

MYSTIC EAST

...an unexplored horizon

A bi-monthly magazine by HRAEI | Vol 6 | Issue 2 | July - August 2020



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Recently in a webinar, Union Minister Mr Nitin Gadkari said that the government is considering an INR 20,000 crores fund to support restructuring of NPAs under the current policy. The Minister for Road Transport, Highways, and MSME asked the hospitality industry to look at setting up an NBFC to take care of the capital requirements of the industry. He said that as many hotels earn revenues in dollars, it becomes easy for such NBFCs to access foreign funds at much lower interest rates. This will help the hotel industry to access loans at less than 3% interest compared to over 10% interest being charged by the Indian banking system.

This is a brilliant suggestion by the Minister which can go a long way to help hotels and restaurants revive their fortunes after the pandemic. In addition to this, the

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We should follow Winston Churchill's famous quote: never waste a good crisis.

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Minister informed that the government has announced various schemes to help the MSME sector to overcome the working capital constraints in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. He said that the INR 3 lakh crores MSME fund is aimed at enhancing the liquidity in the market which is critical to drive demand and supply. He said that the government is giving guarantee for collateral free 20% additional working capital assistance and there should not be any hesitation on the part of the banks to help the businesses. Similarly, he said that the government will soon release INR 20,000 crores fund to support the restructuring of NPA under the present policy. I think our members should take this opportunity following Winston Churchill's famous quote: never waste a good crisis.

Mr Sudesh Poddar
President, HRAEI



Hotel food and beverage (F&B) operations are among some of the most-affected industries by Covid-19. As a result of the coronavirus, hotels all over the world have changed their catering options to allow for drive-through, curbside pick-up, take-out and delivery. Occupancy rates have fallen drastically because of the high risk of travel and the need for social distancing. People are also doing more of their own cooking. If this trend continues, it could have major repercussions for the dining-out industry.

Since nothing inspires innovation as well as necessity, hotels globally have pivoted to embrace new ways of providing service for guests. These include contactless methods of booking and payment, ordering meals ahead of arrival, outdoor dining spaces and so on. To offer "At Home" experiences of a bar, Theodore's family-run snack bar in Melbourne, Australia, has restyled itself as Ted's Grocer and Bottle-Shop, selling snacks, take-home meals, hand-made cocktails and platters. Elsewhere, some venues are maximizing their use of self-service through technology and robotics, with inventions like automated salad makers that don't need human contact.

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In this way hotels
have come forward
to serve ailing
citizens

Over 520 rooms of 17 hotels in Kolkata entered into tie-ups with hospitals meant for Covid patients. The hotels that are functioning as satellite centres for hospitals are registering occupancy in excess of 70 per cent. With the prospect of regular business resuming any time soon extremely bleak, more hotels have now stepped forward to offer their rooms as Covid-care facilities.

The tie-up with hotels has helped hospitals meet the bed crisis. The hospitals deploy staff at the hotels to monitor patients. Apart from 24x7 presence of nurses, doctors visit the facility twice a day. In addition, all medical amenities, including oxygen cylinders, are kept at the hotel to meet emergency needs. Doctors take a call on when a patient's care needs to shift from a satellite facility to a hospital or when the person can be discharged. Hotels provide housekeeping services and food to the patients, most of whom are asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic.

Hospital authorities also train hotel staff, front desk, house-keeping and waiters on how to go about their jobs safely. A mid-way home-type accommodation — between one's own residence and the hospital — is a good idea to host less symptomatic or asymptomatic cases. But care should be taken to ensure that the general complaints, which thousands of patients seem to have with hospitals (especially regarding billing), do not afflict these institutions as well.

In this way hotels have come forward to serve ailing citizens. In the process they are also trying to get some business and cope up the immense loss brought about by the pandemic.

Mr Mohammed Azhar

Honourary Secretary

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KOLKATA HOTELS TURN THEMSELVES INTO COVID-CARE HOSPITALS AS CASES SPIKE

OVER 520 rooms of 17 hotels in Kolkata entered into tie-ups with hospitals meant for Covid patients. “The hotels that are functioning as satellite centres for hospitals are registering occupancy in excess of 70 per cent. With the prospect of regular business resuming any time soon extremely bleak, more hotels have now stepped forward to offer their rooms as Covid-care facilities,” said Sudesh Poddar, honorary secretary of Hotel & Restaurant Association of Eastern India (HRAEI).

“The tie-up with hotels has helped hospitals meet the bed crisis. Our ILS facility has deployed staff at Sonnet hotel to monitor the patients. Apart from

24x7 presence of four nurses, doctors visit the facility twice a day. In addition, all medical amenities, including oxygen cylinders, are kept at the hotel to meet emergency needs,” said ILS group vice-president Debashis Dhar. Doctors take a call on when a patient’s care needs to shift from a satellite facility to a hospital or when the person can be discharged. Hotels provide housekeeping services and food to the patients, most of whom are asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic.

“The rooms are provided with an oximeter, thermometer, sphygmomanometer (machine to measure blood pressure) and attimes, saline stands. The hospital provides a week’s supply

of medicines to the patient,” said Pranav Singh, President, HRAEI.

