

MYSTIC EAST

...an unexplored horizon

A bi-monthly magazine by HRAEI | Vol 6 | Issue 2 | March - April 2019

ELEGANT, SET AMID NATURE

Mayfair Group of Hotels, a
leader in the East, takes the
rest of India in its stride





VISION

- ✌️ Make the Eastern Region comprising 12 States and a Union Territory a flourishing destination for domestic and foreign tourists by projecting their captivating tourism assets.
- ✌️ Promoting best industry practices and setting benchmarks for industry constituents.



MISSION

- ✌️ A common voice for hotels, restaurants and associates for unhindered progress of the hospitality industry in the country's Eastern Region.
- ✌️ Create value for members by ensuring government policies remain supportive of tourism and the industry.



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Fire safety is one of the most important issues in the hospitality industry. All hotels and restaurants should try their best to adhere to the principles of fire safety laid out by fire services department. In the industry there are many areas of potential hazards, such as kitchen, air conditioning system, refrigerators and so on.

Early this year a blaze at a hotel in New Delhi's Karol Bagh claimed 17 lives. Apparently the source of fire was a spark from an air-conditioner in one of the guest rooms which later engulfed the entire building. Reportedly the hotel was built on a slew of violations, such as not leaving any free space as per municipal strictures or open space for emergency exits and ventilation, in case of emergency.

Following the mishap the Delhi government notified new building bylaws for hotels

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Owners and managers in the hospitality industry must learn a lesson from the fire tragedy in the Delhi hotel and try to implement the safety rules in their premises

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and guesthouses, banning the running of kitchens from rooftops or basements and use of carpets, wooden or foam panels in passages, corridors and staircases. It also made mandatory for hotels and guesthouses to have carbon monoxide detectors and alarms.

Hotels and guesthouses must also have fire doors having resistance rating of not less than one hour (capable of resisting fires for an hour) at the entrance of staircases at each floor level which have the capacity to house more than 10 occupants. The carbon monoxide fire detectors and alarms, which are to be installed in buildings, must meet the standards of the Delhi Fire Services department, the rules say.

Owners and managers in the hospitality industry must learn a lesson from the Delhi tragedy and try to implement the strictures in their premises. (275 w)

Pranav Singh
President, HRAEI



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The concept of Hygiene Rating is new in India, but has parallels in many countries

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FSSAI is all set to implement the Hygiene Rating Scheme which will rate thousands of restaurants across India and ratings will become visible across outlets.

Hygiene Rating Scheme and Responsible Place to Eat are new schemes under Project Serve Safe, initiated with an intention of ensuring that consumer make informed choices while eating out and also encouraging food businesses to showcase and improve their food hygiene standards. It reflects the standards of food hygiene found on the date of inspection by the local authority.

The concept of hygiene Rating is new in India, but has parallels in many countries across the globe. Every country has its own terminologies to explain the idea of ensuring safe and hygienic food to general public, in all catering businesses.

This transparent scoring and rating process will allow all food business outlets to showcase their level of compliance and excellent food hygiene quality and enable consumers to make informed choices about the foods and the places where they would like to eat. Through these choices, Food businesses will get encouraged to improve their hygiene standards and thus reduce the incidence of food-borne illness.

This is indeed a welcome move by FSSAI. We wholeheartedly appreciate the noble effort.

Mr Mohammed Azhar
Honorary Secretary, HRAEI

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We expect the new government to look at the high--maximum limit 28 per cent--GST on tourism and hospitality that makes India an expensive tourist destination

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Like 2014, the second term of Prime Minister Narendra Modi comes with a huge expectation from hospitality, travel and tourism sector.

With such an emphatic mandate, I believe that PM Modi and his team will go all out to build a stronger nation. Given the political stability and the fact that India is a growing market there will be no dearth of private investment for India Inc. from across the world.

Five years ago when NaMo-led BJP came in power there has been a strong expectation that this industry will achieve unprecedented growth as ‘Tourism’ was the priority for a government at the centre. Also, looking at the achievements of tourism in Gujarat under his leadership, the stakeholders were very optimistic to have a Prime Minister who understands the importance of the tourism and hospitality sector.

We expect the new government to look at the high (28 per cent) GST on tourism and hospitality product—the highest in the world—making India an expensive tourist destination. While the Finance Ministry has reviewed GST slabs for all sectors, this sector has been left out till now. Also, fee for E-Visa have been increased, whereas our neighbouring countries offer free visa for tourism. This is the reason why the arrival figures into the country have grown, but the real revenue generating arrivals in the organised tourism segment have not shown any significant movement.

It would also help if the government widens the scope and budget of National Skill Development Corporation to train our youth in hospitality operations, housekeeping, front office, cooking and other skills related to the industry, as it can create a ready pool of employable resources for the industry.

Mr Sudesh Poddar

Chairman, Administrative Committee, HRAEI

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a leader in the East,
takes the rest of India
in its stride



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An initiative by the Hotel & Restaurant Association of Eastern India (HRAEI)

WORKSHOP ON FIRE SAFETY

MAY 11, Kolkata: The hospitality industry has grown significantly in the past few decades. The spread of industry and commerce as well as development of tourism has helped a large number of hotels come up both in metropolitan cities and small towns.

The growth spurt of the hotels and restaurants brings to the fore the problems of fire and life society. Wherever tragic fire accidents have occurred in the hospitality industry it's been observed that had the industry been properly equipped and personal trained, the damage could have been avoided or would have been much smaller.

To address the fire safety issue and make the members and staff of hotels and restaurants take adequate steps to prevent fire accidents, the Hotel &

Restaurant Association of Eastern India (HRAEI), in association with West Bengal Fire & Emergency Services (WBFES), organised a Workshop on Fire Safety in Hospitality Industry on May 11, at Hotel Holiday Inn Airport, Kolkata.

The workshop, attended by 350-odd delegates from the region's hotels and restaurants, iterated the fact that adequate precautions can ensure the safety of lives and property. In addition to lectures, demonstrations, posters and public discussion, officials of the WBFES answered to questions from members of HRAEI as well as the staff of several hotels and restaurants in the region.

"The prime focus for the workshop is to create and spread fire safety awareness among the owners and management staff of hotels and restaurants,"

said Shri Jag Mohan, Director General, Director General, WBFES. "Tragedies and fire accidents can be avoided by proper management action and staying alert. This can save both life and property. Its commendable that HRAEI has taken this step for the benefit of themselves as well as the society at large."

The event began with a presentation on dos and don'ts and fire safety rules by Abhijit Pandey, deputy director, WB fire service, referring to the Stephen Court fire that claimed over 40 lives in 2010 and the AMRI Hospital blaze that killed 90-plus people the next year.

In the workshop it was emphasised that every hotel or restaurant building should conform the basic guidelines of National Building Code of India to ensure adequate fire safety. It was



► Mr T.S. Walia, President Emeritus of HRAEI

El), in association with West Bengal Fire & Emergency Services (WBFES)

Y IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY



► Mr Pranav Singh, President, HRAEI

stated that no compromise should be made while building a new premise or no alterations should be done that violates rules of exits (for instance, reduction of the number, width or protection of doorways, corridors or passageways). Proper fire detection and alarm systems along with fire extinguishers should be installed and regular fire safety drills should be organised for health check-up of the system.

Since kitchen is an area where fire and heat are in constant use and it has been a source of many major hotel fires, kitchen staff should be specially trained to maintain and use fire safety devices. Misuse of electricity and faulty electrical appliances are also dominant fire risks. Fires have also started because of careless smoking habit of guests.

“Do keep the exit-entry points and

create more and more such points,” Jag Mohan told the delegates

Mr Sudesh Poddar, Chairman, Administrative Committee of HRAEI and the convenor of the workshop said, “This is indeed a big step towards safety against fire in hotels and restaurants. This will not only spread awareness but save lives and property. During incident of fire it is often seen that there is loss of life. Nothing is more important than live in this earth and I hope this workshop is just the start. The lessons we learnt here will go a long way for societal benefits. We look forward to more such workshops across the region and seek co-operation from WBFES.”

Mr Pranav Singh, the President HRAEI, said, “Fire safety is one of the most important issues in the hospitality industry. All hotels and restaurants

should try their best to adhere to the principles of fire safety laid out by WBFES because in the industry there are many areas of potential hazards, such as kitchen, air conditioning system, refrigerators etc. For new or upcoming premises it is not difficult to adhere to all the principles of fire safety, but for old or existing properties it is not an easy task. The Fire Department has to take this in account and help the existing/old systems to take a middle ground on safety measures.”

Mr T.S. Walia, a senior advisor of HRAEI, said, “For a long time. safety and security with regards to fire has been taken for granted in the hospitality industry. The seminar/workshop, in association with WBFES, will surely change the perception and take the issue seriously to save life and property.”



