

# SIHRA

HOSPITALITY MAGAZINE



In the Service of the  
Hospitality Industry Since 1951

**JULY-AUGUST 2020**

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# News

A BI-MONTHLY ON HOSPITALITY TRADE

By Metro Media

**HOW RESTAURANT  
INDUSTRY IS UNFOLDING  
IN THE TROUBLED TIMES**







# പ്രതിക്ഷയുടെ പാതയിൽ കരുതലോടെ ഒരോണും

പ്രകൃതി ക്ഷോഭങ്ങളെയും മഹാമാരിയെയും അതിജീവിച്ച്  
ഒരേ മനസ്സോടെ

കോവിഡ് പ്രതിരോധത്തിനും ഉപജീവനത്തെ സഹായിക്കാനും **20,000** കോടിയുടെ പാക്കേജ്

കോവിഡ് അനന്തര കാലത്ത് കാർഷിക വികസനത്തിന് **3860** കോടിയുടെ 'സുദീക്ഷ കേരളം'

കിഫ്ബിയിൽ **56,394** കോടിയുടെ പദ്ധതികൾ

പി.എസ്.സി വഴി **1.33** ലക്ഷം പേർക്ക് നിയമനം കാൽലക്ഷം പുതിയ തസ്തികകൾ

ലൈഫ് പദ്ധതിയിൽ **2.23** ലക്ഷം വീടുകൾ പൂർത്തിയായി. ഈ വർഷം ഒരു ലക്ഷം വീടുകൾ

**8.82** ലക്ഷം പുതിയ കുടിവെള്ള കണക്ഷൻ

**10** ലക്ഷം കുടുംബങ്ങൾ കുടി ക്ഷേമപെൻഷനിൽ. പെൻഷൻ **600** രൂപയിൽ നിന്ന് **1300** രൂപയാക്കി

ഓണത്തിനു മുമ്പ് **70** ലക്ഷം പേർക്ക് രണ്ടുമാസത്തെ ക്ഷേമ പെൻഷൻ. എല്ലാ വീട്ടിലും ഓണകിറ്റ്

പെട്ടിമുടി ദുരന്തത്തിൽ മരണപ്പെട്ടവരുടെ ബന്ധുക്കൾക്ക് **5** ലക്ഷം രൂപ അടിയന്തര സഹായം, ചികിത്സ സഹായം, പുനരധിവാസം

കരിപ്പൂർ വിമാനാപകടത്തിൽ മരണപ്പെട്ടവരുടെ ബന്ധുക്കൾക്ക് **10** ലക്ഷം രൂപ അടിയന്തര സഹായം

സർക്കാർ ഒപ്പമുണ്ട്



## PRESIDENT'S *Message*

**K. Syama Raju**  
President  
SIHRA



Dear fellow members,

Greetings!

Efforts to control the spread of COVID 19 continue in full strength throughout the country. We must follow the protocol to keep safe by wearing a mask and maintaining social distancing. We thank all the frontline staff from the medical fraternity, police and essential services who have been working tirelessly to keep us safe.

SIHRA Connect was launched in July this year with the aim of providing a virtual platform for our Members to participate in discussions on industry related matters and as a knowledge sharing platform. A series of Webinars have been held since then on current topics such as MSME and another with a specialist on infectious diseases. It also provides Members an opportunity to market their hotels through the SIHRA Connect platform, which will prove to be very helpful since traditional marketing strategies cannot be implemented during periods of lockdown.

Restrictions have been eased in many States and we hope to see a return to a "new normalcy" soon. Domestic tourism is expected to increase and it is likely people may consider taking a break at a destination within driving distance, since they would be wary of other means of travel such as flights or trains. The protocols to be followed for re-opening of hotels have been shared by the SIHRA Secretariat with all Members.

We are optimistic and look forward to welcoming guests to our hotels and restaurants soon, ensuring adherence to procedure and keeping safety in the forefront.

Stay safe.

Kind Regards,  
K.Syama Raju  
President  
SIHRA

# SIHRA

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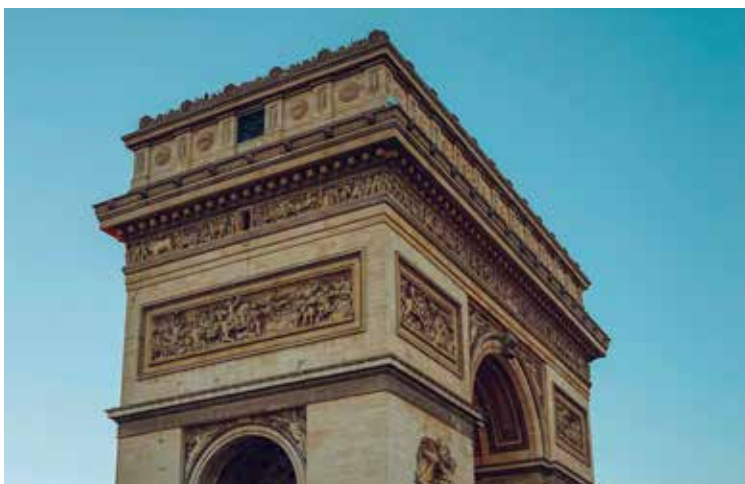
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# HOW RESTAURANT INDUSTRY IS UNFOLDING IN THE TROUBLED TIMES

V.N. NAIR

**I**t is ironic that the Restaurants, Travel and Hotel industry in India is suffering the most due to the crisis created by outbreak of COVID-19 and the benefits they got from the government is far below what is required. Restaurant industry in particular is facing its worst existential crisis following the outbreak of the pandemic. The restaurant industry, with an annual turnover of over Rs 4 lakh crore and a direct employee base of over seven million, is fighting a severe battle for its basic survival amidst the COVID-19 outbreak. The organised restaurant sector accounts for 35 per cent of India's restaurant industry, estimated at Rs 4.2 lakh crore in FY19. Dine-ins are 75 per cent of the organised restaurants, with online delivery or takeaways making up for the rest.

In fact 2019 was a robust year for the food industry. Metro cities

were witnessing the opening of new restaurants almost every week. Eating out in restaurants or some posh lounges in hotels was becoming very common. There were a number of food events. There was a mushrooming of food groups on Facebook. Everywhere people were only talking about entertainment and food. And lo, out of the blue did the COVID pandemic strike bringing distress to the food industry. The lock down imposed a severe blow on the business.

India's food scenario is in for a transformation once the pandemic starts receding significantly. Restaurants have the most urgent task of rebuilding confidence. Their primary focus has shifted to ways and means of implementing hygiene and social distancing protocols. Restaurants will rely far more on home delivery than before due to the lockdown. Cloud kitchens



are also finding it hard to service with food delivery hit hard. Delivery focused food companies like Zomato and Swiggy are facing the loss of sales and market share is dropping. The recent unlocking of restaurants in Delhi NCR has not seen a major cheer amongst restaurant owners.

While quick service restaurants, bakeries and food outlets have slowly started to reopen, bars and clubs are following a wait-and-watch approach due to restrictions like reduced timings, no alcohol permission, 50 per cent occupancy rules and lack of support from authorities.

Many chef-driven, fine dining restaurants which were earlier focused on providing customers a dining-in experience, will now venture into the delivery business. In the long term, this will completely change the landscape of the delivery business in the country. Now ordering your favourite dish from your favourite hotel has become so easy at the click of a button.

It is refreshing that several celebrity Chefs are transmitting positive vibes during lockdown by sharing new recipes daily and promoting cooking contests on social media apps to help people get creative and showcase their cooking

talents. Even luxury hotels have their Chef's do live-cooking and share recipes on social media. Incidentally, the lockdown has ensured that many more members of the family started to enter the kitchen, and cook.

