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Charting new course

Hospitality businesses are continuously evolving and adapting to newest trends. This involves everything from marketing initiatives to embracing cutting-edge technologies and responding to global events.

With a twin deal, CROSS HOTELS enhances Balinese charm

With Bali's borders now open to international visitors, Cross Hotels & Resorts has given the 'island of the Gods' a massive boost of confidence with the continued expansion of Cross Collection. Joining the Cross Collection family are Tanadewa Resort & Spa Ubud and Tanadewa Villas & Spa Nusa Dua. Situated in the tranquil foothills of Bali, Tanadewa Resort & Spa Ubud by Cross Collection offers a selection of modern suites and villas with contemporary designs and Balinese accents. Meanwhile, Tanadewa Villas & Spa Nusa Dua by Cross Collection is exclusively designed to embody sophisticated décor with Bali's rustic roots. Together, the pair bring Cross Hotels & Resorts' Balinese collection to four unique properties that include Away Bali, Legian Camakila, and Cross Bali Breakers.



CENTARA expands its portfolio

Centara Hotels & Resorts has signed a Hotel Management Agreement (HMA) for Centara Riverside Hotel Chiang Mai. Senior management teams from the two companies officially executed the agreement at a signing ceremony held at Centara Grand at CentralWorld recently. The latest signing is the first following the announcement by Centara of its bold expansion plans, which will help the group reach its goal of becoming a top 100 global hotel operator within five years. Centara Riverside Hotel's 526 guestrooms range between 45 and 223 sq. m. Facilities include a wide range of culinary experiences across the varied restaurants and bars, a large outdoor swimming pool, saunas and steam rooms.



voco expands in ME with VOCO DOHA WEST BAY SUITES

IHG Hotels & Resorts has rebranded voco Doha West Bay Suites, the first voco property in Qatar, and is introducing guests to refreshed dining and stay experiences. Nestled in Doha's most popular spot, West Bay, voco Doha West Bay Suites offers a modern, stylish, and unstuffy hotel experience for guests. The 46-floor offers 396 spacious rooms and suites, as well as well-loved restaurants and lounges—The Social, Serenitea, and Sky Lounge, an exclusive helipad, a pool deck, a 24-hour gym with steam, sauna, and Jacuzzi, a spa, a kids' wading pool, and five meeting rooms.

Travel demand to Southeast Asia rises: TRAVELPORT

As borders begin to reopen across Southeast Asia, increased flight bookings show how excited travellers are to return to the region, as per Travelport. The Philippines takes the lead by achieving 42 per cent of its international bookings in Q1 2019 prior to COVID-19. In Q1 2022, the Philippines and Thailand registered 51 per cent of all international flight bookings to the region. The top five countries travelling to Southeast Asia are the US, the UK, Australia, Saudi Arabia, and South Korea. Solo travellers made up 44 per cent of international flight bookings for Q1 2022 to date.



CHOICE HOTELS INTERNATIONAL collaborates with IDEaS

Choice Hotels International, Inc., has collaborated with IDEaS, a SAS company, to help drive commercial success and help enable franchisee revenue growth across its entire global enterprise of more than 7,000 hotels. In collaboration with Choice Hotels, IDEaS developed ChoiceMax, a mobile-first revenue management solution designed for quick, painless implementation and immediate efficiency to help with revenue gains. A mobile-first strategy – IDEaS' user-friendly mobile app empowers Choice Hotels franchisees to more effectively manage channels, rates, and inventory by adapting to local market trends in real time through repricing and competitive rate-shopping—anytime, anywhere. **Douglas Lisi**, VP-Revenue Management, Choice Hotels, said, "To date, 93 per cent of pricing recommendations from ChoiceMAX have been accepted by properties, and the reception of ChoiceMAX among franchisees has been overwhelmingly positive."

FARNEK to establish TRENDZ at ATM

Farneke, the UAE-based smart and green facilities management (FM) company, is set to launch Trendz, a new standalone hotel management company, at the Arabian Travel Market (ATM). "Trendz offers a unique 360-degree service for hotel owners and operating companies with an accent on technology and sustainability. Farneke has traditionally provided manpower and outsourcing services, such as cleaning, security, and property maintenance," said **Walter Knight**, Director of Hospitality at Farneke. Farneke recently developed an app called Flexi-Guest, which digitalises the guest journey from pre-arrival to check-out. It has completed a successful trial, having secured a contract for the Expo Village, situated on the Expo 2020 site.



WALTER KNIGHT
Director of Hospitality
Farneke



Thompson Vienna Milestone Development plans by HYATT

A Hyatt affiliate has entered into a management agreement with an affiliate of SIGNA and CENTRAL Group for Thompson Vienna, a new hotel to be located in the Austrian capital. The milestone development demonstrates Hyatt's drive to expand its brands throughout Europe, along with a strong commitment to growing the Thompson Hotels portfolio. Expected to open in late 2024, the 148-room hotel will be located on Mariahilferstrasse (Mariahilfer Street) in the popular retail area of Vienna.

OUTRIGGER pursues Green Seal certification

Outrigger Hospitality Group is moving forward with the Green Seal certification process at seven of its owned and/or managed properties in Hawaii, as well as its beach resorts in Fiji and Mauritius. This comes on the heels of Outrigger being recognised by the Hawaii Green Business programme. Outrigger is the first in Hawaii to commit to earning the certification for its properties, as well as the first hospitality brand to pursue the certification outside of the US.



LA VIE HOTELS & RESORTS, Sri Lanka to be operational under Radisson Hotel Group

La Vie Hotels & Resorts has signed a deal with Radisson Hotel Group (RHG) and Sino Lanka Group to operate three hotels in Sri Lanka. This agreement with RHG will see the company launch an upscale Radisson Blu resort on the shores of the Indian Ocean near Galle and two upscale Radisson hotels in Colombo—one in the heart of the country's capital city and the other in Kandy, the cultural heart of the island. The three new properties will start to welcome guests following their rebranding as Radisson Blu and Radisson properties, and after a substantial refurbishment investment that will significantly uplift the properties to bring them in line with RHG's standards. This announcement comes on the back of the group's launch of Quality Resort & Spa Patong Beach on 27 March 2022.



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Marching on

Despite COVID-19, India's hospitality sector is finally experiencing an upswing, thanks to influx of domestic tourists. Despite challenges, industry is poised for rebound as international travel reopens.

NAMAMI Health and Wellness Retreat launches in Kerala

Namami Wellness and Health Edu Pvt. Ltd., an emerging healthcare and hospitality company, has launched its futuristic wellness centre, Namami Health Retreat and Wellness Sanctuary, on the banks of the Periyar River in Ernakulam, Kerala. The resort offers 79 rooms and villas, a range of culinary experiences, curated recreation spaces, and a holistic approach towards a healthy lifestyle. The contemporary interiors expand the local living experience based on the traditional principles of architecture, construction, and carpentry. This retreat provides education and services in wellness and health through the ancient sciences of Yoga, Ayurveda, and complementary alternative medicine, while integrating scientific approaches to provide a holistic 360-degree approach to enhance life expectancy. Namami Health has partnered with different national and international organisations like The Yoga Institute, PNNM Ayurveda Medical College and Hospital, Lexi Health, and Dr. Shetty's Aesthetics to bring on board certified experts in Ayurveda, Naturopathy, Yoga, Acupuncture, and fitness.



MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL to bring ST. REGIS brand to Goa

Marriott International, Inc., has signed an agreement with Ceres Hotels Private Limited to bring the storied St. Regis brand to Goa. Slated to open in October 2022, this agreement will bring the brand's vanguard spirit, signature Butler Service, cherished rituals, and rich legacy to one of Goa's most alluring neighborhoods. Following a strategic conversion of The Leela Goa, The St. Regis Goa Resort is expected to serve as the ninth Marriott International hotel in Goa. The resort will undergo a complete transformation in phases, starting in 2022. Ceres Hotels Private Limited, the owner of the resort, is a subsidiary of Metrod Holdings Berhad, which is listed on the Kuala Lumpur stock exchange. "The St. Regis Goa Resort will usher in a new benchmark of luxury hospitality and underscore the trust and confidence our owners have in us and in the power of our luxury brands," said **Rajeev Menon**, President, APAC (excluding Greater China), Marriott International.