► HRAEI organised fire safety workshop in association with WBES at Holiday Inn Airport, Kolkata



► Mr Sudesh Poddar, chairman administrative committee, HRAEI deliver s his talk at the meet



▶ Mr Sudesh Poddar, Chairman, Administrative Committee of HRAEI



▶ Mr Jag Mohan, Director General, WBFEs



▶ Members of HRAEI attending the workshop

ELEGANT, LUXURIOUS, SET AMIDST NATURE

Mayfair group of hotels, a leader in the East, takes the rest of India in its stride

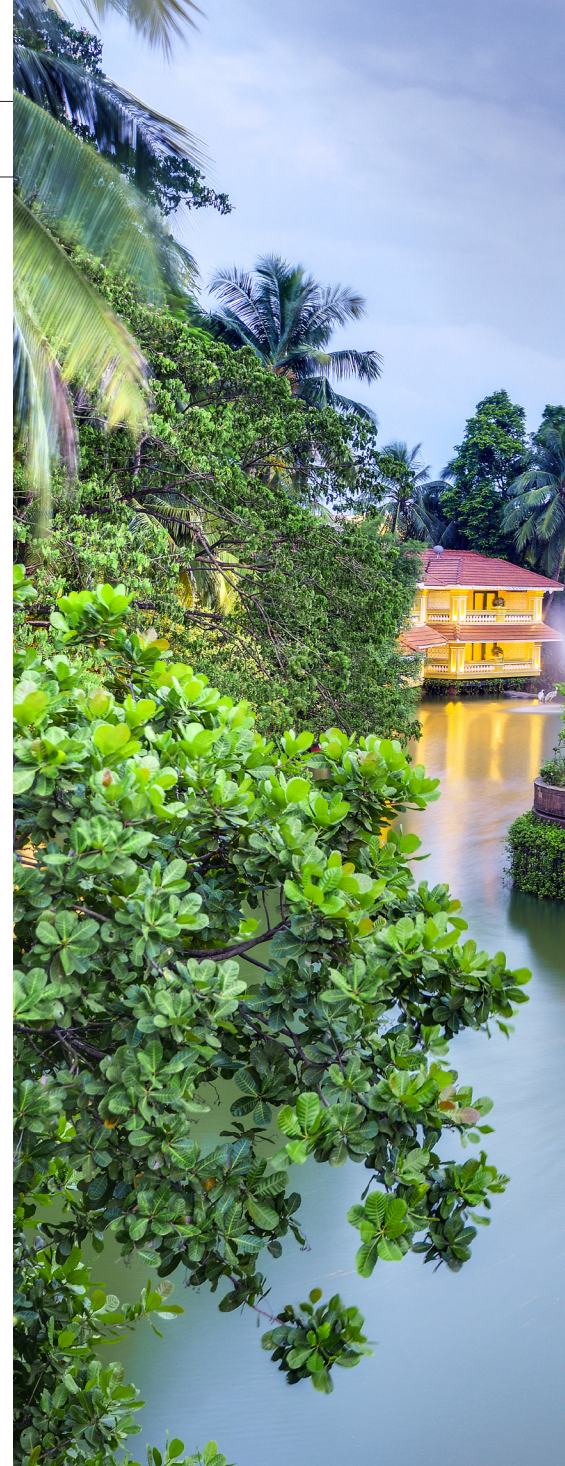
THE severe cyclonic storm Fani left a trail of massive devastation in Odisha, causing loss to people's lives and damaging property worth crores in the state, including those of Mayfair Group, the country's leading hospitality group.

While the disparaging storm has caused massive dent in the infrastructure, it has also affected the greens in the region. Undeterred by the destruction, the hospitality major—extensive green cover on their hotel sites across the country—organised a tree plantation drive in association with government agencies.

Talking about the initiative, group's executive director, Souvagya Mohapatra, told newsmen, "During the recent cyclonic storm, three of our locations got affected

including Puri, Bhubaneswar and Gopalpur-on-Sea. More than the property, we lost lot of greenery as lot of trees got uprooted. Our company's slogan 'Stay with us and stay with nature' promotes the idea of greenery and that's why we plant a lot of trees in all our properties. We took this opportunity to invite our business associates and the government authorities for the tree plantation drive. I am sure with all our sincere effort, we will be able to bring back the greenery in and around our properties very soon."

More than 10,000 trees from all over the country were procured and planted. "Approximately 15,000 trees were uprooted during this cyclone. In the first phase, we have planted 10,000 trees and in due course of time, we



will procure 10,000 more. The entire plantation will take place inside the properties and also in the periphery areas besides the main roads/pathways outside the properties," says Mohapatra.

Cyclone Fani devastated most of the green cover around Mayfair Lagoon



► **Mayfair Lagoon, Bhubaneswar, is one a high-end hotel offering a garden with a lagoon**

and it required a massive effort to clean the hotel area, which was covered with fallen trees. With the efforts of their employees and government agencies, in a record time, the hospitality major cleaned the hotel and also the surrounding areas. Around 110 varieties of plants from all across the

country, were procured for the drive. Mayfair Hotels & Resorts Ltd runs luxury properties spread across a melange of captivating settings in India including dreamlike mountains, idyllic beaches and vibrant cities. Guests can choose from varied options like a heritage property up in the hills, a beau-

tiful beachfront hotel, a delightful spa resort or a business hotel amongst others.

The 11 hotels and resorts are set in four diverse Indian states with the locations being Raipur, Goa, Gangtok, Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Bhubaneswar, Puri, Rourkela and Gopalpur.



Souvagya Mohapatra
– Executive Director,
Mayfair Hotels & Resorts

How did you turn the Mayfair group of hotels into India's most promising luxury hotel chains in Eastern India?

First of all, I would like to thank our Chairman and Managing Director – Mr. Dilip Ray for creating such marvelous properties with his great passion and personal interests. While developing a hotel project, he minutely focuses on each and every aspect including open space, nature, greenery and uniqueness as compared to other hotels in the city. This really makes our job really easy in terms of managing the hotels. Our USPs such as personalized services, large

rooms, love for nature etc stands us apart from the others. We really value our employees who are with us for a long time and loyal to the MAYFAIR Group as a whole. They are the ones and the passion of our Chairman has made us the most promising luxury chain in Eastern India.

What are the challenges you have to face while operating so many properties across Eastern India?

Since we are a hotel group from Eastern India, as such we do not face any operational challenges. However

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The state governments in eastern India is responsive towards the development of hotel industry in terms of approving the new projects quickly

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the complication in licenses such as Fire license, high licensing fees for operating bar etc can be relooked at. Manpower continues to be a major worry as it is difficult to get professional manpower due to lack for quality hotel management institutes.

What are the advantages of operating a hotel in Eastern India?

The state governments in eastern part of India is responsive towards the development of hotel industry in terms of approving the new projects quickly, helps in developing the



Pradipta Mohapatra
 – Assistant Vice President,
 Salles & Marketing



We at MAYFAIR Hotels & Resorts adhere to and practise a brand of hospitality where we strive to ensure that our guests get the best hospitality experience possible. Our properties across India include heritage properties in the hills, glamorous beachfront resorts, luxurious business hotels as well as magnificent city properties that transport you to a serene natural escape. All our properties share some things in common: matchless hospitality and warm service, world class facilities and stunning ambiance which all combine to give a truly memorable stay to our guests.



infrastructure such as roads, electricity and water supply for new and existing projects. Government really takes care of safety and security of the region and quickly responds to the support required by the Hotel Industry as a whole.

Do you think North Eastern India has a huge untapped potential in the hospitality sector? If so, what's your suggestion?

I do fully agree that North Eastern part of India has a huge untapped potential in the hospitality sector. The infrastructure such as air connectivity, improvement on roads, issues on transportation, lack of star classified hotels, lack of professional guides & tour operators needs to be re-looked at.

Government should come forward and invite the worthy developers to come up with star hotels while improving the connectivity both on air and road.

What are the challenges in the hospitality industry in Eastern India?

Eastern part of India is not exposed well in terms of tourism; hence the foreign tourist arrival to this region is minimal. With the presence of abundant tourism products such as Beach Resorts, Hill stations, Wild Life, rich cultural heritage, tribal tourism, Asia's largest lagoon – Chilika and many more the Eastern part of India could be well exposed to foreign tour operators thereby increasing the foreign tourist arrivals

Mayfair has now new properties in Goa and Raipur? Do you have plans to start properties in other states in north, south and west India?

Our Chairman is committed to promote the untapped tourism potential of Eastern India globally. Nine of our properties out of eleven are in East and look forward to extend our arms to many other cities in eastern part in near future. We have a property coming up in Siliguri by next year in tea tourism concept followed by grand properties at Kolkata and Satasnkha in Puri district. Govt of Odisha is extending us all possible support to start our project in Chilika Lake. We have also asked for a land to build a world class convention facility in Bhubaneswar.



► Mayfair Lagoon, Bhubaneswar

Lagoon is a marvellous property



Dhiman Mazumdar
– Assistant Vice President,
Mayfair Lagoon, Bhubaneswar

AT MAYFAIR Lagoon, we pride ourselves on being able to provide an all around unique and exceptional luxury stay experience to our guests. Our emphasis is on providing the best service while adhering to standards of the highest quality. Built around a beautiful lagoon, our 5 Star Deluxe hotel pro-

vides luxury accommodation across various categories including opulent villas with their own private dip pools. Our facilities include a host of event venues: both indoor and outdoor which gives several options to the guests. We have a wonderful spa with an adjoining bridal room and salon, a library, a jogging track, a swimming pool, a business centre and several dining establishments which are counted as being the very best in Bhubaneswar.

Heritage charm in the hills



Sabyasachi Mohanty
– Resort Manager,
Mayfair , Darjeeling

AT MAYFAIR Darjeeling, we offer the perfect balance between comfortable luxury and heritage charm in an incredible setting. Warm hospitality, luxury accommodation, multiple dining options, excellent event venue options and a lovely spa all combine to ensure a marvellous stay experience for our guests.