Hospital authorities also train hotel staff, front desk, housekeeping and waiters on how to go about their jobs safely. Only digital documents are accepted and payments, too, have to be transferred digitally. A mid-way home-type accommodation — between one’s own residence and the hospital — is a good idea to host less symptomatic or asymptomatic cases. But care should be taken to ensure that the general complaints, which thousands of patients seem to have with hospitals (especially regarding billing), do not afflict these institutions as well.

HOTEL INDUSTRY SHOULD TRY TO SET UP ITS OWN NBFCS: NITIN GADKARI



A DDRESSING a webinar organised by FHRAI, Gadkari said that the government is considering an INR 20,000 cr fund to support restructuring of NPAs under the current policy. Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways, and MSME has asked the hospitality industry to look at setting up an NBFC to take care of the capital requirements of the industry. The Union Minister said that as most of the hotels earn revenues in dollars, it becomes easy for such NBFCs to access foreign funds at much lower interest rates. This will help the hotel industry to access loans at less than 3% interest compared to over 10% interest being charged by the Indian banking system. The Union Minister cited the example of some of the Automobile companies in the country who have set up their own NBFCs.

For instance, every industry has to think out of the box, the Minister said. The Minister informed that the government has announced various schemes to help the MSME sector to overcome the working capital constraints in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. He said that the INR 3 lakh cr MSME fund is aimed at enhancing the liquidity in the market which is critical to drive demand and supply. He said that the government is giving guarantee for collateral free 20% additional working capital assistance and there should not be any hesitation on the part of the banks to help the businesses.

Similarly, he said that the government will soon release a INR 20,000 cr fund to support the restructuring of NPA under the present policy. The government will take equity stake in the restructuring of NPAs to remove

the current obstacles being faced by the nancial institutions in restructuring such assets. The framework is ready and will be released soon, he said.

Gadkari said that people and businesses have to learn the “art of living” under the Covid-19 and should learn to adjust with it. Saying that he fully understands the problems of the hospitality sector in the country, Gadkari said that the government has asked all state governments to postpone all mandatory fee and charges associated with the hotel industry.

Responding to the questions of the hoteliers, Gadkari said the MSME department has set up a dedicated platform - Champions - for MSMEs to address their grievances associated with the government schemes and all the issues will be addressed through it.

LES ROCHES TO COLLABORATE WITH QUINTESSENTIALLY TO ASSIST INDIAN STUDENTS TRAVELLING TO SWITZERLAND FOR EDUCATION



IN the current context, Indian students are naturally apprehensive of travelling abroad, and, therefore, to cater to their needs, Les Roches is launching a one of a kind partnership with Quintessentially India, an award-winning luxury concierge and lifestyle management service company.

Les Roches is offering free access to a private Quintessentially account manager that will help students prepare their travel details for Switzerland for the October intake this year, offering a personalized services pack which will include flight booking, airport transfer, meet and greet at the airport, VIP lounge access and a personal protective equipment pack. Founded in 2000, as the first private members club, Quintessentially India has come a long way to becoming the authority and the real voice of

luxury and assistance. From memorable events, to luxury travel, corporate services, global customer loyalty programmes and much more, they are proud to partner with the world's most recognized brands such as Les Roches and support Indian students in their travel abroad.

Ms. Mishti Bose, CEO of Quintessentially India said "It is an absolute honor to collaborate with Les Roches, one of the leading hospitality institutions in the world. We believe our brand ethos is in perfect tandem with the ethos of Les Roches. Uncompromising on quality, we at Quintessentially are agile problem solvers who are passionately committed to connecting the Indian community to their brand partner at Les Roches through authentic, meaningful experiences and aim to provide perfect assistance to the

Indian students during their journey."

Speaking on their collaboration, Mr. Adrian Artimov, Director of Marketing and Enrolment at Les Roches said "We understand that some students from India have been worried about travelling and hence we wanted to assure them and their parents by providing the best concierge service in India. We are extremely delighted to be partnering with Quintessentially and hope that we can achieve our aim of providing a pleasant journey to all our students. Les Roches is one of the best hospitality management schools in the world and by partnering with such an exclusive concierge service, we are showcasing how 5-star hospitality works to our students through first hand experience."

After having travelled to Switzerland using Quintessentially concierge services, the students will arrive to the comfort of the campus where they will meet the designated Les Roches staff to smoothly continue further their integration and accommodate them in preparation for the studies ahead.

Les Roches is a part of Sommet Education, which also includes sister schools Glion Institute of Higher Education and Ecole Ducasse under its umbrella. The collaboration between Les Roches and Quintessentially shall also be extended to the sister schools and the services shall be offered to the students that shall be attending Glion and Ducasse this coming year.

PRIDE HOTELS LAUNCHES AN ALL NEW CATERING SERVICE EXPERIENCE

THE Pride Hotels has launched new catering service experience at its, New Delhi, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Pune, Nagpur, Chennai and Bangalore properties. The hotel group opens its services for doorstep deliveries redefining the dining experience in the New Normal. The initiative enables the customers to enjoy food delicacies with 'contactless' delivery and unique food offering to satiate their cravings.

