

# SIHRA

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## News

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# ABOUT SIHRA

## SOUTH INDIA **HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS** ASSOCIATION

**S**outh India Hotels and Restaurants Association (SIHRA) was incorporated in 1951 with an objective to encourage, promote and protect the interests of member establishments. It has been rendering professional advice and assistance from time-to-time to all its members, on topics of vital importance.

SIHRA, now more than six decades old, is a pre-eminent trade association for the hospitality industry in Southern India, comprising the states of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and the Union Territory of Puducherry.

It has over 1,200 hotel and restaurant members from the smallest stand-alone restaurants to the largest five-star deluxe hotels. SIHRA constitutes the southern region of the country's apex hospitality

trade association- Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI), which presently has a pan-India membership of around 4000.

It takes up the causes of its members with various state governments as well as with other bodies, and acts as the official spokesperson of the hospitality industry in South India. It also acts as an advisory body to the state governments in South India towards formulating their respective tourism policies.

The association regularly conducts professional development programmes and workshops to enhance the existing professional knowledge and productivity skills of the staff to enable them to keep pace with rapid developments in the hospitality industry.

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The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts

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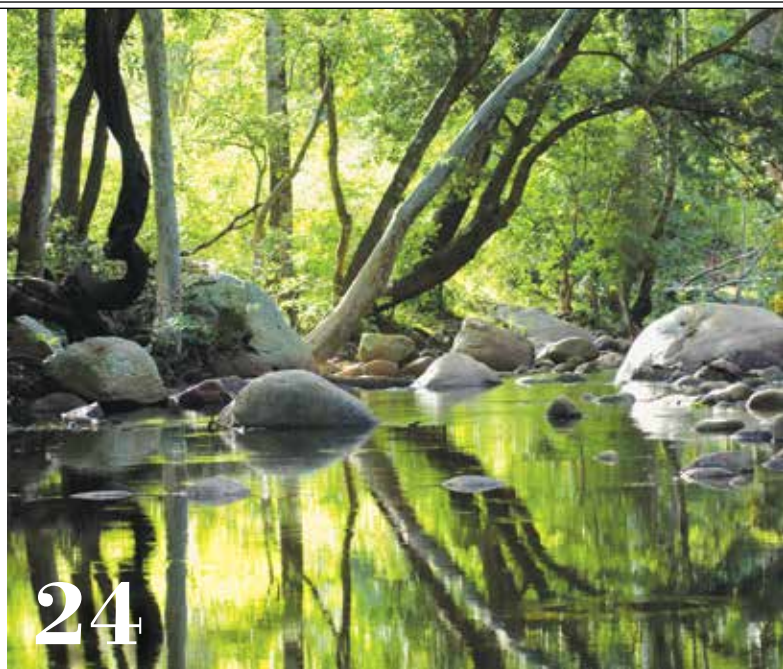
### Maya shines in the South

India Travel Awards South 2018 recognised the tourism and hospitality industry's forerunners in South India. Take a look at the winners of the prestigious award at a ceremony held at the Clarks Exotica Convention Resort & Spa, Bengaluru

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### Of their own 'Accor'd

Gaurav Shiva, General Manager, Novotel Chennai Chamiers Road, on the newly-opened property and the evolution of the hospitality industry in the region



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#### SIHRA

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**K. Syama Raju**  
President  
SIHRA

Dear fellow members,

I am happy to inform you that as per the recent tourism survey by the tourism ministry, India is the fastest growing tourism economy of the world. The receipt was 20.8 per cent in 2017 as against the global rate of 7 per cent. In order to project India as a must-visit destination, **Alphons Kannanthanam**, Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism, Government of India, is undertaking an Incredible India campaign in the US, covering major towns, as 21 per cent of arrivals of foreign tourists are from the US. The Ministry of Tourism's target was to have 20 million tourists in 2020, with double the foreign exchange. To achieve this result, travel marts on the lines of WTM and ITB have been arranged in September 2018, where several tourism promoters and travel writers will be in attendance. The ICPB conclave will also be held in Kolkata and the PATA PowerHouse programme in New Delhi in August. This is good for South India as tourists prefer to visit cultural places in South India, together with lesser-known places.

As per the decision of the Executive Committee for enlisting more members for SIHRA, meetings will be held with hoteliers in important towns in southern states, highlighting the activities and benefits of the Association. Members are requested to join hands with organisers to make this a success.

Under the FSSAI food programme, which has become mandatory for all Food Business Operators (FBOs), more lectures will be organised for hotel supervisors

to enable them to further train their juniors as per FSSAI standards.

I am happy that the selection committee of SIHRA has selected **Bina Karamjeet** as Secretary General to manage the secretariat as well as deal with matters pertaining to SIHRA and FHRAI.

This year's FHRAI Annual Convention will be held at Lucknow on September 20-22, 2018. I hope, like earlier years, SIHRA will be represented in large numbers to make it a success.

Let me end with a note of expectation that the year 2018 will provide more opportunities for the increased growth of the hospitality industry.



India is the fastest growing tourism economy of the world. The receipt was 20.8 per cent in 2017 as against the global rate of 7 per cent



With kind regards,  
**K. Syama Raju**  
President  
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## Kerala Tourism begins extensive promotional campaign

The Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala, is all set to kick-start its five-month-long promotional campaign in the high-potential domestic markets. Phase-I of the campaign would commence with the Travel & Tourism Fair in Kolkata from July 6-8, followed by the tourism partnership meets in Bhubaneswar and Vijayawada on July 10 and 12, respectively. Kerala Tourism would tap the Karnataka market with IITM Bengaluru (July 27-29) and Gujarat with three partnership meets in Ahmedabad (July 31), Vadodara (August 1), and Surat (August 3). Further, it would organise partnership meets in Lucknow (August 14) and Indore (August 17), followed by TTF Ahmedabad (September 7-9).

### Bina Karamjeet appointed Secretary General of SIHRA

**Bina Karamjeet** has been appointed as the Secretary General of SIHRA. She began her career in the hospitality industry at the Taj Coromandel in Chennai.



Backed by the experience she gained here, she moved on to work with Blue Dart Express, Airtel, timeshare and holidays with Club Mahindra. She also has experience of the real estate sector, having worked with Mahindra LifeSpaces. In the new role, Karamjeet will be responsible for the day-to-day activities of the Association, responding to members queries and membership drives among other things.



### OYO & Motherland to co-develop new hotel formats

OYO has formed a strategic partnership with Motherland Joint Ventures that will enable both companies to co-develop a series of exciting new hotel formats and enhance various aspects of customer experience, including key touchpoints such as interiors and ergonomics, all of which will offer guests an unprecedented combination of style, efficiency, and affordability.

### IHG launches new upscale brand, voco

IHG has launched voco, its new upscale hotel brand, alongside announcing a first signing in Australia. The brand will focus primarily on conversion opportunities and will strengthen IHG's offer in the \$40 billion upscale segment, which is expected to grow by a further \$20 billion by 2025. The new brand will combine the informality and charm of an individual hotel with the quality and reassurance of a global and respected brand. The roll-out of voco will begin in IHG's Europe, Middle East, Asia & Africa (EMEAA) region.



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## ITC Kohenur, Hyderabad, is now open

ITC Hotels has launched ITC Kohenur in Hyderabad, making it the 12<sup>th</sup> hotel to join the group's luxury hotel portfolio. Envisaged as a tribute to the traditions and distinct character of its locale, ITC Kohenur is a testament to the multifaceted rich heritage of the region. Located in the heart of Hyderabad's new business district, overlooking the picturesque Durgam Cheruvu Lake, the hotel features 271 rooms, suites, and

serviced apartments; six culinary brands; state-of-the-art meeting and convention spaces; as well as Kaya Kalp spa and well-being offerings complemented by the customary warmth of ITC Hotels. Located in HITEC city, the architecture and design of the hotel mirror the facets of the feted jewel by bringing to life the art, culture, cuisine, and heritage of the region in a contemporary milieu.