► **Mayfair Hotel, Darjeeling**



► Mayfair Himalayan Spa Resort, Kalimpong



Ravi R. Mohapatra

– Vice President,

Mayfair Himalayan Spa, Kalimpong

Magnificent views of the Himalayas

MAYFAIR Himalayan Spa Resort is widely regarded as the best luxury hotel in Kalimpong and indeed one of the best in the region itself. We ensure customer satisfaction by ensuring our service and facilities are of the

highest standards. We offer luxury accommodation in various categories, excellent restaurants and bars, a breathtaking swimming pool, a Recreation area, several event venues, an excellent spa and the most magnificent views of the Himalayas.



Chandan Thakur
– Resort Manager,
Mayfair Spa Resort & Casino,
Gangtok

India's first on-shore casino

LOCATED in a beautiful sprawl of mountain land, here at MAYFAIR Sp Resort & Casino, we provide guests with a memorable stay experience. Our award winning spa, India's first on-shore casino, indoor and outdoor event venues, a lovely swimming pool, Children's Play

Area, a well-stocked library, wonderful restaurants and varied accommodation including lavish villas and cottages are just some of the attractions here. We combine these facilities with warm and attentive service to give our guests a truly memorable experience.



► **Mayfair Spa Resort & Casino**



► Mayfair Hideaway Spa Resort, Goa



Bikash Pradhan
– Resort Manager,
Mayfair Hideaway Spa Resort, Goa

Quaint property in idyllic south Goa

HERE at MAYFAIR Hideaway Spa Resort located in a quiet idyllic part of South Goa, we provide guests with a special stay experience. We have luxury accommodation across various categories, multiple dining destinations, a lovely spa,

a beautiful swimming pool area and excellent event venues which can be incorporated together to be used in the perfect destination wedding. The service and facilities we provide go a long way in bringing a great hospitality experience to the guests.



Prakash Chandra Babu

– Vice President,

Resort Manager, Mayfair Rourkela

Stellar hotel in steel city

MAYFAIR Rourkela has long been known as the most stellar luxury hotel in the Steel City. It is indeed the perfect hotel for both corporates and families alike. We provide multiple event venues

which can be used for major conferences or luxury weddings, exceptional dining options including a courtyard restaurant, a lovely swimming pool and of course beautiful accommodation across various room categories.



► **Mayfair Hotel, Rourkela**



► Mayfair Palm Beach Resort, Gopalpur-on-Sea



Melvin Saroj Solomon
– Resort Manager,
Mayfair Palm Beach Resort,
Gopalpur-on-Sea

Memorable beachside stay experience

LOCATED right by the sea, we at MAYFAIR Palm Beach Resort bring to guests a memorable luxury beachside stay experience. Apart from the astonishing ocean views, we couple it with attentive ser-

vice and warm hospitality. Our facilities include an amazing spa, several event venues, multiple dining destinations, a gorgeous swimming pool and the loveliest lawn spread out right in front of the sea.



Bipratip Baratia
– Resort Manager,
Mayfair Convention

Massive banquet halls for varied events

AT MAYFAIR Convention, we ensure customer satisfaction through a consistent emphasis on providing quality service and facilities. We are happy to be known as one of the best business hotels in the region and offer

luxury accommodation, fine dining as well as a host of event venues including massive banquet halls with corresponding break-out rooms which can be used for varied events like lavish luxury weddings or conferences.



► **Mayfair Convention, Bhubaneswar**



► Mayfair Lake Resort, Raipur



Sanjeeb K. Pattnaik
– Resort Manager,
Mayfair Lake Resort,
Raipur

Luxury property facing a lake

WE AT MAYFAIR Lake Resort strive to provide the very best of service and hospitality to our esteemed guests. MAYFAIR Lake Resort is an exceptional luxury property facing the Jhangh Lake and

we offer luxury accommodation across various categories, excellent indoor and outdoor banqueting space, multiple dining destinations, A kid's Play Area, a swimming pool with a Rain Dance area, a library as well as a lovely spa.



V Kanan
– Vice President,
Mayfair Heritage and waves, Puri

Spectacular views of the Bay of Bengal

LOCATED on popular Puri Beach, both MAYFAIR Waves and MAYFAIR Heritage which are located right next to each other offer luxury accommodation, amazing dining destinations and uninterrupted views of the sea. We also have indoor and out-

door event venue which can be utilised for various events as well as other facilities like swimming pools, spa and Receptions Rooms. We combine these facilities with tailored warm and attentive service to ensure an amazing stay experience for our guests.



► **Mayfair Waves and Mayfair Heritage, Puri**



► **Manish Gupta, GM, Taj Bengal and Area Director-West Bengal, Assam, Andamans and Bhutan**

“
**We are
 bringing
 International
 Chefs from
 across the
 world**
 ”

MANISH Gupta, General Manager, Taj Bengal and Area Director-West Bengal, Assam, Andamans and Bhutan, graduated from the Institute of Hotel Management in Pusa in 1996 and then joined The Imperial Hotel in Delhi. This gave him an opportunity to join them as a management trainee and then be a part of the complete transformation of their property. He got an offer to join the Taj Mansingh (Taj Mahal Hotel) in Delhi in 2002 and was a manager for the banquets and their Chinese restaurant, House of Ming. He was then promoted to handle the F&B of the hotel and got the opportunity to launch Wasabi by Morimoto and Varq.

Then he moved to Mumbai as the resident manager of Taj Lands End, which gave me the opportunity to move out of F&B and handle the operations of the hotel. It's a big 500-room hotel in the heart of Bollywood in Bandra, which was a great experience. After that, he got the opportunity to open The Gateway Hotel in Calcutta.

He was in Kolkata for about a year and then he was moved to Jaipur as the general manager for Rambagh Palace — one of the best hotels in the World — which was a great experience of working in a palace hotel of top-end leisure. It has 78 rooms but is one of the most exclusive hotels in the world.

Then he was promoted to the position of director for the Jaipur region about a year ago, looking after Jai Mahal, two of our jungle lodges in Ranthambhore and Ramgarh, launching The Gateway Resort Ajmer and the Sawai Mansingh (SMS Hotel, Jaipur), with the primary role of looking after Rambagh.

HE SPOKE TO MYSTIC EAST FOR AN INTERVIEW. EXCERPTS:

What are the typical challenges you generally face while operating in your market?

Each market is different, and offers different challenges. New brands are coming to the city of Kolkata, and we have to keep upgrading our products and services, to match up with expectations, as guests are exposed to a lot more than before due to the increase of International travel. The other big challenge is in trained man power, due to the surge of new hotels. We are constantly re inventing training schedules.

How do you face such challenges to stay ahead in the race?

Regular hygiene checkups to ensure that processes are in place and introduce new ideas and concepts to engage our guests.

Considering the peculiarities of the market what kind of innovation you brought into your products, especially F&B, and services including banquets?

New design elements, themes, new cuisines and International Chefs offering unique concepts. We have begun bringing to the city International Chefs from across the world, to create experiences, hitherto unknown to the city. We brought The Master Chef from the Italian President’s Palace in Rome and the Master Chef from the Duke of Luxembourg’s residence. The other area we are focusing on is the high end leisure segment, by creating out of the box experiences.

What is your future plan to generate more revenue/profit?

Continue innovating and upgrading our product and services.

What is your advice to budding managers in your market?

Do not compromise on quality and read and explore what is going on in the world in this sector, to keep up with a fast growing industry and world.

THE NEW TAJ

● The Taj group set an example with its commitment to conservation and sustainable luxury in its newest property in the Andamans with the new Taj Exotica Resort & Spa.

● Occupying 46 acres on the famed Radhanagar Beach at Havelock Island, Taj Exotica Resort and Spa, Andamans is a luxurious gateway to a globally significant biodiversity hotspot in the Bay of Bengal. Fringed by strip of mangroves and a river overlooking the beach, the resort is a homage to the secluded Andaman and Nicobar archipelago stretching for 700 kms from the southern tip of Burma towards the north of Sumatra; a magical medley of rainforests, national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, unspoilt beaches and ancient tribal cultures.

● Not a single tree was felled during the construction of the 72 beach villas that pay homage to the style of the indigenous Jarawa tribe’s pitch-roof stilted huts. Guests can rest over the massive buttresses of an Andaman Padauk tree, ruminant by the water lily pond after a lavish massage or hit the treadmill at the fitness centre built around a majestic Mahua tree that soars up one level to the Olympic-sized infinity swimming pool. Wi-fi at the lobby ensures connectivity, while the silent and intuitive service creates a bespoke atmosphere for privacy and romance interrupted only the sound of kingfishers and emerald doves.

● Taj’s commitment to conservation and sustainable luxury in the archipelago is at the core of the resort’s impeccable facilities and services. Along with their own biogas facility, water bottling plant, a reservoir for rainwater harvesting and partial solar energy, the resort has partnered with the Pollution Control Board to keep the island plastic free while developing a plastic collection centre on the mainland.

● The resort offers a host of fun activities for children that engage them in the marine and terrestrial ecology of the island. Between picking mangoes, mud apples and mulberries at the bountiful orchards to jungle treks, beach picnics, supervised scuba diving and shell-craft lessons at the resort’s vibrant Recreational Center with plenty of post-meal snoozes on villa decks, there isn’t a dull moment for young and curious minds. Meanwhile, adults can dive into sensational dining experiences at the concept restaurants – Turtle House, The Settlers – or luxuriate in beauty and wellness treatments.



► Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, Havelock, Andamans

Old Trade, New Tricks

The latest technological advancements has brought about a change in the work system of housekeeping jobs, but human efficiency still plays an important role



Housekeeping services in a hotel is entrusted with maintaining a hygienic and clean environment. A decade ago, staff were involved in completing the paper work after their assigned job. Room checklist, lost and found, discrepancy report, vacant, dirty and occupied cabin list etc, were mandatory and was noted down manually.