The catering menu is curated by the team of expert chefs and culinarians featuring an interesting amalgamation of Indian food concepts and local ingredients together. These are small bites and memorable flavours. Be it authentic Home Style Mixed Vegetable, Dal Makhani and Paneer Achari from the Vegetarian menu; Murgh Dum Biryani, Lamb Rogan Josh and Rara Ghost Punjabi from the Non-Vegetarian menu and Pasta, Sandwich & Burger from the Asian menu, one can savour it all at their home.

This initiative was taken by the Pride Hotels to make sure that its loyal patrons don't miss out on their favourite cuisine due to COVID. To amplify the concept of 'Luxury-in-Privacy' the hotel group is now offering exclusive catering services for personal meets at home. Pride Group will help in making the celebrations successful with delightful culinary creations and flawless service. Pride Hotels have partnered

with online food delivery aggregator platforms to deliver its food delicacies at customers' doorsteps.

"We are constantly working towards re-modeling our services for guest satisfaction whether it's at our premises or at our guests' chosen venue. This contactless order, payment and delivery option will help us in delivering a responsible guest experience. Through this initiative our guests will be able to experience and indulge in their favourite cuisine from the popular restaurants of Pride Group of Hotels present at their cities." says, Atul Upadhyay, Vice President Operations, Pride Hotels Ltd.

As a part of the 'New Normal' and keeping the present circumstances in mind, the Pride Hotel has launched the 'Pride Safety Assurance'. It's a commitment from the Group of taking care of its guests at every step of its service. Under 'Pride Safety Assurance' initiative, the Pride hotel has rolled out enhanced technological measures like contactless check-in & check-out services, contactless billing facility, touch less dispensing centre for the sanitizers and mobile friendly dining menu. The initiative is designed to tackle the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic at the hotel level and further advance the company's efforts in this area



59th Annual General Meeting of HRAEI

The HRAEI AGM was held at The Park, Kolkata on September 3. A new set of leadership was elected for the FY 2020-21



► Mr Sudesh Poddar gets elected as the President, HRAEI. President Emeritus Mr T.S.Walia welcomes him



► Mr Sudesh Poddar felicitated by Mr Pranav Singh



► 59th Annual General Meeting of HRAEI at The Park, Kolkata



► Newly elected members of the Managing Committee of HRAEI



► Members attending the Annual General Meeting at The Park

THE ROADMAP AHEAD



HOTEL and Restaurant Association of Eastern India (HRAEI) has elected a new set of leadership for the region for the next one year. Mr Sudesh Poddar, an eminent hotelier, with business interest in the hospitality industry in the States of Assam and West Bengal, was elected as the President of the association in the recently concluded Annual General Meeting held in Kolkata.

Mr Poddar said that his top priority is to revive the hospitality and tourism industry in the eastern part of India hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic. Mr Poddar is an authority in the business of hotels and is thoroughly acquainted with the industry and also possesses 35 years of experience along with immense expertise and acquaintance in the field. In the past, Mr. Poddar has been very closely associated with HRAEI and FHRAI in different capacities. He has held office as the President of HRAEI for four consecutive years, during the year commencing from 2014 and upto 2018. Mr. Poddar has also held post as the treasurer of FHRAI for 2 consecutive years during the years 2014 - 15 and 2015-16 and also held post as Honorary Secretary in HRAEI during the year 2019-20. He is also a member (Catering Expert) on the Board of Governors of Hotel Management and Catering Technology, Kolkata. He took charge at a moment when the industry is going through a tough challenge. He spoke to Mystic East in an exclusive interview.

The excerpts:

Congratulations for getting elected as the President of Hotel & Restaurants Association of Eastern India (HRAEI). Now that the hospitality industry is going through one of the toughest crises what is your plan to revive business?

Our industry is indeed going through the worst crisis in recent history. My top priority is to revive the hospitality and tourism industry in the eastern part of India, hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic. To attract more tourists in the region, especially the North Eastern India, we shall make appeal to the Government for more flights and easier access. We are in the process of making a roadmap to promote a lot of inbound tourism to tap the tremendous potential of this region. We have a deep concern for those entrepreneurs who invested in the tourism and hospitality sector before the pandemic. They were hit hard by Covid-19. With zero business they had hard time paying their staff, rentals for their property and also the utility bills. Some of them are on the verge of going bust. We shall appeal for moratoriums on loan repayment and relaxation on interest rates on loans for them.

What else is in your Roadmap Ahead?

In the light of the lockdown due to Covid-19 the Association submitted the following suggestions and prayers to the Governments of West Bengal, Odisha, Assam and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. To revive the hospitality & tourism sectors we have requested governments to engage very actively in organising more conferences and seminars in the states. This will increase the footfall and delegates attending the conferences will avail the services of the Hotels

and Restaurants during their stay and in this way revenue can be generated. We have also appealed for complete GST holidays for 6 Months (at the state Level) with declining revenues almost all hospitality businesses are running out of working capital. In addition, we have asked for relaxation in excise license fee up to 50% rebate for the year 2020-2021 and allowing adjustment with the next year renewal fee for those who have already paid should be considered which will help in revival of the business. Reduction of 50% on sanction fee and fire license for upcoming hotel projects must also be considered; it will encourage entrepreneur to open new hotels and which will in turn generate new job opportunities. Also capital subsidy should be given for new hotel projects.

