

HOSPITALITY Talk

Monthly Publication
April 2016
Vol 3 • Issue 4
Pages 56
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**BUDGET:
GREAT**
EXPECTATIONS,
DASHED HOPES

ENVIRONMENT:
HOTELS FOR A
GREEN TOMORROW



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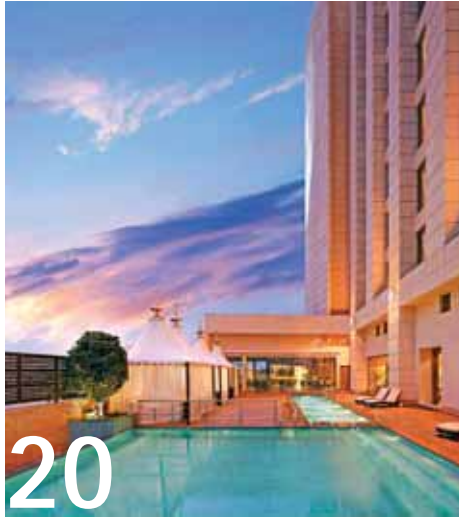
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Cover Image
The Leela Palace
Chennai

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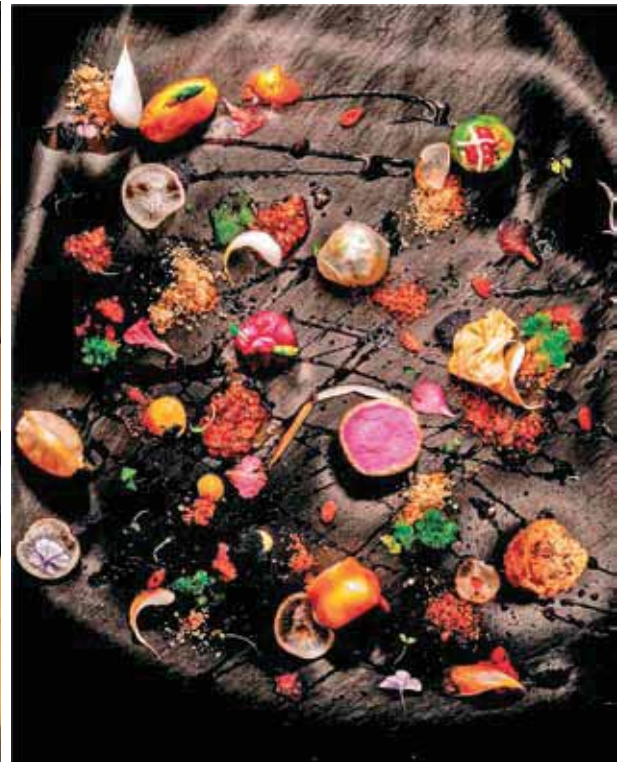
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Hospitality Talk is printed, published, edited and owned by Sanjeet, printed at Karan Printers, F 29/2, Phase II, Okhla Industrial Area, New Delhi-110020 and published at 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi-110001

InterContinental Chennai Mahabalipuram Resort launches Tao of Peng

InterContinental Chennai Mahabalipuram Resort has unveiled this March its newest culinary highlight, Tao of Peng, a contemporary Chinese cuisine specialty restaurant that takes gourmards on a culinary journey through the Sichuan and Canton regions of China. From the modern design and decor with indoor and outdoor seating, to the stylish service, Tao of Peng offers a first-of-its-kind dining experience on the East Coast of India.



The Park Hotels shares Starwood Loyalty Program

The Park Hotels, a part of Design Hotels, has proudly joined forces with the Starwood Preferred Guest Loyalty program, allowing the SPG members to book and avail points at its hotels. The Park Hotels in Kolkata, New Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad & Bangalore will fall under this program. Recently, Starwood officially named Design Hotels as its 11th brand, offering them a valuable portfolio of properties.

Food Studio at DoubleTree by Hilton Pune - Chinchwad

DoubleTree by Hilton Pune - Chinchwad adds another feather in its cap and has launched Food Studio, an unmatched banqueting experience. With a wonderful blend of fine dine and lounge, Food Studio is engaging in design, redefining event spaces in the city. It's revolutionary such that it's a multi-cuisine restaurant placed in the banquet for the patrons to experience cutting edge, contemporary, new age food and beverage.



PayPal ties up with OYO Rooms

PayPal, the world's leading open digital payments company, has announced a tie-up with Oyo Rooms, India's largest branded network of hotels. Having established its market leadership in India, OYO Rooms recently forayed into South East Asia through launch of operations in Malaysia. The partnership with PayPal will enable Oyo Rooms' customers across the globe to seamlessly pay for their bookings in Malaysia and other South East Asian countries via PayPal.



Gender and relationship dynamics at Le Meridien Gurgaon

In an effort to present a stimulating perspective on gender equality and changing relationship dynamics of women in today's context, Le Meridien Gurgaon hosted panel discussions and live art over Coffees and Eclairs on 14 March, 2016. Held at the The Longitude Bar at the Hub of the hotel, the experts included award winning singer and founder of The Sufi Gospel Project, Sonam Kalra, celebrated artist, Anjanna Kuthiala, Author of five Best Selling Books Meenakshi Reddy, author, Writer and poet Anita Krishan and Jyotika Bedi.



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Hilton Worldwide 2016 India Showcase draws partners

A global hospitality company with a portfolio of 13 brands that include Hilton Hotels & Resorts, Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts, Conrad Hotels & Resorts, DoubleTree by Hilton, Hilton Garden Inn and Hampton by Hilton, hosted the Hilton Worldwide 2016 India Showcase on 14 March 2016 with representation from more than 100 hotels and resorts located in the Americas, Europe, Middle East, Asia Pacific and Australia. The three-city, five-day event held in Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore drew more than 500 interested partners from the travel industry. Visitors interacted with hotel representatives and gathered insight into the range of offerings ideal not only for business and leisure travel but also for hosting conference and incentive groups as well as grand weddings and other social events. Leading the contingent from Hilton Worldwide were Rupert Hallam, Vice President, Sales – APAC; Daniel Welk, Vice President, Operations – India; and Pariva Rustagi, Regional Director of Sales – India.



Sorrento opens at Shangri-La's - Eros Hotel, New Delhi

Sorrento, a prodigious specialty Italian restaurant is based on the traditions that lie in the heart of Italy. The restaurant takes an innovative approach on Neapolitan cooking, which is one of the most recognisable aspects of Italian cuisine, with flavours that are unique; inventive yet relaxed without compromising the traditional flavours to provide hearty Italian classics, combined with a hint of creativity and zest.

Aiana Munnar – A Moonriver Resort: An alluring eco-friendly design

One of a kind, Aiana Munnar – A Moonriver Resort, to open in 2016, has been envisioned to be a grand retreat and luxury resort, created for today's green-thinking jet-setters looking for a unique experience within a natural environment. The design duo for this resort comprises Alex and Tsarina Vacha. They incorporated LEED mandates and policies in their design specs.

Novotel consolidates presence in Goa

Grand Mercure Goa Shrem Resort has been renamed Novotel Goa Resorts & Spa. This coupled with the Novotel Goa Shrem Hotel hopes to firmly position a consolidated premium Novotel presence for travellers and explorers of Goa. The two 5-star Novotel properties are located just off the bustling and energetic main street of Candolim in North Goa. The two Novotel properties include seven bars and restaurants, unique five star experiences, a massive kids club with outstanding fun activities, 20,000 sq. ft. of meeting and banquet spaces and the La Brise seaside restaurant on Candolim beach.



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One&Only and Paspaley create a private island holiday getaway

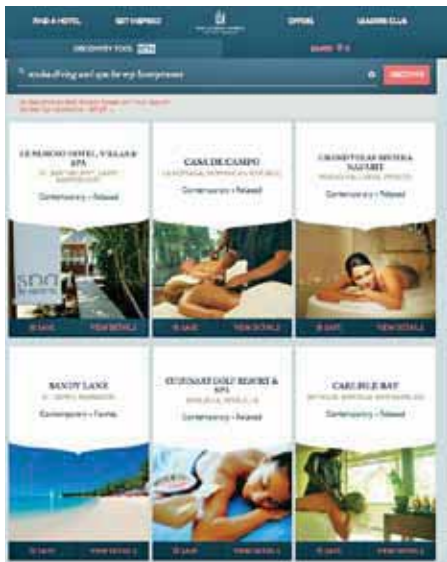
Two of the world's most iconic brands, Paspaley and One&Only Resorts, have come together to create the ultimate Australian luxury getaway. Pearls in the Penthouse is a once-in-a-lifetime holiday private island escape on One&Only Hayman Island, in the heart of the world heritage-listed Great Barrier Reef, and includes the quintessential Australian gift of Paspaley jewellery from the latest collection, Maxima by Paspaley.



Westin hotels & Resorts celebrates world sleep day

Industry-innovator Westin Hotels & Resorts celebrated the power of snooze on World Sleep Day (18 March 2016), in partnership with World Sleep Society in Asia Pacific. The partnership reinforces the brand's renowned position for offering a quality night's sleep on the road, at home, and in the air. Additionally, close to 50 Westin hotels and resorts across key locations in Asia Pacific held a series of activities and events on this day to reinforce the brand's Sleep Well pillar.

The Leading Hotels of the World launches trip discovery tool on website



The Leading Hotels of the World a collection of uncommon luxury hotels, and WayBlazer, the world's first cognitive travel platform, announced on 4 March, 2016 the public beta launch of a sophisticated discovery tool on the Leading Hotels' website that enables people to use natural dialogue while researching travel online. Just in time for summer vacation planning, the new tool helps travelers by providing tailored recommendations.



Preferred Hotels & Resorts partner Katara Hospitality



Preferred Hotels & Resorts and Katara Hospitality, two of the world's leading hospitality companies have entered into a master partnership agreement for the recently launched Murwab Hotel

Group, Katara Hospitality's standalone hotel operating division. This move brings nine new hotels from the Middle East and Europe into the Preferred Hotels & Resorts portfolio by 2017, under the helm of Saurabh Rai who has now taken on a larger regional role as Executive Vice President for Preferred Hotels & Resorts.



HMH partners S.A.O.C. to expand in Oman

Muzn Oman Commercial (S.A.O.C.) has signed a management agreement this March with HMH—Hospitality Management Holdings to operate Corp Muscat Al Muzn Hotel. The upscale 3-star hotel, with a built-up area of 12301 m2 will be part of Al Muzn project that was promoted by MAJAN Development Company S.A.O.C. and being developed along with its strategic partners, as a mixed-use, one-stop destination offering multiple facilities. These include a shopping mall as well as a luxury wellness centre.



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Shangri-La's Hambantota Resort & Spa, Sri Lanka, opens this June

To open on Sri Lanka's stunning southern coastline on 1 June 2016, Shangri-La's Hambantota Resort & Spa will offer unrivalled amenities and experiential activities and set a new standard for hospitality in the 'Pearl of the Indian Ocean.' Spanning 145 acres, the 300-room beachfront resort will boast lush tropical gardens, an 18-hole golf course, an artisan village and a wide array of innovative dining, event and entertainment options.



Get Set for Madrid Fusion Manila 2016

Madrid Fusion Manila (MFM) is the first and only Asian edition of Madrid Fusion, the most important international gastronomy congress in the world, celebrated annually in Madrid since 2003. MFM brings together the most acclaimed avant-garde chefs from across the globe. In its first year, the theme of the congress was 'The Philippines and Spain: A 300-year Gastronomic Journey.' An equally exciting Madrid Fusion Manila awaits gourmet professionals, aficionados and enthusiasts in 2016. This will happen from April 7-9, 2016 at SMX Convention Centre, Pasay City, Manila, Philippines.

The Unbound Collection By Hyatt

Hyatt Hotels Corporation has announced the launch of The Unbound Collection by Hyatt, a global collection of unique and independent stay experiences. The Unbound Collection by Hyatt launches with properties around the world, including The Driskill Hotel in Austin, Texas; the Hôtel du Louvre in Paris, France; the Carmelo Resort & Spa in Carmelo, Uruguay; and the Coco Palms Resort in Kauai, Hawaii, which is expected to undergo a revitalization and re-open in spring 2018.



Starwood accelerates growth in Europe

From the International Hotel Investment Forum (IHIF) in Berlin this March, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide announced its continued expansion in Europe with a record 18 organic hotel openings in 2015 and over 30 hotels already under development and expected to open in the next five years. Looking ahead, Starwood is launching the Tribute Portfolio brand in France, diversifying its brand footprint in Italy and expanding its mid-market brands in the United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Russia and Turkey.

starwood
Hotels and
Resorts

AHIC 2016 to connect businesses and markets

With 11 years under its belt, Arabian Hotel Investment Conference (AHIC) has proven to be the Middle East's annual meeting place for the region's most senior hotel investors, developers, operators and advisors. It is the annual conference that connects business leaders from international and local markets to do deals across the region. This will be happening from 26-28 April 2016 at Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai.

