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Hospitality BIZ

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‘Our target is to sign at least 25 properties by the year 2025’

PG 15 ▶

Souvagya Mohapatra

MD, Atmosphere Core India

FEATURE

Evolving Role of a Housekeeper

PG 20 ▶



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Uttar Pradesh's New Star Classification Policy for Hotels Set to Boost Prayagraj Tourism Ahead of Mahakumbh-2025

HBI Staff | Pune

The Yogi Adityanath government's new star classification policy for hotels and resorts, introduced in December 2023 to promote tourism in Uttar Pradesh, will now be implemented in Sangam city. District officials have begun efforts in collaboration with the tourism department.

A recent meeting at a city hotel, organized by the tourism department and the Prayagraj Development Authority (PDA), saw officials discussing the implementation of this new system with local hoteliers in preparation for Mahakumbh-2025. The new classification aims to increase the availability of hotel rooms, improve facilities, and offer subsidies and



incentives comparable to industry standards.

The system will categorize hotels into five groups: Platinum, Diamond, Gold, Silver, and Bronze, aligning with the traditional star ratings of 5-star to 1-star. This classification will help tourists choose accommodations more easily and encourage higher service standards. Hotels recognized under this system will

receive various incentives, including subsidies and tax benefits.

The Uttar Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation (UPSTDC) is the nodal agency for this initiative. Over 100 hoteliers from Prayagraj and surrounding areas attended the meeting, organized by the Prayagraj Hotel and Restaurant Association.

Harjinder Singh, President of the Prayagraj Hotel and Restaurant Association, noted that the local hotel industry has seen rapid development since the Yogi government took office, particularly after Kumbh-2019. The tourism development of the Ayodhya, Kashi, and Prayagraj Golden Triangle has increased tourist numbers in Prayagraj, spurring further growth in the hotel industry. ■



HRAWI Concludes Its Third Empowering Hospitality Conclave & Awards

HBI Staff | Hyderabad

The hotel and restaurant industry raised concerns over being held accountable for drunk driving accidents caused by patrons at the recently concluded Empowering Hospitality Conclave & Awards hosted by the Hotel and Restaurant Association (Western India) – HRAWI at Hotel Center Point in Nagpur on July 26, 2024. Besides discussing topical issues, the conclave featured presentations by subject matter experts on the new Maharashtra Tourism Policy 2024, Cybersecurity essentials, Technology for enhancing guest experiences, and skill training sessions on subjects such as fire safety and pest management.

Delving into the growing trend of restaurateurs being held responsible for accidents caused by intoxicated patrons, the industry sought guidelines from industry stalwarts, policymakers, and law enforcers participating in the conclave. "The hotel and restaurant industry remains committed to responsible alcohol service and adherence to guidelines. Wherever we are wrong, we are happy to be corrected. However, lately, the restaurant industry has been feeling the full might of enforcement despite operating within the framework of the law. A guest consumes alcohol in a restaurant, causes an accident outside, and the restaurant gets blamed. Shopkeepers

who sell knives don't get held accountable for crimes committed with those items, but licensed restaurateurs have recently been prosecuted for crimes committed by customers. The industry seeks guidance on what regulations it should follow to avoid prosecution for incidents that occur outside its premises," stated Pradeep Shetty, President, HRAWI.

Special Guest Dr. Ravinder Singal (IPS), Commissioner of Police, Nagpur City, acknowledged the hospitality industry's concerns but emphasized the broader perspective law enforcers must maintain while enforcing law and order. "No one needs to fear if they have not broken the law. I am open to discussion with HRAWI, and maybe together we can find a solution that can be replicated across the State," he said. He also appreciated the high quality of service provided by the Indian hospitality industry.

The Chief Guest of the conclave, Dr. Sagnik Chowdhury, DDG & Regional Director (Western & Central), Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India, expressed his happiness at the conscious effort to create a platform for exchanging insights on various ongoing sectoral issues. He congratulated HRAWI for organizing such seminars and noted, "Guests from all parts of the world visit India, and the hospitality sector is essentially a melting pot of cultural exchanges. Enhancing guest

experiences is our core offering; we are more than just venues to stay." He also emphasized the need for the hospitality industry to focus on sustainability and community ties and implored the industry to dovetail its trade with the tangible heritage and intangible cultural heritage which are India's core strengths. The highlight of the conclave was the sessions by subject matter experts with topics that had practical applications and directly impacted the day-to-day operations of hotels and restaurants.

The conclave featured Rajesh Chopra, Head – Hospitality Business Vertical, Ingram Micro India, who presented on how technology can be an enabler for enhancing guest experiences and driving profitability. He also covered Cybersecurity Essentials for the hospitality industry, a crucial area in an increasingly digital world. Ingram Micro hospitality vertical acts as technology aggregator and has created technology solutions for the hospitality industry. These solutions come bundled with friendly financing options and option to recycle e-waste as per pollution control norms. CA Julfesh Shah, Former Vice Chairman of WIRC of ICAI, discussed the New Maharashtra Tourism Policy 2024, emphasizing its impact on the sector. "The new policy offers a 20% cash subsidy (up to ₹20 crores) for tourism projects like hotels and resorts, significantly boosting investment," Shah said. ■

7th AHP Hospitality Excellence Awards Celebrating Innovation, Diversity, and the Future of Hospitality

The prestigious 7th AHP Hospitality Excellence Awards 2024, held recently at the Airforce Auditorium in New Delhi.

This year's event was marked by a strong emphasis on sustainability and inclusivity. One of the highlights of the evening was the participation of 18 specially-abled professionals who showcased their exceptional skills, proving that talent knows no boundaries. Their participation enriched the competition and highlighted the industry's commitment to providing equal opportunities for all. Additionally, a single parent excelling as a hotelier was specially recognized, underscoring the resilience and dedication of individuals balancing professional excellence with personal responsibilities. This inspiring moment highlighted the industry's commitment to diversity.

In addition to the awards ceremony, the event featured insightful panel discussions and keynote speeches by industry leaders, addressing the latest trends and challenges in the hospitality sector. These discussions provided valuable insights and emphasized the importance of adapting to changing consumer preferences and environmental considerations.

Vinod Gulati, President of the Association of Hospitality Professionals, expressed his admiration for the participants, stating, "The AHP Hospitality Excellence Awards 2024 is a testament to the dedication and passion of our industry professionals. This year's focus on sustainability and inclusivity has set a new standard for the future of hospitality. We are proud to recognize the extraordinary contributions of our colleagues who continue to push the boundaries of excellence."

Devipshita Gautam, Founder and General Secretary of the Association of Hospitality Professionals, added, "The 7th edition of AHP Hospitality Excellence Awards is not just an event but a celebration of the exceptional achievements and dedication of hospitality professionals across India. The event underscored the importance of sustainability, inclusivity, and innovation in shaping the future of the hospitality industry. The presence of specially-abled professionals and the recognition of a single parent excelling as a hotelier were poignant reminders of the industry's commitment to diversity and equal opportunity. We are honored to celebrate the outstanding achievements of our participants. Their contributions inspire us all to strive for excellence and innovation. This event highlights the vibrancy and dynamism of our industry. We are committed to fostering an environment where everyone has the opportunity to succeed and thrive."

The Hospitality Challenge began with the Front Office Master competition at Radisson Paschim Vihar, New Delhi, followed by three days of rigorous culinary competitions at Banarsidas Chandiwala IHM, New Delhi. The Challenge culminated in four unique competitions: The War of Spirits and Art of Table Setting at Surya Hotel, New Delhi, and the Art of Bed Making and Art of Towel Folding at The Park Hotel, New Delhi.

The evening concluded with a gala dinner, where attendees had the opportunity to network and celebrate their achievements. The camaraderie and shared passion for excellence were evident, making the AHP Hospitality Excellence Awards 2024 a memorable and inspiring event for all who attended.

The winners of each category demonstrated exceptional skill and creativity. Here are the distinguished gold winners:



- 1. Front Office Master – 2024 (Professionals):** Divyam Suri – Vivanta by Taj Surajkund
- 2. Front Office Master – 2024 (Students):** Akshit Gambhir – Indian Hotel Academy
- 3. Front Office Master – 2024 (Sp. Ability):** Lalit Kumar Haldhar – Redfox Hotel Aerocity and Mahaveer Prasad – Lemon Tree Premier, Aerocity
- 4. Art of Bed Making – 2024:** Saurabh Kr Sharma – The Suryaa, New Delhi and Raj Kumar – The Park, New Delhi
- 5. Art of Towel Folding – 2024 (Professionals):** Mithun Kumar – Radisson Blu Noida Sec. 55, Manoj Kumar – Radisson Blu Noida Sec. 55 and Dhriti Rava – The Park, New Delhi
- 6. Art of Towel Folding – 2024 (Sp. Ability):** Kunj Bihari Mahor – India Habitat Centre, Rajeev Kumar – Lemon Tree Premier, Aerocity and Udham Singh – The Suryaa, New Delhi
- 7. Art of Towel Folding – 2024 (Students):** Habeeb Muhammed K K – Chennais Amrita and P Siva – Chennais Amrita
- 8. War of Spirits – 2024:** Vir Singh – Radisson Hotel Sec-29 Gurugram
- 9. Art of Table Setting – 2024 (Professionals):** Rohit Joshi – The Suryaa, New Delhi
- 10. Art of Table Setting – 2024 (Sp. Ability):** Anshul – Radisson Blu Marina and Arun – Radisson Blu Marina
- 11. Art of Napkin Folding – 2024 (Students):** Riya Nagpal – Indian Hotel Academy and Sunny – Indian Hotel Academy
- 12. Sweet Sensation – 2024:** Tanmay Chugh – Radisson Udyog Vihar
- 13. Dressing a Cake – 2024 (Students):** D Balaji – Chennais Amrita
- 14. Ornamental Breads – 2024:** Ravi – Crowne Plaza Okhla and Pankaj Panday – The Suryaa, New Delhi
- 15. International Confectionary – 2024:** Nilesh Kumar – Eros Hotel, New Delhi
- 16. Kebabs – 2024:** Lalit Sharma – Redfox Aerocity
- 17. Indian Regional Cuisine – 2024:** K Baskar – Eros Hotel, New Delhi
- 18. Halwai – 2024:** Rajesh – Country Inn & Suites by Radisson, Sahibabad
- 19. International Cuisine – 2024:** Vishal – India Habitat Centre
- 20. Biryani Competition – 2024:** Sachin Yadav – Radisson Blu Plaza, Mahipalpur
- 21. Minutes Challenge – 2024 (Professionals):** Ajay Bhardwaj – Taj City Centre Gurugram
- 22. Minutes Challenge – 2024 (Students):** Shubham Singh Rawat – Indian Hotel Academy. ■



‘We make products that work well, last long and feel good’

Dhruv Agarwal, Director, Autopress India Pvt. Ltd. (Stahl Kitchens) takes Sumit Jha on a tour of their plant in Pune and talks about the journey of Stahl Kitchens, their brand ethos and the road ahead.

Q Autopress India has been involved in refining the cookware experience for a long time. Tell us about the journey of Stahl.

Stahl started in 2013 with a vision to create world class cookware in India for the Indian consumer. Autopress India's legacy of over 30 years of manufacturing for some of the best global brands from Germany, France and the United States has aided us in this endeavour. Stahl has brought many category first items to the Indian market over the course of a decade, enabling the brand and category to thrive. Stahl pioneered triply cookware in India in 2015 (Stahl Artisan Series) and was the first to offer revolutionary lightweight cast iron cookware in 2023 (Stahl Blacksmith Plus and Blacksmith Hybrid). The team is young, growing and motivated to create a revolution in the way India cooks.