## AccorHotels completes acquisition of Mantra Group

AccorHotels has completed the acquisition of Mantra Group. The hospitality group has announced that the scheme of arrangement with Mantra Group has been implemented. The total consideration for the transaction was AU\$1.3 billion, which amounts to approximately €830 million, making AccorHotels the only shareholder in Mantra.



## Novotel Chennai Chamiers Road opens with 100 rooms

Chennai welcomes its seventh AccorHotels property with the opening of Novotel Chennai Chamiers Road. The hotel features around 100 well-appointed rooms, including four suites and rooms designed for the specially-abled. "Chennai is fast becoming a key market fuelled by both strong business and leisure traveller growth in an improving economic climate. It forms an integral piece of our densification strategy," says **Jean-Michel Cassé**, Chief Operating Officer, India & South Asia, AccorHotels.



## MSR Hotel and Spa Bangalore now under new management

MSR Hotel and Spa Bangalore, which until end 2017 was operational as Mövenpick Hotel and Spa Bangalore Hotel, has now been bought over by a new management, Gokulam Hotels and Resorts. It is owned by Sree Gokulam Chit & Finance, the flagship company of the Gokulam Group of Companies. AM Gopalan, Managing Director, along with Baiju Gopal, Executive Director, have ambitious plans; the vision and long-term strategy for the hotel group is to have a strong brand presence built on robust operational services and hotel offerings, amenities, and facilities.







## SIHRA organises FOSTAC training in Chennai

The FSSAI training programme was organised on June 20, 2018, with the help of **P Venkataramana Babu**, EC member, SIHRA, at New Woodlands Hotel, Chennai. The programme was conducted by **Dr Pasupathy** of Parikshan, who is an expert on food safety. He was assisted by **Saranya Gayathri**, Executive Director, Parikshan and **Veena Murali**, Director (Operations), Parikshan. Nineteen participants representing the hotel fraternity attended the programme. **R Rangachari**, the Advisor, welcomed everyone and explained why the programme was being held. The FOSTAC certification course has been made mandatory by the government

for all Food Business Operators (FBOs) in the country to ensure safe and hygienic food to all. Participants of the programme were given training on the legal conditions mandated in the law, activity on food spoilage, process flow in an FBO unit, design and facilities given in Schedule-V of FSSAI regulations, experiments on adulteration, as well as food safety management with packaging and labelling requirements. The trainees will thereafter be provided a unique log-in ID and a certificate from FOSTAC which will be valid for two years. It was also decided that the programme will be held in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Karnataka.

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## Radisson Hotel Group partners with MakeMyTrip

Radisson Hotel Group has formed a new partnership with MakeMyTrip (India). The new online distribution agreement will allow Radisson Hotel Group's entire global portfolio of over 1400 hotels and resorts to be available via MakeMyTrip.com, its popular booking App, and other platforms, potentially reaching millions of customers in India and beyond. MakeMyTrip has now become one of Radisson Hotel Group's largest OTA partners in the Asia Pacific region.

"India is one of the world's most dynamic markets for travel and hospitality, with a population of more than 1.3 billion people driving a booming domestic tourism industry and an expanding outbound market. Through this exciting new partnership with MakeMyTrip, we look forward to welcoming many more Indian customers to Radisson's hotels, wherever in the world they travel," says **Katerina Giannouka**, President, Asia Pacific, Radisson Hotel Group. Adding to this, **Saurabh Prakash**, Vice President, Commercial, Asia Pacific, Radisson Hotel Group, says, "India has been a key focus market for Radisson Hotel Group for many years,



so forming a global partnership with India's largest OTA is a natural progression of this strategy. We are fully committed to our Indian guests and will continue to create meaningful benefits for them in partnership with MakeMyTrip."

## InterGlobe Hotels to develop new ibis property in Hebbal

InterGlobe Hotels has commenced construction of another ibis hotel in Bengaluru. The property is being developed in the important suburban location of Hebbal, and will feature 153 rooms and approximately 250 sqm of meeting space.

**JB Singh**, President and CEO, InterGlobe Hotels, says, "With the commencement of construction, our footprint in the city grows stronger with the addition of our third asset in the city." The proposed hotel is estimated to be developed at a project cost of approximately ₹90 crore.



## Cygnett Hotels launches Cygnett Inn Duvvada, Vizag

Cygnett Hotels & Resorts has announced the opening of Cygnett Inn Duvvada. The full-service budget hotel features 40 guest rooms and suites with modern interiors and stylish furnishings. It also features three spacious event and banquet spaces. **Sarbendra Sarkar**, Founder and Managing Director, Cygnett Hotels & Resorts, says, "The fact that Cygnett has come so far is evidence that quality of service supersedes any other factor which influences consumer behaviour towards the hospitality industry. It is essential that we always prioritise on giving our guests an experience they will remember for life."



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## India's first Hyatt Centric in Bengaluru

Hyatt Hotels has announced the rebranding of Hyatt Bangalore MG Road to the Hyatt Centric brand, marking the brand's first hotel in India and 23<sup>rd</sup> worldwide. Located in prime destinations across world-class cities like New York, Miami, Madrid, Tokyo and Chicago, the Hyatt Centric brand is thoughtfully designed to enable exploration and discovery, and targets millennial-minded travellers who want to be in the middle of the action. Designed by Studio HBA, the hotel boasts of a contemporary feel with eclectic touches that capture the city's cosmopolitan vibe. Its 143 contemporary and playful guest rooms, including four suites with terrace gardens overlooking the aquamarine blue pool, have been stylishly redecorated and infused with local flare. Two distinct dining options are also available.

## IHCL signs its second Ginger hotel in Visakhapatnam

The Indian Hotels Company (IHCL) has signed a new Ginger hotel in Visakhapatnam. This will be Ginger's second hotel in the city. The new Ginger in Visakhapatnam, with 56 rooms, an all-day diner, a meeting room and a fitness centre, is located at Gajuwaka amidst a commercial hub. The hotel is slated to open mid-2019. IHCL has two other hotels in the city – The Gateway Hotel Beach Road Visakhapatnam and a 68-room Ginger hotel close to the Visakhapatnam railway station. **Deepika Rao**, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Roots Corporation (the wholly-owned subsidiary of IHCL that operates the Ginger chain of hotels), says, "We are delighted to partner with SSR Builders in Visakhapatnam for this hotel. We are happy to expand our presence in Visakhapatnam."



## AccorHotels to acquire stake in sbe Entertainment Group

AccorHotels and sbe Entertainment Group have signed a Letter of Intent and entered into exclusive negotiations for AccorHotels to acquire a 50 per cent stake in sbe, further illustrating AccorHotels' strategy to expand its offering in the luxury lifestyle hospitality segment. This partnership will combine the expertise and savoir-faire of the two groups; AccorHotels will acquire 50 per cent of sbe's

common equity held in part by Cain International for \$125 million. Sam Nazarian will continue to own the remaining 50 per cent of sbe. In addition, AccorHotels will invest \$194 million in a new preferred debt instrument that will be used to redeem all existing preferred units, also held in part by Cain International. AccorHotels' total investment in sbe will be \$319 million.





# Moving ahead of crisis

**K. Syama Raju**, President, SIHRA, talks about how hotels fared in the last few months in the southern region in the wake of the Nipah virus. He also provides an insight into the hospitality business here and reveals what's to come in the near future.

## WAS THERE A DECLINE IN TOURISM BECAUSE OF THE NIPAH VIRUS?

As the virus was detected at an early stage near Calicut, both government and private agencies swung into action to educate tourists on the matter. All medical institutions were also requested to take necessary action on this issue. To prevent a future calamity of this nature from affecting the industry, business operators were requested to follow good hygiene as per FSSAI standards.

## HOW HAVE HOTELS PERFORMED IN THE LAST TWO MONTHS?

Despite the Nipah virus scare and various *bandhs*, the hotels did well with the help of the travel trade and business houses. As per a survey, there was an increase of 6.5 per cent in occupancy as compared to last year.

