

FOR THE HOSPITALITY PROFESSIONAL

Hospitality BIZ

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Cover Story


**Union Budget 2022
Far from expectation**



**Ancillary Revenue
Significant Chunk of the Pie**

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Hospitality Industry expectations remain unfulfilled with the Union Budget

The Union Budget 2022-2023 presented by the Finance Minister was expected to bring respite for the hospitality industry across various avenues. The industry was eagerly waiting for restructurings such as the restoration of Input Tax Credit (ITC) on GST, unemployment assistance, tax relief, utility tariffs, infrastructure status and financial assistance. However, the industry received only an extension of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) and allocation of additional INR 50,000 crores for hotels and the hospitality sector till March 2023. Along with this, CGTMSE (Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises) scheme also was announced, which is expected to facilitate additional credit of INR 2 lakh crore for micro small enterprises. The budget is also inclusive of aggressive infrastructure development with eight ropeways, an additional 25,000 km of National Highways, 400 new Vande Bharat Trains with modern facilities, etc. The introduction of the revolutionary ePassport in the Union Budget received a lot of appreciation from the travel trade as well as from the hospitality industry.

Hospitality Biz spoke with industry experts to know their opinion about the Union Budget...



Kabir Suri, President, National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) and Co-Founder & Director, Azure Hospitality Pvt. Ltd.

“The Restaurant Industry was eagerly looking at some immediate liquidity support, Restoration of Input Tax Credit (ITC) on GST, Ease of Doing Business from over regulation and excessive licensing, a fair & equitable E-Commerce Policy for the survival and revival of the Restaurant Sector from the Hon'ble Finance Minister. While the Hospitality Sector was mentioned for the first time by Smt. Nirmla Sitharaman when she announced the extension of Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) till March 2023 which will allow one-year moratorium extension for loans availed under the ECLGS Scheme but it may ease current liquidity issues only for some businesses which have existing credit lines or outstanding sanction available loans. It was very disappointing to see that no specific announcements were made for the Restaurant Industry and we are yet again left to fend for ourselves.”



KB Kachru, Vice President, HAI and Chairman Emeritus & Principal Advisor South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group

“We laud the Finance Minister for extending the ECLGS upto March 2023. The additional amount earmarked for hospitality and related sectors will provide relief to the industry which is yet to match the pre-pandemic level. The announcement recognizes the distress in hospitality. However, the specifics require to be studied to understand better the impact on specific businesses and organisations. HAI in the past has been requesting for the scheme to be customised and tailored to the unique model of hotel business and the future outlook of the sector.”



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, Vice President, Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI)

“Though the Budget has been gravely disappointing, the extension of ECLGS with additional allocation to the crawling hospitality sector and provisioning an outlay of Rs.2 lakh crore through CGTMSE are the only relief measures provided as part of the Union Budget 2022-23. The special allocation through ECLGS will support the struggling sector to mitigate some of the pandemic-induced challenges and the CGTMSE scheme is expected to facilitate additional credit of INR 2 lakh crore for micro small enterprises and expand employment opportunities.”



Vineet Verma, Executive Director & CEO, Brigade Hospitality

“Hospitality & Tourism sectors have most regrettably been given the short shrift in the Union Budget 2022-23. Except for the extension of ECLGS till March 2023, there is no other announcement that could have provided the much needed succour for sectors that have been the worst hit.”



Vikas Suri, Senior Associate Vice President, Lords Hotels and Resorts

“The extension of ECLGS as well as allocate an additional INR 50,000 crore to finance the credit demands of the hotel and hospitality sector, is highly welcomed and appreciated by the industry. However, our industry has faced the brunt since last two consecutive years because of the pandemic, the expectation was for more direct and immediate support.

Long pending demand of reduction of GST, waiver or reduction of licence fee would have aided business revival have not been addressed.”



Manoj Agarwal, Head – Asset Management, InterGlobe Hotels

“Hospitality is one of the industries that still haven’t recovered from the pandemic. The third wave of virus restricted people from travelling and slowed down the recovery witnessed by the industry in the last quarter of previous year. We extol the announcement by FM in budget of extending the ECLGS by INR 50,000 crores and up to March 2023. Hopefully, this will provide some relief by creating further liquidity and aid to the faster recovery of the sector.”



Sanjay Sethi, CEO & MD, Chalet Hotels Limited.

“We welcome the attention given to the hospitality industry by the Hon’ Finance Minister in the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) announcement. However, we await fine print on the relaxations on meeting debt ratio covenants of previous ECLGS schemes, if any, and if the INR 200 crores cap under the scheme has been enhanced.”



Amrut Mehta, Director, Little Italy

“The union budget brings a lot of hope as businesses and individuals look forward to receive help from the government in these trying times. The pandemic has been tough in all countries and industries. Many businesses have suffered due to government induced restrictions and lockdowns. The extension of ECLGS by the finance minister is a boon to the hospitality sector. This move will help the MSME sectors to cope up with the risks arising out of COVID induced challenges.”



Sibasish Mishra, Founder & CEO, BookingJini

“This will help the cash strapped hotel entrepreneur to bounce back from the burden and losses of covid19. Great news in the budget for backpackers and travelers exploring inaccessible by roads in the hilly areas, this budget proposed, 8 ropeway projects for a length of 60 km will be awarded in 2022-23 as a pilot and with the success of these there will be more to come.” ■

'To attract more weddings we have tailored theme menus and attractive deals'

According to **Paritosh Ladhani, Executive Director, Taj Hotel & Convention Centre Agra** - Agra has been dependent on inbound tourism, but this has changed in the last two years because of the pandemic. **Asmita Mukherjee** spoke with Ladhani to know how the hotel is planning to create a difference in travellers' experience in the new normal.

Q Kindly tell us about yourself and your journey with Taj Hotel & Convention Centre Agra

I joined my family's bottling business at a young age. However, I had a keen interest in the hospitality business. So I took the



entrepreneurial plunge and ventured into the space with a five-star luxury hotel in Agra. After our partnership with another international hospitality brand ended, we became part of the Taj family in 2019. As Taj Hotel & Convention Centre we are reimagining Agra, offering Taj's world-class hospitality, great F&B options and a space to organize memorable weddings.

Q According to you what is the USP of Taj Hotel & Convention Centre Agra?

Our USP is our Tajness, a brand that stands for the best in hospitality. Our

rooftop poolside restaurant Infini with a view of the Taj Mahal, variety of wedding venues, eclectic mix of cuisines offered and proximity to the monument of love are our USPs as a hotel.

Q How do you plan to create a difference in the experience of leisure travellers?

Looking at the growing trend of staycations and pent up demand for leisure travel, we have designed itineraries for our guests that are experiential and give one flavour of the city. We have a very unique show Noor-E-Taj that narrates the history of the Taj Mahal, puppet shows, and a speciality restaurant Daawat-e-Nawaab that serves authentic Mughlai and Awadhi flavours. Its resplendent decor and live Indian music add to the charm. While we give them the feel of the old city, we also cater to the tastes of the global discerning traveller. Our rooftop restaurant Infini has a breathtaking view of the Taj Mahal, serves grills, international delights and has an attractive drinks menu. Our all-day dining, Palato, comprises of five theatrical kitchens serving world cuisine. The restaurant has an expansive ceiling height and an Al-Fresco dining area amidst manicured horticulture and water bodies.

