

HOSPITALITY[®] Talk

Bi-Monthly Publication
November-December 2021, Vol 8 • Issue 3, Pages 36 ₹ 20

Claim Hotel
Promotions worth

₹ **100,000** /-
FREE!

Call +91 99203 64188

tripjack

HURRY!
Limited
Period Offer

"Tripjack is a trusted name in travel & has a vast network of travel agents that we want to tap into & build our brand visibility. Plus they provide a seamless experience."

Prasad S Bal from Fern Hotels

Register Your Hotel Today!



Scan & Visit

35,000 +
Travel Agents

8 Lakh
Hotels

750+
Airlines

\$ 1 Billion +
Bookings

24x7
Support

India's only
Government approved
CLASSIFICATION
and
COVID Compliance certification
Recognised in over 100 countries



“To get certified by QualStar, an accredited body that is recognised in over 100 countries, was very reassuring, both for the hotel and the guests. It helped us examine the standard and protocols put in place for Covid and assess their efficiency from a fresh perspective.”

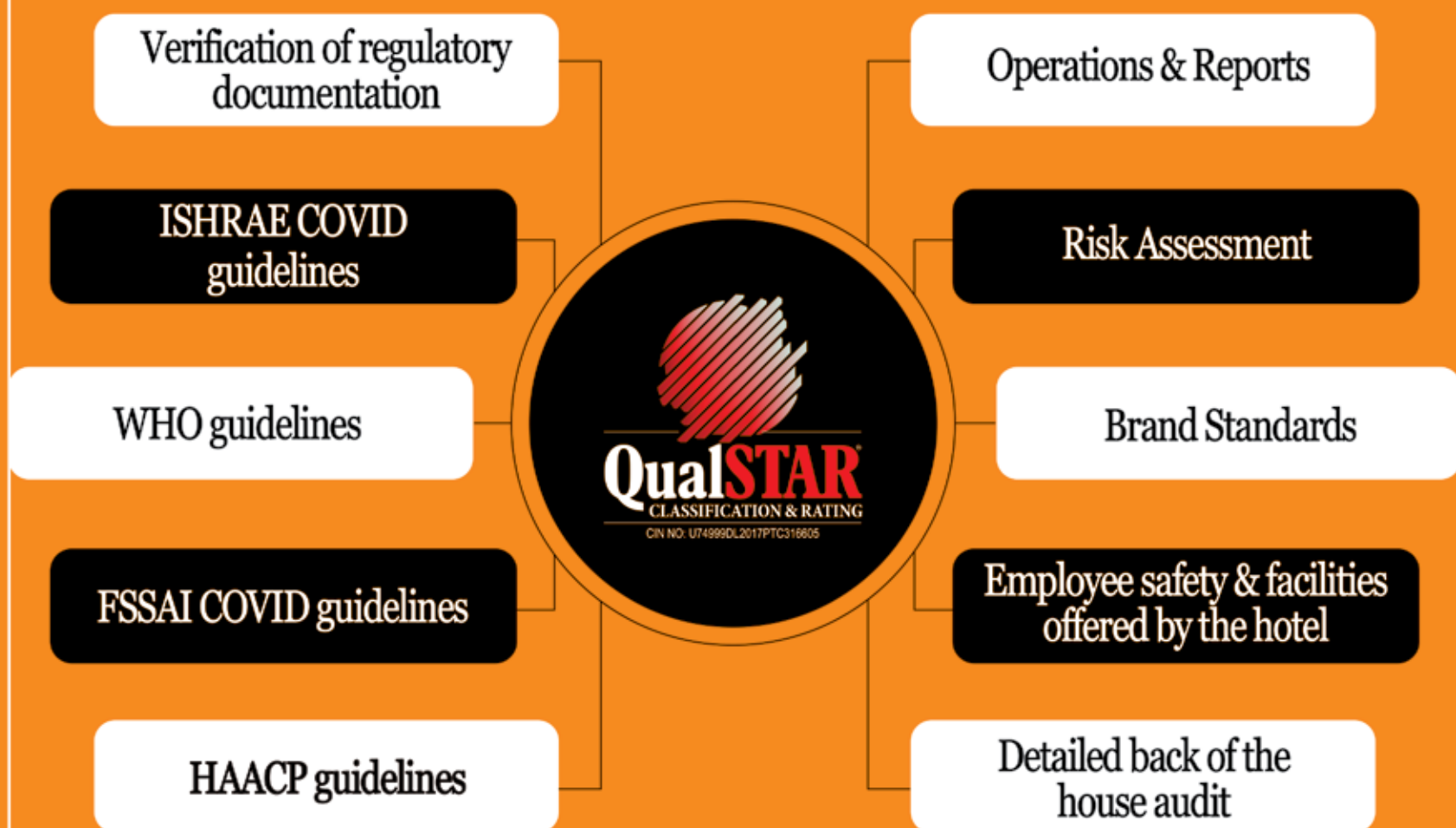
Ms. Meena Bhatia
Vice President and General Manager
Le Meridien, New Delhi



For more information, contact:

+91 7042071995, +91 9871003279, info@qualstar.co.in, meenakshi.bairagi@qualstar.co.in

“One Classification and COVID compliance audit to cover all your operational and regulatory requirements.”



For more information, contact:

+91 7042071995, +91 9871003279, info@qualstar.co.in, meenakshi.bairagi@qualstar.co.in

CONTENTS



10

Overcoming the worst

Tour operators are a pivotal factor of their business as they chart a growth trajectory as they launch new properties.



12

Standardising the way ahead

Standardisation could be game changer for the tourism sector in the post-pandemic world, say industry stakeholders.



18

Upskilling is the key to success

As many struggle against the New Normal, COVID-19 is proving to be an ideal opportunity for hotel staff.



21

No white elephants

How the rules for running a restaurant have changed from no-frills cloud kitchens to rationalised budgets.



25

Buiding resilience

Chefs have been creative and flexible. The need of the hour is to be resilient to stay relevant in the current scenario.



29

Making inroads in India

With global expansion in mind, ISH partners with Sommet Education at a time when the sector is on the cusp of revival.

**HANDICRAFTS
INDIA
YEAR BOOK**

New Delhi: 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110 001
Phone No: +91 11 233 44179,
Fax: +91-22-22070131
E-mail: hospitalitytalk@ddppl.com

Mumbai: 504 Marine Chambers,
43 New Marine Lines
Mumbai 400 020, India
Tel: +91-22-22070129, 22070130
E-mail: mumbai@ddppl.com

UAE: P.O. Box: 9348, Sharjah, UAE
Tel: +971 6 5528954, Fax: +971 6 5528956
E-mail: uae@ddppl.com

Editor & Publisher
SanJeet

Desk Editor
seth.d@ddppl.com

Editorial Team
lipla.negi@ddppl.com
nisha.verma@ddppl.com
hazel.jain@ddppl.com

Advertising : Delhi
ankit.endlaw@ddppl.com
+91-9650399928

gaganpreet@ddppl.com
+91-9650399934

Advertising : Mumbai
harshal@ddppl.com

Design
Raashi Ajmani Girdhar
Advertisement Designer
Nitin Kumar

eCommerce
Ashish Chakraborty

Production Manager
Anil Kharbanda

Circulation Manager
Vivekanand Maurya

Business Manager
Ashok Rana

All information in **Hospitality Talk** is derived from sources, which we consider reliable. Information is passed on to our readers without any responsibility on our part. The contents of this publication contain views of authors and are not the views of **Hospitality Talk**. Similarly, opinions/views expressed by any party in abstract and/or in interviews are not necessarily shared/do not necessarily reflect any opinion of **Hospitality Talk**.

All rights reserved throughout the world. Reproduction strictly prohibited. Material appearing in **Hospitality Talk** cannot be reproduced in whole or in part without prior written permission. The same rule applies when there is a copyright or the article is taken from another publication. Publications reproducing material either in part or in whole, without permission would face legal action.
Editorial enquiries: (concerning reproduction of articles):

talk@ddppl.com
Advertising enquiries: irwin.kainth@ddppl.com

The publisher assumes no responsibility for returning unsolicited material nor is he responsible for material lost or damaged in transit. Any material submitted to **Hospitality Talk** will not be returned. The publisher reserves the rights to refuse, withdraw, amend or otherwise deal with all advertisements without explanation. All advertisements must comply with

the Indian Advertisements Code as well as the Advertisements Code of South Asia. The publisher will not be liable for any damage or loss caused by the late publication, error or failure of advertisement or editorial to appear.

Hospitality Talk is printed, published, edited and owned by Sanjeet, printed at Modest Print Pack Pvt. Ltd., C-52, DDA Sheds, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase - I, New Delhi - 110020 and published at 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110 001

Mantra for success

As consumer behaviour changes in the face of the pandemic, hotels in the world are expanding their footprint and preparing to offer value-driven deals as well as assurance of safety and hygiene to discerning guests.



HILTON cements luxury growth with new signings

Hilton announces two landmark signings: The first Waldorf Astoria hotel in Osaka, Japan, and the Conrad hotel in Chongqing, China, underscoring its growth momentum. The two management agreements, with Orix Real Estate Corporation and Chongqing Jiafa Industrial Co., Ltd., respectively, expand the company's storied portfolio of luxury hotels across Asia Pacific. When they open, the hotels will join the prestigious ranks of the company's group of luxury brands, which include Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts, Conrad Hotels & Resorts, and LXR Hotels & Resorts. Most recently, Hilton launched its newest luxury brand in Asia-Pacific with the opening of ROKU KYOTO, LXR Hotels & Resorts in September 2021.

INTERCONTINENTAL marks 75 years of pioneering luxury travel

InterContinental Hotels & Resorts, which has pioneered luxury travel in emerging and well-loved destinations for the past 75 years, has become synonymous with bold exploration, travel, and cultural discovery. As the brand marks its diamond jubilee this year, guests are invited to rediscover InterContinental hotels and resorts around the world and celebrate the joy of travel. Guests can enjoy a variety of limited-time offers from now until April 2022. InterContinental Hotels & Resorts will also donate US\$75,000 to Water.org as part of the 75th anniversary initiative and IHG's Journey to Tomorrow commitment, which will help 15,000 people receive access to clean water through sustainable, locally owned and run projects.



SIX SENSES KYOTO signifies the brand's entry into Japan

Six Senses Kyoto will open in a prime location, providing an urban oasis and a welcome recharge in time for the many festivals and cultural events. BLINK Design Group was brought on board to bring the Six Senses brand values to life through elegant designs while optimising space and views. There will be a total of 81 guest rooms organised around a central courtyard that, via its biophilic architecture as a garden of seasonal landscapes, connects guests to nature.