But as time passed by, technology came into existence and the workload of paper and manual job was cut down to minimum but not completely. However, technology has improved the work efficiency and eliminated most of the time consuming work in the housekeeping department. With development in technology, the work pattern changed a lot in the housekeeping department, which resulted in reduction of manpower and time.

OLD TRICKS

Housekeeping job always being a physical work but at the same time it was also a clerical job for the housekeepers. Housekeeping department

has large number of staff working right from the EHK to housemen. The supervisor used to note down all the occupied, vacant, dirty rooms of the day and send it to the EHK and the front office. This was done three times a day i.e. in the morning, afternoon and night. Supervisors were responsible for the inventory of the linen. A work list or maintenance slip was prepared for engineering departments for all maintenance work. The housekeeping staff had to undertake these things everyday. The above work was done manually on paper and used to consume a lot of time.

NEW TECH

Today, technological evolution being the mantra globally, most of the hotels in the world have installed and applied various applications and software systems. This helped hotelier and also the staff to learn, understand and aware of the latest technology. Today, there are various technology solution company providing the application and services to the hotel industry in India. Since the inception of technol-

ogy in the housekeeping department, work has become easier. Previously, the housekeeping department was considered responsible only for maintaining basic cleanliness and upkeep of the property. Not much emphasis was laid on analysis-reports, software, training of staff related to the latest happening in field of housekeeping. However, in the last five years, trends have definitely changed with more focus on creativity, innovations, training, use of the latest equipment and technologies and software with new processes and standard operating

PROCEDURE IN PLACE.

Technology helps a housekeeper in simplifying work and brings more efficiency to the system. For example, personal digital assistant's are being used by the supervisors to clear rooms, to get all the information and preferences of the guests and to update the same. In case the guest is checking in for the first time, preferences are taken from the Internet and social websites. Computers reduces the number of papers used thus reducing the impact

on the environment. Radio-frequency identification (RFID) are being used in linen to track pilferage. Automatic chemical diluting machines are being used to get the right dilution thereby reducing wastage and increasing efficiency.

MULTIPLE USES

PMS, iPads, smartphones, maintenance related coordination, inven-

tory tracking system, RFID (a chip, created by linen technology tracking, are being sewn into anything made of cloth inside a hotel room where a sensor will go off to alert the hotel immediately while taking it) is an example of how technology has been applied in the housekeeping department. No one can predict the future and no one can say what could be the future in technology in coming years.

However, there are individuals who are working and want to develop or want something with some more productivity, which can be useful to the housekeeping department in the near future. India is fast catching up with the latest technology and in some areas are better than what the others can offer. It is time, which will decide the excellence of technology in India.

“ Housekeeping is the back- bone of hotel operations ”



Saikat Roy Choudhury
– Executive Housekeeper,
Hyatt Regency, Kolkata

How important is the housekeeping job in the era of hotel reviews (ref. customer satisfaction in an age of online hotel reviews)?

It is the back-bone of hotel operations. As the body can't function without the spine likewise a hotel is operational cause of house-keeping. It contributes majorly in customer satisfaction; the radar for analyzing guest "likelihood to recommend" comes in play when you have served your customer well. Housekeeping is one department which has closest proximity of guest needs and hence the Housekeeping plays a pivotal in hotel reviews.

In the new age what is more essential--human efficiency or mechani-

cal assistance?

Both! Human efficiency backed by mechanical assistance. In our industry where care plays a vital role, mechanical assistance can come handy in providing productivity whereas personal touch is required to make guest feel cared.

Has technical evolution made a housekeeping staff's job easier?

Yes! It has, like I mentioned before technical evolution has eased out the housekeeping associate's daily work and has improved their competence. For instance innovative Pest control machines, modern cleaning equipment's has become a combined force in upkeep of the hotel.

Should housekeepers stay behind

the scene? Or, do they need to be in direct guest contact to enhance guest experience?

Housekeepers are the one who are actually in the direct contact of guest, in fact this department understands guest needs more as they manage their personal space and most likely it is noticed that the guest are comfortable with the housekeeping associates when it comes to share their needs or any feedback.

What are the key challenges a housekeeping staff faces in his/her course of job?

Working in a housekeeping position requires hard work, physical capability, and stamina. The core competence lies in maintaining dirt free and hygiene environment.

In addition, a housekeeping associate needs to interact with customers on a one on one basis which is extremely challenging, understanding guest needs and empathizing with their requirement.

What's your advice to aspiring housekeeping managers?

Be a coach and take care of people. Inculcate the value of "eye for detailing" since it is the most important factor and the department is centered on it.



▶ Michel Rochat, Group CEO, EHL

“
 An ‘Indian’ situation
 is no different,
 if dealt with
 empathetically
 and with cultural
 sensitivity
 ”



ECOLE hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL) is an ambassador for traditional Swiss hospitality and has been a pioneer in hospitality education since 1893 with over 25,000 alumni worldwide. EHL is a leading university that provides a range of on-campus and online learning solutions, including undergraduate, graduate and certificate programs to talented students from 119 different countries.

Founded as the first hotel school in 1893 by Jacques Tschumi, then developed by the Société Suisse des



► Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne campus in Switzerland

WE'VE THE WORLD NO 1 TITLE

Hôtelière (now hotelleriesuisse), EHL has a genuine, historical proximity to the tourism and hotel industry. It has been ranked at the top position in the 2019 QS World University ranking for Hospitality & Leisure Management Universities, after celebrating its 125th anniversary and earning the extremely sought-after Michelin star.

EHL Group CEO Michel Rochat interacted with Mystic East in an exclusive interview:

Q What places EHL among the top hospitality management institutes in the world?

A: We celebrated our 125th anniversary recently. We celebrate a unique heritage that enriches all our programs, from our professional training in our Graubünden school SSTH, to our university programs here in Lausanne. EHL Group has continually pioneered new teaching methods to deliver the highest

quality in education. We reached the title of world Number 1 with great honour and this achievement confirmed our successful strategy to put innovation and academic excellence in the heart of our school. Our proximity and close working relationship with many industry leaders, as well as the global alumni network also helps set EHL Group apart in terms of professional growth and opportunity for students.



► A bird's eye-view of the Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne campus in Switzerland

Q What makes Switzerland the top destination of hospitality education in the world?

A: As a small and alpine country with limited resources, Switzerland has always been forced to bet on excellence and innovation to ensure its competitiveness. The country developed a long tradition in excellence in education, whose very concept has been invented by EHL already in 1893. Furthermore, the Swiss dual edu-

cation system upholds the firm belief that theory and practice go hand in hand. This is particularly true in hospitality management.

Q What is the current demand of hospitality managers across the world?

A: Travel and Tourism are on the rise across the globe. They represent today 11% of the world GDP and 413 million jobs worldwide. Furthermore, this industry supports 23% of the new

jobs created. There is an urgent need for talents who will be able to shape the future of the industry and to tackle its challenges.

Q What skills do hospitality managers need?

A: Our students are going to walk out into the world tomorrow, and they have to make a difference. At EHL Group we bet on both in-depth knowledge of the industry and various soft skills such as critical think-

ing, creativity, communication skills, a strong client mindset and an entrepreneurial spirit. In addition to the sectors within hospitality, travel, tourism and events, and their various departments, hospitality graduates can branch out in their careers to other sectors and businesses where their skills are in high demand such as luxury or private banking.

Our goal is to continue producing the best hospitality managers of the industry, as has been the case for over a century. Today, this means that there are technological and scientific components of the business that need to be well understood. Some examples

include data science and artificial intelligence. How to collect, analyze and leverage data, from revenue management to service personalization is at the heart of the business. Artificial intelligence is also an exponentially powerful tool that will help improve many aspects of hospitality (from back office operations to in-room experience).

We don't ask of our students to become whiz data scientists or coders, but they are expected to understand the mechanisms and stakes at hand in order to put new technology to use, as well as create and manage the most capable teams of experts.

Most importantly, we have been

driven, for the past few years, by the firm belief that learning has become a lifelong endeavour. One can no longer simply get a bachelor degree and be "set for life". This is why we have substantially grown our educational portfolio.

Q How important is soft skills and emotional intelligence?

A: We have always believed that excellence is formed through the perfect blend of intelligence and emotions, hard skills and soft skills, theory and practice. While technical and functional knowledge are critical to any role in an organization, the development of soft



► A student at a preparatory baking class at EHL campus



► An outdoor classroom at EHL, Switzerland

skills, and the ability to provide a truly unique experience will serve as a key differentiator in the future. A focus on soft skills will be a clear way to stand out from the crowd and to align with tomorrow's needs. At the end of the day, it is the one thing that a machine cannot take over!

Q What role does technology play in modern hospitality? Will introduction of artificial intelligence (such as, Amazon Echo and Google Assistant) bring about a change in the domain of hospitality?

A: In a few years, we will have more

advanced robotics and autonomous transport, artificial intelligence and machine learning. These developments will transform the industry but also how we work and live. Nevertheless, we are unlikely to see robot concierges in four- and five-star hotels, as we would lose the "human touch" so much appreciated in those kinds of hotels. At EHL we are currently running two AI-related projects: One is a virtual personal assistant named 'Amelia', which initially will help guests and students connect to the Wi-Fi, and at a later stage will answer questions from potential students and parents about the school's courses.

