

# HOSPITALITY Talk<sup>®</sup>

**Sustainable  
future in  
progress**

**Union Budget  
draws mixed  
reactions**

**2023: Daring &  
resolute**

**Hotel sector  
to enter  
Supercycle**

**First Tourism  
Working Group  
meeting sets  
agenda**

**EXPANDING PORTFOLIO, DRIVING CHANGE**

Puneet Dhawan, Accor India & South Asia

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# Expanding base

Global hotel chains continue to witness robust demand in hotel rooms and improved RevPAR post-COVID while focusing on business travel, Bleisure, among others to maximize revenues.

## Three Hyatt hotels to come up in Saudi's Madinah

Hyatt Hotels has announced that it has entered into management agreements with Rua Al Madinah Holding Company to manage three new Hyatt-branded hotels, including Grand Hyatt Madinah, Hyatt Regency Madinah and Hyatt Place Madinah. Upon opening, these properties will participate in the World of Hyatt loyalty program and will add a combined 1,729 room keys to Hyatt's portfolio in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The three properties will be part of the Rua Al Madinah project and are set to be the first Hyatt-branded hotels in Madinah. "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia continues to play a pivotal role in Hyatt's growth strategy in the Middle East and we are excited to work with Rua Al Madinah Holding Company on the plans for these fantastic properties in Madinah," commented **Javier Águila**, Group President, Europe, Middle East and Africa, Hyatt.



## Ritz-Carlton & Marriott Executive Apartments makes debut in Suzhou, China

Marriott International has signed an agreement with China Central Place, Suzhou to bring The Ritz-Carlton and Marriott Executive Apartments brands to Suzhou, a city in Eastern China. The two complex properties plan to open at the end of 2024 and in the middle of 2025, respectively. "Under the Brand + Destination development strategy—matching destinations with brand debuts and entries, we are delighted to announce the new signings with Suzhou Chunji Real Estate Development," said **Gavin Yu**, Chief Development Officer, Greater China, Marriott International. "We are pleased to announce our signing with Marriott International," said **Wang Honglun**, Co-President, Huamao Group. "We are confident that this project will be a prime example of business excellence, elevating our hospitality offerings to world-class levels for locals and travelers alike." The Ritz-Carlton, Suzhou is expected to open in December 2024. Designed by Remedios Studio, the hotel plans to feature 190 guestrooms and suites.



## Hilton opens Embassy Suites in Virginia Beach

Embassy Suites by Hilton Virginia Beach Oceanfront Resort hotel has officially opened. The hotel is owned by Gold Key|PHR and the Cavalier Resort Virginia Beach. The new Embassy Suites by Hilton Virginia Beach Oceanfront Resort is the newest addition to the collection of Embassy Suites properties in the country with the Resort designation from Hilton. The hotel's opening adds an additional 157 suites to the Cavalier Resort enclave as well as conference and event space, luxury amenities to include indoor and outdoor pools, a fitness center and more. The hotel will delight the foodie as much as the beach-goer, offering two exciting new eateries at the resort: a beachside Tacos 'N Tequila shack, and a bit of whimsical nostalgia at Arbuckle's Bar & Grill, named for historically recurring Cavalier Hotel guest Roscoe Fatty Arbuckle.



## IHG heralds first Vignette Collection in Germany

IHG Hotels & Resorts has rolled out first Vignette Collection, Alte Post in Reit im Winkl, Germany. Alte Post Vignette Collection is set to open in 2026 under a franchise agreement with Odyssey Hotel Group. The luxury hotel will feature 150 luxury bedrooms, two restaurants, including one for fine dining, plus a bar, underground parking and a superb wellness area with fitness studios, saunas and a swimming pool. **Rick van Erp**, Founder and CEO, Odyssey Hotel Group, said, "We are delighted to be working with IHG Hotels & Resorts on this exciting brand debut for Vignette Collection in Germany. We are looking forward to developing this hotel so it remains sustainable for years to come and provides a new luxury hotel stay experience for visitors coming to this part of Germany."

## Radisson sets in motion pipeline of 150 plus hotels

Radisson Hotel Group has paved the way for a strong 2023 by strengthening its foothold in South Asia with the signing of 12 hotels across its brand architecture, including Radisson Blu, Radisson RED, Radisson, Radisson Individuals, and its brand extension Radisson Individuals Retreats developed for the Indian market. Located in key gateway cities and emerging destinations, these new hotels will collectively add over 1,000 plus rooms to its domestic network between 2023 and 2026. "2022 was a remarkable year for us at Radisson Hotel Group as we established a robust pipeline of 150 hotels for the next decade," said **Zubin Saxena**, Managing Director & Senior Area Vice President, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group.



## Hospitality solutions Accor One Living launched

Accor has announced the creation of Accor One Living—an industry-first platform dedicated to the integration of innovative hospitality solutions into mixed-used developments. Accor One Living will support the development and operation of branded residences—anchored by managed and franchised Accor hotels and resorts—and other unique products that add value to mixed-use projects, such as co-working offerings, extended stay hotels, private clubs and more. “Accor is carving a new path with the creation of Accor One Living, based on the tremendous success that we have earned as a leader in the branded residences and mixed-use category. Our momentum is powered by Accor’s diverse portfolio of compelling brands, a commitment to the success of our partners, and more than two decades of experience,” said **Jeff Tisdall**, Chief Business Officer, Accor One Living.



## Kempinski Hotels upgrades customer booking experience

Kempinski Hotels has tied up with Sabre Corporation to enable the luxury hotel chain to upgrade its customer booking experience. Kempinski Hotels launched a contemporary new website, powered by Sabre’s SynXis Custom Booking Engine. Through this innovative solution, Kempinski Hotels has been able to create its own bespoke user design and experience, with features including soft date availability search, upsell capability, and the ability to engage and convert shoppers to bookers using modern e-commerce features such as price comparison and alternate availability.

## voco hotels scales up operations in Thailand

IHG Hotels & Resorts has announced the signing of voco Bangkok Surawong with Tawanna Property Company Limited. The 242-room voco Bangkok Surawong will rebrand from the former Tawanna Bangkok hotel and—following a full renovation—reopen in 2025, ready to introduce travellers to voco hotels’ distinctive lifestyle experience. **Saowarin Chanprakaisi**, Director, Development, South East Asia and Korea, IHG said, “I am excited to partner Tawanna Property Company Limited for the second signing of voco hotels in Thailand. Bangkok is one of the world’s best-loved travel destinations with 25 million arrivals expected this year, and has historically been a market where IHG launches new brands—Holiday Inn Express, Hotel Indigo, Staybridge Suites, Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants and, most recently in 2022, Vignette Collection.”



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# Moving forward

Indian hospitality sector is well poised to unleash much greater growth due to increase in average room rates and occupancies and focusing on expansion.

## AAHAR to be held from 14–18 March

Exhibiting an inspirational line of industry stakeholders and future-forward brands, AAHAR 2023—one of Asia's largest international food and hospitality fair will take place at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi from 14–18 March, 2023. One of its kind, the show is attended by global vendors as well as sourcing professionals every year. It gives an unique opportunity to the visitors and buyers to observe future-shaping industry trends and latest technology. An annual five-day show, it aims to bring food and hospitality exhibitors and buyers together under one roof. It also helps the exhibitors from around the world and across India showcase their cutting-edge innovations and latest products. Every year, millions of industry professionals and supplier brands attend the show to establish new relations and strengthen existing partnerships. AAHAR will also feature the 15th edition of Culinary Art India (CAI), a professional culinary challenge. The professional culinary challenge is poised to draw in national-level participation from senior and trainee chefs from India. The CAI's major objective is to cater a professional platform for culinary professionals from around India to showcase their respective and joint talents, and creativity, learn, contribute experiences, partner, and network in a strictly business-like and competing setting.



## Delhi's first microbrewery launched

Pouring a mug full of cheer and happy times for Delhiites, Hotel The Royal Plaza New Delhi gets the capital city its first microbrewery. "The goal was to obtain the appropriate drink at the appropriate location since beer is in great demand. Gurgaon and Noida both had microbreweries that catered to the residents of Delhi-NCR. Delhi, though, was noticeably absent. To capitalize on this, we launched one of the finest microbreweries in the capital," said **Dhananjay Kumar**, General Manager, Hotel The Royal Plaza. All beers are produced with various German malts and European hops at the microbrewery. Refreshing German wheat beer with hop bitterness and a very thick, mousy, long-lasting white head, with a characteristic banana-and-clove yeast character, high carbonation, and a dry aftertaste. Lager, with light gold hues, is refreshing crisp and bitter with a medium dry finish and medium-light body with high carbonation.



## Fortune Hotels sets foot in Kanpur

Fortune Hotels has further expanded its reach in Uttar Pradesh with a new alliance in Kanpur. The upscale hotel chain's existing bouquet in the state includes Ghaziabad, Noida, Aligarh and Lucknow. Commenting on Fortune Hotel's expansion spree in India, **Samir MC**, Managing Director, Fortune Hotels said, "These are exciting times for us as we continue to expand our reach in India. Uttar Pradesh is a significant growth market for us and hence, the need to enter its biggest city, Kanpur with our fifth entity. The city is a thriving commercial and industrial market and has a huge growth potential in the years to come. Naturally, it that makes for a perfect place to bring in our hospitality expertise."

