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Hotel TALK

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**CB
RAMKUMAR**
states
Certified
hotels
GAIN BIG

**Milestone
move**
HAI
signs MoU with
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Public-private collaboration: Way forward for sustainability



We have consistently pursued the importance of sustainability and waste reduction in our previous editions and will continue to do so, in the hope that our effort makes a difference. Environmental sustainability remains a pressing challenge and cannot be left unaddressed. In this regard, it is strongly felt that in order to achieve tangible results and to move beyond green washing, regulation and certification will need to be implemented. Governments will need to take the lead by including related best practices in their tourism policies and create a robust method of training, audits, and accreditation, whether directly or through credible franchisees. Public-private collaboration may be the way forward where established standards

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Environmental sustainability remains a pressing challenge and cannot be left unaddressed.”

could be implemented which are periodically audited to ensure compliance.

In our forthcoming editions, we also intend to engage with Back of the House designers, who are responsible for planning work efficiency and overall guest comfort. Awareness and recognition in this area are long overdue and the team at Hotel Talk will address this.

I look forward to your continued readership and feedback and take this opportunity to wish you Season's Greetings and a wonderful 2025.

Cheers,
Sunil Ghadiok



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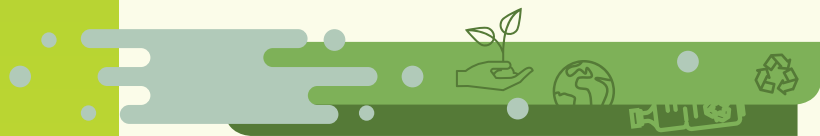


Paving way for green future



CB Ramkumar, Vice Chairman, Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), discusses how GSTC vigorously promotes globally accepted best practices in sustainable tourism.

WORDS BY **SURBHI SHARMA**



Q: What is the importance of sustainability certification? How can hotels be encouraged to obtain it?

A: Sustainability certification is no longer a mere option but a necessity. The world is increasingly moving towards verifiable claims, and for too long, hotels have made unverified claims about their sustainability practices. However, when consumers visit, many of these claims fall apart. To support these efforts, governments offer incentives, tax breaks, and subsidies, but many hotels fail to align with the targets. Certification by an accredited third-party body is becoming vital across all sectors, including hospitality.

While many industries, governed by ISO certifications and third-party verification, embraced sustainability early on, tourism has lagged behind. This is changing now as governments, online travel agencies (OTAs), and aid organisations are now demanding transparency in the tourism sector. Certification ensures that sustainability claims are credible, allowing OTAs to verify and feature genuinely eco-friendly hotels.

For hotels, this is not just an environmental concern—it is a business opportunity. Certified hotels can gain visibility on online platforms. When a hotel qualifies through an accredited certification, OTAs' algorithms prioritise it in search results, helping businesses stand out.

CB Ramkumar

Vice Chairman, Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)





“

When a hotel qualifies through an accredited certification, OTAs' algorithms prioritise it in search results, helping businesses stand out.”

Q: Do you think the centre and the state government must play a major role in regulating the basic levels of such practices, and should this become a part of the certification?

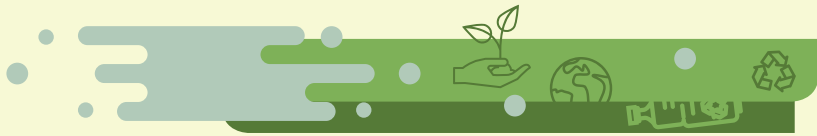
A: Governments worldwide are increasingly incorporating sustainability into tourism policies. Most hotels are privately owned, and governments are moving away from running

hotels themselves. Instead, they focus on creating policies, tax breaks or taking punitive measures that incentivise or even mandate sustainable practices.

In India, states like Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh have embedded sustainability certification into their tourism policies. Hotels certified under GSTC standards have 50 per cent of their certification costs subsidised. This model could be replicated nationwide, with the central government acting as a catalyst in achieving the country's sustainable goals. India has committed to achieving sustainability goals by 2070. To succeed, the government and the private sector must collaborate closely.

Q: How can one identify between greenwashing and genuine sustainable practices? What other activities does GSTC advocate other than energy conservation?

A: In the early days of sustainability, hotels would implement eco-friendly practices with genuine passion. They would proudly inform guests about rainwater harvesting, waste



“

The global shift towards organic living, open-air environments, and nature, is driving demand for sustainable travel options.”

management, or using local materials. These actions were authentic, driven by a real desire to conserve resources. However, as sustainability gained attention, many hotels began to engage in greenwashing—superficial gestures like switching to LED bulbs or placing a towel reuse note in the bathroom and calling themselves an eco-resort. Some hotels even chase awards for sustainability with little real effort. But, with today’s savvy consumers, this facade quickly falls apart.

This is where third-party certification plays a crucial role. A verified GSTC-accredited certification ensures that sustainability claims are real, making it easier for consumers to trust their choices. Certification is not just a badge; it is a tool

for hotels to prove their efforts and stand out in an increasingly eco-conscious market.

Today, sustainability is not just about the environment; it is also about sustainability management, social sustainability, and cultural sustainability. The socio-economic issues, and the cultural issues, especially in tourism, have become important to ensure that the tourism business continues to be robust and sustainable. It is a risk mitigation where one reduces all the risks to ensure that there is no interruption in business at all.

Q: What criteria are needed to get certified by the GSTC?

A: Achieving GSTC certification is no easy feat. OTAs, such as Booking.com and Agoda,





“

The goal is to make sustainability a standard practice in the Indian hospitality industry.”

prioritise certified hotels, which results in better visibility and more bookings. It is a rigorous process that hotels must undergo, beginning with certification bodies that must themselves be accredited by the GSTC. We ensure that certification bodies have the resources, knowledge, and processes in place to certify hotels to GSTC standards.

GSTC certification bodies are prohibited from offering consulting or coaching to avoid conflicts of interest. Certification must remain unbiased and impartial, so that hotels can trust that a GSTC-accredited certification body will assess them rigorously, offering an assurance of true sustainability.

Q: Do you believe that international travellers are likely to select hotels that are certified for basic sustainable practices?

A: Post-pandemic, travellers have developed a newfound appreciation for authentic experiences. The global shift towards

organic living, open-air environments, and nature, is driving demand for sustainable travel options. Research from major travel platforms like Booking.com, confirms that travellers are actively seeking out sustainable accommodations. They want to avoid the traps of greenwashing. Authenticity matters, and they are willing to pay more for verified sustainable stays. This growing demand makes sustainability not only a moral imperative but also a smart business strategy for hotels.

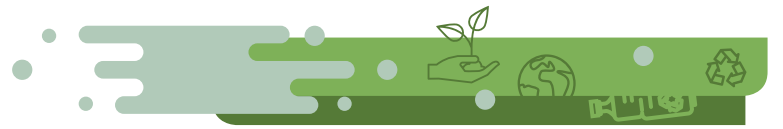
Q: Are there any recent initiatives or collaborations?

A: One of the major initiatives in India's push towards sustainable tourism is the recent Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between GSTC and the Hotel Association of India (HAI). 80 per cent of Indian hotels are HAI members, making this partnership pivotal in driving sustainability across the sector.

The trade body recognised the importance of building capacity and raising awareness about sustainability among its member hotels. GSTC is stepping in to offer training programmes, workshops, and facilitation services to guide hotels through the entire certification process.

The main goal is to make sustainability a standard practice in the Indian hospitality industry. We aim to ensure that all HAI member hotels follow sustainable practices, which is the only way forward.