SKYHELIX SENTOSA opens ahead of schedule

SkyHelix Sentosa, a project of Mount Faber Leisure Group, has opened ahead of schedule in time for the school holidays and year-end celebrations. It will be the first carbon-neutral attraction on Sentosa and Singapore's highest open-air panoramic ride. SkyHelix Sentosa is a gondola ride that slowly rotates 35 metres above ground around a vertical helix-like structure. It is part of the Imbiah Lookout series of attractions.

ACCOR signs deal with DUR HOSPITALITY

Accor expands its footprint in Saudi Arabia with the signing of Rixos Obhur Jeddah. The group is partnering with Dur Hospitality to manage the resort, which will restyle the Makarem Annakheel Village, transforming it into a full-fledged tourist resort with a five-star luxury hotel. In addition, a water park, swimming pools, and villas with private pools will be featured, all of which will be developed in line with the Rixos brand standards.



Striding forward

With new launches such as Howard Johnson, Parvada Rural Stays, and Best Western Vrindavan, among others, the hospitality sector is ready to take a stride forward towards growth in the New Year.



Opening of HOWARD JOHNSON by WYNDHAM UDAIPUR Roop Nagar

Bhageet Hotel and Motel Private Limited has partnered with Wyndham Hotels & Resorts to open Howard Johnson by Wyndham Udaipur Roop Nagar. NILE Hospitality will manage this property. The hotel has 94 modern rooms with a range of amenities such as a welcoming lobby lounge, a modern all-day dining restaurant, and a trendy bar, as well as meeting rooms and banquet halls totalling over 4,900 sq. ft. A business centre, a wellness spa, an outdoor rooftop infinity pool with stunning views, and on-site parking are also available.

BEST WESTERN VRINDAVAN is now up and running

With the addition of Best Western Vrindavan, U.P., Best Western Hotels & Resorts continues its rapid expansion in India. The town's only international hotel offers guests the signature BW hospitality and outstanding service. Best Western Vrindavan is a hit with devotees, gourmets, and business travellers alike, thanks to its signature restaurant, in-room dining, banquets, and meeting rooms. The Best Western Vrindavan hotel has 41 magnificent rooms and suites divided into three categories. Café Western, the all-day dining multi-cuisine restaurant, delivers the best dining experience. 'Stratus' banquet hall, 'Let's Talk' boardroom, and the 'Lush Green' open lawn at Best Western Vrindavan, cater to a gathering of 700 to 1,000 people.



The Rug Republic acquires THE GLASS VILLA GOA

The Rug Republic (TRR) has entered the hospitality business with the acquisition of The Glass Villa in Goa. The Glass Villa rises from the centre of a 25,000 sq. ft. plot of land, surrounded the backwaters of Nachinola. The villa was done by Asahi Glass and was conceptualised by fashion designer Tarun Tahiliani and brought to life by architect Sameep Padora.

Parvada Bungalows launches PARVADA RURAL STAYS, Uttarakhand

Village Parvada promotes itself as a rural stay experience by offering one homestay in the four categories: Luxury, gold, silver, and bronze. The Parvada Bungalows (luxury) boutique cottages are set amid the fields and orchards and are built in a traditional style. Kaaphal Homestay (gold) is set on the edges of the forest. The hike to Chandra's Homestay (silver) is brief yet rewarding. Deepu, the lady of the home, hosts Lucky Homestay (bronze).



SAROVAR HOTELS marks its first foray into Assam

Sarovar Hotels has launched Pushkara Sarovar Portico in Dibrugarh, marking the company's first foray into Assam. The property is set against the Himalayan landscape. The hotel, owned by Pushkara Garden, has 57 elegantly built guest rooms, suites, and penthouses. The hotel's dining and entertainment options include a multi-cuisine restaurant, a bar, and a rooftop club.

ITC HOTELS sign EKAAYA, Udaipur for brand Mementos

ITC Hotels sign up Ekaaya, Udaipur—the first Memento property. This destination offers 130 rooms spread over 106 acres. A massive 25,000 sq. ft., of total covered meeting space is backed by ITC Hotels' signature service excellence. Ekaaya, Udaipur, with its sprawling ballroom, vast pre-function, multi-breakout rooms, green rooms, and open garden spaces of over 5 acres, is the ideal destination wedding venue.



FORTUNE HOTELS goes the pilgrim way

Fortune Hotels has signed two separate operating agreements for hotels in Katra, J&K, and Amritsar, Punjab, bolstering its pilgrim expansion plan and adding over 100 more rooms to its existing inventory. Fortune Park The Atrium, Katra is a 58-room hotel with a glass pyramid-shaped atrium roof and is set to open in 2022, with refurbished contemporary decor and modern facilities. M/s Swastik Resort is the owner of the property. Fortune Inn Heritage Walk is a 50-room boutique hotel in Amritsar that is conveniently located near Jallianwala Bagh.

WELCOMHERITAGE Cheetahgarh Resort & Spa in Rajasthan

The WelcomHeritage Cheetahgarh Resort and Spa, nestled in the Jawai region of Rajasthan, is the newest addition. The property is located in the Bera village in Pali district of Rajasthan, and is spread across 20 acres of private land, housing the roaring wild. The property is located on a vast expanse of untouched land surrounded by rolling hillocks. There are a host of amenities inside the property, including a swimming pool, a clubhouse, a gymnasium, a grand spa, and nature walks, among others.



RENEST HOTELS & RESORTS ventures into the wildlife segment

Renest Hotels & Resorts has recently unveiled Renest Bandhavgarh Meadows, an upscale boutique resort. The property is sprawled over several acres of land and conveniently located near the Bandhavgarh National Park, which is nestled among the Vindhya ranges in the Umaria region of Madhya Pradesh. Ten villas and five cottages make up the Renest Bandhavgarh Meadows. Each villa has an 875-square-foot bedroom, a large private courtyard, a patio with a 200-square-foot area, a spacious bathroom, and an additional 64-square-foot open-air shower. Each of the luxurious cottages is 500 sq. ft. The property also provides all modern amenities and offers tailored experiences such as lunch and dinner in the bushes, nature walks with a naturalist, and balloon safaris.



GREENWARE
India's Most Eco-Friendly Gloves

ECO FRIENDLY

COMPOSTABLE GLOVES

Looks like Plastic,
Feels like Plastic
But does not take 100 years to degrade.

BENEFITS

- Get Sustainable Packaging
- Reduce your Carbon Footprint
- Reduce plastic waste
- Go Cost effective
- Be Eco-conscious brand

www.getgreenware.in | +91-9923332321 | aditya@getgreenware.in

Increasing trend

Following the full and partial lockdowns that occurred in numerous states in April and May of 2020 and 2021, the leisure travel sector saw a rapid recovery towards the conclusion of Q2 of 2021.

The hospitality industry in India witnessed a growth of 169.4 per cent in revenue per available room (RevPAR) during the third quarter of 2021 as compared to the third quarter of 2020, according to JLL's Hotel Momentum India (HMI) Q3 2021. Furthermore, at a pan-India level, there has been a 122.9 per cent growth in RevPAR in the third quarter of 2021 as compared to the second quarter of 2021, due to a strong recovery in leisure demand. The year-on-year (y-o-y) growth witnessed in the sector during the third quarter of 2021 is primarily due to the low base effect of the third quarter of 2020. Post the full and partial lockdowns witnessed in many states during April and May of 2021, the sector witnessed a sharp recovery in leisure travel towards the end of the second quarter of 2021. This trend continued into the third quarter of 2021 as an improvement in travellers' confidence was seen with the vaccination drive across the nation.

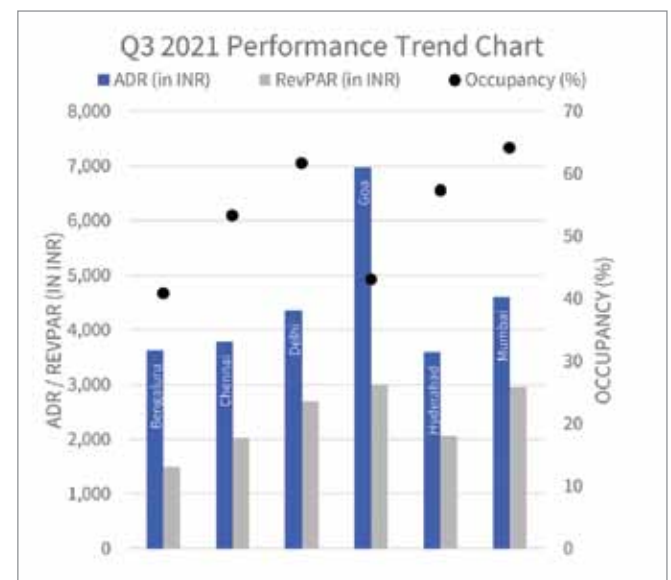
For the next two quarters (Q4 2021 and Q1 2022), growth in travel is expected to continue as India further ramps up its vaccination rate, resulting in improved sentiment towards domestic travel, especially business travel. IT/ITeS companies have indicated that their travel expenditure will increase in the coming quarters as they foresee employees returning to the office/campus as well as resuming travel for work. However, there is a lag between returning to work and subsequent business-related travel. Leisure locations are expected to see a further increase in occupancy and average rates supported mainly by transient leisure and social gatherings.

The total number of signings in the third quarter of 2021 stood at 32 hotels comprising 2,624 keys, recording a growth of 13.4 per cent compared to the same period last year. In line with the overall increase, 15 new signings (47 per cent of total properties signed) are conversions of old hotels. Domestic operators dominated signings over international operators with a ratio of 57:43 in terms of the volume of inventory. Goa re-emerged as the RevPAR leader in absolute terms in the third quarter of 2021 with a growth of 389.8 per cent as compared to the low base of the third quarter of 2020.

Additionally, Hyderabad witnessed the highest growth in occupancy level registering a 33.6 per cent increase in the third quarter of 2021 over the same period last year. Bengaluru saw 213.2 per cent growth in RevPAR followed by Hyderabad with a 173.5 per cent hike compared to the same period last year. Demand and supply of operational inventory in six major cities have increased by 159 per cent and 9.5 per cent, respectively, in the third quarter of 2021 as compared



Goa continues to lead in RevPAR with a 389.8 per cent rise, owing to the low base of Q3 2020"



Source: STR

to the same period last year. "The sector has witnessed a sharp recovery in the third quarter of 2021 post the second wave of COVID-19. Holiday destinations are sold out on most weekends with domestic tourists deciding to explore different destinations across the country. Demand for weddings continue to grow as restrictions on large gatherings are further eased. Food and beverage (F&B) dining has also witnessed a strong recovery both in major metropolitan cities as well as in tier-II towns, on the back of improved market sentiments and growth in the number of vaccinations. In this quarter, we have witnessed a slight up-tick in the corporate travel segment as well, which we believe would be a major step towards a full recovery for the sector," said **Jaideep Dang**, Managing Director, Hotels and Hospitality Group, South Asia, JLL.