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Vijay P Thacker

Hotels in India

THE WAY FORWARD

The Horwath India Hotel Review 2015 pinpoints the ups and downs of the hotels' sector in the year while discussing the outlook for 2016. Vijay P Thacker, Director, Horwath HTL India talks to HospitalityTalk about the sector in the light of the report.

Recorded by Kanchan Nath & Anupriya Bishnoi



I think the government needs to look at the comprehensive financial planning for the industry



What does the Horwath India Hotel Review 2015 tell us?

Most markets have shown improvement mainly on the occupancy side, on the rate side there hasn't been any significant growth. In some segments there have been improvements in the rates but they have lost somewhere. So the rate side is very flat. The RevPars have grown up. Also the supply mix is changing.

The largest supply is in the middle which is good. Increased supply is good but you need to have balance. In some markets the rates have been pulled up. The other fact is new supply is slowing down very substantially which is not good. You need to have more supply to come in. Of course the economy has to support that as well.

Where do you see the growth story?

The growth story is not in the luxury segment. It will be in the upscale, mid-scale, economy budget segment.

Do you think the hotel community has to come together to push rates up?

You can never do that. I think it will happen. The force of demand supply will happen. But we need to have confidence to say I am not going to cut rates anymore, I know that demand will come to me. So the rates will fly.

Since the growth now has shifted to tier-III cities, which are the cities which you think have the maximum potential?

All of the towns have got tremendous potential. I think it's opportunistic. If you look at the Western side of the South, towns like Hubli, Kohlapur and others have got enormous potential. You look at Rajkot, it is growing.

I think Bihar is not being touched yet. Raipur has picked up in terms of supply. Ranchi is picking up slowly. Vizag is doing pretty well. So there is a lot of potential.

What are your expectations from the government?

Look at what has happened to Delhi. They have increased the luxury taxes to 15 per cent on the published tariffs. I am not saying we are only looking for tax breaks but at least keep it rationalised.

I think the government needs to look at the comprehensive financial planning for the industry. Because the kind of financing we need is different. If the government wakes up and says tourism is a major economic activity then the industry can do a lot.

Our monuments have been given to us as heritage. Are we really looking after it? What are we doing to keep them for the long term? It's fine to say people should come and see them but we have to package it much better. We need to realise that the foreigners have problems and they should be sorted.

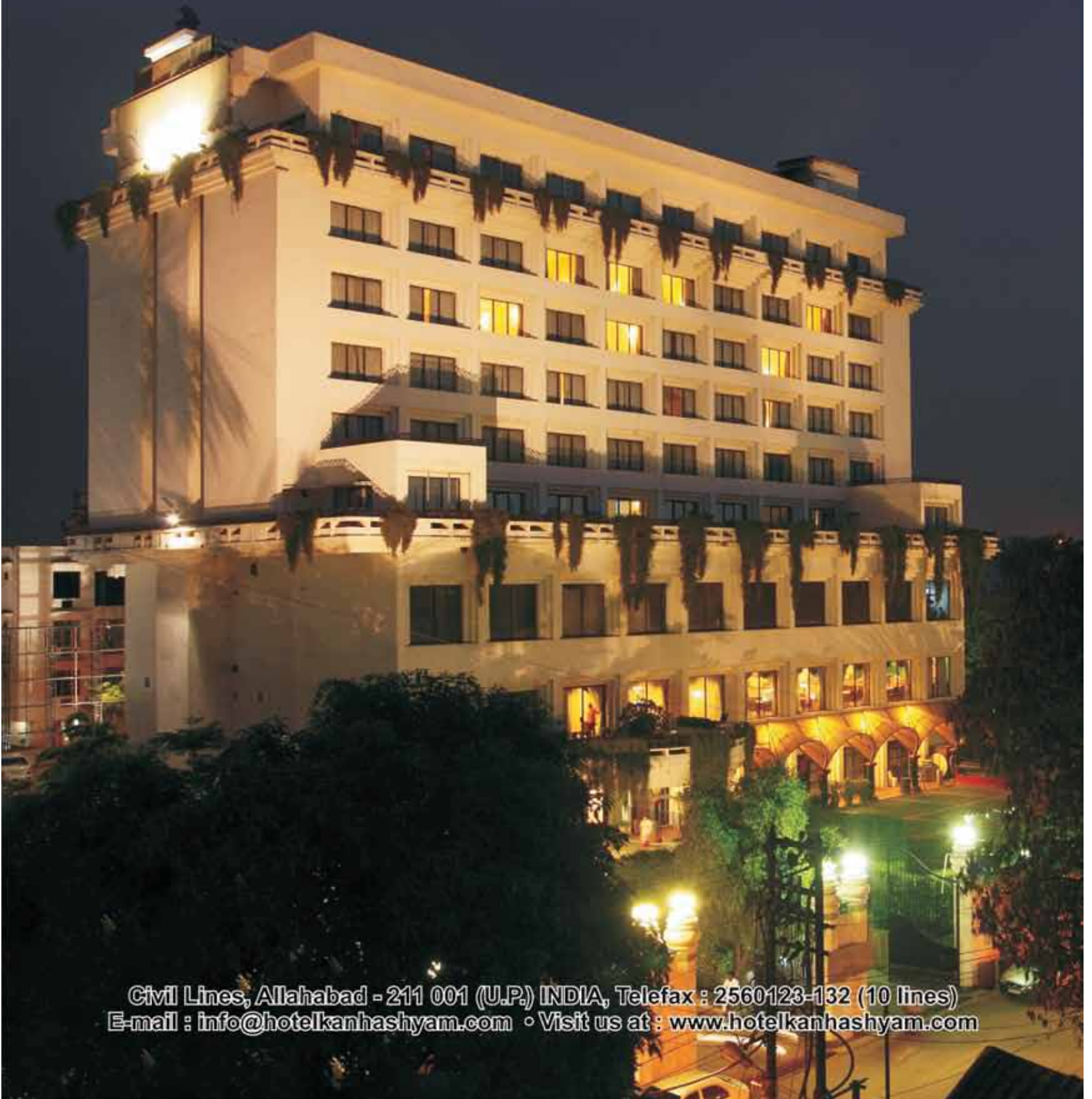


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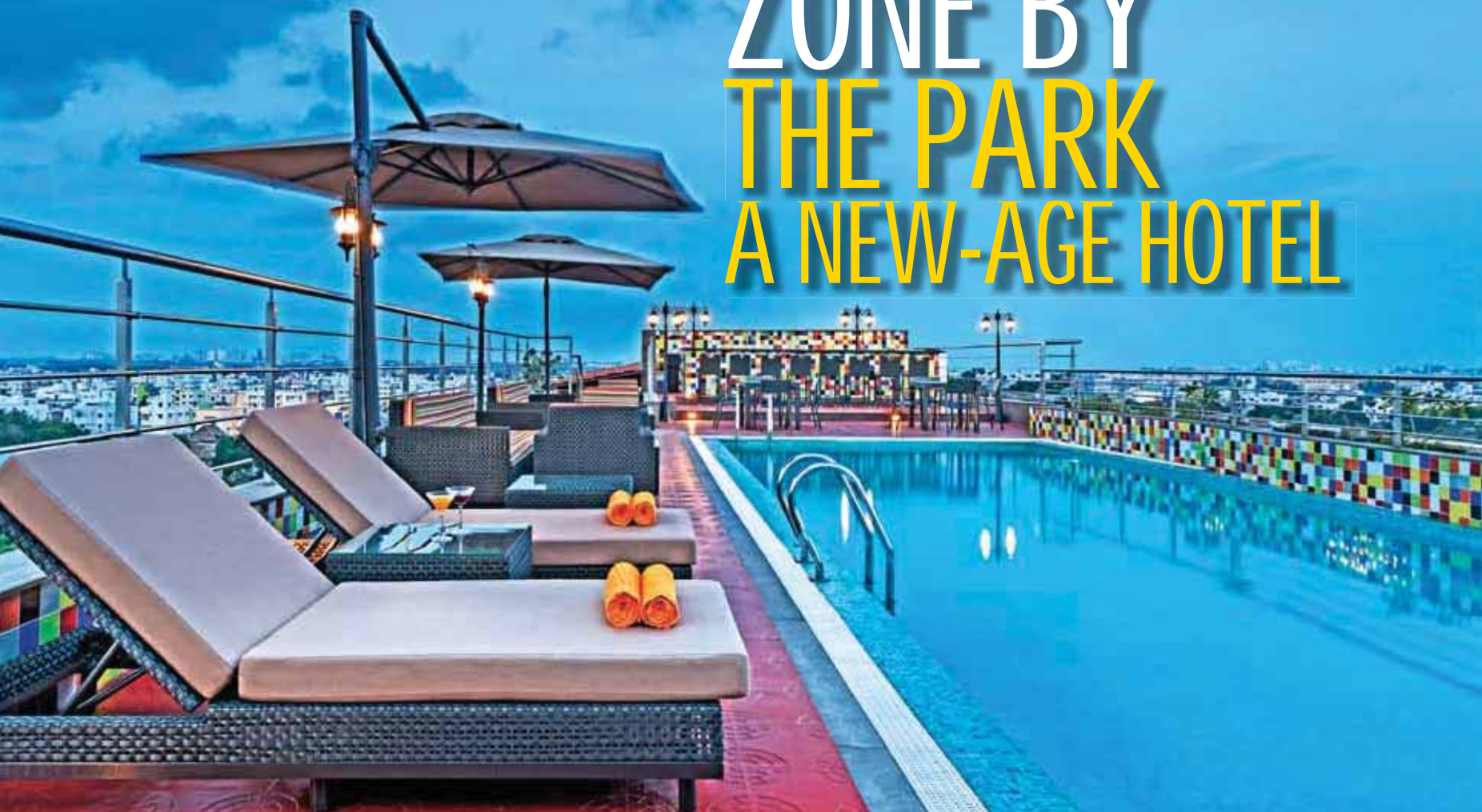
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ZONE BY THE PARK A NEW-AGE HOTEL



Priya Paul

A social catalyst brand, Zone by The Park is a mid-market hotel brand promoted by The Park Hotels Group which has announced the opening of 20 hotels in India by the year 2020. We speak to Priya Paul, Chairperson, Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Zone by the Park and Santosh R Kutty, General Manager, Operations & Development, Zone by The Park Hotels to know what makes the brand tick.

Anupriya Bishnoi



We have 13 properties that are under various stages of development, three have opened, three more will open this year





According to Priya Paul, Chairperson, Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Zone by the Park, this is a new brand which is created for design conscious and price conscious persons. She says, "I think it's a very aspirational brand built for tier II and tier III

cities and we have really looked at what the Indian customers want and therefore we have created a brand that has lot of F&B, spaces where you can have a party, bar, discotheque and so on. Also we have an interesting mix of leisure as well as business properties."

She said, "We have 13 properties that are under various stages of development, three have opened, three more will open this year. So we are poised to be an interesting player in that upper mid-scale market. Some of the next destinations where you will see Zone by the Park are Raipur, Mahabalipuram and Jodhpur."

Santosh R Kutty, General Manager, Operations & Development, Zone by The Park Hotels says, "Zone has been perceived as a social catalyst. When we were deciding on our new brand, we decided to do something which is in with the times. So Zone by the Park is a place which is buzzing, a place where a traveller starts enjoying the city!"

He said, "When you come to Zone by the Park it's not about rooms or

anything, it's more about hanging out and relaxing. We are bringing in products as a part of that. We have made the experience interactive not only for the room guests but also for the non-residents, we want the city to come in. One of the things which we are doing is free internet which we are providing not just to the guests but to the non-residents as well. That's our plan, to bring on the entire city in the hotel and give them varied experiences."

Also Zone by the Park will have an interesting mix of both foreign and domestic guests. However, this will strongly vary according to the destination. Kutty says, "In Mahabalipuram we will have a great mix of foreigners and Indians. In Raipur, guests will mostly be Indians. So it really depends on the market you are in. Goa now is a large domestic market. Foreigners' market will always be there in Goa."

About his expansion plans he says, "We have identified about 97 places that we would want to be in across the country."



Santosh R Kutty

“We have made the experience interactive not only for the room guests but also for the non-residents, we want the city to come in

”





“We hope to grow our resort portfolio”

Lemon Tree Hotel's (LTH) Carnation Hotels manages Lemon Tree Hotel, Tarudhan Valley in Manesar. We speak to Rattan Keswani, Deputy Managing Director – The Lemon Tree Hotel Company & Chairman- Carnation Hotels and Anubhav Jain, Director – Group, Silverglades.

Kanchan Nath



Rattan Keswani

Talking about the USP of the resort Rattan Keswani said, “It's a short distance away from all locations in Delhi NCR. It sits on 75 acres of a villa development, encompassing a nine hole golf course, with every element that can excite a family. There are enough activities for a kid to excite himself; there is archery, pool, an enjoyable spa. You can hire an apartment and cook there, should you wish to. Or you can stay in the main hotel block. It's a wholesome experience for everything that you would want to do on a short weekend or weekday. Or it's got your array of spaces for your social functions and your weddings a little separated from the main hotel block. So you can have all the fun that you want, without being cognizant or careful of the fact that you might be disturbing some other guest.”