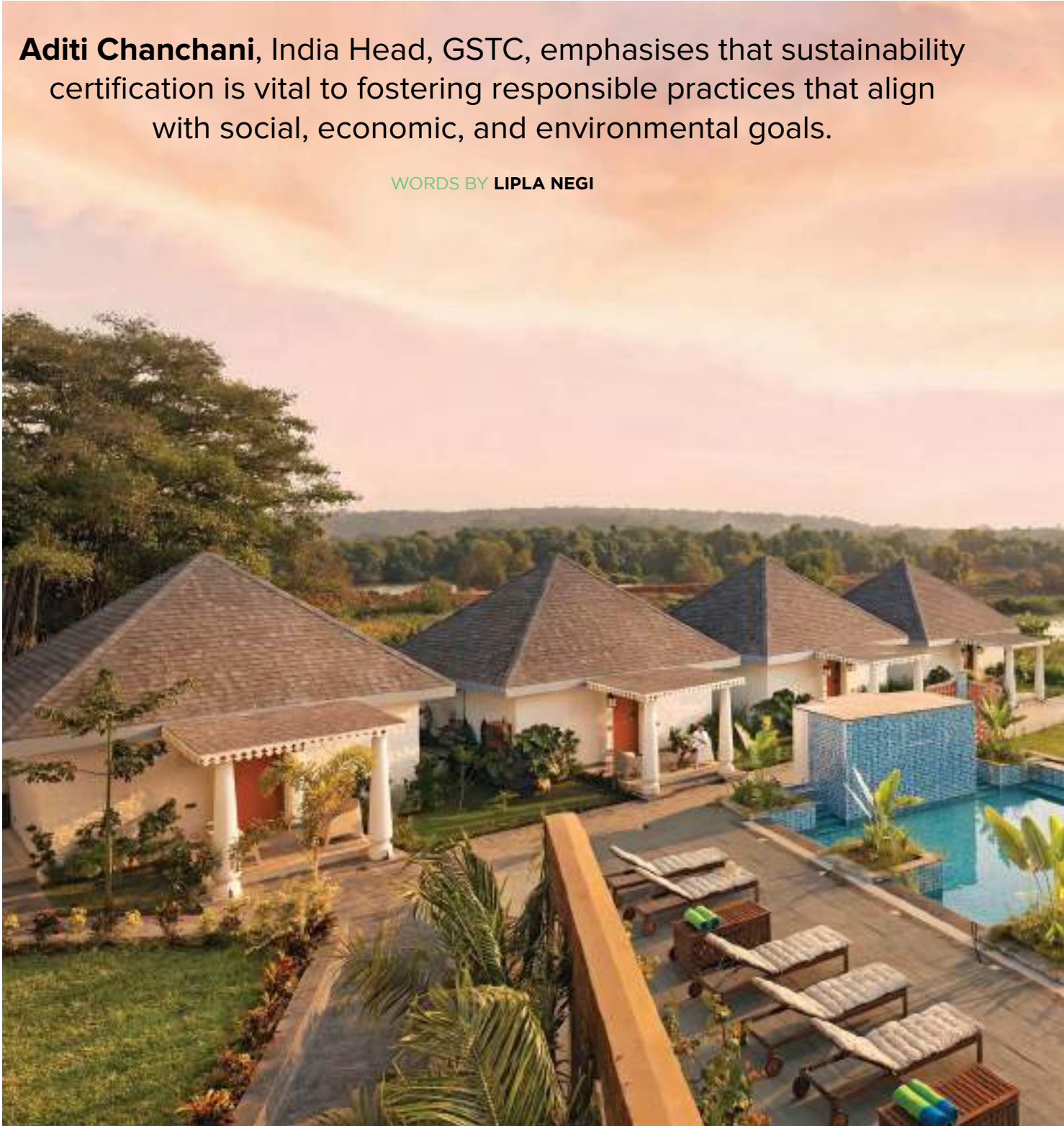
HT



Upholding sustainability standards

Aditi Chanchani, India Head, GSTC, emphasises that sustainability certification is vital to fostering responsible practices that align with social, economic, and environmental goals.

WORDS BY LIPLA NEGI



Q: What is the importance of sustainability certification, and how can hotels be encouraged to obtain it?

A: Third-party sustainability certifications ensure that hotels have strictly implemented practices as per industry-approved standards. The hotels form a large section of the tourism industry and in the face of climate change, all segments in their own ways need to move towards climate adaptation mechanisms. Certifications reflect their commitment to minimising the negative impacts on the environment, society, and local communities resulting from their operations. It also builds credibility with their customers. From a business sense, it is advantageous to adopt sustainable practices in the long run. Globally, the industry is moving towards sustainable tourism and if hotels in India do not wish to be left behind, they need to start on their journey now while there is still time.

Q: Should the centre and state governments play a role in regulating the basic levels of such practices? And should this become a part of the certification?

A: Policy direction and financial incentives for the industry from the centre and state governments are crucial at this juncture to help steer the direction of travel and tourism towards becoming more sustainable. Certification from the third party is crucial to ensure that procedures are credibly verified, and meet global norms for transparency, impartiality, and competence.

Q: Do you see perceivable differences between greenwashing and practicing sustainable activities?

A: Certifications through bodies that are GSTC-accredited can be a differentiator between greenwashing and genuinely pursuing sustainability activities. Starting 1 January 2025, the GSTC-recognised status will no longer be available for non-accredited schemes. To combat potential greenwashing and stop the misuse of 'GSTC-recognized' status, GSTC has introduced strict measures, urging other sustainable tourism standards owners to pursue accreditation.

Q: What other activities does GSTC advocate other than energy conservation?

A: GSTC develops and maintains sustainable tourism standards based on four pillars, such as sustainable management, socio-economic, cultural, and environmental impacts. Currently, we have three standards, including industry (accommodation and tour operators), destination, and MICE.

Q: How many companies are accredited by GSTC for certification? And what are the criteria?

A: GSTC-accredited certification bodies for hotels/ accommodation and tour operators include:



“*Certification from the third party is crucial to ensure that procedures are credibly verified.*”



Aditi Chanchani
India Head, GSTC



“

Travellers prefer to choose hotels that can substantiate their sustainability claims through certification.”

- Bureau Veritas
- Control Union Certifications
- Dream&Charme
- FQC
- RoyalCert
- TRB International Certification
- United Certification Systems Limited (UCSL)
- Vireo Srl
- Mauritius Standards Bureau (MSB)

The hotel criteria are centered on four main themes, including effective sustainability planning, maximising social and economic benefits for the local community, enhancing cultural heritage, and reducing negative impacts to the environment. They are applicable to the entire tourism industry.

Q: Do you believe that the international traveller is likely to select hotels that are certified for basic sustainable practices?

A: International travellers or even Indian travellers, who are now global travellers, are becoming increasingly aware of sustainability certifications. We see a new trend now—travellers prefer to choose hotels that can substantiate their sustainability claims through certification. Corporates are insisting on booking hotels with approved sustainability certifications for their employee travel.

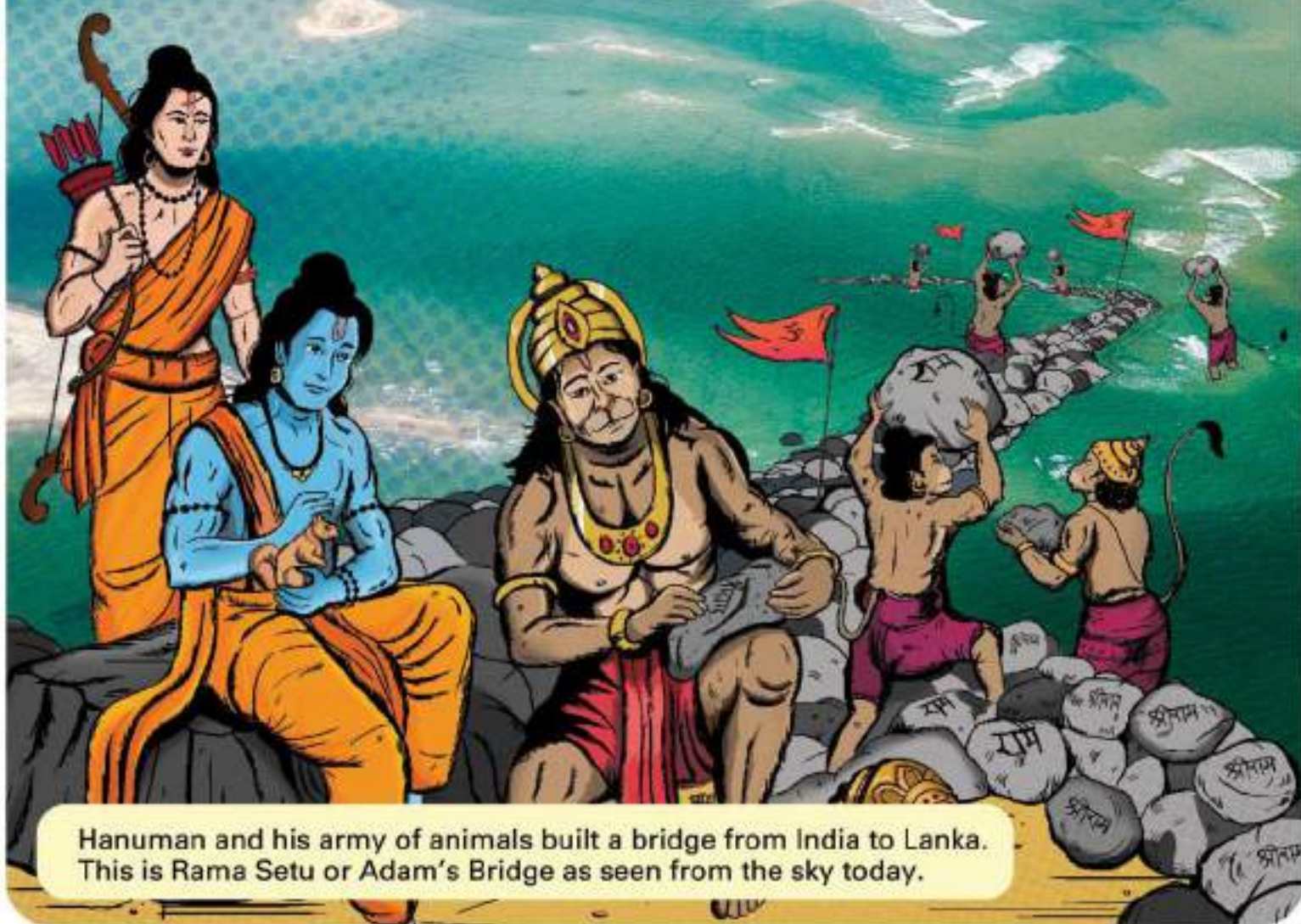
Q: Is the number of hotels following the green code or applying for green certification increasing?

A: More hotels are following the National Building Code (NBC), however, it applies to the environmental impacts of the construction. Whereas a sustainability certification will cover socio-economic, cultural, and management impacts.

Q: Are states helping in encouraging sustainable practices in hotels by offering any subsidies?

