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# Hospitality BIZ

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# The Marriott hotel chain has been hit by another data breach

HBI Staff | Hyderabad

The Marriott International hotel chain has confirmed that it has been hit by yet another data breach that exposed staff and customer information in another unfortunate security incident for a company that was affected by a number of major hacks in recent years.

In the latest incident, hackers are reported to have stolen around 20GB of data, including confidential business documents and customer payment information, from the BWI Airport Marriott in Baltimore, Maryland. Redacted sample documents published by DataBreaches appear to show credit card authorization forms, which would give an attacker all of the details needed to make fraudulent purchases with

a victim's card. Melissa Froehlich Flood, a spokesperson for the Marriott, said that the company was "aware of a threat actor who used social engineering to trick one associate at a single Marriott hotel into providing access to the associate's computer." Before going public with the hack, the threat actor had tried to extort the hotel chain but no money was paid, Froehlich Flood said.

The threat actor did not gain access to Marriott's core network and accessed information that "primarily contained non-sensitive internal business files," the spokesperson said. But, nonetheless, Marriott is preparing to notify between 300 and 400 individuals about the data breach. Law enforcement agencies have also been notified, she said.

Based on current reports, the latest

incident is far less severe than previous hacks that have targeted the hotel chain. In 2018, Marriott revealed that it had been hit by an enormous database breach that affected up to 500 million guests of the Starwood hotel network, which was acquired by Marriott in 2016. Two years later, another data breach in 2020 exposed the personal information of 5.2 million guests.

"As this latest data breach demonstrates, organizations that are victims of previous attacks are more likely to be targeted in the future," said Jack Chapman, VP of threat intelligence at cloud security provider Egress. "Social engineering is a highly effective tool and cybercriminals know that an organization's people are its biggest vulnerability – which is why they return to this technique again and again." ■

# HVS ANAROCK to organize India's largest hospitality conference & awards event on March 2023

HBI Staff | Hyderabad

HVS ANAROCK has announced India's premier hospitality conference and awards event to be held on 2nd & 3rd March 2023 at the Taj Resort & Convention Centre, Goa. To showcase India's global stature as a hospitality industry powerhouse, H.O.P.E (Hospitality Overview Presentation & Exchange) will bring Indian and international hospitality players together for an evening of high-octane knowledge exchange, networking, and celebration.

HVS ANAROCK, a partnership between international hospitality consulting leader HVS and India's leading independent, full-stack real estate services group ANAROCK, has included the HASHTAG (HVS ANAROCK Showcase Hotel & Travel Awards Gala) Hotel & Travel Awards ceremony in the evening's agenda. To be organized annually at unprecedented scale and the highest production values, the event will simultaneously provide the Indian hospitality industry with a peerless knowledge exchange forum and a platform to highlight exemplary achievements in the post-pandemic world.

Mandeep Lamba, President (South Asia) HVS ANAROCK, says, "At H.O.P.E., industry leaders participating in the conference sessions will discuss and dissect the current status of the global and domestic hospitality sector. Two of the event's primary focus

points will be future trends and opportunities and assessing the true potential of the sector. Over the last three years, the industry has had an incredibly valuable learning curve, and it is time to share this knowledge for the collective edification of the entire sector."

Stephen Rushmore Jr, Global CEO - HVS, confirms that the H.O.P.E. conference and HASHTAG awards will be India's annual marquee hospitality event. "This annual showcase event, resolutely geared to the highest global standards, will feature the Who's Who of national and international hospitality luminaries as speakers and panellists," he says.

"Leveraging HVS' industry-defining sectoral knowledge and relationships, the H.O.P.E. Conference and HASHTAG Awards will truly showcase how hospitality shares its expertise and celebrates successes in delivering services that the whole world relies on."

The exclusive audience will comprise 300-350 hospitality and travel luminaries and the C-Suite of domestic and international hotel chain operators, owners, investors, influencers, travel gurus and thought leaders from across the globe.

HASHTAG Awards will go to the best-performing hotel general managers from across the entire value chain - Economy, Midscale, Upscale, and Upper Upscale/Luxury - and to hotels in each of these who have delivered outstanding performance. HVS ANAROCK

will also award one travel company and an Industry Leader of The Year.

The award nominations will go through a stringent quantitative and qualitative rating matrix by a jury of highly eminent industry representatives outside the Hotel and Hospitality fraternity. Additionally, an independent agency will validate each nomination and award. HASHTAG will establish the gold standard for hotel awards.

"We have given much thought in conceiving this event," says Anuj Puri, Chairman - ANAROCK Group. "Leveraging HVS' over four decades of hospitality through leadership and global network, and ANAROCK's deep understanding and coverage of the Indian real estate sector, HOPE will be the culmination of the strengths of both partners to create unparalleled exchange of knowledge and networking in the stunning locale of Goa."

Hotel occupancy for the current calendar year has grown by over 11 percentage points, and room rates by over 35% over the same period last year. HVS ANAROCK expects to see the sector recover fully to pre-pandemic occupancy and rates by early next year.

In fact, after two decades, the hospitality industry will breach past performances and attain a nationwide occupancy of 70% in 2024. Hotel performances are all set to witness a bull-run over the next 4 to 5 years, fuelled by high demand and accelerated supply growth. ■

# FutureScope #2 | Reviving Hospitality Education

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

**S**takeholder mapping needs to be carried out sensitively, without ignoring the expectations of any group, irrespective of size or quantitative impact. We must evaluate stakeholder interest alongside stakeholder influence in five prominent impact groups to resolve the revival of hospitality education. Vendors, partners and participants need regular contact to be kept abreast of business realities. Partners, influencers and community contributors need to be provided regular, transparent updates on the ground situation.

Impacts can be moderated through active participation from policy makers in key leadership positions and government frameworks. Openness will facilitate informed decisions by parents, sponsors and mentors to guide youth correctly. Academia, education and research must proactively assess aspiration levels by listening to the views of

our future leaders. Industry, sector, enterprise can facilitate an open platform for solution building, by bringing all these groups together.

**What are some key issues that our leadership/government/talent ecosystem are straddling?**

Even as the fallout of the great resignation displaces existing professionals who seek attractive, relevant, alternatives, the sheer capacity required to build new talent is a huge concern. Demand continues to outstrip supply while cradles of renewable sources of talent remain obscure. Add to this shifting talent markets, changing youth priorities and a lack of alignment with organizational value systems. Talent scouting creates fertile grounds for recycling and poaching existing people. This snowballs into unorganized and unstructured growth for a few, based on short term considerations. Ongoing attrition, burnout, productivity issues and job losses create the perfect fodder to reject stressful careers. Compensation tangles are icing on the cake, leading to myopia against rationality. Alternate sectors match new-age

recognition/compensation systems, even as the economy inflates!

**What are some typical industry pain-points to be empathetically seen from a new perspective?**

Job role rationalizations are mooted to resolve fixed cost mitigation, while restructuring creates a paucity of traditional job roles. Work model efficiencies create restrictions arising from recent reorientation, following lessons learned during post pandemic resurgence. Overworked mentors and insufficient role models (powerful leads for youth), battle fluid standards as new benchmarks get redefined. Geographical, market and cultural factors create extensive variability across brand offerings, where a high degree of spontaneity in operations is expected. Inflation, price hikes and operating cost restrictions are only functions of variable top-line growth. As businesses renew and volumes return, only pragmatism may revive a compensation restructuring exercise. Keeping talents engaged in a state of flux, as business equations normalize is challenging with fourth wave forecasts.