AWAY BALI LEGIAN CAMAKILA

Away Bali Legian Camakila allows guests to experience the best of both worlds: Relaxing beach life with stunning sunsets over the Indian Ocean, and delightful Balinese ambience right outside the front door.



24 PROPERTIES
THAILAND | VIETNAM | BALI

Get in touch with us for attractive prices and discounts at:

sales@crosshotelsandresorts.in, +91 9650196521
mumbai@crosshotelsandresorts.in, +91 9987550769

Overcoming the worst

Puneet Chhatwal, MD & CEO, IHCL, believes that tour operators are a pivotal factor of their business as they chart a growth trajectory that includes serving the community as part of their ethos.



Nisha Verma



Puneet Chhatwal recently participated in a panel discussion at the 36th convention of the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, where, while discussing how hotels can walk hand-in-hand with tour operators, he agreed to give a dedicated promo code for IATO members to get rates for all the Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL) properties in advance to quote to their foreign tour operators (FTOs) in time.

PROUD PARTNERS

Tour operators, according to Chhatwal, are an essential element of their business, both internationally and domestically. "It is an association that we are proud of, and it has done a great job for us through the years. As a result, we must continue to create the same platform and formula for decades to come," says **Puneet Chhatwal**, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, IHCL.

"As an industry, we have been able to overcome the worst, which we feel is behind us. As history has proven, I think there will be volatility in the short term, but eventually, and as always, the sector will emerge as a winner," he adds.

NAVIGATING THE PANDEMIC

While different companies have adopted different strategies to flounder during the pandemic, Chhatwal says that they have followed an extremely strong multi-brand strategy. "Today we have a portfolio of 230 hotels, of which 177 are in operation. Recently, we launched a property entirely run by women—our extended stay product, Taj Wellington Mews, Chennai. Every month we open one to two of our homestays—amā Stays & Trails. Within two months, we will have reached a portfolio of 60. Our recently launched home delivery platform, called Qmin, is now present in 20 cities," says Chhatwal.

"We also have 15 quick-service restaurants under the Qmin brand, of which 11 opened in the city of Bengaluru last month. Overall, especially with the ginger brand, there are aggressive growth plans. We are proud of how the company has progressed," he expounds.

TO SERVE THE ETHOS

However, he acknowledges that the pandemic has deterred their progress. "Some of our performance has been diluted, but during this pandemic we also indulged in the service of the community, based on the philosophy of the founder of the Tata Group, who believed that the community is not just another stakeholder, but rather the purpose of the existence of every business. We are very proud of how we stood up to the occasion, served more than five million meals, hosted more than 100,000 bed nights and raised ₹70 crore to ₹80 crore," he apprises.

"By taking salary cuts for them, we paid for all the contractual staff of different contractors who worked with us and were laid off. Hence, under the banner of Taj for Families, the pandemic gave us an opportunity to serve, which is a very important principle of hospitality.



**PUNEET
CHHATWAL**

Hence, despite being hit financially, the pandemic gave us opportunities to reimagine, reinvent, restructure ourselves, and serve," he elucidates.

He also highlights that Taj was rated as the world's strongest hotel brand. "This shows that the market has given us a thumbs up on our values. Taj stands for trust, awareness, and joy, and what better time to have trust in our brands than in the time of the pandemic," he claims.

NEW AND EMERGING

Claiming that they are bringing out new products almost every day, Chhatwal informs, "We just signed a contract for another Taj Wellington Mews. We signed another property in a resort in India. We are very much on track to deliver one hotel a month, which can also become 1.5 or 1.3 hotels a month, owing to the lockdown or construction bans because of pollution."

However, the Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL) is a rapidly growing company, changing its business model every day, marrying the company's tradition of asset heavy with asset light to become a rightfully structured company.



We are a rapidly growing company, changing our business model every day"

BRAND IDENTIFICATION

Despite being lauded for its branding strategy a few years back, under which the IHCL hotels were divided into a couple of sub brands (including Vivanta by Taj), the company today is following a different path.

"We have moved away from the strategy of a brand house, where there was a bit of Taj in everything, including in Vivanta, to a house of brands. Now, one would not see the Taj connotation with any of our brands, whether it is a salon, a spa, or a home delivery. One principle we have maintained is that in whatever segment we are positioned in—whether it is luxury, upper upscale, upscale, value proposition, home deliveries, quick service restaurants, or homestays—within that category we must be premium. Just like Taj is a premium in luxury, and this is the principle we are following without attaching the Taj connotation to any of these brands," Chhatwal concludes.



Standardising the way ahead

Standardisation could be the game changer for the tourism sector in the post-pandemic world, say industry stakeholders at the BIS Seminar on 'Service Requirements for Hotels'.

 Lipla Negi

It is often said: Never let a crisis go to waste. While COVID-19 has deeply impacted the tourism and hospitality industries, it has forced their leaders to look for ways to turn the disaster around. Customers' expectations of hospitality have risen due to new emphasis on safety and hygiene. The new norms have also focussed on how hospitality has been perceived and experienced over the years. Customers now expect outstanding levels of safety and health standards, as per many surveys, and the majority of them prefer hotels that offer 'certified clean' stays. Hence, standardisation has become integral to the tourism industry's revival. In other words, the path to recovery, is paved with standardisation, a key to customer satisfaction, and here is where the industry's chance lies. Around 40 tourism and hospitality industry stakeholders, experts, and representatives from





Picture courtesy: The Lodhi New Delhi

hospitality institutions attended the BIS Seminar on 'Service Requirements for Hotels,' held in a hybrid mode at the Lal C. Verma Hall, New Delhi, in association with PATA India and QualStar, to discuss the need and scope for standardisation. The seminar's main goals were to raise awareness about the application of the IS/ISO 22483: 2020 Service Requirements Standard for Hotels and the need for industry standardisation.

EVOLUTION OF HOTELS

Sanjay Pant, Deputy Director General, Standardisation-II, BIS, provided background for the seminar by tracing the journey of hotels from 'home away from home' to today's 'luxurious escapes'. "People nowadays regard hotels as 'something different from home'. Quality, ambience, aroma, and hygiene – all of which jointly set the standards for service providers – define this 'different'," he explained. The evolution of the industry is well grounded in the development and improvement of service standards over the decades. Due to the importance of services in the national economy, he also emphasised the importance of standardisation in the services sector. **K.B. Kachru**, Chariman, Emeritus & Principal Advisor, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group, spoke at the seminar about how consumers' needs and expectations have changed post-pandemic. "Your customer is not the same as pre-COVID-19. We need to remodel the essentials of our business to meet changing customer expectations." Targeting the mind with standardisation is vital to both survival and revival in the industry. He advised, "You do not have to be good; you just have to be seen as good."

CRISIS BRINGS OPPORTUNITY

"We are in the midst of a pandemic. The industry is



K.B. KACHRU



We must remodel the essentials to meet the expectations of our customers"



SANJAY PANT



Stakeholders are key in creating the framework"



KAMAL KANT PANT



If standards are put in place, the sector will grow manifold"

looking at how to survive before a revival", Kachru said, while calling COVID-19 an opportunity for the industry to 'upgrade'. "The leaders' expectations have changed. We must work to fix what is wrong. COVID-19 has given us a chance to prioritise safety," Kachru asserted.

Sanjay Kaushik, Senior Regional Director, Radisson Hotel Group, agreeing to his views stated, "Standardisation is now the voice of the customer in terms of their safety, well-being, and quality of the hotel. It will help the brand gain credibility. People's faith in the hotel industry will be restored. After that, the resonance occurs through internet platforms and travel partners to ensure that the guests are safe in their hands, hence returning to the hotel time and again."

COVID-19 caused the sector to rethink domestic tourism's value. International travellers disappeared, and domestic travellers emerged in the minds of the industry's major players. Domestic travel has been no less than a saviour for the industry in the past few months. "Domestic travel has now completely dominated the tourism industry. Rates and occupancy at our leisure destinations are higher than they were pre-COVID-19," Kachru said. "Ads such as 'Dekho Apna Desh' gave domestic tourism a new lease on life and pushed people to visit within the country. You must assure them the safety of travelling with you," he said.

BLUEPRINT FOR BENCHMARK

Pant elaborated on BIS's standardising activity, emphasising the role of stakeholders in creating a framework for standardisation. "Stakeholders can assist in understanding both parts of standardisation: what needs to be controlled and what does not. By defining the cardinal principles of the process and its implementation, the players have a crucial role in deciding how to achieve this," he said. He further opined that one of the guiding factors in letting India and its indigenous aspects to become the source of ISO standards should be 'culture'. He emphasised the need of adopting a cultural perspective, which "can help us become leaders". "We can launch a certification scheme and raise the benchmark with the help of well-drafted standards," he said, referring to the Ministry of Tourism's 'Dekho Apna Desh' campaign."

Sanjay Goswami, Head (SSD-I), BIS, informed the attendees that the tourism sector is one of the champion service sectors, and that work on development of standards in the tourism sector has been carried out through a Technical Committee, SSD 02. He gave a presentation of the tourism industry's standardisation efforts. He apprised the members about the technical committee's scope, its liaison with ISO/TC 228, published standards, subjects that are being considered, and standards under development by BIS.

Taking over from him, **Shikha Rana**, Scientist D, SSD-I, BIS, took the attendees through a presentation on IS/ISO 22483:2020 'Tourism and related services—Hotels—Service Requirements', including the scope of the standard, quality requirements, and recommendations for hotels in the areas of



Picture courtesy: The Lodhi New Delhi



staff, service, events, entertainment activities, safety and security, maintenance, cleanliness, supply management, and guest satisfaction. Pant described the entire standardisation process as democratic, “Through our well-balanced technical committees, all industry stakeholders are involved. The industry can have a say by making contributions to the drafts, comment submissions, sharing with their own partners, and finally finalising the standards.”

THE CHALLENGES

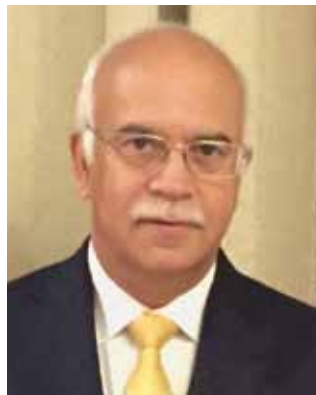
The biggest challenge identified during the seminar is the effective implementation and monitoring of standards. “If execution is done once and not monitored, it is of no help,” asserted Kachru. Driving attention towards the absence of an effective monitoring system, he said, “Standardisation monitoring is really not available. There is a gap between the standard criteria. For example, the budget and economy categories have different standards in different places. There is also a gap in standards between states. About 40,000 hotels are awaiting classification. We need to decide what we can deliver right and on time.” The need for compliance and conformity to the standards was also highlighted during the discussion. “Standards would have no value without compliance,” he added.



