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# Hospitality Frontiers GM Insights





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# Hospitality Frontiers— GM Insights

This issue of **BOTT Magazine** is dedicated to profiling those who anchor the ship in the turbulent seas of the hospitality industry - the General Managers (GMs) of India's leading hotels. This special issue will serve as a stage for the GMs to share their in-depth insights, personal experiences, and visionary leadership that drive their respective establishments' success. Read on to know what all they have to say –

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WORLD CONNECT



From the

## *Editor's Desk*

Dear Readers,

**W**elcome to the August 2023 edition of BOTT - Business of Travel Trade Magazine. This month, we're thrilled to present a special issue that offers a unique perspective into the world of hospitality through the eyes of its stalwarts - the General Managers. Dive deep into the insights, experiences, and visions of 27 esteemed General Managers from leading hotels across the globe. Their stories, challenges, and leadership philosophies promise to be an enlightening read for all.

Our travelogue section takes you on a mesmerising journey to the pristine beaches and vibrant culture of Mauritius. We then transport you to the serene corridors of Naad Wellness, where holistic well-being meets luxury, offering a rejuvenating escape from the mundane.

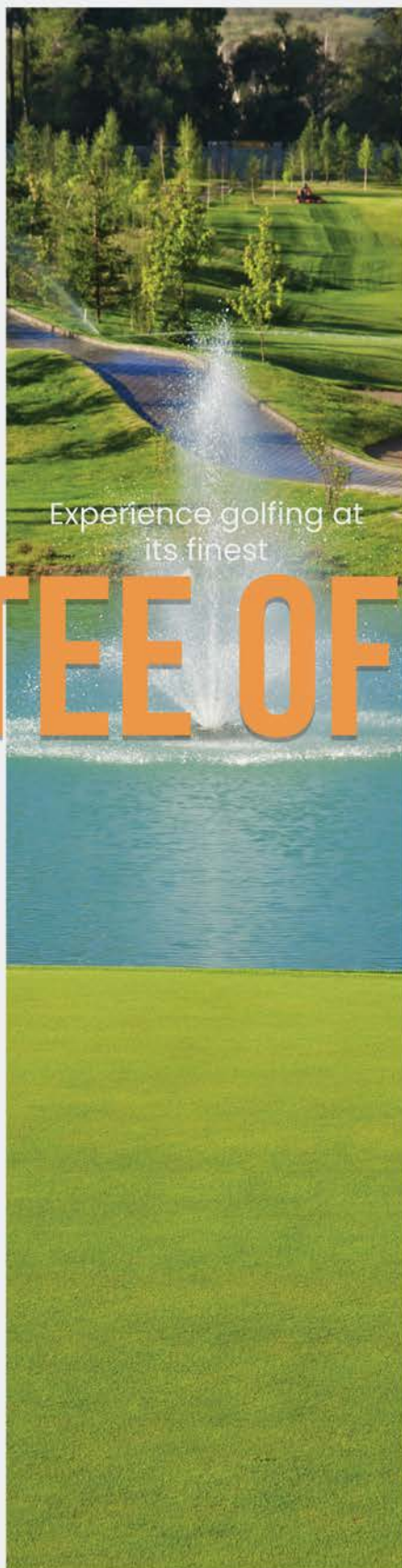
The travel industry is an ever-evolving landscape, and this month, we bring you comprehensive post-event reports from two significant conventions. Delve into the highlights and takeaways from the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) Convention, a pivotal event that shapes the trajectory of India's travel sector. Additionally, our coverage of the Outbound Tourism Meet by FICCI provides a detailed analysis of the discussions, innovations, and future prospects discussed during the conclave.

As always, our commitment to keeping you updated with the latest in travel and tourism remains unwavering. Flip through our news section for a roundup of the most recent developments, trends, and updates from the industry.

In these dynamic times, as the world of travel and tourism undergoes rapid transformations, we at BOTT strive to be your trusted companion, bringing you stories, insights, and updates that matter. Here's to many more journeys together.

Happy Reading!

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**  
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## PM lays foundation for redevelopment of 500+ railway stations

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday laid the foundation stone for the ambitious redevelopment of 508 railway stations across the country. The PM took part in the ceremony virtually via video conferencing. The PM, after laying the foundation for the redevelopment project, stated that at present, India holds the attention of the entire world. He emphasized that India's prestige on the global stage has witnessed a notable rise. The PM also informed that these stations were part of the plan - Amrit Bharat Stations scheme in which almost 1300 prime railway stations will be redeveloped.



## ADTOI launches Mobile App on 'Founders Day'

The Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI) celebrated its Founders Day at The Metropolitan Hotel New Delhi on August 7, 2023. On the occasion, the Managing Committee of the Association launched the ADTOI Mobile App, which will be a game-changer for the association, ensuring that no important information is being missed by the members. Alongside this, ADTOI also provided AKR Award Nomination process update and addition of a 'Youth Award', both of which will be granted next year, based on the calendar year assessment. It also hosted its General House Meeting based on the theme 'Freedom'.

## Sarovar Hotels & Resorts unveils Presidium Sarovar Portico, Dalhousie

Sarovar Hotels & Resorts have announced their newest luxury boutique hotel in Mouza Moti Tibba, in Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh. The hotel is Sarovar's 4<sup>th</sup> hotel in Himachal and 9<sup>th</sup> hotel in the Himalayan range. The hotel boasts 50 rooms and suites with panoramic Views. Thyme, the all-day dining restaurant offers an exhaustive range of Indian and international cuisines.



## The Fern Hotels launches Mysa Zinc Journey by The Fern in Gujarat

The Fern Hotels & Resorts have launched Mysa Zinc Journey by The Fern, Nani Devati, Gujarat. This is the company's 25th operational hotel in Gujarat. The property offers 24 luxurious rooms and suites with a refreshing view of the golf course. The hotel is spread over 9 acres inside the exquisite Glade One Golf Club, allowing guests to indulge in the 9-hole Gary Player-designed golf course. The resort also offers multipurpose courts, spa treatments and a refreshing pool for its guests.

## Kairali Ayurvedic Group opens new Centre at Pune

Kairali Ayurvedic Group has announced the opening of its new Centre at Pune, Maharashtra. The new Centre is the latest addition to Kairali Ayurvedic Group's network of Centres across India, marking their 8th centre in India and 14th worldwide, and it further reinforces the Group's commitment to bringing the benefits of Ayurveda to more people across the country. The Centre is staffed by a team of highly qualified and experienced Ayurvedic doctors and therapists.



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## IndiGo starts direct daily between Mumbai – Nairobi

IndiGo has commenced new daily direct flights between Mumbai and Nairobi, starting August 5, 2023. Nairobi, Kenya's capital is the 27th international and 105th overall destination in the 6E network. This new route marks IndiGo's maiden foray into the African subcontinent, representing a significant step in the airline's international expansion strategy.



## Jazeera Airways reports KD6.27 million net profit for first half 2023

Jazeera Airways announced financial results for the first half (1H) of 2023 with total revenues up 26.1% to KD97.85 million and operating profits of KD9.35million. Net profit for the period was KD6.27 million compared to KD 7.38 million for the same period last year. Jazeera's passenger traffic showed a 40.9% increase to 2.1 million for the first half of the year. Load factors also increased by 4.1% to reach 78.1% in H1.

## Night flights suspended at Vizag Airport

Night flights from Andhra Pradesh's Visakhapatnam International Airport will be suspended for more than four months to facilitate resurfacing of the runway. Night flights will be stopped from November 15 till the end of March 2024. No flights will be operated from 9 pm to 8 am. The closure of the airport for 11 hours every day will affect 12 domestic flights and one international flight. The Airport director has sought a reduction of the closing time from 10.30 p.m. to 7 a.m. to minimise the inconvenience to passengers. The AAI will take up the issue with the Navy headquarters.



## Resorts World Cruises announces Japan itineraries from Hong Kong

Resorts World Cruises announced a new Japan itinerary with a five-night Naha-Miyakojima cruise aboard the Resorts World One, departing from Hong Kong, starting October 1, 2023. Known for their beaches and rich cultural heritage, guests can now visit both islands, Naha and Miyakojima, on a single cruise aboard the Resorts World One. The Resorts World One will be departing from Hong Kong to Okinawa every alternate Sunday.

## Norwegian Cruise Line takes delivery of Norwegian Viva

Norwegian Cruise Line took delivery of Norwegian Viva, the newest vessel in the now 19-ship fleet and the second ship in the revolutionary Prima Class, at the renowned Fincantieri shipyard in Marghera, Italy. The milestone event marks the arrival of the second of six ships in the Prima Class set to debut through 2028. Norwegian Viva is 965 feet long, weighs 143,535 gross tons and comes with the capacity for 3,100 guests.



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# FICCI hosts a successful 2<sup>nd</sup> Outbound Tourism Summit

*FICCI recently held its 2nd Outbound Tourism Summit under the guidance of the dynamic Chairman of the Outbound Tourism Committee Ankush Nijhawan. A day-long event, the Summit witnessed stalwarts from the outbound tourism industry come together to discuss and divulge on the topic and also chalk out a way-ahead to keep the growth momentum of outbound traffic from India going strong.*

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

Setting up the Context for the day ahead, the Summit started with the address by Ankush Nijhawan, Chairman, FICCI Outbound Tourism Committee & Co-Founder, TBO.com & MD, Nijhawan Group. Not only did he share some amazing figures and numbers indicating the upward growth in outbound tourism from India but he also seemed extremely positive of the trend maintaining its escalating graph.

“In 2022 almost 20 million Indians have travelled overseas. We are expected to reach the pre pandemic levels this year and full recovery is expected by 2024. India outbound is growing much faster than any other country. However, to achieve anything, it is important for stakeholders to work together to nurture and maximise the benefits of outbound tourism,” he said.

The Keynote Address was given by Dipak Deva, Chairman, FICCI Tourism

& Culture Committee & Managing Director, SITA, TCI & Distant Frontier, which was followed by the release of FICCI-Nangia Andersen Knowledge Paper and presentation by Poonam Kaura, Partner – Government & Public Sector Advisory, Nangia Andersen. The Hon’ble Ambassador of Indonesia to New Delhi, India H.E. Ms. Ina Hagniningtyas Krishnamurthi addressed the gathering through a video message and stressed upon the importance of India market





for their country in tourism. Manab Majumdar, Deputy Secretary General, FICCI presented the Note of Thanks.

The first session of the day saw an eclectic mix of professionals from the outbound sector who had gathered to discuss the Opportunities and Challenges in India becoming one of the largest Outbound sources markets. The Session was Moderated by Guldeep Sahni, Managing Director -Weldon Tours and Travels & Co Chairman FICCI Outbound Tourism Committee. The Panellists included Luis Cabello, Trade and Tourism - Counsellor of Peru in India; Himanshu Patil, Director – Kesari Tours; Romil Pant, Executive Vice President & Head of

Holidays – Thomas Cook India; Radhika Khanijo, Founder & Managing Director – Welgrow Travels; Sanjay Datta, Past President, Skal International Asia & Delhi, CMD- Airborne Travels & Holidays and Akash Dahiya, Co-Founder & CEO, Sankash.

The second session of the Summit focussed on 'The Big Opportunity: Tapping the Indian Niche Tourism Market Globally'. A panel of experts were invited to discuss the various International Niche Tourism opportunities and growing Travel Trend Internationally catering to Indian Tourists be it Wedding Tourism, Sports Tourism, Cruise Tourism, Events etc. This session was Moderated

by Priyanka Saxena Ray, Founder Editor, Business of Travel Trade (BOTT) and the panellists included Chetan Vohra, Managing Director – Weddingline Events and Hospitality; Ratna Chadha, Co-Founder & Chairperson, TIRUN Travel Marketing; Neha Mehrotra, Founder & Director – Foreign Wedding Planners and Gaurav Chauhan, Managing Director – GC Events.

The tone and discussions during the Summit clearly defined that the Indian travellers today are not just crossing borders; they are blurring them, turning the globe into their playground, and in the process, redefining the contours of the tourism industry. ■

# Mauritius

## A Mosaic of Wonders

*Mauritius, an island nation nestled in the azure waters of the Indian Ocean, is a tapestry of colours, cultures, and experiences. From its pristine beaches to its lush interiors, every corner of this paradise tells a story. Let's embark on a journey through some of its most captivating attractions.*

Rai Umraopati Ray

### Casela Adventure Park

The thrill of feeding a towering giraffe, the excitement of a safari ride amidst zebras and ostriches — Casela Adventure Park is not just a park; it's an experience. The vast expanse of this park offers a unique blend of nature, adventure, and wildlife. The sight of the majestic lions and the playful lemurs is a treat to the eyes and the soul.

### Rhumerie De Chamarel

Nestled amidst the verdant hills is the Rhumerie De Chamarel, a distillery that tells the tale of Mauritius's rich rum heritage. The guided tour takes you through the process of rum-making, from sugarcane crushing to ageing. And of course, a tasting session awaits, where the flavours of the island come

alive in every sip.

### Curious Corner of Chamarel

A stone's throw away from the Rhumerie is the Curious Corner, a house of illusions and mysteries. From mirror mazes to upside-down rooms, it's a place where reality and fantasy blur, leaving visitors both baffled and amused.

### Blue Safari Submarine

Dive deep into the ocean without getting wet! The Blue Safari Submarine offers a unique underwater experience, showcasing the vibrant marine life and the mysterious shipwrecks that lie beneath Mauritius's waters.

### L' Aventure du Sucre

Discover the sweet history of Mauritius at L' Aventure du Sucre.

This museum, housed in an old sugar factory, traces the journey of sugarcane cultivation and its significance in shaping the island's history. The interactive exhibits and the delicious sugar tastings make it a treat for all ages.

### Pamplemousses Garden

Stroll through the oldest botanical garden in the Southern Hemisphere, the Pamplemousses Garden. Home to giant water lilies, spice trees, and over 85 varieties of palms, it's a haven for nature lovers.

### Cap Malheureux

The red-roofed church against the backdrop of the cerulean sea makes Cap Malheureux a photographer's dream. This quaint fishing village, with its serene ambiance, is a perfect spot to





soak in the island's beauty.

### Chateau de Labourdonnais

Step back in time at the Chateau de Labourdonnais, a 19th-century mansion that exudes colonial charm. The orchards, distillery, and the museum offer a glimpse into the opulent lifestyle of the bygone era.

### Caudan Waterfront

From shopping to dining, the Caudan Waterfront is a hub of activity. The vibrant promenade, dotted with boutiques, art galleries, and eateries, is the perfect place to unwind after a day of exploration.

### Sunset Catamaran Cruise

As the sun dips below the horizon, set sail on a catamaran cruise. The golden hues of the sunset, the gentle

lapping of the waves, and the cool ocean breeze make it a magical experience.