THE LEELA expands footprint in South India

The Leela Palaces, Hotels, and Resorts has signed a management agreement for The Leela Kovalam and The Leela Ashtamudi, expanding its footprint in South India and fortifying the brand's resort portfolio. The Leela Kovalam, a Raviz Hotel, returns to The Leela portfolio after three years, while The Leela Ashtamudi, a Raviz Hotel, will be a significant new addition to the brand portfolio to complete the much sought-after and serenely beautiful Kerala itinerary. **Anuraag Bhatnagar**, COO, The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts, said, "This expansion is in lockstep with the growing demand from the discerning global leisure traveller to experience meaningful and transformative journeys."

HYATT CENTRIC Janakpuri New Delhi opens its doors

Hyatt Hotels Corporation has opened the Hyatt Centric Janakpuri New Delhi, marking the Hyatt Centric brand's debut in the national capital. The Hyatt Centric Janakpuri New Delhi features 224 newly refurbished rooms with a playful juxtaposition of colors, textures, and handpicked bric-a-brac to reflect the city's vibrancy. "With its accessible location, multi-dimensional event spaces, and unique F&B experiences, the property offers share-worthy experiences," said **Shikha Singh**, General Manager, Hyatt Centric Janakpuri New Delhi.



HILTON launches HILTON GARDEN INN Pune Hinjawadi

Hilton and Alexis Hospitality LLP have opened the Hilton Garden Inn Pune Hinjawadi. Located within the Rajiv Gandhi Infotech Park, the 144-room hotel marks the entry of the award-winning Hilton Garden Inn brand into Pune. "The property offers upscale and affordable accommodations and modern amenities that appeals to domestic and international travellers alike," said **Jenny Milos**, VP, Focused Service and All Suites Brands, APAC.

Sayaji Group of Hotels launches ENRISE BY SAYAJI Aurangabad

Sayaji Group of Hotels has expanded its footprint in Maharashtra with the launch of Enrise by Sayaji Aurangabad. The property offers 32 well-appointed rooms, comprising of 24 Grande rooms and eight Club Grande rooms, designed with all contemporary amenities. The hotel offers three banquets that are specifically designed to host 150 to 250 guests in an informal style. At Momenntt, the multi-cuisine restaurant that caters to the millennial segment, serves a delectable assortment of Indian, Continental, and Thai dishes in buffet and a la carte form. "The land has been synonymous with history, culture, and heritage. Over the years, Aurangabad has also transformed itself into a major industrial hub. The region attracts a large slice of travellers from India and across the globe. With this new property, we move a step forward in expanding our presence in popular destinations across India," says **Jameel Sayed**, Director-Business Development, Sayaji Hotels Ltd.



AAHAR 2022 begins at Pragati Maidan



AAHAR, the International Food & Hospitality Fair is a flagship B2B event organised by the India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO), the trade promotion body of the government. The 36th edition of the event is being held from 26–30 April 2022, at Pragati Maidan (New Delhi). AAHAR is one of Asia's best known brands in food and hospitality shows. The show has grown by leaps and bounds in recent years and is today a well-known destination for global vendors and sourcing professionals. AAHAR 2019 was held in an area of 25,000 square metre, with around 736 participants, including 150 exhibitors from 18 countries. AAHAR is divided into three major categories: the food sector, the F&B equipment sector (preparation, processing, and packaging), and the hospitality and décor sectors.



IHCL announces TAJ hotel and branded residences in Chennai

The Indian Hotels Company (IHCL) has signed another Taj hotel in Chennai. The development under management contract will feature branded residences as part of the hotel complex. The complex is spread over 3.5 acres. This greenfield development, once completed, will comprise a luxury hotel with 235 keys and 123 Taj-branded residences. The hotel will have four restaurants, a bar,



and a selection of adaptable meeting spaces with outdoor areas ideal for hosting business and social events. Guests will be able to enjoy recreational facilities such as a pool, fitness centre, and spa. The residences will enjoy Taj's legendary service and access to the hotel's facilities. Commenting on the signing, **Puneet Chhatwal**, MD and CEO, IHCL, said, "This signing is in line with IHCL's vision of strengthening our presence in key markets across India. The multi-use development will cater to our discerning clientele and, in addition to a world-class hotel, will offer some of the most exclusive homes in the city managed by a trusted brand. We are pleased to partner with AMPA Group for this project."

LEMON TREE HOTELS unveils its second property in Rishikesh

Lemon Tree Hotels Limited has opened Keys Lite by Lemon Tree Hotels, Tapovan, Rishikesh. This is the second property of the group in the city, strategically located near the Ganges River on the Badrinath road. The hotel features 38 well-appointed rooms and suites with aesthetically designed interiors and modern amenities and facilities for the utmost comfort of guests. Complementing the stay are a multi-cuisine coffee shop, Keys Café, and a rejuvenating spa. This hotel also features an array of well-appointed spaces for functions, business meetings, conferences, or private events. Keys Lite by Lemon Tree Hotels, Tapovan, Rishikesh caters to both business travellers and tourists. Guests can soak in the tranquilly of the region and admire the rich flora and fauna, enjoy thrilling sports activities, or explore the nearby tourist spots like Neer Gaddu waterfalls, Patna waterfalls, the guided Ganga Aarti at Parmarth Niketan, Triveni Ghat, and more.



Industry is moving towards more efficient staffing models: JLL

As key hotel markets mature and business and leisure interests spread wider, the industry is witnessing a significant shift in the upcoming hotel supply, with approximately 43 per cent of the planned pipeline concentrated in tier 2 and 3 markets. Staffing in these locations will necessitate industry's commitment to train and upskill local talent. As per findings from a survey conducted by JLL and The People Network, the direct manpower requirements for the industry is estimated to be in the range of 100,000–150,000 professionals for hotels only, excluding the demand for ancillary and travel trade industries. The report also reveals the staffing gaps currently faced across departments, with the maximum shortage found in F&B (53 per cent), followed by the front office (26 per cent), and housekeeping (21 per cent).


Travel on rebound

Hotel occupancy increased significantly in the beginning of the year, although room rates continued to rise year-on-year. However, due to ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia, input prices are expected to rise.

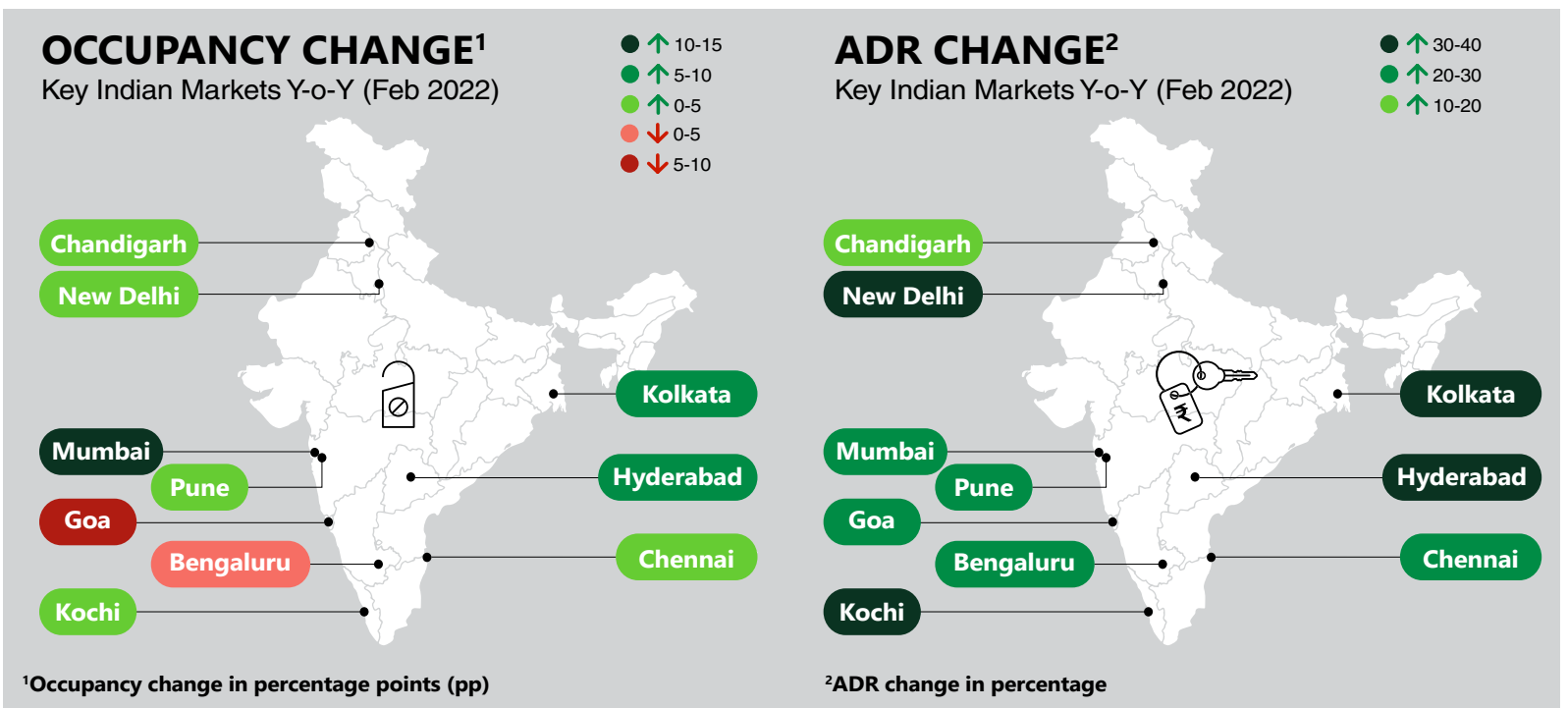
HOTEL SECTOR

Key Stats (India Average)

