



H R A NOW

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF HOTEL &
RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION (WESTERN INDIA)

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**FEBRUARY
2015**



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President's Note

Dear Members,

At the outset I would like to thank all of you for the patience that you have shown in waiting for the Electronic version of the magazine. You will be happy to note that HRA NOW is now online. For those who have not had an opportunity to see the same a simple click on the HRA website will give you access anywhere to your favourite industry publication.

This month the EC had a meeting in Ahmedabad and had the opportunity to understand the concern and grievances of the Gujarat hoteliers. The hospitality of the Gujarat hotel members are much appreciated by all the members of the Executive Committee in organising these meetings.

The HRA (WI) has been making a lot of efforts with the state governments in bringing forth the change as per the vision statement of our Prime Minister in existing policies and regulations for 'ease of doing business'. Until date we have received support from the relevant Ministries of Maharashtra Government and the MCGM. We hope that these initiatives will yield into tangible benefits for all the members.

February is the month where the annual budget of the country will be announced and HRA (WI) has strongly petitioned the Indian government on a number of tax issues that afflict our Industry starting with Service Tax, which is a clear case of double taxation. February is also a time of conferences and trade shows where we hope to see better occupancies for urban properties.

This month we cover the newest capital city in our region. Raipur, Chhattisgarh makes for an interesting area for the development of tourism. The state is still young and we encourage hoteliers to visit this state and take advantage of its investment friendly policies.

We look forward to your feedback on the E-News format of the magazine. Suggestions, ideas and comments are always welcome as is your participation in the activities of the Association.

Let's hope that we get a good budget for the year 2015. ■

Best regards,
Bharat Malkani
President HRAWI

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GOA



NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK



Ambar Sarovar Portico Gandhidham is a swanky, stylish mid-range business hotel offering 58 spacious rooms and suites which welcome the modern traveller with heartfelt hospitality and luxurious amenities. State-of-the-art business facilities and conference rooms effortlessly meet any business or social occasion with banqueting facilities for up to 600 guests. The hotel is centrally located, less than 1 km away from the downtown area and the railway station with close proximity to most shipping and insurance companies and banks and about 9 km from Kandla Port and 6 km from Kandla SEZ.



Address: Plot No 100, Sector 8, Near Oslo Circle, Gandhidham, Gujarat-370201



BIZZ the Hotel in Rajkot offers 27 rooms with exquisite interiors, impeccable service and fine cuisine a pioneer and icon amongst luxury and business hotels in Rajkot. The Hotel is located about 1 km Rajkot Airport, 2 km from the Railway Station and well-known Swami Narayan Temple, 3 km from the Local Bus Station.



Address: Dr. Yagnik Road, Rajkot, Gujarat - 360 001



Hotel The Grand Vaibhav is one of the finest hotel in Morbi with 35 extremely spacious contemporary rooms and suits, where luxury and comfort go hand in hand with superior standard of service. It is the ideal choice for accommodation in Morbi. The hotel is situated in the vicinity of Residential & Business hub of Morbi the most elegant business hotel in ceramic industrial area.



Address: Lakhadhipur Road, N.H. 8-A, Morbi 363642, Gujarat, India



MeSoHappi a place where the name truly reflects how one is made to feel! A café, cultural centre and instant mood pick-me-up, “Me So Happi” will roll easily off one's tongue within five minutes! Talking of one's tongue, the delicious multi cuisine temptations on offer include an eclectic variety of comfort foods, homemade desserts and delicious mocktails and cocktails. A bright, open space with a relaxed ambience ideal for chatting with friends or playing the thoughtfully provided board games. The place to keep an eye out for open mic nights, poetry readings and a few surprise celebrity hangout visits. Me So Happi – where food=happiness.



Address: Shop 2, Ground Floor, Kusum Kunj, Near Guess Showroom, Khar-Linking Road, Khar (West), Mumbai



Monteria Resort features 31 well appointed rooms including 2 suites the hotel is surrounded by an abundance of activities, from Adventure Sports to Holy Places attractions. The hotel has state of the art banqueting facilities including the latest audio-visual equipments and business support services. The hotel is located 70 minutes from the airport located on the old Mumbai Pune highway Vinegaon, Khalapur and is conceptualized and designed to give a feel of life, an ideal place for the discerning group and conference delegates.



Address: Monteria Resort Pvt Ltd Adjacent to Nishiland Water Park Vinegaon, Tal: Khalapur Dist: Raigad, Maharashtra. Pin: 410206.



UK's Resort Khopoli redefines hospitality par-excellence in the lush green landscape. It offers 29 well appointed rooms overlooking the beautifully landscaped gardens as well as swimming pool amidst mountains and greenery an ambience provided with a perfect setting for Business & Leisure events. The hotel is located on old Mumbai Pune Highway a few kilometers from Khopoli/ Khalapur about 80 kms from Mumbai and about 90 kms from Pune near Khopoli.



Address: Ashtvinayak Mahad Phata, Old Mumbai - Pune Highway (NH4)-Khopoli, Dist. Raigad Maharashtra- 410203



Hotel Omni Palace a boutique hotel offers 28 smart rooms with elegant interiors, providing an environment conducive to efficient business operations with pleasure. The hotel exudes a luxurious ambience that is pleasant & refreshing. The hotel is centrally located in the heart of the Indore city, about 8 kms. from Airport ½ km. from railway station and 100 meters from Agra Bombay national highway.



Address: 16-C, Ratlam Kothi Main Road, Near Geeta Bhavan Square, Indore, Madhya Pradesh 452001

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Contact:

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Regenta Ahmedabad is an upscale business hotel which offers 129 brilliantly designed, luxuriously appointed and exquisitely furnished rooms that offers value and convenience. Each room here features individual style and distinctive ambience with a thoughtful combination of avant-garde facilities that address the need of the discerning business traveler and offers 8500sqft state of art banqueting facilities spread on two floors. The banqueting space is ideal for weddings, business launch or events. The hotel is equipped with 6 break-out meeting rooms. These rooms can accommodate up to 20 persons and have facilities for video conferencing, which include LCD projectors, sound & light systems. Other facilities include 24 Hrs All Day Dining restaurant- Café 15A, Terrace Pool & Gym, a very rejuvenating 'SOHUM SPA' that provides highly effective therapies & Govt Auth Liquor Shop for Permit Holders. The hotel is located in the heart of the city of Ahmedabad at a distance of 7 km from International & Domestic Airport and 5 minutes from City Centre.



Address: 15, Ashram Road, Ahmedabad - 380 013, Gujarat



The newly renovated Hotel Oriental Aster has 40 well-appointed contemporary guest rooms comprising of premium and luxury equipped with modern amenities. 99 East: Oriental Aster's speciality restaurant serves local and international cuisine that will tantalize ones taste buds. An abundance of natural light, cheery interiors and relaxed seating provide an easy familiarity which makes diners feel welcome at any time of the day. 99 East lends itself to all types of dining occasions, from a business breakfast, to an informal lunch, or even an intimate dinner. The hotel is located in the bustling Mumbai City just 1km from the Mumbai international airport, 3 kms from the domestic airport and 4kms from the Andheri railway station



Address: 45, Tarun Bharat Society, Dr. Karanjia Road, Near Cigarette Factory, Chakala, Andheri East, Mumbai 400099



The Vainguinim Valley Beach Resort or the Chances Resort & Casino as it is now know offers 53 beautifully appointed rooms that are not only spacious but provides classic luxury. The 30,000 sq ft of casino offers good honest gaming in a luxurious and adrenaline pumping environment. From Blackjack o Baccarat and almost everything in between, there are high stake thrills and loads of fun at every turn. The Resort is located at Panaji in North Goa. 31 km from, Dabolim airport and 28 km from Thivim railway station, situated close to Dona Paula Beach, Vainguinim Beach and Raj Bhavan.



Address: 184-189, Machado's Cove, Dona Paula, Goa 403004



The Eden Court Restaurant cum Bar is a multi cuisine restaurant, fabulous place for a business lunch or a romantic dinner with loved one. The drinks and food served is delicious along with great service and ambience. It offers dishes like Chinese, Continental, North Indian and is famous for seafood delicacies. Besides it has great interior that is well furnished, and equipped with amazing lights and impressive dining.

