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M!CEtalk

A DDP Publication®

Meetings • Incentives • Conferences • Events

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BLEISURE-FUL**

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PUBLISHER & EDITOR

SanJeev

EDITORIAL TEAM

Lipla Negi
Nisha Verma
Hazel Jain
V.N. Murthi
Devika Seth

DESIGN

Rashi Girdhar

ADVERTISING

Arumita Gupta
Meetu Malhotra
Jaspreet Kaur

ADVERTISEMENT DESIGNERS

Nitin Kumar

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Anil Kharbanda

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Ashok Rana

MUMBAI: ADVERTISING

Harshal Ashar
Priyanshu Wankhade



New Delhi:
72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi-110001, India
Tel: +91-11-23234177
E-mail: talk@ddpl.com

Mumbai:
504 Marine Chambers, 43 New Marine Lines, Mumbai
400 020, India
Tel: +91-22-22070129, 22070130
Fax: +91-22-22070131
E-mail: mumbai@ddpl.com

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Rashi Girdhar

NEWS

Park Plaza, Zirakpur launches *shaadi* saga

Park Plaza, Zirakpur, of Sarovar Hotels, has announced the launch of #*ShaadisagabyParkPlazaZirakpur*. This offers guests a one-stop shop towards creating a *shaadi* experience to guests. Under the drive, clients are provided venues, theme-based décor, event manager, and wedding memories photo frame, among others.



Ballroom in Grand Hyatt remodelled Grand Hyatt Mumbai Hotel &

Residences, from high-end corporate affairs to big fat

Indian wedding. It has revamped its banqueting space to offer guests a grand experience.



Navjit Ahluwalia
Senior Vice President and
Country Head of Hilton in India



We are committed to opening The Hilton Garden Inn Hotel in Bengaluru, The Hilton and the Convention Centre at Embassy Manyata Business Park this year



IMTECH show rescheduled

Indian Machine Tool Manufacturers' Association has rescheduled 'IMTEX FORMING & Tooltech'. IMTEX FORMING 2022 & Tooltech 2022 and Digital Manufacturing 2022 will be held at the Bengaluru International Exhibition Centre (BIEC) from June 16 to 21, 2022.



Dubai at the helm of business events

With 41 opulent rooms and modern M!CE facilities, the Best Western Vrindavan enters Mathura, U.P. The hotel has a premium banquet hall (Stratus), a boardroom (Let's Talk), and open lawns (Lush Green), making it the ideal location for all events for groups of 700 to 1,000 people.



Japan
outbound
M!CE to
cross \$7 bn



By 2025, the Japanese outbound M!CE tourism sector is predicted to exceed US \$7 billion. The US is the most popular destination for Japanese M!CE travellers. Also, Japan is the largest source market for Singapore's and Hawaii's M!CE industries. According to Statista, the entire global value of the Japan outbound M!CE tourism business was around US\$ 3.94 trillion in 2019.



New Hilton property opens in Asia Pacific

Hilton recently opened Hilton Singapore Orchard. Located on Orchard Road, the 1,080-room property sets a new benchmark of hospitality with a blend of contemporary design and dining experiences. “We celebrate a milestone with the opening of our largest hotel in Asia Pacific,” said **Alan Watts**, President, Asia Pacific, Hilton. The hotel features facilities for meetings, conferences, and events.

Incentives for Indian visitors

While interacting with business counterparts physically is still a challenge, Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau is offering incentives to promote virtual trade visitors to shows coming up in Thailand. The support scheme — fee for virtual attendance is US \$125,000 and US \$25,000 for physical presence — was shared during the TCEB webinar. It was held for MICE agency owners from India. For virtual attendees, the incentive is US \$50 per visitor subject to three meetings during the show per visitor. There are plenty of shows lined up in Thailand during 2022 on a variety of topics.



Rise in Priority Pass network

Priority Pass, premier airport lounge and experiences programme, operated by Collinson, has announced it has added 183 airport lounges and experiences to its network in 2021. The aim is to focus on making premium experiences accessible for its members by announcing a tie-up with CarTrawler. As part of increasing its network, Priority Pass added 134 new premium lounges, designed to be an oasis for travellers, in 2021. Through its sister firm, Airport Dimensions, the members were given access to a new lounge concept.



In-person meetings hike productivity: IACC

Value and output of in-person meetings are crucial. The trend towards smaller hub and spoke format meetings with in-person regional groups connected virtually is here to stay, as per IACC Meeting Room of the Future Report 2022 stated.

Growth in global M!CE industry by 2028: Study

A Research Dive study has examined the present situation and future scope of the global M!CE industry, forecasts it likely to hit US \$1,619 billion by 2028 rising at a CAGR of 5.9 per cent.



Eyeing fair market share

We believe luxurious brands will thrive in market such as India. Also, guests are keen to explore these brands, says **Pratima Badhwar**, Head-Commercial, Accor India & South Asia.

Nisha Verma

Revealing a bouquet of offerings from Accor, **Pratima Badhwar**, Head-Commercial, Accor India & South Asia said, “For India, we are aiming to reach 70 hotels by 2025. Our portfolio of leading hotel brands across the luxury, premium, mid-scale, and economy segments compliment the Indian market, while supporting our long-term growth strategy. With our presence across cities, we have been able to capture a fair market share and are trending better than 2019 levels at many of our properties. The tier 2 and 3 markets have shone despite COVID-19 and shone through to recovery.”

LUXURY OFFERINGS

Claiming that they have strengthened their market position in India by introducing Accor’s luxury brands here, she said, “With the introduction of Raffles and Fairmont, we are able to solidify our position in the country. The guests are keen to explore these brands for newer experiences. Raffles



Pratima Badhwar



As the curbs are fully lifted, the inbound market will start moving



Udaipur has been garnering good occupancy levels indicating that the Indian market is looking forward to experiencing world class luxury synonym to the brand. We believe that in a market such as India, luxurious hospitality brands will thrive, as there will always be an opportunity for the segment to rise.”

READY TO REOPEN BORDERS

With lifting of more curbs, demand trends are strengthening and ADRs are climbing up, she claimed. “As some international borders have been thrown open, corporate travel is starting to pick up pace, giving impetus to tier 1 markets. As the curbs are fully lifted, we should see the inbound tourists coming back to our leisure destinations,” said Bandhwar.

HAND-IN-HAND WITH TRADE

Claiming that Accor has worked closely with the travel trade world in domestic and international markets, she shared, “Through virtual platforms, we have participated in many informative sessions for our hotels in India and outside the region. We partnered with domestic consolidators and conducted roadshows in new source markets to generate additional demand for domestic business, especially for staycations and weddings.”