## Hospitality sees 60.9% YoY RevPAR growth in Q4 '22

According to JLL's latest Hotel Momentum India Q4, 2022, the hospitality sector continued to witness strong YoY growth in performance in Q4 2022 (Oct–Dec), primarily driven by corporate travel, weddings, winter vacations and festivities. The year ended with a 90 per cent YoY growth in RevPAR for the calendar year 2022 over 2021. The performance in Q4 2021 was strong as well on the back of weddings and domestic leisure travel, however corporate travel was only a fraction of what has been witnessed in Q4 2022. As a result, RevPAR growth of 60.9 per cent YoY from Q4 2022 over Q4 2021 seems significant. Furthermore, the sector witnessed a RevPAR growth of 30.1 per cent QoQ between Q4 2022 and Q3 2022. This is due to higher levels of corporate travel in Q4 2022 compared to Q3 2022.



## IHCL signs its first Vivanta Hotel in Jharkhand

Indian Hotels Company (IHCL) has announced the signing of its fourth hotel in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand. This is a conversion and will be rebranded Vivanta after extensive renovations. The hotel will be operational in 2024. **Suma Venkatesh**, Executive Vice President, Real Estate & Development, IHCL said, "Jharkhand with its significant commercial potential is being recognized as an important state. This signing is in line with IHCL's vision to be present in key markets. Vivanta Jamshedpur is a step in that direction, as it is amongst the largest cities of the state. With this hotel, IHCL will now have two of its brands in the city. We are delighted to partner with Vijaya Homes Group."

## Zuper Resorts opens The Cliff in Panchgani

Zuper Resorts has announced the opening of new resort The Cliff. Speaking at the launch, **Akaal Singh Manchanda**, Founder & Director, Operations, Zuper Hotels & Resorts said, "In line with our vision to curate countryside experiences for our guests, we are delighted to introduce The Cliff resort at a peaceful and tranquil location such as Panchgani. Our group is committed to the finest hospitality in an exclusive set-up, and The Cliff is just the right extension of our promise. We look forward to welcoming our guests for a quick getaway, retreat, or a special occasion." Encompassing 41 rooms and four divisions, these are spacious IoT-featured facilities where technology has been used intelligently to help guests stay in utmost comfort. A temperature-controlled swimming pool enables you to unwind any time of the day, the poolside Zeni Bar endorses the best drinks in the country, and a 24/7 Tuckshop serves you coffee and snacks.



## Sterling Holiday Resorts debuts in Haridwar

Sterling Holiday Resorts has announced the launch of Sterling Mantra Haridwar, its fifth property in Uttarakhand. Speaking on the inauguration of the property, **Vikram Lalvani**, Managing Director & CEO, Sterling Holiday Resorts said, "We are delighted with the launch of Sterling Mantra Haridwar. With Sterling's traditional hospitality and service levels we seek to provide guests with an unforgettable experience. Whether you are a traveler seeking a spiritual retreat or a businessperson in need of a convenient and comfortable stay, Sterling Mantra Haridwar is the ideal destination for you." Sterling Mantra Haridwar offers spacious rooms which are comfortable for families on a holiday. The 40 fully equipped rooms provide all the contemporary amenities and thoughtful touches for a business traveler as well. Golden Leaf, the onsite multi-cuisine restaurant opens out into the lawns for guests to savour an indoor/outdoor dining experience.

## Fern Hotels & Resorts launches The Fern Habitat, Jaipur

The Fern Hotels & Resorts has launched its second unique property, The Fern Habitat, Jaipur. This is the company's 10th hotel in Rajasthan and its 4th hotel in the Pink City. Speaking of the launch, **Suhail Kannampilly**, CEO, Concept Hospitality-The Fern Hotels & Resorts said, "The Fern Habitat is our eco-friendly Apart'otel chain. This new brand compliments our other three Fern, Fern Residency and Beacon hotels in the fascinating city of Jaipur. We welcome our business and leisure guests to come and experience this new offering in Rajasthan's state capital." The Fern Habitat, Jaipur is centrally located on Ajmer Road, putting it within a 15-minute drive to all the important business and tourist locations in the city. The Fern Habitat is a unique apart'otel offering 105 modern, comfortable, spacious rooms, a multi-cuisine restaurant and bar, and six banquet and meeting rooms to suit the needs of up to 400 guests for conferences, training programs, meetings, events and wedding functions.



## Ramada Encore by Wyndham Bareilly commences operations

Wyndham Hotels & Resorts has launched Ramada Encore under a franchise agreement with Juhi Sons, a firm based out of Bareilly. "We are delighted to announce the opening of Ramada Encore by Wyndham in Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, further strengthening our mid-scale presence. Adding to an existing portfolio of six Wyndham-branded hotels across Lucknow, Varanasi, Agra and Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh. We look forward to our partnership with Juhi Sons and give a truly international standard hotel to the city of Bareilly," said **Nikhil Sharma**, Managing Director, Eurasia, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts. "It is our great pleasure to partner in Bareilly with Wyndham Hotels & Resorts under the trendy lifestyle Ramada Encore by Wyndham brand and become part of its rapidly expanding hotel portfolio in India and particularly in the state of Uttar Pradesh," said **Saurabh Mehrotra**, Owner, Juhi Sons.



## HICSA 2023 announces Radisson's CEO as speaker

Federico J Gonzalez, CEO, Radisson Hotel Group will speak at the 18th edition of Hotel Investment Conference - South Asia (HICSA) to be held from 11 to 13 April 2023. "HICSA is synonymous with the South Asian hospitality ecosystem and we are delighted to be part of its 18th edition. South Asia, particularly India, continues to be a priority market for us. 2023 is a milestone year as Radisson Hotel Group completes 25 years of operations in the country with more than 150 hotels in operation and under development. We are committed to growing our presence in the region and doubling our portfolio by 2025. I look forward to meeting and engaging with our industry colleagues," said **Federico J Gonzalez**, CEO, Radisson Hotel Group. HICSA is an annual event that brings together a diverse range of participants from the hospitality, real estate and investment industries.

# Bountiful for hospitality sector

Recently launched Visit India Year 2023 initiative will provide thrust to hospitality sector by attracting huge number of foreign tourists to India, says Union Tourism Minister **G Kishan Reddy**.

In a bid to further provide impetus to the tourism and hospitality industry, G Kishan Reddy, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Development of North Eastern Region has rolled out Visit India Year 2023 initiative and unveiled its logo recently.

On the occasion, Reddy said this in an important year as India is heading G20. "More than one lakh foreign delegates will visit India this year and they will be showcased entire gamut of India's culture, including monuments and festivals. Each foreign delegate of G20 will be a brand ambassador of India's culture, heritage, and tourist destinations. Ministry of Tourism is coordinating with Indian missions and other stakeholders to have a conducive environment for foreign visitors this year."

Visit India Year 2023 logo is a visual identity that is shaped like a grand namaste inspired by Atithi Devo Bhava. Namaste holds cultural significance in India. Here, by folding the hands, India and its citizens are inviting the world to visit India. On a closer look, one will find that the Namaste is in fact, a colourful medley of the vibrant experiences,

heritage, rich culture, delicacies, wildlife, art forms, and a lot more that India stands for. Every icon shown in the logo represents India, in its own unique way.

Encouraging the inbound travel and particularly in the backdrop of India's G20 Presidency as well as grand celebrations of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav,



the Ministry of Tourism is celebrating this year as Visit India Year 2023. The focus is on inbound travel to India, to highlight varied tourism offerings of India and showcase them to the global tourists. The priorities, include highlighting the unique tourism offerings of every state by leveraging country's richness in culture,

heritage, spirituality, natural beauty and focusing on promoting diverse categories of tourism such as sustainable tourism, rural tourism, medical tourism, MICE, and others.

The Ministry is on a mission to unlock the untapped potential of tourism in India, making India a 365-day destination. The Ministry is gearing up to improve both the infrastructure and other framework conditions impacting the growth of tourism within the year. To achieve synergies in the Ministry's efforts and requirements of the tourism sector, the Ministry of Tourism is working with all the relevant ministries and government agencies, partners, travel and trade industry, state governments and tourism boards, and key stakeholders which have influence and impact on tourism.

**The focus is on inbound travel to India, to highlight varied tourism offerings of India and showcase them to the global tourists**





# Affirmative approach

First Tourism Working Group meeting prioritized key areas for hospitality sector's growth. It was advocated by all member countries, invitee countries and international organizations.

Under India's G20 Presidency, Ministry of Tourism and Gujarat put its best foot forward at the 1st Tourism Working Group meeting, held at Rann of Kutch from 7–10 February. There were two side events held as part of this meeting. On Day-1, first side event was held before the working group meeting, with the theme 'Rural Tourism for Community Empowerment and Poverty Alleviation'. At the inaugural session, Bhupendra Bhai Patel, CM, Gujarat; G Kishan Reddy, Minister of Tourism, Culture and DoNER; and Parshottam Rupala, Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, were in attendance. Indian dignitaries shared their views on Indian tourist destinations, steps taken by government to promote tourism, safety of tourists, digitization in the sector and impact of tourism on local economy and employment.

