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News

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Dear Members,

Warm greetings! It gives me immense pleasure to share with you the recent initiatives undertaken by SIHRA to strengthen and advance South India's hospitality sector. Our association remains committed to addressing skill gaps, fostering sustainable growth and positioning the region as a leader in hospitality and tourism.

Responding to the request of **Alagu Meena**, District Collector, Kanyakumari, SIHRA successfully organised a tourism and hospitality skills training programme for tribal youth. Held at the Kalikesam Eco Camp, this programme benefited 40 participants and served as an important step in empowering local communities through skill development. In addition, SIHRA members met with **Thiru T. Christuraj**, Director, Tamil Nadu Tourism, to deliberate on strategies aimed at enhancing the state's tourism appeal. During the interaction, we highlighted our continued efforts to project Tamil Nadu as a premier destination of choice for travellers from across the country and beyond.

As these efforts gather momentum, SIHRA is also working actively to promote South India as a hub for medical and wellness tourism. The region is witnessing a significant rise in medical seminars alongside the rapid expansion of healthcare infrastructure. Notably, many hospitals are now adopting hospitality-driven practices, creating patient experiences comparable to those of world-class hotels.

Similar sentiments were recently echoed by **Suman Billa**, Additional Secretary and Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, at the FHRAI 'Heal in India – Medical and

South India is witnessing a significant rise in medical seminars alongside the rapid expansion of healthcare infrastructure."

Wellness Tourism Summit 2025'. He emphasised the enormous opportunities India enjoys in leveraging its healthcare infrastructure and ancient Ayurvedic traditions. He proposed the creation of 10 medical and wellness tourism clusters by 2027 to act as focused growth engines. In addition, he called for frameworks to incentivise states and service providers, enhance quality benchmarks and launch global campaigns that showcase India's unique offerings to the world. Taking inspiration from his vision, SIHRA will also continue to organise seminars and events across India to spotlight the vast potential of wellness tourism.

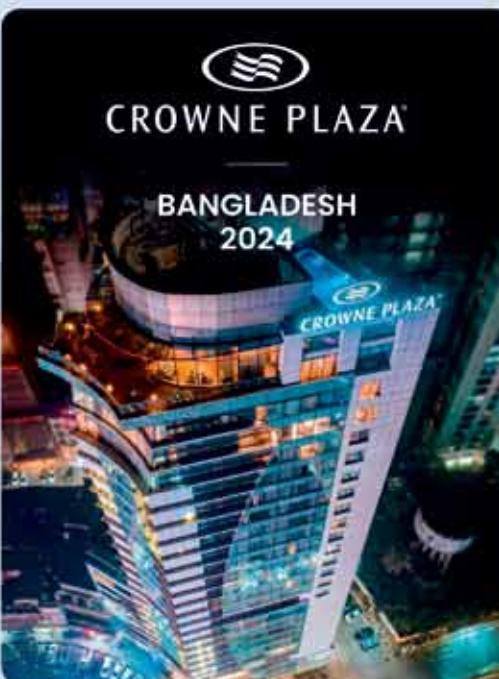
Looking ahead, I encourage all members to actively participate in the 55th FHRAI Annual Convention, scheduled to be held in Bengaluru from 18–20 September 2025. This convention will provide a valuable platform to engage with industry leaders, explore new trends and discover innovative ideas that will shape the future of hospitality.

Together, let us continue to build on our collective vision and drive the growth of South India's hospitality and tourism industry.

Best Regards,
K Syama Raju
President
SIHRA

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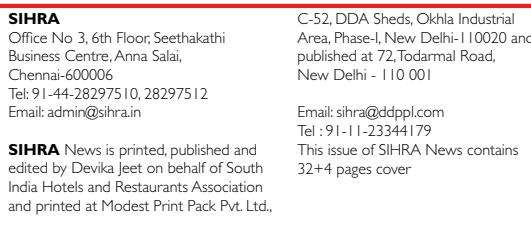
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8 Shaping skills, strengthening South

SIHRA launches diverse initiatives to bridge skill gaps in South India's hospitality sector, strengthening workforce capabilities and fuelling growth in regional tourism.

10 Healing hub

K Syama Raju observes that the lines between hospitality and healthcare are blurring. He believes this convergence positions South India to emerge as a global hub for healing.

14 55th FHRAI Convention comes to Bengaluru

FHRAI is all set to welcome stakeholders from the hospitality sector in Bengaluru for the three-day Annual Convention, which will serve as a dynamic platform uniting industry leaders and investors.

20 The Residency's new era of ease & tradition

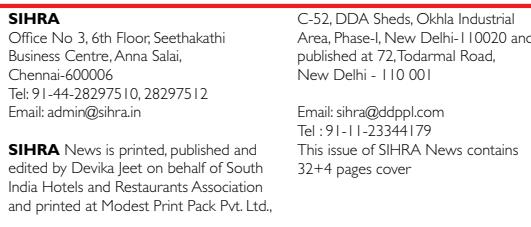
As the hotel industry gears up to double its growth over the next five years, The Residency is crafting new standards for the sector by blending sustainability, modern comfort and tradition.

28 Evolve Back to planet-first approach

Leading South Indian hospitality brand Evolve Back Resorts is embracing a sustainability-first approach, seamlessly blending comfort with luxury and turning every stay into a meaningful investment.



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Building competence through skill empowerment

SIHRA is undertaking varied initiatives to bridge hospitality skill gaps in South India, enhancing workforce capabilities and driving growth in the region's tourism sector.



The South India Hotels and Restaurants Association (SIHRA) is leading the charge to strengthen tourism and hospitality in South India. By addressing skill gaps through targeted training, industry collaborations and imparting knowledge on modern hospitality practices, SIHRA aims to create employment opportunities and position the region as a preferred global travel destination. Here is a quick look at the association's initiatives to strengthen the sector:

TRAINING TRIBAL YOUTH

Acting on the request of **Alagu Meena**, District Collector, Kanyakumari, SIHRA successfully conducted a tourism and hospitality skills training programme for tribal youth. The programme was attended by 40 tribal candidates at the Kalikesam Eco Camp in Kanyakumari district. The initiative was carried out with the support of the Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation (TNSDC), the district administration of Kanyakumari, the Forest Department and Tamil Nadu

Tourism. The supporting departments, along with the District Collector, worked tirelessly to ensure that the programme achieved its goal of empowering local communities with skills in the hospitality sector and promoting sustainable tourism.

SHARED APPROACH TO TOURISM

Recently, members of SIHRA met **Thiru T Christuraj**, Director, Tamil Nadu Tourism, to discuss strategies for enhancing the state's tourism sector. During the interaction, SIHRA highlighted the association's sustained efforts to position Tamil Nadu as a leading tourist destination, both nationally and internationally. The Director expressed keen interest in collaborating with stakeholders and emphasised the potential of innovative



initiatives to strengthen the tourism industry. He assured the association of his full support in raising the standards of Tamil Nadu's tourism.

The meeting underscored the shared commitment of the association and the government to expand the state's tourism industry through the collective efforts of all stakeholders.