### Fort Adelaide

Perched atop a hill, Fort Adelaide offers panoramic views of Port Louis and its harbor. This historic fortress, built in the 19th century, stands as a testament to the island's colonial past.

### Odysseo Aquarium

Dive into the marine wonders of Mauritius at the Odysseo Aquarium. With over 200 species of fish, corals, and invertebrates, it's a vibrant underwater world waiting to be explored.

### Trou aux Cerfs

This dormant volcanic crater, surrounded by lush greenery, offers breathtaking views of the island. A walk

around the rim is both invigorating and scenic.

### Curepipe

Known for its colonial houses and bustling markets, Curepipe is a blend of history and modernity. Don't forget to shop for souvenirs, especially the intricate ship models.

### Takamaka Winery

Who knew tropical fruits could produce such delightful wines? At Takamaka Winery, indulge in lychee, passion fruit, and pineapple wines, a true taste of Mauritius.

### Splash & Fun Waterpark

For those seeking some adrenaline rush, the Splash & Fun Waterpark, with its thrilling slides and pools, is a must-visit.



**Discover the enchanting allure of Mauritius through its premier resorts, each offering a unique blend of luxury, adventure, and cultural immersion.**

### **1. Ocean's Creek Hotel, Mauritius**

Nestled on the pristine shores of Mauritius, Ocean's Creek Hotel is a haven for travellers seeking tranquility and luxury. Its strategic location offers easy access to the vibrant Grand Bay, renowned for its nightlife and shopping. The hotel boasts a private beach, ensuring guests can indulge in water sports or simply relax by the turquoise waters. With its blend of modern amenities and Mauritian charm, the hotel promises a unique experience. The on-site spa, gourmet dining options, and panoramic ocean views are just a few of its USPs. Whether you're on a romantic getaway or a family vacation, Ocean's Creek ensures a memorable stay.

### **2. Intercontinental Resort, Mauritius**

Intercontinental Resort Mauritius, perched on the edge of the pristine Bay of BalACLava, offers a blend of luxury and natural beauty. Its strategic location provides easy access to the capital city, Port Louis, and the bustling Grand Baie. The resort stands out with its private beach, infinity pool, and a world-class spa. Guests can indulge in water sports, explore the historical ruins within the resort, or savour international cuisines at its restaurants. The sunset views from the ocean-facing rooms are unparalleled. With its impeccable service and serene ambiance, the Intercontinental Resort is a slice of paradise.

### **3. Preskil Island Resort Mauritius**

Preskil Island Resort is a tropical gem located near the historic village of Mahébourg. Overlooking the crystal-clear lagoon of Blue Bay Marine Park, it offers breathtaking views and direct access to one of the world's best snorkelling spots. The resort is a stone's throw away from attractions like Île des Deux

Cocos and Pointe d'Esny. Guests can indulge in a plethora of amenities, from the luxurious spa to the on-site restaurants serving delectable cuisines. The resort's architecture, inspired by Mauritian heritage, coupled with modern comforts, ensures a unique stay. Whether you're lounging by the pool or exploring nearby historical sites, Preskil Island Resort promises an unforgettable experience.

### **4. Tamassa Resort Mauritius**

Tamassa Resort, located in the picturesque Bel Ombre, is an all-inclusive haven for those seeking a blend of relaxation and adventure. The resort boasts four pools, a white sandy beach, and a plethora of water and land activities. From kayaking to yoga sessions, there's something for everyone. The Tam Tam kids' club ensures the little ones are entertained, while adults can unwind at the spa or enjoy live entertainment. Dining is a treat with diverse cuisines and a show kitchen. The rooms, offering ocean views, are designed for comfort and luxury. With its vibrant atmosphere and top-notch amenities, Tamassa Resort is the epitome of Mauritian hospitality.



### **Ile Aux Cerfs**

White sandy beaches, turquoise waters, and water sports galore — Ile Aux Cerfs is the epitome of island paradise.

### **Grand Bassin**

A sacred lake for the Hindu community, Grand Bassin, surrounded by temples and statues, is a place of serenity and spirituality.

### **La Vallee Des Couleurs & Quad Biking**

End your journey with an adventure through La Vallee Des Couleurs. The park, known for its 23-colored earth, is a spectacle of nature. And what better way to explore it than on a quad bike, zipping through the trails?

Mauritius is not just a destination; it's a symphony of experiences, waiting to be lived. So, pack your bags and let the island's magic envelop you. ■

# TRAVEL SEAMLESSLY FROM **10 INDIAN CITIES**



Oman Air has announced convenient departure times and seamless connectivity via Muscat from 10 cities in India to a range of exciting international destinations, with flights from Thiruvananthapuram and Lucknow starting 1 October 2023.

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# Meena Bhatia

## 'Business will continue to grow beyond the G-20 meetings'

*Le Meridien New Delhi is one of the most iconic hotels in Delhi that is best known for its outstanding service and location. While the trends and outlook for the year after G-20 are certainly positive, the GM feels that there could be a supply-demand imbalance again and also a further disruption by multi-level addition of accommodation.*

**Meena Bhatia, Vice President & General Manager, Le Meridien New Delhi shares more...**

### Year 2023 so far

The Year 2023 started on a rather cheerful note for hotels across the country. Although much of the growth was attributed to the return of normalcy, pent up demand and a strong rebuild up of MICE and wedding business, it gave the hospitality industry the confidence to believe that the business was here to stay. We are truly encouraged by the positive growth in both occupancy and Average rates over the Pre Covid years.

### New additions / Renovation

With the revival of business and the currently strong positioning of India globally, we anticipate that business will grow, not just for the G-20 meetings but beyond and longer. With this in mind our hotel has undergone refurbishing, primarily in Premium accommodation segment. This was also necessitated by two long years of closure.

### Sustainability Initiatives

We have made a conscious effort to adopt and leverage sustainability-driven initiatives, to serve our guests with environment-friendly provisions. The Hotel has recently installed Yulu bike zone for its guests so that they can explore the beautiful Lutyens Delhi without any toxic emissions and also our associates and guests use it for short commutes.

We have also commissioned an EV charging station in collaboration with Charge Zone. This is a partnership between Marriott Hotels across the

country and Charge Zone.

Our association with these both Yulu and Charge Zone is an endorsement of our commitment towards environment protection. As an organization that firmly believes in preserving the ecology and providing an enabling ecosystem, these two sustainable initiatives are foundations for our future initiatives for a greener tomorrow.

### Domestic or Inbound?

As a hotel, we have always catered to a diverse segment of travellers. We have particularly, always been very strong with Domestic corporate and it has truly been rewarding for us, even in most adverse times.

### Trends

We have had a stronghold in both national and international travellers. At the moment, however, looking at the global economy and the geo political disturbances, the demand for leisure has a slower pace of recovery as compared to MICE and business travellers. However, 2024 looks balanced, we expect all, leisure and corporate and MICE to have an uptick.

The trends and outlook for the year after G-20 are certainly positive for the tourism sector in India as well as the hospitality industry. However, going forward, there could be a supply-demand imbalance again and also a further disruption by multi level addition of accommodation not just in the capital but across India. ■

Meena Bhatia,  
Vice President & General Manager,  
Le Meridien New Delhi

**"The reopening of Pragati Maidan will give a new life to the MICE segment. Our location advantage will give us an edge over some of our competitors. The coming year will witness the opening of ICC in Dwarka. This will dramatically reposition Delhi as venue of choice for large conventions and exhibitions."**

# Rajiv Kapoor

## 'Fairmont Jaipur is a place of grandeur and splendour'

*Fairmont Jaipur has been one of the leading wedding destinations in the country. The fact that the hotel, last year in 2022, hosted 106 weddings reconfirms the fact. About 80% of its revenue comes from weddings, which shows the significant role that this segment plays in our business.*

**Rajiv Kapoor, General Manager, Fairmont Jaipur shares more...**

### Year 2023 so far

Till H1 June 2023, we did 70% occupancy which is 5% more over last year with ADR of INR 17148 which is again 15.6% more as compared to same period last year.

### New additions / Renovations

We plan to renovate existing spaces with updated features and amenities. We are adding additional suites and rooms with a private terrace to our selection and are renovating one of our restaurants and relaunching it as a Pan-Asian specialty restaurant. The hotel has recently added a new party room called "Zui" which is a beautiful tent style room perfect for weddings and corporate events.

### Sustainability Initiatives

We are proud to announce that Fairmont Jaipur is now entirely free of single-use plastic amenities. From guest rooms to back-of-house areas, we have replaced plastic products with eco-friendly alternatives. Additionally, we contribute to various causes like the "Soap for Hope" initiative that aims to provide easy access to hygiene products for the underprivileged. We follow strict procurement ethics while purchasing our products. In line with our sustainability goals, we have made a conscious effort to use only eco-friendly and biodegradable products. We offer cruelty-free poultry and meat at our F&B outlets and have installed an OWC machine from Orbisk which helps us track and minimize all our food waste and compost it. We use only organic/

natural fertilizers for our horticultural needs and strive to procure maximum of our products locally. We have taken steps to empower local artists and craftsmen by actively seeking out their creations for our hotel. This has not only preserved traditional art forms but has also enabled artists to earn a fair income from their craft.

Our commitment to gender equality and community empowerment is reflected in our initiative to hire women from local communities, especially those with limited educational qualifications. One of our most significant initiatives has been the installation of a state-of-the-art drinking water bottling plant. This initiative has completely eliminated the use of single-use plastic water bottles throughout the hotel. Lastly, we believe in investing in our employees and their professional growth, which is reflected in our training.

### Domestic or Inbound?

Currently the demand is driven by Domestic, however we are seeing some traction from inbound from Q1'2024 onwards.

As the market continues to grow, we anticipate that our business numbers will surpass the 2022 figure. With international borders now open, we are expecting an increase in foreign tourists and business travellers. Additionally, the country is hosting more global events in the coming year, which is expected to further boost the hospitality industry in India. ■

Rajiv Kapoor,  
General Manager,  
Fairmont Jaipur

**"In terms of trends ruling the hospitality sector at the moment, Fairmont Jaipur continues to tap into the grand luxury destination weddings segment followed by leisure FIT & corporate MICE. Our top three segments include Social Weddings, Corporate MICE and Leisure FIT's."**



Manish Garg,  
General Manager,  
Hilton and Hilton Garden Inn Bengaluru

## Manish Garg

### 'We maintain a balanced focus on both the domestic and inbound markets'

*As a convention hotel complex, the Hilton and Hilton Garden Inn Bengaluru Embassy Manyata Business Park primarily caters to corporate event delegates, individual business travellers, and social and wedding groups. Their commitment to delivering exceptional services and facilities is aimed at meeting the diverse needs of the guests in these segments.*

**Manish Garg, General Manager, Hilton and Hilton Garden Inn Bengaluru Embassy Manyata Business Park shares more...**

#### 2023 so far

Opening this complex in the midst of COVID in 2022 was a challenging and enthralling experience. Hilton Garden Inn did over 50% of occupancy with full year ADR crossing INR 6000/-. Hilton and the Convention Centre, which opened in May 2022, was received very well. The first half of 2023 brought with it new opportunities with city wide events in North Bangalore i.e., Aero Show and G20 summit and both the hotels were received very well.

#### New Feature / Renovation

The Hilton and Hilton Garden Inn Bengaluru Embassy Manyata Business Park, which were opened in 2022, are newly built properties offering a range of impressive features and facilities. With a total of 619 rooms, 5 diverse food and beverage outlets, and 22 well-equipped event venues, the hotels offer a comprehensive premium experience for guests. A notable highlight is the convention space, covering close to 60,000 square feet, making it ideal for hosting large-scale events and conferences.

The hotel complex is set to witness exciting developments within the calm expanse of Embassy Manyata Business Park. The vibrant NXT plaza is expected to introduce a wide array of vibrant food and beverage options, further elevating the hotel's appeal.

#### Sustainability Initiatives

Guided by Hilton's Travel with

Purpose framework, we have integrated measurable and mindful operational practices to ensure a positive impact on the environment and the local community. Our buildings boast LEED Gold certification and over 96% of our current energy requirements are met through clean and renewable sources, significantly lowering our carbon footprint.

To promote local sourcing and reduce transportation emissions, we proudly collaborate with four local organic farms, which supply us with fresh ingredients for our culinary offerings. Within our premises, we have an in-house garbage decomposition plant that processes a substantial amount of wet garbage, converting it into valuable material for manure. Our in-house bottling plant produces an average of 2,500 glass bottles per day.

#### Domestic or Inbound?

We maintain a balanced focus on both the domestic and inbound markets. Undoubtedly, the domestic market has been the primary source of our business, particularly since Q2 of 2022 when the industry began to recover after the pandemic. As the domestic travel rebounded, we witnessed green shoots of growth in this segment.

Simultaneously, with the travel restrictions easing and positive traveller sentiments reaching an all-time high, we are experiencing a rise in inbound bookings. ■

**"At present, our indicative ratio of contribution stands at 70:30, with the domestic market accounting for 70% of our business, while the inbound market constitutes the remaining 30%. However, we are continuously monitoring the market dynamics and adapting our strategies accordingly to ensure a well-rounded approach."**

# Dinesh Rai

## 'We focus on creating a dynamic and culturally enriching environment'

*Crowne Plaza Kochi stands out with its unique features and offerings, in the realm of weddings, exhibitions and conferences. Its allure as a prime destination stems from its exceptional attributes. Its strategic connectivity, enchanting ambience, and picturesque backwater setting make it the preferred choice for couples seeking a remarkable wedding experience.*

**Dinesh Rai, General Manager, Crowne Plaza Kochi shares more...**

### Year 2023 so far

The surge in occupancy rates this year has proven to be nothing short of extraordinary, boasting a remarkable 15% leap when compared to the figures of the previous year and the corresponding period in 2022. The driving forces behind this unprecedented growth can be attributed to the substantial rise in domestic travel, particularly in the segments of MICE as well as FIT movements.

### New addition / Renovations

Amidst the pandemic, the hotel capitalised on the circumstances to embark on an extensive refurbishment endeavour. It has introduced new fine dining restaurant Skygrill - a rooftop lounge that has quickly become a favourite among the city's residents. The hotel has also broadened its horizons to accommodate larger gatherings by seamlessly integrating a sprawling 14,000-square-foot banquet area. The hotel is also introducing the IHG Connect feature.

### Sustainability Initiatives

As an IHG Green Engage Level 4 property we have always tried to inculcate the best practices of sustainability into everything we do.

All our public areas and the heart of the house are fitted with motion/ occupancy sensors and powered with LED lighting system thus helping bring

down light and energy consumption. The glass façade of our hotel is also uniquely sound and thermal proofed which helps reduce the heat load of the building. The gardens are also fitted with sprinkler system for irrigation and flow restrictors have been used across all taps including kitchens to curb the wastage of water. Guestroom's bathrooms also feature dual flush systems.