The five priority themes identified by the Indian Presidency for the working group meeting include Green Tourism: 'Greening of tourism sector for a sustainable, responsible and resilient tourism sector'; Digitalization: 'Harnessing the power of digitalization to promote competitiveness, inclusion and sustainability in tourism sector'; Skills: 'Empowering youth with skills for jobs and entrepreneurship in tourism sector'; Tourism MSMEs: 'Nurturing tourism MSMEs/Startups/private sector to unleash innovation and dynamism in tourism sector' and Destination Management: 'Rethinking the strategic

management of destinations towards a holistic approach that delivers on the SDGs'. All five key priority areas set for the deliberations were endorsed by all G20 members, guest countries and international organizations.

On the last day of the working group meeting, a second side event was organized on the theme, 'Promotion of Archaeological Tourism: Discovering shared Cultural Heritage'. Speakers at the panel discussion shared their views on conservation of archaeological sites and challenges faced at such sites.

They also highlighted the benefits of promoting archaeological tourism for empowerment and sustainable livelihoods of local communities. In his concluding remarks, Arvind Singh, Secretary, Tourism said that archaeological tourism can provide socio-economic development of local communities in a sustainable manner.

**The Tourism Working Group will reconvene for three more meetings including a Ministerial which will take place in Goa**



Going forward, the Tourism Working Group will reconvene for three more meetings including a Ministerial which will take place in Goa. A Ministerial Level Communique and the Goa Roadmap for Tourism as vehicle for achieving sustainable development goals are the planned deliverables.

In addition to the four G20 meetings of G20 Tourism track, three mega events are also planned to promote tourism during the period of India's G20 Presidency. The Ministry of Tourism will be organizing the first Global Tourism Investors' Summit in April/May in New Delhi; MICE Global Conference in May; and G20 Tourism CEO Forum in June.



# EXPANDING PORTFOLIO, DRIVING CHANGE

In exclusive interview with *Hospitality Talk*, **Puneet Dhawan**, Senior Vice President, Operations, Accor India & South Asia talks about brand's development plans, India's G20 Presidency and robust domestic demand.

 **Lipla Negi**



### What are you most excited about Accor in 2023-24?

2023 will be another strong year of growth for Accor and we are excited to introduce new properties to our loyal guests. We are looking at everything quarter by quarter to stay aligned with changing guests' preferences and economic scenarios, while focusing on sustained positive business recovery.

We will focus on our corporate travelers—domestic and international. MICE and Weddings segment will continue to play a pivotal role for business for the hotels. International inbound segment revival is giving leisure locations an additional impetus.

The last two years were filled with vigorous learnings that paved the way for vital evolution in the hospitality industry. We entered 2023 equipped with better resources that gave us the confidence to stabilize our business and reinforce our development plans. In the last two years, we opened doors to Raffles Udaipur, India's first Raffles hotel, offering a fresh perspective on the city of Udaipur and inaugurated the 21st ibis hotel in the country with the launch of ibis Bengaluru Hebbal. We also added our 22nd Novotel—Novotel Mumbai International Airport adding to our footprint in the Maximum City.

Keeping in line with our growth story, we have recently announced the signing of Fairmont Udaipur, set to open with 340 rooms and Fairmont Shimla Fagu with 105 keys. These upcoming properties are committed to offering a place for special occasions and unmatched guest experiences at the most beautiful locations around the country.

### Luxury, midscale, or economy—where do you see the most demand?

With the introduction of luxury brands such as Raffles and Fairmont, we are able to solidify our position in the country. Guests are very keen to explore these brands for newer experiences.

**We have introduced Accor Key in our hotels globally, that provides guests access to their rooms without a physical key**

The recently opened luxury property Raffles Udaipur, has been garnering strong occupancy levels indicating that the Indian market is looking forward to experiencing the world-class luxury synonym to the brand.

We strongly believe that in a dynamic market like India, there is scope across economy to luxury brands. With the change in the consumer buying behavior, the Indian domestic traveler is far more open to exploring luxury properties within the country. This has propelled the growth of the luxury brands within the India marketplace. There is an equal impetus on the business brands as our Indian economy brands continue to grow. Our focus remains to grow our portfolio across various brands within all segments.

### How does recently launched Handwritten Collection add to Accor's portfolio?

Handwritten Collection enriches Accor's offering in the collection brands within the midscale segment with a curated selection of hotels that exhibit charming and one-of-a-kind concepts. Our aim, beyond delivering a truly authentic guest experience, is to support the growing number of independent and boutique hotel owners looking to boost their global profile, connect with more audiences and grow their revenue without losing their identity. The Handwritten Collection portfolio is expected to reach more than 250 hotels globally by 2030.

When referring to the luxury segment, the Indian luxury traveler now is more discerning and looking at curated experiences to create ever lasting memories. They prefer to choose newer

less travelled destinations to satisfy their travel cravings.

### How do you view infra developments in Tier III & IV cities and their impact on hospitality industry?

We are optimistic as our well-rounded portfolio of leading hotel brands across the luxury, premium, mid-scale, and economy categories, including Ibis, Novotel, Fairmont, Sofitel, and Raffles, compliment the multi-layered Indian market while supporting our long-term growth strategy. With our presence across cities, we have been able to capture our fair share of the market. We continue our foray into Tier II & III markets as they continue to shine, as they did through COVID while leading recovery.

We currently operate Novotel Guwahati and are actively looking at further business development opportunities in the North East region.

### In terms of revenue growth, what are your targets for 2023?

Domestic travel was the driving force for business in 2022 and managed to lead the hospitality wave in the country successfully. Driven by pent-up demand, 2023 will continue to see growth in domestic travel, however we also see international travel coming back. People are on the look out to explore new and untapped destinations as we enter a new year. With more disposable income, we observe a heightened curiosity about the country's own travel spectrum.

Starting Q2 2022 onwards, we saw a strong RevPAR growth quarter on quarter, which was predominantly driven by our higher average rates. Our hotels made sure to maximise every demand opportunity coming their way, putting us in a strong stead. For 2023, we expect the momentum to continue and the trends for Q1 2023 are indicative of a strong year already. This year we should witness demand come back



across all segments—Corporate, Weddings, MICE both in national and international markets.

**How has COVID impacted partnerships & associations with respect to hotel signings?**

As one of the leading international hospitality operators in the country, we continue to grow our network with our owner partners on the back of a strong development pipeline.

We focused on taking a collaborative approach along with our owners and business partners, and opened our hotels in the right manner, by being prepared to meet with guest expectations. Our approach continues to be people-focused, which includes our team members, our customers, and our owners.

We take pride in having a forward-looking attitude when it comes to new signings and openings, with 10 new hotels being signed across various brands in the year 2022.

**Will the room rates continue to soar or will 2023 bring some respite or stabilization?**

As per various industry reports, the hospitality sector is on a steady growth trajectory. Hotel occupancy increased significantly over last year and room rates saw a strong increase. The industry is seeing a continued rise in demand, which we foresee will keep the rates growing further.

**What strong steps should be taken regarding skilled workforce in hospitality industry?**

The talent crunch in the sector is driven by factors on both sides—on one hand, the shortfall in skilled experienced working professionals, and on the other hand, the uphill battle to attract new talent to the future pipeline. We strive to maintain an honest relationship with our team members that results in them placing their trust to continue working with us.

**We collaborated with Microsoft to launch ALL CONNECT which enables guests around world to adapt to new ways of working**

At Accor, the well-being of our teams is our priority, and we want to give them the best possible experience. That is why we offer more sustainable alternatives that align with current trends, Accor's overall vision and what our team members want.

**What role do you see Indian hospitality sector playing in promoting Incredible India in G20 Summit?**

India's G20 Presidency will bring a great opportunity for the tourism and hospitality industry as both inbound and outbound travel are expected to increase significantly in the coming years. It will only further support the cause of the industry showcasing India's hospitality prowess to the world, while celebrating the country's rich and varied heritage and diversity.

We are very closely working with the G20 organizing team to ensure we offer customized solutions across our properties as per the requirements for the various meetings and delegates visiting the country.

**What concrete steps Accor is taking towards sustainability?**

At Accor, sustainability is at the core of what we do, and a lot of conscious effort is made to ensure that our operations are managed responsibly. We believe each of our hotels is a planet, and every action matters. It is our duty to help spread awareness and collaborate with all stakeholders—guests, our team members, our communities, and our partners. With this collaborative approach to sustainable innovation

as our primary focus, we launched Planet 21 – Acting here program that endeavors to act for positive hospitality. The program is structured around six pillars: engaging our guests in a sustainable experience, co-innovating with our partners to open up new horizons, working hand-in-hand with local communities for a positive impact, acting as an inclusive company for our people, moving towards carbon-neutral buildings, and striving for zero waste and healthy, sustainable food.

With Planet 21, Accor's sustainable development program, hotels have committed themselves to work towards a better environment, betterment of society, helping those in need, a healthy lifestyle and much more. Planet 21 is an Accor initiative committed to providing a positive hospitality experience. The program works across four basic priorities of working with its employees, customers, partners, and local communities.

**How has technology reshaped future of hospitality industry in past 2 years?**

Touchless hospitality and innovation brought in by technological advancements have made operations more cost-effective and enhanced guest experience. To provide a contactless and secure guest journey, we have introduced Accor Key in our hotels globally, that provides guests access to their rooms without a physical key. We have embraced technology to ensure minimization of human contact at every level, from room bookings, to check-ins, check-outs, and payment procedures, and digital menus, automation in revenue management, digital trainings, among others.

