appearing for the qualifying examination can apply for provisional admission from FHRAI – IHM under Scholarship Program of FHRAI for Member Establishments by filling up the application form along with an authorization letter from the Member establishment.
- FHRAI / Regional Association will verify the credentials of the applicant and after the verification, eligible candidate will be directed to submit a non-refundable application fee of Rs. 10,000 (this will be adjusted against the tuition fee upon admission) to secure provisional admission in FHRAI – IHM.
- If the details furnished by the candidate are found to be inappropriate during the verification process, the application will be rejected and the same shall be communicated in writing to the applicant by FHRAI.
- The candidate / member establishment shall be bound to furnish any additional information if sought by FHRAI, in reference to the application of scholarship to FHRAI – IHM.
- Though the students selected under the scholarship program for the first year B.Sc. program in FHRAI – IHM shall be eligible to receive the scholarship in the 2nd and 3rd year as well, but poor academic performance and low attendance can make them ineligible to receive the benefit. The decision of the Director, FHRAI – IHM shall be final on such matters.
- To continue the scholarship in the 2nd and 3rd year, the student needs to submit a fresh application in accordance with the eligibility conditions.
- The decision of FHRAI shall be final in all matters related to Scholarship Program for Member Establishments



# INSPECTION OF HOTELS TO AWARD INDUSTRY STATUS BEGINS FROM 3RD AUGUST

**T**he Directorate of Tourism (DoT), Maharashtra Tourism, Govt. of Maharashtra is finally kick starting the inspection of hotels for awarding industry status to them. The Tourism Directorate of Pune is the first one to commence the inspection on 3rd and 4th August, 2022. A total number of 181 non-classified hotels have registered and applied since June 2021 in Pune region that the inspection committee and the appointed agency will be visiting. The Government of Maharashtra had awarded Industry status to the Hospitality sector in the April 1999 but that remained only on paper and wasn't implemented. In 2020, there was a development in the decision when the State government issued the GR, announcing the criteria for levying taxes and charges at the industrial rate for the non-classified hotels. Since then, non-classified hotels were appealed to register and apply to avail the benefits. And now, as the regional offices have

received a considerable number of registrations, the inspection committee will begin their site visits.

The Committee will be chaired by the Deputy Directors of the respective regions, a representative of the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) department, regional representative of Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB), local representative of Hotel and Restaurant Association (HRA) and a representative of Tour Operator Association (TOA). The agency Qualstar has prepared a road map for inspecting sites which will be followed by the committee.

Dr. Dhananjay Sawalkar, Joint Director, Directorate of Tourism (DoT) informed, "So far 446 applications across Maharashtra have been received by DoT. After inspection, if these hotels fulfill all the said criteria, they will be eligible to receive industrial status. This will make electricity charges, water bill, property tax

and, non-agricultural tax available to the registered hotels as per industrial rates."

Hotels can continue to register themselves with Maharashtra Tourism department and avail the benefits attached with the industry status.

Supriya Karmarkar, Deputy Director of Pune region has appealed the hoteliers to apply for industrial status by visiting the official website of 'Maharashtra Tourism' <https://www.maharashtratourism.gov.in> and submitting the online application form along with all the required documents.

The industrial concessions will be applicable from the date of registration certificate of the applicant hotel. Interested hoteliers should check the criteria on the official website of the government <https://www.maharashtra.gov.in/1145/Government-Resolutions>



## GOA TOURISM BOARD PRIORITISES TOURISTS' COMFORT

In the first meeting of the Goa Tourism Board, the board approved organizing various events such as the Sunburn Festival. The Sunburn Festival is scheduled to happen from 28th to 30th December in Vagator, Goa, and is Asia's Premiere Electronic Dance Music (EDM) Festival. It is one of the world's biggest music festivals and has brought together renowned Indian and International artists together to entertain music lovers across the country and overseas. It has helped in positioning India as a prime dance festival destination to the world.

The government is putting in place the ease-of-doing business system with a single-window clearance for investments. In the meeting, it was discussed how to cater to the tourists once Mopa Airport is in operation and to take infrastructure and accommodation into consideration. The Board also deliberated on bringing legislation for tourism trade by simplifying procedures for regulations of business. It has also been discussed that every event that

would be organized in Goa should have the Goa Tourism Branding. The transport department will start a special drive against taxi operators ferrying passengers without mandatory digital meters. There will be a fine of Rs.500 along with show cause notice for cancellations of the permit for 3 years. The department is in the process of developing a mobile App that can help commuters to share their experience or lodge complaints against taxi drivers for not ferrying using meters. Travel & Tourism Association of Goa (TTAG) has supported the Transport Minister's recommendation for App-based taxi services in the state. Moreover, TTAG is in favor of OLA and Uber providing their services in Goa.

The tourism ministry is mulling having a "Tourist Security Force" to put things in order as people are engaging in the act of littering since the improper disposal of waste products, whether intentional or unintentional can have environmental consequences as it can cause pollution, kill wildlife, and spread diseases.

The legislators have demanded with the Government to take action against illegal homestays, and hotel operators without registering them with the tourism department. Taking the safety of the tourists into consideration and making them the priority, the government would make sure that illegal homestays would be taken care of.

The COVID pandemic has had a severe impact on the tourism economy. The foreign tourist arrivals in Goa crashed by 97.6% during the two years of the pandemic. Due to the lockdown imposed by the country and the ban on international travel during the lockdown, foreign tourist arrivals took a huge hit, and the tourism industry was severely affected as a result.

The District Magistrate has put forward the order that liquor will not be served after 10 pm till the panchayat elections. Such a decision would affect the tourism and hospitality business especially because it is a significant loss to the interlinked industries.

## Outstanding performance by Maharashtra Tourism department in MoT's Utsav



for the management but also for the devotees to be able to get a glimpse of the God/Goddess from the comfort of their homes by taking all the safety measures to stop the spread of Corona virus. Maharashtra is popularly known for festivals like Pandharpurchi Wari, Ganesh Chaturthi, Gudi Padwa, Dahi handi, Narali Purnima etc. that are published on the website.

Mrs Valsa Nair Singh, Principal Secretary, Tourism department, Govt. of Maharashtra said, "I am glad that our department is keeping pace with the digital trend where tourists want to get all the information on a single click. Religious tourism being the oldest form of tourism followed in India and, where Maharashtra has unique religious circuit like Shirdi- Shegaon- Pandharpur, it plays a vital role for us to display about them on the national platform. Similarly, festivals are a way of showcasing the culture of our state and is equally important for tourists. As both the aspects are crucial to shape tourism in the state, we have taken keen interest in this initiative of MoT." She added, "I would like to appreciate the efforts made by MoT for bringing information on festivals and religious tourism of all the Indian states under one roof. This will definitely benefit in attracting more domestic and foreign tourists."