Restaurants and hotels are taking pains to make hygiene focus videos aimed at driving home the fact that customers are safe. Different business models and revenue models are being discussed and their emergence will be crucial to the survival of the industry.

Cost cutting is becoming a priority area for restaurants. Restaurants with high levels of indebtedness are likely to face pressure to shut unprofitable outlets to save costs and raise money. Though large players with low debt will be able to raise money, business revival remains a big challenge for them. Consumers turning more health-conscious has made it imperative that hygiene protocols at restaurants and supply chains will need to improve materially, which will increase cost.

A significant recovery of the sector from the financial losses is likely to take not less than ten to fifteen months. According to a front-line restaurant chain owner, nearly 50% stand-alone restaurants in Delhi NCR will close down.

“

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The future trends in food are going to undergo a radical change. Deliveries will be the new normal. Vegan and organic food demand are now going to be a lifestyle trend that is there to stay. Many SME's have come up in the product space across the country promoting plant-based products, foods and more.

Contact-less dining is getting strongly established with the emergence of technology as an effective tool in social distancing and contact avoidance. Contactless QR ordering and mobile app facilitated billing and payment are becoming the new normal.

The SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) put in place, which includes hygiene checks, reduction in guest capacity and tech-friendly service has also prompted the restaurant industry to prepare a roadmap for the future in a diligent manner.



# HOTEL INDUSTRY GETTING DRESSED UP FOR A POST-COVID SCENARIO

N.Vijayagopalan

**T**he fact that tourism constitutes 10% (\$275 Billion) to India's GDP (Business Line) warrants a joint plan of action by the government and the industry to overcome the mayhem caused by COVID-19 pandemic. The hotel industry faces a loss of Rs. 620 crores (Business Line) owing to the lockdown clamped following the COVID outbreak. While the branded, chain and some luxury standalone hotels in India constitute only 5% (1.4 lakhs rooms) of total rooms available, the balance 95% is comprised of Bed & Breakfast, Guest Houses and unbranded budget hotels. Some market analysts estimate that if the COVID situation improves and business picks up in the second half of the year, then the pandemic would have caused only 18-20% erosion of national occupancy while there will be a 12-14% drop in the ADR (Average

Daily Rate) (Hotelivate Report). This appears to be a slightly an ambitious assumption.

The outlook for India's hotel industry indicates a few transformations and innovations. The face of the hotel operations is poised to undergo a sea change. The prime focus of the hotel industry in a post COVID scenario would undoubtedly be on health and safety which obviously translates into hygiene and sanitation issues of hotels. Providing physical evidence of the hotel's concern for health and safety would be crucial. Just as the terror attack on the Taj Hotel had prompted hotels to allay security fears by erecting security checks at the gates of the hotel along with self and baggage screening in the portico prior to entering the hotel, now the pandemic has necessitated checks and screening to be put in place for health purposes including checking



for fever with a remote thermometer, showering a light sanitizer mist, keeping hand sanitizers at the reception, elevator lobbies and guest rooms. Ensuring the circulation of fresh air in guest rooms and display of indoor air quality would become a new norm. It would become very common for the guest room to have a conspicuous display reading : "You are in a room which has been sanitized for your health and safety".

The strategy of most hotels would now be to do a soft-opening with fewer people and with only essential facilities and staff including housekeeping, a part of the kitchen, the coffee shop or dining room, bar, front desk and security. The activities would be limited to one floor or two.

When only few staffers are positioned, they should be experienced, multi-skilled and loyal employees. It would take a little while when the full complement of personnel would be required. All staff would have to continue to wear surgical gloves and masks to give confidence to the guests.

Tables in the restaurant will have to be spaced out. Self-service would be encouraged more and more to reduce human contact. Food menus would transform in such a manner as to save the cost of having high food inventories.

The hotel industry could bank more on India's large domestic tourism for its kick start. The low-priced sector like Bed & Breakfast, budget hotels and guest houses will have a greater role to play here, since 95% accommodation lies in this category. The lock down has shown that corporate travel can be limited with technology aided communication.

Protecting and expanding the clientele base would inevitably be the key, making marketing a thrust area. It would be necessary to keep communicating with loyal guests as well as prospects, particularly in the domestic market, through digital marketing and social media platforms during the lockdown and after.

For hotels, maintaining liquidity for working capital would be an area of great consideration. FAITH (Federation of Associations in Indian and Tourism Industry) has already made an appeal to the PM for certain concessions (Economic Times) which include supporting the payment of employee salaries for twelve months, having a twelve months moratorium on EMIs, advance tax, PF, ESIC, GST, Excise, State levies, bank guarantees, custom duties and security deposits, support for power and water charges and interest free loans for working capital.

“

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”

As COVID-19 has hastened the need to use technology to allow least contact with humans, hotel industry would have to move more towards AI and other technologies. A code aided self-check-in facility for guests and guest mobile apps connecting all buttons and switches in the room to avoid using fingers for touch would become the normal. More hotels will have to go for virtual views on the TV of restaurants, lobby, and bars to see the atmosphere to avoid crowds, digital payments of bills and food and beverage at kiosks which will give out receipts. Self-service room amenities from dispensers in the floor Housekeeping store would fall in place in many hotels.

Hotels will have to fall back upon Revenue Management Software to do the predictions of room occupancy and rates and Big Data analytics to constantly determine the behaviour and attitude of guests to give them customized services. Use of robots for cleaning carpeted and other surfaces and automated dish washing would get established in many hotels.



TOURISM

# 'FAITH' FINDS TOURISM AT INCREASING RISK





**F**ederation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality (FAITH), the policy federation of all the national associations representing the complete tourism, travel and hospitality industry of India (ADTOI, ATOAI, FHRAI, HAI, IATO, ICPB, IHHA, ITTA, TAAI, TAFI) and cause partner AIRDA has further revised upwards its value at risk to Indian tourism to ₹ 15 lakh crores.

FAITH's first guidance which was calculated and was shared with the Government in March 2020 had put tourism's economic value at risk at ₹ 5 lakh crores from this pandemic. The Association revised this further during the quarter as the situation deteriorated and the value at risk was put at ₹ 10 lakh crores. This has been revised again to a value at risk of upto ₹ 15 lakh crores in terms of the economic output of tourism in India

The spread of COVID pandemic continuing unabated, tourism supply chains have broken down in India across all its key inbound, domestic and outbound markets and is not expected to recover for the next 5 months too making the total impact to a minimum of 9 months starting from March this year. The direct and indirect economic impact of Tourism industry in India is approximately estimated at ~ 10% of India's GDP. This roughly puts the full year economic multiplier value of tourism in India at ~ ₹ 20 lakh crores. Minimum three quarters of tourism will be fully impacted. This value covers the whole tourism value chain from airlines, travel agents, hotels, tour operators, tourism destinations restaurants, tourist transportation, tourist guides. Each of these segments of tourism is non-performing or under performing and will stay that way for many months of this year.

This is evident across all segments of tourism. Pending refunds for travel agents, shut down or vacant hotels & restaurants, empty or locked down conventions and meeting or wedding halls, no order pipelines for tour operators, tourist transport lying locked in parking lots, laid off or leave without pay staff, managers, the summer domestic and outbound holiday season gone, no visible bookings for the peak October - March season, meetings shifted to virtual apps, non-essential travel closed and so on.