We also have poolside yoga, a state-of-the-art gymnasium, a kids club and two swimming pools. Besides Agra as a city offers history, culture, monuments, local street food that leisure travellers can explore.

Q What drives your NRRPOR (Non-Room Revenue Per Occupied Room)?

This component is driven by our ancillary revenues from Food & Beverage (restaurants and in-room dining), banquets and also from our spa.

Q What are your future plans for the hotel?

We constantly innovate when it comes to

food as Indian travellers now want to try different cuisines. We have plans to bring Taj Hotels popular Chinese restaurant 'House of Ming' to our hotel in Agra and also its spa brand Jiva. We are also renovating a block to introduce uber-luxurious suites that will have features that a city like Agra hasn't witnessed.

Q What are the challenges for hotels in the region and how do you plan to overcome them through your industry experience?

Agra traditionally has been dependent on



inbound tourism. This has changed in the last two years because of the pandemic. As a hotel, we look at promoting not just our property but Agra as a destination that has so much to offer to domestic tourists. Our challenge is to ensure that our hotel gets the kind of ARR it deserves. We also need to promote Agra as a wedding destination at par with Jaipur.

Q How do you aim to attract the MICE traffic and destination wedding market?

For decades MICE traffic and destination wedding has been an essential part of business and is rising every year. In addition to our augmented hygiene protocols, the guests prefer us as a MICE hotel as we have strong brand recall and are located at a short driving distance from Delhi. We have 3700 sq meters of multiple meeting rooms including Mansion - the largest pillar-less conference facility in the city which can cater to up to 2000 people. The pre-function space of 930 square meters, consisting of show kitchens, island buffet stations and a modular bar, adds to its allure.

To attract more weddings we have tailored theme menus and attractive deals. We have also tied up with high-end wedding planners and event managers. With our wide choice of venues and well-planned spaces, big and small, Taj Hotel & Convention Centre is the perfect venue for all kinds of events. ■

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INVOKING THE CAPTAIN KIRK SPIRIT

It is time to steer hospitality's Starship Enterprise into newer galaxies.

The budget has been declared. The Emergency Credit is jacked up to 50k crores and extended till next year March. Welcome measures but nowhere near enough. The last two years have taught a bitter lesson to not lower the guard for any reason.

This despite how in the light of how other countries have responded to restrictions in the wake of restrictions, the Indian citizenry has more or less responded with remarkable restraint.

The chatter is that post 10th March the situation would improve further. The working hours and other issues associated with the functioning of restaurants, events, gatherings etc. might be loosened still further by the authorities.

However, if there is one lesson hospitality businesses should learn from the epidemic episode is to go beyond traditional definitions and practices of what is called hospitality business.

Dependence on travel can no longer remain the sole fulcrum of this business. Better to wake up now than wail when sundry world events shut down travel and crush the business.

In an earlier era, each episode of the once-popular 'Star Trek' series started with a statement that the intergalactic ship, Starship Enterprise, is prepared to go where no man has gone before. Captain Kirk, the captain of that ship showed amazing ways to focus his fleets' energies immediately to manage their future.

How about opening establishments in myriad ways to their immediate neighbourhoods? While this may mean different things to different establishments, opening up rooms or areas as co-working spaces can also be an innovative option. Hotels can be developed as a destination where not just weddings or conferences but public (and ticketed) events are held as well. Why not work with local governments and municipalities and be open to a wider swathe of clients?

Even rooms need not be rented solely on a nightly basis. How about opening up for hourly use for specific conditions and defined purposes?

Before purists with one-track minds roll their eyes, it would be prudent to explore new avenues to best utilise shelf life. In the light of the taxing times in the last two years indeed, that's what Captain Kirk would have done..

Anurag Yadav
Industry Expert

Anurag Yadav is a travel author and columnist, writing on hospitality and design. An avid traveller, he has published five books and divides his time equally between Delhi and London.

The views expressed in the column are of the author, and may or may not be endorsed by the publication.

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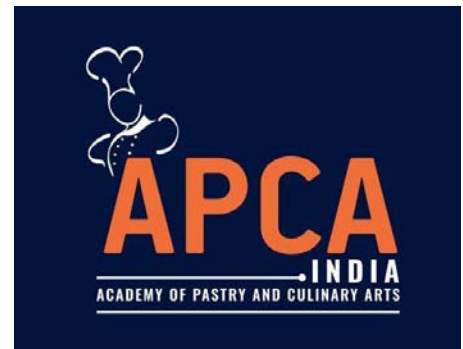
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'We have trained over 1,000 students to date from APCA India'

Academy of Pastry & Culinary Arts provides advanced diploma programs, which offers full-time courses and part-time courses. The courses majorly focus on pastry and culinary arts. The institution has Pan - Asia presence in Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia, Delhi NCR, Mumbai, and Bangalore. The institute has received overwhelming responses and it is now looking for expansion in the near future. **Asmita Mukherjee** spoke with **Major Dinesh Sharma, Founder, Academy of Pastry & Culinary Arts** to know his future plans for the institution.



are working in leading 5-star hotels like Taj, Oberoi, Hilton and brand patisserie too. Few of our students have also got placement opportunities overseas in Maldives, Bahrain, and France. They are working in the kitchen of some of the reputed hotels, commercial setups and even cruise lines.



in this field. The training provided under the guidance of our reputed chef faculty also prepares entrepreneurs who can post completion of the course start their own business setup.

Q How has the response been since you started the academy?

We have had an amazing response so far and it gives us immense happiness to share that we have trained over 1,000 students to date from APCA India. We take a very small number of only 16 students per batch. Times are changing and gone are the days when one would prefer to go to France to learn the art of pastry or baking. We now have a course of global standard available here with access to the best-experienced faculty and award-winning national and international chefs. With a complete hands-on course, students develop skills to the greatest level, and it's an intensive syllabus with a French curriculum in pastry & international cuisines in culinary.

Q How do you plan to empower aspiring chefs and culinary professionals?

At the Academy of Pastry & Culinary Arts (APCA), we provide our students with the right skills and the right foundation to become professional and future-ready for the industry. As a chef, learning never ends. It is important to have a strong foundation, right skills and sector knowledge which would nurture them as excelling professionals.

Q Kindly tell us about some successful alumni of the Academy of Pastry & Culinary Arts (APCA)

We have students who have ventured into their entrepreneurial journey and have been reporting great success. Some of the brilliant students I would like to mention here are Vandana Konidala, our Jan 2017 batch student who has her own patisserie called Delistic, in Bangalore and Venessa Rego, Owner of Venilicious in Mumbai, amongst others. We also have students who

Q What are your future plans for the Academy of Pastry & Culinary Arts (APCA)?

The overwhelming response really encourages us to do better and impart knowledge that is at par with the international standards. Catering to the demand for French patisserie, we have plans for expanding geographically in the near future. ■

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Q What significant characteristics differentiate India from the other countries where the Academy of Pastry & Culinary Arts (APCA) is present?

Amongst all the countries where APCA is present, India is the only country where we have more than one centre. While in countries other than India, we have one centre currently. The overwhelming response that we received from the Indian market and the students have widened our scope for opening more centres in the near future.

Q What was the driver behind the Academy of Pastry & Culinary Arts (APCA) in India?