	FEB 2022	M-o-M (%)	Y-o-Y (%)	FEB 2022	DEC 2021	NOV 2021	OCT 2021
ADR	₹5,000 - ₹5,200	↑ 2-4%	ADR	↑ 22-24%	↑ 21-23%	↑ 33-35%	↑ 42-44%
Occupancy	53% - 55%	↑ 17-19pp ¹	Occupancy	↑ 3-5pp	↓ 7-9pp	↑ 15-17pp	↑ 24-26pp
RevPAR	₹2,650 - ₹2,860	↑ 55-57%	RevPAR	↑ 31-33%	↓ 1-3%	↑ 82-84%	↑ 156-158%



Source: HVS Research



Source: HVS Research



³Data collated by HVS from 13 hotel operators and media reports as of 25 March 2022

Source: HVS Research

Bullish on expansion

Indian landscape seems propitious for Radisson Hotel Group currently on account of strong recovery rate. This resilience of sector in Indian market has led to RHG being bullish on expansion, with 148 hotels and resorts to be added by 2025.



Hazel Jain

Radisson Hotel Group is preparing to double its portfolio in India as it unveils plans to more than double its Indian footprint, with 148 hotels and resorts to be added by 2025. These will be in addition to the over 140 properties Radisson Hotel Group currently has in operation or under development nationwide. At present, Radisson Hotel Group operates 106 hotels and resorts in India, covering seven of its brands.

Showing faith in the India market, **Katerina Giannouka**, President-APAC, Radisson Hotel Group, says, "I am so impressed by the way the India market has rebounded, successfully, much faster than the last wave. After the first wave, it took about seven months to recover RevPAR. In the second wave, we took only four months, and we have seen with Omicron that our hotels have rebounded within a month. This illustrates the resilience of the market, predominantly driven by leisure travellers in India. And now I am happy to see that the MICE segment is coming back along with corporate demand." She added that the team has a pipeline of about 40 more properties, which puts the group at 150 hotels. "Our target is to double that to 300 hotels within the next five years. We have a focus on tiered cities in India. We already have a large network of hotels across the country. One can reach a Radisson hotel every five hours. So we have a good distribution of properties across India," Giannouka added.



KATERINA GIANNOUKA
President-APAC
Radisson Hotel Group



ZUBIN SAXENA
MD & VP of Operations-
South Asia
Radisson Hotel Group



I am impressed how Indian market has rebounded"



Traveller trends in India are all conducive to a big boom"



SUNRISE INDUSTRY OF INDIA

Echoing similar sentiments is **Zubin Saxena**, Managing Director and Vice President of Operations, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group, who said, "We see Indian hospitality as the sunrise industry. We are seeing a good recovery where the larger economic factors are lining up. The larger traveller trends in India that we are seeing are all conducive to a big boom, so we are expecting both the Radisson Hotel Group in India as well as the hotel industry in India at large to narrate a huge growth story in the coming years. We have also observed that, over the course of the pandemic, the demand segments have opened up and the domestic traveller has really started experimenting with branded hospitality and experiencing hospitality products. We foresee that with international skies and the market opening up, the slab of base demand will expand, thereby increasing the total demand." Saxena added that the group saw occupancy levels of 70 per cent in Q1 2022.

INDIVIDUAL RETREATS PILOT

The group recently unveiled its Individuals Retreats brand extension, specifically designed and launched only in the Indian market. It is an extension of Radisson Individuals, launched last year. It will be a collection of upper-uptscale and luxury lifestyle retreats across India that will offer guests experiences in wellness, adventure, and culture, among others. They will be located in offbeat destinations such as Goa, Kashmir, Coorg, and Kabini.

A new travel landscape

Cheryl Williams, Chief Revenue Officer for Preferred Hotels & Resorts, is betting big on creativity, flexibility, and local markets to grow new revenue streams. Change in travel landscape brings opportunity to re-energise, reimagine, and rethink processes.



Lipla Negi



The Fullerton Ocean Park Hotel Hong Kong - Exterior Rendering



The Soaltee

For Cheryl Williams, her appointment as the Chief Revenue Officer at Preferred Hotels & Resorts has come at a pivotal time. Indeed, so much has changed since the onset of the pandemic, “how people travel, where they travel, and why they travel,” she said. However, focussing beyond the recent setbacks, she perceives this change in the travel landscape as an “opportunity to re-energise, reimagine, and rethink processes and our suite of products and services.”

In this newly created executive position, Williams will lead the brand’s commercial efforts, working with department leaders to drive revenue for its expanding global portfolio of 650 hotels in 80 countries. Upbeat about the challenges, Williams is determined to expand the brand’s footprints and strengthen alliances. “I am getting to know our teams around the world and analysing our current position so that I can focus my energies on our desired future state and strategic priorities.”

EXPANDING ASIA PACIFIC PORTFOLIO

Preferred Hotels & Resorts’ Asia Pacific portfolio consists of nearly 140 properties, and Williams is confident that the company is in great shape to further develop its footprint in new markets. The company’s expanding portfolio mirrors this confidence.

In the past 12 months, the brand has welcomed five member hotels in the region, including THE Park Kolkata in India and The Soaltee Kathmandu in Nepal, its first property in the destination. She added, “We are also pleased to have grown our long-standing alliance with The Leela Palaces, Hotels, and Resorts within this same timeframe.”



CHERYL WILLIAMS
Chief Revenue Officer
Preferred Hotels & Resorts



With addition of The Leela Bhartiya City Bengaluru and The Leela Jaipur in late 2021”

The India portfolio of the brand, in particular, looks stellar and ultra-luxurious right now. “With the addition of The Leela Bhartiya City Bengaluru and The Leela Jaipur in late 2021, we represent 10 of the multi-award-winning group’s ultra-luxurious properties in India and there are plans to grow the alliance in the coming months and into 2023,” she said. The summer of 2022 shines bright with promising partnerships. She apprised, “We have also expanded our master partnership with The Fullerton Hotels & Resorts—the renowned Singaporean hotel brand with two best-in-class properties in Singapore and one in Sydney, which will launch The Fullerton Ocean Park Hotel Hong Kong with us this summer.”

REVENUE OPTIMISATION

From a brand perspective, Williams knows that 2022 represents a new travel landscape, and thus asserted, “Our approach is to stay nimble with strategies that can adapt to the ever changing needs of our hotels and clients, while being mindful of opportunities to create efficiencies and new revenue streams.” She said, “We have grown our teams globally so that we are ready for the rebound and well positioned for the anticipated demand.”

STAYING CONNECTED WITH GUESTS

Deliberating on the effect of the pandemic on both human and business levels, she elucidated, “On a human level, we have all had to get really good at doing something new in recent times. How we work has changed significantly, with work from home days and employees previously based in offices now working remotely. From the property level, creativity has been crucial, and many hoteliers celebrated successes during the worst of the pandemic when they leaned in



The Leela Bhartiya City - Hero Image



The Park Kolkata

to creating experiences based on the immediate needs of the traveller and stayed connected with guests and the surrounding community.”