Q What gives Stahl products the distinguishing upper edge? What is your USP?

We make products that work well, last long and feel good. The team at Stahl has worked hard to create exceptional products by combining an intuitive understanding of materials, technology and brilliant design. Our primary focus has always been on meticulously studying and solving consumer pain points, which gives us a distinct advantage. For instance, consumers who used traditional cast iron found it heavy to lift and tough to maintain. We understood these problems of cast iron and innovated to solve for it. Our lightweight cast iron series (Blacksmith Hybrid and Blacksmith Plus) harnesses a unique technology with distinct manufacturing processes and materials, ensuring that our cast iron cookware is ‘Designed Different’.

Q What is the Indian market potential for products like yours, and do we expect international brands of repute to enter the market?

There is a clear premiumisation of the market in India which is currently taking place. Indian consumers aspire for good products. Be it cookware or a category like shoes, consumers are willing to pay for quality. People are understanding the need for good cookware. They are trying different types of food and taking a more active interest in all things food related - a change that has been largely driven by the pandemic. Food is currently the second most Instagrammable topic. Food is increasingly being viewed as an experience with cookware playing an important role. This is also reflected in the restaurant and catering business with the increasing use of live counters, clean workstations, transparent kitchens and food as theatre. People are more conscious about the material and aesthetics of their cookware. Chefs today are celebrities with large fan followings. Thus, the market potential for products like ours is huge and international brands are already eyeing the Indian market for growth.

Q What is competition for you? Do you believe increased competition and enhanced product range would create a better market for cookware in India?

To me increased competition drives market growth. It's simple, if there was an India Pakistan cricket match, many people would watch it. But if the Indian team did not have good competition, if they were doing just net practice, however great they may be nobody would be interested in watching them play! Good competition leads to category awareness, breeds innovation and an improved consumer experience. We do however believe that the competition should be healthy and general integrity should be maintained. We try to educate our consumer for the same.

Q With an eye on innovation and quality consciousness, what new products can the market expect from Stahl?

We take a holistic view of the industry including kitchen products which aid in preparation, conversion, serving and storage. Stahl is already in the conversion category with its range of cookware. Stahl's Talon brand of high-quality knives will soon make its debut in the preparation segment. Talon knives will combine the resilience of German steel with precision and balance of Japanese blade craftsmanship. We are also planning to introduce other kitchen tools in the future. We will be getting into smart cooking devices in the next year. While our cookware brings an added flair to the table if you decide to serve in it, we are looking at expanding into high end serve ware and cutlery in the long run.

Q Do you have a specific plan for increasing your presence in the Horeca market?

Stahl will be looking at interacting more with students of the hospitality industry and for potential tie-ups with professional chefs. We are also looking at growing our distribution structure further so that any restaurant can have easy access to the Stahl range of products when they go out to buy.

Q Your message for the Horeca industry and why they should be using Stahl products?

A good tool is very important in delivering a good end product. HORECA businesses occasionally purchase inexpensive cookware and rotate it. We would like to change this perception. HORECA, like the Indian household consumer of today, is ready for a change. The experience of chefs can be enhanced by choosing quality high-performance cookware like Stahl which pays off over the course of its lifetime, undergoes less wear and tear and is overall easier to use. ■

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'Industry' will continue to grow



Just like every year, the hospitality industry continues to be looked at as a segment that is not in focus of the finance ministry. Continues representations by hospitality bodies seeking infrastructure status continue to be ignored. While there are specific push measures for the country, that would ensure better connectivity, infrastructure and ultimately more business for all, the demand for infrastructure status by hospitality establishments is to enable reduced expenses on interest costs in the initial years of setting up, and other benefits. Despite the ignorance, the industry would continue to grow and generate employment (second largest employer after railways) and be a substantial tax revenue generator for the country. This industry is destined to reach greater heights, and it would do so, weather or not there is a conducive atmosphere for it. In this issue, we present reactions of industry leaders on announcement of the Union Budget 2024-25, which yet again lacks substantial measures to address the fundamental challenges facing the sector.

In our statistics and analysis section, we feature extracts of the National Restaurant Association of India's 'India Food Services Report 2024 (NRAI IFSR 2024)', that interestingly highlights that the Indian food services industry is estimated to be valued at INR 5,69,487 crores as of FY24 and is projected to grow to INR 7,76,511 crores by FY28, achieving a CAGR of 8.1% overall, with the organised segment expected to grow at a CAGR of 13.2%. The report highlights that the government tax contribution by the food service industry stands at INR 33,809 crore for the financial year 2024. That is just the food service industry, hospitality and its allies pay an additional substantial amount into the government coffers.

Housekeeping, is the backbone of the industry, and one missed day can literally create a mess in the operations of a hotel. The role of a housekeeper is changing and so are the methods, equipment and chemicals being used for housekeeping. In this issue we focus on this pillar of strength of the industry and highlight the trends and future possibilities thereof. Would future housekeepers take on the role of a general manager?

This issue also features our regular guest columns and interview from across the spectrum. Do share your feedback with us, and let us know if there is a specific segment that you would want to read about.

Sumit Jha
Editor & Business Head

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Little Italy celebrates 35th anniversary with new menu and expansion plans

Asmita Mukherjee | Hyderabad

Little Italy, in Hyderabad's Kokapet neighbourhood, is a haven for vegetarian Italian food lovers. Located conveniently on the main road in Kokapet, Little Italy is easily accessible and offers ample parking space, a rarity in the busy city.

The interiors are a harmonious blend of rustic Italian decor and modern design elements. Soft lighting enhances the warm atmosphere, making it perfect for both a romantic dinner and a casual family outing.

The restaurant boasts an extensive menu that caters to a variety of palates, all within the realm of vegetarian cuisine. From wood-fired pizzas to creamy pastas and decadent desserts, the menu is a testament to the rich flavors and diverse culinary traditions of Italy. The brand recently celebrated its 35th anniversary, with the launch of its celebration menu.

The dining experience begins with a selection of appetizers that are perfect for sharing. The Wild Truffle Mushroom Soup is a standout starter, a rich concoction swirled with creamy foam and infused with the earthy flavors of porcini mushrooms. Each spoonful is a luxurious treat, setting the stage for the courses to follow.

Another popular choice is the Cheese Nachos. This dish features crispy tortilla chips generously topped with melted cheese, jalapeños, and a zesty salsa. The combination of flavors is a great way to kick off the meal.

Amrut Mehta, Director, Little Italy attributes the brand's growth and success over the past three decades to an unwavering commitment to quality, innovation, and customer satisfaction. "Our ability to adapt to changing market trends, such as the introduction of cloud kitchens and DIY kits, has kept us relevant and competitive," he explains. The strong brand loyalty cultivated through strategic expansions and consistent delivery of authentic Italian flavors has solidified Little Italy's position as a leading

Italian cuisine brand in India.

Little Italy's pizzas are the star of the show. Cooked in a traditional wood-fired oven, the pizzas boast a thin, crispy crust and are topped with the freshest ingredients. The Margherita Pizza is a classic, featuring a simple yet delicious combination of fresh tomatoes, mozzarella cheese, and basil.

The new menu features Pinsas, a new pizza style from Rome. For those seeking something with a bit more zest, the Piccante Pinsa is a delightful choice. Topped with spicy jalapeños, olives, and a generous layer of mozzarella, this pizza packs a flavorful punch.

To complement the delicious food, Little Italy offers a range of refreshing mocktails. The Ibisco Sangria and the Sangria alla Rosa featuring a subtle flavour of litchi juice, provide unique twists on the classic sangria, offering a refreshing end to an Italian sojourn.

Mehta outlines the ambitious revenue targets for this fiscal year, aiming to capitalise on anniversary celebrations and new product launches. "We are targeting CAGR at 15% YOY and opening 6 additional outlets by the end of the year. Our aim is to explore new locations in Hyderabad, Jaipur, Bhopal, Kolkata, Chandigarh, and Odisha. Internationally, we are considering locations in London, the UAE, and Kenya. We are also leveraging our new delivery app to make our offerings more accessible, and increasing sales of Acasa products which is a gourmet grocery brand by Little Italy in both retail and HoReCa markets," he added.

No meal at Little Italy is complete without



Amrut Mehta, Director, Little Italy

indulging in their exquisite desserts. The Saffron Milk Cake is a vibrantly colored Indian dessert that brings a delightful fusion to the Italian menu. The Chocolate Bomb, however, is the showstopper. This decadent dessert, with its rich chocolate exterior and molten center, is guaranteed to satisfy any chocoholic.

Mehta also shares plans for strengthening Little Italy's presence in Northern and Southern India by increasing outlet density, implementing region-specific marketing strategies, and partnering with local influencers and events to engage with the community.

The Green Card Club loyalty program plays a crucial role in customer retention. "We have a great number of loyal guests who have frequented Little Italy for three decades now, and our loyalty program active user base is more than 10 lakhs people. The Green Card Club loyalty program plays a crucial role in customer retention by rewarding our loyal customers with exclusive benefits, discounts and special offers. This program fosters a sense of community and belonging among our customers, encouraging repeat visits and enhancing customer loyalty," Mehta notes. ■

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Leading Learners #1 | Actioning Accountability

By Prof. Satish Jayaram, PhD – Ideator | Innovator | Incubator



Adminutiae #1, 2, 3 have set the pace for diagnosis and extraction of ‘bugs’ from problem domains. This piece focuses on immediate priorities like short, medium and long term – leadership-role clarity, necessary to incubate future talents. This pathway to success is a structured journey, where leadership styles need to be alternated like a relay. Creating guide rails to shepherd future leaders with ongoing skill incubation is a continuous process. Considering perpetual talent deficits, establish an effective approach, to allay future disenchantment! Inspiration is drawn from multiple situational leadership models, where recognition of changing development stages requires complementary leadership behaviour. Ongoing discussions with institutional leaders, faculty members and students - highlight multiple expectation gaps and related opportunities for improvement. To build future talent and skills for a rapidly changing and thriving industry, each one must consider changing leadership behaviour!

Two dimensions, leadership style for impact and levels of skill development must be considered. Early stages of development require more prescriptive approaches to set the right standards. As new alternatives emerge, supportive guidance will facilitate better choices. The impact of experience, whether during training or industrial exposure, can determine if competence development levels of talent can be accurately categorized. Vocational - such as culinary expertise in hot kitchens, bakery, pastry and chocolate in food production. Or professional - such as functional expertise in revenue management, business development, digital marketing and intrapreneurship. The opportunity to develop cross-over competences will evolve as talents mature, guiding their future career choices.

expertise and insights that are not necessarily documented in the public domain, enable professional orientation. Skills vary according to business type, brand standards, market orientation and other factors and will not be stereotypical. Expansion of vocational skills to professional levels can be reinforced from repeated practice. This interim stage is a decisive component for cementing future direction.

3. Year 3 (Choice Stage): Functional expertise from practitioners, plays an important role in matching learner competence with career guidance. Establishing interest, growing depth and accuracy - dovetailed with industry requirements, can be better enabled through mentorship. Veterans, stalwarts and legends in the field, make great role models, where unique nuances and insights can be leveraged in celebrating career stories. Vocational expertise in a core area is the entry ticket to a professional career in that domain, adaptation remains vital as currency.

4. Year 4 (Growth Stage): Pathway leaders who have successfully navigated this development journey make ideal benchmarks. Plotting career journeys from a current stage of development to a desired future stage of professional expertise must be formalized. This pattern could include periods of new learning, joint development and work synergies, remaining current with industry practice. Acceptance of such growth pathways is crucial in managing expectations, setting standards and renewing hybrid skills for targeted career competencies.



