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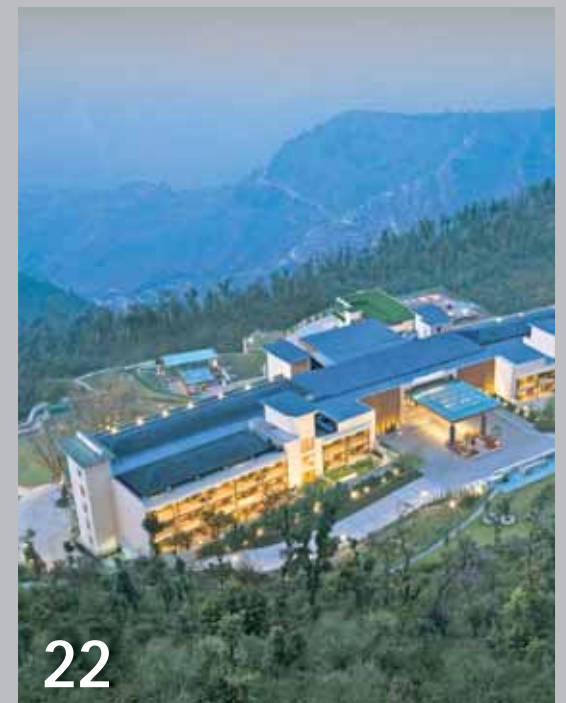
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LIQUOR BAN

The Supreme Court order that bans establishments located within 500 metres of state and national highways from selling alcohol has adversely affected the hospitality sector and other allied sectors. **Hospitality Talk** gets the industry's reaction to this change in policy to help gauge the magnitude of loss that the industry may be staring at.

THE BIG LOSS



HT Bureau

As per the earlier order of December 15, 2016, the ban on sale of liquor was only applicable to liquor vends along national and state highways. There was no mention of restaurants, bars, cafés or pubs in the said notification. However, in due course, some excise officials stopped issuing licences to hotels and restaurants. This led the hospitality industry to seek clarification on the move. In the order

passed on March 31, 2017, the Honourable Supreme Court made it clear that the judgement banning liquor vends along highways would also be applicable to bars, pubs and restaurants, sending shockwaves through the industry.

Business owners (including ITC, TAJ, the Oberois); the hotel and restaurant fraternity; hotel bodies and organisations; as well as members of HAI, WTTC, FH-

RAI, NRAI, HRAH; and travel agents like IATO conducted a press conference at The Oberoi, Gurgaon, in a bid to show their solidarity and arrive at a unified strategy in approaching the Supreme Court directive that no liquor shop could be visible and directly accessible from the highways nor could it be situated within 500 metres of the outer edge of the national or state highway or of the service lane.



Kapil Chopra

KAPIL CHOPRA

**President
Oberoi Hotels & Resorts**

We respect the judgement of the Supreme Court but the biggest challenge that we foresee is the loss of employment in both the hotel and restaurant sector. To give you an example, the entire state of Goa is around the national highway. The other concern is the impact on tourism that the country will witness. This is a very challenging time for us as an industry. We are going to analyse the judgement in detail, determine

how we can still serve guests, and decide on how we must manage the impact on our employees. Around thousands of bars have already been closed down. As an industry, we need to come together with stricter implementation of the law on drunken driving. We understand what the motive behind the Honourable Supreme Court's judgement is. There is no point filing a petition till we don't have clarity on the subject.



Ankur Bhatia

ANKUR BHATIA

**Executive Director
Bird Group**

The way Delhi has been built or continues to be built, all weddings, be it large scale or small, take place besides highways. With this new law, one cannot really conduct a wedding with alcohol. Our tourism industry and the image of the country have also severely been impacted.



Kurt Straub

KURT STRAUB

**Vice President - Operations
Hyatt Hotels & Resorts**

It came as a big surprise to us and it's quite amazing what is going on in the country. It does affect tourism for sure. Although not all of our hotels are affected, some locations have definitely been impacted and it will be important to see how this new policy plays out. At the end of the day, it's a strange signal being sent out by the government and we would like this to be removed in some way.



RAJ RANA

**Chief Executive Officer - South Asia
Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group**

This has wide ramifications, not just on the sales of beverages in a hotel. When we compare this to the international market, it is a complex issue. While I condemn drunk driving, there are better

ways to address this issue. An arbitrary ban on legitimate businesses has already affected sales and the return expected from investments that owners make in these properties. It will also have

an impact on people working in these establishments. It is a difficult situation and we hope the wvoice of the hotel industry will be heard and a middle path will emerge.



Raj Rana



While I condemn drunk driving, there are better ways to address this issue



JB SINGH

**CEO and President
InterGlobe Hotels**

We are analysing the situation and trying to work out the best possible solution for our business as well as our customers. Many hotels close to the national highways have been affected by this decision.

Driving under the influence of alcohol is a serious issue and we, as an organisation, believe in stringent laws to govern the same. While we respect the public safety-led decision of the Honourable Supreme Court, the

ban threatens to hit not only overall revenues of the industry but result in numerous job losses too. We hope for a reasonable solution that takes our industry's interests into consideration.



JB Singh



Driving under the influence of alcohol is a serious issue and we, as an organisation, believe in stringent laws to govern the same





Vineet Verma

VINEET VERMA

**Executive Director and CEO
Brigade Hospitality**

I am not sure if the ban itself will yield desired results in stopping drunken driving on highways. A more stringent regulation on drunken driving, making it an offense far more serious than what it presently is, could actually be a bigger deterrent. A substantial number of our hotels with large MICE facilities and convention cen-

tres are located around state and national highways. These are going to be impacted severely in terms of loss of business through cancellation of bookings and drying up of future enquiries.

While serving of liquor during such events is not a requirement in all cases, the absence of such an op-

tion can be a deal breaker, especially when it comes to residential conferences or international seminars. We have already been losing a large part of international MICE events to our neighbouring countries; with this ban, we may further end up losing the opportunity to host world class events in our country.



Vishal Kamat

VISHAL KAMAT

**Director
Kamat Group of Hotels**

This closure will have direct impact across the industry, not to forget the socio-economic impact that it will bring in its wake. It will also lead to mass unemployment in the hospitality and tourism sector and increase criminal activities and bootlegging.

There is no merit or research based on the extension of the ban to 500 metres from highways. Tomorrow this number could be 750 metres, which is again not logical. We have already seen corporate events move

out of our hotel, bookings getting cancelled, and functions being postponed. It is the hospitality sector that binds together a number of other employment generating sectors, from vendors to suppliers through backward and forward linkages.

The ban will have a cascading effect on other sectors and the impact will be felt in the already depressed real estate market. Besides, this will lead to proliferation of illicit liquor vends

and a surge in bootlegging along the highways, something that is already rampant and not covered under law as it is unregulated. Rather than issuing blanket bans, the policing on highways must improve to tackle drunken driving.

In the past, strict enforcement of law has helped curb drunken driving cases that came down drastically in the cities of Mumbai and Pune. Similar laws need to be enacted on highways to curb untoward incidents.



Rajan Malhotra

RAJAN MALHOTRA

**Director of Sales and Marketing
Shangri-La Hotel, Bengaluru**

Shangri-La Hotel and Resorts is always in sync with the local governing bodies of the countries where they operate. Fortunately, our hotel in Bengaluru is strategically located in the central business district, away from any highway.

MICE is an integral part of generating revenue for any hotel

and it's not always necessary to serve alcohol to generate revenues. Other factors like proximity, hotel accommodation, star classification, food quality, and related infrastructure are key determinants while selecting the right venue. However, certain MICE sub-segments, including weddings, will continue to splurge on beverages and will look

for venues that do not fall under the current Supreme Court norms. At the end of the day, this is a consumer's market and various options will be available only for streamlining market shares. MICE will continue to show a steady increase, citing better infrastructure and higher income generation among Indians.