When we established ourselves in India, our objective was to train individuals and transform them into professionals who are ready to enter the industry. We wanted to mould anyone passionate to learn the art of baking or cooking into professionals excelling



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Enhancing Career Aspirations: Renewing Talent Part 1

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

Two abstracts highlighting our talent related challenges were shared in previous months to set the context for ongoing business concerns. Our preparation to engage in the war for talent needs a deeper exposition, of our existing fragile work culture. Reduced headcounts and revised processes across the board reveal advance warning systems. Many talents at work today are affected by the emerging work culture in post pandemic contexts. The influence of personalities leading or mentoring them at work, also influences their attitude towards a long term career in hospitality and services. The model below juxtaposes the range of career positioning possibilities in the minds of our talents at work today.



Work cultures have either grown with empathy into positive progress zones or degenerated with ongoing stress into negative pressure cans. The role played by key personalities at work, across all levels - with either progressive mentalities or regressive mind sets, discloses the perfect setting. This framework classifies the workplace into four potential positions in the minds of our talent, who align

with one or more quadrants. The relative pros and cons of being in these positioning quadrants will affect our people engagement philosophy. There is a huge opportunity for us to recognize and correct our workplace positioning in associate mindshare, so that talents remain committed to us in future.

1. Career Traps: The hazardous combination of a negative work culture alongside a regressive personality culture creates enormous pressure on talents. Systemic dogma as well as encultured detachment from talents gets exacerbated with regressive leaders and mentors. Larger than life personalities are un-empathetic to people while being self-centred. This creates a sense of being trapped, where neither the system nor its people inspire confidence.

2. Career Coaches: Inherent weaknesses of negative work cultures are offset by progressive paradigms of coaches leading and mentoring at work. Talents receive guidance and support, navigating work challenges with forward thinking leaders. Coaches build skills to sustain winning teams. Though systemic influences create a drag on aspiration, progressive personalities provide the much needed succour to keep talents focused on development.

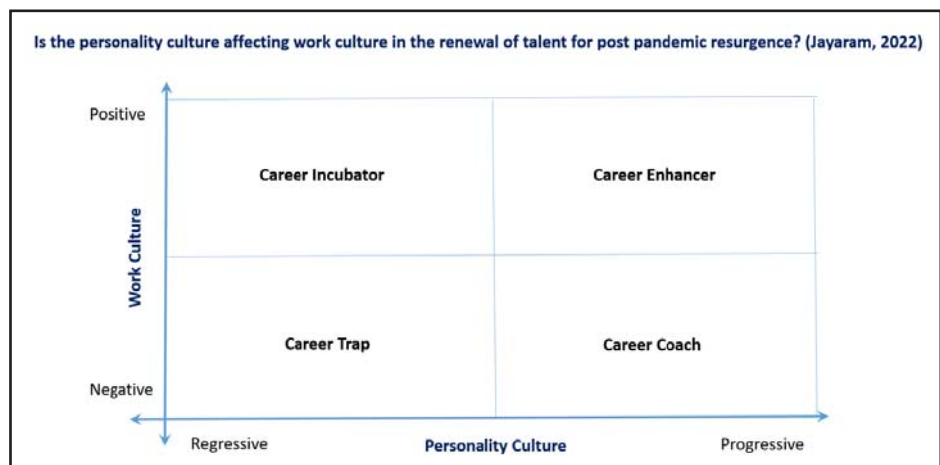
3. Career Incubators: Powerful value-based work cultures uphold principles to strengthen systems to negate the hegemony of regressive personalities. Talents revel in the confidence of multi-level escalations from strong systemic support structures. Positive work cultures outweigh the negativities of narcissistic behaviour from

regressive personality cultures. Systemic confidence allows talents to choose career incubation in a positive work culture.

4. Career Enhancers: Future repositioning of hospitality and service industry careers will require our work places and mentors to be seen as career enhancers. A robust work place culture alongside empathetic personalities who enhance learning and development of leadership skills is the need of the hour. Talents need to feel their inherent growth as they continue to work in a challenging yet rewarding career irrespective of internal or external influences.

Talents do believe that our hospitality and service industries have a high degree of attractiveness. But this pull to work in a demanding work environment, does not necessarily match the millennial mind set. Fulfilment is crucial to their existence and aspirations are not restricted to career related milestones. A healthy work life balance, personal priorities and changing aspirations tend to shape our declining talent pool. The responsibility to align with the emerging expectations of future talents will determine the sustainability of our industry. The value created in the growth of progressive personalities, who will enhance and continue to build a positive work culture is an imperative today.

The only way is to learn from renewed organizations and their enlightened leadership in redesigning a positive workplace that we can renew. A lot depends on the alignment of individual beliefs with the leadership culture in organizations. That the aspirations of talents are undergoing a strong metamorphosis is clearly the writing



on the wall. The ability to recognize, change and activate a culture of renewal will stand the industry in good stead. The incubation of future leaders for industry, begins with the ability to adopt to the change ourselves, so that there is an interactive learning experience.

Managing the seven generations at work today is a gargantuan task, the only melting pot where all actors can align, is in the acceptance of a future ready organizational culture. It is also important to recognize that people and their behaviour at work promulgates quantum changes in the work culture. Individual beliefs are only strengthened by the leadership culture, as we align organizational goals with individual aspirations. In the next part, we will reveal the approaches that will facilitate change. ■

The global pandemic has forced the Indian hotel industry to look outside the box, for generating revenues and increasing profitability. We are witnessing a drastic shift in the way in which hotels used to look at ancillary revenue. With the use of latest technologies, hoteliers are now easily able to cross-sell and up-sell to make the most of ancillary revenue streams. During the last two years of the pandemic, we have seen hotels adapting themselves to the market demands by transforming into hospitals and workstations, while also maintaining relevancy by offering various services, such as laundry services, food delivery services and many more. **Asmita Mukherjee** spoke with industry experts to know what the industry is thinking around ancillary revenue streams.



Ancillary Revenue Significant Chunk of the Pie

PROFIT-MAKING PATH

COVID has taught the Indian hospitality industry to strive through the adverse and think beyond the unimaginable. Hence hoteliers have spent time Rethinking, Reimagining and Restarting. Hotels have been 'innovators' in creating ancillary revenue streams to maintain the cash flow during the lockdown period.

With an understanding the new lifestyle patterns and demand trends, Shuvendu Banerjee, General Manager, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla informed that they forayed into multiple avenues such as Takeaway, Home Delivery and Dial-A-Chef from a food and beverage perspective. "From comfort 'Meal Bowls' for the work-from-home crowd to 'Party Boxes' for the adventurous palate, from packed thalis & lunch boxes for nearby corporates to Institutional Catering services- we ensured that the guests enjoyed their favourite dishes in the comforts of their premises," he added.

Reiterating with Banerjee, Param Kannampilly, Chairman and Managing Director, Concept Hospitality & The Fern Hotels & Resorts opined that in these difficult times any rupee earned contributes to the overall bottom line. With so many restrictions like a cap on the number of people in the restaurants,



Shuvendu Banerjee
General Manager
Crowne Plaza New Delhi
Okhla



Param Kannampilly
Chairman and MD
Concept Hospitality & The
Fern Hotels & Resorts

limited numbers of people attending conferences/marriages, closure of spas, swimming pools and clubs etc, there is very little room for city hotels to make ancillary revenue.

