

HRA Today



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**HOSPITALITY TRENDS
SETTING THE SCENE AS
2021 UNFOLDS**

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and the wisdom of ancient ways,
to find answers in the
mystery of mountains and
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President's Message

Mr Sherry Bhatia
President, HRAWI

My Dear Member's,

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

We are thankful to our Hon Treasurer - Mr Dilip Kothari for hosting the EC meeting on Feb 24, 2021 at his lovely property in Kevadia, Gujarat where the famous Statue of Unity is erected along with lots of other tourist attractions. This is a very commendable Government and Private Sector Partnership to boost tourism and to create thousands of jobs.

Restrictions imposed on the operating timings of restaurants are affecting the prime period of business and causing immense loss once again. Dinner service is a major contributor to a restaurant's revenue. The COVID19 pandemic has put the Hospitality Industry under a lot of pressure. In view of this, we have reached out to the Municipal Commissioner of Mumbai requesting him to intervene and allow establishments to operate until 01:30 am. We have also requested to relax the restriction placed on bar timings from 11:30 pm to 1:00 am.

In another letter to the Hon'ble Home Minister of Maharashtra we have requested Shri Anil Deshmukh to revise the current restrictions of 50% of the restaurant capacity to 100%. Since quite a few restaurants have open spaces and others have large interiors, we have expressed our opinion on the number of customers allowed in restaurants. We have asked that the numbers should not be fixed, but it should be based on the size of each property. Similarly, we have also suggested that meetings and social gatherings be considered and linked to the size of the venues or halls as many hotels have large banquet halls where larger gatherings could be held with all social distancing norms. Additionally, we have recommended that open spaces and terraces, lawns, swimming pool areas be used for restaurants, weddings, social gathering etc. without any restrictions on the number of persons in the

open spaces. We have also requested the Government in the State of Maharashtra to allow restaurants to operate until 1 am.

The HRAWI along with the FHRAI organized a felicitation ceremony for Shri Aaditya Thackeray – Hon'ble Minister of Tourism, Government of Maharashtra. The occasion was to formally appreciate Maharashtra Government's progressive disposition towards Hospitality and Tourism in the State. The Associations applauded the Government for its decision of granting Industry Status for Hospitality and commended its commitment towards Ease of Doing Business for enterprises in the State. The Association also felicitated Smt. Valsa Nair, Principal Secretary, Tourism & Excise, Government of Maharashtra for her help and support to the Industry.

Recently the Goa tourism department launched a crackdown on unregistered hotels that are operating illegally in the State. This is a great initiative taken by the Government which will help the organized players participate on a level playing field. The HRAWI has been demanding that such players that operate without the required licences and permissions be taken to task. These are not only illegal but also a potential hazard to guests. We are glad that the Government is taking steps to curb the mushrooming of such illegal establishments.

Lastly, the Ministry of Tourism has issued revised guidelines for 'Market Development Assistance (MDA) for Overseas Promotion'. The objectives of the scheme are to motivate stakeholders to promote tourism to the country from the overseas markets, to enhance the visibility of brand Incredible India in the overseas markets and to augment foreign tourist arrivals to the country. The guidelines are effective from 1st January, 2021 and have been sent to the members of the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India.

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The Last Leaf



HOSPITALITY TRENDS SETTING THE SCENE AS 2021 UNFOLDS

N.Vijayagopalan

As the largest industry in the world, tourism means a lot for most countries. It is expected that India would become the youngest country globally by 2022, with an average age of 29.

With 59 million active monthly users, India is the third-largest market for Instagram which is ruling the social media networks worldwide. Millennials have set their own rules and pushed the brands and market strategists to serve what they want even before the Covid-19 era. There is a marked trend among the Indian Hospitality brands to render contactless,

seamless and exceptional hospitality services to the guests in the new social distancing world.

Let us see a few trends which are gaining strong ground.

Smart Rooms with Smart Controls

Futuristic technologies, be it Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning or the Internet of Things, have taken complete control of hotel rooms to ensure contactless experiences. From room key to personal entertainment during your staycation, everything is now accessible from smart devices. Once sounded as a science fiction movie

scene, now the guest can set the temperature, mood and ambiance of his hotel room via voice command. The room would detect light automatically or adjust the brightness level, control temperature and contribute to energy-saving while ensuring his luxurious comfort and stay.

The guest can enjoy contactless room service using voice recognition technology or book his favourite spa session with a single click on his smartphone. Opulence, comfort and exceptional room experiences are becoming digital in 2021.



The smart rooms are going to be power-packed with keyless entry, soundproof windows, smooth streaming entertainment, wireless device charging, real-time video chats with hotel staff and a lot more for new age guests.

Sustainability is going to be much bigger and greener

The Covid-19 pandemic and long spells of worldwide lockdowns gave nature the time to reboot and blossom and has made us realise the true value of sustainable and eco-friendly practices to save the life-saving planet.



Maintaining the beauty of the environment through recycling and proper management of five living elements i.e. water, waste, energy, food and structure, hotel brands in the new informed world are now committed to deliver sustainable hospitality experiences. Hotels are using bare minimum artificial powers whether it is in the form of air, light and water. Organic, vegetarian and vegan choices are now leading the F&B menus. Hotels are going to bet high on solar energy so as to contribute their bit in energy conservation for future generations. Plastic straws, cutlery, water bottles, toiletry bottles etc. have been replaced now with compostable or reusable alternatives.

Mobile Check-in

Contactless check-in through mobile phone which started in 2020 is going to rule in 2021 as well. Contactless check-in has become the new norm of hospitality and guests are willing to skip front desk for check-in and other room related queries.

These contactless technologies are not only offering ease and safety to consumers but also helping hoteliers' weather operational disruptions. Chatbots are ready to resolve any guest query. On the otherhand, virtual tours and mobile check-in are ready to delight travel enthusiasts in 2021.

Robots Room Service

Many hotel brands in India have already adopted robotics to transform room cleaning and room service operations. The rise of service robots has ushered in a new era of guest hospitality.

Guests are excited to take services from these robots that are here to assure utmost safety, hygiene and comfort. 2021 will have a new brigade of robot butlers delivering your snacks, toiletries or other amenities to guest rooms. They can navigate floors by using the Wi-Fi to call lifts or be placed at front door where guests can ask questions and enjoy chats with them. They are now your front desk managers providing basic information such as the spa and gym timings, best places to hangout, popular shopping hubs and personalized information for a guest's needs.

Short Distance Tours and Staycations

People are now preferring staycations over long holidays and short distance tours over long journeys. A recent survey conducted by Booking.com has revealed that people have been taking smaller journeys, and discovering (or re-discovering) wonderful experiences closer home with ease in travel restrictions.

Be it bag packers, corporate groups, families or friends, people are preferring to drive down to their nearby getaways for short and relaxed staycations.

In a bid to encourage more foot-fall on domestic tourism destinations, the Tourism Ministry has also started "Dekho Apna Desh" campaign asking Indians to take pledge to visit at least 15 different tourism locations in India by the year 2022.

(Courtesy : IANS)



INNOVATIONS WHICH ARE RESHAPING THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Our Bureau

Hospitality industry in India has been showing a marked downward trend in the aftermath of the pandemic, though there are signs of a recovery in the last three to four months. Now competition is more cut-throat than ever in the industry. It is no wonder that technological innovations are now ruling the roost in the industry so as to stand out in a sea of competition.

Many innovative products are reshaping the hospitality industry. Let us have a quick look at some of them.

