



ENGAGE

January-February 2023 | Volume 3 | Issue 1

HOSPITALITY BRANDING

Exploring the unique
challenges & opportunities

EXCLUSIVE

Anita Praveen,
Secretary, Ministry of Food
Processing Industries, on
Millets for People & Planet



We add flavour to your business.

Whether you are a restaurant, a fast food outlet, a catering service or a bakery serving cuisines from around the world, choose from our range of quality products and get the taste of success.

Mayonnaise | Ketchup, Sauces & Dips | Pizza & Pasta Sauces | Gravies | Salad Dressings & Emulsions | Mustards | Gravies | Ganache, Fillings & Icings | Fruit & Chocolate Toppings | Sugar-based Syrups | Flavoured Syrups



From the President's Desk



PUNEET CHHATWAL
President, Hotel Association of India
MD & CEO, The Indian Hotels Company Limited

Tourism plays a significant role in driving the economy. It generates employment, strengthens the local ecosystem and contributes to infrastructure development. It also helps to conserve the natural environment and cultural assets and traditions, and enables livelihoods.

The image of a country plays a crucial role in tourism - a positive image can attract more tourists, and boost the industry. Promoted as 'Incredible India' by the Ministry of Tourism, the country is well known for its diverse landscapes and cultural heritage, making it an attractive destination for tourists from around the world. However, there is much more that can be done to take brand India to the next level to attract more tourists and reap the benefits of tourism.

India's Budget 2023 has outlined various initiatives and schemes to develop tourism. The central government's push to tourism is an acknowledgement of the fact that the travel and tourism sectors need multiple hands of support. Building the tourism brand of any country needs investment in tourism infrastructure, promotion of the country's unique cultural and natural attractions, and ensuring the safety and security of tourists. Moreover, leveraging social media and other digital platforms to showcase country's tourism offerings is a great way to engage with potential tourists.

Brand India, Branding India – Key to Success of Tourism

In today's world, many travellers are increasingly concerned about sustainability and the impact of tourism on the environment. India, which is at a critical tipping point to expand this industry manifold, has a great opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to sustainable practices. This can include promoting eco-friendly accommodations, reducing waste and energy consumption, and creating opportunities for visitors to engage in environmentally responsible activities such as hiking, wildlife watching, and conservation projects.

Hospitality is a vital aspect of any country's tourism landscape. A strong hospitality brand can make a country a sought-after destination for travellers. India is currently underserved in terms of branded room supply and the hospitality industry is still relatively young. While metro cities have a reasonable presence of chain affiliated rooms, there is still a significant shortage of quality hotel rooms across the country. There is a need for hotels across multiple segments with strong brand identities that guests will gravitate to.

In conclusion, building a strong brand for our country requires a combination of many factors topped with a compelling narrative to differentiate itself and build emotional connections with customers. **HAI**

CONTENTS

VOLUME 3

ISSUE 1

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2023



Cover Story

10

The Power of Branding

A hotel is an interior space that is meant to soothe, to help you relax, to elevate your daily living while you are on a holiday, or on a short business trip. Hotel branding is all about communicating the core values of the hotel and then ensuring the message travels through all the unique offerings. We spoke to experts for fresh insights, and to discover the opportunities in Hotel Branding.

Guest Column

26

Millets For All

India's millet campaign revolves around the theme that it's good for people and the planet. The goal is to achieve \$100 million worth of millet & value added products exports by FY25, up from \$64 million in 2021-22. The rebranding of millets as a healthy and climate-responsive crop will eventually help in the overall ecosystem of the country. Anita Praveen, Secretary, Ministry of Food Processing Industries, writes on the importance of millets.



An all time favourite cookies recipe – Pearl Millet Cookies

27

Chef Rakesh Sethi, Corporate Executive Chef, Radisson Hotel Group South Asia, shares recipes with Pearl millet.



Destination

28

Discovering Kerala

God's Own Country is an excellent example of how a state should market its diversity, culture and hospitality options.



The Last Word

35

Vision for Tourism and Hospitality

Though the hospitality sector should have received more focus in the Union budget, the vision for tourism in the budget is pragmatic, and the roadmap is well charted.



HOTEL ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

Copyright@Hotel Association of India, New Delhi
Volume 3, Issue 1, January-February 2023
Edited, Printed and Published by
Hotel Association of India
B 212-214, Somdutt Chambers-1,
Bhikaji Cama Place,
New Delhi-110066, India
T +91 11 26171114, 26171110
hai@hotelassociationofindia.com;
info@hotelassociationofindia.com
www.hotelassociationofindia.com

PRINTED AT
Thomson Press (India) Limited
Delhi-Mathura Road, Faridabad -121 007, Haryana

EDITOR & PUBLISHER
Hotel Association of India
info@hotelassociationofindia.com

CONSULTING EDITOR
Kunal Advant

CONTENT & MARKETING



editorhai@consociaadvisory.com

DESIGN
Anthony Lawrence
anthonylawrance@gmail.com

EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES
(concerning reproducing of article)
editorhai@consociaadvisory.com

ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES
info@consociaadvisory.com

DISCLAIMER

All information in HAI ENGAGE is derived from sources, which we consider reliable. The contents of this publication contain views of authors and are not the views of HAI ENGAGE.

The information given is as available at time of interview/printing as it may have changed since then.

All rights reserved. Reproduction strictly prohibited.

Material appearing in HAI ENGAGE cannot be reproduced in whole or in part without prior written permission. The same rule applies when there is a copyright or the article is taken from another publication. Publications reproducing material either in part or in whole without permission would face legal action.

The publisher assumes no responsibility for returning unsolicited material nor is he responsible for material lost or damaged in transit. Any material submitted to HAI ENGAGE will not be returned.

All advertisements must comply with the Indian Advertisements Code as well as the Advertisements Code of South Asia. The publisher will not be liable for any damage or loss caused by the late publication, error or failure of advertisement or editorial to appear.



Inclusion of POSH in Hospitality curriculums recommended



Hotel Association of India (HAI), the apex body of Indian Hospitality, has been focusing on raising Industry standards, and has taken the lead on issues like Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) and sustainability. The recently concluded fifth edition of HAI Hoteliers' Conclave had a session dedicated to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG). At another session, "View from the top-LeaderSpeak", Secretary (Tourism) Government of India, Mr Arvind Singh, delivered the keynote address. When a participant suggested the inclusion of subjects like prevention of sexual harassment (POSH) in the



curriculums of hospitality institutes that fall under the National Council of Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NHMCT), Mr Singh responded positively.

After the event, HAI sent a formal representation to the Ministry recommending that POSH be a part of curriculums in hospitality institutes, like the Central IHMs, State IHMs, and Food Craft Institutes (FCIs). The Industry body has recommended the inclusion of subjects like the Vishaka

Guidelines, Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, Safe & Honourable Tourism Guidelines of the Ministry of Tourism.

Mr MP Bezbaruah, Secretary General, the Hotel Association of India (HAI), said: "Huge resources have been channelized towards promoting ethical and safe tourism in the country. The ministry has not only formulated guidelines for safe and ethical conduct by tourism and hospitality stakeholders, but has also led campaigns like 'I respect women' among tourism service providers. Introduction of POSH in hotel schools' curriculums, as suggested by HAI, can be another initiative in the right direction." **HAI**

NEW PRODUCT **SCAN**

Organic is not a choice, it's a way of life!

Are you also always in search of organic goodness for your family?