The other project will be an 'Alexa' of sorts – the virtual assistant developed by Amazon – at the reception to answer questions and provide general information. We are trying to immerse as much as possible our students into these new technologies. We have also developed virtual reality courses in order to prepare the next generations of hospitality leaders to these new challenges.

Q What advantages will graduates with international experience at EHL have over his/her peers from other institutes in India or abroad?



► **A preparatory baking class at EHL**

A: In the global hospitality industry, EHL is constantly recognized and appreciated by industry leaders as one of the most trusted hospitality schools in the world for its academic quality and professionalism.

The degree programs offered by EHL are known for instilling the right mix of industry know-how, creativity, emotional intelligence, critical thinking and entrepreneurial spirit. Not only this, the idea behind the courses is to take the students out of their comfort zone and introduce them to new cultures and different ways of thinking. As a part of EHL, students have access to quality training and education, top global companies that visit on-campus to recruit for jobs or internships and a platform where they can interact with other alumni.

It would also interest you to know that 96% of our graduates find relevant employment opportunities shortly after their graduation and majority of our alumni are serving on senior management roles/positions across the industry.

EHL PROGRAMS

EHL offers a wide array of hospitality management degrees for people with varying backgrounds and career aspirations. All degrees are delivered by EHL, which is recognized as a Swiss University of Applied Science and which has an American (NECHE) accreditation. Plus, our degrees comply with the Bologna requirements using the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN HOSPITALITY

The Bachelor of Science in International Hospitality Management prepares students to enter junior management positions in top companies with the skills, connections and resources to launch an international career. This full-time, four-year degree program includes hands-on hotel management courses, two internships and business integration

MASTER'S DEGREE IN HOSPITALITY

The Master of Science HES-SO in Global Hospitality Business takes students around the globe to study in three top-notch universities in Switzerland, Hong Kong and the USA. This full-time, 16-month program includes contemporary management theory, field trips and business projects with global companies

EXECUTIVE MBA IN HOSPITALITY

With the Executive MBA in Hospitality Administration students acquire solid hospitality management skills and develop their leadership potential in an international campus environment, Switzerland. This full-time, 11-month program focuses on hospitality management and leadership skills. This is ideal for hospitality professionals looking for a career change and for non-hospitality professionals wishing to integrate the hospitality industry

EXECUTIVE MBA IN HOSPITALITY (80% ONLINE)

The MBA in Hospitality is delivered 80% online and 20% (approximately 3 weeks on campus); it offers a balanced learning experience with the freedom of online courses, and the support and interaction with faculty on campus. It gives students a solid education in finance, marketing, leadership and risk management strategies.

EHL FLEXIBLE MBA COURSES/SHORT PROGRAMS

- **Culinary & Restaurant Management Certificate:** turns your passion for culinary arts into a career
- **Junior Academy:** for young students who are curious about hospitality careers and programs
- **Online Certificates:** gives you a deeper understanding of the hospitality industry



► EHL main campus attracts students from several countries

Q Will training at EHL be useful in Indian situation? For instance, we've seen that Indian guests are often more demanding. Also we often come across irate customers difficult to satisfy. Does EHL help Indian students to learn these things?

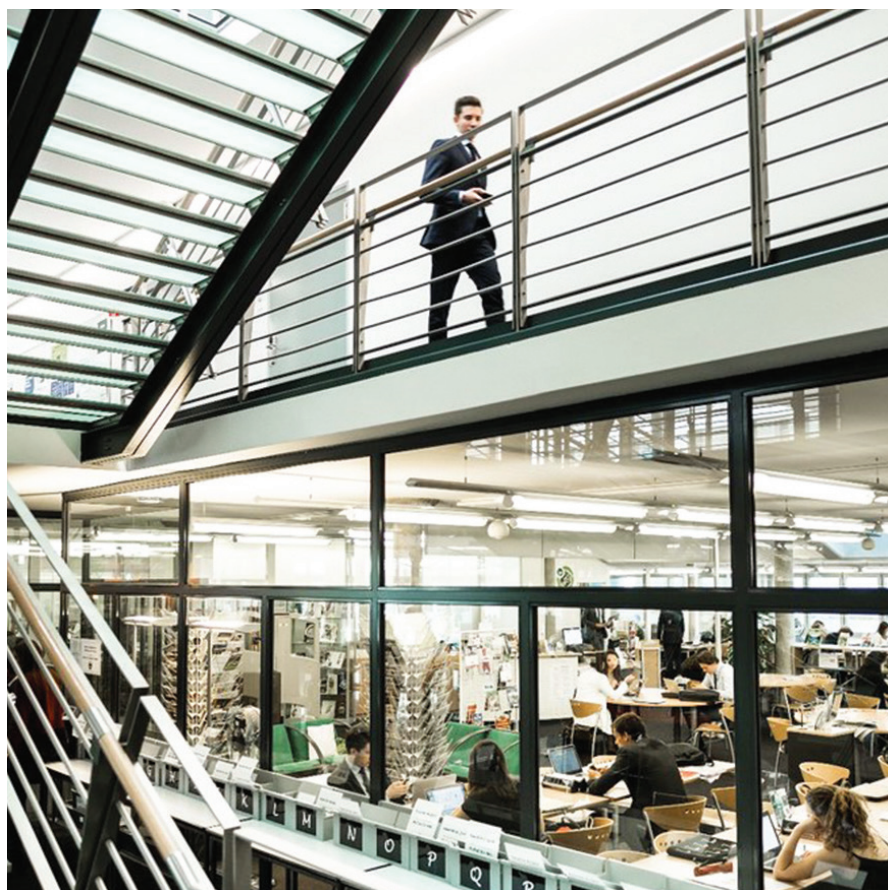
A: Indian guests may be demanding, as is their right. In reality, everyone hopes for the best possible service when they are travelling. Our students are thorough professionals and have an eye for detail, which is the most important part in any industry. They are responsible individuals and always keep service at the top.

Every year, we recruit students from more than 121 nationalities and hence they bring a rich variety of cultures, traditions and languages to our campus. They are the 'leaders in making' with a sense of responsibility who are committed to working diligently and creatively to achieve their academic and professional goals.

"An Indian situation" is no different from any other situation, if dealt with empathetically and with cultural sensitivity.

Q Which are the Indian hotels that recruit students from EHL? How many of the graduates get jobs? What is the entry level pay package for the fresh graduates?

A: Most of our students get recruited by International hotels during the hiring season. Those who are keen to work for Indian hotels join brands like Accor, Marriot and so on. However, most of the Indian graduates show interest in getting hands-on experience with international hotels before settling back in India. A recent example was Ritvika Sethi, an Indian graduate of EHL, who worked at Marriot International Singapore for almost two years and currently is working with HVS Consulting, Mumbai. Whereas, Ambika Seth (CAARA)



► The state-of-the art campus of EHL

and Rahul Khanna (Azur Hospitality) came back to the country after completing their degrees. While Ambika ventured into starting her own start-up Rahul joined his family business.

EHL graduates find relevant employment opportunities right after their graduation and a majority of EHL alumni are in a senior management position or higher role in this industry.

Q Is there any entrepreneurship training for students? Are they encouraged to take up entrepreneurship? Approximately what percentage of students go for entrepreneurship?

EHL Group, in addition to its University, has a responsibility to maintain

open channels between the various actors that will forge the future of hospitality. It appears crucial to us to break down the barriers that often divide academic institutions and economic actors. That is the spirit of the new Innovations Hub we launched in 2018. This place is an incubator for hospitality start-ups that gathers researchers, entrepreneurs, startups, students and visionaries. We consider that the practical application is essential to learn entrepreneurship and we strongly encourage our students to take up entrepreneurship if that is their wish. Thanks to our entrepreneurship classes and the Innovation Hub, we offer our students the ideal setting to realize their projects.

I learned the skill of cooking from my mother



► **Sonu Koithara, Executive Chef at Taj Bengal, Kolkata**

FOR Chef Sonu Koithara has been a part of the Taj group since 1995 and has had an intermittent stint with Four Seasons in between, which made him travel almost all across globe. He had also had an opportunity to work on his Japanese cuisine at Nobu London, Italian cuisine with Michelin Star chef Bruno Loubet of Osteria d'Isola London and Turkish cuisine with Chef Jerome Tavron of Ozer London. The last 10 years as Executive chef has

seen him travelling across various Taj properties like Kumarakom, Kovalam, Umaid Bhawan and now in Taj Bengal.

Now chef Sonu Koithara dons the top hat of executive chef at Taj Bengal, Kolkata. Here's an interview with him. The excerpts:

What made you pursue a Chef's career?

Being from Kerala, I grew up with spices around me back at home. I was

always inquisitive about them, the fresh smell of cinnamon, peppercorn, cardamom, cloves, mace and nutmeg always attracted me for some reason and my involvement with parents in the processing of these spices gave me plenty of opportunities to understand the characteristics of these spices. Being the eldest among four children, I got the maximum opportunity to help my mother in her kitchen. She taught me little interesting tricks like crackling of spices in oil and taught me the art of home cooking and slowly made me her official assistant at home and with her love for cooking good food and my love for eating tasty food done by her I started my culinary journey and ended up being a chef.

What are your accomplishments as a Chef so far?

I love travelling and exploring new cuisines, new culture and new places and I have been lucky that I got to travel to different places of the world, meeting different people, working with different people and cooking for different people and all of this clubbed together is what I call my accomplishment as a chef, this helped me developed holistically.

Who is your inspiration in the trade?

