

# HRAWI



MAY-JUNE 2024

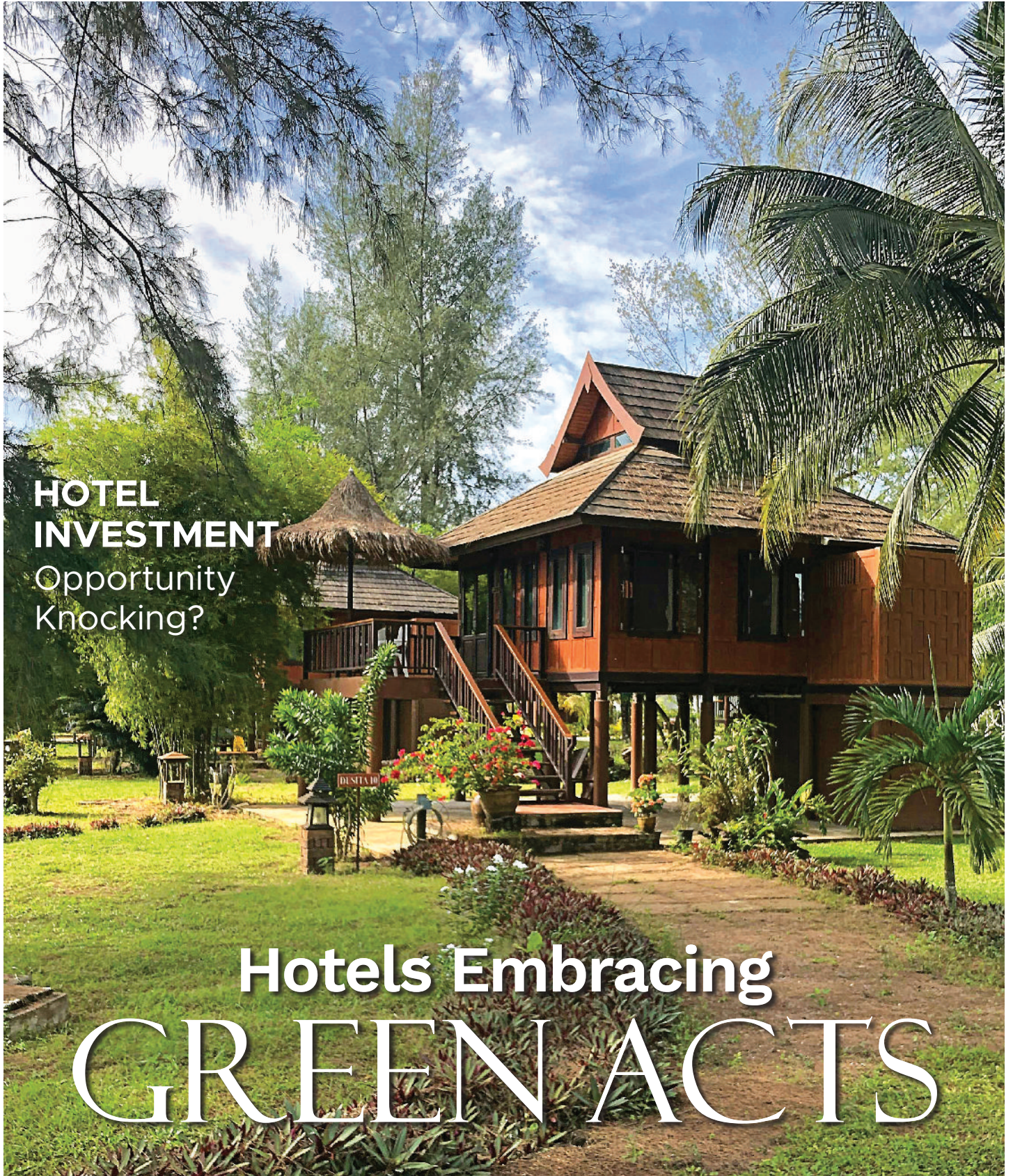
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*Dear members,*

I hope this note finds you well. I am delighted to share some exciting initiatives and events that have unfolded within the Association in April.

Firstly, I am proud to announce the launch of our 'Pledge To Vote' campaign, which is a proactive step towards promoting voter awareness and encouraging participation in the upcoming General Elections. Our aim is to inspire citizens to exercise their democratic rights by casting their votes in the Lok Sabha elections 2024. We urge all our members to actively engage their patrons and communities in promoting voter participation. You can start by displaying placards within your restaurant premises indicating the voting day in your respective constituencies. Additionally, offering special discounts on food bills to customers, who display the mark of the indelible ink on their finger after voting is a meaningful gesture that reinforces civic responsibility. We also encourage active engagement on social media platforms to amplify the message of voter participation.

Earlier this month, I had the privilege of engaging with Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation's (MTDC) Resort Managers from across the state. Our discussions were centered on enhancing the ethos of 'Atithi

Devo Bhava' - a Tourist-First Attitude at MTDC Resorts and Restaurants. It was a deeply insightful experience and we are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the growth and excellence of the hospitality sector. Additionally, I had the honour of being felicitated by **Shraddha Joshi Sharma**, Managing Director, MTDC in the presence of **Chandrashekar Jaiswal**, General Manager, MTDC, and **Manasi Kothare**, Officer, Business Development & Resort Operation Branch, MTDC during the MTDC training programme.

Alongside, HRAWI conducted a productive meeting with the top leadership of MTDC to discuss the establishment of the Maharashtra Convention Promotion Bureau (MCPB). We shared comprehensive recommendations outlining the mission, activities, and services that the bureau could focus on to effectively promote Maharashtra as a premier destination for conferences, conventions, and business events. These recommendations encompass promoting the destination, enhancing economic impact, engaging with industries and stakeholders, supporting event planning and logistics, providing venue and accommodation assistance, and offering local information and logistical support to event organisers. We are optimistic about the positive

impact this collaboration will have on the tourism and hospitality sector in Maharashtra. During the meeting, I also took up the issue of mushrooming illegal bed-and-breakfasts all over the state, including the hill stations and the main cities. This is causing a serious problem of level playing field. These illegal bed-and-breakfasts operate like a hotel, however, outside the ambit of state regulations and licenses.

Additionally, in collaboration with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) we organised two Food Safety Supervisor Training in Advance Catering (FoSTaC) programmes. These sessions, which were organised at Hotel South Avenue in Indore and Yogi Metropolitan in Navi Mumbai, saw the participation of 43 hospitality professionals. The objective of the training was to elevate their proficiency in upholding impeccable safety standards within their establishments. We are proud to have trained and certified 2,956 professionals, showcasing our commitment to advancing food safety standards in the industry.

I encourage all members to actively participate in our on-going initiatives and contribute to the growth and success of our association and the hospitality industry as a whole.

*Warm regards,*

**PRADEEP SHETTY**, President, HRAWI



## 8 Celebrating pioneers

A glimpse of the evening dedicated to stalwarts of the hotel industry. HRAWI recently celebrated the leaders and experts of the sector in Pune who showcased unwavering support to empower and strengthen the future of hospitality in India.



## 10 54<sup>th</sup> FHRAI Annual Convention in Goa

Read here what FHRAI's next convention holds for industry stakeholders accompanied by a suite of exclusive offerings and grand participation.



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## Indian hotels: Green profits trailblazers

Explore what opportunities are knocking at the door of hotel owners in making India a pioneer in expanding its GDP through eco-friendly initiatives, an insight by Kant.

## Sustainability: A way forward

Siddharth Chakravarty from Six Senses Fort Barwara, writes regenerative model of business is going to drive hospitality business in future. Check out here.



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## 30 Right time to invest in hotels?

Check-in for hotel investment trends that are guiding the investors in 2024. Read JLL's report here to understand the present health of the sector.

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# Interactions, vital for branding

Dive into valuable insights shared by HRAWI President on enhancing guest experiences through personal interactions to boost business.

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**WORDS** HRAWI Bureau

In April 2024, Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) organised a training programme at the corporation's Residency Kharghar Resort for resort managers, with an objective to enhance the ethos of 'Atithi Devo Bhava'—a tourist-first attitude at MTDC Resorts and Restaurants. The event was graced by **Shraddha Joshi Sharma**, Managing Director, MTDC, and featured an interactive session with **Pradeep Shetty**, President, Hotel and Restaurant Association Western India (HRAWI).