1. Smart In-room Technologies

Smart in-room technology is taking the hospitality industry by storm. This technology includes mobile keys, nifty devices that allow guests to unlock their room doors using their smartphones; in-room tablets; smart check-in and check-out systems; wireless charging pads; smart

drapes and lighting; smart TVs, virtual reality and much more. With over 20% of hotels worldwide already on board, this top innovation in the hotel industry will continue to reshape the sector in the next decade or so.

2. Self-Serve Tech

Self-Service Technology is growing in importance within the hospitality industry. The hospitality industry has come a long way when it comes to automation of services – and with good reason. Today's

tech-savvy guests prefer tech over human interaction. That's why automated check-ins and check-out options are now the norms. From browser-based applications to mobile apps, service automation is one of the most innovative products in the hotel industry.

3. Robots in the Hospitality Industry

This is an area where lot of innovations are happening day in and day out. It was just recently when California-based Residence Inn LAX

introduced a series of robots tailored for the hospitality industry. Together with artificial intelligence, these robots can do just about anything in a hotel – from checking in guests to in-room service and even bellhop services. In Japan, there are even more advanced robots that do unbelievably well.

4. iBeacons and Location-Based Tech

iBeacon is the name for Apple's technology standard, which allows Mobile Apps (running on both iOS and Android devices) to listen for signals from beacons in the physical world and react accordingly. Beacons are small, wireless transmitters that use low-energy Bluetooth technology to send signals to other smart devices nearby. They are one of the latest developments in location technology and proximity marketing.

When it comes to top innovation in the hospitality industry, location-based services are making waves with guests. Although much of this nifty tech is in its infancy, we can expect them to help staff locate guest without much hassle. This is certainly one of the top innovative products of the hotel industry to keep an eye on.

5. SIP-DECT in the Hospitality Industry

SIP-DECT is a top innovation in the hospitality industry much like setups found in fixed networks. SIP-DECT, however, is a mobile-enabling technology that offers hotel works sizzling features without tying them to a fixed location.

6. Social Listening

Social listening is the process of monitoring digital conversations and interactions on social media to evaluate your brand perception and customer feedback. Social listening technologies are reshaping hospitality industry like never before. Since most customers are already on social media platforms, hoteliers can get "an inside scoop." This way, they can offer personalized services. This is expected to become more and more visible in the future.

The above are a few of the innovative products that are reshaping the hospitality industry.



INDUSTRY' STATUS TO MAHARASHTRA STATE'S HOSPITALITY SECTOR

Our Bureau



The Maharashtra government conferring 'industry' status to the state's hospitality sector recently is a great step forward in boosting the sector. The industry status allows hospitality establishments in the state to be levied electricity rate, electricity charges, water charges, property tax, development tax, increased carpet ratio and non-agricultural tax at industrial rates (with effect from 1st April 2021). As a result, operating costs for hospitality players in Maharashtra are expected to reduce significantly as industrial tariffs are much lower than the commercial tariff that they currently pay.

Earlier in October 2020, the state

had also reduced pre-establishment licenses for the sector from 70 to 10, which along with the industry status is expected to boost the growth in the hospitality sector in Maharashtra.

The industry expects that other states will take cognizance of what Maharashtra has done and follow the same, which could be the harbinger of change for the industry by significantly impacting its fortunes.

India is one of the fastest growing travel & tourism (T&T) economies in the world thanks to its diverse landscape, rich heritage, and cultural diversity, which attracts tourists from across the country and the world. However, we have still not tapped

into the full potential of tourism in the country, especially leisure tourism, mainly due to the lack of good quality hotel infrastructure.

The hospitality sector is highly capital intensive and the high cost of capital often makes investments in this sector seem less attractive. The sector is a significant contributor to the country's GDP growth and employment and granting infrastructure-lending (infra) status to the sector— a long-pending request by key stakeholders – will be the next frontier in its growth path.

The government has granted infra status to three-star or higher category hotels outside cities with a population of over one million and to hotels with a project cost of more than INR 2 billion (excluding land costs). However, this has not provided any significant fillip to the sector as the benefits have been limited to a minuscule proportion of projects.

In the recent past, there have been several successful examples of sectors, such as hospitals, logistics and affordable housing to name a few, which have witnessed exponential growth in investments after they were accorded the infrastructure status.

Similarly, infrastructure status will provide the Indian hospitality sector with several benefits and concessions, including longer loan repayment tenure and lower borrowing rates, which will help in attracting substantial fresh investments and will go a long way in improving the health of the sector, which is currently struggling due to the ongoing pandemic. The growth of the hospitality sector will in turn fuel the economy in the post-COVID world, making a compelling case for the sector being granted infrastructure status.





New Member List

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

HOTELS

Sr. No	Name of the Establishment	Address
1	Hotel President	Above Canara Bank, Berasia Road, Near Bhopal Talkies Square, Bhopal. Madhyapradesh - 462001
2	Carlton Hotel	Florence House, No.12, B K Boman Behram Marg, behind Taj Mahal Hotel, Colaba, Mumbai -400039.
3	Hotel Amba Suites	Sundaram 1-101, Amba Business Park, B/h. Trimandir, Adalaj, Gandhinagar, Gujarat - 382421
4	Double Tree By Hilton	Plot no. 67/1,69 Ambij Bopal Road, Near ISRO Residential Colony, Jodhpur village,Ahmedabad. Gujarat - 380015
5	Hotel Taj Skyline	Final Plot No 67-82, R. S. No. 722 - 799, Sankalp in Hotel Sindhu Bhavan Road, Bodakdev, Ahemdabad, Gujarat - 380059

RESTAURANT

Sr. No	Name of the Establishment	Address
1	Viva Panjim	H.No. 178, Rua 31 de Janerio, Behind Mary Immaculate High School, Fontainhas, Panaji, Goa 403001
2	Creame Centre	211-D, Shoppers Stop, S. V. Road. Andheri (W), Mumbai - 400058

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India's hospitality sector facing whopping revenue loss in 2020.

Our Bureau



The hospitality industry in India has been passing through a critical phase ever since Covid-19 pandemic came to the scene. The RevPAR (Revenue per available room) for the industry saw a sharp decline during the first three quarters of 2020. All key eleven markets in India reported a significant decline in RevPAR Performance in the third quarter of 2020 year-on-year (YoY).

According to JLL's Hotel Momentum India (HMI) Q3 2020, a quarterly hospitality sector monitor, among the key markets, Mumbai had the highest RevPAR when compared to the other markets, despite its decline of RevPAR by 71.7 per cent in Q3 2020 compared to Q3 2019. The IT capital Bengaluru had the sharpest decline in RevPAR in Q3 2020, with an 88.1 per cent decline compared to the same period in the previous year.

The JLL's report observed that during the first three quarters of 2020, international operators dominated signings over domestic operators with the ratio of 53:47 in terms of inventory volume. It was also observed that there has been a demand in leisure destinations, especially during the weekends with further unlocking of restrictions from August 2020.

Besides Mumbai and Bengaluru, cities such as Pune, Kolkata and Goa also witnessed sharp declines in RevPAR. Total number of signings in Q3 2020 stood at 24 hotels, comprising 2,314 keys—a decline of 19 per cent compared to the same period last year.

Despite the downward slide, there were a few positive moves during this period. The Oberoi Group entered a long-term strategic alliance with the Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group to create unique culinary experiences and the Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL) announced the acquisition of the Sea Rock Hotel site to build an iconic sea front hotel in India. The Delhi government allowed hotels to reopen after five months in August 2020.

Besides this, Thailand's Dusit International announced its re-entry into India in a partnership with the Jain Group. The tie-up will set up a 126-keys property in Kolkata at an investment of Rs 75 to 80 crore. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced de-linking hotels from commercial real estate enabling hotels to seek capital loans from banks and ease out liquidity issues, especially for new hotel projects.