Rishi Puri

RISHI PURI

**Vice President
Lords Hotels & Resorts**

We are in agreement that drunk driving is a crime and all actions possible must be taken to end it. However, banning restaurants and hotels that serve alcohol along highways is not a fool-proof solution. Those who are intent on drinking will cross the 500 metre mark, consume their daily quota, and then drive ahead. We are also

of the opinion that star rated hotels should have been kept out of the ban's ambit. Most patrons of such establishments are either in-house guests, wealthy enough to employ services of a chauffeur or responsible enough to engage cabs. The biggest downside of this ban is the impact it would have on hotel employees. The hotel industry employs

a large number of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, and it's very unlikely that these people will find jobs easily or immediately. This ban not only impacts bread winners, but also their families. We hope that the Supreme Court will reconsider its decision and instead address the menace of drunken driving through more pragmatic means.



Zorawar Kalra

ZORAWAR KALRA

**Founder and Managing Director
Massive Restaurants**

We respect the Honourable Supreme Court's decision that has always worked towards the welfare of the country at large. Restaurants and hotels are different from liquor vends that allow people to take bottles out of the premises. Restaurants do not allow people to take bottles outside the premises. Imposing a ban on hotels, which are 500 metres from highways, from serving liquor is hardly prudent as customers can always go beyond the 500 metre distance and still

buy alcohol. In such a scenario, law enforcement is key and this is true across the world. The immediate impact of this ban will be on employment and government revenue, with millions of employees losing their jobs and loss of at least ₹ 100,000 crore in revenue.

Accidents due to drunk or inebriated drivers account for a mere 3.3 per cent of accidents on highways, while the leading cause of road accidents on highways in the country is driv-

ers exceeding lawful speed-limits, resulting in 47.9 per cent of the mishaps on highways. Enforcing existing road safety laws with stricter measures will help mitigate instances of drunken driving in the country. If there is a fear of the repercussions of flouting strict laws, it will serve as a bigger and more effective deterrent than a ban. The entire hotel industry condemns drunk driving, however, we want a more reasonable approach to the situation.





Srinivas Srirangam

SRINIVAS SRIRANGAM

**General Manager
Novotel Imagica Khopoli**

We have significantly been impacted. Bars have been closed and several hotels have been impacted, in turn affecting employment. We understand why such a decision has been taken

but what is important is how to actually curb drunk driving and ensure lives are not lost. Ever since the ban has been imposed, it has severely affected hotels and jobs of people involved. We

need to come up with a solution where the ban on liquor is done in the right way, where employment and businesses don't suffer, and where innocent lives can be saved.



Rahul Saxena

RAHUL SAXENA

**General Manager
Seyfert Sarovar Portico, Dehradun**

The recent ban by the Supreme Court of India has brought the hospitality industry to a standstill. The new financial year, with fresh and challenging targets to be achieved, has begun

on a demotivating note. The hospitality industry is already going through a tough phase with growing competition and reduced profitability. On the one side, the government is set to increase

tourism to the country, while on the other, it seems we are going back to old times. One major impact of this decision would be on the revenue of the country, estimated to suffer a loss of ₹ 65,000 crore, and 60-65 per cent of the hospitality industry being negatively impacted. It is not a small-scale decision. The ban will have long-term repercussions on the government's excise revenue, as well as our sales and the livelihoods of thousands of people employed in the food and beverage industry. It would also increase unemployment in the country.



Soma Mathew

SOMA MATHEW

**Director of Sales and Marketing
Holiday Inn Cochin**

It is one of the most irrational decisions that could have been taken, all the while ignoring the interests of the country. It is very autocratic with baseless reasons. The entire tourism industry has already faced huge losses and will not be any good in the future if the decision is not looked into seriously. Other countries are already catching up as popular MICE and leisure destinations and these kinds of restrictions will further spoil our prospects.





Vijay Wanchoo

VIJAY WANCHOO

Senior Executive VP and GM
The Imperial, New Delhi

Although it's a great national initiative towards preventing loss of life on highways, the impact will be huge on the hospitality industry, hitting both restaurants and hotels significantly across states. Liquor inaccessibility will lead to huge revenue loss for many restaurants and hotels and may in turn lead to retrenchment, affecting employment in a big way. Liquor is a major chunk of

revenue not only for resto-bars but also for hotels. A ban on this strategic cash cow will in turn lead to unemployment and cost cutting at all levels. The government itself will also be at a huge loss on account of taxes or excise duty, which are applicable on liquor. On the contrary, for city hotels like ours, it will result in added business from non-catchment areas due

to such exclusivity. We have two renowned bars at The Imperial, known for their bespoke regality, frequented by city-elites and international travellers. I am sure, with this ban, we will see a substantial rise in footfall, specifically in the domestic segment from Delhi-NCR. It's a wait and watch situation at the moment for the industry and I hope it takes a positive turn.



Shiwam Verma

SHIWAM VERMA

General Manager
Royal Orchid Beach Resort & Spa, Goa

The recent Supreme Court order has created a lot of hue and cry in states like Goa. Being a famous tourist destination that attracts a good number of foreign and domestic guests, closing down of liquor outlets is not going to be simple. It will negatively

impact state revenue, foreign revenue as well as drop in tourists travelling to Goa. Goa being a state that was ruled by Portuguese, liquor culture has been part of its lifestyle and a source of living for many. This order will affect the lifestyle and

livelihood of locals. Sources say that as many as 600 people who were working at outlets that have either shut down or shifted elsewhere have already lost their jobs, in turn reducing overall business and inflow of tourists by 10-15 per cent.

Liquor ban: More than meets the eye



Ajay K. Bakaya, Managing Director, Sarovar Hotels and Resorts, shares with us his take on the liquor ban, what it means for the industry, and how the matter must now be approached.

Anupriya Bishnoi

What is your take on the recent ban on sale of liquor?

India has a history of prime development along its highways where land costs more.

The investment required for setting up hotels along these vantage points is much higher. Certain states like Punjab, Haryana, and

Goa have a majority of their hotels located along highways. They are high employment generators, venues for social get-togethers, conferences and meetings, and sizeable contributors to the tax coffers of the state and central governments. The purported move to stop sale of liquor in these engines of our economy will have

far reaching negative consequences on the economy and on the livelihood of thousands of people.

My individual opinion is that neither the earlier judgement nor the review judgment of the Honourable Supreme Court suggests this ban is for hotels and am sure this issue will be clarified soon.

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“

The industry needs to take a step forward too. We can contribute to safer roads and save lives

”

How does the ban impact India?

Some hotels will catastrophically be impacted. India is going through a tough period and this ban will result in loss of thousands of jobs and significantly depreciate revenue for the states as well as the Centre. Each job loss affects an estimated four dependants. This is unaffordable.

What, according to you, could be the way forward?

The industry will seek clarity and hopefully wisdom will prevail. One wishes this is prompt. The industry needs to take a step forward too. Mandatory courses in 'Responsible Service of Alcohol', already in place in Australia and several other countries, should be introduced. This means that a server will be able to refuse a customer an additional serving of alcohol if

the customer or guest has already had one too many and the doorman will also not hand the keys of the car over to the customer in such a state of inebriation. As an industry, we can contribute to safer roads and save lives.

How immense a loss will the country suffer?

The biggest loss to India would be that of jobs where hundreds of thousands of people would be rendered unemployed. According to one survey, this number could well be over a million.

Is the MICE segment going to particularly be impacted?

The MICE segment is definitely going to be impacted severely. There will be large scale cancellations, a trend that has already begun. MICE

and weddings are sectors that are combined with food and beverage experiences. A ban like this would result in most business organisations and private events reconsidering their venues. A lot of hotels, especially the large ones representing big ticket investments, will be big losers.

Which states would be most affected by the ban?

The states of Punjab, Haryana, Goa, Tamil Nadu, and Delhi will adversely be affected.

The industry was already aware of such a ban. Couldn't a damage of this scale have been avoided?

I do not believe we should spend time on water under the bridge. We need to work towards a safer dawn tomorrow.



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FHRAI to seek redressal on

LIQUOR BAN



The Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) is exploring legal remedies with regard to the Supreme Court order that banned the sale of liquor from April 1, 2017, at hotels and restaurants that fell within 500 metres of national and state highways.

Anupriya Bishnoi

The liquor ban raised many a concern among hoteliers and restaurateurs when, on March 31, 2017, the Supreme Court passed a decree that the original judgement of December 15, 2016, was to include hotels and restaurants too.

