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Sarovar Hotels organises HR & Training Meet

HBI Staff | Hyderabad

Sarovar Hotels & Resorts has recently conducted its 5th HR & Training Meet at Sobit Sarovar Portico, Palolem, Goa. The event was scheduled from July 18 to July 20. Sarovar Hotels' Human Resource Managers and Training Managers from across India participated in this mega event. Nihar Mehta, GM, HR & Yash Raghav, GM, Training spearheaded the event this year.

The event started with Managing Director - Ajay Bakaya's address to the team. He underlined the post-Covid challenges that the industry is facing and threw light upon the changing scenario of the hospitality industry.

The theme of this event was based on Sarovar's Vision & Mission statements with a focus on Guests, Employees, Investors, Self-Development and the Community &

environment. The Chief Executive Officer, Jatin Khanna personally addressed all attendees at the event in Goa. Ex-Naval Commando Captain Suresh Babu was invited as a Guest Speaker to share his personal experience of a highly disciplined life and also the implementation of the same as a hotelier.

On the third day, the Beach Olympics were organised as a part of Engagement and Team Building Activities. A beach cleaning drive was initiated at the Palolem beach in Goa by the entire HR & Training team as a part of Sarovar's commitment to the environment and community. Also, as a responsible tourism partner, they took the pledge to support the community at its best and encourage others to follow sustainable practices.

Rajeev Ranjan, HR Manager - Nirvana



Sarovar Portico, Gorakhpur, was awarded the "The HR Manager of the Year" and Shailendra Dharme - Regional Training Manager, Western Region, was awarded the "The Trainer of the Year".

Speaking about the event Yash Raghav, GM-Training said, "HR & Training are the backbones of any operation and when it comes to hospitality it plays a much bigger role. In Sarovar, we make sure we are doing our best for our people & guests." ■

Mercure Hyderabad KCP brings Thai-RRIFIC culinary extravaganza at 'Terrace' lounge

Asmita Mukherjee | Hyderabad

Indians have always been quite experimental when it comes to food. Increased globalisation in recent years has made it possible for Indians to travel to far-off countries and acquire tastes in food that were previously unknown to the Indian palate. One of such countries which have witnessed a good number of Indian travellers is Thailand. The travelling Indians brought back home tales and experiences of flavourful Thai cuisine, which generated interest in the mystical delicacies among our fellow countrymen. Mercure Hyderabad

KCP understood this demand for authentic Thai cuisine and brought a slice of Thailand's gastronomical pleasures.

Mercure Hyderabad KCP recently hosted a culinary festival of traditional Thai delicacies named as Thai-RRIFIC Food Festival, at their new rooftop lounge - Terrace. The fresh breeze on the Terrace combined with the beautiful and soothing components of Thai cuisine like kaffir lime, galangal, and lemongrass was an enriching experience for the epicureans.

The specially designed Thai Food Festival had a wide range of varieties for both vegetarians and non-vegetarians.



Starting off with the flavourful burst of amuse-bouche, which means 'mouth amuser' in French - the deep-fried crispy chicken dumplings, aka, Thung Thong served with sweet chilli sauce made for a perfect entrée and left one wanting more. The

starter was perfectly paired with the seafood Tom Yum Soup, which drowned the diner in a hot ocean of flavours brimming with the whiff of lemongrass, basil and kaffir lime, perfectly binding together the prawns, mushrooms and broccoli.

The showstopper was the seafood platter, aka, 'Xeher Thale' consisting of seven wonderful fresh catches - Indian Butter Catfish, Anchovies, Pomfret, Scampi, Carb, King Fish and Indian Tuna. Perfectly marinated and grilled with white pepper, kaffir lime, garlic and black pepper, the seven stars stole one's attention towards them with both smell and taste.

The authentic main course of Khao Pad Nam Prik Pao and Gaeng Pa (Thai-style Chicken Fried Rice and Chicken Curry) transferred the diner straight away to the shores of Thailand with the perfectly cooked unique sticky rice and this was a dish that simply couldn't be missed.

Coming to a sweet closure, the irresistible dessert spread consisting of the double bonanza of sinful crispy fried flat noodles - Darsaan and Banana fritters topped with sesame seed and honey - Kluay Tod deserves a worthy mention. ■

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Kings Coffee makes a mark with their premium ready-to-drink coffee offerings

According to a report by Statista Research Department, coffee consumption amounted to 1210 thousand 60 kilogram bags across India during the financial year of 2022. This was an increase compared to last year. Despite being known as the tea nation, India is seeing a healthy increase in coffee consumption. The real fillip to coffee consumption in the country came post-2000, as a new generation of Indians developed a taste for the beverage. Indian millennials see coffee as a companion and source of comfort drink during a conversation, says a report. Committing to using this opportunity to extend its offerings, Kings Coffee entered the ready-to-drink (RTD) coffee market in 2017. Starting with the mission to provide coffee products that don't burden the wallet and are easily accessible to consumers across both online and offline channels, young and passionate coffee enthusiast **Abhishek Khurana** founded **SCK International**, which is the parent company behind Kings Coffee (KCC). **Asmita Mukherjee** spoke with Khurana to know about their future plans for the company.



Khurana started the conversation by mentioning that his love for coffee came into the picture during a business trip to Vietnam, where he saw a coffee shop after every 2 mins of distance and loved the coffee culture of the country. After coming back to India, Khurana saw a big gap in the RTD coffee segment. Khurana said, "I felt that there is a big scope globally as well as

strong and bitter taste. Khurana mentioned that their target clientele are gen-Z and millennials. The company sources its coffee from India, Vietnam, and Ecuador for its various offerings.

Khurana said that initially, they found it tough to maintain the quality and taste of pre-packaged coffee as, "We wanted to give the product a shelf life, so that it can be sold at the retail chains and supermarkets. As a

ups with QSRs and Hotels; Khurana said that they aspire to be the market leader when it comes to RTD coffee. He said, "Kings Coffee is available in 11 online retail stores. We are looking to place ourselves in maximum QSRs and hotels and want to make sure that Kings coffee should come into the mind of anyone who is looking for an RTD solution in the coffee space. We are already in talks with a few national hotel chains for their mini bar placements."

Kings Cold Coffee offers three types of varieties for coffee lovers –Premium Coffee (RTD) available in five varieties - mocha, original, hazelnut, latte and vanilla which comes in 280 ml bottles and is priced at INR 139; Lactose-free RTD, which is available in original and mocha flavours in 320ml premium cans at a price of INR 250; Hot Brew Coffee available in medium roast and dark roast varieties in

10ml sachet priced economically at INR 35. The brand is also planning to introduce three new products; coffee PODs, ground coffee and coffee beans.

Khurana mentioned that they are now planning to expand rapidly and are targeting INR 100 cr revenue by the end of 2023. "We are also planning to set up manufacturing units in India and Vietnam," he concluded. ■

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in India for the coffee market. Our vision was to create a home-grown premium brand that could serve both Indian and Vietnamese-origin coffee. That's when Kings Coffee was born."

While explaining KCC's offerings, Khurana elaborated that they plan to dominate the RTD coffee market by offering their USP of RTD Vietnamese coffee packaged in a glass bottle. The KCC coffee is made from Robusta beans, which have a

solution, we have designed our recipe from the biggest R&D Lab in Europe with the highest quality ingredients and in return, we got a superb product, with the least amount of preservatives. For maintaining the original taste, we use only 'AAA' Grade coffee beans which preserve the taste and aroma of the coffee, plus we use milk powder and coffee extract to increase the shelf life," he added.