Are you looking for 100% Pure and Natural honey straight from the hive?

World's No.1*

Honey Brand – Dabur Honey

brings to you,

Dabur Organic Honey which is

sourced from the hives nestled in remote rocky terrains of the Aravallis Range. This rare indigenous honey is made by Apis Dorsata honey bees that collect nectar from organically blossomed wildflowers.

No chemicals or pesticides are used within a 5 km vicinity of the hives,

thereby ensuring the 100% organic guarantee which is accredited by NPOP (National Programme for Organic Production).

Dabur Organic Honey is a raw, unprocessed and unpasteurized honey which is naturally rich in antioxidants and minerals to help boost immunity. It is a good source of nutrition and is considered useful in cough and cold. One tablespoon of Dabur Organic Honey with warm water daily helps in effective weight management.

Dabur Organic Honey is available on leading e-commerce portals:

[amazon.in](https://www.amazon.in) | [Flipkart](https://www.flipkart.com) | [freshtofu](https://www.freshtofu.com) | [big basket](https://www.bigbasket.com)

NPOP Certified Organic Honey



*As per global syndicate study report of Honey category 2021-2022 by a market research agency, Dabur Honey is the highest-selling brand by volume in the world

Industry leader of the year 2023

Puneet Chhatwal, President, HAI and MD & CEO IHCL, has been conferred the title of 'Industry Leader of the year 2023' at the HVS Anarock Hospitality Overview Presentation & Exchange conference. The recognition is a tribute to all the accomplishments of IHCL, having the honour of serving the country since 1903.



Hotels report sold-out days in Feb, Mar

Travel, which typically begins to show early signs of slowing down around this time of year, is continuing its steady growth, showing a consistent increase for the month of February and March. Companies that operate in the sector, like Thomas Cook India, upscale and upper-upscale hotel chains, Roseate Hotels and Resorts, and several luxury resorts in Kashmir like The Khyber are seeing upwards of 80% occupancy and sold-out days, reports Mint. "We have seen steadfast occupancies and about 80% of the month of February is sold out. We have not seen any softening of rates/occupancy at least for now. Overall if you look at tourist arrivals in Kashmir, it has been historical, and we are experiencing 80% year-round occupancies," said Vinit Chhabra, general manager, The Khyber Himalayan Resort & Spa, Gulmarg, UT J&K.



Tapping opportunities in smaller towns

Metros and Tier-I cities may continue to be business drivers for hospitality groups in India but the real growth opportunity lies in smaller and emerging markets that have shown impressive growth in the past couple of years, reports the Financial Express. That is why Indian Hotels Company Ltd (IHCL) is looking beyond the big cities for expansion. Puneet Chhatwal, MD & CEO at IHCL, calls CY22 "a record year for the company" in terms of its expansion, having added 30 hotels in the pipeline, and having unveiled 17 new properties. "We will be opening 18 hotels over the next 12 months across all our brands. IHCL reached a milestone of over 250 hotels last year, and is in line with the vision of being a 300-hotel portfolio by 2025," he says.

Sports & wedding events boost industry

Sporting events have joined weddings to become major contributors to the post-pandemic rebound in the hotel sector in India, according to a report in Mint. This has led many companies to respond with enhanced value propositions and earnings to capture the rising demand. Hotels and resorts are also no longer apologetic about charging commensurately for the facilities and services they deliver, according to the 'India Hotel Market Review 2022' report by hospitality consultancy Horwath HTL.



G20 drives demand

With nearly 200 meetings scheduled for the G20 summit this year, conference rooms in top hotels in major cities and some smaller towns are nearly sold out. However, the demand for over 200 rooms for every meeting for 2-3 nights may exceed the supply. According to hoteliers, average room revenues (ARRs) have already returned to pre-Covid levels and may soon surpass them. Analysts believe ARR could get a further boost. As per Jefferies analysts too, the sector's ARR is on the rise, says a report in the Financial Express.



Expansion plans

Sotrak Hospitality is devoted to advance eco-friendly tourism. Over the next two years, the Group plans to add 50 more experiences to its catalogue throughout its existing locations including Dakpathar, Mussoorie, Rishikesh, Selakui, Jaisalmer, Ranthambore and Nahan.



Scan here

... Pesh hai ...



Hamdard KHAALIS MASALE

Tasalli se baney, Baareeki se parkhe... tabhi toh Khaalis Zaayqa miley!



Chef Kunal Kapur

*KHAALIS HAI, TABHI TOH KHAAS HAI!

Powdered Spices: Red Chilli, Turmeric, Coriander, Black Pepper, Cumin
Also available in: **Whole Spices:** Cumin, Clove, Ajwain, Black Pepper, Chhoti Elaichi, Cinnamon, Saunf
Blended Spices: Zafrani Garam Masala, Chaat Masala

Online & Channel Partners:

18001800600 / www.hamdard.com | Follow us:

Share your experience, Call us: 18 00 18 00 600 or Write us at: info@hamdard.com or Visit us at: www.hamdard.com
 Registered & Consumer Care Office: Hamdard Manzil, Lal Kuan, Delhi - 110 006, India
 For trade queries, Contact: nitin.setia@hamdard.com & shabab.husain@hamdard.com

Global hospitality bounces back



The global hotel industry will remain resilient and continue its recovery in 2023, thanks to the resurgence of international travel, according to an industry expert, reports Business World Online. For 2023, "we see global recovery," Mark Willis, global chief executive officer of Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, said. Global hospitality had an "uplifting year" in 2022, driven by leisure demand and various international tourism events such as the World Expo Dubai, Formula One Grand Prix and FIFA World Cup, according to real estate services company JLL. In its "Global Hotel Investment Outlook 2023" report, JLL said occupancy rates have recovered around the world. For instance, occupancy rates in the Americas have recovered to 95% of the pre-pandemic levels, while those in Europe and Asia have regained 89% and 77%, respectively.

UAE banks on a growth-oriented year

As Dubai's hospitality industry continues its strong post-pandemic rebound, leisure and business trips are both on an upward growth trajectory. The UAE's hospitality and hotel scene is anticipating a cracking year. Early 2021 saw much of Europe head back into lockdown, as a new spike in Covid-19 cases spread across the country. But 5,000 miles away some of the continent's most-followed social media influencers – top models, movie stars, sporters and more – were enjoying a very different experience in Dubai – branded the 'Covid Casablanca' by some critics.