SANJAY KAUSHIK



Standardisation is the voice of guests in terms of their safety



MANOJ VIRMANI



Audits let firms to see where they stand and how they can improve”



VIKRAM CHALLUR



Trust factor needs to be established in the mind of customers”

Taking enforcement of standardisation into account, the participants discussed the nature of the standards. Everyone agreed that enforcement and monitoring are vital to the whole aim of setting the standards. **Sanjay Kaushik** suggested, “While ranking is terrifying at times, pushing standardisation in the business model could be a viable option. If standardisation brings them business, they would happily do it. The BIS mark would create a trust. Most certified hotels feature at the top of the list of hotels on OTAs. Getting neutral agencies would emphasise the trust factor, while OTAs would help in branding the standardisation.” The participants agreed that creating and resonating it through all channels is crucial for its success. “Trust factor needs to be established in the mind of the customers and as community we have this collective responsibility,” said **Vikram Challur**, Vice President-Hotel Supply Network, MakeMyTrip (India) Private Limited.

STAMP OF TRUST

Manoj Virmani, Founder, MGM Hospitality Solutions, emphasised that the quality of services is the most important factor. “It is quality that determines the price. The products, processes, and people (3Ps) involved in the service, particularly in the tourism sector, all have an impact on quality. This is where standardisation comes in. Effective standardisation of 3Ps means that there is one defined way to complete a particular task, which is clear, measurable, and has a better end result,” he said.

The participants stressed the advantages of the ‘stamp of trust’ that standardisation offers. MGM Hospitality Solutions has partnered with QualStar, which is the only Indian organisation credited by BIS, NABCB, and QCI to conduct hotel classification audits of various kinds. “And it is the audits that will eventually help all companies to evaluate where they stand and how they can improve the quality,” he explained.

Towards the end of the seminar, the officials, leaders, and stakeholders unanimously emphasised the need for certification, monitoring, and audits. Governments, in coordination with the industry, should formulate processes. And there should be neutral bodies to monitor whether the specified is being executed at all levels. At the same time, if executions are done once and not monitored, they are of no help. There are so many agencies nationally who should be considered. The industry should work together. This will show great value to the guests and meet the expectations.

The speakers and participants unanimously agreed on the role of standardisation in strengthening the trust of customers in the industry. “Developing, adopting, and adhering to standards gives confidence to the buyer and the market that the product or services s/he will receive are going to be of certain standards. If we can implement these standards in the Indian hospitality industry, we would get the rightful place among the leading countries that we so truly deserve,” said **Kamal Kant Pant**, Principal, IHM, Pusa. It is time that the industry accepts and makes standardisation a ‘norme du jour’ and enables India to lead in the world of tourism.

Icing on the cake

Atul Jain, COO, Best Western Hotels & Resorts-India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, shares how Best Western Hotels & Resorts is experiencing remarkable growth and penetration into diverse markets.

Best Western Hotels & Resorts continues its rapid expansion in India with the addition of Best Western Plus Revanta, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh, India. Nestled in the scenic Strawberry Hills with beautiful views of the snow-capped Dhauladhar mountain range and the pristine Kangra Valley, the hotel provides guests with easy access to all the main tourist attractions in and around McLeodganj.

This luxurious hotel is just a 45-minute drive from Gaggal Airport and has easy accessibility from Delhi, Punjab, and J&K, with excellent connectivity by air, rail, and road. The Best Western Plus Revanta, Dharamshala, offers a multitude of facilities. The valley-facing rooms are well-appointed and spacious, with a host of ultra-modern facilities for guests.

The hotel offers one of the finest dining and drinking experience at 'Café Plus', the multi-cuisine restaurant and bar; 'Kahveh', the coffee lounge; and 'Skyeline', the rooftop resto-bar.

Recreational offerings such as Kids Zone, where children can enjoy games and fun activities, Work Out fitness centre and indoor swimming pool, a true luxury in the mountains, and a new wellness spa, offering yoga sessions with unobstructed views of the Dhauladhar mountain range, will help to rejuvenate and get close to nature. 'Let's Talk' and 'Jashan' are the ideal places for meetings and social events.

"We have been experiencing remarkable growth and penetration into diverse markets in India in the last three years, and we are delighted to introduce new properties in the highest traditions of hospitality. In November, we



ATUL JAIN



We are delighted to introduce new properties in the highest traditions of hospitality"

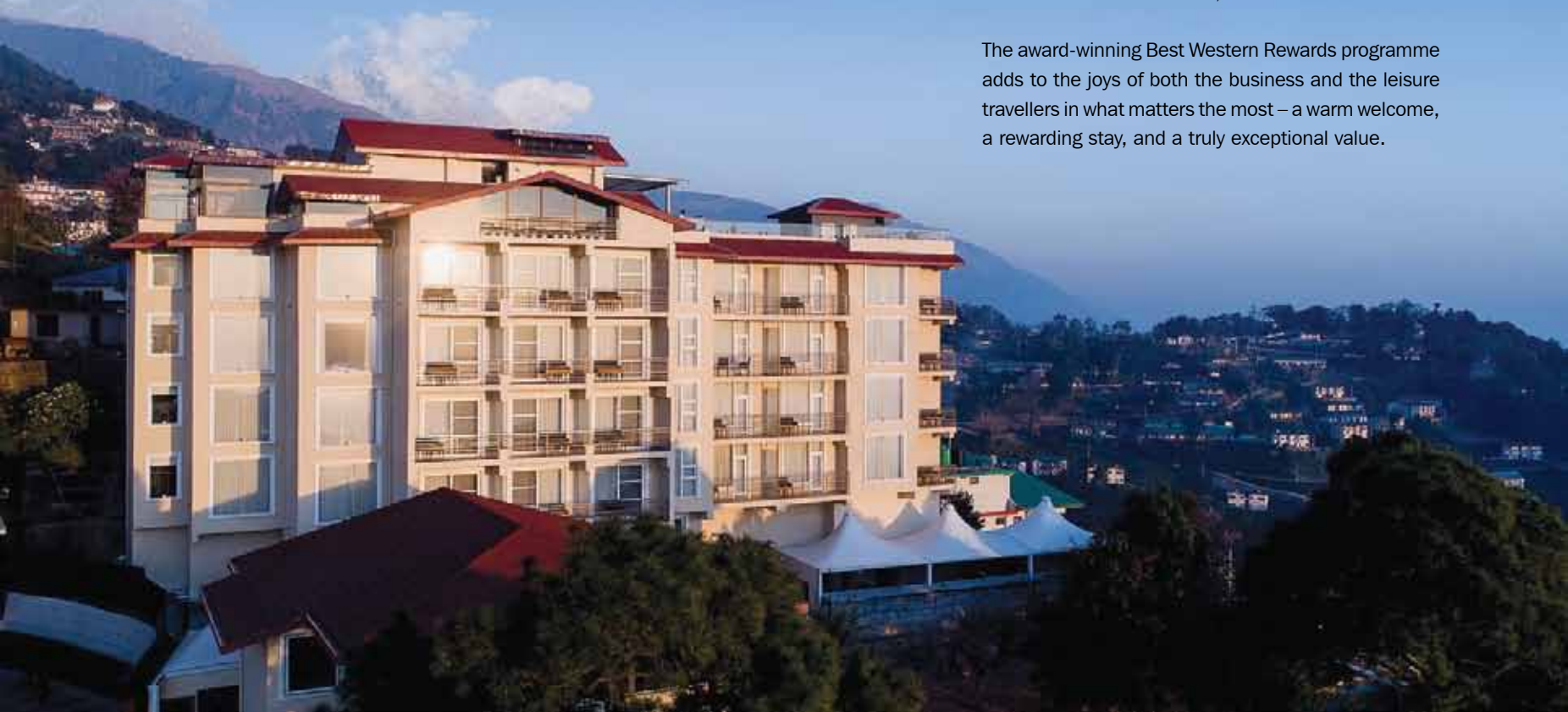


opened SureStay Heritage Walk by Best Western – our third hotel in Amritsar, and Best Western Dalhousie, our first hotel in Himachal Pradesh," says **Atul Jain**, Chief Operating Officer, Best Western Hotels & Resorts-India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

Jain further shares, "With the opening of Best Western Plus Revanta, Dharamshala, we will further accelerate our growth on the back of opening of five more hotels by the first quarter of 2022,"

"We are proud of our association with Best Western Hotels & Resorts and being the first internationally branded hotel, Best Western Plus Revanta ushers in a touch of global hospitality in the city with exceptional guest comfort and service complemented by thoughtfully crafted food and beverage (F&B) offerings," quotes Revanta Resorts & Spa, owner of Best Western Plus Revanta, Dharamshala.

The award-winning Best Western Rewards programme adds to the joys of both the business and the leisure travellers in what matters the most – a warm welcome, a rewarding stay, and a truly exceptional value.



Nuptials go extravagant

In a post-pandemic world, Raffles Udaipur, which opened in August 2021 on a 21-acre private island nestled in the midst of Udai Sagar Lake, is witnessing the return of visitors to big, fat Indian weddings.



Hazel Jain

The launch of the Raffles brand in Udaipur has seen an overwhelming response from travellers since it opened doors in August 2021. With an upward trend in domestic travel and rising demand for luxury and exclusivity among travellers, the property is witnessing an encouraging growth trajectory in terms of bookings.

Abhishek Sharma, General Manager, Raffles Udaipur, says, “The location of the hotel on an exclusive island has captivated travel enthusiasts. With the festive and wedding season in India at its peak, we have been experiencing some of the busiest months in terms of occupancy rates, and expect the trend to continue with Christmas and New Year just around the corner.”

He adds that a large part of the business is from domestic travel, with free independent travellers (FITs)



ABHISHEK SHARMA
General Manager
Raffles Udaipur

making up a significant segment of the guest base. Celebrations have played an important role when it comes to bookings at Raffles Udaipur.

“Travellers consider us not only for luxurious stay experiences but also look at Raffles Udaipur as the ideal destination for celebrations. We have hosted several intimate as well as elaborate celebrations for our guests in the last few months. We do not foresee a major change with respect to traveller behaviour in 2022,” says Sharma.

Speaking about the well-being of guests, Sharma adds, “Safety and hygiene standards will continue to be a key focus area, and the industry will have to continue working towards ensuring the complete well-being of guests. Adhering to stringent safety protocols through the implementation of Accor’s safety label, ALLSAFE,





our teams at Raffles Udaipur have been trained to ensure sanitised stays,” Sharma adds.

Looking forward to 2022

In the coming year, guests are anticipated to be looking forward to private culinary affairs and curated tailor-made experiences.