The brand is now planning for B2B tie-

‘We want to change the perception of strong beer being cheap with our premium offerings’

Lone Wolf is a homegrown unconventional beer brand that believes in celebrating the free-spirited, free-willed individuals who have a will to carve out their own journey & unfollow the accepted norms. The new entrant in the beer market wants to capture the northern region before spanning out into the rest of India by offering its unmatched low enzyme beer. During the massive beer crisis that happened in Delhi due to the blazing weather and increased demand, beer disappeared from the city bars. The comparatively new brand Lone Wolf has managed to turn this market crisis into an opportunity by introducing its premium taste offerings to customers at the opportune time. In a conversation with **Asmita Mukherjee, Arijit Ghosh, VP-Sales, Lone Wolf** speaks about the opportunities and challenges that they face as a new brand.



Q How is Lone Wolf planning to stand out in the crowded beer market in India?

We aim to offer a premium quality beer at the most affordable price. We use high-quality ingredients such as German Hops, Imported Barley Malts, and very low enzymes to brew one of the smoothest strong beers available in the market. Our Mild Lager is a full malt beer with a distinct earthy aroma! These will surely provide a very different beer experience to our consumers.

Strong beer is very often perceived as cheap beer. We want to challenge this perception and are committed to bringing a premium drinking experience whether it is Strong or Mild.

Q Kindly brief us about the product lines and price points.

We have launched two variants now. We have a Lone Wolf Strong which is a high ABV beer with low bitterness and is extremely smooth. Unlike most other strong beers, this one “goes down easy”! Our second variant is the Lone Wolf Mild Lager. This is a full malt, light and crisp beer with a distinct earthy aroma. The all-day lager is appropriate to accompany with brunch or afternoon sessions. Our beers are distinctly low on enzymes or additives, which makes them one of the most naturally flavoured beers.

Our Lone Wolf Strong is available in 650 ml & 500 ml while our Lone Wolf Mild Lager is available in 650 ml, 500 ml & 330 ml. Since there is a difference in excise policies of various states the price ranges between INR 110 to INR 180 for the 500 ml & 650ml packaging sizes respectively. Our 330 ml pint is priced at INR 90 in Delhi.

We will be adding a wheat beer to our offering in the coming quarters. We are also planning to launch LABs and RTDs which currently occupy a very exciting space in the Alco-Bev industry.

Q Since alcoholic beverages have restrictions in advertising, how do you plan to introduce and promote the beverage?

We use the available social media platforms to promote our brand. Slowly but surely, we are increasing our engagement with the consumers and letting them know about us, our products, and our availability. Further, we are collaborating with various music & beer festivals, and gigs to make the consumer taste our beer. We are confident that post the tastings consumers will definitely appreciate what we have to offer.

Q Kindly elaborate on how you have managed to promote Lone Wolf in the massive beer crisis that Delhi faced recently?

The last couple of years has been really tough for the beer market. But this year, the sales are going through the roof! We believe that's due to the increasing acceptance of beer as a party and community beverage. Such a beer crisis only presents an opportunity for new brands like us to get shelf space. We are confident that our products and repeat demand will help us retain, consolidate and increase the shelf space further.

Q Where is your plant located?

We have a tie-up with a brewery in Punjab wherein we currently do our production. We will be expanding our tie-up for next year as we expect the brand to create a niche and have a much larger demand in the next season.

Q What are your plans for expansion and investment? Who are the current investors of Lone Wolf?

We are new entrants to the industry and hence we are taking it slow. Our present focus is hence on increasing our sales and distribution footprint across the North India market. Currently, we are operating only in Delhi & Haryana. Chandigarh & Punjab will start next month. Post that we will be looking to expand into UP & Himachal. Currently, we are a boot-strapped and self-funded company.

Q Do you have any plans to open new plants in other areas apart from the northern region?

Our focus right now is on the North Indian markets only and we want to increase our penetration there before looking elsewhere. We have aspirations to be a pan India brand but we are approaching it as a marathon & not a sprint. Slowly but surely! ■

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HOTELS, HOSPITALS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Much more needs to be done to blend hospitality and medical institutes in the wake of growing medical tourism

When a newbie three-star hotel in Delhi leased itself into a maternity hospital, there was hardly a flutter since this happened in the throes of a stumbling economy following the Covid conundrum. However, the opportunities for the hospitality industry that simmer within the medical business need to be given a closer look.

Medical tourism is big business and understandably, given its rather distinct character, remains on the fringe of tourism sensibility and understanding. This has got to change.

Just recently, the government has strengthened its push by expanding its e-tourism VISA regime to include medical visas in which foreigners can now stay on for over six months at a go.

Those in the know have already predicted a 110% growth in the medical tourism sector in the next few years. By 2030 alone, India is expected to treat over 3 million international patients. It's time they are perceived as tourists as well.

Infrastructure wise, Maharashtra is at the forefront of medical tourism in the country. The rest of India has to brace itself for a strong push if it wants to not be left out of this gravy train.

A collaboration or bridge between the hospitality and medical tourism industry is necessary. The expertise of hospitality professionals needs to be diverted towards medical tourism in efforts to build a skilled workforce. While medical tourism and hospitality programs and courses are available in institutes, the need of the hour is to make it more specific, focused, in tune with modern trends and in sync with the medical and healing institutions. Not only hospitality, travel specialists, operators, front office managers, housekeeping and the entire gamut of kitchen operators and managers have to be integrated in the process.

Asian, African, and European countries are keen on Indian healthcare institutes and with the renewed push from the government and embassies there this business is set to create a revolution of sorts.

This doesn't mean hotels in the red convert themselves or sell themselves to hospitals. The hospitality world might want to pick its best brains to seek links, opportunities and avenues to chip in.



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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'Sustainability is the key focus area of Mercure Hyderabad KCP'

The Mercure Hyderabad KCP, which is conveniently situated in the posh locality of Banjara Hills in Hyderabad, is known for its top-notch service and lip-smacking food. In recent times, the hotel has been seeing much better growth, even better than the 2019 pre-covid period. The hotel is also planning to reduce its carbon footprint by eliminating single-use plastic and to make it a reality the hotel is soon going to introduce its very own bottling plant. **Asmita Mukherjee** met with **Soumitra Pahari, General Manager, Mercure Hyderabad KCP** to know his future plans for the property.

Highlighting the USP of Mercure Hyderabad KCP, Hyderabad which makes the hotel stand out from the crowded market, Pahari said, "There are three points which make us different from others. First is that we always depict and promote local culture and art through Mercure which is the motto of Accor. Each and every room of Mercure Hyderabad KCP promotes local art and craft.

Second is that we always boast about our service. Our guest satisfaction score is paramount for us and it is always above 90%. Be it a domestic or international guest, we give them all equal priority.

And the third point is food. In my opinion, what makes a hotel stand out in the crowded space is not its rooms but food and top-notch service. Good food can build up a hotel's USP. That's the reason we put a lot of emphasis on food. Mercure Hyderabad KCP consist of one all-day-dining – Cayenne, one coffee shop, IQ - The Lounge Bar and the newly introduced Terrace Lounge. All of them are known for great food. We bring to the table local fare and international cuisine. We try to bring in different experiences together by organising food festivals every quarter."

The differentiating factors adopted by Mercure Hyderabad KCP have paid off and combined with the post-Covid return-to-travel phenomenon being observed all around, have resulted in tremendous business growth. Pahari shared his joy by saying, "Since April 2022, we have been doing better, even better than 2019. Our ADR is just above INR 4,000. We are driving occupancy at 80-85% month on month. On the other hand, F&B revenue and room revenue both are at 40-45%. Our room and F&B business contribute to most of the revenue." Commenting on the guest mix, Pahari stated, "We receive 20% airline crew, 20% MICE, 20% corporate travellers and the

rest of the 40% consists of medical tourist and retail customers which we get through OTAs and ACCOR website bookings. We see that leisure travellers numbers are very less. We also receive a lot of medical tourists who are long-haul travellers. Their minimum stay is 7 days. We get 30% of our bookings from our own website while from OTA we receive 20%. We also host a lot of weddings and our venues can accommodate up to 300 people."