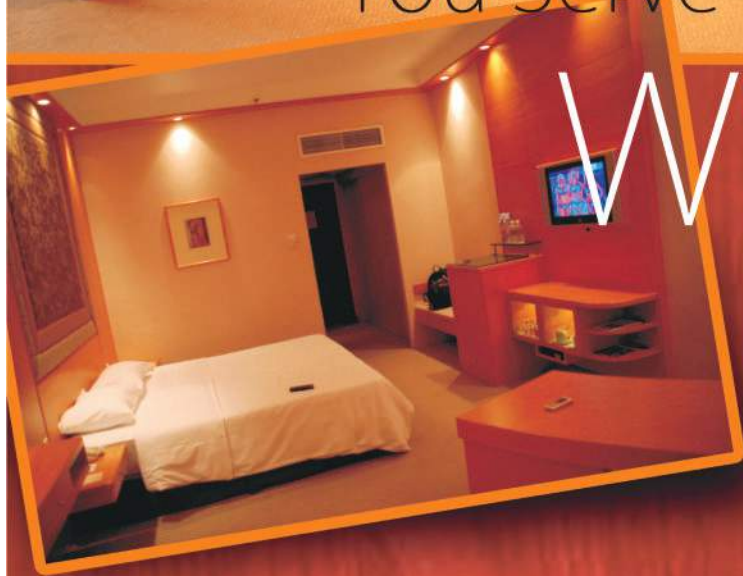


Address: Eden Hall, Opposite Om Super Market, Dhotre Chowk, Dhotre Path Road, Model Colony, Shivaji Nagar, Pune, Maharashtra 411016



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HRAWI Applauds Railway Minister's Initiatives For Bettering Tourists' Experience

Pushes For Opening Up Of Water-Ways For Boosting Coastal Tourism

Union Minister for Railways, Suresh Prabhu's recent announcement commissioning local taxi and auto drivers as tourist guides at Kankavali station has been applauded by the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI). The association has cited this effort as a sign of inclusive governance that goes beyond its scope of work to support ancillary industries.

Commending the vision, President of HRAWI, Mr. Bharat Malkani said, "Although this decision does not affect or directly impact the hotel industry, the move indicates the tone of the Government. To us, this is a promising sign and gives us hope."

"It is an idea that is both simple and ingenious. However, it is also very crucial that thorough audits must be done to identify that these taxi and auto drivers are indeed locals and that the training should include development of their soft skills for tourists to feel a home. With suitable training, which according to the Minister would be provided by the Railways and the State Government, there are none who are more suited than local taxi and auto drivers to act as tourist guides. Not only will tourists get access to easy, convenient and legitimate information off hand, but it will also give the locals additional income, besides enhancing the experience of tourists visiting the place," he added.

HRAWI has been advocating the development and promotion of tourism in the coastal regions of Maharashtra. Projecting the Konkan beach belt, which the association believes is underrated and untapped, is expected to generate employment opportunities and significant revenues to the state.

"Beaches along the Konkan stretch of Maharashtra are unparalleled in their beauty. With ample sunshine, golden sand and sub culture, atmosphere, cuisine and people that are unique to this region, it is as good, if not better than Goa or surrounding places. If only the Government focuses on improving the transport infrastructure and connectivity, the tourist arrivals could easily see an appreciated surge," says Mr. Malkani.



Bharat Malkani
President, HRAWI

Meanwhile, HRAWI also appealed to the Government to implement its earlier proposal for opening up the waterways as this could boost coastal tourism. "Mumbai has one of the biggest ports and waterways and the possibility that it could be utilized as a medium of transportation has been overlooked for long. If the government looks at opening up this possibility, then tourists could use the water mode to reach their beach of choice. This could irrevocably change the landscape of tourism in the state," concluded Mr. Malkani. ■

Hoteliers Welcome Fssai's Decision To Extend Deadline For FBO Registration & Licensing

Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) on behalf of the hotel industry has welcomed the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)'s decision to further extend the deadline for obtaining Food Business Operator (FBO)'s license by six months to 4th August, 2015. The order has come in the wake of several requests made by the association to the ministry.

As per the earlier order all food businesses, from roadside eateries to restaurants, were to comply before February 4 or face rigorous punishments.

"The changes required in obtaining the licenses for FBOs as per the regulations are yet to be fully understood. Awareness on procedures and protocols is still lacking. It is a herculean task in itself and with the sheer number of FBOs the job is doubly cumbersome. Hence, we sought this extension from the government and hope to meet the deadline in August," says Mr. Bharat Malkani, President, HRAWI.

The extended deadline is applicable for FBOs seeking conversions and renewals for existing license / registration under repealed order.

"As an association, representing members of the hotel industry, we will work in the best interests of the industry. We understand and realize the basic premise or the intent of the Food Safety and Standards Act is to ensure international standards of hygiene. On this we are in full concurrence with the Government and extended our co-operation. However, hoteliers will take some more time to be fully compliant. We will take full efforts towards achieving standards that are at par, if not better, with the world," concludes Mr. Malkani. ■

Maharashtra International Travel Mart reschedules to September 27-29

Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) has, since its inception, been involved in the development and maintenance of the various tourist locations of Maharashtra.



The promotional event by MTDC this year Maharashtra International Travel Mart (MITM), which was earlier to be held from February 26 to 28 has been rescheduled to 27-29 September. The event will be held at the Bombay Exhibition Centre in Mumbai. According to an official from MTDC, the event has been rescheduled because of the Rail and Union Budget which will be announced on February 26 and 28, respectively.

The three-day event will showcase the tourism attractions of the state that would lead to an enhanced brand image of the destination. Over 250 Buyers from over 30 countries, 200 exhibitors from India from over 20 diverse tourism segments and 1500 travel agents are expected to participate in the event Mart. Sphere Travel Media & Exhibitions will organize the event on the government's behalf.

Ms. Valsa R Nair Singh, IAS, Secretary, Tourism and Culture, Govt. of Maharashtra said "Maharashtra is home to the largest inventory of tourism products that the country has to offer with five UNESCO World Heritage Sites, over 900 caves, 350 forts with splendid wildlife and world-class beaches to adorn. 'Maharashtra International Travel Mart', being held for the first time will provide the impetus to the inbound travel and tourism industry and would enhance the marketing efforts of Maharashtra Tourism."

Among the countries expected to attend are Netherlands, Australia, Canada, France, Greece, Israel, Japan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, UAE, UK, USA, South Africa and Singapore among others.

The event is supported by major travel – trade and hospitality association in India such as 'Association of Domestic Tour Operators Association of India (ADTOI), Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) and Indian Association of Tour Operators. ■

Grand Hyatt Goa Once Again Triumphs At The

Times Food Guide Awards 2015

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GOA

Chulha win the "Best Indian Restaurant"

Award The Dining Room prevails with the "Best All Day Dining" Award Capiz Bar bags the "Best Bar" Award

The Grand Hyatt Goa takes pride in being among the best hotels in Goa. It features seven food and beverage outlets that offer guests a wide selection of authentic cuisines and flavours from different parts of the world. Chulha, The Dining Room and Capiz Bar feature design elements that reflect the traditional warmth of a Goan residence. The interior design of each restaurant and bar in the hotel has been custom-made to reflect its culinary concept.

Grand Hyatt Goa's restaurants have been honoured with not one, but three accolades by the Times Food Guide Awards 2015, for the fourth year in a row. The enchanting resorts' restaurants Chulha, The Dining Room and Capiz Bar were awarded with the "Best Indian Restaurant", "Best All Day Dining", and "Best Bar" awards respectively at one of the most prestigious culinary awards in the country. ■



FSSAI and Health Ministry to streamline food-product approval process

The Union Health Ministry along with the Food Safety and Standard Authority is working to streamline the process for time-bound approval of food products.



The health ministry recently held a review meeting with all the stakeholders under the mandate of the Food Safety and Standard Authority (FSSA) Act, 2006, to ensure that food that is consumed is safe, healthy and wholesome, and the manufacturing process adheres to all standards and procedures. Present at the meet-

ing were stakeholders from the food processing industries, the secretary of the department of industrial policy and promotions, the secretary of the department of food processing and the chairman and CEO of FSSAI, besides officials of the health ministry.

Union Health Minister Mr. J.P. Nadda said the government is working towards streamlining the process for time-bound approval of food products. The health ministry along with the Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI) is working on this.

"This will not only clear the approval of several pending proposals for food products but will also give a much needed push to the domestic food processing industry, while not compromising with quality and safety of food products. He also stressed on the need to have safe and wholesome food, and the local manufacturing of food products under the government's Make in India campaign. That in order to ensure the quality and safety of food products, various issues pertaining to regulation under the FSSA Act were discussed at the meeting, including the mechanism for product approval. ■

MOT MOCA FAITH come together to create opportunities for India tourism

A first of its kind high-powered meeting between the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Civil Aviation, and Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality (FAITH), took place under the umbrella body of ten national associations representing various sectors in the tourism industry. The meeting was attended by about 50 top national and international carriers and stakeholders from travel and tourism industry. It was aimed at bringing tourism and airlines sector closer and devise a 'draft of working' where both the industries work together for the growth of Indian aviation and tourism creating opportunities for India tourism, for the stakeholders and unleash sector's massive potential for the socio-economic development of the country. It however also served as the platform for the airlines



to raise their various issues and concerns. The airlines also offered their valuable inputs in bettering experience 'India' for tourist and how can they co-operate.

Invoking the Prime Minister's vision of taking India's great story of heritage and culture through tourism globally, Minister of State for Tourism & Culture (Independent Charge) and Civil Aviation Mr. Mahesh Sharma said that it cannot be a one-way traffic when we talk of increasing tourism to India.

"It has to be a win-win situation for all of us," he said sending out a strong message to everybody present in the audience that his ministries, both Civil Aviation and Tourism, means business and is willing to accommodate the concerns and suggestions of the stakeholders. The minister also gave a very uncharacteristic and strong assurance to the airlines that their issue and concerns will be addressed in a single-window, time-bound manner.