We collaborated with Microsoft to launch ALL CONNECT, a hybrid meetings concept supported by Microsoft Teams which enables guests around the world to adapt to the new ways of working. This new offering aids corporate customers and meeting planners to combine physical in-hotel meetings with virtual interactions across multiple locations simultaneously.

# Union Budget draws mixed reactions

Hospitality heads and trade bodies welcome proposals such as Dekho Apna Desh, putting tourism sector to mission mode, Unity Mall, among others announced in Union Budget.



Lipla Negi



**SATISH KUMAR**  
General Manager,  
The St. Regis  
Goa Resort

The Union Budget 2023- 2024 seems encouraging with the introduction of new initiatives such as Dekho Apna Desh which promote domestic travel. Goa being a preferred destination for weekend getaways and annual holidays will benefit through this. The development



of 50 new destinations, will make travel more experiential and will make India more attractive to international tourists as their options will increase. International tourists will now get to explore more destinations in India and this could help Goa as being an option at the end of their itinerary.”

## Development of 50 new destinations, will make travel more experiential and will make India more attractive to international tourists



**CHANDER BALJEE**  
Chairman & Managing  
Director, Royal Orchid &  
Regenta Hotels

Tourism has been given the spotlight that was required for a long time. The focus on Bharat Dekho is commendable, as this is an initiative that will push Indians to see their own country. However, there are several areas, especially in the hospitality industry, that have been missed. There are no loans for long terms, as well as no industry status, which has been our request



for years. The suggested 50 airports will certainly help the industry but will take another 3-5 years to be built. The same can be said for the 50 tourist destinations that will be selected. This will take a long time, maybe even five to 10 years before completion. In my view, more prominence must be given to our industry. There should be more focus on the connectivity of airports.

## In my view, more prominence must be given to our industry. There should be more focus on the connectivity of airports

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**SP JAIN**  
Chairman & MD,  
Pride Hotels

The Hon'ble Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced the development of tourist places jointly by public and private partnerships. This will give a much-needed boost to the domestic tourism segment. The Budget specifies that 50 tourist destinations will be selected and developed as a whole package for domestic and international tourism. We welcome this announcement. For domestic tourism, Dekho Apna Desh has already been promoted very widely now similarly international tourism too will be revived with these

initiatives. The tourist infrastructure will also be provided on the border and in North East India, which will be highly beneficial for the inflow of tourists. The industry can harness the direct and multiplier effects of tourism in employment generation to the youth of India as the sector creates direct and indirect job opportunities. We believe these implementations will play a pivotal role in overall economic development. This is a good Budget for the hospitality and tourism sectors.

### **Dekho Apna Desh has already been promoted very widely now similarly international tourism too will be revived with these initiatives**



**M P BEZBARUAH**  
Secretary General,  
Hotel Association of India

It is heartening to note that the Union Budget 2023-24 continues to build on a strong foundation of economic development by promoting inclusive growth wherein fruits of development reach each and every citizen of the country. We are also enthused by the continued focus on developing infrastructure—railways, transport, airports, heliports, water aerodromes—all of which will improve connectivity that is directly linked to the

growth of tourism and hospitality. Digitization, development of artificial intelligence, emphasis on skilling are other aspects that impact all sectors and hospitality is no exception. This Budget has recognized and highlighted the importance of the sector by announcing the selection and development of 50 tourist destinations through challenge mode. This will surely add more value to India as a destination for both domestic and international traveller.

### **This Budget has recognized and highlighted importance of sector by announcing selection and development of 50 tourist destinations**



**SARBENDRA SARKAR**  
Founder & MD,  
Cygnett Hotels and Resorts

The Union Budget 2023-2024 presented by the Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman is a growth-oriented one, aimed to help India weather the current global economic challenges. With the FM announcing plans to renew 50 additional airports, helipads, water aerodromes, and advanced landing grounds, it will boost regional connectivity. Moreover, the announcement to develop 50 destinations for domestic and international tourists will also help to draw attention to the country's tourism and

hospitality sectors. The Finance Minister said that these tourist destinations will be selected through challenge mode. The impetus on Dekho Apna Desh will provide a further boost to the growth of domestic tourism in the country. The FM also highlighted that states will be encouraged to set up a Unity Mall in the capital city or in most popular tourist destination for the promotion of the One District, One Product theme. Such initiatives will also help unleash the potential tapped in the tourism sector.

### **Union Budget is a growth-oriented one, aimed to help India weather the current global economic challenges**



**PARITOSH LADHANI**  
JMD, Sincere Developers  
& Owner, Taj Hotel &  
Convention Centre Agra

The Union Budget 2023-2024 presented by the Finance Minister highlighted that the Indian economy is on a growth trajectory in spite of the global economic challenges. In her budget speech, the FM emphasized that the country offers immense attraction for both domestic and international tourists. With the government announcing that states will be encouraged

to set up Unity Mall in the capital city or most popular tourist destination for the promotion of One District, One Product theme, such initiatives will help unleash the potential vested in the tourism sector. I also expect that the change in tax regime announced in the Union Budget will result in more disposable income in the hands of middle class consumers.



### **I expect that change in tax regime announced in Union Budget will result in more disposable income in hands of middle-class consumers**



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# Hotel sector all set to enter Supercycle

Bright prospects beckon Indian hotel industry as it has stood out tougher, wiser, and more robust post-COVID, opines Nikhil Shah.

The hotel industry is one of the largest employment generators in India. With travel and tourism's total contribution to the GDP in 2019 being among the top 10, the sector is a major contributor to the country's economy. Post-COVID it has emerged stronger, smarter, and more powerful.

According to a projection by IBEF, the travel and tourism market in India is projected to reach US \$125 billion by FY27 from US \$75 billion in FY20. International tourists are expected to reach 30.5 million by 2028. However, they have not yet reached pre-COVID levels. The Indian travel and tourism industry is expected to record an annual growth rate of 10.35 per cent between 2019 and 2028, reaching US \$512 billion by 2028. In FY19, it contributed US \$191.3 billion to the GDP.

Here are some of the major indicators pointing to the fact that the hotel sector is all set to enter the Supercycle:



**NIKHIL SHAH**  
Director,  
Hospitality, Capital Markets  
and Investment Services,  
Colliers India

**Indian travel and tourism industry is expected to record an annual growth rate of 10.35 per cent between 2019 and 2028**



**Inflation:** The average Consumer Price Index inflation has been around 6 per cent in the past few years and the IMF is expecting the inflation to be in the range of 5 per cent which will increase the operating cost, thereby increasing the interest rate.

**Wealthier India:** Rising GDP, projected to be at an average rate of 6.3 per cent till 2030 by S&P, will help the economy grow and will make more resources available—goods and services, wages, and profits. IMF is expecting the inflation to be in the range of 5 per cent which will increase the operating cost, thereby increasing spends on leisure.

**Population advantage:** A sizeable chunk of the population falls under the working class. This will help the travel sector as disposable income will most likely be high. Refer to the chart given below reflecting that approx. 67 per cent of the population lies between 15–64 years of age.

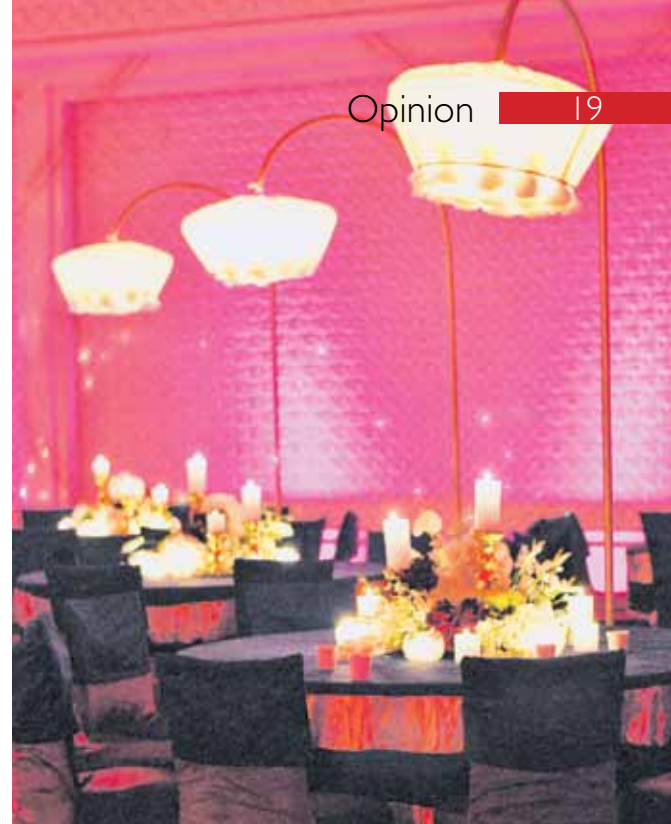


occupancy levels will increase further, as there is great demand among travelers for hotel stays.

**High returns:** A combination of the above five factors are enabling hotel owners and operators to charge higher rates and achieve higher occupancy levels. Some of the recent results of the hotel companies have been phenomenal. For instance, IHCL's Taj Hotels topline is increased by more than 20 per cent quarterly compared to pre-COVID period Q3, Dec 2019. The annual consolidated EBITDA margins are 35 per cent in the current period which were in the range of 20 per cent to 25 per cent. Puneet Chhatwal, MD & CEO, IHCL is hopeful that the Q4 also will be strong compared to past Q4 as Q1, Q2, and Q3 were the best ever in the 120-year-old history.