1. Year 1 (Early Stage): Leadership provided by institutional faculty members plays a crucial role as this stage. Subject competence is a huge motivator as initial mental models are formed. At early stages, vocational development establishes competence levels required at entry levels, in industry. Recent experiences, contemporary sources and open access through learning management systems, plays an important role in revealing curated content pipelines. The quality of knowledge secured at this stage, makes a definitive impact aligning future choices.

2. Year 2 (Interim Stage): Industrial coaches play a crucial role in cementing knowledge into application during training periods. Subject

Many initial learning journeys last 3 to 5 years, including intermittent periods of experience interspersed with skilling. An inter-change of knowledge, application and practice ensconces itself firmly in learner minds, as they formalize options. There is no dearth of ubiquitous learning content in a democratic universe of tech-enabled access. Yet, human intervention is required to cement learning outcomes, from accountable leadership practice. The responsibility for such optimal leadership, extends beyond institutional confines alone. It requires a concerted effort from shared projects, involving multi-level expertise. Professional guidance from subject matter experts including reliance on synergistic industry programs as incubators of future talent is moot. The metaphor of shaping clay comes to mind, involving many stages before the final product is delivered. Interventional leadership relays are much like that comprehensive process. A series of expert inputs - at appropriate times, stages ensuring targeted outcomes – both in learning and for development. My next column will demystify some leadership roles, treasured by learners in skilling contexts. ■

The views expressed within this column are the opinion of the author, and may not necessarily be endorsed by the publication.

Union Budget 2024-25 Disappoints Hospitality Sector with Lack of Structural Reforms

The hospitality sector had high expectations from the Union Budget 2024-25 presented by FM Nirmala Sitharaman. However, the budget lacks substantial measures to address the fundamental challenges facing the sector, which are necessary to boost its growth. Despite the significant multiplier effect of tourism on employment and the economy, key demands from the tourism and hospitality sectors—such as GST rationalisation, infrastructure status, ease of doing business, and policy reforms—were once again overlooked in the budget. **HBI Staff | Hyderabad**



Insights from Industry Experts

Pradeep Shetty, President, FHRAI



The hospitality sector has been pinning high hopes on the Union Budget for 2024-25 presented by Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, on the backdrop of the Government of India's stated vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047 and the critical role tourism industry holds in achieving it. However, there is nothing spectacular in the budget to bring structural changes to address the fundamental challenges it faces in a competitive world order and to accelerate the growth of the sector to be a USD 3 trillion economy by 2047.

Kabir Suri, President, National Restaurant Association of India



Reflecting on the recently announced Union Budget, we would like to commend the Government and our Honourable Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, for looking to establish economic measures that will drive India towards a better economic future. The EPF support for new hires will go a long way in significantly bolstering levels of employment in the country. This is crucial in developing a stable, secure and robust workforce which will be beneficial to all industries including the food services sector. The reduction in income tax slabs is a commendable move, empowering individuals with greater savings and disposable income, thus driving higher consumption levels, an essential catalyst for sustained economic momentum.

K.B. Kachru, Chairman Emeritus and Principal Advisor, Radisson Hotel Group South Asia & President – HAI

Continued focus on infrastructural development, fiscal prudence, and consolidation. Tourism continues to be accepted as an engine of growth for the economy. Emphasis on spiritual tourism, however, no policy changes to expedite growth.

Tourism and hospitality play a crucial role in the growth of the Indian economy. The continued focus on government spending on infrastructure



development augurs well for the sector. Improved infrastructure would translate into better connectivity, which will be beneficial to the promotion of tourism. The development of the eastern region, temple corridors in Gaya and Bodhgaya, and identification of Nalanda as a key tourism site continue to demonstrate the government's intent to utilize the potential of tourism. Regrettably, however there has been no policy announcement

to facilitate the development of hotels and promotion of inbound tourism. The announcement of GST simplification, and comprehensive review of the Income Tax Act provides some hope for the sector that has been seeking rationalization of taxes. The benefits to individuals on taxation will augment the spending power. The focus on skilling and incentivizing employers for creating jobs are other positives that will benefit all sectors.

Although not directly linked to this budget, the industry would continue its ask for granting of infrastructure status for the hospitality sector and industry-related benefits by all state governments.

Nikhil Sharma, Managing Director and Area Senior Vice President- South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group



We welcome the Union Budget 2024-2025 which focuses on positioning India as a global tourism hub through progressive initiatives. The surge in spiritual tourism has been recognized, and we are excited to see the sector receiving much-needed support in this year's budget. The development of road connectivity projects, with a special emphasis on spiritual and cultural corridors, underscores the Government of India's commitment to fueling the growth of the country's rich cultural and spiritual network of tourism. At Radisson Hotel Group, we have always focused on Tier II and III cities, leveraging a first-mover advantage with 50% of our portfolio in these regions. Our strategic commitment to these destinations aligns with the government's vision, allowing us to meet the increasing demand for spiritual experiences and further strengthen our presence across India.

We are optimistic that this development will not only propel the domestic tourism sector but will also provide an opportunity for foreign tourists to further explore the rich culture of India.

Pulkit Arora, Director, CYK Hospitalityes



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's budget is a game changer for the tourism sector.

India aims to establish itself as a world-class tourist destination, focusing on places that are of immense spiritual importance, which includes Vishnupath temple at Gaya, and Mahabodhi temple in Bodhgaya, and comprehensive development of the Kashi

Vishwanath corridor, and the Brahmakunda of Rajgir and Nalanda, in Bihar.

The Indian Food and Beverage industry rises significantly each year. As India aims to promote world-class tourism experience, this would also benefit the F&B industry. The inflow of tourists - international or domestic would like experience the taste of the local food, which will eventually bring up the demand for local food vendors as well as reputed food brands. This would significantly result in economic and social growth. Also, there will be an increase in local employment opportunities to run successful food businesses and manage tourists in these cities.

Manoj Bhat, MD & CEO, Mahindra Holidays and Resorts India Ltd



The budget is focused on fiscal prudence, stimulating investments, providing employment, and encouraging growth in the economy. The emphasis on improved connectivity and infrastructure will greatly benefit the domestic tourism sector. The spotlight on developing religious tourism,

will further boost the local economy by providing investment and employment.

Akash Bhatia, CEO, Eco Hotels and Resorts Limited



The recent budget plan highlights a game-changing vision for India's tourism industry. Building up the Vishnupad and Mahabodhi Temple corridors, along with the extensive development of Rajgir and re-establishing the Nalanda University, will elevate India's cultural and historical charm.

We're delighted about the assistance for making Odisha an ultimate top-spot for tourists. As one of the key players in the hotel business, it is our aim to ensure that our services will be exceptional enough to match these improvements and give guests amazing experiences that draw attention to India's deep roots and lively culture."

Kunal Vasudeva, Co - Founder & Managing Director, Indian School of Hospitality

The government's allocation of INR 1.48 lakh crore for education, employment, and skilling, including training 20 lakh youth and upgrading 1000 institutes, is a significant step forward. For those pursuing vocational routes, this is a major win. It will help people develop practical skills and excel in their fields, bringing more youth into the formal economy. Additionally, with manufacturing bases in or near districts, there's less



need to migrate to cities, reducing mobility. Such initiatives are crucial for hyper-local job creation and boosting the manufacturing sector, driving India towards becoming a USD 10 trillion economy in the next 7-10 years.

The Union Budget's provision for INR 10 lakh education loans with interest relief for higher education in India is a big win for those pursuing the academic route. Given our low gross enrollment ratio, these loans will make quality education more accessible, allowing students to choose institutions of merit. This embodies 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas,' fostering inclusivity from the ground up. By enhancing local education opportunities and increasing our GER from 26% to at least 40% in the next 5 years, we can cultivate a skilled, competent, and agile-thinking workforce. This workforce is essential for job creation, manufacturing growth, and meeting the workforce needs across various sectors, supporting 'Made in India for India and Made in India for the world,' and propelling us towards becoming a USD 10 trillion economy in the next 7-10 years.

Ahsan Shervani, Vice President, Star Hotels Pvt Ltd (Shervani Hotels)



We welcome the allocation of approximately INR 2,450 crores to the sector, marking a 44.7% increase from previous estimates.

This funding aims to enhance employment and stimulate tourism growth which is a welcomed move. As an industry we are still eagerly looking for a bit more rationalization

in the GST structure for hotels and grant of infrastructure status to the industry.

SP Jain, Chairman and Founder, Pride Hotels Group



We warmly welcome the budget announced today by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The government's focus on the tourism industry, especially the development initiatives for Jharkhand, Odisha, and the North East, is commendable. The special emphasis on

Rajgir and Nalanda will undoubtedly enhance religious and cultural tourism, creating new opportunities for growth and community engagement.

In 2023, India's tourism sector attracted over 9 million foreign tourists, marking a remarkable growth rate of over 40% year-on-year. The budget's commitment to enhancing spiritual tourism, particularly through the development of significant sites like Bodh Gaya and the Vishnupada Temple, is a strategic move that promises substantial economic benefits for the regions involved.

However, we had hoped that the Honorable Minister would grant infrastructure status to the hospitality industry. As a highly capital-intensive sector, our industry requires significant investments, and the initial 3-4 years often yield no profits due to high-interest loans from banks. Granting infrastructure status would enable us to access loans at lower interest rates, facilitating the development of more hotels and improving the quality of facilities offered. This is essential to attract both Indian and international tourists and to support the overall development of our industry. ■



‘We’re targeting business travellers with competitive packages and strategic partnerships’

In a competitive hospitality market like Bengaluru, Hyatt Centric Hebbal Bengaluru has implemented a strategic approach to attract new business. By leveraging its prime location near corporate hubs, the hotel targets business travellers with competitive packages and strategic partnerships. Their digital marketing efforts, including SEO, social media, and targeted advertising, have positioned them as a premier choice for luxury stays and exceptional dining experiences. **Asmita Mukherjee** spoke with **Rohan Raj, Director of Sales and Marketing, Hyatt Centric Hebbal Bengaluru** to know how the hotel is managing to know how the hotel is keeping pace with the fierce competition in the Bengaluru market.

Q What strategies have you found effective in attracting new business to Hyatt Centric Hebbal Bengaluru, especially in the competitive hospitality market of Bengaluru?

Hyatt Centric Hebbal Bengaluru is strategically growing its clientele through a multi-pronged approach. By leveraging our prime location near corporate hubs, we’re targeting business travellers with competitive packages and strategic partnerships. Our digital marketing efforts, including SEO, social media, and targeted advertising, position us as a premier choice for luxury stays and exceptional dining experiences. Additionally, we’re actively involved in the local community through event hosting and sponsorships, aligning with our brand identity and attracting a diverse audience. A strong online presence, optimised for user experience and mobile devices, combined with referral programs, is driving customer loyalty and attracting new guests.

Q How do you approach budgeting and forecasting for a hotel of this scale? What tools or methodologies do you find most effective?

Developing accurate budgets and forecasts for a hotel of this scale is a complex process. It requires a deep dive into historical performance data, including occupancy, average daily rates, and revenue per available room. By closely monitoring economic trends, competitive landscapes, and industry projections, we can build a solid foundation for forecasting. Collaborative budgeting, involving all departments, ensures alignment with operational goals and financial targets. Leveraging revenue management software to optimize pricing and inventory further enhances our ability to predict future performance and allocate resources effectively.

Q What high-growth sales strategies have you implemented at Hyatt Centric Hebbal Bengaluru that have yielded significant results?