Sharma opines, “Their fondness towards exploring outdoor activities in and around the hotel, such as local treks, mountain trails, and even cycling around the Aravalli hills, would still be on the rise. In the third quarter of this year, we witnessed a pattern where travel connoisseurs were opting for a minimum of two to three night stays at the hotel, which stands testament to the remarkable brand pull of Raffles Udaipur.”

“Nestled on a private island amidst the tranquil Udai Sagar Lake, the hotel has emerged as an undiscovered gem in the heart of Udaipur. We have observed that guests are choosing to get enchanted by the legendary Raffles service with longer stays, and we expect this trend to continue in 2022 as well,” Sharma adds.

The 101-room Raffles Udaipur has been witnessing

“**Travellers look at Raffles Udaipur as the ideal destination for celebrations**”

high occupancy and has been quite busy all throughout the wedding season. It has hosted a significant number of weddings in November and continues to see the same trend lined up for December as well.

It has a grand ballroom of 9,000 sq. ft., including a pre-function area, multiple outdoor gathering areas, and an on-site temple.

With the easing of restrictions, says the GM, his team has noticed that the industry is moving back to big, fat Indian weddings from intimate weddings.

“The wedding season has also played a crucial role in accelerating the hospitality industry’s journey on its path to recovery in Q3 of 2021. Certain geographical regions have contributed significantly towards the boom in wedding business. During the peak season, we have received a lot of wedding requests and bookings from key cities such as Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Mumbai, and Delhi NCR,” he adds.

The hotel has also hosted multiple corporate events for business founders, owners, and YPO members and will be playing host to private equity board meetings as well.

“We are highly focussed on creating tailor-made experiences for our well-travelled connoisseurs for everlasting comfort and absolute luxury. For instance, during Hindu weddings, based on the auspicious date and time chosen by the guests for the phere, we gift the newly married couple a reflection of the stars, when the universe comes together to witness their union,” Sharma adds.

Apart from soaking in enchanting views of the Udai Sagar Lake and discovering Udaipur with a fresh perspective, guests can also enjoy an array of outdoor activities such as temple treks, mountain trails with bicycle rides, Segway rides, and even movie nights under the celestial skies.

Guests can enjoy intimate culinary experiences such as a midnight barbeque under the stars or a private dinner at Belvedere Point for a gastronomic adventure.



Upskilling is the key to success

As many struggle against the New Normal, the global health crisis of COVID-19 is proving to be an ideal opportunity for hotel staff to upgrade skills and stay relevant with the latest industry practices.

SARBENDRA SARKAR

Founder & Managing Director, Cygnett Hotels & Resorts

UPSKILLING: AN ENDLESS PROCESS

Education and learning continue indefinitely throughout our lives. The business environment is such that it keeps evolving, so the learning aspect of hospitality has to be given the utmost importance to keep staff at the top of the management of hotel services. Therefore, training and development have become essential for a hotel to offer a supreme service standard to guests.

This aspect of upskilling staff is an ongoing process, keeping the momentum of unlearning and learning as per the current trends and customer demands. Given the fact that training is a process carried out over a period of time, it is a tedious task for hospitality companies. Attrition is the major challenge in upskilling the staff. Upskilling has long-term payoff for a hotel property.

That said, we try to make learning and development a continuous process. Cross training is also taken into consideration. These measures ensure that staff are constantly learning and improving their abilities, which eventually reflect on our service standards. It also helps us nurture future managers and expands the scope of promotions. As we open new properties, we are always in need of personnel who understand our service standards



SARBENDRA SARKAR



Training and development have become vital for hotels to offer supreme services”

and brand ethos. Those who perform exceedingly well are given more responsibilities, offering them a rise on the career ladder.

Upskilling is not restricted to technical skills. Training and knowledge offered to our staff help them gain a sound understanding of discipline, know the culture of our work, improve performance, meet and interact with people/guests, and, in general, learn about being hospitable in whatever they do. Understanding new technologies and smart understanding, all help them become complete hospitality professionals, and to achieve this, upskilling is a necessity.

The good thing is that, today, there are numerous opportunities to learn, be it online or offline. We encourage our staff to indulge into learning under the guidance of their reporting managers and also learn online through various soft skills tutorials available easily. Upskilling is critical for success, not only for an individual but also for an organisation. It becomes the barometer of success. Therefore, at any given point in time, upskilling is paramount to meet industry and customer demands who seek quality stay, which is dependent on quality service professionals.

SETHUMADHAVAN R. Director-Talent and Culture, ibis New Delhi Aerocity

THE KEY TO REVIVAL AND RECOVERY

Benjamin Franklin said, “Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.” How relevant does it remain in today’s scenario? COVID-19 has impacted almost all industries adversely, with hospitality being the one that has suffered a massive setback in the short term as well as the long term. Having said that, what drives hoteliers is the positivity and the passion with which we work every day and the smile we carry when meeting our guests. Heading towards a recovery, the last quarter has been good for the industry as hotels are opening positions like never before and the teams have more options to choose from and make a career. But hold on, are we looking at the same skill set as pre-COVID-19 or have we changed our lenses?

This pandemic has played a role as a ‘catalyst’, necessitating the most rapid transformation of the workplace and businesses. The hospitality industry is no exception, and rather than constantly reinventing its wheel, thereby meeting the requirements of today while preparing for the future and ways of new age hospitality, we are building new knowledge and new ways of welcoming and serving our guests. The new age of hospitality emphasises constant skilling to remain



SETHUMADHAVAN R.



We, as a brand, have swiftly adapted to the technological needs in demand”

relevant. If I may take ibis New Delhi Aerocity as an example, we set an example for many when our talent and culture head of this hotel started cross-exposure with operations, eventually heading operations for one of our units down south. So was our L&D director, who had left to take on a first-of-its-kind position as the guest services manager, overseeing both F&B and front-of-house operations. Upskilling, as everyone is aware, is not only to hone your skills for a better tomorrow but also to stay relevant today. Hotels are looking for such talents who can add value to their job description and also adapt themselves to the requirements of ‘today and tomorrow’.

Learning is a lifelong process, and we, as a brand, ibis, have swiftly adapted to the technological needs in demand in terms of contactless check-in processes and dine-in, understanding and adapting to one of the most stringent hygiene practices. We have always focussed on being innovative; multiskilling being our mantra, you could find a chef managing not just kitchen but also talk to the guest about their stay and comfort. Our F&B associates pitch in, in handling front desk wherever the operations gets busy; our technicians are always handy in being multi skilled. Our managers from back of house are always there in operational support-handling luggage, managing F&B operations becoming adept in guest interactions to ensure their comfort level. This systematic cross exposure came as a blessing in disguise where we had to run operations in most optimised manner. Critical thinking, flexibility and adaptability, creative problem solving were the soft skills, we made a mark.

While we focused on upskilling our employees, we also invested in enhancing their mental wellbeing. During these uncertain times, a spike in stress, anxiety, and burnout levels amongst employees is a very common challenge for most businesses. In view of this, we have been focussing on emotionally engaging with employees through various channels, such as regular communication with the team, checking on their and their family’s wellbeing, seeking the opportunity to provide any assistance they might need, and, above all, making them realise we are there for them and that together we will pass through this current phase of crisis. To better support our teams during this time, we rolled out several initiatives intended to keep them motivated. We launched a 24x7 Employee Wellness Assistance Plan (EWAP). Employees were and are still encouraged to reach out and ask for professional help if they need it through the Accor EWAP, which provides several services that are confidential and free for employees and their family members. We had a series of webinars and virtual sessions conducted and an anonymous counselling mechanism with therapists to ensure that our heartists (that is how we call our staff) were being taken care of.

With pride, I conclude that upskilling and reskilling are part of our brand DNA, and technological advancements are here to stay, allowing us to remain a relevant and preferred hospitality brand.



Shaping workflow

With its SaaS-based solution, TourWiz not only wants to provide its complete back-end solutions to agencies, but it also seeks to develop an online marketplace for the travel trade community.



Hazel Jain

TourWiz provides travel professionals with all the digital tools and content they need to work more efficiently and grow their business in the post-pandemic world. **Swapnil Shaha**, Chief Executive Officer, TourWiz, explains the concept behind the start-up.

Shaha says, “TourWiz was launched for all the smaller travel agents, taking care of all their back-office needs and providing them with an office on-the-go. We offer back-end solutions, starting from creating leads, sending itineraries and quotations to clients, invoicing, and recording this for their financial analysis. This includes revenue and sales reports. With this product, we want to help them focus on marketing while we offer them support in operations.”

TourWiz is a joint venture between TravelCarma, a global travel technology brand, and Monarch Network Capital, a financial services company in India. It is relevant for leisure travel and home-based agencies, outbound and inbound operators, and DMCs. It is a user-friendly, SaaS-based product, and it comes with a subscription.

“In essence, agencies get a readymade product from us. We are continuously adding features to it based on their feedback. Moreover, each of the tour operators can avail of our ‘Partner With Us’ programme. Here, they can start putting in their special deals and promotions for all our subscriber agents to see and promote them to their own clients. We are building a community for the travel trade on our platform where the travel agent can come and place a request and benefit from our wide network of tour operators, our partners, and other travel agents,” Shaha adds.

The product is now on trial and the subscription will start on January 1, 2022. Shaha reveals, “We have a monthly, quarterly, six-monthly, and yearly plan for subscriptions. The monthly fee will be ₹625 plus GST. The price point



SWAPNIL SHAHA
CEO
TourWiz



We are building a community”



SAURABH MEHTA
Co-Founder
TourWiz



Customisations are completely free”

has been kept affordable. And as soon as they get rewards points, and if they are able to stretch those rewards points to this value, they can use the system literally for free!” It is now heading towards foraying into the Northern and Eastern states of India, so by December end it will have covered the entire country.

FREE UPGRADES

Sharing the technology side of the product, **Saurabh Mehta**, Co-Founder, TourWiz, says, “As of date, we have 5,000 subscribers on our platform. So we do not sell anything on our platform. Our partners directly connect with the agencies. These partners can be either hoteliers or tour operators.”

Expounding further, Mehta says, “Our focus is on subscriptions and bringing them together. So it is like a marketplace. And since this is a SaaS-based model, customisations and upgrades are completely free. We will take ideas from our customers and incorporate them.”

He also reveals that the team is now working on multiple templates. “If a client grows tired of one template, they can change it while the content remains the same. So during Diwali, you can have one template, and another one for Holi. Clients get pretty excited about it. The product is completely mobile-friendly and can be operated off of any device. Right now, we are trying to automate the entire accounting process. This is especially helpful for smaller agencies,” Mehta says. The content includes over 600 airlines, 135,000 hotels, 400,000 activities, as well as 10,000 transfers.