INDIAN PROMOTIONS

For the Indian market, she claimed, “We ensure we are agile and have the first mover advantage with our customers. By strengthening our sales structure, we are striving towards a better market share for each hotel as against pre-pandemic levels. Focus for Q2 and Q3 will be to maximise on the pent up corporate and M!CE demand for our hotels.”

QUICK BYTE Accor rolled out ‘Vivaah at Novotel’, conceptualised for virtual weddings, extends a hybrid approach



WELCOME BACK TO SINGAPORE

Travellers from India who are fully vaccinated can now visit Singapore quarantine free on Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL) flights.

Singapore Airlines operates daily VTL flights from Chennai, Delhi and Mumbai. From 16TH March 2022, all Singapore Airlines stations in India will operate VTL flights.

For the latest information, please visit <https://safetravel.ica.gov.sg/vtl/requirements-and-process>

Or scan the QR code below



singaporeimagine

‘We hit the sweet spot’

WelcomHeritage is all set to surpass pre-pandemic levels revenue-wise, says **Abinash Manghani**, CEO, WelcomHeritage in exclusive chat with M!CEtalk.

Lipla Negi

When the going gets tough, it is often recommended to go with the flow. At times, it does seem to be the only safe option. However for some, it is always about swimming against the tide, for it is in their DNA and that is what defines them. And while it puts them at risk in many cases, there are times when this strategy brings rich rewards. WelcomHeritage is a brand that believes in going against the flow, and during COVID-19 when almost all the hotel industry saw a slump, they saw themselves grow.



KEY TO THEIR GROWTH

A focus from WelcomeHeritage on a carefully curated bouquet of properties that are tucked away from the overcrowded cities. As Indians looked to get away from the pandemic and cities, properties managed by WelcomeHeritage were in great demand. “Our properties offered a perfect getaway from the crowd. Post-COVID-19, people do not want to stay in big, crowded hotels,” said **Abinash Manghani**, CEO, WelcomHeritage.

With face masks and social distancing being the norms of the day, smaller properties became first choice with travellers. “Nowadays, people want to be in resorts with not too many storeys in a building and not too many rooms on one floor. Our hotels

QUICK BYTE Our hotels work in the same category; the number of rooms at one destination vary from 35 to 60



Abinash Manghani

work in the same category; the number of rooms at one destination vary from 35 to 60. So we can say that we hit the sweet spot. We are benefiting from the size-centric approach. We are near the cities and not very far away,” said Manghani.

CROSSING 1,000-KEY MARK IN 2022

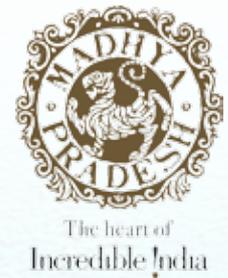
In 2020, the WelcomHeritage’s outlook for the year intends to build upon the success of the past year. The hotel chain is looking forward to four planned openings including WelcomHeritage Azora, Fort Kochi, WelcomHeritage Ayatana, Ooty, WelcomHeritage Desert Resort, Mandawa

and WelcomHeritage Parv Vilas, Solan this year. “Currently, we have 970 operational rooms. By this year end, we will hit 42 hotels and will cross the 1,000-key milestone. We should be at over 1,175 rooms by next year. We hope to get a lot more interesting destinations for our Indian and international travellers,” he said.

“As a brand, offering destinations where the customers can drive on their own, has worked for us. There has been a shift to branded hotel chains which promise safety and hygiene. There are many hotels which are doing fairly well and I expect this to continue for two to three years more until the Indian leisure space gets more mature. Right now, the Indian traveller is open to new destinations,” said Manghani.

We hope to get a lot more interesting destinations for the travellers

Beating heat in lap of nature



With arrival of summer season, you may have been mapping out tourist destinations to escape scorching heat. To make your task easier, let us have peek into two tourist spots of Madhya Pradesh, where you can explore wildlife, heritage, nature, and spirituality.

AMARKANTAK – ‘THE KING OF PILGRIMAGES’

If you are mulling to get refreshed and calm in the lap of nature experiencing religious and spiritual tourism, this is the place for you. Situated at an altitude of 1,000 metre, *Amarkantak*, known as *teerthraj* or ‘the king of pilgrimages’ is located at the meeting point of the three central India hill ranges - *Vindhyas*, *Satpuras*, and *Maikal*. The largest river of Madhya Pradesh, *Narmada* and *Son (Sone)* originate in *Amarkantak*, a town which has several ancient temples with a rich history.

HERE BEGINS THE JOURNEY

As you walk through the alleys of *Amarkantak*, you reach a place dotted with many small and bigger temples. There is a pond called *Narmada Kund* at the *Narmada Udgam* (where *Narmada* River originates). Here are *Narmada Mata* Temple and *Sonakshi Shaktipeeth* Temple.

SEEK BLESSINGS OF THE DIVINE

When you travel one km from *Narmada Udgam* towards south, you see *Trimukhi* Temple, a temple of Lord Shiva constructed between 1042 and 1122 AD. There is also an 18th century’s *Keshav Narayan* Temple. On the southern side of *Narmada Kund* are the ancient temples of *Kalachuri* period and one

km from *Narmada Mata* Temple in the east is *Mai ki Bagia*, where it is said which was visited by goddess *Narmada* to pluck fruits.

THE MILKY WATER STREAM

To escape the heat, one should head towards *Dugdha Dhara* and *Kapil Dhara*, one of the most popular tourist destinations. It is 6 km from the source of *Narmada* River.

Dugdha Dhara waterfall which looks like a milky white stream attracts tourists with its beauty. Less than one km south-west from *Dugdha Dhara* is *Kapil Dhara*. Surrounded by lush green hills. *Sonmuda* sunrise point is another tourist spot. One can have a bird’s eye view of the forest and mountains around it.

PLACES TO VISIT

Amarkantak has many attractive destinations for tourists, including *Shri Yantra* Temple, *Amareshwar Mahadev* Temple, *Son Udgam* Temple, *Bhrigu Kamandal*, *Durga Dhara* Fall and *Jwaleshwar* Temples, among others.

THINGS TO DO

Boat ride, trekking, paragliding, and the most important part is experiencing wellness tourism, yoga, and other meditational and spiritual practices to get rid of stress and anxiety.