In 2021, when COVID-19 virus was still prevalent in India, Ministry of Tourism (MoT) created and launched a website named utsav.gov.in and called for content of various events and festivals as well as, live darshan details of temple deities from all the States/UTs. To this, Maharashtra tourism department promptly responded and shared all the desired details. The state ranking list was revealed by MoT on 5th July, 2022 which declared Maharashtra as number 1 on the portal with 10 published live darshan listings and, among the top 10 states with 8 published

events and festivals' listings.

Having innumerable religious places/ temples/pilgrimages, Maharashtra is also known for its religious circuit. Shirdi, Pandharpur, Tuljapur, Jejuri, Trimbakeshwar, Vani (Saptashrungi) and Siddhivinayak temple of Mumbai are only a handful of religious places that devotees/tourists visit in huge numbers specially during occasions. During pandemic, when the devotees couldn't physically visit these holy places, the temple authorities took up the initiative of online darshan. It became convenient not only

## Domestic hotel industry to return to pre-COVID level this fiscal, says report



The country's hotel industry is expected to return to the pre-COVID level in the current fiscal itself on the back of a significant improvement in demand, according to a report.

According to rating agency ICRA's Assistant Vice President and Sector Head Vinutaa S, demand in the near term is expected to stem largely from domestic leisure travel, although there will be gradual recovery in business travel and free trade agreements (FTAs). According to its report, the hotel industry is expected to clock 60 per cent of pre-COVID revenues in FY22, despite almost four months of impact because of COVID 2.0 and COVID 3.0. Further, the industry is also likely to report operating profits in FY22 aided by improved operating leverage and sustenance of some of the cost-optimisation measures undertaken in FY21. In spite of the potential impact on demand with further COVID waves, if any, ICRA expects the industry to return to pre-COVID levels in FY23, as against FY24 earlier.

Hotels are likely to report pre-COVID margins at 85-90 per cent of revenues going forward. Accordingly, ICRA has revised their outlook on the Indian hotel

industry to stable from negative in March 2022, following the swift demand recovery. About 49 per cent of ICRA's ratings are on stable outlook currently. Leisure markets continued to report strong occupancy in the second half of FY22, ICRA said in the report.

Goa's occupancy has been better than pre-COVID levels since September 2021 while gateway cities like Mumbai and the NCR region have also witnessed healthy improvement in occupancy. Bengaluru and Pune were laggards because of muted business travel, it stated. However, ICRA expects sequential improvement in occupancy in these markets over the next few months and the recovery has largely been occupancy driven, with average room rates lagging in most markets.

Easing restrictions, high pace of vaccination and pent-up demand resulted in recovery in leisure travel within the country in the second and third quarter of FY22. Domestic business travel also started picking up, mainly to project sites and manufacturing locations from specific sectors, in the third quarter of FY22.

ICRA's sample of 11 large listed entities reported 50 per cent

growth in revenues on a quarter-on-quarter basis in the third quarter of FY22, better than its estimates. Owing to improved operating leverage and sustenance of some of the cost saving initiatives, the operating margins also jumped closer to pre-COVID levels, it said.

Despite the Omicron impact, ICRA expects the fourth quarter of FY22 revenues and margins to be better than the second quarter of FY22. The staff-to-room ratio continues to remain significantly lower than pre-COVID levels, aided by redeployment of staff, reskilling employees and centralisation of business functions. While the fourth quarter of FY22 interest coverage is likely to witness some sequential moderation because of the Omicron wave, it is still expected to be better on a year-on-year basis.

Compared to the previous downcycle in FY09, which saw untimely supply increases of over 15 per cent of the inventory at the bottom of the cycle in FY09-FY13, the current pipeline inventory is about 3-4 per cent for the period FY22-FY25. This will facilitate an upcycle, as demand improves over the medium term, and supply lags demand.

## Fairfield by Marriott expands footprint in Western India



Fairfield by Marriott, part of Marriott Bonvoy's portfolio of 30 extraordinary brands, has announced the opening of Fairfield by Marriott Vadodara. Situated in the heart of the city with proximity to the Civil Airport Harni and the central business district, the 96-room hotel is designed with modern amenities for today's business traveller, creating an environment that focusses on the warmth and

simplicity of delivering a seamless hospitality experience. Located in Alkapuri, the commercial abode of the city Fairfield by Marriott Vadodara is within close proximity to upscale fashion boutiques, lifestyle stores and popular, local attractions like the Laxmi Vilas Palace, Sur Sagar Lake and Sayaji Baug. The hotel offers 96 spacious rooms and suites that sport modern design elements and contemporary essentials.

## 25 hotels and resorts managed by Concept Hospitality win award for year 2022



As many as 25 Fern and Beacon hotels and resorts managed by Concept Hospitality have won the prestigious Trip Advisor's Travellers Choice Award for the year 2022, said Noshir A Marfatia, senior VP, sales & marketing, The Fern Hotels & Resorts.

The Fern Hotels & Resorts is India's leading environmentally sensitive hotel chain and amongst

the fastest growing hotel brands in India, with 88 hotels & resorts currently operational under management or opening shortly across 72 locations in India and internationally, under The Fern, The Fern Residency, Zinc by The Fern and Beacon Hotels brands. The company is a part of CG Corp Global, a multi-dimensional Nepalese conglomerate.

## Leela's leadership programme in partnership with Indian School of Hospitality



The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts recently announced the launch of the Leela Leadership Development Programme (LLDP) with its first batch of 25 candidates at The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel and

Residences. Built around a world class curriculum, in partnership with Indian School of Hospitality (ISH) in alliance with Les Roches, the class of 2023 will kickstart learning through blended modules that include boot camps,

classroom training, online classes and on the job experience across Leela hotels.

The LLDP is a 15-month programme that identifies and mentors the talent in the industry with capstone projects, assessments, and extensive guidance at the iconic Leela properties. The programme will also include immersive knowledge sessions at ISH's world class campus in Gurugram and will offer an applied learning format through various expert sessions and workshops delivered by their faculty.