Shaha adds, “We are looking at reaching out to the trade through all the national travel associations, such as TAAI, TAFI, ETAA UTEN – all of them. We have already started talking to them and are trying to become their allied members since booking is not part of our business today, and we are not an IATA organization. Our dream is to reach 10,000 members by the end of the year.”

No white elephants

From no-frills cloud kitchens to rationalised budgets, **Zorawar Kalra**, Managing Director, Massive Restaurants, explains how the rules for running a successful restaurant have changed post pandemic.



Lipla Negi

Cloud kitchens—how do you see this trend panning out?

Cloud kitchens have carved out a strong position in the market. If the product is right and well-marketed, a delivery model could fetch great returns. Everything in the world can go virtual, but restaurants and bars will never go virtual. So, I do not think dining out will change much. Cloud kitchens and dining restaurants will coexist and prosper for a long time.

How have you used the pandemic as an opportunity to reinvent the business model?

Restaurants have always been innovative. So you have to add other avenues of business. Deliveries have surged greatly during COVID-19, even for restaurants that are dine-in establishments such as mine. That is how we launched Butter Delivery and Louis Burger. Cloud kitchens have lucrative unit economics. We are investing half of our resources in this side of the business because our sales from a 300 sq. ft., cloud kitchen are the same as those from our 4,000 sq. ft., restaurants. The trend of revenge consumption is not



ZORAWAR KALRA
Managing Director
Massive Restaurants



We must continue to take measures and develop a contingency plan”

analysis and process-based work to ensure there is no undue cost associated with the restaurant. This also means that every restaurant’s manpower requirements will be reduced. Rather than letting employees off, it is better to hire rationally. It is better to run a lean operation, scrutinising every P&L item, and avoiding unnecessary capital expenditure. We are not going to sign any more crazy leases. No more white elephants.

How do ‘the restaurants of future’ look like?

Cost control will become a major activity. The restaurant sector has grown a lot more efficient as a result of positive unit economics, retooling, and studying all the details of the restaurant’s P&L. People are increasingly coming to restaurants with outside seating. Hence, restaurants with terraces and open-air dining will become more popular. Restaurants will shrink in size as the economics of the industry improve, and the lockdown



going away anytime soon. We are observing a huge growth in online orders as the ease of ordering good-quality food has gained traction.

How much of an impact is Omicron going to have on the revival of industry?

As the pandemic is still ongoing, we must develop a contingency plan. All of my future restaurants will be built on a rational budget. We have done a lot of workflow

has taught people that unit economics are critical to surviving future problems of this sort. Many restaurants will probably be built with social distancing in mind from the beginning. Hence, distances between tables will be permanently increased, different elevations will be used in restaurants to ensure that distance is maintained, and the size of bars may be reduced as congregations are not permitted in bars. As a result, even if there are bars, they may shrink in size.

Festive travel on the rise

COVID-19 led to many festivals being cancelled in 2020. As much as the pandemic has affected the patterns of working and conducting business, it has had its clear upsides in terms of spotlighting domestic tourism.



Ananya Kukreja

The COVID-19 crisis has had its upsides in spotlighting domestic tourism. Ease of domestic travel enraptures the pent-up travellers' desire, creating opportunities for the hospitality sector. The continued demand for mini vacations or staycations is a big contributing factor to festive weekends becoming busier this year. Resident city hotels will experience a considerable boost in banquet bookings.

CAUTIOUS BENEFIT

Guests are opting for air inclusive stays of seven to 10 days. An appetite for celebrations is being witnessed from millennials, groups of friends, corporate MICE, and wedding segment, says **Indiver Rastogi**, President and Group Head of Global Business Travel, Thomas Cook (India) and SOTC. Festive and bank holidays are creating an additional opportunity with travellers extending their stays. Also, high in demand are experiences such as biking, hiking, camping, jungle safaris and picnic lunches, and the industry is rising to the occasion to offer such value additions.

Mahindra Holidays have seen a great uptick in the demand for leisure travel this festive season. Travellers are choosing trusted brands as their vacation partners, says **Miguel Munoz**, Chief Resorts Officer, Mahindra Holidays and Resorts India Limited. Club Mahindra resorts have obtained the highest level of certification in safety and hygiene standards from 'Bureau Veritas'. They also launched 'Travel with Confidence' initiative. Club Mahindra also craft unique experiences around the interests of guests.

At IHCL, there is traction on the 'Dekho Apna Desh' festive offer that gives guests an assortment of exclusive experiences. Ambassador, New Delhi, and The Connaught are witnessing significant buoyancy for the festive weekends and shorter booking windows. After the journey of transformation and re-opening of Machan, the hotel introduced bespoke Machan memorabilia as gifting options and special hampers for children. The Chambers was re-launched this year and has a range of gifting solutions in designer baskets and boxes. Emperor Lounge features gourmet selection of handcrafted savouries and artisanal bakes along with a collection of tea and coffee.



The socio-economic conditions after COVID-19 have altered the travellers' mindset"

The Art of Gifting at Taj Mahal, New Delhi, offers limited edition lux merchandise and gourmet delights. Taj Mahal observed a steady increase in the guests visiting their restaurants for festive dining. With Tajness – A Commitment Restrengthened – the assurance of IHCL's augmented safety protocols, they are privileged to be a part of the guests' festive celebrations, states **Satyajeet Krishnan**, Area Director New Delhi and General Manager, Taj Mahal New Delhi. The demand for exclusive events and memorable destinations are growing. To cater to such demands, Taj Mahal Lucknow ensured customised services and packages under COVID protocols, mentions **Vinod Pandey**, General Manager, Taj Mahal Lucknow.

UPTICK WEDDINGS

Hospitality organisations are observing a strong uptick in weddings and related events. Corporate travel is showing signs of life, and Thomas Cook expects to be at 65 per cent of pre-pandemic levels by the end of the year, working with partner hotels to see a growth in business travel and b-leisure. The Taj Mahal, New Delhi, is a preferred venue for social gatherings and intimate weddings, curated by their culinary, service, and sales teams.

Weddings in city hotels are on the rise for the upcoming season. It is easier for city residents to host events in their hometown. Travel to international places is still limited, however domestic leisure destinations are expanding with individual travel; this makes city hotels a prudent choice.

WAY FORWARD

The hospitality industry will enjoy exponential occupancy from festive bookings by Q4 2021 and Q1 2022. The sector is seeing a surge in demand from city residents and nearby areas. Diwali bookings soared significantly. Top venues are sold out for Christmas and New Year's.

The firms that go above and beyond to ensure the safety of their guests must be credited for building this trust. While many people celebrated in their home comfort even before COVID-19 struck, many others continued to celebrate as flamboyantly as they could even during the peak of the pandemic.



INDIVER RASTOGI



Travel desire has created a significant opportunity for the hospitality sector”



MIGUEL MUNOZ



People are opting for destinations at drivable distances”



SATYAJEET KRISHNAN



The trend has been positive and buoyant this festive season”



Nutrition in focus

Food safety and hygiene are the top priorities for **Chef Davinder Kumar**, President, Indian Culinary Forum and Vice President (F&B Production) and Executive Chef, Le Meridien, New Delhi.



Lipla Negi

C OVID-19 was a sudden stop to the frenzy that chefs are used to. We were facing unprecedented times, and there were a lot of questions that remained to be answered. When will things come back to normal, if at all they do? The resultant changes adapted were mostly focussed on creating a new set of SOPs relevant to the current situation, with hygiene, distancing, and immunity-boosting food taking centre stage. Food deliveries and cloud kitchens have become extremely popular. Things are improving, and today we are looking at a scenario that could lead us to the pre-pandemic stage of the culinary business pretty quickly.

FOOD SAFETY AND HYGIENE ARE VITAL

While food has always been at the centre of all food-related businesses, the focus now is not just on food but also on the source thereof and the procedures followed to bring it to the diners' table. So, food safety and hygiene are things that have become the pillars of strength in the current scheme of things.

How one cooks it and what one uses to ensure that the immunity-boosting quality of the food is maintained and enhanced is the other important aspect that must be kept in mind. Being innovative has always been the key and will continue to help businesses grow.

MENUS FOCUS ON NUTRITIONAL VALUE

One aspect of food which has been highlighted is its ability to showcase the immunity-boosting aspects of the food offered. The chef puts in extra effort to create innovative offerings that help boost immunity. Some menus specifically mention the nutritional aspects of the food being served. Healthy, hygienic, and harmless are



DAVINDER KUMAR
President
Indian Culinary Forum



ICF created a platform to help chefs get employment during difficult times"

the aspects that are being scrutinised both by the staff members and the guests.

CHEF-PRENEURS LEAD THE WAY

During the post-pandemic times, many chefs have donned the hat of an entrepreneur. Some of the chefs, out of compulsion to earn a living, had to set up their own remote kitchens and start with food delivery. Food service financial aspects were quickly learned by chefs and implemented to make a successful business venture.

Of course, all this was done while keeping the basic principles of a chef's role intact and not losing focus on the aspects of health and hygiene. A chef today has become more aware and has to look at all the aspects, not just the food.

INDIA IS A HAVEN FOR FOOD LOVERS

The demographic and geographical expanse of India provides the perfect opportunity for food exploration and adventure. The changing flavours of food as one moves across the country make it a delectable journey.

ICF IS A PLATFORM TO SHOWCASE SKILLS

We at the Indian Culinary Forum have been working towards creating opportunities for and helping gain knowledge and skills for our community of chefs. Chefs have been given platforms to showcase their skills through competitions and also learn from the experts through a series of masterclasses organised online. During the initial days of the pandemic, a lot of chefs lost their jobs. ICF created a special platform to help chefs get employment during such difficult times.

Building resilience

Chefs have been creative and flexible. The need of the hour is to be resilient to stay relevant in the current ever-changing scenario, says **Chef Vivek Saggar**, General Secretary, Indian Culinary Forum.



Lipla Negi

TECH-PUSH IS GOOD

With the ever-growing concept of automation all around us, equipment like dosa makers, grills with conveyor belts, and others has been flourishing. Tables now have digital menus. Since the cost of ingredients has been erratic, digital menus make it easier for restaurants to adjust their prices. Robotics will take over kitchens, making them smaller and more efficient.

CLOUD KITCHENS ARE COST-EFFECTIVE

The trend of establishing cloud kitchens has accelerated, even in remote areas. For instance, during COVID-19, restaurants were surviving mostly through online deliveries, and even five-star hotels started drive-through food collection systems. While it takes a lot of capital to set up a restaurant, relatively minimal resources



VIVEK SAGGAR
General Secretary
Indian Culinary
Forum



The trend of establishing cloud kitchens has accelerated”

are needed for a cloud kitchen. Hence, consumers get quality food in much lesser amount.