The ban on highways has already affected at least 1,000 star hotels

in Maharashtra including the VIP Lounge at the Mumbai domestic airport. The state is expected to lose an estimated annual revenue of ₹7,000 crore.

Almost nine million tourists visit India every year, resulting in almost 27 million foreign visitations across Indian states. These, along with 1.8 billion domestic visitors frequent a

significant portion of these 'establishments' as guests. All of this will be put to risk if the overall food and beverage experience is compromised at such legitimate establishments, which pay direct and indirect taxes, and levies to both the central and state governments. India has only 0.67 per cent of the tourism market share of the world, now set to reduce drastically.



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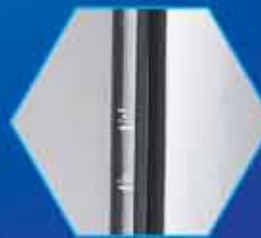
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Dilip Datwani

DILIP DATWANI

Vice President
FHRAI

Right now, our industry is hit very badly. The judgement was a shock to us because we thought we were never in the picture and it was only the liquor shops and vendors to which this was applicable. However, some mention was made to us. We have been advised to go for a review petition, which we are contemplating. The way forward looks bleak,

but we are hoping the government will take a proactive measure because this involves huge loss of revenue to the tourism as well as MICE sector. Additionally, it is not clear what will happen to banquet bookings that have been made by people as much as six months in advance. Hoteliers have taken all legal permissions from the government, applied for loans on that basis, and invested significant

sums in infrastructure, but are today facing such a dire situation for no fault of their own. There will be an estimated `200,000 crore loss nationwide and closure of more than 100,000 establishments. We would not have minded sacrificing if the ban were to yield results. Such a ban portrays a negative image of the country to tourists who are wanting to visit. We are looking at the option of a review petition.



There will be an estimated `200,000 crore loss nationwide and closure of more than 100,000 establishments



Garish Oberoi

GARISH OBEROI

Vice President
FHRAI

We were taken aback by the order that came out on March 31. Earlier, we thought we were not a part of this; it was only the vendors of alcohol that this pertained to. It was only after the order came out that it became known to us that the hospitality industry had been included. This will have a far reaching affect.

We have met the tourism minister, are meeting state governments, and are approaching courts to look into our issue because we were never a part of the initial order. As I understand from my lawyer, there is only one curative petition that is left; we are planning to approach the court with that. One must also take into consideration that it is not just direct employment but also indirect

employment, which is twice the size of the former, that is going to be impacted. MICE business is also going to be affected. As I remember, when liquor got banned in Kerala, all the business got shifted to Sri Lanka and Thailand. This ban is now pan-India. Foreign visitors are going to think twice before coming to the country, unsure of whether or not we will be able to host them.



Foreign visitors are going to think twice before coming to the country, unsure of whether or not we will be able to host them



T.S. Walia

T.S. WALIA

Vice President
FHRAI

We honour the Supreme Court's judgement, but are also seeking legal remedies with regards the course of action that must be fol-

lowed and how the hospitality and tourism industry must be protected. Not only are both industries going to suffer huge losses, but the country itself is going to suffer terribly. We are looking at a `200,000 crore

loss of revenue. The MICE industry will also be badly hit because events like marriages and conventions are mostly accompanied by alcohol where people unwind themselves.



The MICE industry will also be badly hit because events like marriages and conventions are mostly accompanied by alcohol





S.M. Shervani

S.M. SHERVANI

EC Member
FHRAI

The liquor ban has caught the industry by surprise because as per the judgment of December 15, 2016, we did not think it was applicable to us. However, when our members started getting notices and were being told that after March 31, 2017, their licences

were not to be renewed, it raised a lot of concern in the industry. The judgement has affected those establishments that operated legally, were not takeaway vends, and served alcohol for consumption on the premises itself. Many entrepreneurs who have taken loans will be placed at a disadvantage. We went to the court to

seek clarification and felt that the prime concern was drunken driving and how road accidents could be prevented. We need to debate this with the Supreme Court, keeping in mind that concerns expressed do not affect businesses that are not impacted. If we do not approach the Supreme Court, there will be a huge loss of employment and revenue.



We need to debate this with the Supreme Court, keeping in mind that concerns expressed do not affect businesses that are not impacted



Sudesh Poddar

SUDESH PODDAR

EC Member
FHRAI

A lot of the establishments with significantly reduced business will end up with distressed financial assets, leading to a large scale NPA situation for our banking and financial system and may severely impact the investment climate in tourism, hospitality, and the overall business environment in India. An application filed by K. Balu, an

advocate at the Madras High Court, stated that somewhere in Tamil Nadu, there is a stretch of one and a half kilometres where there are close to 67 liquor shops.

A PIL (Public Interest Litigation) had been filed, requesting that their licences be cancelled or withdrawn. Later, another NGO, Safe Society of Chandigarh, filed another PIL and the December 15 judgment arose out of that. In that judgment,

there was no mention of hotels or restaurants. We are considering our options and taking opinion from the legal experts of the country. Within a very short time, we will have a board meeting and arrive at a decision. The tourism industry has not done very well over the last few years. With this liquor ban on the highway, all hotels and restaurants along the highway are shutting down, further impacting the tourism in the country, negatively.



A lot of the establishments with significantly reduced business will end up with distressed financial assets



Sanjay Sood

SANJAY SOOD

EC Member
FHRAI

FHRAI is trying to take a stand for its members who have got into the tangle of this liquor ban, something that I believe was intended for liquor vends and not hotels. We are

somehow trying to wiggle out of the situation. We see a huge concern over liquor bootlegging and the resultant social evil of a black market economy and a corruption-driven parallel economy that state governments are trying so hard to battle and weed out of our system. We are

seeking guidance from legal teams and moving ahead. This is going to have a major impact on the tourism industry. For instance, in Mussoorie, a number of hotels on the highway have been impacted and the foreign tourists staying there have cancelled their bookings.



We see a concern over liquor bootlegging and the resultant social evil of a black market economy and a corruption-driven parallel economy



Looking beyond the ban

Pallav Singhal, Hotel Manager, Fairfield by Marriott Belagavi, talks about Marriott's entry into this city of Karnataka and how the hotel continues to weather the liquor ban storm while keeping business going.



Tripti Mehta

Why Belagavi for Marriott?

Belagavi is the commercial hub and divisional headquarters of North Karnataka, ranking second to Bengaluru in terms of automotive exports. As Belagavi grows as a business and leisure destination, there is a great demand for higher quality mid-range accommodation in the city.

What differentiates you from other hotels in the city?

Located amidst breathtaking landscapes and just adjacent to the Pune-Bengaluru national highway, Fairfield by Marriott Belagavi offers 114 guest rooms that are thoughtfully-designed. The hotel

also offers multiple recreation options such as swimming pool, fitness centre, jogging track, and well-maintained lawns. Our restaurant offers all-day dining with a choice of both Indian and Western cuisines; a modular mood bar and lounge area offering freshly brewed coffee in the day and your favourite cocktail by evening; and a 24-hour lobby retail mart for snacks, beverages, and other basic necessities.

Given your proximity to the highway, has the liquor ban impacted you?

We have not been impacted by

the ban, yet. Firstly, the financial year of this state runs from July to June, so our licence is valid till the end of June. Secondly, we have a very unique licence for this hotel. Since we are located outside the city, we have a CL-6A licence per which we can have any number of alcohol counters put up on the property. Thirdly, this is the only branded hotel in the city and we have a lot of foreign clientele that comes to the city. So, the duration of our licence is actually helping us to tide over this issue at the moment. I am sure all hotels that are suffering are going to put together a plan and go collectively



Pallav Singhal



“

The policy does affect us in the short run because the revenue we are presently making may further be reduced

”

to the government to help find a solution.

Which segments of business may be affected?

Belagavi has a flourishing aerospace business. If we stop serving alcohol, we will lose out on this business. Other hotels that may not provide the quality of accommodation or facilities that we do, will continue to do business and receive guests, on account of their ability to serve alcohol to them, being beyond the stipulated distance. There isn't one particular revenue stream that we can put our finger on and say that it is doing the best. They are all performing similarly. It is not easy for us to judge at the moment to what extent our room revenue will be affected if the ban is imposed post expiration of our licence. However, it seems the room revenue will be affected as foreign visitors will move to hotels that they were earlier staying at. Presently, our revenue from banqueting isn't doing very well either. MICE business will also be affected.