## Centre notifies Ayurveda Aahara regulations for food prepared based on Ayurveda books



The Central government has notified the Food Safety and Standards (Ayurveda Aahara) Regulations, 2022, stipulating standards and regulations related to food prepared in accordance with the recipes or ingredients or process as

per method described in the authoritative books of Ayurveda. The Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) will form an expert committee under the Ministry of Ayush to provide recommendations and others. FSSAI has issued the final notification for the new regulation, after issuing a draft notification which was published in July, 2021 and after considering the objections and suggestions from the public.

The regulation defines Ayurveda Aahara as a food prepared in accordance with the recipes or ingredients or processes as per method described in the

authoritative books of Ayurveda listed under Schedule A of the regulation including products which have other botanical ingredients in accordance with the concept of Ayurveda Aahara, but does not include ayurvedic drugs or proprietary ayurvedic medicines and medicinal products, cosmetics, narcotic or psychotropic substances, herbs listed under Schedule E-I of Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and the drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945. It should also not include metals based on ayurvedic drugs or medicines, Bhasa or Pishti and any other ingredients notified by the Authority from time to time.

## Lords Hotels and Resorts downpours with awards at the Gujarat Tourism Awards 2022



It was a downpour of awards for Lords Hotels and Resorts at the 5th edition of the prestigious Tourism Award ceremony 2022 that took place at City Center, Ahmedabad, on 2nd May 2022. The award ceremony was organized to recognize the Tourism community and also to recognize the hard work of the individuals. Lords Hotels and Resorts won awards in the following categories.

(1) Best Female Entrepreneur in Tourism Award (Sangita Bansal, Director, Lords Inn Hotel and Developers Pvt ltd); (2) Best Chain Hotel in Gujarat (Lords Inn Hotel and Developers Pvt ltd); (3) Best business hotel in Jamnagar (Lords Eco Inn Jamnagar); (4) Best Restaurant in Surat (Blue Coriander Restaurant Surat); (5) Best MICE Venue in other city (Vishal Lords Inn Gir Forest); (6) Best Theme base hotel in Rajkot

(Aarya Lords Club and Resorts); (7) Best Budget Hotel in Surat (Lords Plaza Surat); (8) Best 3 Star Hotel in Gujarat (Lords Plaza Surat); (9) Best MICE Venue in Surat (Lords Plaza Surat); (10) Best 3-star hotel in Gujarat (Lords Plaza Surat); (11) Best Business Hotel in Surat (Lords Plaza Surat); (12) Best Multicuisine Restaurant in Surat (Blue Coriander Restaurant Surat); (13) Best Multicuisine Restaurant in Gujarat (Blue Coriander Restaurant); (14) Best Institute in Gujarat (Lords Institute); (15) Best Budget Hotel in Rajkot (Aarya Lords Club and Resort); (16) Best 3 Star Hotel in Rajkot (Aarya Lords Club and Resort); (17) Best Wedding Venue in Rajkot – Aarya Lords Club and Resort) and (18) Best 4-star hotel in Jamnagar (Lords Inn Jamnagar)

## HRAWI Conducts FSSAI's FoSTaC Program



The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) in collaboration with Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) conducted an Online Food Safety Supervisory Training in Advance Catering (FoSTaC) program on 19th May, 2022, 22nd June, 2022 and 20th July, 2022 with a total number of 194 participants and trainers for all the three programs was Mr. Vivek Anand.

Conducted virtually, the session saw a participation of 54 hospitality professionals from various hotel and restaurant establishments. The program was conducted by Vivek Anand with focus on health and food handling practices for hospitality personnel.

“HRAWI is thankful to the hospitality establishments for proactively enrolling their personnel in the program. We wish to thank the trainers deputed by FSSAI for imparting the requisite knowledge to hospitality professionals. We have made tremendous progress over the last few years with the program across the Western region and plan to continue organizing these program on an on-going basis in the future,” says Mr. Sherry Bhatia, President, HRAWI.

The Association has successfully trained and certified 2252 hospitality professionals across India's Western region in FoSTaC and FSSAI's Management Training Program.

## The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts embarks on a journey of holistic wellbeing with 'Aujasya by The Leela'



The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts announced the launch of their signature wellness programme – Aujasya by The Leela aimed at redefining the road to holistic wellbeing. A unique blend inspired by traditional and modern practices, Aujasya by The Leela encompasses a collection of authentic experiences that build vivacity and promote the vigour of life, built around the 2 Rs of Wellbeing – Restore (Food) and Renew (Mindfulness). Taking

origin from the Sanskrit word, Aujasya – translated as beneficial to strengthening vitality or energy, this initiative will truly allow guests to embrace an enriching and healthy lifestyle.

The food menu includes wholesome and well-balanced dishes that take into account nutritional values and food synergies.

The Leela has re-imagined culinary experiences across the country

by improving the nutritional profile of food menus and offering healthy alternatives. The brand has launched the first pillar, Restore (Food), in collaboration with renowned nutritionist and food consultant, Dr. Ankita Jalori. The Leela has re-imagined culinary experiences across the country by improving the nutritional profile of food menus and offering healthy alternatives. Executive Chef, Simran Singh Thapar at The Leela Palace Udaipur and Chef Rishabh Anand at The Leela Palace New Delhi along with their culinary teams across the country have thoughtfully curated menus to achieve the right balance between health needs and gastronomic expectations by focusing on millets, lean proteins, low-fat dairy and whole grains.

## FHRAI Appeals for GST Rationalization for the Hospitality Sector



Citing the unprecedented rise in inflation, India's apex Hospitality Association and the voice of the hospitality industry – The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) has requested the GST Council to evaluate the present GST structure for the hospitality sector and appealed for it to be rationalized. With prices of edible oils, cooking gas, fuel, transport and other essentials going through the roof, FHRAI has asked the Government to consider simplification of GST rules to enable the establishments to avail of Input Tax Credit (ITC). FHRAI has suggested that all F & B revenue of hotels be delinked from their hotel room tariff slabs and allowed to charge GST at 5 per cent without ITC under the

composite scheme and 12 per cent GST with ITC. Similarly, also for standalone restaurants, FHRAI has asked that two slabs of GST rates be maintained as stated above as was being done in the earlier Service Tax regime.

FHRAI has suggested a reduction in GST on LPG used in hotels and restaurants from 18 per cent to 5 per cent to bring down the operational costs which will benefit customers. It has also asked for either the removal of GST on rent payments or be allowed input credit on rent payments to cushion the blow of the rising inflation.

FHRAI has also stated that post the easing of restrictions worldwide, GST in most countries that depend on FTAs has been

reduced. However, GST rates in India continue to remain one of the highest in the world, making both domestic and inbound tourism extremely expensive.