CIVIL AVIATION MINISTER VISIT

K Syama Raju, President, SIHRA and FHRAI, along with **M Balakrishna Reddy**, Member, Executive Committee, FHRAI, met **Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu**, Minister

of Civil Aviation, Government of India, to extend a formal invitation to attend the 55th FHRAI Annual Convention in Bengaluru. The Minister accepted the invitation and confirmed his participation. The 55th FHRAI Annual Convention is scheduled to take place from 18–20 September 2025.

WEDDING & MICE CONCLAVE

SIHRA members participated at India's first dedicated Wedding and MICE Conclave, held in Kochi, Kerala. Organised by the Kerala Travel Mart (KTM) Society in collaboration with the Kerala Tourism Department, the conclave served as a unified platform, bringing together key stakeholders from

the wedding and MICE sectors to explore opportunities and highlight Kerala's growing potential in this segment. Speaking at the event, **PA Mohamed Riyas**, Tourism Minister, Government of Kerala, said, "Kerala offers an unmatched combination of natural beauty, cultural richness and world-class infrastructure. Turning this potential into sustained growth requires collaborative efforts."

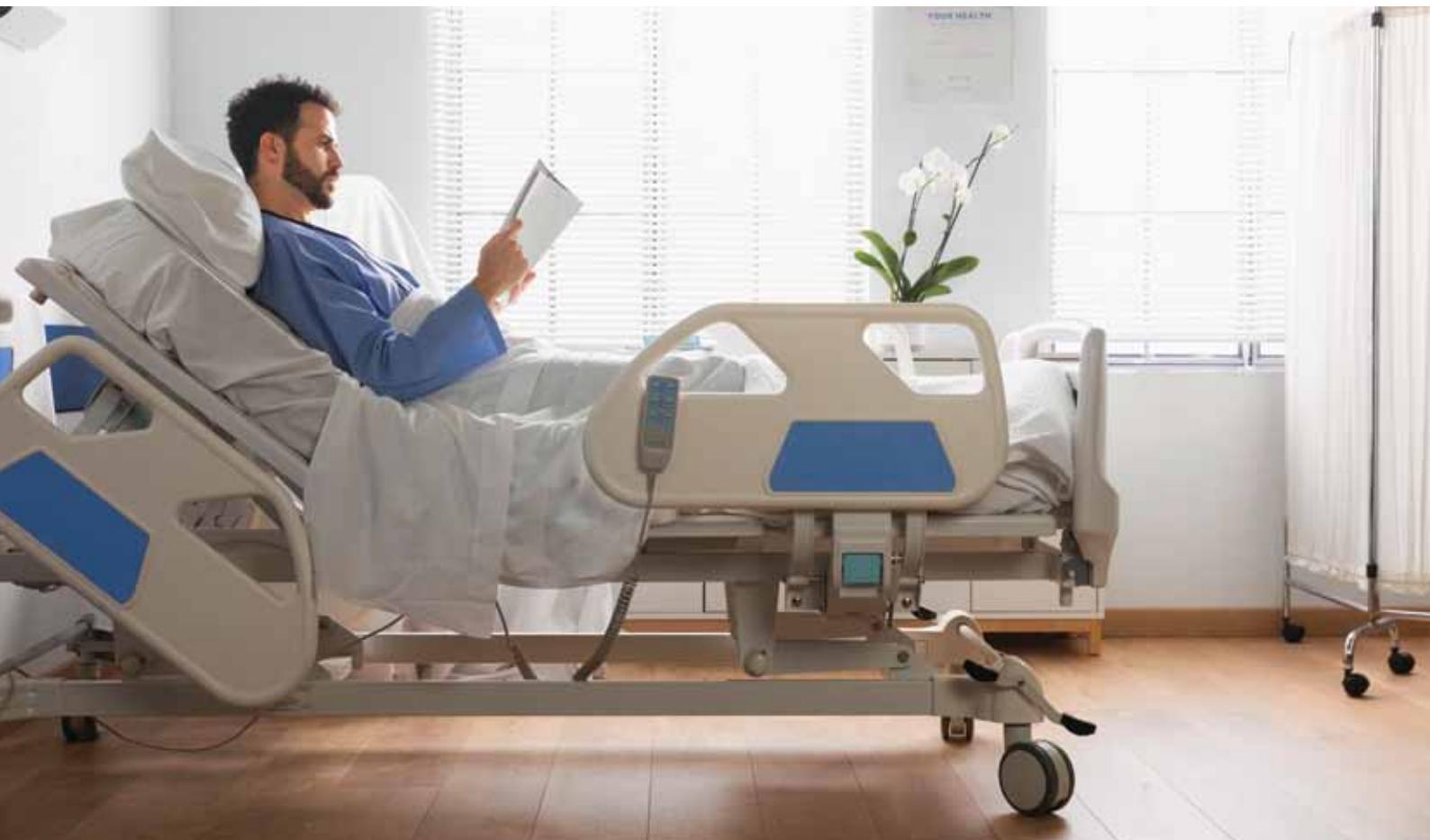
The event witnessed the participation of nearly 700 buyers from across India and abroad, including 70 global buyers. Around 6,623 business meetings were conducted, underscoring the conclave's success as a significant business development forum. ♦

Blended horizons

Where comfort meets cure

K Syama Raju, President, SIHRA and FHRAI, opines that the boundaries between hospitality and healthcare are fading. Their convergence in South India could transform the region into a global hub for healing, wellness and medical excellence.

By **Surbhi Sharma**



With India witnessing a surge in medical and wellness tourism, associations like Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) and SIHRA are stepping up efforts to align the hospitality sector with this booming segment.

Speaking on the occasion of FHRAI's 'Heal In India – Medical and Wellness Tourism Summit 2025', **K Syama Raju**,

President, SIHRA and FHRAI highlighted that South India is emerging as a hub for medical tourism and wellness treatments. The region is witnessing a rise in medical seminars and an expansion of healthcare infrastructure. "Bengaluru and Hyderabad are already hubs for many prestigious hospitals. From Ayurveda hotspots in Kerala to wellness centres in Mangaluru and Coimbatore and even initiatives in Dharamstala, the region offers diverse, high-quality wellness

Hospitals today are integrating hospitality-like services, ensuring patients receive care in comfortable, hotel-like environments



experiences. In fact, numerous wellness resorts are emerging across the region, and this trend is expected to grow significantly in the coming years."

HOSPITALITY MEETS HEALTHCARE

Syama Raju noted that hospitals today are integrating hospitality-like services, ensuring patients receive care in comfortable, hotel-like environments. "Earlier, people from abroad spent large sums for treatment. However, now they are attracted to India as the country offers cost-effective treatments.

Alongside medical services, wellness offerings are becoming standard too. FHRAI will continue to support these initiatives and extend assistance to states keen on developing this segment," he added.

PARTNERSHIP PLANS

To enhance integrated hospitality service offerings, FHRAI plans to engage directly with various hospitals and wellness centres. "If they are interested in collaborating with FHRAI, we are ready to partner with them," Syama Raju affirmed.



K Syama Raju
President
SIHRA and FHRAI



PUSH FOR INBOUND TOURISM

With inbound tourism recovering strongly after COVID-19, FHRAI is looking to amplify promotional efforts. "We have many seminars and events planned, not just in South India but across the country through regional associations, to showcase India's wellness tourism potential," noted Syama Raju.