After the Covid-19 the HRAEI seems to have taken up a number of social initiatives.

We stood behind governments during the hour of crisis. We offered isolation rooms for Covid-19 people who were asked to live in quarantine for two weeks at pay-and-use basis.

We have a deep concern for those entrepreneurs who invested in the tourism and hospitality sector before the pandemic. They were hit hard by Covid-19.



The rooms charges were highly subsidised including meals in all types of hotels—ranging from budget to star hotels. At a later stage, many turned their rooms as satellites of some hospitals as they ran out of beds. We also provided rooms for the inbound passengers from abroad as a part of Vande Bharat Mission. In addition, we held a sanitization drive in Lansdowne market following a request from the honourable Chief Minister of West Bengal.

Did you meet the Chief Minister?

Yes. We met her when she called several industry bodies for discussion in the fight against the novel coronavirus. We stated that we have offered over 2000 rooms to the State Health Department as quarantine centres for those affected by Covid-19. We made her a request to arrange health insurance coverage of Rs 10 lakhs to each hotel staff attending the quarantine centres. The Chief Minister promised to cover the workers under the government's Swasthya Sathi health insurance scheme. She also complimented the Association for our "noble services". We donated Rs 5 lakhs to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

How are the hotels and restaurants doing after their reopening after lockdown?

Weekends are attracting customers. In some restaurants in the Park Street area one could see people waiting for seats. Especially after the government allowed restaurants to serve drinks and bars open, things are getting better. But we are concerned about those who are still not getting enough business to survive. Many big hotels are attracting families through "staycation" packages. But then budget hotels are still struggling to get customers.

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BY THE MOUTH WATERING DUM
KI RAAN. A PORTION OF
VEGETABLE MALAI KOFTA
OR IF YOU PREFER OUR
CHICKEN RISHMI BUTTER
MASALA. THEN OUR SIGNATURE
ORIGINAL CHELO KEBAB AND
LAST BUT CERTAINLY NOT LEAST
A MERINGUE WITH ICE CREAM
AND HOT CHOCOLATE SAUCE
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DINNER COMPLETE EVERY
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A scenic view of a mountainous region with terraced fields and a green building. The landscape is covered in snow, and the mountains in the background are partially covered in snow. A green building is visible on the left side of the image. The foreground shows a balcony with a black railing and a white wall.

APARTHOTELS

FREEDOM, PRIVACY AND AMPLE SPACE

The concept of enjoying the luxuries of a hotel in a larger room with the facility and freedom to make one's own meals always intrigued Saurabh Vaish, the Founder and Managing Director of Rosewood Apartment Hotels





► **Saurabh Vaish, the Founder and Managing Director of Rosewood Apartment Hotels**

ROSEWOOD Apartment Hotels is the first fully organised aparthotel brand in North India. The idea of apartment hotels was conceptualised in 2008 and today the brand boasts of five properties at Gurugram, Haridwar, Pantnagar, Bhimtal and Dhanachuli. Now Rosewood plans to spread its wings in other cities like Ahmedabad, Noida and Dehradun. The launch of Rosewood Villas-- Luxury

Corporate Home Away from Home, curating stays in Golf Course Villas, Mountain Valley Villas and others are in the pipeline.

This chain of apartment hotels gives guests the privacy and flexibility to be on their own with minimalistic interference and are at their beck-n-call if need be. Each studio apartment comes with a full-fledged and equipped kitchenette, a lobby area and housekeeping. The build-

ings also host a gym, restaurant, business centre, residents' lounge and conference rooms.

Rosewood cuts out unnecessary premiums such as meals that a guest may not use. Guests can cook meals in the fully-equipped kitchen and eat in the comfort of their own living area. The serviced apartments are crafted with thoughtful homely touches to make your stay even more comfortable.



► Rosewood Apartment Hotels at Dhanachuli

With Rosewood, being able to live and sleep in different rooms whilst away from home is a luxury you can afford. The serviced apartments are a welcome alternative to the all-in-one hotel room, providing more space in comparison.

The live-in in the apartment offers more freedom and privacy compared to other run-of-the-mill hotels. Guests are not constrained by fixed meal times and avoid food they may not enjoy. The unique chain of aparthotels was founded and conceived by Mr Saurabh Vaish. Mr Vaish spoke to Mystic East in an exclusive interview. Excerpts:

Q: What inspired you to conceive Rosewood Apartment Hotels?

A: Extensive travelling at a young age with my parents and staying at some of the best hotels always made me admire the finesse & quality in this industry. This fascination for hospitality developed into a passion during my 18-month management trainee program at Jaypee Hotels & ITC Maurya, New Delhi, way back in 1988. Since then I have been aspiring to own and manage a star rated hotel property. This opportunity emerged 20 years later in 2008 when I decided to switch from my textile manufacturing business to the fast-growing service sector. The mere fact of providing a quality product and a delightful customer experience has always been very exciting and close to my heart. I find that the hospitality industry offers immense opportunity to fulfil this desire since it offers a dynamic environment and varied guest service requirements, along with challenges of developing and managing properties to be able to offer a quality product.