Supercycle suggests it is the best time to buy hard assets, especially hotels. A hotel having around 70 per cent occupancy generates EBITDA of approx. 35 per cent, and with a 10 per cent increase in occupancy, the increase in the EBIDTA will be more than 10 per cent.

If you have the budget and are looking to invest, you should bid on hotels



available for sale as hotel valuations will soar in the near future due to the above-mentioned factors including limited supply, great demand, and phenomenal performance.

**As the hotel supply is limited, room rates and occupancy levels will increase further, as there is great demand for hotel stays**

Age bracket	% of people	Inclined to travel
0-14 years	26.31%	
<b>15-24 years</b>	<b>17.51%</b>	<b>66.98%</b>
<b>25-54 years</b>	<b>41.56%</b>	
<b>55-64 years</b>	<b>7.91%</b>	
65 years and over	6.72%	

**Cost rationalization:** During COVID, period hotels implemented cost rationalization measures to reduce expenses and maintain profitability. They were able to reduce the fixed cost which otherwise was unheard of. With business back to normal most of these cost rationalizations have remained, leading to better margins.

**Limited supply:** Shrinking supply will lead to shortage of hotel rooms available for occupancy in a specific market or geographic area. This can occur for a variety of reasons, including insufficient new hotel developments, increased demand for travel, and the adverse effects of COVID. As the hotel supply is limited, room rates and



# SUSTAINABLE future in progress

Hotels across globe are embracing sustainable best practices such as embracing renewable building resources, going plastic free, among others to reduce their environmental impact, avers **Inge Huijbrechts**.

The world has sprung back into action following COVID, with a renewed enthusiasm and determination to make up for the lost time. The travel and tourism industry, as one of the most important industries to lead the rebound wave, has embraced new and emerging trends due to massive shift in consumer needs over the past few years. The concept of travel has evolved as the world recognizes the importance of conservation and travelers are now looking for authentic, mindful

experiences that benefit the earth. According to Expedia's 2022 survey, 90 per cent of travelers worldwide prefer to see sustainable options when booking a trip. This tendency was even stronger in APAC, where 95 per cent of travelers expressed interest in sustainable travel options.

## ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

The last seven years have been the warmest on record and the number of natural disasters has doubled in the last 30 years, giving rise to increased physical and geopolitical risk. Climate change and global warming rates are only



**INGE HUIJBRECHTS**  
Global SVP,  
Sustainability, Security &  
Corporate Communications,  
Radisson Hotel Group

**Failing to act to limit global warming and mitigate the effects of climate change can have catastrophic repercussions**



rising. As global warming accelerates, tipping points in the climate system are inevitable. As a result, failing to act to limit global warming and mitigate the effects of climate change can have catastrophic repercussions.

Mitigation means going beyond just preparing for the impact of climate change to also being part of a permanent solution. However, people not familiar with sustainability, often ask: what is the cost of sustainability? Asking for the cost of sustainability is the wrong approach—the cost of inaction is what we will be dealing with at large if this continues.

### PERSISTENT ACTIONS REQUIRED

While the tourism industry was inclined towards sustainability even before COVID, efforts have only intensified in recent times. Sustainability has allowed businesses the chance and freedom to bring in innovations and disruptions.

For hotel owners and investors, unsustainable assets are also a huge risk of depreciation in value as

increasing numbers of investors are realizing that properties compliant with their ESG targets add value to their credibility and extend the lifecycle of their assets.

Even consumers and employees consider sustainability to be an important characteristic when associating with a brand. Travelers, especially Gen Z, will avoid your brand if you do not prioritize environmental sustainability. This is true for nearly all global markets, but even more prominent in India.

Employees also only want to work for companies with a purpose. In the current labor market, companies that are not engaged in environmental and social sustainability will find it even harder to attract and retain talent.

### TARGETING NET ZERO ATTAINMENT

At Radisson Hotel Group, we are committed to being net zero by 2050 and have published validated science-based targets. We have also defined a renewable energy strategy for 25 key markets. Now in times of rising utility

**We must work together to provide positive, measurable initiatives toward net zero, biodiversity conservation, and an equitable world**

costs, any action on efficient resource use has an even better return on investment.

For businesses, the move to net zero requires action on several focus areas:

- An increased use of renewable energy produced onsite or offsite or purchased from providers.
- Green buildings having benchmarks such as LEED, BREEAM, EDGE, or similar guidelines.
- Operational efficiency, achieved by smart habits in hotel operations.

Additionally, communication with guests requires clarity, consistency, and continuous progress which is why the World Travel & Tourism Council, together with Radisson Hotel Group, 70 hotel companies, HAI, and several destinations launched Hotel Sustainability Basics (HSB) a solid, clear, industry standard for hotel sustainability. HSB contains 12 criteria focused on efficient resource use, planet, and people with progress built into the framework.

### EMBRACING SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

Sustainable actions require an evaluation and deliberate planning. While approaches can vary, the duty falls squarely on all stakeholders' shoulders. Sustainable travel is more than a 21st-century phrase, with consumers seeking actual actions from businesses that illustrate their commitment. With shifting demand patterns, we must work together to provide positive, measurable initiatives toward net zero, biodiversity conservation, and an equitable world. The more we as an industry push for responsible travel, the clearer the case for sustainability becomes, and the greater the impact we create. The maximum positive impact on sustainability can only be achieved if we tackle challenges collectively and the tourism industry is well-poised to take the lead in initiating this cycle.





# Foreign tourist arrivals are growing

Economic Survey 2023 remains bullish on growth trajectory of hospitality sector owing to resumption of scheduled international flights, thriving wedding & social events & easing of COVID regulations.

**T**he Indian tourism sector is showing signs of recovery after two years of COVID-induced challenges, the Economic Survey 2023 has said. "Tourism sector is showing signs of revival, with foreign tourist arrivals in India in FY23 growing month-on-month with resumption of scheduled international flights and easing of COVID regulations. Hotel occupancy rate has improved from 30–32 per cent in April 2021 to 68–70 per cent in November 2022," noted Survey.

The Survey noted that with travel restrictions and health concerns subsiding, tourism has become a vital driver of a strong upswing in contact-intensive activity. The entire aircraft movement in the country increased by 52.9 per cent YoY between April and November 2022 as India resumed all regular international flights at full capacity towards the end of 2021-22.

With the waning of COVID, India's tourism sector is also showing signs of revival. India is ranked 10th out of the top 46 countries in the Medical Tourism Index FY21 released by Medical Tourism Association, the Survey pointed out.

"Recent initiatives such as Ayush visa for tourists who desire to visit India for medical treatment, the launch of the National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism & Responsible Traveller Campaign, the introduction of the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, and Heal in India can assist in capturing a larger share of the global medical tourism market," observed Survey.

The tourism ministry is vigorously developing several tourism products and destinations to boost tourism over the years. Wildlife Tourism, Adventure Tourism, Luxury Tourism, Medical Tourism, Wellness Tourism, Cruise Tourism, Film Tourism, and MICE Tourism have been identified as the top focus areas by the tourism ministry.

**Economic Survey noted that with travel restrictions and health concerns subsiding, tourism has become vital driver of strong upswing**

The Union Budget 2023-24 has also highlighted tourism as one of the major sectors contributing to the overall economy of the country. Emphasizing the fact that the country has immense attractions for both domestic and foreign tourists, Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, stated while presenting Union Budget that the sector holds huge opportunities for jobs and entrepreneurship for youth in particular and underlined that promotion of tourism will be taken up on mission mode, with active participation of states, convergence of government programmes, and public-private partnerships.

A total outlay of ₹2,400 crores has been allocated to the tourism and hospitality sector in the Union Budget 2023-24. Out of the total ₹2,400 crores allocated to Ministry of Tourism, major portion of the outlay amounting to ₹1,742 crores is allocated

for development of tourism infrastructure and an amount of ₹242 crores for promotion and branding. An outlay of ₹1,412 crores has been allocated for the Swadesh Darshan Scheme. Swadesh Darshan is a flagship scheme of Ministry of Tourism. The Finance Minister announced that with an integrated and innovative approach, 50 tourist destinations would be developed for providing a wholesome tourism experience offering physical, digital and virtual connectivity, availability of tourist guides and tourist security under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme. Such destinations would be developed as a complete package under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme.

An integrated and innovative Vibrant Village Programme for development of tourism infrastructure and facilities in border villages has also been suggested. An amount of ₹250 crores has been allocated for the PRASHAD Scheme. The PRASHAD Scheme aims for holistic development of selected pilgrimage destinations in the country. The Champion Service Sector Scheme has been provided an allocation of ₹196.22 crores. Allocation of ₹105 crores has been made for human resource development and capacity building to meet the requirements of trained manpower in the tourism and hospitality sector.

The Finance Minister also announced that an App will be developed covering all relevant aspects of tourism. States will be encouraged to set up Unity Malls in state capitals as the most prominent tourism centres to promote One District One Product, GI products, handicrafts and products of other states.

# AI set to transform food industry



Technological advancements and digitization in the food business are gaining much importance post-COVID and spurring restaurants and hotels to go contactless, reckons **Rajendra Mittal**, Partner, Mittal International.

## Food industry has suffered heavily during COVID. How is the industry rebuilding?

Small restaurants were forced to close. The restaurant's management appeared to require more money than could be saved. The restaurant industry tried to adopt innovative techniques such as fewer seats per table, contactless doors, guest self-parking, and usage of QR coded menus for contactless ordering and payment of bills through digital payment platforms.