As the lines between hospitality and healthcare continue to blur, associations like SIHRA and FHRAI's collaborative approach could place India, especially the Southern region, firmly on the global map as a premier destination for healing, rejuvenation and medical excellence. ♦

Medical tourism

A strategic pillar of Indian tourism

Suman Billa, Additional Secretary and Director General, MoT, Government of India emphasised the integration of Ayurveda and modern healthcare to make India a global healing destination.

By **Surbhi Sharma**

In a world increasingly drawn to holistic healing, India stands at a pivotal crossroads where medical and wellness treatments converges with economic ambition.

Addressing the 'Heal in India 2025 Medical & Wellness Tourism Summit', **Suman Billa**, Additional Secretary and Director General, Ministry of Tourism (MoT), Government of India, outlined the bold vision — that India's tourism economy must reach US\$ 3 trillion by 2047, marking 100 years

of independence. At the centre of this ambition is a focused strategy to position medical and wellness tourism as key pillars of India's global identity.

INDIA'S STRATEGIC EDGE

As per Billa, India is uniquely poised at the intersection of clinical excellence and cultural wisdom. While other countries may boast advanced medical facilities or ancient healing systems, India blends both. "Our USP is not just great doctors and hospitals but our ancient systems of healing: Ayurveda, Yoga, Siddha,

which treat the body, mind and spirit," he noted.

India must evolve from being a place 'where you are treated' to 'where you come to heal'. Medical tourism — which is currently valued at US\$ 7.6 billion and wellness tourism at US\$ 19.4 billion — are expected to double in five years, making them critical levers for accelerating tourism-led GDP growth, job creation and foreign exchange.

TRUST IS CRITICAL

According to Billa, the challenge



Suman Billa
Addl. Secretary and DG, MoT,
Government of India



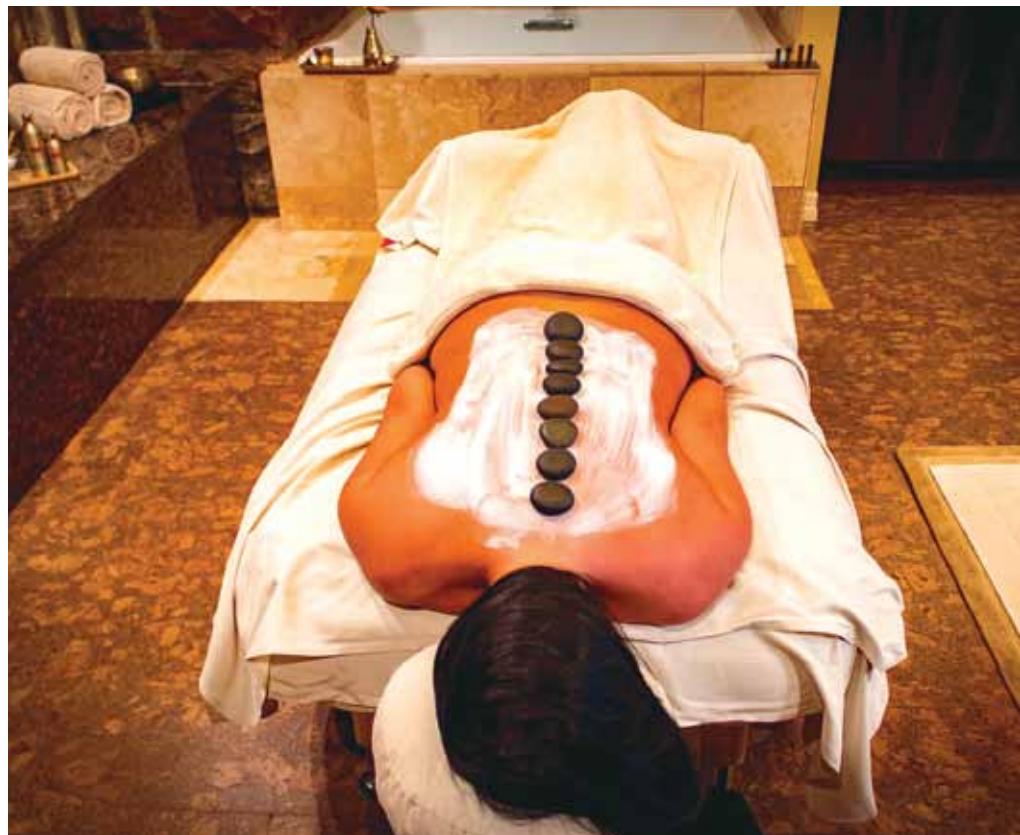
To project India as a healing soft power, we need to make the 'Heal in India' campaign a global movement."

is not just scale, it is trust, therefore, India's credibility in this sector must rest on seamless experiences, exceptional services, international standards, safety and security.

ACTION PLAN

To make 'Heal in India' a global movement, Billa outlined a clear action roadmap and stressed on the need to create a unified digital platform integrating hospitals, tour operators, hotels and wellness centres.

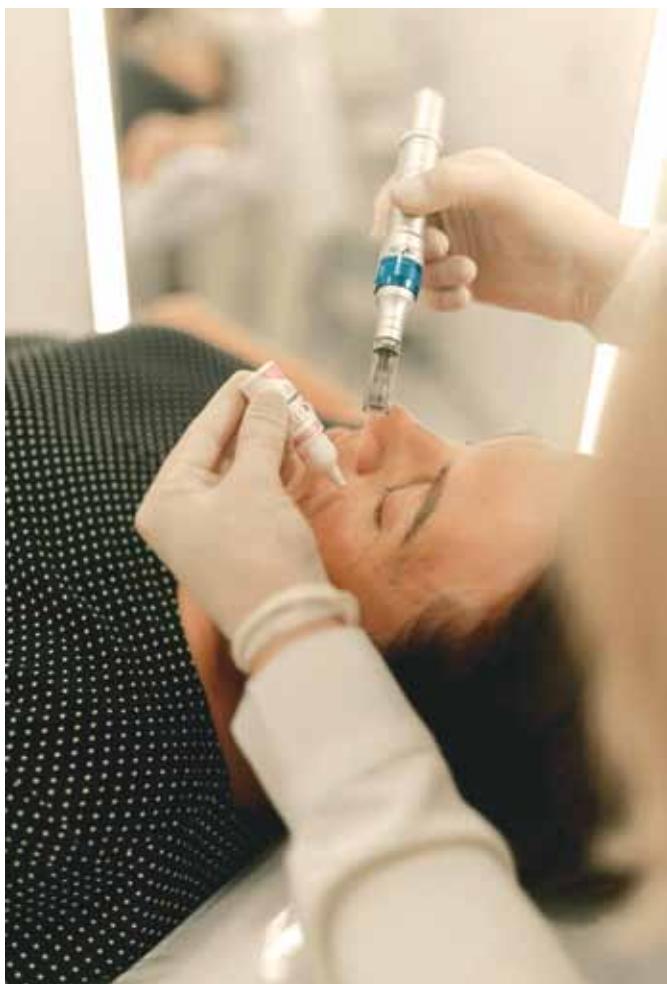
"Identify 10 medical-wellness tourism clusters by 2027 to act as focused growth zones.