A: There are lot of people and chefs that I look up to however Chef Alain

Kudampuli Meencurry (Fish Curry With Malabar Tamarind)

It is a traditional dish of central Kerala. It is very spicy and is usually served along with rice.



Serves: 4; Preparation Time: 20 min; Cooking Time: 25 min

Ingredients:

Fish -medium sized 4 numbers
Grated coconut -1 cup (half of a coconut)
Chilli powder -3 heaped teaspoon

Coriander powder -1/4 teaspoon
Turmeric powder -3 pinch
Salt -as per your requirement
Green chilli - 5 nos.
Curry leaves -2 sprigs
Malabar tamarind or kudampuli-2 or 3 pieces
Coconut oil 2 tablespoon

Directions:

- First clean and cut the fish into small or medium sized pieces.
 - Make small cuts in the fish pieces so that Masala enter into the fish to make the curry tastier.
 - Grind together all the ingredients (Grated coconut, Chilli powder, Coriander powder, Turmeric powder) until it make a smooth paste.
 - Then mix this paste and fish along with green chilli, curry leaves, Malabar tamarind or kudampuli and salt and add water to it in an earthen pot. The mixture should be loose and thin, but not too watery.
 - Switch on the stove and place an earthen pot on the stove. Using earthen pot for preparing the curry increases the taste of the curry. The flame should be high till the curry boils.
 - After the curry boils, pour the coconut oil to it. After pouring oil keep it for 5 minutes. Then reduce the flame.
 - Then gently swirl the pot (Don't stir the curry). When the curry becomes thick enough remove it from flame. Enjoy with rice or kappa (tapioca).
- Tip:** If the curry becomes too thick pour a little water and just boil it. Note: For some fishes (will be cooked soon) put the fishes only the mixture comes to boil.

Ducasse is one chef that I correlate myself a lot. His ideology and the way of "working with available ingredients" inspires me a lot to grow and learn everyday in my life.

Tell about a few memorable guests you catered to? Any other memorable experience?

All the guest that I cater to are memorable guest to me, I try my level best to deliver a memorable experience to all of them which they can reminisce later in life however few of my memorable once are Mr Ratan Tata, Naomi

Campbell, Ms. Neeta Ambani, Mr. Pele, Maharaja Gaj Singh, Mr. Sanjiv Goenka, Sharukh Khan, Virat Kohli, M.S. Dhoni, Mr Amitabh Bachaan and Mr Narendra Modi

What is your signature recipe?

As I have mentioned before I learned the skill of cooking from my mother hence one of her signature dish which is very common in all Kerala household became my favourite dish to eat and hence I have cooked it so many times that I've mastered the art of making it and the name of the dish

is: Meen Kudampuli Curry (Fish curry with smoked Kerala kokum)

What's your advice to aspiring young chefs?

It is enthralling to see that these days lot of youngsters are perusing cooking as a career and my sincere advice to them would be "be you", don't lose your essence, your roots, your individuality; get inspired by other people and create something new with your own twist in it. Remember good cooking requires a lot of patience and passion.

THE NEW REVOLUTION

The competitive, dynamic and often unpredictable Indian market has brought revenue management to the forefront

RAPID development and the emergence of major international hotel operators in all the sectors have created a very different business environment. If the rules of the game have changed then hoteliers need to implement new disciplines and methodologies to retain their market share. Therefore, the need for robust revenue management strategies is greater than ever before.

Revenue management is about optimising your available inventory in the best possible manner so that it maximises your profitability. As revenue management has developed, it has become more disciplined and technical in using a variety of analytics to predict consumer demand

through automation.

Effective revenue management is the key to maximising profitability for any hotel business; ensuring rates are optimised as per the seasonal peaks and valleys for meaningful occupancy figures. RMs are increasingly turning to automated RMS to get this balance right. Automated systems can also be managed across chains to push targeted segments into sites that are experiencing a fall in demand and identify market changes on a much more immediate level enabling the entire business to adapt quicker and remain competitive. RMS have brought about automation in daily revenue management tasks, but RM as a significant role player has only been introduced into Indian



hospitality in the last 10 years, hence hoteliers are still getting used to RMS.

RMS works on algorithms based on revenue management principles directly communicating with performance management systems and extracting, calculating, formulating data for decision making / recom-



► **Effective revenue management is the key to maximising profitability for any hotel business**

mendation. Indian industry depended a lot on manual data as direct benefits of RMS were not understood till the time multinational chains displayed the same. Indian hotel industry has been slow in integrating systems with RMS mainly due to concerns related to high investment and

inexperienced handling, hence very low perceived ROI.

Today's RMS need much more than forecasting and pricing. RMS should have big data capabilities, it should incorporate price sensitivity of demand and analyse impact of online reviews and competition rates on

pricing. RezNext offers an advanced revenue management solution – ReV powered by Maxim – that eliminates countless hours of tedious work, adopts the principles of big data analytics helping RMS adopt speedy and accurate responses to competitive actions and changes in demand. ReV

also optimises the rates and availability controls to maximise revenues and profits and automatically sends the optimal rates, controls and booking limits to all electronic distribution channels. Apart from being a cost effective solution, it facilitates better control and accessibility.

Yet why has the industry been a little slow in adopting and integrating RMS within their systems? The concept of revenue management arrived in India after it was adopted successfully in the west. Initially, there wasn't much significance given to revenue management. Coupled with the fact that the cost of employing an RMS can be quite high, the industry was a little slow in adopting it.

The Indian hospitality companies still rely on traditional Human Intensive Sales Structures and multiple levels and channels to do business. Profitability has not been the essence of their existence and accountability may have been fragmented till recently. RMS and their integration at a property level is capital intensive as well.

In India, revenue management tools have been restricted to mostly high end 4- and 5-star properties because of the implementation bandwidth and the cost involved. Also, the associated complexity in deploying RMS and employing skilled personnel to maintain and utilise it has also added to its low adoption among mid-market hoteliers. Hoteliers in popular destinations have an expected occupancy level that they achieve year on year. Hence they fail to recognise the opportunity that a RMS can provide them in terms of improving their RevPAR. Other factors that have contributed to the slow adoption of revenue management are lack of trained manpower, limited service providers, lack of knowledge, need for upskilling, integration challenges.



► In India, revenue management tools have been restricted to mostly high end 4- and 5-star properties because of the implementation bandwidth and the cost involved

“
Technology plays a key role in the evolution of Revenue Management
 ”



Mr. Gourav Roy Choudhury
 – Director of Revenue Management,
JW Marriott Hotel Kolkata

How important is Revenue Management for a hotel chain?

The hospitality industry has witnessed tremendous changes in the growth and development of Revenue Management. It is a discipline which is constantly evolving and has made its place as one of the most critical area in the hospitality industry. This discipline allows hotel operators to forecast demand, optimization of the availability and to implement correct rate strategy to achieve the best possible financial result. Hotel Revenue Management is not restricted to room but has found its utilization in space rentals, spa, car parking, food and beverage.

How has software-based RM system changed the scenario in recent years?

Technology has played a major part in the evolution of Revenue Management. An effective Revenue Management system has actually eliminated the manual work in field. The RMS if utilized well, gives more opportunity to analysis data and helps the hotel to take calculated risks. The RMS based on its analysis suggests strategic decision. However the RMS don't have the ability to understand sudden change

in the market place. Here Revenue Management professionals come into the picture. It is very important that the hotel is able come up with the fair return on investment ROI at a stipulated time.

What do you see as the biggest challenges in relation to revenue management?

Although the technology has helped revenue management professional in many ways, but these technology solutions come up with a very hefty price tags. Without RMS technology, it would be difficult to drive business digitally, which is the focus of all the big hotel brands.

Another challenge would be the cost of distribution. Though the strategy is drive digital, but the main focus is to get business from the hotel's own brand website. The combination of OTAs, metasearch can make it difficult to ascertain the cost in the profit and loss statement.

How should hotel operators look at their existing pricing and segmentation practices in order to gain optimal results?

Hotels, generally follow one of the

two pricing - Weekday and Weekend strategy or dynamic pricing strategy. The dynamic strategy can also help the hotel to fill guest rooms during low occupancy period by offering an optimum rate on low occupancy dates around high occupancy dates.

With regards to segmentation, the approach is to segregate your business, instead relying on business from one particular segment. Pricing restrictions in different segmentation allows the hotels to sell the same product at multiple rates.

For instance, corporate segment represents the guests travelling on business. Organizations will enter with the hotel into an agreement for a special rate. The rate can be based on the projected room nights the organization will produce for the hotel. Another example could be the early booker segment where the hotel will offer a discounted rate to those bookers who will book early.

The success of Revenue Management lies with the implementation of the market segmentation. Price is not a factor to decide the market segmentation. It is also important for the leadership to understand the strategic position of the hotel.



HYGIENE RATING

FSSAI is all set to implement the Hygiene Rating Scheme which will rate thousands of restaurants across India and ratings will become visible across outlets

HYGIENE Rating Scheme and Responsible Place to Eat are new schemes under Project Serve Safe, initiated with an intent of ensuring that consumer make informed choices while eating out and also encouraging food businesses to

showcase and improve their food hygiene standards. It reflects the standards of food hygiene found on the date of inspection by the local authority.

The concept of hygiene Rating is new in India, but has parallels in many



► Pawan Agarwal, CEO, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India

countries across the globe. Every country has its own terminologies to explain the idea of ensuring safe and hygienic food to general public, in all catering businesses. Some of the well-known schemes already in place are “Food Hygiene Rating Scheme” (FHRS) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and “Scores on Doors” a star rating scheme in Australia, etc.