The meet proposed MOU in this regard that can be explored between MOT and Airlines. The modalities could include complimentary tickets, screening Incredible India movies, against spaces in various international travel marts like ITB, WTM and others, invitation to airlines' officials to India evenings, featuring logo in MOT collaterals, linking of airlines' packages to Incredible India website, sharing the annual MOT calendar among others.

The meet also proposed that the airlines come on board FAITH platform and explores possible areas of jointly working with the central government on policy planning. It proposed that one representation each from various alliances like Star Alliance, One world, and one from the domestic sector full service and low cost airlines can be an option. It also stated to form inter-industry task force to address issues and concerns between the travel and aviation sector.

The airlines concerns and suggestions included creating demand in various markets, friendly bilateral regime, making airport and immigration experiences better, airport infrastructure at the smaller cities and making available night landing facilities at these airports, reducing VAT and rationalize taxes. They also stressed on the need to conduct aggressive road shows in overseas market, address the safety, security and cleanliness concerns of visitors, better visibility of Indian tourism boards and destination marketing in potential source markets like mainland China.

Offering enthusiastic support for conducting familiarization trips Thai Airways' Mr. Ravi Talwar informed that his airlines has already conducted such tours in the past. "We can possibly circulate offers to our general managers in other countries to bring in more such partners to India. We are willing to pay for the tickets, but need support with hospitality, land arrangements and other things associated

with it," he said.

According to Air Arabia's Mr. Sachin Nene, last year his airline, in association with Goa Tourism, conducted a mega-fam tour from Russia and CIS countries inviting about 50 operators. "It really gave us a big boost bringing tourists from these countries. I think we are ready to take such initiatives. Let us know where we can write to you," he said.

Hitting the nail on its head, one of the youngest airline CEOs, Air Asia's Mr. Mittu Chandilya, emphasized that things need to be done in a lot more structured way. He suggested the need to build a task force where the airlines, in collaboration with FAITH and the Union Government, have an opportunity to talk to the states.

Bringing what could probably be the first outcome of this meet and the issue of synergy between tourism and airlines, in the spotlight, Mr. Sarabjit Singh, Vice Chairman, FAITH and Chairman, GET INDIA 2015, pointed that the handling part of familiarization tours, organised by the government, has been handed over to the industry where all segments of FAITH have come together to handle such tours.

"Now we want the airlines to also come forward and join hand with FAITH so that we can take it to greater level. And it is not about the free tickets. The moment the airlines are part and parcel in selecting tour operators being brought in, the purpose is well served," he said.

While concluding, Ms. Usha Sharma, ADG, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India said, "We will cull out the actionable points from today's meeting and see how these actionable points are converted into deliverables. We need to form a task force sort of committee. I will request Faith and Ministry of Civil Aviation to give us names from the participants who would volunteer themselves in order to take the agenda forward. It should not be limited to just a one show platform. We need to meet more often." ■

Mumbai Port Trust to make floating hotel & restaurant projects viable

Mumbai may soon get both a floatel and floating restaurant, as Mumbai Port Trust (MbPT) has tweaked land allotment policy in favour of the revenue-sharing model to attract more bidders for floatel and floating restaurant projects. MbPT stated that it will allow a 500-room capacity five-star



floatel at C-2 anchorage. The floating restaurant will come up off Girgaum Chowpatty in the bay area. Earlier, the port trust had stated that the floating hotel may be operational for only eight months a year, but now plans to allow it to operate through the year. However, the restaurant will be shut during the monsoon. Bidders will have to take approvals from the state government, Navy and security agencies.

Mr. Gautam Dey, senior deputy traffic manager, business development, MbPT said, "Instead of a rental, we have gone for the revenue-sharing model, which is likely to make the project more viable. According to conditions outlined in the tender, MbPT will seek 10% of revenue earned by the operator. The site will be 1.5km from Ferry Wharf and people will have to take a speed boat from there to the hotel. The three-star restaurant will be able to accommodate a maximum of 250 customers, who can reach the venue by speed boat. A floating jetty will be provided near Girgaum for this purpose. The last date for submission of bids is February 26. It will take two to three months to scrutinize them and give approvals."

MbPT had earlier made attempts to set up the facilities and around 10-12 firms in the shipping business had expressed interest. But the policy to rent out space in the sea proved a dampener as rentals are too steep in South Mumbai. According to the policy framed by the Government of India, rentals should be 50% of the rates of property in adjoining areas. The interested parties had stated that rental will make the proposal unviable as the hotelier will not only have to set-up a restaurant or a hotel in the sea but also arrange, to ferry people to the establishment in a boat or yacht. They had pointed out that maintenance of the vessel used to set-up the facility will be costly. This made running a restaurant or hotel on the sea costlier than operating one on land. ■

OYO Rooms now offers budget rooms in Mumbai

Budget hotel chain OYO Rooms.com established in 2013, is present in five cities in India. OYO has developed a proprietary process using which

the company is able to take over a property and convert it into an OYO Rooms standardized hotel within six-ten days. As part of this process, OYO undertakes hotel staff training and coaching programs for all new properties. Lately it has announced that it now offers standardized hotel room for just Rs. 1,499 a night. A release from the budget hotel chain said "OYO Rooms is currently offering over 10 hotels with similar high-quality rooms, priced between Rs. 1,499 and Rs. 2,899 a night, in business and tourist-friendly locations in Mumbai, including Andheri (East), Navi Mumbai, Juhu and Bhiwandi."

OYO plans to launch 30 new budget-friendly hotels in other prominent central and western Mumbai suburbs, including Chembur, Bandra, and Andheri (West) in the next 12 months, taking its inventory to over 500 rooms.

Mr. Ritesh Agarwal, CEO, OYO Rooms said, "Our promise of a high-quality hotel room at rock bottom prices is our attempt to shake up the budget travel market in the country. With standardized rooms across India priced as low as Rs. 999 a night, we are not only making travel more accessible to Indians, but also completely changing the value perception of a budget hotel stay for business or leisure travellers."

Abhinav Sinha, COO, OYO Rooms said, "OYO is aiming to deliver a far superior and standardized customer experience driven by technology across all our properties. We are looking to offer an unprecedented, seamless experience to the budget traveler at all stages, from the discovery and booking of a room to its realization".

OYO Rooms.com claims to offer standardized, high-quality rooms starting at Rs 999 per night. All rooms come with air conditioning, TV, unlimited Wi-Fi, a clean and attached washroom and a complimentary breakfast service. ■



Mexican fast food restaurant Taco Bell opens 2 new outlets in Mumbai

California based Taco Bell Mexican fast food restaurant chain launched in India in 2010, has announced

the launch of two more outlets in Mumbai. The two new outlets have been launched at RCity Mall, Ghatkopar and Viviana Mall, Thane. Following the launch of its outlet in Oberoi Mall, Goregaon in 2013, this will be Taco Bell's first leg of expansion in Mumbai. The restaurant is known for tacos, burritos, and other such Mexican specialties. Taco Bell menus boast of items that are hot and cold, soft and crunchy - all at the same time which intends to produce a true multi-sensorial food experience for eaters.

Mr. Unnat Varma, General Manager – Taco Bell & Pizza Hut, India said, "At Taco Bell, we serve very innovative types of fast food that are crunchy, cheesy and extremely flavorful! Our experience both in Mumbai & Bangalore has been fantastic with consumers thoroughly enjoying new food formats like Tacos, Chalupas & Quesadillas. Though our food has familiar ingredients but they are done very differently. People come in both for snacking & having full meals."

He also added, "The new food formats, differentiated tastes and even the new eating styles that some products demand make Taco Bell a place for complete 'Food Adventure' for consumers. There is always an unexpected element of surprise at Taco Bell."

Taco Bell, in association, Viviana Mall, has recently launched their first Braille Menu for blind people. The menu is visual, Braille and audio enabled and a strong step towards becoming more accessible for all segments of the society. Taco Bell also recently hosted the Pre-Launch After Dark Party at the R-City Mall outlet in Ghatkopar, in a tie up with Mood Indigo - Asia's largest cultural festival. The event featured 4 rock bands.

With over 6000 stores in 16 countries, Taco Bell is one of the leading Mexican food chains worldwide. ■



JW Marriott Hotel Mumbai Sahar appointed Vivek Bhatt as the Executive Chef & Ayesha Bhalla as Director Sales & Marketing

JW Marriott Hotel Mumbai- Sahar boasts of an unparalleled location in the heart of the vibrant suburb of Andheri-Mumbai. It is a short drive from both the Mumbai airports, as well as the area's business hub. The hotel's 585 brand new, sophisticated rooms and suites offer every possible amenity to ensure comfort, such as plush Marriott bedding, flat-screen TVs, in-room tea and coffee makers added with high-speed wired and wireless Internet. Additional perks throughout the hotel include full-service spa, as well as an impressive 56,000 square feet of flexible indoor and outdoor meeting and event space with creative catering services. The hotel also has two fully-staffed business centres.