Solar systems are used to heat the water meant for guest areas and the entire hot water system is managed through a steam condensate return and solar hot water system. In step with global changes, we have shifted from single use amenities to bulk dispensers which promise to bring down the consumption of plastic in a vast manner. We are also committed to reducing food wastage with No-bin days that we have incorporated into staff meal schedules.

### Domestic or Inbound?

With 269 spacious rooms and suites, versatile meeting spaces spanned across 24,000 sq. ft., our hotel ensures a comfortable and connected experience. We take pride in catering to a diverse range of guests, encompassing both the domestic and inbound markets. Our approach revolves around striking a balance between these two segments. By welcoming guests from various corners of the world, as well as those hailing from within our country, we create a dynamic and culturally enriching environment. ■



Dinesh Rai,  
General Manager,  
Crowne Plaza Kochi

**"In essence, Crowne Plaza Kochi's positioning as a globally recognised brand, its commitment to adapting to changing trends, and its ability to provide an unparalleled experience have collectively contributed to its prominence as a top choice for weddings, leisure getaways, and business events."**

## Srinivas Ganduri

## 'The domestic leisure sector will continue to rule'

*The demand for religious and spiritual tourism is growing big time. Pilgrims from all over the world will continue to be driven by a major business demand coupled with growth in EMC and IT Industry expected to develop at Tirupati in the coming 4 to 5 years period. International flight connectivity is also on cards to Middle East and European countries by 2024.*

**Srinivas Ganduri, General Manager, Marasa Sarovar Premiere, Tirupati shares more...**

**Year 2023 so far**

It has been a fantastic year with an occupancy of 81% at an ADR of INR 5,556/-. We have grown in occupancy by 5% and ADR by 10% above last year's same time.

**New additions / Renovations**

We have added a Games Zone for the recreation of our guests as a new feature at our hotel. The safety and Security of our guests have been enhanced by making our guest elevators access controlled. We have also added 30 minutes Express Spa therapies as a new feature at our Spa for guests who would like to have a quick relaxation.

As our hotel enjoys the highest patronage in Tirupati, we have done soft renovation by changing the upholstery of all guest rooms and public areas, in-room mattresses, wooden flooring, new carpet inside our Banquet ball room, Granite tops inside guest rooms Centre table and luggage racks etc.

**Sustainability Initiatives**

The hotel has a 100% eco-friendly design as glass has been extensively used throughout the hotel to ensure that one doesn't miss breathtaking views of the water bodies, and lush green hilly terrains. Water conservation steps were taken through STP, Rainwater harvesting pits, end to end drip irrigation system to maintain the massive horticulture and Aerators in all guest rooms and public areas to save water. We have

an in-house Vermi Composite-making facility to maintain our gardens. A solar system has been installed for running the hot water facility inside guest rooms and public areas. Packaging of all HK amenities is 100% eco-friendly and nonwoven carry bags for guests' usage.

**Domestic or Inbound?**

The domestic leisure sector will continue to rule the Indian hospitality industry in 2023. At Marasa Sarovar Premiere Tirupati, 95% of our business is driven by domestic leisure from the Spiritual tourism sector and 5% from the Corporate and other markets.

**Trends**

Inbound tourism to India is expected to revive and pick up from the coming Winter season. Coming to FITs, the MSME sector and large Indian companies have created a support base for the Corporate FIT market. International business inbound is currently happening mostly from South East Asia and Middle Eastern markets.

At the time, many countries were still facing pandemic-related problems like lockdowns, travel restrictions, lesser air connectivity and visa restrictions. Because of this reason, organisations and individuals started looking inwards. During this period, many corporates, which usually hold conventions, annual summits, and conferences overseas, chose hotels in India to host their events. This turned out to be very advantageous for the domestic MICE segment.. ■

Srinivas Ganduri,  
General Manager,  
Marasa Sarovar Premiere, Tirupati

**"The destination wedding sector in the country is experiencing significant growth and popularity. Destination weddings have become a trend and sought-after option for couples looking to celebrate their special day in unique and picturesque locations. India offers a diverse range of destinations for weddings and we are one of them."**

# Rahul Joshi

## 'We dedicate our efforts to delivering exceptional experiences'

*Situated on 4.5 acres of land less than a kilometre from the Taj Mahal, the Taj Hotel & Convention Centre Agra features 239 plush rooms including 12 lavish suites and one presidential suite to whisk guests away into a world of repose. A refreshing rooftop infinity pool with magical views of the Taj Mahal and an abundance of dining options to delight the epicurean, this is truly a one-point stop in Agra.*

**Rahul Joshi, General Manager, Taj Hotel & Convention Centre, Agra shares more...**

### Year 2023 so far

Throughout the year 2023, Taj Hotel & Convention Centre, Agra, has experienced a robust and steady flow of guests, ensuring our property remains a preferred choice for travellers seeking an exceptional hospitality experience. Despite the challenges posed by the ever-changing landscape of the hospitality industry, our Average Room Rates (ARR) have remained stable, aligning closely with our performance from the previous year. We are consistently striving to enhance our guests' experiences and provide exceptional services.

### Sustainability Initiatives

Embracing our responsibility towards sustainability and giving back to society, we have implemented several eco-friendly measures at Taj Hotel & Convention Centre, Agra. We have a robust waste management plant in place to minimise our ecological footprint. Alongside, we actively participate in cleanliness and plantation drives to contribute to the betterment of the environment.

As part of our commitment to supporting the local community, we collaborate with NGOs in the city and extend our assistance to their noble initiatives. Our hotel also takes pride in preserving local arts and cultural heritage. Through traditional experiences like pottery and puppet shows, we not only showcase indigenous talent but also empower small artisans in their livelihoods.

Incorporating green practices, we have implemented a rainwater harvesting plant, ensuring responsible water usage. Additionally, we have installed Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations at our property to promote eco-friendly transportation options for our employees and esteemed guests.

### Domestic or Inbound?

Taj Hotel & Convention Centre, Agra, caters to a diverse clientele and maintains a balanced approach between the domestic and international markets. Agra's timeless allure as a city of historical and cultural significance attracts both domestic and foreign travellers. As a result, we dedicate our efforts to delivering exceptional experiences tailored to the preferences of both segments.

### Trends

Currently, the hospitality sector experiences a dynamic mix of trends, with each segment contributing significantly to the industry's growth. At Taj Hotel & Convention Centre, Agra, we witness substantial traffic in various segments. Weddings have emerged as a prominent trend, with couples choosing the splendour of our property as the backdrop for their special day. Additionally, the popularity of leisure stays, and staycations has seen a remarkable upsurge, driven by the desire for memorable experiences and relaxation. ■

Rahul Joshi,  
General Manager,  
Taj Hotel & Convention Centre, Agra

**"Agra's timeless allure as a city of historical and cultural significance attracts both domestic and foreign travellers. As a result, we at Taj Hotel & Convention Centre, Agra, dedicate our efforts to delivering exceptional experiences tailored to the preferences of both segments."**



Suresh Kumar,  
General Manager,  
Ramada Resorts Kochi

“One segment that has grown exponentially is the destination wedding. We had close to 60 destination weddings with two of three days of entire resort buy out. This trend is looking like it will continue this year. Since we are a little away from the city, we get a lot of weekend stays from the city itself and from the nearby towns.”

## Suresh Kumar

# 'We have renovated all the lakeside cottages this year'

*Ramada Resorts by Wyndham Kochi is a 5-star Deluxe luxury retreat set within 8 sprawling acres, beside the picturesque lakes of Kumbalam, in the outskirts of Cochin. Nestled in a picture-perfect locale, Ramada Resorts by Wyndham Kochi is a haven of leisure for the city-weary soul.*

**Suresh Kumar, General Manager, Ramada Resorts Kochi shares more...**

### Year 2023 so far

The occupancy compared to 2022 is down by almost 10%. But this is not due to any lack of business, rather we had shut down almost 50% of the inventory for renovations. The ARR is neck to neck with last year and we are hoping we will be able to command a 15% higher ARR on our renovated cottages. So overall we expect an 8% growth in ARR.

### New additions / Renovations

We have renovated all the lakeside cottages this year, which was planned for 2020 but the Pandemic pushed everything out of the timeline. The year 2022 was the highest revenue earner for us, thanks to the domestic market. Vietnam's leading airline – VietJet is inaugurating a direct connectivity from Ho Chi Minh city and Kochi, which is a big boost for Inbound as well. We are having a Vietnam food fest running for 2 weeks coinciding with the inaugural flight with Vietjet sponsoring to fly 2 chefs from Vietnam. Taking this a step further, we plan to launch a Vietnamese restaurant in a few months' time. We are also planning to renovate and relaunch the seafood restaurant.

### Sustainability Initiatives

Like most industry practices we also follow the usual recycle, reuse, reduce moto for anything that is consumed, be it electricity, water, or raw material for food. We have installed two heat exchangers, which exchange the heat from compressors in the AC plant to heat the water for the use in the rooms. We have additional support from solar panel in the admin block area roof to aid this for our boilers. We have cut down diesel consumption in this area by about 90%. This year we invested in two electric vehicles for guest use, thus resulting in reduction of our use of fuel. We have a 1 lakh litre capacity for rain water harvesting which we use in the garden and other areas.

### Domestic or Inbound?

Currently we are focused on the domestic market. Post pandemic and with the war in Europe compounded by the inflation, the Foreign FIT market hasn't been good for us. But this was completely replaced by the domestic and we did our highest turnover in 2022. The trend seems to be the same in 2023, but we need to wait till October of this year to see if there is any real uptake on the foreign leisure market. ■



# Kunal Shankar

## 'The resort can handle both local and international markets'

*As the market continues to grow, we anticipate that our business numbers will surpass the 2022 figure. With international borders now open, we are expecting an increase in foreign tourists and business travellers.*

**Kunal Shanker, General Manager, InterContinental Chennai Mahabalipuram Resort shares more...**

### Year 2023 so far

The year 2023 has brought success to the resort with an average occupancy forecasted at 65% and an ADR forecast over ₹14000 plus for the full year. The resort is thriving and continues to flourish in every aspect including guest experience and financial returns. Notably, our remarkable elite loyalty recognition scores are one of the highest in the region.

### New addition / Renovations

Our brand's market positioning is set to strengthen with the successful rejuvenation and relaunch of the beachside restaurant, KoKoMMo Tiki Shack, following the Chennai storm of December 2022. This exemplifies adeptness in surmounting challenges through resilience and innovative solutions.

Our commitment to sustainability and guest-centric initiatives is epitomized by the pioneering organic garden, cultivating Vegetables, Fruits, and Herbs at InterContinental Chennai Mahabalipuram Resort.

### Sustainability Initiatives

InterContinental Chennai Mahabalipuram Resort showcases an unwavering dedication to minimizing its ecological footprint. A meticulous alignment of sustainability and cost-efficiency underscores all operational aspects. The culinary team's conscientious approach to food management sets a benchmark. Precise menu planning and portion control, attuned to guest and associate needs, substantially reduce food wastage.

A transformative shift towards sustainability has abolished single-use

plastic bottles, as the resort embraces a UV RO water system. The comprehensive room amenities initiative reinforces environmental awareness by reducing the use of plastic refillable toiletries.

The resort champions a sewage treatment plant that rejuvenates 100% of water, nurturing lush landscapes and lawns while the renewable energy integration charts the course toward a greener horizon.

### Domestic or Inbound?

The resort has expertly designed a strategic framework that seamlessly navigates both local and international markets, blending prevailing trends harmoniously. Through precise portfolio adjustments, the resort solidifies its standing as the pinnacle of opulent luxury. Rooted in insightful travel analysis, this approach flawlessly balances the unique preferences of both domestic and international patrons.

### Trends

In today's hospitality landscape, a blend of trends shapes guest preferences, including a focus on vacations, independent travellers, revived weddings, business meetings, and a fondness for staycations. Our hotel stands at the centre of these trends, drawing diverse guests. Those seeking relaxation choose us for luxurious comfort and rejuvenation. Adventurous explorers find unique experiences within our premises. We're also a favoured venue for weddings and special occasions, while business-minded individuals and conference attendees appreciate our professional and sophisticated environment. ■



Kunal Shanker,  
General Manager,  
InterContinental Chennai Mahabalipuram Resort

**"We cater to those valuing staycations, offering a quick yet invigorating escape. Our resort shines as a bespoke wedding destination, reflecting our commitment to crafting extraordinary experiences and lasting memories. In essence, our hotel delivers an exceptional and immersive experience."**



Karan Bakshi,  
General Manager,  
WelcomHeritage Cheetahgarh Resort & Spa

**“Currently, each segment is seeing a very good growth compared to previous years. We have 90% domestic movement and the few inbound numbers we are seeing are mostly booking directly with the resort. Inbound market is getting aware of our destination Jawai and we expect this number to grow exponentially by Q3 & Q4 of 2023-24.”**

## Karan Bakshi

# ‘The domestic market wants unique experiences & has a higher spending capacity’

*Counted amongst the best luxury resorts in Rajasthan, WelcomHeritage Cheetahgarh Resort & Spa amalgamates luxury and grandeur in raw, unfiltered nature that surrounds the land of leopards & shepherds-Jawai.*

**Karan Bakshi, General Manager, WelcomHeritage Cheetahgarh Resort & Spa shares more...**

### Year 2023 so far

We have been marketing our brand in key feeder markets over last year and we have seen some great results in 2023. Q1 2023 has seen an ARR growth of 16% over last year and a REVPAR growth of 35% over Q1 of last year. We strategically kept rates higher than last year during summer and have seen a good occupancy growth from the domestic market in Q1 and the same will flow to Q2 this year.

### New addition / Renovations

While our primary activity at the destination is Leopard and with a 99% sighting during safari, we have always aimed at creating experiences beyond the safari in order to be more sustainable in the long run. We have experienced naturalists on board who have tailor made a few trekking programs, Village visits and nature walks for guests. We have introduced a “Young Naturalist” program for kids to get them to learn about the amazing bird in Jawai. Due to our location and clear skylines in the night we have added Stargazing Activity at the resort. We have a high-end telescope with a professional team leader who engages guests in experiencing the celestial sights.

### Sustainability Initiatives

We practice sustainability through 3 main actions. Firstly, we provide benefits to the local community through jobs at the resort, business opportunities by providing us the supplies needed for the

resort. Creating entrepreneurs in the region to sustain better growth for the destination.

We are TOFT Certified and follow strict compliance to the environment / eco-friendly practices. We don't use any single use plastic in the resort from water bottles to guest amenities. We recycle all waste to create manure for our organic farm and flora inside the resort. We have our STP and recycle the water to use in our gardens.