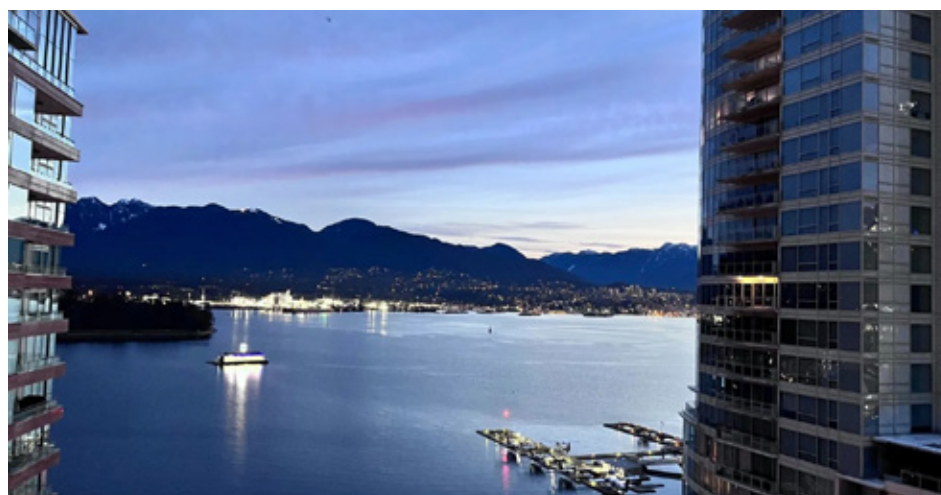


Canada sees tailwinds

Canada's hotel industry started off the year on a high note, as performance came in above the 2019 benchmark," said Laura Baxter, CoStar Group's director of hospitality analytics for Canada, in a report. "Despite downward pressure on household disposable incomes, tourism spending remained elevated," Baxter said. "People have chosen to prioritize experiences, including hotel stays, evidenced by transient demand that was 9% above the pre-pandemic comparable and showed no signs of pullback from the latter half of 2022. Meanwhile, group demand came in 14% below 2019 levels but is expected to pick up momentum throughout the year as more typical patterns start to

emerge and the industry benefits from events taking place that were cancelled earlier in the pandemic." Manitoba recorded the highest January occupancy level (64.3%), which surpassed the pre-pandemic comparable by 20.9%. Among the major markets, Vancouver reported

the highest occupancy level (63.9%), which was 1.3% behind 2019. Prince Edward Island (36.3%) saw the lowest occupancy among provinces, up 14.1% against 2019. At the market-level, the lowest occupancy was reported in Edmonton (43.2%) which was 6.4% below the 2019 comparable.



Davidoff
TIME BEAUTIFULLY FILLED



IT'S HOW WE PUT THEM TOGETHER
THAT SETS THEM APART



FEEL THE DIFFERENCE

SIGNATURE GRAND CRU ANIVERSARIO MILLENNIUM

Official Business Partner

N V Lifestyles Pvt Ltd

100 A/6, Ground Floor, The Capital Court, Olof Palme Marg, Munirka, New Delhi 110067, India

T: +91 011 4052 3774 | E: info@nvlifestyles.co | W: www.nvlifestyles.in

The POWER of Branding

A hotel is an interior space that is meant to soothe, to help you relax, to elevate your daily living while you are on a holiday, or on a short business trip. Hotel branding is all about communicating the core values of the hotel and then ensuring the message travels through all the unique offerings. We spoke to experts for fresh insights, and to discover the opportunities in Hotel Branding.

Team HAI Engage

Branding, at one time, was thought of as a superfluous activity, or something that could be invested in only by luxury chains. We all know about the Marriotts, Hiltons, The Taj Group, Oberoi Hotels, and others. However, branding is your storytelling narrative, and howsoever, big or small, every Hotel is doing some sort of branding exercise now. It may be in the form of loyalty programs, or for building new revenue streams, or for enhancing offline/online media presence. In today's digitized world, every hotel has the opportunity to build its own unique brand, and excite customer interest. Branding helps to outdo competition, open up new revenue streams, harnesses the power of story-telling, and also helps build loyal customers, who become brand ambassadors. There is an African proverb that if you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together. We can add to this: To go far, it is good to see far before setting off, and then design your journey.



Says **Ranju Alex**, General Manager of the JW Marriott Kolkata and Multi-Property Vice President East India: "The post-pandemic traveller is a mature guest, more meticulous and careful with preferences. The secret to keeping guests satisfied is to ensure to not let the ball drop with the kind of service excellence and quality hospitality that the guest is expecting. It is imperative that we keep our offerings fresh and distinctive, ensure they are competitively priced, richly experience-led and resonate with the end customer's travel sensibilities and priorities."

She adds: "For Marriott International, the individual brands enjoy distinct preference and credibility among varied audience segments. Branding plays a crucial role in augmenting the existing customer base, and also in adding to loyal customers. While the right branding does help connect to the customer, to retain them, we go the extra mile to provide the customer with a stay experience that is their money's worth."

At Marriott, she says, their objective to be the, World's Favourite Travel Company, is translated through their unsurpassed vacation and leisure experiences. As examples of some distinct branding, she says the W Hotels offer a hip and eclectic vibe, while the Ritz-Carlton is synonymous with luxury and sophistication. These brands are brought to life through signature experiences, such as the W Living Room and The Ritz-Carlton Club Lounge.

She says, generally, a hotel should allocate between 10-15% of its revenue towards branding and marketing. The investment ensures the hotel reaches potential guests.

On the global front, Marriott International has a combination of strategic partnerships and innovative marketing campaigns, and invests in technology and sustainability initiatives. In India, the branding strategy includes a focus on providing guests with a blend of local culture and modern comfort, as well as a commitment to sustainability and responsible tourism.



W Bangkok Hotel, Thailand



"Branding plays a crucial role in augmenting the customer base, and adding to loyal customers. To retain customers, we go the extra mile to provide a stay experience that is the money's worth"

RANJU ALEX
General Manager, JW Marriott Kolkata and Multi-Property Vice President, East India

The Marriott Bonvoy program provides members with exclusive benefits and rewards, such as free nights, room upgrades, and member-only events. The program also offers a range of travel-related benefits, including discounts on airfare and rental cars, making it easier for members to plan their next getaway. With a focus on personalization and recognition, the loyalty program helps to create a strong emotional connect with guests.

Parveen Chander, Executive Vice President, Sales & Marketing, IHCL, says to beat the challenges caused by Covid-19, they expanded supply by signing and opening new hotels. "We foresaw trends in demand, from home delivery of gourmet delicacies to secluded family getaways, and created businesses like Qmin and amā Stays & Trails. When international travel was restricted, we leveraged our strong presence across the Indian landscape and the captive domestic tourism demand to deliver business results stronger than even pre-Covid times."

He says that branding plays the critical role of connecting the organisation's business objectives with the consumers' expectations, and vice versa. "Right from providing the assurance of safety, hygiene and physical distancing with 'Tajness – A Commitment Restrengthened', to highlighting the

importance of wellbeing and togetherness with campaigns like 'Innergise' and 'Cherishing Togetherness', we sensed the market sentiment to steer our brands into delivering what our guests needed, and broadened our horizon too," he adds.

He says they have created "category" and "destination-level" distinguishers. For example, "Living Legacies of Taj" is all about luxury palaces, while hotels in the Northeast are branded under the destination-specific campaign "Follow The Sun". Hotels in each category and destination then operate with their well-defined set of USPs. "We also invest in story-telling pegs of every single hotel while ensuring that the common standards set for the brand are followed to the fullest, without exceptions," he says.

"We foresaw the emerging trends in demand, from home delivery of gourmet delicacies to secluded family getaways, and created businesses like Qmin and amā Stays & Trails"

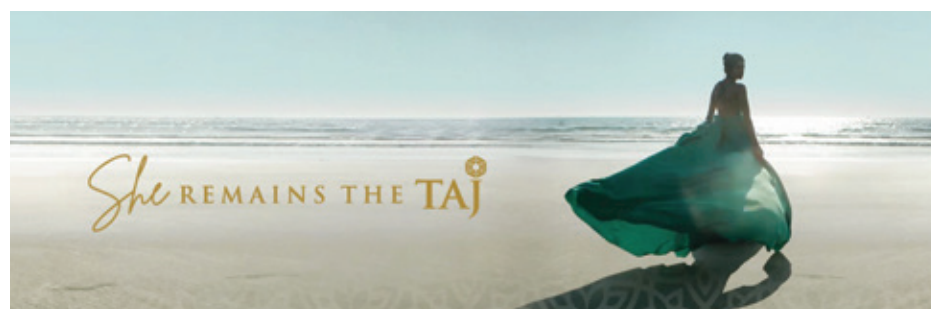
PARVEEN CHANDER
Executive Vice President, Sales & Marketing, IHCL



Marriott Bonvoy



Taj Vivanta Shillong, Meghalaya



Their additional brand engagements include exclusively branded access cards for The Chambers members to specially crafted amenities for women travellers with Woyage, and from colour-themed menus around occasions of national importance to larger-than-life projections of the iconic hotel facades.