**How does this affect the motivation of academics, educationists and a future research drive?**

Rolling out a new education policy aside restrained faculty resources, re-evaluating quality, currency, value of education to dovetail into a progressive credit system - needs dynamic leadership with structured implementation. Aligning retrograde education practices with globally relevant, attractive and ambitious learning for universal credit transfers, needs policy re-structuring and facilitation. Industry internship experiences urgently need a structural overhaul, as first impressions of working in the trenches, creates dissonance amongst emerging talent who simply leave the industry! Cultural changes and academic/internship climate modifications are critical to incubate future leadership. Introspection through joint think-tanks is crucial to drive research on emerging models. Education needs unity of visionary leaders, synergizing academia for innovative disruption, to secure fresh talent.

**How are hospitality careers positioned in the minds of parents, sponsors and industry**

**mentors?**

Job content woes shared by wards with families create demands, as sponsors pay for this education, without being abreast of change. Deficits arising from a lack of respect for work engagement, fuels ongoing talent conflict. Complex industry perceptions and work related enslavements leave few solutions for parents to guide their wards. A lack of mentor driven support systems results in cross communication, even to keep flagging motivation levels alive. Unstructured learning, anticipated growth/development, unclear futures, often result in sponsored career changes. Transparency in career progression, interactive appraisals and a lack of positive reinforcement for sustenance, often leave parent communities distraught. Despite making initial investments in hospitality education, hybrid career options sought by wards, often become acceptable alternatives for supportive parents.

**How does this stakeholder background affect talents, students, interns, youth and prospects?**

Unstructured career progression remains one of the primary reasons for aspirational conflict. Some remain steadfast, while others denounce unresponsive system solutions. Impatience, instant gratification replace traditionally passionate leaps of faith towards the Zen of Learning. Add to this - unattractive career pathways, restricted opportunities to upgrade and progress, which remains the reserve of a select few. Silo focused linear growth patterns do not receive enrichment with lateral learning opportunities. Robotic, repetitive work does not add value, results in attention deficits, which in turn increases attrition. Mapping talent competence, quick job rotations and challenging assignments are exciting to youth as roadmaps to progress. Restricted cross exposure creates tunnel vision and blocks 360 degree vistas on future possibilities. And last but not the least, inconsistent outcomes of in-company programs, not closely monitored, create bottlenecks for talent development. Young talent seek rapid career leaps and work-life balance while one knows only too well, reality bites!e ■

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





Nest Jaipur, a luxurious boutique property located on Ajmer Road was recently launched to cater to high-end weddings in the city. The 107-room luxurious property offers exquisite signature suites, wide gardens and spectacular gathering space. The resort offers major MICE facilities, including two big green lawns, four meeting rooms, and a gathering space to organize lavish wedding parties, meetings and conventions on a high scale. As strong signs of economic recovery are visible, the brand is expecting a good season ahead for the hospitality, event and wedding sector. **Asmita Mukherjee** spoke with **Sanchit Gupta, Managing Director, Nest Jaipur Resorts** to know their plans for catering to the guests in recent times.



## The Nest positioning itself as the best emerging destination wedding and MICE venue in Jaipur

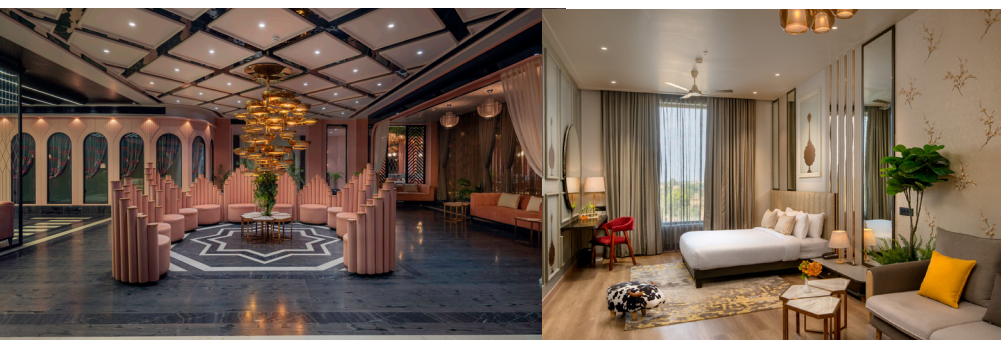
Speaking about his experience and journey with Nest Jaipur, Gupta said that for him it has been a roller coaster ride from the beginning. “We decided to start welcoming guests when COVID was still raging in the country. The idea was to provide employment to people in such challenging times and also to gauge our response when faced with such kinds of unforeseen events. It’s been very fruitful as we achieved both objectives. Guest response to Nest has been very positive. This gives a lot of self-satisfaction to us.”

Elaborating his plans, Gupta said, “We plan to make the property the most sought-after destination when one thinks of Jaipur. For the same, we are constantly working as per the feedback received from guests, and other people related to the hospitality industry.” He also added that The Nest’s target customers are those who would love to get themselves pampered, and who value nature. “We would certainly look to have business travellers as our guests. We have all the essentials required to meet the demands of business travellers like conference rooms, banquets, dedicated internet for conferences, and high-speed internet is available everywhere on the property. We also have very competitive pricing for corporates.”

Speaking about target locations, Gupta added that for weddings they are targeting urban centres where people like to go for destination weddings, while for corporates, nearby SEZs, industrial areas of Jaipur and the NCR region especially Gurugram because of its proximity to Jaipur are good targets. For individual travellers, The Nest is focussing on NCR. Since the hotel dynamics have changed completely post-pandemic, The Nest is revisiting their SOPs of both food and beverage and social distancing regulations. Besides providing a safe, hygienic and engaging meeting space for MICE, they are also focussing on providing different venue options and paraphernalia to conduct team-building exercises for the corporates. Keeping the patrons engaged is the top priority of the hotel, Gupta pointed out.

To promote the brand, Gupta said that they have already chalked out a marketing mix to promote Nest Jaipur as a brand. For offline strategy, they are either personally meeting or reaching out to a lot of travel agents, event planners, and wedding planners. “We plan to have our presence on hoardings in Jaipur and NCR region. We at Nest would continue to be present online by means of robust social media engagement and SEO. We have hired a social media agency; we are reaching out to social media influencers like bloggers, YouTubers, Instagrammers, etc. We would be leveraging the leads generated on our page and staying connected with our event partners. Right now, the most important thing is to make our partners know that we are ‘the best emerging destination wedding and MICE venue in Jaipur’ and are active in creating safe and healthy live experiences,” he concluded. ■

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## BETWEEN VAN GOGH AND AJANTA CAVES

**Promoting a historical art scene for tourism calls for a sharp eye for creativity and a sensitive commitment to the visitor.**

Van Gogh's life in the 1880s at Provence in France where he produced most of his life's finest works, is a pivot on which the region hangs a chunk of its tourism market. In the same state abandoned limestone quarries in the village of Les Baux de Provence have been turned into a magnificent canvas to display projected art images set to music in an immersive show 'Carrieres de Lumieres' by the company that manages French museums and art centres.

While promoting tourism, one has to watch out for both the purist and the 'so-called' plebeian tastes. Tourism has to be varied, topical, reflective of heritage and imbued with an appeal to modern tastes. of 'the general public as well' (and that being the operative expression).

The thin line between 'exploiting' culture and 'marketing' will always be debated. There will always be diverse opinions on any strategy whether it is 'selling' culture or 'promoting' it. In Provence, the many museums, art centres besides popular sites where the artists from Van Gogh to Cezanne based their art, serve as tourism hotspots.