Hotels and tourism have been amongst the worst impacted businesses due to the on-going pandemic. However, with the phased unlocking of the economy in the third quarter of 2020, we witnessed a gradual growth in demand, especially in the leisure markets. But business travel, which is the primary source of



room demand, is yet to pick up and this can only happen once we see renewed confidence in people to start travelling again. Investors have been taking interest in exploring operational hotel opportunities, both in business and in leisure locations. With the phased unlocking of the economy in the third quarter of 2020, there has been a gradual growth in demand particularly in the leisure market with weekend occupancy spikes.

According to another report on the Indian hotel industry by ANAROCK, the Indian hospitality sector is facing a revenue loss of Rs 90,000 crores in 2020. The report says there was,

however, a slight increase in hotel occupancy that improved from 10 per cent in April 2020 to almost 26 per cent in September 2020. ANAROCK anticipates the overall Indian hospitality sector (including organised, unorganised and semi-organised operators) to incur an estimated total revenue loss of Rs 90,000 crore in 2020. Occupancy and average daily rate (ADR) are expected to reach pre-Covid levels only by 2022 and 2023, respectively—assuming that a vaccine is in place by early 2021 and becomes widely available before the end of the year.

In the backdrop of the Covid-19

pandemic, ANAROCK says guest perceptions and preferences have evolved rapidly, and hotels have been quick to fall in line. The focus is now on safety, hygiene and social distancing that is not only for the safety of guests but also hotel employees. The report observes that besides the mandatory sanitisation protocols, many hotel chains are also investing in new cleaning technologies such as electrostatic disinfection misters and ultraviolet light interventions. While domestic leisure travel is picking up, corporate demand is still subdued and will remain constrained at least for the short term due to companies' cost-cutting measures. Most corporates are now using virtual meetings, events and webinars to connect with their stakeholders.

The ANAROCK report further points out that the under construction hospitality projects may face delays on account of labour shortages and issues pertaining to vendors and a disrupted supply chain. Besides that, muted market conditions will likely lead to delayed openings and some projects will remain on hold pending recovery. There could also be financing challenges on account of negative sentiment for the sector and that may also delay projects. There is also a possibility that changes in market conditions may render some proposed projects infeasible, leading to indefinite postponements and also some properties may close on account of financial stress and not reopen for an extended period of time, resulting in negative supply growth.

According to ANAROCK, prior to Covid-19, over 11,500 rooms were expected to be added to the supply in both 2020 and 2021. Now only 15-20 per cent of the anticipated 2020 supply can be expected to come into the market, with the rest being postponed to 2021 and beyond.

കാങ്കോയുടെ കാർഷിക ഉത്പന്നങ്ങൾ 50% വരെ സർക്കാർ സബ്സിഡിയിൽ കമ്പനിയിൽനിന്ന് നേരിട്ട് വാങ്ങാവുന്നതാണ്.



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TIMIOS'



Timios' Made to Order porridge range for infants and toddlers in 12 variants

Timios forays into the baby food market with the launch of its new category of 'Made to Order' porridge range for infants and toddlers. This new product is meant for the nutritional requirements of babies between ages of 6 to 18 months, and is available in 12 variants.

According to company sources, the porridge range is manufactured in a cleanroom processing unit with the finest ingredients ensuring highest quality of standards and hygiene. A cleanroom unit is typically used in pharmaceutical and scientific research that require a controlled environment with limited exposure to contaminants. The cleanroom used for manufacturing the porridge range is designed to maintain an extremely clean environment that filters dust, airborne organisms and vaporised particles to provide the most hygienic food products. Each product is processed only upon receiving the customer's order.

The company claims all the ingredients used are 100 per cent Organic, USDA and India Organic Certified. These ingredients are further processed using traditional methods where they are sprouted, roasted and ground to retain the nutritional value of the ingredients. Timios porridge range is available in 12 variants covering age groups 6 Months to 12 plus months.

TATA TEA



Tata Consumer Products strengthens beverages portfolio with new launches

Strengthening its wellness portfolio in the packaged beverages category to cater to consumer needs, Tata Consumer Products has launched two new products: Tata Tea Tulsi Green and Tata Tea Gold Care, and reformulated its existing Tetley Green Tea with added Vitamin C. According to company sources, these new offerings are developed with beneficial ingredients that are known to help improve the body's immunity and enhance overall wellness and the 2 new product offerings combine the refreshment of everyday tea with the goodness of Indian herbs which are known for their health benefits.

Gold Care is infused with a medley of five native ingredients that provide wholesome goodness in every cup and promote wellbeing. It packs the goodness of immunity boosting ingredient Tulsi and other native ingredients Ginger, Cardamom, Mulethi and Brahmi that not only make for a perfect cup of masala tea but also are known to provide specific health benefits.

Tulsi Green is a blend of green tea and real tulsi leaves. Tulsi is traditionally known to boost immunity and green tea is known for its multiple health benefits. These two were brought together to create a product that tastes and feels good.

DEL MONTE OLIVE OIL



Del Monte makes olive oil more affordable with launch of 1 litre pack

Del Monte has launched a special 1 litre pouch pack priced at Rs 250, thereby making olive oil affordable like never before. The move is surely expected to disrupt the Rs 40,000 crore edible oil market in the country, considering that price has been reported to be the single biggest barrier which has prevented families from shifting to olive oil segment until now. The pack has already hit the markets in Delhi-NCR, Bengaluru, Chennai, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Punjab and is available on leading e-commerce platforms as well.

This new pack carries a special variety of olive oil called Olive Pomace Oil, which is imported directly from Europe and was only available in bottles, at a premium. It is known to have zero Cholesterol with no Trans-fats, and instead carries high good fats (MUFA/PUFA) and anti-oxidants. It is considered ideal for deep frying apart from everyday Indian cooking.

FAST&UP



Fast&Up enters child nutrition market with range of healthy nutrition for kids

Fast&Up has launched a new range of immunity boosters and electrolyte supplements for kids- Fast&Up Charge Kidz and Fast&Up Reload Kidz. According to company sources, backed by innovative and Swiss effervescent technology, both products feature premium quality ingredients in delicious flavours that make drinking to good health fun and easy. The range is available across India in retail outlets, e-commerce platforms, kirana stores, top medical stores and through the brand's website.

According to the manufacturers, bridging the gap of quality nourishment for children in India, the brand will cater to the growing needs of both parents and kids through effervescent nutrition to make health drinks fun. The products contain no added sugar or artificial colouring and are safe to consume. The products will help to boost immunity at an early age in children, and provide instant energy and electrolyte replenishment, which are easily lost due to physical activity or through sweating.

ID FRESH FOOD



iD Fresh Food ready to take coffee market, eyes Rs 50 crore sales in 2021-22

iD Fresh Food launches three unique blends of first-of-its-kind instant filter coffee liquid. The company stated that its coffee liquid has been steadily disrupting the non-alcoholic beverage market since its introduction in October 2018. The company is targeting a revenue of Rs 50 crore for 2021-22, with the unique instant filter coffee blends.

The surge in demand during the lockdown and work-from-home norm to slow the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic inspired the company to create three exceptional blends – Strong, Bold and Intense. While Strong offers a traditional blend of 70 per cent coffee and 30 per cent chicory, Bold is a combination of 80 per cent coffee and 20 per cent chicory, and Intense is 100 per cent coffee for the purists who like their coffee blended with nothing but coffee. The products will be available in retail stores across markets and e-commerce platforms, such as Amazon, BigBasket, and Supr Daily among others.