Talking about their commitment about operating resorts, he said, “We have been going in the direction of adding resorts for a long time. We started off with a resort in Goa, we started with a resort in Alleppey, and we are building a resort in Udaipur, as we speak. We have one in Sikkim, which is more a management piece. Our whole thrust for the next ten years is to grow our resort portfolio. As we have a huge number of repeat guests we are able to showcase an array of other experiences that they would want other than just staying in our business hotels. Portfolio development brings in an array of experiences. And helps us protect our customers in our own base.”

He said, “Every marketing strategy has to straddle every segment, because each segment drives business. A smart



marketer would be the one who can sit on top of each of these mixes but drive the best dollar or rupee value return from that segment by the creativity that can be put into the experiences. We will not prefer one to the other, everybody has a role to play, whether it is Air BnB, OTA or a travel agent. They are all providers of a customer that we would like to focus our attention on. Then for a hospitality player it is more important to say how do you convert the customer to be part of your own direct distribution. That will only come if your customer services are higher than anybody else's."

He added, "Every hotel has an experience, has a brand, and has a customer demographic. Every business is going to work on a demand supply, its sheer economics. If mismatch exists, pricing would be a little more conservative, if mismatch is not there and the demand starts to go sharply higher than the supply, price will find its own stature. Today pricing is at a level lower than possibly 2004, 2005 and 2006. In dollar terms, we are definitely lower than whatever we were nine 10 years ago. You cannot make business or make profit at the level of pricing we have today. So the industry has suffered, it has been the

longest low cycle that hospitality has faced, at least in my history of 35 years."

Anubhav Jain, Director – Group, Silverglades, said, "Our focus has not been hospitality as a group, we are pioneers in luxury development which are both residential and commercial, we started with the classic golf resort, and with Laburnum housing in Gurgaon in partnership with ITC. We broke away from ITC in 2004, started doing our own projects and Tarudhan valley was the first such project. Hospitality is a long term proposition, for the right kind of location and property, a hospitality venture does still make sense. In a 75 acre property, having a 70 key hotel brings in a lot of life into the whole complex."

He concluded, "We have been working in this location for now over 20 years now. We chose this property for its proximity to Delhi/NCR. The Gurgaon master plan has extended, it's almost touching us now. Growth and development is happening on this side. The industrial belt, along the NH8 is a big boost. We have been a part of this community for a long time, we employ people from here, giving a lot of opportunity to people around here."



Anubhav Jain

PERSONALISED PRIVATE SPACES FOR CORPORATE

An inspiring set of premium personalised spaces at Hyatt Regency Delhi allows guests to create the perfect ambience for events.

Vaishali Dar



their living rooms which they can use to their advantage to create unique events and customise. No boxy space with monotonous table tops but a personalised way of conducting meetings."

Designed by Hirsch Bedner Associates (HBA), the spectacular space is worked by a team of globally renowned architects from the Bauer Latoza Studio in Chicago. It is an innovative event space, where the cuisine served comes with freshest ingredients and live cooking counters.

transform your event into any setting. The idea is to move away from the monotonous cheffers dish format and have intimate and unique events with those personal touches by our expert hands," he adds.

While there are challenges in every industry, according to Kapoor, the events industry is the only industry that has grown in the past few years. "Everybody seems to be doing events. Weddings is a huge market and is the one segment which caters to the best of luxury in the industry!"



Aseem Kapoor
GM, Hyatt Regency Delhi

From the moment you walk into this super-plush meeting space at Hyatt Regency, you know that you have entered a casual-cum-relaxed meeting space at the five-star luxury property. The launch of Hyatt's new event space called The Living Room has been conceptualised especially for intimate gatherings, meetings and events. The area covers seven smaller meeting rooms on the floor interconnected to accommodate eight to 500 pax.

Aseem Kapoor, General Manager, Hyatt Regency Delhi, says, "When we started with the first event space in the hotel in 2006, many new concepts were evolving at that time. No one really focused on events space and that is how the whole idea was conceived to have a specialised event space for both small and large scale events. With the events space evolving every year, last year, we decided to have a space that understands the customer's requirement, is more residential and personal so when somebody walks in he feels the comfort that he has at home. We wanted to provide guests with modern and creatively designed spaces that work as an extension to

Kapoor adds that the multifunctional spaces cater to creative meetings during corporate hours or can be transformed into private party places for evening get-togethers, lunches, social events and wedding receptions. It is an ideal place for corporates like bankers, conference organisers, social engagements, car launches and weddings. The space is convertible for all MICE events as they provide multiple options for plenary as well as break away rooms. "We give customised attention to your events. Be it a spa room, chocolate room or a cocktail platter room, our nine rooms can

As per the strategies adapted for a successful event, he feels that it is important to give personalised attention to corporate events. "In order to make the event space more meaningful, we bring in special cuisine chefs, organise theme-based breaks for corporates, post-event activities and try to make every event different to make it a more lively and happening place for a client.

We create special moments and instead of typical coffee breaks we have spa breaks with head neck shoulder massage and or have a motivational speaker."



We wanted to provide guests with modern and creatively designed spaces that work as an extension to their living rooms which they can use to their advantage



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Rupert Hallam

BUILDING GOOD BUSINESSES IN GREAT LOCATIONS

The three-city, five-day Hilton Worldwide 2016 India conclave was held in Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru, where 100 hotels and resorts located in the Americas, Europe, Middle East, Asia Pacific and Australia participated. On its sidelines, we got in touch with Rupert Hallam, Vice President, Sales – Asia Pacific, Hilton Worldwide.

Kanchan Nath



Supply is slowing down, which is good as the demand is increasing. It is a great opportunity



Talking about the showcase, Hallam said “The key purpose of the showcase is to bring our hotels and clusters directly in contact with our clients. So they can have meaningful conversations about business and outbound from India. We have around 4,600 hotels globally,

We want to sell outbound from India, into those locations.”

Talking about their growth plans for India, he said, “We are looking at sustainable growth across India. The luxury Conrad Hotels & Resorts brand will enter the country with

the opening of Conrad Pune. Four of the Hilton brands already have a presence in India, which include: Hilton Hotels & Resorts, DoubleTree by Hilton, Hilton Garden Inn and Hampton by Hilton. Particularly for India we see the most growth in these because they are the



focussed service brands rather than the luxury end."

Talking about the brand he said, "The Hilton Brand itself is the strongest brand. Hilton Hotels & Resorts' brand was ranked the No. 1 international hotel brand and No. 2 hotel brand overall in India in the recent BDRC Continental's India Hotel Guest Survey that tracked the performance of 116 brands that have a presence in the country."

Talking about the industry, he said, "As time goes by supply is slowing down in India, which is good because the demand is increasing. It is a great opportunity for all hoteliers in India. Over the last four five years, there has been a slowdown in supply. That is actually a positive thing, when you are looking at the overall growth in the region and focussing the business into the hotels."

Talking about the main challenge in operating out of India, he said, "The biggest challenge is retaining staff in hotels, getting good service oriented staff. In Hilton, all 13 brands revolve around service. Bricks and mortar don't make a hotel; it's the people that make the hotel. If we don't get service right, we will not be successful. Our focus this year and in the coming years is to get the right people in the right position in the right place."

He said, "The Hilton Brand has always been at the forefront of technology. We were the first ones to have

TVs in the bedrooms and telephones in the bedroom."

He added, "The first ones to have room service and the list goes on and on. In the last two years we have again been at the forefront of technology. You can check-in on your mobile phone, or your laptops. You can now click and choose the room you want to stay in. We were the first to do that last year. You can also check-in to your rooms with your mobile phones, we started that last year. Prior to your arrival, you get a message that the room is available, it's activated by your key and you know that there is no need to go to front desk; you can go straight to your room. Within five metres the phone

activates. You can place your mobile phone against the door lock and the door will open."

He added, "That straight to room will come to Asia pacific in 2017, and into India in the later part of 2017. It will depend on when and where we develop the new hotels, because these will come with new technology. Changing and adapting old hotels is difficult as compared to building hotels with new technology."

He concluded, "Hilton is globally recognised as the number one hotel brand around the world. We have the resources globally; we got the reputation for building good businesses in great locations."

“

The biggest challenge is retaining staff in hotels, getting good service oriented staff

”



THE KEYS TO HOSPITALITY

Anshu Sarin, CEO, Berggruen Hotels discusses her brand and the outlook for the Indian hospitality industry.

Anupriya Bishnoi

Please explain your portfolio.

With 25 plus hotels and 2000 plus rooms we are spread across 15 major cities in India. We operate in the upper mid-market with Keys Prima Hotels, mid-market with Keys Hotels and economy market with Keys Lite. Keys Prima hotels are our premium brand of hotels offering affordable luxury with facilities like spa, pool and multi-cuisine restaurants.

Keys Hotels is our signature brand of hotels providing smart stays and catering to the conventional needs of the guests. Keys Lite is our brand extension at various strategic locations offering convenient stays and a bed and breakfast solution. With this diverse presence we

ensure guests find a Key wherever they go.

From a growth perspective, it is essential that we have a focussed asset light approach. Performance metrics, team capabilities, brand strength are oriented towards a robust operating platform.

We are looking to do six to seven operating contracts a year under management and or franchise format. We have a robust operating team, infrastructure to operate and manage hotels, a viable distribution structure and an extensive brand portfolio to cater to hotels in the lower to upper mid-market segment. We believe long term partnerships can be built only when both partners continually

see value in the relationship. Our commercial options available under asset light ensure that at all times.

How are you marketing your properties internationally?

We don't do anything internationally. Apart from the fact that we are on the Berggruen Hotels website, we don't do much. We don't have too much of international traffic even today. It's significantly less, less than five per cent, that too is restricted to our Bengaluru property. We haven't really done much with international marketing. However what we have moved towards is more technology, digital and distribution. For our Kerala property, for example, we definitely need to start marketing in the UAE market



Anshu Sarin





and that's what we are planning to do through our digital channel. That's where we are looking at now funding our money.

Where according to you is the future? Mid-scale, budget hotels or luxury hotels?

There will be certain amount of consolidations or mergers that will happen in the future. If you ask where the demand is going to start, luxury market is a more distinctive whereas demand has to be far more generic. So as the domestic traffic is increasing with the rise in people with disposable income, the need for mid-market hotels will increase. Also now new destinations have come up which were earlier not known to people. There are so many factors that are giving a kick to domestic travel and hence the need for hotels which are under upper mid-scale or mid-scale will rise.

What kind of guests are you catering to?

We do both—leisure as well as corporate. We have a mixed portfolio, that's why we get both leisure as well as corporate. In leisure we get clients which are from the pilgrimage sector as well as we get the core leisure

market which is both the weekender marker as well as mid stay and the long stay market. Goa, for example, is a seven to 14 night business and then you have the smaller guys, which are temple stays which is an overnight business. We have all sorts within the leisure umbrella as well. The bread and butter for us is of course the corporate market which is a significant segment which come to us through direct channel as well but we have also have a significant build on our retail segment from the online which is where a lot of Assamese crowd come in from.

What about MICE?

We have MICE facilities in select brands of ours. Keys Prima hotels as well as in Leisure Hotels we have MICE facilities. Our hotels such as Keys Prima Parc Estique, Keys Evershine Mahabaleshwar, Keys Prima Temple Tree, Keys Whitefield have facilities to cater to small to mid level meetings, social and corporate events.

According to you what is the biggest problem that the Indian hospitality industry is experiencing at the moment?

There are three to four problems

GST, if it comes to us at the right tax point is the solution. Debt funding is also a concern. Taxation again not just has to be reformed but it has to be viable and has to be uniform and also has to ensure that you are able to attract customers. A tax structure which is higher is not going to help the country bring in more business. Then the problem is with regulatory bodies. We have a hotel in Cochin that we opened last year. We would have loved to open it two years back. But we couldn't because of regulatory norms.

We had a fully functional hotel with staff. So you can imagine what we went through to fund the entire hotel through that cycle. And then when we opened, we didn't get an electricity connection and we kept working on generators. How can you pay back debt when the external factors are so difficult and out of control? I think regulatory reforms need to be more flexible. If we really want to turn around the industry, then we definitely need to reform. Then the other hurdle is human resource. I think the industry faces extreme crunch as far as manpower is concerned, both at frontline level as well as in key positions.

“ I think regulatory reforms need to be more flexible. If we really want to turn around the industry, then we definitely need to reform ”



Trailer Park Lounge

World's Weirdest

On TLC's *World's Weirdest Restaurants*, television show host Bob Blumert takes a wild ride around the globe to find the wackiest, craziest and downright strangest places to grab a bite. Bob has spent a lifetime exploring the outer limits of the food world, but there are still a few surprises out there, even for him.

LE RESTOPHONE MONTPELLIER, FRANCE

If you hate eating alone, Le Restophone in Montpellier, France is the place for you. Restophone is a restaurant of seduction. It's very unique. Each table has a phone and customers can call each other. In this unique restaurant using the phone inside the restaurant and talking to the person sitting on the next table is funny and it makes people relax at the same time.