JW Marriott Hotel Mumbai- Sahar has recently appointed Chef Vivek Bhatt as the Executive Chef of hotel. Chef Vivek a student of IHM Ahmedabad began his culinary journey in 1997 as Chef de partie at the Oberoi Hotels and Resorts. His passion towards food has helped him evolve into a versatile personality thus accepting various roles and gained thorough knowledge on different kinds of cuisines, also learnt to cater to large banquets and has spear head operations across bars, lounges, restaurants in his culinary experience, an expert in North Indian and Mediterranean cuisines (especially Spanish), Chef Vivek draws his inspiration from his travels to Spain, Muscat, China, Philippines, Maldives and other places. With over 17 years of experience in the industry, Chef Vivek has brought to the table, his expertise in handling operations, training, planning, developing and executing



new concepts and various trends for many renowned hotels like The Trident, Jaipur, a part of Oberoi Hotel Group, Hyatt Regency, New Delhi, Hyatt Regency La Manga, Spain (Now Hotel Principe Felipe) and Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts.

Ayesha Bhalla has also recently assumed the position of the Director of Sales & Marketing at the JW Marriott Hotel Mumbai Sahar. She graduated in B.Com. from Sydenham College of Commerce & Economics - Mumbai and further obtained her Post Graduate Diploma in Management from Amity Business School - Noida. Having more than sixteen years experience in the hospitality industry, she began her career with Holiday Inn Worldwide as a Sales Executive to help generate rooms revenue and to improve performance. She later went on to join Oberoi Hotels and Resorts and has worked across positions, responsible for property reactive sales, proactive account sales and segment sales, local and social catering sales, business travel sales, reservation sales. Before joining JW Marriott Hotel Mumbai Sahar, Ayesha was the Director of Sales and Marketing at The Oberoi, Bangalore here she was in-charge of developing and maintaining relationships with key corporate clients. ■

Hotel Sahara Star Mumbai recently appointed three key positions



Mr. Sachin Motee as Head – Loss Prevention, Mr. Pravin Gadekar as Assistant Manager – Loss Prevention and Mr. Anupam Godara as Assistant Front Office Manager

Sahara Star Mumbai, the flagship hotel of Sahara India pariwar a 5 star deluxe hotel is strategically located opposite Mumbai's domestic airport Hotel, it is well appointed with 286 guestrooms inclusive of 14 luxurious suites and 9 Food & Beverages outlets, magnificently blends Indian mysticism and culture, while personifying the country progressive spirit blending peerless hospitality with ultra modern technology. Hotel Sahara Star promises to enthrall the world with its magnificence, an architectural phenomenon, a majestic landmark, a destination to be experienced in its entire splendor. The Hotel is a distinct yet contemporary destination which caters to the guest's requirements with state of the art amenities, services & promotions. Creating a paradigm shift, Sahara Star showcases world largest-

pillar-less- clear- to- sky dome, an architectural landmark blending hospitality and entertainment to cater one of the most individualized hospitality experiences. Here, the culture, mystique & hospitality of India blends with modern facility & services to create the finest business- cum-leisure hotel of the country.

Hotel Sahara Star has appointed Mr. Sachin Motee as Head – Loss Prevention. He holds a degree in Bachelor of Science and has undergone security training courses, ISPS code certification, and courses in Crowd Management, Crisis Management, and Human Behaviour, also has other survival skill validations such as fire and safety certificates. In his 17 years of experience in the hospitality industry, he has worked as Chief Security Officer at Carnival Cruise Lines in Miami and as Duty Officer at Cambata Aviation Ltd.

Mr. Pravin Gadekar appointed as Assistant Manager – Loss Prevention-Sahara Star Mumbai, holds a Degree in Bachelor of Arts and has completed first year of LLB from Mumbai University along with various security certifications. Before joining Sahara Star Mumbai he was associated with The Oberoi Group in Unit Oberoi Flight Services, Mumbai as Security Officer. In his 14 year of work experience in the hospitality industry he worked as the Security Supervisor with Taj Group of Hotels and Resorts, Mumbai; Security Executive at The Park Plaza Royal Palms, Mumbai; Assistant Security Manager at Banyan Tree Group of Hotels & Resorts Seychelles; and as Assistant Security Manager at Thunderbird Group of Hotels.

Newly appointed Anupam Godara as Assistant Front Office Manager Sahara Star Mumbai, holds a degree in Bachelor of Hotel & Tourism Management Studies from Mumbai University. He brings with him 5 years of experience in the hospitality industry, he started his career as Front Office Assistant at The Oberoi, Mumbai, then moved on to Courtyard by Marriott, Mumbai International Airport as Front Office Executive. Latter took up the role of Assistant Manager – Front Office at Hyatt Regency, Mumbai before joining Sahara Star Mumbai. ■



Carnation Hotels partners with Parikh Inn to open Lemon Tree in Vadodara

Carnation Hotels the management arm of Lemon Tree Hotels was created as a Joint Venture between two of India's pre-eminent hoteliers,



Mr. Patu Keswani (Chairman and Managing Director, Lemon Tree Hotels) and Mr. Rattan Keswani (erstwhile President, Trident Hotels-The Oberoi Group), Carnation Hotels leverages the operational excellence of Lemon Tree Hotels and the corporate depth and expertise in Sales & Revenue management, Marketing, Finance, Human Resources as well as Technical Services/ Project Management of The Lemon Tree Group, for owners across India. Carnation Hotels recently, signed a management contract with Parikh Inn Pvt. Ltd, The owning company which is a part of the Jamshedpur based Raj B. Parikh Group of companies. The contract was signed for a mid-scale hotel in Vadodara. The 48-room property is scheduled to open in April 2015, and will offer a multi-cuisine coffee shop, gym, cyber kiosk, two meeting rooms to cater to business travelers, apart from a roof-top space that would serve as an outdoor dining venue. The hotel will be branded as Lemon Tree Hotel, Vadodara, and is located opposite Parsee Agiari, Sayajigunj in Vadodara. The hotel will mostly target business travellers.

The management agreement was signed by Mr. Rattan Keswani, Co-Promoter and Chairman, Carnation Hotels & Dy. Managing Director, Lemon Tree Hotels and Mr. Shapath Parikh, Director of Parikh Inn.

Mr. Rattan Keswani said, "We are delighted to associate with the Parikh family to bring our midscale brand to Vadodara. We are excited about including it in our portfolio. Vadodara is one of the top ten fastest developing cities of India and the third largest city of Gujarat. An important industrial, cultural and educational hub of western India, the city is home to a gamut of large-scale industries, major IT and development companies and also benefits from being the Gateway to the Golden Quadrilateral- Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Surat."

Shapath Parikh stated, "The opening of our Vadodara hotel will be an important milestone in the history of our 60 year old group, marking our first foray in Western India and the second hotel in our portfolio."

Lemon Tree Group currently owns and operates 26 hotels in 15 cities aggregating 3000 rooms with 3500 employees.

It has 3 operative brands - Lemon Tree Premier (upscale), Lemon Tree Hotels (midscale) & Red Fox Hotels (economy). The group already has two hotels in Ahmedabad, the capital city of the Gujarat State, and is now expanding its brand presence to other key cities. ■

Accor's Formule1 opens doors in Pune Pimpri to serve both business and leisure travellers.

Accor, the world's leading hotel operator and market leader in Europe, is present in 92 countries with nearly 3500 hotels and 440000 rooms. Accor has recently opened Hotel Formule1, in the heart of Pimpri in Pune, bringing the network to six hotels in India. Hotel Formule1 Pune Pimpri features 115 stylish and compact rooms equipped with amenities including flat screen LED televisions, free hi-speed Wi-Fi, and soundproof windows. Other facilities and services in the hotel include Café F1, buffet breakfast, and ample parking spaces and garden area. The hotel is located in close proximity to Pune Expressway, Auto Cluster Exhibition Center, Sahara Sports Venue and many educational hubs; the close proximity to Pune Expressway also makes it a good option for transit travelers. Hotel Formule1 Pune Pimpri is targeted at both business travellers as well as leisure travellers.

Philip Logan, Vice President, Hotel Formule1 India, said: "Hotel Formule1 seeks to reach out to aspiring young travellers throughout India. We are here to create a niche segment of Rest Assured hotels that provide guests with comfortable hotel stays and memorable experiences. The opening of Hotel Formule1 in Pimpri Pune marks our sixth hotel in India and our second property in Pune Maharashtra, reinforcing our strong presence and growth ambition."

Vineesh Kurup, General Manager, Hotel Formule1 Pune region, said, "Hotel Formule1 Pune Pimpri will attract travelers due to its optimal location and quality services and facilities ensuring a comfortable and rest assured stay."

Hotel Formule1- Accor's low cost segment brand is set to redefine this segment in India by creating a 'Rest Assured' hotel, focused on delivering exceptional value to all stakeholders. From building design to operating model to service levels, every element of Hotel Formule1 has been considered to deliver the best experience to guests and the maximum return to partners. ■

Newly opened Acron Waterfront Resort-Baga the second Fortune hotel in Goa

Fortune, a member of ITC's hotel group, was set up in 1995 to cater to the mid-market to upscale segment in business and leisure destinations. Today, it is a professionally managed Hotel Management Company with 71 signed properties, 5632 rooms spread across 55 cities in India, out of which 44 hotels are operational at present. It has emerged as one of the fastest growing first-class, full-service hotel chains in India. The Fortune brand's 44th hotel in association with hospitality and residential property developers Acron Group have announced the opening of 'Acron Waterfront Resort', their newest hospitality property, at an exquisite location by the edge of the Baga river in Goa just where it meets the Arabian sea.