He adds at IHCL, they have been leading with inclusivity campaigns, like the women-oriented “She Remains The Taj” campaign through which they are implementing career-enabling policies for women employees, partnering with women-led businesses and supporting women-centric community initiatives. “Woyage” is a set of specially curated stay packages for women travellers. Similarly, “Carecations” allow guests to



partake in the efforts towards conserving nature, preserving heritage and supporting communities. “Trust, Awareness, and Joy act as enablers and drivers of the culture of Tajness across all that we do. From Paathya, our holistic framework to drive our efforts in the space of environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG), to ‘She Remains the Taj’, our efforts in branding are focused towards the beliefs we share with our partners, stakeholders and our guests,” he says. IHCL recently migrated the loyalty program Taj InnerCircle to NeuPass, a much larger, shared loyalty program that rests on the Tata Neu app. With this move, they have been able to leverage a much larger database of consumers to fuel their rapid growth journey. In addition to NeuPass, they also offer other paid membership programs, like The Chambers, exclusive clubs for the ultra-elite, and Epicure, an annual membership program that offers a host of savings and benefits to its members.



“Branding is not just a logo, it’s a brand promise. Guests come to us because of the promise and values we stand for. Creating a strong brand is the cumulation of years of branding, service, and experiences the guests feel every time they walk into the hotel”

VIJAY DEWAN
Managing Director,
Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Ltd



Says **Vijay Dewan**, Managing Director, Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Ltd (ASPHL): “Branding is not just a logo, it’s a brand promise. Our guests come to us because of the promise and values we stand for. Creating a strong brand is a cumulation of years of branding, service, and experiences the guests feel every time they walk into the hotel. Consistency in both verbal and visual branding drives customer loyalty and overall trust around a company. At THE Park Hotels, the spirit of Anything But Ordinary is a very strong brand positioning. Zone by The Park is positioned for price-conscious and design-conscious travellers, and builds a buzzing, curious, connected world. Though the look and the feel of the hotels may differ, the experience levels and underlying values remain the same.”



The Park Hyderabad



Zone by The Park Hotel, Coimbatore

ASPHL has five brands – THE Park Hotels, THE Park Collection, Zone by The Park, Zone Connect, and Flurys. The spirit of Anything But Ordinary stands on seven brand pillars: Urbane India; Curating Culture; Food Reimagined; 360 Design; Stay Swell; Life: Leisure; and, Ready, Set, Business. Zone by The Park is the mid-scale brand. THE Park Collection is intimate, personalized, and tailored to transmit an inimitable guest experience. In 2020, ASPHL launched a new brand Zone Connect under Zone by The Park portfolio, another midscale brand. Flurys, the 96-years old iconic patisserie from Park Street in Kolkata, has expanded to over 40 outlets across Kolkata, and is also located in Navi Mumbai and Delhi.

Regarding some outstanding takeaways, he says, THE Park Hotels tagline Anything But Ordinary™, and the collaterals, stationery, toiletries have a distinct branding. Similarly, Aura Spa, Aqua and Someplace Else, the music zone, are all distinctive branding examples. “Out of the total revenue, it is advised to earmark 5-6% on marketing, branding and communications,” he says. THE Park Preferred is a loyalty program running across THE Park Hotels, with three membership tiers – Gold, Platinum, and Black. THE Park Preferred may be redeemed only through room stays.

“Branding plays a vital role in meaningfully engaging consumers while expanding the customer base,” says **Nakul Anand**, executive director, ITC. Over the decades, ITC has established its prowess in building and operating iconic hotels, which are exemplars in



sustainability, luxury, signature services and award-winning dining & well-being experiences. Even in the pandemic times, ITC launched innovative brands and programmes like the Gourmet Couch, the signature delivery & take-away culinary offering, curated stay packages that offered flexibility and value that helped the brand to build continued equity and engagement.

ITC has launched two new lifestyle hospitality brands: Mementos by ITC Hotels in the luxury segment, which aims to provide memorable experiences to discerning travellers through specially engineered service designs, and Storii by ITC Hotels, a collection of atypical intimate hotels. It’s also expanding footprint and recently launched ITC Narmada in Ahmedabad, a new property in Jim Corbett, and under the new Storii brand two boutique properties have been launched in Goa and Dharamshala. “Guided by the ethos of Responsible Luxury, environmental stewardship continues to be ITC Hotels’ focus. With the world’s first 10 LEED Zero Carbon Certified Hotels and all its luxury hotels & select premium hotels being LEED Platinum certified, the brand has achieved a historic milestone,” he says.

About the hotel’s branding, he says ITC Hotels has a distinct positioning of “Responsible Luxury”. “The two simple words, rarely found together, have become the bedrock of belief and commitment for ITC Hotels. Responsible Luxury is luxury with a conscience that encourages responsible practices in harmony with the environment and the society,” he adds. With

“ITC Hotels has a distinct positioning of ‘Responsible Luxury’. The two simple words, rarely found together, have become the bedrock of our belief and commitment at ITC Hotels”

NAKUL ANAND,
Executive Director, ITC

“Namaste” as its brand identity, ITC Hotels endeavours to offer authentic, indigenous experiences that celebrate India in every aspect. ITC Hotels takes the nation first approach by promoting Indian destinations and its rich culture through architecture, cuisine, services, and signature rituals. Loyalty program Club ITC unifies all the six distinct brands – ITC Hotels, Welcomhotel, Mementos, Storii, WelcomHeritage and Fortune, and members gain access to a wide range of exclusive benefits across 65+ hotels pan India.



Mementos by ITC Hotels, Ekaaya Udaipur



“Our staff guide the guests in experiencing the true nature of the destination and what the brand has to offer in the most authentic way. In terms of marketing, we create a window to the authentic and real experiences offered by the region & its people”

MICHAEL DOMINIC
MD & CEO, CGH Earth Group

Says **Michael Dominic**, MD & CEO, CGH Earth Group: “The brand CGH Earth offers unique experiences across Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry and Karnataka. These experiences rest on the three pillars of our core values—environment sensitivity, benefitting the community and adopting the local ethos. Our people are our strength and they are our best brand ambassadors. We seek alert independent and conscious travellers who are in search of unique experiences. CGH Earth holidays have been transformative in nature for many first-timers who have found meaning in our way of holidaying. These guests are the genuine loyalty that we cherish. And they in turn become brand ambassadors for us.”



Spice Village – CGH Earth

CGH Earth brand, he says, is a collection of unique and boutique holiday and wellness experiences, held together by the common thread of the brand’s core values and responsible travel practices. “The staff guide the guests in experiencing the true nature of the destination and what the brand has to offer in the most authentic way. In terms of marketing, we create a window to the authentic and real experiences offered by the region and its people, and our staffers, who are from the neighbouring villages and towns, take pride in their culture and their ability for co-creating experiences.” The positioning of the brand remains the same for international and desi audiences.



