

# HRA Today



Oct - Nov 2021  
Vol: 3 Issue 3  
Pages 44 ₹20

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF HOTEL & RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION (WESTERN INDIA)

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## DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION LANDSCAPE OF HOTEL SECTOR



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HRA Today monthly is Edited, Printed and Published by Siji Nair, R M Nivas, TMRA F 6 Pangappara (PO) Thiruvananthapuram Pin 695 581. Published from Thiruvananthapuram, Printed at Akshara Offset TC 25/3230(1), Vanchiyoor, Thiruvananthapuram 695 035. Owned by Hotels and Restaurants Association (WI), Editor- Siji Nair

RNI No. DELENG/2018/76917 \* Responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act.

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## President's Message

**Mr Sherry Bhatia**  
President, HRAWI

### **My Dear Members,**

Greetings in the 71st year of the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India!

Let me begin this message on a positive note. Your Association has become the first Indian Hospitality Association to be awarded the ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 27001:2013 certifications. These internationally recognized standards ensure organizations meet with the needs of members through an effective Quality Management System (QMS) which is the foundation of quality assurance activities and Information Security Management System (ISMS) which aims to protect the confidentiality, integrity and availability of members' information and data. I congratulate and thank everyone in our office for their efforts towards making this possible. I also wish to take this opportunity to welcome Mr Kunal Gujral to the HRAWI family. Mr. Gujral, who comes with over two decades of industry experience, will serve as HRAWI's new Secretary General.

Moving on, after two painful years of lockdowns and restrictions, things are looking up for the country and for our industry too. As of mid-November, nearly 80 per cent of India's eligible adult population had been administered the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine while 38 per cent had been fully vaccinated and the number of new cases is steadily on the decline. We've requested the State Govt. to restore the operation timings of restaurants as per the license held by establishments, on all days of the week from Monday through Sunday.

FHRAI & HRAWI have launched a scholarship program for students interested in pursuing a 3-year B.Sc. in Hospitality and Hotel Administration from the FHRAI Institute of Hospitality Management (FHRAI-IHM), Greater Noida. Children of employees of member establishment of FHRAI and HRAWI will be offered 50 per cent waiver in the admission, enrolment, tuition and examination fees. Other than for members, 20 per cent waiver will be offered to children from the families of hospitality patrons or employees. In solidarity with the plights of the workers who lost their jobs during pandemic, as a special case, the scholarship will be provided to the children of hospitality sector employees who were working in the member establishments and lost their jobs during pandemic, based on a certification by the member establishment and the Regional Association. We urge all our members to kindly spread the word and help aspiring hospitality students to take benefit of this opportunity.

Lastly and more recently, the HRAWI has appealed to the Hon'ble Prime Minister – Shri Narendra Modi ji for urgent relief for restaurants from the recent abnormal increase in the cost of Liquid Petroleum Gas (L.P.G). It has become extremely difficult especially, for standalone restaurants to absorb this exponential increase in the cost. To continue to remain affordable, the HRAWI has requested that the rate of tax on LPG for standalone restaurants be reduced to 5 per cent from the current 18 per cent.

- Sherry Bhatia, President, HRAWI



# DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION LANDSCAPE OF HOTEL SECTOR

N.Vijayagopalan



Currently, the hoteliers, mid cap and above, are forced to face the digital transformation of their hotels and realize it is here to stay. However, it appears that not everyone is ready. In fact, even though the use of technological tools has exploded since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, many hotels are betting on a comprehensive digital transformation.

Among the many changes that the sector is experiencing, we have seen how, as a result of the coronavirus crisis, many hotels have implemented contactless solutions that include apps for guests, online check-in, smart upselling, electronic locks,

and chatbots. In addition to these tools, there are other concepts such as artificial intelligence and big data that are already on everyone's radar, but there could be many to know what they are or how they are used.

When we talk about technological advancement in hotel sector, we have to look at two concepts - Digitization and Hotel Digital Transformation. Digitization is turning traditional operational systems into digital ones. Digitization has been around for a long time, for example, when a hotel goes from paper posters to screens in public areas this is the digitization of its posters.



Hotel digital transformation is the use and integration of different technologies in all areas of the hotel, procedures, products, and even the building itself to improve efficiency and guest satisfaction while solving current and future problems. Digital transformation can even open up new opportunities to generate more revenues or increase the RevPar of your hotel. Digitalization is part of the path towards digital transformation.

We already know that independent of the COVID19 crisis, in the hotel sector there is a clear need for digital transformation to be able to address some of the challenges that all hotels share. Two of these challenges are : (1) increase direct bookings or growth of the direct channel and (2) meeting the level of customization that the market

demands.

When we ponder on these two things, it seems that the hotel sector is still not betting on a transformation that helps them improve retention, loyalty and acquisition, or if it does so with a digitization that improves guest satisfaction and their personal security.

There are a few technologies in which hotels across the world have been increasingly investing in even during the pandemic as they want to get on the bandwagon of technological transformation and not end up being invisible or slaves of the big online Travel Agencies (OTAs).

1. **Big data in hotels** refers to a large volume of data, ordered as well as unordered. An example of

Big data would be the volume of data collected by the PMS or CRM of a large hotel chain. It is very difficult for an independent hotel to generate Big data by itself so it must resort to specialized software.

2. **Artificial intelligence** in the hotel industry is a type of technology that is automatically capable of thinking and drawing conclusions like humans. This technology analyzes Big Data to identify patterns and trends among our data.

By combining your hotel's historical data with artificial intelligence you could know if there is a rising or falling pattern of reservations if, for example, rain is announced, and more specifically, you could know it according to nationality.

3. **Machine Learning** is a type of Artificial Intelligence that, in addition





to thinking like humans, also learns like humans. Learning in this area means that you autonomously analyze and study new data without stopping, thus identifying new patterns. This technology is essential to making predictions.

Using the previous example, machine learning would be able to extract new patterns of ups or downs from your pick-up if now suddenly people change their reservation behaviors as a result of some specific factors.

**4. Business Intelligence (BI)** links this concept to all the previous ones, BI is the practice of transforming Big Data into usable information. In other words, it refers to the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning to translate your hotel's Big Data into reliable and manageable

information.

Thanks to hotel business intelligence, revenue managers can now predict whether the pick-up will go up or down and make business decisions based on this information. It is not based solely on historical data or the manager's own hunch.

The long-term digital transformation of your hotel must have as its objective to be able to make decisions with real and reliable data. This will augment the hotel's strategic vision. This transformation will mean going from being a hotel that makes decisions based entirely on historical data to one who makes them based on detailed data-driven predictions of the future. If you do not have access to Business Intelligence, you only have one opinion.

'Big Data for CEOs and Directors' by Isaas Gonzalez is a good read for beginners as it explains everything you need to know to understand Big Data in an easy to understand, ordered schematic format.

If hotels want to increase direct bookings and reduce the dominance of the large OTAs, among many other things, the hotel digital transformation must help the sector to answer the following questions in any scenario:

Observe : What is happening?

Understand : Why does it happen?

Predict : What would happen?

Collaborate : What should the team do?

Decide : Which way to go?



# International Tourism Mart North East region is endowed with diverse tourist attractions

- International Tourism Mart highlights the tourism potential of the region in the domestic and international markets
- The delegation includes students from across the country as part of a study tour under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat
- Presentation by State Governments and discussions on several aspects of tourism and unique tourism products in the North East Region and their potential as part of the Mart

**M**inister of State for Tourism & Defence Shri Ajay Bhatt addressed the opening session of the second day of the 9th International Tourism Mart for the North East Region at Kohima, Nagaland today. MLA & Advisor

Tourism, Government of Nagaland Shri. H Khehovi Yeputhomi, Secretary Tourism, GoI Shri Arvind Singh, ADG Tourism, GoI Smt. Rupinder Brar and other dignitaries of the Central government and the North Eastern States were also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the second day of the 9th International Tourism Mart in Kohima Shri Ajay Bhatt said that the North East region is endowed with diverse tourist attractions and each State has its own distinct features. The attractions are scattered over the entire region



and are largely located in remote areas within a highly fragile environment. These attractions and the people of the Region constitute rich tourism resources. Shri Bhatt said that North East has a huge potential for adventure and eco-tourism.

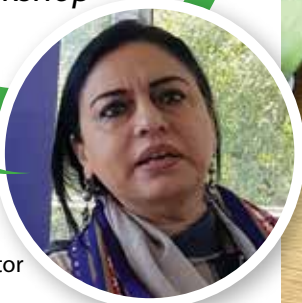
On the second day of the Mart State Tourism Departments of Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, and Tripura gave presentations on their tourism potential and products. After that discussions on several aspects of tourism and unique tourism products started and experts highlighted the Rafting, Trekking and Road Expeditions, Potential of Fairs and Festivals for Tourism in NER, and Potential of Food and Wine Tourism in North East.

The objective of the event is to highlight the tourism potential of the region in the domestic and

international markets. The coffee table book on Nagaland was also launched on this occasion. The event was attended by over 300 delegates including government officials, industry stakeholders, and local participants. The event was attended by the High Commissioner, Brunei Darussalam, High Commissioner, Malaysia, Ambassador Extra Ordinary, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Ambassador, The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, amongst others attending dignitaries and diplomats. Other high-ranking officials from participating Ministries/ Government bodies are also going to be part of the event. In line with the Prime Minister's vision of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat', the delegation also includes students from across the country who, as part of a study tour, will be interacting with local students and



*“While we saw a demand for such homestays just before the pandemic, now it is through the roof. We are tailoring our promotional campaigns to promote homestays. Tourists don’t want big hotels anymore. They want big open spaces, personalized care, and want to experience the local flavor. We are also promoting staycations, Homestays have emerged as a very strong vertical and we are focused on it. In February, we held a workshop on homestays in Darjeeling where 500 owners had registered. As many as 725 came for the workshop”*



**Rupinder Brar**  
Additional Director  
General in the  
Tourism Ministry

immersing themselves in the region’s rich heritage and culture.

The event has been planned and scheduled to facilitate interaction between buyers, sellers, media, government agencies, and other stakeholders. Around 50 buyers from different regions of the country participated in the Mart and engaged in one-on-one meetings with 75 sellers from the North East Region. This will enable the tourism product suppliers from the region to reach out to domestic buyers, to promote tourism. Domestic Buyers will be engaging in business-to-business meetings with sellers from the North Eastern Region as well.

To further enrich the experience of the participants, the Ministry has organized a visit to Kisama Heritage Village, Kisama War Museum and Morungs, Khonoma Village, and Kohima World War II War Cemetery. The visiting delegation will be familiarised with the local community, local art and culture, and the rich heritage of Nagaland.

The International Tourism Marts are organized in the North Eastern States on a rotation basis. Nagaland is hosting this Mart for the first time. The earlier editions of this mart have been held in Guwahati (Assam), Tawang (Arunachal Pradesh), Shillong (Meghalaya), Gangtok (Sikkim), Agartala (Tripura), and Imphal (Manipur).





ECOTOURISM





# ECOTOURISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

V.R. Nair

**E**cotourism is a new approach in tourism, which has gained grounds in the recent times. Ecotourism refers to travel to natural areas to appreciate the cultural and natural history of the environment, taking care not to disturb the integrity of the ecosystem, while creating economic opportunities that make conservation and protection of natural resources advantageous to the local people. Fundamentally, ecotourism means making as little environmental impact as possible and helping to sustain the indigenous populace, thereby encouraging the preservation of wildlife and habitats when visiting a place.

According to The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), ecotourism can be defined as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education".

Ecotourism is derived from two words - 'Ecosystem' and 'Tourism'. Ecosystem is the system in which we live - the system which include the earth, the water, the sky and ofcourse the living and the non-living objects in all these systems. It is a dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit. But, there is no such specific and particular spatial unit or scale to measure an Ecosystem.

And, tourism means - 'the practice of traveling for pleasure.' Thus, a tourism which contains a visit to an Ecosystem is known as Ecotourism. But, that is not all. Ecotourism is not only travelling to such Ecosystems, but also conserving them. Basically Ecotourism means - "Tourism involving travel to areas of natural or ecological interest, typically under the guidance of a naturalist, for the purpose of observing wildlife and learning about the environment and at the same time focus on wildlife and promotion of understanding and conservation of the environment." In short, ecotourism can be categorised as a tourism programme that is nature based and ecologically sustainable.

This is a conscientious form of tourism and tourism development, which encourages going back to natural products in every aspect of life and helps preserve nature. It is also the key to sustainable ecological development. Simply put, eco-tourism is tourism with an ecological conscience.

## We and our environment

The race for becoming the most advanced and most developed state in the world, has led man to destruct the natural resource in our stock and our biosphere. Today, most of the underground and above the ground resources are on the verge of finish, resulting in abrupt climate, natural disaster and more. Now, man is facing two very extreme dangerous

conditions - 'Global Warming' and 'Greenhouse Effects', both of which will lead to the total destruction of the Planet Earth. It is now high time, we should (the entire Human Community) start our bit of job to save our Earth from complete destruction. It is now every man's duty to do as much possible to save our Planet Earth.

Today, there are "Green Laws" of conservation, which are making people aware of how man and the environment can live beneficially for more time to come and Ecotourism is one way to maximise the environmental and social benefits of tourism, not forgetting the economic developments.

Everyone is a stakeholder in the process and we clearly need to avoid our past shortcomings in taking care of nature and environment. In India too the movement is gathering momentum with more and more travel and travel related organisations addressing the needs of the ecotourists and promoting ecotourism in the country.

## The concern for Ecotourism

Since ages, nature worship and the conservation ethics have been an inseparable part of Indian thought and traditions. Traces go back to ancient civilisations of India, when people used to nurture the philosophy of the oneness of life. The Indian tradition has always taught that humankind is a part of nature and one should look upon all creation with the eyes of a love and respect.

It is tragic that since last few decades, the mad quest for the material end and economical progress in India and abroad has become identical with the exploitation of nature in all its appearances. Today, the entire world is facing a deep crisis and is in the danger of being doomed. The rich forest areas and biological diversities have been relentlessly divested to erect concrete walls.

The continuous denuding of forest reserves has led to Global Warming and Greenhouse Effects. Fortunately, this has led to some realisation, and now the world has awakened for new beginnings about human responsibility towards nature.

## Ecotourism in India

India, the land of varied geography offers several tourist destinations that not just de-stress but also rejuvenate you. There are several ways to enjoy Mother Nature in most pristine way. The few places like the Himalayan Region, Kerala, the northeast India, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the Lakshdweep islands are some of the places where you can enjoy the treasured wealth of the Mother Nature. Thenmala in Kerala is the first planned ecotourism destination in India created to cater to the Ecotourists and nature lovers.

The Indian topography boasts of an abundant source of flora and fauna. India has numerous rare and endangered species in its surroundings. The declaration of

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*Everyone is a stakeholder in the process and we clearly need to avoid our past shortcomings in taking care of nature and environment.*

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several wildlife areas and national parks has encouraged the growth of the wildlife resources, which got reduced due to the wildlife hunt by several kings in the past. Today, India has many wildlife sanctuaries and protection laws. Currently, there are about 80 national parks and 441 sanctuaries in India, which work for the protection and conservation of wildlife resource in India.

There are numerous Botanical and Zoological Gardens in India, which are working towards the enhancement of the Ecosystem. Poaching has stopped to a large extent. There are severe punishments for poachers, hunters and illegal traders of animals and trees. Tree plantation is taking place in several places. There are several animal and plant rights organisations, which fight for the rights of the animals and plants. Numerous organisations and NGOs are coming forward to provide environmental education to the common people at the grass root level.

It's high time one needs to be conscious towards the environment and make sure that his recreational activities don't adversely affect the natural beauty of the place. The

following are some Dos and Don'ts which a responsible traveller needs to take care.