### Domestic or Inbound?

We believe that the domestic market has enough potential to help sustain business YoY. We have and are in a continuous process to market our brand through digital marketing in key domestic markets. Everyone wants inbound but that is something which will take time to reach full potential. But over the years it is very clear in our numbers that the domestic market has a higher spending capacity, they are looking out for unique experiences and are ready to spend for such experiences. In the present scenario each segment is seeing a very good growth compared to previous years. There is no segment that is falling short of numbers. The difference however is the ARR each segment attains. Leisure has taken a leap in ARR over the last 2 years and that too from domestic movement. Less inventory Resort or Boutique resorts have enjoyed the rate increase the most. More unique and off beat the offering higher the price. ■

# Shuvendu Banerjee

## 'Modern day travellers seek vibrant hotel stay experiences'

*Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla is a centrally located hotel catering to a mix of segments - corporate, inbound, domestic, FITs, Leisure & MICE. Inbound and Corporate have been two hottest selling domains for business and the hotel's industry partners and foreign tour operators have supported it extensively to secure business associations and group bookings.*

**Shuvendu Banerjee, General Manager, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla shares more...**

### 2023 so far

2023 has been a spectacular year for Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla with inbound and corporate travel swinging back in full form. Our occupancy percentage increased by 8-9% as compared to last year as we witnessed record-breaking numbers as far as revenues are concerned. We were able to tap several sports groups and film crews, helping us build base occupancy, while staycation packages for the domestic segment supported the weekend business. The MICE industry has also witnessed a tremendous surge.

### New added / renovated features

Modern day travellers seek vibrant hotel stay experiences and hence, we are focussing on curating experiential dining events, immersive wellness regimes, interactive kitchen/bar takeovers and unique entertainment avenues. We are focussing on creating a proposition of engagement, interactivity, and rejuvenation for our guests so that they can make the most of their after-work hours.

Our all-day dining restaurant, Edesia, has carved its place as one of the most sought-after destinations for curated food events. Our signature food festival, Dilli 6, wherein we roped 'khansamas' from Chandni Chowk witnessed record-breaking trends in revenues as well as footfall. At ChaoBella, we have introduced

Soulful Suppers, a live singing element to pair up with the interactive culinary classes, walk-in wine cellar experience, barbeque evenings and wine-paired menu tastings. Our patisserie French Heart is undergoing a unique 'millet makeover' to wow our patrons.

At our wellness sanctuary, Spazzo, we have introduced signature Ayurvedic therapies as well as morning Yoga rituals, while our meetings, events and wedding spaces have witnessed refreshed themes and experiences to live up to the expectations of Gen Zs and millennials.

### Sustainability / eco-friendly measures

Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla has adopted the IHG Green Engage program, an innovative environmental sustainability system that gives our hotels the means to measure and manage our impact on the environment. This has helped us incorporate best practices in water, waste, and energy management at our hotel. A few of the key renewable energy practices include installation of a Bio-Methanation plant (to curb food wastage), creation of rainwater harvesting pits and aligning of solar power plants on our terrace areas. We have installed sewage treatment plants and have focused on eliminating single-use plastic from our day-to-day operations. We are constantly striving to devise strategies to curb food wastage in the hotel. ■



Shuvendu Banerjee,  
General Manager,  
Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla

**“At our wellness sanctuary, Spazzo, we have introduced signature Ayurvedic therapies as well as morning Yoga rituals, while our meetings, events and wedding spaces have witnessed refreshed themes and experiences to live up to the expectations of Gen Zs and millennials.”**



Joseph K Jacob,  
General Manager,  
Ramada by Wyndham Alleppey

“Hospitality sector in general is at the stage of revival and reformation. Conventional methods of achieving guest satisfaction are undergoing drastic changes. It requires constant update in terms of technology and human approach to maintain the growth rate.”

## Joseph K Jacob

# 'Our guests are a mix of FIT, Leisure, MICE and weddings groups'

*In Alleppey, the Venice of the East, Ramada by Wyndham has been doing great business. While being a landmark property in the region, the hotel is also undergoing major renovation and changing its exterior look.*

**Joseph K Jacob, General Manager, Ramada by Wyndham Alleppey shares more...**

### Year 2023 so far

Year 2023 for us, is witnessing a mixed response, both domestic and international guests are on the high. Changes in the climatic conditions have affected the flow of guests through the first quarter of the year. Average Room rates are in par with last year and keep balanced increase through the year. Overall, the current year looks prospective and positive.

### New additions / Renovation

Ramada by Wyndham Alleppey has been undergoing through a major renovation for Building Exterior and rooms renovation as well. Considering the increased demand for guest comfort, more attention is being given to improve guest room interiors and in room facilities. We are also looking at developing an island plot for outdoor activities.

### Sustainability Initiatives

We have obtained Level 2 certification in Wyndham Green Program. Currently, we are pursuing

our efforts to achieve Level 3 in green program. We believe that introduction of new eco-friendly practices and concepts could attract more guests. We have already introduced an in-house bottling plant thus eluding plastic bottles for drinking water.

### Domestic or Inbound?

The ongoing trend for 2023 looks mixed for domestic and international. There is a decrease in domestic guests while there is a gradual increase in international guests. Both inbound and domestic profiles make up our guest flow.

### Trends

Alleppey is well known for its backwaters and breathtaking sceneries. Even though it is considered as a leisure destination for FITs and MICE, it is also home to mid-scale wedding events. We have successfully hosted several destination weddings events in Ramada by Wyndham during the past year. In general, our guests are a mix of FIT, Leisure, MICE and weddings groups. ■



# Shrikant Wakharkar

## 'We experience a fair a mix of both domestic and inbound markets'

*India's G20 presidency presents a promising opportunity for the country to change the narrative around inbound tourism. It is expected to not only increase the demand for hotels but also bring several Indian destinations to the forefront of the global tourism map. Keen on tapping this burgeoning demand is Hyatt Regency Delhi with its multitude of offerings.*

**Shrikant Wakharkar, General Manager, Hyatt Regency Delhi and Area Vice President – Hyatt Hotels (North) shares more...**

### The year 2023 so far

The year 2023 has been exceptional for Hyatt Regency Delhi in terms of occupancy and Average Room Rates (ARRs). Post-pandemic, the property was able to match the 2019 numbers, at least in the first half of the year. However, as we entered the second half of the year, there was a massive improvement, and the property outperformed the 2019 numbers for the corresponding months. This trend was highly encouraging and has made the team at Hyatt Regency Delhi more optimistic about the future.

Looking ahead, the property is very bullish about the upcoming year. New Delhi will be hosting the G20 summit and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Conference in 2023, which has led to a surge in activity in the Delhi-NCR region.

### New additions / Renovation

In addition to our regular upgradation and general maintenance, we are thrilled to share an exciting development at our property – The Presidential Suite, which is the largest in the city and is designed exclusively for Heads of State, dignitaries, etc. It features two bedrooms, an exquisite master bathroom, a state-of-the-art home theatre, a well-equipped office, and a sprawling drawing, dining, and lounge area with a cigar corner and

high-end bar.

### Sustainability / Eco-friendly measures

At Hyatt Regency Delhi, we are committed to reducing waste and promoting sustainability through a range of initiatives. One notable step we have taken is establishing our own in-house water bottling plant. Furthermore, we have implemented various energy-saving measures throughout the hotel. We use energy-efficient LED lights, recycle water for cooling tower and horticulture purposes, and have a solar water heating system in place. We have also adopted green transport technology. Since 2019, we have provided 10 e-charging stations at the hotel, encouraging the use of electric vehicles and reducing carbon emissions.

### Domestic market or Inbound?

At Hyatt Regency Delhi, we have a mix of both domestic and inbound markets. During the pandemic, like many other hotels, we saw a significant increase in domestic travel as people preferred local destinations for their getaways. However, in the first quarter of 2023, we anticipated a surge in inbound leisure traffic, and we have already started to witness its revival. This trend is expected to continue and reach its optimal level by September 2023, especially with G20 scheduled to take place in India. ■



**Shrikant Wakharkar,**  
General Manager, Hyatt Regency Delhi and Area  
Vice President – Hyatt Hotels (North)

**“The hospitality sector in India is heading towards a promising future with diverse trends shaping the traffic flow in the industry. As events and conventions gain momentum and leisure travel continues to rebound, we are excited about the growth opportunities and the potential for Hyatt Regency Delhi in the evolving landscape.”**



Rajib Roy Choudhary,  
Sr. General Manager,  
Vedic Village Spa Resort

**“We have adopted new technologies to enhance guest experiences, streamlined operations, and improved overall efficiency. We have also introduced Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) – virtual tour of the property. Our AI-powered chatbots provide instant customer service and immediately answers guest inquiries.”**

## Rajib Roy Choudhary

### ‘Leisure travel has always been a significant driver to our property’

*Capturing the five elements of nature with stunning decor, Vedic Village Resort is an oasis of high-end luxury. Nestled in the lap of nature just 20 minutes away from Kolkata International Airport, this unique boutique getaway, sprawling over 150 acres of fertile farmland greenery, sparkling lakes, coconut groves and a wealth of flora, is a haven for city dwellers.*

**Rajib Roy Choudhary, Sr General Manager, Vedic Village Spa Resort shares more...**

#### Year 2023 so far

After staying crippled for a while due to the onslaught of the pandemic, India’s hospitality sector is on its way to a full recovery. As compared to the previous year, OCC has shown a growth of up to 60% YTD and a spike in ARR of ₹5400 approx.

#### New additions / Renovations

Our Bungalow rooms went under a renovation and we also added new modern amenities to it. The resort as a new look and feel as the reception/ lobby is also undergoing refurbishment. We are coming up with 3500 sq. ft. of banquet hall and 6000 sq. ft. of convention centre space with an added lawn space of 10,000 sq. ft. All these renovations have been done considering market research, size and capacity, while the new design and aesthetics, amenities, technology, acoustics, sustainability, accessibility, and flexibility have been planned keeping the ease of organising a group event in mind.

#### Sustainability Initiatives

We are already doing things to save water as saving water is something that can help the environment and also save us money. Guests have the option to reuse towels and, in the guestrooms, we are only using water efficient toilets and water-efficient showers. Use of E-Cycles, E-scooters and E-cart is being implemented throughout the property for commuting internally. Saving energy

helps save both the environment and our money – it’s a win-win for everyone. Emission of greenhouse gases have been reduced by using and buying things available locally. Renewable energy resources in process of implementing wind, solar power energy to reduce the connected grid power demand.

#### Domestic or Inbound?

Resort focus depends on several factors including location, target audience, market trends, and business strategy, however our share of business is more from domestic market than Inbound. Our domestic travellers seek weekend getaways, short vacations, staycations/ packages – this is a reliable source of business throughout the year. We have inbound movement also with higher revenue potential. However, long stay guests engage more in activities, contributing to off season business, helping balance out demand.

#### Trends

Leisure travel has always been a significant driver to our property. People are increasingly looking for unique and personalised travel experiences, which are focused on local culture, cuisine, and activities. With us, they find it all. We also tailored our services to cater to the preferences and needs of FITs. Destination weddings and special events continued to be a lucrative niche for us. We offer comprehensive wedding packages and event planning services which are high in demand. ■

# Amit Rana

## 'We aim to reduce our ecological footprint and contribute to society'

*Holiday Inn New Delhi International Airport has achieved unprecedented milestones since its inception. Particularly noteworthy is the Hotel's outstanding performance, demonstrating a remarkable 43% surge in the total revenue and an impressive 57% growth in RevPar during February 2023 compared to the same period in 2019.*

**Amit Rana General Manager Holiday Inn New Delhi International Airport shares more...**

### Year 2023 so far

Holiday Inn New Delhi International Airport has registered a 43% surge in the total revenue and an impressive 57% growth in RevPar during February 2023 compared to the same period in 2019. This encouraging trend is further substantiated by the substantial increase in domestic air traffic, which soared by an impressive 22% in April when compared to the corresponding month in 2022.

### New additions / Renovation

We have recently added Digital Screens to our Banquets to enhance event experiences and provide dynamic displays. We've added more seating space to our restaurants, ensuring an enhanced, comfortable and enjoyable dining atmosphere for our guests. Our bar, restaurant, and lobby areas have been revamped with new upholstery and furniture, offering a refreshed and inviting ambiance.

### Sustainability Initiatives

By transitioning to refillable dispensers for toiletries, we have effectively reduced over 20,000 kg of plastic waste annually. This step is a significant stride towards a greener environment. Up next, our adoption of biodegradable food containers underscores our commitment to sustainability. We're minimising our ecological footprint while ensuring that our guests can indulge in delicious meals guilt-free. Our move to switch to bamboo straws is aligned with our objective to diminish plastic usage.

We're thrilled to announce introduction of our in-house glass water bottling. This initiative not only provides guests with a refreshing hydration option but also significantly reduces plastic waste. As part of our steadfast dedication to sustainable transportation, we're currently in the process of setting up EV charging stations.

We align with the IHG Green Engage policy, a comprehensive commitment to environmental sustainability. Our efforts encompass energy conservation, water management, waste reduction, and community engagement. Through these measures, we aim to reduce our ecological footprint and contribute positively to society.

### Domestic or Inbound

We understand the distinct preferences and requirements of domestic travellers, as well as the expectations of inbound visitors exploring our city. Our aim is to offer a comfortable and enriching stay for all our guests, regardless of their origin. This harmonious blend of guests from different backgrounds contributes to the vibrant atmosphere and cultural exchange within our establishment.

### Trends

At our property, the predominant focus in terms of guest traffic lies in the MICE and corporate segments. Given our strategic location in the vibrant Aerocity area, we naturally attract a substantial volume of business from corporate clients. ■



Amit Rana,  
General Manager,  
Holiday Inn New Delhi International Airport

**"While our core emphasis remains on catering to MICE-related demands and the corporate sector, we also acknowledge the evolving preferences of travellers and continually adapt our offerings to meet a diverse range of guest requirements."**



Ashwni Kumar Goela,  
General Manager,  
Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport

**“At the Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport, we are witnessing a dynamic blend of hospitality trends that reflect the evolving preferences of our valued guests. Our property caters to a diverse array of segments, such as – leisure travellers, FITs, Weddings and Events, MICE and staycations, each contributing to our vibrant guest experience.”**

## Ashwni Goela

### ‘We have adopted new advancements to enhance our guests’ experience’

*The Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport is one of the flagship properties of RHG in India that offers luxurious accommodations and a range of world-class amenities and services. The hotel has several dining options, a spa, a fitness centre, and meeting and event spaces, making it a popular choice among business and leisure travellers.*

**Ashwni Kumar Goela, General Manager, Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport shares more...**

#### Year 2023 so far

The performance of our property/brand in the year 2023 has been quite positive. The Average Occupancy for the first quarter of FY 2023-24 stands at an impressive 94%, indicating a strong demand for our accommodations. Additionally, the Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR) for the same period is ₹8,186 reflecting a favourable performance in terms of revenue generation.