Hyatt Centric Hebbal Bengaluru drives revenue growth through a highly targeted sales approach. By meticulously segmenting our market and tailoring campaigns to specific customer groups, such as corporate clients, wedding planners, and travel agents, we’ve maximised our sales impact. Our direct sales team is empowered to build strong relationships and deliver personalized solutions to key accounts. Strategic cross-selling

and upselling initiatives, combined with the effective use of CRM, have significantly contributed to increased guest spending and customer loyalty.

Q How do you maintain strong relationships with key accounts and clients? What practices or systems do you have in place to manage and nurture these relationships?

We cultivate enduring partnerships with key accounts through personalised service and deep customer understanding. By recognising and rewarding loyalty with exclusive benefits, we foster long-term relationships. Our commitment to guest satisfaction is evident in our proactive approach to gathering and implementing feedback. Dedicated account managers provide consistent, tailored support to ensure clients feel valued and cared for.

Q How do you approach training and mentoring your sales and marketing team to ensure they are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to achieve organisational goals?

Our sales and marketing teams are equipped with the knowledge and skills to drive success. Through comprehensive training in product knowledge, sales techniques, negotiation, and relationship building, we ensure our team is well-prepared to exceed guest expectations. Proficiency in CRM systems, digital marketing tools, and revenue management software is essential to their role. We invest in leadership development and mentorship to nurture talent and create a high-performing team capable of achieving our organisational objectives.

Q What are your future goals for Hyatt Centric Hebbal Bengaluru in terms of sales and marketing?

Hyatt Centric Hebbal Bengaluru envisions a future marked by growth and exceptional guest experiences. Our strategic focus includes expanding our market reach through targeted campaigns aimed at new geographic regions and demographic segments. We are committed to continuous innovation, elevating our F&B offerings, spa services, and technological integrations to create unforgettable stays. By embracing sustainability and positioning ourselves as leaders in experiential luxury and cultural immersion, we aim to solidify our status as a premier destination in the highly competitive hospitality industry. ■

asmita.mukherjee@saffronsynergies.in

'We ensure all our practices are sustainable'

House of Malaka Spice was established by Praful and Cheeru Chandawarkar in Pune in 1997. The duo travelled extensively in the Southeast Asia region during their seven years stay in Hong Kong and came back to India with a collection of recipes that not only preserves the authenticity of the region, but they also infused their innovative twists to it, to create a menu that has become an aspiration for many. **Praful Chandawarkar**, Founder and Managing Director, Chiranjeev Restaurant and Foods Pvt Ltd (House of Malaka Spice) talks to **Sumit Jha** about his journey from investment banking to hospitality.



Q How did the journey in this industry start for you?

I come from a background of multiple education. While my first education was in hospitality, the initial days of working in the hospitality industry did not meet up with my expectations because I realised that I was not going to make the kind of money potentially working for someone. The reason I did not last more than 5 months in my first job with the ITC group. I started an enterprise at a very young age, and learnt it the hard way that when you don't have capital, your enterprises tend to shut. I shut three enterprises before moving to Hong Kong where I got an opportunity to work in the financial sector. While I was there for seven years, me and my then girlfriend Cheeru, travelled extensively, ate local food and created a bank of regional recipes that we enjoyed. Shortly after coming back to India, I decided to go back into the food and beverage industry. I found a small space in Pune and used my reserves to start an enterprise. I started Malaka Spice.

Hospitality industry attracts passionate people, which I believe I am. All entrepreneurs journey will have its ups and downs. We have had many, but all of them have been educative for us. We are patient, and also plan our succession. I truly believe that restaurant concepts come to fruition in 30 years and die somewhere around the 100th year.

Q Way back then, how was the market acceptance for food that was not Indian?

Because our food was so different, and people were not willing to explore too much, it took us about two to three years to establish ourselves. We did end up spending out of our reserves during that time. To our advantage was the proximity of Pune to Mumbai – thanks to the then newly built expressway, and the international exposure that well-travelled people

from Mumbai had. Plus, the IT industry in Pune had started to boom, and the city was becoming more cosmopolitan. I knew that business would be successful, and things did turn in our favour. Today, we have been around for 27 years.

Our deep knowledge of financials helped us a lot to survive and grow even in very lean periods. The nuances of understanding profit and loss, and cash flows and balance sheets and understanding how investments and savings are done, is not there in chef driven places.

Q How has the business grown for you and what are the future plans?

We have been profitable from the year 2000. We now have four Malaka Spice restaurants and three outlets of One China. Before Covid we had eight Malaka Spice restaurants. After covid we learnt a lot and started building cloud kitchens which have seatings. Those are the One China hybrid models, which are recession proof and work in small areas and small towns, and that is where the growth is going to come from. I feel One China is going to be 100 outlets in five years, whereas Malaka Spice is going to be restricted to 10.

Q How has the franchising route worked for you?

With Malaka Spice, we have gone the franchise route and have failed in it. We have had many issues in franchising. If the laws in India, had been as stringent and quick as in the US, we would have been more successful. Franchisees in India need to build patience. They should do what they are supposed to do – provide the space and handle the finance. We have learnt that the hard way.

In One China, the franchise route is working beautifully. They are smaller units and don't need intense capital expenditure. They are quick to duplicate and the Indian palate loves Chinese

food. And they are also cloud kitchens. With an investment of about rupees 20 lakhs, the return is in the range of a lakh or a lakh and a half every month, net of taxes.

Q What is your new management contract business?

We have a management operations business that will work under the banner of the House of Malaka. Because we promote the Artha-shastra as a thought process, we are getting contracts to run other people's restaurants and resorts. We have chosen a resort in Mulshi (on the outskirts of Pune) because there were synergies in the new promoter of that resort. He thinks like us. This is our first management contract project. We will operate that business as per our philosophies and make sure that it becomes profitable. We are not making the same mistakes that we made with other franchisees.

Q What is competition for you?

We are well aware of our competition. We study them and when we can learn something from them, we learn. We always collaborate. Many restaurateurs come to Malaka Spice and they have access to all our knowledge – to survive, to do better, to be part of our Gurukul. We help them where we can. For us competition is healthy. We look at other restaurants as collaborators and not as competition. There are many good things to learn from competition or collaborations, so more the better. ■

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Fundamental Principles of Memorable Experience

By Prem Anand, The LONDON BUTLER ACADEMY® Switzerland

Throughout our lives, we do random things and encounter things and people. We can remember some memories stay with us for a long time and others for a lifetime.

How does this happen?

Why do we choose to retain some memories?

If we understand how we choose what to keep and relive many times, it is easier to be in a position to know how to create.

Fundamental Principles of Memorable Experience in Hospitality

In this competitive hospitality market, creating memorable experiences is crucial for success. This involves not just excellent service but crafting lasting moments.

Key principles include:

Personalization: Personalization is critical, from greeting guests by name to tailoring services.

Consistency Maintaining high standards across all touchpoints ensures guests know what to expect, from room cleanliness to staff courtesy.

Attention to Detail: Attention to unspoken needs is essential.

Emotional Connection: Genuine warmth and empathy from staff foster loyalty and special memories.

Unique Offerings: Set establishments apart and provide guests with memorable stories.

Seamless Experience: Efficient processes, clear communication, and responsive service

Surprise and Delight: Unexpected gestures

Staff Empowerment: Provide training, resources, and a supportive environment.

Sensory Engagement: Engaging multiple senses can anchor memories more deeply.

For your businesses, the challenge is to have intelligent people

Who can sense, relate, feel, think quickly and act on it?

One approach focuses on the 'experienced being' or 'what' that is



"I am deeply passionate about human behaviour and its impact on service excellence.

I bring many years of successful luxury service experience from the United Kingdom.

I empower businesses, leaders, and teams to master client engagement, influence, and create experiences which make their clients become their loyal ambassadors.

I am Prem Anand, the founder of The London Butler Academy in Switzerland, which helps businesses in India provide Swiss Standards.

experienced in the individual's environment, such as events, activities, occurrences, things, etc.

I have named this approach the environment-centred approach.

Experiencing the northern lights, visiting the museum, getting a ticket to the band the client enjoys, or watching a game of Wimbledon.

The second approach is focused more on the 'experiencer' and the effects that they experience. Hence, I have called this approach the effect-centred approach.

Sky diving, snorkelling, taking the client to catch the fish that will be cooked for their dinner, or the event organiser playing the original wedding song during the 25th wedding anniversary celebrations.

The third approach, the encounter-centred approach, is focused on the characteristics of the individual's encounter and environment.

Meeting the King at Buckingham Palace or encountering a humpback whale while swimming.

Let us have a closer look at what happens.

Memorable experiences can significantly impact our emotions, memory, and behaviour, making a lasting impression.

Cognitive Impact

- **Formation of Vivid Memories:** Memorable experiences are encoded in the brain as vivid, detailed memories. Due to their emotional content, these memories are more likely to be recalled than ordinary experiences.
- This recall often reactivates the positive emotions associated with the experience, reinforcing its impact.
- **Positive Associations:** The individual who receives such experience forms positive associations with the brand or service.
- These associations are not just about the specific details of the service but also about how the experience made them feel. This is crucial for brands seeking long-term loyalty and advocacy.

Emotional Well-being

- **Enhanced Well-being:** Positive experiences contribute to an individual's well-being. Memorable experiences can provide a sense of escape, relaxation, and happiness, which are beneficial for mental health.
- **Sense of Appreciation and Belonging:** When the service is personalised, individuals often feel a deep understanding of being valued and appreciated.
- This can lead to a feeling of belonging or being part of something exclusive, which is particularly significant in luxury settings. ■





‘Our target is to sign at least 25 properties by the year 2025’

Atmosphere Core, a hospitality company known for its resorts in the Maldives, is on an ambitious expansion plan in India. The company aims to open 25 hotels by 2025. In an exclusive interview with **Asmita Mukherjee, Souvagya Mohapatra**, Managing Director of Atmosphere Core India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, & Bhutan; discusses the factors driving the expansion, how Atmosphere Core will ensure brand consistency across a larger portfolio, the key locations for these new properties, and the plans to address its manpower requirements.



Q Atmosphere Core aims to expand to 25 hotels in India by 2025. What factors are driving this ambitious expansion plan? How will Atmosphere Core ensure brand consistency across a larger portfolio?

Atmosphere Core has made significant strides since its inception in 2013, focusing on establishing a strong presence in the hospitality sector, particularly in the Maldives. Venturing into India and Southeast Asia is a natural progression given the brand's success and expertise.

Our approach to selecting hotels based on popularity as a tourism destination, air connectivity, and the potential to attract high-end travellers is strategic. These factors are indeed crucial for ensuring the success of luxury resorts and hotels.

In India, especially, where tourism is growing rapidly, choosing destinations with established popularity among travellers and good air connectivity can provide a strong foundation for our expansion efforts. High-end travellers often seek exclusive and unique experiences, which aligns well with our brand's ethos of delivering world-class service.

Maintaining our strong values and vision will be essential as we expand into new markets. It will help in not only establishing our brand but also in differentiating it from competitors in these regions.

Q What are the key locations in India where these new properties will be launched?

We have so far signed 12 properties in India in management contract module. Our target is to sign at least 25 properties by the year 2025.

The properties in the destinations that we have already signed are Kolkata, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Coorg, Kannur, Goa, Bhubaneswar, Darjeeling Hills and Jaipur.

We are going to launch three properties in this year i.e. 2024. Our flagship property Ozen Mansion Kolkata with 235 rooms, a heritage property called Sadar Manzil Heritage By Atmosphere Bhopal and a luxury retreat in 40 acres coffee plantation called Stillwood Retreat A Signature Atmosphere Coorg are set to open during quarter 4 2024.