The menu at Restophone is designed to inflame the heart but in a good way. In this restaurant French food is cooked to give passion to people. On the surface it's a typical restaurant but if you look a little closer you will know on every table there are phones and a number written on it. It's like speed dating in a fine French restaurant.

The food served here is a perfect expression of passion of French cooking. Fish cooked in open wood flame stuffed with fresh herbs remains one of the

delicacies at the restaurant. Lot of people have met in this restaurant and later have got married. If people are coming back for both food and meeting new people, that's when you know the concept is working.

PARTIDGE AND PEAR SEVIERVILLE, UNITED STATES

Partidge and Pear is an incredible restaurant where its Christmassy 365 days a year. If you love Christmas dinner, you can have it at any time of the year here. Everywhere you look in the restaurant there are Christmas decorations. This place is a Mecca for Christmas fanatics. Also this restaurant has 'Ugliest Sweater' competition every year where the person wearing the ugliest sweater wins.

You can have Christmas turkey dinner 365 days a year. If you want to know what Santa does 365 days a year, he is in this restaurant. The festive feel of the restaurant is unmatched. You don't have to wait for all year long for your perfect Christmas feast.

TRAILER PARK LOUNGE NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

New York is one of the most sophisticated cities but in the middle of this glitz, there is Trailer Park Lounge. This place is half museum and half restaurant. Trailer Park Lounge is an escape from the craziness of New York City. People in the restaurant, mostly the first timers, gaze in wonder looking at the kitschiest décor in NYC. The sandwiches here are char-grilled to perfection, which brings out that authentic, backyard picnic flavour. Also the homemade chili, thick and melty mac n' cheese, mile-high BLT's, tater tots and sweet potato fries are a must try.

This restaurant is truly feast to the eyes. To really get into the spirit of what Trailer Park Lounge is all about, you can also get the tattoo facilitated at the restaurant itself.

World's Weirdest Restaurants airs every Friday at 6 pm only on TLC

to be continued..



Partidge and Pear

Restaurants **TLC**



Le Restophone



What are your expansion plans?

We are opening our sixth hotel in Chennai. Then we are working on a plan for Mumbai. It's a combo property; Holiday Inn and Holiday Inn Express and then we are working on our Indore project. We are also looking for some more acquisitions this year. Let's hope it materialises.

Also the industry has picked up and hotels are doing well. So we are hoping that this year is going to be better than 2015 in terms of overall sentiments. The investment in infrastructure will boost the atmosphere.

What are your views on hospitality education in India?

The kind of talent the country's hotel management schools are producing is raw. When they come out of these institutes, they have absolutely no idea what hospitality means.

The standards of hotel management institutes have to really go up. There are some efforts by private organisations but how much can they do? Companies like Starwood and Marriott should open hospitality management institutes as they can get the international standards to the country. But considering the Indian population, I don't know how that

"We need to MARKET our country better"

Naveen Jain, President, Duet Hotels discusses his brand and the hospitality industry.

Anupriya Bishnoi

Naveen Jain





Goa but I think there is lot of potential in India like in part of North-East. This part remains completely unexplored. About places in Orissa or South India,

people have no idea what these have to offer. People are only seeing Jaipur and Agra. I think we need to market ourselves much better. Incredible India

started but again it faded away. Industry is doing a lot but the government too needs to look into this, to market India as a destination for holidays.

will happen. The curriculum has to be more practical than theoretical. And then the internship period should be increased. I guess the solution lies in these points.



SomestateslikeKerala and Goa but I think thereislotofpotential in India like in part of North-East. I think we need to market ourselvesmuchbetter



How do you think inbound has grown and your expectations? Unfortunately we have not been able to market our country like some other countries of the world. We have so much of potential as a country which people would like to visit but unlike Singapore, Dubai, we don't promote our country like that.

Though we have started doing this, in fact some states are really forward in promoting themselves like Kerala and





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Manmohan Ojha

HOTELS for a GREEN TOMORROW

As the hospitality sector continues to grow, companies in this sector are becoming concerned about reducing the carbon emissions from their properties. HospitalityTalk gets in conversation with hotels and hoteliers working towards green initiatives to ask them about the steps they are taking to reduce carbon footprints.

Anupriya Bishnoi



In all our guestrooms, public areas are on low consumption power lights like 4W, 8W, LED down and LED cove lights



REDUCING THE CARBON FOOTPRINT

Reducing its carbon footprint not only increases the value of a hotel property but it also decreases the capitalisation rate and increases profit. Integration of sustainability into business is an emerging phenomenon. And once hotels start out on the sustainable path there's seemingly no end to the number of areas they can look at to help reduce their carbon footprint while also making improvements and savings.

In an initiative to reduce the carbon footprint Courtyard By Marriott Bhopal opted for LED lights which are high

on energy efficiency. Manmohan Ojha, Chief Engineer, Courtyard By Marriott Bhopal says, "In all our guestrooms, public areas are on low consumption power lights like 4W, 8W, LED down and LED cove lights. At the back of the house we are using a motion sensor for lighting control to reduce electricity consumption. Highly efficient HVAC and BMS systems are in place, of Samsung DVM2, Schneider TAC Vista (which help us to run the HVAC system with a climate control). The advanced water saving flow restrictor in all our washrooms which help us to restrict the water flow up to 1.3Ltr per hour at three bar pressure and also guestrooms are equipped with water saving dual-flush cistern tanks. We are using ETP and STP water plant for recycling and reusing the same for gardening."





Punish Sharma



Also our hotel has energy efficient lighting, use of natural lighting, an intelligent key tag system, and Eco Button



Punish Sharma, GM, Meluha The Fern says, "Direct emissions and Scope 2 GHG emissions are reduced by optimising and conserving every unit of energy at Meluha. Our LEED certified Gold rated building exhibits state-of-the-art green architecture, sustainable systems and energy efficient technologies. Also our hotel has energy efficient lighting, use of natural lighting, an intelligent key tag system, and Eco Button. On pressing the Eco Button the thermostat of the air-conditioning unit is stepped up by two degrees gradually thus conserving energy. Indirect Scope 3 emissions are reduced through local procurement of supplies, procurement of seasonal fruits and vegetables and so on."

Also the hotels use environment friendly amenities such as Ayurvedic toiletries, jute slippers and jute bags. Sharma further says, "Above 99 per cent of our waste is diverted from landfill sites through 3R measures and effective tie-ups with local MPCB certified recycling agencies."

Varun Sahani, General Manager, The Orchid Mumbai says, "The Orchid, Asia's First Ecotel Hotel, a leading landmark in the city of Mumbai, has gained international importance due to its pioneering efforts in the eco-friendly sphere. The Orchid hotel, since its inception, was in the forefront following various environment initiatives and has been designed, built and maintained keeping environment issues in mind. We, at The Orchid, exhibit every characteristic one would expect to find at an operation that is considered sustainable and offsets the carbon footprint."

The Orchid Mumbai tries to reduce carbon footprints in the following areas:

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Solid Waste Management is an important aspect of environmental responsibility given the amount of waste that is sent to landfills all over the world. Orchid follows the 3R theory-

Reduce, Reuse and Recycle to manage waste efficiently. They segregate solid waste in all the kitchens of the hotel into four bins and two bin segregation systems are used in the hotel's common areas, offices and guestrooms. Four separate colour coded bins in the kitchen are used for storing the separated waste.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Energy efficient designs and systems have been integrated into the hotel from its very foundation.

The Skylight: Double layered domes admit maximum natural light in the atrium of the hotel thereby reducing the extent of artificial lighting required in the lobby, corridors, rooms and restaurants.

The Façade: Depressions and protrusions in the façade play an important role in reducing energy consumption since the majority of the walls remain under shade thereby preventing surface radiation from entering the structure.



Varun Sahani



We, at The Orchid, exhibit every characteristic one would expect to find at an operation that is considered sustainable and offsets the carbon footprint





Maverik Mukerji



Our Head of Engineering has taken measures to ensure that we reduce our carbon footprint and contribute to our environment sustainability mission



Deepika Arora



The Ramada Vineland is one of the first in the Wyndham Hotel Group family to use solar panels to power its campus



Triple Glazed windows incorporated in the rooms consist of three panes separated by two hermetically sealed spaces. These windows have the best thermal insulating properties and also assist in curtailing noise from India's busiest domestic airport.

Energy efficient lighting: The hotel uses energy efficient LEDs lighting which reduces the electricity requirement.

Solar energy: The hotel has solar panels on its roof and the electricity generated through these panels is used for the rooftop lighting, reducing the extent of conventional coal based electricity used by the hotel.

equivalent emissions going into the atmosphere each month.

WATER CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION

The Orchid is mindful of the fact that merely three per cent of the water available on the earth is fresh water. With the current projected water demand in the country it is of utmost important to conserve, utilise and manage this vital resource in a sustainable manner.

Through the seven pillars of its PLANET 21 programme, AccorHotels acts to improve its practices in social, societal



Intelligent control systems: Each room in the hotel has a master control panel to control the lighting and temperature of the room. This master control panel has an eco-button, which when pressed increases the temperature of the room by two degrees without affecting guest comfort.

Air conditioning and refrigeration systems use CFC free refrigerants with low ozone depleting potential.

By saving an average 99,344 units of electricity per month The Orchid Hotel prevents 2,12,596.16 pounds of CO2

and environmental fields and, at Novotel Hyderabad Airport, are very serious about and committed to sustainability.

Maverik Mukerji, General Manager, Novotel Hyderabad Airport, "Our Head of Engineering has taken measures to ensure that we reduce our carbon footprint and contribute to our environment sustainability mission. Novotel Hyderabad Airport has opted for using solar panels for hot water generation, tremendously decreasing diesel/power consumption, switching to bio-diesel for our equipment, using steam condensate to produce hot water

and recycling condensed water; using LED for all electrical and lighting systems. At the kitchen level we maintain a rapid kitchen Hood clearing system that helps us filter and reduce carbon emissions into the atmosphere and eco-friendly refrigerants have helped us achieve our goals of reducing carbon footprints from cold storage and air conditioning units."

As one of the leading hotel chains in the world, Wyndham is significantly adopting innovative practices globally for sustainable environment through the Wyndham Green program. The program not only focuses on improving



environment but also includes other initiatives such as reducing carbon footprints, tracking energy consumption, reducing water wastage, improving air quality and recycling and reusing waste.

Deepika Arora, Regional Vice President – Eurasia, Wyndham Hotel Group says, "For years the Wyndham Worldwide has been using green innovation to drive the results of our Wyndham Green program around the world. For example, The Ramada Vineland is one of the first in the

Wyndham Hotel Group family to use solar panels to power its campus. The solar farm generates approximately 620,620 kilowatts of power each year—enough to power about 50 family households. Additionally, the solar farm also prevents the annual emission of 863,220 pounds of carbon, 4,717 pounds of sulfur, and 1,552 pounds of nitrogen."

Also, Wyndham engages its properties in Earth Hour celebrations to save power and energy, water conservation, usage of organic waste converter and use of motion sensors for public areas like washrooms and lifts to save energy consumption, hence, helping to reduce carbon footprints. "We have also started adopting energy saving alternatives such as replacing conventional lighting systems – halogens with LED lighting which plays an important role in not only saving energy but also elating the mood of guests and facilitates right kind of socialising and business meetings," adds Arora.

GUEST AWARENESS

Also, it is important for hotels to know how aware guests are these days about the green initiatives and how often they ask if the hotel they are checking into is eco-friendly.

Ojha says, "Guests do enquire before checking in if the hotel is eco-friendly but the numbers are very low and the majority is from Europe. Also, being first international hotel chain in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, most of the guests who are aware about 'Marriott Spirit to Preserve' prefer to stay with this being their preferred choice among ecofriendly hotels."

Sharma says, "We cater to a sizeable number of expats at our hotels and quite a few do enquire about the eco-amenities. Guests do prefer to stay at our hotel due to our environment sensitive way of operation and our constant communication about 'Reuse, Recycle and Reduce'."

Varun Sahani says, "People have now become more conscious about the environment and are concerned about reducing the impact of their activities on the environment."

Mukerji says, "Guests and corporate clients are pro-environment these days. Even our contracted global clients and local corporates are vigilant about their partners and enquire about our commitment to the environment while selecting/contracting. The PLANET 21 strategy includes a programme for encouraging customers to contribute to the hotels' actions."

Arora says, "Consumers' purchase behaviour is evolving and hotels also understand the need to take a step further in offering eco-friendly services."



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Rakesh Sharma
IT Manager, ITC Rajputana

Keeping pace with new trends and technology

Though hospitality remains a people-centric industry, hotels also focus on enhancing guest experience through initiatives like technology. Hotels that are innovating technologically in response to evolving consumer preferences are driving growth and profitability.