## ARE ANY NEW INITIATIVES FOR ATTRACTING MORE TOURISTS TO THE REGION ON THE CARDS?

SIHRA, with the help of various state governments in the southern region, arranges interactions with investors, tour promoters, and international hotel chains to impress the need of their presence through MICE and wellness tourism, and to promote various lesser-known destinations in the region.

The Ministry of Tourism, with the help of state tourism boards, has taken several initiatives to promote the south as a favourable destination. Apart from this, various travel marts and conferences were also held to exhibit the facilities of the hospitality industry and showcase its importance for infrastructure development.

## HOW CAN THE GOVERNMENT WORK TOWARDS IMPROVING THE INFRASTRUCTURE?

It is suggested that the government declare tourism as an industry by providing an infrastructure status to it and to have a single-window clearance to enable new hotels to come up without any problems. Land should be provided at a concessional value and there should be a sufficient gestation period in the form of tax holiday. Financial institutions should provide fiscal concessions as hotels not only build up the infrastructure but also provide employment opportunities to skilled and unskilled labour.





# KARNATAKA

## to develop 20 KEY SPOTS

Karnataka Tourism is developing its Coastal Circuit to boost tourism and has identified 20 key destinations to be developed. The state is going all out to revamp its marketing strategy to increase visibility and awareness about its tourism products and further its hospitality expanse.

In 2017, Karnataka recorded an increase of 38 per cent in domestic tourism while inbound tourism maintained its pace as compared to previous years, informs **Kumar Pushkar**, Managing Director, Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC). He says, "Wildlife is our biggest strength; we have unexplored beaches, nature, rich heritage and culture, and the state is also a hotspot for pilgrimage."

### New projects

In order to harness the tourism potential of the state's 320-km coastline, it is developing the Coastal Circuit. "The destinations under this circuit include Gokarna, Murdeshwar, Karwar, Tagore Beach, Devbagh Beach, Malpe, etc. The central government has allotted a budget of ₹92 crore for this circuit, while the state government has allotted funds to the tune of nearly ₹100 crore," he informs.

### Hospitality spectrum

Pushkar feels that the hospitality sector grows automatically with increase in demand. He says, "In Hampi, there were earlier only one or two-star hotels, but more hotels have now been added. With increased air connectivity to Hampi, tourism will grow further." KSTDC has around 45 hotels in the state out of which 19 are run by the government and the rest have been outsourced for operations. "Though we market these properties under the budget category, our facilities can match any three-star property," he concludes.

“

The central government has allotted a budget of ₹92 crore for this circuit

”


Pushkar believes that private enterprises have a major role to play in this sector, while the government needs to support the sector with better infrastructure, tourism-friendly policies, safety and security of travellers, and proper amenities. He identifies lack of information among travellers as one of the key challenges. "Since last year, the priority of the government has been to develop 20 key destinations in Karnataka. The plan of action is to develop five of these 20 destinations in phase-I in the next one year and the rest shall follow in various stages," he says.



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# Towards a new

Hilton, with a portfolio of 14 brands comprising more than 5,100 properties and nearly 838,000 rooms in 103 countries and territories, is on a rising curve. **Jatin Khanna**, Vice President, Operations - India, Hilton, talks about the importance of India as a market for the brand, its growth strategy here, and much more.

Anupriya Bishnoi

## What is your strategy for the Indian market?

We have a two-pronged strategy plan for India. One is for big cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Hyderabad, where we want to bring some of our iconic brands like Conrad and Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts. The second is for Tier-II and Tier-III cities that we don't want to lose out on. There is a lot of expansion happening in these areas. So, we have a robust plan for the country where we are not going to overlook smaller cities; it will be a uniform growth.

## Which of Hilton's brands is the biggest revenue generator?

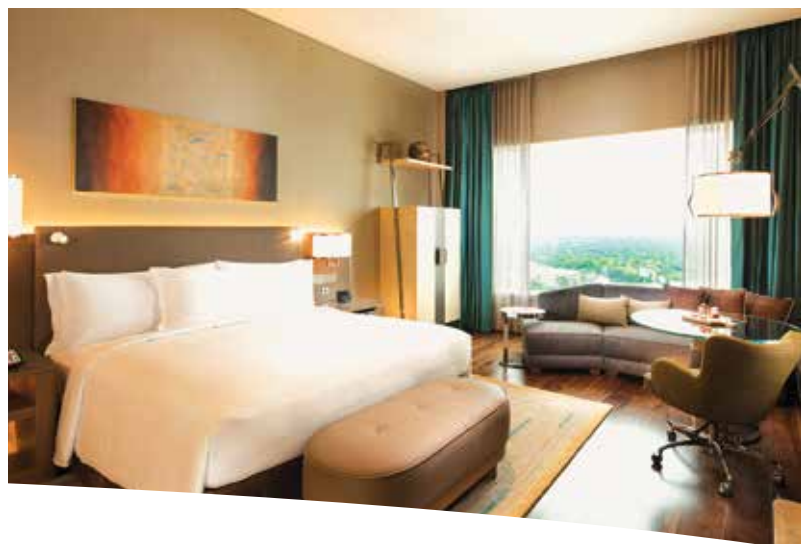
We run 17 hotels in India; some of them are extremely successful. Conrad Pune and Hilton

Chennai are iconic hotels in their respective cities. Also, when we talk about the most successful brand or hotel, it's more about how successful the F&B business is in that hotel. Over the years, we have seen F&B coming back to hotels and the ones which do well have great F&B outlets and loyal patronage.

## How important is India as a market for you?

India is an extremely important market for us. This year, we have made a few corrections and we have made a few announcements in the India structure. I think it's very important that we put a lot of local resources closer to the market, which shows how important India is for us. In the coming months, we are going to add a few





# ZENITH

positions that will reflect the growth potential of this market.

## **Do you think mergers and acquisitions are shaping the future of the global hospitality industry?**

You can say that, that's the flavour of the season. Not just in hospitality but in other sectors as well, mergers and acquisitions have become a trend. The world has changed; it's all about partnerships and consolidations. I think that's the way forward for a business like ours.

## **India is an evolving hospitality market. What are your views?**

India is still evolving as a hospitality market and it is not as matured as the American or European hospitality sector. Having said that, it has grown to a different level.

Today, India is not just about four metros or big cities. Also, different brands in different segments

have found more acceptability in comparison to the scenario that existed seven or 10 years ago where India was perceived as a five-star hospitality market. It has changed now; people have started identifying brands of various segments. They have specific choices and they have their favourites. So, the evolution is on the right path and soon enough we will be on a par with other top hospitality markets.

## **Is competition intimidating to you?**

Not at all. Competition is always good. It keeps you aware in terms of what you want to achieve. Also, if you don't have good competition, you won't be able to give the best to your customers.

## **Any specific clientele that you target?**

It totally depends on where you are. Of our 17 properties, a couple of them are resorts which will have more of a leisure base, but some of the other properties are corporate or MICE hotels like Conrad Pune and Hilton Chennai.



“

We have a robust plan for the country where we are not going to overlook smaller cities”

”





# Moving beyond BORDERS

**Sudhir Nair**, Executive Chef, Courtyard and Fairfield by Marriott, ORR, Bengaluru, on the business of F&B at the properties.

## What makes the restaurants at the properties unique?

At Courtyard and Fairfield ORR Bengaluru, we operate four food and beverage outlets together. Each caters to both in-house and outside guests. Kava is positioned as a comfortable dining option with impetus on local Indian selections and healthy food options. MoMo Café is an all-day dining multi-cuisine restaurant where the focus is to provide business travellers a meal and drink of their choice. BGs is a quintessential poolside bar and grill to relax after a day's work. MoMo2go, located in the Courtyard lobby, is a comfortable lounge to enjoy your favourite whisky or binge on a vegan shake.