RESTORE CUSTOMER CONFIDENCE

To get the customers back to the restaurants, hoteliers need to win their confidence by ensuring safety protocols are strictly followed. For instance, the model of letting consumers see the preparation of their food in real-time to ensure proper hygiene is getting popular. Even budget-friendly menus are being encouraged to attract more customers back to their favourite dining places.

THINK LOCAL FOR SUSTAINABILITY

We can promote sustainability by going local as the cost of importing food items across the globe is not

measured just in money, but in carbon emissions too. We also need to design menus as per the season to reduce the import of fruits and vegetables throughout the year. The sustainable food movement requires supporting the right kinds of producers. Choosing a more plant-based diet is another step towards it. The government and farmers also have a big role to play in it, as have the restaurateurs and customers. It is worth the effort as a few minor tweaks to your lifestyle can have a huge impact on the way the food system develops in the coming decades.

CHEFS HAVE TO UPSKILL

Chefs these days are expected to be not just skilled, but multi-skilled. They just cannot specialise in a thing or two, but have to upskill. They have to learn things that haven't been there before. Everyone in the industry is now expected to keep upgrading themselves. As the industry reopened after the COVID-19-related restrictions, the notion of training the trainer had been in their minds to give them an edge in the post-pandemic world. Chefs need to get tech-savvy, innovate, perform with critical thinking and exhibit emotional intelligence. Chefs have been creative and flexible. They must now be resilient.

INDIA'S CULINARY HERITAGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

If you look at the categories in the Chef Awards, there were diverse categories where regional food from across the nation was cooked and promoted. For instance, if we talk about kebabs, we think of a non-vegetarian item. However, we made sure to reserve a place for the vegetarian variant of the dish for the chefs to master. Also, halwaais, the sweet-makers who are not even brought into the conversation, generally get acknowledged and rewarded by the Indian Culinary Forum.





Spotlight on **history**

In all aspects of the design, Pilibhit captures the accurate aura and spiritual essence of the town, meticulously carried out with sustainable practises and modern adaptation.

Haridwar is known for the strong influences of the deity Shiva, which are enhanced by the presence of the Ganga River. Pilibhit House, a mesmerising hospitality project in Haridwar by Designers Group, seeks to enthrall everyone entering the town in search of liberation (Moksha). The Pilibhit House Hotel's contemporary design grammar was heavily influenced by Haridwar's cultural and religious significance. The descendants of the royal family of Pilibhit owned this vintage property on the banks of the Ganga River.

The design was conceptualised by highlighting the four phases of life, or Purusharth, as per Hindu Philosophy, i.e., Dharma (righteousness), Artha (prosperity), Kama (pleasure, love), and Moksha, translated into a contemporary setting. Multiple design influences were incorporated as a homage to Lord Shiva and the gateway for the Chardham Yatra. The cultural and spiritual significance of Haridwar plays a considerable part in the contemporary design grammar of the Pilibhit House by IHCL SeleQtions. The project was first initiated by the late Ar. Pradeep Sachdeva. This project was handed over to Designers Group after his untimely demise in 2020. Later, Sachdeva's team teamed up with Designers Group on the property's architecture to successfully complete the project.

The hotel is divided into four sections: the entry, courtyard, lounge, and dining area, which all face the holy river. The entryway symbolises Dharma. The courtyard is the next space guests enter, emphasising their relationship with Artha. The hotel's central hub, the courtyard, includes the lounge, lobby, reception area, and coffee shop. The



Rudraksha is prominently depicted in the decor and styling”

reception area is an illustration of the Bholenath. All guests are ensured a celebratory welcome, adorned with a symbolic Rudraksha Mala, thus symbolising birth, with a skunk, Damrus, and a welcome mantra.

The overall property enables guests to comprehend the concept of Purusharth with Lord Shiva's spiritual influences. The ceremonial representation is done with small details that take into account the natural lighting and architectural elements used in the design. The 100-year-old mango tree has been preserved, and a pool has been designed around it. The River Lounge is designed near the Ganga Ghat. The treatment and control of air and water pollution were employed through the use of sustainable architectural practises. The hotel authorities are working on the maintenance of the Ganga Ghat and the vicinity as part of their goal to give back to society. The hotel encourages the use of lost native cuisines and local art and culture, as well as provides proper skill training to trainees and employed personnel.

The Haveli's rooms have been luxuriously designed as suites using contemporary design grammar. The Ganga's changing colours through the seasons inspire the property's overall colour palette, which can be observed in both the backdrop and the chandeliers. The soft furnishings have been chosen to complement the celebrations of the holy river and the Haridwar temples.

There is also a spa on the hotel premises. The palatial hotel allows guests to descend right into the holy river to either see the rituals or partake in the coveted Ganga Snaan. The design also includes a Ganga lounge, often known as the river room.

Best culinary artists

ICF presented the 18th Annual Chef Awards alongside the 9th edition of Knowledge Summit to honour chefs and their extraordinary contribution to the industry in commemoration of International Chefs Day.

In the presence of Chief Guest, K.B. Kachru, Chairman Emeritus and Principal Advisor, Radisson Hotel Group, South Asia, and other top-notch names from the culinary fraternity, awards were bestowed on the best chefs in 16 categories. With its 18th edition, the Annual Chef Awards continued their legacy of providing chefs with a platform to showcase their culinary, preparation, and presentation skills while also being honoured. The Indian Culinary Forum (ICF) held the 9th edition of its Knowledge Summit. The Knowledge Summit provides a forum for discussing issues affecting the industry and charting the industry's future course.

The 9th Chef Summit's theme was "A Healthy Planet for Future Generations: A Step Toward Sustainability," and it was held over three sessions. V.S. Datta was the guest of honour for the occasion. The Knowledge Summit provides a forum for discussing issues related to the duty of passing on the knowledge and culinary abilities to the next generation of chefs. The first panel discussed post-pandemic innovative gastronomic trends: survival



The event serves as a medium to bring the best out of the upcoming chefs"

strategies. Maneesh Baheti moderated the session, and panellists included Surjit Dhillon and chefs Davinder Kumar, Manish Mehrotra, and Rajeev Janveja. The panel explored the HACCP perspective in the aftermath of COVID-19.

The second session's theme was 'Sustainability through Consumption: A New Mantra'. Chefs Saby, Vinod Bhatti, Ankit Gaurav, and Prakarshi Pulkit were on the panel, which was moderated by Chef Vineet Manocha. The panel discussed the sustainable consumption mantra, promoting a plant-based diet while stressing the importance of limiting and naturalising available ingredients to attain sustainability. The point of being vocal for local was also discussed.

The third session emphasised the development of culinary skills, including knowledge, skills, and attitude. Chefs V.S. Datta, Amit Wadhwa, Aditya Jaimini, and Utkash Bhalla acted as panellists for Chef Rajiv Gulshan's session, which was chaired by him. The session's focus was on bridging the gap between academia and industry.



Chef Davinder Kumar, President, ICF, says, "In our bid to encourage them to match the international standards, the prime objective of the Chef Awards is to provide the chefs with a platform where they can exhibit their culinary, preparation, and presentation skills and get rewarded for the same. The event also serves as a medium to bring the best out of the upcoming chefs while also maximising the potential of the existing ones for their growth in the sector."

The Chef Awards were preceded by a three-day culinary competition at the Indian Culinary Institute in Noida, where over 100 chefs from starred hotels and high-end standalone restaurants competed in 10 different categories for the Best Chef awards. The jury was comprised of well-known chefs and was presided over by a WACS-certified chef. The jury chairperson was Chef Umesh Mattoo, while the organising secretary was Chef Sireesh Saxena. The Chef Awards also honoured industry veterans in six other categories, with winners chosen by a panel of eminent jurors.



Chef Vivek Saggur, General Secretary, ICF, says, "The platform will not merely be a competition as chefs will be updated with modern techniques and mechanisms. The right training can take you places, and therefore, the Chef Awards are more than just a competition. For 18 years now, the association has been giving due recognition to the unknown faces that bring smiles to the faces of diners. By imparting improved education and organising grand industry-specific events, we keep moving one step ahead and set new benchmarks in the hospitality industry."



Reimagining hotel of the future



‘Futurama’ refers to a glimpse of something that is not yet a reality or an indication of what might be. In ‘Hotel Futurama and Other Stories’, Bhatia paints a picture of futuristic hotels that contrasts with reality.

Hotel Futurama is about a hotel in the future that we hope to see. While it was written ahead of its time, around 2008, and the original manuscript predicted that the narrative would take place in 2015, that year has passed, and the hotels are yet to advance to this stage as on date.

Part of it is already happening in the hospitality industry, but there is still a lot more that has to be accomplished in terms of technology. Many



**RAJINDER
MOHAN
BHATIA**

aspects, such as mobile phone access, facial recognition, digitalisation of menu cards, and sensor taps in guest rooms, were set in motion by a pandemic, to say the least. As a result, we have moved the storyline forward to 2025.

The actual hotels, like the name of the hotel, Futurama, are somewhat there, but not yet a reality. But, while Hotel Futurama gives us a glimpse into the future, with technology advancing at a rate faster than we can imagine, will there ever be an actual hotel like this or will it always remain a fantasy?

In Rajinder Mohan Bhatia’s novel, the author takes the readers on a three-day journey around the Hotel Futurama. It is a wake-up call to what is possible. Every element of his stay, from the welcome to the discovery of a hotel as a mini city, will be a journey into the possible future.

There are several other interesting stories on different topics:

- **Love is Blind:** If love is blind, what causes us to perceive it?
- **Lucky Charm:** Would you consider a successful thief lucky?
- **The Marriage Proposal:** How many marriage proposals have you made in anticipation of the right time? Would you give up, or would you persevere?
- **The Withering Flower:** To what extent will a father go for his daughter’s happiness?

Rajinder Mohan Bhatia’s fascinating stories contain all of this and more.



Bhatia takes the readers through the journey of a three-day stay at Hotel Futurama”



Making inroads in India

With global expansion in mind, the ISH partners with Sommet Education at a time when the sector is on the cusp of revival and renewal.



Lipla Negi

Collaboration creates a multiplicity of opportunities and possibilities, especially when two like-minded industry leaders join hands to pursue a common vision. With an ambition to become the largest hospitality and culinary arts education players in India by working together, the Indian School of Hospitality (ISH) and Sommet Education recently shared plans for their India business at an event in Delhi NCR. The plans celebrate their partnership and serve as a blueprint of all that the two leaders hope to achieve in the near future.

“For Sommet Education, this alliance creates the opportunity to leverage ISH as a springboard into India and the region. As a dynamic young economy, India is the perfect development platform for international education brands to invest in and innovate,” says **Benoit-Etienne Domenget**, CEO, Sommet Education. While École Ducasse has now opened its first campus in India at ISH with this partnership, Les Roches enters into an academic alliance with ISH for its undergraduate and postgraduate hospitality management programmes.