Irrespective of whether it is leisure (inbound, outbound, domestic) corporate travel, heritage, adventure, meetings incentives, exhibitions & events religious, spiritual and in upcoming high value niche tourism products such as sea & river cruises, camping, rafting, golf film tourism, jungle tourism, agri tourism and many more across all states, this will be the worst performing year for tourism in a century.

Tourism is one of the largest economic multipliers and FAITH based upon its industry estimates believes, that each rupee spent on tourism could have an economic multiplier of upwards of 3-4 times more for India given its most globally unique natural and cultural heritage spread across the Indian hinterlands. The cumulative job losses for the full year both in organised & unorganised category of tourism could go as high as 4 crores.

It should be noted that FAITH has been highly proactive in bringing the woes of the industry to the notice of the authorities. FAITH has been requesting over the past 5 months that for revival of any demand in tourism, it is first important that the survival of tourism businesses in

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The spread of COVID pandemic continuing unabated, tourism supply chains have broken down in India across all its key inbound, domestic and outbound markets and is not expected to recover for the next 5 months too making the total impact to a minimum of 9 months starting from March this year.

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India has to first remain intact.

FAITH has found the following immediately critical to maintaining the survival of tourism businesses

- A Tourism fund which can be used by tourism enterprises in India for taking care of their employees.
- A multi-year moratorium by RBI on principal and interest payments by tourism, travel & hospitality businesses.
- An immediate full year waiver of all central and state statutory liabilities be it PF, ESI, income taxes, GST, fixed power and utilities tariffs, property, excise, inter-state tourist transportation taxes and license fees, all without any accumulated or penal interest has to be done immediately.
- Robust booking payments refund mechanism for travel agents & tour operators from airlines, railways, state tourism parks and other suppliers.

Only these aspects will keep the Indian tourism in track and hospitality industry alive for a revival, it will keep the jobs intact and it will protect the exposure of the banking sector to tourism preventing their loans from becoming NPAs. Post the Unlock, tourism is seeing some spur, though very limited and not enough to make any tourism business viable.

FAITH has already raised requests over the past five months to the Prime Minister, the Finance Minister, to each of the 28 chief ministers, to the RBI, Niti Aayog, to tourism parliamentary panel, ministries of aviation, commerce, Finance and to more than 600 parliamentarians and is closely in coordination with ministry of tourism. It has also requested the Parliamentarians to raise the question as to 'why not tourism' for sector specific support when tourism industry contributes to pan India jobs across urban & rural, forex, robust IT & GST collections, capex driven GDP & so on.

Tourism is a very unique business and is a discretionary activity. Tourism is a means of unwinding, letting oneself immerse in local experiences. With each aspect of the travel journey now under the threat of virus from contact, this puts tourism at risk. Till the time there is a vaccine found, the very concept of tourism will be in question.

This will be reflected in all data points of the Government whether in GST collections, banking data, PF, ESI or state level fixed charges.

Tourism cannot be treated economically like any other business and needs NOW a Fiscal & Monetary structured package coordinated among all arms of Governments.

The whole value chain of Indian tourism will be under threat - which catered to almost 10.8 million incoming foreign travellers, almost 1.8 billion Indian domestic tourism visits, almost 5 mn+ expats Indians visiting back, almost 28 mn+ outbound travelling Indians & almost \$ 29 bn+ forex earnings.





കാംകോയുടെ കാർഷിക ഉത്പന്നങ്ങൾ 50% വരെ സർക്കാർ സബ്സിഡിയിൽ കമ്പനിയിൽനിന്ന് നേരിട്ട് വാങ്ങാവുന്നതാണ്.



POWER	3.89 HP
FUEL	PETROL

പവർ റീഷർ KR120H



POWER	9 HP
FUEL	DIESEL

പവർ ടില്ലർ KMB200



POWER	3.89 HP
FUEL	PETROL

ഗാർഡൻ ടില്ലർ B30



POWER	12 HP
FUEL	DIESEL

പവർ ടില്ലർ സൂപ്പർ DI



POWER	4.63 HP
FUEL	PETROL

പവർ വീഡർ/ഗാർഡൻ ടില്ലർ K40



POWER	1.6 HP (HONDA ENGINE)
FUEL	PETROL

ബ്രഷ് കട്ടർ KBC 300

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# INDIAN ECONOMY SHOWING SIGNS OF REVIVAL

Finance Desk

**T**hough the nation-wide lockdown following the outbreak of Covid 19 has severely hit India's economy, it has started showing signs of a recovery. Some sectors have held the fort, with agriculture, exports, consumer durables, FMCG recording growth.

The easing of lockdown restrictions in June and July has led to a notable uptick in economic activity. Despite growing corona virus cases, areas like agriculture, tractor sales, trade surplus, and FMCG have shown growth. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, during the recently-concluded 2020 India Ideas Summit, said "the green shoots are (visible) based on high-frequency indicators. We will watch them as we go along".

Agriculture sector has performed exceptionally well on the wings of

good Rabi and Kharif crop harvests, and better than expected monsoon. According to experts, bumper crop this year could even create a surplus in the agricultural markets. Former Reserve Bank Governor D Subbarao, in a webinar organised by economic think-tank NCAER recently, also said the government must build on "some silver linings" in the farm sector to speed up the economic recovery.

The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) data suggests that India's unemployment rate fell significantly to 10.99 per cent in June compared to 23.48 per cent in May, showing signs of improvement in the job scenario in the country and return to the pre-lockdown period. The unemployment rate in urban areas for the month stood at 12.02 per cent, while it was



recorded at 10.52 per cent in rural areas. It is significant that India's unemployment rate was recorded at the highest since January at 25.52 per cent after the government announced nation-wide lockdown with strict measures on March 25. April saw the unemployment rate of 23.48 per cent as most of the economic activity remained subdued. The employment rate in March was recorded at 8.75 per cent, while it remained 7.22 per cent and 7.76 per cent in January and February.

Another noteworthy feature is that FMCG consumption is almost back to pre-COVID levels, according to Nielsen's latest edition of 'COVID-19 Consumer Evolving Trends' report. The report says the FMCG value sales index that was at 100 in March, before the lockdown, dipped to 75 during April and May. However, June saw a revival with the index touching 98, just a few points lower than the value in March. The recovery has been faster in rural India, which grew from 84 points in April and May to 109 points in June. Rural markets in June saw higher growth than the pre-COVID days in March (103). FMCG consumption in the urban markets was at 100 pre-COVID, which dipped to 70 during April and May and bounced to 94 in June.

It is pertinent to note that the consumer durable and appliances segment has also shown steadiness in trying times. It is reported that most leaders in the segment, including Panasonic India, Godrej Appliances and Philips India, recorded growth in sales, mainly driven by a surge in demand for home appliances, washing machines, television sets, and personal appliances as people remained locked at their homes. Panasonic India recorded 20 per cent growth in sales of vacuum cleaners; and 44 per cent in microwaves and washing machines sales compared to the pre-COVID-19 levels. Godrej Appliances saw record sales (up to five-fold) in kitchen alliances like microwaves and dishwashers while Philips India and Panasonic India

saw significant uptick in personal alliances sale for the month.

Though India's passenger vehicle sales fell 49.59 per cent in June, tractor and two-wheeler sale across hinterland have touched pre-COVID levels, with top manufacturers like Hero MotoCorp and Mahindra & Mahindra recording increase in sales. Mahindra's recorded 47 per cent jump in month-on-month sales to 35,844 units in June compared to 8 per cent in the same period last year. Hero, however, sold 450,744 units, four-fold rise in month-on-month sales. Recovery can be attributed to boost in cash flows in the rural areas due to good rabi harvest, expected bumper kharif production, good rainfall and welfare transfers to migrants and farmers by the government.