During my travels, we used to frequently stay at serviced apartments



► Rosewood Apartment Hotels at Gurgaon

and the concept of enjoying the luxuries of a hotel in a larger room with the facility and freedom to make your own meals always intrigued me. I found that there is a huge gap in North India in the mid-segment serviced apartment business and hence we chose industrial and corporate hubs which offered the possibilities of extended stays to setup our properties.

This thought and concept led us to the industrial town of Pantnagar in Uttarakhand and our first property was established.

Q: What makes your property stand out in the hospitality industry in India?

A: We are North India's first organized Apartment Hotel chain offering 4-star hotel luxuries in a serviced apartment environment.



► Rosewood Apartment Hotels at Pantnagar



► Rosewood Apartment hotels at Bhimtal

The four distinct features which set us apart from other properties in our vicinity are:

Large size rooms (400 sqft. to 700 sqft.) with fully equipped kitchenette and all and facilities and comforts of a star rated hotel property with flexible dining options –

- Dine in our in-house restaurant
- Order room service
- Cook your own meal in your kitchenette with complementary pantry shopping service
- Food delivery to your room from a nearby restaurant.
- Each of our properties is professionally managed by a team of hotel management graduates having adequate work experience in the hotel industry.
- There is immense attention to detail and standardization and we use industry's best suppliers for every item which we place in our prop-

erties whether it be the crockery, cutlery, linen, guest amenities etc. making us comparable to 5-star properties.

- Each guest at our property is not a room number but is known and addressed by his name. We take pride in extending the highest level of personalized service and even offering customized meals to our long stay guests. This has resulted in more than 90% repeat clientele and the privilege of hosting a New Zealand national for almost 3.5 years.

In addition, we try to ensure that our long stay guests get a local flavour, we extend to them personalized curated experiences such as Ganga Aarti, river rafting, kayaking /boating, forest treks, bird watching etc.

3. How do you choose the location of a property?

We primarily look at locations

near industrial and corporate hubs which enable us to get long stay guests who are able to truly benefit and appreciate the facilities of our property.

We have now ventured out into two leisure locations one facing a lake and the other with spectacular views of the snow-capped Himalayas. These are again being primarily offered to our corporate clients for their offsite trainings and leisure trips.

4. Do you prefer to build a property from scratch or buy an existing property and then refurbish it according to your requirement?

Since we don't have standard hotel rooms, we prefer to build from scratch. However, we also explore existing properties but only those which can be customized according to our concept and requirements.

5. Who are your guests? Are they people from the corporate houses? Or, families on pilgrimage?

Since we are located in the industrial & corporate clusters, our primary clientele are all the nearby industries with whom we have corporate tie-ups and we prefer to entertain bookings only through them or through their references. Some of our major customers include Tata Motors, Bajaj Auto, Ashok Leyland, Maruti Suzuki, Mahindra & Mahindra, Hero Moto Corp, TVS Group, Greenply, Dabur, ITC Limited, Anchor by Panasonic, Tata Steel, Voltas, Saint Gobain, Hindware, Hindustan Zinc, JBM Group, VLCC, Yes Bank, Axis Bank, Spicejet etc.

We were even featured as the "10 most promising corporate lodging service providers in 2019" by the Silicon India Magazine.

FANTASTIC FIVE



The Rosewood Haridwar

The aparthotel in Uttarakhand's holiest city Haridwar where the River Ganga emerges from the Himalayas, is an all-rounder, no doubt. It is home to businessmen, spiritualists, yoga enthusiasts, family vacationers and adventure junkies!



The Rosewood Gurgaon

The aparthotel offers a luxurious setting with exquisitely styled guestrooms, a multi-cuisine cafe, and a large conferencing space combined with new-age technology and business support services.



The Rosewood Pantnagar

The aparthotel was launched in Pantnagar to cater to the employees and visitors of the industries around the city in SIDCUL industrial area. It soon gained momentum and has since seen staycation guests who base themselves at Pantnagar and day trip to the nearby picturesque hill towns of Ranikhet, Binsar and the seven-lake town Nainital.



The Rosewood Bhimtal

Perched at 8500 feet above sea level, the Rosewood experience in Dhanachulli is most exciting in the snowy winters. The scenic hamlet has captivating views of the Himalayas, the dense forests and kids playing around in the apple orchards.



The Rosewood Dhanachuli

Located in Mukteshwar, 19 miles from Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary, Rosewood Dhanachuli Retreat features views over the Himalayas. It is fit for every kind of traveller- business, leisure or someone just looking for a scenic, spiritual and quiet break.

COVER STORY/STRATEGY

HOW TO SURVIVE, REVIVE AND THRIVE

The FICCI & Grant Thornton Report gives a complete overview of Covid-19 Impact on Travel & Tourism and ways to rebuild the industry

THE travel and tourism industry in India is looking at up to 40 million job losses (both direct and indirect) and about USD 17 billion in revenue loss in the next one year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the loss of lives and livelihood all across the globe. Industries across the spectrum have been impacted by the pandemic, the travel and tourism industry has felt maximum impact due to grounding of planes, closure of railways, hotels and other establishments.

The travel and tourism industry has proven its importance as an economic growth engine for the world economy. For nine years consecutively, the industry's growth rate has surpassed the growth rate of the global economy. In 2019, the industry grew at 3.5% compared to global GDP growth rate of 2.5%. Accounting for 10.3% of total GDP, the industry contributed USD 8.9 trillion to the global GDP and created approximately 330 million jobs, one in 10 that year.