"The only silver lining has been the leisure destinations, resorts etc, which have done brisk business. We were able to sell everything there to add up to the revenue coming from the rooms," he added.

Manish Goel, Founder, Stotrak Hospitality also agreed to the point that ancillary revenues have helped hotels to achieve profitability during these trying times. Elaborating on the importance of ancillary revenue streams, he said, "For our chain whose mission is to provide unique experiences, the revenues generated through such activities, and experiences have been very critical commercially. We are putting a lot of effort into creating experiences enabling us to cater to our guests of all age groups."

UTILISATION OF ANCILLARY REVENUES

According to Goel, hotels are still not exploring it to its potential. He expressed that hotels are still on the conventional path which is focused on room and Food and Beverage sales, and tend to ignore the importance of these ancillary sales opportunities which have a

dual impact on profitability, on both top and bottom line.

Kannampilly opined that there is always room for improvement, as a hotelier only looks at ancillary streams in difficult times. He added that most of the normal revenue comes from basically three departments viz. rooms, banqueting and FnB. But he emphasised on the fact that given the pandemic situation it is imperative for hoteliers to reimagine the ancillary revenue segment.

Explaining the scenario Rohit Arora, Area General Manager, The Park New Delhi said, “Hotels and hoteliers have been very rooted to the structure of the business we are in, but every now and then there is a disruption that changes the structure a bit. COVID was a much bigger disruption than anyone of us have seen in our lifetimes, hopefully, the first and the last. This time changed our regular route of business and survival shifted us towards ancillary revenue streams, though we were new in these streams, we had experience at handling almost anything and we gave our 100% into deriving profits from these streams. However I personally still feel that we can do much more and reach our full potential. Currently, I do not think we are there yet.”



Manish Goel
Founder
Stotrak Hospitality

PLANNING AND SELECTING PROJECTS

Arora opined that one should always keep in mind their own strengths, as to not jump into something because everyone is getting into it. Sometimes it is better to miss the bus than to join the bandwagon. He suggested that hoteliers should think about whether the project will bring profit, or if the project is resonating with the company goals and vision.

He pointed out that the involvement of departments and the core teams are indeed very important. Also the major point which is required for the success of the project is good marketing for those projects. Lastly, he suggested that deep drilling to find the best ways and processes to pursue the project is necessary and each process should be detailed and drafted.

According to Goel, the main factor will be the purpose it solves, and the experiential impact that it gives to the guest's overall experience during the stay at the hotel/resort.

“Getting a clean & hygienic room is no more a luxury, it is a very basic necessity for any hotel. The key to success now is being authentic and local. We have been able to offer our guest's such experiences, and by these value additions provide a scope of introducing facilities and products which can add on to the revenue as well. These do not necessarily have to be of exorbitantly high price, and they can be as local and traditional as possible. After all our industry has already started to act more sustainable in the way we conduct our businesses,” he added.

Banerjee said, “It is extremely important to understand the gaps and needs in order to curate solutions. Hotels should also identify the target groups that they are trying to tap. Evaluate and observe your hotel spaces, underutilized venues, resources and local partnership avenues with a fresh approach to creating innovative concepts. A short term strategy must also fit into your long term agenda. The umbrella approach should be on ‘Selling

An Experience’ rather than just selling a product. It is important to expand your horizons and generate ideas outside the property as well. In a nutshell, an idea shouldn't be cancelled just because your premises or infrastructure doesn't permit it.”

TRENDS IN HOSPITALITY ANCILLARIES

The hospitality industry is competitive, and hotel businesses need to keep up with the latest hospitality trends to avoid being left behind.

Arora said, “FnB will surely be one of the biggest revenue streams, as this is one service that is mobile and does not have to be restrained within the hotels. Offering services and ODC to small events, openings, events and weddings will surely be one big focus stream for us and we do anticipate results from that. Secondly, small add ons in our rooms, like a meal, upgrades, special in-room dining packages at attractive rates will remain a winning idea. Workations, staycations and work from restaurant spaces at nominal rates, MICE and Wedding packages at competitive yet lucrative rates will be another big thing.”

Giving an example of how technology is helping hoteliers to understand the market trends, Banerjee said, “While OTAs and Meta searches will help the hotels sell a room at the desired price point, the focus has to be on selling the experience! ‘Themed Packages’ focusing on specific demographics such as family vacations, romantic getaways and adventure junkies will help hotels to cater to the niche markets. For example, for family vacations, a guest might be looking for an attached room, customized meal offerings, baby sitters or even early check-in or late check-out matching the kid's schedule. Hotels will look out to utilize the surroundings as well as local partnerships to create immersive and more thoughtful experiences for the guests. For example, a romantic getaway may call for a beautiful champagne dinner at an exotic location while an adventure trip could be camping, glamping, hiking at a nearby pristine location. Wellness, Spa and entertainment segments would also be key drivers as not just the leisure guests but even corporate guests would look for ways to unwind during their downtime. Even if a guest is low key, mood enhancers such as organic coffees and herbal teas, rejuvenation kits and more can just be the right add on.”

CONCLUSION

Since the ancillary revenue stream has proven to be revenue-generating, hoteliers will now give more focus on innovative approaches to leverage this. Most hoteliers have seen results and have plans to think more on these lines to survive and revive.

While speaking on the contribution of ancillary streams to the total revenue, Goel mentioned that the ancillary revenues contributed to, “around 6 to 8% of our total revenues in the past year.”

Arora added, “Well, they have been a saving grace so far. These different businesses have given us revenues in times when the pandemic had hit us the most.” ■

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'We are growing internationally with a fourth restaurant in the Middle East and our first restaurant in the UK this year'

Amrut Mehta, Director, Little Italy joined Little Italy Group when he was only 16 - as a management trainee in the operational department of Food and Beverage production and service. After graduating and joining full-time in 2017, his first focus was to help Little Italy evolve and elevate the brand's current offerings and customer experience. Since 2018 Little Italy has been adding new brands to its portfolio. The brand successfully has launched over five new brands since 2018. **Asmita Mukherjee** spoke with Mehta to know more about his journey and plans with Little Italy.

Q How is your long experience of three decades helping you to navigate the current pandemic crisis?

The current crisis we all face is unlike any other we have seen in history. It's a challenging

Even though the pandemic is unlike anything else, we have seen in the past our team spirit and resilience from so many years of working together has helped us overcome the pandemic.

Q What are the new markets or segments that you are looking to penetrate as regular revenue segments might have difficulties in these trying times?

The pandemic naturally has a huge impact on consumer behaviour and has formed a lifestyle shift in many aspects for consumers. There was a substantial lifestyle shift towards cooking at home during the pandemic. We launched Acasa with a vision to enable people to enjoy cooking and easily recreate their favourite restaurant dishes in the safety and comfort of their own homes. Acasa, the DIY home kits, became a huge success, and over time the demand was so great we launched an entire gourmet grocery line called Acasa. This range is now available online in pan India and in select premium stores.

Another big lifestyle shift was the rise of delivery and how it became a huge revenue source for restaurants. In 2021 while restaurants were still recovering, delivery sales were consistent and growing. Keeping up with this trend in 2021, the Little Italy Group launched two new delivery brands Senioritas Mexican Kitchen and Piazza- Superfast Italian. We added these as new verticals to all existing restaurants to capitalize on the rise in the delivery market.