## Dos

- Carry back all non-degradable litter such as empty bottles, tins, plastic bags etc. These must not litter the environment or be buried. They must be disposed in municipal dustbins only.
- Observe the sanctity of holy sites, temples and local cultures.
- Cut noise pollution. Do not blare aloud radios, tape recorders or other electronic entertainment equipment in nature resorts, sanctuaries and wildlife parks.
- In case temporary toilets are set-up near campsites, after defecation, cover with mud or sand. Make sure that the spot is at least 30 meters away from the water source.

## Don'ts

- Do not take away flora and fauna in the forms of cuttings, seeds or roots as it is illegal and the biodiversity of a region has to be protected at all costs.

- Do not use pollutants such as detergents, in streams or springs while washing and bathing.
- Do not use wood as fuel to cook food at the campsite.
- Do not leave cigarettes butts or make open fires in the forests.
- Do not consume aerated drinks, alcohol, drugs or any other intoxicant and throw bottles in the wild.
- Do not use Polythene and plastics which are non-biodegradable and unhealthy for the environment.

Ecotourism is flourishing at a tremendous pace in India. The government of India has formed a 13-member community, called Ecotourism Society of India, which focuses on creating awareness about ecotourism and helps in framing guidelines.

What we in India can do is to promote ecotourism as much as possible. If you ever have an interaction with tourists, tell them how diverse our country is. India has a lot to offer, especially in terms of terms of wildlife, flora and fauna, which is why ecotourism is growing so popular.

LIFESTYLE

# IS VEGAN FOOD SUCCESSFULLY PENETRATING THE INDIAN MARKET?

N.Vijayagopalan



**T**he word 'vegan' was coined in 1944 by Donald Watson, the co-founder of the Vegan Society. The term was initially used to describe 'non-dairy vegetarians', the Vegan Society updated the definition to: "...exclude all forms of animal exploitation..." in 1951.

No longer a novel concept, Veganism is evolving from a fringe movement to a mainstream choice associated with health, ethics, and eco-sustainability. The meteoric rise of plant-based diets around the world is proof that more than ever before, we're living in the age of Veganism.

How did we get here? A rising educated middle-class, increased awareness of global trends, a growing focus on personal and planetary health, and the appeal of a greener, cleaner way of life.

Although veganism spans across generations and cultures, it's a lifestyle choice led by the youth. With veganism skyrocketing around the world, India, as a young country with almost half its population under the age of thirty, is keen to follow.

Instrumental in the rise of veganism are influencers who have tapped the young, tech-savvy generation by increasing awareness of the cause through social media. Hundreds of vloggers sharing wellness guides, nutritional advice, and vegan recipes can be followed on YouTube.

Dr Nandita Shah, Founder of Sharan, is one of the many nutritionists who have been catalysts for the vegan movement at home. Athletes like Virat Kohli and actors like Aamir Khan and Ayesha Takia have also brought awareness of veganism's health and performance benefits to the masses. Vegan for almost a

decade, Takia is set to launch a vegan food company called Plant.

Celebrity couple Ritesh Deshmukh and Genelia D'Souza, too, is launching their vegan initiative Imagine Meats, presumably inspired by the multi-billion dollar success of US giant Beyond Meat.

On screen, powerful documentaries such as Cowspiracy, What the Health, Dominion, and most recently, The Game Changers, have been inspiring people across the spectrum to adopt a plant-based lifestyle. In covering a range of topics from the atrocities of factory farming to its damaging effects on climate change, these thought-provoking films have successfully converted a niche campaign into a popular cause. Opinions of these films and all aspects of veganism are able to spread rapidly across social media through Twitter and Instagram.

The popularity of vegan food has been slowly gaining momentum in India. Over the last few years, not only have people started to appreciate the concept of veganism but have adopted it in their lives too. According to a UN FAO report, India has the lowest rate of meat consumption in the world due to 44 per cent of the 1.3 billion population being Hindus. According to rough estimates, there were around 500 million vegetarians in India in 2020 and of these, only one per cent are strict vegans. So, the total number of vegans in India is around five million.

Today, people have a variety of plant-based food options that are both healthy and tasty. And more and more of them are now preferring vegan diet and thus catering to this increasing number becomes an important task. According to market reports, Indian food producers and

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*Today, people have a variety of plant-based food options that are both healthy and tasty. And more and more of them are now preferring vegan diet and thus catering to this increasing number becomes an important task.*

”

restaurants are getting increasingly ready to cater to vegan customers and the market is ready to take up the challenge of providing more plant-based food options.

The vegan customers in India, although small currently, are growing rapidly. The product offerings, however, are quite limited, especially when customers are looking for a replacement of a meat-based product. Achieving the same meat-like taste, texture and aroma, using only plant-based ingredients being a difficult task, market players are understood to use innovations to attract more meat-eaters into their vegan food.



# HOTEL INDUSTRY RECOVERS FASTER THAN EXPECTED POST COVID 2.0: ICRA

Our Bureau

**T**he hotel industry demand has recovered at a sharper pace post Covid 2.0 compared to last year's lockdown, aided by the easing of restrictions in Q2 FY2022. Partial lockdown as well as travel restrictions in many states in April and May 2021 post the onset of Covid 2.0 resulted in the ICRA sample of companies reporting a 56% decline in revenues on a QoQ basis, in line with the ratings agency's estimates. However, the revenues are expected to improve by 85-90% sequentially in Q2 FY2022.

Occupancy has picked up, with the August-21 Pan-India premium hotel occupancy at 44-46%. For 5M FY2022, the same is estimated to be 32-34% (up from 13-15% in 5M FY2021), vis-à-vis 46-48% in Q4 FY2021. The Pan-India ARR are estimated at Rs 3,850-3,950 for 5M FY2022 and still remain at a 25-30% discount to pre-Covid levels, although some high-end hotels and leisure destinations have even

seen ARR return to pre-Covid levels in Aug-21/Sep-21. Travel during the festive season travel will act as a key demand booster for the industry in Q3 FY2022.

Vinutaa S, assistant vice president and sector head, ICRA Limited, said, "While the first few months were impacted, the industry witnessed faster-than-expected ramp up in Q2 FY2021, because of lower restrictions, high vaccination pace and pent-up demand, which resulted in revenge travel. Demand in the last few months has come from staycations, weddings and travel to driveable leisure destinations, and from special purpose groups. There is the new trend of biscations (which is working from a resort) that is picking up. Business travel pickup has been mainly to project sites/manufacturing locations from specific sectors. The Covid-related demand which was prevalent April mid to June mid, waned from July and we are seeing real demand pick up. The situation is evolving,

and sustenance of demand will depend on efficacy of vaccines and a potential third Covid wave. The industry is currently cautiously optimistic."

Most markets reported over 50% occupancy in Jul-21 and Aug-21, the key markets - Jaipur, Goa, Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad displayed healthy occupancies whereas Bangalore and Pune lagged behind. The ARR in leisure destinations were above pre-Covid levels in Jul-21 and Aug-21. Going forward, ARR will be a function of sustenance of demand.

The demand recovery pattern has different from other crises, with properties with affiliated strong brands and in the luxury segment standing to benefit, as trust and safety are paramount. Drive-to-leisure, staycations, social MICE/weddings and special purpose groups are expected to drive revenues for hotels for the next one year at least. International traffic arrivals will take time to pick-up and



Nevertheless, the situation is still evolving and as the estimates are contingent on timelines tied to the pandemic," added Vinutaa.

Moratorium and ECLGS provided the much-needed financial support during Covid-19. About 70% entities in ICRA's hospitality portfolio availed moratorium during the first wave, though it was only 39% of rated debt. Some companies also raised funding through equity and debt tie-ups before ECLGS announcement. The industry has raised about Rs. 660 crore of equity in FY2021 and has announced Rs. 3,300 crore of equity/fund raising plans in FY2022. ICRA expects further equity fund raising/asset

monetization to support capital structure improvement going forward. However, debt metrics are expected to return to pre-Covid levels only over the medium term, while RoCE is expected to remain sub cost-of capital at least for the next few years.

ICRA continues to have a negative outlook on the Indian hotel industry, as the sustenance of the demand pickup in the recent months remains to be seen. A potential third wave and its impact on travel and hotel occupancies cannot be ruled out. Further, the RevPAR is still significantly lower than pre-Covid levels. About 63% of ICRA's ratings are also on negative outlook currently.

in the intervening period, demand will be supported by domestic travel. Hotels/cities dependent on business travel/foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs), will also take considerable time to recover.

In terms of supply, in the immediate term, temporary shutdowns are possible in affected regions, if there is a third wave. Acquisitions and industry consolidation are the way forward, and rebranding in the midscale and upscale segments will add to share of organised supply. Over the medium term, a part of pre-Covid supply may be permanently shelved, while there could be new properties coming up in leisure destinations.

"The hotel industry is expected to clock at least 45-50% of pre-Covid revenues in FY2022. Further operating profits in the current fiscal will be aided by improved operating leverage and sustenance of some of the cost-optimization measures undertaken last fiscal. However, pre-Covid revenues and profits are likely only by FY2024. As a result of sustenance of some cost-saving measures, the breakeven is expected to reduce and hotels are likely to report pre-Covid margins of 85-90% of revenues going forward.



# INVESTMENT IN TECHNOLOGY ENHANCING GUEST EXPERIENCE

**Amruda Nair is Founder & Director, Araiya Hotels & Resorts. Ms. Nair has a global perspective on hospitality, backed by her experience with leading international brands. She is the granddaughter of the late Captain C.P. Krishnan Nair, the iconic businessman who founded the Leela Group. Amruda Nair shares her views on hotel industry scenario with HRA Today.**

**N.Vijayagopalan**

## **What are the major challenges the Indian hotel industry is facing at this juncture?**

The hospitality industry continues to struggle with muted demand for corporate room inventory, delays in supply of goods, higher operating costs, restriction on trading hours and reduced capacities. The resumption of inbound international tourists and the complete re-opening of borders to foreign travel are the critical turning points that the industry is looking for. Hotel room demand is recovering quicker than expected and, as a result, service levels are suffering. While we knew there would be an erratic recovery curve, prolonged labour issues have intensified the challenge to meet the expectations of returning guests who expect a return to normal, even if it's not yet economically viable.

## **According to you, what is the emerging landscape of hotels in India?**

There has been a clear shift in the willingness of the domestic traveler to explore the country and seek new experiences within a drivable or single flight radius. Indian guests are also showing openness to boutique properties with unique features or undiscovered locations. Trust and safety remain the key currency and brands that establish clear communication through digital channels will have a clear advantage.

Launching a new, independent brand just before the pandemic hit was a big leap but one that has been well received as it is exactly what guests today are looking for. Araiya which means eternal beauty to me means constant evolution - the ability to adapt, change and stay relevant. The only way to achieve this agility is to be young and fearless. As a new brand we have the ability to make quick decisions and respond to the constantly evolving environment.

Our vision today is to bring the joy of travel and discovery

back to hospitality. This resonates strongly with our guests who are seeking brands that are independent and not part of the mega consolidation in the industry that they view as commodification. Our guests love that we are boutique, female-owned, community focused and built on inclusiveness and transparency.

## **What new trends are getting established in the hotel industry after the pandemic has eased and normalcy is back?**

The expectations of guests have changed forever and we are seeing a normalisation of contactless, digital transactions that are hassle free and allow for more genuine human interactions. The pandemic allowed hotel brands to connect with their guests through social media and enhance the engagement in future with the use of data analytics. At Araiya we chose to invest in technology so that we could leverage our systems to enhance the quality of our guests' stay experience through preference tracking, personalisation and customisation.

## **What is your take on the role of online retail companies in the resurgence of the hotel industry?**

We have a lot to learn from online retail companies who were adept in bridging the gap between physical and digital and transformed the buying experience through data analytics and personalisation. Using past purchases to design future offers to guests is something hotels are only beginning to tap into. The same goes for de-packaging the offerings beyond bed and breakfast to include other enhancements such as excursions, special meals, spa and sports features based on preferences.

## **What are the strategies of your brand to augment business in the post pandemic scenario?**

The pandemic allowed us to engage further, build trust and establish more regular and relevant communication channels with our guests. Our investment in technology



has not only helped drive direct bookings but also enhanced the guests' stay experience. We have been able to incorporate contactless and self-service technologies into our service offering to provide a more customer-centric experience that replaces administrative convenience with genuine engagement.

**What is the support that you look forward from the government for a smooth sail ahead?**

While domestic tourism is booming, the complexity of regulations that change from state to state has made travel expensive and cumbersome hence stifling demand particularly for business travelers. Liquidity remains a key concern for both existing hotels with subdued cash flows as well as projects under development that require fresh funding. As the largest generator of employment in the country, tourism has vast potential to contribute to the economic recovery and the industry has been lobbying for infrastructure status that will encourage investment and growth in the sector.

**How do you envision the position of your brand five years down the time line?**

We plan to grow in a sustained manner, focused on expanding in geographies such as Himachal Pradesh, Kerala and Gujarat where we already have a presence. We will also seek new destinations in wellness, spa and activity-led space to leverage our existing portfolio of golf, spa and mountain resorts. We will continue to add more properties under the Araiya flag to appeal to our existing guest database and will also be opening flagship properties under the luxury 'Essence by Araiya' and mid scale 'Soul by Araiya' brands to expand our offering in multiple segments and markets.

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**T**he Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) continues to expand its membership base across the western reaches of India. In the recent past, the Association has added hotels, restaurants, and other affiliates from Goa, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh among other states. The Association's continued efforts and support for the hospitality industry in the regions under its ambit have helped its membership base grow exponentially.

## HOTELS

Sr. No	Name of the Establishment	Address
1	Sardar Sarovar Holiday Resorts LLP	Kevadia, Garudeshwar (Taluka), Opp. Kevadiya Railway Station, Narmada, Gujarat - 393151
2	Hotel Ginger Dwarka	Highway No. 06, Village Baradiya, Taluka Okha, Dwarka, Gujarat - 361335
3	Mayfair Lake Resort	Sector 24, Atal Nagar, Raipur -492018
4	Grand Vicotria The Fern	Panchgani, Plot no 555, Narayan Lodge, Panchgani Mahabaleshwar Road, 412805,
5	Silver Estate Resort	Tikamgarh, Jhansi Road, Alampura, Madhya Pradesh 472001
6	Hotel Ranjeet	870/7 Lane No. 10, Bhandarkar Road, Gymkhana, Pune - 411014
7	Radisson Hotel, Resort & Spa	Plot No - 19, 21 & 27-29, Gold Valley Sector D, Tungarli, Lonavla
8	Singhania Srovar Portico	Great Eastern Rd, near AIIMS Hospital, Sarvodaya Nagar, Tatibandh, Raipur, Chhattisgarh 492099
9	Binori Hotel	Opp. New York tower, near Thaltej Cross Rd, Sarkhej - Gandhinagar Hwy, Bhaikakanagar, Thaltej, Ahmedabad, Gujarat 380054
10	The Fern Residency Jamnagar	JCR Cinema Pvt Ltd, Survey no.612 Theba Cross Road, Jamnagar Dwarka Bypass Road, Gujarat - 361120

## RESTAURANTS

Sr. No	Name of the Establishment	Address
1	Feelings Little Italy Foods LLP	Shop No. 21, Balewadi High Street Park, Near Express Highway, Pune - 411045

2	Kapila Garden Restaurant	174, Dhole Patil Rd, next to Ruby hall Clinic Gate, Sangamvadi, Pune - 411001
3	Thambbi Veg Restaurant	15, Runwal Heights, Nirmal Lifestyle Mall, Lal Bahadur Shastri Rd, Salpa Devi Pada, Mulund (W) - 400080
4	The Café Bistro	Shop No. 5/6 Sumeru Arc, Ghogha Rd, near Roopani Circle, Bhavnagar, Gujarat - 364001
5	Subway	Bio Green Acres Bungalows CHS, DIN Quarry Road, Chembeur (E) - 400088
6	Ruka Luxury Restaurant	462, AB Nair Rd, Juhu,
7	Circle of Crust	Phoenix Market City, 2nd Floor, Nagar Road, Viman Nagar, Pune - 411014
8	Circle of Crust	Shop No BG, 8, DC Rd, Magarpatta, Hadapsar, Pune, Maharashtra 411013
9	Swig Bar & Eatery Restaurant	Shop No. 05, Balewadi High St, Laxman Nagar, Baner, Pune, Maharashtra 411045
10	Shahi Haveli Restaurant and Bar	238 A, M. P. Nagar Zonel 1, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh - 462011

## ASSOCIATES

Sr. No.	Name of the Establishment	Address
1	Poona Hoteliers Association	13, Wilson Garden, Motilal Talera Marg, Opp. Pune Railway Station, Pune - 411001
2	Broadway Integrated Park LLP	8th Floor, Muttha Chamber II, Senapati Bapat Road, Pune - 411016
3	Spartan Engineering Industries Pvt. Ltd.	111, New Tejpal Industrial Estate, Andheri - Kurla Rd, Saki Naka, Mumbai -

## FSSAI introduces new logo for 'vegan'



The Food Safety and Standards Authority (FSSAI) of India has introduced a new logo to identify vegan products in the country on Tuesday. Green in colour, it has a V inscribed in the middle with a small plant on top of it and Vegan written at the bottom. The food regulator informed that the design resonates with the current logo, which is a green and brown dot in the middle of a square, respectively, for vegetarian and non-vegetarian products. FSSAI.