A: The Gujarat government and now the Uttar Pradesh government, both speak of supporting the industry by giving 50 per cent reimbursement if they would like to be certified under the GSTC criteria. Sustainability today has become slightly complicated, therefore support is needed. Lack of awareness, knowledge, and maybe other business priorities may be the reason for slow adaptation. HT

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Gain competitive edge

Olga Shuvalova stresses the urgent need to adopt GSTC standards for hotels to thrive sustainably on the global stage.

WORDS BY LIPLA NEGI





Olga Shuvalova
CEO, United Certification
Systems Limited

Q: How did you get involved in GSTC certification? What motivated you to pursue it?

A: We are a purpose-driven organisation, united by a shared commitment to creating meaningful change. Our journey towards GSTC certification was driven by a commitment to align business practices with global sustainability goals and address the negative impacts of tourism on nature and communities. For years, we sought meaningful ways to mitigate these

effects by supporting businesses sharing our values worldwide.

Our decision to focus on GSTC certification was significantly shaped by my involvement in GSTCs activities since 2017 and attending global events organised by GSTC in Chile (2017), Botswana (2018), and the Azores (2019). These experiences provided valuable insights and strengthened our belief in the need to move towards rigorous sustainability standards in the tourism industry. When we decided to expand into tourism certification, choosing GSTC was an unambiguous choice. It is currently the only accredited and aligned with ISEAL standards tourism certification scheme that brings GSTC criteria to the top of trust by the industry.

Q: Why is GSTC certification considered superior to other certifications available in the European market? What unique features set it apart?

A: GSTC-accredited certification stands out due to its comprehensive, third-party assessment by a GSTC-accredited certification body. This involves a rigorous audit to ensure conformity with GSTC criteria, widely regarded as the top standard in sustainability certifications. GSTC-certified businesses gain exclusive access to the GSTC Market Access Programme, which provides visibility on leading online travel agencies (OTAs), such as Booking.com, Agoda, and EcoHotels.

GSTC certification aligns with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ensuring that businesses certified under its framework contribute to global sustainability priorities. It is fully compliant with European Union regulations, such as the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive, the EU Green Claims Directive, and the European Directive for Corporate Sustainability Reporting (CSRD).



“Our journey towards GSTC certification was driven by a commitment to align business practices with global sustainability goals.”



Unlike other ecolabels, GSTC requires accredited certification. It ensures that certification processes undergo rigorous evaluation by an accreditation body, confirming adherence to international standards of impartiality, integrity, quality, and transparency. GSTC certification does not require ongoing membership fees, making it a cost-effective choice compared to other schemes.

Q: How are you collaborating with European hotels, and what has been the response so far? What are their top concerns vis-à-vis sustainable practices?

A: European hoteliers are increasingly embracing GSTC certification as they face stricter regulations and rising demand for sustainable practices from guests and corporate clients. We are incredibly proud to be partners for GSTC-accredited certification for esteemed properties of Mandarin Orienta Hotel Group and other luxury hotels in different locations of the region. The response from European hotels

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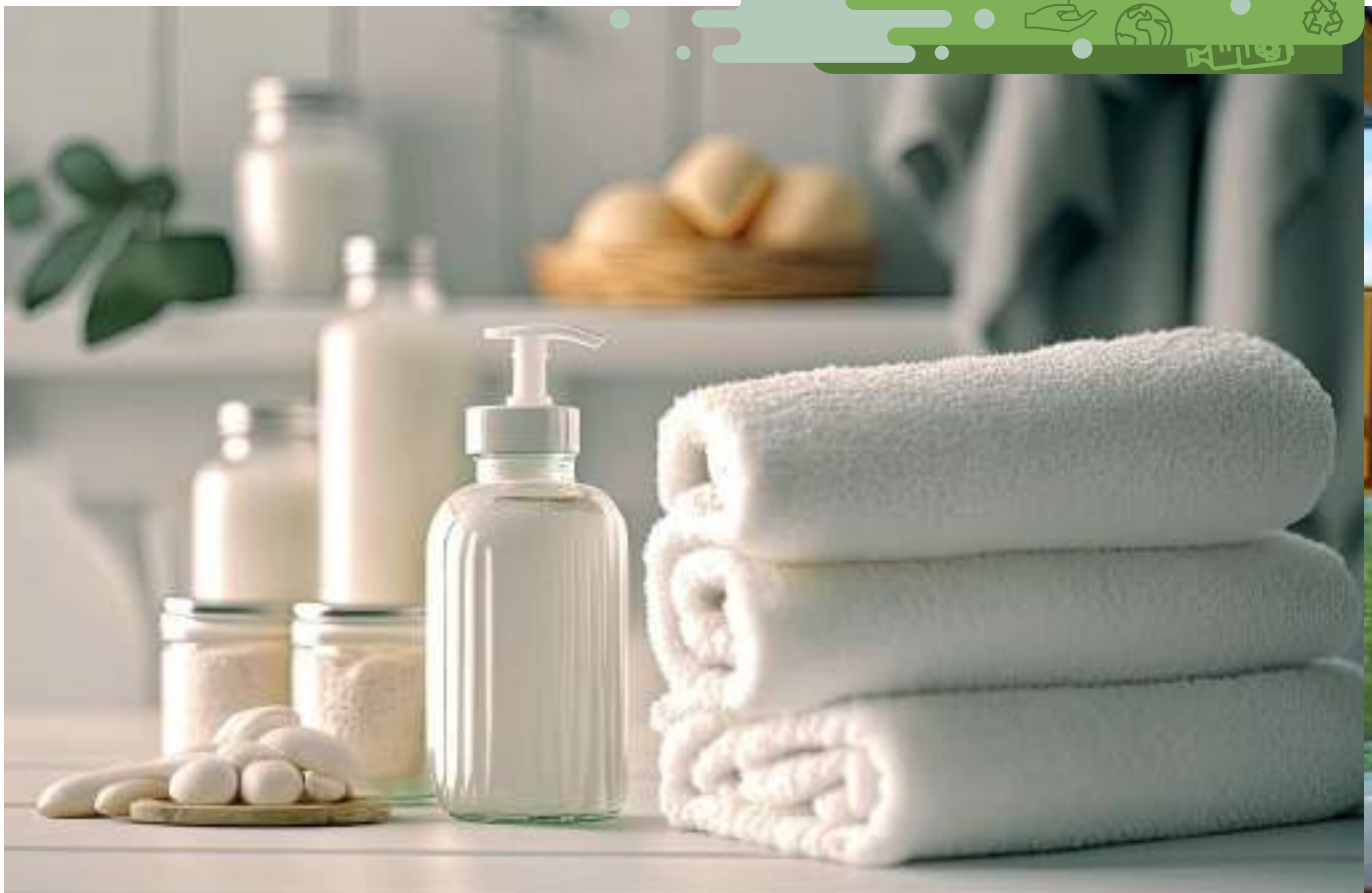
Building local expertise and empowering local professionals is the only path to true sustainability, creating long-term value for businesses.”

has been overwhelmingly positive. Many establishments admit the growing importance of sustainability in attracting travellers and enhancing their brand reputation. We have built a reputation as partners in this journey, helping them navigate challenges and turn sustainability into a competitive advantage. Talking about top concerns vis-à-vis sustainable practices, training is critical to ensure employees fully understand and embrace sustainability practices, yet it requires resources and consistent

effort. Similarly, ensuring suppliers meet sustainability standards can be difficult and challenging.

Q: With changing sustainability requirements in Europe, how will these shifts impact clients, guests, and corporates who use hotels?

A: The EU's Greenwashing Directive, alongside the new Green Claims Directive, represents a legislative advance in ensuring that sustainability claims made by businesses are not only transparent





and truthful but also substantiated by rigorous, third-party verification. The EU's directives are set to have a profound impact on businesses across the hospitality sector—not just within Europe but also in destinations frequented by European travellers. For clients, guests, and corporate users, these changes mean shifting priorities in their decision-making processes. Guests are demanding authentic eco-friendly experiences rather than superficial claims, and corporates are embedding sustainability into their procurement policies. For hotels, this shift requires embedding sustainability into every aspect of their operations.

Q: What are your plans for expanding into India and working with Indian hotels? Are you looking at corporates as well, one of the biggest consumers of hotels?

A: We already have a strong foundation in the region. Our local representative and an experienced GSTC auditor, who is qualified to work with both tour operators and hotels, is based in India. Collaboration with local businesses is a key priority for us. We firmly believe that building local expertise and empowering local professionals is the only path to true sustainability, creating long-term value for both the businesses and the communities they operate in. We are currently formalising our strategic partnership with QualStar, a well-known organisation in hotel certification in India. We can confirm that this collaboration is a step forward in supporting Indian businesses in meeting global standards.

Q: Why is it crucial for hotels in Southeast Asia to adopt GSTC standards right now?

A: Southeast Asia's tourism sector is at a critical juncture, adopting GSTC standards has become an urgent necessity for hotels in the region. It is one of the most popular destinations for European travellers, making it essential for hotels in the region to comply with the increasingly stringent sustainability requirements set by European laws. Besides, global online travel agencies (OTAs) are collaborating with certification schemes for tailored filters, allowing guests to easily find sustainable service providers. GSTC-certified hotels gain a competitive edge by being featured prominently in these searches. Adopting GSTC standards is not just a strategic decision for Southeast Asian hotels—it is a commitment to ensuring their resilience and responsibility. Therefore, embracing sustainability is the path to securing a thriving future for businesses. HT



Strengthening green credentials

In a conversation, **Subha Bhaskar**, COO, QualSTAR, discusses how certification drives business, their 360-degree approach to sustainability, Gen Z's sustainability concerns, and more.