With the growing delivery sales, cloud kitchen is another promising business model for which we see great potential; we have launched 6 cloud kitchens in four cities with plans for adding 8 more by the end of 2022.

Q Apart from Little Italy what are the other offerings that you have?

Our philosophy with diversifying is to add brands that add value to our consumers as well as to our existing brands. Another major point for us to consider is we like to get into specialized cuisines or unique concepts which fill a gap in the market.

With that philosophy, we have launched Akss, a modern Indian restaurant, the word Akss means mirror or reflection. The restaurant sets out to reimagine or reflect Indian cuisine with its own touch, aided by the latest trends and modern cooking techniques. Akss is present in six locations, each with a unique menu inspired by the city it was located in, all aimed at recreating the city's flavour onto a plate and elevating the whole dining experience.

Next came Tutto Bene in 2019, a speciality cafe and pastry shop added to four existing locations of Little Italy.

In 2021, we launched our Delivery brands Senioritas Mexican Kitchen and Piazza-Superfast Italian. Piazza will also have physical stores in malls, high streets, tech parks, etc., which will be our first venture into the QSR segment.

Q What are your plans for 2022?

This month we opened our first Piazza store in Seasons Mall Pune, which is an exciting concept we have been working on for two years. The next one will open next week at Inox in Pune. We are looking to have 100 outlets in the next two years.

Q Do you have any plans for B2B tie-ups (with hotels)?

Sure, it is another promising business vertical to service the HoReCa industry. We plan to focus more on this in the second half of 2022 once our new factory is complete and we increase our production capacity.

Q Kindly let us know about your investment and expansion plans.

Besides our four restaurants in the UAE, we plan on expanding further in the Middle East with five more restaurants in the next two years in countries like Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain.

We will also be entering the UK market with a first flagship restaurant in London, and we plan to be in the US soon as well.

In India, we will scale Piazza and expand Little Italy to more metro cities. We are also planning to add 20 cloud kitchens in the next three years as it's a very promising model. ■

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situation that requires a lot of resilience, bravery, and teamwork to overcome. Thankfully being in business for so long and having built a team of dedicated individuals, we have surrounded ourselves with the right people and with the right spirit; we were able to not only navigate through this crisis but use it in a way to learn, evolve and redesign certain aspects of our business, which have now allowed us to be in a better position than we were before the pandemic.



imperative that we all look inward and check on our existing infrastructure and process methodologies to make a long term plan for financial resurgence and growth.

Q What pandemic-based long-term effects do you see for the hospitality industry?

The pandemic has undeniably caused long-lasting effects on the industry. The adoption of technology has become the fulcrum of hospitality. Contactless payments methods, self-check in kiosks, express checkouts, digital menus and messaging service to limit contact between staff and guests and smart keys are some of the changes I see continuing in the long term.

covid levels by Q3 of this year. We witnessed the spike in Q4 of 2021 and revenues rose by 40% in comparison to same time the year before. This year we have budgeted ourselves to over 70% growth in comparison to 2021, which was muted year on all fronts.

Q Which customer segments (short-haul/long-haul/leisure/corporates/staycations) and from which locations are you expecting to form the major pie of your business in these coming months?

We are focusing on transient and social groups, with a key eye on the wedding segment. Staycations and value based offers will be on the rise as more families plan their pending vacation and get on the road

‘Travel and trade will certainly rebound and reach pre-covid levels in this year’

Q What are your expectations from 2022?

I am optimistic that this year we shall heal ourselves. We suffered personally, professionally and financially in the last two years and the dawn of this new year will emancipate this pain. However, caution needs to be exerted since the prevalent situation is volatile and requires us to be responsible citizens. Travel and trade will certainly rebound and will reach pre-covid levels in this year. If given a choice, I shall caption this year as “Time to Travel”.

Q What operational changes do you think hoteliers/hotel operators need to focus on as the industry recovers?

The pandemic has taken a toll on the operational efficiency of all establishments. Cost contingencies and redundancies have a long-term impact and therefore it is important to recuperate faster. Hoteliers and restaurateurs will need to get the spring in their step and align for success. It is



Shiv Bose, General Manager, DoubleTree by Hilton Goa – Panaji is optimistic that this year hospitality will get back its lost charm. According to him revenues are expected to surge and reach pre-covid levels by Q3 of this year. If given a chance, Bose would caption this year as ‘Time to Travel’. Asmita Mukherjee spoke with Bose to understand his expectations from 2022.

Q What concerns do consumers still have regarding travel safety?

Guests are cautious about their well-being and safety and expect hotels and resorts to adopt hygiene and sanitization programs. In line with these expectations, we have adopted the “Hilton Clean Stays” program. It is a holistic and robust program that ensures we welcome guests in a sanitized environment and maintain all the necessitated protocols towards their well-being.

Q What kind of revenue growth are you foreseeing for your property this year? Are you expecting increased occupancy during the holiday and wedding season?

Revenues are expected to surge and reach pre-

to explore places. We have launched the “Dream Stray” and “Great Small Breaks” that give value based inclusions to vacation seekers in making their stay at Double Tree by Hilton Goa, Panaji, truly memorable.

Q How can hotels utilize technology on their continued recovery journeys?

By adopting technology, we have realised that it can play a vital role in delivering personalized hospitality. We have used the benefits of technology from our rooms to our restaurants and have ensured that the merits of human interactions are not compromised. From digital compendium and digital keys in guest rooms, to scan and pay option at all our restaurants, we have ensured that technology enriches our overall service direction.

Q What are your short- and long-term plans for the property?

The resort has taken a new approach and has implemented numerous process changes to benefit visiting guests. From kids friendly touch points to tie-ups with vendors to explore Goa and its hidden locations. We offer a very personalized service experience to all our guests and customize each stay as per guest desire. From celebratory stays to vacation visits, our service delivery is designed for all discerning travellers. We are also launching “Elle Spa and Salon” to improve the rejuvenation and personal care aspect for our guests. ■

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The rising number of Omicron cases in India has resulted in subdued leisure & business travel demand in January 2022, says report

Hotels Sector

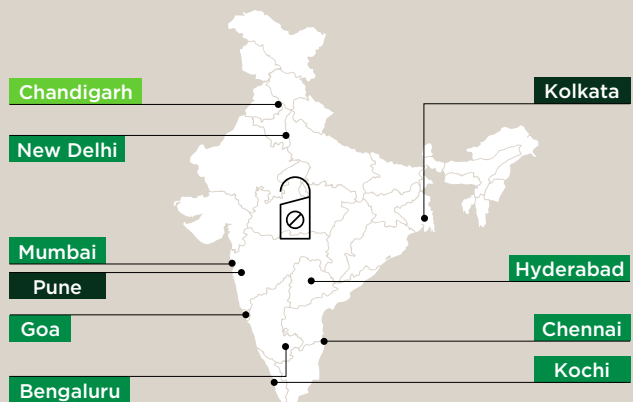
Key Stats (India Average)