#### New addition / Renovations

A few years ago, we completed a substantial million-dollar renovation to elevate our guests’ comfort and satisfaction. This renovation encompassed various aspects of the property, ensuring that we provide a modern and delightful ambiance. Additionally, we have enthusiastically adopted new advancements to enhance our guests’ convenience and overall experience during their stay.

#### Sustainability Initiatives

Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport has taken remarkable strides towards embracing sustainable and eco-friendly practices. The hotel offers a seamless and eco-friendly experience through paperless check-in/check-out processes, reducing paper waste while enhancing operational efficiency.

By harnessing advanced technology

like “WaterGen,” the hotel converts atmospheric moisture into usable water. The hotel’s strong stance against single-use plastics is evident through its in-house bottling plant, providing guests with reusable water bottles and significantly reducing plastic waste.

The hotel also actively engages in meaningful CSR activities, such as adopting an old age home and a children’s school, etc.

A comprehensive water recycling system and rainwater harvesting pits ensure efficient water usage and groundwater replenishment. Motion sensors strategically placed throughout the hotel optimize energy consumption by adjusting lighting and temperature settings based on occupancy. The hotel’s installation of EV chargers supports sustainable transportation options while its F&B offerings prioritise organic and locally sourced ingredients.

#### Domestic or Inbound?

We strive to cater to a diverse range of guests, both from the domestic and international markets. Our focus is on providing exceptional hospitality and experiences that resonate with all types of travellers, regardless of their origin. By offering a well-rounded blend of services, amenities, and cultural sensitivities, we aim to create a welcoming and inclusive environment that appeals to both the domestic and inbound markets. ■

# Joyjit Chakravorty

## 'We have pledged to have 20% women workforce in the team'

*The growth story from 2022 has been carried forward in this year and occupancy levels at Hilton Garden Inn, New Delhi/ Saket are already 20% ahead of last year in ADRs and the hotel has been witnessing an average 80% plus occupancies, with trend seeing no trace of slowing down. I strongly feel that this is going to be a great year.*

**Joyjit Chakravorty, General Manager, Hilton Garden Inn, New Delhi/ Saket shares more...**

### New Features / Renovation

We have updated our property in terms of guest convenience. Hilton Garden Inn, New Delhi/Saket has now introduced Digital Keys for all guest rooms and elevators, enabling our guests to choose their rooms before check in and do their payments too via the same. The restaurant and bar have also got an upliftment with a glass façade overlooking the Saket district centre. Additionally, we are in the process of renewing our pool side and the rooms would follow next year. Our team members are delighted with their new learning corner, renewed team café and locker facilities.

### Sustainability Initiatives

HGI Saket is part of the "Travel with Purpose" 2030 goals which is Hilton's ESG Strategic Framework. All members of the hotel have 9 Pledges to accomplish for this year, contributing in conversion of all bulbs to LED, adding water aerators in all public restrooms for water savings and monitoring our cooked food waste. We have also pledged to have 20% women workforce in the team and promote employment opportunities for the less privileged. We have also started procuring cage free eggs for our in-house patrons and are working towards organising carbon neutral meetings with our regular corporates and offset by the

carbon credit(s) which work towards offsetting emissions generated from that meeting. Hilton is using industry leading LightStay ESG management system to track and report progress which gives us the visibility and awareness to improve over time. Among the other most appreciated ones, involves repurposing discarded linen to create shoe bags for our guests. These bags not only provide a convenient way for guests to store their shoes while travelling, but they also help reduce textile waste, making us contribute more in our goals for the "Travel with Purpose". The remaining ones we are committed to work with another local NGO initiative "Linen for Life" to contribute for the greater good.

I must also add here that, as the ESG Lead for India, my goals are to achieve our pledges not only for HGI Saket but assist my fellow Hilton colleagues in India to collectively progress in fulfilling the pledges we have taken together promoting sustainable responsible traveling. ■



Joyjit Chakravorty,  
General Manager,  
Hilton Garden Inn, New Delhi/ Saket

**"The segmentation of HGI Saket is mix of both domestic and corporate inbound. We also have additional healthy contribution of medical tourism and weekend leisure travellers from the neighbouring cities. We are a perfect amalgamation of FITs and leisure including stycations. However, due to limitation in our C&E space we cater to smaller events."**

# Sharad Datta

## 'Our versatility is a distinct advantage'

*The global MICE market's potential is staggering, with an anticipated value of USD 1.56 trillion by 2030 and a CAGR of 7.5%. The revival of travel, especially in the Asia Pacific region, including India, has been instrumental in propelling this growth. Given that India exhibited rapid recovery in 2022, JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity is optimistic for a fruitful 2023.*

**Sharad Datta, General Manager, JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity, shares more...**

### Year 2023 so far

In 2023, the at JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity has experienced remarkable growth in both occupancy % and Average Room Revenue (ARRs). As travel resumes its upward trajectory, we've been fortunate to witness a substantial influx of luxury group travellers. This resurgence has been pronounced across segments, contributing significantly to our thriving performance. The year thus far has been pivotal, aligning with our commitment to elevate guest experiences, foster sustainability, and embrace technological advancements. This unique confluence of factors has propelled us toward unprecedented success, setting new benchmarks and cementing our reputation as a luxurious haven for discerning travellers.

### New additions / Renovation

In our unwavering pursuit of excellence, we've introduced several enhancements to JW Marriott Hotel New Delhi Aerocity. While we are proud of our well-equipped Grand Crystal Ballroom, capable of hosting up to 1,400 guests, we continue to innovate our offerings to cater to evolving guest preferences. The ballroom's flexibility, allowing it to be partitioned for various event sizes, has been a notable highlight, accommodating diverse occasions seamlessly.

### Sustainability Initiatives

Our initiatives encompass a range of actions, from adopting cage-free eggs to promote animal welfare, launching

a Clean Air Initiative to contribute to a healthier environment, and setting up a water bottling plant to minimize single-use plastic. The establishment of an EV charging station showcases our dedication to promoting cleaner transportation options. Furthermore, our involvement in the Serve 360 initiative underscores our responsibility to make a positive and lasting impact on the community.

### Domestic or Inbound?

At JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity, our approach is characterized by a harmonious blend of both domestic and inbound markets. The strategic location of Aerocity, proximate to the airport and offering easy access to Central Delhi and Gurugram, makes us an ideal choice for a diverse clientele, encompassing business and leisure travellers alike.

Our versatility is a distinct advantage, enabling us to cater effectively to the specific needs and preferences of both domestic and international guests.

### Prevailing Trends

In the current landscape of the hospitality sector, several trends have emerged as dominant forces, shaping the guest experience and industry dynamics. The paradigm shift toward holistic wellness is undeniable, with wellness amenities such as spas and mindfulness offerings gaining prominence. Virtual reality technology is revolutionizing event planning, allowing organizers to virtually experience event spaces and configurations. ■

Sharad Datta,  
General Manager,  
JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity

**"JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity is rooted in continuous innovation and unwavering commitment. We remain dedicated to providing a haven of tranquility and exceptional hospitality to our guests. As technology continues to reshape the industry, we are prepared to embrace its potential, enhancing our operations and guest interactions."**

# Raaj Panda

## 'The Gaurs Sarovar Premiere, Greater Noida is a true hospitality trailblazer'

*In a short span of 2 years, the property's recent conversion to Premiere status has been the significant accomplishment and a defining moment in its journey. The Gaurs Sarovar Premiere, Gaur City, Greater Noida caters to FITs, Weddings and MICE and takes pride in providing personalised experiences to all segments.*

**Raaj Panda, General Manager, The Gaurs Sarovar Premiere, Greater Noida shares more...**

### The year 2023 so far

In the eventful year of 2023, 'The Gaurs Sarovar Premiere, Gaur City, Greater Noida' has emerged as a true hospitality trailblazer, achieving remarkable accomplishments. The property's year-to-date (YTD) occupancy rate has soared to an impressive level of 84%, which is a testament to its popularity among the masses. The fact that such a high percentage of rooms have been consistently booked showcases the trust and satisfaction guests have placed in us. Moreover, the Average Room Rate of the hotel has experienced substantial growth of 9% above the budgeted ARR. This success highlights the exceptional guest experience and the property's strong value proposition.

### New Addition / Renovation

In a short span of 2 years, the property's recent conversion to Premier status has been the significant accomplishment and a defining moment in its journey. This achievement reflects the property's commitment to excellence, high standards, and exceptional service. The hotel is yet to add facilities in two floors and the plan is to have the right combination of Rooms, Speciality Restaurants and Banquet facilities.

### Sustainability Initiatives

With a robust solid waste

management program, we convert all our waste into compost. Water conservation and energy efficiency are given utmost priority, with advanced technologies, water-saving fixtures, and energy-efficient appliances which are employed to minimize resource consumption. Aligned with the Sarovar's sustainability norms, the hotel continues usage of biodegradable waste bags, E waste management, waste oil management and all other recommended initiatives for the sustainability.

### Domestic or Inbound?

At our hotel, we have strategically chosen to focus on both the domestic and inbound markets to cater to a diverse range of travellers. The domestic market holds significant potential due to the proximity of great attractions such as the International Trade Expo Centre Limited, India Expo Centre & Mart, and other nearby business parks and manufacturing units for corporate movements. Moreover, our location near the Buddha International Circuit adds to the appeal, attracting motorsport enthusiasts and participants attending races and events. These events attract numerous business travellers and event attendees seeking comfortable accommodation options. Additionally, travellers visiting Agra and nearby tourist destinations prefer to stay with us during their trip. ■

**Raaj Panda,**  
General Manager,  
The Gaurs Sarovar Premiere, Greater Noida

**"Our hotel experiences maximum traffic from three main segments: FITs, Weddings and MICE. We excel in providing personalised experiences for independent traveller, hosting unforgettable weddings, and offering top-notch facilities for successful business events. Our commitment to exceptional service drives our success."**



Mahesh Phuyal,  
General Manager,  
Ramada Encore by Wyndham Kathmandu Thamel

**“In our case, leisure FITs and MICE are the major ruling sector. Our hotel is located at the centre of touristic hub of Kathmandu called Thamel so we have been serving more than 100 nationalities in a year and that is majorly leisure, leisure FITs and MICE. Also, we have been actively engaged in Wyndham Green Initiative.”**

## Mahesh Phuyal

### ‘The year 2023 is the year of building confidence to our investors’

*Ramada Encore, the first Wyndham Certified property in Nepal is an innovative hospitality company with a view to providing world-class hotel facilities in a unique environment that exceeds expectations in terms of intuitive service and luxurious ambiance. The wonderfully central location of the Thamel hotel makes it easy to explore Nepal's capital city.*

**Mahesh Phuyal, General Manager, Ramada Encore by Wyndham Kathmandu Thamel shares more...**

#### Year 2023 so far

The year 2023 is the year of building confidence to our investors who has invested huge resources in it, employee who has started feeling secure their future in hospitality industry and our guests who has also been feeling safe and secure to travel and having been in good hand who understand their comforts, priorities and preferences. As a whole the year 2023 has been sharing a very positive note for its all stakeholders who has been involved directly and indirectly. Occupancy wise we have reached the pre covid stage and we have noticed a very high improvement ARR in comparison to post covid survival and revival year but still this point yet has been going through some struggle due to many factors locally, regionally and globally. We have raised our head as a leading hotel in the city in our category that is just because of the brand contribution and brand made us distinct than our competitor and have encouraged all us to exceed the guest's expectation.

#### New additions / Renovation

We have going through minor operational modification adding retractable room in our rooftop terrace, expansion of our bakery and pastry section targeting local small hotels and

restaurant and also for walk in guests. Started operating mid night restaurant because of popular demand of late-night meal.

#### Sustainability Measures

We have full commitment for sustainability programs in some major platforms and have been fully complied it. We have world class waste management – bio degradable, non - bio degradable and hazardous waste management program in place, EV charging station, promoting bicycle and also safe bicycle stand at parking area, we have been actively promoting and buying locally produced food and beverages from the producers directly at least 35% of daily consumption. Controlled water emitting taps are only used in the hotel. We have been using biotique products as bath amenities. Also, we have linen and towels reuse policy in place. We have been actively engaged in Wyndham Green Initiative.

#### Domestic or Inbound?

We have been trying to balance both domestic and inbound market. Both are equally important contributor in our business. In bound market major contribution is in accommodation and domestic market has been contributing much higher in food and beverages and banqueting business. ■

# Piyush Kapoor

## 'We have seen a surge in both demand & expenditure by our clientele'

*This year, the hospitality industry has been progressing like never before. Post-pandemic, the number of weddings and MICE events has increased and grand-scale, experiential events have made a comeback. Hoping to keep the momentum going, Radisson Blu Palace Resort, Udaipur is keen to end the year on a positive note and expect to gain greater traction by year end.*

**Piyush Kapoor, General Manager Radisson Blu Palace Resort, Udaipur. shares more...**

### Year 2023 so far

For our property, 2023 has been promising so far. Due to the pent-up demand and resurgence of travel, we have witnessed high footfall. We have also seen a surge in both demand and expenditure by our clientele. In fact, there has been a 20% increase in ARR since last year. We are now bracing ourselves for hosting 80-100 weddings this year. We are keen to end the year on a positive note and expect to gain all the more traction.

### New additions / Renovation

We are currently involved in the renovation of our property. We have just wrapped up revamping our banquets. To cater to the evolving needs and technological advancements, we felt this was the time to transform our banquets and make them tech-savvy. Our Ballrooms too have been redone and now have an ultra-modern ambience. Our next step is to redesign our in-house restaurants. Up next, the rooms are being redeveloped in phases.

### Sustainability Initiatives

We have established an in-house water plant that seamlessly manages the cleaning, filtering and packaging of drinking water. Another important element of our sustainability program is avoiding food wastage. To achieve this

goal, we have developed a composting plant at the hotel itself. A sewage treatment has also been established within the premises to clean the waste in-house with the sole objective of reducing environmental damage. Our property functions on solar energy with the help of a plant built near Bikaner. This is both cost-efficacious and energy-saving. We have installed sensor-based LED lighting at the hotel.

### Domestic or Inbound?

We focus on both markets. However, it has been a year that our inbound vertical has picked up pace rapidly. Having said this, our domestic market is continuously faring well and generating significant revenue. For our domestic travellers, we strive to provide experiential stays, while we host our foreign tourists with the motto of giving them a first-hand experience of the local culture, traditions, cuisines, folklore, etc.