NOTO POPS



Noto Pops: low calorie frozen treats that are sugar free & vegan

Noto has launched six ice popsicles that are stated to be low-calorie, free of artificial ingredients and GMOs, and to have no added sugar. According to the manufacturers, these six flavours are packed with 40 per cent fresh fruit (unsweetened), stevia, erythritol, apple concentrate, Vitamin C and Prebiotic Fibre and these low calorie and vegan popsicles have no added colour, zero added sugar and are made with real fruits. The six flavours include, Strawberry Raspberry, Kala Jamun, Imli, Pulp Orange, Pina Colada, and Mango Coconut.

READY-TO-COOK BIRYANIS



Nandu's launches two ready-to-cook biryanis in Bengaluru

Nandu's has launched two ready-to-cook (RTC) products: Nandu's Nawabi Chicken Dum Biryani and Nandu's Donne Chicken Biryani. Faster than ordering in and easier than stepping out for one, the biryani mixes, masalas and kits are available in the market. According to the manufacturers, the all-inclusive offering is a complete ready to cook biryani kit which includes chicken biryani mix, tender chicken pieces, sherva an accompaniment for Donne Biryani and salan an accompaniment for Nawabi Biryani and rice too (jeera rice for Donne Biryani and basmati rice for Nawabi Biryani. One pack can easily serve two.

The company stated that since March 2020, the demand for Nandu's RTC range of products, such as Chicken 65 and Butter Chicken Masala, has grown more than two-fold.

MoFPI portal on food research & development projects creates employment opportunities



The MoFPI portal on the food research and development projects 2021 was launched at the inaugural session of India's 1st Virtual 'Processed Food Expo' organised by Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India in association with FICCI. This portal presents the outcomes of the research and development works of various institutes involved in food processing and value addition in India. The portal has facilities to explore technological solutions in the form of food product, process and technology and food processing machinery and will also serve as the repository of innovations and technical solutions.

Speaking on the occasion, Rameswar Teli, Minister of State, Food Processing Industries, Government of India

said that a well-developed food processing sector with a higher level of processing helps to reduce wastage, improvise value addition, encourage crop diversification, ensure better RoI (Return on Investment) for farmers, boost employment along with growth in export earnings. Teli said that there is a plethora of opportunities in the food processing sector for growth in employment and export potential. He further said that there is a need to develop processing, handling, packaging, storage, and distribution technology for all key processed products to meet domestic and international food regulation standards. Food processing ministry is implementing the research and development plan for the sector. The objective is the commercialisation of the food processing industry. He add-

ed that he was confident that this research and development plan will benefit not only the product and process development but will also aid in the better packaging value chain by value addition in the food processing industry.

Pushpa Subrahmanyam, secretary, MoFPI said that the food processing industry is research and innovation based. It is the innovation that drives this sector and determines its path and expansion. "The ministry has been supporting small innovation projects for developing new products and processes, packaging, testing equipment and more affordable technology for the predominant MSME industry in this sector," she said.

Nitta Gelatin India launches intl standard gelatin for the hotel & restaurants sector



Nitta Gelatin India has launched a premium gelatin of international standard in HoReCa category. The products include a variety of desserts, jellies, frozen sweets, soft candies, marshmallows, etc. This is the first time a gelatin manufacturer in India

is offering food-grade gelatin in their own brand for retail segment. According to company sources, good quality gelatin is the one ingredient that goes into most of these items and the product is expected to be palatable for food connoisseurs. The premium gelatin is, manufactured with Japa-

nese technology as per GMP and HACCP system under hygiene rules by European Regulation (EC). According to the manufacturers, derived from natural sources, the gelatin contains all essential amino acids except Tryptophan.

The company is promoted by Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation Limited in collaboration with Nitta Gelatin Inc., Japan. With two plants in Kerala and one each in Maharashtra and Gujarat, their products reach more than 30 countries.

CII's 11th Food Safety Awards Ceremony 2020



The 11th CII Food Safety Awards Ceremony was organised to recognise role models and best in class food business operators on food safety excellence and provide a framework for continual improvement. The glittering Award Ceremony was organized virtually on 18th December 2020. Rita Teotia, chairperson FSSAI graced the occasion.

The winners of the awards were

- 1) Cereal, Grains, Pulses : ITC Limited, FBD, ICML - Pudukkottai, Atta Unit
- 2) Confectionary : Nestle India Limited-Ponda
- 3) Food Testing Laboratory : TUV India Pvt Ltd. Pune (Lab division)
- 4) Foodstuff intended for Particular Nutritional Uses : Hindustan Unilever Limited, Sonapat, Haryana
- 5) Health Supplements and Nutraceuticals : Amway India Enterprises Pvt Ltd, Tamil Nadu
- 6) Alcoholic Beverages : Pernod Ri-

card India (P) Limited, Nashik

- 7) Ready to eat Savouries : Integrated Consumer Goods Manufacturing Facility, ITC Limited Panchla
- 8) Ready to eat Savouries : Pepsico India Holdings Private Limited (FRITOLAY Division), Sangrur, Punjab
- 9) Spices, Seasoning, Oleoresins and Condiments : AVT McCormick Ingredients Pvt Ltd, Ernakulam
- 10) Tea : TCPL, Damdim Packaging Centre
- 11) Fats & Oil : Adani Wilmar Ltd-Mundra
- 12) Catering & QSR : Proodle Hospitality Services Pvt Ltd, C/o. KIA MOTORS INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED
- 13) Catering & QSR : Proodle Hospitality Services Pvt Ltd – C/o Hyundai Motor India Limited.

Other well deserving applicant units nominated by the jury were awarded with Certificates of Significant Achievements, Strong Commitment and Letters of Appreciation for their appreciable efforts in food safety.

More than 120 qualified assessors from a pool of 560 assessors were involved in assessments for the Awards which was conducted virtually this year. The Award follows a 4 stage evaluation methodology comprising of technical assessment by trained food professionals, calibration by sector specific calibrators and subsequent evaluations by the Awards Committee and a final round of evaluation by a distinguished panel of Jury.

The Jury panel included : Dr Chindi Vasudevappa, chair, Jury, CII Award for Food Safety, Vice Chancellor, NIFTEM (under Ministry of Food Processing Industry); Dr Gyanendra Gongal, Regional Advisor (Food safety), Food and Fit, Healthier Populations and NCD, WHO Regional Office for South East Asia; Sridhar Dharmapuri, Group Leader, Agriculture and Food Systems, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific; Dr U.K Chatterjee CEO TPM Consulting.

Heritage Foods won 3 awards at National Energy Conservation Awards 2020



Heritage Foods has won all the prestigious All India National Energy Conservation Awards 2020, 1st, 2nd Prizes and Certificate of Merit in Dairy Sector for its processing units at Tirupati, Bayyavaram in Visakhapatnam District and Bengaluru for the effective energy conservation methods, which had resulted in substantial energy saving and higher productivity for the energy consumed.

The Awards were received by vice chairman and managing director, Nara

Bhuvanewari and head operations, DVRK Prasad at an award function organised virtually by Bureau of Energy Efficiency, Ministry of Power, Government of India in the presence of Minister of State for Power, New and Renewable Energy R.K Singh.

While this is an industry record by itself, the company has reached a new milestone by winning all the three awards this year by breaking the previous record of two awards in the year 2015. The evaluation period considered for these awards is from 2016 to 2020.

With these Heritage Foods' National Energy Conservation Awards count reached to a total of 11 awards since 2008. It had won these Awards in the years 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 & 2020.

The Heritage Foods founded in the year 1992 is one of the fast-

est-growing Private Sector Enterprises in India, with two business divisions' viz., Dairy and Renewable Energy under its flagship Company Heritage Foods Limited and Cattle feed business through its subsidiary, Heritage Nutrivet Ltd (HNL). Presently Heritage's milk and milk products have a market presence in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Odisha, NCR Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand. It has a totally renewable energy generation capacity of 10.39 MW from both Solar and Wind for captive consumption of its dairy factories.