Benefiting the local community

Says **Akriti Arora**, Group Head, PR & Communications, Lemon Tree Hotels: “The major evolution in brand communication during and post the pandemic has been the transition from offline to online mediums.” She says the past couple of years has brought about a change in marketing and communication strategies, with the pandemic creating an ecosystem where the global population was forced to live, work and play online. We have, therefore, found that there are a few key areas wherein we need to spend time and effort in order to reach out to and interact with existing and potential new customers, including:

- Revamping the website and creating a new, more refined and customer friendly UI/UX, as today discovery, assessment and bookings of hotels are being done online
- Creating a new loyalty programme with easier, more secured access and greater benefits

- Redefining our social media marketing strategy, and creating new content with higher customer appeal. Also, using a mix of experiential, destination, brand and product marketing to target different user personas
- Encouraging two-way communication with our users on social and professional networking platforms, thus increasing engagement
- Even greater adherence to the highest levels of hygiene, cleanliness, safety and security, and timely redressal of any issues that guests may face during their visits.

She adds: “Branding goes beyond a name, tagline, design, symbol/logo or other tangible assets. The key components that form a brand include the brand’s identity/essence (core values), personality, product and service design, and brand management/communication strategies, which are used to build brand awareness, reputation, loyalty and advocacy amongst target customers. A brand’s essence is



Lemon Tree Premier, Dwarka



“A brand’s essence is the promise to its customers of what they can expect from a company’s products/services and includes emotional (intangible) as well as functional (tangible) benefits”

AKRITI ARORA
Group Head, PR & Communications,
Lemon Tree Hotels

the promise to its customers of what they can expect from a company’s products/services and includes emotional (intangible) as well as functional (tangible) benefits. Brand equity is the measurable totality of a brand’s worth and is validated by observing the effectiveness of these branding components.”

Thus a successful brand strategy is a key component that can be used in business,

marketing and advertising to drive recognition and awareness, reach out to customers and create value as brand equity, to the benefit of the brand’s customers, its owners and stakeholders. “For example, through our Rest Assured branding for our cleanliness and hygiene programme, we are able to communicate effectively to our guests regarding our numerous operational initiatives, and assuage any doubts or worries they may have had regarding travel and hotel stays,” she says.

Lemon Tree has 87 hotels, under seven brands that span the upscale, upper-midscale, midscale and economy segments. Branding elements across each of these brands varies, and encompasses:

- Brand/hotel name
- Logo
- External and internal signage as per the brand standard
- Brand specific collaterals in the hotels
- Outlet branding – across the restaurant/ coffee shop, bar, specialty restaurants, spa, banquets etc. – which includes the name, logo, signage, menus and promotional collaterals.

“Our branding efforts go beyond the tangible, as we want all of our brands, in their own way, to please the five senses, viz. sight, smell, sound, taste and touch, and evoke the ‘sixth’ intangible sense (or aura) of happiness through our differentiated design elements, product offerings and seamless service delivery,” she says. The Lemon Tree Hotels’ tagline is “Refreshingly Different” and the brand essence is fresh, fun, spirited and vibrant.

Aurika Hotels & Resorts, their upscale brand, has the tagline “Beyond the Unusual”.

“For tier II and tier III destinations and leisure hotels, offline mediums still play a large role in the awareness and establishment of the hotel brand. Radio ads and SMS marketing work well in smaller cities and/or for food and beverage promotions. For leisure hotels, particularly road trip destinations, hoardings, prominent signage and brochures continue to garner awareness in target markets. For weddings and social events, traditional printed brochures with images,

seating charts, maps, etc. work well,” she says.

Giving some examples, she says the Aurika branding started with the selection of the font and colours, and the development of the logo. The brand colours, gold and purple, represent elegance, luxury and warmth, and creativity, beauty and royalty. The classic serif font selected for the brand and the logos expresses luxurious elegance. The lower case ‘a’s in the brand logo bring in informality. The R resembles the Devanagari ‘r’ - a subtle suggestion of Indianness in the brand. A small jewel-like sparkle inserted into the logo represents the extraordinary luminous energy of the brand.

Regarding how much should a hotel spend on branding, she says: “Branding should be looked at from two perspectives – one is the creation of the brand, and the second is brand marketing, to create brand awareness and drive sales. The cost of brand creation can vary from a few lakhs to a few crores, depending on the number of elements and collaterals required, development of proprietary fonts/colours, the agencies with whom a brand is working, and more. As far as brand marketing is concerned, the industry average for spends by B2C brands is 5-10% of the revenue.” LemonTree has a loyalty programme – Infinity Rewards by Lemon Tree, replacing the previous programme – Lemon Tree Smiles – and brings in many unique offerings that were not part of the previous programme.

Navjit Ahluwalia is Senior Vice President & Country Head, India, Hilton, that operates 24 hotels across five of Hilton’s 19 brands: Conrad Hotels & Resorts, Hilton Hotels & Resorts, DoubleTree by Hilton, Hilton Garden Inn and Hampton by Hilton. “Each brand caters to diverse customer needs and stay occasions - from the upscale Hilton Garden Inn that’s known for affordable accommodations and modern amenities, to the luxury Conrad Hotels & Resorts which offers intuitive, personalized service and contemporary, bold design. In addition, across all our brands and hotels, guests can enjoy the benefits of Hilton Honors,



Hilton Garden Inn Jakarta Taman Palem

our award-winning guest loyalty program which recently celebrated its 150 millionth member globally,” he says.

“At Hilton, we are committed to expanding our footprint in India by choosing the right brands in the right locations, while working with the right partners. We aim to establish our presence in city and resort destinations with our flagship Hilton Hotels & Resorts brand, find new-build and conversion opportunities for our

upscale DoubleTree by Hilton brand in high visibility urban and leisure locations, and cater to the needs of the growing middle class through our focused service brands such as Hilton Garden Inn. We also see an opportunity to bring our award-winning luxury brands, Waldorf Astoria and Conrad Hotels & Resorts, to first-tier high-visibility markets where we are primed to elevate the level of international luxury hospitality,” he adds.



“At Hilton, we are committed to expanding our footprint in India by choosing the right brands in the right locations, while working with the right partners”

NAVJIT AHLUWALIA
Senior Vice President & Country Head, India, Hilton

Kush Kapoor, CEO, Roseate Hotels & Resorts says: “Branding plays an important role as it helps our guests understand what we stand for and allows us to connect with them on a more personal level. We focus on delivering exceptional experiences to guests. Post Covid-19, we reiterated our commitment to guest safety by being transparent about measures introduced in our Care by Roseate program. We introduced a live feed of our kitchen where guests could view the food being prepared. We add products that allow our guests to experience Roseate even when they are away from the hotel. These include Mithais, Chocolates, Cookies, Macaroons, Breads, among others. Our meet & greet facility at Delhi airport ensures our guests have a hassle-free experience at the airport. We see a lot of guests coming back to us and they are the brand ambassadors for Roseate Hotels. We continually update them on what’s happening across our hotels in India and the UK. The word-of-mouth promotion by our guests is the most efficient method of branding as guests are able to convey their own experiences in a way that cannot be done by anyone else.” Personalization like monogrammed bath robes and table napkins or chauffeured delivery of birthday cakes for guests



“We see a lot of guests coming back to us and they are our brand ambassadors. We continually update them on what’s happening across our hotels in India and the UK. Word-of-mouth promotion by our guests is the most efficient method of branding”

KUSH KAPOOR
CEO, Roseate Hotels & Resorts

to their homes are some of the unique ways they connect with their guests. He says their hotels are wellness retreats and this is a theme that is consistent for the hotels, like at The Roseate in New Delhi or The Roseate Ganges in Rishikesh. Their guest loyalty program – B-Prive has benefits covering Stays, Dining, Experiential events, and so on.