While on this, a look at the worlds' possibly first art gallery in the Ajanta and Ellora caves in India should be in order. The rare finesse of the cave paintings there is unique in the history of art. Painted in 60 or 70 BC the bold brushstrokes, use of perspective, play of light on the faces and other technical aspects like choice of pigments and use of lime mortar makes those UNESCO world heritage paintings truly exceptional.

Yet as one hears, if the Public Works Department is still repairing the link road from the caves to the closest city before the coming monsoon season, it is cause for concern. While a light and sound show inside the caves is a purists' no-no, building anything close to an amusement park in the vicinity as is rumoured, could well be sacrilege.

Between a dull indifference to art and history and an extreme gung-ho carnival spirit at Ajanta, a balance should be eased sooner than later.

There is barely a fraction of that focus at Ajanta. This should seriously concern the mandarins of Indian tourism.



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Industry Expert

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

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# 'We can bring a revolution in the alternative meats category in India'

With its abundant vitamins and minerals, jackfruit is considered to be a healthy addition to the diet. Recent global trends have also brought forward jackfruit in a new avatar – as a substitute for meat. In India, Goa-based sustainable D2C start-up Wakao Foods has successfully introduced jackfruit meat to the domestic market. With its new disruptive approach and a sustainable focus, Wakao Foods aims to bring a revolution in the alternative meats category in India. **Asmita Mukherjee** spoke with **Sairaj Dhond, Founder of Wakao Foods** to know his future plans for the vegan meat brand.



**Q** Over time the popularity of plant-based meat has increased. As the founder of a plant-based meat brand, how does the future of this particular segment look to you?

On the expansion front, we want to build a very robust distribution network across India. We would have our distributors in most of the major cities across the country so that we can reach out to more people, retail outlets and modern trade outlets. On the D2C front, we are looking at pushing strongly with our online presence and having a wider reach to a wider audience and getting more people to try our product. The sky's the limit, we have huge opportunities in the global market because people are already aware of the product and therefore we are putting more effort into exports. We are also thinking on the line of QSR service, which we probably may launch sometime later but it's something that is there in our expansion plan.

**Q** How does the demand for this product look like in HoReCa? What are your plans for B2B tie-ups?

The HoReCa segment is really very big, and they need a product like Wakao, our aim is to reach each one of them. Currently, we are supplying pan India, to a lot of chains, hotels, and restaurants from Goa but we want to centralize it and have more teams across the country. I am extremely confident that we can bring a revolution in the alternative meats category in India.

**Q** What are your main ingredients in plant-based meat? How do you source it and process it into the final product?

Wakao's current offering of jackfruit meat is ethically sourced and hand-picked from farms, hygienically manufactured and brought to the customer's dining table. The jackfruit has been an obvious product of choice for its versatility, meat-like texture and nutritive value (high in fibre, low in calories and fats). The Ready-to-Cook

in Goa were the first to try and give us feedback and helped us grow and build this product, by helping us to identify areas that needed improvement which lifted the brand to the level it is today. Nowadays, Wakao is becoming synonymous with jackfruit and slowly it will spread across the country as Wakao foods provide versatile products and can be used in different variations in different cuisines and are available in more than 20 retail stores.



**Q** What are your goals for the year 2023?

The game plan is to go out in multiple directions and alternatives. The biggest market that we foresee is exports and we are going very aggressively as far as exports are concerned. We are also looking at educating people and making them realise the importance of mock meats and what can be made out of jackfruit in India domestically. We are moving very fast in appointing distributors across India, and that's how we are spreading horizontally in the country. We are also going very hard on D2C

and the online medium and we foresee a lot of sales happening there as well.

**Q** Kindly brief us about your expansion and investment plans:

We have upgraded the recipes of the current Wakao products and are soon launching an all-new product category which will consist of 2 new Jackfruit-based sausages and 1 continental burger patty. ■

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**Q** Can you please brief us about the locations at which these products are available and what are the price points?

The Goan market has always been very special to us. It is our test market where we have launched our products and started our journey. The restaurants and hotels based

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## ‘Our strategy is to position Caesars Palace Dubai as a resort destination with experiences for every age group’

Located on Bluewaters Island, Dubai’s newest island oasis, Caesars Palace Dubai is an immersive destination featuring iconic hospitality accommodations. The property is aiming at the high-value business segment by targeting high net-worth individuals (HNIs) as guests from India. **Naren Upadhyay, Director of Sales, Caesars Palace Dubai** shares with **Asmita Mukherjee** his strategy to tap into the Indian market.



### Q How is Caesars Palace Dubai geared to tap the Indian market in the new normal?

India is a top source market for the destination as per DTCM’s recent report and also features among our top 10 markets for Caesars Palace Dubai. Thanks to the

luxury travel, we are confident that the right trade partnerships will support our growth in the luxury segment.

### Q What is your strategy for the Indian market?

Our strategy is focused on driving strong brand awareness, positioning Caesars Palace Dubai as a resort destination with experiences for every age group and growing our share within luxury leisure and MICE segments with seasonal offerings. Leveraging the right media mix and investing in engaging, educating and inspiring our travel partners (both in Groups and Leisure Travel) will help accelerate our business.

### Q Which segments in India are your key focuses?

Although India is a growing market for us, it’s a high-value business segment with HNI profile of guests (from couples, families and groups) booking into suites and speciality products at Caesars Palace Dubai. What is attractive to them is our island location, the exclusivity and privacy that Caesars Palace Dubai offers in combination with iconic, legendary service and hospitality.

Our MICE segment has always been quite healthy and is getting stronger, with a mix of weddings and mid to large corporate businesses looking for retreats, conferences and team outbounds. Our beautiful private

island location with venues against scenic panoramas of sea views, Ain Dubai and the city skyline has favoured the Indian destination wedding trend and we hope to keep this going strong. Partners like Thomas Cook, SOTC, JTB, BCD and others continue to stay instrumental in driving direct leads for MICE from India.

### Q Do you have any plan to tie up with OTA’s and travel agents in future?

We have a great ongoing partnership with major OTAs that operate in India as well as on the global scale, such as Make my Trip. Additionally, we have tied up with 10 luxury agents and consortia like AMEX & Quintessentially to support our evolving business needs.

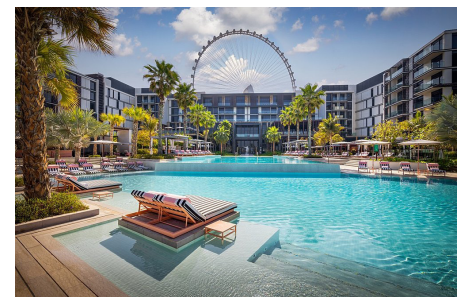
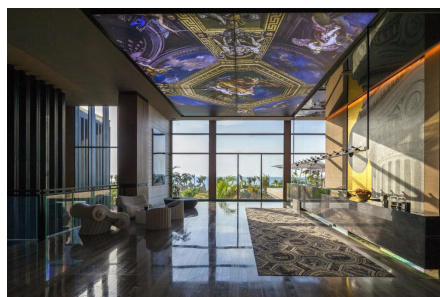
**Q Expo 2020 Dubai contributed greatly to the overall social and economic recovery within and outside the UAE. How has it helped Caesars Palace Dubai?** Dubai benefited from Expo 2020 and the attention to the world stage throughout the entire event.