Q What strategic benefits do you anticipate from this rapid expansion?

Atmosphere Core is leveraging its specialization in resort management within the luxury brand portfolio space as a key differentiator in the hospitality industry. Their expertise in managing luxury resorts allows them to deliver exceptional guest experiences and operational excellence, crucial for attracting high-end travellers. A pivotal strength is their ability to build strong relationships with owners and investors, ensuring trust and partnership that secure management contracts and portfolio expansion. Investors recognize the value proposition offered by Atmosphere Core, receiving a competitive return on investment while maintaining high standards of service and profitability. Focusing on regions like India and Southeast Asia represents a strategic move to tap into growing tourism markets with significant potential for luxury hospitality growth. By choosing destinations with tourism appeal, good connectivity, and high-end traveller potential, Atmosphere Core ensures

sustainable development. Their commitment to delivering value and ensuring the right ROI for investors sets them apart in a competitive market, building on their strong brand reputation from the Maldives and extending it into new markets. This strategic emphasis positions Atmosphere Core as a compelling partner for investors and owners looking to capitalize on the growing demand for luxury hospitality in India and Southeast Asia.

Q How is Atmosphere Core tailoring its offerings to suit the unique characteristics of different markets while maintaining its core principles of luxury and service excellence, specifically in India with a focus on specialty dining and banquet facilities?

Atmosphere Core is tailoring its offerings to suit the unique characteristics of different markets while maintaining its core principles of luxury and service excellence. Here's a breakdown of our approach in India and the emphasis on specialty dining and banquet facilities:

All-Inclusive Concept Adaptation: In the Maldives, the all-inclusive concept has been successful, covering transfers, meals, beverages, and taxes. This approach simplifies the guest experience and enhances value. Extending the all-inclusive concept to isolated destinations in India acknowledges the importance of providing comprehensive packages that cater to guest needs without hassle.

Specialty Restaurants and Dining Experience: Recognizing the diverse taste preferences in India, emphasizing specialty restaurants offering various



cuisines is strategic. This approach caters to guests' international palate expectations. Incorporating live food preparation and service demonstrations in the All-Day Dining outlet adds a dynamic and interactive element to the dining experience, enhancing guest engagement and satisfaction.

Banquet Facilities and Market Segments: Acknowledging the significance of weddings and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) in India, integrating robust banquet facilities becomes crucial. These facilities cater to large gatherings and events, offering tailored services and spaces that meet specific event requirements.

Strategic Considerations: Enhancing the overall guest experience through culinary excellence, interactive dining experiences, and comprehensive event facilities aligns with our commitment to delivering exceptional service. By focusing on specialty dining and banquet capabilities, Atmosphere Core distinguishes itself in the competitive Indian hospitality landscape, appealing to both leisure and business travellers.

By integrating these elements into our operational strategy, Atmosphere Core not only meets but exceeds guest expectations, setting a high standard in luxury resort management in new and diverse markets.

Q Given the significant expansion, how will Atmosphere Core address its manpower requirements, considering the severe talent crunch in the industry?

Atmosphere Core places a strong emphasis on addressing the challenges of manpower requirements in the hospitality industry through strategic recruitment, training, and retention practices. Prioritizing the recruitment of individuals well-suited for specific roles ensures a solid foundation for operational success and guest satisfaction, while partnerships with Indian Hotel Management institutes help source well-educated and trained talent. Emphasizing skill-based hiring ensures that each team member possesses the necessary competencies to excel. Our dedicated training department indicates a commitment to continuously enhancing the skills and knowledge of our workforce, providing thorough and ongoing training programs to equip employees with both technical and soft skills essential for delivering exceptional service. Organizing regular engagement activities fosters a positive work environment and strengthens team cohesion, while offering structured career development plans and pathways helps employees envision



long-term growth within the organization. A transparent and fair appraisal process recognizes and rewards employee performance, boosting morale and retention. By actively sourcing talent from reputable institutions and investing in training, Atmosphere Core mitigates the impact of industry-wide manpower shortages. Our focus on employee engagement, career development, and fair appraisal processes helps retain skilled and motivated employees, reducing turnover rates. By consistently implementing these strategies, Atmosphere Core not only addresses current challenges but also sets a strong foundation for sustained growth and excellence in the hospitality sector.

Q The Indian hospitality market is witnessing significant growth. How will Atmosphere Core differentiate itself from the competition?

Atmosphere Core is strategically expanding its presence to cater to the growing demand for high-quality hospitality experiences.

The company plans to increase its portfolio from 12 signed properties to 25 by 2025, focusing on destinations aligned with its ethos and values. This ensures consistency in service and guest experience across all locations.

At Atmosphere Core, the "Joy of Giving" philosophy translates into exceptional service delivery. By fostering a culture where service is a joy, the company aims to not only enhance guest experiences but also boost employee morale.

Through strategic expansion, a focus on guest satisfaction, and a commitment to its core values, Atmosphere Core is well-positioned to become a major player in the Indian and Southeast Asian hospitality markets.

Q How will Atmosphere Core ensure they cater to the evolving demands of Indian travellers?

Atmosphere Core is strategically aligning its offerings to cater to the evolving dynamics of the Indian hospitality market, particularly focusing on domestic tourism, weddings, and corporate travel segments. Here's a detailed look at our strategies and capabilities:

Domestic Tourism Focus: Recognizing the pivotal role of domestic tourism in driving demand within the Indian hospitality industry underscores your readiness to meet the needs of local travellers. Adapting our service style and offerings to cater specifically to the preferences and expectations of domestic travellers ensures relevance and enhances guest satisfaction.

Wedding Segment: Acknowledging the wedding segment as a game changer in India highlights our preparedness to capitalize on this lucrative market. Offering specialized services and experiences tailored for high-end weddings demonstrates our commitment to delivering memorable events and enhancing our brand's appeal in this segment.

MICE and Corporate Travel: Equipping our properties with the latest trends and technologies necessary for MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) and corporate travellers showcases our capability to meet the specific needs of business travellers. Providing state-of-the-art facilities and amenities ensures that our properties are well-positioned to attract and accommodate corporate events and meetings effectively.

Strategic Advantages: Aligning our service style and offerings with the unique demands of each segment—domestic tourism, weddings, and corporate travel—positions

Atmosphere Core as a versatile player in the market. Prioritizing guest satisfaction through tailored services and memorable experiences strengthens customer loyalty and enhances our reputation.

By leveraging these strategic approaches and focusing on service excellence across all segments, Atmosphere Core is well-positioned to capitalize on the growing opportunities within the Indian hospitality industry.

Q How is Atmosphere Core strategically leveraging its Sales & Marketing operations to expand its global presence and establish a strong foothold in the Indian market?

Atmosphere Core is strategically leveraging its Sales & Marketing operations to expand its global presence and establish a strong foothold in the Indian market. Here's a detailed overview of our strategies and initiatives:

Global Sales & Marketing Presence: With several Sales Offices and PR Offices worldwide, Atmosphere Core demonstrates a robust global footprint. Having a dedicated team managing Sales & Marketing activities ensures effective market penetration and brand representation across different regions. Emphasizing the adoption of latest trends and technologies in Sales & Marketing highlights our readiness to evolve with industry advancements, enhancing competitive edge.

Revenue Management Strategy: Our Revenue distribution team's expertise in targeting the right clientele, considering peak and off seasons, optimizes revenue generation and occupancy rates. Tailoring marketing strategies to different segments like Tour

Operators, Wedding Planners, MICE agents, and corporate entities demonstrates a strategic approach to diversify revenue streams.

Operations in India: Engaging with domestic and international Tour Operators, Wedding Planners, MICE agents, as well as Government and PSUs for business partnerships and brand building showcases proactive market engagement. Recognizing the importance of online visibility, partnerships with OTAs, presence in GDS, and a robust website booking engine setup are essential for expanding reach and capturing online bookings.

By focusing on these strategic initiatives and leveraging your global network and expertise, Atmosphere Core is well-positioned to capitalize on opportunities in the dynamic Indian hospitality market while maintaining a strong international presence.

Q How does Atmosphere Core ensure the maintenance of transparent and trust-based relationships with property owners while also delivering exceptional guest experiences and ensuring sustainable ROI?

Atmosphere Core places a strong emphasis on maintaining transparent and trust-based relationships with property owners while delivering exceptional guest experiences and ensuring sustainable ROI. Here's a detailed look at our business strategy and focus areas:

Business Strategy: Operating and marketing properties with an emphasis on excellence ensures operational efficiency and enhances guest satisfaction. Building and nurturing transparent relationships with property owners fosters trust and collaboration, crucial for long-term partnerships. Upholding property

standards and meeting expected ROIs consistently reflects your commitment to maximizing property value and profitability for owners.

Sales and Marketing Collaboration: Collaborating effectively with Sales and Marketing teams ensures targeted efforts to attract the right clientele, including direct guests and corporate accounts. Enhancing brand visibility through strategic marketing initiatives, online presence, and partnerships with OTAs and GDS enhances property recognition and guest acquisition.

Guest Experience Focus: Prioritizing guest satisfaction through personalized experiences and high service standards strengthens brand loyalty and drives positive reviews and referrals. Emphasizing ongoing training and development ensures staff readiness to deliver exceptional service, further enhancing guest satisfaction levels.

Owner Satisfaction and ROI: Monitoring and optimizing key performance indicators (KPIs) such as occupancy rates, revenue per available room (RevPAR), and guest satisfaction scores ensures alignment with owner expectations. Developing and executing comprehensive sales, marketing, and operational plans tailored to each property's unique market position and potential maximizes ROI potential.

By continuing to prioritize transparent relationships with owners, exceptional guest experiences, and strategic sales and marketing efforts, Atmosphere Core is well-positioned to achieve its growth targets while delivering on commitments to both owners and guests. ■

asmita.mukherjee@saffronsynergies.in





‘Our solutions will cater to both luxury hotels and 3-star and 4-star establishments’

Acquaviva, a renowned name in the hospitality sector, has built its vision on redefining luxury and longevity. With an impressive portfolio of over 300 esteemed clients, the company is dedicated to delivering products that enhance the guest experience while ensuring durability. The company plans to achieve the ambitious target of 12,000 five-star hotel rooms across India by 2024. **Asmita Mukherjee** spoke with **Ramesh Baliga, Group CEO, Acquaviva** to understand their plans for the future.

Q How do you plan to achieve the target of 12,000 five-star hotel rooms across the Indian market by 2024?

We plan to achieve our goal of having 12,000 five-star hotel rooms across India by 2024 through a dedicated team of professionals. They will focus on providing services and support to renovate existing units without disrupting their operation. Our strong relationships with current clients are key, as they provide crucial technical support and help us complete projects on time.

We will be collaborating with architects, project consultants, plumbing experts, and hotel management teams to prepare for future projects across the country. Our solutions will cater not only to luxury hotels but also to 3-star and 4-star establishments.

Q What new products are you introducing to cater to both the affordable and luxury segments in the hospitality industry?

We're expanding our product range to meet the increasing demands of India's hospitality industry, which is experiencing a surge in tourism and hotel renovations. Our new products will cater to both affordable and luxury hotel segments. For instance, we're introducing rain showers that save water, sensors for hotel lobbies, luxurious whirlpool tubs for relaxation, steam units for a spa-like experience, and a variety of bathtubs in different sizes to suit various preferences.