What percentage of the hotel's revenue does liquor entail?

Most of the hotels do not make too much money on alcohol. It is a driver for another businesses such as food revenue, occupancy, and catering revenue. The alcohol revenue as such is currently contributing to only 20 per cent of the business.

How do you plan to make up for the eventual loss?

Our current revenue mix is quite jumbled. We do not yet know how we will make up for the lost revenue. We have invested ₹11 lakh in the licence. We could start by trying to make our room offers more attractive. There is another point of view doing the rounds that the licence fee may be refunded in the form of the government either buying back the stock of the hotel or the government re-selling it to someone who has a legitimate licence and is still able to continue selling it. It does not make sense to invest in the licence again, but maybe there is a way in which we can somehow downgrade it.

What changes can the ban bring about?

It seems the consumption of alcohol within the room, brought by the guest himself, will increase. A number of hotels are deliberating on promoting this as an alternate revenue stream to cover up for the loss. Either way, drunken driving cannot be curbed in this manner. There are ways that are already available and are being used. The practise of drinking out of a car will also flourish. The government will also be impacted. More than revenue, it is the reputation of the government that will be affected.

What do you think can be the way forward for the industry?

Hotel associations are trying to get an ordinance in so at least the hotels and restaurants are out of the ambit of the new policy. We are probably the smallest fish affected and a number of us are playing the wait and watch game. The government is losing excise revenue and we are losing alcohol revenue. Some of the states have taken or will take the route of re-designating the roads as city roads. Punjab has already done it. Goa is planning to do it. Our highway cannot be changed to a city road. That said, we are not overtly concerned. The policy does affect us in the short run because the revenue we are presently making may further be reduced. However, few years down the line, things will be different.

In India, there is a short memory for everything and soon all will be forgotten. It is then that people would rather have a good room to stay in than be perturbed by these policies. There will definitely be a blip but it will return in the form of room revenue if not alcohol revenue.



2017: A robust year for Marriott



Ramesh Daryanani

Ramesh Daryanani, Vice President, Global Sales - Asia Pacific (excluding Greater China), Marriott International, talks to us about the market response to the world's largest hotel group post-merger and the motive of Marriott's Sales Mission that happens every year in the country.

Anupriya Bishnoi

Tell us about Marriott's Sales Mission 2017.

The Global Sales Mission is an annual meet organised by Marriott International to bring together primary contacts across all market segments with Marriott associates, to update them on the company's developments worldwide,

strengthen existing relationships, educate and induct new customers into the rich loyalty programmes, discuss the performance of the year gone by, and explore opportunities for the year ahead and beyond. It is a great platform for meeting industry partners and potential customers from various sectors of business.

sectors across meetings, MICE, and corporate and travel trade. It is an opportunity for constructive dialogue and ambitious exchange of thoughts that lead to innovative and mutually productive results. We have participation from more than 60 Marriott hotels and resorts showcasing brands and destinations from all over the world, making business possibilities endless as we offer the largest portfolio of powerful and distinctive brands. We have more than 50 participants from all over the world that are here to meet

Marriott has always received great support from its customers, who look forward to this annual event each year. Global Sales Mission 2017 provides a platform for us to engage with our partners from all



Marriott has always received great support from its customers, who look forward to this annual event each year



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We are able to meet the demands of customers across all needs, thanks to the variety of brands we have under our umbrella



with Indian customers. The Global Sales Mission brings together B2B customers from all segments of the industry. This platform is also used to thank business partners in the region for their support over the past year for all 15 Marriott brands in India. The wide and exhaustive showcase of hotels at the event is

aimed to bring all the best brands under one roof and make the planning process seamless and interactive for partners as well as potential business partners.

How has India's response been to Marriott?

The response has been

phenomenal so far. One advantage that we clearly have is worldwide coverage. Some statistics will show you that one in every four hotels that is being constructed across the globe today may be a Marriott. We have 30 brands and that is an



Neeraj Govil

MARRIOTT'S TAKE ON LIQUOR BAN

Neeraj Govil
Market Vice President - South Asia
Marriott International

A number of our hotels have been impacted by the ban. We have received a copy of the judgement and are working through the nuances of it, always ensuring that we are in compliance of the law. We also see an impact on our business, especially in the tertiary market. We will work with the industry bodies to make our voice heard.





“

The JW Marriott brand in India has done significantly well because of the MICE facilities, the food outlets, and the inventories

”



advantage for us. We are able to meet the demands of customers across all needs, thanks to the variety of brands we have under our umbrella.

Tell us about Marriott's performance between 2016-17.

Business from India has seen a growth of 10 per cent. The predominant beneficiary of this business was Asia-Pacific, followed by Europe, US, and the Middle East.

What are your expansion plans?

Today, we have 6,000 hotels and around 1.1 million rooms across the world; this year alone we have signed 175,000 rooms. We see this number increasing over the next few years by at least 10-20 per cent.

In Asia, we have 526 hotels and another 500 in the pipeline. In India, we have 84 hotels with another 80 in the pipeline. So, there is a lot of growth everywhere. It is also great to see that there is a lot of interest from the ownership community for Marriott's brand of hotels. Our outlook continues to be positive.

What kind of trends do you see for 2017?

The Indian market is a robust growth sector for us. I don't think it is a market that's going to stop, given all the challenges we have. Indians will still continue to travel. Also, digital and social mediums of communication with customers are going to increase. The customisation of products and experiences is also going to be a huge trend for this year. Indian consumers are looking at more experiential travel. As a hotel company, we want to focus on altering our services according to the needs of Indian customers.

Which is Marriott's highest revenue generating brand?

That would depend on the market that we are catering to. JW Marriott Delhi is the highest revenue generator for us in India. I would say that the JW Marriott brand in India has done significantly well because of the MICE facilities, the food outlets, and the inventories that the brand has to offer. The scale of operation is very different from that of Fairfield.

HICSA takes CENTRE STAGE

From industry big wigs to students of hospitality, this year's HOSI, followed by HICSA, had something for everyone, from a CEO panel to an exclusive owner's-only roundtable to a cooking competition.



Manav Thadani

HT Bureau

HVS Global Hospitality Services recently concluded its 13th annual Hotel Investment Conference – South Asia (HICSA) at the Grand Hyatt Mumbai, held on April 5 and 6, 2017. The two-day conference was dedicated to the hospitality industry. This edition of HICSA brought together close to 475 delegates from across 18 countries, providing a platform to deliberate on the development and direction of the hotel and tourism industry, exchange strategic thoughts and experiences, and discuss significant trends prevailing in the industry.

This year, day one saw a power-packed Global CEO Panel showcasing the front runners of four of the most respected global hotel companies, Christopher J Nassetta, President and CEO, Hilton; Mark

Hoplamazian, President and CEO, Hyatt Hotels Corporation; Rakesh Sarna, Managing Director and CEO, Taj Hotels Palaces Resorts Safaris; and Vikram Oberoi, Managing Director and CEO, The Oberoi Group.

Speaking about how the industry has changed over the years, **Manav Thadani**, Chairman, HVS Asia Pacific and Founder of HICSA, said, "This is HICSA's 13th edition and we have seen how costs have gone up. We have internet now, so security costs and all other costs have gone up but revenues have not grown. If we look at performance at the CAGR, revenues have gone up just two per cent while inflation and other things have gone up by a much wider margin. The industry has really grown over the years. From just 12-14 brands, today we have over 100 different brands across various

segments. The market has become more sophisticated and technology is becoming a big thing. OTAs and aggregators have come into the business wherein earlier the average General Manager didn't have to deal with this. Today, they have to be more tech-savvy and have a better understanding of what is happening."

Nevertheless, he added that he is bullish about the next two to three years. "There is little supply coming in; occupancies have been high and are going to go even higher. I think the momentum has to come from rates," he says. Next year, HVS plans to focus on technology, something that many are scared of. "We plan to keep HOSI in New Delhi where most of the brands are headquartered and we might continue with HICSA in Mumbai. This year's



HICSA had more owners, around 125 of them, which is a huge number," Thadani added.