**PRADEEP SHETTY**  
President, HRAWI

During the session, Shetty disseminated his valuable insights and domain knowledge to resort managers and senior officers from across Maharashtra in the hospitality sector. Encouraging the participants,

he said, "The MTDC's properties boast the finest locations in the state, providing an advantage to resort management. There are two critical aspects for the managers to focus on guest relations and staff relations. Upholding high standards in these areas ensures success. Managers are encouraged to personally interact with guests during key moments such as check-in, breakfast, and check-out to gauge guest satisfaction. This proactive approach enhances guest relationships, leading to improved resort revenue and ARR."

Shetty also added, "Having the confidence to converse with the hotel guests during their stay provides a holistic view of the resort's operations. ♦♦"

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## Uniform mandate for check-outs

After customer feedback, the government aims to standardise hotel check-out timings.



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**WORDS** HRAWI Bureau

We have all been there. The plane lands early in the morning, but the hotel check-in is mid-afternoon. Or departure is several hours after check-out.

The one thing that most of us can relate to, while staying at a hotel is inflexible check-in and check-out timings, which often trouble customers or puts a hole in their pockets (paying extra charges) for stretching their stay timings.

However, diverse hotel check-out times across India pose a grave challenge for travellers, leading to overstay and extra charges. So, the government has come up with the idea to address it by taking measures after considering consumer feedback.

As per sources, discussions are underway with the stakeholders to set up standardised check-out times, aligning with global norms. This effort aims to streamline the process, enhancing convenience and fostering better communication between hotels and guests.

With uniform check-out times nationwide, travellers can expect smoother check-ins and reduced inconvenience, ultimately improving the overall hotel experience. ♦♦





## FHRAI's stakeholders' meet converges in J&K

Making a remarkable collaborative effort, FHRAI and Hoteliers Club Srinagar signed an MoU to support tourism development in J&K.







# Celebrating stalwarts

## Contributions recognised

HRAWI in partnership with PHA acknowledged pioneering work done to empower and encourage best practices in hospitality sector.

**WORDS** HRAWI Bureau

**H**RAWI organised an impactful conclave recently, in collaboration with the Poona Hoteliers' Association (PHA) titled, 'Empowering Hospitality' at the Raddison Blu Hotel in Pune to honour the remarkable contribution of hospitality professionals. The event witnessed a gathering of industry leaders and experts who empower the hospitality industry with their support and knowledge.



**Suresh Talera**, President of Honour, PHA, received the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award; and **Amit Sharma**, General Manager, Amanora The Fern, Pune, and President of PHA, was recognised for his significant contribution to the hospitality sector in Pune.

Among the distinguished professionals recognised for their contribution to the hospitality sector were as follows: **Arun Nayar**, **Sanjay Singh**, **Sharan Shetty**, Past Presidents, PHA; **Vinay Nair**, GM, DoubleTree By Hilton Hotel Pune; **Sumit Sharma**, GM, The Central Park Hotel, Pune; **Sandeep Singh**,





GM, Hyatt Pune; **Pankaj Saxena**, GM, Radisson Blu Hotel, Pune Kharadi; **Rahul Panwar**, GM, Novotel Pune; **Vaibhav Lamba**, Executive Director, Ramada Plaza By Wyndham Pune Hinjewadi; **Santanu Sarkar**, GM, Crowne Plaza Pune City Centre; **Abhishek Sahai**, GM, The Conrad Pune; **Melvyn Saldanha**, GM, Blue Diamond, Pune-IHCL SeleQtions, and **Dev Kumar**, Associate VP, Hotel Parc Estique, Pune.

“As we observe remarkable growth and evolution in the tourism sector, it becomes essential to acknowledge the stalwarts of the hospitality industry. With forecasts highlighting the sector’s substantial GDP contributions and job opportunities by 2028 and the ambitious milestones set for 2047, it is crucial to ensure that the industry is led by capable individuals,”

**Pradeep Shetty**, President, HRAWI, said, while felicitating the recipients.

He also revealed, “With the same intention, HRAWI’s forthcoming 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention in Goa seeks to propel growth, while promoting best practices in the hospitality

sector, which are in line with India’s aspirations of welcoming 100 million tourists by 2047 and achieving a hospitality tourism economy amounting to US\$3 trillion.”

### Fire life safety strategies

The event featured discussions on ‘Fire Life Safety Strategies for Hotels’ and ‘Classification & Industry Status of Hotels’. Dignitaries, including **Devendra Potphode**, Chief Fire Officer, Pune; and **Shama S. Pawar**, Deputy Director, Pune, shared their insights. The dignitaries delved into the multifaceted dimensions, including fire safety risk assessments, the ramifications



of codes and compliances, implementation of passive fire safety measures, meticulous egress planning and the imperative of FLS audits and preventive strategies.

“We applaud HRAWI for their proactive stance on fire safety. Initiatives, such as these create a safer environment for guests and employees alike. The policies recently launched by the Directorate of Tourism underscore our commitment to driving positive change in the sector. Together, we strive to create a more sustainable and thriving tourism landscape in Maharashtra,” Shama S. Pawar shared. ♦♦



Raise a toast to

# Magnetic India

FHRAI prepares to host the 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention in Goa to equip India's hotel sector to make a mark on the global tourism map.

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**WORDS** HRAWI Bureau

**A**fter a six-year hiatus, Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) will host its 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention in Goa from October 16 to 18, 2024, at Taj Cidade de Goa Horizon. This convention is expected to serve as a landmark event, providing a platform for collaboration, innovation, and collective action towards shaping a dynamic and resilient tourism landscape for India. The event

their insights about the future of the industry. The convention is also going to feature a special zone for investment facilitation and an exclusive B2B pavilion.

This year, the convention's theme, 'Tourism @2047: Incredible to Inevitable India: Driving Growth and Sustainability in a Mission Mode,' is going to be in alignment with the Government of India's vision for making India a developed country by 2047. With this convention, FHRAI aims to set the right tone for India's tourism industry, which is expected to be a US\$3 trillion economy in itself, with the capacity to welcome 100 million foreign visitors. Interestingly, the theme of the



**“THE FEDERATION IS DEDICATED AND FOCUSED ON MAKING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM A PIVOTAL AGENDA FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY SECTOR IN THE COUNTRY.”**

**PRADEEP SHETTY**, President, FHRAI

boasts a gathering, which brings together aboard a cross-section of influential voices, policy makers, and luminaries of the sector.

The convention is expected to witness the presence of more than 750 hotel and restaurant owners, and promoters from across India. More than 1,000 delegates representing prominent hotels and stakeholders will grace the event, and over 50 national and international speakers will share

convention not only focuses on the aggressive growth of tourism but also echoes the urgency of sustainable and responsible measures to be taken to build the industry without exhausting the resources.

The testament to the Federation's commitment to sustainable tourism is the recently hosted 'Travel For LIFE Tourism Sustainability Summit 2024' by FHRAI in the capital. The summit drew participation from key professionals in the hospitality

sector, spanning hotels, government bodies, institutes, and travel associations, among others. In the words of **Pradeep Shetty**, President, FHRAI, "The Federation is dedicated and focused on making sustainable tourism a pivotal agenda for the advancement of the tourism and hospitality sector in the country. We aim to embrace it as a mission, ushering in a paradigm shift in India's tourism and hospitality sector by intensifying efforts





towards sustainable practices, encompassing climate action, energy and appliances efficiency, plastic reduction, biodiversity, and efficient consumption.” In fact, as a chief guest at the summit, **Amitabh Kant**, G20 Sherpa, India, and former CEO,

NITI Aayog, Government of India, urged the tourism and hospitality firms to focus on offerings that help develop the ‘brand entity’ of India as a leading sustainable destination. He said, “Tourism will be a major driver of India and inclusivity

rests at the heart of this growth. Tourism not only drives economic prosperity but also presents a unique opportunity for India to lead the way in decarbonisation.”

In popular opinion, sustainable acts and regenerative models of tourism are going to drive the future of the tourism industry. As per Future Market Insights report, ‘India Sustainable Tourism Market Size, Share & Trends–2032,’ the sustainable tourism market size in India was valued at US\$26 million in 2022 and is likely to reach US\$151.88 million by 2032 at a CAGR of 19.3 per cent from 2022 to 2032. Moreover, the shift towards sustainability has also impacted the outlook of the hospitality industry as well. Currently, the objective of the international hotel industry is to reduce emissions by 66 per cent per room by 2030 and 90 per cent by 2050, apart from the sector’s expansion. ♦





# Indian hotels Pioneering green profits

Hotels can become the beacon of economic expansion through decarbonisation, a vision advocated by India's G20 Sherpa.