WORDS BY HT BUREAU



Q. What is the mission behind QualStar? What makes it unique in the hospitality sector?

A. QualStar is on a mission to elevate the standards of the Indian hospitality sector by providing internationally benchmarked certifications that inspire excellence and trust. As India's first certification body accredited by the Quality

Council of India (QCI), QualStar sets itself apart by combining credibility, precision, and an in-depth understanding of the hotel industry's unique needs.

From hotel classification and mystery audits to hygiene evaluations, QualStar ensures that every property it works with, meets world-class standards while

addressing local nuances. Its collaboration with state governments, such as auditing hotels for 'industry status' with Maharashtra Tourism and supporting classification efforts with the Uttar Pradesh Government, highlights its pivotal role in shaping tourism policies. With its unwavering focus on excellence, QualStar is setting new benchmarks

for the hospitality sector, driving sustainability and ensuring Indian hotels shine on the global stage.

Q. In what ways can sustainable certification revolutionise the hospitality sector in India?

A. Sustainable certification has the potential to transform India’s hospitality sector by fostering credibility and driving long-term growth. In an era where greenwashing is prevalent, certifications like those based on the UN-backed GSTC criteria provide a credible framework for hotels to demonstrate a genuine commitment to sustainability. This not only builds trust but also positions certified hotels as leaders in an increasingly eco-conscious market.

With data showing a rising preference for sustainable options, such certifications can attract environmentally conscious tourists and open doors to global partnerships. Certification also goes beyond attracting guests—it helps hotels optimise operations, reduce costs, and meet regulatory requirements.

Q. What distinguishes the QS certification from other sustainability certifications? Why is it seen as more valid and reliable in the industry?

A. The QS certification stands out for its rigorous, unbiased approach, and its exclusive focus on the hospitality sector. Partnering with a certification body accredited by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), QS certification ensures the highest standards of third-party



assurance. This eliminates any conflict of interest and addresses greenwashing issue. As the only certification body in India exclusively dedicated to the hospitality sector, QualStar brings unparalleled expertise and precision. By tailoring the certification process to the unique needs of hotels, it provides a framework that not only enhances operational sustainability but also aligns with global best practices.

Additionally, the GSTC accreditation gives QS certification

international recognition, making it a powerful tool for hotels to stand out in a competitive market and appeal to a growing segment of sustainability-focused travellers.



Subha Bhaskar
COO
QualSTAR



Beyond attracting guests, certification helps hotels optimise operations, reduce costs, and meet regulatory requirements

Q. What sets your approach to sustainability certification apart from other entities in the market?

A. Our approach to sustainability certification is truly holistic, addressing every critical dimension of sustainability—environmental, social, economic, cultural, and organisational management. Unlike other certifications that focus narrowly on specific aspects like green building standards, energy reduction, or social impact, our framework provides a comprehensive 360-degree perspective.

By considering the business aspect alongside sustainability goals, we empower organisations to not only achieve long-term environmental and social impact but also enhance operational efficiency and profitability.

Q. What steps should hotels take to apply for QS certification? What are the primary advantages of being certified?

A. Applying for QS certification is a structured process designed to guide hotels towards achieving sustainable excellence. Once a hotel submits its application, it undergoes the pre-audit document review that familiarises the hotel with the certification criteria and identifies areas that need improvement. Next is the preliminary audit assessing hotel



readiness and providing actionable feedback, ensuring the hotel is well-prepared for the final audit.

The primary advantages of certified hotels include global recognition and credibility, holistic sustainability focus, access to global travel platforms, preferred by corporate clients, and contribute to corporate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) reports.

In your opinion, does sustainability certification contribute to a hotel's credibility and attract more eco-conscious Gen Z travellers?

A. Sustainability certification plays a significant role in enhancing a

hotel's credibility, particularly with eco-conscious Gen Z travellers. With a strong focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), they actively seek hotels that demonstrate genuine commitment to sustainability and are often willing to pay a premium for properties that respect and adhere to these sustainability principles.

Certified hotels not only appeal to their values but also foster trust and loyalty among Gen Z travellers, who prefer authentic efforts over superficial greenwashing. Platforms like Booking.com and Trip.com, frequently used by this demographic, are already integrating sustainability certifications into their listings. HT



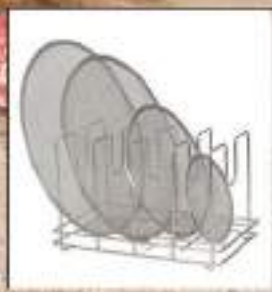
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The event reaffirmed members' commitment to sustainable practices in their operations and policies.”

by the Association's Vice President **Rohit Khosla**, Executive Vice President-Operations, IHCL, in which members committed to make all efforts to make their hotels net zero by 2050 well ahead of the government target of making India net zero by 2070.

Besides, the event witnessed a virtual fire-side chat between **Liz Ortiguera**, Managing Director-Asia Pacific, World Travel & Tourism Council, and **Inge Huijbrechts**, Chief Sustainability & Security Officer, Radisson Group. The discussion brought to fore the global perspective on sustainability in the tourism and hospitality sectors.

The event also featured panel discussions discussing energy efficiency, renewable energy, hospitality sector's role in sustainability, circular economy, and water conservation, among others. It reaffirmed the commitment of its members to sustainable practices in their operations and policies. 

HAI, GSTC ink MoU

The conclave underscores the collaboration between HAI and GSTC, raising awareness of the application of sustainable practices.

WORDS BY HT BUREAU

The Hotel Association of India (HAI) and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 8 October 2024. The partnership aims to create awareness and promote sustainability practices along with certification among HAI member hotels.

The MoU was signed at the 'Sustainability Conclave: Life @ 100' event, organised by the HAI in partnership with Jaquar Group.

In his keynote address at the event, **Suman Billa**, Additional

Secretary-Tourism, Government of India, emphasised the need for growing responsibly, setting collective goals, and the need of a proactive role of the industry in the policy framework.

While congratulating the association, **Mugdha Sinha**, Director General-Tourism, Government of India, highlighted the importance of strong collaboration and synergy between the industry and the government.

The highlight of the event was the HAI pledge for Life administered

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Puneet Chhatwal, MD & CEO, IHCL, says community engagement in sustainable development can yield impactful outcomes.

WORDS BY LIPLA NEGI

In a resounding call for cooperation, **Puneet Chhatwal**, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, the Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL), invoked the inspiring words of industrialist and philanthropist Ratan Tata, “If you want to walk fast, walk alone. But if you want to walk far, walk together.”

In his keynote address at the 54th FHRAI Annual Convention, he underscored that the ambitious vision of Tourism@2047 could only be realised through collaboration across all sectors. He stressed that the future of Indian tourism depends on the collective efforts of government, industry, and all stakeholders.

Sustainability Approach

Community engagement is crucial for facilitating sustainable development that leads to impactful results. Reflecting on the importance of sustainability and community involvement, which have always been guiding principles for the Group, he recalled, “We



are the oldest operating company in the country. Our founder, Jamshedji Tata, always believed that the community is not just another stakeholder, but the very purpose of any business. This philosophy has been central to the Tata Group companies.”

The company adhered to sustainability principles long before they became a buzzword in the industry. He added,

“

With robust growth, the tourism sector has the potential to be the largest job creator in the country

“Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) forms the foundation of nation-building, and we are proud to be a part of it.”

India’s growth trajectory

Chhatwal highlighted India’s meteoric rise on the global stage, driven by the country’s impressive strides in economic growth and technological innovation. “In 1947, India contributed only 3 per cent to global GDP. Today, we stand as the fifth largest economy, contributing 7 per cent of the global GDP. In the next 5 to 7 years, we are expected to contribute 10 per cent of the world’s GDP,” he observed.

Job opportunities

India’s current workforce in organised tourism sector stands at 43 million, with projections suggesting it could easily expand to 100 million in the coming years. “The tourism sector has the potential to be the largest job creator in India, and we need to make the sector an attractive career option again,” he asserted.



Importance of infrastructure

Emphasising the need for better infrastructure, Chhatwal discussed the government’s role in planning and executing large-scale projects. He said, “India’s airport infrastructure has grown from just 10 in 1947 to 150 today, with plans to increase this to 300 soon. Similarly, the expansion of highways and railway stations is critical to supporting the growing tourism demand.”