To further fuel this blazing growth rate, the hotel has launched new products recently,



aligned with Pahari's belief in the motto – 'the only constant in life is change'. Elaborating on the new products Pahari said, "In the last six months we had introduced a Spa which is a B2B tie-up with Somara Wellness and launched a rooftop lounge called Terrace. The lounge is very thoughtfully designed keeping the millennials in mind. The Terrace overlooking Hussain Sagar Lake, Birla Mandir, and Necklace Road is the perfect spot for a weekend hangout."

In the middle of all this, Pahari is also mindful of reducing the environmental footprint of Mercure Hyderabad KCP. Pahari is trying to bring about radical changes to the way the property does business through various sustainability initiatives. Pahari shared a few of those initiatives by saying, "We have introduced electric vehicle chargers to our property. The transport service which we use for the hotel has electric vehicles.



Through this, we plan to reduce our carbon footprint. We are also planning to eliminate all single-use plastic, such as toiletries - shampoo, conditioner, cream bottles, shaving kits, earbuds, toothbrushes, and toothpaste. We have tied up with a local Hyderabad-based start-up called Nevo for supplying sustainable products. We will be replacing plastic combs with wooden combs, and plastic toothbrushes with wooden toothbrushes. We are also starting our own in-house water bottling plant, which can produce around 700 to 1000 bottles per day."

While discussing the various challenges that Pahari has been facing, he commented that the pricing of the hospitality industry in Hyderabad is a dampener, and the pricing is not growing at the rate that it should be. "The room cost and the food pricing, both are not at par with Bengaluru, Delhi, or Mumbai. We still have a lot to catch up on. That is something that probably the hospitality industry of the city should work together for a solution," he added. A key challenge being faced by the industry in current times is that of staff crunch. But Mercure Hyderabad KCP under the aegis of Pahari has adopted several key steps to counter this crunch and has been successful in mitigating this issue to a great extent. "We are pretty content. We are recruiting local talents. We had increased our associate's salary twice in FY 21-22, and now wage-wise, we are at par with other industries, so our associates are happy to work with us," he concluded. ■

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“We foresee a 60% expansion growth in FY 2023-2024”

Platform 65, a train-themed multicuisine restaurant with origins in Hyderabad, has witnessed exemplary love from its patrons since the launch of its first outlet. Platform65 is the brainchild of Sadgun Patha, Managing Director and Co-Founder of the restaurant and is led by Mr. Sarveswara Rao, Founder, Mr. Vinodh, Co-Founder and Mr. Madhu, Co-Founder. With a rapid growth curve over the last few years, the brand which values quality as its core and adopts innovation as its mantra is now spreading across India. In a free-wheeling conversation with **Asmita Mukherjee, Sadgun Patha, MD & Co-Founder of Platform 65** shares the brand's unique journey till now and his plans to take the brand to the next level.



Q What are the specialities of Platform 65?

Platform 65 is a unique train-themed restaurant, and all of our outlets are having different sub-themes under the main train theme. The Kondapur outlet has world-famous places as sub-themes, the Kompally outlet has a mountain sub-theme, whereas, KPHB which is also our first outlet showcases the famous railway stations of India. So, a patron must visit all our outlets to enjoy the ambience which is different across all our outlets.

Along with this we also have a diverse menu to offer, which has almost 500 dishes and includes cuisine spread across Telugu, Tandoor, Chinese, North Indian, and many more. Our aim is to satisfy patrons with good food and for that, it is important to retain our quality across all our outlets. We train all our Chefs in our headquarters so that our customers can get the same taste and quality in each of our outlets.

Q What kind of a growth rate do you foresee in FY 23-24, and how are you planning to drive that growth?

Due to the love of our patrons, we have achieved rapid growth in a short while and foresee 60% expansion growth in FY 2023-2024. As a brand, we have a very good repeat clientele number – almost 27-30%, which is a testimony of customer loyalty to our brand. Currently, we have 7 branches and in the next quarter, we are planning to launch 4 outlets, one each in Vizianagaram, Warangal, Rajahmundry, and Bengaluru. The work is going on at a smooth pace and we are just waiting for the inauguration to happen. After

that within the next 6 months, we will be targeting Chennai, Tirupati, and Nellore. The recce is progressing well and we are on the verge of finalising the location. We are also planning to introduce Platform 65 in Mumbai and Delhi soon.

Q What are some of the innovative ideas that you have adopted at Platform 65?

Covid-19 made contactless food delivery a fad. But even before Covid struck, we had



already adopted contactless food delivery from the kitchen to the table by transporting cooked food on trains directly onto the customer table. If the customers want, they can enjoy the food by unloading the food from the train on the table and self-serving themselves, or they can also ask for assistance from the waiters.

We have a team of 4 members who travel pan India to aggregate innovative ideas which can be adopted by Platform 65. In the food business, innovation is the need of the hour which makes your brand stand out from the competitors.

We have recently introduced our own food delivery app. By ordering through the Platform

65 app, customers can avail of a discount of 15% along with free deliveries within a radius of 5kms from our outlet. Another innovative aspect is that we have also introduced our membership card which offers a flat 15 % discount for the loyal customers in any of our outlets, and along with that, we also provide personalised gifts to them as our token of appreciation.

We attract groups by providing a discount to corporates. For any corporate parties or meetings, we provide them with a flat 10% discount. We also have our catering unit which can be booked for a minimum of 30-40 pax.

Q What trends do you foresee in Hyderabad's F&B space?

COVID-19 has made people more health-conscious. We understand that this trend will grow in the years to come. Many of the dishes that we offer are following old healthy recipes. One such example is our Chitti Muthyalu Pulao which consists of Samba variety rice along with chicken or mutton. Chitti Muthyalu or small pearl rice is rich in Magnesium, Fibre, Folic Acid, Calcium, and Iron which increases the immune system strengthens muscles and makes the skin look shiny. We recommend this dish to each of our patrons who are health conscious.

Q What are the B2B partnerships that you are planning to have?

Right now we don't have any B2B tie-ups but in the future, we are of course planning to explore this avenue, as we think it is a great way to promote and expand. ■

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Cyber Security Absolute Necessity

The recent data breach at a global hospitality company revealed the insecure cyber environment prevalent in the hotel and restaurant industry. This attack and several high-profile attacks in rapid continuity have made cyber security a priority for the hospitality industry. **Asmita Mukherjee** spoke with cyber experts in the hospitality industry and tried to delve into this concerning situation faced by hotels and restaurants by understanding the ground realities.

According to industry experts, the attack surfaces which are also the entry points of the properties can lead to unauthorised access to any system that is lying under the entry points. Elaborating on attack surfaces, Ravi Kant Prasad, IT Manager, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla said, "Attack surfaces are defined as all possible entry points and vulnerabilities that can lead to unauthorized access into any system. In the modern scenario, proliferation of Internet of Things (IoT), increased use of mobile technologies, devices, web applicable & network nodes as well as poor security structure of third parties can lead to multiple potential cyber security threats.