A closer look at her strategy for brand outreach in 2022 reveals that it is heavily reliant on creativity, leading to customer connection. She shared, “In the last two years, Preferred Hotels & Resorts’ parent company, Preferred Hotel Group, has ushered in some exciting updates to its family of brands—most notably with the spring 2021 launch of sustainable hotel brand Beyond Green—and valuable enhancements to ‘I Prefer Hotel Rewards’, our guest loyalty programme, which has a growing membership of over four million travellers globally.”

MICE IS ONCE AGAIN GAINING TRACTION

Acknowledging the fact that the MICE business was the hardest hit and slower to return as compared to leisure travel, she said, “Due to the nature of MICE travel, our industry was prepared for a slow return, and the ups and downs that followed the Delta and

Omicron variants further stunted progress, so it is great to see green shoots of recovery.” At the same time, William sees the return of MICE driving hotel demand in 2022 as she added, “Lead activity for meetings and events this year is at 2019 levels, and our talented global group sales team is busy fielding international group inquiries for late 2022 and 2023.” Importantly, major industry events like IMEX Frankfurt are back this year, signalling a growing appetite for group travel and corporate events.

MORE FOR MEMBERS

The takeaways from the past two years have become the guiding lessons for most brands in the hospitality business, and William, too, is counting on those lessons, “To ensure Preferred continues to thrive, we are paying attention to learnings from the past two years, monitoring future production to identify potential changes to booking patterns, and broadening all account opportunities to reduce reliance on any one segment for a well-balanced business mix. We are also focused on creating unique experiences, value, and flexibility for ‘I Prefer Members’, including options to redeem points for free nights and other offers.”

LOCAL MARKETS REMAIN INVALUABLE

Optimism dominates the brand’s outlook in 2022 as William shared, “Our business continues to lead with leisure business, with group travel coming back sooner and stronger than expected; we are also optimistic about corporate business travel and are starting to see this reflected in booking data.”

Betting big on local markets and experience that goes beyond the hotel stays, she said, “Local markets have been invaluable for many of our hotel members, particularly in coastal and rural areas. As we move forward, expect to see hotels ramping up revenue beyond the traditional room and hotel services, partnering on local experiences that extend beyond the hotel stay.”



We represent 10 of multi-award-winning group’s ultra-luxurious properties in India”

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Building momentum

CBRE expects to see a further improvement in hotel investment volume as investors seek greater exposure, with the weight of capital chasing Asia Pacific hotels now at an all-time high.



HT Bureau



In 2021, Asia Pacific hotel investment grew 46 per cent year-on-year to US \$12.1 billion. As borders in the region reopen, the hotel sector has a great opportunity to profit as investor confidence grows and purchasers seek assets with excellent risk-adjusted returns. The hotel industry is quickly becoming one of the most sought-after for value-added investors, according to CBRE's Asia Pacific Hotel Outlook.

TOURISM CURBS EASED BY MARKETS

The first few months of 2022 have seen several Asia Pacific markets start to ease travel restrictions, shorten quarantine periods, or offer quarantine-free entry to fully vaccinated tourists. This has been the case, particularly in several Southeast Asian countries, with resort markets expected to benefit from pent-up travel demand and

lead the travel recovery. Certain markets are opening up more gradually. Outbound tourism from mainland China, for example, will remain limited in the near term which will have implications for economies that are heavily dependent on this source market.

PERFORMANCE WILL IMPROVE

Nonetheless, as many markets in the region continue to ease travel restrictions and reopen borders, improvements in visitor arrivals and room occupancy rates will begin to emerge in the second quarter of this year. Southeast Asian leisure markets are expected to outperform as pent-up travel demand is unleashed. The need for more spacious outdoor environments has seen destinations such as the Maldives already return to pre-pandemic levels of hotel occupancy and room rates.

MOVING TOWARDS TRUSTED BRANDS

With an industry recovery in APAC on the cards, hotels will soon welcome a different type of traveller. Flight to safety is likely as consumers gravitate toward brands they know and trust because of the rigour in which they manage hygiene and safety across their portfolios. There will also be a greater emphasis on technology, whether for ensuring hygiene and safety for leisure guests or for enhancing conference room and business meeting capabilities for business travellers. Growing environmental and social awareness among consumers is another emerging trend that will drive further ESG adoption in the hotel sector and shape future transactions in this space.

INVESTMENT WILL RISE

There will be a further improvement in hotel investment volume as investors seek greater exposure, with the weight of capital chasing APAC hotels now at an all-time high. The sector offers attractive risk-adjusted yields and asset repositioning opportunities to investors seeking enhanced returns. Hotels have also gained appeal as a potential inflation hedge due to the sector's uniquely short lease period, measured in days rather than months or years as with other property types. On the back of the steady reopening of borders and easing of travel restrictions, inquiries are growing from investors keen to acquire choice assets ahead of a full improvement in occupancy and visitor arrivals, with this segment to attract substantial investment demand in H2 2022.



Southeast Asian leisure markets are expected to outperform as pent-up travel demand is unleashed

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Tech unicorn and terrific trio

We are growing on a regular basis and hope to include one lakh rooms under our brand umbrella by December 2023 before expanding globally, says **Chandan Pandey**, Co-founder & CEO, WB Hotels.



If 2020 was about resilience and survival, 2021 saw the sector re-emerge with fervour. How has your and WB's path to revival been thus far? What are the key takeaways?

Revival initiatives of WB Hotels are incredibly innovative, and they are being implemented for the first time in the hospitality industry. WB Hotels began with a 14-room hotel in Coorg in November 2021, and we now have more than 525 hotels with over 12,000 rooms in over 100 places, with more opening every day. To build something amazing, you must believe in your product and team.

Since its inception, how has been this journey of growth for company?

We are an 18-month-old company that has grown from nothing to over 525 hotels, turning a dream into a reality. Our three online brands are WB INN, WB ECONOMY, and WB COMFORT.



CHANDAN PANDEY
Co-founder & CEO
WB Hotels

What are your future plans, and how many keys are you aiming to add in 2022-23?

We are currently concentrating our efforts on the metro cities. We want to add over 1,000 hotels in metro areas only in 2022-23 and a total of 50,000 rooms across the country.

What all new destinations are you planning to expand to?

Our primary focus will be on metro city business and religious locations. Business cities are always 85 per cent occupied, whereas religious locations have a higher ARR and are 50 to 60 per cent occupied. We believe that the WB brand has worldwide potential.

What innovative ideas have WB Hotels & Resorts done or offered in recent years, keeping thinking outside the box in mind? What has worked for you in terms of drawing patrons and new clients?

First time in the hospitality industry the online brand franchisee offered to standalone hotel owners, and this has worked well for all of us, resulting in increased revenue for hotel owners and more inventory under the WB Hotels' umbrella.

How is WB performing post-pandemic? What is your long-term goal?

We are growing on a regular basis and hope to include one lakh rooms under our brand umbrella by December 2023 before expanding globally. Because the entire process is based on technology and can be administered from a single place, we want to be the world's largest online hotel brand with a presence in the majority of the country.

What are your key brand marketing strategies? How important are OTAs for you?

We are an online hotel brand and our complete focus is on OTA platforms. Our affiliation with worldwide OTAs enables us to see more. We benefit from increased visibility on their platform because we are the largest supplier of rooms in the three-star category to OTA.

“We want to add over 1,000 hotels in metro areas only in 2022-23”





ROYAL grandeur, RARE experiences

As demand for experiential travel grows within the country, **Faiz Rashid**, Director of Jehan Numa Group, feels that the brand's 100-year-old legacy will give them an edge over global companies.



Lipla Negi

From crisis management to business strategies, the pandemic changed many things for many hoteliers around the world.

However, for Faiz Rashid, Director of Jehan Numa Group of Hotels and a direct descendant of Dost Mohammad Khan and the Begums of Bhopal, the crisis has simply reaffirmed his faith and renewed his passion for the family-run business.

Owned and managed by the founding family of Bhopal, the Jehan Numa Group consists of four distinctive boutique luxury hotels: the Jehan Numa Palace and Jehan Numa Retreat in Bhopal; the critically-acclaimed Reni Pani Jungle Lodge in Satpura; and the recently-launched Bori Safari Lodge in the Bori Wildlife Sanctuary.

CUSTODIAN OF THE HERITAGE

His passion for hospitality runs in his genes. While Faiz Rashid stays in Bhopal to look after the retreat and the palace hotel, his brother Aly Rashid takes care of the two lodges. "For us, being a legacy business, it comes down to being involved with the property through generations. We are like custodians of the property, and we want to try and carry the legacy forward. But for someone else who is into the business of buying and selling, it only comes down to restoring the property and then selling or reselling it to someone

else. Our focus is always passing it to the next generation," said Faiz.