The second day of HICSA featured an interesting session titled 'Institutional Capital Chasing Hotels: Timing the Entry and Exits', delving further into the uptick in transaction volumes with a number of institutional players entering the market.

In 2016, HVS, through its extensive market knowledge and research, challenged and demystified an industry paradigm that leisure lacked the ability to make money. Taking a cue from this, HICSA 2017 had two dedicated sessions on the subject, where stakeholders directly involved in the business of leisure, wellness, and luxury further explored the tremendous untapped potential this segment holds.

Despite the overall hotel market witnessing robust demand growth outpacing new supply, accompanied by a steady rise in occupancy levels, a majority of Indian hotels have only recorded a marginal ADR increase. The session titled 'Why Are We Struggling with Room Rates?' comprising representatives of prominent hotel companies, traversed the reasons for and, at the same time, identified plausible solutions to

address this acute challenge. HICSA 2017 also placed special emphasis on hotel owners. The event opened with an exclusive pre-conference 'Owners' Only Roundtable' in an effort to provide them a platform where they candidly expressed their views and concerns. The conference also saw a number of owner-driven panel discussions led by some of the most prominent hotel owners in the South Asian region.



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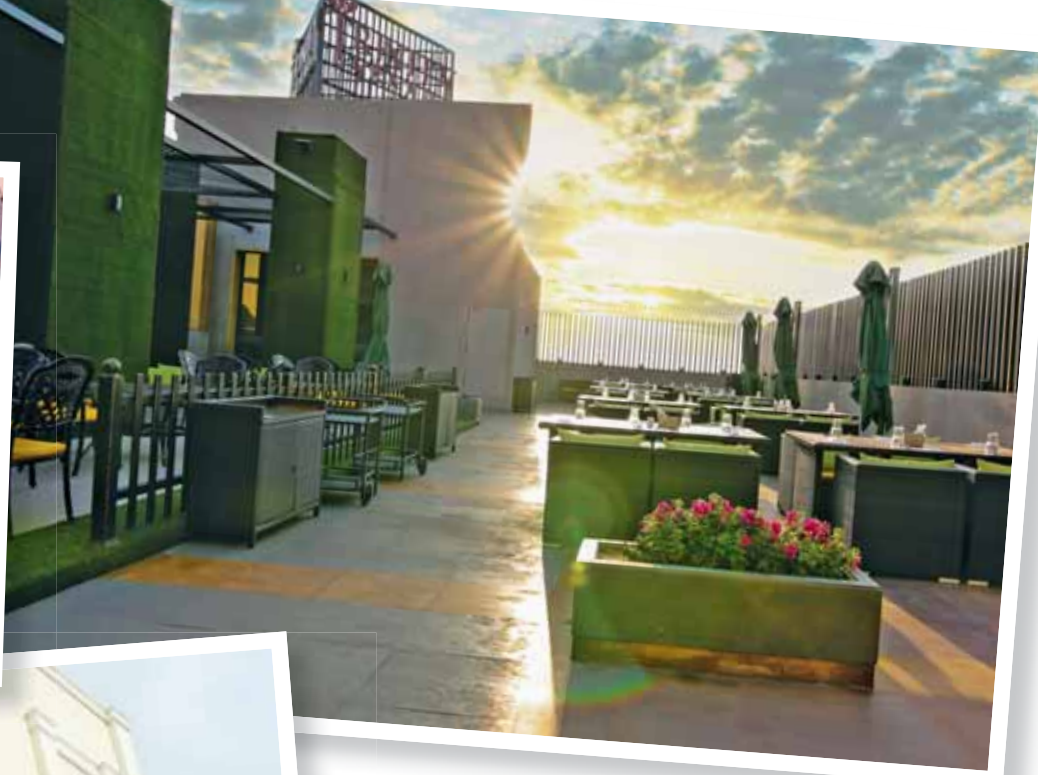
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Talk





Technology versus the human touch

The hospitality industry is increasingly relying on technology, but will this advancement render the human touch unnecessary? We find out from eminent spokespersons on the prominence of human touch in today's times and why it will never take a back seat.



Pawan Gupta

PAWAN GUPTA

Executive Director
Hotel Trinity Grand

A PHENOMENON TO BE UNDONE

In times to come, the fading human touch phenomenon will be reversed. The hospitality industry cannot breathe without the human touch. It is a very basic need for the industry. That said, the hospitality industry is a volatile one and the retention of humans is a challenge. We need to explore multiple ways from time to time to overcome this challenge.

NO REPLACEMENT FOR HUMANS

F&B production and F&B service are two such departments of a hotel where humans play and will continue to play a crucial role. Whatever may be the technological advancements in these departments, they cannot survive without the human touch. It's humans that make cuisines delicious and presentable; it's humans that serve food to guests the way they prefer; it's humans

that ensure guest experiences are delightful; and lastly, it's humans that can make guests want to visit again.

TECHNOLOGY IS NO MATCH

Any number of technological innovations, no matter how advanced they are, cannot replace the human touch in the hospitality industry for thousands of years to come.

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Sulabh Suri

SULABH SURI

Director Human Resources
Hyatt Regency Mumbai

OBSERVATION IS KEY

At Hyatt, we feel that both technology and product are merely table stakes. What really makes a difference is the emotional connection we have with each other and with our guests. The key thing that we do for our guests is deliver experiences that really resonate with them and matter to them. This practice entails recognising what their desires are and ensuring

that we fulfil those desires. All of it ultimately revolves around serving and activating our purpose as a company, so it's really about caring for those people and making sure we help them be their best.

TECHNOLOGY CAN ONLY GO SO FAR

The stay and dine options available at hotels is what determines guest preferences. Over the last decade, technology has played a major role in how we are able to create faster and smoother guest experiences.

However, the emotional connect we have with guests is irreplaceable. Hence, while technology can help scale up those experiences, it will be difficult to create those experiences without the human touch.

For instance, we can use modern technology in the way a meal is prepared but technology will not be able to replace how that meal becomes a great meal without the love and experience put in by chefs.



Similarly, guests always rate the need for a comfortable bed high on their priority list while choosing a hotel stay; the aesthetic sense of crafting that guest room cannot be replaced with technology.

TECHNOLOGY NOT THE ANSWER

In a hotel like ours, 50 per cent of the guests are Indian nationals. It is therefore imperative for us to use technology prudently. The world is changing, and we must too.

We cannot do away with the advancements of technology in everyday working. While technology is important in creating a seamless guest experience, application of human touch is also extremely vital.



AASHIMA SHARMA

General Manager
Park Hyatt Chennai

HUMAN TOUCH AT EVERY STEP

We care for people so they can be their best and no technology can ever replace the human interface. Technological advancement is a need and it's there to make our life simpler, allowing us more time for making a difference in the lives of those we touch everyday with empathy and humility. Human touch is present at every step, right from arrival at a hotel to departure from it. Human interactions are neces-

sary to ensure a guest's stay is not just comfortable but also a memorable experience with a sense of family and home that the guest can associate the hotel with.

PEOPLE - THE ESSENCE

Each department of a hotel needs people. The hospitality industry is essentially about people. Departments that focus on humans are culinary and housekeeping, where technology cannot rule.

INDIAN HOSPITALITY TOPS ALL

Whilst technology has become a significant part of the industry, hospitality, as the word suggests, cannot purely be dependent on machines. The human interface still remains at the heart of our business in the country and technology is being embraced to enhance the experience rather than replace the human interface. We still don't have vending machines in most hotels in India to dispense a meal.

The one thing that people expect as soon as they arrive in the country is our hospitality, where a gracious welcome by a doorman remembering their name is what makes their stay memorable; an automated door cannot replace this experience, but only enhances it, their luggage being taken by an associate and someone checking them in with a pleasant smile instead of a kiosk and so on.



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SCENT AND SENSIBILITY



Vishesh Vijayvergiya

Innovations are true to every sector; there are some that are perceivably tangible while some others that subtly enhance the ambience of a place. **Vishesh Vijayvergiya**, Perfumer and Scent Branding Consultant, Vedic Aroma Lab, talks to us about aromatic solutions that the company provides to the hospitality industry.