### Trends

I strongly feel as of now; all the trends are gaining momentum as the demand for travelling remains at an all-time high. Whether it is families looking for rejuvenating holidays, couples opting for romantic weekend getaways, corporates organising team offsites, or MICE events and grand weddings, the hospitality sector is thriving on the back of the pent-up demand. ■



Piyush Kapoor,  
General Manager,  
Radisson Blu Palace Resort, Udaipur

**“Our property Radisson Blu Palace Resort & Spa, Udaipur, welcomes people with open arms. Even though we have a reputation for being the go-to MICE event and wedding destination, we receive footfall from guests across age groups- families, couples, corporates, wedding hosts, celebrities, etc.”**



Manoj Kumar Maharaj,  
General Manager,  
Ramada Encore by Wyndham Statue of Unity

**“We take immense pride in our commitment to providing exceptional service and creating memorable experiences for our guests. Our dedicated team ensures that every aspect of their stay is meticulously taken care of, from the moment they arrive until their departure. With our prime location we offer a unique blend of luxury & comfort.”**

# Manoj Kumar Maharaj

## ‘Our primary concentration is on the domestic market’

*Nestled on the banks of Narmada River right next to the Statue of Unity, Ramada Encore by Wyndham Statue of Unity is a luxurious hotel that portrays opulence and comfort in everything it has to offer. With 54 garden and river-facing rooms, suit rooms, the property gives you a chance to relax and rejuvenate.*

**Manoj Kumar Maharaj, General Manager, Ramada Encore by Wyndham Statue of Unity shares more...**

### Year 2023 so far

The year 2023 has been exceptionally successful for Ramada Encore by Wyndham Statue of Unity. Despite the challenges posed by COVID in the past, our property has made a remarkable comeback with an impressive average occupancy rate of 80 to 85%. Additionally, our average ARR (Average Room Rate) stands at a competitive approx. INR 7000.

### New additions / Renovation

Yes, we have recently introduced two exquisite suites that offer breath-taking views of the river Narmada. Guests can view various water activities such as dinner cruises and day cruises from the suites, while also experiencing the serene ambiance of the Narmada Maha Arti. Furthermore, we have enhanced our swimming pool area by adding a dedicated kid zone. Additionally, all our rooms have been upgraded with elegant wallpaper and wooden flooring, providing a fresh and modern look post-Covid.

### Sustainability Initiatives

We are committed to sustainability and have implemented rainwater harvesting systems. This ensures that all rainwater is directly channelled to the

river Narmada, minimizing wastage, and contributing to the preservation of this vital natural resource.

### Domestic or Inbound?

While we had plans to cater to both domestic and international markets, the impact of COVID has led us to primarily focus on the domestic market. The government of Gujarat had initiated FAM (Familiarization) tours domestically, and although international plans were delayed due to the pandemic, we have successfully adapted to the current situation. As a result, our primary concentration is on the domestic market, which has shown great potential.

### Trends

At present, leisure travel and staycations are dominating the hospitality sector. Guests are seeking relaxation and rejuvenation, and our property caters to these needs perfectly. We have witnessed a significant influx of leisure travellers who are looking for a tranquil escape amidst the natural beauty of Gujarat. Additionally, our property is also well-suited for weddings and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) events, attracting a diverse range of guests. ■



# Amitabh Rai

## 'Westin Hyderabad Hitec City is an all-Women-Powered hotel'

*The Westin Hyderabad Hitec City has a very remarkable and unique achievement to its credit. It is an all-Women-Powered hotel, the first of its kind in the city and within the Marriott International portfolio in South Asia.*

**Amitabh Rai, Cluster General Manager – The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace & Hyderabad Market Marriott International shares more...**

### Year 2023 so far

The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace has maintained around mid-70% occupancies with ARR's that have grown impressively by 42% over 2019. I'm also very proud at the opening of our second Westin hotel in the city, i.e. The Westin Hyderabad Hitec City which opened earlier in June, this year.

### New additions / Renovation

We have undertaken two key renovations this year, The Westin Ballroom which comprises 23,500 square feet of modern event spaces with an option of multiple break-out rooms to be able to cater to any event both corporate and social in the city. The second renovation at the hotel was at our restaurant Casbah, the perfect place to unwind with appetizing finger foods and delicious cocktails in a stunning rooftop setting with a lush courtyard and Mediterranean ambiance.

### Sustainability Initiatives

The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace has always been ahead of its time with sustainability and eco-friendly measures adopted over the years. Our in-house bottling plant has helped us reduce one-time use of plastic and contributed significantly towards our sustainability initiatives. We have recently added a fleet of 12 e-vehicles for The Westin Mindspace and Westin Hitec, helping us cut down our carbon emissions and drive towards a cleaner, sustainable and greener planet. We have planted around 600 trees this year dedicated towards the inventory of our hotels and to give

back to our planet which has been one of my favorite initiatives of the year. Apart from this, we have also installed water coolers for the Zilla Parishad High School-Hyderabad to ensure children have access to safe and clean drinking water. The hotel also ensures our Sewage Treatment Plant supplies the required water for the landscape and cooling towers via recycling. The Rain Water Harvesting pits help maintain the groundwater reserve, and the Residential Bath Amenities implemented help eliminate the one-time usage of plastic. Additionally, my colleagues and I practice "No Bin Day" every day at our staff cafeteria to ensure there is no food wastage.

### Domestic or Inbound?

The major contributor to our hotel has been the domestic market however we're also noticing a gradual upward trend in the inbound business, which is a promising sign for better business in the future. Hyderabad is a very corporate-driven destination hence the major contributor is the FIT segment. We have seen steady growth in the MICE segment with corporates restarting their offline conferences and team outings post-pandemic, and stating the obvious here again that India is known for its big fat weddings and celebrations hence weddings and social events are always here to stay. With a renovated Ballroom and the option of multiple event spaces, and a beautiful outdoor lawn area we believe that The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace will certainly be the most coveted venue for weddings in the city. ■



Amitabh Rai,  
Cluster General Manager,  
The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace & Hyderabad  
Market Marriott International

**"The major contributor to our hotel has been the domestic market however we're also noticing a gradual upward trend in the inbound business which is a promising sign for better business in the future."**



Sanzeev Bhatia,  
President & GM,  
The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa, New Delhi

**“To meet the guest expectations and to enable them to have various experiences beyond accommodation within the Hotel, we keep on innovating and experimenting in areas like F&B, Spa, Shopping, Technology, curated events and more. We keep curating different events and promotions at our various outlets to lure guests at these outlets.”**

## Sanzeev Bhatia

### ‘We are consciously promoting Responsible Luxury to guests’

*The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa (THE MET) is a Five Star Deluxe full service hotel, located in the heart of the business and commercial hub of New Delhi, and provides easy access to most of the corporate and financial centres, ministries, embassies and the International Trade Fair grounds.*

**Sanzeev Bhatia, President & GM, The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa, New Delhi shares more...**

#### Year 2023 so far

First Quarter of 2023 was fantastic with excellent growth in terms of ARR, Occupancy and Revpar, but from the second quarter the demand is not much in the market. The Growth in Rates is definitely there but occupancy has declined. I am sure that the third quarter onwards the industry will be growing remarkably

#### New additions / Renovation

We have recently changed all three guest lifts and the work is going on in full swing to change our service lifts and goods lift. Soft renovation of guest rooms and public areas has already been completed. Menu of all F&B outlets and neoVeda Spa have been changed with new additions

#### Sustainability Measures

The hotel believes in providing luxury with a conscience and therefore has created a well-thought environment program, EcoMet. The objective of EcoMet (Ecological Philosophy of The Metropolitan Hotel inspired from both the ancient Indian Vedic Science and Modern Science) is to create perfect balance between human consumption and provisions of nature by implementing policies based on three ‘R’s - reduce, reuse and recycle. This program is even certified with ISO14001:2004, an Environment Management System Certification.

Innovative design, modern

technology and eco-friendly practices have been enhanced with new ideas and bright insights. Like usage of state-of-the-art technologies for less energy consumption, intelligent energy saving lighting and air-conditioning management systems, smart room key card inserts, reflective triple glazed windows, eco-friendly light colours and furnishings, improved water management system, furniture made out of eco-friendly wood, reduction in wastages, use of local produce and organic ingredients. Hotel has also implemented process like solar heating plants, automated taps, enhanced flushing system & sewage treatment plant to even recycle wastewater, latest drinking water treatment plant (Reverse Osmosis) that destroys all micro-organisms for healthier preservation. Hotel religiously follows three ‘R’s -- reduce, reuse and recycle practice by reusing paper, recycling waste, recycling old linen, cloth, crockery, cutlery, recycling cartridges, reducing paper usage, reducing heavily on consumables, amenities, disposables, etc. Hotel is not bleeding the resources and is consciously promoting Responsible Luxury to guests without comprising on their unparalleled experience.

#### Domestic or Inbound?

At present due to very less demand from international market we are focusing more on domestic corporate and leisure market and are hopeful of restart of inbound market soon. ■

# Amardeep Singh

## 'We have hosted two G20 events to tap into the MICE segment'

*The Westin Resort & Spa, Himalayas opened for guests this year in the month of January 2023. The last 6 months have been very promising in terms of both room occupancy and ARR's. Being a brand-new resort destination in the Himalayas, the resort has received an overwhelming response from the tourists and also hosted some big Indian Weddings at the property.*

**Amardeep Singh, General Manager, The Westin Resort & Spa, Himalayas shares more...**

### Sustainability Initiatives

When it comes to talking about the sustainability practices at The Westin Resort and Spa Himalayas, we have many sustainable practices and initiatives that are present at the resort. Some of which includes having a Water Bottling Plant – we have an in-house water bottling plant at the resort. We use recyclable glass bottles and do not use any single use plastic on property. Our water bottling plant has a capacity of 250 LPH and can make 1000 bottles of clean drinking water for our guests. Next, we have a OWC (Organic Waste Converter) unit at the resort. We use this to convert the wet waste from the kitchens and convert it to make compost which is then used by the horticulture team for landscaping in and around the property. All the lights on property are LEDs. This helps us in reducing our carbon footprint and lower emissions. We also have a Sewage treatment plant (STP plant) on property, which is located on site. It has a capacity of 200 KLD (Kilo Liters per day). We use this facility to treat the waste water and reuse it for gardening and flushing purposes.

Supplementing this, we have 2 E-Vehicle charging facility at the resort which is located on the main porch area. We have fast charging facility with chargers of 30 Kwh.

### Domestic or Inbound?

Since the opening of the resort, we have been getting great domestic

demand for the summer months. We foresee getting good traction from the overseas market during peak winter season. To answer your question, I would say we will look at both the segments for our property.

### Trends

For The Westin Resort & Spa, Himalayas we have been fortunate enough with the location, vantage points, weather and accessibility, due to which we have been able to tap into different target communities. We have had domestic travellers for leisure vacations, we have hosted two G20 events to tap into the MICE segment, locals from Rishikesh, Dehradun or Haridwar have stayed over for staycations and the hotel has also been abode to some large-scale weddings.

### F&B

We are delighted to share that Toya, the pan-Asian restaurant housed within the hotel has been honoured within Travel and Leisure, Delicious Dining Awards 2023 for Best New restaurant. The outlook for the Indian hospitality industry remains positive with a firm believe that the coming times will bring more business with it. In terms of an overview of the hospitality sector, I feel that the geographical location of a hotel plays a pivotal role in positioning the nature of the guests or the high selling periods so only time will tell what is it that we will experience more - MICE, FITs, Leisure, Staycations or a mix of all. ■



Amardeep Singh,  
General Manager,  
The Westin Resort & Spa, Himalayas

**“We understand the responsibility of the hotel towards its environment and have thus announced The Plus Initiative supported by THSC to provide skill training to the youth in Uttarakhand. We have also partnered with Jivisa Wellness, a local wellness brand from the Uttarakhand to source the most authentic and natural tea blends used at the hotel.”**



Amit Sharma,  
General Manager,  
Amanora The Fern-An Ecotel Hotel

**“The Fern as a brand is firmly committed to sustainability. We have joined hands with Abid Surti at Drop Dead Foundation in association with National Geographic Traveller India to save water across India. Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle are strictly followed at the hotel.”**

## Amit Sharma

### 'Amanora The Fern offer best banqueting services in Pune'

*Amanora The Fern is one of the best wedding destinations and events hotel in Pune. Pre –Covid times, the hotel used to host big events spanning 200 to 2800 pax. While Staycations and FITs kept the wheels churning, MICE is now returning in full form and 2023 definitely looks a promoting year.*

**Amit Sharma, General Manager, Amanora The Fern-An Ecotel Hotel, Pune shares more...**

#### The Year 2023 so far

The FY 2023-24 has started on a quite positive and exciting note at Amanora The Fern, Pune though a bit of market correction has happened as compared to same time last year (April-June). July onwards business has been steady with an average occupancy of 80% YTD and an ARR/ ADR growth of almost 10-11 %. Looking at the present scenario the future of the hospitality industry looks quite bright and encouraging.

#### New Additions / Renovations

Yes, looking at the demand we have added 23 more rooms for our guests with state-of-the-art facilities and use of technology. All our rooms are equipped with big balconies with sit-outs and are either lake facing or garden facing and have a modern city view, making them a perfect choice for your stay. We are an F&B-driven hotel with huge banqueting space to choose from 50 pax to 2700 pax. Our banquet halls and beautifully landscaped lawn area are one of the most sought-after Corporate/ Wedding event destinations in Pune.

Also, we would be opening our much-awaited 150 covers Lake restaurant & bar which would be serving multi-cuisine flavours and would be located right in the lake overlooking the lake and lush gardens.

#### Eco-friendly Initiatives

The Fern as a brand is firmly committed to sustainability & Eco-friendly practices under the able

guidance of our Executive Chairman Mr. Param Kannampilly. Three core elements of Sustainable development are economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental Protection. We in the hospitality industry need to understand that sustainable practices not only benefit the environment but also help you save money on your business.

We at The Fern Hotels have joined hands with Abid Surti at Drop Dead Foundation in association with National Geographic Traveller India to save water across India.

Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle are strictly followed in all the areas of the hotel. Also, we have a focus on using organic amenities to minimize food wastage. Energy & Motion tracking, installing smart technology in rooms, and using energy-efficient lights in all areas.

#### Domestic or Inbound?

We are predominantly a domestic market-oriented hotel where we cater to all requirements of the customers offering them modern rooms, great restaurants, classy bars along with superb banquet facilities and 6 spa rooms. However, we also have quite a few expats long stayers with us who stay with us and make full use of additional sports facilities such as Squash Courts, Tennis Courts, Badminton, Snooker/ Billiards table and pool table along with badminton, an 80-seater proper movie theatre which showcases movies every weekend for our guests as we have positioned ourselves as a Hotel & Club. ■

Jai Chugh

## 'Hotels must keep up with new offerings and technology'

*Riding on the wave of optimism, DoubleTree by Hilton Gurugram Baani Square is hopeful for exciting times ahead as India is hosting a number of international events, including G20 presidency & ICC Men's World Cup matches in various cities. This will certainly provide a substantial surge in demand for accommodation with high occupancy levels.*

**Jai Chugh, General Manager, DoubleTree by Hilton Gurugram Baani Square shares more...**

### 2023 so far

The year 2023 has been remarkable for our hotel as it has logged a strong surge in occupancy over the previous year. We are touching an average of 80% occupancy every month this year and the ARR has shown 65% growth compared to the previous year. MICE has also picked up the pace which will further strengthen ADRs in Q4 2023. The prospects for the hospitality industry in Q3 and Q4 of Financial Year 2023-24 look promising.