PACHMARHI – ‘SATPURA KI RANI’

Situated at the mounting height, the state’s most verdant charm *Pachmarhi*, also known as ‘*Satpura ki Rani*’ (Queen of Satpuras), rules the range of *Satpura* Hills. This is the best time to visit *Pachmarhi* where one can also enjoy jeep safari in order to experience the beauty of this place.

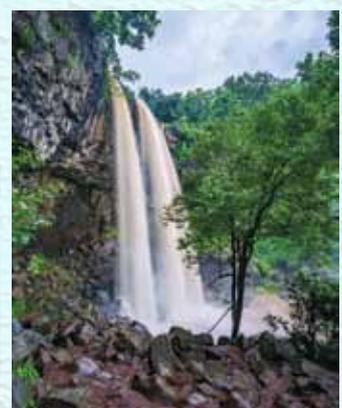
PANDAVAS AND JATA SHANKAR CAVE

‘*Pandavas Caves*’ is the most eye-catching spot. Legend has it that *Pandavas* built a house and lived here during their exile. The *Jata Shankar* Cave

has the 100-headed divine snake, *Seshnag*. The rock of this sacred cave depicts the entangled locks of Lord Shiva.

SATPURA NATIONAL PARK

One of India’s most beautiful tiger reserves, visitors to *Satpura National Park* can have a unique experience. The sanctuary was adjudged TOFT Wildlife Tourism Award for the most visitor-friendly wildlife destinations in the year 2010. Many of the tourist places in and around *Pachmarhi* include *Dhoopgarh*, *Bee Falls*, and *Duchess Falls*, among others.





Good times are ahead for hotels

Ravi Rai, Cluster GM, Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach, Novotel, Vijayawada Varun and The Bheemili Resort Managed by Accor Hotels discusses the future ahead.

MT Bureau

If 2020 was about survival. How has your journey been to revival?

The last couple of years have been tough for the guests and employees alike. Novotel Vijayawada Varun introduced monthly guest engagement events to bring cheer to the guests. All these events were held adhering to safety protocols and government restrictions. We focussed more on staycations, wellness packages for The Bheemili Resort managed by Accor and food deliveries.

What has changed between 2020 and 2022 for you and the brand at large?

The pandemic has disrupted the hotel's functioning. 2020 and 2021 were a rollercoaster ride for us, but we had a decent recovery post the second COVID-19 wave. During August and



Ravi Rai

Demand for wellness travel is going to go up, we may get a few bookings locally.

September 2021, we saw several guests visiting the hotel. The brand attributes the customer trust to adherence of safety protocol and our brand image. We were more focussed on domestic travellers, social weddings, ancillary business, takeaways, and ADR to be the market leader in terms of RGI and RevPar. Our vision is creating lifestyle experiences for all our guests.

What strategies have worked for you in terms of attracting the patrons as well as new clients?

Our hotel has emerged as the most hygienic hotel one in the city thanks to

maintaining safety protocol in every nook and corner of its premises. To take care of the health and wellbeing of our guests, we have implemented various measures. Currently, I feel the demand for wellness travel is going to increase and we may also get a few bookings locally. In order to capture this trend, we have rolled out several attractions for our guests.

How is Novotel Vishakhapatnam surviving in the current scenario?

We are witnessing an upsurge in hotel bookings. Leisure is growing with increased demand from local, interstate travellers while corporates are moving slowly. With Vizag being a leisure destination, we are looking at gaining consumer confidence by our hygiene measures for safe travel and stay experience.

QUICK BYTE Our hotel has emerged as the most hygienic hotel for adhering to safety protocol

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We are preparing to bounce back

Occupancy rate is now at 75%. The challenge we are facing now is inconsistency and we hope to overcome it, says **Anand Nair**, GM, Crowne Plaza Chennai Adyar Park.

MT Bureau

If 2020 was about survival, what are the key takeaways in your opinion?

The biggest learning for us moving from 2020 to 2021 was to be prepared to face any eventuality. We stopped worrying about the situation and started focussing on the solutions instead. Our strategies had to be extremely flexible and nimble enough to adjust to the ever-evolving scenarios. Importance was given to short-term tactical promotions to drive the overall strategy.

What has changed between 2020 and 2022 for you and the brand at large?

We have adapted ourselves to change more towards our customer's needs. Customers are quite clear on what they want so we strive to ensure all demands are met. Our main focus has been the IHG Clean Promise, Cleanliness being our top most priority with the safety protocols



Anand Nair

Cleanliness has been accorded priority. We see all COVID-19 norms are followed

being strictly followed. Our breakfast buffet has seen a big step up with sizeable improvements and changes made. The strategy for 2022 is to bring back corporate business in a large way and business from our loyal clients.

What new things has the hotel tried or launched to get business?

We introduced interesting ideas both in rooms as well as F&B. 'On the Rocks', our European specialty restaurant introduced The Curate Series, where celebrity chefs come in for a kitchen take over series and run a promotion with their specialty menus to emphasise on local fresh produce. Take Aways

have evolved considerably where we even created a Sunday Brunch that could be delivered to your door step. Same was done during Onam celebrations where our team delivered a full-fledged *Sadya* experience served in the safety of your home with all precautions. As global travel resumes, keeping in mind that Crowne Plaza is all about business travel, we have designed flexi packages with a 24-hour check-in and check-out for our guests.

As far as M!CE business is concerned, how is the brand trying to bring business back?

We are offering special rates, all-inclusive pricing, and attractive flexi packages. We have developed SOPs for the bio-bubble business. We are a M!CE-centric hotel with 15,000 sq. ft., of banqueting space and meeting rooms.

QUICK BYTE The strategy for 2022 is to bring back corporate business and business from our loyal clients

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Absolutely Bleisure-Ful

With boundaries between business travel and leisure trips getting blurred (thanks to WFH culture), spotlight falls on few hotels that pack best of both worlds.

Lipla Negi



Novotel Pune Nagar Road

The Novotel Pune Nagar Road, which is situated in an upscale area, is a short drive away from Pune International Airport (PNQ), and near to the railway station. Boasting 11,000 sq. ft., of banqueting space and having 223 rooms, the hotel promises guests a luxurious experience. Business travellers can have quite a lot to expect—from executive rooms to premier lounge, complimentary local airport transfers, and breakfast as well as all day refreshments.



Roseate House New Delhi

Roseate House New Delhi is an amalgamation of lineage and novelty. The hotel, which is spread over 1.6 acre, features 216 spacious rooms, including suites. The hotel is housed in Aerocity. Catering to the new generation of cosmopolitan guests, Roseate House, a comfortable 30-minute drive from Gurugram and Delhi, and at walking distance from Aerocity metro station, is ensconced in comfortable surroundings away from the cacophony of the city.