Being the closest 5-star luxury beachfront property to Expo was, of course, beneficial. Throughout Expo, we welcomed official groups, country representation and international tourists who wanted to relax and enjoy, whilst also able to easily enjoy the events at Expo throughout their stay. ■

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proximity of the two countries, the Indian traveller’s appetite for luxury experiences and the regular frequency of flights, India is currently 2-5% of our business mix. We have appointed One Rep Global as our representation company to support brand awareness and promote Caesars Palace Dubai as a unique destination catering to all segments of our audience – the buzz-seeking young and trendy adults, the families who want a fun-filled holiday with kids’ recreation, guests that want to celebrate an occasion as well as high-end MICE groups. As a developing market for



In a recent interview, AccorHotels CEO Sébastien Bazin pointed out that the company is dealing with a blazing issue which is staff shortage. At a time when the business is booming after a log lull caused by the pandemic, the industry is facing severe staff shortage **Asmita Mukherjee** spoke with industry experts to know how they are tackling the situation at their hotels.



# Staff shortage: A neglected concern

The pandemic had forced most of the hospitality brands to downsize and when the return-to-travel bounced back at a fast pace, it has become difficult for hospitality players to stay in the game. These downsizing actions taken by most brands at the onset of the pandemic have resulted in hesitation amongst the experienced candidates in joining the hospitality industry, said , Neha Rana Dutta, Chief Human Resources Officer, Espire Hospitality Group. She stated that declining interest from some experienced talents can be witnessed who are not willing to take the risk and want to now engage in a safe journey only. Speaking the minds of many, Dutta added that the pandemic is responsible for breaking confidence. “Risk requires courage and unfortunately, the pandemic has broken the courage of many,” she said.

According to Sandeep Udupa, Assistant Director of Human Resources, JW Marriott Bengaluru, there is huge hesitation among candidates especially with the newcomers as other service industries like E-commerce, IT, Real Estate and Retail to name some are also hiring from the hospitality sector. “These candidates are polished and honed with customer delights and related services; hence they tend to pick the trick of the trade quite effortlessly and are easy

to bet on,” he added.

Col. Manbeer Choudhary (Veteran), CMD, Noor and Jewels Classic Group of Hotels feels that the hesitation to join the sector also stems from the fact that the hospitality industry has always been a tough employer and one really needs to have a passion, aptitude, and dedication to succeed in this industry. “There is always a hesitation to work with a tough taskmaster. And the pandemic has increased this hesitation. It seems that a lot of this hesitation is due to the job requirements of locating to a different city. If a deserving talent finds a good opportunity in the city of their preference then the reluctance is definitely less. I believe there is a lot of hardworking young talent searching for the right opportunity in the hospitality industry. The hard task is to be able to find the right talent for the right job.”



**Col. Manbeer Choudhary (Veteran)**  
CMD, Noor and Jewels  
Classic Group of hotels

## UNDERSTAFFED OR UNDERSKILLED

The hospitality industry is seeing shortages across many areas starting from housekeeping staff, and front office staff to restaurant managers.

According to Udupa at present about 90% of the hotels are understaffed. Since the talent pool in hospitality has a huge demand in industries from the services sector, these potential candidates tend to switch often, always in search of better pay than



**Sandeep Udupa**  
Assistant Director,  
Human Resources, JW  
Marriott Bengaluru



**Neha Rana Dutta**  
Chief Human Resources  
Officer, Espire Hospitality  
Group

the current gig. To sum up, currently, there is a significant gap with huge demand and less supply of talent making this one of the biggest challenges faced by the industry.”

Choudhary also reiterated that the industry is understaffed. He said that the hospitality and restaurant industry is one of the biggest employers in the country. But, the demand is of such large magnitude that the industry is still understaffed. “It is difficult to put a figure on how understaffed the industry is,” he added.

Dutta put forward her own point of view by commenting that the industry is not understaffed, but rather underskilled. Supporting her viewpoint, she commented,

“An appropriately skilled organisation does not require the support of mammoth manpower to run its operations. All you need is appropriately skilled and multi-skilled manpower to efficiently run a business. Every organisation must have the will to skill and kill the number noise.”

Echoing Dutta’s thoughts and stressing the need for appropriate skilling, Choudhary stated, “The hospitality brands need to identify avenues from where they can find the right talent for themselves.

Sometimes we need to see beyond the conventional option of hospitality graduates. One might find an excellent talent, perfectly suited to a role but is not a hospitality graduate. Training can be given but it is the aptitude that a hospitality brand should focus on while hiring. Very importantly, it is also critical to retain the good and efficient talent that you have,” he added.

### CHALLENGE MITIGATION STRATEGIES

“The demanding job of the hospitality industry became much more demanding,” commented Choudhary, “In this case, the best bet for hospitality players is to go local on the hiring front. Due to the pandemic effect, many people prefer staying close to their families, and they do not want to relocate away from their families and hometowns. Brands need to search for talent from the city itself. This does not mean compromising on the quality of talent that you are hiring. We have always believed in hiring local talent and training them in our unique way,” he said.

Echoing similar thoughts, Dutta elaborated on the strategies adopted by her brand to tackle the staff shortage problem. “Hospitality industry is finally beginning to rebound after the global pandemic. The loss of revenue and talent during the pandemic period can never be accounted for, in accuracy. Agreeably there is a shortage of talent and to mitigate the crisis we are going local, as post-pandemic, talent does not want to pursue employment opportunities far from their native places. Thus, sourcing talent from the immediate indigenous environment is key to attracting and ultimately retaining the talent.

We are also hiring young and long-term potential talent since our focus is on young aptitude. We are open to hiring raw talent as we believe that adding this talent to the existing talent pool of resources will make a deep-rooted impact on the industry. This will ascertain a positive impact on the career life cycles of those whom we engage in our business.”

According to Udupa, the wave of process automation that took place during the pandemic can be further extended as a mitigation strategy. He pointed out this can be one way to tackle the problem of acute staff shortage. “We have seen various industries shifting to automating jobs in the past few years. As a result of the pandemic, the world really has fast-forwarded its adoption of the digital from the physical,” he added.

To mitigate the staffing problem, Choudhary informed that their brand has designed its own unique hiring module and they prefer appointing local talent and looking for dedication over qualification.

Another aspect that can be explored to counter the recruitment challenges of permanent staff is that of hiring gig workers. There has been a tremendous increase in the gig economy with people largely opting for it. Embracing gig workers means hospitality employers only pay for workers when they are needed such as during festivals, summer holidays, etc. This will save the brands spending a fortune on staff throughout the year which means that they can focus more on infrastructure and investing in guest relationships.

Udupa feels that it will be a win-win situation for both parties, helping hotels fill in positions requiring a temporary workforce as well as for the gig workers to deviate from the traditional roles. “I feel the focus should be on getting skilled gig workers which is a common practice in the West. I strongly feel taking up contract manpower across all departments has huge potential of mitigating this issue,” he concluded. ■

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# Domestic tourism to be key growth driver for hospitality industry: Report

HBI Staff | Hyderabad

The hospitality sector is well poised to put the pandemic's destruction behind it with the demand outlook improving and amid the large-scale infrastructure push by the government, said a report titled 'Hospitality Industry: Heading towards Hospitable Territory' by Care Edge, a credit rating agency.

Realignment of cost structures by the industry players forms a strong base for the profitability of the hospitality sector in the coming months, said the report.

For FY23, it estimates the majority of its portfolio of hotel companies will report improved performance, largely restored to pre-covid levels. Domestic tourism is expected to be the key growth driver, with international travel slowly gaining momentum, specifically post resumption of international flights. The situation is, however, still evolving and the same remains contingent on the possibility of another Covid wave and its severity on the sector.

But the decline in covid cases, resumption of international flights from March 2022, and strong leisure and wedding demand are the positive factors that should lead to growth in occupancy in FY23.