### New Features / Renovation

Few of our recent developments in product enhancement and elevating guest experience includes – Great Small Breaks, which is a Hilton concept curated to attract families looking for a staycation. This is currently active on our website and inclusions curated at the property level includes complimentary breakfast & dinner, wi-fi, complimentary kids' menu, in-room games, late check-out. Crèche/Day Care Facility is offered by our hotel in association with a reputed Pre-School & Day Care facility for guests and team members. Our hotel has also associated with a Dog Boarding & Grooming facility that allows guest to avail this facility with pick up and drop option at a special rate. Our Café O Lait now has a retail corner that offers many healthy and grab & go items. Lastly, we are in the process of renovating our hotel exteriors, rooms, F&B outlets, fitness centre & lawns.

### Sustainability Initiatives

The hotel has installed Building

Management System in order to control the usage of electricity units and thermostats paired with motion sensors. All public areas have LED lights and sensor lights in some of the back areas. The hotel recycles all wastewater generated in the hotel and reuse it in gardening, WC and cooling towers & running laundry operations on alternate days during low occupancy that saves both water and electricity. The hotel has switched from LPG to PNG which is more energy efficient. We are also increasing the use of glass bottles in restaurants and event spaces, biodegradable food containers for events and food deliveries and recyclable disposable bags and stationery.

### Domestic or Inbound?

At DoubleTree by Hilton Gurugram Baani Square, over 73% of occupancy has been from domestic travellers when we closed in Q2 of 2023. Domestic travel is expected to grow further by 2 per cent for the full year for us considering the G20 presidency in India in September. We have seen a massive shift in tourism from inbound to domestic in 2022 and we expect this to continue through 2023. We are expecting this year to be better with a higher share of occupancies and RevPAR over last year with leisure segment taking the centre stage. We being a business hotel receive major traffic from FITs, MICE events and weddings as key revenue contributors. ■

Jai Chugh,  
General Manager,  
DoubleTree by Hilton Gurugram Baani Square

**"We have seen a massive shift in tourism from inbound to domestic in 2022 and we expect this to continue through 2023. We are expecting this year to be better with a higher share of occupancies and RevPAR. Ours being a business hotel, we get major traffic from FITs, MICE events and weddings as key revenue contributors."**



Koustuva Mukherjee,  
Associate Vice President and General Manager,  
Pride Plaza Hotel Ahmedabad

**“At Pride Plaza Ahmedabad, we have witnessed significant traffic in weddings and MICE segments. With nine banquet venues and 180 rooms, we are well-equipped to cater to large weddings, accommodating around 700-800 guests in our banquet space. The MICE segment also performs strongly, as we provide comprehensive event solutions.”**

## Koustuva Mukherjee

### ‘We anticipate an upsurge in inbound tourism during Christmas time’

*With upcoming important matches of the World Cup to be played in Ahmedabad, the city is anticipating a significant jump in both ARR and occupancy during that time and Pride Plaza Hotel Ahmedabad is geared to ride this buoyant tide.*

**Koustuva Mukherjee, Associate Vice President and General Manager, Pride Plaza Hotel Ahmedabad shares more...**

#### Year 2023 so far

The year 2023 has been quite promising for our property in Ahmedabad in terms of occupancy and ARR. The city hosted significant events like the G20, which had a favorable impact on both metrics. The G20 attracted a large number of delegates, government officials, and business executives from around the world, leading to a surge in demand for hotel accommodations and hospitality services. This resulted in high occupancy rates and maximized revenue generation for the hotels in Ahmedabad.

#### New additions / Renovation

Our hotel in Ahmedabad is undergoing phased renovations, and we are planning to add more rooms to the property. Currently, the hotel has 164 rooms, and after the renovation, it is expected to have approximately 180 rooms. In addition to the room expansion, we are also creating additional banquet space, which will prove beneficial during the upcoming “World Cup” matches and other major events held in the city.

#### Sustainability Initiatives

We have adopted the elimination of single-use plastic in all our hotels, reducing our environmental footprint. To reduce food waste, we have set a target of 40% less food wastage and promote energy-efficient practices in our owned and managed properties. Many of our hotels are equipped

with Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) to conserve water and minimize our carbon footprint. We prioritize the use of LED lighting for energy efficiency and have plans to increase the use of compostable, recyclable, or recycled content packaging for takeaway food containers and carry bags. Rainwater harvesting pits are used to utilise water efficiently in certain areas of the properties, and sensors in public area washrooms help prevent water wastage. Plastic straws have been replaced with paper and wooden alternatives, and we use refillable dispensers for toiletries to reduce single-use plastic.

#### Domestic or Inbound?

Our focus is balanced between the domestic market and inbound tourism. However, Ahmedabad’s primary emphasis lies in the domestic market, mainly due to the thriving pharmaceutical and automobile industries in the region. While we cater to domestic travellers throughout the year, we anticipate an upsurge in inbound tourism during the Christmas season. This period sees an increased number of NRGs (Non-Residential Gujaratis) traveling to Gujarat for their annual visits, boosting the inbound market during that time. We attribute our success to our workforce-friendly approach, sustainable initiatives, and strong networking among guests and all stakeholders, which reflects the core of our organizational culture. We are excited about the future.. ■

# Anoop Pandey

## 'The inbound market is yet to return in full swing'

*JW Marriott Mussoorie Walnut Grove Resort & Spa is witnessing a significant trend where travel patterns are reverting to pre-pandemic norms. This positive development has led to a thriving business environment, reminiscent of the bustling days we all experienced before the pandemic.*

**Anoop Pandey, General Manager, JW Marriott Mussoorie Walnut Grove Resort & Spa, shares more...**

### Year 2023 so far

Despite being a seasonal destination, JW Marriott Walnut Grove Resort & Spa Mussoorie has continued to maintain a steady level of occupancy, with no decline observed as of 2022. One key addition that helped us tap into emerging markets is direct flights to Mussoorie. These new flight connections have not only contributed to sustained occupancy but have also given Mussoorie an opportunity to showcase the unique offerings of the region to a wider audience.

### New addition / Renovation

To further elevate our offerings, we have carefully curated new and exciting experiences to cater to diverse interests and preferences. One such endeavour is our holistic well-being program, Himalayan Escapade. This exclusive offering is designed to provide guests with a rejuvenating and immersive retreat amidst the serene beauty of the Himalayas.

Another enticing addition is the Hilly Hideout Experience package, a perfect getaway for those seeking meaningful moments in a tranquil setting. Additionally, we are excited to introduce our latest project, the JW Dome, as part of our experiential dining offerings. The JW Dome provides a respite from the outside world, enveloping guests in a gentle ambiance with soothing lighting and harmonious decor.

### Sustainability Initiatives

The hotel successfully participated

in the Good Travel with Marriott Bonvoy program with the Implant Nature experience, focusing on the Environment Protection pillar. Additionally, we take pride in growing unique herbs and botanicals in our own greenhouse, supporting our vegan-friendly Mediterranean dining venue, The Wisteria Deck.

Solar water heating plant and energy-efficient LED lamps are in place throughout the property, reducing energy consumption. Water management is enhanced with aerators in bath fittings, while occupancy sensors help optimize energy usage. Rainwater harvesting and a zero-discharge STP contribute to sustainable water usage and landscape maintenance. Biodegradable garbage disposing bags have replaced conventional ones, improving waste disposal systems. The Mobile Key program reduces plastic waste and residential amenities have replaced single-use bathroom amenities, and all guest room amenities are organic and eco-friendly.

### Domestic or Inbound?

As a destination, Mussoorie holds allure for both domestic and outbound markets, making it a versatile and sought-after location. At our hotel, we welcome a diverse mix of guests from both segments. However, the domestic market has been resilient and continues to contribute significantly to our occupancy, the inbound market is yet to return in full swing and may take some additional time to fully recover. ■



Anoop Pandey,  
General Manager,  
JW Marriott Mussoorie Walnut Grove Resort & Spa

**“Through a conscious effort, we have strategically positioned our property to cater to a diverse clientele, with a focus on leisure travellers, FITs, and we are also becoming popular as a niche destination for weddings. As travel patterns evolve, we have also observed the emergence of leisure travel among business travellers.”**

# Visit Naad Wellness to Disconnect, Heal and Reconnect with the World

*In today's world, the ceaseless bustle and hustle drown our senses in a never-ending symphony of noises, tasks, and challenges. More than ever, the longing for peace of mind and a healthy spirit and body has become an echoing sentiment for many. Wellness, in this context, becomes not just a want but an essential need. When we envision wellness retreats, our imaginations often transport us to secluded mountain ranges or serene valleys, detached from urban chaos. However, Naad Wellness comes forth as an unexpected and delightful surprise, challenging this stereotypical notion.*

**L**ocated just a few kilometres away from the vibrant capital region of Delhi NCR, Naad Wellness stands as an emblem of holistic health and serenity. It's a place where urban proximity meets an oasis of tranquillity. As its mantra suggests, the centre invites guests to 'Disconnect, Heal, and Reconnect'. And it delivers on this promise seamlessly.

The beauty of Naad Wellness isn't just its geographic location. The real allure is its philosophy and the way it offers a spectrum of wellness

opportunities. As you step into this haven, you are greeted with an atmosphere that instantly cuts ties with the external noise. Here, you are not just a visitor; you embark on a journey. A journey that begins with detachment from the world's constant demands, progresses into healing your mind, body, and spirit, and concludes with you re-establishing a connection with the world, but on healthier, rejuvenated terms.

The treatments and therapies at Naad are meticulously designed, fusing ancient knowledge with modern

techniques. They cater to the individual needs of visitors, ensuring that each person's experience is bespoke and transformative. Moreover, the experts at Naad are committed to guiding you through this voyage of rediscovery and rejuvenation.

The setting of Naad Wellness is nothing short of enchanting. Surrounded by lush greenery, the centre offers tastefully furnished luxurious rooms, each with its own balcony or private area, overlooking the picturesque surroundings. The attention to detail is evident in every aspect of the centre,





from the treatments offered to the meals served.

Speaking of meals, food at Naad Wellness is an experience in itself. Adhering to Ayurveda's principle that food is one of the three pillars of life, the centre places immense importance on nutrition. The vegetarian meals, prepared from freshly procured ingredients either grown at the centre or sourced from nearby farms, are customized for each guest. This customization takes into

account individual body types, medical history, and health objectives, ensuring that every meal contributes to the guest's overall well-being.

But perhaps the most compelling testimony to the effectiveness of this sanctuary is the transformation visitors undergo. Once you leave Naad Wellness, it's not just about feeling good for a few days. The experience equips you to confront life's challenges with newfound energy and perspective. You're not just

refreshed; you are reborn, ready to embrace the world with open arms and a serene heart.

In conclusion, if the rigours of daily life have dimmed your spirit, it's time for rejuvenation. And what better place than Naad Wellness? Here, you don't just get a retreat; you undergo a metamorphosis. Experience it to believe it. And once you do, the world will witness a more radiant, resilient, and revitalised you. ■



# TAAI Convention in Colombo concludes on a highly successful note

*The 67<sup>th</sup> TAAI Convention and Exhibition that recently concluded in Colombo, Sri Lanka was a resounding success. Never in history has the President of the host country been a part of the Convention, as was the case this time. The Sri Lankan hospitality was at its best and they left no stone unturned in organising a wonderful and memorable experience for all the delegates. The insightful and invigorating Business Sessions kept the audience captive as they listened in rapt attention to the suggestions and viewpoints of their industry colleague.*

Priyanka Saxena Ray



The inaugural function of the 67<sup>th</sup> Conference of TAAI commenced at the BMICH in Colombo, setting the stage for an awe-inspiring opening ceremony that left the audience captivated. The conference centred around the profound connection shared by India and Sri Lanka, showcasing the vibrant essence of Sri Lankan culture through a mesmerizing performance by the renowned Channa Upuli Dance Troupe. Nishad Wijetunga, the President of SLAITO, extended a warm welcome to the distinguished delegation. Both Jyoti Mayal, the President of TAAI, and Gopal Baglay, the Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, addressed the gathering, emphasising the significance of India-Sri Lanka relations in the context of tourism. The Chief Guest of the evening, His Excellency President Ranil Wickremasinghe, further reiterated the profound bond between the two nations with a brilliant speech that highlighted the awe-inspiring sights found in Sri Lanka. Mr. Lokesh Bettaiah, Hon. Secretary General, TAAI concluded the evening with a Vote of Thanks, honouring the esteemed dignitaries, TAAI delegates and most importantly the Sri Lankan officials, who had played a crucial role in making the Convention possible.

The Day 2 of the 67<sup>th</sup> TAAI Convention kick-started with a houseful of travel and hospitality professionals, eagerly waiting for engaging business sessions followed by a B2B session showcasing the best of Sri Lanka's Accommodation Providers and Destination Management Companies. Mr. Harin Fernando, Honourable Minister of Tourism and Lands, Sri Lanka

The Session on India Tourism Vision 2047: A Transformed Landscape of Experiences and Connections witnessed an exciting discussion between Arvind Singh, former Secretary Tourism, Government of India; Madhavan Menon, Managing Director at Thomas Cook India Limited; Mr Nipun Agarwal, Chief Commercial





and Transformation Officer, Air India; K.B. Kachru, Chairman Emeritus & Principal Advisor – South Asia, Radisson Hotels Group and moderator Ashish Gupta, Consulting CEO, FAITH. Insightful presentations were made by Pieter Elbers, CEO Indigo and Tisum Jayasuriya, Chairman Sri Lanka Convention bureau. An interesting discussion on potential of aviation was moderated by Kapil Kaul, CEO and Director, CAPA India with panellists Amitabh Khosla – Country Director – India, IATA; Praveen Iyer – Co-Founder & Chief Commercial Officer, Akasa Air; Rajeev Bhatia – Chief Commercial Officer, Amadeus India; Vinay Malhotra – Head of Global Sales, Indigo and Richard Nuttall – CEO, Sri Lankan Airlines.

Adding a stimulating perspective to travel were two intriguing sessions. One was a detailed presentation on Experiential Travel – A Paradigm Shift in Tourism by Dr Navina Jafa, Expert Cultural Skills & Sustainable Development

and other was a motivational story of a true journey by Ajeet Bajaj and daughter Deeya Bajaj on climbing the Seven Summits – The Trailbalzers' journey!