**WORDS** HRAWI Bureau

**A**s the Chief Guest at the recently held Travel for LiFE: Tourism Sustainability Summit 2024, **Amitabh Kant**, G20 Sherpa, India, illuminated the attendees how tourism is going to serve as the driver of India's growth

trajectory for the next three decades. By embracing sustainability and responsible tourism, India's hotels can elevate the country's brand value on the global tourism stage and encourage green investments in the tourism sector, especially when consumers are increasingly prioritising environmental issues.

Lauding the theme of the summit, he said, "Tourism will not only drive GDP growth but also create

25 million new jobs in the next five to six years. The multiplier effect of tourism is significant. For every direct job created in tourism sector, seven indirect one is generated. Therefore, for India to achieve equitable and inclusive growth, there is no sector better than travel and tourism. As we expand the sectors over the next three decades, it is essential that we prioritise sustainable and responsible

Sawantwadi Palace,  
Maharashtra





tourism practices.” Nothing could be a better opportunity for India to function as a pioneer in expanding its GDP through decarbonisation by adopting new strategies for both manufacturing and urbanisation, Kant claimed.

While reminding everyone that India’s key aspect of G20 leadership was to establish a green development pact, Kant emphasised value-oriented tourism over mass tourism. “One crucial element was the Travel for Life initiative. It is vital because we must recognise the substantial footprint we leave, while travelling. By 2035, India is expected to attract 10 million tourists, with projections indicating an increase to 40 to 45 million tourists in the future. I have long believed that it is not about the number of tourists but the value they bring. We should prioritise increasing the



## “INDIA’S COMMITMENT TO DECARBONISATION IS NOT A NECESSITY, BUT A RESPONSIBILITY, AS WE STRIVE TO BUILD A GREENER AND RESILIENT FUTURE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.”

value per tourist rather than solely focussing on numbers,” Kant said. He appreciated Kerala for identifying sustainable and responsible tourism as its niche, targeting high-value tourism centred around culture, art, craft, and backwaters. He underscored India’s ‘population scale’ advantage in making affordable and transformational changes, drawing parallels with the digital payment revolution in the country.

Kant stressed the need for proactive measures despite India’s low per capita consumption of greenhouse gases. “India’s commitment to decarbonisation is not a necessity, but a responsibility as we strive to build a greener and more resilient future for generations to come,” he said.

India’s tourism landscape is currently a carte blanche, where striking the right chord could help the country to encash unlimited opportunities, he said.

### FHRAI’s Green Initiatives

Aligned with the Ministry of Tourism’s vision of responsible tourism, FHRAI has signed a pact with Indian Plumbing Association to facilitate knowledge exchange for water conservation and sustainable plumbing practices in hotels and restaurants. It collaborated with Indian Green Building Council to underscore FHRAI’s commitment to sustainable development, aspiring to position India as a global leader in sustainable building practices by 2025. ♦♦



# FHRAI files petition against DGFT



is accorded the same privileges as other export-oriented industries. We trust that the legal action will pave way for equitable relief and a level-playing field for our stakeholders.”

FHRAI has maintained, “One of the primary areas of contention has been the lack of relief granted to the hospitality industry under the Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) Scheme. Despite repeated requests, the sector has not received any respite, further exacerbating the financial woes of the industry.” The other main concern, which has been emphasised by the Federation is, “DGFT in 2007-08 in the new EXIM policy, introduced an additional condition, which not only meant that over and above the

**“WE TRUST THAT THE LEGAL ACTION WILL PAVE THE WAY FOR EQUITABLE RELIEF AND A LEVEL-PLAYING FIELD FOR OUR STAKEHOLDERS.”**

HRAWI recently challenged DGFT’s provisions affecting the sector when the industry is surrounded by multiple economic challenges.

## WORDS HRAWI Bureau

**F**HRAI has initiated legal action against the Directorate General of Foreign Trade’s (DGFT) detrimental provisions targeting the hospitality sector. This comes as the industry continues to grapple with a myriad of economic challenges stemming from global recession, terrorist attacks, and COVID.

**Pradeep Shetty**, President, FHRAI, emphasised the urgent need for relief. He confirmed, “After careful consideration and in response to numerous appeals from our



**PRADEEP SHETTY**  
President, FHRAI

members, FHRAI has decided to file a writ petition in the Delhi High Court. We aim to ensure that our members are shielded from undue prosecution and that the hotel sector

primary condition, the industry needed to comply with a secondary condition of maintaining three years average past performance over and above the specific EO. The average has to be maintained for the entire block of six/eight years till the redemption of license. Unfortunately, post the introduction of the secondary condition, the industry suffered a decline in forex due to which the industry has not been able to fulfil the secondary condition of maintaining the three years average past performance.”

FHRAI stresses the sector has been impacted by economic downturns, resulting in a decline in foreign exchange. The Federation highlights other export sectors have received relaxation under Para 5.19 of the Handbook of Procedures 2015-2020, where total exports fell by 5 per cent. But the sector has been excluded from such provisions. ♦



# Making it greener!

**Sandeep Talaulicar** writes hotels can make the hospitality sector sustainable and greener by making few changes in their operations.

**Y**es, we can become a greener industry with little capital expenditure. In fact, adopting green ways can save you huge amounts of money in operational expenditure. Yes, the ROI is significant and is short-term. Not only that but we can use this green lifestyle to market ourselves better and to help Mother Earth as a whole.

Sustainable practices encompass various strategies to reduce environmental impact and promote responsible tourism. Some key practices include:

1. **Energy efficiency:** Implementing energy-efficient lighting, heating, and cooling systems to reduce electricity consumption.
2. **Water conservation:** Installing low-flow faucets and toilets, as well as reusing towels, linens in order to reduce water usage, and monitor excess water wastage in the kitchen. Use of locally made Pancha in a bid to replace Turkish towels is also recommended.
3. **Waste reduction:** Reducing usage of single-use plastic, recycling, and composting to minimise waste generation.



**SANDEEP TALAULICAR**  
Managing Director  
Jakson Hospitality

**CHOOSE BRANDS AND  
BUSINESSES PRIORITISING  
PLASTIC REDUCTION  
AND SUSTAINABILITY.  
ENCOURAGE THEM TO OFFER  
PLASTIC-FREE OPTIONS**

4. **Local sourcing:** Sourcing food and products locally to support local economies and reduce emissions from transportation.
  5. **Green building design:** Constructing or renovating facilities with sustainable materials and energy-efficient designs.
  6. **Eco-friendly transportation:** Promoting eco-friendly transportation for guests, such as EVs or bike rentals.
  7. **Education and awareness:** Educating staff and guests about sustainable practices and encourage responsible behaviour.
  9. **Certification programmes:** Obtaining certifications such as CII IGBC in Energy and Environmental Design to showcase commitment to sustainability.
  10. **Renewable energy:** Incorporating renewable energy sources such as solar panels.
  11. **Wormy culture:** Use less pesticides and promote healthy organic plantations in your hotel kitchen operations.
- By adopting these practices, the hospitality industry can reduce its environmental footprint, while appealing to eco-conscious travellers ◆





# FHRAI

raises **concern over stagnated hotel growth** in Delhi



FHRAI pointed out to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs about the need to develop hotel infrastructure in Delhi. Despite MPD 2021 provision for increased FAR for hotels, the industry is witnessing a stagnation in its growth. **Pradeep Shetty**, President, FHRAI, said, “Once Terminal 1 at the IGI Airport opens, its capacity will shoot up to 110 million passengers per year, making Delhi a vital regional hub. But the hotel infra is not growing in sync with this development. Hotels are facing challenges regarding the utilisation of additional FAR.” Parking norms, and anomalies in the rates for additional FAR between commercial and hotel properties are the major roadblocks for hotels in utilising the FAR.

# HRAWI

proposed convention bureau to **promote Maha for M!CE**

HRAWI proposed MTDC to set up Maharashtra Convention Promotion Bureau for promoting the state as a premier destination for conferences, conventions, and business events. A letter with inputs highlighting the bureau’s mission was sent to MTDC, followed by a meeting between **Pradeep Shetty**, President, HRAWI, and **Shraddha Joshi Sharma**, MD, MTDC. Attracting events lure delegates, exhibitors, and participants, which increases tourism, hotel bookings, and business for local vendors thereby boosting the economy of Maharashtra, the letter stated. The bureau will develop and implement marketing strategies to showcase the state’s infrastructure and attractions for the events. It will collaborate with various firms, and stakeholders to create a supportive climate for hosting events.