Prasad added that surfaces can be attacked in various manners

such as digitally, physically, or through social engineering. Digital attacks prey upon vulnerabilities due to weak passwords, exposed application programming interfaces, poor coding or poorly maintained software, and default operating system settings. Physical attack surfaces encompass endpoint devices such as USB ports, mobile devices, desktops, and laptops. Social Engineering attacks rely heavily on human-to-human interaction and involve manipulating people to gain unauthorized access to system networks by identifying loopholes and breaking security protocols.

Echoing similar thoughts, Shiju Nair, Associate Director of IT, The Fern Hotels & Resorts, explained, "Attack surfaces are categorized as physical or digital. The modern attack surface is both digital and external because digital transformation has increased online presence via web-based SaaS applications and cloud services. Hotel software comprising of modules such as PMS, POS, MMS, FAS etc. are implemented both on the cloud and onsite. Therefore by exploiting these attack surfaces a hacker can carry out a security breach in various critical ways that could impact the vulnerable areas of a hotel such as point of sale/ payment card attack, customer data/ identity theft, and DarkHotel hacking."

Unique Challenges

Hotels have a huge database that includes the sensitive personal information data of customers which can be domestic or international, their credit/debit card details, their preferences and so much more. This database is very much vulnerable, and if that database is exposed it is a big challenge for the whole industry.

Elaborating on the common types of attacks that try to steal customer data, Nair said, "Using attack vectors such as phishing,

ransomware, malware, etc. malicious actors target the software systems and steal the customer data/ identity of the guest which is a major cyber security challenge for a hotel as compared to other industries.”

“Cyber and data security breach is a worldwide phenomenon and not restricted to any one particular industry. Hackers tend to target businesses that involve dealing with the personal data of the customers. Day-to-day operations of the hospitality industry include a collection of personal and financial data such as payment card details, addresses, phone numbers, identification-related documents, etc, which are a hacker’s jackpot,” added Prasad.

Jeevasuriyan. P, Assistant Manager - IT, Mercure Chennai Sriperumbudur elaborated on some unique aspects of the hospitality industry which make it an easy target for hackers, by saying, “Hospitality companies which use old technology, platforms, and applications, delay the periodic upgradation of IT Infrastructure, are more vulnerable when combined with the exposure to a high number of external community/people in the hospitality industry, as compared to other industries, where access to the premise is majorly for authorised internal teams / employees. In hotels/restaurants anyone can have access to different areas and services.



Ravi Kant Prasad
IT Manager, Crowne Plaza
New Delhi Okhla



Shiju Nair
Associate Director of IT,
The Fern Hotels & Resorts



Jeevasuriyan. P
Assistant Manager -
IT, Mercure Chennai
Sriperumbudur

Increased adoption

Recent findings indicate that during the pandemic, 81% of global organizations experienced increased cyber threats with 79% experiencing downtime. The pandemic had become an opportunity for malicious actors to step up cyber threats in the hospitality industry.

Prasad said that most of the organizations shifted to work from home or hybrid models during the pandemic, which made the systems more vulnerable. “As a measure, stringent systems and access scrutinizes are being conducted prior to allowing the shifted systems back to the network. The digitisation of communications and processes to minimize common touch points, especially in the hospitality industry has increased the risk of cyber-attack by an order of magnitude.” Prasad added that as an organization, they have always worked towards creating a culture of Data Safety and Cyber Security by deploying advanced technology, and periodic testing of threat detection and response capabilities. Along with all of these, they have also emphasized the training of their team members. “However, as a proactive measure, we reassessed our security systems - both physical and digital to identify any new cyber risks post-pandemic. This included system audits and updates,

examining critical supply chains, examining digital capabilities of various business functions, revisiting access mechanisms, and refresher training for team members,” he added.

Echoing similar thoughts, Nair said, “There has been a tremendous increase in adoption in cyber security measures after Covid 19. During this phase, most of the industry had opted to work from home and switched to the online platform via SaaS applications and cloud services in which various measures were taken by the IT team to provide connectivity to their internal network from outside which has also created more attack surface area for cybercriminals to penetrate through the same channel and hack the system.”

Jeevasuriyan said that his property had implemented the latest security measures, viz. upgraded hardware and software platforms, devices with updated firmware, Operating systems with the latest patch updates, Fire eye, PCI-DSS compliance, etc.

Measures Taken

The hospitality industry as a precaution has been taking a lot of measures to avoid big blunders in the future. For instance, Prasad mentioned that Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla (IHG), treats data safety and cyber security as one of the most integral

parts of its DNA. “Few of our best practices include but are not limited to - ensuring that all our systems are upgraded with the latest security updates. We have also prohibited the download of any unauthorized applications or programs on the company systems. We encrypt users’ data and verify private data to ensure safety. Segregation of data is extremely important and hence we do not connect all networks under one system. We have created an access hierarchy and access requirements mechanism to ensure access and data relevancy go hand in hand. We have heavily invested in network

protection- the latest firewalls, and next-generation anti viruses to ensure maximum security. As a policy, we only collaborate with those vendors who meet international standards when it comes to data privacy and handling. As a part of our contracts and agreements, data safety requirements remain one of the major focus areas. Reinforcement of existing security processes and reviewing them on a regular basis helps us identify risks and threats and formulate resolution strategies. Creating a culture of awareness and responsibility via mandatory online and offline training becomes the most important factor to ensure integrity and security for us,” he informed.

Nair added that firewall protection, SSL protocols, and antivirus are the most important things to focus on. He added that his brand also practices the separation of admin networks and guest networks, which are kept distinct from each other using VLAN, both logically and physically. To be more vigilant, they keep on monitoring and scanning the network on a regular basis for any threat detection, and last but not least the brand has made sure that IT security policies provided by them are strictly followed by the users within the company. ■

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GST levy will stunt budget hotels recovery in India, opines GlobalData

HBI Staff | Hyderabad

Following the news that The Indian Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council has levied a 12% tax on small hotels and accommodation facilities charging room rent up to INR1,000 (USD 12.5) per day effective from 18 July 2022;

Anjali Singh, Consumer Analyst at GlobalData, said, “The move will deal a heavy blow to India’s budget hotel industry, which saw annual revenues nosedive by 70% in 2020* due to COVID-19. However, an intensive national vaccination program and the subsequent easing of COVID-19 restrictions boosted consumer confidence and the hotel industry recovered in 2021. This positive consumer sentiment carried over into 2022, with 51% of Indian respondents in GlobalData’s Q2 2022 survey* describing their spending on hotels and accommodation as being quite/very high, compared to 49% of respondents in the Q1 2022 survey.”

“The revival in domestic tourism has fueled the demand for affordable leisure and homestay accommodations, thereby