Our range also includes high-quality bath accessories and long-lasting bidet sprays. These products are designed not only to enhance guest experiences but also to support sustainable practices in hotel operations. By collaborating with architects, project consultants, and hotel management teams, we ensure that our products meet the evolving needs of the market. Our goal is to provide solutions that contribute to the comfort, efficiency, and modernization of hotels across the country.

Q With clients like Marriott, Hilton, and Taj, how does Acquaviva ensure it meets the high standards expected by these top-tier hospitality brands?

We are fortunate to work with prestigious brands like Marriott, Hilton, and Taj in the hospitality industry. We understand their needs for best-quality products and efficient service. We always ensure we meet their expectations without compromise. We customise our bathroom products to fit their exact requirements, ensuring they receive the best possible solutions at decent prices. Our commitment extends beyond just delivering products; we provide dedicated support whenever they need

us. This includes maintaining the quality they expect and responding promptly to any requests or issues. By closely collaborating with these renowned hotel chains, we ensure our offerings align perfectly with their expectations, contributing to their overall guest satisfaction and operational excellence.

Q Acquaviva aims to open 500 showrooms this year and expand its channel partners to 200+. What strategies are being employed to achieve this rapid expansion?

We have set ambitious goals for expanding this year. We're opening six of our own showrooms across India to showcase our products and support our retail expansion. Our plan is to increase our network of partners to over 500 across all areas of our business in the next nine months.

To meet different customer needs, we're introducing new products for different markets: AQUA plus for affordable options, ACQUA VIVA for luxury and wellness products, and focusing on sanitaryware designs that combine luxury with practicality. Our main focus is to provide customers with everything they need in one place, making their shopping experience convenient and satisfying.

These efforts are aimed at growing our presence in showrooms and strengthening our partnerships, ensuring Acquaviva becomes a major player in the market while meeting the diverse needs of our expanding customer base.

Q Can you elaborate on your investment and expansion plans?

We're ramping up our investment and expansion efforts across several fronts. Over the next two years, we're increasing our production capacity and enhancing our sales team. We're also planning to establish our own showrooms in major cities, which will benefit our dealers and customers.

Currently, we have three manufacturing units, and we're in the process of completing infrastructure for two additional factories. This expansion will give us a total production space of about 500,000 square feet. We're investing in state-of-the-art automated machinery to improve efficiency and quality.

These investments will enable us to meet growing demand, improve our product range, and strengthen our presence in the market. By expanding both our production capabilities and sales infrastructure, we aim to provide better service and support to our customers while ensuring sustained growth for Acquaviva. ■

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Evolving Role of a Housekeeper

The role of a housekeeper has significantly evolved in the recent years. Various factors, including changing customer expectations, focus on health and safety, and technological advancements have been at the forefront of this evolution. **Hospitality Biz** talks to industry experts to present a round up of the changing scenario.



Housekeeping department has been the backbone of and an essential pillar for the operational success of a hotel. Over the years the role of a housekeeper has evolved and today their responsibilities do not only end at keeping the rooms, lobbies and other common areas clean, but also includes specialised tasks like maintaining high standards of sanitization in the hotel environment, specially in light of increased health concerns. Advanced cleaning equipment, eco-friendly products and measures are being used to ensure sustainability takes the centerstage.

Technological advancements and its integration have transformed the role of housekeepers. The use of automated systems for scheduling, inventory management, and even cleaning has become more common. The housekeepers now need to be tech savvy, capable of operating sophisticated cleaning machinery and digital management systems. This shift not only enhances efficiency but also allows housekeepers to provide more personalised services by tracking guest preferences and needs.

“To cater to today’s discerning guest, where in the luxury sector it is expected that the team curate an experience every time, the scene is evolving rapidly. Gone are the days when deep cleaning and sanitisation were the only aspects of housekeeping. Today, these factors are given, taking this further the housekeepers of today are working with and managing allergens, air quality etc. Personalising and customising services like tailored cleaning plans, specialised cleaning services. Raising the bar with IHCL’s Paathya initiatives, our housekeeping teams

work with green cleaning products, effective waste management practices including upcycling and going energy efficient,” informed Sarita Fernandes, Director of Housekeeping – IHCL, Goa.

“The housekeeping sector has recently seen significant evolution driven by technological advances, consumer preferences, and sustainability. Advanced technology integration, such as robotic vacuums and AI-powered systems, enhances efficiency and reduces manual labor. Data-driven approaches improve operational efficiency, inventory management, and service quality through real-time monitoring and customer feedback. The adoption of mobile apps and cloud-based systems streamlines task management and communication,” said Vaneeta Arora, Corporate Director, Housekeeping, The Park, New Delhi.

“Sustainability practices are also on the rise, with a shift toward eco-friendly, non-toxic cleaning solutions and a heightened focus on health and hygiene, especially post-pandemic. Efforts to reduce waste include using reusable cleaning materials and recycling. Additionally, air purifiers and regular HVAC maintenance are employed to ensure better indoor air quality. These trends highlight a move towards greater efficiency, personalisation, and eco-friendliness in response to technological advancements and evolving consumer expectations,” added Vaneeta.

Housekeeping team members are increasingly interacting with customers, and often serve as the face of the establishment, providing information and assistance, thus requiring good communication skills. Because

of the reliable nature of their job, they are often given additional administrative responsibilities like inventory management.

“From data driven operations like performance analytics to predictive maintenance and inventory management, things are redefining the role of housekeeping in the hospitality industry luxury segment. Backed by data, KPIs could be measured in terms of cleaning efficiency, guest satisfaction and cost effectiveness of operations. Using data to predict schedule maintenance proactively will deter equipment failure. These data-based solutions will optimise inventory levels of supplies, amenities and manpower,” added Sarita.

“The future of the housekeeping industry is looking very different from its past. The industry is changing and evolving to meet the needs of an innovative generation of customers. Housekeeping has conventionally been seen as a low-skilled, low-wage job. However, this is no longer the case as the industry is now cherishing employees with higher levels of education and training. Trend have change where the companies try to retain their employees and do the best to trained them rather than hiring from other companies, they are growing team within the company,” said Jayashree Nagaraj, Founder President and Chairperson, Professional Housekeepers Association.

“The future of housekeeping operations will be driven by technological advancements, evolving consumer expectations, and a stronger focus on sustainability and efficiency. Key changes will include increased automation, with sophisticated robotic systems taking

over tasks like vacuuming, mopping, and dusting. Automated scheduling will optimize workflows and resource allocation. Advanced data analytics and AI will predict equipment failures and personalize cleaning services based on client preferences and historical data. Smart technology will integrate Internet of Things (IoT) devices for real-time monitoring and management, and voice-activated assistants will enable hands-free control of housekeeping tasks. Sustainability efforts will focus on zero-waste initiatives, biodegradable products, and green certifications. Enhanced health and hygiene standards will be achieved through advanced

also provides housekeepers with opportunities for career growth and advancement.

“Evolving significantly, the role of an executive housekeeper has transformed from a primarily operational position to one that demands strategic thinking and business acumen. Today’s housekeepers are expected to contribute to the overall hotel strategy, operational efficiency and revenue generation. Their primary roles are developing and managing department budgets, control costs and measure return on investments on housekeeping initiatives. Hence it would be right to say that today’s housekeeper has a chair on the board

staffing, inventory management, and scheduling to enhance operational efficiency. Leadership and team management have become more prominent, with responsibilities including team development, training programs, and fostering a positive work environment,” said Vaneeta.

“Collaboration with other departments, such as front desk, maintenance, and food and beverage, is essential to ensure seamless operations and guest satisfaction. Executive housekeepers are also key players in promoting sustainable practices, achieving environmental certifications, and managing energy consumption. They are increasingly included



Sarita Fernandes
Director, Housekeeping
IHCL, Goa

disinfection technologies like UV-C light and improved air quality management,” informed Vaneeta.

“Future housekeeping will offer bespoke cleaning solutions tailored to individual needs, utilizing virtual reality (VR) for immersive staff training. Integration with smart home systems will automate and synchronize cleaning tasks, while remote monitoring via smartphone apps will become commonplace. Robust health and safety measures will ensure staff wellbeing, with better protective equipment and ergonomic tools. There will also be a focus on employee satisfaction through recognition programs and career development opportunities. Enhanced protocols for data protection and privacy will be crucial to safeguard sensitive customer information. These changes will promote greater efficiency, personalisation, and environmental responsibility in the housekeeping sector,” added Vaneeta.

With these expanded roles, there is a growing need for professional development and training in the housekeeping field. Many organisations are investing in training programs to equip housekeepers with skills in advanced cleaning techniques, technology usage, and customer service. This professionalisation of the role not only enhances the quality of service but



Vaneeta Arora
Corporate Director, Housekeeping,
The Park, New Delhi.

and is no longer just managing a department but is becoming a strategic business partner,” added Sarita.

“With increased number of hotels of the same brand in a city opening up, the trend of having a multi property executive housekeeper is also catching up. Executive housekeeper can be cluster executive housekeeper, undertaking a corporate role. The future role for an executive housekeeper will be that of a Director of Housekeeping. It has taken years for the hospitality industry to understand that a housekeeping professional can be elevated to the position of Director of Rooms and General Manager,” said Jayashree.

“The role of an Executive Housekeeper has evolved significantly with the expansion of the hotel industry. They are now integral to strategic planning, developing cleaning protocols, sustainability initiatives, and cost management strategies. Their responsibilities extend to budgeting and financial planning, overseeing expenses related to housekeeping operations, supplies, and staff. With the rise of smart technologies and automation, Executive Housekeepers oversee the implementation and management of these systems, ensuring alignment with the hotel’s needs. They leverage data analytics for informed decision-making in



Jayashree Nagaraj
Founder President and
Chairperson, Professional
Housekeepers Association

in senior management meetings and decision-making processes, contributing to corporate-level strategies and decisions. The role now demands advanced training and professional development to stay abreast of industry trends and managerial skills. Recognised as crucial to hotel success, Executive Housekeepers are finding greater professional recognition and career advancement opportunities, reflecting their expanded strategic and managerial responsibilities,” added Vaneeta.