## How do you see Artificial Intelligence influencing the food sector?

Restaurants are using a variety of strategies to take advantage of technology. These include technological advancements such as artificial intelligence that enhance the client experience. For restaurant franchise operators, the addition of digital tools and programmes does come at an additional expense. Artificial intelligence is more efficient than humans for order-taking. Order-taking led to less strain on the staff and more time to focus on higher-value tasks and interaction with the customer. This can help ensure order accuracy, as the customer enters their order into the system personally and reviews the order before finalizing it.

## How is technology reshaping the future of the food industry?

Customers give delivery workers instructions over the phone as to where the food should be placed. Order preparation is the first step towards contactless delivery. Orders must be processed without any physical interaction. The kitchen may have bags of food that a staff member can take and move to a staging location. To achieve a contactless delivery, several of these

“



**RAJENDRA MITTAL**  
Partner,  
Mittal International

**The Centre's objective is to provide consumers with hands-on experience on the equipments.**

”

operations need physical handoffs between staff that must be digitally managed. To avoid needless physical contact, every paper must be converted to digital format.

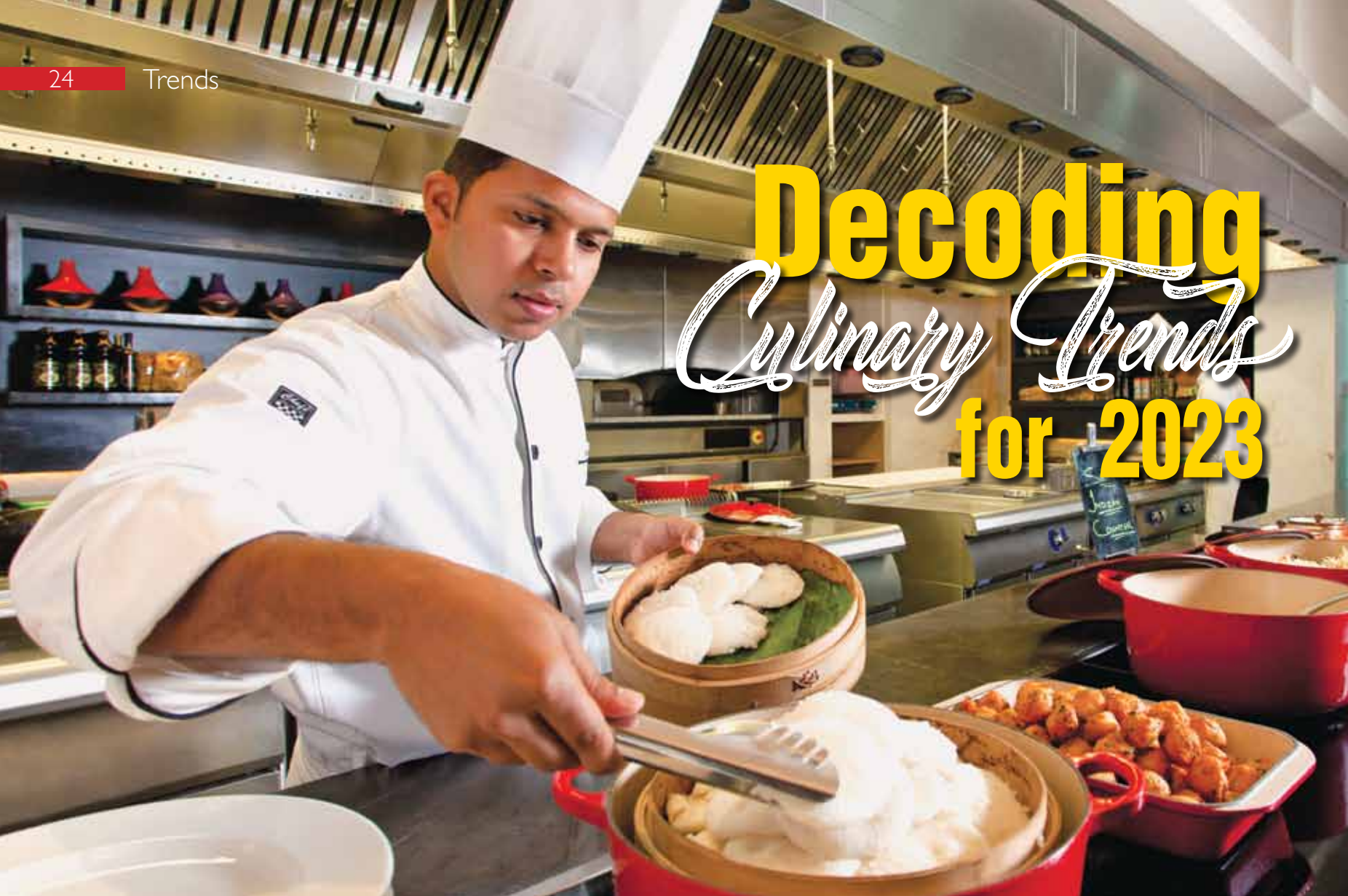


## Mittal International opens experience centre

Mittal International recently launched Experience Rajendra Centre, a 1,600 square foot facility, in Noida. The Centre's objective is to provide consumers with hands-on experience on the equipments. Mittal International has always wished for a single location where clients could go and can experience actual product demonstrations. Distributors and customers can now test the finished products and cuisines, as well as the equipments' operations and methods. The Centre also offers a selection of automatic and semi-automatic coffee machines in a separate area with a barista-like ambiance.

Mittal International, which was established in 1980 by Rajendra Prasad Mittal, is credited with bringing foreign kitchen equipments to the Indian hospitality sector. The company also launched the Scotsman ice cube maker to India and sold the first La Cimbali coffee machine to Oberoi Mumbai in 1989. The best brands from across the world are available from Mittal International, a pioneer in introducing cutting-edge cooking and refrigeration equipments to Indian commercial kitchens.

# Decoding Culinary Trends for 2023



Leading culinary experts give sneak peek on what will rule our palate this year. Experts reckon that indigenous ingredients, Millets, among others will play decisive role in changing mindset towards healthy eating.



**Lipla Negi**

**N**ew Year brings new flavor from far and wide. While COVID brought healthy eating into sharp focus, the quest of taste buds continues to inspire culinary experts and enthusiasts alike to plate nutrient-rich meals that add a punch of both flavor and fitness to your lifestyle. “Post-COVID, there is also a shift in the mindset towards healthy eating, and I see this trend growing into 2023,” said Chef Sunil Dutt, Culinary Director, W Goa. People are focusing on nutrient rich food options and not just taste. He further added, “Plant-based food has seen a continuous interest among consumers.”

Making a lifelong commitment to holistic well-being, Aujasya by The Leela was launched last year. Talking about the new program, Ashish Bhasin, Director, F&B Service & Culinary, The Leela Bengaluru explained, “Our culinary teams across the country have thoughtfully curated menus to achieve the right balance between health needs and gastronomic expectations by focusing on Millets, lean proteins, low-fat dairy, and whole grains. We have also tied up with a nutritionist who helps us tweak menus keeping nutritional needs and overall wellness of our clients in mind and just waistline.”



**CHEF SUNIL DUTT**  
Culinary Director,  
W Goa

**Post-COVID, there is also shift in mindset towards healthy eating, and I see this trend growing into 2023**



The exciting Aujasya food menu includes dishes such as Pearl Millets Pessaratu, Sorghum Rava Idli, Sattu Paratha, Spinach and Himalayan Millets Risotto, Raw Jackfruit Masala Curry, Quinoa Biryani, and Ginger Millets Bread and Butter Pudding, among others. “The menu is quite popular among MICE groups,” he said.

## MARVEL OF MILLETS

This is the official year of Millets, and chefs across the country will be working out ways to put Millets on the centre table. Shivneet Pohoja, Executive Chef, ITC Kohenur elaborated, “Millets, the ancient grain, may soon acquire the stardom that it deserves. More and more diners are becoming aware of the benefits of Millets such as being a low glycemic grain and a suitable alternative grain for persons with specific allergies. “The year will see Millets don many avatars, and restaurants across the country have already started rolling out Millets-centric menus. In support of UN’s initiative, ITC Kohenur has launched the Mighty Millets program where we offer a variety of Millets dishes such as Multi Millets pizza, Pearl Millets and Parmesan Khichda, Kodo Millets pancakes and little Millets and dark chocolate cake on our buffets throughout the day.”





“



**SHIVNEET POHOJA**  
Executive Chef,  
ITC Kohenur

**As chefs increasingly explore the world and its flavors, they will try to introduce unique flavors in their own style of regional cuisine**

”

### RECLAIMING REGIONAL CUISINES

Coupling culture and history, regional food has been one of India's strongest attractions for centuries now. Every region has its own cuisine, no less than a kaleidoscope of exotic spices and ingredients. With G20 Presidency, many such regional cuisines will find their moment of global celebration this year. Agreed Pohoja, “Pride in one's own heritage and cuisine will remain the guiding culinary principle for the year 2023. As chefs increasingly explore the world and its flavors, they will try to introduce unique flavors in their own style of regional cuisine.” He further added that the days of chefs obsessing over elusive ingredients may be numbered as local ingredients will fuel creativity in cooking. “We will find that trendsetting restaurants would marry locally grown premium ingredients and lost techniques from heritage cuisine with the creativity of their initiated teams to present culinary experiences which are exciting and not seen before.”