## How has the palate of South Indian diners evolved?

Until a decade ago, South Indians, in general, were happy and content with their own food and tastes. Today, not only are they well-travelled and discerning, but they are also keen to explore uncharted cuisines. Not only has the cuisine border between southern states diminished, but a lot of international and North Indian cuisines are also flourishing here.

## How challenging is the business?

Getting chefs with the right skill and aptitude is one of the main

challenges in our field. With such drastic changes in weather, supply of seasonal produce gets adversely effected. For example, the quality and quantity of mangoes available this year is a pittance. It just keeps getting worse year after year.

## How are you beckoning more walk-in guests?

We believe in word of mouth, so we keep our offering and price appropriate. We also use social media to inform people of ongoing promotions and offers, but the hallmark of our success are repeat guests and their friends and colleagues.

## How do you deal with the competition here?

Frankly, there is nothing that can be done regarding the competition in the region; it will keep increasing. We keep ourselves abreast of competition, play to our strengths, and try to better ourselves continuously.

## Do you think customisation of food kills authenticity?

We welcome guest feedback wholeheartedly and make changes based on their needs. Authenticity is a misused concept in today's world; it is a perception based on popularity and acceptance. What is authentic today may be strange a few decades from now.





# 5 reasons

## INDIA TRAVEL AWARDS WEST 2018

11<sup>th</sup> September 2018 at Hotel Express Inn, Nashik

# are good for your business



# 1

### Reputation

Appreciation and recognition from industry peers

These exciting Awards are brought to you by The DDP Group and TravTalk, the leading business to business travel newspaper in South Asia. TravTalk is a well-established and highly respected publication that has been running for 30 years. It is read by 6,00,000 people, every fortnight.

# 2

### Exposure

Opportunity to tell your story and elevate your profile

Getting shortlisted for an award can improve brand awareness and promote your business to new customers. All winners will appear in the TravTalk supplemental issue. Further media coverage will also be provided in other media including TravelTV.News.

Being nominated for India Travel Award will help you gain PR exposure, through special print magazines, newsletters, email broadcasters and website promotion, throughout the year.



# 3

### Competitive edge and bragging

Stand out from the crowd

An award is a seal of approval for your activities and is a sign of quality for potential customers. It's a great way of differentiating your organisation from competitors.

# 4

### Access to industry leaders

Connect with the best

The India Travel Awards offers a great opportunity to network with senior industry professionals and government officials away from the business environment.



# 5

### Motivate and reward

Boosting team morale

Attending an award ceremony in itself creates a buzz. The team looks forward to a good night out with their colleagues and industry peers, and if they win an award it is even better. Getting back to office with a shiny trophy is recognition of the hard work put in by team and highly motivating.

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Interview



# ‘Evolve Back’

**Jose Ramapuram**, Director Marketing, Evolve Back Luxury Resorts, talks about the brand, how it helps guests explore the uniqueness of a location, and what the company has on its expansion radar.

# to LUXURY





### Tell us about Evolve Back and what makes it unique.

Evolve Back, formerly known as Orange County, is an established chain of luxury resorts in India that are a representation of local history and natural surroundings. We are a privately-held public limited chain of resorts under the name Orange County Resorts & Hotels, which was originally incorporated in 1993. Our head office is in Bengaluru. We are currently present in three locations - Kamalapura Palace in Hampi, Kuruba Safari Lodge in Kabini, and Chikkana Halli Estate in Coorg.

We, at Evolve Back, provide exquisite holiday experiences that showcase the purity of nature and the culture of the land. We call this the 'Spirit of the Land' philosophy and imbibe it in all our endeavours. Over the years, we have also maintained high standards of quality in our services with acute attention to guest experience.

### What unique experiences do you provide to your guests?

Our guests are pampered with personalised attention, leaving them ensconced in a warm and surreal feeling that can last a lifetime. Due to the distinctiveness of each property, the guests tend to have a sense of pride in their association, leaving them enriched with new-found knowledge and never-before experiences with nature. All of our existing resorts offer unique experiences. Evolve Back Chikkana Halli Estate, Coorg, engages guests in the history, natural habitat, and culture of Coorg through specially designed walks and visits. Starting from the plantation and nature walk to the coracle rides and bird watching, guests are enthralled and immersed into the local and indigenous charms of Coorg. We also provide an experiential visit to the local village, which offers a host of hidden natural delights and social experiences. Evolve Back Kamalapura Palace, Hampi, provides thoughtfully planned visits to engage guests in various aspects of Hampi's history, mythology, architecture, commerce, and political life that come alive through its striking monuments, magnificent temples, and soul-stirring landscapes. Evolve Back Kuruba Safari Lodge, Kabini, with boat and vehicle safaris, night trails, village visits, and evening activities, provides guests with the opportunity to experience the spirit of the land through specially crafted activities that appeal to every sense.

### What factors do you consider when deciding on location?

We carefully handpick each location for our resorts after extensive research. We are looking to tap the new-found interest



“With four new projects in the pipeline, we are looking at a total investment of ₹112 crore”

among people for experiential travel, especially for untapped destinations. We usually avoid overcrowded destinations and scout for those unspoilt markets where we sense a potential to grow not just for us but also for the destination.

### Which destinations do you have on your radar for further expansion?

Evolve Back is looking to expand over the next three years nationally and internationally, with four new projects in the pipeline. We are looking at a total investment of ₹112 crore, which is planned to be raised with a mix of internal accruals and debts.

We will be opening a resort at Kumta in North Karnataka, over an area of 30 acres and with an investment of ₹50 crore. This resort has been planned on the theme of a local fishing village. We are also looking at a palace-themed resort in the medieval town of Mandu in Madhya Pradesh. This property is expected to see an investment of ₹35 crore. In the interim, a property each in an African and in an Asian country are also being planned. All the said properties integrate architectural elements of their destinations, making the setup all the more sustainable and authentic, complemented by luxurious amenities.

### Who are your clients?

Evolve Back's primary target markets are the metros and other urban areas in India, while the secondary market comprises Western Europe, America, Scandinavia, Australia, South East Asia, and the Middle East. We attract approximately 90 per cent of our clientele from within India and the remaining 10 per cent from across the globe.

### What kind of challenges do you face in the business?

One of the challenges we face is in acquiring land in certain locations. Land in many parts of India is largely fragmented and we need to acquire it from multiple individuals. The next challenge is in getting the required clearances for the project from multiple departments and signatories. Environmental laws are typically very rigid and hence take a lot of time and effort to fully comply with.

In addition to this, because of the vast distances between locations, basic services such as electricity and water are typically hard to come by. In fact, most of the basic infrastructure that we take for granted is missing or is inadequate and needs to be developed from scratch. All this is not only extremely time-consuming, causing unnecessary delays, but also ends up escalating costs as a result.

# When times aren't hospitable

Nipah virus in the South, brutal weather conditions in the North – the likelihood of such events impacting tourism and hospitality within or beyond the affected regions is immense. SIHRA members provide their point of view on how such occurrences affect hospitality business.

Anupriya Bishnoi



Picture Courtesy: Kerala Tourism



**JOSE PRADEEP**  
Managing Director  
Hotel Yuvarani Residency

## AN ADVERSE IMPACT

We had major impact in the tourism sector due to the Nipah virus. We had been expecting a huge inflow of domestic and Gulf holidaymakers during the months of June and July.

There were widespread cancellations of hotel bookings and tour packages through the

entire state, even though the virus had affected only a small area of a district. All Wayanad-included packages were cancelled and many Malaysian pilgrimage groups also cancelled or postponed their trips. News divulged through local and national media caused panic while giving mandatory information

to public. Government machinery like the Health Minister, District Collector, Tourism Secretary, and the Tourism Director acted well by coordinating various departmental efforts and arranging multilevel meetings to come up with a strategy to minimise casualties and avoid a situation of panic.