“At present, the threshold limit of hotel room tariff with GST at 18 per cent is Rs.7500/-. This needs to be increased to Rs.9500/-. At the time, when the threshold was fixed at Rs.7500/-, the exchange rate of Dollar per Rupee stood at Rs.64, but the same has breached Rs.76 per dollar today. Raising the threshold limit will bring parity of rates between the Rupee and the Dollar. Also, the threshold limit for zero GST on hotel rooms should be increased from Rs.1000/- to Rs.2000/- per room per day. This will help give boost to the budget segment hotels, encourage more domestic tourists to travel and promote tourism in the country. IGST billing also should be allowed to hotels for corporate bookings and MICE. This will enable the companies to avail GST input credit which will incentivize them to spend their annual budgets in Indian cities other than holiday destinations of South East Asia,” concludes Mr Kohli.

## Pride Group of Hotels launches Pride BiznoteL in Sasan Gir



Pride Group of Hotels, one of the fastest-growing domestic hotel chains, has now launched 'Pride BiznoteL' in the renowned Lion den at Gujarat's Sasan Gir National Park. Pride BiznoteL Sasan Gir will be the group's 13th property in the state of Gujarat. The location can be easily accessed by road, rail, and by air. It is in close proximity to Gir National Park and other popular places of tourist interest.

The new hotel offers 23

beautiful air conditioned rooms, well equipped with internet connectivity, television and all contemporary amenities. Guests can avail of 24-hour room service, complimentary breakfast, tour desk and so on. The multi-cuisine restaurant serves a variety of Indian and continental delicacies in a-la-cart. The hotel also houses a banquet for events and get-togethers that will be operational soon.

## FHRAI-IHM signs MOU with Sattvik council of India to offer Sattvik lead auditor training program to hospitality students



The FHRAI Institute of Hospitality Management (FHRAI-IHM) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Sattvik Council of India (SCI) to offer hospitality students a course in ‘Sattvik Lead Auditor Program’. The MoU was signed between Mr Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, Vice President of Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI), and Mr Abhishek Biswas, Founder of SCI. The course is a comprehensive three-week training programme for students and professionals interested in pursuing a career in the rapidly growing vegetarian

certification vertical. The course will be particularly beneficial for those students who choose to pursue a degree in vegetarian specialisation. The programme aims to provide students with the required knowledge and skills to plan and conduct internal and external audits in accordance with Sattvik management systems in various industries.

“We are pleased to inform FHRAI-IHM will now be offering another value-add to students’ academics through the latest collaboration with the Sattvik Council of India. The course will be process driven approach to Sattvik management systems and auditing prominent industries within the Sattvik umbrella. We applaud SCI for crafting such a well-designed programme and urge hospitality students and professionals especially; those who are pursuing a degree in vegetarian specialisation to consider enrolling for this course,” says Mr Gurbaxish Singh Kohli,

Vice President, FHRAI.

FHRAI is the third-largest Hospitality Association in the world and, FHRAI-IHM is the first and only private institution run by an Industry Association to be affiliated with the National Council for Hotel Management & Catering Technology (NCHMCT), an autonomous body under the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. FHRAI-IHM provides the best-in-class training infrastructure, backed by experienced and knowledgeable professors, to students interested in pursuing a career in hospitality. FHRAI-IHM is built on a sprawling 7-acre campus with state-of-the-art facilities and infrastructure at Knowledge City in Greater Noida. It hosts a well-equipped 70-bedded hostel for girls and 200-bedded hostel for boys on the campus. The institute boasts of dedicated and experienced faculty working under the Director of the Institute – Arun Kumar Singh, former Principal of IHM, Mumbai

## “MUMBAI” features in the ‘Best Cities in Asia’ and receives the World’s Best Award which was announced on 12th July, 2022. (listing in Travel + Leisure magazine USA).



Also, every year World’s Best Awards survey, Travel + Leisure asks readers to weigh in on travel experiences around the globe — to share their opinions on the top cities, islands, cruise ships, spas, airlines, and more. Readers rated cities on their sights and landmarks, culture, cuisine, friendliness, shopping, and overall value.

## Hospitality industry body seeks regulation on travel food aggregators



**H**ospitality industry body FHRAI has sought intervention of the parliamentary standing committee on finance for regulation of online travel and food aggregators, alleging anti-competitive practices by the tech platforms.

In a letter to the parliamentary standing committee on finance chairman Jayant Sinha, FHRAI said a handful of Online Travel Aggregators (OTAs) as well as Food Service Aggregators (FSAs) have created havoc. The parliamentary panel is examining alleged illegal practices of big tech players and technology platforms that could adversely impact competition in the Indian market. “The primary reason for

the intervention of the committee is enormous public interest / consumer interest in this matter. The customers face continuous problems of non-fulfilment of prior commitments coupled with almost zero complaint redressal mechanism from the OTAs and FSAs,” Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) vice president Mr. Gurbaxish Singh Kohli wrote.

He further said, “Due to plundering of business interests of lakhs of hotels and restaurants in the country, it is imperative to ensure a protective mechanism in the face of predatory pricing and anti-competitive tactics adopted by OTAs and FSAs.” It is also a matter of concern that through international funding the FSAs and OTAs used to garner customers or divert them to their forum, Mr. Kohli added.

According to FHRAI, the common problems from FSAs and OTAs arise from their inability to service customers. “At times, the OTAs and FSAs show on their platforms that the restaurants

are not operating and rooms are sold out, but in fact, they are unable to service their customers thereby causing great trouble to both the customer and the service provider,” it said.

Alleging hidden charges levied by OTAs and FSAs, the hospitality industry body said these platforms “often indulge in double dipping by inflating charges payable by consumers through levies raised under different names and pretexts, and which consumers are often confused to think that the same is levied by hotels and restaurants.”

These charges include convenience fees, service and packaging charges which are not levied by the business, delivery charges, transaction fees to offset credit card commission, tips which are supposed to be paid to delivery persons, and donations collected for different charities.

“None of these charges are levied by the hotel or the restaurant and the consumers are made to believe that the charges are levied by the hospitality industry,” it pointed out.

## IHCL aims to be debt-free by next April



**I**ndian Hotels Company (IHCL) is aiming to be “debt-free” by April 2023, according to its managing director and CEO Puneet Chhatwal. The Tata Group-backed hospitality chain’s annual losses narrowed to Rs 265 crore in 2021-22 from Rs 796 crore in previous year, as per results declared on April 27. Their aim is to repay all debt as and when it gets due to obviate the need for paying unnecessary premiums and to become a debt-free company in all cases by April 2023.