**India’s tourism sector** is forecast to witness continuous

## surge

Reports suggest that by 2030, the travel and tourism industry is poised to make substantial contributions to global GDP and employment, **Amit Jain**, Founder, Book N Travel, said. Anticipating the surge in travellers’ demand, he said there are several compelling factors projected to propel the significant growth of the travel and tourism industry. Some of these included growth of spiritual tourism, exploration of uncharted and unexplored destinations, continued pent-up wanderlust, infrastructure development, technological integration, rise in disposable income and millennial demographics.





# IHCL registers **new growth benchmarks** in FY2024



Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL) registered a portfolio expansion in FY 2024. This year, the firm saw 52 signings and 34 openings. IHCL has achieved a portfolio of 300 hotels, including an industry-leading pipeline of 90 hotels. **Suma Venkatesh**, Executive VP, Real Estate & Development, IHCL, said, “FY 2024 has set new norms with 52 signings. On the domestic front, key signings included large format hotels at New Delhi, Cochin, and MOPA airports and strengthened our leisure and spiritual portfolio at Alibaug, Bekal, Naukuchiatal, Ayodhya, and Haridwar.” **Deepika Rao**, Executive VP, Hotel Openings & New Businesses, IHCL, added, “The 20 new hotel openings saw us strengthen our footprint in the East and North East.”

Luxury lifestyle brand

## Radisson Collection

debuts in India

Radisson Hotel recently opened its luxury lifestyle brand by unveiling Radisson Collection Hotel & Spa, Riverfront Srinagar. Nestled along the banks of River Jhelum, the hotel drew inspiration for its design from J&K's heritage, culture, and artistry. The hotel epitomises the convergence of landmark architecture with cultural essence of J&K, refined interiors, gastronomic and personalised service, and opulent amenities. It is located near Dal Lake, Mughal Gardens among others. Nikhil Sharma, MD and Area Senior VP, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group, said, “We are proud introducing the first Radisson Collection hotel in India in Srinagar. Boasting an inventory of 212 rooms, the largest in J&K, the property promises an unparalleled experience for our esteemed guests.”

# FSSAI



issues **directives to e-commerce sites** to relevantly categorise food products

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has ordered all e-commerce operators to properly categorise food products. As per FSSAI, there have been instances where products licensed under ‘Proprietary Food,’ such as dairy-based beverage mix, cereal-based beverage mix, or malt-based beverages are being sold on websites under ‘Health Drink’ or ‘Energy Drink’ categories. FSSAI has clarified the term ‘Health Drink’ lacks standardisation under the FSS Act, 2006. FSSAI has urged all e-commerce operators to rectify this misclassification by reclassifying ‘Health Drinks/Energy Drinks’ and placing them under the appropriate category. ♦





# Be optimistic to climb the ranks

Arun Singh pens down how positive attitude and a calm mind can help professionals build a strong relationship with their guests.

Hospitality is an industry, which is distinct from others, where personal attention sets the tone of service, and staff are termed as ambassadors of such a capital-intensive business. Being in hospitality education from the last 27 years, I believe that 'right attitude' for service industry is the first and foremost requisite for a successful career in this field.

Positive attitude formation is difficult but doable, based on knowledge, inborn qualities, and learning from the experience of others and self. The most appropriate service attitude should have a can-do



**ARUN SINGH**  
Director, FHRAI-IHM

**“SERVICE  
PROFESSIONALS NEED  
TO STAY RESILIENT  
AND OPTIMISTIC,  
WHILE PERFORMING  
TASKS.”**



approach in order to resolve the issues and serve the guest to their satisfaction. We need to have a friendly attitude towards guests, but with caution to keep physical and attitudinal distance from them with due respect. Service professionals need to stay resilient and optimistic, while performing tasks with the gratitude needed toward the guests, seniors, and other staff members. They should understand the organisation where they are working, its aims, and objectives. This will help in understanding the preferences of the guests, anticipating their problems, and in offering solutions.

Service professionals need to be clear in their thought so that during situations of conflict, miscommunication can be avoided. Right attitude also includes quality to remain calm as stressless mind will bring new ideas whereas being stressed and impatient always escalate problems. Service professional with the right attitude will develop their personality, communication, knowledge, and learn the skill needed to remain updated and serve the industry with enthusiasm. ♦







# Plan first for fire safety

**Hemant Khadse** shares about evolving fire safety equipment and strategies to minimise damage arising out of emergencies.

## Q. What are the criteria and considerations, while choosing fire safety products and solutions?

**A.** Occupancy classification and risk identification are the primary sources to derive the Fire and Life Safety (FLS) strategy for hotel and restaurants. Once the risk is ascertained, then specific codes and standards may be applied based on the set criteria for fire safety design and engineering solutions. Products should not only be purchased based on paper compliance instead but also fulfill actual safety requirements. The evaluation must be done at the planning or construction stage only by engaging independent FLS experts. Each product selected to protect life or property should meet the criteria, and be evaluated for its performance. In India, the National Building Code 2016 part 4 describes the occupancy classification, and hotels and restaurants are covered adequately. A designer is free to refer to the local or international codes and prescribe suitable systems. However, we all need to figure out what is right for us because nothing about life is one size fits all.

## Q. How have fire safety solutions upgraded over the years?

**A.** Globally, fire safety solutions have evolved based on fire accident historical data analysis and changing fire codes and standards. The latest systems are more efficient, reliable, and flexible. Today, even small apartment buildings opt for analog addressable fire alarm systems due to their inherent advantages over conventional fire alarm systems. Systems with less human intervention and a good cost-benefit ratio are becoming more popular.

## Q. What is your outlook for fire safety across the hospitality industry?

**A.** Apart from best amenities, safety and security are becoming the focus areas in hotels, which is a good sign as it promises a better safety culture in the domain. I have seen a surge in demand for good auditors for hotels, which was not the case a decade ago. Most of the branded hotels follow their own brand standards for FLS and engage third party review consultants at the construction phase. Those local fire officials who issue licenses without doing proper checks on compliances are not permitted anymore. ♦♦



**HEMANT KHADSE**  
CEO, East Corp Group, Fire and Life Safety Consultant

## MOST COMMON HAZARDS AND CAUSES OF FIRE



### Vulnerabilities

Hospitality occupancy area, means of egress, and basements used for the car park, storages, plant, and utility areas are crucial areas when it comes to fire safety. Construction of basements with adequate ventilation, fire and smoke compartmentation, escape lighting, and signage are mandatory.



### Causes of fire accidents

Apart from electrical short circuits and faulty appliances, other causes include non-segregated storage spaces, unsafe hot work at the site, smoking, unsafe cooking appliances, and continuous running of exhaust fans. Moreover, indirect causes such as panic, bad smoke management, lift usage in case of fire, fall, among others could cause fatalities.



### Measures

Emergency plans should be in place. Periodic training and well-maintained systems can save lives. Life safety measures such as a good egress plan, adequate exits, efficient escape lighting, and visible exit signages can avoid delays, while evacuation. Staff should inform every hotel guest about emergency procedures and equip them with first aid tools to minimise the damage.







# Future of hotels

## hinges on sustainability

**Siddharth Chakravarty** writes sustainable practices embodied in ethical acts help hotels make valuable contributions to the planet at large.



**SIDDHARTH  
CHAKRAVARTY**

Director, Sustainability,  
Six Senses Fort Barwara



I often wonder, is sustainability just a good thing or is it something supercritical? Isn't it a moral imperative, rather than seeing it as a strict law in the traditional legal sense? Does it not embody ethical principles aimed at preserving resources, protecting the environment, and ensuring the well-being of present and future generations? While sustainability today is enshrined in difficult-to-understand laws, the foundation lies in moral and ethical values related to stewardship, responsibility, and equity. Frankly, hotels operate in strong resource-dense environments, and their operations are typically designed on a consumption-based model. The world is moving fast towards the regenerative model, where every part of the operation helps the company to regenerate its resources. There are 1.4 billion Indians, and the country faces significant resource constraints. Forget about regeneration; currently, we are far from sustaining resources for future generations. Everyday, we lose almost 11 football fields worth of good-quality soil from Earth. Whether it is clean air, clean water, or nutrition, all these aspects are under severe stress. Let me address this through the common framework of sustainability—People, Planet, and Profits.