FSSAI to go slow on minerals in packaged water and animal feed norms



The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has extended the implementation of the regulations governing the limit of minerals in packaged drinking water and commercial feeds for animals.

The apex regulator in two separate orders, has stated that both these regulations were deferred until July 1, 2021 due to Covid pandemic.

Under the FSS-Food Product Standards and Food Additive-Fourth Amendment Regulations

2019, the FSSAI had prescribed limits for calcium and magnesium in packaged drinking water, wherein for calcium limit was set at 20-75 mg/litre and for magnesium it was of 10-30 mg/litre. The timeline for compliance of this regulation was July 1, 2020 and subsequently extended till January 1, 2021.

FSSAI in a statement has said that it has received several representations from the stakeholders requesting for further extension of the time for compliance.

"After due consideration of the representation, it has been decided to further extend the timeline for compliance related to the limits of calcium and magnesium for the standards of packaged drinking water (other than mineral water) up to July 1,

2021," says FSSAI's order.

Similarly, FSSAI has issued an order for extension of timeline for compliance with the direction dated January 27, 2020 issued regarding compliance of commercial feeds/feed materials intended for meat and milk producing animals with relevant BIS standards.

The said regulations were to come into force by July 27, 2020 but the implementation was extended until 1st Jan 2021 due to Covid pandemic.

Subsequently, upon considering the representation from the stakeholders, FSSAI has further extended the implementation until July 1, 2021, and issued an order in this regard.

Hospitality industry roots for domestic tourism, appeals for tax exemption

The Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) has appealed to the Government of India to aggressively promote domestic tourism in the new year. The apex hospitality association has pressed on the need to encourage local tourism under the Ministry of Tourism's DekhoApnaDesh Pledge campaign while the country remains closed to international tourists.

India's tourism and hospitality sectors have incurred the largest collateral damage of the Covid-19 pandemic and every small or big step to revive the sector will be crucial in the long-term health of both the sector and the country's economy.

The FHRAI has recommended incentivising domestic tourism by offering tax exemption under 80C of up to Rs 50,000 to Indians which will encourage them to travel.

Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, vice president, FHRAI, said, "The PM has always spoken about how important the Indian Tourism is to the country. We believe that with the right kind of messaging and support from the Government, India's domestic tourism could flourish. Make in India or Vocal for Local initiatives are on the same line as DekhoApnaDesh and there couldn't be a more opportune time to push the throttle on promoting domestic tourism. The Government could allow valid GST hotel bills of any State other than the home state of the individual assessee exempt under Section 80C for an additional amount of Rs 50,000. The potential additional tax saving will encourage citizens to travel within India and will give impetus to hotels as well as ancillary industries."

Hospitality and Tourism sector accounts roughly for 10 per cent of India's GDP and employs nearly 9 per



cent of India's working population. With zero foreign exchange earnings and less than 25 per cent of pre-pandemic revenues, the sector is facing an existential crisis. The total loan outstanding to the Hospitality industry is approximately Rs 55,000 crore and the value at risk for the hospitality and tourism sector is at approximately Rs 10 lakh crore. If favourable initiatives and policies are not drawn for survival of the hospitality sector then at least 40 to 50 per cent restaurants and 30 to 40 per cent hotels in the country will shut down, resulting to millions of job losses.

Pradeep Shetty, joint secretary, FHRAI, said, "Over 26 million Indian Nationals travelled overseas in 2019. Right now is the time these travellers can explore their own country. We request the Government to urge people to stay and travel within India. India has some of the best coastlines and beaches in the world, its hill stations and architectural wonders are unparalleled and we also have pilgrimage

attractions. There is every reason that the domestic traveller should explore their own country and the Government just needs to induce this want to see one's own country. This will save many small and medium-size businesses from imminent and permanent closure."

"The hospitality industry has much hope from the upcoming Union Budget and hotels and restaurants are expecting sector-specific policy announcements from the Finance Ministry under the leadership of Nirmala Sitharaman. The industry needs this more than anything to survive and then, to eventually revive. Travel culture in the country is on the rise and if the domestic tourist is offered incentive, tourism could witness a boom at home," concluded Kohli.

FSSAI notifies on FSS Act and Good Agri Practices to address contaminants

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has written to the state Food Safety Commissioners for a training and awareness programme about the FSS Act and 'Good Agricultural Practices' for the primary producers to address the problem of contaminants and residues of various pesticides post-harvesting.

The state food authorities were asked to include programmes related to agriculture, animal husbandry, pesticide usage and so on.

"It is requested to conduct training and awareness programme about the Act and promotion of 'Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), Good Animal Husbandry Practices (GAHP), Good Animal Feeding Practices (GAFP) etc., apart from integrated pest management, use of pesticides only in the prescribed manner and for approved crops, observance of waiting period prior to harvesting by the cultivators etc. among farmers," reads the letter.

The letter added that the programmes can be arranged in association with state departments of agriculture, animal husbandry, dairying, fisheries, Krishi Vigyan Kendra and Indian Council of Agricultural Research.

The matter gained prominence after the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health had observed that harmful components and contaminants enter the food system at the time of primary production and asked the food authority to ensure that the food is safe right from the beginning of the food chain, the food authority needs to work closely with the primary producers.

According to the FSSAI, being a food regulator it monitors and regulates the contaminants and maximum residue limits for various pesticides in farm produce once the food enters in the food value chain.

"However, the source of presence of pesticides and heavy metals in food

chain are agricultural practices like use and sale or unapproved pesticides to the cultivators, overuse of pesticides beyond the recommended dose, non-following of waiting period and other agronomic practices including integrated pest management and contaminated irrigation water etc.," said an official with the FSSAI.

The official informed that FSSAI has issued various codes of practices under the Food Safety Management System for milk, milk products, fish, fish products, meat and meat products and so on, along with vegetable edible oils.

Besides, the regulator has also issued a number of guidance notes on major food safety issues related to the primary production level regarding metal contaminants, pesticides, aflatoxins and issue of formalin, and all of this material is available on FSSAI's website.

Express Group set to acquire 7 properties of Cambay Hotels



Gujarat's four-star hotel chain – Express Group of Hotels has acquired seven

of Neesa Leisure Ltd. (NLL)-operated Cambay Hotels. Presently, the Express Group of Hotels owns and operates three premium hotel properties in the state, two in Vadodara and one in Jamnagar. With this acquisition, the Express Group adds over 800 keys to its existing portfolio of 376 rooms. The new properties are located at Gandhinagar and Ahmedabad in Gujarat and at Neemrana, Udaipur and Jaipur

in Rajasthan. Express Group of Hotels is awaiting the approval of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), Ahmedabad for formally taking over the reins of Cambay Hotels.

NLL is currently going through the Corporate Insolvency Resolution process under the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code and the NCLT is expected to announce the outcome on the matter, shortly.

HRAWI & HRA- Gujarat meet CM, implore Government to lift night curfew restrictions

Members of the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Gujarat (HRA-Gujarat) along with the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) met with Chief Minister of Gujarat, Vijay Rupani, to bring to his attention the dire situation of the hotel and restaurant industry in the State. In the meeting, the associations explained the extremely precarious situation of the hospitality industry.

Gujarat has witnessed closure of over 40 per cent of hospitality establishments since the lockdown had come into effect. On priority, the industry has pleaded to the CM for lifting the night curfew for hotels and restaurants. The Associations have requested that Hospitality establishments be allowed to remain open after 10 pm for another two hours. The Government has also been requested to lift the restriction on the capacity of guests permitted in a closed venue.