According to the Group chieftain, they are well capitalised and have enough positive cash flow and the fourth quarter is the second consecutive quarter of profitability and growth for the chain and margins have been the highest in the last ten quarters. He observed this is reflective of the change in their business model, focus on fee-based business, new businesses which are high margin, and reimagining some old brands.

## VITSKamats Group to launch 'VITS Select', its new portfolio of mid-market hotels



VITS-Kamats Group has now announced a new addition to its portfolio with the launch of 'VITS Select'. Positioned in the mid-market segment, VITS Select will offer smart accommodation with food and beverage facilities primarily catering to business and leisure travelers. The properties will be conveniently located in close proximity to commercial hubs, city centers, small towns, and tourist attractions offering exceptional guest experiences.

VITS-Kamats Group operates its hotels under VITS Premium Full Service Hotels & Resorts

and Economy class – Business and Leisure Hotel by the name of "Purple Bed by VITS" the 3-star category chain. The company manages premium Food & Beverage Brands that include Kamats Original Family Restaurants, Pepperfry by Kamats – fine dining restaurant, Urban Dhaba, an authentic Punjabi cuisine, and Wah Malvan – exquisite Malvani food. VITS-Kamats Group currently manages 27 properties under the flagship brands 'VITS Premium Full Service Hotels & Resorts' and 'Purple Bed by VITS'.

## Radisson Group to add 148 hotels and resorts by 2025; also plans to launch 'Retreats'



Radisson Hotel Group has unveiled plans to more than double its Indian footprint, with 148 hotels and resorts to be added by 2025. These will be in addition to over 140 properties Radisson Hotel Group currently has in operation or under development nationwide.

The company is also launching a new lifestyle brand extension

Radisson Individuals Retreats amid a rise in demand for curated travel and experiential stay from new-age travellers. Each retreat property will be in unique leisure destinations including, Goa, Kashmir, Coorg and Kabini or offbeat locations such as the mountain ranges of Himachal Pradesh or Uttarakhand, the hills of Karnataka or the historical

lands of Rajasthan.

Radisson Individuals Retreats is an extension of Radisson Individuals, the soft brand concept that made its debut in South Asia in 2021. At present, Radisson Hotel Group operates 106 hotels and resorts in India, covering 7 of its industry-leading brands in all parts of the country

## Indian Accent to open in Mumbai



**E**HV has signed an agreement with Reliance Industries Limited to bring India's most awarded restaurant, Indian Accent, to Mumbai. This comes on the heels of announcing the summer opening of EHV's forthcoming restaurant in New York, Koloman helmed by Chef Markus Glocker as well as a collaboration with Chef David Thompson for Thai restaurants in India.

Indian Accent, Mumbai is expected to open before the end of the year. It shall be housed in a beautiful space overlooking the fountains at the Dhirubhai Ambani Square at Jio World Centre in Bandra Kurla Complex.

Indian Accent is at No. 22 on Asia's 50 Best Restaurants list. The kitchen at Indian Accent Mumbai will be helmed by Executive Chef Shantanu Mehrotra who has been Executive Chef of Indian Accent, New Delhi since its opening under the guidance of Chef Manish Mehrotra, who created the Indian Accent menu and has been promoted to Culinary Director. Rijul Gulati shall be Head Chef and Varun Sharma, who leads the award winning bar at EHV's other restaurant, Comorin, shall head the bar program.

The interior design of the restaurant is by the prolific London based, Russell Sage Studio working closely with EHV's Design Director Rohini Kapur. Incubis Consultants were the local architects under project supervision by EHV's Director Development Vikas Bhasin. Indian Accent, Mumbai shall seat 80, including 2 Private Dining Rooms styled as a homage to Mumbai's Art Deco movement.

Indian Accent is owned and operated by EHV, which is part of the Old World Hospitality group. Indian Accent is at No. 22 on Asia's 50 Best Restaurants list and EHV's other highly acclaimed restaurant Comorin, Gurugram has made its debut at No. 69 on the list.

## Food businesses may use additives not present in GMP table: FSSAI



**T**he food authority has issued a direction saying that food businesses governed by the FSS Nutra Regulations 2022 may use

some of the additives which are not present in the GMP (good manufacturing practices) table of the FSS Food Product Standards

and Food Additives –Regulations (FPS & FA-R). These additives, however were part of the Schedule VE of the previous FSS Nutra Regulations 2016 and include ammonium acetate, ammonium lactate, choline salt and esters, croscarmellose sodium, potassium hydrogen malate, sodium starch glycolate, and sucrose oligoesters –type I and II. These additives, the FSSAI direction says that FBOs may use at GMP level in addition to additives listed under the GMP table (Appendix A) of the FSS FPS & FA-Regulations. Meanwhile, the direction added that enzymes and proteins listed under schedule III of the FSS Nutra Regulations 2022 are allowed in the manufacture of health supplements.

## Sayaji Hotels expands presence in MP with signing of 6 new properties



Sayaji Hotels Limited will expand its presence in the state of Madhya Pradesh with the opening of 6 new properties by the end of 2023. The group

currently operates 4 properties with 500 keys under the brands Sayaji Hotels, Effotel by Sayaji, and Enrise by Sayaji. The upcoming properties include Sayaji Gwalior, Effotel Bhopal, Enise Hoshangabad, Enrise Rewa, Enrise Harda, and Enrise Indore. Collectively these new properties will add 400 keys to the group's portfolio in Madhya Pradesh.

This rapid expansion in Madhya

Pradesh exemplifies the consistency in the quality of its services and stays across all the Sayaji Hotels irrespective of the region it operates in. Moreover, the owner-centric strategy adopted it is highly appreciated by its partners, enabling it to rapidly expand its presence under asset-light alliances and management contracts model.

## CEO, FSSAI, stresses on enforcement & quality of products



The CEO, FSSAI, has asked food safety officials (FSOs) to focus on enforcement activities and ensure quality of the food products under their jurisdiction. He urged the above while speaking

to them in Hyderabad during his recent visit.

The FSOs were particularly asked to regularly collect samples of high risk food categories like meat and milk with an increased frequency. The officials were also asked to maintain transparency while conducting searches, sampling and other enforcement activities. Further, the FSOs were asked to conduct regular inspections of food at railway stations, canteens of educational institutions, government establishments, and public and private offices.