Here’s a discussion in details the process of scoring through self-assessment of compliance with food hygiene and safety procedures and structural requirements by FBOs followed by physical verification by state FDAs. A concept of appeal and re-verification is also introduced for helping FBOs in improving their food hygiene and safety and also add their bit to provide Safe and Nutritious Food to citizens.

WHAT IS HYGIENE RATING?

Hygiene rating is a voluntary



► Food samples must be tested regularly from any FSSAI-approved lab



► Hygiene rating is a voluntary scheme applicable to food businesses supplying food directly to consumers either on or off the premises

scheme applicable to food businesses supplying food directly to consumers either on or off the premises and food businesses are rated on the basis of food hygiene and safety conditions found at the time of inspection.

This transparent scoring and rating process will allow FBOs to showcase their level of compliance and excellent food hygiene quality and enable consumers to make informed choices about the foods and the places where they would like to eat. Through these choices, Food businesses will get encouraged to improve their hygiene standards & thus reduce the incidence of food-borne illness. The main purpose of the scheme is to:

- Allow consumers to make an informed food choice about where to eat and cultivate responsible eating habits
- Encourage food businesses with high hygiene standards and to continue maintaining them and showcase the same to their consumers.
- Motivate other food businesses having lower hygiene standards to improve.

The hygiene ratings system designed by FSSAI will be implemented in two parts:

Hygiene Ratings – will score FBO based on self-assessment questionnaire for compliance with food hygiene

and safety procedures and structural requirements followed by the verification of the hygiene rating by physical inspection and validation by the state FDAs. The hygiene rating will be from (0 up to 5) as per the level of compliance.

B) “Responsible Place to Eat” - Hygiene rating of 4 and more and the compliance of voluntary conditions to be adopted by FBO will rate the FBO as Responsible Place to Eat. This will also enhance the commercial viability of an FBO and responsibility towards providing safe and nutritious food to consumers. This scheme will help to bring about the behavioural change in consumers by making them aware of healthy choices and giving them access to such options.



► Food businesses are rated on the basis of food hygiene and safety conditions found at the time of inspection

TYPE OF FOOD BUSINESSES

The food establishments falling under this scheme will include: All food establishments that supply food prepared / cooked / served outside of homes, directly to consumers for consumption on or off the premises. Currently, this scheme is being launched for Catering Sector.

What Are the Key Requirements to get Hygiene Ratings?

Hygiene rating scheme will be implemented online through Serve Safe Portal (www.fssai.gov.in/servesafe). But prior to enrolling for this scheme FBOs should ensure that they fulfill the following steps:

1. FBOs need to have FSSAI License/ Registration and follow Schedule 4 requirements.

This is to provide for adequate measures that are to be adopted to ensure that food being served to the consumers is of good quality and safe to eat.

To get FSSAI License/ Registration FBO should:

Step 1: Log on to <https://foodlicensing.fssai.gov.in/index.aspx>

Step 2: Check eligibility and Apply for license

Once you have logged on you need to check your eligibility depending on the type of business, an FBO will need to apply for Central/ State license.

FOR REGISTRATION

Schedule 4 of Food Safety and Standards Regulations, 2011 provides Good Hygiene Practices (GMP) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) to be followed by Food Business in their premises. All food businesses shall comply with these practices.

Online access of Schedule 4:

Logging on to www.fssai.gov.in home What's New Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Business) Amendment Regulations, 2018 Section 6: Part V of Schedule 4.

Appoint a certified Food Safety Supervisors and Train all food handlers. Food Safety Supervisor is a trained

professional to be appointed by a FBO in his/her restaurant to supervise and maintain food hygiene practices and train other food handlers working in the premises. There should be one FSS per 25 food handlers.

Responsibilities of a Food Safety Supervisor is to: Supervise and maintain hygiene standards in the restaurant as per Food Safety and Standards regulations and train all food handlers in the restaurant about safe food handling practices.

How to become a Food Safety Supervisor: Register on Food Safety Training and Certification (FoSTaC) Portal of FSSAI by logging on to <https://fostac.fssai.gov.in> register as trainer.

Must have Food Safety Display Boards (FSDBs) prominently displayed in the premises:

- Food Safety Display Board (FSDB) with the information to consumers and food handlers about important food safety and hygiene requirements.

- FSDB must provide an options to consumers for sending feedback through WhatsApp, SMS or give feedback on FSSAI App

- All FSDB must have the FSSAI registration/license number on it for consumers to verify.

Get food samples tested periodically from any FSSAI approved Lab. Water samples: to be tested biannually for organoleptic and physiochemical parameters as mentioned in Food Safety and Standards Regulations 2011

- Food samples: to be tested annually for safety parameters (contaminants and microbiological parameters)

How FBOs can Enroll in Hygiene Ratings Scheme?

Once FBO have fulfilled all the set requirements mentioned in the previous section. They may follow the steps given below to enroll in hygiene rating scheme.

Log in using your FLRS credentials at:

- Log on to www.fssai.gov.in/serve-safe

- Follow guidelines to implement key requirements and complete self-assessment process.

- Generate "hygiene rating".

- If your rating is 4 or more that you may enroll for Responsible Place to Eat.

- Inspection /Verification of ratings will be done by a FSO (Food Safety Officer) from FSSAI, through an on spot inspection either using online checklist (on FoSCoRIS OR Serve Safe Portal) or physical checklist.

- Post Inspection, FBO can generate the verified (signed) rating certificate.

- Enroll for "Responsible place to eat" if above ratings score is 4 (Good) or more.

What is Assessment and Scoring Process?

- Audit Checklist for assessment of the FBO on Hygiene Ratings is same as Schedule 4 checklist used for inspection by FSO (Enclosed in Annexure 2).

How to calculate scores?

- Self-assessment questionnaire to be marked by the FBO

- Indicated marks for each question marked as yes, will be added to arrive at the total score.

- Questions marked with "Asterisk" are critical and which can impact food safety. Failure to comply with these will lead to non-issuance of hygiene ratings.

- Score achieved is converted to percentage by the formula: $\text{Total Score value} \times 100 / 114$. The score of the checklist is converted in per cent and emoji's (symbols are designated as per the scores obtained).

What is the validity of Hygiene Rating awarded?

The ratings awarded under Hygiene Rating Scheme will be valid for one year. However, inspecting officer may



schedule an audit during this period in case any complaints are received.

How to improve your Hygiene Rating?

Any FBO desirous of improving their ratings can do so by taking following steps:

- Check for non compliant food hygiene and safety practices as per the checklist.

- Take clear, concrete steps to ensure and demonstrate compliance for each of these issues.

- Redo self-assessment, but only 3 months after the previous inspection and print certificate.

- Apply for re-verification by filling in the re-verification form

- Once, inspecting officer re-audit the premises and submit results. Print the new verified rating certificate online



► The Government plans to open up 100 islands including the twins- Smith and Ross Islands

STATE SURVEY: ANDAMANS

ISLANDS CALLING

NITI Aayog plans to turn Andaman & Nicobar islands into world class destinations with a broad plan to invite private players for the task, including huge tax sops. The concessionaire would have the exclusive right, licence and authority to construct, operate and maintain the project and provide hospitality for a period of 66 years



In a detailed Project Information Memorandum (PIM), the NITI Aayog notes that 26 islands have been identified as having development potential and overall, 220 luxury resorts, 70 luxury tents for camping activities and 50 tents will be developed.

THE BASICS

Andaman & Nicobar Islands, a group of picturesque islands at the junction of the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea, are blessed with pristine sea beaches, attractive marine life and a large extent of forest cover with rich biodiversity. About 82.16 per cent of the total geographical area (6,777 sq km) has been reported under forest and tree cover in Andaman & Nicobar (India State of Forest Report 2017). The Islands possess a mix of natural ecosystems including mangrove forests, tropical rainforests, sandy beaches, rocky shores and coral reefs. In the limited geographical area, a high level of biodiversity with several species of mammals, birds and fish have been reported to occur in the Islands. Other strengths possessed by the Islands are rich cultural traditions, historical heritage sites and peaceful environment.

The unique strengths in the possession of Andaman & Nicobar Islands have attracted domestic tourists. The arrival of domestic tourists in the Islands increased significantly from 2,02,221 in the year 2011 to 3,84,552 in 2016. However, the inflow of foreign tourists to the Islands has been stagnant at around 15,000. It was 15,814 in the year 2011; 17,538 in 2012; 14,742 in 2013; 17,235 in 2014; 14,674 in 2015; and 15,466 in 2016 (India Tourism Statistics). This is in spite of the fact that globally, there is a high demand for eco-tourism, adventure tourism (sea sports, game fishing etc.) and cruise tourism. The demand provides an opportunity of better tourism-based development in the Islands.

ON 10 August 2018 NITI Aayog unveiled a proposal titled 'Incredible Islands of India (Holistic Development)' aimed at fostering investment opportunities in Andaman, Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands.

Amitabh Kant, the CEO of NITI Aayog, stated that the development potential of the islands has been accorded high priority while noting the constitution of the Island Development Agency (IDA) which has mandated the NITI Aayog to head the Holistic Development of Islands program.

As per latest information, the IDA has reviewed 11 tourism projects of which six are in Andaman and Nicobar

About 82.16 per cent of the total area is under forest and tree cover in the islands

islands and a few other infrastructure projects like ferry services, desalination plants, digital connectivity et cetera as part of the 'holistic development' plans.