The erstwhile state of Bhopal was founded by Dost Mohammad Khan in 1724. But then the Begums of the family ruled for over 100 years. Four generations of Begums of Bhopal quietly and determinedly sowed the seeds of growth and transformation, health and civic innovations, and advancements in the fields of arts, education, and architecture in the area.

The stately residence — Jehan Numa Palace — was built on the slopes of the Shamlia hills in the 19th century by General Obaidullah Khan, son of the last Begum. It was converted into a world-class heritage hotel in 1983 by the General's grandsons.

COLLABORATION IS NOT AN OPTION

The family has been running the hotel for nearly four decades now, and has no plans to collaborate with a global brand. It is not that no lucrative offer came, but the family was determined to take the legacy forward without diluting its essence.

"In the last 40 years, we have done well and things have been working for us. So we feel that as a business we must continue the way we are. The way we understand the palace, property and people working for us through

generations, makes our hospitality different from others. We are not very keen to give it away to an international brand. And this is something that makes us unique. We did it when we were growing up, and we want to pass it on to the future generations,” shared Rashid.

He believes that the way his family understands this place, with its history, culture, cuisine, and even the jungles around it, makes their hospitality one-of-its-kind. “We truly follow the General’s ideas and values,” said Rashid.

Talking about the culinary history, Rashid added how the old family recipes are conserved through generations, and proudly mentioned, “These recipes cannot be copied and that is what Bhopal stands for.”

He said, “The 100-year rule of the Begum in Bhopal makes the city unique. The great, great-grandchildren of the General are still running the hotel. And because we are personally involved in the day-to-day running of the hotel, it makes us different.”

A CUT ABOVE THE COMPETITION

The confidence in his voice is unmistakable as he talks about the competition the group faces within the country. The tales of Indian royalty have always adorned fables and fairy tales alike, and inspired many world travellers throughout the ages. Even today, the country offers plenty of heritage jewels, some of which are now being acquired and promoted by international hotel chains. Unfazed by the growing competition, Faiz views the opening of Raffles Udaipur and Six Senses Fort Barwara last year as a positive sign – proof of sorts of his belief that “there is a niche in India that we suddenly see, who seek experiential travel, wanting something out of the box, desiring something different and personalised – and this is something we have always believed in.”

PANDEMIC DOUBLED PASSION

While the pandemic was the worst for the industry, it gave the Rashid brothers an opportunity to take a breather and relook at all that they could offer travellers. Faiz looks at the pandemic from the perspective of “who we are and what we offer!” Since his place was purely an experiential property, he recently spent a lot of time setting up a museum featuring family photos and



FAIZ RASHID
Director
Jehan Numa Group



Traditional artisans have brought the Barwara Fort back to its former glory. Care has been taken about its every detail to give customers a lavish stay”

treasured artefacts within the Jehan Numa Palace, and it set things rolling for all the other properties. “We created a unique dining experience at the General’s Table. At the retreat, we set up private dining spaces and also set up a green-house bistro,” he adds. Realising that social media is a necessity nowadays, the brothers also started a dedicated page for their properties.

“If you look at our social media page, the quality of the pictures of the experiences that we offer is our main focus. We are not running after ‘paid likes’. If a customer stays with us, experiences our hospitality and finds and likes us on social media, that is very satisfying for us. We try to give a glimpse of our legacy,” he explains.

Besides history and nature, their social media pages are a feast for the eyes. “Food is an integral part of the Jehan Numa experience. We give a lot of importance to it, especially on social media. Through pictures, we try to showcase the legacy of our 100-year old family recipes,” he shares.

PERSONALISATION TRUMP NUMBERS

Any hotel expects and strives for 100 per cent occupancy. But Rashid clearly knows that it is not numbers that define success for them. “We cannot cater to anything large. The moment we target large groups, the uniqueness of our experiential hospitality goes out the window. We prefer to be in small groups where we can offer something unique,” he says. He is fine with getting a slightly lower occupancy as long as “people go back understanding what their hospitality standards are.” The word “niche” sums up their target audience, driving their marketing strategy. “While over the top (OTT) got the numbers, the travel agent who is into luxury leisure travel and does tailor-made experiential travel is a match for us,” he affirms.

Personalisation rules the roost here. Whenever time allows, Rashid accompanies guests for a walk around the palace, while Aly, a wildlife enthusiast himself, drives the guests on jungle safaris. “We have personalised cards and notes for them. At the jungle lodge, we had a surprise sundowner. As you take a bend on the road, you have your sundowner with your choice of drinks in the middle of nowhere,” he shares. At the palace, you enjoy your morning tea while watching horses being exercised, reminiscent of the General’s love for horses that continues in the hotels. “We have four to five coloured bred horses which have come down through generations,” he says. “As the COVID-19 cases lessened in numbers and restrictions were eased by the Government of India, leisure travel surged within India, but “it was never swarms of travellers coming into our hotels,” he says.

That is not how the family plans their business, and definitely not through discounts or promotions on OTTs. “Leisure travellers travel a lot within India. But within that, Bhopal has thankfully received a niche of those travellers who want to explore a city which was untouched. While regular travellers go to Goa and Udaipur, among others, a well-travelled person ends up coming to Bhopal,” Faiz says.



Sustainable shift

Bringing sustainability to the fore, a rising number of hotels are investing in EV charging infra – a move that aligns people, profit, and planet in perfect harmony.



Lipla Negi



The next time you drive into the thick greens of Jim Corbett National Park, chances are that you will find an EVCS before you spot a tiger. Set amidst the wildlife, GenX Corbett Tiger Den by Suba Group of Hotels is among the growing tribe of hotels to operationalise an electronic vehicle charging station (EVCS) on its premises. With the intensity of the pandemic lessening, the hospitality industry is seeing a rising number of hotels turning to sustainable methods as a strategy to cut costs and survive through the tough times. However, of late, for many brands, it has turned into a ‘conscious choice’ to encourage travellers to drive the change rather than a customary CSR activity. The surge in domestic tourism, coupled with the growing demand for electric vehicles (EVs), offers an opportunity for business growth in an ever-evolving industry that has never shied away from embracing innovative ideas.

“The industry thrives on building an aspirational environment for guests and influencing customer

preferences. Hotels have played a role in the adoption of lifestyle changes for each generation. By investing in sustainable processes, such as EVCS, solar technology, water conservation, and recycling, it also serves to showcase how these changes can be implemented in our daily lives,” said **Rajneesh Malhotra**, Chief Executive Officer, Chalet Hotels.

From shunning single-use plastic to recycling waste and water, sustainability has spread like wildfire in the industry. So much so that responsible tourism is not just a trend anymore. It has taken the form of a movement wherein the stakeholders and travellers share the responsibility of protecting the planet. While some sustainable methods are personal choices, a few are needed by the hour. Touted to be the next big thing in the automobile industry, EVs are drawing more attention than ever. Sensing their potential in the near future, the hospitality industry has started prepping for it. In 2021, several big names in the country announced their interest and investment in EVCS infrastructure.

INGENIOUS BUSINESS MOVE

According to research by the Centre for Energy Finance based on Vahan Dashboard data, 5,000 four-wheeler EVs were sold in 2021, the highest in four years. So one can fairly see that developing EV charging infrastructure is a well-calculated move for hotels. More than a ‘green quotient’, the easy availability of EVCS within the hotel premises will help cater to, retain, and attract the well-heeled and travelled clientele of such hotels. Predictably, a growing number of hotel chains are stepping up their game in this direction. As customers switch to cleaner sources of energy, these EVCS are sure to become a necessity in the near future.

Installing an electronic vehicle charging point in the hotel premises is a move that helps embrace sustainability, conveniently as well as profitably, since it is a low-to no-cost investment and brings revenue too. Drive-in destinations, especially those on highways or in close proximity to cities, will be big gainers. A typical DC fast EV charging session lasts for



From shunning single-use plastic to recycling waste and water, sustainability has spread like wildfire in the industry”



45 to 60 minutes—sufficient time for customers to have their meals during breaks at hotels. At popular tourist destinations, the hotels offering EV charging facilities could also become the base to explore the nearby attractions.