## Industry RevPAR's Inching to Pre-Covid Levels FY22 Performance Review

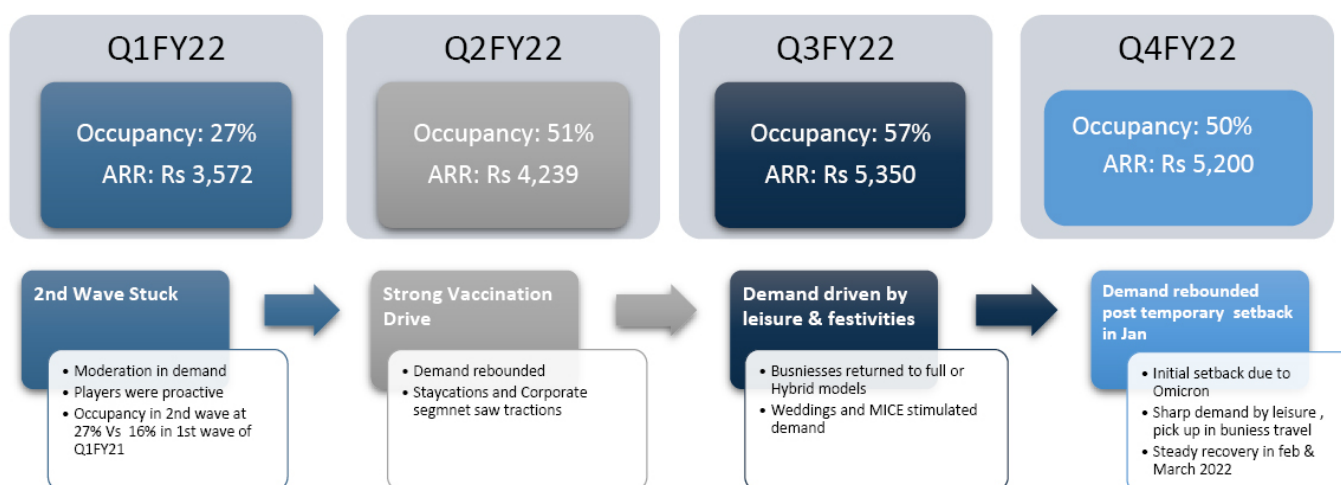


FY22			
44-46%	↑	11-13 pp Y-o-Y	
	↓	19-21 pp from FY20	
Rs 4,400 - 4,590	↑	13-14 % Y-o-Y	
	↓	22 - 24% from FY20	
Rs 1,900- 2,100	↑	55-59 % Y-o-Y	
	↓	45 - 47% from FY20	

Source: CareEdge, HVS Anarock, Industry data.

pp: percentage points, ARR: Average room rate, RevPAR: Revenue per occupied room

## Quarterly Revival Journey



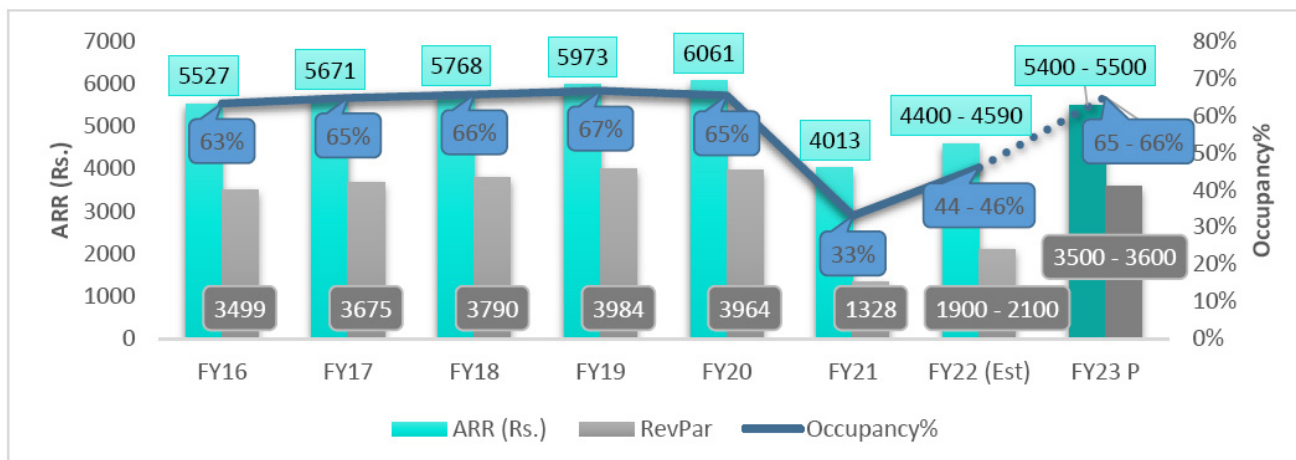
The operational profitability margins, which remained in the positive zone post Q1FY22, are expected to further improve to the pre-covid levels during FY23, owing to improved demand outlook and sustained cost optimisation measures adopted.

Though international travel continued to suffer in FY22 as well, the report said, there was a sharp recovery as compared to the previous year. Despite the strong upward movement,

foreign tourist arrivals remained at about 20% of the pre-covid levels.

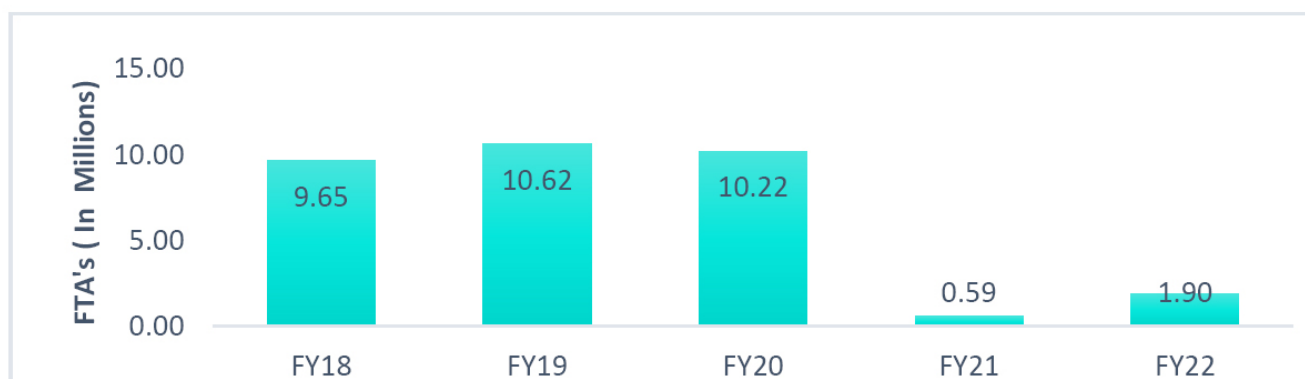
With the resumption of international flights from 27 March, 2022, the travel demand is expected to recover gradually through FY23 till the end of FY24. In April 2022, the number of foreign tourist arrivals recovered to reach 21% of total arrivals in FY21. ■