	Dec 2021	M-o-M	Y-o-Y	Dec 2021	Nov 2021	Oct 2021	Sep 2021
ADR	₹5,750 - ₹5,950	↑ 7-9%	ADR	↑ 33-35%	↑ 42-44%	↑ 25-27%	↑ 19-21%
Occupancy	58% - 60%	↑ 3-5pp ¹	Occupancy	↑ 15-17pp	↑ 24-26pp	↑ 25-27pp	↑ 29-31pp
RevPAR	₹3,335 - ₹3,570	↑ 15-17%	RevPAR	↑ 82-84%	↑ 156-158%	↑ 133-135%	↑ 163-165%

Occupancy Change¹

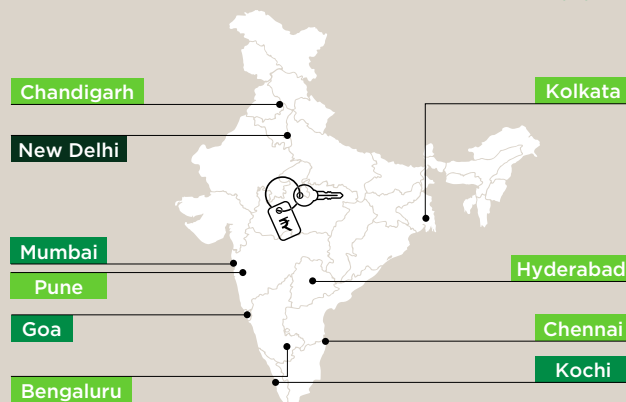
Key Indian Markets Y-o-Y (Dec 2021)



¹ Occupancy change in percentage points (pp)

ADR Change²

Key Indian Markets Y-o-Y (Dec 2021)



² ADR change in percentage

Source: HVS Research

HBI Staff | Hyderabad

According to HVS Anarock's Hotels & Hospitality Overview (H2O), January 2022 report, hotel occupancy in India witnessed only a modest increase compared to the previous month due to restrictions on account of Omicron. The report also said that the Indian hotel sector witnessed its highest monthly room rates since Mar 2020, with Goa leading the way with average rates 20% higher than pre-pandemic levels. The rising number of Omicron cases in India has resulted in subdued leisure & business travel demand in January 2022; however, it expects a strong rebound in domestic travel as soon as the cases subside, and travel limitations are lifted, some of which is already underway. Hospitality Biz presents some key highlights of the report. ■

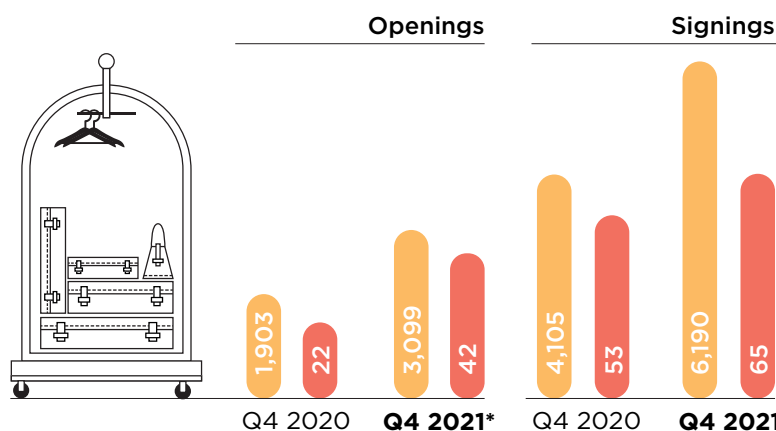
Branded Hotels³ (Q4 2021 vs. Q4 2020)



By Keys



By Properties



* Fully or partially opened new hotels

³ Data collated by HVS from 16 hotel operators and media reports as of 22nd Jan 2022



“Burgrill plans to reach a mark of 100 stores by the end of FY2022-23”

Ankur Madan, Rajat Bawa and Shreh Madan - The founders of Burgrill had a communal love for gourmet-style healthy burgers, but they realized that most of them were only limited to the high-end luxe places. The more affordable and feasible burgers were circumscribed with frozen patties and unhealthy ingredients. This was their sign to take their love for burgers to a next level. Asmita Mukherjee spoke with **Shreh Madan** to know the trio’s plan for the unique brand.

While walking us through the brand’s inception journey, Madan informed that the brand first opened its store in 2016 which was a franchisee in Chandigarh. He said, “Burgrill made its mark in sector 8 Chandigarh which was a franchised store, wherein our franchise trusted us without having a store of our own! We got a great response from the day we started and there has been no looking back since then.”

“Burgrill then moved to Delhi NCR and now is present in 15+



cities. We currently have 31 stores operational and another 12 under fitment across North India,” he added.

Further elaborating on the idea behind Burgrill, he said, “We wanted to bridge the gap between high-end luxe places and commercial MNCs. We wanted to change the perception of fast food to healthier food. Burgrill ensures that we have healthier alternatives to cater to all our consumer needs.” As nowadays the consumer prefers eating healthy, most of the brands are focusing on offering healthy foods, Burgrill is no exception, Madan

added, “We always focused on using fresh ingredients which are grilled to order and served in healthier bread.”

Madan informed us about their growth goals by saying, “The current run rate is INR 24Cr this year, and would like to maintain a 100% year on year growth for the next 5 years.” He also informed that the brand is positively looking forward to launching their very own signature sauces.

The brand has recently launched its unique plant-based burger which is still a new concept in India, “We have successfully launched our plant-based burger namely Green meat pounder and we are really happy with the response. We see a great increment in the numbers especially in the tier-I cities and also planning to launch more items in the category,” he added.

Commenting on the investment and future plans. Madan said, “Our company is bootstrapped and profitable. We are currently looking out for a strategic investor. He also added that the company is planning rapid expansion by saying, “We are expanding rapidly keeping North and West India in mind, and plan to reach a mark of 100 stores by the end of the financial year 2022-23.” ■

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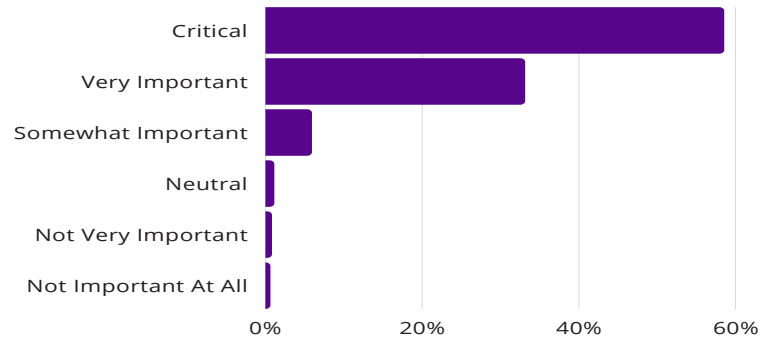
Over 90% of hoteliers reported technology is either very important or critical to their operations, says report

HBI Staff | Hyderabad

Stayntouch, a global leader in guest-centric hotel property management systems (PMS) and contactless technology, has recently released the 2022 Hotelier Technology Sentiment Report in partnership with graduate students at NYU School of Professional Studies Tisch Center of Hospitality. The report captures comprehensive insights and sentiments from over 500 hoteliers across North America, Europe, and Asia Pacific, representing independent and branded hotels.