“The EV charging facility for customers is becoming a huge value addition for hotels on highways and in cities. The customers utilising EV charging solutions will also lead to more sales for hotels through the food and beverage category during their stay,” said **Maxson Lewis**, Managing Director, Magenta, an Indian Charge Point Operator (CPO) company.

CATALYST FOR CHANGE

Recently, we have seen some big players make a strategic investment in EV charging infrastructure. While IHG Hotels & Resorts announced a partnership with SunFuel in India, Marriott International signed an MOU with Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL) to install EV charging units across 37 Marriott International hotels, which will gradually expand to 100 hotels in a year. Jumping on the EVCS bandwagon, the amā Stays & Trails collaborated with Tata Power to install EV charging points at 30 of its villas and heritage bungalows across 11 destinations. There are more names being added to the list as we write, and things continue to roll.

It is surely a step forward in catering to the evolving needs of environment-conscious consumer customers who wish to reduce their carbon footprint while travelling as well as cut their fuel expenses. Speaking about building a robust EV ecosystem, **Mahua Acharya**, MD and CEO, CESL, said, “Developing a sustainable



SUDEEP JAIN
MD-South West Asia
IHG Hotels & Resorts



Destination charging will be key to driving easy transition and adoption of electric vehicles”

landscape with supporting EV infrastructure is the key to cultivating consumer confidence in EVs. We are expecting to reduce pollution emission levels, leading to cleaner air and various public health benefits.”

Foresight is a virtue in the hospitality business, and the hotel chains investing in EVCS infra are quick to identify the value addition this investment brings to their brand image and loyalty. Here we spoke to some of the first few hotel chains to operationalize EVCS on their properties vis-à-vis EV infra and how it helps kill two birds with one stone—sustainability and competent business strategy.

JOURNEYING TO TOMORROW

Sudeep Jain, Managing Director-South West Asia, IHG Hotels & Resorts, said, “With a massive footprint across the globe, we recognise the important role the tourism and hospitality sectors play in working towards a sustainable future. As one of the world’s leading hotel companies, we embrace our responsibility and opportunity to make a positive difference and help shape the future of responsible travel.”

“Our 10-year plan—Journey to Tomorrow—launched last year is to make a difference to our people, communities, and the planet. This includes our support of efforts to care for the environment, and through a recently announced partnership with SunFuel in India, a prominent EV charging company, we are helping our guests make a positive contribution to environmental sustainability. Through this initiative, guests who drive electric vehicles will be able to plug their vehicles into the charging spots and top-up their batteries across our hotels in the country whilst enjoying hotel facilities

and the best-in-class service that we are known for. We understand that EVs are a growing segment in India, and destination charging will be key to catalysing the easy transition and adoption of EVs in the country and empowering conscious travellers. Our initiative of providing EV charging amenities across our portfolio will attract the growing segment of EV drivers to our hotels. With an expanding portfolio of hotels in India, we know we can enable a positive change and we are proud to be working with partners such as SunFuel who share the same vision. We believe that sustainable hospitality is the future, as our guests have also evolved and are more mindful than ever about travelling responsibly. We are happy to complement the needs of a responsible traveller by offering such facilities across our hotels,” he added.

CHARGING INFRA WILL BE A NECESSITY

“In the next couple of years, we anticipate that this charging infrastructure will be a necessity and not a USP any longer. It would most definitely impact the services we offer, as people would look for smart and comfortable options to spend time while their cars are charging. With a whole gamut of added services on offer such as F&B, wash and change rooms, spas, and health clubs, guests will engage which will eventually lead to higher sales. This service also offers a great opportunity to build guest satisfaction and loyalty,” said **Bhaskar Gurunath**, Area Director of Engineering, South Asia, Marriott International.”

Gurunath added “We look at these chargers as a catalyst for the transition from internal combustion engines to EVs, which supports our sustainable objectives as well. We consider it a smart business move as we encourage EV users to make productive use of their time while their vehicles are charging, by using our restaurants, meeting rooms, or even the services of our fitness centers, spas, or salons. Our choices are going to clearly define and structure the tomorrow that is to come. Encouraging and moving to an EV-based mode of transport is a significant step towards supporting a sustainable future for the next generation. At Marriott International, with our expanding global presence, we have a greater obligation to operate responsibly. While integrating sustainability across our value chain and mitigating climate-related risk, we are working towards reducing our environmental impacts, building and operating sustainable hotels, and sourcing responsibly.”

IT HELPS PRIORITISE SUSTAINABILITY

Although the EV business is still at a nascent stage, it is imperative to create more charging stations and battery switching facilities in urban and rural areas. These steps will make it easier to use EVs since many travellers prefer road trips and long excursions in private vehicles, as per Malhotra.

“The adoption of EVs is gaining momentum as governments push citizens to switch to EVs, thereby necessitating the development of charging infrastructure. Charging stations will soon be on the ‘must-have’ list of all hotels as more and more people will be driving EVs. Installing charging stations will not



BHASKAR GURUNATH
Area Director of
Engineering, South Asia
Marriott International



EV service offers great opportunity to build guest satisfaction and loyalty”



RAJNEESH MALHOTRA
CEO
Chalet Hotels



Charging stations will soon be on ‘must-have’ list of all hotels”





**SUHAIL
KANNAMPILLY**
CEO, Concept
Hospitality (The Fern
Hotels & Resorts)



I see this as mandatory for all hotels in five years, like STPs or composting units”



**RAJAN
KALRA**
Director-Sales
Suba Hotels &
Resorts



This generation is turning point for almost all industries on a global scale”

only be a ‘smart business move’ but also a step in the right direction from the ‘sustainability’ perspective,” he said.

“Today’s consumers and shareholders prioritise sustainability and choose to partner with businesses that are doing social or environmental good. Chalet Hotels is a signatory to Climate Groups’ EV100 initiative and will be installing EVCS at all its properties by 2025. We have not worked on the commercials yet, but our endeavour is to encourage people to adopt EVs by providing EV charging facilities at a reasonable cost,” he added.

MANDATORY FOR FIVE-STAR HOTELS

Suhail Kannampilly, Chief Executive Officer, Concept Hospitality (The Fern Hotels & Resorts) said, “Business that focusses on sustainability is smart business. I see this becoming mandatory for all hotels in five years. The price point for the charge currently varies from state to state as power costs are different. We do not provide this as a complimentary service, but the rates are not much higher than commercial electricity charges. Customised packages as well as listings of the available facilities for guests are in progress. We recently collaborated with Autocarindia and Audi to organise the first EV drive through a national forest at Sasan Gir, Gujarat. The cooperation from the forest department was brilliant to see. It also paves the way for a future where our forest only allows non-emitting vehicles.”

GROWING VISIBILITY ON SEARCH ENGINES

Rajan Kalra, Director-Sales, Suba Hotels & Resorts, averred that the Suba Group is the first pan-India hotel group to operationalise EVCS on their premises. While your vehicles are getting recharged, you can avail customised F&B offers. The benefits of EVCS are greater than one. First, it helps attract EV owners. Second, with the low supply and increasing demand, having this amenity will increase visibility on search engines.

He added, “Through the EV charging mobile app, power companies provide EV owners the ease of locating our hotel charging stations on aerial maps. Consumers increasingly expect ‘green’ options, and hotels must become champions for climate mitigation.”

This generation is the turning point for almost all industries on a global scale as they are tech-savvy, accustomed to convenience, and passionate about environmental preservation. Car manufacturers are working hard to make electric vehicles affordable for millennial and Gen Z drivers since the price of EV batteries dropped 50 per cent between 2010 and 2016. When you consider the rapidly approaching deadline for the sale of traditional diesel and gasoline vehicles, it is easy to see why the hospitality industry needs to act now to serve millennials and Gen Z.

There will come a time in the not too distant future in which EVs outnumber traditional cars, and accommodating this global evolution will be a key to the success of the hotel business.



Mindfulness meets magnificence

Unflinching desire to travel and unwind after 2-year break in people is reassuring, says **Ronan Fearon**, General Manager, JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa.



Lipla Negi

What key challenges and opportunities do you see in India?

We opened a luxury resort at the foot of the Nandi Hills amid a pandemic, so it is difficult to foresee any challenges. As one of Marriott International's first fully-integrated resorts in our portfolio, we see this as an opportunity as the property combines luxury, leisure, and long, lazy evenings overlooking the golf course. Local Bengaluru residents can escape for weekend breaks, lavish family celebrations can be held on our 60,000 sq. ft., Savannah lawns, and corporations can gather their teams in a state-of-the-art 35,000 sq. ft., convention centre.