Hotel branding is the image the hotels want to convey, their storytelling narrative. It also gives a focus to the staff to ensure the service deliveries are aligned with the set goal laid out in the branding efforts. HAI



Roseate House New Delhi

Enhance your property’s guest experience with Magzter Smart Reading Zone®

Go Green with Magzter and offer your guests contactless and unlimited access to 7,500+ magazines and newspapers anywhere inside your property



Magzter Smart Reading Zone® - There’s something exciting for everyone



Families



Leisure Travellers



Backpackers



Business Travellers

Our Existing Hospitality Sector Clients



Exclusive limited period offer available for hotels

Contact now to get a free trial



Chander Shekhar



+91-7011580422



chander@magzter.com



Millets For All

India is the largest producer of millet in the world. The Economic Survey 2023 highlighted that India produces over 50.9 million tonnes of millet, accounting for 80% of Asia's and 20% of global production. India's average yield of millet is 1239 kg/ha, compared to the global average yield of 1229 kg/ha. It is with the aim to create awareness and increase production and consumption of millets that the United Nations, at the behest of the Government of India, declared 2023 the International Year of Millets.

With the UNGA's nod to 2023 as the International Year of Millets, there's a renewed focus on these nutritious grains. Through various schemes under the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, efforts are being undertaken for greater and more efficient marketing of the many benefits of millet consumption. The Ministry has approved millet-based products as ODOP (One District One Product) for promotion in 19 districts of 10 States. More than 1,800 Millet Processing Units have been supported through credit access, capacity building, handholding and forward linkage activities. Moreover, 17 millet-based Incubation Centres have also been approved, in order to strengthen the Millet Value Chain in the country. In addition to this, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries is hosting Millet Mahotsavs across 20 States and 30 Districts in the country with the aim to create awareness about the nutritional benefits, value addition, consumption and export potential of millets.

A component for millet-based products has been included under the Central Sector Scheme, "Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industry (PLISFPI)", with an outlay of Rs 800 crore to encourage the use of millets in Ready-To-Eat (RTE) and Ready-To-Cook (RTC) product category. Thirty applications (8 large entities and 22 SMEs) have been approved under this segment. The incentive amount earmarked for millet based products is likely to facilitate increased production by about Rs 16,500 crore till the year 2026-27.

A mega-food event- "World Food India 2023" is also being organized by the Ministry from 3-5 November,

India's millet campaign revolves around the theme that it's good for people and the planet. The goal is to achieve \$100 million worth of millet & value added products exports by FY25, up from \$64 million in 2021-22. The rebranding of millets as a healthy and climate-responsive crop will eventually help the overall ecosystem of the country.

ANITA PRAVEEN, Secretary, Ministry of Food Processing Industries, writes on the importance of millets.

2023, at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, to provide a unique platform to all stakeholders i.e. producers, food processors, equipment manufacturers, logistics players, cold chain players, technology providers, academia, start-up & innovators, food retailers, etc. to interact with and have a dialogue. The event is slated to be the biggest-ever congregation of dignitaries, global investors and business leaders of major global and domestic food companies which would put India firmly on the global food landscape.

Besides being farmer-friendly, due to the unique nutritional properties of millets, i.e., high fiber, quality protein & mineral composition, millets are called "nutri-cereals". Millets are fibrous in content, have magnesium, Niacin (Vitamin B3), are gluten-free, and have high protein content. Millets also offer other benefits in ecological, nutritional, and socio-economic areas.

Millet processing provides a significant opportunity to boost off-farm livelihood opportunities. The ministry has been encouraging in placing processing units closer to production sites, thereby reducing the factory gate pricing of millet products. Off-farm opportunities ensure that cultivators get the chance to integrate value-addition in their scope of work and reap better monetary benefits, and also make RTE/RTC millet-based products affordably accessible to rural households.

Millets are growing in popularity across the globe. They are now available in the form of cookies, pancakes, brownies, and a lot more. Although mindsets and lifestyles don't change overnight and it may still be a while until millets become a permanent part of India's mainstream consumption, the future is bright for this superfood. **HAI**

AN ALL TIME FAVOURITE COOKIES RECIPE

-Pearl Millet Cookies

Chef Rakesh Sethi, Corporate Executive Chef, Radisson Hotel Group South Asia, shares recipes with Pearl millet.

Pearl Millet, also known as Bajra is one of the most ancient crops available. It is called several other names across various parts of India.

Like most millets, bajra is a nutrient-dense source of protein, carbs, vitamins, minerals, and beneficial plant chemicals.

Bajra and most types of other millets are good grain choices for people with diabetes. Like many other millets, it also has low GI compared to today's grains like wheat & rice. It's easy to cook but better if either soaked a night before or grounded as it is mostly done in our Indian recipes that can be used to make roti and other types of flatbreads.

In the following recipe, we used Bajra flour to make cookies



PEARL MILLETS COOKIES

Ingredients:

- Pearl millets (Bajra) flour: 100 gm
- Butter (Chilled): 100 gm
- Jaggery powder: 100 gm
- Baking powder: 5 gm
- Vanilla essence: 5 ml
- Cardamom powder: 5 gm
- Milk (chilled): About: 6-7 tbsp

METHOD:

- Cut the butter into small pieces, making sure it is still cold
- Add Pearl millets flour, baking powder, and jaggery powder in a bowl. Mix well, and be careful not to form lumps
- Add vanilla essence and cardamom powder
- Add milk little by little and form a smooth but firm dough. Refrigerate it for 30 minutes.
- Make small balls out of the dough, coat with sesame, and sugar, and flatten them slightly
- Arrange them on a baking tray leaving a little gap between each piece
- Bake in a preheated oven for 18 minutes at 150 degrees.
- Cool in the same tray before serving. **HAI**

DISCOVERING KERALA

God's Own Country is an excellent example of how a state should market its diversity, culture and hospitality options.

BY RIAAN JACOB GEORGE

It would be stating the obvious if one were to praise Kerala for its magnificent landscapes, extensive network of backwaters, unique culture and outstanding food—the state is well known for this. What one should make a point to highlight is just how exemplary Kerala has been in positioning itself as a thoroughly diverse tourist destination. The state's marketing mechanism, as well as its hospitality stakeholders, have ensured the right positioning of the state, and it attracts high-quality, experiential tourists. Kerala sees an inflow of discerning travellers from both domestic and international markets.

Wellness, spiritual, cultural and nature tourism lead the pack for different segments of the state's tourism pie. In terms of hospitality, Kerala offers an extremely high standard of luxury hotels, homestays, and boutique properties.

According to the Kerala Tourism official website, there were 60,487 foreign tourists to Kerala in 2021, while domestic tourist arrivals to the state in the same year was 75,37,617, a 50% increase when compared to the previous year. To highlight the importance of tourism in Kerala, the total revenue from this industry for 2021 stood at about Rs 12,000 crore, up by 8.38% from the previous year.