## People

### Community partnerships

The sustainability fund at Six Senses is 0.5 per cent of the hotel's revenues. This fund is used to provide clean drinking water to local schools and partnering with NGOs to work with the community. It plans to bring an RO system to two local schools and a govt hospital by April 2024.

### Employing more local talent

By identifying the local talent and providing job employment opportunities, we can bring down attrition. People who remain close to their families tend to seek employment elsewhere less frequently, resulting in higher job satisfaction and greater team stability.

### Training hosts and guests on climate change

With the Climate Warrior programme, we educate our guests about climate change and its effects. At the Earth Lab, we host DIY activities such as creating a seed bank, learning to make effective microbial solutions for cleaning, and crafting mosquito repellent.

### Reducing carbon footprint

To save Mother Earth, we need to shift to renewable energy sources and reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The need is to not limit ourselves to solar energy, but move towards decarbonising. At Six Senses, we make choices regarding our supply chain in a bid to control carbon emissions.

### Natural ventilation

At Six Senses Fort Barwara, we keep the windows in the back office of the hotel open for ventilation so as to allow natural air to flow in. We make it a point to switch off the HVAC systems when they are not needed in order to save on electricity consumption.

### Bringing back native plantation

We are reintroducing native species in a bid to improve soil fertility, conserve water and electricity. Additionally, having more native species also reduces the need for spraying of insecticide, thus promoting the development of a rich biodiversity.



## Planet

### Reduction in fossil fuel bills

The shift from boilers to heat pumps is efficient and saves fossil fuel by using it at an optimum to drive power efficiency. It helps to build a management system for ease of use. By introducing hybrid vehicles, we can reduce fossil fuel usage and provide guests with a premium experience.

### In-house biogas generator

The system designed for biogas is efficient, and the investment can be recovered in five years. The biogas generator is versatile as we can reuse food waste and provide methane as a by-product, which can be used by boilers to heat water, generate steam, and can be used in kitchen stoves.

### Stop fumigation

It is crucial to halt fumigation. Mosquitoes breed in stagnant water, and fumigation hinders biodiversity, resulting in loss of bees among others. Many brands have adopted innovative solutions. At Earth Lab, we made a mosquito repellent and make guests aware about how to make it.

### Introduction of drip irrigation

Hotels typically feature extensive landscaping. One of the best practices is to utilise drip irrigation systems, which can be customised to meet specific gardening needs. With advancements in tech, we can implement automated systems equipped with soil sensors.





*The system designed for biogas is efficient, and the investment can be recovered in five years*



## Profit

### Brand differentiation

Investing in sustainable initiatives, both locally and on a larger scale, enables us to establish a unique identity and distinguish our brand from other resorts. Those customers who care about the environment are drawn to us and become more loyal to our company.

### Reduces staff attrition

By fostering sustainability as a practice, the hotel can decrease staff attrition, as it has been proven people are drawn to firms with worthy causes. Hotels invest resources in training new staff and allocate more training hours to enhance productivity in operations.

### Electricity, water usage meters

To reduce water and electricity wastage, we must enforce strict measurements to analyse data that highlights excessive usage. By monitoring areas where we can conserve these resources, we must take necessary steps in order to save money in the long-term.

### Monitoring food waste

The usage of metric plates helps in the effective resource allocation of the hotel kitchen. Once the food waste is separated into cooked and green waste properly, analysis might be performed to identify the reasons in a bid for reduction of food waste.

### Sustainable supply chain process

A dedicated discussion should focus on establishing a conscious supply chain, transitioning to local procurement, and selecting greener options. This shift can result in higher profits while placing greater emphasis on local suppliers to help reduce variable procurement costs.



(The views expressed are solely of the author. The publication may or may not subscribe to the same)





# Mumbai's T2

will soon get a  
new 5-star hotel

Royal Orchid Hotels has entered into a lease/revenue sharing pact with MASA Hotels for their upcoming 5-star hotel in Mumbai. The 300-key 5-star establishment, slated to open in late 2024 is located a 2-minute walk away from Mumbai's terminal. Spanning over 12 floors, this property will feature a banquet ballroom, a meeting hall, a grand lobby bar, and 24x7 interactive dining options. "With this property, we are set to redefine upscale hospitality in India, catering to needs of the guests. Every aspect, such as technology, and facilities offered, is being crafted with a fresh perspective," **Arjun Baljee**, President, Royal Orchid Hotels, said. The pact underscores ROHL's commitment to the western region and intent to expand its properties in tier I cities.

# Pune

is no longer a sluggish  
town: **Abhishek Sahai**

**Abhishek Sahai**, GM, Conrad Hotels & Resorts, Pune, said, "Pune has shed its quiet demeanor and evolved into a vibrant hub." He stressed the role of ongoing commercial developments in bolstering the hospitality landscape. The need for infra, and a revamped airport are imperative to elevate Pune's allure as a business hotspot. Increased footfall would translate into heightened hotel occupancy and improved pricing. At present, the market operates in a price range of US\$125 to 135, falling short of the ideal range for luxury properties. He suggested Pune needs to attract more conferences to boost hotel performance metrics. The surge in group bookings would drive banquet revenues, boost ADRs, and overall occupancy levels. Hilton has plans to expand its portfolio, through five more properties across India in 2024.

**Sustainability** takes  
centre stage for **Goa** at

# ATM 2024



Goa Tourism showcases its steadfast commitment to sustainable tourism at Arabian Travel Market (ATM) Dubai 2024 in May under the theme, Transforming Travel Through Entrepreneurship. The Goa Tourism Pavilion at ATM Dubai spotlights these initiatives guided by Regenerative Tourism encompassing hinterland exploration, restoration of heritage sites, and journey toward spiritual tourism. Ekadasha Teertha circuit featuring 11 temples and exposition of St. Francis Xavier at the Basilica of Bom Jesus in Old Goa, among others take centre stage. As per **Suneel Anchipaka**, Director, Tourism and MD, GTDC, Goa Tourism, the aim is to promote tourism in GCC and lure tourists to explore the state.





## Goa gets direct flight to Lakshadweep's Agatti

Goa-based airline FLY91, recently, launched MOPA-Agatti-MOPA route in April. Alongside the Goa-Agatti sector, the regional airline has started operations on Goa-Jalgaon and Hyderabad-Jalgaon routes in the same month to expand its network across India. Incorporation of Agatti and Jalgaon as domestic sectors in FLY91's network aligns with the domestic summer holiday season. Agatti Island is an attractive destination for tourists. The island serves as an ideal gateway for exploring Bangaram, Pitti, Thinnakara, Parali I, Parali II, and Karavati, nearby. The FLY91's new route to Agatti was celebrated at Goa International Travel Mart 2024, an event that brought together public and private sectors to chart Goa's evolution in the tourism landscape.

## Pride Hotels

unveils two **new** properties in Gujarat

Pride Hotels Group unveiled Biznotel in Himmatnagar, a city known for religious and historical landmarks. The addition of Himmatnagar to the Pride Hotels Group portfolio underscores the region's status as a multifaceted destination. Biznotel by Pride Himmatnagar will offer amenities, such as well designed rooms, an all-day dining restaurant, a banquet hall, a rooftop gym, a spa, and a swimming pool. It launched its latest addition, Pride Elite Bharuch, in Gujarat. Nestled in Bharuch and close to Dahej port, this property caters to business and leisure travellers. It has 60 luxurious rooms designed for ultimate comfort and style. Also, it has a 25,000 sq. ft. wedding lawn and a spacious 3,000 sq. ft. banquet hall, ideal for weddings and corporate events.



**MP**  
focuses on  
safety to  
enhance  
tourism  
experience

Madhya Pradesh is taking initiatives to emerge as a premier destination, prioritising safety and hospitality for travellers. Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board announced the state's commitment to ensure a secure environment for all visitors. The state boasts infra with well-kept roads, good transportation services, signage, and modern healthcare facilities, all demonstrating its dedication to visitors' safety. Madhya Pradesh has introduced steps to safeguard travellers, particularly empowering solo female travellers. These initiatives include a 24x7 helpline for assistance, tourist police units for emergencies, and Safe Stay Certification programme for accredited accommodations. The Women Homestay Programme encourages rural women entrepreneurship, while initiatives to train women as tour guides and host cultural workshops stress the state's commitment to offering authentic and safe experiences. ♦♦



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When we had twins in 2001, one of our daughters, **Tiana Beheram Mehta** was diagnosed with autism spectrum. Our daughter is a genius with an eidetic memory and an acute sense of smell. Her background of graduation in Chemistry and her acute sense of smell give her a great advantage in helping us prepare fragrance blends for wellness products. All these factors urged us to start a company for our daughter, Tiana, with the name; TIA, while we were already running a chain of Wellness Centres under the name of SOHUM Wellness & Spas.