Crowne Plaza Hotel New Delhi Mayur Vihar Noida

Located at a short distance from Noida, travellers can reach the luxurious Crowne Plaza Hotel New Delhi Mayur Vihar Noida through the DND Flyway, NOIDA expressway, Sector 62, Film City, Central Delhi, Pragati Maidan, and the India Expo Centre. Corporate or business travellers will like the world-class facilities made available at this swanky hotel, including a 24-hour business centre with free high-speed internet access.



ibis Mumbai Vikhroli

The 15-storeyed ibis Mumbai Vikhroli has 249 plush rooms, designed in six different themes, featuring the city's pulsating heartbeat. Each room has the much loved 'Sweet Bed' by ibis. Located in the corporate area of Mumbai, Lal Bahadur Shastri Marg, the hotel presents a gamut of luxurious services, including digital menus, mobile check-in, and access to OTT entertainment channels, making it the perfect destination for business and leisure travellers.

Hilton Garden Inn Bengaluru Embassy Manyata Business Park

Hilton Garden Inn Bengaluru Embassy Manyata Business Park is located near important business areas in North and Central Bengaluru. It enjoys accessibility from Kempegowda International Airport. Part of the upcoming Hilton Hotels Embassy Manyata complex comprises 619-key dual-branded Hilton properties – Hilton Garden Inn and Hilton, and 60,000 sq. ft. convention centre. Travellers need not go out of their way searching for a delicious meal here.



The Leela Gandhinagar

Called nothing short of an engineering marvel, The Leela Gandhinagar, which is a luxurious getaway, is housed as many as 40 km away from Gandhinagar. The five-star hotel has 318 rooms. "The architecture combines modernity with tradition. The hotel's lavish interiors are inspired by Gujarat's archaeological and architectural richness and the art decor by the rich flora and fauna of the state," said **Jaideep Anand**, Vice President and General Manager, The Leela Gandhinagar.



The Westin Mumbai Powai Lake

Set on the banks of Lake Powai, The Westin Mumbai Powai Lake is the second Westin property. Housed in Mumbai, it offers views of the Hiranandani skyline overlooking the Lake Powai. Taking a leaf out of the concept of Biophilia, and highlighting the demand for wellness travel, **Neeraj Govil**, Senior Vice President, Operations, Asia Pacific, excluding China, said, "The Westin Mumbai Powai Lake is set to expand the signature offerings of the brand to the travellers."



Crowne Plaza Chennai Adyar Park

Crowne Plaza Chennai Adyar Park caters to a lot of international business. "We have come up with a brand new Business Flex offer that offers guests the flexibility of 24 hours check-in and check-out," says **Jit Bose**, Director of Sales and Marketing, Crowne Plaza Chennai Adyar Park. Kapaleeshwar Temple, Santhome Church, and Marina Beach and others are near to the hotel, which has 287 rooms and facilities such as spa, gym, beauty treatments, and Wi-Fi, among others.



Holiday Inn Chandigarh Zirakpur

The Holiday Inn Chandigarh Zirakpur is 9 km away from Mohendra Chaudhry Zoological Park and 15 km away from Sukhna Lake. The hotel is 13 km away from Chandigarh International Airport. Boasting of 131 chic rooms and suites, guests can look forward to a plethora of facilities such as gymnasium, rooftop pool, a buffet restaurant, well-stocked bar, room service, and breakfast. The spacious rooms of the hotel boast comfortable beds with a choice of pillows.



Taj Lakefront, Bhopal

The 152-key Taj Lakefront, Bhopal is an important leisure centre. Taj Lakefront has amenities such as a gym, a spa, a tennis court, and a banqueting and conferencing space. **Puneet Chhatwal**, Managing Director and CEO, IHCL, said, "IHCL's iconic brand, Taj, steps into Bhopal with Taj Lakefront. This addition is in line with IHCL's strategy of being present in every state capital. By making our guests feel exceptional, we try to make their special occasions memorable."





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Winning trust of hotel guests

QualSTAR, COVID Compliance Certification agency in India, helps hotels ensure safest stays for their patrons.



Lipla Negi



Putting the pandemic behind them, an increasing number of Indian travellers are eyeing to travel to domestic tourist destinations. Driven by a desire to explore and be outdoors after consecutive lockdowns, their passion for travel is also being fanned by emerging travel trends such as revenge travel, staycations, and digital detox and the like. This presents hotels and resorts in the country with an opportunity to capitalise on the growing craze for domestic destinations.

But it is not the same for travellers anymore. Domestic travellers' expectations of hotel stays and services have changed, especially when it comes to cleanliness and hygiene. They are increasingly opting for hotels that offer the assurance of quality in every sense. Of late, safety and hygiene have pipped pricing to become the concerns of domestic travellers. And this puts into focus the significance and value of standardisation and quality certification for a hotel.

Armed with understanding of guest experiences in the industry, gathered after research conducted with the help of the most renowned and celebrated organisations in the world, QualSTAR helps existing as well as new hotels ensure the highest

safety and service standards for an unmistakable guest experience. Addressing the need of the hour, QualSTAR COVID Safety Compliance scheme is a certification that assists hotel in strict adherence of COVID-19 safety guidelines. It has been accredited by National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB) that falls under the umbrella of Quality Council of India (QCI), an undertaking of Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India. It aims to provide an objective assessment of the preventive measures adopted by hotels to mitigate COVID-19-related risks and health hazards.

QualSTAR is the first and only COVID Compliance Certification Agency, accredited by NABCB (a member of International Accreditation Forum in line with international standards for the accommodation sector. The QualSTAR COVID Safety Compliance scheme is based on guidelines by the World Health Organization (WHO), MOT, Union Ministry of Tourism, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and other government organisations.

PAR EXCELLENCE

To ensure safety and hygiene in the industry, the government launched a COVID-19 compliance scheme called SAATHI, where a hotel can do self-assessment and take a print out of the certificate. Although this self-assessment scheme is available free

of cost, the absence of a third-party audit and assurance often fails to win the confidence and trust of frequent travellers. Unwilling to compromise on safety and hygiene standards, travellers today don't mind going an extra mile to hunt down hotels that have gone through the grilling process of

QUICK BYTE It is the only COVID-19 safety audit approved by the govt to minimise reputational risk and liability





QUICK BYTE It is India's only hotel classification and COVID-19 compliance certification body

standardisation and exhibit their 'stars' proudly and stamped by a trusted authority.