The tourism sector makes a significant impact on the economy of our country. The data by World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) reveals that in 2019 the tourism industry in India contributed INR 194 billion to India's GDP. The industry also supported 87.5 million jobs, 12.75% of total employment in 2018-19. Due to the impact of the pandemic on the global economy, the WTTC is estimating losses of up to USD 2.7 trillion with up to 100 million jobs at risk. The travel and tourism industry in India is looking at up to 40 million job losses (both direct and indirect) and about USD 17 billion in revenue loss in the next one year.

All across the world, countries are looking at tourism as the main driver to revive their economy. The central government plays an important role in developing a strong visitor economy which is evident from the fact that the Ministry of Tourism has also undertaken a slew of initiatives, such as the Incredible India 2.0 campaign focusing on niche tourism products

including wellness and adventure tourism, as well as investment into the industry through schemes, such as PRASHAD and Swadesh Darshan, which have proven to be successful in increasing the number of foreign and domestic visitors in India.

The government has also leveraged e-visa capabilities and extended it to 169 countries making it easier for individuals to visit our country.

Looking ahead, domestic tourism will be the way forward as inbound tourism will take longer to revive and open up. Although the Indian travel and tourism industry has not received much support from the recent announcements on the economic relief package by the government, it should be considered as a priority sector. In order to achieve this, government, industry and institutions must make collaborative efforts to create a supportive ecosystem for tourism.

We are happy that a National Tourism Taskforce (NTF) has been formed by the Ministry of Tourism, Govern-



ment of India. It will play a major role in the survival and revival of the Indian travel and tourism industry so that it can once again be the torch bearer for the Indian economy.

We are pleased to present the FICCI - Grant Thornton report, *Travel and Tourism: Survive, revive and thrive in times of COVID-19*, which looks at the impact of this crisis and the recommendations for survival and revival. This document will facilitate a better understanding of the challenges faced by the industry and the opportunities for revival, both by the government and private sector.

Dr. Jyotsna Suri Past President, FICCI Chairperson, FICCI Tourism Committee Chairperson and Managing Director, The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group

Impact of COVID-19 on the travel and tourism sector in India

COVID-19 has disrupted international travel trade and supply chains in an unprecedented way. Several countries have suspended tourist and business visas and banned both domestic and international air travel, bringing economies to a screeching halt. The International Monetary Fund predicts a shrinkage of the global economy by 3% during 2020 due to the novel coronavirus.

With many economies yet to hit their infection apexes, experts predict economies around the world to shrink in the first quarter of 2020, with ripple effects expected to be felt in the following months. The travel and tourism sector is the worst hit.

Of all the segments of the hospitality sector, the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions - popularly known as MICE segment - has been hit the most with major international business events cancelled

including Mobile World Congress (MWC), Google I/O, and Facebook's F8 event, leading to huge economic losses.

The pandemic is estimated to have a debilitating impact on the Indian travel and tourism sector, which includes hotels, travel agencies, tour operators, destinations, family entertainment venues, restaurants and air, land and sea transportation, amongst others. Overall, losses are estimated to total up to USD 16.7 billion. Being a large employment generator for the country, 40-50 million jobs will be at risk in 2020, both directly and indirectly employed in the industry.

The Ministry of Tourism has constituted a National Tourism Taskforce, to be headed by the Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism to meet the challenges posed by COVID-19 and will include state tourism ministers, joint secretary level officers of the concerned central ministries, and representatives from associations, such as FICCI, CII, ASSOCHAM and WTCII, as well as heads of tourism and hospitality associations.

With large scale cancellation of travel plans by both foreign and domestic tourists, there has been a

Relief measures and recommendations by FICCI to the Government of India

With coronavirus impacting the Indian economy, the travel and tourism industry is looking at up to 50 million jobs at risk. For the industry to tide over this crisis, several relief measures have been recommended to the Government of India by FICCI.

drop in both inbound and outbound tourism of approximately 67% and 52% respectively from January to February as compared with the same period last year.

The aviation sector, which contributes 2.4% of Indian GDP, is among the worst affected sectors due to COVID-19. The spread of the pandemic across the country, in the last two months, has led to a 47% decline in the passenger traffic. Following the lockdown in March, airlines have been incurring parking charges as nearly 650 planes of Indian carriers are now grounded. These airlines are liable to pay a lump sum amount of INR 6 million of parking and housing charges. Airlines are also refraining from increasing prices for the summer season. According to the Centre of Aviation (CAPA), the Indian aviation industry could bear losses up to USD 3.6 billion during April-June 2020 alone.

The travel ban has largely impacted tour operators and travel agencies as the restrictions have not only affected current bookings, but future bookings too. With March and April being peak season for Indian travelers heading to both domestic and international destinations, nearly 90% bookings of hotel and flights have been cancelled for the same period. Among these cancellations are cruise bookings for destinations such as Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia. According to the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), the hotel, aviation and travel sector together may incur losses of about INR 8,500 crore due to travel restrictions imposed on foreign tourists by India which further puts at risk the survival of smaller to medium sized organisations including the jobs of several thousand, if not lakhs of individuals. For tour operators and travel agents across



▶ **Hard surfaces, including seat trays, touch screens, door handles of a plane need disinfection after each flight**

the length and breadth of the country, average losses in revenues compared with the same period last year have been in the range of 50-80%.