## Occupancy Inching Back to Pre-pandemic Levels



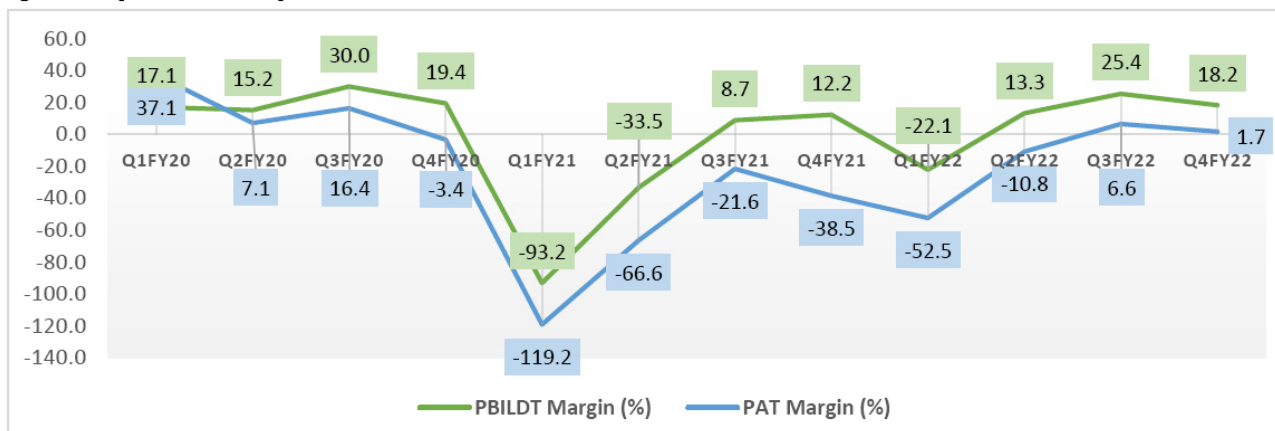
Source: HVS Anarock, CareEdge

## FTA's Rising from the Lows of FY21



Source: CMIE, CareEdge

## Quarterly Profitability Trend from Pre-Covid to Post-Covid



Source: CMIE, CareEdge (sample set of listed players)

## 'We plan to introduce Mr. Jerry's at the Duty-Free outlets in Indian International Airports'

Mr. Jerry's is India's first commercially available, ready-to-serve cocktail range. The brand was launched in December 2020 by Mrinal Manu and Rincy Varghese of Blue Ocean Beverages and is led by beverage mavericks - Arijit Bose and Pankaj Balachandran. The ready-to-serve cocktails are currently available in six variations across Goa, Bengaluru, Delhi, and Mumbai. The brand aims to launch in West Bengal, Pondicherry, and Telangana soon and project to achieve a turnover of INR 5.5 crores in FY 2022-23. **Asmita Mukherjee** spoke with **Rincy Varghese, Brand Manager, Blue Ocean Beverages** to understand Mr. Jerry's strategy to capture the niche market.



### Q How has the journey been since Mr. Jerry's inception?

We did have our share of hardships, which involved getting approvals and educating the officials about the brand and how it works. In fact, we still face difficulties with some cities. Apart from these challenges, we have received quite an overwhelming response from people within and outside the industry and hope this support keeps continuing.

### Q How do you plan to capture the bottled cocktail market?

Mr. Jerry's is the only Ready-to-Serve bottled cocktail available in India. Mr. Jerry's was formulated by the topmost bartenders in India - Arijit Bose and Pankaj Balachandran. Mr. Jerry's is for the true cocktail aficionado who is not looking for flavoured low alcohol or non-alcoholic alternatives but rather the real deal. It is as simple as pouring over ice and serving which makes it an easy and convenient option to get a great bar-style cocktail anywhere you need. Our brand ensures that a true cocktail lover would find this product as one that not only tastes great but also solves many problems – like the need to have multiple spirits and the know-how to make a cocktail so that one can enjoy it.

### Q Have you planned for any B2B (restaurants/hotels) tie-ups?

We are planning on tie-ups with hotels and restaurants as a phase-II of our brand because as a product it comes in handy in high-volume bars where a bartender can ensure they are able to hand out consistently good drinks to patrons in a flash. Also for many restaurants that focus



on food and may not have the space for a bar programme in place for cocktails this can plug in perfectly and power the restaurants to give its patrons a choice of cocktails to imbibe alongside their finger-licking food options. We also plan to tie up with event and wedding planners so that we can provide them with the option of adding a cocktail bar in their offerings to potential customers.

### Q Which geo-locations (tier-I / tier-II / tier-III) have greater demand for your products?

Since cocktail consumption is in its nascent stages in India the key markets for us are the tier-I cities and a few tier-II cities. Another reason is the complicated and elaborate approvals and permissions procedures of each state excise that is required for alcoholic beverages in India.

### Q What are your future plans for the brand? Kindly explain your investment and expansion (international) plans?

We are currently available in Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Goa. We intend to introduce Mr. Jerry's in Kolkata, Hyderabad and Pondicherry very soon. We are also looking at moving to a few key international markets such as Singapore and Dubai. Another avenue we are looking at entering is the Duty-Free outlets in Indian International Airports.

We are also working on introducing additional cocktails to our existing lineup of 6 cocktails.

### Q Who has funded Mr. Jerry's till date?

Mr. Jerry's is funded by Blue Ocean Beverages Pvt. Ltd., a company based in Goa engaged in the business of manufacturing and marketing various alcoholic beverages across the country. ■

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HBI Staff | Hyderabad

**H**otels and restaurants have recently been barred from levying service charges automatically or by default in food bills. The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has issued guidelines to prevent unfair trade practices and contravention of consumer rights regarding the imposition of service charges. As per the CCPA guidelines, “No hotels or restaurants shall add service charge automatically or by default in the bill.” Under the guidelines

product. Neither the Government nor any authority can interfere with the decision of the business owner in this regard. It is a universally accepted trade practice.

The customer is made aware of the pricing and its components before the customer places an order for the product. Once the customer places the order after being made aware of the terms and conditions there comes into existence a binding contract. No authority can interfere with the binding nature of a valid contract until and unless it is shown and proved to be unconscionable or against any unfair trade practice.

guidelines have already been followed by hotels and restaurants. Nobody was forced to pay the service charge nor was any consumer turned back if they disagreed to pay it. The industry was expecting the enactment of a comprehensive law that would put curbs on levying charges over and above the cost of a product or service and which would be applicable across all industries. However, with these guidelines, it appears that the curbs imposed are applicable only to the hospitality industry. FHRAI may approach the CCPA seeking clarifications and to submit further suggestions. Unfortunately,

## Service charge ban at hotels and restaurants miffes industry bodies



issued, a consumer can lodge a complaint against the respective hotels and restaurants by dialling 1915.

Responding to the recent guidelines National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) commented, “The latest guidelines issued by CCPA has created unnecessary confusion amongst the consumers, leading to disruption in smooth business operations of restaurants. Through these repeated guidelines, there is an attempt to start a campaign against this restaurant industry practice without any legal basis. It is also relevant to state that extra charges are being levied by many other industries, including some Government agencies. However, the guidelines are issued only for the Restaurant Industry.”

The association also added that “Service Charge is a part of the owner’s discretion/ decision regarding the total price payable by a customer with regards to sale or service of a product. It constitutes one of the components of the total price of the

The legality, reasonableness or justification of levying service charges has been considered by the Hon’ble Supreme Court of India, High Courts, National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, erstwhile Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission and the Income Tax Authorities (ITAT). The levy of service charge has been upheld in various judicial pronouncements.”

The association demands that a levy of service charge is beneficial for the workmen as a class who are employed in the establishments. Any move to the contrary would be detrimental to the interests of workers – and against the labour-friendly stance of the Government.

Speaking on the topic, Pradeep Shetty, Jt. Hon. Sec., Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) & Sr. Vice President, Hotel & Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) said, “These are a new set of guidelines that have been issued by CCPA and not a new law. Most of these

the beneficial global practice for employees will take a beating. FHRAI will issue a detailed statement after examining and studying the guideline.”