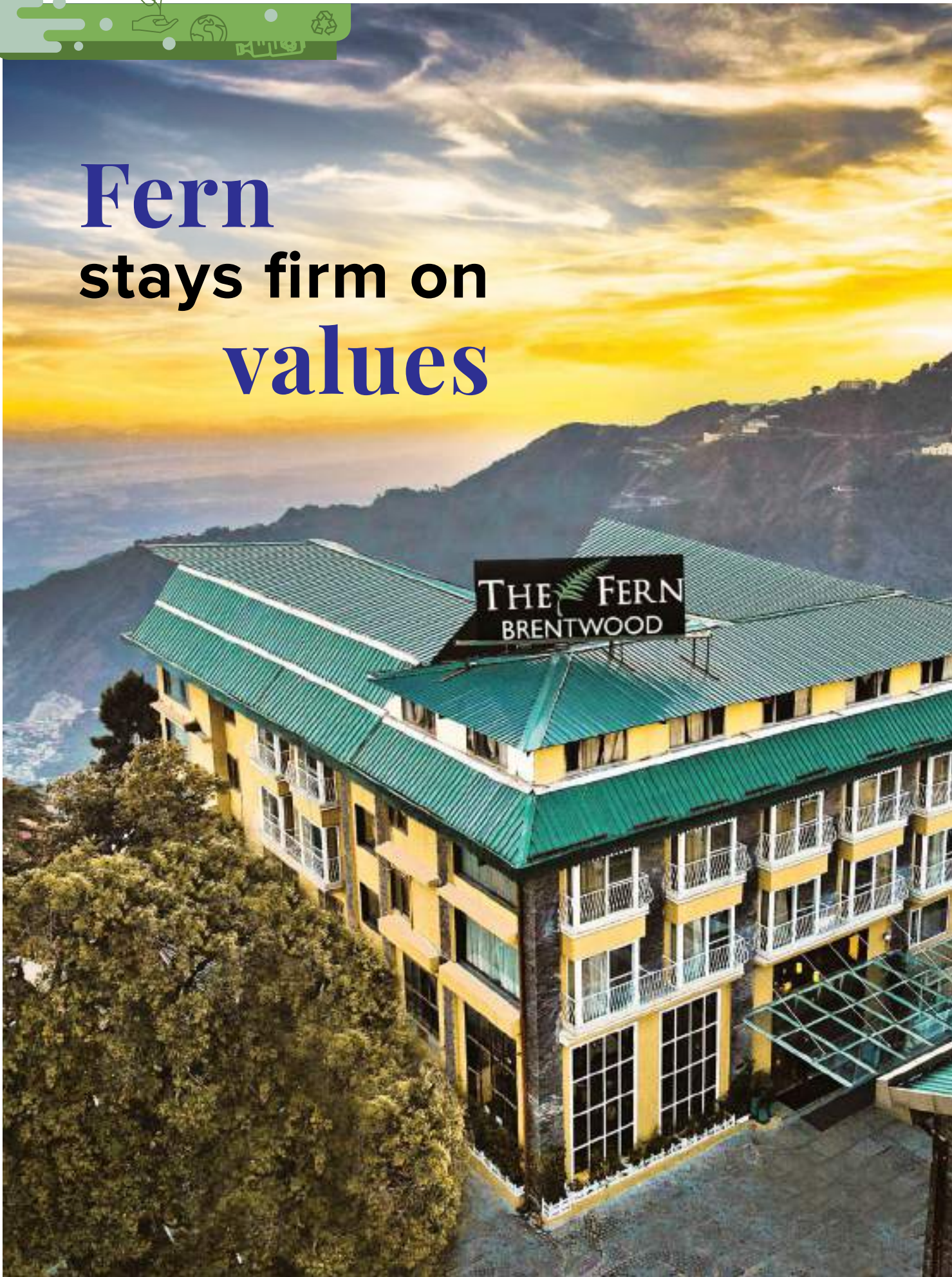
The path forward

With a young demographic and sustained economic growth, India is well-positioned to become the world’s third-largest economy, with tourism playing a pivotal role. “We have the potential to become the third-largest tourism destination globally. With right policy interventions, we can expect double-digit growth in tourism’s contribution to GDP India’s tourism sector will continue to thrive with rising disposable incomes, a young population, and improving infrastructure,” he said. HT





Fern stays firm on values





Param Kannampilly,
Executive Chairman,
The Fern Hotels &
Resorts, outlines the
company's strategic
succession approach
and its expansion
strategy, which aligns
with local environment.

WORDS BY LIPLA NEGI

Q: What traditions or elements would you like to keep unchanged when it comes to The Fern Hotels & Resorts?

A: At The Fern Hotels and Resorts, we are deeply rooted in our commitment to environmentally sensitive hospitality and the personalised service that defines our brand. One of our cherished traditions is the integration of local culture and sustainability into every aspect of our offerings. Each hotel is thoughtfully designed to reflect its surroundings, allowing our guests to immerse themselves in the unique essence of the location. This means not just showcasing local architecture and decor but also offering culinary experiences that celebrate regional flavours.

Moreover, our dedication to responsible practices is unwavering. We prioritise eco-friendly initiatives, from waste reduction and energy efficiency to sourcing locally produced goods. This focus on authenticity and responsibility is fundamental to our identity and helps us create memorable experiences for our guests while fostering a sense of community. As we grow, we remain committed to these core values that have helped shape the Fern Hotels & Resorts into a beloved brand.

Q: What are your expansion plans for the next five years?

A: Over the next five years, our ambitious expansion strategy aims to significantly increase our footprint, targeting 150 operational hotels across India, and

select international markets. We plan to continue our growth under our established brands—the Fern, the Fern Residency, the Fern Habitat, and Zinc Journey by the Fern & Beacon Hotels. We are also exploring opportunities in tier-II and tier-III cities where there is a burgeoning demand for environmentally responsible hospitality.

Our approach includes not only expanding our geographical presence but also enhancing our product offerings. We are investing in innovative hotel concepts that cater to diverse customer preferences, from luxury to budget-friendly accommodations. By focusing on sustainability, we aim to set new industry standards and lead by

example, ensuring that our growth aligns with our commitment to the environment and local communities.

Q: What does your group traditionally stand for in terms of hospitality? What are your promises both to customers and to people who work in the organisation?

A: Traditionally, our group stands for a holistic approach to sustainable hospitality, exceptional service, and meaningful community engagement. For our customers, we promise to provide unique and memorable experiences that respect and celebrate the local culture and environment. Our guests can expect not only high-quality accommodations but also

services that are infused with local character, ensuring they leave with cherished memories of their stay.

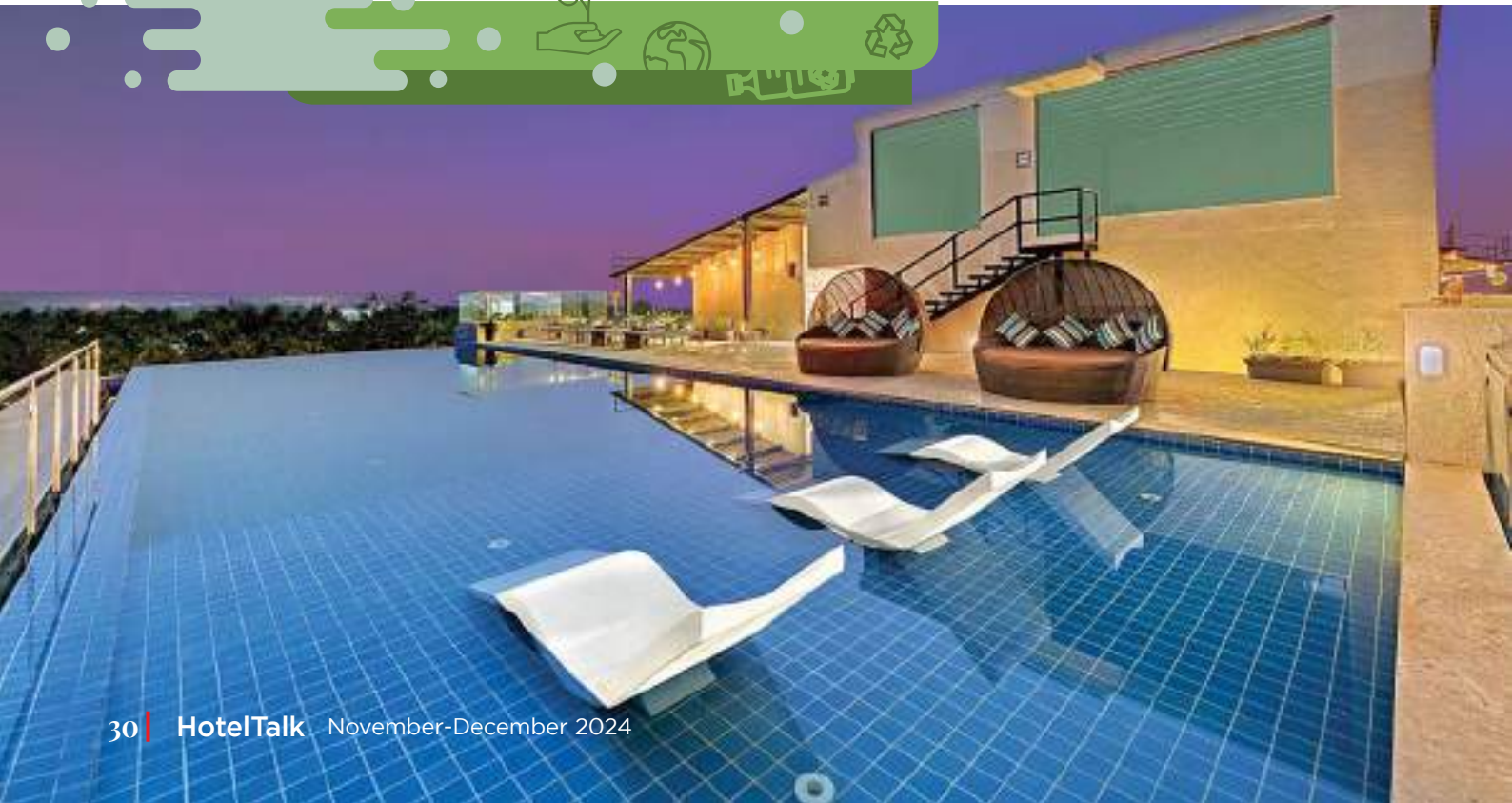
For our employees, we are dedicated to fostering a supportive and inclusive workplace culture that emphasises professional growth and well-being. We promise to invest in their development through ongoing training, mentorship, and opportunities for career advancement. By prioritising the happiness and satisfaction of our team members, we create a positive atmosphere that translates into excellent service for our guests. Ultimately, we believe that when our employees thrive, our guests benefit, creating a virtuous cycle of satisfaction and loyalty.