**SK HARI ARUMUGAM**

**Managing Director**  
**Poppys Hotels**

**PREPARING FOR THE WORST**

It is a well-known fact today that there are an increasing number of disasters and crisis that affect the tourism industry, ranging from natural to human-influenced incidents. The globalisation of the industry and the fact that the world is also becoming more interdependent and connected has led to a new reality for the tourism industry, where crisis that occur in one single place of the country or world can affect tourism activities around the broader area. This interdependence enforces the need for crisis preparedness with a constantly ascending need for crisis and disaster preparation.

The enormous growth tourism has experienced in the past 50 years, also because of technological advancement in

sectors such as transportation, internet, etc., which brought many destinations within reach, has resulted in a much stronger interconnectedness and complexity within the tourism system and made the industry an important factor in socio-economic development. However, these processes have also opened business undertakings up to a wider set of global risks. Tourism is often described as a fragile industry, where demand for travel is highly susceptible to numerous shocks such as wars, outbreaks of deadly contagious diseases, incidents of terrorism, economic fluctuations, currency instability, energy crisis, and so on. Many crisis can be avoided with good risk management techniques.

The need for crisis preparedness is an ongoing process of developing organisational

capabilities to prevent, contain, and recover from crisis, and to learn from experience. Understanding disasters, their lifecycle, and potential impact can help in the development of strategies by organisations to deal with such incidents. Strategies to deal with these different crisis situations will vary depending on time pressure, the extent of control, and the magnitude of the incident. Of course, the impact of disasters does not last forever. Usually, tourism returns to normal after a period of recovery.

Heightened fear of travelling led to some cancellations and a drop in new bookings during the Nipah virus scare. However, the state and central government's comprehensive measures to contain the crisis with public announcements certainly helped.



“Heightened fear of travelling led to some cancellations and a drop in new bookings”

**RUPAM DUTTA**

**General Manager**  
**Feathers - A Radha Hotel, Chennai**

**TO COOLER GROUNDS**

Summer in India has a very sharp impact on overall travel. If I classify the traveller by season, many tourists, mainly in the domestic market, travel to destinations like Shimla, Kashmir, Manali, and Kulu in the North; Gangtok and Darjeeling in the East and Northeast; and Ooty and Kodaikanal in the South. These are places that have significantly low temperatures.

We don't get to see many inbound leisure groups in Chennai during summer. Within Chennai, a remarkable change of lifestyle has been observed in recent years. The South being a

hub for corporates, IT companies, automobile plants, etc., has a certain volume of business travellers who are always looking to travel for leisure. We see a slowdown of our F&B revenue during this phase. Barring May, we manage to stay within reasonable numbers.

In my opinion, any event of a negative form in a neighbouring state has not been a concern for the footfall in another state in recent times, and when we see that many proactive steps are in place during any negative event in a neighbouring state, we gain confidence. Nipah was

handled extremely well by the state administration. This went down well with the travelling fraternity and the global community.

Bad weather in New Delhi did not have an impact on us. We didn't see any increase in occupancy during this period. We have also noted a decline in domestic air travel during May. Nipah did not have a huge impact either. It was very well handled by the department of health in Kerala, and thanks to the national media, everyone was cautioned but never was a negative propaganda carried.



“Bad weather in Delhi and Nipah did not have a huge impact”

# How far can **TECHNOLOGY** go?

The business of hospitality, without a doubt, has come a long way when it comes to technology. However, this industry is such that it cannot completely do away with human element. Hoteliers explain how technology betters business, but where they need to draw a line.

Anupriya Bishnoi





**HARISH CHANDRA**

**Director - Information Technology**  
**Sarovar Hotels & Resorts**

**An ever-present mobile**

In the last one decade, technology has evolved a lot and is used in many spheres, especially after the invention of the mobile touchscreen. Smartphones are turning to be an opportunity for hospitality business to improve customer service. Most of the hotels today have responsive websites. Guests use mobile phones to have a look at the property and book without hassles. Customisable and accessible Apps that

make hotels more efficient and improve guest satisfaction are available today. These Apps facilitate efficient guest service commitment by anticipating guest needs and promise prompt service.

**Utilising social media**

Hotels are investing in solutions that help in creating the 'wow' factor among guests at reasonable costs. Use of social media in delivering personalised experience to guests

is also increasingly being employed. Today, hotel chains engage frequently-visiting guests with various offers via social media websites. This has also helped us to grow business by winning their loyalty.

Hotels prominently spread brand awareness through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc. The best advantage of using these social media platforms is that we get traffic from both organic and referral links.

**RAHUL KANUNGO**

**General Manager**  
**The Fern Hotel, Belagavi**

**Everything is online**

To be successful in the hospitality industry in today's landscape, those entering the field must be open to using a variety of new tools to ensure satisfaction of both leisure and business travellers. Over the past 20 years, many facets of the hotel industry have shifted to adapt to new technology and changing consumer behaviour, which has in turn changed how hoteliers conduct business. Technologies like

travel websites and Apps help the most. There is a plethora of online travel sites and Apps that can be used for different purposes.

**The human element will survive**

It has been observed that technology is replacing the human element slowly. The moustached doormen are being replaced by automated doors, check-in kiosks are coming in handy, automated

welcome dispensers are handy to pick up a welcome drink of one's choice while waiting in the lobby area, a single remote to operate all functions of the room are common nowadays, and with the advent of interactive televisions, the ordering of services from the room is faster and reduces human error. That said, though technology may reduce mundane jobs, human touch will still remain an integral part of Indian hospitality.

**RAHUL NAMA**

**General Manager**  
**Mercure Chennai Sripurumbudur**

**In touch with tech**

Over the last decade, the hospitality industry in India and globally has undergone multiple transformations leading it to where it is today. Technology and innovation advances have been the primary drivers of change in the past decade. For instance, the advent of Online Travel Agencies (OTAs), using Artificial Intelligence, virtual reality,

virtual concierges, or in-room automation have helped further the customer experience. Globally, our concierge brand John Paul, our mobile App Phil Welcome, and AccorLocal have helped the brand come close to not just guests staying with us but also the neighbours of our properties.

**On an equal footing**

It is given in hospitality that

a hotel has to be a home away from home, so apart from comfort, hygiene, and culinary experience, a business hotel has to offer the tools and technology for its guests to stay connected in real time for both personal and professional requirements of its patrons. Having said that, to make a guest feel welcome and special, a personal touch is equally important.





**SACHIN MAHESHWARY**  
General Manager  
Novotel Kochi Infopark Hotel

### Bridging gaps with tech

Where most people think the advent of technology is taking the guest away from the staff, we believe that it is bringing us much closer to the guest. The communication networks have so intricately developed that we can now stay connected with the guest through social media, chatbots, and other platforms. We understand guest needs better and address their concerns quicker. It gives us a better hand at maintaining relations.

### An aid, not a substitute

The human touch is indeed the



essence of Indian hospitality. No technological aid can replace the warmth of a heartfelt *namaskaram*. That said, the advent of technology is necessary for operational ease and lowering of building cost

in some cases. However, the modern implants and gadgetry, which are very intriguing in the first few minutes, can later be a hindrance to ease of functioning, especially to the not-so-tech-savvy generation.



**AMIT KUMAR**  
Hotel Manager  
Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park

### Addressing guest needs

Technology has been a major driver of growth and collects customer insight through feedback and online reviews, which helps hotels curate a customised experience in line with the needs of guests for their repeat visits. It is this technology that helps simplify their stay at the hotel. Hotel's today have everything that a young business

traveller seeks, including tech-savvy features such as high-tech work spaces with complimentary high-speed wireless internet access, entertainment amenities, and one-stop connectivity solutions for multiple electronic gadgets.

### A balancing act

I believe that today's customer is a tech-savvy traveller and has

an expectation of a digitally advanced hotel in terms of high-speed internet, smart room keys, or digital conference facilities. However, in hospitality, personal connect builds customer loyalty and technology is an addition for an overall customer satisfaction. As a hotel, one needs to strike the right balance between the two for a good experience.