What makes Vedic Aroma Lab so unique?

Vedic Aroma Lab has been in the business of fragrances since 1850. Spanning six generations of dedicated research and innovation in the field, Vedic Aroma Lab offers a complete range of aroma solutions under one roof. Eliminating the need for multiple channel partners, the company ensures that good quality products that are reasonably priced are directly delivered to its clients.

We have aroma solutions for practically all possible applications under one roof. From essential oils, reed diffusers, carpet fresheners, odour neutralisers, water fountain fragrances, garden incense sticks, laundry fragrances, and floor fragrances to strategic air fresheners.

Our aroma solutions have been used at leading hospitality brands across India, which include Taj, Leela, Orange County, Vivanta, Gateway, Westin, Novotel, Chokhi Dhani, and Royal Orchid amongst others.

Which trends have influenced your product range?

Times are changing and so are customer requirements. Choices have become more intriguing, availability more frequent and simpler, and marketability more extensive. The internet and social media are the biggest contributors to this trend. Vedic Aroma Lab has successfully catered to this newfound awareness by making available to clients its vast range of innovative aromatic solutions.

More and more hoteliers are now keen on implementing our Strategic Scent Marketing, wherein we provide such aromatic solutions as hold true for the ambience they will be used in. For instance, we diffuse the aroma of coffee in a coffee shop, thereby willing guests to come in and have some coffee, in turn increasing revenue.

Tell us about your latest ventures.

We have recently upgraded our website to assist hoteliers and



other customers in easily sourcing our products without the need to go to other portals or the local market. Our range of products available online cater to hotels, spas, restaurants, and offices. We also assist our customers with optimal inventory management, helping them order as and when a need arises and ensuring that orders are delivered to their doorstep.

Besides this, we also have a new range of products in the pipeline. We have actively been promoting our Signature Scents division that provides custom-developed aroma solutions to hotels, making fragrances unique to each property. We are also working on an online programme where hoteliers can visualise an aroma through an interactive interface and adjust quantities based on the concept they have in mind.

For more information on the aroma solutions manufactured by us, visit us at www.thearomadepot.com





FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Fun Food Facts

- 1 Chocolate was once used as currency.
- 2 Coconut water can be used as blood plasma.
- 3 Eating bananas can help fight depression.
- 4 The twists in pretzels are meant to look like arms crossed in prayer.
- 5 Apples float in water because 25 per cent of their volume is made of air.
- 6 The most popular carrots used to be purple.
- 7 The Dunkin' Donuts in South Korea offers doughnut flavours such as Kimchi Croquette and Glazed Garlic.
- 8 Staple ingredients of Indian cuisine, like potato, tomato, and chilli did not originate in India. They were brought to the country by the Portuguese.



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FICCI's innovation summit: A catalyst for growth

The second edition of FICCI's Digital Travel, Hospitality and Innovation Summit that was held from March 22-23, 2017, deliberated on the changing spectrum of the tourism and hospitality industry with the advent of technology.



Ankita Saxena

The inaugural session of the Summit was addressed by **Suman Billa**, Joint Secretary - Tourism, Government of India; **Dr. Jyotsna Suri**, Chairperson, FICCI Tourism Committee and Chairperson and MD, Lalit Suri Hospitality Group; and **Rahul Chakravarty**, Senior Director and Head - Tourism, FICCI. The show was attended by key stakeholders from the tourism, hospitality, aviation, and travel technology industries. With a majority atten-



dance of 32 per cent of travel agents and tourism operators, hotels and resorts accounted for a 21 per cent attendance, while technology companies and online travel agencies accounted for 22 per cent and nine per cent, respectively. The Summit also introduced Travel Tech Startup Launchpad, FICCI's maiden initiative to catalyse the growth in India's travel tech ecosystem and support the growth of young innovative businesses. FICCI received entries from



25 technology start-ups in travel out of which 12 were shortlisted to pitch to the investors at the Summit. The FICCI-Avalon knowledge paper, 'Travel 2.0 - The Next Generation of Travel', was also released at the event. The paper details suggestions on mapping the travel industry better and trends that can offer insight to push the growth of the industry.

Addressing the Summit, Billa said, "Travellers are moving away from



exploring routes to exploring experiences. Social media is a legitimate research source and reviews are becoming increasingly important. Bloggers, as a marketing channel, have become important as they turn around niche products and create interest groups." He further explained that the digital explosion that is happening globally has removed the advantage of big players who were enjoying over their smaller counterparts, thus creating a level playing field for everyone. "India, as a destination, cannot move ahead

without being fully digitally enabled. The brick and mortar agencies have to embrace the technology curve and take on the challenge," he added. MoT is also speeding up its digital efforts with steps like managing MoT's social media handles across digital platforms, strengthening the website with more information, interactive audio visual content, and is also looking at augmented and virtual reality as powerful tools to boost tourism, informed Billa. Suri added, "Adapting and adopting technology is the need of the hour and at FICCI we

are happy to take on this vertical and offer a platform for thoughtful discussions and deliberation on the future of travel." She pointed out that FICCI, as a chamber body, has always supported the government's initiatives, playing catalysts to encourage modernisation and innovation. "FICCI continuously engages in such forums which throw up various suggestions and the outcomes are shared with relevant ministries for their understanding and possible implementation," added Suri.

ACCORHOTELS SHOWCASE: INDIA CONNECTS

A total of 50 properties from 27 countries presented their products at the AccorHotels Showcase 2017 that was held in the cities of Delhi and Mumbai.



Nisha Verma

AccorHotels saw its various properties from around the world come under one roof to meet the travel trade partners in India. **Arif Patel**, Vice President - Sales, Marketing, Distribution & Loyalty, AccorHotels India, said, "This is one of the largest showcases done by any brand in the country. We are very excited and the response is overwhelming. In



Mumbai, we had more than 800 customers, and in Delhi we had around 700 people. I spoke to participants and all of them had some active leads to close."

The group, according to Patel, is looking at offering a panoply of its brands to customers in India. "We have a larger distribution strategy in place. Firstly, we are opening global

sales offices in nine cities with 42 sales people," he said. The Showcase is only one of the many events that AccorHotels is planning in India. The brand is set to showcase products from selected destinations as well. "We are the largest players in Singapore with 14,000 rooms, and we are going to invite all our hotels from Singapore to come to India to meet customers who have



business for Singapore. However, the Showcase will remain the face of our B2B events, and we might take it to Bengaluru next year or the year after that," added Patel.

The acquisition of FRHI Hotels by AccorHotels has also given them additional opportunities for development, informed Patel. "In India, we have 46 operating hotels. We are

going to open nine more hotels by the end of this year, which will make it 55. We will cross the 10,000 mark in rooms. These three brands give us more opportunities to work with potential developers. Our strategy now will be to grow our luxury portfolio, while not losing sight of upscale and midscale brands. We are going to be in 26 cities by the end of this year. The new cities are

Lucknow, Vadodara, Guwahati, Nagpur, Coimbatore and we just opened a hotel in Cochin," he added.

In fact, Patel said that they were looking at further intensifying their presence in cities like Hyderabad, Chennai, and Goa, where they already have hotels. The group is also set to open another ibis hotel in Pune.





The Claridges' 'Corn Pudding' still going strong

The Corn Pudding, an iconic dessert by The Claridges, celebrated its 35th anniversary in April this year. Launched in 1982, this widely loved pudding has been one of the best-selling and loved desserts till date at Ye Old Bakery, The Claridges. Even after three decades of evolution in the patisserie industry, the Corn Pudding continues to enjoy a loyal following with its signature flavour and taste to the extent that approximately 40 kgs of the pudding is sold daily.



Chennai to now have more OYO presence

OYO has briskly expanded presence in Chennai since its launch in March 2015. The Chennai hub currently enjoys a strong network of nearly 9,000 rooms in 550 hotels providing standardised and affordable accommodation to travellers. OYO aims to enable a delightful stay-experience for customers by giving hotel owners access to technology and facilitating better customer service, thereby increasing their overall profitability.