Commenting on the subject, Ashwin Bhadri, CEO, Equinox Labs, says, "The decision of conducting strict inspection helps to ensure the FBOs adhere to the norms and regulations framed by the FSSAI. The FBOs are recommended to maintain the quality of the consumables they provide. There are different methods by which the FBOs can easily communicate with the consumers to know the feedback to enhance consumer satisfaction while through inspections and audits the quality of the food product can be maintained."

## IHCL plans 'Ahvaan 2025' to map three-pronged growth strategy



Tata Group-backed Indian Hotels Company (IHCL) is launching a new strategy, called 'Ahvaan 2025' that aims to re-

engineer margins, re-imagine its "brandscape" and restructure its portfolio. By 2025-26, IHCL aims to build a portfolio of 300 hotels, clock 33% Ebitda margin with 35% Ebitda

share contribution from new businesses and management fee, chief executive and managing director Puneet Chhatwal said.

IHCL signed over 100 hotels and opened over 40 new properties over the last five years, making it the "fastest growing" hospitality company in India. Chhatwal said IHCL's "iconic and strongest brand Taj, Paathya an industry leading ESG+ framework, and a strong focus on digital will be key enablers." The company said Ahvaan 2025 maps IHCL's three-pronged strategy to grow profitably in the coming years.

## FSSAI issues direction on labelling of oil; seeks action against violators



The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has issued a direction to food safety departments of all the states for ensuring compliance with respect to the provisions of labelling of Multi Sourced Edible Oil (MSEO).

The FSSAI has stated in its order that the provision should

be checked and verified for compliance and an action taken report should be submitted to the food authority in this regard. The order added that action must be initiated against the violators.

“It is requested to check and verify compliance of labels of all such oil products/manufacturers under your jurisdiction and in case of any violations with respect to labelling such as name of the oil or deceptive labels creating erroneous impression regarding nature of the product, FBOs may be immediately issued notices under intimation to FSSAI HQ,” reads the order.

According to the FSSAI, as per the

FSS (Prohibition & Restriction on Sales) Regulations Multi Sourced Edible Vegetable Oil shall not be sold under common or generic name of the oil used in the blend but shall be sold as Multi Sourced Edible Vegetable Oil.

“Also FSS (Labelling and Display) Regulations 2020 stipulate that ‘every package containing an admixture of edible oil shall carry declaration immediately below the brand name/trade name on front of the pack regarding the name and nature of each vegetable oil used in its preparation and their percentage by weight’,” added the FSSAI statement.

## FHRAI-IHM completes one academic year, hosts Annual Day festivities



FHRAI Institute of Hospitality Management (FHRAI-IHM), Greater Noida celebrated the successful completion of its academic year by organising the Annual Day on May 20, 2022. To commemorate the crossing of this milestone, the hospitality management institute hosted its

Annual Day function with cultural events organised by students.

Chief guest of the evening Vinod Gulati, executive committee member of FHRAI, inaugurated the first issue of FHRAI-IHM's magazine 'Insperia' dedicated to hospitality education. Guest

of honour, Rishabh Tandon, area director human resources, Intercontinental Hotels Group; eminent dignitaries Satveer Singh, director studies NCHMCT, Rajeev Malhotra - former IHM principal, T.K. Razdan- hospitality skill trainer, Aswani Kumar- assistant director, NCHMCT, Jaison Chacko, secretary general of FHRAI and Arun Kumar Singh, director, FHRAI-IHM attended the function.

FHRAI-IHM is India's first and only private institution run by an industry association that is affiliated with the National Council for Hotel Management & Catering Technology (NCHMCT), Noida affiliated, an autonomous body under the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

## HRAWI organises seminar on revenue management for restaurateurs & hoteliers



The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) held a seminar on revenue management for hotels and restaurants on May 11, 2022. The seminar was organised to help hoteliers and restaurateurs

overcome the challenges of declining revenue and to maximise yields. Hesheta Shah, expert in hospitality management and revenue; Sainath Vernekar, sales & revenue management expert, and Rajesh Ghanshani, specialist in cloud-based travel and hospitality technology solutions, were the subject matter experts for the seminar. Revenue management is the practice of maximising an establishment's revenue while selling the same amount of products or services. It employs a mix of pricing strategies and systems to maximise yield.

“The hospitality industry is regaining meaningful business today after almost two years of pandemic induced lockdowns and restrictions. Now is the time for hotels and restaurants to try and maximise the potential of their businesses. We organised the seminar specifically to help such hotels and restaurants that need to do exactly this. HRAWI thanks the speakers for sharing their knowledge with us and for addressing the queries of members who participated in the seminar,” says Sherry Bhatia, president, HRAWI.

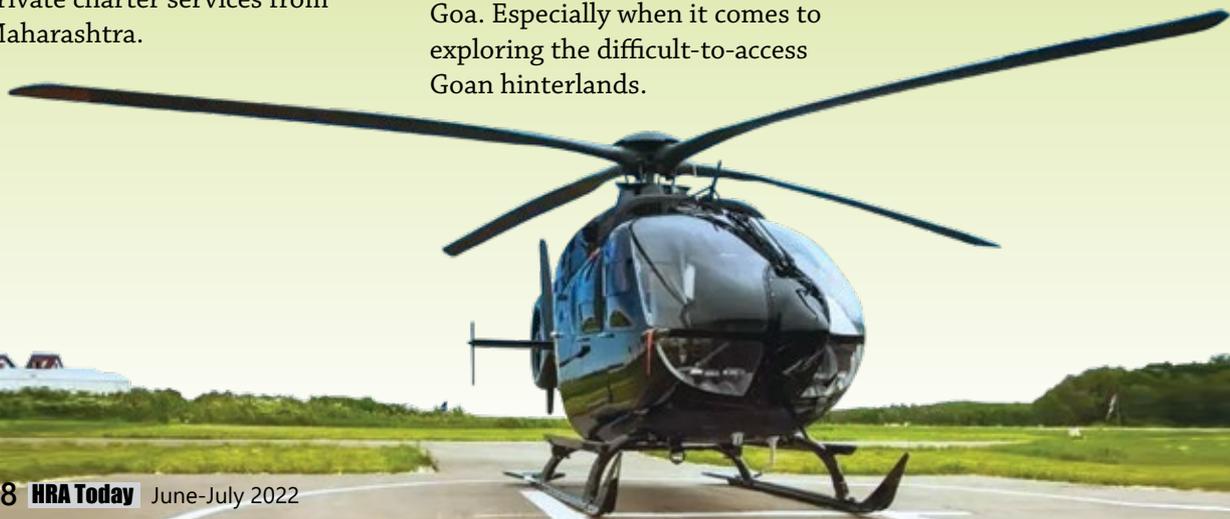
## GOA LAUNCHES THREE HELICOPTER SERVICES TO BOOST TOURISM IN ITS HINTERLANDS

Goa, in association with BLADE India, has launched three helicopter services in order to boost tourism in the Goan hinterlands. Heli tourism services in the state will offer better connectivity to the tourists as well as residents. The helicopters will provide better connectivity from Goa airport to North, South and Old Goa. Also, there will be private charter services from Maharashtra.