Another noteworthy feature is the increase in India's food exports by 27 per cent since March, despite COVID-19 restrictions in place. The growth has been primarily attributed to high demand for food-based items. Overall, India emerged as the net exporter in June, recording trade surplus of 0.79 billion compared to \$15.28 billion deficit in the same period last year. As per ASSOCHAM, India's spices recorded 23 per cent growth in June to \$359 million as against \$292 million in the same month last year.

For the first time in the past 18 years, the economy recorded the first-ever trade surplus in June since January 2002. India's merchandise exports for the month fell 12.4 per cent, while imports shrunk 47.6 per cent, showing a cumulative trade surplus of \$790 million, thereby indicating increased employment and economic growth recovery. Comparatively, the trade surplus was \$3.15 billion in May and \$6.8 per cent in April.

According to research firm Canalys, as many as 2.9 million desktops, notebooks, tablets and



The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) data suggests that India's unemployment rate fell significantly to 10.99 per cent in June compared to 23.48 per cent in May, showing signs of improvement in the job scenario in the country and return to the pre-lockdown period.



workstations were shipped during April-June period despite lockdown for most of the period and just 45 operational days. Lenovo was the market leader with 818,000 PCs. HP with 629,000 units shipment was at the second spot. However, experts say that the PC industry has been on a decline for the last few years and this recent boost in PC sales may not be enough to change the industry dynamics.

The hospitality sector, particularly hotels, travel and tourism, however, remains the worst hit sector. Any respite in hospitality sector is expected only when the travel restrictions, particularly those imposed on the international travel, are released or at least eased, which can be expected only after the pandemic surrenders to the ongoing efforts to combat it. Once the hospitality sector starts recovery, that would augur better days for India's economy.

# INDIAN HOTEL MARKET OUTLOOK, 2020-2025:

## A \$16.8 BILLION OPPORTUNITY ASSESSMENT WITH PROFILES OF THE TOP 10 PLAYERS



According to a study report by Research Markets, Indian hotel market is projected to grow from around \$7.5 billion in 2019 to \$16.8 billion by 2025, exhibiting a CAGR of nearly 15% during the forecast period.

The market is expected to grow on account of rising urbanization, increasing foreign as well as domestic tourist arrivals coupled with growing disposable income in the country. Expanding young & working population coupled with an increasing number of dual-income families is expected to positively affect the market in the coming years.

The country's hotel market is categorized into Mid-market Hotels, Upscale Hotels and Economy Hotels. Mid-market hotels segment holds the largest market share and the trend is expected to continue in the coming years due to customer-friendly prices, standard amenities and affordable room services offered by Mid-market hotels. Nevertheless, both Upscale as well as Economy segments are also anticipated to witness robust double

digit growth during the forecast period. Additionally, due to the rising investments by international players in the country's hotel industry, more hotels are expected to come up in the coming years. North India dominated the country's hotel market in 2019 and the region is expected to maintain its dominance during the forecast period. South India is another fast growing region in India hotel industry.

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Major players operating in India hotel market include Oravel Stays Private Limited; Indian Hotels Company Limited; ITC Limited; EIH Limited; Bharat Hotels Limited; Lemon Tree Hotels; The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts; Marriott Hospitality Services Private Limited; etc.

Years considered for this report included :

- Historical Years: 2015-2018
- Base Year: 2019
- Estimated Year: 2020
- Forecast Period: 2021-2025

Objectives of the Study were the following:

- To analyze and forecast the market size of the India Hotel Market.
- To classify and forecast India Hotel Market based on Type, Revenue, Booking Type, Region and Cities.
- To identify drivers and challenges for India Hotel Market.
- To examine competitive developments such as expansions, new product launches, mergers & acquisitions, etc., in India Hotel Market.
- To identify and analyze the profile of leading players operating in India Hotel Market.

(Source : Research and Markets Report)





## CLEANLINESS, HYGIENE AND SAFETY TO DRIVE BUSINESS, POST COVID

**H**otel industry is one of the sectors worst affected by the COVID pandemic. This is an industry where the landscape and the rules of the game are drastically transforming. The very face of the hotel industry is changing in an unprecedented manner.

**Mr. Devendra Bharma, Executive Vice President, The Oberoi Group speaks to HRA Today on the scenario.**

### On the changing landscape of hotel industry

The current COVID pandemic has led the hospitality industry to reinvent and move forward with bold, innovative ideas that are future forward. One of them is the adoption of technology. The digitalisation of processes such as check-in and check-out processes and QR code enabled menus has become highly relevant. As safe distancing protocols are well

in place, the advantages of this technology are invaluable.

Hotels will cater to more domestic travellers in the post-pandemic world, till certain flights normalise and confidence builds amongst travellers. Guests will choose hotels where they can experience a genuine effort being made to maintain safety and sanitised conditions.

### On the preparations afoot on the part of Oberoi Group to face the post COVID challenges

The Oberoi Group has always prioritised the health and wellbeing of guests and team members with exacting standards of cleanliness and hygiene. As we enter a new era post COVID, we have implemented even more detailed and stringent measures as per WHO and Ministry of Tourism guidelines.

We have also partnered with Bureau Veritas, the world leader in testing,

inspection and certification services, to validate and review our safety and hygiene measures.

At our hotels, the fleet of hotel owned and operated cars are thoroughly sanitised before and after each trip. The accompanying chauffeurs, like all, have guest wellbeing as their highest priority. Our team members at the hotels are meticulously sanitising their hands, and wearing disposable gloves and face masks at all times. They also have their body temperatures checked daily before starting work and also during their shifts. We have implemented contactless check-in and check-out procedures with contactless payment options to ensure guests' safety.

Apart from this, we have also introduced QR code accessible menus and offer guests a wide spread of immunity-boosting dishes made with farm-fresh ingredients.



## CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF FOOD DELIVERY INDUSTRY, POST COVID-19

**A**s the country is on a transition from lockdown to greet what many refer to as the 'new normal', the foodservice and delivery industry, which includes the cloud kitchens or delivery-only kitchens in India, is putting their best foot forward to start operations after a four months' gap.

Throughout the lockdown period, online food and grocery deliveries continued to be the sole lifeline for many. Even after reaching the fifth phase of the nationwide lockdown, many still prefer ordering food online to avert stepping outside for dining altogether. The rising demand for online food delivery has led to the birth of delivery-only restaurants or virtual restaurants. Not surprisingly, this concept is fast gaining popularity in the F&B space in India. As per Goldstein Research report, the universal cloud

kitchen market which was valued at \$700 million in 2018 is currently anticipated to grow at a CAGR of 17.25 percent by 2030.

The F&B market, which was unstable in the lockdown phase, is now taking steps to fall back upon the concept of satellite kitchens since it is considered to be a prudent way of running the restaurant business. These delivery-only restaurants do not have any dining space, and depend only on online orders placed through food apps, which are the next big thing. Diners are now scaling up on takeaways and online food delivery as food safety and hygiene has become a crucial factor.

Market reports say that there are a few key elements that are going to define the future of the Indian food business once the pandemic



vanishes. They are the products, the people who handle them, the production and manufacturing infrastructure and facility, and the essential protection measures while transporting the products from the production facility into the hands of the end-customers.

The emerging situation has prompted most restaurants and food aggregators to implement several safety strategies to augment the safety standards and to gain back customer trust. For instance, many food delivery joints are making use of double-layered packaging, one-time-use utensils and cutlery, ensuring delivery persons are equipped with gloves and masks, and most importantly, cashless payments.