With the relaxation of travel restrictions, is there a full recovery in sight?

Absolutely. Inquiries for our resort are way above expectations. There has been pent-up demand in the last couple of months. The property has so far hosted five weddings and two corporate meetings. We have



Our guests are quick to put the pandemic behind them and get back to enjoying unique experiences"

also hosted plenty of eager travellers looking for a resort-style setting to experience something new. We have a pristine golf course, and with golf being more popular than ever, it is going to be a major attraction for all our patrons.

What has changed between 2020 and 2022 for the brand at large?

I would say a lot and also not so much. Personally, I have had a change in scenery since arriving in beautiful Bengaluru less than six months ago. Professionally, the industry has been incredibly hit, but firms and their people have proved to be extremely resilient. Our guests, too, are quick to put the pandemic behind them and get back to enjoying unique experiences with their loved ones or even just time alone to be one with nature after a challenging two years.

How would you reach out to corporates?

Initially, all conversations were online, but as a new hotel as well as being associated with a leading luxury brand, corporate companies are reaching out to see what we have to offer. The companies are eager to bring their teams together face-to-face again after a 2-year hiatus.

What are the unique offerings?

Golf and spa at the same location make for a luxurious and one-of-a-kind combination. All our guests will experience complete mindfulness as they set foot on the property, and the surroundings will help bring out the best version of themselves.

What are the lessons from 2020 and 2021 that you will stick to in 2022?

Look after your people, they will take care of the customer, and the customer will take care of your business.



RONAN FEARON
General Manager
JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige
Golfshire Resort & Spa



Himalayan paradise

Summit Hotels and Resorts nurtures grandeur of Eastern Himalayas to provide guests with delightful experience of incredible Himalayan hospitality in midst of nexus of diverse tourist destinations.

Welcome to the Eastern Himalayas, a glorious hotbed of tourism often mistaken as an extension of North East India. Although in terms of cultural and geographical diversity, they are identical, the Eastern Himalayas clearly have their own essence and regional potential.

If you see the stretch of the Eastern Himalayas incorporating the hills and valleys of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and Gangtok, it seems like a string of pearls with mainstream and offbeat tourist destinations attached to a thread very close to each other, almost all at an approximate distance of two-three hours, surprising tourists with a mesmerising landscape at every bend of the trail.

THE EMERGENCE

In a nexus of countless heterogeneous tourist destinations, you have Summit Hotels and Resorts nurturing the beauty of the Eastern Himalayas to give travellers a wonderful experience of incredible Himalayan hospitality. Summit is the first hospitality brand to have its footprints established in a corridor of the Eastern Himalayas.

The beauty of properties spread across the axis of Siliguri, Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Gangtok, Pelling, Lachung, and Lachen is more than just a reflection moving seamlessly across rugged Himalayan passages; it validates the hard work demonstrated over a 12-year period to innovate as well as grow.

A TOKEN OF APPRECIATION

Riding on the back of outstanding success since 2009, Summit Hotels and Resorts was first recognised by the East India Travel Award in 2014 as the Fastest Growing Hotel Brand. From then until now, be it in the category of ultimate hospitality, customer service, luxury hotel, best hotel chain, leading hotel chain, best Himalayan hotel brand, Summit has always shown its credentials as the first, largest, and most preferred Himalayan hospitality brand.



SUMIT MITRUKA
CEO & Founder
Summit Hotels & Resorts



Summit has shown its credentials as first Himalayan hospitality brand"



CUSTOMERS AT THE CORE OF EVERYTHING

The amenities and services of Summit Hotels and Resorts cannot be justified by more than the range of properties they have to offer. Be it heritage hotels, resorts, boutique hotels, farm stays, clubs, prime locations, off-beat locations, and vernacular architecture, the Summit has everything, if not more. The centralised booking system is an instance of technical attributes incorporated to give a hassle-free booking experience to travellers. Social corporate responsibility is meaningfully played by the induction of electronic vehicles to pick up and drop guests at Summit Properties across Darjeeling and Kalimpong clusters. To connect with our valued guests, Summit has sales officials deployed in every corner of the country, so you do not miss out on anything. The list of ways to introduce a guest on arrival to traditional Himalayan hospitality goes on with the sole aim of standing unfazed by our principle that is "Exceptional Value, Exceptional Service".

TOMORROW WILL DEFINITELY COME

A young and dynamic hotelier from North East India is forging a dream to put the name of Summit Hotels and Resorts on the map of the global hospitality industry. Walking down memory lane, the year 2009 seems like an evening of yesterday, but factually, it is not. This year, when Summit Hotels and Resorts stand together to celebrate 12 years of hard yard in the volatile industry of hospitality, they feel that they have sailed an ocean to be here today. From one property in Gangtok to 22 properties functioning across seven states and 15 destinations, Summit has really come a long way.

Summit Hotels and Resorts have premium properties in Kaziranga, Rishikesh, and Shimla, with the most recent being Lansdowne in Uttarakhand. Sitting down and enjoying the laurels is not an option. Rather, the dream is to go to every peak in the country and summarise them so the experience of incredible Himalayan hospitality can be delivered to each and every traveller.

Pioneering finesse and quality

Since 1984, Mehta Furnishers has been a pioneer in delivering equipment that is manoeuvrable and ensures disruption-free housekeeping, creates upscale atmosphere, and is vital in hotels worldwide.

What stands behind impeccably clean hotels is the eagle-eyed housekeeping department and its management. Good housekeeping is essential for the safety and good health of people. Adding value, style, and convenience to good housekeeping are compact housekeeping carts and caddies from Mehta Furnishers. This equipment organises supplies and is essential in hospitality businesses around the world.

accessories with value additions that work as desired units for the best of convenience and situations. Customers' requirements are met with bumpers, lockable doors, additional storage, operational needs, and a variety of desired features that add value to the style and smiles to good housekeeping," said **Y.K. Mehta**, Owner, Mehta Furnishers. Other products that Mehta Furnishers makes are minibar-replenishment carts, linen and luggage carts, beside



These allow housekeeping staff to bundle fresh and used linens, guest essentials, chemicals, and cleaning supplies all in one unit.

High-quality castors selected for their application make cart movement simple, and they are also designed and sized to fit into standard-sized elevators. With the possibility of so many models, one is sure to find a maids' cart to work as per their requirements. Workably priced for the value they deliver and made with edge protectors for professional jobs, one can choose from a range of housekeeping carts, mobile caddies, baskets and hospitality products.

"I humbly thank all those who have been associated with us for a long time, guided us and expected more from us in this never-ending learning journey that continues. We make carts, caddies, baskets, and



Castors chosen as per their application make movement of carts effortless"

housekeeping and picnic baskets, strollers, bins, trays, front-office carts, and several accessories using wood, cane, wicker, and steel, as well as all outdoor furniture and umbrellas.

Products at Mehta Furnishers are compact, maneuverable, practical, and offer visible support for disturbance-free housekeeping, provide upmarket ambience, and are essential for the safety and good health of the people they are made for.

Solid steel structure, durable liner and cabinet for linen and amenities, robust shelves, sturdy bars for handling and moving, hardwearing-coated fabric bags in choicest colours, heavy-duty non-marking castors for effortless carting and parking, and edge-protectors on all customary carts go a long way in building trust in the company since 1984.

Setting sights high for IHE 22

India International Hospitality Expo (IHE) will hold its fifth edition from 3-6 August 2022, and its highlight event will be one-day conference dedicated to bakery and confectionary, *mithai*, and *namkeen* sectors.



An important new attraction at this conference will be a Franchise Forum, where businesses exploring franchising options for further growth can network with their potential partners. This activity will be a part of the special event planned for the fifth anniversary year of the show, which was first held in 2018 at the India Expo Mart & Centre, Greater Noida, in Delhi-NCR. Other activities planned for the fifth anniversary edition include a focussed activity with hotel and restaurant purchase managers around the food and hospitality products being developed by the MSME sector in the North-East. The North-East Mart will be accompanied by a forum to highlight the work being done by our exhibition partners in that region. Another new addition will be a Startup Pavilion, which will host startups that are either active or starting out in the food and food tech verticals.