Acron Waterfront Resort, Baga, Goa- A Fortune Resort is the second hotel of Fortune in Goa. Sprawled across an acre on the Baga peninsula, the 29 rooms of the Acron Waterfront Resort provides the very best in modern amenities. There are rooms for differently abled guests, with one's own personally appointed butler, car, and mobile phone, each room has been meticulously designed with hand-painted motifs to reflect an individual touch, all in a uniquely rustic setting that may well become ones home away from home.

Celebrity Cyrus Todiwala will be the Master Chef at Acron Waterfront Resort. He runs four restaurants in London and will also manage The River Restaurant, where in his trademark style he will delight diners with his inimitable and quirky cuisine from across the globe. His team will cater to specific individual tastes while creating a highly personalized fusion menu of the best Goan and international fare.

Acron Waterfront Resort is a boutique resort property, strategically located, with views of the river, the sea and the courtyard. The Resort has built ramp access to their River restaurant and other common areas. ■





New Ways In Hospitality Adding To Profits & Increase in Revenue

The hospitality industry a part of larger enterprise of the travel and tourism industry is one of the oldest industries in the world. In early days, traders, explorers, missionaries and pilgrims needed a break in their journeys requiring food, shelter and rest. People opened their homes and kitchens to these weary travellers, and an industry was born. Although accommodation today is varied and their services have changed and expanded over the ages, one thing about the hospitality industry has remained the same, guests are always welcome. From a friendly greeting at the door, room service, breakfast, to a host of facilities the hospitality industry offers travellers a home away from home. Today's hospitality is an industry made up of businesses that provide lodging, food and other services to travellers. The components of this industry are the hotels, motels, inns, resorts and Restaurants engaged in tourism, entertainment, transportation or lodging including cruise lines, airlines, railways, car rental companies and tour operators. The two main segments are the lodging industry and the food and beverage industry.

Running a successful hotel is an ongoing challenge that requires the combined forces of both management and staff. Policies must be in place to make sure that daily operations run smoothly and all hotel guests are treated well. It is fair to say that the primary goal of almost every owner and operator of a hotel is to make as big a profit as possible. To achieve such a goal the focus needs to be on both revenues

and costs. Hotels can boost their bottom line by increasing revenues and decreasing costs. When a hotel's occupancy rates and RevPAR rise, it is usually a good indication that management is executing well. While the industry is now seeing revenue and occupancy growth outpace pre-recession levels, net income has stayed flat, dragged down by increasing costs. New innovative ways and strategic steps by hoteliers and hotel managers are increasing net revenue in these current expensive times.

Focusing on forecast & engaging associates

The hoteliers today are bringing a view of the future to managers at all levels throughout the organization. Ensuring everyone understands operational and financial forecasts and the implications of each subject. Guest satisfaction is often times dependent upon guests' experience with numerous associates. Empowering each person in the organization via relational communications versus a hierarchal approach is improving overall employee morale and by assigning return on investment (ROI) to someone who understands the business holistically and who can assess performance of initiatives throughout a period of time so that one can recourse as necessary is enabling more associates to contribute to the bottom line.

Checking online agents

Online travel agencies (OTA) have become essential in hospitality industry in the recent years for increase in business. The OTA sends customers to the hoteliers, but they also charge a commission and usually the hoteliers have to sell their rooms at discounted rates to the customer. In certain situations, using an OTA to increase occupancy works well, but to know how much, or little, it is adding to the bottom line can be seen by regularly auditing the sales and expenses by OTA. It is easy to get caught up in the OTA trap without audits done on regular intervals.

Differentiating ones property from others

In this competitive world it is very necessary that every hotelier gives guests a reason to choose their hotel over other hotels two blocks or two miles away. The differentiation can be on the basis of price, policy and service. Offering free internet or a 3:00 pm checkout are just a few possibilities. While one does not want to get into a losing battle by dropping room rates by 25 percent below their competitor's rates, but one can have a policy where their rates can always be at or near the lowest rate in town. Whether a guest is just staying for one night or for two weeks, one should always do their best to make them feel like ones hotel is their home away from home. When the hotel is warm and welcoming, people always want to come back.

Rising on the hotel rating scale

It is surprising but practical how big a difference it can make if ones hotel goes from a 2-star rating to a 3-star or further rating in a popular hotel rating service. By achieving a higher star level, more people will want to stay at ones hotel and it will probably increase profits by raising the daily room rates based on higher ranking.



Energy efficient systems to cut cost

The hoteliers today are closely tracking energy and efficiently maximizing cost savings by providing tools to front desk, maintenance and housekeeping staff to allow them to communicate statuses of rooms so that issues such as emergency repairs are conveyed immediately without delay. One never wants to tell their guest that they cannot keep their room as cool as they like, because the hotel is trying to conserve energy, since hotels often spend more than 50 percent of their operational budget on air conditioning and heat, the best way to cut those costs is to invest in a highly efficient HVAC system that uses less energy and fewer kilowatts to cool and heat a room. Also switching to LED lighting which is almost 10 times more efficient than incandescent lighting, in the long-run it saves the hotel thousands and thousands of rupees in higher electric bills and the cost of buying and replacing burnt out light bulbs. Using solar heating and lighting are some modern ways of energy conservation which hoteliers are now adapting. In a similar vein, doing an energy audit will identify areas where the hotel is overspending on energy or other fuels. By doing this every hotelier can make adjustments to lower overall expenses.

Enhance guest experience while generating additional profit

Today guest satisfaction is the key to profit making in the hotel industry. The customer is always right is not just a catchy phrase, but also, one of the most fundamental rules of the hotel business. If guests are satisfied, it will pay positive dividends. On the other hand, if the guest is upset it will come back to haunt the hotel with negative posts on hotel review sites and the loss of customers. Guest always takes notice when the person at the front desk calls them by their name. If the manager takes the time to walk around the breakfast area and asks the guests if they are enjoying





their stay, it makes a difference, making the guests feel that they are important. Also being creative and proactive to find a good solution by fixing a problem before it leads to a complaint. Taking stock of opportunities throughout the travel continuum (e.g., dreaming, planning, booking, anticipating, experiencing and sharing). Using platforms such as social media to engage guests in the dreaming and planning stages or illustrate benefits in the booking phase to permit potential guests to easily upgrade or add supplemental services. Knowing the value of certain services on which one could make additional revenue. For example, allowing an early check-in or late check-out for a nominal fee. Having an idea of what type of customer is being served guides one, in what added services might be of value to the customer. Carefully review arrival reports days in advance to verify pricing and package components to a guest's folio. Upon checkout, confirm all charges are accounted for to avoid surprise charging a guest on a later date for a consumed service that was not added in initially at checkout. Finding the most-profitable customers and profiling them in a broad category. Understanding guest behavior in terms of booking windows, channel preference and spend propensity, among others, are all factors to be taken into account for generating additional profits and enhancing guest experience.

Developing incremental revenue sources by Selling hotel branded products

Hotels today are giving emphasis on unique ways of to increase their profits. They are trying to gently persuade hotel guests to spend a little more by adding a new revenue stream by making available for purchase branded products by the hotel like towels, linens, shampoos etc. Using front desk or other designated area to take advantage of point-of-sale opportunities like selling tickets to attractions, rent



cars or even sell key chains letter openers and Momentos. Guests are usually willing to pay more if they feel like they are getting more value.

Focusing on marketing of most important customers Encourage guests to refer new customers

In the hotel industry statistics show that 20 percent of a hotels customers account for 80 percent of their revenues. If a hotel has large number of corporate customers or do make a lot of business with a travel agency, it makes sense to give more direct attention in the marketing campaign to those very important customers. A satisfied guest can be a great source for new customers, by encourage such guests to refer friends and family to stay at the hotel by giving them various incentives like a room discount on a future stay, free dinner, or perhaps, a gift card. If one has the space, put more emphasis on using it to host business gatherings, reunions or other social events. The hotel can do everything from holding a training session in a conference room to being the venue for a wedding on the grounds of the hotel.

Other unique ways to increase revenue

Some unique way to increase revenue is to make it possible for honeymoon couples to enhance their stay at the hotel. Wedding guests can buy the couple those desirable extras like spa treatments, a round of golf or dinner at the hotel's restaurant. Proper marketing can make this another solid revenue source that will differentiate ones hotel from others and create a whole new way to book a honeymoon. Many travelers love to take their pet along with them when they travel. If one makes their hotel pet-friendly, it attracts a different segment of traveler who are willing to pay more for the rooms. Always meeting or exceeding expectations of guest will add upto the booking rate.

Networking with nearby businesses

The hoteliers who network with other businesses in their area like amusement parks, museums, restaurant etc., they tend to attract travelers and tourists which increase revenue for the hotel and the business partner, and at the same time, benefit the customer. A hotel could offer discounted tickets to local attractions that benefit current hotel guests. Business can be driven to the hotel if the hotel offers a special rate for anyone who books a room and shows a ticket or receipt from the hotel's networking partner.