The logo has been developed by Kruti Manish Rathore of Mount Carmel College, Bangalore, pursuing Masters in Food Science and Nutrition, under the guidance of Sangeeta Pandey.

## Fortune Park Hotels to add five hotels in India by December 2022



Fortune Park Hotels, a member of ITC's hotel group, will be opening five properties with over 375 rooms in India by the end of 2022, as part of its robust expansion plans in the country. The company has 38 operating hotels with around 2,900 rooms across 34 cities of India.

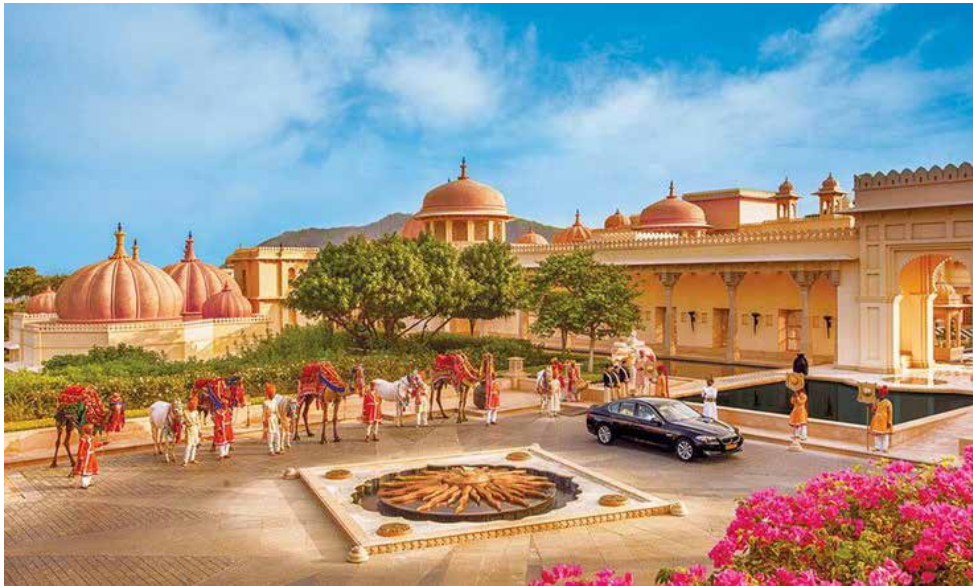
Apart from opening 5 hotels with over 375 rooms across 4 cities of India from our active pipeline by the end of December 2022, they are understood to be also in advanced negotiations for a few more projects, some of which are anticipated to open before the end of next year. These five hotels will be -- Fortune Resort Benaulim Goa, Fortune Park in Hoshiarpur (Punjab), Fortune Park in Tirupur (Tamil Nadu), Fortune Select in Goa and a Fortune Inn in Haldwani (Uttarakhand), he added. It has clearly defined sub-brands -- Fortune Select, Fortune Park, Fortune Inn and Fortune Resort -- under which the hotels are being operated by the chain.



## Lords Hotels and Resorts expands its footprints in Panchgani

Lords Hotels and Resorts announced the sign-up of its forty third hotel at Panchgani, a serene hill station near Mahabaleshwar. Deriving its name from the five hills surrounding it, Panchgani is known for offering breathtaking views of wonderful valleys, forts, hills and dams. This hotel is situated in the best part of the city, with easy access to the major sightseeing attractions and rooms overlooking the infinity pool and the valley beyond it. It will offer forty well-appointed rooms & suites with a fascinating view of the valley and also feature a conference hall, game zone, infinity pool and multi-cuisine restaurant. Pushpendra Bansal, COO, Lords Hotels and Resorts stated "We are delighted to mark our presence in one of the most popular hill stations of Maharashtra and the strawberry garden of India. We aim to deliver highest level of comfort to our esteemed guests with our True Value services". Rishi Puri, Sr. Vice President, Lords Hotels and Resorts further added "This hotel will also be a perfect destination for work and pleasure. This would surely be a Strawberry (Berry) on the cake on existing portfolio of Lords Hotels and be a boutique unit" he jested in lighter vein.

# India's Hotel Industry Continues to Regain Occupancy



After a rapid decline due to a second COVID-19 wave, India's hotel industry has seen a continued increase in occupancy due to the progressive approach to vaccinations in key markets across the country, according to preliminary data and analysis from STR.

India's daily occupancy sat in the 20-30% range in early June but improved by the end of the month with several days closer to 35% and an outlier

of 50.5% on 26 June. In July, the country took another step forward with most days in the 40-60% range and a peak of 63.2% on 17 July.

"The progressive approach to vaccinations has led to an increase in travelers and hotel demand—leisure demand continues to drive this growth," said Vidhi Godiawala, STR's business development manager for Central and South Asia. "Beyond the noticeable improvement, we

have seen a different trend in where the country is regaining occupancy. Whereas India's first recovery earlier in the year was concentrated in leisure destinations, such as Goa, heavily populated markets such as New Delhi and Mumbai have seen improvement in this latest rebound."

Mumbai's daily occupancy reached as high as 77.9% on 26 June. New Delhi occupancy improved to as high as 79.7% on 17 July. Those were each market's highest daily levels in 2021.

STR provides premium data benchmarking, analytics and marketplace insights for global hospitality sectors. Founded in 1985, STR maintains a presence in 15 countries with a corporate North American headquarters in Hendersonville, Tennessee, an international headquarters in London, and an Asia Pacific headquarters in Singapore. STR was acquired in October 2019 by CoStar Group, Inc. (NASDAQ: CSGP), the leading provider of commercial real estate information, analytics and online marketplaces. For more information, please visit [str.com](http://str.com) and [costargroup.com](http://costargroup.com).

## The Leela Palaces, Hotels And Resorts announced the opening of The Leela Gandhinagar

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts owned by Brookfield Asset Management-sponsored private real estate fund, announced the opening of The Leela Gandhinagar, in Gujarat's capital city. The hotel is built on the airspace of a conventional railway station, 22 meters above ground and is the tallest building and the largest hotel in the city. The Gandhinagar capital railway station has been redeveloped along with the 318 room 5-star hotel atop the tracks, the country's first such project.

Located near the Dandi Kutir museum, The Leela Gandhinagar provides spectacular views of the Central Vista. The hotel's lavish interiors draw influence from the rich archaeological and architectural antiquity of Gujarat. The flooring is inspired by the Adalaj Stepwell and features elements like the famous Tree of Life at Sidi Saiyyed Mosque, traditional glass beadwork, textile craftsmanship of Bandhej, Ajrakh and Batik, among various other art inspirations embellishing the

complex. The hotel houses 318 spacious rooms and suites, with contemporary interiors seamlessly blending grandeur, comfort, and modern sophistication. The bevy of suites also consists of Royal and 4 Presidential Suites each offering a distinct magnitude of unparalleled opulence, ultra-modern facilities, and luxurious amenities. The Leela Gandhinagar delivers a rich culinary experience with dining venues spanning across a host of cuisines served in picturesque environs.

# Hotel Industry Witnesses Growth in Revenue Per Room in second quarter

The hospitality industry in India witnessed a growth of 84.7% in revenue per available room (RevPAR) during the second quarter of 2021 (April-June) as compared to Q2 2020, according to property consultant JLL India.

However, on a pan India level, there has been a decline by 53.9% in Q2 2021 RevPAR as compared to Q1 2021, because of the restrictions imposed due to the second wave of the pandemic.

Goa emerged as the RevPAR leader in absolute terms in Q2 2021 with a growth of 360% as compared to the very low base of Q2 2020. Additionally, Mumbai witnessed the highest growth in occupancy level registering 17.7% increase in Q2 2021 over the same period last year. Chennai witnessed 99.6% growth in RevPAR followed by Hyderabad with 89.6% increase compared to the same period of the previous year.

Demand and supply of operational inventory in six major cities increased by 186% and 14% respectively in the second quarter of 2021 as compared to the same period last year.

According to JLL's Hotel Momentum India (HMI) Q2 2021, a quarterly hospitality sector monitor, y-o-y growth witnessed in the sector during Q2 2021 is primarily due to the low base effect of the complete nation-wide lockdown in Q2 2020. During the months of April and May this year, the country witnessed the imposition of full and partial lockdowns as well as travel restrictions in many states.

However, as restrictions were eased between the end of May and June, a sharper recovery in leisure demand was seen in comparison to the same period last year. The recovery of the sector has been primarily driven by branded chains in the leisure

segment performing notably well. Guest preferences have changed significantly, and people are preferring to stay at secluded low-density properties.

JLL said that it expects the leisure and wedding segments to continue to drive the sector in the short to medium term. As offices open and travel restrictions ease further, along with the rise in the pace of vaccination, corporate travel is expected to gain momentum towards the end of the year.

In terms of hotel signings, a total of 20 hotels comprising 2,100 keys were signed in Q2 of 2021, which is three times the number of rooms signed in Q2 2020. Furthermore, domestic operators dominated signings over international operators with the ratio of 60:40 in terms of inventory volume.

## The Fern Hotels & Resorts ties up with SpiceJet's IFE platform SpiceScreen



The Fern Hotels & Resorts, India's leading environmentally sensitive hotel chain has partnered with SpiceJet's inflight entertainment platform, SpiceScreen, to showcase its selected properties on the platform. SpiceScreen gives access to an amazing collection of unlimited entertainment, podcasts, magazines, and games along with an exclusive travel section that highlights hotels, vacations, and mid-air cab bookings.

SpiceJet guests would be able to make their hotel bookings on our brand website booking engine. All 55 participating hotels will offer SpiceJet guests booking their hotel rooms through this platform a flat 20% off on the hotel's BAR rates. The guests will also get a 20% discount on food and beverages and complimentary room upgrades & late check-out till 4 pm, both subject to availability. This is a promo offer.

# FHRAI-IHM Gets Affiliated With NCHMCT, Noida



The FHRAI-Institute of Hospitality Management (FHRAI-IHM) is now affiliated with the National Council of Hotel Management & Catering Technology (NCHMCT), Noida an organisation of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. NCHMCT, Noida presently has over seventyfive affiliated Central, State and private Hotel Management institutes in the country. FHRAI-IHM becomes the first private institution that is run by India's apex Hospitality Association – Federation of Hotel &

Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) to be affiliated with the NCHMCT. FHRAI-IHM will offer a 3-year B.Sc. in Hospitality and Hotel Administration, 18-month Diploma in Food Production, 18-month Diploma in Bakery and Confectionary and 18-month Diploma in Food & Beverages Service.

India's only private Hospitality Institute that's run by the country's apex Hospitality Association is now also affiliated with NCHMCT, Noida an organisation of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. This development reinforces our commitment to offer students the best in Hospitality Management education. FHRAI-IHM is founded by FHRAI comprising of its four regional hotel and restaurant Associations in the North, East, West and South. FHRAI is the world's

3rd largest Hospitality Association. FHRAI-IHM offers the best-in-class training infrastructure backed by experienced and learned faculty for carving out a great future for students in Hospitality.

FHRAI-IHM is fully equipped to provide students with all necessary inputs in the area of aptitude formation, personality development and brings the right value-add for building careers in the hospitality domain. We are also updating and incorporating the technologically advanced practices prevalent in Hospitality Industry. Hopefully, we will soon have put this phase of lockdowns and restrictions behind us and pray that tourism bounces back to health. Hospitality has and will continue to play a major role in the progress of education and continue to be a great avenue for students aspiring to make a career in the field.

## Second Covid-19 wave hit BMC's khau galli plan



The plan was to set up khau gallis in all 24 administrative wards of the city. However, the city was hit with second wave days later with cases starting to increase from February

2021-22 budget, BMC reserved ₹200 crore for creating food hubs including beautification of footpaths, beautifying space below flyovers etc.

2021. According to BMC officials, a policy for khau gallis was to be framed but there is no development on the same as the plan is on hold for now.

The idea of food trucks was pushed by state tourism minister Aaditya Thackeray who announced having food trucks across the city to boost tourism. In the

BMC officials said after initial discussion in January, a policy was to be formulated wherein 10-12 trucks, selling different cuisines, will come and park trucks between 6pm and 11pm. For this, several wards in the city are looking at small streets which BMC can afford to shut between 6pm and 11pm and divert traffic to alternative routes.

Meanwhile, the hospitality industry feels they should be consulted before such a policy is implemented. Pradeep Shetty, senior vice-president of Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI), said, "Our industry is the most impacted due to the Covid lockdown, and business has been hit for hotel industry since the past 15 months. We expect that such a policy is drafted after taking suggestion from hospitality industry to ensure there is level playing ground.

# Pandemic Impact Severe on Mumbai's Hotel Industry



The second wave of the pandemic caused by the variant of the COVID-19 virus, which was first identified in the United Kingdom has been the most severe in India. As a result, travel and tourism have been halted across the country, and the impact on the hotel industry is immense, especially in major cities such as Mumbai. There

are approximately 300 hotels in various classes across Mumbai. The majority of the hotels (22.3%) are luxury, followed by upper-midscale at 20.25%, according to the data from STR, CoStar's hospitality analytics firm. Renaissance Mumbai Convention Centre Hotel is the largest hotel in Mumbai with 600

rooms, followed by JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar with 585 rooms.

Prior to the pandemic, hotels in Mumbai posted an average of 77% occupancy in 2019, which was the highest full-year level on record back to 2013. There was a steady 1% to 2% increase in full-year occupancy each of the past five years. However, Mumbai hotels lost business share in 2020 and 2021. As a result of the pandemic, Mumbai hotel occupancy reached a low of 14.5% in April 2020. Occupancy has ticked up since then, and reached its highest level of the pandemic so far in February 2021, at 56.8%. It dipped again since February, to 37.2% in April.

Revenue per available room, a key performance index, also reached the lowest level on record for full-year 2020, at 2,617.91 Indian rupees (\$35.69), according to STR data. Due to the disruption caused by the pandemic, it will take some time for the country to get back to normalcy, but there is a glimpse of hope as vaccinations become more accessible.

## FHRAI and EEMA to fight against intimidation on copyrights issues by agencies

In order to find a lasting solution to the alleged intimidating tactics of copyright agencies on broadcasting AV Content in hotels as part of the banquets and other events in hotels, the Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) and Event and Entertainment Management Association (EEMA) have decided to work together.

The two associations have said that they will collaborate to address the common challenges faced by industry players against the oppressive practices of certain copyright societies or their agents. Through the collaboration, the associations aim

to arrive at tariff rationalization in copyrights through a joint front and plan to engage with all concerned authorities regarding the issue that has been plaguing the industry for quite some time.