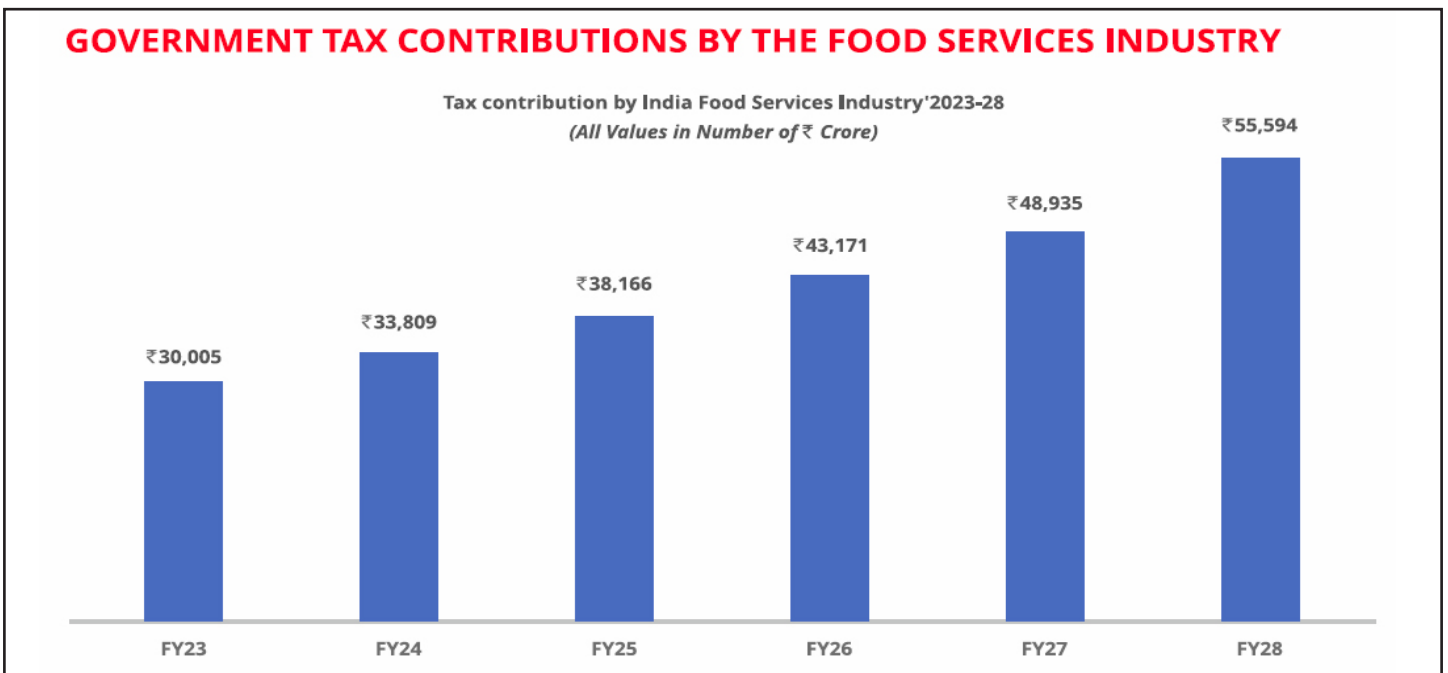
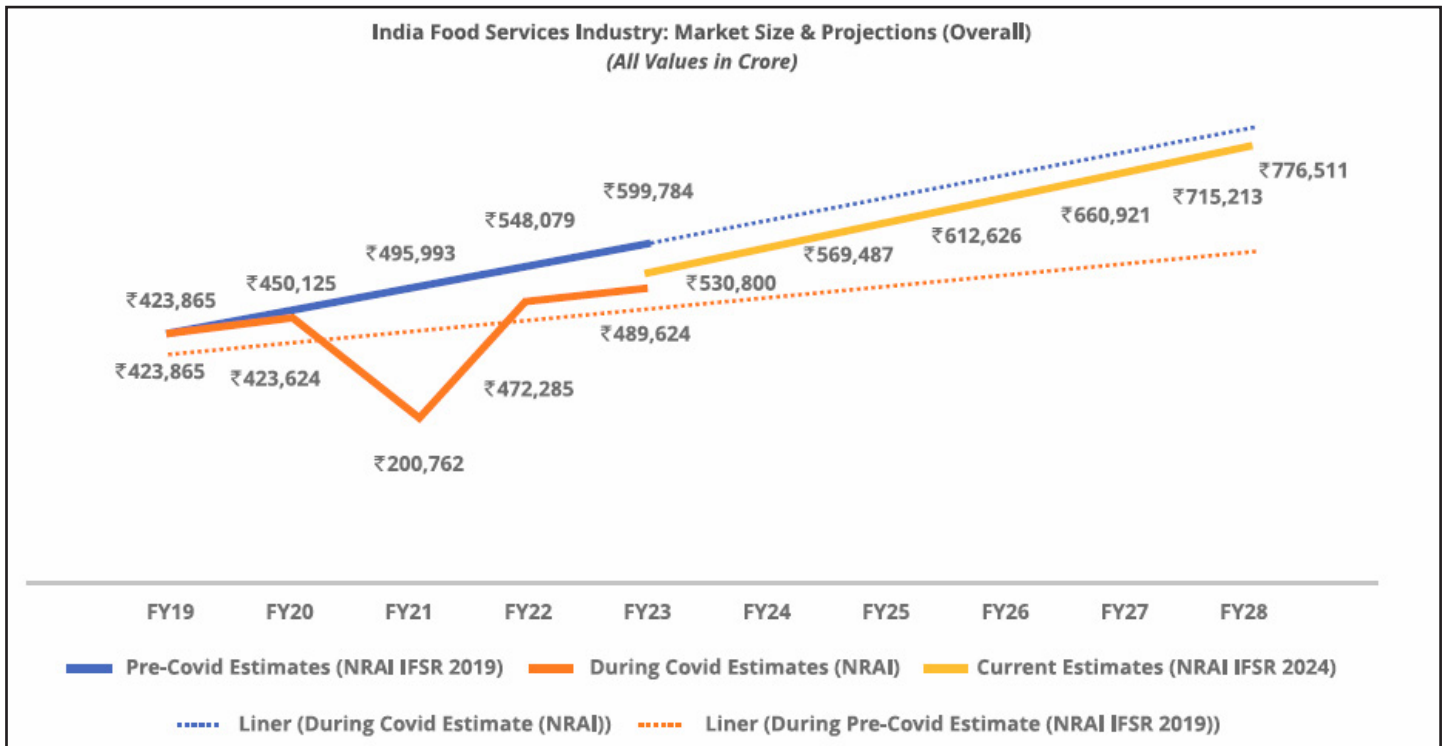
“The future housekeeping looks very bright. There are many new trends emerging that will help to make the job of a housekeeper easier, driving increased efficiencies. Technology will continue to help us deliver better. Exciting new trends are being adapted by hotels for better outcomes,” concluded Jayashree.

The role of housekeepers has evolved from basic cleaning to a multifaceted position requiring a range of skills, including technological proficiency, specialised cleaning knowledge, and customer service. As the industry continues to grow and change, housekeepers will remain vital, adapting to new challenges and expectations. Their role is now recognised as not just essential but also as a professional career path with opportunities for development and advancement. ■

Indian food services industry projected to grow to INR 7,76,511 crore by FY28 : NRAI IFSR Report

Hbi Staff | Hyderabad

According to the National Restaurant Association of India's 'India Food Services Report 2024 (NRAI IFSR 2024)', the Indian food services industry is estimated to be valued at INR 5,69,487 crores as of FY24. It is projected to grow to INR 7,76,511 crores by FY28, achieving a CAGR of 8.1% overall, with the organised segment expected to grow at a CAGR of 13.2%. Hospitality Biz reports ■

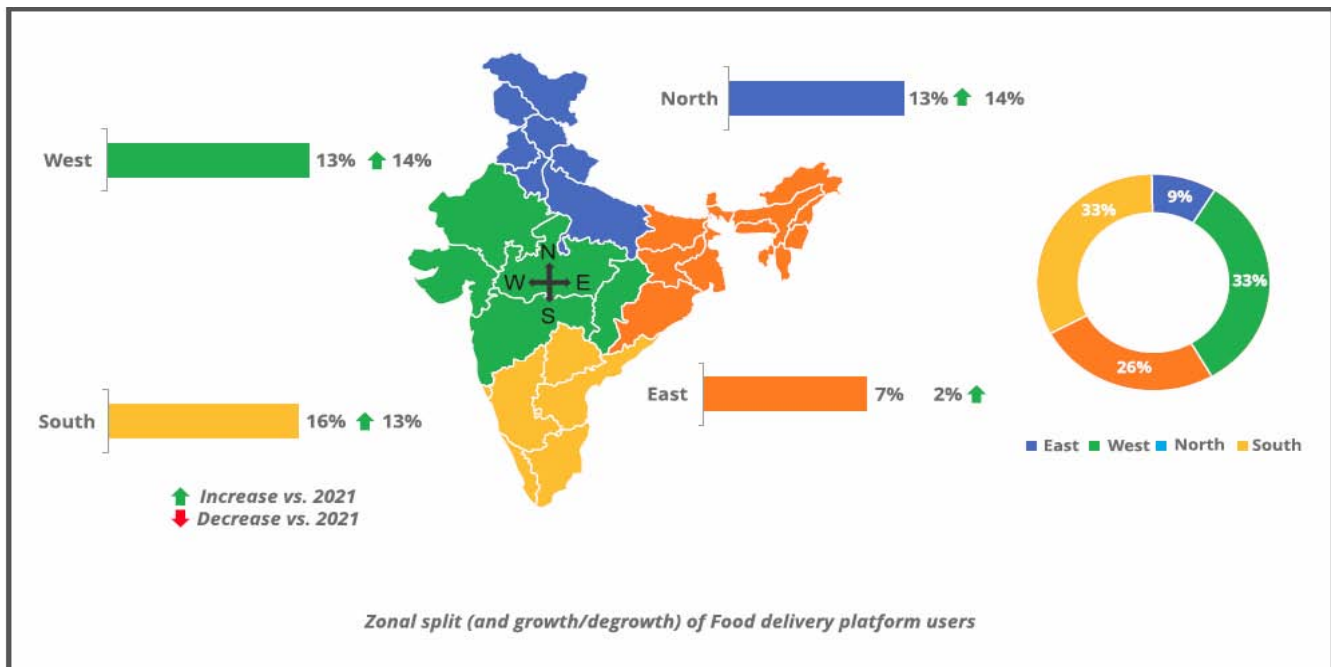


The following growth rates are estimated for various formats:

Cafes	Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs)	Desserts, Ice cream & Bakeries	Casual Dining Restaurants (CDRs)	Fine Dining Restaurants (FDRs)	Pubs, Bars & Lounges	Cloud Kitchens
15-20%	15-20%	15-20%	5-10%	10-15%	0-5%	30-40%

The table below summarizes the current GST regime for restaurant Industry in India:

No.	Type of restaurants	Current GST Rates
1	Standalone restaurants, including takeaway	5% without ITC
2	Standalone outdoor catering Services or Food delivery Services	5% without ITC
3	Food supplied or catering Services by India Railways/IRCTC	5% without ITC
4	Restaurants within hotels (Where room tariff is less than Rs 7,500)	5% without ITC
5	Normal/composite outdoor catering within hotels (Where room tariff is less than Rs 7,500)	5% without ITC
6	Restaurants within hotels (Where room tariff is more than or equal to Rs 7,500)	18% with ITC
7	Normal/composite outdoor catering within hotels (Where room tariff is more than or equal to Rs 7,500)	18% with ITC



'State-to-state excise policies hinder optimal expansion for independent craft spirits manufacturers in India'



In 1969, Dani Chand opened a modest liquor shop in Kohima, Nagaland. This humble beginning evolved into Radiant Manufacturers Pvt. Ltd. in 2001, a company now redefining the alcobev industry in the North East with its regional in-house brands such as Lost Treasure Coffee Rum, Castle Hill Dark Knight Small Batch Whiskey, Vinho Porto Wines, and White Magic Tango Gin & Orange. Today, it stands as a symbol of entrepreneurial spirit and regional pride. Radiant Manufacturers excels in developing multiple distilled filtered wheat mash spirits for vodka, botanicals-infused spirits for gin, and mixed grain mash spirits of corn, rice, and malt for whiskies. **Asmita Mukherjee** spoke with **Vicky Chand, Director and CEO, Radiant Manufacturers** to learn more about their business plans.

Q Can you share the story of how Radiant Manufacturers started from a modest liquor retail shop in Kohima to becoming a leading alcobev pioneer in the North East of India?

In 1969, in Kohima, my father and our Founder and Chairman Mr Dani Chand had opened a modest liquor retail shop. Back then, its origins were unassuming and very few took notice. However, destiny had bigger plans for this shop, setting us on a trajectory that would redefine the alcobev industry in the North East. Today, Radiant Manufacturers stands as a testament to entrepreneurial spirit and regional pride in the North East. As a result, in 2001, 'Radiant Manufacturers Pvt. Ltd.' was founded in KhatKhati, Karbi Anglong, Assam, focusing on producing regional in-house brands and products at the bottling plant. Two decades later, the Radiant brand portfolio has grown, anchored by a commitment to consistent blends and quality. We launched the Distillery division, our first Agro-based ENA plant in 2012, which was also the first grain based distillery of Northeast India.