The state's marketing mechanism, as well as its hospitality stakeholders, have ensured the right positioning of the state, and it attracts high-quality, experiential tourists



Eravikulam National Park

Natural Landscapes

An abundance of wildlife as well as natural flora and fauna await travellers in Kerala, across its highly diverse landscapes. With national parks and wildlife sanctuaries galore, it may not be an easy feat to cover all of them. However, if you plan your itinerary well, you might be able to cover quite a lot. Among the top spots for wildlife spotting is the Periyar National Park, spread over approximately 777 sq km. Also known as the Periyar Tiger Reserve and located in the districts of Idukki and Pathanamthitta, this park is home to various rare and endangered flora and fauna. It is also home to the magnificent Bengal tiger and the Indian elephant, which makes it a must-visit.

Another sanctuary at the top of the list is the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary. Formed in 1973 and populated with a variety of large wild animals like the gaur, Indian elephant, tiger and deer, this sanctuary is the second-largest wildlife sanctuary in Kerala and has made a name for itself for having the largest population of tigers in the state. It also comes under Project Elephant, which guarantees some herd spotting during a visit. Need we say more?

A few more noteworthy names on the wildlife front are the Eravikulam National Park, the Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary and the Idukki Wildlife Sanctuary.



Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary



Western Ghat

To highlight the importance of tourism in Kerala, the total revenue from this industry for 2021 stood at about Rs 12,000 crore, up by 8.38% from the previous year

UNESCO Sites

India's southernmost state has been at the top of every traveller's list because of its sheer diversity in culture, natural landscapes and hospitality options. Kerala is also home to a number of stunning UNESCO World Heritage Sites. These are:

The Western Ghats is a mountain range older than the Himalayas. Boasting some extremely diverse and distinct forest ecosystems and geomorphic features of importance, this range has a huge impact on the Indian monsoons and has been recognised by UNESCO as a region of extreme global importance for the conservation of biological diversity.

The Vadakkunnathan Temple is a stunning place of worship in Thrissur and attracts scores of visitors from across the country. It is known for its unique architectural styles. UNESCO has overseen the restoration measures to preserve this historical temple. The famous Chendavadyam performance is also held at Koothabalam, a temple theatre.

The Mattancherry Palace is next on the list. It is a two-tiered quadrangular building, located in Kochi, constructed by the Portuguese in 1555. Famous for its long and spacious halls and unique intricate carvings on the first-floor ceiling, this palace is one of the finest examples of the Kerala style of architecture inspired by colonial influences.



Vadakkunnathan Temple



Mattancherry Dutch Palace Ernakulam

“Kerala state has achieved several milestones in tourism and has been recognized as a model for sustainable and responsible tourism. The state continues to innovate and develop new initiatives to promote tourism while ensuring the welfare of the local community and the conservation of natural resources”

MOHAMED FAROUK
Regional Director (South),
Ministry of Tourism,
Government of India



Home of Ayurveda and cradle of wellness

It is said that the Ayurvedic form of treatment was passed down from the gods themselves as a gift. Kerala—God’s own country—is known internationally to be a centre for wellness tourism. It is reputed for its Ayurveda and wellness retreats. Kerala gets a huge inflow of international tourists seeking this ancient form of treatment. The state offers almost every kind of Ayurvedic therapy, to suit all budgets, and interests. From rejuvenation therapies and Panchkarma to diagnoses and Ayurvedic medicine,

as well as specialised treatments, you will find something for every health and wellness objective. Not just Ayurveda, Kerala also boasts some of the best wellness retreats and facilities in the country. With numerous offers and countless variations, you may pick and choose the best package for you. Somatheeram Ayurvedic Resort, located just off Kovalam Beach is one of the most specialised places to go for treatment. Other places include the Kairali Ayurvedic Health Resort, the Sarovaram Ayurvedic Resort and the Kalari Kovilakom.



Kativasti Ayurveda Therapy



Somatheeram Ayurveda Village, Kovalam and Poovar Resort



Alappuzha Kochi Cruise

Wellness, spiritual, cultural and nature tourism lead the pack for different segments of the state’s tourism pie. In terms of hospitality, Kerala offers an extremely high standard of luxury hotels, homestays, and boutique properties

Paradise in backwaters

One of the most recognisable symbols of Kerala, visible across most advertisements for the state, is the boat on the backwater. Kerala’s popularity as a tourist destination may be attributed to its wonderful tropical climate and culture, but its backwaters are the highlight attraction. The backwaters are a cluster of internal waters that stretch for 900 km. The backwaters connect very large sections of the region so there are a number of different ports from where you can start and end your cruise. A few well-known places where you may experience the backwaters are Kumarakom, Alleppey, Kochi and Trivandrum. While backwater cruises typically last half a day or a full day, some tourists choose to spend the night on a houseboat, also known as kettuvalam. This is a large boat that, in principle, was built to carry spices, provisions and much more, but these are now turned into luxury houseboats, where travellers may cruise around by day and stay the night. The most popular option for houseboat trips is Alleppey, also known as the Venice of the East for its extensive network of canals.



Munnar

Three hill stations to visit in Kerala

Munnar is known as the Kashmir of South India because of its lush landscapes and cool climes. If you are in Munnar, do not miss out on the Kundala Dam—the boat rides are marvellous. Also, visit the Attukal waterfall and the iconic Tata Tea museum if you love chai. You may even visit the many panoramic points atop the hills or the charming markets to buy local spices and artefacts.

Wayanad is famous for its spice plantations and the breathtaking diversity of flora and fauna. Nestled in the Western Ghats, you may visit natural spots like the ancient Eddakal Caves or spot some rare species at the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary. The Pookode Lake is also a must-visit. The Meenmutty Waterfalls are highly recommended and you may try the local food at the wayside stalls as well.

Vagamon is dreamy thanks to its expansive meadows and gentle, pine-laden hills, in the region of Kottayam. The stunning landscapes are complimented by a range of cultural activities. The Vagamon Falls are extremely photogenic, while the Vagamon Meadows are perfect for an evening picnic. The nearby Pine Hill merits a leisurely walk while you may go boating at the Vagamon Lake. You may even paraglide here if you would like to see the landscape from a different perspective. These art forms.



Wayanad, Kerala



Vagamon, Kerala

Business and MICE travel in Kerala

An emerging and important segment in Kerala is corporate travel, especially to the cities of Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram. The recent opening of the ultra-luxe Hyatt Regency Trivandrum is a case in point. During our recent visit there, the hotel, owned by LuLu, is all about modern design and high technology catering to business travellers. The rooms and MICE infrastructure are outstanding and likely to create a huge supply for major events in the state. For the leisure segment, the hotel also has curated city and food experiences in and around the property. **HAI**



Images courtesy:
Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala



Hyatt Regency Trivandrum

● The Last Word

Vision for Tourism and Hospitality

Though the hospitality sector should have received more focus in the Union budget, the vision for tourism in the budget is pragmatic, and the roadmap is well charted.

By MP BEZBARUAH

Secretary General, Hotel Association of India



The expectations and excitement of another Union budget is now behind us. The build up to the budget and its aftermath followed the familiar pattern—the industry enthusiastically participated in the pre-budget discussions with the Finance Ministry, feeling happy that its suggestions seem to have received sympathetic attention. The aftermath was not much different. Hospitality industry felt that its expectations from the budget were not met. Small things which could have been accommodated with little or no financial implications, which could have spurred the industry to greater contribution to GDP, inclusive growth and job creation, did not receive attention.