QualSTAR is India's only hotel classification and COVID-19 compliance certification body which is approved by the Ministry of Commerce through the Quality Council of India (QCI) and the National Accredited Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB). This certification has come after almost five years of research on Indian and international standards, developing a scheme that was approved by the NABCB. The hotel classification is highly trusted and widely recognised in the industry, which directly translates into meeting guest service standards, amplifying the visibility of your property and expanding your reach to a wider range of discerning domestic as well as global tourists.

HYGIENE IN FOCUS

Unlike traditional classification inspections, QualSTAR undertakes an in-depth audit covering 360 degrees of hotel products, services, compliance, business practices, and

business continuity. The certification begins with the application and review of statutory compliance. Before the audit, a deep dive into the hotel, the facilities it offers are reviewed on the website and physically verified during mystery audits.

The mystery audit of hotel products and services is followed by an announced audit of the heart of the house areas that support the guest services. This is followed by the verification of statutory compliance, the business processes, and guest complaints and their resolution process. The entire audit takes almost two days and two nights and could also be extended by a day, depending on the size of the hotel and the facilities it offers. The auditing mechanism is only to improve the hotel and its performance when it comes to guest services and products.

WORLD-CLASS AUDITORS

It typically takes two days and two nights for two auditors to physically audit a five-star hotel. The QualSTAR auditors are appointed after going through a rigorous



Gireesh Bindra
VP-Operations
The Suryaa New Delhi



QualSTAR gives you an accreditation that ensures safety of the guests



Kush Kapoor
Chief Executive Officer
Roseate Hotels & Resorts



It would do well if hotels go for QualSTAR certification



Meena Bhatia
VP and GM
Le Meridien New Delhi



The safety certification reassures us and our guests



assessment process. The audit team is experienced and well versed in the international standards and protocols to be followed while auditing a facility. All the auditors come with over 10 years of experience in the hospitality industry. They have been trained on ISO 17065 requirements, auditing techniques as per ISO 19011, and as per World Health Organisation (WHO) standards.

The audit team goes the extra mile to conduct objective and customised analysis of the results. This enables your standards to be on par with internationally relevant guest expectations. And more importantly, the standards become enablers of ultimate guest satisfaction. Taking along the in-house team, the auditors dive deep into the analysis of scores across QualSTAR parameters to get an extensive understanding of your hotel's performance and market standing.

COVERING ALL DIMENSIONS

Like any other industry, third-party inspections are unarguably important for hotels to be on a path of continual improvement. At the same time, for the guests, it is important to have quality assurance from a third-party certification. The QualSTAR audit covers Dimension 0 to Dimension 8 – from statutory compliance to business risks, energy reduction goals to sustainability with all stakeholders.

Today, hygiene and guest satisfaction are inextricably linked and this new found relationship between the two holds an even greater impact brand image. The hotel guests want to travel to places that offer privacy, seclusion, and stay at hotels that follow all COVID-19 protocols and promise a safe and hygienic environment.



ACING THE M!CE experience

This gathering will make global M!CE participants aware of growth made by Turkish industry.

MT Bureau

The ACE of M!CE exhibition is being organised under the sponsorship of Turkish Airlines. Since 2013, the exhibition is being organised every year. The event is being held in a strategic partnership with TURSAB and with support of Republic of Turkey's Ministry of Culture and Tourism, TGA, Istanbul Governorship, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Istanbul Chamber of Commerce, TUROFED, TUROB, Antalya Promotion Foundation, and AKTOB.

ACE of M!CE Awards is the biggest award ceremony of the global M!CE industry which targets to guide the sustainable growth of congress, meeting, and event operations, to create a will of achieving perfection for industry companies and to increase the awareness of the Turkish M!CE industry on an international scale. The award ceremony has been moved to Antalya which is being held under the name of 'Master of



QUICK BYTE Participants will have choice to expand their networks due to collaboration with industry partners

Events by Ace of M!CE Awards,' held for the last nine years between 7 to 9 November, 2021.

Infinity Visual Fx Studio invites you to the event with its special concept and experience areas. The organisers are waiting for you to watch a magical hologramic opening show in the concept of Anti Gravity. The United Nations (UN), Turkey and its partners are working collectively to achieve 17 ambitious goals as part of the sustainable development goals (SDGs). Based on these,

various projects will be carried out by the brands within the framework of sustainable development. The companies will share their projects with the participants in about 40-minute individual sessions. It will help strengthen business relationships by meeting significant M!CE companies and buyers.

Within the scope of the international buyer programme, 90 international incentive companies, Professional Congress Organisers, destination management companies (DMCs), and corporate buyers to participate from the foreign market will hold B2B meetings with the participating companies. Plans are afoot to hold the event in Cyprus within the scope of 'Masters of Events'.

AMEzing Party: Are you ready for the most ambitious party of the year? AMEzing Party will bring participants together for an unforgettable night with the concept of 'Fit Together'.

Taking legacy forward

As demand for experiential travel is growing, **Faiz Rashid**, Director, Jehan Numa Group, feels brand's 100-year-old legacy will give them edge over global companies.

Lipla Negi

From crisis management to business strategies, the pandemic changed many things for many hoteliers around the world. However, for **Faiz Rashid**, Director of Jehan Numa Group of Hotels (JNG) and a direct descendant of Dost Mohammad Khan and the Begums of Bhopal, the crisis has simply reaffirmed his faith and renewed his passion for the family-run business.

Owned and managed by the founding family of Bhopal, the Jehan Numa Group comprises four distinctive boutique luxury hotels: the Jehan Numa Palace, Jehan Numa Retreat in Bhopal, the Reni Pani Jungle Lodge in Satpura and the recently-launched Bori Safari Lodge in the Bori Wildlife Sanctuary.

CUSTODIAN

The passion for hospitality runs in his genes. While Faiz Rashid stays in Bhopal to look after the retreat and the palace hotel, his brother



Faiz Rashid

We have been running the hotel for nearly four decades now and have no plans to collaborate with a global brand

Aly Rashid takes care of the two lodges.

“For us, being a legacy business, it comes down to being involved with the property through generations. We are like custodians of the property and we want to try and carry the legacy forward. But for someone else who is into the business of buying and selling, it only comes down to restoring the property and then selling or reselling it to someone else. Our focus is always passing it to the next generation,” says Faiz. The erstwhile state of Bhopal was founded by Dost Mohammad Khan in 1724. But then the *begums* of the family ruled for over 100 years. Four generations of Begums of Bhopal quietly and determinedly sowed seeds for growth and transformation, health

and civic innovations, and advancements in the fields of arts, education, and architecture in the area. The stately residence — Jehan Numa Palace — was built on the slopes of Shamla hills in the 19th century by General Obaidullah Khan, son of the last *begum*. It was converted into a world-class heritage hotel in 1983 by the General's grandsons.