“Most of these guidelines issued by CCPA are already followed by hotels & restaurants. It’s extremely disheartening that the hospitality industry is constantly singled out. Ironically, there are several online websites and apps that charge convenience fees including the Government-run IRCTC. These do not even explain what the charge is for nor is the consumer given a choice to opt-out of it. We ask the Government to introduce a law that is uniform to all businesses so that the hospitality industry is not discriminated against. We are an industry that creates jobs and at the end of it, any kind of ruling or order against the service charge will be detrimental to employees since they are the ones who will suffer,” said Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, Vice President, Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI). ■

## 'We are constantly looking at new avenues and areas to scale'

Jade Forest is a premium non-alcoholic beverage brand that has created a diverse range of drinks by mixing botanicals preserved in their most authentic and raw form. Launched in August 2019 by 2 experienced entrepreneurs in the F&B industry - Shuchir Suri and Punweet Singh, the company has quickly risen to become a front-runner in the beverage space. The products of Jade Forest contain no artificial sweeteners, flavours, or colourings and are naturally low in calories and sugar. The brand has 8 products in its portfolio that are available in over 45 cities pan India. The brand aims to bring about a holistic change to how people consume beverages and is also looking to raise its next round of Series A funding. **Asmita Mukherjee** spoke with **Shuchir Suri** to know about their plans to introduce new products in the 'better-for-you' beverage category.



### **Q** What is the USP of your beverages, which makes them unique?

We embarked on this journey to create something different, something that the consumers wanted and needed but were not readily available in the market. We saw a gap in the market for premium quality, 'better-for-you' beverages that were low in sugar, low in calories and made with fresh, natural ingredients and so, Jade Forest was born. We follow a unique extraction process that allows us to capture the essential juices and oils of our premium quality ingredients in their purest form. We are honest about our products and what goes into our beverages.



We are also constantly striving to minimise our carbon footprint as a brand by using materials that are better for the environment. We've pledged to never use plastic bottles or any non-biodegradable packing materials.

### **Q** How do you manage to keep Jade Forest ahead of others in the same product category?

A robust distribution network and aggressive marketing strategies have allowed us to create a strong foothold in the market. We strongly believe in using high-quality ingredients in all our products and we believe that has helped

create a loyal customer base who are looking for a premium product without compromising on taste. We take pride in the R&D process we undertake for each new product. What this means is that each of our products is 100% authentic and unique in taste and profile. We conduct extensive consumer research to make sure each new flavour will be widely accepted by the Indian consumer.

### **Q** What is your take on the health beverage market in India?

The health beverage market in India has expanded tremendously in the last couple of years. It has been noted that people have become more conscious about what they consume, and they carefully read what is going into their food and beverages. With health and fitness also becoming big among the youth, they are moving to functional beverages and low-calorie options as opposed to sugary sodas and juices.

Jade Forest provides a variety of options to people in this category. The aim is to cover AM to PM guilt-free consumption. We are also constantly reinventing ourselves in response to the current and future trends in the beverage industry.

### **Q** What is the current distribution of Jade Forest? Going forward, what are the plans to scale? Are you working with any hotels and restaurants for b2b tie-ups?

With an omnichannel sales approach; we sell through a number of offline retail channel partners and last-mile delivery platforms, as well as through our own e-commerce website and Amazon. We have achieved strong organic growth and sales through a combination of an attractive product design and clear communication. Heavy emphasis

on the correct product placement at all points of sales is also very important.

We are constantly looking at new avenues and areas to scale. This includes new products on the horizon, innovative packaging solutions as well as reaching out to larger markets and demographics.

We are working with many of the leading chains and brand names in the HORECA space. We're the official pouring partners for places such as - Olive Group, Anglow, Cho, The Bar Stock Exchange group, Toy Room, and The Piano Man, to name a few.

### **Q** Please tell us about the price points.

Our products range from INR 75 to 85 per bottle. Our products are priced quite aggressively among the different homegrown beverage products and our ultimate goal is to be able to offer more products at varying price points, making them even more accessible for those across the country.

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

We are on a constant mission to expand our user base and diversify our products. We recently launched our Premium Iced Teas that can be savoured any time of the day, with food, or on their own. We are also looking to launch some very exciting flavours in the coming months, taking inspiration from upcoming trends and adding our own homegrown twist to them. Furthermore, we are looking to raise our next round of Series A funding and planning launches in a few new markets.

We're currently at a high growth stage in the company that has been backed by a group of market leaders and investors. ■

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## Vivanta Katra Hotel, Vaishno Devi

Nestled along the foothills of the Trikuta mountains, the hotel is located in the picturesque Himalayan range with easy access to the holy shrine of Vaishno Devi.

Strategically located on the Jammu-Katra highway, the 77-room Vivanta Katra offers travellers views of the mighty Himalayas. The hotel features stylishly designed rooms and suites including a Vivanta Suite,

which spread across 176 square metres, is one of the largest in the city of Katra. Guests can indulge in eclectic culinary offerings at Mynt, the all-day diner, or enjoy a comforting cup of hot brew at The Tea Lounge. With multiple meeting rooms and outdoor spaces, this hotel is ideal for social gatherings. Guests can embark on holistic wellbeing at the Tattava Spa or rejuvenate at the hotel's fitness centre and swimming pool.

Located in Jammu and Kashmir, Katra is a key pilgrimage destination, known for the temple of the Holy Vaishno Devi. Also known for its natural beauty and multitude of adventure activities, Katra sees thousands of tourist footfalls each year.

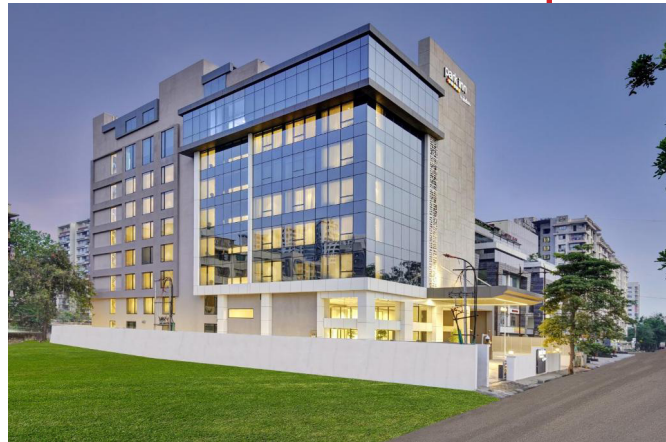


## Park Inn by Radisson Surat

Park Inn by Radisson announced the opening of Park Inn by Radisson Surat. Nestled in the coastal state of Gujarat, the hotel is situated in the heart of Surat and enjoys proximity to the Tapi River. Located within seven kilometers of the Surat International Airport, Park Inn by Radisson Surat is also accessible from Mumbai National Highway 48, making it easily accessible by road from Mumbai and Ahmedabad.

The hotel is spread over 1,600 sqm with 185 sqm of event space to host mid to large-scale meetings and events. The hotel is an ideal starting point for exploring the unique city of Surat also locally known as The Silk City and The Diamond City.

Park Inn by Radisson Surat features spacious rooms and suites adorned



with local artwork and handicrafts that help deliver the true Surat experience to guests. These rooms are equipped with cozy bedding and combined with the hotel's modern facilities, contemporary design and exciting food and beverage selections that offer the opportunity to make each guest's stay comfortable.

Guests can choose from four room categories including, standard rooms, superior rooms, deluxe rooms, and family suites. The hotel also offers the perfect space for business meetings and private events with state-of-the-art audiovisual equipment, and a breakout area.