Traditionally, the budget not only provides the picture of the finances of the country, it also lays down the directions of the macro-economic policies for larger economic objectives. Hotel Association of India (HAI) took care to make its suggestions not so much in terms of “asks” or “demands” but attuned them to the broad objectives of the government. They were grouped under policy intervention, rationalisation of taxes and tax rates to achieve greater efficiency and productivity and changes that make compliances easy and doing business hassle-free. Though missing in details in the Budget these recommendations are expected to be addressed in the coming months as there is a mention of The Harmonized Master List of Infrastructure to be reviewed by an expert committee for recommending the classification and financing framework, about increased ease of doing business and other proposed reforms. The budget, with its focus on capital investment and infrastructure development, cannot in its implementation ignore HAI’s proposal for “infrastructure status” that will encourage “atmanirbhar” way of bridging the gap between

demand and supply in tourism infrastructure. And for that matter, the objective of professional development of tourism in “mission mode” must be built on making tourism an “industry”. HAI will continue to focus on the rationale of these suggestions and their relevance to the avowed objectives of growth of the tourism and hospitality sector.

The budget coincides with a strong revival of the hospitality sector and in that excitement there may be a danger of ignoring these long-term imperatives of growth for the sector. Emerging from perhaps the worst time ever, tourism and hospitality were pleasantly greeted by 2023 like a ray of fresh sunshine. The recovery has been astounding, pushing to background the despair and despondency of the preceding years. Horwath HTL (HHTL), a leading global hospitality consultant, in its year-end report called 2022 a dream year for the Indian hospitality industry. Nearly 65% of respondents to a survey conducted by them say it was their best year ever; another 30% ranked it as among the three best years ever for their hotel. The report highlighted Lack of Scale as a serious concern. The average size of new supply created in 170 hotels in 2022 was 65 rooms; 93 of these hotels had 50 rooms or less. Just two hotels had more than 300 rooms. On its own, the hospitality sector—the highest employment multiplier for every million rupees invested among all the sectors—has a strong case for “big push” as infrastructure. And without it the mission mode of tourism will be limping on broken legs.

The FM has painted the broad picture and the expectation is that the nitty-gritties will fall in place



Quite often well-meaning initiatives of the MOT fall on the wayside for lack of convergence with the departments responsible for implementation of the programmes

In fairness it must be said that the FM has painted the broad picture and the expectation is that the nitty-gritties will fall in place. Rarely has tourism found clear mention in the long term macro-economic directions of the country as it did in the current budget. In a few paragraphs, the FM has been able to pack a comprehensive, meaningful and futuristic vision for the sector, acknowledging the large potential to be tapped and the huge opportunities for job creation to be exploited. It is worthwhile paraphrasing the vision as enumerated as the guiding principles for the future. First is the need for a professional approach to tourism, a mission mode where the three key players converge—the states, different departments of government and the private sector. Quite often well-meaning initiatives of the MOT fall on the wayside for lack of convergence with the departments responsible for implementation of those programmes. The Mission mode is expected to remove these deficiencies.

Second, a recognition of the new trend in tourism—of creating experience. Destinations to be developed in an innovative manner as comprehensive packages where all elements like connectivity, physical and virtual, security, storytelling, culture and cuisine are integrated. The experience of tourists will be enhanced by development of theme-based circuits. Significantly, it clearly brings out the

In a few paragraphs, the FM packed a comprehensive, meaningful and futuristic vision for the sector, acknowledging the large potential to be tapped and the huge opportunities for job creation to be exploited

importance of domestic tourism development as the foundation for the future tourism vision.

During the pandemic, the UNWTO had made an important TBILISH Declaration on the theme of the People and the Planet as the future focus and had carried it forward subsequently in the World Tourism Day theme of Rethinking Tourism. The Vision outlined by the FM rests on sustainable concerns—bio-diversity, carbon stock, ecotourism—where the local communities are at the centre and participate in the development and derive economic benefits from such participation.

A survey by UNWTO had found that for about 30% of travellers, shopping is a primary motivation during travel. India is a shopper's paradise in terms of the variety of arts and crafts. However quite often travellers complain about hassles in shopping and about price and quality. It will be interesting to see if the concept of Unity Mall and development of local handicrafts and crafts transform the shopping experience of travellers and create avenues for income and employment for local artisans through tourism.

Last, by no means least, it is heartening to see the FM highlight the importance of skilling and entrepreneurship development in the sector. Tourism competitiveness revolves around the capacity to service experiences. And service now depends heavily on technology which is fast changing. To achieve the objective of seeing India as a top destination, attention to skilling will be an unavoidable requirement.

Overall, therefore the tourism and hospitality sector has much to be happy about the current budget. One is reminded of the famous quote in Alice in Wonderland-- "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

Though the hospitality sector should have received a clearer attention, the vision for tourism in the budget is pragmatic, and the roadmap is well charted. The hospitality sector will continue to hope that the rational suggestions of the sector will logically fall in place if the budget vision is properly and systematically implemented. **HAI**



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS



Mr. P.R.S. Oberoi
Patron-in-Chief
Hotel Association of India
Chairman Emeritus
EIH Limited



Mr. Puneet Chhatwal
President
Hotel Association of India
Managing Director & CEO
The Indian Hotels Company Limited



Mr. K.B. Kachru
Vice President
Hotel Association of India
Chairman Emeritus &
Principal Advisor, S. Asia
Radisson Hotel Group



Mr. Vikram Oberoi
Immediate Past President
Hotel Association of India
Managing Director & CEO
EIH Limited



Ms. Priya Paul
Corporate Member
Hotel Association of India
Chairperson
Apeejay Surrendra Hotels Limited



Mr. Nakul Anand
Corporate Member
Hotel Association of India
Executive Director
ITC Limited



Dr. Jyotsna Suri
Corporate Member
Hotel Association of India
Chairperson & MD
Bharat Hotels Limited



Mr. Patu Keswani
Corporate Member & Hony. Treasurer
Hotel Association of India
Chairman and MD
Lemon Tree Hotels Limited



Mr. Vivek Nair
Corporate Member
Hotel Association of India
Chief Executive Officer
HLV Limited



Mr. Anil Madhok
Fellow Member
Hotel Association of India
Executive Chairman
Sarovar Hotels Pvt. Ltd.



Mr. Sanjay Sethi
Fellow Member
Hotel Association of India
Managing Director & CEO
Chalet Hotels Limited



Mr. Rohit Khosla
Member
Hotel Association of India
Executive Vice President
(Operations), IHCL



Mr. J.K. Mohanty
Member & Hony. Secretary
Hotel Association of India
Managing Director
Swosti Premium Limited



Mr. R. Shankar
Member
Hotel Association of India
President - Corporate Affairs,
EIH Limited



Mr. Samir M.C.
Member
Hotel Association of India
Managing Director
Fortune Park Hotels Limited



Mr. Rupak Gupta
Member
Hotel Association of India
Managing Director
U.P. Hotels Limited



Mr. Surinder Singh
Member
Hotel Association of India
Area Director, IHCL



Mr. M.P. Bezbaruah
Secretary General
Hotel Association of India



Ministry of Tourism
Government of India



Visit India Year 2023



Incredible India