Thanks to these initiatives, the cloud kitchen segment is not

seeing any significant impact of the pandemic. With a strategic increase in the ticket-size, it is a clear indication that foodservice and delivery are slated to be a long-standing trend in the coming years and are here to stay.

Cloud kitchens are also taking other essential steps to curb the spread of the virus and to mitigate the risks and to make virtual food delivery during the pandemic a hassle-free experience. The food delivery platforms have started an operative outreach programme to reassure their customers about the safety involved in ordering food online. These programmes have been designed to inform customers about the optimum practices that are being followed in order to enable them to order food without being wary.

One of the major concerns for customers while ordering food is the health status of the delivery partner. To address this concern, food delivery apps are making use of a temperature tracker on their app in order to inform customers about the body temperatures of all the stakeholders - right from the cook to the delivery boy.

For maintaining social distancing and avoiding contact with the delivery person, many platforms are offering services like no-contact delivery options while ordering food, to their customers. The feature ensures that you do not come in contact with the delivery partner in any way. Customers can choose from any of the digital payment methods for contactless deliveries. Since the delivery workers are particularly vulnerable to the virus, delivery agents are being provided with safety equipment like gloves and masks.

Customers are mostly concerned about the hygiene condition of places where the food is made and packed. Food delivery apps are taking measures to dehumidify and sanitise all the surfaces, thus preventing the growth of the virus.

“

The emerging situation has prompted most restaurants and food aggregators to implement several safety strategies to augment the safety standards and to gain back customer trust.

”

The ecommerce segment is poised for a massive growth in the coming quarters, with activities like fundraising, and mergers and acquisitions. In order to get freed from the clutches of the pandemic victoriously, the existing players will consider expanding their portfolios. This would see new partnerships and associations emerging and new companies springing up, thus escalating the ecommerce penetration.

Due to the complexity of factors surrounding the pandemic, in the current situation, dining out will be less even after the restaurants open totally. Increased emphasis is bound to be on home deliveries. It is an accepted fact that almost no business can be conducted as done in the pre-COVID era. At the same time the proven resilience of our country gives strong hopes of bounce backing with the new rules of customer engagement being drawn by restaurants.



# COVID-19 TAKES A TOLL ON BEER INDUSTRY

Our Bureau







**T**he nationwide lockdown to combat the spread of coronavirus adversely impacted several industries, and alcoholic beverages are no exception. The first two phases of the lockdown witnessed a complete ban on the sale of alcoholic beverages. This was also due to the World Health Organisation (WHO) associating the consumption of alcohol to weakening of immunity, which makes people more prone to the deadly COVID-19. The decision had an adverse impact on stores as well as manufacturers.

The restrictions were eased by the central government during the third-phase of lockdown and many states reopened the liquor stores. However, a few States implemented duty hikes - a COVID cess - ranging from 10 to 75 percent, which increased the price significantly. Beer is already taxed 60 percent higher than stronger spirits, though it has lower alcohol levels. Coupled with the COVID cess, the price of beer in certain states increased by over Rs 100 per 650 ml bottle. This increase in price put a significant dent in the consumer's budget. The price of beer increased by 25 to more than more than 50 percent

in various States. This prompted consumers to opt for harder forms of alcohol, low-quality and low-priced products, as well as illicit or spurious liquor to match their budget. This has the potential danger of having a severe impact on the health and well-being of the consumers.

Many alcohol market leaders feel that the alcohol taxation structure in India is unfavourable to the product, making it costlier when compared to other alcohol options. Market reports say that the introduction of COVID cess dampened industry prospects, resulting in a dramatic decrease in the demand for beer. It is reported that the volume sales of beer plunged by as much as 60 percent to 90 percent across states like West Bengal, Odisha, Telangana, Rajasthan and Karnataka in May 2020 when compared to the same month last year.

While this has severely impacted the alcohol industry, it has an adverse effect on the ancillary segments as well, especially farmers and the entire supply chain ecosystem with barley malt suppliers and logistics partners. This has resulted in loss in revenue

opportunities and jobs and impacted the overall economy at large.

At the same time, the industry is undergoing a change. The lockdown has presented multiple challenges to the industry, and at the same time it has also opened opportunities such as the online sale and home delivery of alcohol. Social distancing a part of our new reality has enabled the e-commerce model for alcohol sale by various states like Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Maharashtra, and Punjab. These interventions are likely to shape the future of the industry. This model calls for strong regulations and due diligence to ensure that only consumers above legal drinking age are served. Home consumption of alcohol beverages is also on the rise due to the current circumstances.

Against the backdrop of introduction of COVID cess, the industry feels that to accelerate growth for an otherwise crippled sector, the government should explore the possibility of delinking the beer sector from the hard liquor industry along with introducing a central taxation policy.

## ORGANIC COCONUT WATER PHALADA PURE AND SURETE



Phalada Pure and Sure, India's leading organic food brand, has launched an organic coconut water beverage. According to the manufacturers, this energiser is packed with vital nutrients, and high concentrations of electrolytes, potassium, calcium, and magnesium and is the cleanest organic coconut water free of pesticides, additives, or artificial ingredients. According to them all the products under the brand portfolio are 100% certified organic products in an endeavour to provide clean food that guarantee purity and wholesomeness. They say that the product is made with organically grown coconuts and fruits and available in three flavours. It is available in three flavours.

## EAT.FIT FOOD PRODUCTS CURE.FIT



India's integrated health and wellness platform, cure.fit, has announced the launch of its ready-to-eat products under its healthy food delivery vertical—eat.fit. According to the manufacturers, this range of products includes an offering of healthy easy-to-prepare food options that are 100% safe and free of chemicals, highly affordable and most importantly, delicious and authentic in taste. The ready-to-eat products, priced between Rs 100 and Rs 150, are available for ordering in Bangalore, Delhi and Hyderabad via the cure.fit app or on Swiggy and Zomato. Currently available in two variants, eat.fit plans to expand its range in the next six to nine months to include around 13 varieties. These products have been manufactured in conjunction with Tasty Bites—a major player in the ready-to-eat category.

## PRAWN SPREAD LICIOUS



Licious, a meat, seafood & meat products brand, has expanded its range in the ready-to-eat (RTE) category with the launch of prawn spreads. The product according to the manufacturers, is made from all-natural ingredients, with no artificial preservatives, colour or flavouring and zero trans-fat. A blend of freshly cooked juicy and succulent prawns and a creamy base, the product is available in two zestful flavours – Chunky Butter Garlic Prawn and Chunky Sriracha Prawn. Chunky is the operative word here. According to the manufacturers, every 100 gram of the spread contains 30 gm of freshly cooked prawn chunks. It is meant for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snack menus. The product will be available on the company's app and website and select modern retail outlets across Bangalore, Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Pune, Chandigarh, Chennai and Hyderabad.

## EPIPHANY SNACKS SHIKHAR EXIM LLP



Shikhar Exim LLP has introduced Epiphany Snacks to India. This plant-based snacking range consists of four variants. According to the manufacturers, the product range is free of gluten, preservatives and cholesterol and has no added sugar, and also caters to vegans. The variants comprise of blueberry almond crisps, cranberry almond crisps, California pistachio crunch and almond vanilla crunch, and are made using authentic and healthy gems of nature, consisting of California almonds, wild hand-plucked cranberries, flavourful blueberries, California pistachios, and brown rice syrup. All four variants of the product are available at Nature's Basket, PayTM Mall, Amazon India and Zomato in Mumbai. The consumers can place an order directly on the company's website as well.