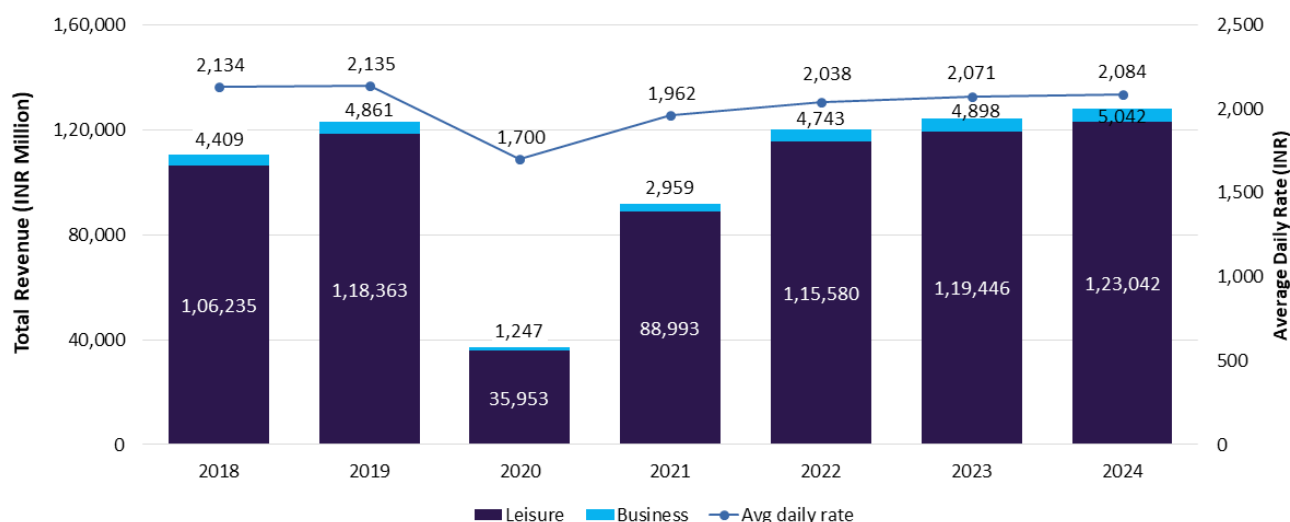
spurring the recovery of the budget hotels. Consequently, the overall revenue of the Indian budget hotels skyrocketed annually by 147% in 2021***. The average daily rate of budget hotels also rebounded by 15.4% in 2021.”

“However, the GST Council’s decision to impose a 12% tax on hotels, lodges and clubs with daily room rent of INR1,000 (USD 12.5) or less will push up the overall travel costs for low-budget guests, who are already tackling spiraling food and fuel inflation. As a result, guest traffic will be redirected to small-scale hotels with annual revenues under INR 2 million (USD 25,067), which are exempted from GST. In areas where such facilities are insufficient or inadequate, travelers may be tempted to seek unregulated accommodation, or even curtail their travel plans.”

“The hike in room rent will thereby disrupt the recovery of budget hotels, many of which were on the brink of permanent closure during the peak of the pandemic. However, the overall Indian hospitality sector will grow in 2022 as domestic travel increases. Staycations, pilgrimages, weekend leisure trips, and social gatherings are once again becoming a part of life for most Indians after a two-year hiatus.” ■



India: Revenue Evolution of Budget Hotels by Leisure and Business Customer Types, 2018–24



Source: GlobalData Travel & Tourism Intelligence Center–Market Analyzers, accessed in July 2022

GlobalData.

The recovery in the Indian hotel sector is back on course says HVS Anarock report

HBI Staff | Hyderabad

According to HVS Anarock's Hotels & Hospitality Overview (H2O) July 2022, the recovery in the Indian hotel sector is back on course, with a marginal increase in hotel occupancy in Jun 2022, compared to May 2022, while average rates remained stable. According to the report, Occupancy, ADR, and RevPAR were all higher than their pre-pandemic levels for the month.

The report also said that in Jun 2022, Chandigarh and Pune had the highest occupancy rates in the range of 75-77%, followed by Bengaluru (74-76%). During the month, Goa recorded the highest average rate (INR 8,500 - INR 10,500) in the country, followed by Mumbai (INR 7,500 - INR 9,500). However, Domestic air traffic in India fell by 8% in Jun 2022, compared to the previous month, mainly due to the seasonality factor. ■

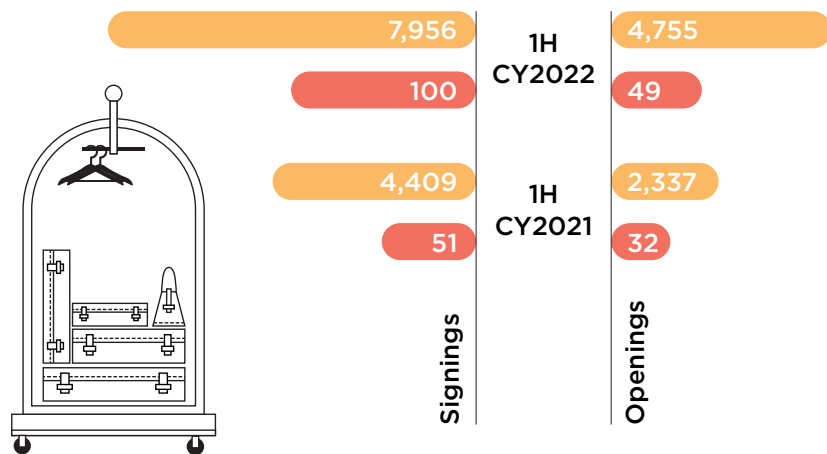
Branded Hotels³ (1H CY2022)



By Keys



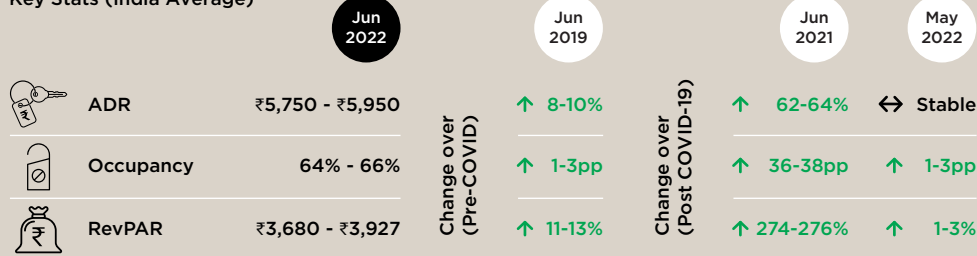
By Properties



³ Data collated by HVS from 21 hotel operators and media reports as of 25th July 2022

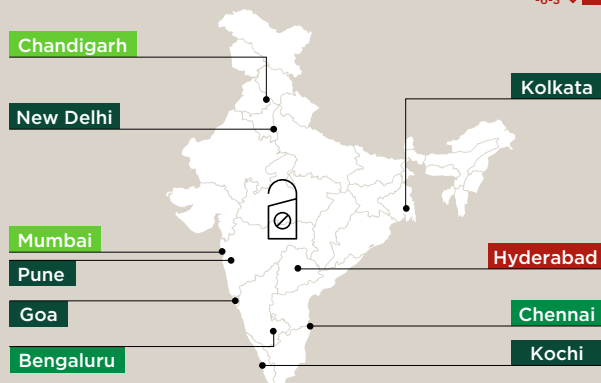
Hotels Sector

Key Stats (India Average)



Occupancy Change¹

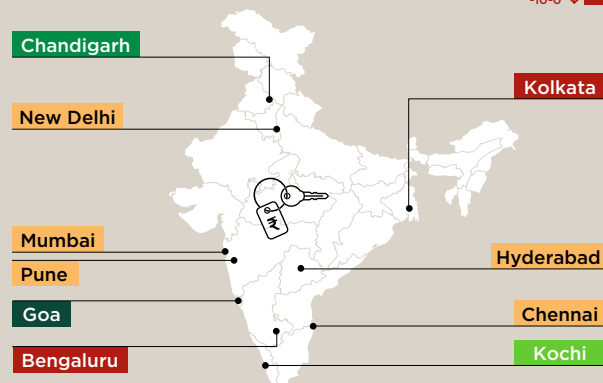
Key Indian Markets (Change over Jun 2019)



¹ Occupancy change in percentage points (pp)

ADR Change²

Key Indian Markets (Change over Jun 2019)



² ADR change in percentage (%)

Source: HVS Research

'Kitchen is not just a place to cook, but also a place to exchange ideas, entertain and engage guests'

Q Could you please tell us more about your restaurant brands and what their specialities are?

The Westin as a brand is 'wellness-focused' and this ideology forms the key pillar of all our restaurants at The Westin Mumbai Garden City. The 'eat well' factor is well reflected in all our culinary outlets.