Narendra Somani, president, HRA Gujarat and executive committee member, HRAWI, said, "We are hopeful that the Hon'ble CM will consider our plea and lift the curfew. With the pandemic almost under control, hotels and restaurants in State should now be allowed to go back to the pre-curfew timings. The present 10 pm deadline is costing the industry a monthly revenue loss of close to Rs.500 crores. Also, the current 50 per cent cap on the number of people allowed in closed venues should also be raised. We have

appealed to Shri Rupani ji to consider this demand and have assured him about hotels and restaurants maintaining utmost diligence in ensuring guests' health and safety."

Pradeep Shetty, senior vice president, HRAWI, said, "Since the lockdown was imposed last year, the hotel and restaurant industry has almost completely collapsed. Restaurants and hotels are either closing or are scaling down operations. Even the New Year Eve celebrations did not bring any respite to the Hospitality industry. The wedding season is here but the night curfew as well as the cap on the number of people allowed at celebration venues has turned our hopes and plans upside down."

The Associations have also pointed out that there has been a drastic fall in the number of cases in the State and that it's time to normalise business as many other States in the country have done.

"Even generally, people step out of their houses only sometime after 7 pm and this gives hotels and restaurants only a couple of hours to entertain guests. This is hurting hotels and restaurants. We have requested the Hon'ble CM to consider our plea of allowing establishments to remain open until 12 pm and food delivery services to be allowed all night," added Somani.



Besides lifting the night curfew, hotels and restaurants have also requested the Gujarat Government to lift the 50 per cent restriction on the number of people allowed at a venue. The associations have asked the Government to consider allowing hospitality establishments to accommodate guests in full capacity.

"Not just the curfew but also the restriction on the number of guests a hotel or restaurant can accommodate should now be removed. Limiting the number of people and the number of operational hours is majorly denting our business. We are effectively being allowed to operate at only 30 per cent of our total capacity. The industry is being pushed to the edge and if the curfew is not lifted, many hotels and restaurants in the State will close down permanently. This will lead to increase in unemployment and also the chances of reviving businesses will become even more difficult," concluded Somani.

Food Service Establishments should display calorific value against food items: FSSAI

The apex food regulator of the country has notified the regulations for display of information in food service establishments that directs for disclosure of the calorific value against the food items served. FSSAI has said that the Food Business Operator needs to comply with these provisions by January 1, 2022.

The regulations say that Food Service Establishments having Central licence or outlets at 10 or more locations shall mention the calorific value (in kcal per serving and serving size) against the food items displayed on the menu cards or boards or booklets.

“Additionally, reference information on calorie requirements shall also be displayed clearly and prominently as an average active adult requires 2,000 kcal energy per day, however, calorie needs may vary”, reads the regulation notified by the FSSAI.

Further, says the notified regulation that Food Service Establishments shall also mention information relating to food allergens as prescribed under these regulations, depicted by easy to understand symbols and logo for veg or non-veg against the food items displayed on the menu cards or boards.

However, these provisions shall not be applicable to Event Caterers and Food Service premises that operate for less than 60 days in a calendar year (consecutively or non-consecutively); self-serve condiments that are free of charge and not listed on the menu; and special-order items or modified meals and menu items as per customer’s request.

Besides, the regulations state that the Food Service Establishments shall also provide nutritional information regarding sugars, added sugar, fat, and dietary fibre along with certain mandatory declaration prescribed in

the schedule-II of these regulations, if applicable and information relating to organic food or ingredients, if claimed, for the food items sold by them to consumers upon request in the form of booklets or handouts or on their website and deviation of 25 per cent may be tolerated in case of nutritional information declaration.

These regulations also apply on the e-commerce businesses, as they are asked to get the information on nutrition and mandatory declaration from respective Food Business Operators and provide on their website wherever applicable.

Also, according to these regulations, the nutritional information, ingredients information along with health messages should be displayed where food is served in a manner as may be required and specified by the Food Authority.

IHCL opens Taj Skyline in Ahmedabad, Gujarat



Indian Hotels Company’s (IHCL) one of the major brands, Taj, opened its new hotel in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Soaring over 18 storeys, Taj Skyline is an addition to Ahmedabad’s historic and modern architectural

landmarks in the city.

Strategically located at a comfortable driving distance from the airport, important commercial centres as well as Gandhinagar – the state capital, Taj

Skyline is a 315-room contemporary luxury hotel offering panoramic views of the city’s skyline. The hotel’s design captures the evolving spirit of the city, drawing subtle inspirations from the local design and culture in its interiors. In line with its philosophy of raising the bar of the culinary landscape, Taj Skyline introduces Shamiana, the popular all-day diner, to Ahmedabad – its third outpost after Mumbai and Dubai. Guests can also enjoy Pan Asian cuisine at Nonya or relish international and local comfort food at Emperor’s Lounge. Taj Skyline, with its tastefully designed banqueting and conferencing spaces with independent access and breakaway rooms, is perfect for events and weddings. The hotel also features the signature Jiva Spa and a temperature-controlled indoor swimming pool.

WHO urges governments to promote healthy food in public facilities

Public settings, such as schools, childcare centres, nursing homes, hospitals and correctional facilities and all other canteens of public institutions, can play a key role in ensuring people are provided with healthy food and helping prevent the 8 million annual deaths currently caused by unhealthy diets.

A new WHO Action framework for developing and implementing public food procurement and service policies for a healthy diet aims to increase the availability of healthy food through setting nutrition criteria for food served and sold in public settings. The action framework also aims to reduce preventable diseases and deaths from high consumption of sodium and salt, sugars and fats, particularly trans fats, and inadequate consumption of whole grains, legumes, vegetables and fruit.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, said, "Public places that serve the entire community, including our most vulnerable populations, must be places where healthy diets are promoted not discouraged. "Now is the time for governments to lead by example through

ensuring that the food served or sold in public settings contributes to healthy diets and saves lives. No public funds should be spent on food contributing to unhealthy diets."

Consuming a healthy diet from pre-birth to the last days of life is vital to prevent all forms of malnutrition as well as diabetes, cancers and other non-communicable diseases (NCDs). The new action framework serves as a tool for governments to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate public food procurement and service policies that align with the core principles of healthy diets as outlined in existing WHO recommendations:

- Limit sodium consumption and ensure that salt is iodized;
- Limit the intake of free sugars;
- Shift fat consumption from saturated fats to unsaturated fats;
- Eliminate industrially-produced trans fats;
- Increase consumption of whole grains, vegetables, fruit, nuts and pulses; and ensure the availability of free, safe drinking water.

Healthy public food procurement and

service policies set nutrition criteria for food served and sold in public settings. These policies increase the availability of foods that promote healthy diets and/or limit or prohibit the availability of foods that contribute to unhealthy diets. Policies can cover the entire process of purchase, provision, distribution, preparation, service, and sale of food to ensure each step meets healthy criteria.

A number of countries worldwide have already taken steps to promote healthy diets in public facilities. In Brazil, the National School Feeding Programme requires 30 per cent of the budget to be used to purchase food from family farms, and requires menus to be based on fresh or minimally processed foods based on the region's sustainability, seasonality and agricultural diversification. To improve the health of children, the Republic of Korea established Green Food Zones that regulate the food available within a 200 metre radius of schools. In these zones businesses may not sell food that falls above a set threshold for calories per serving, total sugars and saturated fats.

Pune to host the preliminary round of Young Chef Olympiad 2020

Pune will host the first round of the Sixth season of Young Chef Olympiad 2020. The city will host 10 out of the 55 participating nations. The event will see eminent international chefs like Chef Andreas Muller, Chef Andy Varma, Karen Anand, Rahul Akerkar, Enzo Oliveri and several other judges. The 5-day long competition will include three rounds of tough challenges for cheftestants. The event

will be held in India from 28 January to 2nd February 2020 across Delhi, Bangalore, Pune, Goa and Kolkata. The prizes include a cash prize of USD 10,000, the Winner's Trophy and a Gold Toque.