## ROCKET ICE CREAM MOTHER DAIRY



Making an entry into the new category of ice cream - chocolates, Mother Dairy, a leading dairy player in India, introduced brand 'Rocket', with two flavours of French vanilla and Belgian chocolate. The company, with this launch, has also created a brand mascot named Neila, that is synonymous to the company house colour Blue.



## PROTEIN DOSA MIX MYPROTEIN



Myprotein, the sports and nutrition brand has announced their latest launch – the Protein Dosa Mix. According to the manufacturers, identifying accurately that Indian households by the millions turn to the humble dosa as a quick and easy breakfast fix, they have given it the added benefit of a protein boost. This is the first introduction in their product range to be manufactured locally. The company will be working closely with Indian manufacturers for production of the Dosa Mix. According to the company, made using Soy Protein Isolate, each container contributes 26g of muscle-building protein to your family meal, serving up to eight dosas of about 35g each, with no sugar whatsoever.

## DISH- AND VEGGIE-WASH CONCENTRATES WONDERCHEF



Wonderchef, one of the kitchenware brands in the country, has forayed into the kitchen hygiene category with the launch of Dish Wash Concentrate and Veggie Wash Concentrate under the sub-brand Health-Gear. With an aim to aid and strengthen the country's fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, the company is diversifying its portfolio in the hygiene segment. According to the company, addressing an industry gap and with hygiene at the core, these newest introductions offer a unique mix of ingredients. They say the product is a powerful formula that kills bacteria and deactivates virus and eliminates stubborn stains, oil and odour from utensils and leaves them smelling fresh. This is a formula made with neem extracts and removes 99.5% of germs, chemicals, fertilisers, pesticides and wax from fresh fruits and vegetables without leaving any residue, colour or smell, claims the company. These products are available across leading retail stores, e-commerce and the company's own website. It will also be sold through the company's DTH network of thousands of women entrepreneurs across India.

## CADBURY CHOCOBAKES CHOC LAYERED CAKES



Mondelez India, the makers of Cadbury Dairy Milk, Cadbury Bournvita, Oreo and so on, on Tuesday announced the launch of Cadbury Chocobakes Choc Layered Cakes. This is the company's second launch under the chocobakery sub-category, in less than a year, after the successful launch of Cadbury Chocobakes Choco-filled Cookies. The company hopes the new product will acquire interesting avenues in the snacking space.

## JERSEY PROTEIN PLUS MILK CREAMLINE DAIRY



Creamline Dairy Products, a subsidiary of Godrej Agrovet, has launched Jersey Protein Plus Milk, with 30% more protein than regular toned milk. The company said the product is positioned in the market to address the related deficiency in the country. According to the company, along with higher protein content, the product is also fortified with Vitamins A & D, making its consumption suitable not only for growth and development of children but also for boosting immunity of the entire family. They claim the product contains 100% milk protein with no preservatives and is manufactured in a highly hygienic and sanitised environment at the dairy's state-of-art plant near Hyderabad.

## TRADITIONAL MILK-BASED SWEETS - MOTHER DAIRY



Mother Dairy, India's leading milk and milk products brand, has expanded its range of traditional milk-based sweets, offering consumers the option to opt for packaged sweets. The company's range of traditional milk-based sweets now comprises five products, available in close vicinity. The portfolio comprising of the famed milk cake and orange mawa barfi, has been strengthened with the introduction of frozen rasmalai during the lockdown period. In addition, the company has re-launched hygienically packaged gulab jamun and rasgulla, solely driven by public demand.

# APPOINTMENTS



**Anjali Mehra**  
Vice President Marketing  
The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts

In her role, Anjali Mehra will provide strategic counsel to the company's senior executive leadership team and be responsible for developing and implementing a comprehensive and integrated Marketing and Communication roadmap and an ongoing strategy to strengthen the positioning of The Leela brand as an embodiment of true Indian luxury. Mehra brings with her over two decades of rich and varied experience in hospitality Brand Marketing and Communications. She started her career in aviation where she held key leadership positions before finding her true calling in hotels.



**Ravi Shankar**  
Senior Vice President Finance  
The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts

In his new role, Ravi Shankar will oversee the finance operational strategies and initiatives for the brand. In his career spanning over 20 years, his previous posting was as Chief Financial Officer at MH Lifestyle Hotels LLC Dubai. Shankar comes with extensive experience both within India and internationally. His career includes several noteworthy assignments with top corporate houses and hotels, such as RSM & Co., New Delhi (now PricewaterhouseCoopers), Le Meridien, Starwood Hotels and Resorts and Marriott International. Shankar is a qualified Chartered Accountant and also holds a Bachelor's degree in law and Commerce.



**Satish Kumar**  
Senior Director Talent & Culture,  
India & South Asia  
Accor

With more than 20 years of experience in talent development, Satish in his new role will handle India hotel operations management teams. He will be responsible for driving the team of 9500 employees in 50 hotels. In the past, Satish has contributed to the growth of the organisation. During his tenure he successfully spearheaded many pathbreaking employee and CSR campaigns which has helped the company nurture its talent.



**Amandeep Sarna**  
Vice President - Information  
Technology.  
The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts

Amandeep brings with him over two decades of extensive experience in Information Systems & Technology. His last assignment was with Kerzner International – Dubai, where he was leading the technology function in the capacity of Vice President – Global, Application Development. Prior to this he has worked with many international brands including Marriott International, Starwood Hotels and Resorts, Interstate Hotels and Onyx Hospitality.



**Manish Gupta**  
CEO  
Taj SATS

Manish Gupta has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of TajSATS Air Catering Limited, Indian Hotels Company's (IHCL) joint venture with

SATS. Gupta is a seasoned hotelier with over two decades of experience in multiple roles across various categories and sizes of hotels in India. His career with IHCL began when he moved to the iconic Taj Mahal Hotel, New Delhi as a restaurant manager. He rose through the ranks to become General Manager of different hotels including the legendary Rambagh Palace. Gupta will move to his current role from his previous position of being the Area Director – East & General Manager – Taj Bengal, looking after the Eastern India hotels, Bhutan and Nepal.



## MAJORITY OF HOTEL OPERATORS EXPECT UP TO TWO-YEAR REVENUE RECOVERY PERIOD: JLL



Real estate consultancy firm JLL conducted a survey with 15 leading hotel operators in India having adequate presence across hotel segments in both business and leisure markets to understand the effects of the pandemic on development and opening of new hotels, as well as the support required for the sustenance of the sector. According to the survey, only 20% of the operators believe that their hotels could bounce back

to 2019 Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR) levels within 6 to 12 months. Whilst 60% believe that their portfolio should be back on 2019 levels between 13 and 24 months from now. Luxury hotel operators are expected to ramp-up much slower with some expecting that their portfolio may take more than 2 years to reach 2019 performance levels. Qualitatively, the survey also indicated that business travel is expected to reduce in the

post COVID-19 world as companies will rationalize spending on travel, which could, in a way, benefit branded economy and midscale hotels. The firm observed that the standard operating procedures will be significantly transformed to promote enhanced hygiene standards and to adopt technology to support social distancing policies. However, with the slowdown of hotel developments, capital assistance is needed to help hotels sustain until demand returns.

As the sector continues to build contingency plans to alleviate the fallout of the crisis, hotel operators are extending the hand of solidarity to their owners by providing certain relief measures. 67% of the operators surveyed confirmed that they are being approached by the hotel owners for financial assistance or relief, for example, deferring management fee, fixed system charges etc. providing the much needed relief to hotel owners.