"Events and entertainment as an industry is a natural extension of the Hospitality ecosystem. EEMA and FHRAI's collaboration will strengthen the existing ecosystem and synergise the relationship for a progressive working culture. One of our immediate plans is to make joint efforts to address the Copyright Issues for the benefit of our members by creating a cohesive

strategy to address the common challenges across both industries effectively. Currently, the copyright societies impose unregulated tariffs and intimidate businesses with arbitrary non-compliance notices. There is no mechanism to challenge these agents and by coming together we are aiming to bring about tariff rationalization in copyrights," said Mr. Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, Vice President, FHRAI.

The two associations have plans to submit joint representations to all concerned government authorities regarding the copyright issue.

# ITC Hotel CEO, Anil Chadha, expects huge traction for the newly launched brand, Storii



Anil Chadha the Divisional Chief Executive of ITC Hotels said that the response has been “phenomenal” for the new brands launched a month-and-a-half ago, especially for Storii. He foresees huge traction particularly for their newly-launched boutique hotel brand, Storii. Recently, the company introduced two new hotel brands - Memento and Storii - that will consolidate the boutique luxury hotel space and boutique hotels at unique locations, respectively. Participating in a panel discussion at the HICSA 2021 (Hotel investment conference for South Asia), organised by Hotelivate in Delhi, Chadha said that the response

has been “phenomenal” for both the brands, especially for Storii, since they launched the brand a month-and-a-half ago.

A lot of new investors are investing in small boutique hotels at many emerging leisure destinations and want good brands to manage those assets. And since these properties come with a small inventory, most big brands don't consider them worth dealing with. But as per reports, with Storii, ITC Hotels is actually looking at building a network of exactly the same kind of properties with a hub and spoke model in coming years.

## Hotel industry likely to clock 45-50 percent of pre-Covid revenues in FY2022: Report

The hotel industry is expected to clock at least 45-50 percent of pre-Covid revenues in this financial year as demand has recovered sharply post the second wave of the pandemic aided by easing of restrictions during the July-September period, according to a report. “The hotel industry is expected to clock at least 45-50 percent of pre-Covid revenues in FY22. Further operating profits in the current fiscal will be aided by improved operating leverage and sustenance of some of the cost-optimisation measures undertaken last fiscal,” ICRA Assistant Vice President and Sector Head Vinutaa S said. However, she said, pre-Covid revenues and profits are likely only by the financial year 2023-24, as a result of sustenance of some cost-saving measures, the breakeven is expected to reduce and hotels are likely to report pre-Covid margins of 85-90 percent of revenues going forward.

The situation is still evolving and remains contingent on the efficacy of vaccines and a potential third Covid-19 wave, the ICRA report added. Further, the report said

occupancy has picked up, with the August-21 pan-India premium hotel occupancy at 44-46 percent. For the first five months of the financial year 2021-22, the same is estimated to be 32-34 percent as against 46-48 percent in the fourth quarter of the financial year 2020-21, it said.

The Pan-India ARRs are estimated at INR 3,850-3,950 during first five months of the financial year 2021-22 and still remain at a 25-30 percent discount to pre-Covid levels, although some high-end hotels and leisure destinations have even seen average room rates (ARRs) return to pre-Covid levels in August-September, the ICRA report said. Travel during the festive season will act as a key demand booster for the industry in the third quarter of the financial year 2021-22, it noted.

“While the first few months were impacted, the industry witnessed faster-than-expected ramp up in second quarter FY21, because of lower restrictions, high vaccination pace and pent-up demand, which resulted in revenge travel. Demand in

the last few months has come from staycations, weddings and travel to driveable leisure destinations, and from special purpose groups,” Vinutaa said. There is the new trend of biscations, which is working from a resort, that is picking up, she noted.

“Business travel pickup has been mainly to project sites or manufacturing locations from specific sectors. The Covid-related demand which was prevalent April mid to June mid, waned from July and we are seeing real demand pick up. The situation is evolving, and sustenance of demand will depend on the efficacy of vaccines and a potential third Covid wave. The industry is currently cautiously optimistic,” she added.

ICRA continues to have a negative outlook on the Indian hotel industry, as the sustenance of the demand pickup in the recent months remains to be seen. A potential third wave and its impact on travel and hotel occupancies cannot be ruled out, it added.

# Noesis Capital Advisors signs up with the upcoming 300-room Ramada Plaza by Wyndham in Mumbai



Noesis, one of Asia's leading hotel investment advisory firms, has signed up with the 300-room Ramada Plaza by Wyndham Mumbai Sahar, which announced its June 2022-opening a few days ago, as reported here by ET HospitalityWorld earlier this week.

This hotel is conveniently located next to Mumbai International Airport

and will be positioned as an upscale full-service transit hotel. The hotel, featuring well-appointed suites and rooms, a lobby lounge, an all-day dining, meetings and event spaces, a business centre, wellness areas, kids' entertainment areas, and an outdoor swimming pool, will cater to domestic and foreign corporate travellers, transient leisure travellers,

crew, and airline businesses among others.

Nandivardhan Jain, founder and chief executive officer, Noesis Capital Advisors, said, "We are proud to successfully advise our client Masa group, first by facilitating the acquisition of this magnificent 300 rooms hotel at brownfield stage, then giving development consultancy and now facilitating brand affiliation tie-up with Wyndham Hotels. We are committed to this hotel and would extend our thanks to Masa group leadership for restoring faith in the Noesis team for appointing us as their exclusive consulting partners. We are excited to give pre-opening advice and asset management services to this hotel."

"This is the flagship hotel of the Masa Hotel Group, and we are very proud to have partnered Wyndham Hotels & Resorts to bring one of their most popular brands Ramada Plaza in the vicinity of Mumbai International Airport at Sahar," added Sabir Rassul, director, Masa Hotels Private Limited said.

## Wyndham to open newly built Ramada Plaza hotel during summer 2022

Global hospitality major Wyndham announced its plans to further strengthen its presence in the country by opening a 300-room newly built hotel, Ramada Plaza by Wyndham Mumbai Sahar, located at the Mumbai airport. The new property, expected to open in summer 2022, will be operated by hotel management company MASA Hotels, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts said in a statement.

Masa Hotels, part of the Masa Group that has ventured in trading, electronics, hotels and shopping mall developments, is headquartered in Mumbai with business operations spread across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Wyndham, with nearly 50 hotels all across India and three in Mumbai, has 34 additional hotels in the development pipeline across the Indian sub-continent. Wyndham

Hotels & Resorts has around 9,000 hotels across nearly 95 countries with a leading presence in the economy and mid-scale segments of the lodging industry. The company operates a portfolio of 21 hotel brands, including Super 8, Days Inn, Ramada, Microtel, La Quinta, Baymont, Wingate, AmericInn, Hawthorn Suites, Trademark Collection and Wyndham.



# Information Technology should be proactively used to promote tourism at domestic and international levels: Lok Sabha Speaker

Lok Sabha Speaker, Shri Om Birla, delivered keynote Address at the programme "Tourism for Inclusive Growth" organized by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India on September 27 to mark the World Tourism Day, 2021. Union Minister of Tourism, Culture & DoNER Shri G. Kishan Reddy and MoS for Tourism Shri Shripad Yesso Naik also were present on the occasion while a video message of Secretary General, WTO, Shri Zurab Pololikashvili was also played. Secretary Tourism Shri Arvind Singh; DG Tourism, Shir Kamala Vardhana Rao; Head UNEP, ShAtulBagai; senior officers of the Tourism Ministry and representatives of travel and hospitality industry addressed on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Birla said that post-Covid, the tourism sector is reviving in India at a faster pace. He further said that committed and collective efforts will ensure that India will emerge as the best tourist destination in the world. He suggested that ambitious and sustained efforts are needed to promote rural tourism. This will strengthen rural economy by creating demands for handicrafts and other rural products. Similarly, tourist destinations which are still secrets should be brought on the tourism map of India so that more and more people know about these destinations, he suggested. On this occasion, Shri Birla launched NIDHI 2.0 (National Integrated Database of



Hospitality Industry) and released "India Tourism Statistics: At a Glance, 2021.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and The Responsible Tourism Society of India (RTSOI) have signed an MoU to actively promote and support 'sustainability initiatives' in the tourism sector, which was also exchanged at the event.

The Union Tourism Minister, Shri G Kishan Reddy while addressing the gathering said that the tourism sector is one of those few sectors which have suffered a lot due to this pandemic and the early resumption of tourism is very important for the recovery and growth of this sector. He lauded the efforts of the ministry and said "The National Integrated Database of Hospitality Industry ( NIDHI) is the ministry's portal to register accommodation units in the country and as on date 44,024 units have been registered on the portal

which was activated on 08.06.2020".

Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General of the UNWTO, in his video message highlighted that tourism can help our societies to recover from the effect of pandemic and it can deliver hope to those who need it most. In many parts of the world, tourism has slowly started and the growth of tourism must benefit every sector from big airlines to small family business and from the largest cities to the poor communities. This is what it means when we say we will leave nobody behind. He further added that "moving to the future, inclusive decisions will be key to the growth of our sector". Secretary, Tourism Sh Arvind Singh said that the Tourism Ministry is working tirelessly to revive the tourism sector which suffered greatly due to the Covid pandemic. It is possible to revive the tourism sector quickly by reviving demand especially of domestic tourism, he said.



Smt Jyoti Mayal of Federation of Association of Indian Tourism & Hospitality ; Shri Rakesh Mathur , Founding Member & Honorary President of RTSOI and Shri Atul Bagai, Head UNEP India also expressed their views on how to revive the tourism sector in the post Covid scenario as well as promote Responsible and Sustainable Tourism that benefits the person at the last mile.

# FSSAI gives time until Jan 2022 for compliance with 'print licence no. on invoices order'

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has deferred the implementation of the order mandating food businesses to print licence numbers on receipts, invoices, cash memo or bills of retail sales of food products.

The FSSAI has extended the date of implementation of the order until January 1, 2022.

The FSSAI has issued an order in this regard and stated, "In view of representation from various industries associations & stakeholders, it has

been decided with the approval from Competent Authority that the enforcement of said order will come into effect from 1st January, 2022." The FSSAI has taken the decision after various associations involved in the food trade sought more time for compliance with the order issued in June 2021 that sought printing of licence numbers on sales bills.

The food authority reasoned that presently, FSSAI number was compulsory to be displayed

on packaged food labels but the issue lies especially in the case of establishments such as restaurants, mithai shops, caterers, even retail stores etc. FSS (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Regulations were amended to mandate display of Food Safety Display Boards at all times at prominent places in case of restaurants. However there remains a deficit of mechanism for consumers to know the FSSAI number of the service or the product provider.

# FSSAI to conduct pan-India surveillance to ascertain quality of food products



The Indian food regulator, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, has decided to conduct a pan-India surveillance of food products and floated tender inviting bids for the same. The survey was required to ascertain the quality of food products sold across the country for their conformity with standards set by the FSSAI.

According to the FSSAI, the pan-India surveillance of food products was needed to find out the extent of non-confirmation with respect to contaminants and adulterants adversely affecting the quality & safety of food products and to arrive at the root cause of the problem.

"It includes regular surveillance on variety of food products i.e. spices, jaggery, tea, vegetables, fruits etc.," reads the FSSAI statement.

The country-wide survey would include big cities, districts, tehsils with an option to add-up to 25% more numbers of places.

The last date for submission of bid documents was Oct 21, 2021, 3:00 PM. FSSAI stated that the bids under the two bid system (Technical Bid & Commercial Bid) should be submitted on the government's e-procurement portal by the due date and time.

After the award of tender, the draft report based on the lab analysis would be submitted within 35 days after the picking up of samples followed by the final report after submission of the draft report. The release of the final report would be done in next one week.

# Pride Hotel announces expansion of Group's portfolio



Pride Group of Hotels has announced the plans to expand its portfolio to 50 hotels by 2022. The group, at present, has presence in 34 locations and boasts of over 3,200 keys. Once

the new openings are complete, Pride Hotels will have 50 properties and over 5,000 keys across various geographical regions. It also plans to add 72 rooms and 35 rooms at its five-star properties in Nagpur and Pune respectively.

According to company sources, the focus will be on an asset-light model for our expansion with a major slice of the portfolio managed directly by us and most

of these upcoming properties will be located in popular tourism and pilgrimage circuits primarily in Tier 2 and tier 3 cities. The new portfolio includes resorts and hotels in Mussoorie, Daman, Dapoli, Dehradun, Amritsar, Dwarka, Aatapi, Chandigarh, Faridabad, Gurgaon, Ujjain, Ratlam, Vadodara etc. The Pride Resort in Aatapi is an amusement park plus a resort located in between Vadodara and Kewadia (famous for the Statue of Unity).

# FSSAI issues draft on manual of methods of analysis for dairy products

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has issued a draft on 'Revised Manual of Methods of Analysis of Foods, for Dairy and Dairy Products'. Stakeholders can comment on the same by October 26.

The draft includes 127 analysis methods for liquid milk, cream, dahi & yoghurt, cheese & cheese products, channa/paneer, ice cream & related products, condensed/evaporated milk, dried milk products, khoa, butter, milk fat products, chakka & shrikhand, whey powder, edible casein products, colostrum and, others including determination of melamine

and cyanuric acid in milk and milk products, preparation of standard solution of sodium hydroxide, hydrochloric acid and silver nitrate.

According to the FSSAI, the test methods given in the manual were standardised, validated and taken from national or international methods or recognised specifications. However it would be the responsibility of the respective testing laboratory to verify the performance of these methods onsite and ensure that it gives proper results before putting these methods into use.

A senior official with the FSSAI stated, the 'Revised Manual of Methods of Analysis' of Foods - Dairy and Dairy Products' has been approved by the Scientific Panel on Methods of Sampling & Analysis in its 34th meeting held in July this year.

"Before the manual was finalised, the comments, views, suggestions of the stakeholders were invited," read the FSSAI statement adding that only such of the comments, suggestions would be taken into consideration as were furnished with supporting scientific evidence.

## Radisson Hotel introduces 'Meetha', premium retail outlet in Mumbai



After the successful launch of Meetha, a premium offering of curated Indian sweets by Radisson Hotels in Delhi-NCR last year, the Group opened its first premium retail outlet at Radisson Mumbai Goregaon. Further launch plans for Meetha include cities like Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Bhopal, Amritsar, Guwahati and Pune. With the expansion of Meetha, the Group aims to strategically strengthen its Food and Beverages (F&B) portfolio and pioneer innovation in the lucrative branded mithai (sweets) industry in India. The outlet offers over 15 packaging options suitable for various occasions like weddings, festivities, social and corporate gifting with an exclusive Classic Rose Gold packaging for liquid Bengali mithais. The orders are available for take away or doorstep delivery which is facilitated keeping all safety protocols in mind.

## HRAWI requests Maharashtra govt to restore operation timings for hotels and restaurants in the state

The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) has submitted a representation to the Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Chief Secretary Sitaram Kunte and to the Environment, Tourism and Protocol Minister Aditya Thackeray requesting for an extension of

operation timings for hotels and restaurants in the State. The Association has recommended restoring the operation timings of hotels and restaurants as per the license held by establishments, on all days of the week from Monday through Sunday. It has also

requested the Government offers relaxation on the condition that restaurant staff be fully vaccinated for resumption of operations.

The Association has stated that since October 2020, restaurants in Maharashtra were allowed to operate under restrictions at 50 per cent capacity with restrictions on timings. But the second wave of the pandemic led to another complete lockdown and later more severe restrictions were imposed on restaurants.

# HRAWI Appoints Kunal Gujral as its Secretary General

The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) has appointed Mr. Kunal Premkumar Gujral as its Secretary General, 18th October 2021. Mr. Gujral has over two decades of industry experience across F&B, sales and marketing, and prior to joining here had served at the Riverside Resorts and Holiday Homes Pvt. Ltd. in Goa as its Vice President of Revenue & Sales. Mr. Gujral has worked in some of the finest and renowned hospitality brands in the country including Bharat Hotels Limited, Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts, Park Hotels and IHHR Hospitality Pvt. Ltd., among others.