HT Bureau



Smart hotels wishing to grow their room occupancy need to strategically leverage social media



Bhupinder Rawat, Director of Rooms,
Le Meridien Gurgaon



It is important that hotels keep up with the changing technological landscape



Rakesh Sharma, IT Manager, ITC Rajputana - A Luxury Collection Hotel says, "Social media is a new marketing channel. With social media, hotels now live in a glasshouse. Smart hotels wishing to grow their room occupancy need to strategically leverage social media through every conceivable channel, be it Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Videos and Blogs. Going beyond discounts with your loyalty programme, different audiences respond differently to loyalty programmes."

Technology is at the core of hotels these days. Today's traveller is well-informed, smart, well-travelled, spoilt for choice and always on the

move. **Bhupinder Rawat**, Director of Rooms, Le Meridien Gurgaon says, "It is extremely important that hotels keep up with the quick changing technological landscape. There are various softwares, for instance, those play a major role not only in the efficient functioning of different departments in a hotel; be it Front office, Housekeeping, F&B, Finance and Sales but also eases out things for guests. This in turn leads to a better guest experience at the hotel. The good thing is that these technologies are accessible through smartphones, i-pads and other devices which have simplified a lot of things. There is also a cut down on costs."

Travellers all over the world are becoming increasingly tech savvy and mobile with their information and connectivity. With the increasing number of on-the-go travellers, no longer is free Wi-Fi just a sweet spot but is a necessity.

Faiz Alam Ansari, General Manager Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park says, "In keeping with the demands of today's technology-driven generation, hotels are required to keep up with the ultra-wired next-gen traveller right from their pre-arrival, their stay and departure. With this in mind, our SPG Keyless check-in has been extremely successful in easing the entire process by allowing guests to fasten the check-

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in process by using their own phones as well as giving them the options to pre-select their preferred room."

Aseem Kapoor - General Manager, Hyatt Regency Delhi says, "We continually strive to secure ideas that go above and beyond our customers' dining expectations which adds on through the design and technology of our outlets. The newly launched Mansion (The Living Rooms and Oval Room) has complemented our existing line-up of indigenous concepts, that we have always been pioneers of. Travellers not only look for good hotel rooms, they look for fine style combined with modern design while choosing a place. It is imperative to be technologically sound."



Faiz Alam Ansari
General Manager, Aloft Bengaluru
Cessna Business Park



These systems also have the capability to handle communication with the front desk, housekeeping, concierge, and checkout. The modern hotel also offers staff facility-wide monitoring and management capabilities."

According to Ansari, travel needs to be customised for today's traveller. He says, "Industry should be creative with technology usage, for example, start with the basic uninterrupted hi-speed Wi-Fi connectivity, meeting rooms equipped with upgraded technology for ease of usage, a clutter free business centre or self-concierge service for the discreet business traveller—all of which doesn't require overhaul of the entire property."

Rawat says, "Through new and innovative software made especially for hotels it is easier for the associates to anticipate guest needs and keep a record that can be easily accessed through various brands within the same hotel group across the globe. It speeds up communication and makes sure each detail is addressed. Technology also enables guests to provide a detailed feedback that is not very time consuming and that too on their own devices. This feedback can then be analysed by the hotel."

According to Kapoor the hotel industry is constantly evolving these days; hotels need something to differentiate their rooms and restaurants, because food or good rooms alone is not enough to wow a guest who has options. "It is imperative that we present unique



Hotelshavetokeepup with the ultra-wired traveller from pre-arrival to departure



TECHNOLOGY'S ROLE IN HOTELS

Sharma says, "Technology is an important part of the home, and what better way for hoteliers to make guests feel at home than to provide them with state-of-the-art technological amenities? In fact it is at to a deeper level of connectivity than a simple iPod dock, or a reliable Internet connection in a hotel room. The trend in luxury hotels across the globe is a simple touchscreen with an easy-to-use graphic user interface that can control all your room's amenities, such as lighting, air conditioning, TV, movies, and music.





Aseem Kapoor
General Manager
Hyatt Regency Delhi

concepts to all guests and combine design and functionality. Our patrons' feedback has prepared us to enter one of the most progressive markets."

AREAS WHERE TECHNOLOGY IS IMPORTANT

According to Sharma new guestroom devices offer new opportunities for reduced energy consumption while maintaining and enhancing guest comfort. "A panel consisting of options in lighting, climate control, entertainment systems, and other guestroom technologies are required these days. The large volume of credit-card data and sensitive guest information presents numerous data security threats. Both physical and technological security (network and data encryptions) are used for the safety of data." Technology has now reached beyond the regular PMS, POS, SAP, CRS, Payroll. The requirement now is for biometric access control at sensitive points,

room lock controls, elevator floors control and so on. The introduction of RFID technology has changed the entire guest experience. On arrival at different selling points of the hotel, the guest's photographs and preferences on mobiles are used by the outlets to give personalised and WOW service.

Ansari says, "At Aloft, we're bringing some of the coolest technology right into our lobby and rooms—with urban-inspired design, tech-forward sensibility and a go-with-the-flow attitude, we are focused on innovative programming and accessible technology to guests."

With the launch of the SPG Keyless check In, we are putting the power to unlock your room, right in your hands—your smartphone. Our new keyless entry program lets you zoom into your room without any hassle. Guests can simply register for our SPG Keyless program and opt in to go keyless.

You'll receive a text with your room number and can skip the check-in line and head to your room, unlocking the door with a smart phone. Quick menu and feedback through iPads in restaurants enhance guest services."

Kapoor says that Meeting and Event Space is the most important space of a hotel and needs the best technology.



Travellers look for fine style and modern design. It is imperative to be technologically sound



INITIATIVES BY TAJ IN TECHNOLOGY

We have an acute focus on improving our technology infrastructure. We are in the process of standardising our property management systems across all hotels to ensure a smoother onsite experience for our guests.

We are in the process of launching a world class desktop and mobile ready website that will provide

customised content to our guests about our hotels and about the destinations we are serving.

We are also currently rolling out sales and catering software that enables our sellers to react quickly to the needs of our potential guests.

In addition there is a big focus on analytics and understanding our guests better so we can run stronger loyalty programmes and customise our products and offerings using CRM.

Finally we are also in the process of installing new generation revenue management software at our key hotels with the idea of maximising our revenue opportunities in the markets we operate in.

We have reorganised our organisation structure to give adequate attention to the disciplines of loyalty, analytics and digital including all consumer facing technology with the idea of improving the guest experience across all our touch points.



Chinmai Sharma, Chief Revenue Officer, Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces



IMPORTANCE OF DESIGN AND INNOVATION IN HOTELS

How important is keeping pace with the new trends/designs and technology in hotels?

Technology improves and changes at such a rapid pace, it's important that interior designers and hotel operators are at the forefront of these new developments. Competition is fierce, so being on top of this is key. Designers must stay current of design innovations

within the industry and operators must focus on improving the guest experience and efficiency of the Front and Back of House.

What role does technology play in hotels these days? In which areas of hotels is technology important?

Technology is important for the guest experience. Especially for the business traveller who needs a fast check-in and out. They require ease from paying their bill to ordering room service. This ties back to efficient Front and Back of House

operations. The smoother and quicker things can be done, the quicker one can be in the comfort of the room.

As trends and designs change, how can hotels upgrade without bringing down the entire property or without going through hefty renovation?

Thinking ahead of time, for technology, installing the most advanced or flexible 'infrastructure' during the first build so that only software needs to be upgraded down the line.



Phillip Young, Regional Managing Director, DiLeonardo



Renu Misra, MD
Lixil Water Technology

SUPPLIER'S POINT OF VIEW

What is the role of technology in your industry? How is brand GROHE enhancing its product offering and achieving design and technology supremacy?

Technology is the backbone of the premium sanitary fitting industry. GROHE is deeply invested in research and development which allows us to turn world-leading technologies for bathrooms and kitchens into a reality.

Our products have been created to last a lifetime, to be both easy and intuitive to operate and to make the use of water a pleasure. GROHE is the undisputed leader when it comes to products that blend technology and design seamlessly.

All our faucets and fixtures infuse a high degree of aesthetic allure in any space and also offer the most

advanced, luxurious and delightful tech experience to our patrons.

How have hotels accepted technology and does it play an important role?

Hotels have been at the forefront of tech adoption when it comes to bathroom fittings and fixtures. The mark of an exceptional property is how aesthetically done up it is and more importantly how it manages to wow guests with technology-backed convenience it offers. Technology, therefore, certainly plays a pivotal role in the hospitality sector.

Has Indian hospitality kept pace with the new trends and technology? Where does the scope of improvement lie?

Superlative hotels in India lay a lot of emphasis on creating oases of rejuvenation with the highest echelons of functional comfort backed by superior technology, packaged with breathtaking designs.

In a well-appointed cosmopolitan bathroom of a high-end hotel, there is no place for antediluvian fixtures and outdated usage methodology. Touchless controls, digital and intuitive operations, water-saving technology are some of the areas which are witnessing immense traction.



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INDIA: A FOOD GIANT IN THE MAKING

Aahar is the largest show of its kind in South Asia. The Indian food sector is the country's highest growth sector with immense potential for value addition. It is expected to touch US\$482 billion by 2020. On the occasion of the inauguration of 31st Aahar, Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Union Cabinet Minister, Food Processing Industries shares her views on the potential this industry holds and how India is the major food factory for the entire world.

Anupriya Bishnoi



I am looking at India becoming the food factory for the world in the next few years to come



A Aahar 2016 was a huge success. On the inauguration, Harsimrat Kaur Badal shares her views on how powerful India is becoming as far as the food industry is concerned and how the country can utilise its own resources which are aplenty.

"I want to congratulate ITPO and I must tell you, after having gone to Gulfood and SIAL that it is indeed a

pleasure when I go around attending fairs and get requested if I can put in a word if they can put a stall at Aahar. This year in Aahar we have over 1,000 people exhibiting from all over the world with 25 per cent growth since 2015 and with over 19 countries participating. I think all these signals are indicating the new look India has acquired in the last 22 months. Our prime minister is all across the globe. He has travelled

to over 39 countries in the last 22 months. In these months there has been a huge change in the outlook towards this country and this has got reflected in Aahar to some extent. Besides this fact, figures speak for themselves. Today when there is an economic slowdown in the entire world, India is the one growing economy; the one bright spot whose rising economy has overtaken big giants like China, USA, UK and





Germany, India is growing faster than all these countries put together.

"I would also say there are many other figures which prove that in the last 20 months this government has worked really hard to ensure that the environment in the country is created so that the economy can grow. The foreign exchange reserves are the highest and 7.6 per cent is our growth rate in the last quarter. Besides this, what makes me happy, this is the highest amount of FDIs that has ever come in (39 per cent) in the last few months. The amount of trust the world has shown us is amazing. Even if we look at a few of the other things like the Trust in National Government survey (conducted by OECD), today India ranks second."

"By bringing in amazing reforms, offering a transparent tax regime,

ease of doing business, getting rid of all old laws, telling all the departments that please look into your paperwork and tell how they can simplify procedures and get rid of any unnecessary delays, red tapism, paperwork, the present government is doing an amazing job. This is all beginning to show and if this is showing in the way the world is looking at India, the way investments are coming in. I think the bright spot in all the investments besides the other sectors, one of the bright sectors that I see is going to be the food processing sector. Aahar is going to play a very important role. I don't think there is any doubt that the food processing sector is going to play a catalytic role in improving the Indian economy in the years to come. One of the biggest initiatives in this budget is to open up 100 per cent FDI in multi-brand marketing of food

produced and processed in India and if you look at the kind of population we have, second largest in the world, an average Indian spends 40 per cent of his income on food, that's the kind of market opportunity we have. We are a huge resource market, if you look at the food we grow in our country we are the leading market. India is the largest producer of milk in the world, second largest producer of fruits, vegetables and cereals in the world, that's the kind of raw material base we have. There is no dearth in India, and talking about opportunities, we only process 10 per cent of the food we grow. There is huge potential in terms of processing and now that the 100 per cent FDI has been allowed, this is going to give a boost."

"There is an e-marketing platform which is going to be opened on 14th of April 2016 where 585 mandis have been connected in a unified agriculture market. There is a focus on irrigation facilities so that there is more land that is cultivable, besides promoting organic farming. We are looking at the entire North-east as an 100 per cent organic farming location. I am looking at India becoming the food factory for the world in the next few years to come."





GREAT EXPECTATIONS, DASHED HOPES

The hospitality industry's expectations from this year's budget have not been fulfilled. Leading hoteliers give us their views about the impact of the budget.

HT Bureau



Luv Malhotra

"There is nothing for us there"

LUV MALHOTRA
President
HRANI

I would say that the budget is good for the country in the long run. In the short

term I cannot say much because some results will be visible only in the second year, others only in the third year.

As far as our industry is concerned, there is nothing for us there. Only positive thing is that the country will be better connected via road, rail and airports, which is excellent for the travel and tourism industry but then again we will see the repercussions of this happen in the future and not in the coming year.

The additional half percent Krishi Kalyan Tax of 0.5 per cent will make travel, accommodation and eating out costlier which is a big negative.