## HILTON INTRODUCES 'CLEANSTAY' PROGRAM, REDEFINES CLEANLINESS STANDARDS



Hilton's EventReady proposes to introduce its 'CleanStay' program for the corporate, entertainment, wedding meetings and events and ready to shower its bountiful services with the ensured safety and cleanliness. Hilton's Team is working hand in hand to fulfill all the guidelines that are set within the program. According to Hilton sources, the program is molded with extensive research and feedback handling all the challenges that it has come

across with hospitality and generosity. Hilton EventReady has kept a clear check on focused points of staygiene and touchless that includes room seals for guest and meeting rooms, sanitizing stations in public areas and meeting

spaces and an EventReady checklist, conciliatory efforts from booking to billing with the objective of gratification of customers through flexible pricing, space options and contract terms and responsive offers to meet the need of customers, like simplified agreements for small meetings. According to Hilton sources, Hilton has kept the expectancy and commitment towards corporate sectors, regardless of the size or scale of the meetings.



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## HOTEL ASSOCIATION OF INDIA APPOINTS FORMER TOURISM SECRETARY, MADAN PRASAD BEZBARUAH AS SECRETARY GENERAL



As a part of an extensive restructuring exercise to aid the resurgence of India's hotel industry in a post pandemic world, the Hotel Association of India (HAI), the apex body of the hotel industry in India and an integrated hospitality industry platform has inducted retired IAS Officer and Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism,

Government of India, Madan Prasad Bezbaruah as the Secretary General of the industry body. The appointment comes in the backdrop of the industry's worst-ever crisis that has left the sector in one of the most difficult and untenable circumstances. Bezbaruah succeeds the Founder Secretary General of Hotel Association of India, R K. Puri, a Senior Bureaucrat himself, the First Director of Tourism, Railway Board and instrumental in the conceptualisation and launch of the popular "Palace on Wheels".

Madan Prasad Bezbaruah is a senior bureaucrat with nearly four decades of experience working in the circle of power, both at the Centre and State. He holds a Masters degree in

Arts from Delhi University as well as Masters in Public Administration from Harvard University and has held important government positions nationally and internationally like Home Secretary Assam, Minister (Economic) in the High Commission of India, London, Principal Adviser in the Planning Commission of India and Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism for five years—the longest for any tourism secretary. He is the only Indian civil servant to be elected Chairman, PATA. After his retirement he was member of the Strategic Group of UN-WTO, Banking Ombudsman for the Reserve Bank of India and Member North Eastern Council.

## STERLING HOLIDAY RESORTS, APOLLO CLINICS COME TOGETHER TO CATER SAFE HOLIDAYS



Sterling Holiday Resorts announced its coalition with Apollo Clinics to reassure its promise of safe and hygienic holidays through its 'Sterling Cares' program. The announcement of this association comes at the time when Sterling Holiday Resorts has re-opened its 13 resorts across Jaipur, Puri, Sariska, Mount Abu, Lonavala, Mussoorie, Thekkady, Rajakkad (Kerala) Wayanad, Karwar, Palakollu (Andhra Pradesh) and its Nature Trails resorts in Sajan and Durshet;

with more to be opened soon. A survey made by them among their customers had revealed that hygiene and safety will be their most important consideration when taking a holiday. This prompted their move to tie up with Apollo Clinics. Considering the norms of social distancing, safety and hygiene, Sterling Holiday Resorts has introduced Holiday Insurance, Tech innovations such as QR code menus and has designed a new set of games and holiday activities

## WYNDHAM HOTELS & RESORTS UNVEILS HAWTHORN SUITES BY WYNDHAM BRAND IN INDIA



Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, the world's largest hotel franchising company by the number of properties announced the opening of Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham Dwarka- its first Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham hotel in India. Wyndham, which has approximately 9,300 hotels across 90 countries also announced its plans to enter markets like Nepal and Bhutan. Wyndham said it plans to have 47 hotels open across India by the end of this year and that Wyndham remains focused on tapping into key markets of the Indian sub continent.



## COVID IMPACT: OYO EMBRACES HYBRID WORKPLACE MODEL FOR THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF ITS EMPLOYEES



OYO Hotels & Homes has permanently moved to a 'hybrid workplace model' which is helping the company operate in full capacity across the country, without compromising the health and safety of its employees. While a significant majority continue to work from home, several teams have chosen to 'work from anywhere' while others have opted for flexible coworking centres offered by OYO Workspaces, the company's coworking arm. OYO is empowering its employees with the right tools such as Slack to drive their productivity and performance,

to build a high-performing and employee-first work culture, and a strong leadership bench strength. Besides this, OYO has rolled out various employee-centric initiatives to boost employee morale during these times. To ensure employee connect, OYO is organising virtual coffee sessions with its leaders. They have launched 'CEO-Club' - a recognition programme by Rohit Kapoor, CEO, OYO India & South Asia and has also rolled-out skip-level, monthly rewards and recognition meets.

The company also recently hosted its first-ever virtual family day aimed at building better interpersonal bonds among OYOPrenuers. To promote upskilling and e-learning among its employees, OYO has launched OYOversity, its learning management system for the employees which includes lessons on leadership, how to boost productivity while working remotely among other topics.

## CORNITOS TAKES A NEW JOURNEY TO E-COMMERCE



Cornitos inaugurated their e-commerce website, with an endeavour to provide convenient and secure accessibility to its customers. The website enables consumers to choose from products ranging from Nachos Crisps, Taco Shells, Dips, Tortilla Wraps, Nuts & Seeds and Combo Packs. The decision has come at a point when businesses across verticals are witnessing a plunge in the sales as manufacturing and distribution were hindered

due to Covid-19 crisis. Along with offering the regular flavours to savour from, the e-store of Cornitos brings with it a few offers. They have rolled out 'Crunchy Rewards' program, wherein customers gain 'Crunchy Points' on every purchase. Cornitos products are also available in Retail, E-Retail and Modern Trade stores and on all e-grocery platforms like Amazon, Flipkart, Grofers, Big Basket, Milkbasket, Scootsy, Suprdaily, Jiomart, dmart and others.

## THE LEELA VOTED AS WORLD'S BEST HOTEL BRAND



The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts has been voted the World's Best Hotel Brand by Travel + Leisure, USA World's Best Awards Survey, 2020. The Leela hospitality brand is owned by Brookfield Asset Management. The accolade is a recognition of the brand's consistency in pursuing excellence and an affirmation of its commitment towards curating authentic luxury experiences with the graciousness of Indian hospitality. In the same survey, The Leela Palace Udaipur gained top honours as the #1 Resort in India and The Leela Palace New Delhi has bagged #2 City Hotel in Asia. Both hotels have been recognized for their unique location, exquisite architecture and personalised experiences that connect guests with the city's rich cultural heritage. Travel + Leisure USA World's Best Award Survey is a renowned benchmark of excellence for travel and hospitality companies globally. It honours the finest travel experiences in the world selected by Travel + Leisure's global readership of discerning travellers. Readers rate their experiences and evaluate hotels across the world on characteristics such as rooms, location, service, cuisine and value.

## ZURICH BASED F&B VETERAN LAUNCHES SUPPORT FUND FOR INDIAN HOSPITALITY EMPLOYEES



Considering the limited support available for hospitality workers in India following the Covid 19 pandemic, Zurich based Michael Butler, former corporate director of food and beverage for Europe and India at Hyatt Hotels Corporation

has decided to start a fund to support hospitality employees living in India. Butler is asking for support from anyone across the globe who would like to contribute by donating what they can afford. Starting from July 20, spread across several days, Butler will also walk 265 kms from Zurich to Geneva, wearing a chef coat to show solidarity and support for the hospitality colleagues. He believes this will help raise more awareness and generate contributions for those who are in need. He said India has been very close to his heart for many reasons and he has been fortunate to have been able to work with great minds in the

field of hospitality in the country. The fund has been set up online and the process will entail the requesting employee submitting an email with attachment of their relieving letters from past employers. Preference would be given to non-management workers and those who were laid off the earliest. Butler said he will also validate the claims with local support teams to ensure the most needy and deserving ones get support at the earliest. The fund has been created in late June, and Butler will officially launch it through the walk on July 20. The status of the fund collection can be seen real time.