“As Secretary General of HRAWI, my role entails liaising and facilitating the various processes and functions of the office for efficient management of the Association and its affairs. Other than this, policy advocacy with the Government, membership service and most importantly carrying out all such tasks to mitigate the hardships caused to members due to the pandemic will be on priority. I will do my best to carry out the functions with efficiency and I thank the EC for reposing faith in me. My experience in hospitality has equipped me with the requisite industry knowledge and it will be my endeavor to put this knowledge to optimum use for the benefit of the Association and its members,” says Mr. Kunal Gujral, Secretary General, HRAWI.

Trained in Food & Beverage service, Housekeeping, Front Office and Food Production, Mr. Kunal Gujral holds a Bachelor’s degree from the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology & Applied Nutrition (IHM) – Mumbai.



## No License of Sound Recording Required for the Marriage Related Functions and Religious Ceremonies

Dear Members of the Hotel and Restaurant Association Western India,

This is in response to the queries received from a large number of members regarding requirement of license of sound recording for the marriage related functions and religious ceremonies.

Please be informed that as per the enclosed Public Notice of Ministry of Commerce & Industry dated 27th August, 2019, it has been clarified that in view of the provisions contained in Section 52(1) (za) of the Copyright Act, it is not required to take license of any sound recordings in the course of religious ceremony including a marriage procession and other social festivities associated with a marriage.



The sub section (1) ( za) of the above said section states that :

‘ The performance of literary, dramatic or musical work or the communication to the public of such work or of a sound recording in the course of any bona fide religious ceremony or an official ceremony held by the Central Government or

the State Government or any local authority’.

Explanation.-- For the purpose of this clause, religious ceremony including a marriage procession other Social festivities associated with the marriage.’

Thus, members are informed that in case a marriage procession and other social festivities associated with a marriage or any event associated with a religious ceremony is taking place at your premises, you need not obtain; or insist on the event organizer or guest to obtain any license from the copyright owner(s) or their assignees/licensees, such as IPRS, PPL, Novex etc.

# International tourism may open by Oct 15, announcement soon: Union Minister of State for Tourism

International tourists may be able to travel to India by October 15 and an announcement is likely to be made by the Central government soon, Union Minister of State for Tourism Shripad Naik said on October 2nd. In a Gandhi Jayanthi function, Naik told that as corona decreases, national and international tourism will be resumed and the announcement will be made

soon and that there is a possibility of it beginning after October 15. "International flights have started and we have requested for charter flights to resume by a particular date so that people can book trips to India and nowhere else," he added.

International charter flights account for a bulk of the foreign tourist

footfalls to Goa. Earlier in September, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant had forwarded a request made by travel and tourism industry stakeholders to the Union Home Affairs Ministry urging the latter to grant permissions to international charter flights at the earliest.

# Religious Tourism: PM Modi inaugurates multiple projects in Somnath

Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated and laid foundation stone of multiple projects in Somnath on August 20. Inaugurated projects include the Somnath Promenade, reconstructed temple precinct of Old (Juna) Somnath and Somnath Exhibition Centre. While inaugurating the projects, PM highlighted that, India needs to strengthen religious tourism. It will provide employment to youth and enable them to get knowledge about our past.

Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone for Shree Parvati

Temple on the occasion.

This temple is proposed to be constructed with a total outlay of Rupees 30 crore. It comprises of construction of temple in Sompura Salats Style, development of Garbha Griha and a Nritya Mandap.

Somnath temple is situated in Veraval (Somnath City), Saurashtra on the western coast of Gujarat. This temple is believed to be the first of twelve Jyotirlinga shrines of Shiva. The temple is an important pilgrimage and tourist spot of Gujarat. It has been reconstructed multiple times in the past following repeated

destruction by Muslim invaders and rulers. Temple in its present form was reconstructed in Chalukya style of Hindu temple architecture. Its construction was completed in May 1951. Its construction was started on the orders of Home Minister of India Vallabhbhai Patel. Current chairman of Somnath Mandir trust is Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Name of the Veraval city was changed to Somnath city on March 30, 2021. It is a municipality and headquarters of Gir Somnath district in Gujarat. This city is the hub of fishing industries in India.

# Noesis signs with Ramada Plaza by Wyndham



Hotel Advisory  
Redefined

Noesis, Asia's leading hotel investment advisory firm having experience of more than a decade of providing integrated professional services to the hotel owner, investors operators, financial institutions,

unveiled the facilitation of one more landmark hotel brand affiliation signing of a 300-room hotel with Wyndham Hotel & Resorts. The hotel will be branded as Ramada Plaza by Wyndham Mumbai Sahar. The hotel is

owned by Masa hotels, the group having a portfolio of 10 hotels across Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and India.

This hotel is located next to Mumbai International Airport. The hotel is scheduled to open by June 2022. The hotel will cater to domestic and foreign corporate travellers, transient leisure travellers, crew, and airline businesses among others.

# FSSAI inaugurates third National Food Laboratory at JNPT in Navi Mumbai



The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) inaugurated the third National Food Laboratory at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) Nhava Sheva in Navi Mumbai, in presence of Rita Teotia, Chairperson, and Arun Singhal, CEO, FSSAI, recently.

This is the third lab which will be now operated along with two existing national laboratories, namely National Food Laboratory (NFL) currently operational at Ghaziabad and Kolkata. Dr Vasi Reddy, chairman, Vimta Labs Ltd, Harita Vasireddy, MD, Vimta Labs Ltd, and a number of partners and stakeholders from the scientific community, food businesses, importers and corporates also participated in the inauguration function.

National Food Laboratory, Ghaziabad,

is being run in PPP mode, while NFL, Kolkata, is being operated by FSSAI. NFL, JNPT, has come up in a Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) mode with Set up, Operate and Transfer (SOT) model. It is the first such initiative in the food laboratory, while the PPP partner in which only the space has been provided by FSSAI for establishing the food laboratory and the PPP partner is responsible for meeting the capital and operational expenditure. Part of the revenue generated through testing of samples will be shared with FSSAI.

Vimta Labs Ltd, a reputed name for testing in the field of food and drugs will be the PPP partner responsible for operating the NFL at JNPT. The same model has been worked out at the Chennai Port Trust (CPT), and the laboratory

at CPT will run by National Commodities Pvt Ltd (NCML). With this, FSSAI will have its own laboratories in East, West, North and South of India. These are apart from more than 200 NABL accredited FSSAI notified laboratories that form the National food testing network.

National Food Laboratory, JNPT, is located on an area of 11,873 sq ft at the ground and first floor of Trainees Hostel Building in JNPT Township, Navi Mumbai. The lab is a well furnished lab with state-of-the equipment required for sample preparation, basic food testing and contaminants and adulterants. The laboratory has high end equipment with the latest technologies and facilities to conduct chemical and microbiological analysis as per global accreditation standards for testing and calibration. The laboratory has the capability to analyse up to 9000 samples/month.

National Food Laboratory, JNPT, will be applying for NABL accreditation under the FSSAI-NABL integration assessment category, initially for eight food product categories and will subsequently apply for enhanced scope of testing based on the number and type of samples. It is expected that the laboratory will obtain the NABL accreditation by the end of November 2021 and become fully operational immediately thereafter.

## Inox partners with ITC Kitchens of India for country wide multiplex menu

India's leading multiplex chain, Inox Leisure Ltd, unveiled its partnership with ITC Ltd.'s ready-to-eat, gourmet brand Kitchens of India to introduce a re-defined innovative food and beverage experience across all multiplexes located across India.

With this first-of-its-kind partnership,

the brand aims to add a new experience in the cinema halls through a trusted range of 100% natural, Indian gastronomical delights. The new menu additions will provide newer home-style options to customers, whether ordering at cinemas, or from the comfort of their homes through

food-ordering apps.

The brand claims the menu has a range of exotic dishes which capture the rich heritage of authentic Indian cuisine including Vegetable Pulao, Hyderabadi Vegetable Biryani, Dal Makhani, Rajma Masala, Pindi Chana and Steamed Basmati Rice.

# Maharashtra drive makes licence or registration for food businesses must



Maharashtra's Food and Drug Administration, Brihanmumbai Division, has stated that FBOs can operate only with a valid licence or registration under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. Hence all food businesses have been advised to get licence or registration from FSSAI as applicable in order to do food business. In this regard, the Brihanmumbai Division has undertaken a special drive from October 1-7 to check licences / registrations of food businesses under its jurisdiction.

FDA in a press communiqué has informed that food businesses with

an annual turnover of more than Rs 12 lakh were required to obtain a licence while traders whose annual turnover was less than Rs 12 lakh should register with the FSSAI. "It is proposed to file a case against food traders who were found doing business without a valid licence or registration. the penalty for such offence is fine of up to Rs 5 lakh and imprisonment for up to six months," the communique read.

The FDA has also explained that to apply online for licence / registration, the FBO has to upload the required documents, in the prescribed format online by

paying the fee. The website [www.foscoss.fssai.gov.in](http://www.foscoss.fssai.gov.in) was available for applying for licence or registration online and there was detailed guidance available for the required documents and similar matters, so that one can apply without any help.

Further the FDA has stated that food businesses having licence or registration should renew their licence / registration immediately before the expiration date. Also, food businesses who were eligible for a food business licence but are registered, should get a licence immediately to avoid any action by the FDA.

## IHCL opens Taj Lakefront, Bhopal



Indian Hotels Company (IHCL) opened its new hotel, Taj Lakefront in Bhopal. The hotel draws inspiration from the rich architecture, history and culture of Madhya Pradesh. With the addition of this hotel, IHCL will have seven hotels in Madhya Pradesh.

The 152-room Taj Lakefront, introduces two signature restaurants to Bhopal – Machan, the all-day diner, and House of Ming, with its Chinese cuisine. Guests can also enjoy cocktails at Infinity Lounge and Bar and a selection of brews and bakes at Emperor Lounge. The hotel also houses a banquet, conferencing space for events, Jiva spa, a gym and a tennis court.

# FSSAI makes BIS certification must for infant food trade



The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has decided to make 'BIS certification' mandatory for food businesses involved in 'infant food trade'. The food regulator has decided to amend the prohibition and restriction on sales regulations and issued a draft called Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Amendment Regulations, 2021 that seeks mandatory 'BIS certification' for such trade. The amendment reads, "No person shall manufacture, sell, store or exhibit for sale food for infant nutrition, except under Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Certification Mark, wherever BIS standards

available". The FSSAI has also sought comments from the stakeholders on this amendment.

Meanwhile, on request from food businesses, the time for compliance with the provisions of the Food for Infant Nutrition Regulations notified in December 2020, has been extended until April 1, 2022, against July 1, 2021, under the notified regulations. The reason was said to be the representations received by the apex food regulator from the stakeholders seeking extension for the compliance. The stakeholders requested FSSAI that since the entire portfolio requires reformulations

including stability studies, which is a mammoth and time consuming activity, therefore they require time to comply with all the provisions of the new regulations.

These regulations prescribe the compositions of infant formula to be given to the infants during the first six months, infant food to be given to infants after six months of age upto to 24 months of age and Food for special medical purpose intended for infants. The regulation also prescribes conformity requirements with respect to various parameters like moisture, total protein, fat, carbohydrates, minerals and vitamins along with optional ingredients which are ordinarily found in human milk. Besides, the regulation also prescribes food additives, emulsifiers, acidity regulators, that can be used in the preparation of the infant formula and specifies the labelling requirements for such food products.

## Vizergy expands alliance with Sabre Hospitality Solutions



Vizergy Digital, a provider of digital marketing and sales for the hospitality industry, announced a new agreement with Sabre Hospitality Solutions, a technology and software company for the hotel business. Expanding Vizergy's reach with Sabre Hospitality customers, it will make it easier for hoteliers to access Vizergy's custom web development and analytic services. Leveraging Sabre's e-commerce tools and Vizergy's websites will help hoteliers increase

reach, engagement, and conversion of direct bookings. This mutually beneficial agreement is expected to strengthen customers' businesses and help hoteliers provide the personalised offers that guests expect. Together, the companies are helping hoteliers access the technology required to reach a new level of competitive advantage.

Sabre Hospitality Solutions serves more than 42,000 hotels, resorts,

and chains spanning nearly 200 countries and territories. Large global chains to independent properties rely on its products to drive commercial performance and operational excellence on its platforms. Sabre's SynXis Platform provides hoteliers with a unified platform solution that drives operational benefits, such as economies of scale and speed of innovation, and commercial performance to enable the creation of highly differentiated experiences for both the brand and guest. Vizergy serves the global hospitality industry with conversion optimised website design and competitive tools that can maximise revenue.



# VITSKamats Group launches 'VITS The Somnath Gateway' in the pilgrim town of Somnath



VITS Kamats Group has launched VITS The Somnath Gateway in the temple town of Somnath. Located in close proximity to the Somnath

temple, it offers a peaceful abode for pilgrims with all the necessary devotional settings. The hotel can be easily accessed from, NH

151 (Rajkot-Somnath Highway) Diu Airport, Rajkot Airport, and Somnath Railway Station making it an ideal choice for travelers in this region. The hotel claims it offers the perfect setting for both business and leisure travelers with places of interest like the Somnath Jyotirlinga temple, Somnath beach, and museum located in close proximity and is ideal for business travellers as well as leisure travelers with a host of facilities for both segments.

VITS The Somnath Gateway consists of 70 rooms and suites, meant for solo travelers, pilgrims, families, as well as friends. The in-house KAMATS Original family Restaurant adds value to the hotel. VITS Hotels is presently operational through 15 properties located in Mumbai, Thane, Upper Thane, Silvassa, Ankleshwar, Chakan, Aurangabad, Dwarka, Nanded, Morbi, Dapoli, Goa, Aurangabad (Purple Bed), Daman (Purple Bed), and Somnath.

# Café Noir launches its first outpost in Mumbai



Bangalore's favourite French café, Café Noir, is set to open its doors to gourmands from the city of dreams, Mumbai. Situated at the iconic Lodha World One Towers in Lower Parel, the cafe will serve its signature range of French and Italian bistro-style food, along with a selection of fine coffees, teas, and wines. The cafe is slated to open in the last week of October 2021.

Established in 2009, at the premium UB City Mall in Bangalore, it now has four outposts in the Garden City. This will be its first outlet, outside of Bangalore. Café Noir has been a favourite spot of guests in Bangalore seeking a wholesome and relaxed dining experience.

# Mementos, the new luxury brand from ITC Hotels



To address the requirement for boutique luxury hotels across various destinations, ITC Hotels is all set to launch its destination-led luxury brand, Mementos. The new brand adds to ITC's bouquet of five existing ones – ITC, Welcomhotel, Fortune, WelcomHeritage and Storii, with the lattermost being the most

recently released brand.

ITC Hotels' newly elevated Divisional Chief Executive Anil Chadha shares that the introduction of these two new brands – Storii as premium and Mementos as luxury– is in line with the larger strategy of the hotel chain to offer differentiated experience to the travellers. "In the next five years, we plan to double our tally of hotels which stands at 100 plus hotels with 10,000 plus keys presently," shares Chadha, adding that the Storii will have anywhere between 15 and 50 rooms and Mementos will have a minimum of about 100 rooms.

It was in 2018 that the ITC Hotels adopted the "asset right" strategy, the management contract model for growth and as Chadha says

that the change which worked in their favour and the Welcomhotel brand started getting the eyeballs it deserved. The response at each of the four new hotels that have been opened under the Welcomhotel brand – one each in Shimla, Katra and Chail and Bhubaneswar over the last one year has been encouraging. This further prompted the brand to launch the two new products —Storii and Mementos.

The Mementos, a collection of hotels across varied destinations ranging from modern marvels to hidden retreats to historic treasures, has been conceptualised as a brand that will offer flexibility and possess all the elements of luxury that ITC has – F&B, branding, staffing, culture, training, etc.

## VRO Hospitality plans to enter into cloud kitchen model PAN India



VRO Hospitality, a Bangalore-based hospitality chain which owns reputed brands like Hangover, Badmaash, Nevermind, Mirage and Tycoons among many others and recently raised \$3 million in Series A funding is now planning to enter into cloud kitchen model PAN India.