I am surprised that the Largest Employment Generator (Travel, Tourism and Hospitality) globally has not been mentioned in the budget considering that employment generation was a major point of the budget.

"The tax holiday will add vigour to the business climate"

AJAY K. BAKAYA
Executive Director
Sarovar Hotels & Resorts

"The proposal to levy infrastructure and agriculture cess is retrograde as it adds another slice to a high tax burden. We welcome the proposal of a 3-5 year tax holiday for start-ups. We hope this applies to new hotel projects. This will add vigour to the business climate. The mention of revival of 160 airports/airstrips is excellent. We hope this translates to reality in FY17. The proposed outlays in infrastructure, highways, roads and rails are all



Ajay K. Bakaya

excellent. Once again, we hope to see real progress on the ground. An outlay of `9,000 crores on Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is welcome. India needs to solve the issue of final garbage disposal against the largely prevalent system of sweeping dirt away from one place only to another."



Kamlesh Barot

"The budget is a complete washout for the hospitality industry"

KAMLESH BAROT
Past President
FHRAI & HRAWI

"The PM in his initial speeches had mentioned tourism as one of the four pillars in the mandate of the new BJP Government. The finance minister Arun Jaitley in his budget speech has talked about nine new pillars. There is mention of agriculture, social, infrastructure, rural development, ease of doing business, skill development and so on, but nothing has been mentioned with regard to tourism or hospitality industry. The budget is a

complete washout for the hospitality industry. Nothing from the pre-budget memorandum submitted by FHRAI has been taken into account. In fact, even the lowest hanging fruits like infrastructure status for the industry where they were to bring down the threshold limit to 25 crore has not even been granted under the infrastructure pillar that he mentioned. The only light at the end of the tunnel seems to be that the NSDC is going to open 1,500 new institutes and one crore has been allocated for skill development for the next three years. This might bring in some employment for the tourism sector. DDT now taxed at the shareholders' end also will mean corporates at 24.67 per cent tax are going to shell out more. Voluntary disclosure at 45 per cent is a bit steep to implement. The model shops and establishment act mentioned is something we will see how it shapes up, when he mentioned about seven day working for malls and now SMEs

On the eradication of interstate passenger permits, maybe conducted tours are going to make movement by road less costly for tourists. 100 per cent FDI for the food processing industry's marketing might trigger some growth there. With the industry in pits he has only strengthened the DRT to chase debt-ridden hoteliers more. We were expecting a lot from him, this being the last year of the Xllth plan."

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“The hospitality industry needs to have a stronger voice”

DAVID HOPCROFT
General Manager
Le Meridien Gurgaon

There are few things that I see that are beneficial for the travel and hospitality industry. First is the investment that the government will be doing in the infrastructure. The second is, now the focus will also be on the rural side of the business which was neglected possibly along the line. I think the hospitality industry needs to have a stronger voice and I would like to urge various bodies like FHRAI and



David Hopcroft

others to get together and present a document to the government rather than waiting for the government to do something. Also if India markets its heritage and culture internationally, it will be a deal breaker.

“A sharp focus on building a stronger eco-system for the travel and tourism industry”

JB SINGH
President and CEO
InterGlobe Hotels



JB Singh

The union budget 2016-17 has provided a sharp focus on building a stronger eco-system for the travel and tourism industry. The ₹21,246 crore outlay for infrastructure development, ₹97,000 crore investment in road sector and the intent to build as well as upgrade highways is a measure that will aid connectivity across the length and breadth of the country. Last mile connectivity is a key hurdle for tourism and travel in India, and we believe this measure will aid in overcoming this challenge. Emerging India and rural India have a lot to offer from a point of view of tourism. There is immense potential in these markets to develop

hubs of tourist attraction and also develop it as a means of employment for locals. The government's focus on development and empowerment of emerging India—Tier II and III cities—is a positive sign. It will boost consumer sentiment and purchasing power and also encourage the next phase of rural tourism in India. The industry was keenly looking forward for the government to focus on incentives for the commercial real estate sector such as REITS, real estate regulatory bill and single-window clearances; however this continues to remain a challenge.



Jean Michel Casse

“The union budget affirms the government's commitment to continued reforms”

JEAN MICHEL CASSE
Senior Vice President
Operations – Accor Hotels, India

The Union Budget affirms the government's commitment to continued reforms while maintaining an increased level of prudence, given the current global environment

of economic volatility. While there are no direct provisions for the hospitality sector, we are enthused by the government's substantial focus on infrastructure, earmarking a massive ₹21,246 crore outlay for infrastructure development, ₹97,000 crore investment in road sector and plans to revive 160 non-functional airports at a cost of ₹50-100 crore each.

Strengthening the infrastructure across levels will definitely strengthen India's position as an attractive tourist destination in the global ranks. Enhancing regional and last mile connectivity, especially to untapped regions like the North-East, will open up fresh avenues for expansion for hotel chains. There is an immense potential in these markets to develop hubs of tourist attraction.

Increased connectivity and accessibility will also give a fillip to outbound domestic travel from Tier-II and Tier-III cities, thus offering greater growth avenues.

The details on allocation of budget for Incredible India campaign are still awaited, which will also have implication for expansion plans.



Vikas Ahluwalia

VIKAS AHLUWALIA
General Manager
Four Points by Sheraton Agra

“The money in infrastructure growth will help the hospitality business”

The positive part is there is lot of money that has been put in the infrastructure to create the support system which in turn will help the hospitality business. If there is better connectivity, better roads for people to travel, this is one of boosting as far as hotels are concerned or increasing the number of people travelling from inter-state or inter-countries.

The second good thing that has happened is that the Make-in-India Campaign has been made more robust. When you are setting up a business, for example if a MNC comes to the country, they will need services like hotels to stay, to do their training sessions, and so on, which will increase the foreign exchange.

BUDGET



S.M. Shervani

“A huge opportunity has been missed to create Indian tourism as an engine of growth”

S.M. SHERVANI
Honorary Secretary
FAITH, EC member, FHRAI

The budget has not proposed any long term, visionary steps nor any immediate taxation support to the

tourism and hospitality industry. There is a proposed relook at the motor vehicles act to enable passenger vehicles for national movement and the activation of 100 plus state airports or investments in seaports. But no timelines have been given. Tourism was probably mentioned only in the spirit of promoting national integration. On the contrary there appears to be an increase in service tax by 0.5 per cent for agri Cess from 1st June which has the potential to make services more expensive. The fine print which has to be read in detail also has increased the basic excise duty on ATF from eight per cent to 14 per cent which will make air travel more expensive.

We understand the central government's fiscal deficit and political challenges but we believe that a huge opportunity has been missed to turn tourism into an engine of growth. A focus on tourism-driven growth could have addressed core issues of current account deficit reduction, pan-Indian employment, infrastructure creation and India brand building.



Saurabh Rai

“There was expectation that the budget would level a few long pending concerns”

SAURABH RAI
Executive Vice President
Preferred Hotels & Resorts

The Indian government has shown good intent and commitment in endorsing the

travel and hotel sector. There was some expectation that the budget would be able to level a few long pending concerns like high taxes. An over 25 per cent tax situation hinders our destination's competitiveness.

Hotels in India have been suppressed for a prolonged period. Cyclicalities have to prevail and government policies on taxation, lending rates and infrastructure status for hotels need to come through. There was anticipation that this budget would bring about some real reforms and amend policies to support the hospitality industry. This was the fuel that we need to take the industry to the next level and remain competitive. Great hotels have made the destination synonymous with exceptional guest experiences that come from genuine warmth and a willingness to serve. This needs to be supported by government policies.”

“The industry will be impacted to a limited degree by the increase of service tax”

RIYAAZ AMLANI
President
National Restaurant Association
of India

The Union Budget 2016 was largely agrarian in nature and the restaurant and F&B sector was looking forward to some impetus. While we had also hoped for some announcement on implementation of GST, the industry will be impacted to a limited degree by the increase of service tax, through the introduction of 0.5 per cent agri cess. However, the decision to circulate the model shops and establishments bill to state governments for voluntary adoption is a welcome move and we hope to see some traction on it.



Riyaz Amlani



Ashwani K Goela

“This time there hasn't been anything as far as infrastructure, hospitality or tourism is concerned”

ASHWANI K GOELA
General Manager
Crowne Plaza Jaipur Tonk Road

This time there hasn't been anything as far as infrastructure, hospitality or tourism is concerned. We were hoping for some announcements related to the deduction of the taxes which would have benefited our industry but sadly that didn't happen. It was a disappointing budget this year which remained neutral to our industry.



K Syama Raju

“Initiatives to strengthen domestic connectivity and international accessibility will have positive results”

K SYAMA RAJU
President
SIHRA

The Union Budget 2016 is a document aimed at improving the rural and agricultural, social and infrastructure sectors. Tourism has been a key contributor to the Indian economy with immense possibilities of growth. The budget cannot be expected as a document for every industry. It is a more holistic and a more macro view.

Though nothing directly impacting the hospitality industry has been proposed in the budget we expect that the following will have a positive impact on our industry:

☞ It has been proposed for good governance to capitalise on the country's unity in diversity and create a closer engagement between different states and districts in a structured manner. *Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat* programme will link states and districts in an annual programme that will connect people through exchanges in areas of language, trade, culture, travel and tourism.

☞ It has been proposed to develop new greenfield ports both in the eastern and western coasts of the country. The work on the national waterways is also being expedited. In the civil aviation sector, the government is expected to draw up an action plan for the revival of unserved and underserved airports. The union government will partner state governments to develop some of these airports for regional connectivity. Similarly, 10 of the 25 non-functional air strips with the Airport Authority of India will also be developed.

Tourism has been a key contributor to the Indian economy with growth possibilities. The government's initiatives to strengthen domestic connectivity as well as international accessibility will have positive results.



Aseem Kapoor

“There is nothing substantial for the hospitality sector in the budget 16-17”

ASEEM KAPOOR
General Manager
Hyatt Regency Delhi

There is nothing substantial for the hospitality sector in the budget 16-17 though we were hopeful that the government will focus on the tourism industry and help drive the industry towards its projected growth and specially the tax regime.

Having said that, it is a great step for the government to pump in more money in infrastructure (roads and highways) which will indeed result in enhancing Delhi tourism.



Ankur Bhatia

“Overall a balanced budget with emphasis on development.”

ANKUR BHATIA
Executive Director, Bird Group and
Member CII National Committee on
Civil Aviation

The budget is for heartland of India, and is focused on agriculture, infrastructure development, education and health. The finance minister has laid emphasis on rail and road infrastructure developments as well as on new startups and Make in India campaign, which is good. We welcome the cabinet's decision of reviving underserved airports in partnerships with states, which will boost the overall aviation sector. Levying of additional cess in hospitality could have been avoided. We do hope that the cess levied on combustion will be used for a betterment and development of green vehicles and infrastructure. Overall a balanced budget with emphasis on development.”

“Though there are no direct benefits for the hospitality industry but many indirect”

RISHI PURI
President, Lords Hotels and Resorts

The presented budget mostly has positives. Though there are no direct benefits for the hospitality industry but many indirect. The greater emphasis on improving rural incomes to the extent of doubling them in five years, improving rural infrastructure including irrigation facilities and roads do have benefits for the industry in the long run. Secondly there is a proposal to develop unused airstrips in the tier II and tier III cities. Strong infrastructure is critical to the opening of the tourism industry in the country. We also believe that the hike in clean energy cess is a welcome move as it will impact the Heat Light and Power (HLP) cost for hotels in the short run but it will also drive hotels to use energy efficient resources which will cut bills in the long run also reducing negative environmental consequences. So there are no direct benefits but I believe indirectly lots of benefits are in store for our sector.



THE NEW HOUSEKEEPING MINDSET

Hotel housekeeping department takes care of rooms and are large. Guest satisfaction is important and the hygiene factor is always present. Housekeeping contributes to a guest's impression of a hotel and largely determines whether guests are happy and will return. Leading hotel manager tells Hospitality Talk of the relevance of housekeeping and how it has evolved over time.



Anand Nair

ANAND NAIR
General Manager
Vasundhara Sarovar Premiere, Kerala – Vayalar

Earlier housekeeping was not a priority factor for the guest while choosing a hotel. The guest used to look for travel convenience, location, food and the brand and was not much bothered about the quality housekeeping and often neglected housekeeping errors. But things changed dramatically over the past few years. Now the first preference for the guest is the sleep quality, cleanliness and hygiene of the hotel. We often get preference details for the pillows, mattress, linen, towels and cots.



Ajit Jose

AJIT JOSE
General Manager
Poetree Sarovar Portico, Kerala - Thekkady

Housekeeping does many things today but one thing that takes up 90 per cent of its time is cleaning and attached ancillary services. The primary activity of housekeeping is to look after the core product of the hotel. Over the last two decades, we have seen considerable change in how housekeeping has evolved in hotels, mostly for the better! New advanced technologies, increasing importance of hygiene, mechanised new specialised agencies and eco-practices are emerging trends.