COLLABORATION IS NOT AN OPTION

The family has been running the hotel for nearly four decades now, and has no plans to collaborate with a global brand. It is not that no lucrative offer came but the family was determined to take the legacy forward without diluting its essence. “In the last 40 years, we have done well and things have been working for us,” said Faiz. Talking about the culinary history, he adds how the old family recipes are conserved through generations, and proudly said, “These recipes cannot be copied and that’s what Bhopal stands for.”

QUICK BYTE For some one else, it is only restoring the old property and selling or re-selling it





M!CE events on path of recovery

COVID-19 has left its impact across varied industries and M!CE industry is no different. Reviving itself against hurdles, one lesson learnt well is to be sustainable in future.

Charmaine Fernz

The National Strategy and Roadmap for the M!CE industry in India states that the US has remained tops with 934 meetings out of a total of 13,254, as per ICCA Country and City Rankings 2019, while India with 158 meetings was at the 28th position as per the rankings. The document states that Indian M!CE has less than one per cent share in the estimated global M!CE business. This despite the natural, cultural advantages of India, and being one of the highest growing economies. The recall value of the Indian M!CE is considered low. While the industry has a substantial track to cover, the way ahead needs to be more sustainable.

Sustainability in layman terms is a balancing act of People, Planet, and Profit. We all talk about climate change, but this fact is unrealised that climate change is also relevant in our everyday activities. Every individual needs to be more responsible towards the environment and infrastructural/economic development of planet earth, which if achieved can be beneficial in the long run.

Taking on this trend, the Indian M!CE industry in after intensity of the pandemic has lessened is looking at more sustainable events. **Birju Gariba**, Founder, ISKARA Events said, "Sustainable events and carbon neutral concepts have been doing rounds in our part of the world for almost a decade. However, it has picked up in the last couple of years before COVID-19. Many MNCs, following global practices, were the first ones to start smaller implementations towards the same, but the conversations have picked up more aggressively in the last five years. The pandemic

was a natural promoter of sustainable events as a lot of events going digital or hybrid reduced carbon footprints."

Manish Dayya, General Manager, Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre and Hyderabad International Convention Centre said, "Sustainable events are managing events that take into consideration three aspects; environmental protection, social growth and economic progress. We are looking to endure balance at-risk approach so that these three perspectives are integrated into the planning of events at NHCC and HICC, into execution



Manish Dayya
GM, Novotel Hyderabad
Convention Centre



We need to innovate to ensure they're intact for future generations



need to innovate to ensure they are intact for the future generations," he added. Accor has taken major strides towards achieving this objective with its Planet 21 initiative. The programme focuses on sustainable development with concrete and quantitative objectives related to local sourcing, diversity, water, energy, waste management and much more.

ARE WE SUSTAINABLE ENOUGH?

Just talking about sustainability is not enough, we need to start working towards or rather charting out a strategic plan and



QUICK BYTE The ongoing pandemic has given the right impetus to smaller but more focused events

of the plans along with a commitment to review and make sure that any negative impact socially, economically and environmentally are managed and reduced to its minimal level, to be able to leave a better impact, to leave a better operation and make a difference to the managing of the events."

Dayya goes on to positively assert that sustainable events will be the way forward for the M!CE Industry. "We are cognizant of the fact that earth has finite resources, we

achievable goals. Being sustainable as mentioned before is an entire cycle and we are just at the beginning. The Indian hospitality industry is ensuring that small steps are being taken down the sustainable route. Following suit, Roseate Hotels has adopted some measures such as completely non-smoking with 100 per cent recycling

of wastewater, no plastic straw usage, optimal energy usage, sustainable waste disposal and zero kitchen waste recycling. The brand also strongly promotes the conservation of flora with more than 2000 uncut trees across its Indian resorts.

From a convention centre point of view, Dayya says that both NHCC and HICC have taken all the necessary steps to achieve this objective. Some of the measures adopted are energy-efficient lighting, glass bottles for small to medium events to avoid the use of single-use plastic, water dispensers in larger events. NHC donates its unused soaps to the Soaps for Hope foundation for recycling the same and even the old linen is donated to Tender Heart NGO.

“The property at its restaurants and F&B at events offer healthy and balanced meals sourcing the products grown in our kitchen gardens, local products. We plan to reduce food wastage and prevent the use of single-use plastics. We also enter into partnerships with the local businesses and communities to promote sustainable ways to conduct events,” added Dayya.

Interestingly, known to be hosts to large events, during any of the events at NHC and HICC, if the minimum guarantees of guests are not met we have a tie-up with Robin Hood army wherein the excess food is distributed on a priority basis to the needy thus contributing to the society and promoting positive hospitality.

On a similar note, food waste is converted to compost which is then utilised for gardening purposes in Roseate Hotels and all its properties. The hotel group also takes pride in making their jams, marmalade

and sauces from their farm produce.

THE GROWTH PANGS

The pandemic has given the right impetus to smaller but more focussed events. The hybrid concept has helped many a chain to adopt more environment-friendly methods. The important point to note is the fact that the industry is much aware and conscious of its part in the entire cycle. As Gariba explained, "Being a fairly new company born during the pandemic, we at ISKRA encourage our clients to try and minimise wastages and make events carbon-emission efficient."

Dayya stated that NHCC and HICC are known for handling sustainable events. “M!CE being our core focus, we have handled many national and international events across pharma, corporate, weddings, lifestyle, and other sectors,” he added. As part of the Planet 21 initiative, Accor has encouraged the organisers and their partners to follow sustainable practices. Events should be organised smartly and sensibly without leaving a minimal negative footprint. “We, at every opportunity in any of the international and national events with the consent of organisers, host pop-up shops by local entrepreneurs promoting, supporting providing a platform to showcase the local art and culture,” Dayya further added.