With the heli services, tourists can now get better views of the stunning Goan coasts and also take in the aerial view of the Western Ghats region and the Goan hinterlands.

BLADE has had quite a good reception in Maharashtra and Karnataka, and adding Goa to its list is not only a great step, but also a very favourable one for Goa. Especially when it comes to exploring the difficult-to-access Goan hinterlands.

By making these otherwise dense forested regions more accessible, the heli services will aid in providing visitors to Goa a wholesome holiday experience in two major ways: firstly, by cutting the travel time from the city centres to the hinterlands; secondly, by providing ways to understand and experience Goa's stunning natural beauty.



## FHRAI submits representation to minister for revival of hospitality industry

India's apex hospitality Association, Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI), recently met with G Kishan Reddy, Union Minister for Tourism, Culture and Development of North-Eastern Region, and submitted a representation with suggestions for the revival and growth of the hospitality industry.

Recommendations include making tourism a national priority sector, according hospitality Infrastructure status, better credit facilities, subsidies and incentives, rationalisation of GST, continuation of EPCG scheme, favourable liquor licence policies, and the need for a platform similar to Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) for hospitality industry, among



others. As part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations, FHRAI and its regional associations have promised their whole-hearted support and proposed organising region-specific food festivals across the country with the support of the Ministry of Tourism. FHRAI has also advised its hotel and restaurant members to display the 75 years of Independence logo of Azadi Ka

Amrit Mahotsav in their premises and on their stationery.

“With the pandemic restrictions being eased slowly across the country and man being a social animal, people are eager to get out and socialise. The future of culinary tourism is bright in India. People are very aware of the different cuisines and are ready to experiment with the variety to try out good food. It is the right time to take initiatives that can promote tourism in the country. To commemorate 75 years of Indian Independence, we are proposing that FHRAI and its associations with the support of the Tourism Ministry would like to highlight and host 75 regional cuisines in each of the food festivals,” says Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, VP, FHRAI.

## SteppingOut CEO and VRO co-founder Adoor is IHC Entrepreneur of the Year



One of India's youngest and most dynamic leaders in the hospitality industry Safdar Adoor, CEO of SteppingOut and co-founder of VRO, was awarded the IHC Entrepreneur of the Year at the 7th edition of Hospitality Awards organised by the International Hospitality Council London and the prestigious IIHM (Indian Institute of Hotel Management) in Kolkata recently.

The event was held to celebrate April 24 as International Hospitality Day. It was participated by Dr. Suborno Bose, chief mentor of the Indismart Group & IIHM & CEO, International Hospitality Council, UK, Lord Karan Bilimoria, founder

and chairman of Cobra Beer, Prof. David Foskett, chairman, International Hospitality Council (IHC), and Alastair Birt, senior head pastry chef, Harrods.

Adoor, 29, is the co-founder of Bengaluru-based VRO Hospitality and CEO of SteppingOut by Dineout, India's fast-growing event curation platform. VRO Hospitality is also India's fastest growing hospitality group that has its footprint in Bengaluru, Mumbai, and Goa, owns around 10 popular fine-dining brands and cloud kitchens. The brand is set to venture into new markets like Kochi, Chennai, and Kolkata and create its first international imprint in Dubai.

## New deals, investments return to hospitality industry following two year lull



The hospitality industry in the country has started witnessing fresh investments on both new hotel projects and sales of existing ones after a two-year lull induced by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ludhiana-based Jujhar Group has acquired around 12.5 acres of land in its home city for construction of two hotels at prime locations, and will invest around Rs 350 crore in the construction. It has also acquired Fairfield Marriott hotel in Amritsar from NCLT for

Rs 67.5 crore. This is an indication of the fact that the hospitality sector is back in demand.

Hoteliers are getting bullish with leisure travel returning to pre Covid levels and business travel making a promising comeback as well.

Real estate service firm JLL said it is working on deal closures amounting to 1,450 keys across four and five-star hotels, mostly in business cities. According to them people keep asking about leisure destinations but, regrettably, not enough assets are available that could be worth transacting in terms of valuation or inventory.

As per JLL's findings, in the first quarter of 2022, about 70% of hospitality transactions comprised of new projects and the rest were conversions with some cases of brand change. Most conversions were a change from non-branded

to branded hotels.

It is learnt that the hospitality advisory firm Noesis Capital Advisors is in discussions for a pipeline of 1,900 hotel rooms and is in talks with high net-worth individuals (HNIs) and family offices. Reports indicate that the sector is currently the most active since the pandemic outbreak. The market has rebounded strongly post Covid and investors are venturing out for new potential opportunities in hotel development as they recognise domestic demand.

More properties are being signed this year than pre-pandemic times. As per JLL's Hotel Momentum India (HMI) quarterly hospitality monitor, 56 hotel deals were signed in the first quarter of 2022 against 53 hotels in quarter one of 2019.

## FSSAI issues list of products for +F endorsement



To remove 'ambiguity', the FSSAI has issued an advisory with respect to the revised SOP for applying +F endorsement for fortified food products in FoSCoS and has issued a list of identified products for +F endorsement. Some 82 products under various product categories of milk & milk products, edible oil, fortified fruit

juices, cereals & cereals products, bakery products and salt were included in the list which are covered for the endorsement to make it easy for the food businesses to identify their product.

The advisory by the food authority says, "To remove the ambiguity regarding the food products which can be fortified as per Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Food) Regulations, 2018, and subsequent Amendment Regulations, 2020, a list of identified products has been created and made available in FoSCoS for +F endorsement."

FSSAI in its order of April 2021 issued SOP (Standard

Operating Procedure) regarding the provision for applying +F endorsement of processed food products made in the Food Safety Compliance System (FoSCoS) as per the Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Food) First Amendment Regulations, 2020, and incorporated coverage of processed food in the list of product categories. However, the order was proved ambiguous for the food businesses as general references were given about the product categories and the FSSAI was requested for clarification. Subsequently, the food authority issued the list of products to remove the ambiguity related to +F endorsement.