IHG expands Chennai portfolio

InterContinental Hotels Group has announced the opening of Holiday Inn Chennai OMR IT Expressway. The 202-room hotel marks the fifth IHG hotel in Chennai and the first Holiday Inn in the city. The hotel has 5,000 sq. ft. of flexible meeting space and a wide range of food and beverage outlets. IHG has also expressed that it is on track to having 150 hotels open within the next 10-15 years. This growth will largely be driven with a distinct focus on Crowne Plaza and InterContinental Hotels & Resorts in key gateway cities.



Carlson Rezidor enjoys strong presence in India



Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group announced at the Hotel Investment Conference - South Asia (HICSA) 2017, its successful growth strategy of increasing presence in state capitals and key cities. Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group's India portfolio comprises of 140 hotels in operation and under development across 60 cities in India, including 16 state capitals. The operating portfolio's Compounded Average Growth Rate (CAGR) has been a remarkable 17 per cent since 2010. The Group also saw healthy Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR) growth in India, an eight per cent increase vis-à-vis the industry's performance of six per cent for the year 2016.

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Crystal Sarovar Premiere, Agra, receives 5-star classification

In recognition of its superior services and facilities, Crystal Sarovar Premiere, Agra, has been certified as a 5-star hotel by the Ministry of Tourism. The certification represents the hotel's status as one of the leading premium hotels in Agra, offering the best of hospitality to leisure as well as business travellers. The 136-key hotel has received the certification for a period of five years till the year 2022.



Earth Hour at Courtyard by Marriott International Airport, Mumbai

An edible chocolate earth was created using over 120 kgs of dark chocolate to deliver a powerful message on climate change as Courtyard by Marriott International Airport, Mumbai, observed the Earth Hour on March 25, 2017. The hotel served free chocolate desserts to all guests and associates. Each one of these desserts was prepared using chocolate scraped from the chocolate earth. Thus, every dessert ordered deformed the chocolate earth. By the end of the Earth Hour, this chocolate creation no longer resembled the earth. However, guests could have stopped this deformation by taking action.



RCI expands its network year after year

RCI, the global leader in vacation exchange and part of the Wyndham Worldwide family of brands, added 29 new affiliated properties in Asia in 2016. The additions, which include some resorts currently under construction, expand RCI's network to more than 400 vacation options in the region. The affiliations in India include two properties by JC Residency, one each in Kodaikanal and Madurai. Three new resorts were also added to the exchange network by Sterling Holiday Resorts India, which includes Sterling Anaikatti by the Siruvani in Palakkad, a riverside resort that draws inspiration from the nearby Siruvani River. The resort's buildings are even crafted from the surrounding pinewood trees.



Hyatt to open new properties in Lucknow and Kochi

After the recent opening of its new property in Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu, Hyatt India has plans to expand further with new properties set to open in Lucknow and Hyderabad. **Kurt Straub**, Vice President - Operations, Hyatt Hotels & Resorts, revealed, "The next two years for us will be positive and interesting as we have a number of developments coming up in a number of cities in India. A really big opening will be Grand Hyatt Kochi."



Marriott Resort & Spa now in Jaisalmer

Marriott Hotels continues to expand its portfolio in India with the recent opening of Jaisalmer Marriott Resort & Spa in the heart of this western Indian city. Amidst the magnificence of exotic palaces and the seemingly endless

Thar Desert, the resort is a perfect getaway for travellers who want to experience the grandeur of the city while enjoying Marriott's exemplary hospitality and culinary excellence. With resplendent forts and elaborate havelis in the backdrop, vast sand dunes with beating drums, cavalry on camel back, folk dancers and festivity, the resort also offers an ideal destination to host the quintessential Indian wedding.



RAKTDA outlines strategy for India market

Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA) has outlined its strategy for 2017 for the India market. Year-on-year, India continues to remain one of the most significant source markets in terms of



visitor numbers. Ras Al Khaimah recorded a rise of 11 per cent in overall visitor numbers in 2016 versus 2015. Visitors from India to the emirate in the first quarter of 2017 grew by 35 per cent, while the number of guest nights taken by Indian tourists grew 49.4 per cent in the same period as compared to the first quarter of 2016.

Novotel Guwahati GS Road set to open this year

Novotel will make its debut in Guwahati with the opening of Novotel Guwahati GS Road, this year. The hotel will feature 118 modern and well-appointed rooms and suites. Guests at Novotel Guwahati GS Road will enjoy an array of modern facilities, including an all-day dining restaurant, lobby bar, lounge, and health club.



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Diyarbakir, Turkey, now home to Radisson Blu

Radisson Blu has announced the opening of its new hotel in Diyarbakir, Turkey. With a prime location in the city's new business district, Radisson Blu brings an upper-upscale, stylish hospitality experience to Diyarbakir. All 167 guest rooms and suites have a warm, contemporary design. There's also a choice of rooms to suit every traveller and a range of suites with stunning panoramic views. The Presidential Suite adds a more decadent touch and provides the opportunity to relax in style while at the elegant hotel.



Hyatt Regency debuts in Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Hyatt Hotels Corporation will be opening Hyatt Regency Amsterdam, the first Hyatt Regency hotel to open in The Netherlands' dynamic capital city. Hyatt Regency Amsterdam is the third Hyatt-branded hotel in The Netherlands, joining luxury lifestyle hotel Andaz Amsterdam Prinsengracht and select service hotel Hyatt Place Amsterdam Airport. Hyatt Regency Amsterdam has been thoughtfully designed, blending history with a modern-day lifestyle. The hotel has 211 guest rooms, including 15 suites.

AccorHotels announces acquisition of Availpro

Following the acquisition of Fastbooking in 2015, AccorHotels has announced the acquisition of Availpro, one of the leading European software providers to hoteliers. The consolidation of these two major players will create a leading European digital services provider for independent hotels. In an expanding and highly competitive sector, the companies will work to benefit hoteliers who are increasingly calling for decision-support solutions and will now have access to a whole range of management tools and assistance services to enhance their online distribution and increase their revenues.



Marriott takes first steps into Fiji

Marriott Hotels has opened one of its first hotels in Fiji, the Fiji Marriott Resort Momi Bay, that welcomes guests to an unspoiled corner of this island paradise. Nestled on the secluded beaches of Momi Bay on the western coast of Viti Levu, Fiji Marriott Resort Momi Bay is an exotic destination defined by its idyllic natural surroundings. Taking full advantage of a picture-perfect setting, the property is the only one on Fiji's mainland to offer overwater villas. Surrounded by 20 hectares of crystal-clear, man-made lagoons, guests can enjoy direct access to a private white-sand beach.





Anantara launches luxury resort in Portugal

Making its debut in Europe, Anantara Hotels, Resorts and Spas has announced the launch of Anantara Vilamoura Algarve Resort, bringing the brand's authentic luxury to Portugal's picturesque Algarve coast. Nestled amongst orange grove trees and undulating wetlands, the resort brings to life Anantara's ethos of connecting modern travellers with authentic destinations and ensures the brand's signature Thai hospitality is paired with indigenous style and flavour. All of the resort's 280 newly upgraded guest rooms boast of soft touches reflecting the natural woods and fibres of the region, creating a chic and comforting place to relax.



The Oberoi Beach Resort opens in Al Zorah, Ajman

The Oberoi Group has announced the opening of The Oberoi Beach Resort, Al Zorah. Al Zorah is a unique destination in the UAE, master-planned by Solidere International. Nestled within 247 acres of rich ecological wetlands, Al Zorah boasts of exceptional biodiversity and is home to almost 60 species of birds and marine life. The resort has a sophisticated design set within mangrove forests, caressed by the gentle sea breeze and in harmony with nature, spread along white sandy beaches and azure lagoons.

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A healthy, tasty break

GAIA'S new line of granola bars, GAIA Sport Apple and Cinnamon, are a healthy snack that not only kick away hunger pangs but also give a burst of energy. This new product is an all-day bar, packed with Vitamin-C and healthy nutrients. Spicy cum sweet, the bar is made from 100 per cent real apple and cinnamon. Now munch into this uniquely flavoured granola bar and enjoy an energy boost any time of the day.