The 2022 Hotelier Technology Sentiment Report reveals hotelier sentiments about emerging technologies and takes a pulse on trends in both hotel operations and the guest experience. The report focused on a range of issues including, the evolution and necessity of digital technology in hospitality to combat challenges brought upon by the pandemic, the longevity of self-service technology, the use of technology to empower a limited hotel staff, and technology's role in streamlining processes and guest personalization. The Report said that the number of hotels using popular technology (including self-service check-in, in-room technology, automation, and chatbots) increased by 31% throughout the pandemic. This number is projected to increase by an additional 19% in 2022. It also said that Over 90% of hoteliers reported technology is either very important or critical to their operations. ■

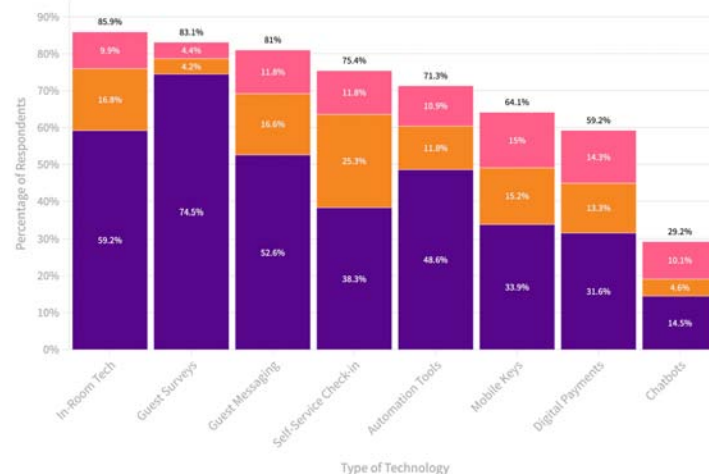
HOW IMPORTANT IS TECHNOLOGY TO YOUR OPERATIONS?



CURRENT & PLANNED TECH USE

Use of popular hospitality technology increased by 31% during the pandemic. In 2022, it is projected to increase by 19%.

■ Implemented Prior to the Pandemic
 ■ Implemented During the Pandemic
 ■ Plan to Implement in 2022

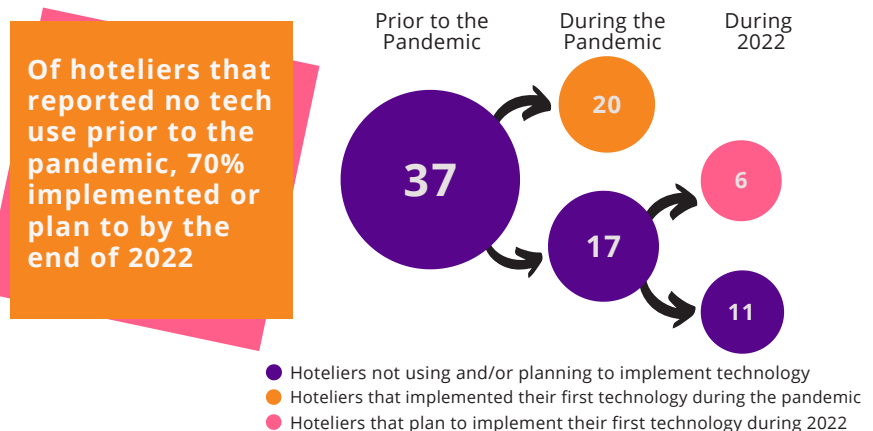


53% planned increase in hotels offering chatbots during 2022

66% increase in offering self-service check-in during the pandemic

74.5% used guest surveys prior to the pandemic

DECREASING REPORTS OF NO TECHNOLOGY USE



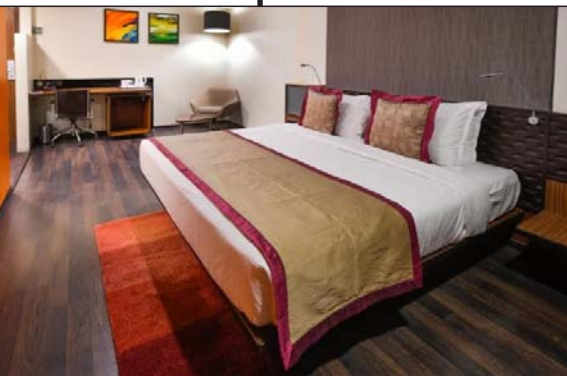


Raajkutir, an IHCL SeleQtions, Kolkata, West Bengal

The 33-room Raajkutir recreates an old world traditional Bengali Raajbari in spirit, design, décor and cuisine. Guests can enjoy authentic British Colonial and Bengali Zamindari cuisine at East India Room, the all-day diner; an original Victorian-style high-tea at Loafer's Café, the delicatessen; and the finest collection of select beverages at The Swig, the bar. It also features the award-winning Indian and all-natural Jiva Spa. The hotel has approximately 4,600 sq. m of indoor and outdoor banqueting space to host sophisticated conferences and lavish social events. With the addition of this hotel, IHCL will have six hotels across brands in Kolkata, including two under development and it also takes the total SeleQtions portfolio to 24 hotels including 18 in operation.

The Fern Residency, Haridwar, Uttarakhand

The Fern Residency, Haridwar is a 55-room full-service hotel, which offers a multi-cuisine pure vegetarian restaurant, a swimming pool, gym, spa and state-of-the-art banquet facilities. The hotel is centrally located with easy access to major sightseeing attractions. The hotel offers three categories of rooms viz. Winter Green, Fern Club and Hazel Suite. The rooms are equipped with all modern facilities and amenities to fulfil the needs of leisure as well as business travellers. Other facilities in the hotel include kids play lawns, souvenir shop, comprehensive travel assistance, complimentary buffet breakfast, multi-cuisine pure vegetarian restaurant, spacious banquet and meeting rooms and business centre facilities.



The Atmos Hotel, Hinjewadi, Pune

The Atmos offers well-equipped meeting rooms for conferences, events and many other services with good space and exquisite banquet services. The hotel is a 51-key hotel with air conditioning that offers excellent food, service, and ambience. There is a beautiful wedding lounge that accommodates around two thousand people. Additionally, the hotel is planning to open a rooftop lounge soon. The Hotel has a multi-cuisine restaurant and The Latin Bar and Kitchen. The hotel offers culinary specialization in Indian, continental, and pan Asian cuisine. Besides that, it also has weekend and weekday buffets with a wide spread of international cuisine where the customer can enjoy varieties of flavours. Everyone can relish the picturesque setting and warm hospitality of the hotel.

Pride Biznotel Manjusar, Gidc Vadodara

Located in Mukut Nagar, the hotel is well-connected by road to prominent commercial and leisure destinations around the city namely Manjusar GIDC, Halol GIDC, Statue of Unity, Champaner Fort, Pawagadh Temple and Sayaji Baug.

Pride Biznotel Manjusar boasts of elegantly designed rooms. All the rooms are fully air-conditioned and filled with modern amenities like LED television, ergonomic work table, tea/ coffee maker, iron and ironing board, wardrobes, high-speed internet connectivity and much more. The eclectic dining outlet comprises Café Pride – the multi-cuisine restaurant that presents a variety of sumptuous cuisines and authentically prepared dishes. The banquets are perfect to host private parties, social events and classified gatherings. The lush green lawn spans across 8,000 sq ft which is ideal for destination weddings, product launches, training sessions, team-building exercises and outdoor events. Guests can also enjoy a break at the Gym facilities within the hotel, like a re-energizing workout at the fitness centre.