At the last edition of IHE, which was the first physical show, held from 24-27 September 2021, as many as 160 exhibitors representing the major industry-relevant verticals, from food ingredients and new-generation beverages to kitchen equipment, furniture and furnishings, and tableware, were present in strength. Over 8,000 visitors who thronged IHE2021 included members of the Purchasing Professionals Forum-India (PPFI) and Hospitality Purchasing Managers Forum (HPMF), the leading ladies of WICCI, chef-members of the Indian Culinary Forum (ICF), founders of the Professional Housekeepers Association (PHA), and other hospitality industry decision-makers. Commenting on the response to IHE2021, when the country was just recovering from the second wave, **Rakesh Kumar**, Chairman, IEML, and Director-General, Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), said, "The response to IHE2021 far exceeded our expectations. We were able to prove that the IEML is ready and equipped to present physical shows. Our calendar is filling up fast for 2022 and 2023. And yes, we are returning with a much bigger and better edition of IHE on 3-6 August 2022."

The highlight of the programme was the conclave which saw animated conversations involving industry leaders such as Rajeev Menon, President, APAC excluding



Greater China, Marriott International; Rattan Keswani, Deputy MD, Lemon Tree Hotels; Samir MC, MD, Fortune Park Hotels; and Anurag Katriar, President, National Restaurants Association of India (NRAI). Our who's who roster of speakers included top educators and recruiters such as Kamal Kant Pant, Principal and Secretary, Catering and Nutrition, IHM-Pusa and Dr. Swarup Sinha, Principal, ITC Limited-Hotels Division, ITC Hospitality Management Institute; renowned chefs, notably Manjit Gill, President, Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA) and Devinder Kumar, President, Indian Culinary Forum (ICF) and VP, F&B, Le Meridien New Delhi; and housekeeping decision-makers such as Dr. Madhu Chandhok, Director and Founding Partner, pip2020 and Meenu Tongatta, Executive Housekeeper, ITC Hotels.



We are returning with a much bigger and better edition of IHE on 3-6 August 2022"

IHE has established itself as a three-in-one event—a showcase of new products and services; a networking platform; and a festival of ideas. It will be built on this tradition to achieve the goal of making IHE2022 an unmissable event for decision makers in the food service and hospitality sectors.

Bouncing back with a bang

Seventeenth edition of Hotel Investment Conference - South Asia (HICSA), with theme 'Harder, Better, Faster, Stronger' hosted by Hotelivate received an overwhelming response not just from Indian delegates but international as well. The two days saw some charged discussions around changing traveller sentiments and predictions for the coming year.



HT Bureau

Hotelivate recently concluded the 17th Edition of its Hotel Investment Conference-South Asia (HICSA) at the Grand Hyatt, Mumbai. This annual event is India's largest hospitality investment conference and this year it saw well over 400 delegates in attendance representing various businesses across the hospitality spectrum which indicated a turning point in the industry's recovery.

A completely in-person conference was a much-needed and welcome change after a hiatus because of the global pandemic. A collection of presentations, keynotes, interviews, and panel discussions covered a plethora of themes and topics as industry stalwarts addressed the

challenges hospitality has faced in the past two years and highlighted the growth potential and investment opportunities going forward. The two-day conference was indeed a success as it provided a much-needed boost to one of the worst-affected industries in the country with some of its most prominent thought-leaders and trend-setters uniting under one roof. This year was also unique as it saw amazing gender representation with more than 20 per cent of women speakers as well as new perspectives being shared with 55 per cent of speakers as first-time speakers.

Commenting on the 17th anniversary of HICSA, **Manav Thadani**, Founder Chairman of Hotelivate, said, "The feedback received has been overwhelming





and heartening. The hospitality industry was in dire need of some positivity, and we do hope that HICSA has been able to be that platform. All the sessions were extremely well received in terms of attendance as well as content. We are extremely grateful for the support we have received from our delegates, patrons, speakers, and sponsors. None of this would have been possible without them.”

FOCUS ON CHANGING TRAVELLER SENTIMENTS

Day 1 of the conference started with a power networking session which was something unique this year. It allowed the delegates to exchange business cards and get acquainted before the sessions began. The keynote sessions, interviews, and plenary panels were all content-rich and provided valuable insights into the changing hospitality landscape. Delegates were seen taking notes as speakers such as Jesper Palmqvist, Area Director, Asia Pacific, STR; Ritesh Agarwal, Founder and Group CEO, OYO; Aaditya Thackeray, Minister of Tourism & Environment & Protocol, Government of Maharashtra; Aditya Ghosh, Co-Founder of Akasa, Board Member-Fabindia, OYO and Homage were speaking. Nakul Anand, Executive Director, ITC Limited, was felicitated with a lifetime achievement award, celebrating a professional journey like no other. He was seen attending the event with his family.

Consistent with the HICSA tradition, Day 2 of the conference featured many relevant panel and group discussions as well as a few keynote sessions with industry leaders. All the sessions saw a fantastic response and some thought-provoking Q&A from the audience. Sessions such as Island Hospitality discussed burning current issues, while sessions such



MANAV THADANI
 Founder
 Chairman
 Hotelivate



Hospitality sector was in need of positivity. We hope that HICSA is able to be that platform”

as India Tourism Unleashed-Picture *Abhi Baaki Hai* and Trial by Fire: Travel & Tourism revolved around changing traveller sentiments. While the session on Real Estate: The Best Asset Class for Returns was extremely insightful, the session titled ‘How Will Management Contracts Evolve Post Pandemic’ left delegates wanting more. The conference concluded with the famous ‘Hot Seat Debate’, moderated by Manav Thadani which put the spotlight on its panellists, bringing it all out into the open. The panel had Kapil Chopra, Founder and CEO, The Postcard Hotel; Priya Paul, Chairperson, Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels; JB Singh, President and CEO, InterGlobe Hotels; Snehdeep Aggarwal, Founder-Chairman, Bhartiya Group; and Zubin Saxena, Managing Director and VP Operations-South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group; and with this, it brought an end to the most exciting two days.

Form IV

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 Signature of the Publisher



< VIKRAM LALVANI

MD & CEO

Sterling Holidays

Lalvani handled various strategic responsibilities at Sterling for seven years, which included customer engagement, revenue maximisation, sales, and resort operations. He has over 25 years of experience in the hospitality, leisure, and ITeS industries.



< ANIRUDDH KUMAR

VP-Development, India & South Asia, Accor India

He will spearhead Accor's expansion strategy in the region to consolidate its current brand footprint as well as focus on expanding current and new brands. He was the Vice President, Asset Management, APAC for Marriott International.

TANAY SHANKAR >

**Director-Sales and Marketing
Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla**

He will focus on strengthening the hotel's position as a destination for business and leisure travellers. He will work towards optimising hotel revenue performance across the verticals of room sales, social, as well as MICE business.



INDU KHATRI >

**Director-Sales and Marketing
Fairmont Jaipur**

With a wealth of experience spanning over 15 years, she has proven to be a strong suit for Fairmont Jaipur. She joined the property last year as the Deputy Director of Sales and Marketing, with an extensive background in the hospitality and trade sectors.



< RAJESH RAJPUROHIT

**General Manager
Radisson Blu Resort
Dharamshala**

He will lead the team to position the property as a top resort in Dharamshala, streamline hotel ops, align sales and marketing strategies with the hotel's commercial goals, and drive excellence in guest experience.



< AMITABH RAI

**Cluster General Manager, The
Westin Hyderabad Mindspace
& Hyderabad Market**

He will oversee the Hyderabad Marriott Hotel & Convention Centre, Courtyard by Marriott Hyderabad, Le Meridien Hyderabad, Marriott Executive Apartments, and The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace.



RANJEET DHAR >

**Corporate Associate Director-
Marketing & PR,
The Khyber Himalayan Resort
and Spa, Gulmarg**

He has a diverse background in event planning and marketing in the hotel business. With The Khyber turning 10 this year, his participation in the celebrations will be eagerly awaited.



VINITA NEGI >

**Head-Business Development
Leisure Hotels Group**

She brings a wealth of knowledge and domain expertise in asset management both through management, franchise and lease models, structuring business deals, strategic tie-ups, building relationships and handling the domestic market.



< TARIQUE HEREKAR

**F&B Manager
Novotel Pune**

He plans to invest time in the growth and development of associates, empowering them to provide exceptional guest service. He would also focus on innovation and the implementation of new trends in food and beverage (F&B) operations.



< SANJEEV KUMAR

**Rooms Manager
Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla**

He will focus on spearheading the Front Office department by establishing quality and service standards, streamlining room occupancies and operations, focussing on loyalty recognition and enrolment, and curating engaging guest experiences.



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