The partners have already chalked out a plan to expand the current ISH Gurugram campus to feature an additional 25,000 sq. ft., of classrooms, training kitchens, and student experience areas. This expansion will increase the capacity of the campus to over 500 students and is expected to be operational by early 2022. “We are also evaluating opportunities for a second campus to be located in Mumbai, Bengaluru, or Hyderabad,” shares **Dilip Puri**, Founder and CEO, ISH. There are also plans to launch a network of École Ducasse studios in select cities across India that will cater to the needs of professionals, enthusiasts, and career changers for upskilling and acquiring new skills.

Addressing the impact of the pandemic on the hospitality sector, Puri says, “It has become imperative for education to move hand in hand with this evolution to reflect and serve the needs of the industry. Factors like digitalisation and technological advancements have propelled this change. Updating education delivery and pedagogy, globalisation of the curriculum, better infrastructure, and industry immersion are some of the key dynamics of this partnership that will help provide a global quality of education and prepare students to lead the industry tomorrow.”

The pandemic pushed the hospitality industry to rethink and reinvent itself, with an additional focus on health, safety, and wellness. The industry is also realising the need to upskill and reskill existing



Updating education delivery is one of the key dynamics of this partnership”



and future employees, and this is where hospitality institutes are helping professionals stay relevant. “The hospitality institutes have restructured and realigned their curriculum and learning methodology to meet the industry’s evolving requirements. For instance, digital and technology incorporation has increased greatly, be it in products, operations, or customer service. In that respect, we not only use the best of technology to impart education to our students, but also equip them with the technological know-how to ace in the sector through quintessential courses such as digital marketing, safety and wellness, service operations, and emerging technologies. The programmes help you attain future-proof skills,” informs Puri.

Domenget believes that education is the key to the recovery of the hospitality sector. “With a diverse tourism portfolio, India has been successful in enticing international travellers. The increasing variety of traveller types requires the future hospitality leaders to learn from institutions that offer a globally focussed curriculum and opportunities to gain experience abroad.” To tackle the pandemic-induced challenges, Puri feels, “It is vital for organisations to invest in employees’ upskilling and reskilling. These include proficiency in soft and life skills, technological agility, and adaptability. The industry must now work closely with academic institutions and have more training programmes for their employees.”



< VICTOR CHEN

General Manager
Courtyard by Marriott Mumbai International Airport
 With 21 years in the industry, Chen is a seasoned hotelier with a strong operations background. He began his career with Hyatt Hotels in the Corporate Leadership programme and rose through the ranks.



< SOUMEN HALDER

General Manager
Polo Floatel, Calcutta
 With a career spanning over two decades, Halder gained industry exposure across leading hotel chains in India, such as Taj and Accor. He strives to bring out the best brand value and ensure that each guest has their own bespoke Polo Towers experience.



T. BOBBY SINGH >

General Manager
Pushkara Sarovar Portico, Dibrugarh
 Singh brings with two decades of experience. His core strength lies in hotels' pre-opening, MICE and banqueting business, operations management, and recruitment. He has been associated with pre-openings and running hotels.



URVASHI ANAND >

Associate Director- Training & Quality
Signum Hotels
 Anand comes with 12 years' experience. She will be responsible for formulating training calendars, analysing training needs, implementing training strategies, and brand standards responsibilities.



< DEEPTI KAPIL

Marketing Manager
The LaLiT Ashok Bangalore and The LaLiT Resort & Spa Bekal
 Kapil will handle marketing, communication, PR, and promotions to enhance the visibility of the hotel. She brings an unconventional approach to her work, leading with an open heart full of purpose and passion.



< SUSHIL AMLANI

Head - Business Development
Espire Hospitality
 Amlani has over two decades of experience in business development, hotel operations, and sales. In his new role, he will be supporting the growth objective of the company and achieving the goal of 20 resorts in the next two years.



ROHIT NAIR >

Front Office Manager
Sheraton Grand Pune
 Nair will be responsible for maintaining quality and service standards, and focus on developing new concepts to bring in innovation to enhance the guest experience. He will also manage the room operations to ensure an elevated experience for guests.



< JAGMEET SINGH

Executive Chef
Radisson RED Chandigarh Mohali
 He will spearhead the restaurant - Redhaba, the lounge - Jiggera Bar, the bakery - Lavo & Go, in-room dining, and banquet operations as well as training chefs to facilitate a collaborative environment in F&B operations.



< BALVINDER LUBANA

Executive Chef
Hyderabad Marriott Hotel & Convention Centre & Courtyard by Marriott Hyderabad
 Lubana comes with 13 years of experience. Over the years, he has worked with a host of Indian and international luxury hotel chains, including Oberoi, Taj, Marriott, and Hyatt Hotels.



MANDEEP KUMAR >

F&B Manager
Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel
 He will be responsible for heading and managing F&B operations and maintaining high standards of guest satisfaction. He will closely work with the sales and marketing team to establish greater brand visibility for the hotel's F&B offerings.



Hamare 31 Saal ke
Anubhav ka

Swadisht Tadka

Ready
to Eat

COMBO

Fully Cooked...
Just heat and eat !!!



IRCTC
APPROVED

For Ordering
8128015994

Available in Regular and Jain



COMBO

Paneer Mutter with Plain Rice | Rajma with Peas Pulao
Gujarati Dal with Plain Rice | Chhole with Plain Rice
Veg Biryani with Mirchi ka Salan | Gujarati Khichdi Kadhi
Dal Fry with Peas Pulao | Dal Makhani with Jeera Rice

SPECIAL PACK FOR

Ho Re Ca



HOTEL, RESTAURANT, CAFÉ OR CATERING

Palak Gravy | Shahi Gravy
Dal Fry | Makhani Gravy



Jain options
also available

#startupindia



छप्पनभोग

Since 1989

स्वाद परंपरा का

L.S.S.A.I L.No.1002002006560



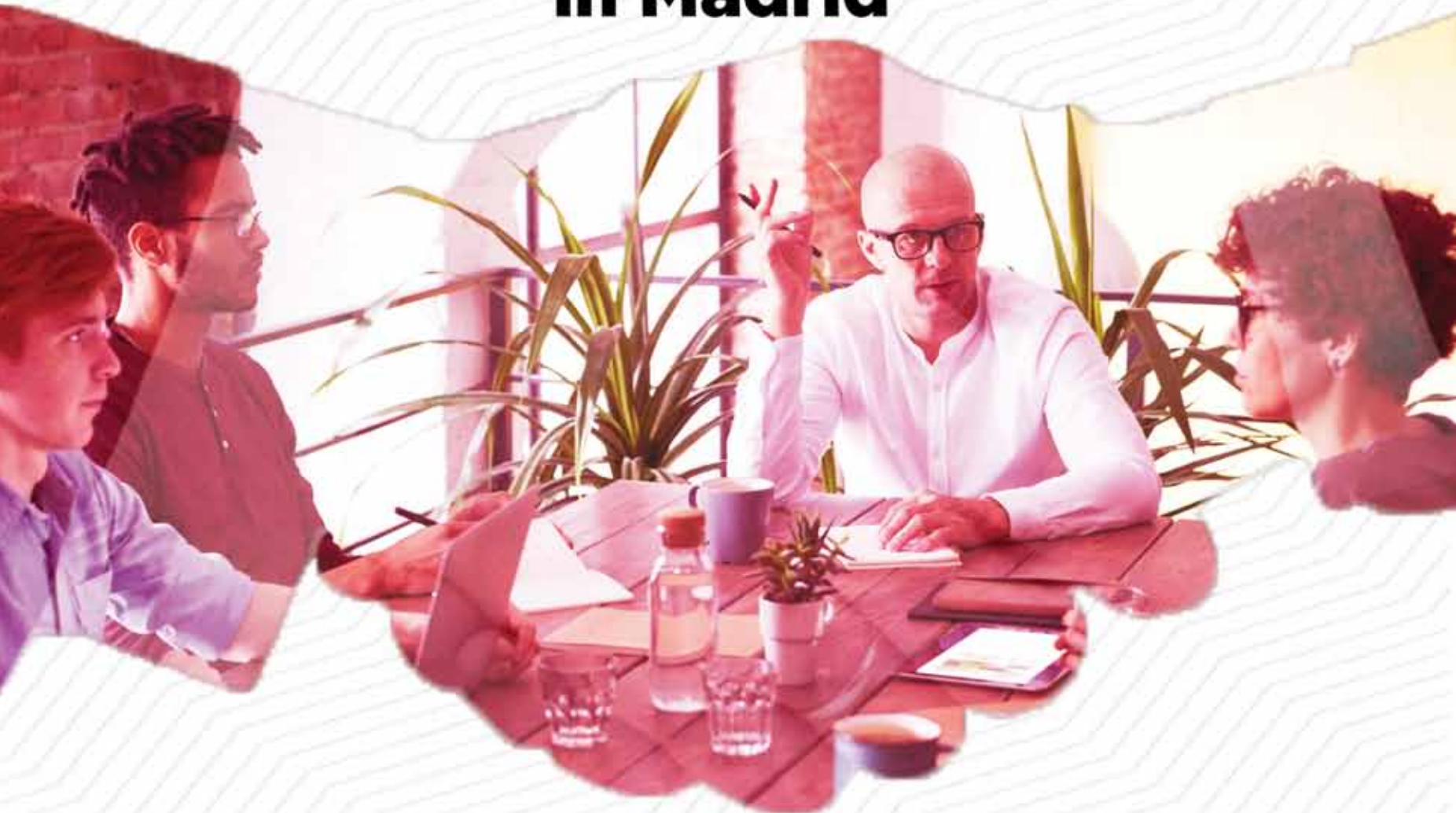
Manufactured & Marketed by
R. RETAIL & EATERY PVT. LTD.
88 Sampatrao colony, Productivity Road,
Alkapuri, Vadodara - 390007
Toll Free : +91 769 887 3313

e : Info@patelschhappanbhog.com • W : www.patelschhappanbhog.com • Follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/patelschhappanbhog) [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/patelschhappanbhog) [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/patelschhappanbhog) [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC56bhogVadodara)

Also Available on [amazon](https://www.amazon.in) [Flipkart](https://www.flipkart.com) [SHOPCLUES](https://www.shopclues.com) [snapdeal](https://www.snapdeal.com) [GROFERS](https://www.grofers.com) [paytm](https://www.paytm.com) [indiamart](https://www.indiamart.com) [JdMart](https://www.jdmart.com) [trade india.](https://www.tradeindia.com) [Alibaba](https://www.alibaba.com)



International Tourism Trade Fair in Madrid



Contact, Exchange, Opportunity and
BUSINESS.

19-23 January 2022



For More information, please contact:
devika@ddppl.com, +91-9818767141
reema.khan@ddppl.com, +91-9810191852