India has a total of 3961 centrally protected sites either under UNESCO as a world heritage site or the Archeological Survey of India (ASI). Monuments, such as the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort in Agra and Qutub Minar in New Delhi, are the highest revenue earners grossing annually INR 77 crore, INR 34 crore and INR 26 crore, respectively. The livelihoods of approximately 1.75 lakh daily earners, including tour guides, rickshaw pullers, photographers, etc., have been affected in Agra alone. Tour guides with licenses from the government are not allowed to take up alternative jobs, adding to

their challenges.

Various pilgrimage sites, including large temples across the country, have been closed in the wake of the pandemic. Tirumala Venkateswara Temple, the richest Hindu temple has incurred losses of nearly INR 125-130 crore so far. Other temples in Tamil Nadu have also incurred losses due to the lack of daily offerings. Closure of pilgrimages has also had cascading effects on hotels, homestays, businesses of travel agents as well as floriculturists.

Negative impact on the Indian Railways has also been witnessed ever since the nationwide seizure of rail services across the country. The Indian Railways facilitate the movement of goods as well as passengers.

Six-month moratorium to be extended to a minimum 12-month moratorium period on all working capital, principal, interest payments, loans and overdrafts

- Permit one-time rescheduling of principal/interest dues in line with the estimated cash flows of each project post recovery from COVID-19 without treating it as restructuring, re-classification/downgrading in asset qualification and requirement of additional provisioning.
- 12-month waiver of all statutory dues including customs, excise and license fees and increase in insurance premiums
- Stimulus package to provide salary support to businesses
- ESI contribution to be deferred for 12 months. Insurance corpus of ESI should to be used to provide wages to all covered workers
- Waiver and/or reduction of GST on products offered by the sector for a 12-month period
- Direct cash support for the aviation sector (airlines, ground handling and airports)
- Waiver of parking and landing charges
- Short-term, interest-free or low-interest loans for rebuilding businesses in the form of term loans and working capital loans
- Create a separate tourism fund under the aegis of Ministry of Tourism, accessible to the industry as a collateral free, 10 year loan, with a moratorium of two years and minimal rate of interest to support businesses stabilise in this time of crisis

The Indian Railways is expected to witness losses amounting to INR 17 billion due to COVID-19; almost 13,000 passenger trains have come to a standstill.

There is an urgent need to take immediate steps to not only contain the spread of the virus but also to address the key pain areas of the industry to minimise the impact of the outbreak on the Indian economy and businesses. A combination of monetary, fiscal and financial market measures is needed to help the businesses and people cope with the crisis. Therefore, to be able to frame correct actions and policy measures, it is important to understand clearly the specific problems that people and businesses are currently facing. This alone can enable the government to take appropriate measures.

Measures recommended for the survival and revival of the travel and tourism sector

- While a six-month moratorium has been granted to the industry, a minimum 12-month moratorium period is needed on all working capital, principal, interest payments, loans and overdrafts. Collateral and interest-free loans for five years for SMEs in the sector to help them sustain and rebuild
- A 12-month waiver of all statutory dues with respect to license fees, property tax and excise fees • Defer GST and advance tax payments at the Central Government level and removal of fees for any upcoming licenses, permits and their renewal
- Bailout packages to fund and support salaries in the sector Export status for foreign exchange earnings for inbound tours and hotels
- A 12-month deferment in the increase of insurance premium related to standard fire and special perils

- rate for fire, loss of profits
- SGST to be waived off till the situation becomes normal
- Tax rebates by the government for encouraging spending on domestic holidays (for example, LTA) and GST relief and other incentives for corporates to organise meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) within the country

Regulatory measures

- Permit one-time rescheduling of principal/interest dues in line with the estimated cash flows of each project post recovery from

- COVID-19 without treating it as restructuring, re-classification/ downgrading in asset qualification and requirement of additional provisioning
- Permit sanctioning of additional facilities in the form of working capital term loan for meeting cash flow mismatches during the period affected by COVID-19. The tenure of such facility shall be assessed based on the individual project cash flows. Such additional facilities to be treated as standard assets
- In case of projects under implementation, the banks/institutions/



► Staff need to be trained a new standard operating process of safety and hygiene

NBFCs be permitted to extend the Date of Commencement of Commercial Operations (DCCO) by one year without treating it as restructuring as it would be difficult for promoters to raise funds from other business/services for project completion.