Publishing a hotel newsletter

Another efficient way to give a boost to ones hotel is by publishing an effective newsletter. Guests can opt-in to receive an email subscription to the newsletter for free. Regularly adding, good current content to the newsletter with offer and incentives, which will be only available to the subscribing of the newsletter. This in turn will increase the booking of guests to the hotel. It is also a great way to stay in touch with current and future visitors to ones hotel.

Encourage employees and making them happy

In today's world hoteliers who keep their employees happy are adding to their profits, as they will find that by keeping their employees satisfied in turn results that their employees are happy to talk positively about the hotel. In addition to relating positively to hotel guests they encounter, one will never know when they will encourage a friend or family member to stay at ones hotel. The employees are the hotels most valuable asset. The personal touch is always a good way to reach out to past guests and encourage them to stay again. Today, social media sites, smartphones and many other types of technology, make it easy to talk to past and future guests. In the hotel industry or any service-oriented industry,

it is particularly important that the employees project a friendly and outgoing attitude toward the customer. If one makes their employees happy by paying them fairly and recognizing them for their achievements, there is no doubt that they will want to be good ambassadors for the hotel. When the employees go above-and-beyond their official duties to help out a guest that creates tremendous goodwill and can lead to repeat visits and recommendations. As demand can fluctuate at the last minute, hoteliers need to be more adept at dynamically adjusting staffing to match their business levels. If an employee comes up with a good idea that will help generate more revenue or lower expenses for the hotel, recognizing and rewarding the employee will make a lot of difference in the employer-employee relationship. When employees know that they are appreciated, they will continue to work hard and look for ways to improve the hotel. If one remembers to follow the rule "people first, then money, then things," one will be well on their way to running a successful hotel.

The hotel industry is at a crossroads. Commissions paid to distribution partners are growing at twice the pace of revenue, and the rebound of average daily rate has been low and slow. Traditional revenue management associated with best available rate pricing, managing to budgets and other antiquated approaches have benefitted intermediaries at the expense of hoteliers. Looking beyond the things one has done in the past, and think differently about what opportunities which lies ahead by efficiently tackling modern time complexities and regain control of their bottom line. Hoteliers have to implement highly integrated and flexible pricing strategies, sales, marketing, distribution, digital, revenue management and all others tasked with generating revenue need. The ultimate goal should no longer be just revenue, but net revenue combined with good service to the customer. ■





Hotel Mayura

a combination of awesome hospitality & comforts

Hotel Mayura is one of the finest 3-star hotels in Raipur, the beautiful capital city of the newly formed state of Chhattisgarh. Hotel Mayura Raipur is at a distance of just 2 km from the Railway Station and 15 km from the Airport. Located amidst the sprawling landscaped greenery, Hotel Mayura is very close to all the major business, public and communication centers of Raipur. Hotel Mayura is a favorite haunt for the business travelers which offers a host of business facilities to its guests and rightly so is one of the most favorite venues for business conferences and meetings in Raipur. The facilities and services offered by the Hotel Mayura are of highest standards and the best in the city. Guests have a choice of 49 charming guest rooms including 2 suites and 2 presidential suites, a multi-cuisine restaurant, a specialty restaurant, a well stocked bar and a lounge and a discotheque. The Hotel staffs are unconditionally dedicated to service at all times.

Rooms & Suites

All Rooms at the hotel have been designed specifically keeping in mind the fundamental requirement of the business travellers and also the best luxury that the traveller would expect from a hotel. Guests enjoy numerous facilities ranging from appropriate air conditioning, clean and superior quality bed and bathroom linen, Tea/Coffee maker, a well stocked mini bar and luxurious furnishings. It is an ultimate aim to provide guests a pleasant and fulfilling stay.

Deluxe Rooms

The Deluxe rooms are Spacious, modern and elegant with plush interiors. Tastefully appointed and well equipped guest amenities and services such as a Minibar, tea/coffee maker, chocolate/chips basket, international direct dialing and 24 hours in room dining services including complimentary breakfast at "Ocellus".



Super Deluxe Rooms

The Super Deluxe rooms are chic, smart and graceful, these newly designed rooms offer more comfort than expected. These rooms have a luxurious bathroom with shower cubicle and elegant bath fittings. Identical guest amenities and services are offered as provided in all other rooms.

Suites

The Suites have new age designed spacious rooms and ornately decorated to give guests a feeling of pride and satisfaction. Plush interiors, smart living room and a separate bedroom gives the guests an unpretentious experience.

Presidential Suites

The Presidential Suites has two state of the art rooms specifically designed for corporate travellers. Both these rooms sport a richly crafted “Jhula” to give our guests an unperturbed experience of a home. This three room suite is remarkable designed to enhance guest comfort, with 2 bedrooms and a living room.

Smart Single Room

These rooms are outfitted for comfort well equipped to cater to the needs of company executive with identical modern amenities and services as provided in deluxe rooms at affordable rates.

Food & Dining

Hotel Mayura Raipur believes in providing guests with world class food and beverages by nourishing the quality of food and beverages offered while following strict hygiene standards.

Ocellus

At Ocellus guests can expect a casual, all day eateries to formal dining, looking forward to a wide range of scrumptious dishes, and refreshing drinks. Ocellus offers a distinctive dining experience one that explores the nuances of the finest Indian, Continental, and Chinese cuisines, serving traditional and contemporary favorites. The charming contemporary designed restaurant also offers elaborate buffet for breakfast and lunch.

Cinnamon

Cinnamon a specialty restaurant offers various cuisines from the North West frontier regions of India. Cinnamon, as the name suggests is one of the major spices that are used in the kitchen to prepare scrumptious dishes. Here the hotel assures one would like to see the chef cooking right in front of the guests while they relish the flavors of this contemporary designed restaurant.

180 Proof Bar

180 Proof is a well stocked bar which offers assorted cocktails and mocktails

combined with tantalizing appetizers and delectable dishes to pacify ones nerves.

Qubus

One needs to experience the thunder of Qubus at least once when visiting the Hotel. Imagine dancing to the music of the DJ inside the glass cube under the starry sky. They have made this possible at Qubus where one can enjoy with friends as well as family. The “mood lighting effect” offer to change the colour of the lounge according to different moods, enjoy dinking watching live cricket and football matches, or the vrooming Formula- 1 races while the barman juggles at the counter and blows fire on the dance floor. One can also reserve this Hotspot at the hotel for throwing private parties and gatherings.

Meeting & Event

Hotel Mayura Raipur offers excellent meeting and conference facilities to business travellers. It is an ideal place to organize business conferences, seminars and sales exhibitions, with latest audio-visual and communication equipments such as high-speed Internet Access, Fax and Photocopying facilities. The Hotel Mayura also offers banquet facilities an ideal venue for special occasions like wedding receptions,



birthday bashes and kitties, serving exquisite cuisines from India, China and Italy.

Cristatus

Cristatus is a 2500 square feet pillar less, air-conditioned area, best suited for conference, seminar, board meets and all day events, catering is available for breakfast, lunch, dinner, meeting breaks and cocktail parties.

Conference Hall

It is a large pillar less hall having a capacity of accommodating 70-80 people quite suitable for arranging conference, meets, exhibitions and parties. The newly designed centrally air-conditioned hall offers exclusive buffet menu with the dishes from various cuisines.

Board room

The richly designed Board room is a small meeting room, best suited for board meets, presentations and interviews.

Recreation

Keeping in mind the exhaustive schedule of guests during their stay, the hotel has designed a recreation area where guests can enjoy watching movies as well as using the health and business center. Guests can benefit from this area for utilizing the business facilities viz. surfing the net through Wi-Fi and sending faxes.

Business Center

At the Business center guests have a choice of either using their personal laptops or computers available for surfing the internet and to send faxes or take personal printouts. Added

advantage to this area is that guests also have an alternate to use the business library, watch exclusive movies and spend their leisure time.

Spa & Gymnasium

The hotel takes pride to offer services to keep guests fit and energetic all throughout the day. Their gymnasium is well equipped with the latest technology in exercising equipments. Facilities such as Jacuzzi, Steam, Sauna bath and an in-house masseur have been included to relieve the stressed out guests.