TIA supplies FMCG products such as shampoos, conditioners, body wash, massage oils, to various spa chains and hotels like Four Fountains, Orritel Hotels, Oakwood Hotel, Radisson Blu, Holiday Inn, Hilton Hotel, Oceana Wellness. We ensure that they are free from cruelty to animals, are not harmful chemical substances, and are paraben-free. Our clients prefer our products because of their quality, reasonable rates, and on-time delivery, which makes them our loyal customers. ♦♦

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What sets us apart is not just our competitive pricing but also our unwavering commitment to quality, a sentiment echoed by our esteemed clientele. As a brand, we do not just furnish spaces; we elevate experiences, one immaculately crafted piece at a time. Of course, Dreamspan Ventures is your gateway to exceptional hospitality furniture solutions. ♦♦





Hospitality industry is taking an innovative approach, while hiring; gaze into the shifting work environment and culture of Indian hotels.

**WORDS** HRAWI Bureau

**I**nclusive spaces allow diversity to flourish, and this is exactly the kind of space hotels are trying to build by going beyond traditional hiring practices. Global hotel brands are nowadays adopting a gender-fluid approach by hiring candidates from LGBTQ communities. To create an inclusive and non-discriminatory workplace, they also acknowledge the skills of the socially marginalised sections along with people with special abilities.

“For us, diversity extends beyond gender inclusivity, which is fundamental. Half of our senior leadership comprises women. We engage with communities such as the LGBTQ and neurodivergent communities as well as support acid attack survivors within our workforce. We make sure their talent is seen,” **Keshav Suri**, Executive Director, The Lalit Suri Hospitality

Group, said, while highlighting diversity in their working space.

Meanwhile, setting the precedent for breaking the conventional way of operating, Chalet Hotel recently launched India's first all-women-run hotel, the 168-key Westin Hyderabad HITEC City. Reflecting on this unique convergence of inclusivity, **Sanjay Sethi**, MD and

sustainability remains a key essence of the hotel's identity, therefore, they have renewed focus on recruiting Employees with Disability (EWD) and from Economically and Socially marginalised segments (EcoSoc). As highlighted by **Aradhana Lal**, Senior VP, Sustainability and ESG, Lemon Tree Hotels, “Currently, Lemon Tree has a workforce of 8,350, which

## HOTELS ARE ADOPTING A GENDER-FLUID AND INCLUSIVE APPROACH BY HIRING LGBTQ AND MARGINALISED SECTIONS

CEO, Chalet Hotels, said, “Our diversity metrics have risen from 13 to 22 per cent in recent years, with efforts to amplify representation from various backgrounds, including women, LGBTQ, individuals with disabilities, and those from underprivileged backgrounds.”

Now in its 17<sup>th</sup> year, Lemon Tree Hotels is making sure social

comprises five per cent EWD and nine per cent EcoSoc employees, totalling a 14 per cent diversity rate.”

This shift in the work culture creates a conducive stay for visitors as well. Such initiatives in the sector foster a space where sustainability goes beyond responsible use of resources, and social integration takes centre stage. ♦





# Digital presence hauls hotel biz

Coherence between digital marketing and right traditional marketing can enhance online visibility of hospitality players, says **Poonam Nair**.

**I**n today's digital age, technology has emerged as the backbone of businesses and digital operations. I believe hotels like ours and other industry players can gain exposure and expand their footprint through a robust and strategic online presence. The first step in this process is to enhance the marketing efforts, be open to innovations, and leverage the new-age channels. Some of the key aspects to focus on are:

1. **Social media marketing:** Hospitality players need to engage on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Share visually appealing content about your property, communicate recent updates or celebrations, promote exclusive offers, and interact with followers to build a online community and amplify your content on diverse platforms. Use Google Analytics in order to track the performance of your content and your content strategy accordingly.
2. **Online Travel Agencies:** Collaborate with popular online travel agencies. These platforms can increase the visibility of the hotel and attract a broader audience. List your hotel on these sites and consider a pay-per-click (PPC) advertising tool to further increase online visibility.
3. **Localised marketing:** One could target specific demographics and local markets through online advertising. This could include paid social media campaigns or Google Ads in order to reach



**POONAM NAIR**

Vice President, Sales & Marketing, Radisson Blu Udaipur Resort & Spa

To leverage digital channels, hospitality players should perpetually pay heed to traditional elements of image building as well like:

1. **Top-notch hospitality:** Exceptional hospitality is at the core of positive guest experiences. This includes cordial staff, prompt service, and concerted efforts to make guests feel welcome and valued.
2. **Personalised service:** Providing personalised service involves understanding the specific needs and preferences of guests. This encompasses remembering guest preferences, anticipating needs, and tailoring services that leave a lasting impression and encourage guests to share their positive experiences.
3. **Word-of-mouth publicity:** Even in today's digitally-driven world, positive word-of-mouth is a powerful marketing tool. Satisfied guests are likely to share their experiences with friends, family, and colleagues. This organic form of marketing is highly

## DIGITAL MARKETING PROVIDES A DYNAMIC AND MEASURABLE WAY TO PROMOTE HOTELS AND ADAPT TO EVOLVING CONSUMER TRENDS IN THE ONLINE SPACE

potential guests from various age groups in the area.

4. **Mobile optimisation:** Today, many travellers use smartphones for booking, and a mobile-friendly website is vital for a positive user experience. Hence, hotels need to ensure their online presence is optimised for mobile devices.

With the right mix of strategy and tools, hospitality players can enhance their online visibility, connect with a broader audience, and ultimately drive more bookings, contributing to the hotel's growth and expansion.

### Online presence is key

Digital marketing is a crucial component of online presence. It plays a pivotal role in enhancing

online visibility, engaging with the target audience, and driving bookings. Digital marketing not only helps with enhanced visibility but also provides an opportunity for hotels to engage with their customers and gain a competitive edge, leading to increased revenues and customer acquisition. Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), social media marketing, email marketing, content marketing, online reviews, mobile marketing, influencer marketing among others are tools that help brands achieve their objectives. By incorporating these elements into the marketing plan, hospitality players can build a strong online presence and connect effectively with their target audience.

trusted, and potential guests often rely on recommendations from people they know.

While digital marketing tools can attract guests initially, it is the combination of excellent hospitality, personalised service, and unique experiences that builds a solid foundation for a hotel's growth, fosters deeper connections with customers, and ensures long-term success. The digital efforts support and complement the expansion strategy and strengthen brand-building initiatives of hotels in the offline space. ◆

*(The views expressed are solely of the author. The publication may or may not subscribe to the same)*





# Upward trajectory

## in investments in 2024?

The JLL report indicates a significant investor appetite claiming that the buoyancy will continue in this year.

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**WORDS** HRAWI Bureau

**T**he hospitality sector in India contributes a perceptible share of India's GDP. Therefore, any upward trajectory in the country's hospitality sector is always a piece of good news for the Indian market. According to JLL's 'Hotel Investment Trends-India 2023' report, India's hotels experienced an impressive jump in investment volumes. In 2023, the sector recorded a total deal volume of US\$ 401 million, marking a four-fold increase from 2022.

The report indicated a significant investor appetite claiming that the buoyancy will continue in 2024. The first quarter of 2024-25 has shown a rise with an 80 per cent year-on-year increase in trade volumes as compared to Q1 of 2023. In 2024, there will be contribution from diverse categories of hotels, from tier I markets, and greenfield developments in emerging markets. Hotels located within mixed-use developments and growth corridors in proximity to key infrastructure will contribute significantly to the next phase of the hotel investment story.