The brand is now on an expansion mode and will start with three different brands i.e., Burgers and Beyond, Holy Doh Pizzas and Smashed and Whacky Chang at no extra cost. Once, the brand will hit about 30 outlets, it will have about 50-60 dark kitchens operating out of them.

The brand has around 18 in multi-format restaurants, cafes and lounges averaging \$1.5 Million revenue per month. The chain also acquired brands like Fava, Café Noir, Plan B, Caperberry and One Night in Bangkok.

## Mementos, the new luxury brand from ITC Hotels

The food regulator of India, FSSAI, has decided to allow food business operators to change the address of the premises without changing the FSSAI licence or registration number. The FSSAI has issued an order in this regard, saying that to facilitate food businesses in retaining the existing licence or registration number, even if they change the location of food unit, it has been decided to enable the relevant provision for changing the

State/UT or District in FoSCoS while applying for modification of FSSAI licence/registration.

According to the FSSAI, at present, food businesses face problems in retaining their existing licence or registration number in case they change the premises of their food units. FBOs were required to surrender their existing licence and apply for new licence.

Industry reports say that this was a good move by the food regulator as it would help the companies which were growing and expanding. And this move will also help the start-up businesses. Previously, the FSSAI has also allowed food businesses to migrate from State Licence to Central Licence or vice versa without change in the FSSAI licence number.

# Hilton introduces tech enhancements, improving guest experience



Hilton announced the latest in a series of technology innovations that enhance the guest experience across the company's 18 hotel brands. In a first for the hospitality company, Digital Key Share will allow more than one guest to have access to their room's Digital Key, which turns the free Hilton Honors app on their

smartphones into a room key.

Hilton also announced an enhancement to a highly valued Hilton Honors benefit, providing members with early confirmation of a favorite perk – complimentary room upgrades. Eligible Gold and Diamond Hilton Honors members will be notified of their space-available upgrade 72 hours prior to arrival, enabling the member to choose their upgraded room directly when they check in via the Hilton Honors app.

These two enhancements join the recently launched Confirmed Connecting Rooms, which allows individuals to easily and instantly confirm at least two connecting

rooms at the time of booking.

As regards Sharing Digital Key with Travel Companions, this technology is now available at more than 80% of Hilton's portfolio, or close to 5,400 of Hilton's more than 6,600 properties worldwide. The primary guest can share their active Digital Key with up to four additional people or devices from the Hilton Honors app. For the secondary guest to gain access to the Digital Key, they must receive an invitation from the primary guest, be logged into the Hilton Honors app and pass a security check that happens instantly in the background.

# FBOs can now change their address without change in licence number

The food regulator of India, FSSAI, has decided to allow food business operators to change the address of the premises without changing the FSSAI licence or registration number. The FSSAI has issued an order in this regard, saying that to facilitate food businesses in retaining the existing licence or registration number, even if they change the location of

food unit, it has been decided to enable the relevant provision for changing the State/UT or District in FoSCoS while applying for modification of FSSAI licence/registration.

According to the FSSAI, at present, food businesses face problems in retaining their existing licence or registration number in case they change the premises of their food units. FBOs were required to

surrender their existing licence and apply for new licence.

Industry reports say that this was a good move by the food regulator as it would help the companies which were growing and expanding. And this move will also help the start-up businesses. Previously, the FSSAI has also allowed food businesses to migrate from State Licence to Central Licence or vice versa without change in the FSSAI licence number.

# ibis opens its 20th hotel in India



ibis, the brand from the Accor portfolio, has launched its third and largest property in Mumbai – ibis Mumbai Vikhroli making it the 20th hotel by ibis all over the country. The 15-floor hotel featuring 249 comfortable rooms presents progressive technology, including digital menus in the restaurant, mobile check-in and access to OTT entertainment channels in the rooms. It houses a multi-cuisine restaurant – Spice It, with an interactive live kitchen, a lively bar, library wall, outdoor space for events and special occasions, a 24-hour operational fitness centre, two board rooms and a spacious, fully equipped convertible meeting room. The brand claims that ibis Vikhroli has been uniquely designed sporting a new generation theme that has public areas that are highly energetic, colourful, and vibrant and offers a specially curated authentic culinary experience.

# IHCL to raise INR 4000 crores

# IHCL

Indian Hotels Company (the Taj chain) plans to issue new shares and convertible instruments to inject Rs 4,000 crore into the business, as it rises from the depths of the pandemic. It has increased the fund raising programme from Rs 3,000 crore after a re-evaluation of its requirement. In August, it had

decided to raise up to Rs 3,000 crore through a rights offering. But, it has now modified its capital-increase programme and will raise Rs 2,000 crore via a rights issue and another Rs 2,000 crore through a qualified institutional placement (QIP).

At Taj's annual shareholder meet in June this year, IHC chairman N Chandrasekaran had said that capital infusion in some form in the company is important as it will not only help to navigate the immediate months but also

prepare for the future. The equity issuances are aimed at making the company "zero-debt" in the future and to finance growth plans. It has a debt of Rs 3,571 crore on its books.

Taj parent Tata Sons will be subscribing to a substantial chunk of the Rs 2,000-crore rights issue considering it holds 38% in the hospitality chain. In case of under-subscription, the rights issue will be backed by Tata Sons. IHCL reported a loss of Rs 131 crore for the second quarter of fiscal 2022.

# Mumbai Central gets 48 Japanese-style 'pod hotels' for train travellers



The railways has readied 48 sleeping pods or capsules at Mumbai Central station for rail users. They will be launched by the end of this month. Of the pods, 30 have been tagged as 'classic', seven marked for women, 10 private and one for the differently abled. Located on the first floor of the station building, the pod room is spread over 3,000 sq ft. The cheapest pod will cost INR 999 for 12 hours. According to IRCTC sources, this facility will be a gamechanger in the

way passengers travel in India by rail, especially those on business trips and that the concept will best suit frequent travellers, backpackers, single travellers, corporate executives and study groups.

First popularised by Japan, a pod hotel features a large number of small bed-sized rooms. These hotels provide basic overnight accommodation for guests who do not require or cannot afford

larger, more expensive rooms at conventional hotels.

Each pod user will have access to free Wi-Fi, luggage room, toiletries, shower rooms, washrooms in common areas, whereas inside the pod the guest can avail facilities like TV, a small locker, mirror, adjustable air conditioner and air filter vents, reading lights apart from interior light, mobile charging, smoke detectors and DND Indicators.

# FSSAI issues draft prescribing Basmati rice standards

The Indian food authority, FSSAI, has issued a draft prescribing 'Basmati Rice Standards' and sought stakeholders comments on the same. Called the Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Amendment Regulations, 2021, it includes standards for 'Basmati Rice' in regulation number 2.4 that covers cereals and cereal products.

According to the draft, 'Basmati Rice shall be mature kernels of the varieties of *Oryza sativa* L. notified under the Seeds Act, 1966 (54 of 1966) as Basmati, which shall possess natural fragrance, characteristic of Basmati rice both in raw and cooked forms and shall be free from artificial colouring, polishing agents and artificial fragrances.' The types of Basmati Rice include Brown Basmati, Milled Basmati, Parboiled Brown (de-husked), Milled Parboiled and Blended Basmati Rice (mixture of milled Basmati rice -80% with other long grain non-Basmati rice).

The draft says that the Average Length (mm) of Basmati rice should be 7.0 and above for brown rice, and 6.61 and above for milled variety. The average cooked rice length (mm) should be 12.0 while the average length – breadth ratio should be 3.5mm. The other standards



include, moisture percent by mass, not more than 14%, other varieties of non-Basmati rice (per cent by mass with Basmati rice), not more than 5.0%, damaged discoloured grains (per cent by mass), not more than 1%, alkali spreading value (ASV) 4.0-7.0, and uric acid (mg per kg), not more than 100mg. Further, the confirmation for Basmati Rice variety shall be done by Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test, if required.

Also, every package of Blended Basmati Rice containing Milled Basmati Rice and other extra long grain rice shall carry the label, - 'BLENDED BASMATI RICE contains Milled Basmati Rice..... per cent'. Other extra long grain non-Basmati rice ..... per cent'. Besides, the type of broken rice, such as Tibar, Dubar, Mogra shall be prominently mentioned on the label.

The length prescribed by the FSSAI for broken Basmati rice includes: Basmati Rice Tibar (>6.5 mm), Basmati Rice Dubar (>6.1 mm), Basmati Rice Mini Dubar (>5.25 mm), Basmati Rice Mogra (>4.4mm) and Basmati Rice Mini Mogra (>3.8 mm). Rest of the parameters for long grain Basmati rice will be applicable on the broken Basmati rice as well.

# HRAWI earns dual certification - ISO 9001:2015 & ISO 27001:2013

The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) has become the first Indian Hospitality Association to be awarded the ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 27001:2013 certifications. These internationally recognized standards ensure organizations meet with the needs of their members through an effective Quality Management System (QMS) which is a foundation of quality assurance activities and Information Security Management System (ISMS) which aims to protect the confidentiality, integrity and availability of members' information and data.

"The ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 27001:2013 accreditation is assurance that we have robust, clearly defined procedures in place across all areas including handling of documents and data (Data Management), strong business



continuity processes, back-up plan, risk analysis and mitigation (Risk Management), communications security, office security, incident management, compliance and monitoring. HRAWI is setting the standards for Hospitality Associations by raising the bar in Management and Security for the benefit of its members. Additionally, to maintain the validity of the certification, in the future HRAWI will

perform regular audits to ensure compliance and identify areas of improvement. We are happy that we are the first Hospitality Association in the country to have proactively taken the initiative and become certified in the interest of our members," says Mr. Sherry Bhatia, President, HRAWI..

"These certifications further strengthen our commitment towards our members' and our Association's quality and security policies. Through the effective application of the systems and with continuous process improvements we have strived to make our organization secure and systems robust for our members' satisfaction. We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to members for their continued commitment and support. We remain committed to meeting the highest quality, security and privacy standards," concludes Mr. Pradeep Shetty, Sr. Vice President, HRAWI.

# Dineout launches new 'Reviews & Rating' feature allowing users to share real-time experience

India's largest dining out and restaurant tech platform, Dineout has unveiled a revamped reviews and rating section that will allow food connoisseurs to share their dining-out experiences on the app. This feature aims to help diners get genuine restaurant recommendations from thousands of verified reviews available on the platform, and book a table at the restaurant they find the most appealing.

The company observed a surge in the number of customers on its platform and app, who

are constantly looking for recommendations, reviews, ambience, food and much more at a restaurant. The new reviews and rating, feature will offer users the option to add photos and reviews at any of its 50,000 plus partner restaurants across the country. With relevant sub-parameters such as Food, Ambience, Hygiene, Verified Reviews, now every diner can make informed gastronomical choices for themselves and their loved ones. Additionally, they can also share reviews they found useful while making dining out plans, or follow

the reviewer profiles of their fellow foodies. This would go a long way in creating the most memorable dining out experiences for millions of patrons around the country.

Only those users who clear their bill via the app or redeem their membership will be eligible for writing verified reviews. This unique feature ensures that the reviews on the platform are written by actual diners who had visited the restaurant in the recent past, hence delivering reliable recommendations to users.

## Now, connect with FSSAI through mobile app for licence and registration

Country's food authority, FSSAI, has launched a smart phone mobile application for the purpose of granting licences or registration to food businesses. The mobile app would be a one place solution for food businesses having all the relevant information from procedures related to compliance with the FSS Regulations, to laboratories and others.

FSSAI stated that the mobile application, 'Food Safety Connect', will help in connecting the authority

with consumers and Food Business Operators (FBOs), and will facilitate food businesses to apply for FSSAI registration through a faster and convenient mode. They said that with the launch of FSSAI's Food Connect Mobile App, it will be easier for food businesses, particularly petty hawkers, vendors and start-ups to file an application for FSSAI registration by simply using their smartphones.

This newly launched mobile application will also provide information regarding eligibility

criteria; FAQs on the procedures related to Licensing and Registration; Regulations and other compliances for the food businesses. FBOs can also access resource material pertaining to a list of notified laboratories for food testing, inspection checklists, product standards, list of Food Safety Mitras, training through FoStAc, guidance documents etc.

The new application downloadable from Google Play Store is also aimed at bridging the communication gap with consumers and providing a resource hub for them to stay aware and updated about FSSAI key activities.

## Marriott Bonvoy introduces new campaign Power of Travel

Marriott Bonvoy by Marriott International has introduced to India its global campaign Power of Travel, that aims to encourage and inspire travellers. The campaign calls out to people to bravely set out on the road to adventures and self-discovery, embracing the transformative power of travel. With the tagline 'Where can we take you?' Marriott Bonvoy's new campaign brings endless

experiences on a joyride with a gentle reminder that travel has the power to reshape the world. The global ad film, curated specially for this campaign is a compilation of choicest travel moments of people from across the globe as they set out on the journey to experience the many wonders of the world. The 360-degree campaign will run for four weeks across print, digital and Out of Home mediums across India.

According to the brand sources, Marriott Bonvoy, Marriott International's renowned travel program encompasses an extraordinary portfolio of 30 brands and is designed to add richness to the travel experiences of every traveller while extending the promise of safety, exclusive benefits and diversified experiences and that the campaign communicates a positive attitude while opening the door to endless experiences that people can explore with Marriott Bonvoy when they are ready to hit the road again,

## VRO Hospitality expands beyond Bengaluru; steps into Mumbai & Goa markets

As the country returns to post-pandemic normalcy, leading Bengaluru-based hospitality chain, VRO Hospitality is back in an expansion mode by entering two of the biggest markets for travel & hospitality, i.e. Mumbai & Goa with an ambition of a pan-India presence. With its French café brand 'Café Noir', the group is set to take up all of 1,000 sqft at the new Lodha World estate in Mumbai's Lower Parel. It is also unveiling a new brand 'TakiTaki', which will deliver some of the finest Japanese flavours within the same Lodha premises. By November end, VRO also plans to launch into one of the biggest hospitality destinations in the country, Goa with another equally successful brand 'Mirage' at the popular Vagator Beach.

Besides Café Noir, VRO Hospitality also acquired Fava, Plan B, Caperberry, and One Night in Bangkok that were



transiting from the F&B space last year. The acquisitions were followed by a fresh round of funding (Series A) this year worth \$3 million and will help VRO take their diverse portfolio across India. Around 80% of the Series A funding, which was led by Creed Capital, will be going into expansion as VRO is planning to add 16 new projects in Bengaluru, Goa, Mumbai, Kochi, and Chennai.

## 233 hotels in Mumbai to get property tax relief

The BMC will give property tax relief to 233 hotels that were used as quarantine facilities for suspected Covid-19 patients and international travellers arriving in Mumbai. According to BMC officials, this year INR 41.87 crore of property tax will be waived for the period of February to May.

The concession is being offered under BMC's "Wellness Package", under which these hotels were also given relief last year. According to officials, last year property tax of INR 20 crore for 183 hotels was waived.

## FSSAI amends organic food norms; exempts aggregators from compliance

The Food Authority has amended the Organic Food Regulations of 2017 to include provisions that aggregators or intermediaries shall be exempted from complying with the applicable provisions of the 'organic' food certification system. The amendment regulations were notified as the first amendment regulations for organic food standards to include a sub regulation 3 under regulation 4 (applicability of systems), which reads, "Aggregators or Intermediaries who collect organic food from small original producer or producer organisation and sell it to the end consumer directly, are exempted from the provisions of the systems referred in sub-regulation (1) and they shall maintain records of traceability and

comply with any of the provisions of the systems mentioned in sub-regulation (1) and organic food shall not carry Food Safety and Standard Authority of India's organic logo."

The sub-regulation 1 says that the organic food offered or promoted for sale shall also comply with all the applicable provisions of one of the following systems, namely: - (i) National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP); (ii) Participatory Guarantee System for India (PGS-India) and (iii) Any other system or standards as may be notified by the Food Authority from time to time.