Kunal Shanker

KUNAL SHANKER
General Manager
Holiday Inn Cochin

Housekeeping as a profession started since we had inns or lodges in place. Care, Cleanliness and Comfort were the main focus of housekeeping operations in olden days. Now housekeepers have evolved and lot of innovations have come in place. One may be mentioned: Save the Planet programmes. This is a support programme hoteliers do to save natural resources. Most of the guests wouldn't need the linen to be changed on a daily basis. We have a tent card placed in the guest room which says, 'It is our pleasure to make your bed every day. Your linen will be changed only when this card is placed on the bed in the morning. In the bathroom we have appropriate collateral which states 'Towels on the Rail – I will use them again and Towels on the Floor – Please replace them'. The guest will take a choice of changing or washing the linens/ towels accordingly and partnering as responsible travellers. We have evolved in terms of our tools and equipments. From brooms, mops and buckets and soap oils we have upgraded the system of cleaning rooms with electrostatic rags, microfiber wet and dry mops, water-activated micro scrubber sponges made from melamine foam and companies have started deriving green chemicals from organic sources. We have also moved from a proactive turning over the mattress to a non flipping mattress with more durability.



Faiz Alam Ansari

FAIZ ALAM ANSARI
General Manager
Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park

In the hospitality industry, housekeeping is a crucial factor that defines guest services and the reputation of a hotel as accommodation is one of a hotel's major products. Determining brand standards and providing a pleasant environment are the sole responsibility of the housekeeping department; hence it can create a direct impact on a guest's experience at the hotel. In an era where personalisation is a key differentiator for choosing your hotel as a traveller, attention to detail on the guest preference of room turnaround (reuse of linen and so on) as well as right communication on behalf of the housekeeping team regarding your hotel's environment-friendly practices can impact service delivery. While delivering a clean hygienic room to the guest is important, it has also become essential to maintain sustainable practices of housekeeping. A well trained team with a focus on providing maximum guest delight is the key to mastering the housekeeping function in any hotel.



Firoz Jangaria

FIROZ JANGARIA
General Manager
ibis Bengaluru City Centre
The housekeeping function has shown

tremendous progress over the years— starting from the quality of equipment used to the quality of room amenities and the services provided. But what has evolved the most is the mindset. It's no longer a back-end function with little or no interaction with the guests. Hotels have realised that the sales function may bring the guests in for the first time but in order to convert them into patrons or repeat users, the role of housekeeping is very important. Hence more and more housekeepers are being encouraged to interact with the guests and delight them with simple gestures such as towel art or a chocolate for the kids. Clearly, housekeeping is no longer limited to elementary tasks such as cleaning the room or changing soiled sheets.



Shibil Malik, General Manager, Sheraton Hyderabad Hotel tells HospitalityTalk what makes his property unique and how Hyderabad is shaping up as a hospitality destination.

A HYDERABAD HOSPITALITY EXPERIENCE

HT Bureau



Shibil Malik



Sheraton Hyderabad Hotel is the newest, contemporarily designed Starwood Hotels and Resorts property in the heart of Cyberabad in Hyderabad



What is the USP of your property?

As far as the location is concerned, the first city hotel from the airport is the Sheraton Hyderabad Hotel which is the newest, contemporarily designed, very conveniently located Starwood Hotels and Resorts property in the heart of the financial district of Cyberabad in Hyderabad surrounded by the top fortune 500 companies like Microsoft, Amazon, Capgemini, Dupont, Cognizant and so on and there is also an ISB campus and the upcoming US consulate in its vicinity.

Keeping in mind the high demand projections, we are adding fully serviced apartments to our rooms inventory, hence, also catering to the needs of the extended stay guests and thus giving them home like comfort and experience at the same time while they enjoy access to all the recreational facilities like the health club and the spa that the hotel provides. Moreover, the extended stay guests can also enjoy the 'Teasing Off experience' on the lush greens of the Boulder Hills Golf course which is just a stone's throw away from the hotel.

The exquisite dining experiences at the Feast, our multi-cuisine restaurant where the guests can devour a variety of delicacies including the famous 'Sunday Market Brunch' which is another unique and first of its kind F&B concept that Sheraton

Hyderabad Hotel introduced in the city of Nizams. This actively involves the guests in buying their own raw exotic fruits, vegetables, cold cuts, home baked breads, micro greens, sauces and other ingredients from the in-house Sunday Market and





having it prepared by our chef in a way that the guests enjoy the most, the live band playing along with the drinks during the brunch elevates the experience to a sheer delight for the soul. Also, Sheraton Hyderabad Hotel has brought the food and beverage standards to new heights in the city by launching Inazia as the speciality South-East Asian and Oriental restaurant. Our expat chef Ninja creates authentic culinary and gastronomic experiences for guests.

How is the hospitality business in Hyderabad? How has it evolved? How competitive is the market in the city?

Hyderabad has the right ingredients in the right proportions for a successful city. It has political stability, the right economic policies, the right demography which is young, talented

and highly skilled and the indigenous culture of the people of Telangana is positive, accepting and adaptive to changes. This has catapulted Hyderabad onto one of the fastest growth trajectories in India.

These factors have led to the growth of IT and ITES along with the BFSI sectors initially and later the Technology, Pharma, Manufacturing, Defence and Aerospace sectors have grown rapidly, resulting in growth of demand in the hospitality sector. The International Convention Centre in Hyderabad has brought in a number of mega-conferences into the city of Hyderabad which has also created a new demand for hotels in Hyderabad. The development of the new airport has definitely brought international business into the city of Hyderabad which is also another

reason for growth in demand for the hospitality sector in Hyderabad. This high demand has resulted in many international hotel companies opening new hotels in Hyderabad and thereby increasing competition many times.



Do you have any new initiatives for this year?

We have initiated our brand transformation under a mission named 'Sheraton 2020' and we shall be undertaking steps to revamp brand standards by 2020. At the local level we are looking at introducing sustainability initiatives that shall help us give back to our surroundings, to our communities that we live in and to the eco-system as a whole. As mentioned earlier, we will also be adding serviced apartments to our current room inventory for guests staying for longer duration. Over and above these, we are organising various food festivals in our restaurants like the 'Awadhiana Food Festival' which we are organising from 9th to 23rd March, 2016 in Feast, our multi-cuisine restaurant.



150 + DELEGATES ATTEND HRANI CONCLAVE IN DELHI

Members and delegates got together to mull over industry related issues, interact with the government and network at the HRANI conclave held on 27 February, 2016 at Le Meridien, New Delhi. We bring to you highlights of the inaugural discussions.

Kanchan Nath



RATIONALISATION OF TAXES, NEED OF THE HOUR

The HRANI Conclave addressed issues of hoteliers and restaurateurs of Delhi and put across suggestions to the Delhi Tourism Minister, who was present at the event. Telling us about the conclave, **Luv Malhotra**, President, HRANI, said, "This conclave is primarily Delhi state-centric conclave, which relates to issues specific to hotels and restaurants in Delhi. There are three primary issues which we are addressing with the tourism minister at an open forum. The luxury tax levied is a major issue. The exorbitant charges on environment tax which we have to pay as restaurateurs and hoteliers for which discussions are on

in court is another. And ease of doing business is the third issue, where I do give credit to the Delhi government, who have taken a pro-active approach." Malhotra again stressed the importance of a Single Window Clearance (SWC) and simplicity in process. He stated that at present the industry requires 40 odd licences, certifications and clearances to function where as only five licences are required in countries like China and Malaysia.

RESTING HOPES ON THE DELHI BUDGET

Addressing the tax related concerns of hoteliers at the HRANI conclave, **Kapil Mishra**, Delhi Tourism Minister, said, "We are working on rationalising

the taxes and this budget will bring good news for the industry."

DELHI FESTIVAL IN NOVEMBER

Talking of giving impetus to the capital city of Delhi, Mishra disclosed a slew of initiatives to come. He said, "Government is working on a major Delhi Festival, a 15 day long cultural event in Delhi to be held in the month of November on the lines of the Dubai Festival. We have completely changed our event organising policy and are also planning 10 smart streets which will be made into tourist hubs in the city. We are revamping all monuments. This year a massive and aggressive Delhi branding will be launched." He also reassured



the gathering that he is keen to have a regular meeting with the association in order to fast track procedures and work effectively.”

IS DELHI LOSING OUT TO NCR AND NEIGHBOURING STATES?

The competitiveness of Delhi when compared to NCR regions like Gurgaon, Noida, Greater Noida, Faridabad and Ghaziabad is low.

Luv Malhotra said, “Approximately 24 million tourists come to Delhi, the rest are going to neighbouring states of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and Punjab has picked up as well. Delhi is becoming so expensive and is also becoming like a transit state and maximum individuals are staying for just one or two days. Hotels in Delhi are not getting much business. Now especially prospective clients are going across the state where they no longer have any toll tax. Business growth seems to be moving to the

periphery as most of the policies are working for them. For example in Gurgaon, entrepreneurs have the opportunity to make budget hotels at cheaper costs than in Delhi. Many tour operators say that from the backend point of view. It makes it much easier for them to sell the properties in Gurgaon, Faridabad, Noida rather than Delhi, because the costing does not work out for them. A key reason for that remains luxury tax. When luxury tax is so high, tourists start moving across state lines, they spend their money there and the incremental revenue comes from those states and not Delhi. Tourism development in Delhi holds lots of opportunities and with collaborative efforts Delhi could emerge as a choice destination for tourism in the country”

Delhi is the only state levying a 15 per cent tax on declared rate, which pushes up the effective tax rate on hotel accommodation in Delhi, which is the maximum among all our neighbouring states, and puts

a liability on hotels to collect and deposit tax on the highest declared tariff, irrespective of any discount or concession that may have been passed on to the guest.

Talking about hospitality he said, “In 2014, the industry has employed 23 billion individuals. It is expected to employ 29 million people by 2025. We need to employ 10 million people every year for the next 25 years. Delhi gets 2.3 million international tourists and only gets 22 million domestic, price sensitive tourists. Hotels are the backbone of the tourism segment but we are yet to get an industry status. You cannot have tourism without hotels, so why so many taxes are levied on the hotels and why are we seeing taxation being so high?”

In conclusion he requested the Delhi Government to look at the progressive tourism policy of UP for hotels as have been outlined by **Surinder K Jaiswal**.

Form IV	
Statement about ownership and other particulars about newspaper Hospitality Talk to be published in the first issue every year after the last day of February	
1. Place of publication	: 72 Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110001
2. Periodicity of its publication	: Monthly
3. Printer's Name	: SanJeet
Nationality	: Indian
Address	: 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110001
4. Publisher's Name	: SanJeet
Nationality	: Indian
Address	: 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110001
5. Editor's Name	: SanJeet
Nationality	: Indian
Address	: 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110001
6. Name and address of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one percent of the total capital	: SanJeet, 72, Todarmal Road New Delhi - 110001
I, SanJeet, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.	
Date : 01/03/2016	Sd/- SanJeet Signature of the Publisher

LUXURY GUARANTEED AT ETRELUXE

ETRELUXE, a luxury lifestyle retailer of high end interiors and accents is making it a life worth enjoying with its wide array of stellar masterpieces for bathrooms, kitchens, surfaces and living spaces all available under one umbrella of a brand that curates designs and offers to the customer what rules in the world of trends, design and technology; nothing is impossible when you let your imagination free.

Catering to the discerning Indian customer for over a decade now, ETRELUXE has introduced, time and again, state-of-the-art designs, top of the range products that fulfill desires for all preferences without limiting the imagination and redefining luxury through an array of possibilities.

With three showrooms to its name and two awards under its belt ETRELUXE curates luxurious designs that reflect through the essence of each of its showrooms, the strengths of the team and the vision of the owners Dilip and Kamal Rathi.

Today ETRELUXE holds a wide range of products across Bathrooms, Kitchens, Living

Spaces and Surfaces vertical that encompass an extensive range of products that fulfill every desire. Be it rich and sculptural design products with precious and semi-precious elements to those with clean straight and modern lines or to neo-classical styles that infuse a combination of classical with contemporary, everything is now possible through ETRELUXE.

Some of the products available at ETRELUXE are-





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The all new GROHE Rainshower SmartControl 360 shower system gives a personalised and luxurious showering experience every day. The new innovative controls offer direct intuitive spray-pattern selection with personalised volume setting and memory function. Simply push to start and stop then turn to adjust the water flow. The thermo-element's unrivalled sensitivity delivers water at the desired temperature within a fraction of a second—and keeps it consistent for the duration of your shower.



Gaia launches olive oil

Replace butter and other less healthy fats with Gaia Extra Virgin Olive Oil. Extracted from the freshest and juiciest olives of Spain, Gaia Extra Virgin Olive Oil is high in heart-healthy antioxidants called polyphenols and good fats. Extra Virgin Olive oil is an excellent choice to be used while you are making salad, dressings, soups and vinaigrettes.