Kangan, a fine-dine regal restaurant, showcases the symphony of rustic Indian flavours from the North-West Frontier region of Peshawar and Awadh in an exquisite ornate ambience bejewelled with sublime views of the city.



Vikas Singh, who has recently joined **The Westin Mumbai Garden City** as the **Executive Chef** thinks that as a chef, one always has to push the borders and try innovative and progressive dishes to be proficient with the evolving trends in order to improve the guests' dining experiences. According to Singh, evolving culinary crafts can now be showcased artistically in the form of live kitchens and theatrics while cooking. **Asmita Mukherjee** spoke with Singh to know his plans for the hotel's culinary department.

Seasonal Tastes is an all-day restaurant where one can indulge in expansive buffets, a fine mélange of regional and global fare, along with a special dedicated 'eat-well' menu. Prego is a speciality restaurant showcasing the most authentic and finest handcrafted Italian cuisine perfectly paired with premium wines, in a warm welcoming ambience.

Apart from these 3 iconic outlets, we also have Eighteen The Lounge, befitting to unwind with crafted cocktails and light bar bites. Pronto is a café cum boulangerie where one can make a quick stop to savour artisanal sips and delectable patisserie goodies.

Q What is your vision for the future of The Westin Mumbai Garden City in terms of food? How do you want to take things forward?

Our brand vision revolves around the core belief of 'wellness' and this lays the foundation of our culinary curation as well. We focus on crafting

and serving traditional food philosophy in a fun, contemporary format. Bearing in mind the evolving culinary scene and consumer palate, we adapt to newness and freshness while retaining the originality. We are mindful of their flavour and health needs and want to deliver not just food, but an epicurean experience that is engaging and memorable in every way.

Q Why do you think the visual aspect in F&B business is so important?

It's a known fact that we eat with our eyes first. The visual appeal is perhaps the primary impression before the actual tasting experience of the food. The presentation strikes the right chord with the sensory thoughts leading to better taste perception. Hence, so much effort is now given to the art of plating to make it intriguing and enticing for the consumer.

Q How do you see innovation in the food industry? What do you bring to the table in order to innovate?

In today's day and age, we are constantly looking to find healthy and nutritious offerings that are not just appetizing and exciting but also sustainable. Healthier alternatives like mock meat, tempeh, koji, and so on are being experimented with to give better food innovation. We are coming up with novel ways to suit the evolving needs and play with elements and techniques.

As chefs, we always have to push the boundaries and try innovative and progressive dishes to be proficient with the evolving trends and continuously improve guests' dining experiences. Conceptualizing a menu, maintaining quality standards, revamping skills and the sheer passion to keep learning have always been the focus. I strive to mould my team in the same way and pass on my torch to them in terms of culinary vision.

Q What changes in the new normal are you observing in terms of consumer mindset while ordering food?

Every day we wake up to new information and try to adapt while also catering to consumer needs. The shift that I've observed in the new normal is how health-conscious the consumer has become and now gives importance to a holistic way of living. Everyone has that awareness now that one needs to invest in their health, and this mindset is also reflected while they order their food. A sense of enquiry has seeped into their minds wherein they want to know what they eat, where it comes from, its nutritional factors, and so on. Since the Westin brand already focuses on its core pillar of 'wellness', we have merely intensified this message through our menu offerings.

Q Where do you see kitchens evolve in the next five years?

The evolving kitchen trends have also emerged because now it's a belief that the kitchen is not just a place to cook, but also a place to exchange ideas, entertain and engage guests. The technological innovations have standardized the process leading to quality monitoring. The culinary craft can now be showcased artistically in the form of live kitchens and theatrics while cooking, thus giving the diner a thorough sensory and immersive experience. The kitchen now becomes the stage, the chef becomes the artist and your plate becomes his art! ■

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FutureScope #3 | Reviving Hospitality Education

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

My previous writing explored reasons for ongoing loss of interest, aside unfilled talent aspirations in hospitality careers. This essay focuses on enhancing careers by identifying critical success factors for industry attractiveness. Renewing operations learning, creating enterprise solutions and building synergistic platforms for knowledge sharing is now imperative. Exploring network learning channels through creating corporate sponsored universities is an open ended solution. Creating industry think tanks, benchmarking sectoral models and

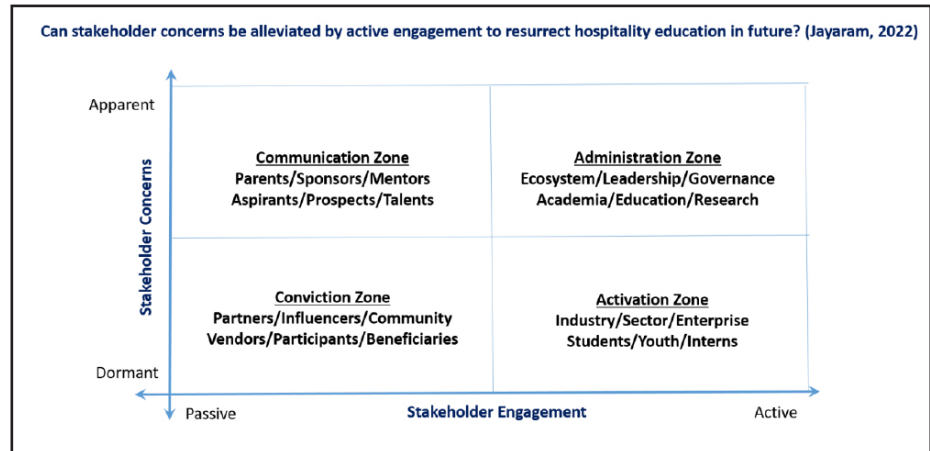
incubating new industry-led employment-driven curriculum is crucial, as operations leads educational experiences. The aggregation, curation and creation of new models of content will defer latent redundancy. Shared research can enhance solutions across brands

and industries on a synergized best practice platform. The agenda that leaders need to actively drive is innovating on contemporary learning with an incubation mind set till the right solutions crystallize.

1. Conviction Zone: Concerns felt by parents, influencers and community remain murmurs and must be extracted as problem statements. Vendors, industry participants and beneficiaries engage passively. Their inactivity obscures an expression of easily controllable issues. Every effort must be made to communicate transparently to bring stakeholders on board with plans.

2. Communication Zone: Open conversations and interactive participation of sponsoring parents and mentors can uncover lateral approaches to problem solving. Future aspirants, participants and beneficiaries can reveal expectations that can be openly evaluated for validity. Passive engagement grows discussion, but does not contribute to solution modelling.

3. Administration Zone: Leaders and policy makers need to adopt facilitation control and empower active actors to incubate relief systems. The expertise of



academia and education partners with ongoing research can be a basis to reinforce disruptive growth. Active leadership, empowered implementation and complete stakeholder buy-in signifies progress.

4. Activation Zone: Visible corrective action must be initiated to change industry-internship working conditions. Active guidance and ideation will result in building future solutions co-opted with students, youth and interns, empathetically co-creating with their aspirations. Change activation must be ground up, prioritizing easily actioned activities in organizations.

Talent and culture leaders in industry need an accurate future jobs forecast, to incubate a new talent pipeline. This base must be sourced and sharpened creatively, aside first training the faculty that strengthens capability! Benchmarking, defining new standards and creating an open knowledge repository for universal access is a good step. Learning needs to get unbundled from being cumbersome to become unbounded. Short formats, stackable credits, accreditation of prior learning will create value for experience. A veteran mentor data base country wide, with global external experts for short student interactions, will be a shot in the arm. This interactive coaching system will keep talent on track. This ecosystem needs to devise a new talent strategy by renewing skill standards. New role JDs, hiring JS along job content updates to fulfil future aspirations is mandated. Disrupting old education modes with asynchronous, blended, hybrid and phygital learning is an imperative now.