**VIKALP RAJ**  
Director of Sales & Marketing  
Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway

### A tool for revenue maximisation

Technology plays a very important role in today's time, especially when hotels are focusing more on tracking guest details and historical dates, guest experiences, as well as daily operations in F&B venues, which are an integral part for hotel business. It also contrib-

utes greatly in trend analysis, revenue optimisation, studying pricing of the hotel for future revenue generation, and advising us on what should be done for revenue maximisation.

### Memories count

I believe that with the advent of technology, our back-end processes have improved for

providing better guest experiences. However, the front of the house still works on providing personal touch to the guests at every point. At our hotel, our associates are keen and extremely particular in covering all the critical touch-points that not only provide guests memorable experiences, but also ensure repeat visits.





# Holland

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# On the right **AXIS**

**Anil Kumar Prasanna**, CEO, AxisRooms, on how technology has created a revolution in the hotel industry and how this new-age product is helping hoteliers enhance distribution and operate efficiently.



## Tell us about AxisRooms.

We are a full suite hotel technology platform that enables business growth, distribution, and efficiency in managing hotels and accommodations. AxisRooms started in 2011 with a vision to enable and empower independent and mid-sized hotels with technology, as growing e-commerce needed a solution that was easy to understand and economical for hotels to manage their business. Today, AxisRooms is already a market leader in hotel technology products in India, Sri Lanka and Bhutan, and is working towards other markets.

“  
Our connectivity is seamless with real-time pricing  
”

## How is this technology aiding hotel operations?

We assist hotels in the core value of business, which includes enhanced e-commerce distribution, revenue and yield management with accurate forecasting of business, and enabling them to operate the business efficiently. Approximately 95 per cent of the platforms hotels are using are obsolete and do not offer business value. There is a lot of unnecessary manual work of feeding

reservations from online bookings to the property management system, inventory management system, etc. Hotels deal with Big Data and these systems do not even record segment analysis, customer needs, which are important for hotels to help them stand out amongst competition.

## What is your view of the evolution of technology in the hospitality industry?

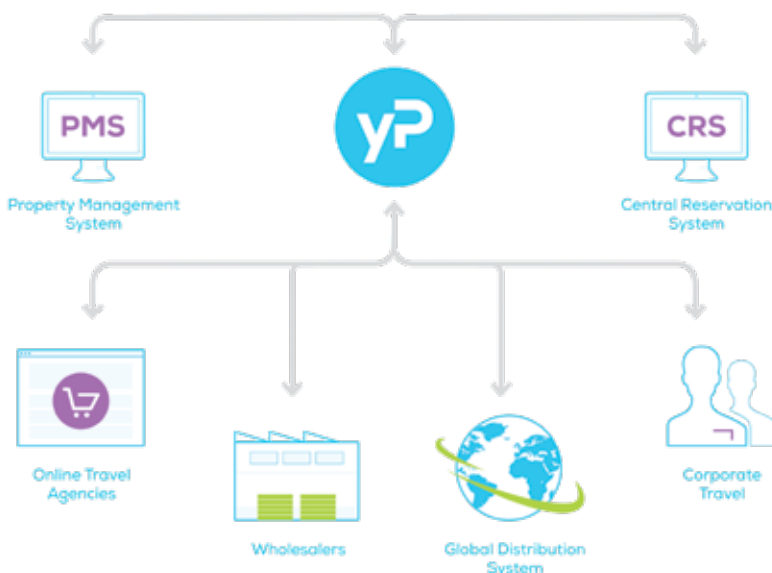
Today, everything needs to be connected. From customer relationship management to reputation management, everything has to be on a single platform. Hotels still do not understand the value of products available in the market and I feel, the ones that will understand, will be the hotels that will do well in the future. Channel managers and connected reservation systems are a must, and adoption of revenue management systems is the future for every hotel and accommodation business.

## Why would a hotel approach you?

We have hotels approaching us for various solutions. The most sought-after platform is our channel manager followed by our revenue management system, so there is an immense interest to use our products and early users have even seen triple-digit business growth. We will be enhancing our presence in hotel management systems, too, but our focus will be more on mid-size hotels, inns, and vacation homes.

## How does AxisRooms help manage distribution channels?

Our connectivity is well-tested and is quick compared to traditional competitors. We were one among the first to connect Goibibo, MakeMyTrip, Airbnb, Traveloka, Qunar, Cleartrip, Yatra, etc., for India-specific market distribution. We have a lot of functionalities which are not even available with global competitors. Our connectivity is seamless with real-time pricing and inventory updates.





# Travel

## SHOWS

### Business

#### TRAVEL SHOW

December 1 - 2, 2018  
Hyderabad Marriott Hotel & Convention Centre

### Education

#### TRAVEL SHOW

November 17 - 18, 2018

### Allied

#### TRAVEL SHOW

February 23 - 24, 2019

### Luxury

#### TRAVEL SHOW

April 6 - 7, 2019

### Wedding

#### TRAVEL SHOW

July 6 - 7, 2019



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# MAYA SHINES IN



India Travel Awards South 2018, in a glittering ceremony held at Clarks Exotica Convention Resort & Spa, Bengaluru, recognised the tourism and hospitality industry's forerunners in South India.



(L-R) SanJeet, Harmandeep Singh Anand, Anita Mishra, Kumar Pushkar, Manish Kriplani, M Balaji

**R**enowned as a platform that recognises the hard work and continuous effort of tourism industry players in their respective regions, India Travel Awards - South brought together the who's who of the industry at a glamorous, black-tie

awards ceremony. **Kumar Pushkar**, an IFS officer and Managing Director, Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation, and the Chief Guest for the event, said, "These awards are a motivation for those who work in the field of tourism.

I believe that tourism is all about sustainability and good practices, and I hope that the award winners will learn from the good work put in by their colleagues." **Anita Mishra**, Gladrags Mrs India, Maharashtra



# THE SOUTH



The winners of India Travel Awards South 2018 at Clarks Exotica Convention Resort & Spa, Bengaluru

2018, graced the occasion as the Guest of Honour.

The ceremony recorded the presence of nearly 150 people from the industry. **SanJeet**, Mentor, India Travel Awards, asserts that tourism is synonymous with progress, development and opportunity, and this sentiment is echoing all over the country. He believes that every small hotel, restaurant, and tourist attraction contributes to the growth of the industry. But, are we doing enough to recognise the players who are contributing to this growth, he questions. "We have instituted these awards to address this gap. The regional awards recognise those establishments which may not be able to see the light of day at the

national level. This recognition that we bestow on our regional players puts the spotlight on them and we recognise their contribution, and at the same time ensure that they are maintaining the high industry standards," he says.

The awards are divided into four categories: Personal Awards are for the legends and leaders who have established themselves and the youngsters who need the encouragement; Business Awards are for those organisations that have been outstanding in their respective field and deserve the recognition; Trending Awards, decided by critics, are awarded to individuals who have done extraordinary work and Partner Awards are to appreciate the

partners who help make the ceremony a grand success.

In the Personal Awards category, the Gold Maya was awarded to **Sherif Salman**, Chairman, Sherif Travel and Cargo Services, who entered the Gallery of Legends. **Raj Andrade**, VP, Business Development, Marketing and Strategy, Bengaluru International Airport, took home the DDP Game Changer trophy this year. **Ronald Colaco**, Owner, Clarks Exotica Convention Resort & Spa, Bengaluru and **Vivek Kumar**, MD, Clarks Brij Hotels, Pride Hospitality and Brijrama Hospitality, were both named the DDP Trailblazers. **Nirupa Shankar**, Director, Brigade Hospitality, was declared the Face of the Future.