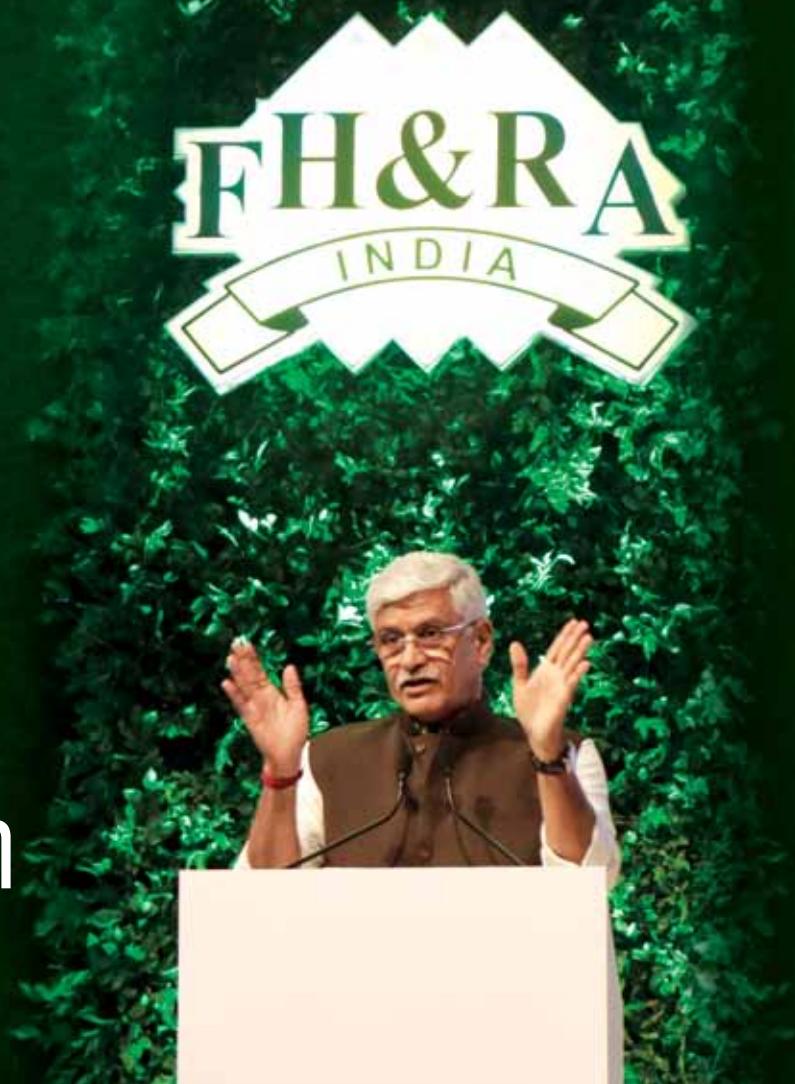
Incentivise states and service providers for quality outcomes, campaigns and forex contributions. Run global campaigns targeting the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Africa and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) for medical, and the West for wellness tourism, to position India as the world's preferred healing destination. Bridge gaps in standardisation and skilling, especially in tier II and III cities."

SOFT POWER

"To project India as a healing soft power, we need to make the 'Heal in India' campaign a global movement where the country heals the world — not just with its science but also with its soul," Billa concluded. The stakeholders across tourism, healthcare, hospitality and wellness, must realise that India's next leap in tourism is not just about numbers, it is about nurturing global trust, creating seamless ecosystems and harnessing its ancient roots to shape its future. ♦



Bengaluru to host 55th FHRAI Convention



The three-day Annual Convention of FHRAI will provide a vibrant platform for hospitality, bringing together policymakers, industry leaders and investors.

By DDP Bureau

Exploring the theme, 'FutureScape 2047: Redefining Hospitality for a New India', the 55th Annual Convention of the Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) will take place in Bengaluru from 18–20 September 2025. Each year, the Convention is attended by around 1,000 delegates from India and abroad, including leading hoteliers and key stakeholders from across the tourism and hospitality ecosystem.

The landmark event will be graced by **Gajendra Singh Shekhwat**, Minister for Tourism, Government of India

The landmark event promises a unique confluence of ideas, leadership and industry innovation

(Gol) and **Rajnath Singh**, Defence Minister, Gol. The convention will also see the presence of several distinguished dignitaries, including **Siddaramaiah**, Chief Minister, Karnataka, **K Ram Mohan Naidu**, Minister of Civil Aviation,

Gol, **DK Shivakumar**, Deputy Chief Minister, Government of Karnataka, **MB Patil**, Minister for Large and Medium Industries, Government of Karnataka, **V Vidyavathi**, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Gol and **Suman Billa**, Additional

Secretary & Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Gol. The FHRAI stated, "We look forward to your participation in this landmark event, which promises to be a unique confluence of ideas, leadership and industry innovation." ♦



Rising staff shortages push for smarter kitchen solutions

As the sector faces staff shortages, post-pandemic attrition and rising guest expectations, RATIONAL introduces innovative products like iVario Pro to meet these requirements.

Team building, fair compensation and flexible work models remain priorities for employees but modern kitchen equipment is equally vital for better conditions. "Older professional kitchens often suffer from an investment backlog," notes **Vishal Raman**, Managing Director, RATIONAL India. In industry catering, appliances can be decades old, making work inefficient and unattractive. A well-equipped, modern workplace has a stronger appeal, especially for younger talent who value digitalisation and automation. RATIONAL's **iVario Pro**, for example, replaces multiple appliances like tilting fryers, boiling pans and pressure cookers, while its intelligent functions automate routine tasks, easing workloads and creating more appealing future-ready kitchens.

The single-pan units have a capacity of 100 or 150 litres and are ideally equipped for the preparation of large quantities to a consistent quality. Thanks to the powerful yet precise heating power, searing large quantities of meat, for example, is no problem. For the chef, there is an even

RATIONAL's iVario Pro replaces multiple appliances like tilting fryers, boiling pans and pressure cookers, while its intelligent functions automate routine tasks, easing workloads and creating more appealing future-ready kitchens

more decisive advantage: The iVario takes over the time-consuming monitoring of the cooking process. The chef will only need to turn, pour or remove something when the unit signals. Even delicate dishes such as risotto or pudding require hardly any attention, which takes the stress out of routine work and leaves enough time for more interesting tasks.



Solutions such as the AutoLift, which automatically lifts the food out of the cooking liquid after the cooking time has elapsed, are just as impressive. Raman says, "The results are top class and can always be repeated thanks to the programming of the cooking paths. It could not be any more reliable." Both iVario Pro 2-S and 2-XS offer dual pans, parallel cooking, four-times faster performance and 40 per cent more energy savings than conventional kitchen equipment.

The iVario is also no stranger to digitalisation. It integrates seamlessly with ConnectedCooking using a smartphone, tablet or PC, transferring recipes, automatic software updates and secure HACCP data storage in just a few steps. ♦



South India welcomes 6 new Marriott properties

Brigade Hotel Ventures and Marriott International have joined forces to bring six new hotels in South India across four key cities, with the aim of delivering premium experiences to travellers.

By DDP Bureau

Brigade Hotel Ventures (BHV), one of South India's largest hotel owners, has signed a landmark agreement with Marriott International to develop six new hotels across four key South Indian cities.