Enculturating respect for the goals of future talents requires current leaders to redesign

workplace dynamics. Invigorating routines must be incubated in all learning systems, irrespective of the format. An acceptance of discontinuous learning and flexibility with enrichment of learning experiences outside existing boundaries will bring hope. Innovative work place incentives and flexible gig work schedules must allow time for growth, reflection and social needs. Sensitive leaders must learn to live in the skin of their teams to feel their predicaments. Supportive development systems that plan, map and execute growth strategies for talents, must be embedded as organizational enterprise solutions. Focus on talent lifetime value irrespective of linear or lateral growth will lead to retention strategies. New approaches for talent attraction and retention through shared learning resources must begin!

There is no short term panacea, as leading and facilitating change is the only answer. Innovating and enhancing the ecosystem to deliver better is an urgent action. System limitations have to be overcome or they will overwhelm as inertia sets in. Collectivism will create synergy and strength to cope with the intensity as the situation exacerbates. Facilitating planned change is better than meeting forced change without being prepared. Sector leaders need to galvanize action teams and incorporate policy changes. Talent and culture leaders need to evolve a collective universal solution for all affected. Creating a learning culture together is the only way forward to enhance our declining domain strength! ■

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

Hyderabad - based QSR chain Zomoz scaling aggressively to capture the momo market

Asmita Mukherjee | Hyderabad

Zomoz, a momo QSR chain, is a brainchild of **Shouvik Dhar**, started its journey in 2015 with 6 employees in a small two-bedroom apartment in Hyderabad with the hope of bringing the joy and flavor of authentic momos and dumplings to the people in the city.

Dhar, an Engineer, ex-DRDO, and ISB Hyderabad alumni is a passionate entrepreneur who started Zomoz with the vision of introducing a QSR focused on momos. Zomoz has come a long way in the last 7 years, starting with its first outlet, an 8x8 kiosk located at Inorbit Mall Cyberabad to a commendable presence in 70 locations across 9 major cities Bengaluru, Chennai, Mysore, Mangaluru, Indore, Vijayawada, Mumbai, Pune, and Kolkata, apart from Hyderabad.

Dhar shared the journey of Zomoz, by saying, "Hailing from the North-Eastern part of the country, I always wanted to represent the food from North-East, and so despite having no prior experience in the F&B business, we started Zomoz at Inorbit mall in Hyderabad with authentic chefs - straight from North-East India. As our sales started picking up, we received a request from PVR to serve our momos to around 20 odd multiplexes of PVR in Hyderabad. That is the moment when we understood that if we went by the traditional method of momo making, we would never be able to

scale up since the momo-making process is a very tedious one and lots of effort and skilled labour are needed to make perfect momos. Then I started searching for process automation to cut back the effort. We had ordered momo machines from China. Handling and production were going well but the quality of momos made by these machines was not up to the mark. We never wanted the degradation of quality to affect our brand. I put good use of my background in engineering to re-engineer those momo-making machines and it started giving the results which we wanted. It took us 8-9 months to remodel those machines but the results were spell bounding."

Explaining the various facets of automation adopted by Zomoz, Dhar informed, "Now our production is totally automated and there are different machines to process ingredients starting from washing, cutting, chopping, mixing, dough making, momo forming to making veg and non-veg fillings. Our Robot Cooking wok machines do perfect momo filling. The machines which can be pre-programmed use Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Robotics to do the job. There is a steaming chamber where we steam the momos and then we blast freeze them to increase the shelf life without using a single preservative. The entire chain of machines has the primary role of making juicy momos in our central kitchen which is located in Hyderabad. After the packaging is done, we have logistics that deliver the momos to 9 cities. For the logistics, we have tied up with

Jyoti International Foods Pvt. Ltd."

Covid-19 had a profound impact on charting the future direction of the brand. Elaborating further, Dhar said, "In the aftermath of the pandemic, we had to shut our operations. During those trying times, I realised the importance of automation, as most of our skilled labour left for their hometown. In September 2020, we joined hands with Rebel Foods. They are like landlords to us. The relationship with Rebel foods is a symbiotic relationship between the two companies. We can utilise the kitchens of Rebel Foods and scale all over India, while Rebel Foods gets tenets pan India. We introduced 3 kitchens in Bengaluru with the help of Rebel Foods. Now we are at 20 cloud kitchens in Bengaluru, all are run by Rebel and rented by us. We also have a retail outlet in Bengaluru, and in the future, we are planning to open more retail outlets in Bengaluru," he added.

Commenting on the funding of Zomoz, Dhar said that he himself had infused around INR 3 cr in the company. He said, "Rebel Foods is the only external investor in our company, and they have invested INR 11 cr. In the future, we are planning to raise funds from various investors."

The brand is focusing more on sustaining a profitable business. Dhar explained some key aspects, "For instance, we are able to generate INR 6 lacs from a 50 sqft kiosk and our idea is to replicate this model everywhere. We don't spend too much money on our outlets. Our model is very simple and very scalable. We can break even in a city with only a single outlet. As we are automated and have minimised human labour." Elaborating further on the scalability of Zomoz, Dhar said, "Zomoz is the most scalable food chain ever. Due to our automated production and reliable supply chain, we work with 100% efficiency.

While explaining his plans for introducing new products Dhar said, "We are also piloting a line of Baos in Hyderabad. We are going to scale Baos under a different brand name pan India very soon. As we already have a presence in cities so introducing a brand won't be a problem for us. We are also planning to introduce Crystal Dumplings under Zomoz and Ravioli under a different brand very soon. As a brand, we are very reasonably priced and our offerings range from INR 110 to INR 170. We call ourselves the value for money brand. Every year we are doubling our revenues. We have been growing at 120% Y-o-Y for the past three years."

The brand also has aggressive plans to extend B2B partnerships and corporate food court tie-ups, "We are in talks with Deloitte, Hunger Box, and many other corporate food courts at the moment for corporate tie-ups and for B2B tie-ups, we are in talks with Compass Group and Sodexo. Apart from these, we are also in talks about white-label momos with two conglomerate leaders."

Commenting on the momo market in India and Zomoz's growth and market presence, Dhar said, "Our topline is at INR 24 cr and we are planning to target INR 48 cr for next year. The momo market is very fragmented and unorganised and is an INR 3000 cr market. In Hyderabad, we are the market leader, while in Bengaluru we own 10% of the market, again in Mysore we are the market leader with 10%. We want to focus on Tier-II and Tier-III. Down the line, in the next 3-4 years we want to be the most penetrated brand in the country." ■

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Shouvik Dhar, Founder, Zomoz

Fairfield by Marriott, Mumbai

Strategically located less than a kilometer away from the Mumbai International Airport and inspired by the beauty of simplicity and warm hospitality.



Fairfield by Marriott Mumbai International Airport features 205 spacious, modern and well-equipped rooms and suites, including a 68 square-meter Presidential Suites. The hotel features two signature restaurants and bar. Mado Mado, the expansive all-day dining restaurant featuring local delicacies, global cuisine and interactive live stations. Bisou is the hotel's lobby lounge that provides guests a space to indulge in cocktails and snacks. Guests who are looking to relax after a long day can enjoy by the poolside, overlooking the views of the airport runway at SORA. The hotel also provides 'The Market' for guests to have convenient access to drinks and snacks on the go.