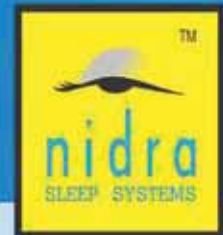


Franke launches Tectonite Sinks

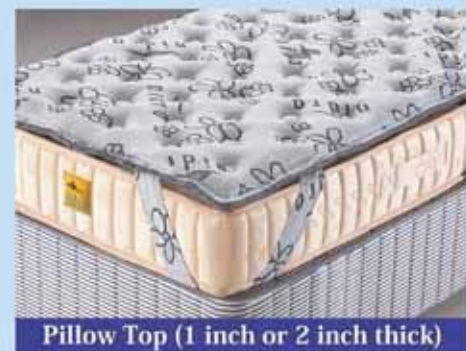
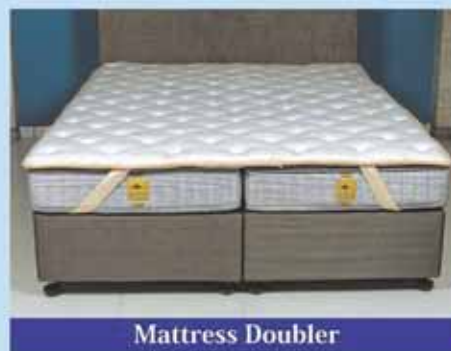
Franke has been one of the oldest and most renowned brands in the manufacturing of sinks along with other kitchen appliances. The state-of-the-art Centenary design is formed from patented materials. Tectonite comes with three tiered accessories. These sinks are created to fit perfectly in functionality and design with 3rd Generation Material. A world leader in the production of sinks, Franke offers a unique range of products comprising models at the very pinnacle of functionality and design, complete with various accessories that epitomise practicality and efficiency.

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- Custom manufactured to fit existing mattress size



Internal Filling Types			
PU Foam	Memory Foam	Gel	Fibre Fill

Thick size	Filling Choices available			
	Fibre Fill	PU Foam	Memory Foam + PU Foam	Gel+ Memory Foam + PU Foam
1 inch	✓	✓	X	X
2 inch	✓	✓	✓	X
3 inch	✓	✓	✓	✓



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MOVEMENTS

PANKAJ MATHUR

General Manager
Pride Plaza Hotel Aerocity
New Delhi

The Pride Group of Hotels has announced the selection of Pankaj Mathur as General Manager for its first 5-star luxury property - Pride Plaza Hotel Aerocity, New Delhi. Mathur has worked closely with global leaders in this sector in building breakthrough management solutions. Mathur comes with more than three decades of experience in the hospitality industry and brings with him a wealth of operational and management expertise. Just before joining Pride Plaza, Mathur successfully rebranded and repositioned two independent hotels, The Surya New Delhi at New Friends Colony and The Corinthian Resort & Club, Pune.



PUNEET BAIJAL

General Manager
Hyatt Regency Chandigarh

Puneet Bajjal, a dedicated Hyatt professional, has been appointed general manager at the new Hyatt Regency, Chandigarh. To Bajjal, 'leadership is action, not position'. A determined yet considerate leader, Bajjal sees his new role as an opportunity to be able to serve his fellow team members and local community. As a hotel general manager, he is looking to develop future hospitality talent and whilst in Chandigarh, contributing to the growth of the Hyatt Brand. With a career of more than 17 years, Bajjal is respected for his expansive knowledge of the hotel industry, and brings with him to Chandigarh a broad experience of working with a number of Hyatt brands.



MEENA REWARI

Sales & Marketing
Hyatt Regency Chandigarh

Meena Rewari, a Post Graduate in English literature, hails from Panipat, the 'City of Weavers'. Her career in Hospitality Sales spans almost two decades with association with brands like The Park Hotels, The Oberoi Group and Hyatt Hotel Corporation. Her knowledge, experience, impeccable knack for customer engagement and determination to achieve growth make her the best suited choice for this position. Rewari's wanderlust makes her want to explore many destinations within and outside the country. She is a voracious reader, a good orator, an avid yoga student, loves watching sports like Tennis, Basketball, Cricket and enjoys cycling and brisk walking.

NISHANT AGARWAL

General Manager
The Westin Pune Koregaon Park

The Westin Pune Koregaon Park recently announced the appointment of new General Manager. With over 16 years of experience Agarwal journey in the hospitality industry has been far-reaching given his achievements in the preceding years. Not only is he a veteran in his field, he is also a trailblazer. Agarwal interest in the hospitality industry emerged from the inception of his formal education, post completing his Diploma in Hotel Management from IHM, PUSA - Delhi.





DHANANJAY KUMAR

General Manager
The Suryaa, New Delhi

Dhananjay Kumar popularly known as DJ, he is one of the most well established names in the hospitality sector. With over 21 years of experience, for the brands like Radisson Blu Hotel (Chennai), Hilton (Chennai), Technopak Advisors Private Limited (Gurgaon), The Claridges Hotel (New Delhi), Shangri-La (New Delhi), Oberoi Hotels and Resorts, The Park Royal (New Delhi), DLF Hospitality (Gurgaon), & Hyatt International. His last assignment was with Radisson Blu Marina as General Manager. His last stint at The Suryaa was as a Resident Manager for a year in 2012. He specialises in hotel operations, revenue management, performance enhancement, best practices implementation, setting up process and implementation, organisation development and human resources and training.



BHUPINDER RAWAT

Director of Rooms
Le Meridien Gurgaon

Le Meridien Gurgaon has announced Bhupinder Rawat as the new Director of Rooms for its 285 room property at MG Road, Delhi-Gurgaon border. Rawat's career spans over 16 years and he has worked with brands such as Nikko, Claridges, Shangri-La, Pullman. For the past two years Rawat has been the Executive Housekeeper of Le Meridien Gurgaon. He has to his credit not only the refurbishment of rooms but also hotel's restaurant - Latest Recipe and Longitude Bar. In his new role as the Director of Rooms, Rawat continues to head the housekeeping function of the hotel. Before joining Le Meridien Gurgaon, Bhupinder was the Exec. Housekeeper at Shangri-La Hotel, New Delhi.



NIKHIL GANDHI

Director of Operations
Hyatt Regency Chennai

Nikhil Gandhi has been associated with the property since 2012 where he joined as Asst Director Food & Beverage, and he later went on to become Director Food & Beverage and now he shall be taking over as Director of Operations where he will be looking after Food & Beverage operations and Rooms division (including Front Office, Housekeeping, Laundry, Spa) on the whole.



INDRANEEL BENADIKAR

Market Director of Sales and Marketing
Marriott properties, Pune

Indraneel Benadikar has been appointed as the Market Director of Sales and Marketing for the Marriott properties in Pune. He will oversee Sales and Marketing activities, developing and implementing multi-hotel strategies for participating properties. He joined Marriott as a part of the opening team at the JW Marriott Juhu in 2001 and since has held several positions in Sales, Marketing and Revenue Management disciplines; in India and across South East Asia. His most recent assignment was in Bangkok where he was part of the opening team at the Bangkok Marriott Hotel Sukhumvit and the Marriott Executive Apartments, Thonglor.



MOVEMENTS



“I believe that the quality of the food and beverage can make or break a trip”

NEIL PATERSON

General Manager

Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre and Hyderabad International Convention Centre

I am an avid traveller and have visited many different destinations across the globe. I believe that the quality of the food and beverage can make or break a trip. I prefer dining at places where a wide variety of dishes meets culture with an amazing ambience. I like dining at Bacchanalia in Singapore which serves delicious progressive, vegetable-centric foods. South Delhi and Kerala are one of my favourite picks in India. I like the rich historical heritage of South Delhi.



“I enjoy being with my family anywhere in India but Mumbai is my kind of place”

MANISH JHA

General Manager

Anantara Hua Hin

I de-stress by stepping on the treadmill with my headphones with loud music. I cannot leave any task incomplete or halfway. Seeing it to the end is my passion. One thing about me which not too many people know is that I still want to be a cricketer. However my love for travel is commonly known. India is my home country so I enjoy being with my family anywhere in India but Mumbai is my kind of place, a city that has too much to do. I enjoy visiting Dubai. I enjoy good food but not too spicy. If I was an ingredient, I would be coriander as it's fresh.



“Nothing de-stresses me like going home and playing my guitar”

CONOR O'LEARY

General Manager

Keemala Hotel Phuket

Nothing de-stresses me as going home in the evening and playing my guitar and singing out loud to my heart's content. I am also passionate about my kids and family; they are number one in my life. I am a people's person and I like to ensure that every person that I meet leaves my company having gained or learned something from me. My favourite holiday destination is Huntington Beach in southern California. I spend the afternoon besides Ruby's restaurant on the pier, fishing with local Mexican fishermen.



“I love exploring new places and have a palate for various cuisines”

ROHAN SABLE

General Manager

Novotel Goa Resorts & Spa and Novotel Goa Shrem Hotel

Goa was one of my favourite destination before I started working here. Goa has now become a work place for me. For a relaxing and culturally enriching holiday, I would rate Tranquebar, Corbett National Park and Shimla as one of my favourite destinations. I love exploring new places and have a palate for various cuisines. My favorite restaurants in Goa are 'Peeps Kitchen', Antares Beach Club, Moti Mahal, Black Sheep Bistro and La Brise by the beach. Mandarin Oriental Hotels is one of my favourite hotel chains.



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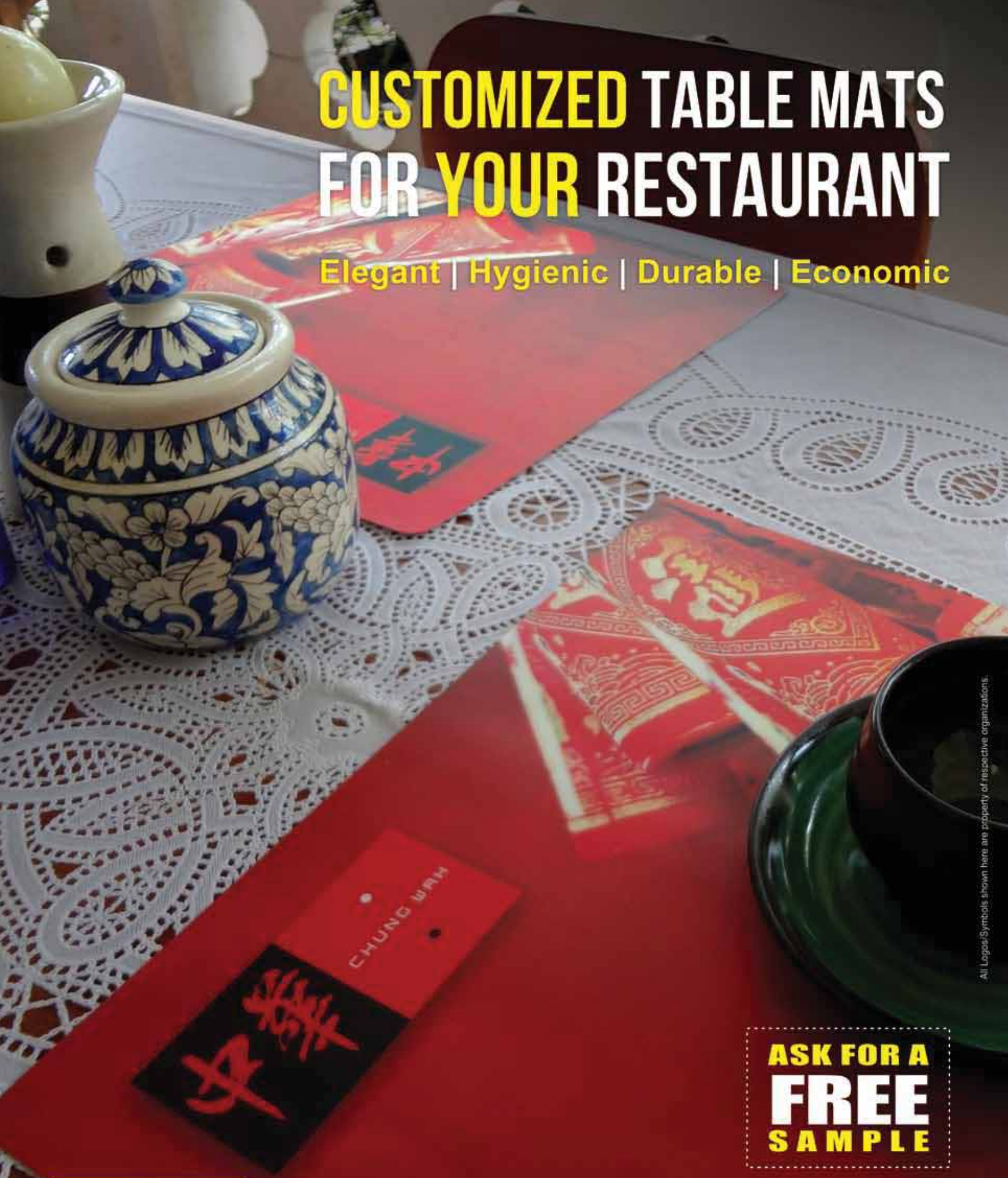


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