This strategic collaboration will introduce globally recognised Marriott Bonvoy brands such as The Ritz-Carlton, JW Marriott, Marriott Hotels & Resorts, Courtyard by Marriott and Fairfield by Marriott to the portfolio.

Currently, BHVL operates nearly 500 rooms across its

properties in India. With the addition of these new projects, the company will add 940 rooms, taking its total inventory to 1,388 rooms across eight hotels. The move underscores Brigade's confidence in India's rapidly expanding hospitality sector and its focus on delivering premium experiences for both business and leisure travellers.

Commenting on the development, **MR Jaishankar**, Executive Chairman, Brigade Enterprises, said, "We are excited to strengthen our long-standing partnership with Marriott by adding six unique hotels to our portfolio. Each

project reflects our belief in the long-term potential of Indian hospitality."

Rajeev Menon, President, Marriott International for Asia Pacific (excluding China), echoed this sentiment, noting that the upcoming properties will cater to diverse traveller needs while maintaining Marriott's hallmark of trusted service and global standards.

Among the notable projects is the Courtyard by Marriott Chennai World Trade Centre, set to open in FY27 with 245 rooms and contemporary amenities. By FY28, Fairfield by Marriott

Bengaluru International Airport and Fairfield by Marriott Brigade Valencia will debut, offering a combined 375 rooms. Kerala will welcome a luxury retreat, The Ritz-Carlton Vaikom Island, featuring exclusive villas and experiential offerings, expected by FY29. Meanwhile, JW Marriott Chennai OMR, with 250 rooms, is slated for completion by FY30.

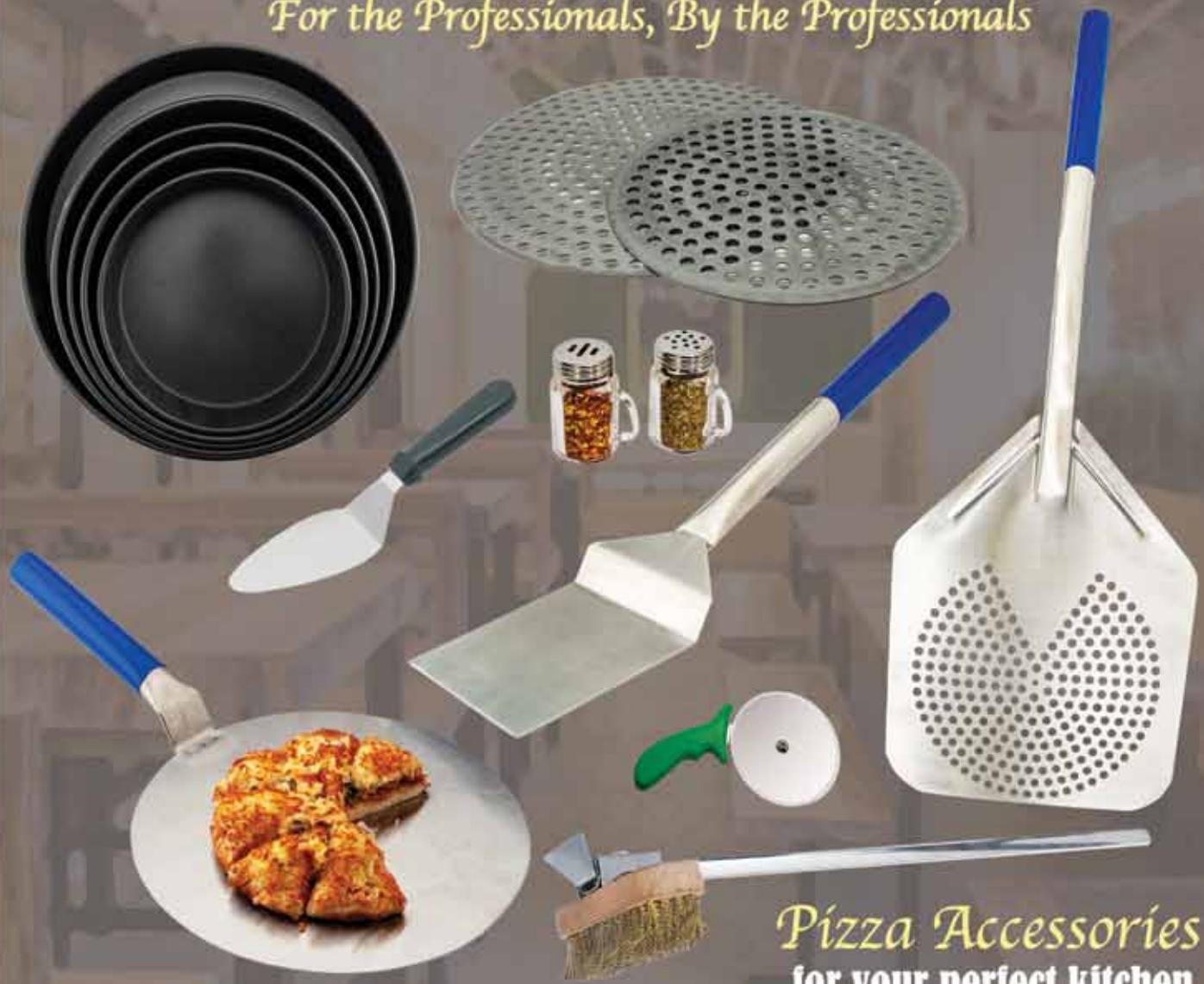
This expansion not only strengthens BHVL's presence in India's competitive hospitality landscape but also reinforces Marriott's position as a global leader in the country's growing travel market. ♦



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Residency ready for green & expansive future

With the hotel industry poised to double its growth in the next five years, **B Gopinath** shares his insights on growth, sustainability, traveller's expectations, GST reforms and the ambitious expansion plans of the group.

By Nisha Verma





B Gopinath
CEO
The Residency Group of Hotels

The Indian hospitality sector stands at the threshold of a transformative decade. India's hotel market is rapidly diversifying with international brands, regional players and home-grown groups like The Residency positioning themselves for both domestic and global travellers. The country's economic growth, rising disposable incomes and surge in domestic tourism are key enablers but **B Gopinath**, Chief Executive Officer, The Residency Group of Hotels, stresses that long-term growth will depend on embedding sustainable practices into operations.

"The number of hotels in India is going to double in the next five years, from 200,000 to nearly 400,000. The growth is going to be phenomenal in the next five years. It is a





If owners adapt to the latest technology, it will help them to perform better.”

golden period for the hospitality industry,” observed Gopinath.

However, this expansion comes with a sense of responsibility. “As we grow, we need to take care of sustainability, reduction of waste and energy conservation measures, so that overall, it is good for the community,” he added.

TECHNOLOGY FOR EFFICIENCY

At present, India’s hospitality landscape is a mix of branded and independent hotels and one of the pressing concerns is energy management. “In India, 40 per cent is branded hotels and 60 per cent is standalone, single-owner properties. Almost 40 per cent of electricity is consumed by HVAC. There are fantastic schemes and beautiful equipment available, which can reduce energy costs by 10 to 15 per cent. That would be a great saving in the years to come,” he noted.