Param Kannampilly
Executive Chairman
The Fern Hotels & Resorts



We are exploring opportunities in tier-II and tier-III cities where there is a burgeoning demand for environmentally responsible hospitality as we aim for 150 operational hotels.”



Q: What are the succession plans for the group?


A: Succession planning is a critical component of our long-term strategy to ensure the continued success and stability of the Fern Hotels & Resorts. We recognise that cultivating leadership from within is essential, and we focus on identifying and nurturing talent at all levels of the organisation. Our leadership development programmes are designed to equip future leaders with the skills and knowledge they need to drive our vision forward.

Additionally, we promote a culture of mentorship where experienced leaders guide emerging talents, sharing insights and experiences that help shape their careers. We are committed to creating a seamless transition process that maintains our brand integrity and operational excellence, ensuring that our growth trajectory remains strong and consistent even as leadership evolves.



Q: To what extent does your group consider sustainability to be a key concern?

A: Sustainability is not just a goal for us; it is a fundamental principle that guides every aspect of our operations. At the Fern Hotels & Resorts, we have implemented a wide range of eco-sensitive practices, from energy-efficient technologies to comprehensive waste reduction programmes. Our hotels are designed with sustainability in mind, using environmentally sensitive materials and practices to minimise their ecological footprint.

We are committed to promoting conservation and local biodiversity through initiatives such as sourcing locally, reducing water consumption, energy conservation and implementing waste management systems that prioritise recycling. Our dedication to sustainability is an ongoing journey, and we regularly assess our practices to ensure we are on the right track, leading the way in environmentally responsible hospitality. We believe that by prioritising sustainability, we not only protect the planet but also enhance the experiences we offer our guests. 



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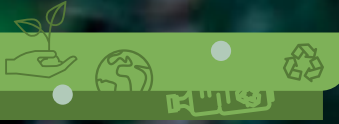
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Refresh, refocus and rediscover

As the digital detox trend evolves, hoteliers are crafting innovative experiences helping travellers disconnect from devices and prioritise personal well-being.

WORDS BY SOMYA DEEP



“

The demand for digital detox vacations will continue to rise as people seek balance amidst increasing technological pervasiveness



The hospitality sector is witnessing a significant surge in a new trend—digital detox travel. Today’s travellers, often overwhelmed by the constant digital distractions, seek refuge in serene escapes from their tech-centric lifestyle to disconnect and rejuvenate. Global search interest for “digital detox retreat” has increased by 50 per cent in the past year.

Fast-evolving trend: Key developments

To capitalise on the rising trend of digital detox travel, hotels and resorts have come up with new marketing strategies incorporating a variety of digital detox-related offerings, targeting wellness-conscious travellers.

TreeHouse Hotels & Resorts, in collaboration with Avika MindHealth, has introduced Aura, a virtual reality wellness experience, in Goa. JW Marriott Bengaluru offers locally produced and wellness-focused culinary experiences that promote health and

sustainability. They have also incorporated initiatives, such as a pilates studio, customised yoga classes, and outdoor activities like walks in Cubbon Park, fostering a holistic experience.

Many resorts, hotels, and travel companies have come up with a variety of activities designed to help guests disconnect from their digital lives and reconnect with themselves. Fort JadhavGadh, based in Pune, also launched a programme, ‘Disconnect to Reconnect,’ offering various activities, from nature walks around the fort to pottery workshops along with stays in Chavani tents with minimal distractions, board games, and live folk performances.

Lotus Eco Beach Resort has historically embraced a strict no-technology policy, offering experiences that disconnect guests from the outside world.

Uptake of digital detox experiences

Given the rising demand in recent years, digital detox practices are expected to stay rather than



be a temporary trend in the hospitality industry. They are taking on a new dimension in hospitality, as travellers are increasingly prioritising wellness and mindfulness amid a constantly connected world.

Lalit Mundkur, General Manager, Fort JadhavGadh Pune, said that there has been a significant uptick in guest satisfaction since the launch of digital detox experiences. “Many guests appreciate the experiences, as they allow them to disconnect and just be present in the moment.” He noted, adding, “As a result, we have seen an increase in repeat visitors.”

Sharing similar thoughts, **Gaurav Sinha**, Hotel Manager, JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru, said “Our initiatives have resulted in notable improvements with our guests. Positive evaluations from visitors have been ascribed to the natural environment and customised experiences we offer.”

While the concept of digital detox is gaining traction, it is still a niche market. “Very honestly, the percentage is still low, and the category of people who prefer digital detox is smaller in comparison,” admitted **Bharat Biswal**, General Manager, Lotus Eco Beach Resort.

Demographics of digital detox travellers

Travellers looking for digital detox experiences come from a diverse range of backgrounds. Each seeks a rejuvenating escape to regain control of their lives and overall well-being.

Ajay Mehtani, Partner, TreeHouse Hotels & Resorts, shared, “Our digital detox guests typically fall within the 24-45 age bracket. These individuals are often from



Lalit Mundkur
General Manager, Fort
JadhavGadh Pune



Gaurav Sinha
Hotel Manager, JW Marriott Hotel
Bengaluru



Bharat Biswal
General Manager, Lotus Eco Beach
Resort



Ajay Mehtani
Partner, TreeHouse Hotels &
Resorts



“

Guests appreciate the experiences, enabling them to disconnect and be present in the moment

high-stress job profiles seeking an escape from the technology-driven world. They prefer destinations with natural beauty.”

Sinha added, “Our wellness-seeking guests are usually aged between 30 and 50 and look for experiences that prioritise well-being.”

Today, digital detox is a need across all age groups. Children too are facing the brunt of uncontrolled use of digital devices. “Even a six-month-old baby can become screen-addicted from the pervasive influence of technology,” Biswal said.

Rise in demand

In response to the growing demand for tech-free vacations, hotel brands have been exploring innovative ways to craft personalised wellness

programmes. Mehtani stressed that the demand for digital detox vacations will continue to rise as people seek balance amidst increasing technological pervasiveness.

With an increased focus on mental, physical, and emotional well-being, Sinha predicted a broader range of wellness experiences, such as mindfulness courses, outdoor excursions, and personalised wellness journeys, which would gain popularity.

In today’s hyper-connected world, the demand for digital detox vacations is on the rise as people become more conscious of the negative effects of constant digital engagement. Digital detox is not just a passing trend; it is essential to incorporate it into the core services of the tourism industry. HT

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Hospitality: Crucial for India's US\$3 trillion tourism economy



India needs to prioritise supportive policies for hospitality investments, says **Suman Billa**, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Tourism.

WORDS BY LIPLA NEGI

At the 54th FHRAI Annual Convention, **Suman Billa**, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, discussed India's vision of a US\$1.3 billion tourism economy by 2047. Billa emphasised the hospitality sector's critical role in enhancing destination experiences and India's performance on the global tourism index. To achieve this goal, Billa said, "India must boost both inbound and domestic tourism, increase visitation by more than 10 per cent, and expand the country's tourism infrastructure at a rapid pace."

Demand-supply imbalance

The hospitality industry faces a supply-demand gap that could impede the sector's growth.




Suman Billa
Additional Secretary
Ministry of Tourism

Prior to the pandemic, India saw approximately 2 billion domestic tourism visits. Experts now project that figure could rise to 20 billion visits over the next decade. To

meet the rising demand, "The government and private sector will need to invest heavily in expanding capacity, modernising infrastructure, and developing new hotels, particularly in underdeveloped tourist destinations," Billa said.

Steps to be taken

To achieve the goal of a US\$3 trillion economy by 2047, Billa outlined several strategic measures. He highlighted the need for more supportive policies from the central and state governments to encourage hospitality investments. Establish Destination Management Organisations (DMOs), led by local authorities with industry input, to monitor tourist activity and manage infrastructure. The sector must focus on developing new, lesser-known destinations for sustainable growth.

The tourism industry needs to tackle challenges, such as skilled workforce shortages, inadequate infrastructure, and environmental concerns. "If we get this right, the next 20 to 30 years of Indian tourism will be unstoppable," he concluded. 



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Industry-academia breaking skill barriers

From addressing talent shortages to eco-friendly measures, HRAWI President **Jimmy Shaw** stresses strengthening existing groundwork for significant outcomes.

WORDS BY LIPLA NEGI

As the 75th anniversary approaches, HRAWI is all set to celebrate this significant milestone. With many outstanding initiatives being undertaken, the association aims to implement these initiatives successfully. Shaw emphasised, “Our priority is to continue building on the groundwork that has already been laid and ensure that we drive impactful results for the association and members.”

Overcoming challenges

The biggest challenge plaguing the industry is the shortage of skilled and experienced staff shortages. It is partly self-inflicted due to a lack of competitive compensation and care for staff well-being. Shaw said, “The association aims to address this

by promoting industry-academia collaboration through initiatives like the Academic Think Tank.”