# HRAWI MEMBER LIST SURGES

The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) continues to expand its membership base across the western reaches of India. In the recent past, the Association has added hotels, restaurants, and other affiliates from Goa, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh among other states. The Association's continued efforts and support for the hospitality industry in the regions under its ambit have helped its membership base grow exponentially.



<b>HOTELS</b>	
<b>Name of the Establishmet</b>	<b>Address</b>
Hotel Kalatit International	Near DSP Bungalow, Teen Batti, P.M. Marg, Gujarat, Jamnagar - 361001
Woods Hospitality	Mangalyan Meadows, Chanvai-Rabda Road, Chanvai Village, Gujarat, Valsad - 396020
Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa, Nashik	CTS No. 289,2, Vikrikar Bhavan Road Pathardi Phata, Maharashtra, Nashik - 422010
The Park Indore	IDA Plot No. 5, Scheme No. 159, MR 10 Road, Madhya Pradesh, Indore -452010
Fairfield By Marriott Goa Calangute	H. No. 1/72C, Gavravaddo, Goa, Calangute - 403516
Hotel Crown Palace (Unit of TBJ Hotels)	2-A, Kanchan Bagh, Madhya Pradesh, Indore - 452001
Hotel Landmark NX	O-13-14, Patel Nagar , City Center, Madhya Pradesh, Gwalior - 474011
Gift City Club	Gift International Center, Block-38, Zone-3, Tapas Marg, Gift City, Gujarat, Gandhinagar - 382355
Sayaji (Unit of Harsh Creation)	Sayaji Hotels Limited, Vrindavan Society, Main Road, Nr. Pradhyuman Green City Tower, Off Infornt Of Kalawad Road, Gujarat, Rajkot - 360005
<b>RESTAURANTS</b>	
<b>Name Of The Establishmet</b>	<b>Address</b>
Mocha Cafe And Bar	Mocha Cafe And Bar, 232/ 202 Cement Road, Shivaji Nagar, Maharashtra, Nagpur - 440010
<b>ASSOCIATES</b>	
<b>Name Of The Establishmet</b>	<b>Address</b>
Transinterface Digiserv Pvt Ltd	609, 6th Floor, Dattani Prism 1, Vasai (W), Maharashtra, Palghar - 401202
Kaam Job Career Pvt Ltd	701, Agarwal Trinity Tower, De Monte Lane, Kachpada, Malad West, Maharashtra, Mumbai - 400064
Ezee Technosys Pvt Ltd	D-113, International Trade Center, Majura Gate, Ring Road, Gujarat, Surat - 395002
Worldex India Exhibition And Promotion Pvt Ltd	309, Parvati Premises, Sun Mill Compound, Lower Parel West, Maharashtra, Mumbai - 400013
Mbg Card India Pvt Ltd	860, Dubey House, P&T Gate Number - 4, Madhya Pradesh, Jabalpur - 482001

# APPOINTMENTS



**Sudeep Sharma**  
General Manager  
The Westin Pune

Sudeep has primarily been with Marriott International for over a decade, having worked his way from the Assistant Director Food and Beverage at JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu to various leadership positions such as Director of Food and Beverage at Jaipur Marriott Hotel and Director Of Operations at Courtyard by Marriott Ahmedabad.



**Dharmendra Rana**  
director of operations  
Enrise By Sayaji Aurangabad

Dharmendra Rana in his career spanning 15 years has worked with reputed brands like The Oberoi New Delhi, Trident Agra, Taj Lake Palace Udaipur, and Ananta Spa & Resort Udaipur. Prior to this, he was associated with Hotel Avadh Utopia, Surat as food & beverage manager.



**Sneh Jha**  
Director of Marketing and  
Communications for India  
and South Asia TWAccor

Sneh Jha has over 14 years of versatile experience in handling brand marketing, corporate communications, and strategy functions for brands across the hospitality, advertising, and technology industries to the role. In the past, Sneha has been associated with brands such as PMG Asia, OYO Life and Stanza Living.



**Abanti Gupta**  
Director of Human Resources  
JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar

Abanti Gupta has over 18 years of experience in talent management, she is a seasoned professional in her field. She has also received several accolades and awards throughout her career, including 'Most Influential Human Resources Leader' by World HRD Congress in 2017.

## D-CUBE EXHIBITIONS

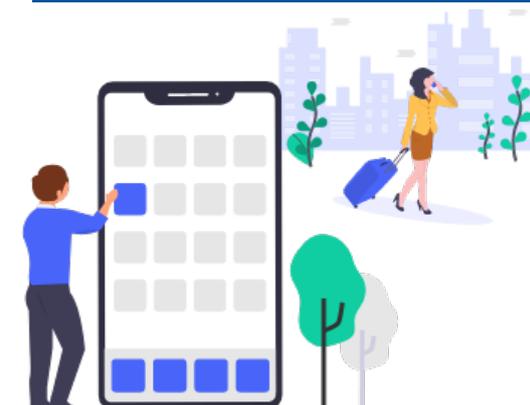


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**7503023330 / 011 40780724, Mr. Abhishek Kumar, ASG, FHRAI**

## POSITIVE INDICATIONS ABOUND

**W**ith the gradual relaxation of travel curbs and other restrictions coupled with the success of the vaccination program, the hospitality industry is witnessing a return of demand and volumes started looking up as 2021 bid farewell.

As per market reports, ever since the pandemic started receding, the travel sector started getting a new lease of life. The gradual easing of international border restrictions in the recent months continue to enthuse many to start planning their next international getaway. International travel corridors have long played a major role in strengthening the economic vitality of destination.

The awakening of the travel sector has its direct impact on the hotel industry. Many hotel brands are on an expansion spree while there are strong signals of a host of new global brands occupying the scene. Market reports say the country's hotel industry is expected to return to the pre-COVID level in 2022 itself on the back of a significant improvement in demand. Hotel occupancies and tariffs are continuing their upward trajectory in the country. More and more hotels across the country have started to adopt state-of-the-art technology for giving the best care to their customers. At the same time, the hotel industry is also reported to encounter some manpower woes mainly due to the paucity of trained staff to meet the new challenges posed by technological revolution which has engulfed the hotel industry. The associations of hotels and restaurants have been taking a number of pro-active steps to make the ground free of legal and other deficiencies and hassles.

The Government of India has recently taken several steps to make India a global tourism hub, realising the country's potential in the tourism industry. The current edition of the magazine carries an exclusive story on this.

All these developments give us a lot to hope about the future of hospitality industry in the days ahead.



**SJI NAIR**  
Managing Editor



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