## IBIS HOTELS FORAYS INTO CO-WORKING SPACE FOR INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS IN INDIA



Hotels chain Ibis has introduced alternative working space for individuals and organisations in India in adherence to the safety and hygiene standards amid

COVID-19 crisis. Available across all its properties in India, the new offering Work@ibis provides a safe, alternative working space to individuals and organisations looking to work remotely in a healthy and reliable environment, Ibis said in a statement. According to the company, the service features ready-to-move-

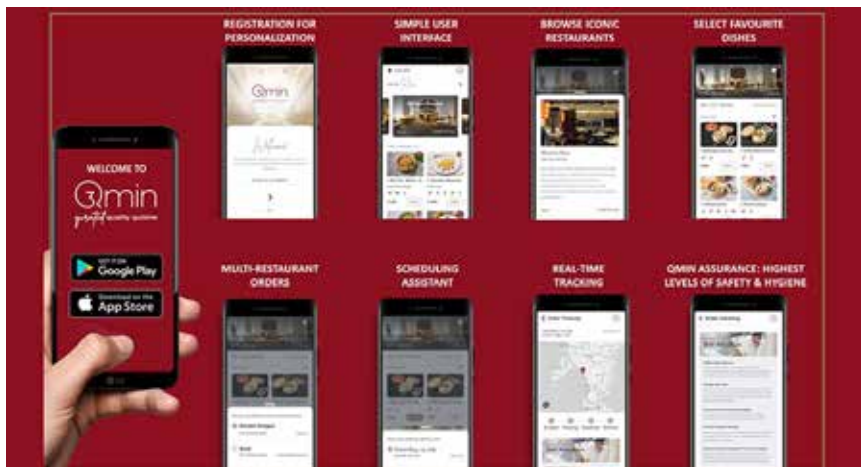
in workspaces, meeting and conference rooms and office lounges with access to high-speed internet connectivity, office essentials, tea and coffee station, and customised F&B offerings and these spaces are stringently sanitised in adherence to the Accor group's Allsafe global cleanliness and prevention standards and Indian government norms, the statement said. Ibis is part of hospitality major Accor, which currently has 5,000 hotels, resorts, and residences across 110 countries in its portfolio.



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## IHCL FORAYS INTO ONLINE GOURMET FOOD DELIVERY WITH QMIN



Indian Hotels Company (IHCL) announced that it is foraying into new culinary offerings through the launch of a new brand called Qmin. IHCL's Qmin mobile application to be launched in July 25 will deliver dishes from Taj restaurants in Mumbai such as Golden Dragon and Souk from Taj Mahal Palace, Thai Pavilion and Trattoria from President besides others and will gradually cover other markets such as Delhi, Chennai and Bengaluru over a period of five weeks. The gourmet Qmin shop will open in August and the Qmin will be integrated into the chain's loyalty

programme in September. Company sources said leveraging a digital platform will 'augment' the group's existing F&B offerings and will address the consumer demand for online gourmet food delivery services. The company said Qmin will follow safety protocols such as contactless delivery and mandatory use of protective gear for delivery executives in sanitized vehicles. As per IHCL, the packaging of these food items will be eco friendly utilizing bio degradable materials, and with customised insulation boxes to preserve the food during deliveries.

## INDIAN HOTELS COMPANY ANNOUNCES 100% ACQUISITION OF SEA ROCK HOTEL SITE

The Indian Hotels Company (IHCL) signed a binding agreement for the acquisition of the balance 14.28% equity interest in EEL Hotels and Investments Limited (EEL) from the Nanda family, which will make IHCL, the 100% leasehold owner of the Sea Rock hotel site by December 31, 2021. The payment will be structured through multiple instalments staggered over a period, with full buyout by December 31, 2021. IHCL's plans to rebuild the hotel site have been stuck after the National Green Tribunal (NGT) stayed clearances given to it last year citing violation of Coastal Zone Regulations (CRZ).

In 2009, IHCL had announced the acquisition of the defunct Sea Rock Hotel for Rs 680 crore by acquiring an 85.72% stake in owner EEL. At the time, IHCL had said it planned to build a hospitality cum convention complex on the hotel site and integrate it with the nearby Taj Land's End.

## RADISSON HOTEL GROUP SOUTH ASIA ENTERS INTO STRATEGIC TIE-UP WITH EAZYDINER



Radisson Hotel Group South Asia announced its partnership with EazyDiner – India's table reservation and food discovery platform. The partnership is a significant step to strengthen the Group's Food and Beverage (F&B) capabilities in the region. The collaboration will

serve all 94 operating hotels of the Group's portfolio in India and will include table booking and home delivery services. Radisson Hotel Group South Asia has devised 20 signature dishes for home delivery. Curated by Chef Rakesh Sethi, a known culinary expert in the Indian F&B industry and presently corporate executive chef for Radisson Hotel Group South Asia, these include items like Paan Kulfi with Gulkand Cake and Supari Cigar, Angaar E Jamun (Chocolate stuffed Gulab Jamun flambeed) and Trio Symphony (Gajar Halwa/ Gulab Jamun Terrine/ Kalakand Tart/Kesar Phirni) amongst many others. Guests will be able to order

these dishes online along with their favorite cuisines across Radisson Hotel group South Asia's specialty restaurants through EazyDiner's EazySafe+ platform that ensures safe takeaways and minimal-contact deliveries. Radisson Hotel Group has rolled out Radisson Hotels Safety Protocol, a new program of cleanliness and disinfection procedures, in partnership with SGS, the world's leading inspection, verification, testing and certification company. Additionally, exhaustive food safety and hygiene manual and food and beverage protocol guidelines have been laid out for all hotels to ensure safe and secure F&B experience.



## THE LAST LEAF

### THE NEED OF THE HOUR IS FASTEST RECOVERY OF ALL CLASSES OF HOTELS

**H**otels report 82% drop in occupancy; recovery unlikely before September. The other key parameter ADR (average daily rate) has come down sharply as well. For instance, the average room rate for a branded hotel in April was Rs 4,113 per night, which was 27 per cent lower than the ADR in the same month last year.

Reports indicate that Indian hotel sector is one of the worst hit in the Asia region. There is a drastic drop in room rates and occupancies ever since the lockdown was clamped and in spite of its easing. It is reported that among the large Asian markets, India reported the second-largest drop in occupancies just behind Thailand where the occupancies dropped 90 per cent. At the same time, countries like Malaysia, China and Singapore have performed better than India with lower drops in occupancies.

Since the lockdown which came into force from March 25, the demand for travel and tourism services has dropped considerably. It is reported that most hotel chains operate just a small percentage of their hotels for stranded guests, and corporate clients who want to offer their critical staff a safe accommodation while supporting business continuity.

Reports reveal that the general expectation of the top brass of most hotels is that things would improve from September onwards which is in line with the government's internal assessments. But even after September, the revival is likely to be slow-paced.

It's also believed that once the demand picks up, the branded hotels would be in a better position to recover as they are likely to follow high level of service protocols and hygiene standards that would give guests a sense of safety while staying in them. The need of the hour is fastest recovery of all classes of hotels, which is absolutely essential for the hospitality sector to start looking upwards.



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