Hotel Mayura in Raipur offer uncompromising hospitality as well as comprehensive business facilities to cater to the needs of their discerning guests. They strive to make their guest experience memorable through excellent and world class services and amenities. ■



Dawat Restaurant

One Of The Pioneer Restaurants Of Raipur



Dawat restaurant situated near Devshri Cineplex is a 70 seater 100 percent vegetarian restaurant which servers delicious Indian and continental specialities, also famous for their Paneer recepies. The restaurant was established by Mr. Shantilal Lunkad in the year 1990, since then the restaurant is visited by food lovers across Raipur for the popularity of the food served in Indianised style, the place is apt for social gatering and funtions. The restaurant serves more than 50 pure veg dishes. The restaurant offers catering sevices for marriage functions and parties. Dawat as the name resembles is indeed a feast served at the restaurant with local flavours for the vegetarian food lovers. ■



Raipur

a city of religious attractions,
spellbinding lakes and scenic locations

Raipur is the capital city of the state of Chhattisgarh and is the administrative headquarters of Raipur District. It was formerly a part of Madhya Pradesh before the state of Chhattisgarh was formed on the 1st of November in the year 2000. It is an important town and a flourishing city not only in terms of industry but also tourism as it ropes in large numbers of tourists from various corners of India. Raipur was founded by the Kalchuri King Ram Chandra of Raipur in the last quarter of the 14th century AD, now, it is the Headquarters of the District and Division of the same name centrally located in the newly formed State of Chhattisgarh. Raipur is the biggest city of the Region and a fast developing important industrial centre. Raipur is located near the centre of a large plain, referred as the "rice bowl of India", where hundreds of varieties of rice is grown. The Mahanadi River flows to the east of the city of Raipur, and the southern side has dense forests. The Maikal Hills rise on the north-west of Raipur; on the north, the land rises and merges with the Chota Nagpur Plateau, which extends north-east across Jharkhand state. On the south of Raipur lies the Deccan Plateau. The time when Raipur was a part of Madhya Pradesh, it was the second major commercial centre in Madhya Pradesh after Indore.

Traditionally, Raipur's economy has been based on agricultural processing, Steel, Cement, Alloy, Poha and Rice and now serves as a regional hub for trade and commerce for a variety of local agricultural and forest products. The traditional face of city has changed with Raipur becoming an important regional commercial and industrial destination for the coal, power, plywood, steel and aluminium industries. Raipur is the largest market of steel in India. Raipur is among the richest cities and India's biggest iron market; there are

about 200 steel rolling mills, 195 sponge iron plants, more than 6 steel plants, more than 60 plywood factories, 500 agro-industries and more than 35 ferro-alloy plants. There are more than 800 rice milling plants, and all major and local cement manufacturing companies (Century Cement, Ambuja, Grasim, and Lafarg) have a presence in the city.

Raipur also has a big chemical plant which produces formalin which is distributed throughout the country. Raipur has a wagon repair shop, where wagons of goods trains are repaired. A heavy machinery plant of Jindal Group is situated in Raipur. Sponge iron plants of major steel companies including Monnet, Jayaswal Neco Steel Plant, and Drolia Electrosteels are situated in Raipur. LPG bottling plants of Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum are also present in the city. The industrial areas of Raipur are: Urla and Siltara (heavy and medium scale industries), Bhanpur, Birgaon, Gondwara (medium and small scale industries).

Bharti Walmart Private Limited, the joint venture between Bharti Enterprises and Walmart Stores Inc for wholesale, opened its first best Price Modern Wholesale cash and-carry store in Chhattisgarh's Raipur in June 2011. It is spread over 53,000 square feet and stocks over 5,500 items.

Raipur has been in existence since the 9th century; the old site and ruins of the fort can be seen in the southern part of the city. Raipur district is important historically and as a point of interest archeologically. This district was once part of southern Kosal and considered part of the Maurya Empire. Raipur has been the capital of the Haihaya Dynasty Kalchuri kings, controlling the forts of Chhattisgarh for a considerable period. Satawahana kings ruled this part until the 2nd-3rd century. The 4th century AD king Samudragupta conquered



this region and established his domination until the fifth–sixth century when the area came under the rule of Sarabhपुरi kings. For some time in the fifth and sixth centuries, Nala kings dominated this area. Later on Somavanshi kings took control and ruled with Sirpur ("City of Wealth") as their capital. Mahashivgupt Balarjun was the mightiest emperor of this dynasty. His mother, the widow queen of Harshgupta of the Somavanshi, Rani Vasata built the brick temple of Lakshman. Kalachuri dynasty kings of Tumman ruled the area for a long period making Ratanpur the capital. The old inscriptions of Ratanpur, Rajim and Khallari refer to the reign of Kalchuri kings. It is believed that King Ramachandra of this dynasty established the city of Raipur and subsequently made it the capital of his kingdom. According to one more legend, it is believed that Raipur got its name after the name of son of King Ramachandra named Brahmdeo Rai. Khalwatika was the capital city of Raipur during his ruling period. In the reign of this king, in 1402 AD, a magnificent temple was built named the Hatkeshwar Mahadev. This temple was built on the River Kharun banks. The ruling period of this dynasty came to an end with King Amarsingh Deo's death and was taken over by the Bhosle Kings.

There are numerous festivals and events in Raipur that are celebrated mostly in the Shravan and Sharad Purnima months of the Hindi Panchang (calendar).

Hareli is one of the major festivals in Raipur and is celebrated in July. The festivities include farmers putting leaves of the Bhelwa tree on their crops and praying to God for a good crop. People also hang neem twigs from their household doorframes to keep away seasonal diseases.

Gouri Goura is another prominent festival in Raipur that is celebrated in the month of August. The celebrations are spread

over a period of six days and the festival commemorates the marriage of the Goddess Parvati to Lord Shiva.

Dedicated to the bull worship is the festival of Pola. Children are gifted with clay bull idols during this festival and there are other entertaining events and games played during the celebrations.

Kila Raipur Rural Olympics is one of the prominent events in Raipur. Various sports like bull racing are organised during this event.

Other festivals in Raipur that are celebrated with great fanfare include the festival of Surti that is celebrated in the month of October and the festival of Teej that is celebrated in December. Praying for the longevity of their husbands on this day, Teej is the festival when women dress in their bridal finery and fast for their husbands' good health.

Doodhadhari Monastery and Temple

This monastery and temple is located in the southern region of Raipur. An ancient river called Maharaj bandh flows by this landmark. Doodhadhari Temple in Raipur is an amazing beauty of the 17th century which still carries the same splendor and attraction. This pre-historic period temple was constructed by the Raja Jaitsingh before 500 years near the Burha Talab. This magnificent temple is devoted to Lord Rama, astonishing murals and the monastery of Swami Balbhadra is the main highlights of this temple. It is believed that Lord Balbhadra stayed here surviving only on milk. Elaborative carvings are the main attraction of this old temple in Raipur. One can also find the memorials of the ex- Mahants (Temple Ministers) here.

Vivekanand Sarovar & Ashram

Vivekanand Sarovar also known as Burha Talab is an old lake in the city. It is said that Swami Vivekanand stayed near the lake and took bath in the pond when he was in Raipur and so the lake was named after him. The major attraction of this lake is the 37 ft high statue of Swami Vivekananda that is installed here. Being the largest model of Swami Vivekananda, it has been added to the Limca Book of Records. The statue is made of bronze and is in sitting position.

Evenings are the best time to visit this lake when the colorful light fountains add more beauty to the surroundings. Another added attraction is the beautifully maintained garden lying adjacent to the lake. Swami Vivekananda Ashram is located at a distance of 2.7 km from the lake which is well-known for teaching the ideologies of Vivekananda. It is an important place of interest for those who seek spiritual enlightenment and is a branch of the mission inaugurated by Swami Vivekananda in the year 1897. The organization works on the principles of ideologies that are based on renunciation and

self-emancipation and attempts to achieve the overall well being of the world.

Mahant Ghasidas Memorial Museum

This museum was established by Raja Mahant Ghasidas of Rajnandgaon in the year 1875. The museum records the major events of the town's history and is known for its collection of antiquities like inscriptions, images, sculptures, coins and things associated with natural history and anthropology. The museum has two floors and five galleries. The first floor houses objects related to nature and its history containing various mammals, snakes, and birds. Besides, it also displays crafts, jewelry, paintings and terracotta belonging to tribal culture. For attracting attention of book lovers and imparting wisdom and knowledge, there lies an informative library in this museum.

Shadani Darbar

Shadani Darbar in Raipur is a popular pilgrimage place. It was named after the saint Sri Shadaramji Saheb. Spread over 12 acres of land, it has a big hall where Dhuni Saheb is kept. Engraved images of gods and their incarnations i.e. Devta and Avatar can be seen on either side of the wall. Dukh bhanjan Dhuni is performed every day. Other attractions include musical fountains with religious idols and statues.

Budhapara Lake

This is the largest lake in the city. This marvelous lake is one of the main attractions in Raipur. Basically, this lake was created by King Brahmadeo, one of the Kalchuri emperors, in 1402. The lake is continuously gaining popularity because of its mesmerizing environment. Those who want to spend few moments in serene and tranquil atmosphere; away from hectic of the city, for them Budhapara Lake is the right option. This lake is quite alluring destination of Raipur and therefore, one could see hoards of people at this lake every moment. This place is magnificent and a paradise on the earth.

Nagar Ghadi

As the name suggests, Nagar Ghadi is a tall singing clock being established by the development authority of Raipur. This representative icon of Raipur was made in 1995 and at present, it attracts loads of tourists for witnessing its charming



model. The most amazing fact of this clock is that it sings differently on each hour completion. Basically, the clock used to rhyme tunes just before the clang of hourly bell. Therefore, if one wants to hear 24 different types of melodious tunes, then one has to spend one whole day near the busiest square of Raipur where the marvelous clock is located.