The challenge, according to him, is not cost but awareness. “If owners adapt to the latest technology, it will help them perform better. The technology is not very expensive. They only need to give some time to understanding what it is about. In the long run, it will help them gain significantly,” explains Gopinath.

His advice to hoteliers is clear — the future of hospitality is closely linked with sustainable operations and efficient technology adoption.

FROM PILGRIMAGE TO PAMPERING

The Residency Group, with its deep roots in South India, has been closely observing shifts in traveller behaviour. Gopinath identifies a clear trend — “There are two things happening — the government is pushing ‘Make in India’ but I would say ‘Make for India’. Today the biggest customers are Indians.”

He highlights how pilgrimages and tier II and III cities are emerging as hotbeds of growth. “Guests would like to go to the pilgrimage, finish the darshan but in the evening, they want to dip into the pool, have a spa and a drink. That is the next generation of Indian travellers.” This dual desire for tradition and modern comfort marks a new phase of demand, claims Gopinath, saying, “The growth will be in tier II and III cities and pilgrimage centres. New hotels there will be occupied by customers who come for cultural interests but also want their own comfort and a bit of pampering in the years to come.”

This underlines the importance of aligning offerings with a new generation of domestic travellers who seek spiritual fulfilment along with world-class amenities.

CALL FOR FAIRER GST THRESHOLDS

Taxation continues to be a critical policy discussion within the hospitality sector. While the government has announced tentative changes in the GST regime, Gopinath voiced a pragmatic demand. “At the moment, there is a threshold at ₹7,500. We would like that to move to ₹15,000. Thus, up to ₹15,000 should be one slab and above

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₹15,000 another slab, instead of the current structure. As a SIHRA member, we have already submitted this request to the government. Let us see what comes out when the reforms are announced."

If this change comes into action, it could bring relief to mid-scale and upscale hotels catering to domestic travellers, particularly in growing secondary markets.

EXPANSION IN MADURAI

From its inception in 1991 with its first hotel in Coimbatore, The Residency Group has grown into a prominent hospitality chain with a stronghold in South India. Today, it operates hotels across Coimbatore, Chennai, Puducherry, Karur and other key locations. Looking ahead, the group is set to make a bold mark with its eighth property. "The eighth hotel will open in the first quarter of 2026. It will be the largest hotel in South India with 188 rooms, four F&B outlets and the largest convention centre of about 20,000 sq ft," Gopinath stated.

The new property, strategically located in Madurai, is designed to meet the rising demand for leisure, business and MICE. "The convention centre can comfortably seat 2,000 people, with integrated wellness facilities and modern amenities," he explained.

Madurai's growing connectivity, infrastructure upgrades and reputation as a cultural hub made it the natural choice. "After Chennai, it will be the largest hall in Tamil Nadu. The place is ready to attract tourists as well as big MICE events. With good governance and infrastructure, Madurai is poised to become a major hospitality destination," he adds.

MIX OF TRADITION & MODERNITY

Over the last three decades, The Residency has carved a niche by blending South Indian warmth with contemporary hospitality. Its properties, including The Residency Towers in Coimbatore and Chennai, are known for modern design, expansive banqueting facilities and award-winning dining experiences. The group prides itself on service excellence, culinary innovation and a strong local connect. With its upcoming projects, particularly the Madurai convention hotel, The Residency is not only expanding its footprint but also signalling a new phase of hospitality for South India — where business, leisure and culture converge.

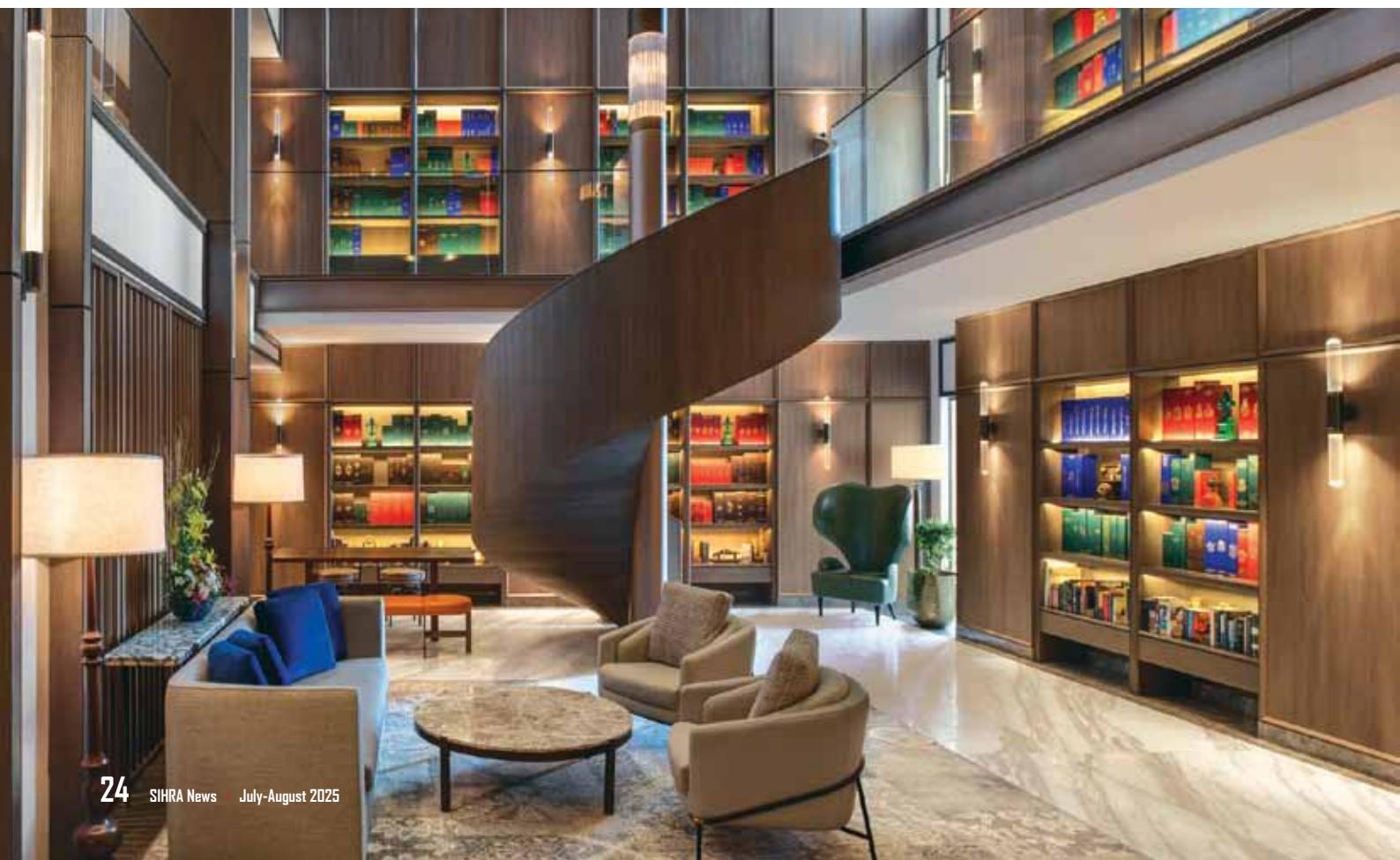
RESPONSIBILITY

Gopinath's reflections serve as a blueprint for the future of Indian hospitality — rapid growth, sustainable operations, fairer taxation policies and bold expansion into new