Also for labelling provisions under Regulation 5 of the Organic Food Regulations, the amendment



notification added another provision 5 (3) which says, "In-conversion products under PGS-India may be labelled as 'PGS-Green' and may also be labelled as "In-conversion to organic? and the conversion products under NPOP may be labelled as "In-conversion to organic" and shall mention the year of conversion and such in-conversion products shall not carry Food Safety and Standard Authority of India's organic logo."

The food business operators were asked to comply with all the provisions of these regulations with effect from May 1, 2022.

# FHRAI asks FM To Bring OTAs Under GST Coverage

The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) has recommended Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to bring Online Travel Aggregators (OTAs) such as EaseMyTrip, MakeMyTrip and ixigo, under the coverage of Goods and Services Tax (GST). The suggestion comes days after the GST Council decided that food aggregator apps such as Zomato and Swiggy will collect the tax at the final point of delivery and will pay GST on restaurant services.

Alleging that over 40% of the room inventory listed on OTA platforms are operating illegally without valid licenses from local and state authorities, Mr. Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, Vice President of FHRAI, added that if the segment is brought under the ambit of GST such illegal activities can be restricted along with plugging



tax evasion. "We have informed the Government on several occasions that OTAs harbour and encourage unregistered hotels and accommodations that operate without any licenses. This not only enables such entities to escape tax but also, these illegal accommodations pose huge security risks," Mr. Kohli said.

As per FHRAI's estimates, the tax losses due to GST evasion by illegally listed entities on OTAs would be more than INR 4,000

Cr. He was of the view that in order to ensure a level playing field in the hospitality sector as well as to stop the massive revenue loss to the economy, online players should be brought under the GST umbrella. On the GST Council's latest decision to impose tax on food service aggregators, FHRAI said that the move will prevent tax loss of INR 2,000 Cr caused due to underreporting by the aggregators. Post the decision, Zomato, Swiggy and other food aggregators will be liable to pay the 5% GST rate, collected from the customers.

The suggestion, if implemented, may hit the online travel aggregators which were severely impacted by the pandemic, and have now started to see some uptick amid easing of restrictions and start of domestic and global travel.

# FHRAI takes up A&N Hoteliers power tariff issue with Union home minister

Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI), has submitted a representation to Union home minister Amit Shah, imploring his immediate intervention in implementing the judgement passed by the Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission (JERC) for the State of Goa and Union Territories (UT) with respect to charging of electricity tariff at industrial rates for hotels in the UT of Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

The Association has stated that despite JERC's decision through its order dated 02/12/2020 and the High Court of Calcutta's order dated 31/08/2021 directing the Andaman & Nicobar Administration to charge electricity for the hospitality sector at industrial rates, the administration and the electricity department has continued to charge commercial rates. Not only has the administration refused to

execute the orders but its electricity department has now sent notices to members of the Hoteliers Association of Andaman & Nicobar Islands (HAANI) asking them to pay the higher commercial rates and refusal to comply would lead to disconnection of electricity to their establishments.

"In May 2019, the Andaman & Nicobar Electricity Department started charging commercial rates on electricity from the distressed hospitality sector. A few of our members challenged this decision in JERC and through its order the JERC ruled that the hospitality sector in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands is indeed an industry and has to be charged industrial rates. But the electricity department ignored the order and continued to charge commercial rates to the hospitality units, which is in direct contravention of the order.

Later, the Hon'ble High Court of Calcutta too ruled in favour of the members of the Hoteliers Association of Andaman and Nicobar Islands directing the electricity department to issue bills on industrial rates and not on commercial rates. The HC also directed the department to rectify the previous electricity bills and issue bills based on industrial rates retrospectively from December, 2020. Yet, the administration has violated both orders and continues to charge electricity at higher rates. We request the home minister to intervene and direct the Andaman & Nicobar Administration to charge electricity at industrial tariff for the hotel industry as per the directions of JERC & the High Court of Calcutta and save the already distressed hospitality industry," says Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, vice president, FHRAI.



# Diu Collector & District Magistrate issues order regarding alcohol consumption in public places

The Collector & District Magistrate, Diu has issued an order on December 1, 2021 with respect to consuming alcohol in public places for strict compliance by the general public including the citizens of Diu and visitors in exercise of the powers conferred upon him by section 144 of Criminal Procedure Code, 1973.

The order says that "WHEREAS a large number of complaints are being received that people purchasing liquor from liquor vendors often start consuming the same in front of the liquor vendor or at some other public place;

AND WHEREAS there has been an increase in littering and breaking of glass bottles and alcohol fueled criminal activities, unruly, violent, dangerous, aggressive and/or offensive conduct at beach areas throughout the District;

AND WHEREAS, this is creating a situation whereby it is becoming difficult for a citizen to pass through or visit the beach area and many citizens of the District fear to take their families to the beach areas because of drunken and

disorderly conduct;

AND WHEREAS drinking in public is a nuisance with a serious potential to result in brawls and quarrels causing serious injuries/ death and damage to public and private property. This affects peace and tranquility of the area and creates problems in maintaining law and order;

AND WHEREAS it is necessary to take speedy measures by taking penal action as per all the rules and regulations in force in this regard to prevent danger to human life or safety and to thwart/prevent untoward incident which may affect the peace and tranquility of the area;

NOW, THEREFORE, in exercise of the powers conferred upon me by section 144 of Criminal Procedure Code, 1973, I, Saloni Rai, IAS, District Magistrate, Diu, do hereby make this written order for strict compliance by the general public including the citizens of Diu and visitors that;

Unless the undersigned or designee has issued a special event permit and unless otherwise

permitted by Goa, Daman and Diu Excise Duty Act, 1964, it is unlawful for any person to consume any alcoholic beverage at any time, upon

1. Any public property, including all public beaches, but not including any licensed premises permitted under Goa, Daman and Diu Excise Duty Act, 1964 and

2. Public rights-of-way, including but not limited to public streets, parking lots, sidewalks, alleys, plazas, piers, jetties, including on or against seawalls, including all sidewalks along the outer perimeters of such areas and including any sidewalks, boardwalks and other public rights-of-way at any beach or coastal bluff.

This order shall come into force with immediate effect from 02/12/2021 to 30/01/2022 and shall be effective for a period of 60 days (both days inclusive) unless withdrawn earlier.

Any person contravening this order shall be punishable under section 188 of the India Penal Code, 1860."

## FBOs told to ensure products unfit for consumption disposed off as per guidelines

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has advised food businesses to ensure that food products unfit for human consumption should be disposed off in accordance with the guidelines of the Central or State Pollution Control Board. The food regulator has issued an advisory in this regard, stating, "Such products should be disposed off into the authorised agencies managing waste in accordance with waste management guidelines issued by the Central/State Pollution Control Board." The food authority added that food businesses need to ensure timely removal of such products unfit for human consumption from the supply chain. "If the food product

expires or is recalled and is unfit for human consumption, the Food Business Operator shall ensure timely removal of such products from the food supply chain to prevent distribution and consumption," reads the advisory.

According to the FSSAI, a considerable quantity of food products are disposed off after expiry or recall as they are unfit for human consumption. "Also, it is a common practice to remove food products from the supply chain prior to end of shelf life. It is advised that such food products, if safe for human consumption, should be donated in a timely manner to prevent food wastage," said an official with the FSSAI.

# Robotics operation in travel and tourism industry set to grow, says GlobalData



According to GlobalData, a leading data and analytics company, the utilization of robotics is expected to continue to grow in importance in the travel and tourism industry. However, companies need to be sensitive in how they deploy this form of smart technology.

According to a recent GlobalData poll, 31% of the respondents stated that their company will invest in robotics in the next 12 months, with robotics being the third most popular answer for this question, above the likes of IoT and cloud. A significant contributing reason as to why business executives and employees think that investment in robotics will increase is due to the long-term cost savings this technology can provide

along with its ability to meet the sudden changes in consumer demands.

Ralph Hollister, Travel & Tourism Analyst at GlobalData, comments: "Prior to the pandemic, the utilization of robotics in tourism was mainly seen as a gimmick. Robot butlers in hotels would provide good Instagram opportunities for guests, creating exposure for the accommodation provider, and customer service robots at airports would entertain guests to reduce feelings of boredom. These same robots are now a necessity for the likes of hotels and airports due to the need for COVID-safe experiences."

According to GlobalData, 74% of global consumers are still either 'quite' or 'extremely' concerned regarding the impact of COVID-19. These robots

reduce the need for human contact, which increases safety for travelers across multiple stages during their trip.

It is also no secret that COVID-19 has battered the finances of many companies involved in travel and tourism. Although the initial cost of investing in robotics to replace human jobs will be high, many companies will recover what they have invested in just a short number of years. Subsequently, companies will then continue to shrink fixed costs and increase profit margins.

Hollister concludes: "Investing too heavily in robotics to replace human jobs could tarnish brand image. Travel and tourism employment has fallen substantially across the globe due to the pandemic, and many consumers will feel that it is a company's social responsibility to employ people in need of work as travel recovers, especially if they have appropriate skill sets. Filling vacancies with robots could be deemed as insensitive in the current climate, especially in destinations that heavily rely on tourism as a key contributor to the local economy.

"Through increasing operational efficiency and improving traveler confidence, robotics in tourism will continue to grow. However, companies need to ensure that they are not seen to be shunning their social commitments. It must be emphasized that the robots are deployed to work alongside humans, not instead of them.

## Xbar Club to invest \$10mn in restaurant & club business

Xbar Club plans to invest \$ 10 million for expansion which will be towards both company-owned and franchise outlets. The expansion will take it to prominent cities such as Lucknow, Goa, Chandigarh, Mumbai, and Bangalore.

It has taken the night life of Delhi NCR by storm. Situated in Garden Galleria Mall, Sec-38, Noida is all set to transport its audience into the world of exhilaration. It is the largest club-restaurant that the NCR has seen. According to company sources, the vision behind Xbar Club is to give the audiences out there the best electric vibe club in town to dance their heart out. The theme of the outlet is such that it gives a proper party ambience for metallic music lovers.



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## Paithan Eco Foods launches Anjaneya Graviola/ Soursop fruit juice



Paithan Eco Foods, a complete provider of natural health supplements, has launched Anjaneya Graviola / Soursop Fruit Juice, a fruit juice for cancer patients. It is reported to contain the Graviola also known as Hanuman Phal/LaxmanPhal which is known to have annonaceous acetogenins, a phytochemical compound that reportedly fights cancer cells in the body and promotes good health. It is also reported to contain vitamins and minerals that naturally assist in overcoming conditions like weakness and depression.

## Mother's Recipe launches Dhaniya Pudina Chutney



Mother's Recipe, the FMCG brand, has strengthened its chutney range with the launch of the new Dhaniya Pudina Chutney. It is an important aspect of the chaat, and the brand has reportedly curated this chutney with the finest quality ingredients such as fresh coriander and mint leaves along with green chillies, cumin and lemon that gives this chutney a special taste.

## General Mills unveils ready-to-cook 2 min Pillsbury Pancakes brand



General Mills India, a part of the US-based Fortune 500 Company, General Mills, Inc., has introduced its ready to cook (RTC), two minutes Pillsbury Pancakes portfolio. The launch of the brand in the country closely follows the company's continued efforts to tap into the growing need for quick snacks among young moms for their children. The product come in two variants: Choco Chip and Funfetti. The Choco Chip and Funfetti Pancakes aim to cater to the young moms.

## Parle Products forays into cereal category; launches Hide & Seek Fills



Parle Products, India's leading biscuits, snacks and confectionery manufacturer, announced its forays into the cereals category, with the launch of 'Hide & Seek Fills'. The company aims to produce highly nutritious cereals for an energising breakfast and strengthen its product portfolio for consumers in all age groups. To build on the legacy of quality and experience, the company's premium 'Platina' range will bring an exciting mix of healthy and indulgent offerings into the newly launched segment.



## Wonder Foods & Farms launch 4 new sauces with Karishma Sakhrani

Wonder Foods & Farms has launched a set of four vegan, nut-free, no added preservative gourmet sauces along with chef Karishma Sakhrani, Master Chef 4 finalist that is one of the pioneers in the hospitality and food industry.

## Hershey India introduces Almond drink in unsweetened & chocolate flavors



Hershey India, a subsidiary of The Hershey Company, North America's leading chocolate and confectionery manufacturer, expands its portfolio of plant-based drink brand Sofit in India with the launch of Sofit Almond drink, giving health enthusiasts and vegans another delicious choice. After the growing popularity of Sofit Soya drink, Hershey India aims to give Indian consumers other non-dairy drink options by introducing unsweetened and chocolate flavor almond drink available in 200 milliliters and one liter value packs.

According to the brand, the new Almond drink range by Sofit is naturally cholesterol and gluten-free and is a good source of protein, dietary fiber and Vitamins like Vitamin A, E and B12. It is also reported that the Almond drink is enriched with calcium, and it is naturally low in saturated fat and naturally free from cholesterol-containing no added preservatives. The company says it is also naturally lactose-free, making it an ideal beverage for people suffering from lactose intolerance.



## Nature's Basket launches plant based meat with Blue Tribe Foods

Nature's Basket, part of RP-Sanjiv Goenka group has launched an entirely separate category of plant based meat products. This new category reportedly caters to the changing lifestyle and growing needs of new-age consumers. Under this specific category, the brand has partnered with Blue Tribe Foods, India's leading plant-based meats brand.



## Right to Protein introduces Soy Fed product label to highlight quality animal protein products

Right To Protein, a nationwide public health initiative announced the launch of India's first feed label – 'Soy Fed' for animal protein products, earmarking the celebration of National Nutrition Month, September 2021.

## Baskin Robbins launches its first-ever 'Happyness Pack'



Baskin Robbins, the world's leading ice cream brand, decided to spread #TheGiftOfHappyness with their all-new and unique 'Happyness Gift Pack', an all-new gift hamper that is claimed to be ideal for every special occasion. The brand claims the 'Happyness Gift Pack' primarily targets young adults, millennials, and middle-aged people living in India's metropolitan cities who are constantly on the lookout for something unique when it comes to gifting their loved ones and making them feel special. The 'Happyness Gift Pack' essentially consists of two family packs of ice creams (customers can choose their two favourite flavours from multiple options), six crunchy waffle cones, two different fun toppings (aka chocolate sprinkles & chopped almonds), Hershey's Chocolate sauce sachets and a premium ice cream scooper.

## Sunfeast introduces Dark Fantasy Desserts Indulgence Collection



Sunfeast Dark Fantasy, the premium center-filled cookie brand from ITC Ltd, has introduced an uber-premium experience exclusively on Amazon - Dark Fantasy Desserts Indulgence Collection. Reimagining the dessert experience, Sunfeast launched Dark Fantasy Desserts, a multi-sensorial ensemble of cookies crafted with luscious choco crème fillings. Sunfeast Dark Fantasy has launched two variants of its Dessert range: 1. Choco Chunks – Gourmet cookies with choco chips on the crust and a luscious velvety choco crème filling, oozing pure indulgence in every bite; and 2. Choco Nut Dipped – A delectable choco and hazelnut filled treat. The cookie has a crust dotted with cashews and almonds, and a rich molten choco crème filling – making every bite pure pleasure.

## Parag Milk Foods launches Go Milkshake



Parag Milk Foods, the makers of India's favourite dairy products like Gowardhan, Go, Pride of Cows and Avvatar, unveiled the expansion of their product portfolio with the launch of a range of milkshakes - Go Milkshake. It is claimed to be made from 100% cow's milk and you have a long shelf life at ambient temperature. It is available in 180 ml Tetra Packs in strawberry, vanilla, chocolate and coffee flavours. The company claims the new range of milkshakes is tastier and thicker than existing range of milkshakes in the market and is the perfect drink for both for children and young adults to quench their thirst with a healthier option.

## Danone India forays into health drink category with launch of AptaGrow



Danone India, with its mission 'to bring health through food to as many people as possible', entered into the health drink category for children with the launch of AptaGrow. The company claims the product will address the nutrition requirement of children in the age group of 3-6 years and will be available in tasty chocolate and vanilla flavour. It is also claimed that the product is a scientifically designed health drink for children with 37 nutrients that includes a unique blend of prebiotics and DHA for physical and cognitive development of children and its unique Nutri-Absorb formula enables better absorption of key nutrients which support better growth.