## Burma Burma adds a new dimension to offer a pantry selection

Burma Burma Restaurant and Tea Room is an amalgamation of culture, authentic taste, and cooking from Burma (Myanmar) lovingly prepared from treasured family recipes. The much-loved brand now launches the Burma Burma Pantry, an extension of a treasured Burmese culinary heritage, bringing the authentic tastes and flavours of Burma to Indian kitchens and homes.

Envisioned as a space, by co-founder Ankit Gupta to go beyond just a restaurant experience, Burma Burma is loved by diners across the country. The launch of the Burma Burma pantry is an extension of the taste profile and much-loved flavours already served up at the dine-in space. The current pantry portfolio comprises nine exclusive products like the Khowsuey Curry Paste; Malar, an all-purpose Burmese Sauce; Plain Laphet, a Burmese Tea Leaf dressing; as well as a Spicy Laphet. There are Lotus Stem Chips; Balachaung, a topping to put on noodles, rice or salads; Crunchy nuts mix as well. The collection of fine teas is another very exciting part of the pantry. Burma Burma is available on the pantry's home page.



## Hansgrohe personalizes bathroom space with Finoris Faucet Range

Hansgrohe has introduced a new faucet collection 'Finoris' under its premium brand Hansgrohe. Built with minimalist design and maximum flexibility, the faucet comes with a unique pull-out spray with two spray modes- PowderRain and laminar spray offering enough freedom of movement – be it washing one's hair, or bathing a baby, or cleaning a clothing item. The range is exclusively designed to cater to all possible requirements which can be linked to a washbasin where the design and functionality of a faucet play a crucial role.

The new faucet range set incorporates unique accents for all bathrooms, whether it is a gentle PowerRain spray or a smooth laminar spray, the faucet adapts to the respective application with a flick of the wrist and

the push of a button, reducing water consumption to 5 litres per minute. Built with sustainable Hansgrohe EcoSmart technology, the range offers three surface finishes –Chrome, Matt Black and Matt White with a slim, geometric look, exclusively designed to support different heights with a wide variety of basin models.

## Jacob's Creek introduces Unvined

Australian wine brand, Jacob's Creek announced the launch of Unvined, a non-alcoholic wine with less than 0.5% alcohol, available in two varietals - Riesling and Shiraz.

Unvined, a modern expression of winemaking, is the perfect answer to occasions when one wants to enjoy a glass of wine without the alcohol content yet retain the true character of the original styles and flavours. The winemakers at Jacob's Creek use sophisticated technology which removes alcohol whilst capturing most of the original aromas and flavours of the wine. The Unvined range has 50% less calories than regular wine of the same varietal, catering to the evolved consumer base looking for varied options to suit their preferences and mood. With the introduction of these two new varietals under the non-alcoholic wine category, Jacob's Creek truly delivers on a coveted portfolio of wines that everyone around the table will want to reach for. Unvined Riesling and Shiraz are available in select retail outlets in Delhi and Mumbai and pan-India through Amazon India at INR 900/-.



## HYATT HOTELS

### **Ishika Konar, Executive Chef, Hyatt Regency Kolkata**

With over 16 years of culinary experience, Konar brings a dynamic and innovative energy to Hyatt Regency Kolkata's diverse culinary scene.

Her wide-ranging experience, creative flair and ardent passion for culinary art make her the perfect chef to oversee and maintain the legacy of the award-winning restaurants of the Hyatt Regency Kolkata. Holding a strong record

of streamlining operations and improving service while preserving the highest levels of quality, menu engineering and food styling being her prime forte; she is passionate about blending contemporary eating habits with the authenticity of traditional flavours and wellness.



## IHG HOTELS & RESORTS

### **Dhiman Das, Rooms Manager, InterContinental Chennai Mahabalipuram Resort**

In his new role, Das will work towards driving guest experience by ensuring Rooms Division meet the brand's standards, true hospitality, operational efficiency and generating higher profitability. Das will assist the General Manager in all aspects to drive Rooms Division at InterContinental Chennai Mahabalipuram Resort and ensure

smooth operations across all the departments. Ensuring all customer focus parameters are on track and driven by high customer satisfaction will result to repeat business and will help to position the resort among top in ECR, Chennai.



## HILTON HOTELS & RESORTS

### **Resha Naik, Marketing and Communications Manager, DoubleTree by Hilton Goa - Panaji**

Naik has over 19 years of relevant experience and started her hospitality career with Fairmont Dubai. In her new capacity, Naik will work closely with the hotel's commercial director and will be responsible for directing all marketing & communication strategies that help brand visibility to sustain

the hotel's competitive positioning. Her last assignment was a cluster role as Marketing Manager with Novotel Goa Candolim and Novotel Goa Resort & Spa. Naik has gained rich expertise in increasing brand awareness and profitability with extensive knowledge of traditional advertising and design, which she inherited from her father who is an accomplished commercial artist. She was introduced to modern tools of communication through her work experience.



## MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL

### **Manu Nair, Director of Operations, Indore Marriott Hotel**

With over 14 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Nair in his new role will be responsible for overseeing smooth functioning across departments and leading the strategic and business operations of the property. His journey at Marriott commenced with JW Marriott Juhu in Food & Beverage in the year 2008.

With his exceptional contribution to the property for around eight years, he received several accolades and role elevations. Prior to joining Indore Marriott Hotel, Manu's recent role was at Goa Marriott Resorts & Spa as the Director of Food & Beverage. Some of his accomplishments include getting listed in Hotelier Web's Power 25 F&B Leaders in AP, the Middle East and Africa along with various other awards like Manager of the year, and Best F&B Leader by Trinity Best.



### **Vidhi Jain, Marketing & Communications Manager, Jaipur Marriott Hotel**

In her new role, she will be responsible for elevating and maintaining the hotel's brand positioning, creating invigorating marketing campaigns aligned with the hotel's key goals, and driving additional revenue through tactical campaigns. She will be an integral part of the Sales & Marketing team enhancing the digital presence across platforms,

and driving PR, Communications and Media Relations for the hotel. Prior to her current role, she headed Marketing & Communications for Holiday Inn Jaipur City Centre, including during the tumultuous phase of the pandemic. Talking about her tenure, she was actively involved in ideating, planning and executing various food festivals and promotions and was an integral part in driving the successful R&B campaigns and PR campaigns.



### **Pramod Kumar, Director Of Sales And Marketing, Jaipur Marriott Hotel**

Kumar brings along a wealth of expertise in the Sales Marketing and Revenue Management domain. In his new stint, he will be responsible to drive commercial objectives and enhance the brand positioning. His journey from a Food and Beverage Steward to a Director of Sales and Marketing is no less but exemplary, armed with a rich experience of more

than 16 years including 7 Pre-openings and Re-Branding. Spearheading the Sales and Marketing vertical for Jaipur Marriott – the hotel offers an amalgamation of contemporary luxury and timeless opulence with 374 well-appointed rooms, an array of recreational activities, award-winning dining options and over 1,00,000 sq. ft. of convention and banqueting space he will focus on optimizing hotel revenues, enhancing brand reputation, curating thematic wedding experiences, driving innovative marketing campaigns and harnessing the teams' strengths to achieve commercial goals and set new benchmarks.



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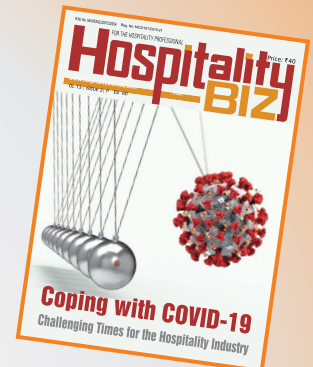
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