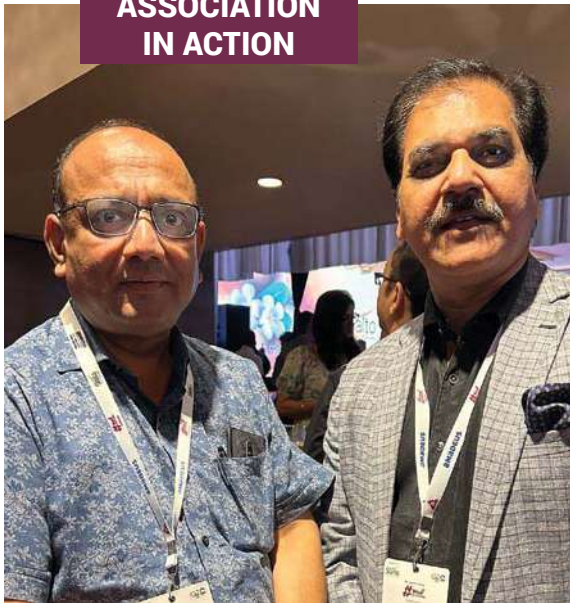
A brilliant evening to cap off an enthralling Day 2 was held at the Cinnamon Grand. Following a Sri Lanka Theme, the event was named "an evening in Colombo" and featured captivating dance performances, oriental music and delicious meals & drinks. The evening was graced by the presence of Hon. Minister of Tourism & Lands Mr. Harin Fernando and the Chief Guest Hon. Speaker Mr. Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena, who both gave exhaustive speeches highlighting the importance of India market for Sri Lanka. Besides cultural affinity, both countries share crucial tourism ties too.

Sharing her thoughts, Mrs. Jyoti Mayal said, "For us it was important to stick to our commitment of holding the Convention in Sri Lanka. I personally believe that Sri Lanka as a destination

has much to offer and as a neighbouring country, we must do everything in our power to help the country come out of the economic crisis. India's relationship with BIMSTEC countries presents a significant opportunity for enhancing tourism ties and we all must work upon it. We are thrilled to be hosted by Sri Lanka and completely overwhelmed by the warm response that we have received. I am confident that this Convention will prove to be a milestone in the India – Sri Lanka relations and also the country's tourism graph."

During the course of the evening, the Hon. Tourism Minister also shared his opinion. He said, "We have a target of 4 million tourists and we are confident of achieving it because India is out No.1 source market. We are not just a beach destination but also a beautiful island that is brimming with touristic offerings – we are a 365 days destination. Sri Lanka is called the Pearl of the Indian Ocean for

## ASSOCIATION IN ACTION





its beauty and multitude attractions.” The Minister also spoke highly about TAAI, especially President Jyoti Mayal, who has remained a loyal friend of Sri Lanka and stuck to her commitment of holding the Convention in the country, obstacles notwithstanding. The closing speech was given by Chairman Organising Committee Maahen Kariyawasam followed by the Vote of Thanks by Vice President TAAI Mr. Jay Bhatia, who applauded the efforts of his peers and acknowledged that the Sri Lanka Tourism went out of their way to make the TAAI Convention a grand success.

The Day 3, the final day of the TAAI Convention took delegates to a new venue – The Shangri-La Colombo, which is one of the poshest hotels in the city. The morning started with the signing of the MoU between Nexus DMC CEO Vinay Gupta and TAAI President for its new landmark website – NEXTAAI. “The total size of the Global Tourism sector is 8 trillion and with NexTAAI we have combined the strength of people + innovation + experience + relations. This is the first time that an association has taken such a move for its members,” said Vinay. Giving real-time presentation to the audience, he explained how TAAI members can make use of this new portal to create flawless itineraries in

a short span of time and also do easy follow-ups and changes. Mr. Amish Desai, Member Managing Committee, TAAI was the key person from TAAI overseeing this new technological breakthrough. Keeping the energy momentum going, Yogesh Chhabria, author, speaker and founder of The Happionaire Way stepped in and motivated the gathering to always have a positive and ‘I can do it’ attitude towards everything in life.

Roping in international viewpoint, the session on Transcending Borders – Strengthening International Relations for a Transformed World brought together Ms. Ho Thi Thanh Truc. Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Sri Lanka; Mr. Paul Stephens, High Commissioner, High Commission of Australia, Sri Lanka; Mr. Katsuki Kotaro – Charge D’Affaires, Embassy of Japan, Sri Lanka; Mr. Fakhri Alivev – Charge D’Affaires, Embassy of Azerbaijan. New Delhi and Mr. Maged Mosleh – Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Sri Lanka. Any noteworthy discussion on tourism is incomplete without discussing how Technology has upped the game in travel. Titled Differentiating Travel – Perspectives from Industry Experts, the panellists included Dev Karvat – Founder and CEO, Asego Travel LLP; G B Srithar – Regional Director, India, Middle East & South Asia, Singapore

Tourism Board; Commander Nevil Malao – Senior Vice President, JM Baxi & Co.; Noel Swain, COO – Passport, eVisa, Identity & Citizen Services, VFS Global and was moderated by Ashish Gupta, Consulting CEO, FAITH. Rounding off the three hectic days of the Convention, Mr. Shreeram Patel, Hon. Treasurer, TAAI in his concluding Vote of Thanks acknowledged the Supporters, Speakers and Delegates of the Convention while extending a special thanks to the host country.

Another day full of engaging business sessions was followed by a B2B session showcasing the best of Sri Lanka’s Accommodation Providers and Destination Management Companies.

A stunning end to the TAAI 67th Convention with a night of scintillating entertainment at the beautiful Heritance Negombo. Set overlooking the beautiful golden beaches of Negombo, the TAAI delegates were treated to the very best of English, Sinhala, Tamil and Hindi entertainment with the likes of Umara, Roy Jackson, Judy De Silva, Jacqueline Hettiarachchi, Danu Innasithamby, Ricky Bahar and many more. The performances were complimented by dances, fireworks and delicious food and drinks. Plenty of Lucky Draws ensured that the delegates went back happy after having attended a landmark TAAI Convention. ■



*Tarot Card Reading is the art and science which helps understand the present status and the future course. It helps to apply course correction, if required. Tarot Card can be used for shaping Career, Health, Finance, Business, Relationship, Marriage, Match-making, etc. Ms. Richa Srivastava, a renowned Tarot Card Reader conducts exclusive Tarot reading under the banner - Tathaastu. Here are her predictions for June 2023.*



## March 21 – April 20

This month you will work hard to carefully plan your strategies. A drastic change in your surrounding environment would stimulate your creativity and help you achieve better results. Do not invest in risky ventures. Mutual trust and comprehension may strengthen your relationship.



## July 23 – August 21

If you are willing to be flexible and open to new opportunities, this could be a turning point in your career. Expenses may arise this month. Be sure to give all your plans a serious consideration. This is a great time to host a small get together.



## November 23 – December 22

Some people may want to take this month to think things over. Know your strengths and work on your weaknesses. Those interested in beginning a professional life may soon be able to do so. Couples can plan for relaxation and better bonding.



## April 21 – May 21

If you keep an optimistic outlook, you can achieve your goals. Get ready to put in the required effort and pursue your goals. Maintaining a stable family budget is important to avoid wasteful spending. Pay attention to your partner. Take care of your health.



## August 22 – September 23

There can be professional and financial benefits for you if you listen to and implement suggestions from your subordinates. You must strike a balance between your professional and personal lives to keep your relationship running smoothly. There is a likely possibility of meeting your prospective partner.



## December 23 – January 20

Now is the time to step up confidently and take on any and all professional obstacles that may lie in your path. You may be spending a little more than you earn, so it's time to look at your budget. Don't bother getting involved in debates that aren't relevant to you.



## May 22 – June 21

Be cautious in your career and financial dealing this month. Those who are thinking of making a career change should hold off for a while longer. If relations within your family have been tense, it may be good idea to make plans to spend some time together.



## September 24 – October 23

Get out of your enchanted bubble and start making use of your skills. Work hard to achieve your goals, even when the odds are stacked against you. To maintain peace and harmony at home, it is important to communicate openly and confidently with everyone in your family.



## January 21 – February 19

Having an efficient work ethic and a keen eye for detail can help you rise in the professional ranks and even earn you recognition from your peers. Avoid investments or deals that promise to be risk free. Weigh your options carefully before committing. Take good care of your health.



## June 22 – July 22

Positive emotions are likely to persist throughout this month for you. Examining your investment portfolio to eliminate losses may be a sensible move. If you want to feel fit and energised, sticking to an exercise routine may be essential.



## October 24 – November 22

It may be a career high point for you if you manage to pull off a particularly challenging task with flying colours. Keep your goals in mind as you move forward while following the rules. You should avoid making crucial financial decisions.

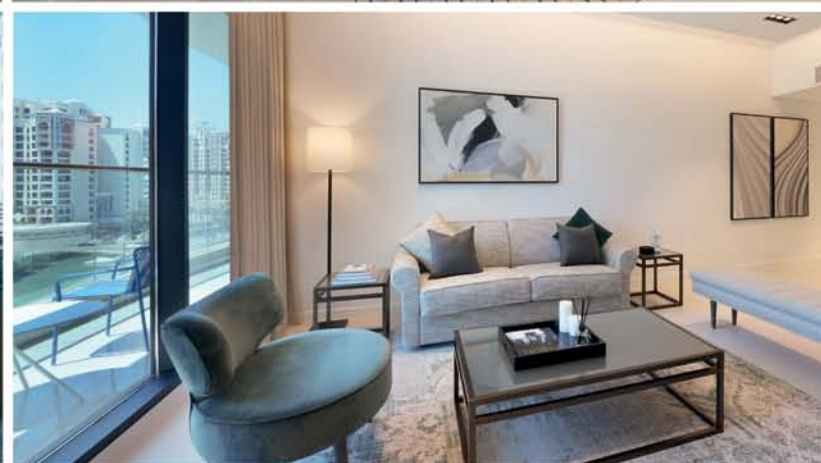
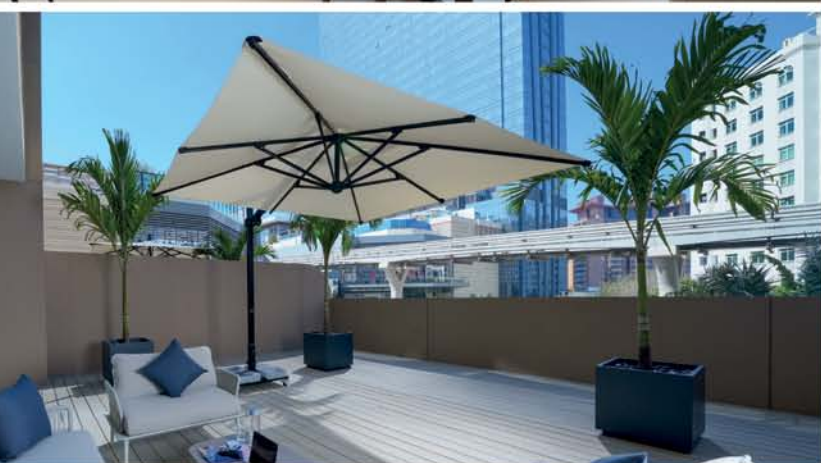


## February 20 – March 20

Now is the time to institute structure and discipline at home or on in the workplace, which will help reap benefits in the future. This month your partner is likely to be encouraging and supportive of you. Plan to manage your finances. Start meditation.



# CHEVAL MAISON THE PALM DUBAI



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SCAN TO FIND OUT MORE

# Post renovations, the Çırağan Palace Kempinski Istanbul readies to welcome guests

*On an India tour recently to meet up with the travel trade professionals and media, which was organised by the Nijhawan Group in Delhi and Mumbai, Mr. Ralph Radtke, General Manager of Çırağan Palace Kempinski Istanbul and Regional Director of Kempinski Residences Türkiye shared some interesting insights about his property. A firm believer of quality service and team prosperity, he shared his future plans in an exclusive chat with BOTT.*

Priyanka Saxena Ray

Sharing his views on the renovation, Mr. Radtke said, "The renovations at the hotel took almost a year and the reason it has taken this long is because we are going about the entire thing in a very organised and phased manner. For us, the guests come first. No one would like to stay in a hotel that has constructions sounds going on. Therefore, we were very careful so as to not spoil the guest experience. We have undergone an extensive redesign of our hotel building, encompassing everything from the grand hotel entrance to the elegantly crafted lobby, luxurious rooms and suites, and two brand-new restaurants."

This unique hotel is the only Ottoman Imperial Palace and Hotel on the Bosphorus that once hosted Sultans. The property has a heritage that dates back to the 17th century. The location of the property is the best in the city and over the years, it has become popular for hosting bespoke grand weddings alongwith memorable holidays. The 'Mittal Wedding', which took place pre Covid set the benchmark for Big Fat Indian Weddings. Currently, about 15 – 20% of the weddings that take place in the hotel are Indian Weddings.

Talking about the renovations, the entrance, lobby, rooms and have been completely redesigned with inspiration from the history and architecture of the Çırağan Palace, which defy time with their admirable styles. Two new restaurants have also been added to the hotel. Being managed by Kempinski, Europe's oldest luxury hotel group, Çırağan Palace Kempinski Istanbul, has evolved its entire hotel building into an

even more impressive appearance with a poetic transformation.

The two new restaurants, located in the hotel building, are being appreciated not only for their designs but also for their menus and service styles. Serving in the concept of a chef's restaurant, Akdeniz by Esra Muslu welcomes taste lovers at Çırağan Palace Kempinski Istanbul with its unparalleled theme of Mediterranean cuisine. As one of the most successful female chefs of Türkiye, Muslu keeps the Turkish traditions alive while interpreting them for Çırağan Palace with Mediterranean touches. The other restaurant, Gazebo, is again one of the most popular taste stops in the city with its flamboyant ambiance, service style and menu. It has adapted the Ottoman Garden art to the present in its new design.

"At the Çırağan Palace Kempinski, which hosts a unique luxury experience, we will make our guests experience the feeling of spending time in a real palace with our redesigned hotel rooms, suites, lobby, hotel entrance and restaurants. We will be pleased to host our distinguished guests from all over the world at Çırağan Palace Kempinski, where we bring together the most sophisticated form of Turkish hospitality with a unique luxury inspired by the history of Çırağan Palace. It is a worldwide known award-winning hotel that has always kept destination marketing a priority, promoted Turkish hospitality and Istanbul in the best possible way.

History has been made here. In this new era, we carry the traces of the past into the future and offer a service beyond luxury," concluded the passionate GM. ■



Mr. Ralph Radtke,  
General Manager of Çırağan Palace  
Kempinski Istanbul and Regional Director  
of Kempinski Residences Türkiye



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