FACT CHECK

- India's hotel inventory will double from 200,000 to 400,000 in the next five years.
- HVAC consumes 40% of hotel electricity; new technology can cut energy costs by 10–15%.
- SIHRA and industry leaders seek to raise GST threshold from ₹7,500 to ₹15,000 to support mid- and upscale hotels.
- The Residency Group's next milestone: a 188-room hotel in Madurai opening in 2026.
- Property to feature South India's largest 20,000 sq ft convention centre, seating 2,000 guests.

markets. "The growth is phenomenal, but it must go hand in hand with responsibility. Sustainability, energy conservation and adapting to technology will ensure that this golden period is beneficial for the industry and the community alike," he underlines. He believes that the next five years could indeed be a golden era, provided the industry grows responsibly and inclusively. ♦



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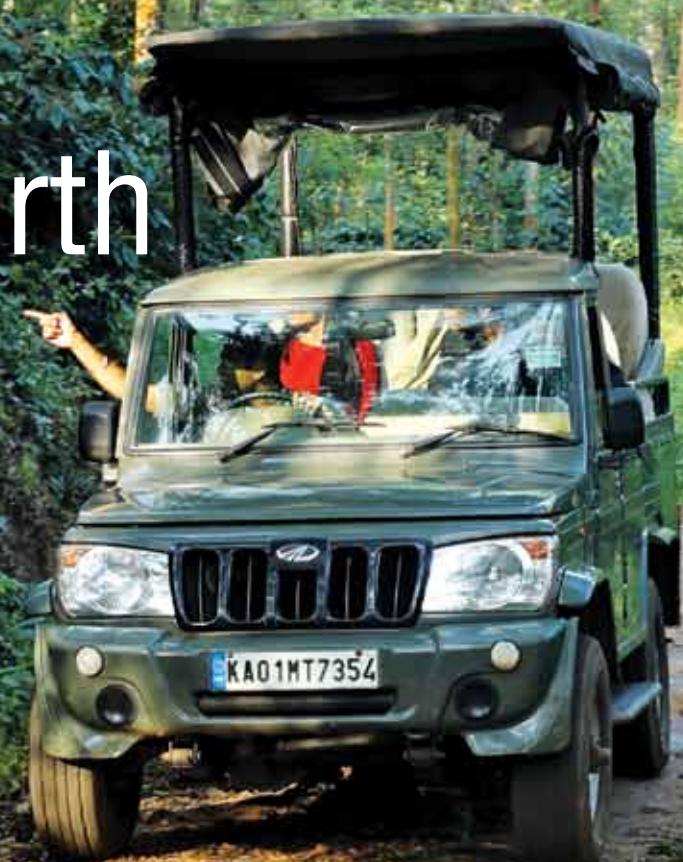
INDIA's #1 Food Service Equipment



Green acts healing the Earth

The sustainability-first approach of South Indian hospitality brands like Evolve Back Resorts is blending comfort with luxury, making travellers' stay a valuable investment.

By DDP Bureau





Jose Ramapuram
Executive Director
Evolve Back Resorts

Gone are the days when travellers judged a hotel solely by its amenities. Today, hospitality extends beyond opulence, shifting steadily towards sustainability. This transformation is driven by the growing awareness of climate change and the consequences of irresponsible living on people, the economy and the planet alike.

"Guests today are increasingly conscious of the footprint their travel leaves behind," said **Jose Ramapuram**, Executive Director, Evolve Back Resorts. "Now sustainability must go hand in hand with luxury and comfort while planning the operational style in the hospitality industry."

Sustainability is not an add-on — it is a core operating principle.

It means fostering harmony between people, planet and profit."

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

Sustainability is no longer limited to growing trees or repurposing waste. According to Ramapuram, "Sustainability is not an add-on — it is a core operating principle. It means fostering harmony between people, planet and profit." It is about going beyond giving hotels a 'green' appearance. It is about creating meaningful experiences where guests can engage with the local community, while still enjoying the comfort and luxury that make their stay a valuable investment.



PROFIT-FRIENDLY SUSTAINABILITY?

Global travellers are leaning towards sustainability and authentic experiences, and the hospitality industry is evolving in the same direction. Beyond domestic and inbound tourists, corporate buyers, MICE planners and travel trade professionals now actively seek properties that align with Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles. Recognising this shift, Evolve Back is capitalising on it by embedding a sustainability-first approach across its operations; from thoughtfully designed travel packages to the very architecture of its properties.

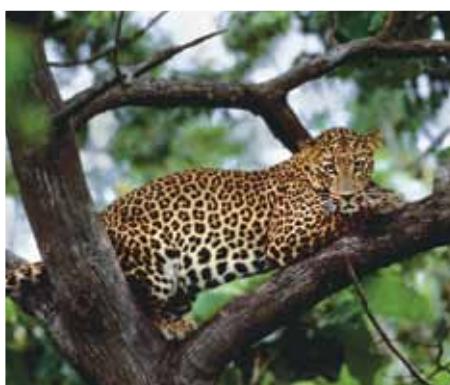
Ramapuram talked about how their sustainability approach has impacted their prop-

The sense of purpose, combined with uncompromising luxury, justifies a premium pricing model

erty occupancy. Travellers are choosing their property because of the conscious activities they have put into practice to protect local ecosystems and to uplift host communities. "The sense of purpose, combined with uncompromising luxury, justifies a premium pricing model. Our eco-conscious practices

resonate strongly with international markets, environmentally aware domestic travellers and corporates, contributing to consistent year-round performance."

Evolve Back actively showcases and sustains local traditions by hosting performances of regional dancers, featuring handcrafted products in their boutiques and sourcing organic produce from local farms. These efforts not only conserve heritage but also integrate guests into the living culture of the destination. "We design these interactions with deep sensitivity and authenticity, ensuring they are mutually respectful and economically beneficial to the communities of the region," said Ramapuram.





Additionally, Evolve Back has added activities such as guided village walks, culinary sessions with local families and storytelling sessions with tribal elders in their packages, which provide a uniquely enriching stay. "These experiences are woven into our packages in a way that complements luxury travel, offering enriching and immer-

sive journeys into the soul of the region," mentioned Ramapuram.

HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

Reflecting their commitment to preserve the 'Spirit of the Land', Evolve Back has promoted initiatives that balance ecological responsibility, cultural preservation and com-

munity upliftment, while ensuring a refined and luxurious experience for guests.

On the environmental front, they are strengthening resource management systems through innovative interventions. Speaking about statistics, Evolve Back Resorts recover over 60 per cent of dry waste and recycle 100 per cent of wastewater for public spaces. Close to 50 per cent of their energy needs are met with wind and solar installations, significantly reducing their CO₂ footprint. To contribute to community development, they have adopted local government schools and are improving the curriculum and infrastructure of these schools. Projects such as the Morning Glory preschool in Coorg are preparing children from underprivileged backgrounds for better education.