According to a company release, YCO 2020 has embraced the theme of Sustainability and the world's biggest culinary extravaganza aims to show

the world how to make the world a better place for future generations.

It states YCO brings people together and one of the biggest takeaways of YCO 2020 is that it will bring young people of the world on one platform and that sustainability is the theme for YCO 2020.

Madhya Pradesh signs pact with Kerala to replicate Responsible Tourism. Kerala, MP Tourism ministers exchange MoUs

Kerala's famed Responsible Tourism (RT) found another state officially emulating the pioneering initiative, as Madhya Pradesh today signed a Memorandum of Understanding

(MoU) with the state for implementation of the Kerala model, which involves local communities and makes tourism a tool for rural development.

The two states signed a joint decla-

ration under which Kerala will extend a series of services under a 16-point programme. The MoUs were exchanged at a ceremony by the state's Tourism Minister Shri Kadakampally Surendran and his Madhya Pradesh counterpart Ms Usha Thakur.



Tourism Minister Shri Kadakampally Surendran and his Madhya Pradesh counterpart Ms. Usha Thakur exchanging a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)



Ms. Usha Thakur, Minister for Tourism, Madhya Pradesh, speaking at the MoU signing ceremony for implementing Kerala's Responsible Tourism (RT) model in Madhya Pradesh.



Tourism Minister Shri Kadakampally Surendran speaking at the function for exchanging an MoU with Madhya Pradesh for implementing Kerala's Responsible Tourism.

Shri Surendran said Responsible Tourism is the "only tool for sustainable development of tourism" as it creates better places for people to live in and visit. "RT takes the responsibility of the economic well-being of society. It ensures social and cultural stability besides environmental protection," he noted, terming the pact with Madhya Pradesh as "another milestone" for Kerala Tourism and its RT Mission.

Shri Surendran said Kerala did not have a practical model to follow or replicate when it launched RT. Today, the Mission has more than 20,000 units comprising small-scale entrepreneurs, artists, craftspeople, traditional workers, farmers and other service providers. "They are local communities at the grassroots, linked directly or indirectly with tourism," he added.

"The RT Mission's projects earned Kerala's tourist map several micro destinations. It has, during its function since October 2017, generated an income of Rs 35 crores amid disruptions owing to Nipah, two floods and now Covid -19."

Ms Thakur said she was overwhelmed by the way the tradition, culture and heritage of Kerala is being preserved here. She pointed out that with the help of RT Mission of Kerala, the rustic beauty, life and heritage of Madhya Pradesh could be highlighted on the world tourism map.

"There are several tribes like Bhil, Sahariya and Gond living in our state, and we want to showcase their traditional value, attire and food habits to the entire country and outside word with Kerala's assistance. India is

a country of villages and its soul lies in the villages. We want to show it to the world with your cooperation, she added."

Kerala Tourism Secretary Smt Rani George said the success of RT in Kerala has always been the public and private partnership. "Community should be benefitted and empowered through RT. So it's high time other states thought about embracing RT," she said, adding that a team from Kerala will be visiting Madhya Pradesh as part of this collaboration.

Kerala Tourism Director Shri P Bala Kiran, welcoming the gathering, said the MoU with Madhya Pradesh marks a new progress for Kerala in RT sector. Kerala can also learn a lot from Madhya Pradesh.

Kerala RT Mission coordinator Shri K

Rupeshkumar said Madhya Pradesh can become a champion in RT sector with the support of Kerala, which has already set a model in RT in the world.

Ms Sonia Meena, Deputy Secretary and Additional Managing Director of Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, gave a presentation on the proposed RT activities in the central Indian state.

Shri Krishna Teja, MD, Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC); Dr Reena K S, ward councillor; Shri Manoj Kumar Singh, Director, Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board; Shri Baby Mathew Somatheeram, President, Kerala Travel Mart Society (KTM) and Senior Vice President of IATO Shri EM Najeeb also attended. In the next one week, a 13-member team from Bhopal, led by Minister Smt Thakur

will tour different parts of Kerala to gather first-hand knowledge about RT in the state.

Today's MoU entrusts Kerala RT Mission with the task of implementing RT projects in Madhya Pradesh in ways that suit that state. Kerala will help Madhya Pradesh chart its RT masterplan, ready the human resources to implement the project, conduct training projects, list the criteria for the formation of district tourism promotion councils, locate sustained tourism projects so as to carry out RT projects, formulate social and economic security measures, help in gradation of hotels, resorts and homestays, form tourism clubs and restrooms on lines of Kerala's RT.

Mumbai restaurants welcome move to stay open till 1 am, say it will improve sales

The Maharashtra Government has issued a directive announcing an extension for operational timings for restaurants and shops, where the restaurants can be operational till 1 am. The move is being welcomed by the city's hotel and restaurant industry as a sign of going back to normalcy. Pradeep Shetty, Sr Vice President, Hotel and Restaurant Association Of Western India (HRA-WI) has said, "We are absolutely thrilled with the Maharashtra Government's decision. The extension will definitely be a boost for businesses and will encourage several restaurants to re-open which have continued to remain shut since the lockdown. At present, diners have to be at the restaurant before



9.30 pm max to ensure they have a table and the last order is taken latest by 10.30 pm. With the hospitality industry in grave losses, we had been pleading with the Government to relax the timings for restaurants. This is

a most welcome move as it has the potential to generate anywhere between Rs.50 Cr to Rs.75 Cr revenue per day for the industry." Industry leaders have hailed the move of the Maharashtra government.

Changes in law on cigarettes, other tobacco products to impact F&B sector: NRA



Industry body NRAI has urged Health Minister Harsh Vardhan to consider its viewpoints on the proposed amendments to the Cigarettes And Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, as it would directly impact the food and beverage sector. The proposed amendments will not only hugely inconvenience the consumers but will also adversely impact the overall consumer sentiments, the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) said in a statement.

"While we understand the health concerns arising out of smoking and understand Government's efforts to contain smoking habits, we as an industry that has an annual turnover of approximately Rs 4 lakh crore and provides direct employment to over 7 million Indians, are also hugely concerned about the impact of this decision on our business at a time when we are fighting a grim battle to eke out a mere survival for ourselves," NRAI President Anurag Katriar said.

The proposed licensing requirement will further add to the red tape which goes against the avowed policy of the government, he added. "The proposed amendments to COTPA will inconvenience our consumers, thus hurting the consumer sentiments, which will have a direct bearing on our business. We cannot afford this," Katriar said.

While restaurants can regulate the sale of tobacco products, it will be incorrect to hold a restaurant management responsible if an individual guest lights a cigarette in violation of the rules. The proposed fines are also very significant and seem disproportionate for the nature of the offence, he added.

The amendment to COTPA proposed by the Ministry of Health disallows retail sale of loose sticks of cigarettes, prohibits sale of tobacco products to persons below 21 years, put controls on in-shop advertising and promotion, amongst others.

National Restaurant Authority writes to Finance Minister, seeks 'immediate' relief measures

Food services industry body NRAI has sought an equitable e-commerce policy, multi-layered GST structure, liquidity through banks and other financial institutions with low collateral, lower interest rates and minimum moratorium of six months in the upcoming budget.