Role of sustainability

Sustainability is crucial for the

hospitality industry’s long-term growth and success, as they are inherently linked. However, the association is no introducing new initiatives but focussing on ongoing efforts. He shared the approach will help balance tourism growth with environmental preservation.

Technology integration

The association’s goal is to help members adopting cutting-edge technologies to enhance operational efficiency and improve guest experiences. Shaw cautioned that security and data privacy must be woven into the tech fabric and cannot be treated as afterthoughts.

Member engagement strategy

By increasing the meeting frequency, the association aims to provide a more structured platform for members to express their views and contribute to the association’s initiatives. “This will ensure every member’s voice is heard and valued,” Shaw averred.



Jimmy Shaw
President, HRAWI



Association aims to provide a more structured platform for members to build stronger connections

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Setting new ethos in luxurious sustainability

As Indian hoteliers aim to improve their offerings, Atlantis Dubai serves a stellar model for balancing luxury with sustainability.

WORDS BY HT BUREAU

In the ever-evolving landscape of luxury hospitality, Atlantis Dubai stands out as a beacon of innovation, setting new standards for sustainability, guest experiences, and operational excellence. HotelTalk recently spoke with **Kyp Charalambous**, Vice President, Sales, Atlantis Dubai,

to delve into the resort's initiatives that are reshaping the industry.

Sustainability at forefront

Atlantis Dubai has made remarkable strides in its commitment to responsible tourism. The resort's Atlas Project has yielded impressive results, including the installation

of solar panels that saved 767 tonnes of CO₂ in 2023 alone.

"This is equivalent to the carbon sequestration of 15,435 trees," Charalambous said, highlighting the scale of their environmental impact.

Food waste management has been a key focus, with the implementation of Winnow food waste technology in

all buffet restaurants. This initiative has resulted in an estimated 40 per cent reduction in edible food waste. The resort has also partnered with local farmers to introduce fresh, organic ingredients, with 100 locally sourced and sustainable dishes now available on restaurant menus.

The elimination of single-use plastics has been another achievement. “We have replaced single-use plastic amenities with refillable pump bottles in guest rooms, annually diverting three million plastic tubes from landfills,” Charalambous explained. The resort has also eliminated over



Kyp Charalambous
Vice President, Sales
Atlantis Dubai

2.6 million single-use plastic water bottles, opting for glass refillable bottles instead.

Elevating guest experiences

Atlantis Dubai’s commitment to excellence extends beyond sustainability. The resort has become the first in the Eastern Hemisphere to earn the IBCCES Certified Autism Centre™ (CAC) designation, prioritising accessibility for autistic and sensory-sensitive guests.

For luxury travellers seeking unique experiences, Atlantis Dubai offers bespoke services that go beyond traditional offerings. “Our VIP services team ensures every request is answered with a ‘yes’,” Charalambous averred. From lavish birthday parties in ultra-luxury penthouses to Michelin-starred private dining experiences, the resort ensures the needs of discerning guests are met.



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Future of luxury hospitality

Personalised experiences, sustainable practices, and technological innovation are key trends that will shape the future of luxury hospitality. Emphasising the importance of adapting to evolving consumer preferences, Charalambous, said, “Post-pandemic, we have observed an increasing trend of multi-generational families travelling together, with an emphasis on family togetherness among Indian travellers.”

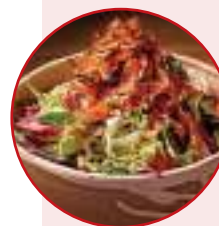
This shift has influenced Atlantis Dubai’s approach to guest experiences and amenities. The resort now offers various activities designed to cater to all age groups, ensuring memorable experiences for every family member. “We have introduced new school programmes at the Lost Chambers Aquarium to increase education opportunities, exceeding 2022 attendance by 253 per cent in 2023,” Charalambous revealed.

Indian hoteliers looking to upgrade their services with focus on sustainable practices, Atlantis Dubai serves as a model of excellence. The resort skilfully blends luxury with sustainability and operational excellence with innovative guest experiences. By embracing similar approaches, hotels in India could boost their standing in the international luxury hospitality market. This would not only meet the growing expectations of sophisticated travellers but also foster a more sustainable future for the industry. **HT**



Ariana’s Persian Kitchen:
The impossible kebab

Milos Special:
Estiatorio Milos



Shitake Salad: Nobu Dubai

Taro Truffle Dumpling, plant based Omni-meat: Ling Ling



Vegetables Tofu Karashi: Nobu by the Beach



Mark Wong

Senior Vice President-Asia Pacific
SLH

With a strong foothold in luxury hospitality for over three decades, SLH has continued to expand its presence in India, catering to both domestic and international travellers. **Mark Wong**, Senior Vice President-Asia Pacific, SLH, discusses the brand's evolution in India, expansion plans, and future in India and globally.

Betting big on India

India is fast becoming an important market for SLH, both domestically and internationally. The country has shown promising growth, particularly in outbound bookings. "India is an emerging domestic and inbound market for SLH as we re-establish

Ramping up brand presence in India

In collaboration with independent hotels, SLH seeks to re-establish its brand presence and reimagine sustainable luxury in India.

WORDS BY **NISHA VERMA**





Indian media to spark interest and engagement of the brand,” Wong explained. The combination of storytelling and personal engagement is at the heart of SLH’s promotional strategy in India.

On growth & sustainability

SLH is not only focusing on expansion but also leading the way in sustainable luxury. The SLH Considerate Collection, launched in 2021, showcased eco-friendly properties that align with sustainability pillars, such as environmental consciousness, cultural preservation, and community support. “We plan to introduce the SLH Considerate Collection to India next year and expand on our conscious travel initiatives,” Wong revealed. SLH is also developing a ‘Wellbeing Collection’ to cater to the growing demand for wellness-focused travel experiences. HT

our brand presence with new hotel signings, such as Suryagarh Jaisalmer, Narendra Bhawan Bikaner, and Brij Lakshman Sagar Pali,” said Wong. Indian travellers are already exploring SLH properties overseas, especially in popular destinations like the UK, Italy, and

added, indicating that there are more exciting developments to come.

Edge over others

SLH’s differentiation lies in the size and character of its properties. “With an average of 50 rooms per hotel, our properties offer privacy,



Re-establishing the SLH brand in India involves strategic engagements with travel trade, media, and consumers.”

France, contributing to over 50 per cent growth in booking revenues from the Indian market year-on-year.

Expansion strategies

SLH’s expansion in India is marked by the brand’s approach towards partnering with independently minded hotels that offer something distinct. “We have partnered with Heavens Portfolio as our extended sales team in key cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, and Bangalore,” Wong shared.

SLH is particularly focused on sustainable luxury and is on the lookout for hotel partners that prioritise eco-conscious practices. “We plan to expand to the southern regions of India next year,” he

discretion, and personalised service,” Wong noted. SLH also prides itself on curating hidden gems that provide guests with an authentic connection to their destination. Whether it is a family-owned boutique hotel or a historic building with deep cultural ties, each SLH property is unique.

Promotional initiatives

Re-establishing the SLH brand in India involves strategic engagements with travel trade, media, and consumers. The SLH team has already hosted roadshows and media events in New Delhi and Mumbai to personally introduce the brand’s story and philosophy. “We are focusing on sharing entertaining, newsworthy stories with the



Global expertise in local context

To reinforce its business expansion, Synergy adopts a holistic approach to address local needs without compromising its global standards.

WORDS BY JANICE ALYOSIUS



Synergy has made significant strides in the Indian market during the past nine years, adapting to the various challenges and opportunities it presents. **Sofia Oragano**, Senior Director of International Sales, Synergy, delves into how the company prioritises customised services to cater to the unique needs of its Indian clientele.

Growth strategy

The past 12 months have been a period of exceptional growth for Synergy, with the

company opening its headquarters in Bengaluru and expanding its local workforce by 120 per cent. “Our bookings are up by 115 per cent year over year,” Oragano revealed, underscoring the company’s success in the Indian market.

Synergy plans to continue its expansion by growing its supplier network and focusing more on second and third-tier cities. Further, the company aims to strengthen its partnership with its parent company, The Ascott Limited, to further expand its portfolio and offer hotel reservation capabilities.

“India is a relationship-driven market, and we will continue investing in local resources to build trust and provide 24/7 support,” Oragano said. The company’s focus on cost containment will be crucial as it grows alongside its clients.

Digital solutions for efficiency

Synergy has embraced technology to enhance both customer experience and operational efficiency. Oragano shared that the company’s hybrid tech stack, consisting of proprietary and third-party tools, streamlines supplier management, booking, and guest services.

“CommsHub, our new guest communication platform, automates and streamlines many



Sofia Oragano

Senior Director of International Sales,
Synergy



Synergy plans to continue its expansion by growing its supplier network and focusing on second and third-tier cities

processes effectively, leading to quicker responses and fewer touchpoints for customers. Moreover, our use of artificial intelligence and biometric security has helped protect sensitive data, and we are proud to report zero data breaches in 2024,” Oragano explained.

The company has also developed SynergySMART, an award-winning tool that digitises the pre-arrival inspection checklist, improving supplier compliance, and enhancing duty of care protocols.

Future of serviced apartments in India

Oragano is optimistic about the future of India’s

serviced apartment market, pointing to the country’s booming economy and projected growth in business travel spending. “India’s business travel spending is expected to reach US\$38 billion in 2024, and this will drive a growing demand for serviced accommodation,” she said.