The hotel also features 3,218 square feet of function space, suitable for meetings, conferences and social events. Guests can maintain their daily routines at the 24/7 fitness centre featuring state-of-the-art cardio equipment and free weights. The Market, a 24-hour convenience store in the hotel is available for guests to shop for daily essentials.

Golden Tulip, Delhi

Golden Tulip, New Delhi, Harinagar is located in the heart of West Delhi, close to the district center and in easy access to the business hubs of Delhi NCR.

The hotel has aesthetically designed 69 rooms offering modern comfort and enhancing guest experience. The hotel features Café Tulip- an all-day dining restaurant, offering local and global cuisines and Chill Bar where guests can relax and relish snacks and beverages.



Ginger Hotel, Goregaon

The hotel offers seven multipurpose events and meetings spaces for hosting from large social gatherings to board meetings. These spaces are perfect for all celebrations and events.

With 102 rooms, the re-imagined Ginger Goregaon is strategically located off the Western Express Highway, with easy access to NESCO IT Park, the NESCO Exhibition Centre (Bombay Exhibition Centre) and Film City. The hotel features Ginger's newly designed signature rooms, a fitness centre and an all-day diner.

EssEmm Corporation launches Cosmos Nut Butter Grinder

Cosmos, a brand owned by EssEmm Corporation, now reckoned with quality in the hospitality and food processing industry launches the Cosmos Nut Butter Grinder, a first of its kind in India. The Cosmos Nut Butter Grinder is Ideal for grinding peanuts, sesame seeds, cashew nuts, cocoa beans, apricot kernel, pumpkin seeds, and many nuts & seeds into fine paste from its roasted form. It finds its application in supermarkets, organic food stores, ice cream, chocolate and hospitality industry. Entire machine is made of SS 304 and the food grinding parts are made of SS316. The machine can run for long hours non-stop.



CMC'S latest offering, a translucent natural marble - Botanic Wave

Classic Marble Company (CMC) has introduced its latest product – Botanic Wave, a translucent white marble draped in waves of olive green from the natural marble collection. The lux marble has brown webbed patterns running across the slab in nature's most exotic design. Best suited for wall cladding applications, the Botanic Wave leaves a lasting impression with its natural patterns and vibrant design. The Botanic Wave with its lushness sets the tone of peace and tranquility for the space it is installed in.

Hindware unveils New Easy Clean Countertop Basin and Shower Enclosures

The new Easy Clean collection offers a comprehensive range of brilliantly designed Countertop basins that delivers both a compact and functional style. As the name suggests, 'Easy Clean' basins by Hindware Italian Collection, cleans the basin automatically after every use. Flushing the washbasin keeps the bathroom clean and refreshing all the time. The size of the basin is 59.5 cm x 45 cm x 16 cm, and that will give bathrooms a compact, clean and elegant look.

Aided with Aqua Clean coating, the new shower enclosures by Hindware Italian Collection, offers a non-sticky treatment to make the glass surface hydrophobic and provide protection against stains caused by water, soap, and other oils, making sure that glass remains clean and bacteria free. Non-treated glass absorbs mineral deposits which become difficult to clean over time. Aqua clean coating reduces cleaning time by 90% & eliminates the need for harsh chemical cleaners.



ITC HOTELS



Deepak Menezes, General Manager, ITC Windsor Bengaluru

ITC Hotels has appointed Deepak Menezes as the new General Manager at the iconic property ITC Windsor, Bengaluru. With over two decades of experience in hospitality, Deepak brings with him an astute sense of business and markets.

In his role as the General Manager at ITC Windsor, he will be responsible for the day-to-day

operations and management of the hotel, while leading the teams to drive revenues and increase brand value. With extensive and practical knowledge of Food & Beverage concepts & operations, enhancing guest experiences, and product and hotel development, he brings with him the perfect skill set and experience required to carry forward the legacy of ITC Windsor and achieve the desired goals amongst the competition set in the city of Bengaluru.

MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL



Amit Sachdeva, Cluster General Manager, Hyderabad Marriott Hotel & Convention Centre and Courtyard by Marriott Hyderabad

Sachdeva has recently been appointed as Cluster General Manager for Hyderabad Marriott Hotel and Convention Center and Courtyard by Marriott Hyderabad. Having been with the hospitality industry for over twenty years, Sachdeva has held several significant leadership roles with some of the

top brands in the country bringing with him a rich experience in both the business and luxury segment of hotels. He has previously worked with a bouquet of prominent hotel chains including – Marriott, The Imperial, The Oberoi Hotels and Resorts and Accor Hotels.

Mayoorakanth Sivalingam, Cluster Director of Sales, Courtyard by Marriott Madurai & Trichy



With a substantial experience in corporate real estate and tourism, Mayoorakanth also has over 15 years of experience in the hospitality sector.

Started his journey with Marriott in 2007 at Courtyard by Marriott Chennai, Mayoorakanth went on to become senior sales manager at

Kochi Marriott Hotel and later associate director of sales at Fairfield by Marriott Visakhapatnam. After a stint as India's head for Sales & Operations at Isprout, the popular co-work space service provider, Mayoorakanth is thrilled to be back at Marriott where he truly belongs.

SAHARA STAR



Salil Fadnis, General Manager, Hotel Sahara Star

Salil Fadnis joined the group in 2007 as the Hotel's Executive Sous Chef bringing in more than a decade of hospitality experience. He continued his passion for food at Hotel Sahara Star opening nine Food and Beverage outlets and has been the force to reckon with in the food and beverage industry. He is also the President and founder member of the Western India Culinary Association; The

Chefs Guild in the Western Part of India having its headquarters in Mumbai. After spending a few years as the Executive Chef, he moved beyond the realms of kitchen and began to spearhead the operations of Hotel Sahara Star as the Hotel Manager. As the property's Hotel Manager, he was entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining all standard operating procedures, and employee and guest-centric programs with a keen focus on building a strong operating team.

CONCEPT HOSPITALITY



Vandita Singh, General Manager - Marketing & Communication, The Fern Hotels & Resorts

Singh brings with her 10+ years of rich and diverse global experience of working with some of the biggest brands in the world like Qatar Airways and Ogilvy and Mather across the Middle East, India and Nepal. She has completed MSc in marketing and management from Lancaster University.

In her career journey, she has contributed to the global success of Qatar Airways with large-scale events, CSR and sponsorship tie-ups with FIFA, AS Roma, FC Bayern Munich, UNICEF, Farnborough air show etc.

SARAF HOTEL ENTERPRISES



Vishal Khosla, General Manager, Azaya Beach Resort

With more than 20 years of management experience, Khosla is a seasoned hospitality professional having extensive cross-cultural exposure to diverse domestic and international markets across UK, UAE and India. Prior to joining Azaya.

Beach resort, he has served as a General Manager in properties such as Novotel Goa Dona Sylvia Resort, Park Regis Resort,

Whispering Palms Beach Resort and The Kenilworth Resort & Spa in Goa. He has also worked with renowned hospitality brands like the Hilton Glasgow Hotel, Radisson SAS Hotel in Liverpool, IHG - Holiday Inn Hotel in Aylesbury, Etihad Airways in Abu Dhabi, The Taj Mahal Palace & Tower and JW Marriott Hotel in Mumbai and The Club Mahindra Resort and The Lalit Golf & Spa Resort in Goa.

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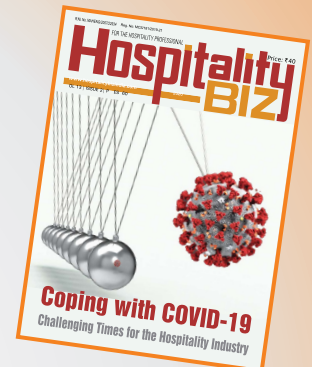
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