## Awards



**GALLERY OF LEGENDS**  
Sherif Salman



**DDP GAME CHANGER**  
Raj Andrade



**DDP TRAILBLAZER**  
Ronald Colaco



**DDP TRAILBLAZER**  
Vivek Kumar



**FACE OF THE FUTURE**  
Nirupa Shankar



**GENERAL MANAGER OF THE YEAR**  
Shipra Sumbly Kaul, Holiday Inn Express & Suites Bengaluru Racecourse



**BEST HOSPITALITY PROFESSIONAL**  
Rajan Malhotra, Director Sales & Marketing, Shangri-La Hotel Bengaluru



**BEST SALES & MARKETING PROFESSIONAL**  
Sachin KS, Director - Sales & Marketing, Royal Orchid Bengaluru





**MOST ENTERPRISING HOSPITALITY PROFESSIONAL**  
M Balaji, CEO, Clarks Exotica Convention Resort & Spa



**BEST GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM**  
Travelport Galileo



**BEST LEISURE HOTEL**  
Hyatt Place Rameswaram



**BEST REGIONAL AIRLINE**  
SilkAir



**BEST CORPORATE HOTEL**  
The Oterra



**BEST B2B TRAVEL PORTAL**  
Travel Boutique Online



**BEST HOTEL AND RESORT MARKETING COMPANY**  
Sterling Holiday Resorts



**BEST LUXURY TOUR OPERATOR - OUTBOUND**  
Baywatch Travels



## Awards



**BEST BUSINESS TRAVEL AGENCY**  
Osaka Air Travels



**BEST BUSINESS HOTEL**  
Howard Johnson Bengaluru Hebbal



**BEST TOUR OPERATOR - INBOUND**  
Cholan Tours



**BEST BUSINESS HOTEL CHAIN**  
Fortune Hotels



**BEST TOUR OPERATOR**  
68M Holidays



**BEST AIRPORT**  
Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru



**BEST FOREIGN EXCHANGE COMPANY**  
Centrum Direct



**MOST PROMISING AIRLINE**  
TruJet





**BEST FIVE-STAR BUSINESS HOTEL**  
Aloft Bengaluru Whitefield



**BEST CORPORATE TRAVEL AGENCY**  
Archana Travels



**BEST RESTAURANT - SOUTH INDIAN CUISINE**  
Nandhana Palace



**BEST MICE DESTINATION**  
Clarks Exotica Convention Resort & Spa



**BEST B2B TRAVEL EVENT**  
Global Panorama Showcase



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South Tourism



## Awards



**BEST LUXURY HOTEL**  
Shangri-La Hotel Bengaluru



**BEST MICE HOTEL**  
Crowne Plaza Kochi



**BEST FAMILY RESORT**  
Estheli – The Village Resort



**BEST DMC - SOUTH EAST ASIA**  
TravelBulz



**BEST BOUTIQUE RESORT**  
The Leaf Munnar



**BEST AIRPORT AVIATION MARKETING**  
Bangalore International Airport



**BEST LUXURY FAMILY RESORT**  
Sterling Wayanad



**BEST MID MARKET CORPORATE HOTEL**  
Ramada Bangalore





**EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE**  
The Fog Munnar Resorts and Spa



**BEST DEBUT HOTEL**  
Holiday Inn Express & Suites Bengaluru Racecourse



**BEST SERVICED APARTMENTS**  
Oakwood Residence Kapil Hyderabad



**MOST SCENIC RESORT**  
Wayanad Silverwoods Resort



**BEST DESTINATION MANAGEMENT COMPANY**  
STHI Group



**BEST GREEN RESORT**  
MangoMist Resort, Bengaluru



**BEST TRAVEL INSURANCE PROVIDER**  
TrawellTag Cover-More



**HOSPITALITY PARTNER**  
Clarks Exotica Convention Resort & Spa



# Of their own 'ACCOR'D

**Gaurav Shiva**, General Manager, Novotel Chennai Chamiers Road, talks at length about the newly-opened property and what has led to the rise of international brands in southern India.



## What is the USP of your property?

Novotel Chennai Chamiers Road is the first Novotel with contemporary design and interiors. The hotel has been conceptualised by SODA, an international design firm known for creating fresh, innovative, yet sustainable spaces. The hotel has been designed keeping in mind the rich, artistic, and traditional culture of Chennai, thus catering to today's traveller who is in search of exciting and unique experiences. The contemporary feel starts at the entrance of Novotel Chennai Chamiers road, which has been inspired by various twentieth-century buildings of the city, giving it an earthy yet modern look.

## Tell us how the hospitality industry in South India has evolved.

Traditionally, the southern parts of India have been favourites among honeymooners and holidaymakers. Blessed with plenty of natural beauty, South India has everything that a leisure traveller looks for, from scenic hill stations to tranquil beaches. The rich cultural heritage with plentiful tourist attractions serve as icing to the cake. However, in recent years, the region has experienced stunning business growth, especially in the IT and manufacturing space. Cities like Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Chennai have now been dubbed as the epicentres of IT growth for the country and have earned a name for



“Hospitality players find this region a potential market for their expansion plans”

themselves in the global start-up diaspora. Cities like Kochi, Coimbatore, Mysuru, and Visakhapatnam are also fast playing catch-up. Owing to this, as hoteliers, we have seen a very large increase in corporate travel over the last few years. Over time, we have seen our guest mix evolve from a relatively homogenous reliance on a single segment to a much healthier and more diversified combination of travellers with varied expectations and priorities. It is a welcome change that has shaped our strategy and helped us cater to the evolving guest needs. On the business front, this evolution in the guest mix has been of great benefit as unlike leisure travel, business travel has no season and hence, occupancy rates remain healthy year-round. The spurt in corporate travellers has also given a boost to MICE business, a segment increasingly contributing to revenues of the industry.

## How and why has the presence of AccorHotels in South India grown?

With the launch of Novotel Chennai Chamiers Road, AccorHotels has achieved a milestone of becoming the largest international hospitality player in Chennai with a total inventory of more than 1000 rooms. Their other hotels in the state are Novotel Chennai OMR, Novotel Chennai SIPCOT, Mercure Chennai Sripurumbudur, ibis Chennai SIPCOT, ibis Chennai OMR, ibis Chennai City Centre, and ibis Coimbatore City





Centre. In Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Kerala, we have a combined inventory of over 2500 rooms in 16 hotels across brands.

South India has emerged as a hotspot for hospitality projects as leading brands have established a presence in the market here over the last three years. With commercial activity gaining momentum and subsequent influx of foreign nationals, hospitality players find this region a potential market for their expansion plans.

### **Any challenges that you foresee? How are you planning to tackle them?**

The core challenge for the hospitality industry at large is the ability to attract and retain the right talent. With attrition at around 25-30 per cent across different levels, a metric often considered amongst the highest across all service industries, talent and culture are areas we focus on strongly as a group. We focus on instilling the right attitude and service to increase our guests' satisfaction, via our AccorHotels Académie. We spend a lot of time running trainings, developing and managing employee engagement plans, understanding and supporting the work-life balance needs of our people, openness for flexible timings, specially-designed programmes to benefit employees,

and developing resources with initiatives such as the AccorHotels New Gen Leaders programme to help further develop skills and facilitate leadership development. Also, one of our initiatives is oriented towards culture change at the workplace, known as Heartist. Through this, we build our distinct identity, share a common language, common set of values, common desired guest experience, and a common way of being in every brand.

### **What about marketing strategies?**

We have both long-term and short-term marketing strategies to ensure a forward-looking approach to planning, with the fundamental goal of achieving a sustainable competitive advantage. We have analysed our hotel's strategic initial situation prior to the opening, as well as evaluated and selected a market-oriented competitive position that contributes to the hotel's goals and marketing objectives.

### **How will you handle competition?**

The cutting-edge international design combined with nouveau F&B concepts at the property cater to the discerning, widely-travelled guest. Robust online marketing presence coupled with rate parity across all channels will ensure that we conduct our business in a fair manner, fulfilling the Novotel promise of providing guests a home away from home.

## The world of wicker

Wicker World has curated a bespoke range of 'Comfy' daybeds. Designed by Amit Sawhney, these new daybeds make outdoor living more pleasurable. The collection can blend seamlessly with a garden, patio, or poolside. These daybeds are made in high-quality aluminium frame and woven with all-weather wicker from Germany. Each daybed uses a quick-dry mattress and foam which is upholstered in UV-resistant fabric available in a range of colours. The sleek style gives maximum comfort.