### OLD COOKING STYLE RESURRECTED

In pursuit of great taste and flavor, chefs are turning to old cooking techniques for an unmatched food experience. Anirban Dasgupta, Director, Culinary, Conrad Pune, agreed, “I still believe in the old ways of cooking, and love to work with my hands to bring the nuances of a dish together. There is one culinary style that I believe in, however, and that is sous vide cooking of meats, which helps to intensify the taste and has encouraged me to think differently about the usage of technology in culinary.”

“



**ASHISH BHASIN**  
Director,  
F&B Service & Culinary,  
The Leela Bengaluru

**We are going and getting the history out. Chefs who love to read history bring it out in the way they cook it as well as plate it**

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### STORYTELLING WITH FOOD

Culinary and culture go hand in hand. Add a dash of storytelling to it and you got a perfect recipe of unforgettable dining experience for your guests. According to Bhasin, “We are going and getting the history out. Chefs who love to read history bring it out in the way they cook it as well as plate it. For example, it is fascinating to know when Babar came to India, why he brought certain ingredient from Central Asia and how the cooking style was further evolved when Akbar came in power. Every cuisine has a story to tell, and it enhances the flavors.” However, he is quick to caution the chefs not to cut-copy-paste. “Modify it to suit the palate and take it to another level,” he advised.

“



**ANIRBAN DASGUPTA**  
Director, Culinary,  
Conrad Pune

**I still believe in old ways of cooking, and love to work with my hands to bring nuances of a dish together**

”

### AI POWERED MENUS

For Pohoja, it is artificial intelligence (AI) that will bring next big revolution in the food business. He shared, “I am eagerly looking forward to an AI interface with the culinary world. While I still believe that cooking is one area that may not be completely taken over by bots, the infusion of machine intelligence in certain processes will make chefs more efficient and creative. Data driven menu compilation for specific demographics, ingredient listing by an AI bot based on a chef's qualitative description of flavor of the final dish and AI art generators recommending previously unimagined plate presentations are the kind of tech infusions that would happen very soon.” He firmly believed that AI may not replace professionals, but professionals who can use AI will replace professional who cannot.



# 2023: Daring and resolute

Exhilarated about bright prospects that 2023 holds for hotel industry, hoteliers divulge major hospitality trends they are most exuberant about and reckon that they will continue to leverage technologies in 2023.



Lipla Negi



**KUSH KAPOOR**  
CEO,  
Roseate Hotels & Resorts

**TREND THAT WILL DRIVE REVENUE:  
WEDDINGS & MICE EVENTS**

The year 2023 will see continued focus on domestic travel and tourism along with weddings and MICE events and these will be the drivers of revenue for the coming year. Technology is another focus area for us. We are engaged in various R&D activities with startups wherein we roll out initiatives at a small scale to test and enhance and then quickly scale these up across the brand.

**STRATEGY FOR 2023**

For us at Roseate Hotels and Resorts, the focus

will be on enhancing guest personalisation, rolling out many more of our own Roseate products that can create a meaningful impact in the lives of our guests. Initiatives include meet and greet at the airport, evolving our guests loyalty program to the next level which provides a very high level of service and benefits to guests and greater focus on the wellbeing of our guests and employees. Our room occupancies have been around 85 per cent in the last five years and our focus will be on enhancing RevPar and ARR by offering superlative service and products to our discerning guests.

**Focus will be on enhancing guest personalisation, rolling out many more of our own Roseate products that can create meaningful impact**

**TREND THAT WILL DRIVE REVENUE: F&B  
EXPANSION**

I think that the expansion of the F&B brands of various hospitality groups, both inside the hotel premises and outside, will pick up pace in the coming year. COVID witnessed the emergence of cloud kitchens of big hospitality groups, such as ITC. Now one can easily order Dal Bukhara and enjoy it in the comfort of one's home. In my opinion, the entrepreneurial hospitality brands have seen the immense potential of the food business space in the last couple of years and

therefore this segment will see a much greater push and development going forward.

**STRATEGY FOR 2023**

Since we are not talking to a standing army but to a moving parade, I do not think it is wise to follow a single strategy. In my opinion, it will depend on the market scenario, customer demands and seasonal trends. So, we will evaluate the situation every quarter and accordingly develop the strategy for the next quarter. In fact, we plan to have a strategy for every quarter, every month, every week and further divide it by weekdays and weekends.

**We plan to have a strategy for every quarter, every month, every week and further divide it by weekdays and weekends**



**ASHISH VOHRA**  
Founder & CEO,  
juSTa Hotels & Resorts



**NIKHIL SHARMA**  
Regional Director,  
Eurasia, Wyndham Hotels &  
Resorts

### TREND THAT WILL DRIVE REVENUE: WORKCATION

In the era of remote work, workcation has emerged as a new trend that is here to stay, in 2023 and beyond. The idea of leisure time combined with work is an excellent way for people to escape their routines. Be it long weekends, festive times, or weekdays, workcations are a flexible way of functioning, which will go a long way, especially for the passionate travelers who enjoy roaming around the world. In 2023, we expect more travelers to join the travel bandwagon.

**Be it long weekends, festive times, or weekdays, workcations are a flexible way of functioning, which will go a long way, especially for the passionate travelers**

### STRATEGY FOR 2023

Our core idea is to extend our support to the hotel partners on overall performance and revenue management. We have various resources and tools that are there to help hotels drive their revenue performance and adapt to market changes in these evolving times. Our expansive structure of support is backed by our years of experience, and we will continue to include more initiatives in the future.

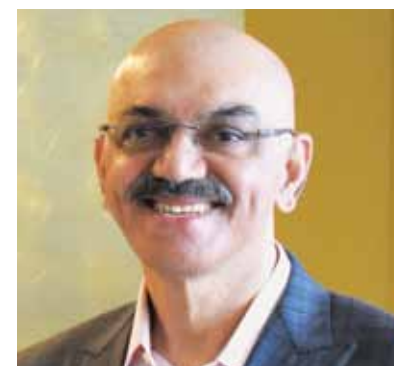
### TREND THAT WILL DRIVE REVENUE: DRIVECATION AND WEEKEND TRAVEL

Domestic leisure travel will keep expanding between waves, and stays will generally be longer than they were before COVID. The weekend performance and high occupancy and rates of resorts within driving distance of major cities will continue. With properties set to open in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Rajasthan, to name a few, Sayaji Hotels will be able to expand its presence across the country.

**Weekend performance and high occupancy and rates of resorts within driving distance of major cities will continue**

### STRATEGY FOR 2023

Given how strongly ADR recovered in 2022 across the majority of our hotels compared to previous downturns, maintaining this trend will be a focus and priority for 2023 as well. As a result of product upgrades that enhance the guest experience, we are now observing an increase in the number of leisure travelers staying in a number of our hotels. This has strengthened customer loyalty and increased yield through business drivers such as OCC, ARR, and RevPar. In order to maintain demand, we will work to exceed guests' expectations and meet their facility needs.



**RAOOF DHANANI**  
Managing Director,  
Sayaji Hotels



**S P JAIN**  
Chairman & Managing  
Director,  
Pride Hotels

### TREND THAT WILL DRIVE REVENUE: WORK- FROM-ANYWHERE

ADR recovery has been very strong across most of our hotels in 2022 compared to previous downturns, and it will remain a focus and priority for 2023 as well to keep this streak going up. We have performed exceedingly well in 2021-2022 compared to 2020-2021. The ADR and occupancy have gone up from 65 per cent to 80 per cent for the current season 2022-2023. We are expecting to clock a turnover of ₹250 crores this fiscal year.

**Hospitality industry continues to evolve, adapting to new realities and consistently viewing trends as opportunities**

### STRATEGY FOR 2023

The hospitality industry continues to evolve, adapting to new realities and consistently viewing trends as opportunities. With the industry's surge in demand in recent quarters, we would invest our time in cultivating the power of analytics and understanding of the guest data in hand to drive more direct and profitable business for our hotels. We would also invest our time in understanding the digital landscape and choosing the right partners for our brand.

### TREND THAT WILL DRIVE REVENUE: BLEISURE

As people are becoming more conscious of nature and its long-term importance, travelers are expected to book more environment friendly travel alternatives in 2023. As tourists try to balance their environmental and social concerns with their desire to travel, sustainable travel will remain a top focus. Another emerging trend is bleisure, the combination of business and leisure travel. Travelers are also expected to invest more on overall wellness and holistic experiences. Health

**Health and wellness will remain integral in 2023 due to travelers' desires for personal wellness, social wellness, and community wellness in general**

and wellness will remain integral in 2023 due to travelers' desires for personal wellness, social wellness, and community wellness in general.

### STRATEGY FOR 2023

At Renest Hotels & Resorts, we aim to offer experiential stays to discerning travelers. Our USP lies in giving the guests a magical firsthand experience. We strive to generate and make the most of opportunities as a brand that is continuously searching for ways to grow and improve.



**VISHAL LONKAR**  
General Manager,  
Business Development,  
Renest Hotels & Resorts

# Enhancing potential of Indian hospitality

G20 events along with robust infra growth will drive hospitality industry in India to newer heights in 2023, opines **Nandivardhan Jain**.