Reviving concerns over policies adopted by e-commerce aggregators, the NRAI said in a letter addressed to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman that "Our primary concerns are around the lack of data sharing by aggregators,

unilateral decision-making on listing and year-round platform driven discounts." The letter said aggregators and market place owners are following "opaque algorithms". NRAI said the food services sector has been "one of the most adversely impacted" sectors during the pandemic. "With an erstwhile annual turnover of approximately Rs 4 lakh crore and providing direct employment to over 7 million Indians, the restaurant industry today is in a very precarious situation, fighting a grim battle for its survival," the letter states. NRAI president Anurag Katriar said with almost 30% of restaurants shut down and the

balance operating at a much-reduced capacity, approximately three million jobs have already been extinguished.

The industry body, which represents over five lakh restaurants and bars, said the current single rate of GST at 5% and rollback of input tax credit has put additional burden on operating costs for the already stressed sector and increased capital outflow on new projects by almost 20%. It said a multi-layered GST structure will improve collections and bring in fresh investments to the industry.

'ഉയരെ വ്യവസായം ഉണർന്നു കേരളം'

മുൻ സർക്കാരിന്റെ കാലത്ത് നഷ്ടത്തിലായിരുന്ന കെഎസ്ഐഇ 2017-18 ലും 2018 - 19 ലും ലാഭം രേഖപ്പെടുത്തി. കേരള സോപ്പ്സ് ഖത്തറിലേക്കും കയറ്റുമതി ആരംഭിച്ചു. ലികിഡ് ഹാൻഡ്‌വാഷ്, ഹോട്ടൽ സോപ്പ് എന്നിവ ഉൽപ്പാദിപ്പിക്കാൻ നടപടി സ്വീകരിച്ചു വരുന്നു.



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APPOINTMENTS



Devina Thapliyal

Director of House-keeping

The St. Regis Mumbai

Having commenced her career with one of the leading luxury hotel chains of India, Thapliyal brings with her a decade of housekeeping experience. She has ably led a large house-keeping taskforce in her past. Thapliyal's skill and detail to attention over the years garnered through her roles with varied luxury properties has seen her rise through the ranks to her current leadership position. Her most recent role was as part of the pre-opening team of one of the largest JW Marriott Hotels, JW Marriott Mumbai. Having graduated from the prestigious Oberoi School of Management, she started her role in housekeeping with The Oberoi, New Delhi & Gurgaon followed by a stint at the Vivanta by Taj Ambassador, New Delhi before her foray into Marriott International with the JW Marriott brand.



Thomas Abraham

General Manager

Hyatt Regency Pune & Residences

The new assignment is in addition to Thomas Abraham's role of AVP for Hyatt Hotels, Central India. Thomas brings 27 years of experience in the hospitality industry and has spent over 13 of those years with Hyatt. He moves to Hyatt Regency Pune from the iconic Park Hyatt Hyderabad, in the same capacity, to guide the hotel to similar stature. Thomas started his hospitality journey with the Oberoi Hotels, Mumbai as Assistant Banquet Manager soon after he completed his Diploma in Hotel Management in 1992 from the prestigious Les Roches, Switzerland. Thomas has played an integral part in bringing stability to the operations, enhancing service and product efficiency and establishing the objectives and policies for some of the flagship Hotels around the country.

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Deep Preet Bindra

General Manager

Courtyard by Marriott, Ahmedabad (Ramdevnagar)

Deep Preet Bindra, has rich and diverse experience panning over 17 years in the hospitality and services sector. Bindra has worked in different capacities at different hospitality brands including some of Marriott’s premium properties such as JW Marriott at Aerocity in New Delhi and Marriott Whitefield in Bengaluru. His multi-dimensional experience in different roles in Marriott International and other brands, has helped him carve a niche in bringing about operational excellence. Bindra is an alumnus of Delhi University and has pursued post-graduation in business management from Indraprastha University.



Sudeep Mukherjee

Market Director of Sales Sayaji Hotel Indore

Mukherjee brings with him over 12+ years of rich and varied experience in sales and marketing. Mukherjee holds strong sales and revenue management skills and a thorough knowledge of the hospitality market. Prior to this, he has worked with reputed brands such as Crowne Plaza Kathmandu Soaltee (IHG Pvt Ltd), Grand Mercure Bangalore (Accor Hotels Pvt Ltd), Marriott Hotels India Pvt Ltd, ITC Limited – Hotels Division and many more.



Dev Thakur

Director of Food & Beverages Sayaji Hotel Indore

Dev Thakur has 15+ years of experience in world’s finest hospitality brands. He brings to the table, his expertise in fast paced environment and high volume operations with multiple styles of service and has a long exposure to food & beverage operations of luxury hotels, destination resorts, upscale & midscale hotels. Prior to this, he was associated with multinational chains, such as Marriott International, The Leela Palaces, Hotels & Resorts Hyatt International, Hilton Hotels and Accor Hotels in India.



Nikita Das

Cluster Director of Marketing Hyatt Hotels

In her new role Nikita Das will take charge of overseeing Marketing Communications for Grand Hyatt Mumbai Hotel & Residences, Andaz Delhi, Hyatt Regency Kolkata, Hyatt Regency Chennai, Hyatt Regency Lucknow, Hyatt Regency Ahmedabad, Hyatt Raipur and Hyatt Place Hampi. She has been associated with the Marketing Communications & Advertising industry for over a decade now and brings with her insightful learning and experience gained across national and international brands. Das began her career with Ogilvy advertising in Mumbai in 2009 as an Assistance Account Executive. Her hospitality career started as Marketing Executive for IHCL hotels – The Taj Palace, New Delhi followed by a cluster role for Marketing and Public Relations at Marriott International, Bangalore until recently.



Jitendra Singh Rathore

Executive Chef Courtyard by Marriott, Sindhu Bhawan Road, Ahmedabad

The newly opened hotel is Marriott International’s sixth property in Ahmedabad. Rathore brings to the new property, a rich and diverse experience in hospitality sector spanning over 17 years. An alumnus of Institute of Hotel Management in Jaipur, Jitendra began his career at Oberoi Rajvillas, Jaipur in October 2003. Prior to being part of the pre-opening team at Courtyard by Marriott, SBR, Jitendra was the executive chef at Courtyard by Marriott, Raipur. He has also worked in various capacities with various properties of national and international hospitality brands, including Taj Rambagh Palace, Jaipur; Hyatt Regency, Pune; Hyatt Palace Goa and The Claridges Hotel Surajkund, Delhi-NCR.

Revival of the Hospitality Sector



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The various stakeholders of the hospitality sector are pinning much hopes on the expected support from the central and the respective State governments for survival and revival of Indian Travel, Tourism and Hotel Industry. Though the sector has been showing clear signs of a revival, the pace of the revival is not at all commensurate with the magnitude of the issue and the actual requirement caused by an year long virtual suspension of activities.

The current scenario calls for urgent steps to boost demand through special promotional campaigns and policy interventions. FICCI Tourism Committee members have urged the government to create a promotional campaign for PIOs and NRIs such as 'Return to your Roots'. Such campaigns could certainly make a visible impact on the scene.

The situation warrants a relook at convenient policies and procedures for MICE operations which constitute a chunk of the hospitality business. Hotels expect permission to host all kinds of banquets and conference strictly following the Covid protocol and other related regulations so that they could earn some revenue in a context where other sources of business have significantly dried up.

Much depends on the revival of the travel and tourism segment. The movements in this sector have a ripple effect causing a resurgence of the other associated segments of the hospitality sector. The industry anxiously looks forward to a conducive climate which sees opening up of the travel and tourism segment.

Staycation is seen as an emerging trend where people stay at luxurious hotels to revive themselves of stress in a peaceful getaway. To cater to such needs, some major hotel chains are seen to introduce staycation offers where guests can choose from a host of curated experiences, within the hotel. Similar moves would certainly go a long way in bringing in the much needed revival of the hospitality sector.

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