### Hotel signings

- 2023 witnessed a maximum number of signings of around 25,176-keys. About 54 per cent of signings were concentrated in tier II cities
- While management contracts continue to hold the higher share of signings (78 per cent of the total number of keys), there has been a significant uptick in lease/revenue share models (4 per cent) across tiers
- Rise in lease/revenue share agreements in

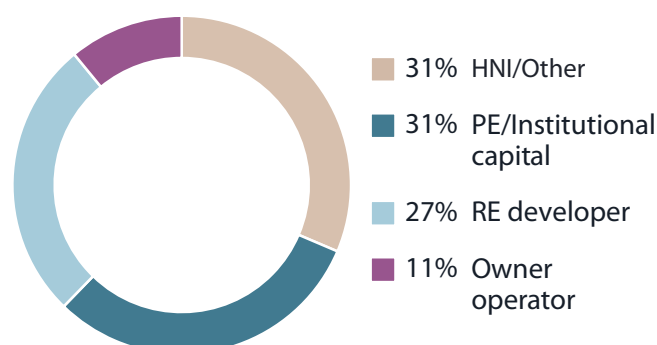




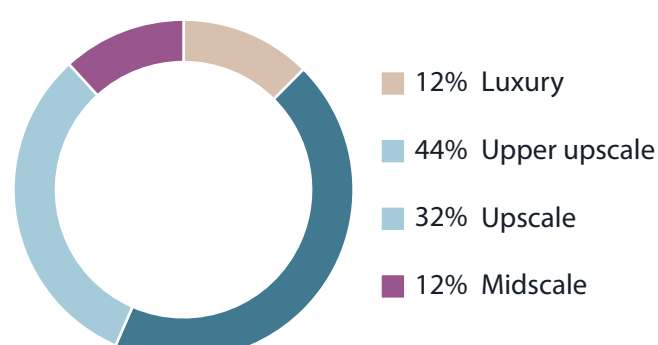
## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023

- 22 deals were recorded, marking the largest number of assets traded in the last decade
- 25% (six assets) of the transaction volume was for hotels under-construction across business & leisure locations
- HNIs and Institutional Capital accounted for 31% of volume of investments, followed by Real Estate Developers (27%) and Owner-Operators (11%)
- Five transactions through the insolvency resolution process under the NCLT, accounting for 33% of the total transacted value, which equates to US\$132 million
- Upper upscale segment witnessed highest number of keys being transacted, followed by upscale, luxury, and midscale segments
- The year also saw three hotel companies launching their Initial Public Offers (IPOs)

Source of capital - Hotel  
Transaction volume (2023)



No. of keys transacted  
by segment (2023)



tier I cities indicates hotels' growing interest in models with less risk exposure.

- Greenfield projects increased in 2023 (13,600-keys), surpassing 2022 (8,000-keys)
- Tier I cities recorded a rise of 31 per cent in key signings in 2023 as compared to 2022
- Three large format hotels signed with a total of 900-keys suitable for MICE demand

### Hotel openings

- The last year saw the highest number of openings (12,647-keys), of which 82 per cent opened were concentrated in tier II & III cities (10,300-keys)
- The midscale segment holds the highest share (53 per cent), followed by upscale (24 per cent), then luxury and economy (9 per cent each), and upper upscale (5 per cent)

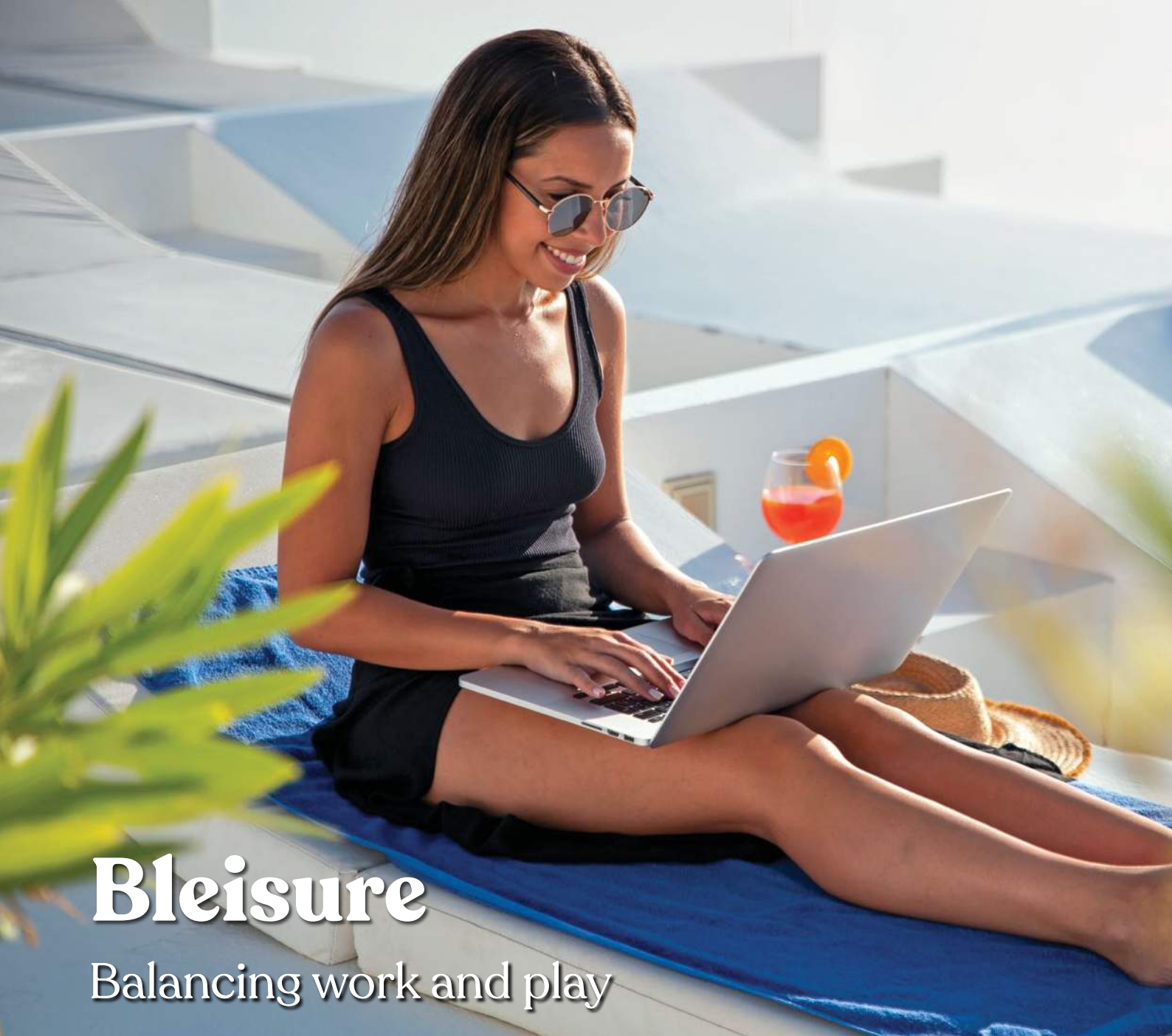
### Perspective

"The uptrend in hotel transactions reflects the maturing hotel asset class although the Indian market

remains distinct, driven primarily by High Net Worth Individuals (HNIs) followed by institutional investors. The institutional investors are showing interest, but the lack of scalable stocks in India limits their participation. The transaction market would be dominated by HNIs, Indian corporates, and specific listed companies until there is a lack of sufficient supply of scalable stocks," **Jaideep Dang**, Managing Director, Hotels & Hospitality Group, India, JLL, said. However, he made a positive remark in context with a narrowing gap in buyer-seller expectations due to the industry's post-COVID recovery, wherein a shift has been observed from occupancy-driven growth to rate-led recovery.

As hotel stocks are growing across diverse segments depending on locations, Dang expects an upward slope for the transaction market. He advised investors to be cautious and recommended mixed-use developments curated per destination profiles to mitigate escalating FSI and land costs and underscored the importance of risk hedging in project costs, advocating for investment strategies amidst evolving market dynamics. ♦♦





# Bleisure

## Balancing work and play

We spoke to a few hotels to quench our inquisitiveness about upselling bleisure travel, transforming a trip into an extraordinary journey, leaving corporates with stories to tell.

---

**WORDS** Hazel Jain

**I**n the fast-paced world of corporate events and meetings, the choice of venue/s can make all the difference between a successful gathering and a forgettable one. In the shifting trend towards the convergence of business and leisure, there

is a need for the venues that seamlessly blend both worlds.