Faber launches a convenient and compact water heater

Faber's FWG Helios water heaters – in black ivory come with a Powerful heating element and the vertical and elegant design is bound to complement the décor of your kitchen/ or bathroom. Available in 10 ltr/ 15 ltr/ 25 ltr with 2KW wattage. Made of Molded plastic body with 2 KW heating element that helps heat water quicker. Faber's water heater comes with a thermal cut-out to ensure electrical safety and ascertain temperature regulation above a certain limit. They come with a single weld, unlike other water heaters which have a 3 piece structure. This feature of minimal weld joints reduces leakage by 67% in high-pressure scenarios. Pressure- 8 bars: our water heaters can withstand up to 8 bars pressure making it suitable for even high rise buildings.



The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts launches the brand's signature fragrance 'Tishya by The Leela'

Tishya by The Leela celebrates the essence of India and the richness within, with a blend of authentic and inspiring aromas that transport you into an immersive sensory experience. The signature fragrance is inspired by the national flower of our country Kumud or lotus and the wonder flower - Nilgiri or Neelakurinji that blossoms once in every 12 years. These amenities are 100% vegan, paraben and SLS-free and developed with natural extracts, floral fragrances and come in 100% recyclable packaging. The newly launched signature fragrance and bath and body collection have been conceptualized and executed in collaboration with Kimrica Hunter International, India's largest manufacturer of luxury toiletries and guest room amenities. With a team of 500 people, an expert panel of scientists, fragrance designers and technicians; Kimirica Hunter International exports to 20 countries worldwide and works with luxury hotel groups across the world.

Cornitos launches baked snack, Crusties

Cornitos expanded its product portfolio with baked snacks. The newly launched range is the snack of the season - Crusties. The funky zig-zag snack is a perfect balance of health and taste, offering the choice to enjoy the snacks guilt-free. This range is packed with delicious flavours and incredibly nutritious ingredients such as rajma, chana, and potatoes. It is available in six variants of Rajma Crusties King Curry, Rajma Crusties Lemon Chili, Chana Crusties Dilli Chaat, Chana Crusties Cheesy Garlic, Potato Crusties Peri Peri, and Potato Crusties Italian Cheese. Each pack is priced at INR 30 and would be available in retail, etail, and modern trade stores.



The Indus Valley launches Tri-Ply Stainless Steel Cookware range

The Indus Valley's Tri-ply Stainless Steel Cookware range offers a smart, modern and ideal solution for achieving the best cooking experience with ease with the new Tri-ply Stainless Steel Cookware, cooking healthy food becomes easier and hassle-free, as it offers amazing cooking advantages that involve no chemicals, such as the 100% food-safe material of the cookware with no PFOA, PTFE, coatings or metal leaching from acidic ingredients. One can also get a glimpse of the magic of fully-clad cookware, for just as its name suggests, it is entirely built of 3 layers of metals from base to rim, set between 2 layers of superior food grade 304 stainless steel, and an Aluminium core. This technique not only helps in even heating but also in heat retention.

ESPIRE HOSPITALITY



Neha Rana Dutta, Chief Human Resources Officer, Espire Hospitality

In her new role at Espire Hospitality, she will spearhead the human resource function for Six Senses Fort Barwara, steer the full spectrum of the function for Espire Hospitality and will support the expansion plans of the company. The company plans to expand its Country Inn Hotels & Resorts portfolio and introduce a new luxury

boutique resort brand in early 2022. Dutta joins Espire Hospitality after 15 years of working in association with India's leading hospitality brands including Leela, Shangri-La, Hilton, Westin and Radisson.

MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL



Haramohan Bora, F&B Manager, Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park

Bora will be responsible for carrying out overall culinary operations, which includes operational and managerial aspects of the hotel's F&B endeavours. He comes with an exemplary knowledge and experience in the hospitality industry, especially food and beverage, which will enable him to establish a formidable brand presence in the market.

Bora has an overall experience of over 12 years that includes managing restaurants, banquet operations and events planning. His excellent managerial and leadership skills in the aforementioned domains have proved to be an asset in his previous assignments. He has been part of renowned 5-star properties throughout his career, which made him a highly result-driven individual with a seamless track record.



Gulzar Singh Dayal, Executive Chef, Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park

An expert in the culinary space, Chef Dayal has consistently set industry benchmarks to the high standards of fine dining in India. A seasoned professional, known for crafting timeless culinary masterpieces, a chef has been in the industry for over 19 years. Chef Dayal's sheer passion for food and love for cooking took him to some of the striking

locations in the country that further flourished his culinary skillset and also got him to meet some of the finest personalities of the country. The exposure and learnings he has over all these years have enabled him to experiment and curate signature dishes that established him as a name to reckon with in the industry.



Vimal Bhat, Director of Sales, Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park

Bhat comes with over 20 years of experience in the sales domain with commendable knowledge and expertise. He will head the sales vertical at the hotel, which entails increasing overall sales for the hotel. He will be responsible for managing sales activities, property's reactive and proactive sales efforts and executing sale strategies, along with innovative

marketing concepts in order to meet business goals. Bhat is a seasoned sales and marketing professional with experience in hotel sales, inventory and channel management. Graduate in hotel management, he has started his career journey with F&B operations. He has been instrumental in executing excellent customer service to drive customer satisfaction and loyalty program.



Monica Edara, Associate Director of Marketing & Communications, The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace

An astute, seasoned, and national award-winning professional with an overall marketing experience of two decades Edara is set to take the reigns of The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace as the Associate Director of Marketing. Within hospitality, she began her career with Accor Hotels and

has worked for over fourteen years as a successful Marketing Communications Head with Hyderabad International Convention Centre (HICC), Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre, Novotel Hyderabad Airport, and Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach. Her previous stint was with Renaissance Mumbai Convention Centre Hotel & Lakeside Chalet – Mumbai, Marriott Executive Apartment; India's largest multi-dimensional lifestyle complex with 773 keys.



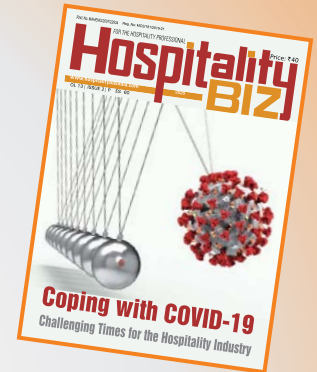
Prasanna Venkatesh, Director of Food & Beverage, The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace

Prior to his integration at the Westin Hyderabad Mindspace, Venkatesh was the Head of Operations and was responsible for the pre-opening of multiple venues at Expo 2020, Dubai. He headed the F&B Operations for Hilton Hotels & Resorts and Westin Hotels in Dubai. The other brands he has led for includes Cheval Blanc by LVMH,

TAJ Dubai, Six Senses Soneva Gili Maldives, Kanuhura by Sun Resorts Mauritius, Hyatt Regency Chennai, Velassaru Maldives and The Oberoi Udaivilas marked the beginning of his journey in the hospitality industry. At The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace, he will be responsible for the entire Food & Beverage Operations while heightening and streamlining systems and procedures. In addition, he will overlook the strategies and business plans for all F&B outlets and Events & conferences.

FOR THE HOSPITALITY PROFESSIONAL

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