Sustainable events take effort and strategic planning. While it can be advantageous it also presents several challenges. Gariba with his long-standing experience in the M!CE sector explained that the advantages are simple, reduce the usage of paper encouraging digital formats and thereby largely reduce



QUICK BYTE Events should be organized smartly without leaving a minimal negative footprint

POWER-FUL

Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre has installed a dual solar power and heater system, which generates nine kilowatts of electricity per day. On a rough estimate, it translates to 36 units per day and heats up 4,000 litres of water for the property. The dual solar system has an impact on the environment as it generates 136 units of electricity per day.

wastage. Alternatively, these steps do impact the costs and business environment since sustainable events incur extra costs and mar the business of certain units such as paper, travel, and venues. Dayya is of the view that sustainable events would help the businesses achieve their social objectives of preserving the environment, involving and benefiting the local communities. This would yield a positive reputation and improve the image of the organisation and the host as well.

THE RIGHT DIRECTION

“We can confidently say now that every green step is the right step. However, the industry is witnessing unique trends which are shaping the industry. Green venues and hybrid events are largely the flavours of the new age,” asserted Dayya.

HICC, property par excellence

Built in sylvan surroundings of Hyderabad, it is first of its kind and best standalone and service driven convention centre in entire South Asia.

MT Bureau

Hyderabad International Convention Centre (HICC) is managed by Accor, one of the world's leading hotel operators, and is jointly owned by Emaar Properties PJSC Dubai and Telangana State Industrial Infrastructure Corporation Ltd.

HICC is a purpose-built, convention facility with world-class facilities and, the first of its kind and the best standalone convention centre in South Asia.

The five-star property has quite a few feathers in its cap. HICC has received the award for 'Best Meeting & Conference Venue' at the South India Travel Awards. In every aspect, be it infrastructure, services or technology, it compares with the best in the world.

Connected to the Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre is an international business hotel. It has as many as 288 rooms, including 129 super rooms and 106 super rooms with a view, and is equipped with meeting rooms, restaurants, business centre, spa and a health club.

It is also the Best South India Travel Award winner, which is admired for its outstanding service. Some of the world-class features of the hotel include 37 breakout rooms, including specialised meeting rooms,



QUICK BYTE HICC has received the award for 'Best Meeting & Conference Venue' at South India Travel Awards

speaker preparatory room, boardrooms, VIP lounge, apart from 12.5 metre high ceiling, roof cat walkers, truss to withhold heavy suspension, and in-house five-star banqueting service.

The unparalleled infrastructure of the business hotel also has service pits every six metres, with power, water, internet and the like, in built power back-up capability.

Built like a behemoth, the luxurious hotel built in Hyderabad, built among the sylvan surroundings

it which was discovered by the Qutub Shahi dynasty in 1591, the hotel has state-of-the-art Information Technology (IT) infrastructure, design, technology, telecommunications, and audio-video (AV) equipment.

It also has a hall measuring 6,480 square metres that can hold a 6,000-delegate plenary and can be partitioned into six halls.

HICC also has the best meeting and conference venues with a spacious

pre-function foyer area. The hotel has a huge 500-person reception area with as many as 16 terminals.

It also comprises an ATM and currency exchange cabin which has been kept in view of the tourist flow, which is all set to increase with the borders of all countries reopening and the country inviting international commercial flight services.

These apart, the spacious grounds of the hotel also has a parking bay along with in-house event management and auditoriums. Apart from the power back-up generation capability, there are as many five well-stocked bars and restaurants in the premises of the business hotel.

Spectacular getaway

Radisson Resort Pondicherry Bay which is located on Coromandel coast is ideal to organise meetings or have unforgettable wedding in scenic backdrop.



MT Bureau

Situated in the Arikamedu archaeological site, at Puducherry on the southern coast of India. The Radisson Resort Pondicherry Bay is nestled between a lagoon and the popular Blue Flag-Eden Beach and is rated among the top 10 beaches of India.

With a beautiful landscape and a breathtaking view of the sea, lagoon and tall coconut trees, the resort is the perfect location for a relaxing getaway, vacation or staycation, with indoor and outdoor venues for meetings and events, including conferences, weddings, as well as performances.

The Banquet Hall is a pillar-less space spread over 1,200 sq. ft., on the first floor promising a marvellous view. The Boardroom is a compact 1,000 sq. ft., space is apt for intimate gatherings and meetings or corporate gatherings.

It is situated in the resorts' luminous gardens, guests can enjoy an alfresco event in a relaxed atmosphere, surrounded by well-tended lawns and plants.

Sunset Deck overlooks the west by the lagoon. The picturesque sunset views from here, makes it a perfect spot for intimate events. Sands has an unfiltered view of the lagoon, this is perfect for relaxed evening events such as barbecues, concerts, and performances.

Ameet Raj Kundu, Cluster Commercial Head, Radisson Resort Pondicherry Bay said that the resort is located on the Coromandel coast, south of Chennai. The resort is situated 150 km from Chennai International Airport and travellers can reach here in around three hours by car. Pondicherry Railway Station and Pondicherry Bus Station are around 20 minutes away from the hotel.



Ameet Raj Kundu
Cluster Commercial Head
Radisson Resort
Pondicherry Bay



The Chennai International Airport is about 150 km from the Radisson resort



WEDDINGS

Guests can enjoy an unforgettable wedding at the Radisson Resort Pondicherry Bay. "Our dedicated events team and wedding planner will help you plan your dream wedding, with the beautiful surroundings of Pondicherry Bay, as a magical, scenic backdrop, which is a unit of GRT Hotels & Resorts," Kundu said.

Some of the world-class facilities at the resort include Salt Splash, spread more than 2,400 sq. ft., is a Moroccan themed saltwater pool with hydrotherapy, is perfect to detox and refresh.

L'enfant is a dedicated indoor kids play area with arcade games, puzzles and games for children of all ages. Bodhi Spa is designed to relax and rejuvenate you, perfect the entire resort experience. Le Jardin is a serene garden in the middle of the property.

Maintain your workout routine in Muscles Fitness Centre with modern equipment, and professional trainers for personalised attention. The hotel rooms are designed in the classic Franco-Tamil style of Puducherry, with wide balconies and verandahs decorated in earthy colours. With four chalet types, the guests can choose between a balcony and veranda as well as the choice of luxurious private villas with a garden and a pool.



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Succeeding in all-male world

Rakhi Kankaria has won plaudits for her work in education as well as tourism development, both male-dominated sectors, in Telangana.



Nisha Verma

For **Rakhi Kankaria**, Founder Director, Rachnoutsav and Vice Chair, Tourism Committee, Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI), the journey in events industry started early in 1996. "It has been close to almost three decades and at that time the subject of events was not understood. I learnt early since my father used to throw great parties at our family home. When my husband and I decided to do something different, I embarked on first doing a survey in Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata for three weeks, and then started my party planning company, which I later termed as an event management company," she said.