The team at Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre and Hyderabad International Convention Centre (HICC) tries to upsell bleisure travel through an approach that seamlessly integrates business with leisure. **Rubin Cherian**, General Manager, Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre & HICC, revealed the details about the propositions created by them for clients and said,

“Our strategy involves presenting enticing options to enhance the guest experience beyond their corporate requirements. We offer upgraded accommodations and provide exclusive access to amenities such as private lounges and wellness facilities. Additionally, we curate bespoke packages that combine cultural excursions and culinary delights, offering guests a multifaceted experience tailored to their interests. Through meticulous attention to detail and personalised service, we ensure that every guest’s stay at our hotel is not only productive but also enriching.”

Similarly, the team at Signum Hotels & Resorts is looking for ways to stay ahead of the curve and





**RUBIN CHERIAN**  
General Manager, Novotel  
Hyderabad Convention  
Centre & HICC



**MEHUL SHARMA**  
Founder & CEO  
Signum Hotels & Resorts



**ROHIT BAJPAI**  
General Manager  
Sheraton Grand Palace  
Indore



**RAJDEV BHATTACHARYA**  
Global Head (Travel &  
Hospitality) and Process  
Owner, Wipro

to attract bleisure travellers. By offering a mix of business and leisure amenities, hotels can make their properties stand out and capture a larger share of the market.

In fact, **Rohit Bajpai**, General Manager, Sheraton Grand Palace Indore, agreed that this intersection of business and leisure travel is in turn reshaping the landscape of hospitality. "This trend highlights a desire among travellers to blend work commitments with leisure pursuits, marking a shift in

at the cusp of a new era, ready to cater to business and leisure aspirations of our guests," he added.

While hotels are busy adapting to this change in hospitality from a corporate perspective, **Rajdev Bhattacharya**, Global Head (Travel & Hospitality) and Process Owner, Wipro, inquisitively posited some relevant questions, "Bleisure! Ah, yes, a concept promising to satisfy work obligations and wanderlust. But amidst our productivity-driven world, can bleisure offer a balance,

## ARE WE BLURRING THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN WORK AND PERSONAL LIFE? DO COMPANIES TRULY BENEFIT FROM EMPLOYEES WHO ARE TECHNICALLY 'ON VACATION' YET MENTALLY TETHERED TO THEIR WORK EMAIL?



hopped on to this trend that has been gaining momentum in recent years. "Bleisure has become popular among business travellers, with 60 per cent of them adding leisure to their business trips. It is essential to cater to the needs of bleisure travellers by offering amenities that allow guests to balance work and play. This can include flexible check-in and check-out times, high-speed internet access, fitness facilities, and recommendations for local attractions," said **Mehul Sharma**, Founder & CEO, Signum Hotels & Resorts. He suggested hotels should focus on creating a comfortable and relaxing atmosphere that allows guests to unwind after a busy workday if they want

traveller's expectations. As industry professionals, it is urgent to adapt to these changes, offering enriching experiences to meet the subtle needs of today's travellers. This evolution pushes the boundaries of traditional hospitality, encouraging hotels and resorts across the globe to reimagine their offerings. As we embrace this shift, the sector stands

or is it merely a vacation veiled in burnout potential? Are we blurring the boundaries between work and personal life? Do companies truly benefit from employees who are technically 'on vacation' yet mentally tethered to their work email? Is bleisure travel a clever ethical workaround or a slippery slope toward workaholic tendencies?" ◆



# Taste tomorrow's dining trends

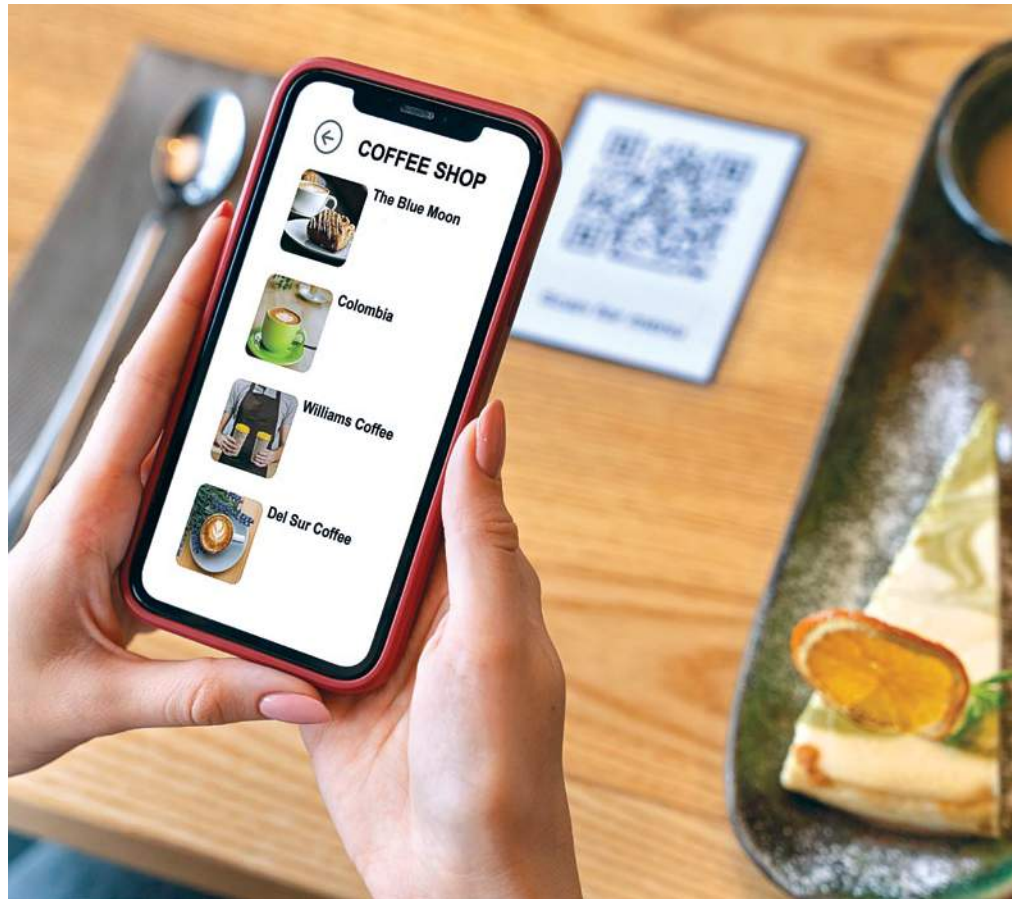
The restaurant industry is ready to witness a paradigm shift in advanced technology to transform dining experience.

**WORDS** HRAWI Bureau

**K**eeping up with the modern times, the restaurant industry is witnessing numerous transformations, propelled by evolving consumer preferences, technological advancements, and socio-economic shifts. Over the next five years, several trends are set to redefine dining experiences, driven by technological innovation, shifting consumer preferences, and a growing focus on sustainability and personalisation.

## Embracing technology

Technology will continue to drive the restaurant operations and customer interactions, such as online ordering platforms, mobile payment systems, and AI-powered chatbots for customer service. The data from the National Restaurant



## OF LATE, GHOST KITCHENS OR CLOUD KITCHENS ARE GAINING MOMENTUM TO MEET THE DEMAND FOR ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY

Association indicates 79 per cent of consumers believe technology enhances their restaurant experience, reflecting the increasing demand for tech-driven solutions.

### Rise of 'ghost kitchens'

Ghost kitchens, also known as virtual or cloud kitchens, are gaining momentum as a cost-effective way to meet the demand for food delivery. These kitchen-only establishments are devoid of traditional dining spaces and focus solely on fulfilling

orders placed through third-party delivery apps. As per Statista, the global online food delivery market is likely to reach US\$200 billion by 2025, offering a lucrative opportunity for entrepreneurs to tap into the growing delivery market without the overhead costs of a physical restaurant.

### Sustainable dining practices

As sustainability is one of the major concerns of the sector, restaurants will prioritise eco-friendly practices

and ethically sourced ingredients. As per the Technomic survey, 56 per cent of consumers are likely to choose a restaurant offering sustainable menu items.

### Personalisation and customisation

Consumers seek personalised dining experiences, leading restaurants to leverage data analytics and AI to tailor offerings to individual preferences. Customisation based on past orders, dining habits, and dietary curbs, will be a differentiator in a competitive market.

The coming years will witness, interactive culinary experiences, and themed pop-up restaurants catering to customer's desire for space where food service and entertainment converge. ♦♦



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*Hospitality Partner*





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