## Jewelled basins

VitrA introduces its new collection, the Water Jewels washbasins. The collection's seemingly simple form and function are enhanced to incredible effect with PVD coatings, a state-of-the-art process of vaporising and depositing metal powder onto a surface, which remains corrosion-free and scratch-resistant. This series artfully showcases the designs of ceramic washbasins finished with brilliant metallic rim coatings that draw inspiration from traditional Turkish craftsmanship. The Water Jewels washbasins are available with platinum, gold, and copper-coloured rims, and are suitable for bench-mount, semi-inset, and under-counter installation.

## 'Oh, live' the oil!

Leonardo Olive Oil, from Cargill India, meets the nutrition and health needs of consumers by creating the perfect blend of health and taste in the premium olive oil category. The brand is breaking the category dynamics by simplifying the nomenclature of its variants for the consumers by renaming them by their usage. The new names of Leonardo's olive oil variants are Cook All, Just Lite, and Just Drizzle, which is perfect for salad dressings, dips, and condiments.



## Iced to the 'Tea'

Positive Food Ventures, through its brand Brewhouse, is eyeing to change the way we consume iced tea by bringing real-brewed iced tea in a bottled format for the first time in India. The iced teas are all-natural with no preservatives and contain 40-70 per cent less sugar than aerated beverages and juice-based drinks. The company sources its tea from the Nilgiris in South India.

## Rising above the rest

The White Teak Company has launched a designer floor lamp collection to warm up the overall tone of a living space. From classic to bold and trendy designs, each piece of the collection has its own exclusivity. The light beautifully illuminates dark corners, giving living spaces a touch of luxury. Pick a tall floor lamp today!





# News on the Move

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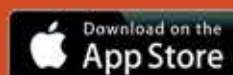


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# APPOINTMENTS



**Apoorva Maheshwari**  
Director of Marketing  
AccorHotels India

AccorHotels has appointed Apoorva Maheshwari as the Director of Marketing for AccorHotels India. In this role, Maheshwari will be responsible for leading the marketing activities of the growing portfolio of brands in the country. Her strengths are building effective teams,

driving brand strategy and innovation, and creating compelling marketing communication. Her knowledge of both conventional and unconventional ways of brand building has contributed to some of the most disruptive and fastest growing brands in the country.



**Rajesh Gopalakrishnan**  
General Manager  
Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun  
Beach Hotel and Varun  
Bheemli Resort

Rajesh Gopalakrishnan has been appointed as the General Manager for Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach Hotel and Varun Bheemli Resort. In this role, he will be responsible for spearheading the overall operations of both the properties, which are owned by Varun Hospitality. Gopalakrishnan has been associated with AccorHotels since 2005, and was the General Manager of Grand Mercure Vadodara prior to this move.

**Shibil Malik**  
General Manager  
Sheraton Grand Chennai  
Resort & Spa



Shibil Malik has been appointed as the first General Manager of Sheraton Grand Chennai Resort & Spa, the premium resort property coming up on the East Coast Road of Chennai. He will be responsible for launching the new resort and positioning it as a destination for unique experiences. Through his unwavering commitment to service excellence, Malik plans to ensure the resort features amongst the best in the country. He has previously held various positions in the company and has been associated with brands such as The Westin. Prior to this assignment, Malik was the General Manager of Sheraton Hyderabad.

**Pranay Verdia**  
Multi-Property GM, Courtyard &  
Fairfield by Marriott, ORR,  
Bengaluru and Fairfield by Marriott  
Bengaluru Rajajinagar



Marriott International has appointed Pranay Verdia as Multi-Property General Manager for Courtyard by Marriott Bengaluru Outer Ring Road, Fairfield by Marriott Bengaluru Outer Ring Road, and Fairfield by Marriott Bengaluru Rajajinagar. Verdia brings over 19 years of experience in hospitality to his new posting. He has been associated with various properties of Marriott International across India. Prior to Marriott, he has worked at the Four Seasons Hotel in Mumbai and Park Hyatt Goa Resort & Spa in different roles. Verdia is a determined individual with great business acumen.







## Appointments



### Vikalp Raj

Director of Sales & Marketing  
Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at  
Brigade Gateway

Vikalp Raj has been appointed as the Director of Sales & Marketing at Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway. He comes with over 12 years of experience in the sales and marketing domain, with commendable knowledge and

expertise. In the new role, Raj will be responsible for increasing overall sales for the hotel, which will entail managing sales activities, reactive and proactive sales efforts, and executing sales strategies, along with innovative marketing concepts to meet business goals. He was also part of the pre-opening team of the property in 2010, which will be an advantage for him.



### Sandeep Sahdev

Director of Sales & Marketing  
The Den, Bengaluru

The Den, Bengaluru, has appointed Sandeep Sahdev as Director of Sales & Marketing. His role would be to oversee the operations of the property and he will also be actively involved in strategising and planning of marketing initiatives along with boosting the sales and revenue of

the brand. In previous roles, Sahdev has also been responsible for revenue generation and supervising market intelligence and projections in line with budgeted numbers. He has also previously worked with Radisson Hotel, Delhi; Sheraton Udaipur Palace Resort & Spa; and Four Points by Sheraton. His last stint was with Duet India Hotels.



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### RANJU ALEX

Multi-Property Vice President - Bengaluru & Kochi and  
General Manager, Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield

"Travelling is one of my key passions. The excitement before travel is as endearing as travel itself. My favourite part of the world is Europe; I make it a point to go there primarily between February and September. In India, I loved a recent

trip to Sikkim as it made me realise that India has so much to offer in terms of beauty, culture, and food. I have a home library of more than 6,000 books. Long drives, movies, and cooking (in that order) are my favourite pastimes."

“

I have a home library of more than 6,000 books

”

### VIJAYAN GANGADHARAN

General Manager

Four Points by Sheraton Visakhapatnam

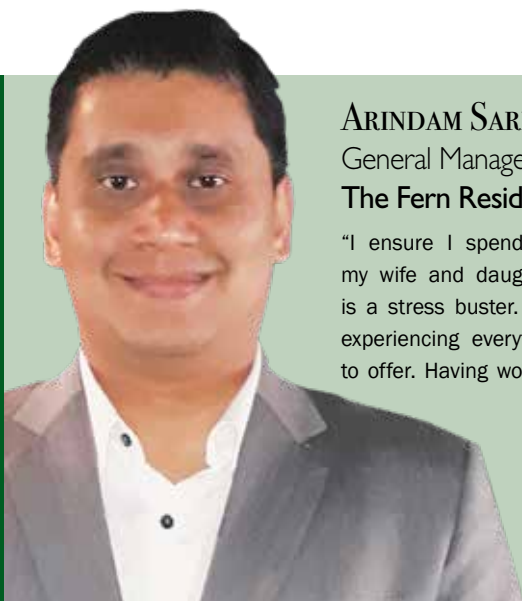
"I love nature. I love walking on the beach barefoot, which helps the mind be in touch with the stimuli coming from your feet. This helps you connect with the world around you. As far as travelling is concerned, I like travelling to mountainous regions like

Kashmir and Sikkim. Outside India, I love Europe. The iconic structures that one can pick out in an instant, architecture as old as time such as Barcelona's impressive Catholic Cathedral that still stands unfinished, never fail to impress me."

“

I like travelling to mountainous regions like Kashmir and Sikkim

”



### ARINDAM SARKAR

General Manager

The Fern Residency – Yeshwanthpur, Bengaluru

"I ensure I spend some quality time with my wife and daughter. Playing with my kid is a stress buster. I also love travelling and experiencing everything that a country has to offer. Having worked with an international

cruise liner, I was fortunate enough to travel the whole world, but when it comes to the matter of my favourite destination, I prefer Goa over anything else. I love playing cricket; I also like listening to Hindi music."

“

I love travelling and experiencing what a country has to offer

”



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