CHANGES

Stating that the industry has changed in the last 30 years, Kankaria pointed out that today, there is a plethora



Rakhi Kankaria
Founder Director, Rachnoutsav and Vice Chair, Tourism Committee, Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry



FTCCI Travel Committee identified Pocharam to be developed under PPP



QUICK BYTE It has been close to three decades; then subject of events business was not understood properly

of event managers in every nook and corner. "However, my husband Sanjay and I have been very passionate about our work and never saw anything as a challenge. In fact, we found it interesting to find solutions and receive accolades, appreciation through words and references for future business. That made us grow. Till date, we do not have a marketing department in our company as we have only grown by word-of-mouth," she elaborated. While she thinks it is a man's world even today, Kankaria believes that her skills, and an equal partner in her husband, made her shine in this industry.

"If I would not have my husband with me, I would not have been as successful as I am. Event management has a wide spectrum of subjects," she said.

TOURISM IN TELANGANA

This apart, she also dons the cap of Vice Chair of Tourism Committee at FTCCI. A big advocate of Public Private Partnership in tourism, Kankaria said, "Telangana is a treasure trove of tourism spots. The FTCCI Tourism Committee has identified Pocharam as a destination that can be developed under PPP and I have found an investor who is ready to invest. More locations have been identified by the team. Also, the team has identified around eight tourism places in the state, including Ramoji Film City, Charminar and Golconda Fort, where we can have memorabilia and souvenirs."

M!CE TRAVEL SHOW

23-24 April, 2022 - Novotel Pune

Exhibitor's Testimonials

Raymond Lim

*Area director, India
(New Delhi Office),
Singapore Tourism Board.*



We have gone from virtual to hybrid events. To progress further in the MICE business, we must be realistic, and to continue our operations, we must be inventive in our use of technology. Events we organize may need to be smaller in scale, so that we are able to pay great attention to detail and deliver a unique experience and launch specialty programs.

Mohit Juneja

*Account Director -
Global Meetings and Events,
HYATT Hotels and Resorts*



To be honest seeing so many people under one roof at the Travel MICE Show is treat for my eyes. It is a delight to meet decision makers and influencers here. We want to see lot more corporates coming by 2022 to help boost MICE tourism. As an industry, we sincerely want you to come out, explore and begin your journey.

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30

Exhibitors



30

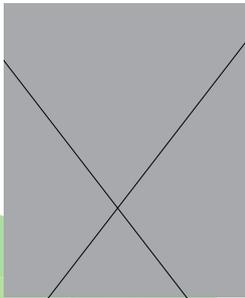
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Movements



Aman Kidwai

Area Manager, Welcomhotels, Northern Region and GM, Welcomhotel Sheraton

Amaan Kidwai has joined as the Area Manager (Welcomhotels-Northern Region) and GM, Welcomhotel Sheraton. After working as GM, ITC Gardenia, he will oversee the brand in the North with nine operating properties. Known for his analytical skills, he would be working on driving profitability and growth, enhancing revenues via customer acquisition among others. He believes in developing his team and empowering them to deliver unmatched guest experience in building guest loyalty and patronage.



Sarvar Hans

VP-Commercials Amritara Hotels & Resorts

Sarvar Hans has been recently promoted as VP, Commercials, Amritara Hotels & Resorts. Hans has joined the Amritara Hotels & Resorts in 2018 and has spearheaded some of the most successful hotel openings of the brand, apart from heading Sales, Marketing and Revenue. He will be responsible for acquisitions of new properties and brand expansion. A strong believer of deliberate and instinctive thinking, he has led the brand towards excellence. Hans is elated with this appointment and is look forward to newer challenges.



Shyam Kumar

General Manager DoubleTree by Hilton Agra

Shyam Kumar has been appointed as the GM of DoubleTree by Hilton Agra. From being a hotelier with an experience of 21 years, he worked as the director (operations), Conrad Bengaluru. He also worked with Starwood and Marriott as director of F&B at Shangri-La Bengaluru. Receiving the runner-up award for the "Best Hotel Manager" South India at BW Hotelier Awards 2020, he was fortunate to be part of Shine 2 programme by Hilton. Kumar started his career by working in Sarovar Park, ITC, Shangri-La and Marriott.



Utsah Sehgal

Director-Operations Kochi Marriott Hotel

Utsah Sehgal was appointed as director (operations), Kochi Marriott Hotel. Armed with an experience of 13 years in the industry, he is an alumni of IMI, Switzerland. Previously, he served as the Director of Rooms for Renaissance Hotel Bengaluru where he headed the hotel's operations. He started with Courtyard by Marriott, Pune as a front office associate. Later, he worked with Marriott brands in India such as Bengaluru Marriott Hotel, JW Marriott Hotel Aerocity, New Delhi, and Bengaluru Marriott Hotel, Whitefield.



Imit Arora

General Manager Holiday Inn Jaipur City Centre

Imit Arora, serving as a GM, Holiday Inn Jaipur City Centre, is a self-motivated professional with excellent interpersonal skills. Armed with two decades of experience in the industry, he worked as the GM of The Lalit, Chandigarh. Arora has also worked in luxury brands such as The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts, Taj Hotels, and The Lalit. Arora began his career with The Leela Kempinski, Mumbai and since then there was no looking back for him.



Prisha Lamba

Director-Marketing & Comm, Fairmont Jaipur

Prisha Lamba has been appointed as Director of Marketing and Communications of Fairmont Jaipur. With an experience of 14 years, she will be responsible for spearheading the conception and execution of innovative marketing and communication strategies that help drive overall brand development and growth at Fairmont Jaipur. Lamba's last assignment was with Hyatt Regency Gurgaon where she served as a Marketing Communications Manager. Before that, she worked with the Four Seasons Hotel in Mumbai.



Prashant Shewale

AM, Revenue & Distribution, Absolute Hotel Services India

Prashant Shewale has been appointed as Regional Manager of Revenue & Distribution of Absolute Hotel Services India, Mumbai. He has over a decade of exposure in operations, noteworthy being Accor namely Ibis and Novotel. He joined Absolute Hotel Services at Eastin Easy Aishwarya Talegaon as Front Office Manager and was promoted as Rooms Division Manager. Later, he acquired an understanding of markets, revenue models, and distribution networks.

Form IV

Statement about ownership and other particulars about newspaper MICEtalk to be published in the first issue every year after the last day of February

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Hakodate

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8
Hiroshima
Nagoya 7
Tokyo 1
6
Fukuoka
Osaka 2
Kyoto 3
9
Yokohama
4
Okinawa

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