Jagannath temple

In 1860, a beautiful and fascinating temple was established named – Jagannath temple. It was the first temple of Lord Jagannath in the whole state of Chhattisgarh. This authentic temple is situated at the Sadar Bazaar of Raipur. The temple is also famous for its “Rathyatra” being the most enchanting festival of Raipur. During the celebration of this festival, chariot of Lord Jagannath is accompanied with the chariots of Lord Balbhadra and Devi Subhadra. All the three Lords remain away from the Jagannath temple for fortnight and after that, on full moon day, they comes back to the temple putting the Rathyatra to an end.

Udanti Sanctuary

Covering an area of 232 sq.kms in Raipur district, Udanti Sanctuary is one of the most attention-grabbing wildlife of the area. The sanctuary got its name as the River Udanti flows in the large portion of the entire sanctuary from west to east. Sanctuaries gain their popularity with their amazing wildlife and lush green vegetation and both of these features are there in this sanctuary of Raipur. The main wild animals that you can see in this sanctuary are the Tigers, barking deer, sloth bear, four-horned antelopes, jungle cat, wild dog, porcupine, etc. Also, bird watchers must visit this sanctuary as they can witness rare bird species among which the main are racket-tailed drongos, magpie robin, herons, egrets, parrots, etc.

Telibandha Talab

Located at the busiest road of Raipur named the GE Road, Telibandha Talab is one of the most attractive spot of Raipur. This Talab holds great significance as a large number of rituals are performed at this lake. This awesome lake is also famous for its fresh water and serene environment. This





Talab is recognized as a religious site more than a tourist place. Loads of Hindus come here to perform Hindu rituals with great piety and faith every year from every nook of the country. Therefore, Telibandha Talab is one of the most demanding attractions in Raipur.

Maharajabandh Lake

Raipur is well said as the city of lakes as lots of spellbinding lakes are present in this city of Chhattisgarh. The other fascinating lake of Raipur is Maharajabandh Lake. This wonderful lake was constructed in 1770 by the Maharaja Roadani. This lake of Raipur is famous for its historic significance. The stunning picturesque of this striking lake is very charming and allures numerous tourists from all over the world. Just close to this lake, one could witness a pre-historic times fort which was constructed by the Raja Ram Chandra.

Goddess Banjari Mata Temple

This majestic temple was established by Shri Harshi Joshi in Raipur. He was that fortunate person who got a holy stone featuring an image of Banjari Mata. Then, he started worshipping the idol continuously due to which, the temple grabbed the attention of the people of Raipur and even, people of other parts of the country came here to bow their heads in front of Goddess.

Nandanvan Garden

Covering an area of 10 hectares, Nandanvan Garden is well-maintained and a great place for leisure for its visitors. This garden is perched at 16 kms away from Raipur city on the banks of River Khaaroon. This garden in Raipur holds a great place in the world of tourism just because of its heavenly beauty that cannot be described in words. Also, for entertaining kids along with amusements, there is a mini zoo in this garden. In the zoo, one can witness fascinating animals like tigers, lions, panthers, leopards, deer, and much more. To address this garden as the best biological park in Raipur is true as it houses wonderful forestry plants also.



Maitri Bagh Zoo

Maitri Bagh Zoo is one of the most appealing tourist attractions in Raipur. This wonderful zoo was built by the Bhilai Steel Plant. In the zoo premises, there also lies an amusement park for the comfy and leisure of its visitors. Literally, “maîtribagh” refers to the friendship garden. Visitors of all age group enjoy their visit to this amazing Maitri Bagh Zoo. In this zoo, there are many source of entertainment present like musical fountain, an artificial waterfall, a mini toy train, a gorgeous small lake, etc. Also, just standing on the Pragati Minar, one can capture great stunning views of the steel plant and the entire zoo in their heart .

Mahamaya temple

For the religious and pious people, the Mahamaya temple in Raipur is just next to heaven. Nestled on the banks of Khaaroon River in an ancient fort, the Mahamaya Temple attracts lots of tourists every year from all over the world. The temple is devoted to Goddess Mahamaya who is considered to have the superlative powers of both – Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva. According to Hindu rituals, Goddess Mahamaya is also known by other names like – Durga, Jagdambe and Mahishasura Mardini, devotees of Goddess Mahamaya visit this temple to take blessing of this Goddess.

Open Air Museum

This museum is located at the Abhanpur block of the Raipur district and covers an area of more than 200 acres land; this museum has stored lots of amazing things in its core to attract its visitors from different part of the country. Also referred as the “Purkhouti Muktagan”, the museum exhibits numerous antique things revealing the back history, art and culture of the Chhattisgarh. The other main attractions of this museum are the Children’s Park, Science Park, Educational sessions for the kids, open-air interactive sessions, self-learning activities and many more.

Raipur the important city of Chhattisgarh has people of simple nature, with very polite and humble behavior. They make their own identity by doing several things which are incredible and add a lot to make the place unique and alluring. Raipur with its religious places, historic monuments, lakes, zoo’s, scenic location, events and festivals is said to be a tourist’s paradise. ■



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HOTEL AND RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION (WESTERN INDIA)

Over view of the hospitality Industry Q & A

Q. At what rate is the hospitality sector in India growing?

A. In India, the growth is attributed not only to the flow of incoming tourists but also to the increasing trends in tourism, the investment by international hotel chains, the expansion to Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities and the increase in the numbers of budget hotels to sustain the growth of an expanded travelling middle class. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, international tourism expenditure has grown by 4 per cent in 2014. I think, in about ten years' time, the industry will grow to contribute nearly 72 million more jobs, supporting 338 million jobs across the world.

Q. Do you think there is an increase in the demand for more skilled professionals?

A. As the industry continues to grow, the demand for highly qualified, multicultural, multilingual and experienced managers and professionals grows as well. In many cases, the development is prevented not so much by capital but by lack of human resources. Over the last ten years or so, hospitality education has shifted from offering general undergraduate programs to specialised education, in order to respond to the demand for function-oriented professionals within the field. The combination of these two – a business degree with a focus on different areas of specialisations- allows the students to follow diverse career paths in and outside the industry.

Q. As the major feeder markets – US and Europe – are yet to see recovery. Where do you see the travellers come from?

A. True, these economies are yet to see recovery. But the good news the industry is tapping up new markets, especially in Asia, besides, the extent of economic activity in India has not decreased. There has been a growth in travel albeit with compromised on hotel spends.

Q. What will be the driving forces of development in the hospitality sector?

A. For the economy is positive and there is a direct co-relation between GDP and tourism. The Government also realised and taking all its efforts to boost the tourism sector. Rupee appreciation also made travelling to India cheaper to foreign tourist. The one segment of the business that however gets impacted when heading economies are experiencing recessionary trends is the drop in the long haul holiday travel. This will however get partially offset by the weakening of the Indian Rupee vis-a-vis other currencies.

Q. How is the supply-demand situation?

A. Despite the supply is going up on the one hand and on the other the occupancy level is going down, thanks to the global economic crisis, at 60% occupancy the industry is doing reasonably good. But in the foreseeable future the demand will increase to match the supply.

Q. What are the bottlenecks and challenges for the industry?

A. We need to start developing and marketing new tourism assets that will help us to market the country to a more diverse group of global tourists. Better rail, air, road and hotel infrastructures is what will make traveller within in the country, not just possible but also pleasurable. In India domestic market is very big, the high price levels of ATF resulting in higher airfare is also a setback for domestic tourism industry. The other major hurdle is tax system, India's cumulative taxes on the hotel industry varies from state to state and ranges from 20-30%. In contrast, tax rates in hotels in countries such as Malaysia, Japan or Hong Kong are far lower, ranging between 3% -5%. So, there is a case to rationalize taxes. Then the availability of manpower, according to estimates the industry would require around three lakh people by 2020 in both skilled and unskilled category. There is lack of awareness about the career options available in the tourism industry. ■



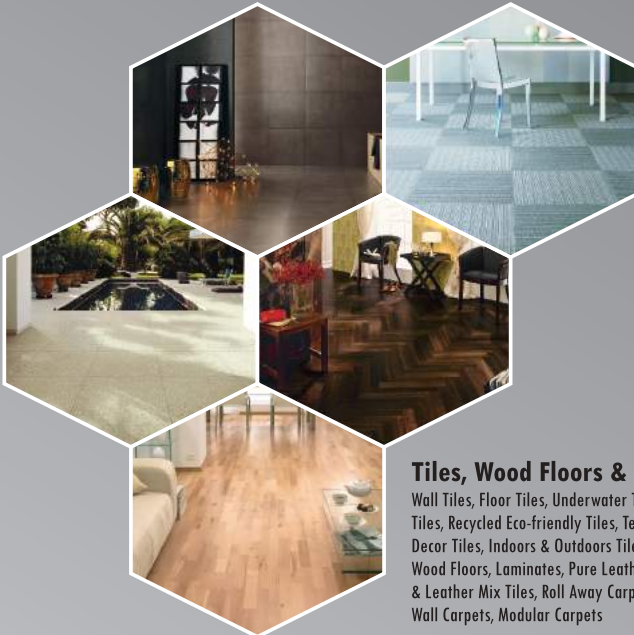
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