After a difficult 2020 and 2021, the year 2022 showed positive signs for the hotel industry. Continued demand for domestic leisure destinations, rise in demand among the top 20 business cities in the second half of 2022 and strong demand for social and wedding events in Tier II, III, and IV cities were the real gamechangers of the Indian hospitality industry in 2022. This demand will continue to rise in 2023 as well due to strong infrastructure development work across India starting from airports, roads, and railways, which will add fresh demand. The G20 summit in India encompassing 200 events across 50 cities in the next 12 months is further icing on the cake for the hospitality industry. These events will generate 100,000 direct room nights and 200,000 indirect room nights requirement in 2023. In addition to this, these 50 cities have an opportunity to showcase themselves on a global platform.

Goa's second airport development is a classic example of infrastructure development correlated with the growth of the hotel, hospitality and travel industry. The existing Dabolim Airport, being a naval airport, has limited slots for civilian flights, due to which Goa's air connectivity growth was disrupted for the last few years. With the newly built Mopa Airport, air connectivity with new domestic and international destinations will improve substantially this year. One new inbound flight introduction to

Mopa Airport will generate additional demand for 70,000 room nights annually.

In FY 23-24, hotels in Goa will witness a rise in average daily rate and occupancy by 10 to 12 per cent due to enhanced air connectivity.

One more such example of hospitality investment correlated with infrastructure development is the commencement of construction work for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train corridor. A few months back when bullet train development work commenced in Gujarat, it immediately gathered the attention of domestic and foreign investors for hotel acquisitions around bullet train station terminals in cities such as Surat, Vadodara and Ahmedabad.

Domestic leisure travelers fuelled up the leisure market with high demand due to uncertainty and restrictions in 2020 and 2021. In 2022 also, leisure travelers preferred to plan travel closer to the date and domestic travel was preferred to avoid uncertainty. In the domestic experiential leisure market, offbeat locations, home/villa stay, farm stay, staycation, and coastal destinations are the ones, which reported high demand. This market was largely driven by the young domestic travelers.

Based on the data of 150 villa owners across India, collected by the NOESIS research team, the



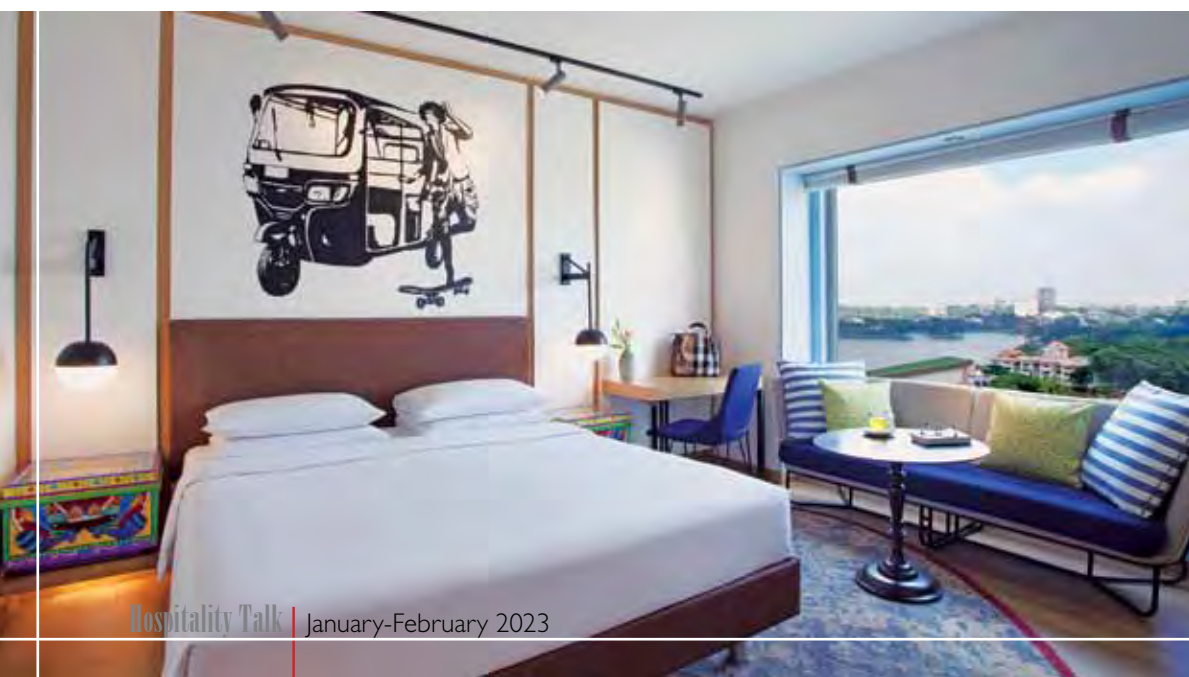
**NANDIVARDHAN JAIN**  
CEO  
NOESIS Capital advisors

**In FY 23-24, hotels in Goa will witness rise in average daily rate and occupancy by 10 to 12 per cent due to enhanced air connectivity**



reasons for strong demand for villas/homestays at rural and offbeat destinations were value for money, privacy, among others. The average return on investment (ROI), these villa owners are making, is within the bracket of 6 per cent to 10 per cent on the Capex incurred by them on today's valuation. In a few cases, ROI is as high as 14 per cent as well. Due to limited regulatory approvals and low Capex requirements in comparison to traditional resort/hotel developments we foresee strong supply adding up. Land cost is quite low in offbeat locations, which makes these projects quite profitable for the investor.

We foresee in 2023 all the hospitality and lodging formats at the macro level will break all their records of ADRs, occupancy, revenues, profitability, new project announcement, and fundraising. It is time to be prepared for the golden year.



# Action-packed gala

Hyatt recently organized fun-filled evening to announce its expansion plans, especially opening of large format hotels such as Grand Hyatt Gurgaon and Hyatt Regency, Trivandrum in Tier II & III cities.



# Heralding transformation

NCHMCT recently tied-up with JNU. This tie-up empowers JNU to recognise two programs, B.Sc. HHA and M.Sc. HA, run by NCHMCT and award degrees for these programs.





#### ◀ SAHIL JOSHI

**Rooms Division Manager, Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport**  
Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport has announced Sahil Joshi as the Rooms Division Manager. Joshi has over 12 years of experience in the hospitality and guest relations sectors from his work with well-known businesses in India. His most recent task was with the Hilton in Jaipur.



#### ◀ ABHIJEET GADGIL

**Director, Sales & Marketing, Novotel Pune**  
Abhijeet Gadgil brings with him experience of over 12 years. In his new role as Director, Sales and Marketing, Novotel Pune, Gadgil will be demonstrating his creative approach to lead the hotel in achieving its key revenue budgets.

#### JASON KRIMMEL ▶

**Head, International Business, Norwegian Cruise Line**

In his new role as Head, International Business, Norwegian Cruise Line, Jason Krimmel will oversee sales, marketing, and brand communication efforts outside of the United States and Canada—including in the Asia Pacific region—to expand the brand's international footprint.



#### SAKET VERMA ▶

**Director, Sales & Marketing, JW Marriott Kolkata**

With over 12 years of luxury hospitality sales and marketing experience, Saket Verma has been promoted to the position of Director, Sales and Marketing, JW Marriott Kolkata. Verma has a proven track record of generating results for the sales and marketing division.



#### ◀ SHARIN JOSEPH

**Commercial Director, Hilton Bangalore Embassy, GolfLinks**

As Commercial Director, Hilton Bangalore Embassy GolfLinks, Sharin Joseph will be responsible for driving the hotel's commercial strategy, maximizing revenue, and developing strong relationships with key stakeholders and will work closely with the hotel's leadership team to ensure the property continues to deliver best guest experience.



#### ◀ VINAYAKK KAAMBLE

**Director, Human Resources, Westin Goa**

Vinayakk Kaamble started his journey with Royal Orchid Hotel, Navi Mumbai in 2012 as a HR Manager. As Director, Human Resources, Westin Goa, Kaamble will be helping his teams to grow and excel in their careers through learning and development.



#### SANJAY GUPTA ▶

**General Manager, Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Center**

A seasoned hospitality professional with a career spanning over two decades, Sanjay Gupta has worked with brands such as Hilton and Hyatt Hotels. As General Manager, Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Center, Gupta will work towards serving the guests better and transforming the property into one of the city's best hotels.



#### NICK FLYNN ▶

**Hotel Manager, Shangri-La Al Husn**

Nick Flynn began his career in hospitality in the early 90s, working in food & beverage department. As Hotel Manager, Shangri-La Al Husn, Flynn will ensure Shangri-La Al Husn reaches unparalleled levels of service and continues to deliver unique and unforgettable experiences to all its guests.



#### ◀ HERWIG KNAPEN

**Executive Chef, Grand Hyatt Gurgaon**  
Grand Hyatt Gurgaon has appointed Herwig Knapen as its Executive Chef. Chef Knapen will be leading all the culinary outlets in the hotel and will be responsible for overseeing all food and beverage operations including menu ideation, procurement, personnel management and catering.



#### ◀ KARAN SINGH NAGRA

**Marketing & Communication Manager, JW Marriott Kolkata**

With an incredible track record in his profession, Karan Singh Nagra's key responsibilities as Marketing & Communication Manager, JW Marriott Kolkata will be creation and supervision of a result-oriented multi-platform communications strategy. Nagra brings with him an experience of eight plus years.

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