ECO-FRIENDLY LENS

Evolve Back Resorts is now exploring new outlets in the region that align with their ethos of sustainability and spreading its roots in the global market with the recently opened Evolve Back Gham Dhaolodge in Central Kalahari in Botswana, Africa. The aim is to enhance loyalty programmes with more sustainability-aligned benefits for long-term patrons. ♦



The sweet taste of health and wellness

SoSweet is a natural, zero-calorie sweetener, which is now a fixture in hotels aiming to offer both health and great taste to customers, says **Leena Mittal**, General Manager, Herboveda India.

By DDP Bureau



What strategies are you employing to maintain SoSweet's market position?

SoSweet is a new, zero-calorie sweetener made from Stevia Rebaudiana herb. As a 100 per cent natural product, it has no side effects and is safe for everyone. Our goal is to be in the coffee shops and kitchens of all 5-star hotels, so they can offer their guests a combination of health and great taste.



Leena Mittal
General Manager
Herboveda India

SoSweet is a new, zero-calorie sweetener made from Stevia Rebaudiana herb. As a 100 per cent natural product, it has no side effects

What response have you received from hoteliers and chefs?

We have received an excellent response on our products.

Chefs are using our stevia sweetener for all their mocktails, shakes, lassi and desserts, recognising its health benefits for guests.

Any recent updates regarding your brand's product launches, customer service initiatives, expansion plans or upcoming events?

We have launched a lemon and orange drink, perfect as a welcome beverage for guests. It is a low-calorie drink with health benefits, which is being well-received by many hotels. ♦



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Movements



Bharathi Perumal
GM, Hilton Garden Inn
Trivandrum

Muthoot Pappachan Group (MPG), the ownership group of Hilton Garden Inn Trivandrum, has appointed Bharathi Perumal as General Manager of the hotel. In his new role, Perumal will be responsible for all aspects of hotel operations, including guest services and hotel administration, in addition to overseeing marketing efforts. With more than 22 years of experience, Perumal is a seasoned leader in global luxury hotel operations. Known for his collaborative leadership and operational focus, his deep understanding of diverse markets has consistently translated into strong results in service delivery, team engagement and business performance.



Parvathi Singh Thakur
Senior Sales Manager,
NHCC and HICC

Parvathi Singh Thakur has been promoted to Senior Sales Manager by Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre (NHCC) and Hyderabad International Convention Centre (HICC). As part of her new role, she will continue to handle the weddings, social and entertainment segment. Her strong understanding of the segment has contributed to multiple successful events at the venues. Under her leadership, the brand is expected to set new standards in delivering exceptional MICE and wedding experiences. She will also focus on curating bespoke experiences and expanding the brand's reach in emerging markets to drive sustained growth.



Shranoth Suresh
Director, Sales,
Renaissance Bengaluru Race
Course Hotel

Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel has appointed Shranoth Suresh as Director of Sales. He brings over a decade of rich and diverse experience in the hospitality industry with a strong focus on sales strategy, business development and client relationship management. Prior to this role, he served as Associate Director of Sales at The Westin Chennai Velachery, where he led the sales functions, playing a pivotal role in revenue growth and market expansion. His professional journey spans leading hospitality brands including Marriott International, Hilton Hotels & Resorts and ITC Hotels, along with an international stint with Renaissance Zurich.



Anuradha Konar
Asst. Manager, Marketing &
Communications, Grand Mercure
Bengaluru at Gopalan Mall

Grand Mercure Bengaluru at Gopalan Mall has appointed Anuradha Konar as Assistant Manager for Marketing & Communications. With a solid academic foundation in strategic communications and a knack for creative storytelling, Konar is set to bring a fresh outlook to brand development, public relations and consumer engagement. Her journey in the industry kicked off with ITC Hotels and, since then, she has made her mark at well-known establishments like One8 Commune, Inja Restaurant and Grand Mercure. Renowned for her ability to merge creativity with insight, she has a track record of building strong brand identities and meaningful business ties.



Anindita Tah
Executive Housekeeper,
The Den Bengaluru

The Den Bengaluru has appointed Anindita Tah as the new Executive Housekeeper. Tah possesses over 15 years of experience in some of the country's top hotel chains as a top-rated employee. Her experience encompasses operational management, human resources, service creativity and innovation. Tah has earned a reputation for being an expert in implementing high housekeeping efficiency, service training and aligning service performance with guest expectations. Some of the brands she has worked with include Sterling Mac Hotel, Suryagarh Jaisalmer, Sheraton Bengaluru, Gokulam Park Kochi and The Lalit Goa.



Udit Joshi
Associate Director, Sales,
NHCC and HICC

Udit Joshi has been appointed as Associate Director of Sales by Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre (NHCC) and Hyderabad International Convention Centre (HICC). With over 12 years of experience in the industry, his expertise will drive new opportunities and strengthen HICC's presence in the global MICE space. Joshi's goal will be to strengthen global outreach and position HICC as a top choice for international associations. His efforts will focus on strategic partnerships, innovative sales initiatives and enhancing client engagement to boost the brand's long-term growth and its visibility in the international market.



Varun Mehrotra
Multi-Property Director, Sales
& Marketing, Bengaluru,
Marriott International

Varun Mehrotra has been elevated to Multi-Property Director of Sales & Marketing for Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Center, The Artiste Kochi – a Tribute Portfolio Hotel and Marriott Executive Apartments UB City. In his new role, Mehrotra will oversee all the strategic sales and marketing efforts across all three prestigious Marriott properties, further driving commercial excellence and brand positioning in key markets. He will be responsible for spearheading business development, optimising revenue performance and enhancing brand visibility across various markets.



Eldho Jacob
Director, Sales,
The Den Bengaluru

The Den Bengaluru has appointed Eldho Jacob as the Director of Sales. With an extensive experience of 13 years in the hospitality industry, Jacob has a proven track record of driving sales strategies and contributing to revenue generation. He has previously worked with leading hospitality brands such as Tamara Leisure Experiences, The Leela Kovalam, Crown Plaza, Kochi and The Trident. In his new role, Eldho will oversee sales strategies to achieve key revenue targets, strengthen The Den's market position and foster long-term relationships while enhancing guest experiences along with maintaining strong brand visibility across diverse markets.



Vinayak Ravichandra
Revenue Manager, Novotel
Visakhapatnam Varun Beach

Vinayak Ravichandra has been appointed as the Revenue Manager by Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach. Bringing over a decade of proven expertise in revenue management across some of the world's most respected hospitality brands, including Hyatt, Accor, Radisson, Hilton, Marriott and IHCL, Ravichandra is poised to play a pivotal role in driving the hotel's strategic growth in one of India's most dynamic coastal markets. Prior to this appointment, he served as Revenue Manager at Hyatt Place Jaipur, where he successfully implemented pricing strategies and forecast models that led to improved ROI and revenue performance.



Suresh Reddy
Revenue Manager, Grand
Mercure Bengaluru at
Gopalan Mall

Suresh Reddy has joined Grand Mercure Bengaluru at Gopalan Mall as Revenue Manager. With more than 14 years of experience in top domestic and international hospitality brands, Reddy brings a data-driven mindset to revenue strategy, pricing intelligence and optimising business performance. He has held significant revenue management positions at properties, such as Radisson Blu Resort Maldives and Radisson Blu Atria in Bengaluru. In his new role, he will manage revenue strategy, pricing, forecasting and distribution, collaborating closely with the sales and marketing teams to unlock the hotel's full business potential. ♦

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