3D in your kitchen

Faber has introduced the world's first 3D chimney with T2S2 technology and a three-way suction. The unique filters on the side of the hood extract any smoke that escapes the bottom vent. This technology ensures a kitchen free from smoke and grease, making it appear neat and hygienic. Available in black and SS options, 3D hoods have the latest design and finish from Europe.

Elanpro, the new cool

Elanpro has unveiled Elanpro EKG Series, a new range of glass-top chest freezers that is packed with the latest innovations. This series has been launched by Elanpro in seven variants that are available in the capacity range of 150 to 625 litres. The newly launched Elanpro EKG Series comes exclusively with best-in-class 82 mm insulation ensuring minimum heat ingress and low power consumption.



The whacko taco combo

Cornitos is back with a healthy spin for your fancy food. The popular snack company has introduced two new wholesome flavours in its Taco Shells category - Spinach Garlic Taco Shells and Beetroot Chili Taco Shells. Spinach Garlic Taco Shells are prepared using a unique recipe that uses natural extracts of spinach and garlic. Similarly, the Beetroot Chili Taco Shells are also prepared with natural extracts of beetroot and chilli in the shells that bring flavour and colour to dishes.



High care from HICARE

HICARE, in partnership with Blueair, aims at purifying the air in your house with the launch of a new air purifier. This innovative air purifier, the Blueair Blue Pure 211, has the potential of cleaning the air of the entire room up to five times an hour. The Blue Pure 211 Air Purifier can cater to a room size of 540 to 1,080 sq. ft. With a 360-degree air intake, it boasts of the largest filter area, far superior than any other that the market has to offer.

Crockery, class-apart

Ficus Fine Living brings to you its latest range of porcelain crockery that ranges from tea, coffee mugs, and saucers to dainty snack-plates and dip dishes, all artistically decorated in soft Scandinavian colours. The classic dinner set in the collection features contemporary designs and complements any occasion with a touch of elegance. This beautiful crockery collection will definitely ensure that your guests and you dine in style.



Brighter surroundings

The Great Eastern Home introduces its range of stylish chandeliers that includes various designs – crystal, Moreno glass, mission, antler, beaded, iron, Victorian, and antique. The chandeliers have magnificently been crafted in brass with gold wash and coloured glass.



Top of cooktops

Usha International introduces the Usha Induction cooktop IC 3616. The cooktop comes with pan-sensor technology where the heat turns on only when the cooktop senses the utensil. It also prevents overheating by auto-switching to the power-saving mode, maintaining an optimum temperature. The cooktop offers a pre-set menu for five Indian dishes besides a manual menu control option. Another highlight of the product is its resistance to voltage fluctuation of up to 1,500 Volts. Usha Induction Cooktop IC 3616 comes with a 1,340 mm long cord for ease of placement.



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MOVEMENTS

TRISTAN BEAU DE LOMENIE

Director of Operations
LUXE Hotels India

Tristan Beau de Lomenie has been appointed as Director of Operations, LUXE Hotels India, apart from his current role as General Manager Delegate – Pullman and Novotel New Delhi Aerocity. Tristan has been associated with AccorHotels for almost 30 years now, having been responsible for managing many hotels of the group across several locations. He has successfully opened and launched the 670-room joint property of Pullman and Novotel New Delhi Aerocity.



AYESHA BHALLA

Market Director of Sales and Marketing
Marriott Properties, Pune

Ayesha Bhalla has been appointed as Market Director of Sales and Marketing for JW Marriott Pune and all other properties in Pune under the Marriott portfolio. In the new role, she will spearhead strategic sales, marketing, and business operations for the Pune cluster of Marriott properties while shouldering the responsibility of achieving revenue goals, guest and employee satisfaction, and the financial performance of the department.



SALIL KOPAL

Director of Sales and Marketing
Sheraton Hyderabad Hotel,
Gachibowli

Sheraton Hyderabad Hotel, Gachibowli, has announced the appointment of **Salil Kopal** as the Director of Sales and Marketing. Coming with over 13 years of valuable experience and having been associated with leading hotel brands like The Oberoi Group; Taj Hotels, Resorts and Palaces; and Marriott International, Kopal will be leading the sales and marketing team at the hotel. He began his career in 2004 when he joined the Oberoi Group as Front Office Associate.



SACHIN DIDOLKAR

Director of Business Development
Conrad Pune

Conrad Pune has appointed **Sachin Didolkar** as the Director of Business Development. He will be responsible for overall sales and marketing including strategic management of key revenue streams of the hotel. Didolkar comes with 12 years of experience in the hospitality industry. Prior to taking up the new role, he was part of Sheraton Grand, Pune, and Le Méridien, Mahabaleshwar, as Complex Director of Sales and Marketing.





DEEPAK MATHUR

Director of Sales
Four Points by Sheraton, Jaipur

Deepak Mathur has joined Four Points by Sheraton, Jaipur, as Director of Sales. With over 17 years of experience in hospitality, he has worked with a number of brands like Le Meridien Jaipur, ITC Rajputana Luxury Collection Hotel, Holiday Inn Jaipur, Hotel Clarks Khajuraho, Hotel Arya Niwas Jaipur, and Hotel Shalimar Jaipur. Mathur brings with him valuable experience in revenue management and strategic sales planning.



RIMAL D'SILVA

Director of Human Resources
JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar

Rimal D'Silva joins JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar as Director of Human Resources. Prior to this role, Rimal was the Director of Human Resources at Four Seasons Hotel Mumbai. A post-graduate in Human Resource Management, she joined JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu as a Management Trainee in Human Resources. During the programme, she gained exposure to cross-functional roles in human resources and training and was then promoted to Assistant Manager - Training.



VISHAL JAMUAR

General Manager
Radisson Blu Resort
& Spa - Alibaug

Radisson Blu Resort & Spa - Alibaug has appointed **Vishal Jamuar** as General Manager. A graduate in commerce and a post-graduate in marketing management, Jamuar is a versatile professional who specialises in sales and marketing. His career spans over 25 years and reflects pioneering operational expertise with year-on-year success in achieving business objectives. He has also worked with various renowned hotel brands.



AZEEM KHAN

Marketing Manager
Jaipur Marriott Hotel

Jaipur Marriott Hotel has appointed **Azeem Khan** as Marketing Manager. In the new role, he will be responsible for looking after all offline and online marketing activity at the hotel. An MBA in marketing, Khan has been in the hospitality industry for almost five years now. Prior to this appointment, he was the Assistant Marketing Manager at Holiday Inn Jaipur City Centre.



MOVEMENTS

KRISHNA KUMAR

General Manager

Radisson Hyderabad
HITEC City

Cycling and travelling are the most enjoyable activities I indulge in”

I love cycling and there is nothing that beats a long ride very early in the morning which sets up your day beautifully too. Cycling and travelling are the most enjoyable activities I indulge in. Thailand easily remains my favourite destination with Phi Phi islands being my favourite place to visit. My favourite holiday remains a three-week trip along to Andaman.

RANJEESH P.K.

General Manager

Davanam Sarovar
Portico Suites,
Bengaluru

I welcome any chance to ride out on my Harley to de-stress”

I believe in working hard and relaxing well. The hotel business is a demanding one and I welcome any chance to ride out on my Harley to de-stress. Spending time at home with my wife and son are blissful moments for me, and I look forward to us spending time together on a Euro tour where we can soak in the best of culture, food, and experiences.

DINESH RAI

General Manager

Mercure Hyderabad KCP



I love listening to music and appreciate all genres of it”

My success mantra is having faith in people and commitment to everything I do. I try to give due importance to both work and personal life. I love listening to music and appreciate all genres of it. Sports have also always been my passion and I'd say I am a sportsperson at heart. I love playing cricket and badminton, and also try my hand at other games whenever I find time.

RIDUL DEKA

General Manager

ibis Mumbai Airport



The active component of drumming helps reduce stress”

I am an avid runner and it is my biggest stress buster. The rush of adrenaline it gives keeps me going all day. Another hobby that helps me unwind is drumming and playing music with my friends. The active component of drumming helps reduce stress in many ways. It is fun, it is physical, and it is a great escape from the stress-filled day-to-day activities.



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