► Roll-on or Roll-off Ferry Project on PPP Mode will be undertaken to boost sea connectivity

Tourism: Key driver

Presently, tourism has the potential to be an efficient driver of high economic growth in the Islands. Development potential also exists in other sectors such as maritime trade, shipping, fisheries, under-sea mining, oil and gas. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands have a long coastal length of about 1,912 km. The Exclusive Economic Zone around these Islands is about 6 lakh sq km constituting 28 per cent of the total EEZ in our country. The Great Nicobar Island is only about 90 km away from the western tip of the Malacca Strait, an important shipping route between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. Being at close aerial/shipping distance to a number of countries (Indonesia, Myanmar and Thailand) and the Malacca Strait, the Islands have the potential of enhanced maritime trade, particularly for export of the products made in the Islands.

Existing situation calls for formulation of suitable strategies for holistic development of identified Islands. Effective implementation of well-planned strategies in tourism and other key economic sectors would lead to creation of more jobs and generation of additional income for the Islanders. However, while planning development interventions, both the ecological concerns and the tribal-related issues need to be fully addressed so as to ensure a sustainable development process.

As Islands are located in seismic zone V (highly vulnerable to earthquakes), suitable measures are required to be put in place for protection of the Island eco-system. A clean, green and healthy environment has to be maintained to support the desired economic growth. The strategy to replace use of diesel with promotion of non-conventional energy sources such as Solar Energy, Wind Energy, Tidal Energy and Ocean Thermal Energy would con-



► **Andamans can easily compete with the South East Asian destinations**

NEW PROJECTS IN THE HORIZON

● **Andaman & Nicobar Islands:** The New Projects

There are 6 Eco-Tourism projects in the pipeline for private sector participation

READY TO LAUNCH PROJECTS

● **Smith Island:** Treehouse / Glamping

Area: 25 Ha. **Capacity:** 70 Keys **Investment:** 70 Cr

● **Aves Island:** Glamping

Area: 22.75 Ha. **Capacity:** 50 Keys **Investment:** 40 Cr

● **Long Island:** Resort

Area: 42 Ha **Capacity:** 220 Keys **Investment:** 400 Cr

UNDER PREPARATION PROJECTS

● **Neil Island:** Resort

Area: 9.7 Ha

● **Lalaji Bay:** Eco-tourism Resort

Area: 42 ha **Capacity:** 220 Keys **Investment:** 400 Cr

● **Great Nicobar Island:** Ecotourism Site

Status: carrying capacity being assessed



► The Great Nicobar Island is only about 90 km away from the Malacca Strait in south east Asia

tribute significantly to environmental sustainability. In addition, interests of various tribes living in the Islands need to be fully protected. Andaman & Nicobar Islands are home to four 'Negrito' tribes namely Andamanese (Strait Island), Onges (Little Andaman), Jarawas (South and Middle Andaman) and Sentinelese (North Sentinel Island) and two 'Mongoloid' tribes namely Shompens (Great Nicobar) and Nicobarese (Car Nicobar, Chowra, Teresa, Bampuka, Katchal, Kamorta, Nancowrie, Trinket, Little Nicobar, Kondul, Pilomilo and Great Nicobar). There is a necessity to maintain rich cultural traditions of all these tribes.

In view of the need to ensure ecological stability and also to safeguard the interests of the tribal population, development projects have to be

planned carefully and scientifically. Careful planning is required also to ensure no threat to security of the strategically-located Islands. More than 500 islands, islets and coral rocks in Andaman & Nicobar carry strategic importance in the Indo-Pacific Region.

Realizing the potential in Andaman and Nicobar and more or less similar potential in Lakshadweep, holistic development of identified Islands has been accorded high priority by the Government. NITI Aayog has been mandated to steer the process of "Holistic Development of Islands". Final Site Potential Development Reports have been prepared for four Islands in Andaman & Nicobar (Aves, Long, Smith and Ross) and 5 in Lakshadweep (Bangaram, Cheriya, Minicoy, Suheli and Thinakara). Af-

ter carrying out systematic analysis, ready-to-launch tourism-based Projects (three in Andaman & Nicobar and another three in Lakshadweep) have been identified for implementation with private sector participation.

In two bigger Islands, Little Andaman and Great Nicobar, efforts are being made to identify suitable sites, outside Tribal Reserve, having potential for sustainable development. Some more islands have also been identified for sustainable development. These are North Passage, Cinque, Inglis, Viper, Neil (Bharatpur Beach), Ramnagar Beach, Karmatang Beach, Dhaninallah Beach, Kalipur Beach, Rutland, North Bay and Great Nicobar (B Quarry) in Andaman & Nicobar and Kalpeni, Kadmat, Agatti, Chetlat and Bitra in Lakshadweep. Priority is also

ROAD CONNECTIVITY

- Andaman Trunk Road (ATR) – an important road - connects Port Blair to Middle and North Andaman
- NH-4 upgradation has been included in the early bird project
- Construction of Humphrey Strait Bridge started
- Middle Strait Bridge – Review application for CRZ clearance filed before NGT
- Agreed by Ministry, Clearance from NGT

AIR CONNECTIVITY

- Diglipur Airport to be made operational for civilian aircrafts by December, 2018
- Port Blair, Car Nicobar, Campbell Bay and Diglipur Airports to form an Air Circuit
- Diglipur, Car Nicobar and Campbell Bay airports are also included in Regional Connectivity Scheme (UDAN)
- Reviving Sea Plane Operations under UDAN Scheme
- Water drone locations has been identified at Diglipur and Mayabunder.
- In 2nd Phase Smith, Long and Neil Islands are under consideration



SEA CONNECTIVITY

- Roll-on/Roll-off Ferry Project on PPP Mode to boost sea connectivity being taken
- Improvement of Existing Jetty in Long Island
- Ministry of Tourism to fund from its ongoing schemes
- Potential of developing Yacht Marina on PPP

being accorded to improving air, road and web connectivity in the Islands.

Diglipur Airport (Shibpur) is expected to be operational for civilian aircraft by December, 2018. Connectivity to Diglipur, Port Blair, Car Nico-

bar and Campbell Bay through smaller aircrafts supplemented with more helicopter services using the existing 17 helipads effectively will boost much required inter-islands connectivity in Andaman and Nicobar. That

would yield immense benefits to the tourists and the Islanders. Efforts are also on to start international flights from Veer Savarkar International Airport, Port Blair. In case of Lakshadweep, there is a Plan to introduce better air connectivity to Minicoy Island. Existing Jetty at Kavaratti is proposed for modernization.

For improving web connectivity, augmentation of bandwidth from 1.118 Gbps to 2.118 Gbps has been taken up. Further for promotion of Industries, particularly IT based and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), incentives as contained in the North East Industrial Development Scheme (NEIDS), 2017 are being considered for Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep. All these measures such as setting up of MSMEs; improvement of infrastructure for promotion of tourism; development of fisheries,



► Aerial view of the islands



► Havelock Island, with its coral reefs, is known for its dive sites and beaches

under-sea mining and other important economic sectors; and increase in maritime trade would provide immense benefits to the Islanders.

Investment opportunities

In a bid to develop India's islands into world class tourist destinations, the government has drawn a broad plan to invite private players for the task. NITI Aayog recently came up with a draft concession agreement that allows for the development and operation of these island resorts. The document has been prepared by NITI Aayog in consultation with Ministry of Tourism. They are hoping to use the agreement as the base document to develop specific eco-tourism projects.

According to a report in The Economic Times, the concessionaire would have the exclusive right, licence and authority to construct, operate

and maintain the project and provide hospitality for a period of 66 years. Additionally, the government has eased the regulations for development of these zones on these lands.

The 10 identified islands where these tourist projects will be developed on government-owned land are Smith, Aves, Long, Neil & Little Andaman Islands of Andaman & Nicobar and in Kadmat, Suheli and Minicoy islands of Lakshadweep.

NITI Aayog said that the concessionaire will have to undertake designing, construction, finance, development, operation and maintenance of the following additional facilities, the ancillary facilities, as part of the project. They will also be entitled to develop the beach for activities such as jet skiing, snorkelling, kayaking, water surfing etc.

"The concessionaire shall be respon-

sible for the maintenance, upkeep and security of any such beach facilities while also ensuring that these activities are managed and undertaken in accordance with applicable laws and applicable permits," NITI Aayog said, as mentioned in the daily.

NITI Aayog has asked for suggestions from all stakeholders by October 17, after which it held a stakeholder meeting on October 23, where the document was finalised. Following this, invitation was extended for tenders.

The government is planning to open up 100 islands in Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep for development of eco-tourism. Ten islands have been picked for development under the Holistic Development of Islands programme. Detailed land survey and demarcation of project sites, carrying capacity assessment has already been undertaken.

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NIVA HOTEL & RESORTS PRIVATE LIMITED

Niva Hotel Swimming & spa area



Five storied hotel with provision for all modern amenities, for sale in Fraserganj. The hotel is 11minutes away from Bakkhali Sea Beach and is the tallest hotel in the vicinity. Area of land is 4 Bighas or 80 Kanthas (1.32 acres). It has a total of 50 rooms (32 with attached bathrooms + 15 with common bathroom for drivers + 3 dormitories with two attached bathrooms).

Amenities:

- Beach facing rooms,
- Space for AC in the rooms,
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 - Space for Spa/Sauna bath,
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 - Conference room,
 - Banquet hall,
- Driver's accommodation,
 - Space for lift and
- Elaborate parking space.



Niva Hotel Boating Island



Niva Hotel Building