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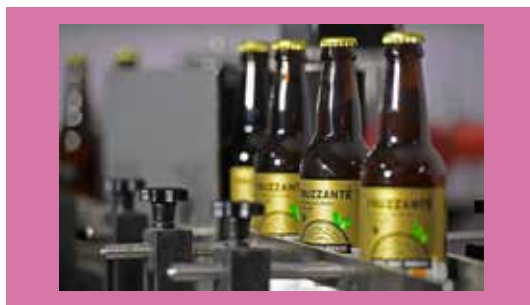
## Bonn Group launches Americana Multigrain Cracker Biscuits

Bonn Group, the leading manufacturer of Food products in India, has launched Americana Multigrain Cracker Biscuits, that are low on pocket and reportedly make a healthy treat with perfect blend of flavours. These biscuits are intended as a perfect snack for mid-day cravings that come with the goodness of multigrain flours, flax seeds, sesame seeds, sunflowers seeds and watermelon seeds. The ingredients also include rolled oats and soya bean.



## Xotik rolls out ready to drink cans for Jeeru, Vanilla Float & Hammer

Xotik Frujus, a beverage with its flagship product Jeeru, has unveiled three products in a new shape and size. The products- Jeeru, Vanilla Float and energy drink, Hammer, will now be available in a 250 ml can in the markets. In a move to elevate their visual identity, the brand has opted for a youthful and polished design and packaging, that sets them apart in the store shelves. Jeeru offers a blend of sweet, sour and spicy flavours fit for the Indian palette.



## Fruzzanté launches premium honey mead brand Arkä

Hill Zill Wines Pvt. Ltd., the manufacturers of Fruzzanté sparkling alcoholic beverage, launched its premium honey mead brand called Arkä. It is reportedly made from honey extracted from bee hives that is then fermented and presented as mead, a drink which has been mentioned in ancient scriptures dating back to 100 BC.



## Apis India enters healthy breakfast cereal category with cornflakes & choco flakes

Apis India, one of the leaders in the organised honey trade market of India has now forayed into the breakfast cereals category with two categories – cornflakes and choco flakes. The company claims these are the perfect cereal options for health-conscious, professionals and kids.



## WhiteCub introduces vegan butter

India's pioneering dairy-free food brand, WhiteCub have introduced, first ever vegan butter. This butter is reportedly created without a single drop of any dairy product, is completely plant-based with vitamins B12 and D. It is devoid of any inter-esterified fats, trans fats, or palm oil.



## Godrej Yummiez expands heat-and-eat range, launches new Gravy and Paratha variants



Godrej Tyson Foods Ltd., has unveiled the expansion of its heat-and-eat portfolio of products, by introducing new variants of Paratha and Gravy under its fastest-growing brand – Godrej Yummiez. The brand has launched delectable, frozen whole-wheat-based Lachha and Tawa Paratha, which comes with a reported shelf life of nine months. Under the heat and eat range, the brand has also introduced two of the most loved and scrumptious gravies from the traditional Indian cuisine - Butter Chicken and Chicken Tikka Masala.

## Bonn Group launches cake rusk in chocolate and plain flavors



Bonn Group has launched cake rusk in chocolate and plain flavor, catering to its consumers' rising demand for tasty but healthy products during the festive season. Bonn has launched this product amid the festive season when the markets are opening after a long gap due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The brand claims it had made this product with quality ingredients and is 100% hygienically baked, free from cholesterol and trans-fat. They also claim that the product has no added artificial flavor and colors and is 100% vegan and made with responsibly sourced ingredients.

## Grilled cheese - Burrito & Quesadilla Taco Bell



Taco Bell, the world's leading Mexican-inspired restaurant brand, introduced two new offerings for its consumers with the launch of Grilled Cheese Burrito and Quesadilla. The Grilled Cheese – Burrito and Quesadilla is an offering being added to Taco Bell India's diverse product portfolio. The company claims the latest innovation offers consumers an opportunity to feel the real cheese experience they deserve at an introductory price of just Rs 129 for vegetarian variant and Rs 149 for non-vegetarian variant.

While the former is a soft tortilla roll, filled with the brand's signature ingredients such as two blend cheese, spicy ranch sauce and jalapeno rice, the latter is a soft grilled tortilla, folded with loads of cheesy goodness and creamy jalapeno sauce. Taco Bell Corp., a subsidiary of Yum! Brands, Inc., is a world-famous Mexican-inspired restaurant chain

## Nourish adds cornflakes to its healthy breakfast portfolio



'Nourish', a leading food products company under the aegis of BL Agro, introduced 'cornflakes' to its already existing breakfast cereals product range. The company has launched its cornflakes range in three different flavours - Kesar Pista, Rose Almond, and Classic flavour, as breakfast meals. The product category is available at company's consumer platform, along with an extensive range of products. The company claims that the newly launched cornflakes are rich in vitamins, cholesterol free with no added sugar, making it a healthier breakfast option. The products are endorsed by Shilpa Shetty.



## Hershey's Exotic Dark adds two new flavours to its range

Hershey India Pvt Ltd., a part of The Hershey Company, a leading global snacking giant and the largest producer of quality chocolates, announced the addition of two new flavours to its 'Hershey's Exotic Dark' range of premium chocolates. The newly launched flavours include 'Blackberry Granules' and 'Guava & Mexican Chili', made with whole, roasted California Almonds especially curated for the next generation of consumer who has an ever-evolving palate. According to company sources, the California Almonds are seasoned with unique and consumer-loved flavors like Guava and Mexican Chili and Blackberry, all coated with dark cocoa rich chocolate and the roasted Almonds used in the new range are imported from California.

## Bagrry's introduces a Superfoods Seeds range



Breakfast cereals brand Bagrry's has added six new nutrition packed seeds to its selects and organics range, reportedly bringing the goodness of natural plant-based nutrition to the table. The expanded Organics range now includes protein packed Flax seeds along with Quinoa & Chia seeds. The new Selects range comprises Pumpkin, Sunflower and Watermelon seeds all available in stand-up pouch packs.

The company claims the 100% organic, vegan and gluten-free Flax seeds are rich in protein, fibre and omega-3 fatty acids. These seeds can be roasted and tossed into salads or ground and added to your regular wheat flour for a wholesome meal. It can also be used as toppings on muffins, breads, mueslis and oats for an added nutrition boost. Calcium and antioxidants-rich Chia seeds and the protein-rich super grain Quinoa are the other two seeds in the Organics range. The company claims the green and crunchy Pumpkin seeds are loaded with good fats, proteins and micronutrients and are 100% natural and gluten free and the Sunflower seeds are rich in fibre and protein and offer anti-bacterial and anti-fungal benefits.

## Freshezy launches MIGHTY, ready-to-cook and eat range



MIGHTY has introduced its ready-to-cook and eat range of plant-based protein preparations as an optimal diet for Indian palates and their health. These preparations are a first of its kind innovation by food tech company – FreshEzy Foodtech Pvt Limited. The brand claims the wide range of products are artisanal, handcrafted products which cater to the evolving Indian palate and that unlike most plant-based products (PBP) in the market, MIGHTY promises to delight the taste buds while nourishing the body in a convenient and far more accessible manner. They also claim that their plant-based products are handmade, high-quality protein extracted from Green Gram, Chickpeas and Peas to cater to a protein-deficient India. Mighty is targeted at the young but busy individual helping them meet their daily protein requirement.

## The Baklava Box launches Middle Eastern dessert Kunafa



The Baklava Box is a gourmet sweets company based in the city of joy, Calcutta has newly launched a traditional Middle Eastern dessert which is called Kunafa/ Kanafeh. It is made with shredded filo pastry, soaked in sweet, sugar-based syrup, and typically layered with nuts. The brand offers a wide range of dessert collections to choose from.

## Myprotein and Keventers partner to make healthier, protein-rich coffee alternatives



Leading sports nutrition brand Myprotein, and one of the iconic dairy brands in India, Keventers have collaborated to create a unique Whey Protein in Keventers Coffee Flavour. Designed for the everyday milkshake-lovers, the collaboration brings the tastiest, safest and healthiest whey protein flavour to add to your daily milkshake/smoothie drink. The limited-edition coffee-flavored protein powder was launched to make the habit of coffee drinking healthier and bring one closer to required protein allowance for the day. According to Myprotein sources, it is a healthier alternative to regular coffee, regular smoothies and shakes and a tastier alternative to unflavoured protein supplements and that it is a great alternative for fitness enthusiasts. The collaboration also involved Keventers sharing their milkshake recipe with Myprotein, for the first time in 96 years.

The newly-launched Whey Protein in Keventers Coffee Flavour comes in two variants - Whey Protein Concentrate and Whey Protein Isolate.



## OZiva enters kids nutrition segment with launch of OZiva Kids

OZiva, India's leading certified clean, plant-based nutrition and wellness brand announced its entry into the kids nutrition segment with the launch of OZiva Kids. According to the company, OZiva Kids offer a range of superfoods, fortified with essential nutrients and blended with powerful Ayurvedic herbs, to cater to the varied needs of growing children like growth (muscle and bones) brain health, eye health and immunity and taste is another factor that has been kept in mind while developing these products. OZiva Kids range includes Superfood Brain Multi, Superfood Immunity Multi and Superfood Vision Multi.

## ITC Fabelle unveils India's first luxury chocolate crafted with 24k edible gold



ITC Ltd., Fabelle Exquisite Chocolates, the pioneers of luxury chocolates in the country, launched a unique Heart of Gold Collection. The Heart of Gold Collection is claimed to be a first of its kind offering crafted with 24 karat pure edible gold.

The brand launched the gold infused chocolates co-curated by Fabelle Master Chocolatiers and Michelin Star chef Marco Stabile, an acclaimed Italian culinary legend. According to the brand, their endeavour is to acknowledge and celebrate the extra ordinary feats achieved by select illustrious citizens and organisations whose meaningful contributions have helped in nation building and helped society at large. It is claimed that the Heart of Gold Collection has been inspiringly crafted to highlight their characteristic virtues like valour, knowledge, compassion, purity and persistence.

# Appointments



**Amit Kumar Mehta**

Director of Food and Beverage,  
Courtyard by Marriott Bhopal

Mehta comes with a formidable experience of over 18 years in the hospitality industry that has seen him convert visions into measurable results. He began his career in the year 2003 with Taj as an F&B mixologist and that's where he took a flight. Amit has handled large operations with a keen understanding of Food and Beverage. As the Director Food & Beverage at Courtyard by Marriott Bhopal, he will be responsible for heading and managing the Food and Beverage operations and maintaining high standards of guest satisfaction.



**Vinay Chandavarkar**

Chief Development Officer,  
SaffronStays

With 16+ years of experience in the hospitality segment, Vinay was earlier associated with The Indian Hotels Company Limited (Taj Group of Hotels) as Corporate Director - Development and Hilton Hotels as Director, Development - India. His primary role at both these organisations was to expand the brand's portfolios, a responsibility that he shall continue with at SaffronStays - securing and sealing well-appointed luxurious homes and villas. This new addition to the SaffronStays team is an important step towards expanding their horizon, and marrying real estate with hospitality.



**Rahul Bhagat**

Director of Operations, Conrad Pune

With over 16 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Rahul joined Conrad Pune after almost a decade with the Hyatt Group across different hotels in India where he started as a Corporate Leadership Trainee in 2006. In his current profile, Bhagat is responsible for the seamless functioning of the entire hotel and employees in sync with the international Hilton brand standards while ensuring maximum client satisfaction. He also assists in the preparation and execution of the Annual Hotel Business Plan and the marketing strategies for the overall hotel. He is personally involved in the recruitment, training and motivation of the entire hotel team.



**Supriya Pandita**

Human Resources & Training Manager, DoubleTree by Hilton Pune Chinchwad

A well-recognized industry veteran with almost 10 years of experience, Ms Pandita has experience in the upscale and corporate industry. In her role, she will help in setting up HR practices, staff recruitment & retention, orientation and onboarding, HR policies & procedures, training & development, performance management, grievance handling, employee relations, and employee engagement.



**Biswa Ranjan Mohapatra**

Director of Rooms, Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa, Nashik

Biswa is a seasoned hospitality professional with over 15 years of experience. He earlier had a successful stint with Ibis Novotel Bengaluru Techpark. Biswa began his hospitality career in 2006 with Grand Hyatt Mumbai and worked across various departments in his tenure of over 8 years at the property. Biswa holds a Hotel Management Diploma from the Indo American Hotel Management.



**Anil Chadha**

Divisional Chief Executive, ITC Hotels

Anil Chadha was earlier Chief Operating Officer at ITC Hotels. He will now head the entire portfolio for the hospitality chain. An alumni of the Welcomgroup Graduate School of Hotel Administration, Chadha joined ITC in 1992. Barring a brief hiatus of a couple of years, he has spent his entire career with the brand, heading key properties in New Delhi, Agra, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Chennai. In the past, he held key positions, including General Manager of ITC Maurya, Vice President, Operations at Hotels Division, Vice President, Southern Region ITC Hotels and General Manager ITC Grand Chola.



**Manikandan Marar**

Director of Finance, Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa, Nashik

He has over three decades of domain experience in financial planning and analysis, financial control, taxation, and budgeting. A postgraduate degree holder in Mathematics and a certified degree holder from The Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of India (ICMAI), Marar started his journey in the hospitality industry with a renowned Indian luxury hotel group and later worked with notable hotel groups including – Le Méridien, Hyatt Hotels & Resorts, and Hilton Hotels & Resorts. In his current role as Director of Finance at the upcoming Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa, Nashik, he will oversee all the hotel’s financial operations; namely accounting, auditing, budgeting, financial reporting and purchasing functions.



**Rajesh Karki**

General Manager, The Byke Royal Pearl, Goa

Rajesh Karki has over 17 years of experience in operations encompassing front office, housekeeping, F&B, sales and marketing and client servicing in the hospitality industry. Previously, he has been associated with brands like Hyatt, Radisson and Shangri-la Hotel and Resort.



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## Hospitality Industry on a Wave of Confidence and Optimism

All in all there is now much optimism in the Indian hospitality sector for genuine reasons.

According to consultancy JLL's Hotel Momentum India Q3 2021, a quarterly hospitality sector monitor, the Indian hospitality industry witnessed a growth of 169.4% in revenue per available room (RevPAR) in Q3 2021 (July - September) compared to Q3 2020. At a pan India level, RevPar grew 122.9% in Q3 2021 as compared to Q2 2021, due to strong recovery in leisure demand as travel restrictions were eased post the second wave of the pandemic.

For the next two quarters, the company expects the growth in travel to continue as India further ramps up its vaccination rate resulting in improved sentiments. IT/ITeS companies have indicated that their travel expenditure will increase in the coming quarters as they foresee employees resuming travel for work. Leisure locations are expected to see a further increase in occupancy and average rates supported mainly by transient leisure and social gatherings.

Industry experts opine that as corporate travel comes back to 80-90% of pre Covid levels in markets such as Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore, the total revenue of the hospitality industry should exceed pre Covid levels, factoring that the leisure business also stays the same.

The lifting of all restrictions on the number of flights airlines can operate in October by Aviation Ministry is a big move that is expected to bring normalcy in flight operations. The government has decided to lift any capacity restriction, which was put in May 2020, after a surge in demand for travel, as people started to travel during the festive months.

More and more countries have lifted their restrictions on flights to India. Airlines like Indigo are strengthening their domestic network. A few hotel groups are on the path of expanding their network.

All these factors augur well for the Indian hospitality industry. India is a large market for travel and tourism with its diverse portfolio of niche tourism products - cruises, adventure, medical, wellness, sports, MICE, eco-tourism, film, rural, spiritual tourism and religious tourism.

The resurgence of travel and tourism industries is expected to give a strong boost to the hotel industry in the days ahead.

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