Q What were the key strategies and milestones that led to Radiant Manufacturers' rapid expansion across Assam, West Bengal, Bhutan, and Nepal? Are you planning to expand into new geo locations?

Our growth strategy revolves around two key pillars. Remaining relevant in the dynamic landscape is the first as we understand the importance of staying attuned to industry trends and consumer preferences, to ensure our offerings continue to meet dynamic markets.

Simultaneously, we are committed to strengthening our moat by continuously innovating and pursuing research.

We most certainly aim to get into Rajasthan, Goa and Maharashtra along with Odisha and other corporation markets as they are safe bets. Ideally, a one nation one tax model would have allowed every independent craft spirits manufacturer to exponentially expand their reach, however, that is not the case with India. Therefore, until Excise is a state-to-state matter with different policies and ever-changing landscapes it is quite difficult for brands like ours to expand optimally.

Q What inspired you to launch your own distillery in 2012, and how has this decision impacted the quality and consistency of your products?

Once we got into manufacturing our liquor then my father Mr. Dani Chand realized that the inconsistencies in the spirits sourced from various distilleries were interfering with the quality of the product. In order to combat this problem he thought of starting his own distillery. The idea was shared with the family and it clicked immediately with me and I decided to turn this dream of my father into a reality. The decision has been very helpful in creating our own line of whiskies, gins and rum which requires consistent grain spirit.

Q Are there any upcoming products or innovations that Radiant Manufacturers is planning to introduce to the market? What are your investment plans for the company?

The Distillery division is on an ambitious expansion plan aimed at increasing the production capacity by 50% and tapping into the rapidly growing Ethanol market. To facilitate this growth, significant efforts have been put in place recently. We have also recently acquired the Consent to establish for an expanded unit, which will include a CO2 unit, a Micro Distillery, in addition to a visitor center, and a maturation facility. At the heart of our expansion efforts lies a focus on the maturation and production of very special grain spirits. We are keen to explore this

niche segment further, leveraging our expertise to craft exceptional spirits with distinctive character and flavor profiles. Additionally, our enhanced capabilities open up opportunities to supply specially crafted small-batch spirits from the distillery level. These spirits can be tailored to meet specific brand applications, catering to a diverse range of clientele. We are capable of developing multiple distilled filtered Wheat Mash Spirits for Vodka, botanicals infused spirits for Gin along with mixed grain mash spirits of Corn/ Rice/ Malt for Whiskies. We are also researching to create a grain mash incorporating elements of Jaggery or Sugarcane juice. Although this endeavor has not yet yielded success, we remain committed to the pursuit of innovation and are determined not to give up. ■

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Courtyard by Marriott Goa, Colva

Encompassing comfort and functionality, the 91-room Courtyard by Marriott Goa Colva invites travelers to relax and savor the charms of a tranquil escape. Guests can unwind in spacious, contemporary rooms, some featuring private balconies with lush panoramic views and indulgent bathtubs. Each room is equipped with high-speed internet access, a flat-screen TV, smart air conditioning, and a variety of modern amenities. This new addition to the Courtyard by Marriott family ensures a perfect blend of relaxation and sophistication, offering an exceptional stay for every traveller—whether they are traveling on business, leisure, or both. At Courtyard by Marriott Goa Colva, dining is a delightful blend of upscale elegance and casual comfort. One can enjoy local delights such as Chicken Cafreal and Goan Fish Curry at Colva Kitchen, the all-day dining restaurant serving International, Indian, and Asian cuisines.

Kinwani House, Rishikesh

Kinwani House boasts six opulent suites offering panoramic views of the serene valley and majestic mountains.

The first floor of Kinwani House features an enchanting conservatory for an indoor evening under the stars or a special evening of cocktails by candlelight. Guests can indulge in a bespoke culinary journey with a chef-curated three and five-course degustation menu offering global and indigenous cuisines, perfect for a romantic evening with the cool breeze from the valleys of Rishikesh. Visitors may unwind in the temperature-controlled swimming pool, where every stroke is accompanied by breathtaking vistas, creating an unforgettable experience of relaxation and rejuvenation. A special mention must be made to the spa at Kinwani House, and high tea served, where the refined décor and personalised service only elevate the experiences.



Kashi Anandam – Signature Collection by Eight Continents in Varanasi

The property features luxurious rooms and suites, all with stunning views of the Ganges, ensuring a unique and memorable stay for all visitors. Kashi Anandam also boasts state-of-the-art meeting and event spaces, making it an ideal location for a variety of gatherings. Meals created at Kashi Anandam are inspired from local, organic ingredients ensure a nourishing and delightful dining experience.

Furthermore, guests have the opportunity to participate in traditional activities like pottery making and vegetable plucking. They can also enjoy outdoor games and wellness amenities such as a spa and yoga center, enriching their stay with authentic and enjoyable experiences.



Signify launches NatureConnect lighting

Signify recently launched oNatureConnect; an industry-first revolutionary product, designed to enhance well-being by bringing the benefits of natural light indoors. Inspired by biophilic design principles, NatureConnect mimics the natural rhythm of sunlight, promoting a healthier circadian rhythm, improved mood, enhanced focus, and better sleep quality. Research indicates that people spend 90% of their overall time indoors, emphasizing the importance of creating healthy indoor environments. NatureConnect addresses this need by utilizing elements of nature in interior spaces to create healthy, engaging, and inspiring environments with a proven biophilic design principle. Recognizing the profound impact of light on our physical and mental well-being, Nature Connect's groundbreaking technology emulates the dynamic variations of sunlight throughout the day, helping to balance the body's circadian rhythm and improve overall health, energy levels, mood, productivity, quality of sleep and overall well-being.



Allied Blenders and Distillers Limited brings its Special Batch Premium Gin Zoya to Maharashtra

Allied Blenders and Distillers Limited has launched Zoya, Special Batch Premium in Mumbai. Following a launch in Gurgaon, this marks Zoya's entry into the Maharashtra market. Zoya is made from 100% grain and natural spirits, with juniper and 12 botanicals to give it a beautiful, fresh and unique finish. This launch underscores ABD's commitment to the premiumization of its portfolio and distribution of brands in the premium segment.

Priced at INR 2200 for a 750ml bottle, Zoya Special Batch Premium Gin will be available across Maharashtra's top hotels, restaurants, and liquor retail stores, offering consumers a taste of its craftsmanship.

thinKitchen Expands Offerings with American Anchor Hocking Barware and Storgeware

thinKitchen announced the launch of Anchor Hocking, an over 100-year-old American brand known for its exceptional glass barware, serve ware and food storage solutions. Discover a selection of Anchor Hocking products at thinKitchen, from the elegant Tiki Cocktail Glass to the classic Soda Dessert Glass as well as Whiskey and Tequila Shot Glasses and more. Experience the Anchor Hocking range online and offline at thinKitchen with prices ranging from INR 499 for individual glasses to INR 14299 for 16-piece storage sets.



Indri Single Malt Indian Whisky Unveils the 'House of the Dragon' Exclusive Edition

Indri Single Malt Indian Whisky, in partnership with Warner Bros. Discovery Global Consumer Products, proudly introduces its latest masterpiece inspired by the Game of Thrones franchise – the 'House of the Dragon' Exclusive Edition. Crafted in homage to the highly anticipated return of the HBO Original Series, House of the Dragon, this exclusive edition stands as a unique partnership, the first of its kind in India's single malt market. The 'House of the Dragon' Exclusive Edition by Indri will be available in select premium outlets in India and exclusively at Delhi Duty-Free with prices ranging between

INR 6000 – 11,500 depending upon the state available in.

ACCOR HOTELS


Manali Gupta, Director of Operations , Raffles Hotels & Resorts Udaipur

With an extensive background in luxury hospitality spanning over 17 years, Manali brings a wealth of experience and expertise to this iconic property.

Manali began her illustrious career as a Management Trainee with The Leela Hotels & Palaces, where she gained comprehensive exposure to various segments

including resorts, hotels, and palaces. Her professional journey has also seen her excel in roles with international brands such as Starwood, Accor, and Hyatt at some of the world's most iconic locations.

Sidney DCunha, Director of Food & Beverage and Culinary, Sofitel Mumbai BKC

Sidney, who joined Sofitel Mumbai BKC in 2022, has since then been instrumental in further developing the hotel's robust culinary offerings. Through a series of unique food festivals, visits by a variety of guest chefs, and an immense interest in progressively bettering the hotel's many restaurants and bars,

Sidney has played an instrumental role in carving a niche for Sofitel Mumbai BKC on Mumbai's innovative restaurant scene. What's more, since his arrival, Sidney and his team have enjoyed numerous accolades for the hotel's restaurants & bars, bestowed by some of the country's finest publications and reputed organizations.

HILTON HOTELS


Ravinder Chahal ,Director of Sales, Hilton Bangalore Embassy Golflinks

In his previous role, Ravinder led a high-performing sales team, developed and aligned sales goals with broader business objectives, and managed daily operations. His hands-on approach and commitment to excellence have been key to achieving targets and coordinating with stakeholders.

He has also been pivotal in

mentoring and training his team, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and customer satisfaction.

In his previous role, Ravinder led a high-performing sales team, developed and aligned sales goals with broader business objectives, and managed daily operations.

HYATT HOTELS


Abhishek Arora , Revenue Manager, Hyatt Regency Chennai

As the Revenue Manager at Hyatt Regency, Chennai, Abhishek will oversee all revenue management operations, develop and implement strategies to maximize revenue and profits, analyse market trends, manage pricing and inventory, and collaborate with various departments to ensure effective revenue management practices.

He will leverage data and technology to inform decision-making and will be accountable for achieving revenue targets and driving growth.

ITC HOTELS


Gaurav Soneja, Cluster General Manager , ITC Royal Bengal & ITC Sonar

His journey with ITC Hotels commenced at Welcomhotel Sheraton New Delhi in 2007. Over the years, he has held senior management positions in Bangalore, Delhi, and Mumbai, where he established himself as a trailblazer for his successors.

As an integral part of the pre-opening team, Gaurav served as the Cluster Hotel Manager

for ITC Royal Bengal & ITC Sonar in Kolkata. In this capacity, he was instrumental in the positioning and launching of the 693-key destination, featuring 14 food and beverage offerings, the Bengal Stateroom—the largest pillar less hall in Eastern India—meeting rooms, a spa, and long-stay serviced residences. His strategic acumen amidst fierce competition elevated the hotel complex to become a leading destination in India.

MARRIOTT HOTELS & RESORTS

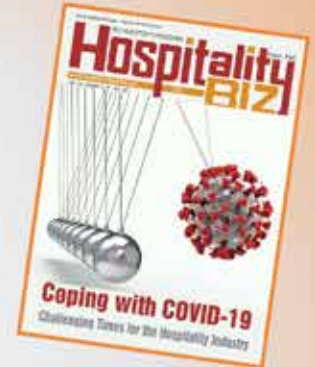

Shaad Ansari, Director of Catering Sales, JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar

In his new role as Director of Catering Sales, he will leverage his deep knowledge of the Mumbai business landscape and his strong connections with the Medical Association to drive the hotel's success to greater heights. His exceptional negotiation skills and strategic vision will undoubtedly enhance the catering

sales operations and elevate the overall guest experience at JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar.

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