Synergy is prepared to lead the way by combining global expertise with local knowledge, with focus on tailoring it resources to meet the clients’ needs . “Our goal is to be a thought leader and influencer in the industry, shaping the future of serviced accommodation in India,” Oragano said.





Decoding future of hospitality industry

FHRAI's 54th edition underscored the role of innovation and sustainability, setting the stage for the hospitality industry's future course of action.

WORDS BY HT BUREAU

Centered on the theme, "Tourism @2047: Invincible," the Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) hosted a three-day convention in Goa. The event brought together nearly 800 delegates to discuss the future of India's tourism and hospitality industry.

The event was inaugurated by **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat**, Union Minister of Tourism and Culture, in the presence of Dr. **Pramod Sawant**, Chief Minister of Goa. **D.S. Advani**, Chairman, Convention Organising

Committee, and **Pradeep Shetty**, President, FHRAI, delivered the welcome address.

Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director and CEO, Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL), presented the keynote address. **Mugdha Sinha**, Director General of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism, also addressed the event. **Suman Billa**, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, was among the speakers.

Shetty said, "Your participation reflects our collective commitment to excellence and innovation in the

“

We can drive meaningful change and create a brighter future for our sector

hospitality industry. Together, we can drive meaningful change and create a brighter future for our sector.”

At the event, FHRAI's recently established Centre of Excellence released a report on the 'Ease of Doing Business' in the hospitality sector. Besides, awards were presented across various categories honouring excellence in the hospitality sector. The Lifetime Achievement Award was given to the Late **Prithvi Raj Singh Oberoi**, former Executive Chairman, EIH Limited. Additionally, the Hall of Fame award was presented to **Dr. Ajit B Kerkar**, Former Chairman and Managing Director, the Taj Group of Hotels; late Capt. **C P Krishnan Nair**, Founder Chairman, the Leela Group of Hotels; and **Lalit Suri**, Founder Chairman, the Lalit Suri Hospitality Group.

The convention also featured insightful panel discussions from market trends to sustainable practices. **HT**



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Procurement innovation key for economic growth

HPMF 2024 emphasised greater collaboration, innovation, and sustainability to shape procurement future in hospitality industry.

WORDS BY HT BUREAU

The 14th edition of the annual convention of the Hospitality Purchasing Managers' Forum (HPMF) was held in Lucknow, marking a significant milestone for the hospitality industry. Focused on the theme, "Ease of Doing Business in Hospitality," the event brought together industry leaders, government officials,

and emerging talent to discuss the latest trends and challenges in hospitality procurement.

In his address, **Dr Nitin Shankar Nagarale**, Founder and General Secretary, HPMF, emphasised bridging the gap between buyers and suppliers by creating a platform for open dialogue and supporting local businesses and artisans to contribute to

economic growth. He also stressed the importance of recognising and empowering women leaders in the hospitality industry.

Vikram Mehta, General Manager, Miraya International LLP, shared insights into the company's commitment to providing natural, preservative-free ingredients to the hotel and restaurant industry. He also discussed how



“

Bridging the gap between buyers and suppliers by creating a platform for open dialogue.”

Dr Nitin Shankar Nagarale
Founder and General Secretary, HPMF





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partnering with local suppliers can contribute to the economic growth of rural communities.

Discussing the importance of fragrance in the hospitality industry, **Gaurav Kumar**, Certified Perfumist, Gralit India Biotech, said that by selecting the right fragrance, hotels can elevate their brand image.

Mayank Agarwal, Director, Dabri Tea, shared the company's commitment to

providing premium tea solutions for the hospitality industry

Other key speakers included **Mohan Deshpande**, Chairman, HPMF; **Rahul Pandit**, Managing Director & CEO, Advent Hotels International; and **Souvagya Mohapatra**, Managing Director-Operations, India, Bhutan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts. The event also featured a panel discussion focusing on

procurement challenges and solutions. The highlight of the event was the 12th Annual Procurement Excellence Awards, recognising outstanding contributions in the hospitality industry.

The event provided a unique platform for industry experts to exchange ideas and share best practices, fostering Uttar Pradesh's growth in hospitality, ecotourism, and education. HT



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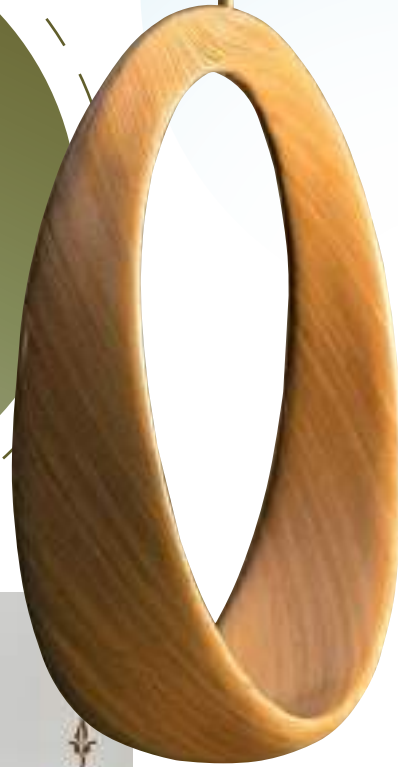
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Nature inspires Art

Redefining ergonomic design

The LOOP series by andblack is a collection that combines form, emotion, and functionality. It features various pieces, including a bookshelf, bench, twisted table, and spiral jhoola, among others. Each item redefines the norms of ergonomics and structure while establishing a language that resonates both aesthetically and emotionally. The series highlights the strength of curves and the power of form.



Blending functionality with luxury

Rosabagh unveiled its latest collection, 'Aurelie collection,' embodying an amalgamation of French countryside allure and Renaissance-inspired grandeur. The Aurelie collection stands out for its extensive range of seating options, each designed to offer both comfort and style. Each piece is thoughtfully crafted to offer both aesthetic appeal and practical utility.



Amalgam of cultural aesthetics

The Terra Collection by Cristiana Masi has made its debut in India. In collaboration with UDC Homes, the collection introduced a touch of Italian elegance to the Indian market. This partnership underscored the company's commitment to offering top-tier international design, reinforcing its position as a key player in the Indian décor market.

Display solutions



Antarctica Equipment has introduced Ifi S.p.a.'s TONDA gelato display case to the Indian market. The circular and rotating design offers a 360-degree product view, maximising visibility. It features advanced sensor-controlled technology allowing simple hand gestures to activate the rotation, enabling the gelato server to select flavours with minimal effort. With its energy-saving features, TONDA delivers up to 25 per cent savings compared to traditional gelato display cases.

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Movements



Randhir Gupta
VP - Commercial & BD,
Mayfair Hotels & Resorts

With over 23 years of experience, Randhir Gupta brings a wealth of expertise in sales, marketing, and business strategy to Mayfair Elixir. Joining as Vice President - Commercial and Business Development, Mayfair Hotels & Resorts, he is expected to contribute significantly to the group's development initiatives.



Rohit Chopra
Area Commercial
Director-India, Minor
Hotels

Minor Hotels has appointed Rohit Chopra as the Area Commercial Director, India. Chopra will spearhead commercial activities, drive revenue growth, improve client relationships, and enhance customer satisfaction. He is a seasoned leader in the hospitality industry with a career spanning over 26 years..



Gagan Katyal
Director of Sales,
Fairmont Jaipur

Gagan Katyal has been appointed Fairmont Jaipur's new Director of Sales. With over 20 years of experience, Katyal has driven strategic growth and elevated brand presence in the luxury hospitality sector. In his new role, Gagan will oversee the sales department, driving both inbound and outbound sales strategies.



Biswajit Chakraborty
General Manager
Four Seasons Hotel
Bengaluru

Four Seasons Hotel Bengaluru has appointed Biswajit Chakraborty as the new General Manager. In his new role, he aims to elevate the guest experience while maintaining the brand's legacy of personalised service. He has held various positions at esteemed luxury brands, including Oberoi, Taj, The Leela, and Accor.



Annam Lubana
Director of Operations
JW Marriott Goa

JW Marriott has appointed Annam Lubana as the Director of Operations at JW Marriott Goa. In her new role, she will oversee key departments, including food and beverage, culinary, front office, housekeeping and spa. Annam will also focus on the revenue and reputation of the brand, and drive operational profitability.



Sakshi Sarmandal
Director of Talent and
Culture, Machan Resorts
LLP

Machan Resorts LLP has appointed Sakshi Sarmandal as the Director of Talent and Culture. With a strong background in the hospitality industry, Sarmandal will lead the execution of strategies aimed at enhancing a people-centric culture, engaging working experience, and attracting the best talent in the industry.



Ryan Rocque
Director of Marcom,
The Clarks Hotels &
Resorts

The Clarks Hotels & Resorts has roped in Ryan Rocque as the Director of Marketing and Communications. With over 14 years of experience in the hospitality and luxury sectors, Rocque will focus on enhancing brand identity, driving digital and performance marketing, and leading corporate communications initiatives.



Anwesha Bhattacharya
Marcom Manager, Hyatt
Centric Ballygunge
Kolkata

Anwesha Bhattacharya has joined Hyatt Centric Ballygunge Kolkata as the Marketing Communications Manager. She will be responsible for overseeing the hotel's marketing, branding, and communications strategy. Her expertise spans various industries, driving several marketing and PR initiatives.



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