- Lending to tourism sector to be treated as 'priority sector lending' at least for next one year which will enable access to bank finance
- Amendments to Master Direction - Reserve Bank of India (Relief Measures by banks in areas affected by Natural Calamities) 2018-SCBs to include:
 - COVID-19 in the definition of natural calamity and permit use of this circular for tourism sector
 - Enabling NBFCs to use this circular (presently only applicable to banks)
 - Removing additional provisioning requirement for the restructured portion of loans under this scheme

Policy measures

- Stimulus package to be formed to stabilise and support the sector in the near-term, including a workforce support fund to ensure that there are no job losses
- Waiver of all statutory dues such as advance tax, custom duties, excise duties, etc. at central and state level for 12 months
- Provision of a 12-month corporate tax holiday to travel, tourism and hospitality sector and deferment of payment of all statutory dues, such as custom duties, excise duties, PF and bank charges, at central and state level for 12 months
- Extension of annual renewal of licenses paid for in 2020 until the end of 2021 without any incremental fee or charges

Relief measures requested for tour operators

- Restoration of Service Exports from India Scheme (SEIS) scrips for duty credit of 10% to the tourism industry.
- Extension of Services Export Promotion Council (SEPC) membership to 31st March 2021
- Finalisation of an aggressive Incredible India marketing plan during lockdown and implementation on opening to drive domestic travel in India
- Approval of completed forms by Directorate General of Foreign Trade within 30 days to utilise the cash flow to pay salaries and expenses
- No landing fees for Goa, i.e. charters land for free to encourage flights to come back
- Same ticket prices for foreigners and Indians for entry to historical monuments.

Relief measures requested for travel agents

- Support fund majorly for salaries and establishment costs through the following:
 - Government to contribute 33.33% of take home salaries to all employees of registered travel agencies.
 - Government to use funds of ESI to pay salaries of employees covered under the scheme.
 - No deduction of TDS on salaries for employees of the trade till March 2021
 - Subsidise electricity by 33.33% to give relief to 53,000+ travel agents, more than 1.3 lakhs tour operators (domestic, inbound, adventure, cruise and outbound), more than 2,700 MICE organisers and 19 lakh plus tourist transporters
- PF contribution to be waived off for

all categories of employees for the next 12 months

- Employees to be allowed to withdraw a fixed sum of INR 10,000 for up to six months from their EPF accounts
- ESI contribution to be deferred for 12 months. The insurance corpus of ESI needs to be used now to provide wages to all organised workers for all accumulated days from non-availability of work and the act needs to be amended immediately
- Professional tax to be waived for all companies as well as employees up to March 2021
- Refunds of cancellations and advances of travel agents and tour operators from AIRLINES/IATA: MOT and MOCA immediately advises them to refund. Advances/float accounts also to be refunded in full immediately as they are of money in float/advances for not issued tickets
- Billing period for IATA carriers to be extended to 15 days. MOCA should underwrite these payments to travel agents & tour operators which will be securitised against these receivables from IATA and low-cost carriers/non-IATA airline
- Complete GST and income tax holiday for tourism, travel and hospitality industry for period of twelve months:
 - IT Holiday effective FY2019-20
 - Reseller model for air travel agents to be permitted for corporates/customers with GST number with the agents directly on payment basis since airlines don't pay on payment/receipt basis and credit GST only on flown basis
 - Unlock inter-head credit of GST across IGST, CGST, SGST for tour operators. Permanently allow tour operators to claim IGST for hotel reservations/other services



► **Hotels are revising their room cleaning protocols thoroughly**

- interstate basis as input credit to claim ITC
- Roll back of TCS introduced in Budget 2020 by the finance minister
- LTA like tax benefit for Indians for two times a year for domestic and international travel. This will stimulate domestic travel by Indians

Relief measures requested for hotels

- GST rates on companies in hospitality should be slashed for at least two to three years. Currently, large hotels are charged a GST rate between 12-18% based on room rate. Now that hotels are almost empty, the GST rate should be brought down to 5-6% with immediate effect
- 500 units of electricity per month and water to be provided free of

charge to companies in the sector. Thereafter, subsidised rates can apply on actual consumption and not against fixed load

- Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) scheme to consider grant of extension in export obligation fulfilment period by an additional three years (beyond current limit of six years) for all the licenses expiring during current and within this and the next financial year, without attracting any penalty or interest

Special package for the survival of heritage hotels

- The CSR initiatives for hotels, aviation, travel, tourism entities should be extended to Swachh Bharat, which in the case of tourism industry, should include monuments, tourist sites, and other facilities

Opportunities for growth in the sector

Promote niche travel products under the Incredible India 2.0 campaign

- Yoga and Ayurveda - Promote wellness tourism as a key unique selling product which will gain a lot of attraction in the near future
- Religious circuits - Religious circuits is a highly unorganised travel market. A complete relook is required to formalise these offerings into circuits for all faiths. Even the NRI market can be tapped for this product, if institutionalised well. Government needs to play a unification role with state, private players, travel operators and other identified points of sale, including fin-tech companies. A feasibility study should be conducted to connect the religious sites by modes of transport such as aerial ropeway



► **Immediately after the pandemic there will be holiday rush of tourists**

and trollies. Rail, bus, and IRCTC need to all work in cohesion for the circuits to be a success

- Culinary tourism - It is a great opportunity to explore variety of cuisines in the country. Focus on creating culinary circuits and trails and promote it extensively through digital campaigns. Promote local food by partnering with online restaurant aggregators for showcasing dining in experiences of cafes/restaurants
- Self-drive holidays - Self-drive holidays, including hiring of self-driven cars need a complete re-look in the Indian market. Currently, only 10,000 self-driven commercial vehicles are registered in 30 cities across India. The base should be expanded to include a larger number of railways, airports and city gate ways. This will

attract younger population who could combine their air/rail travel with self-driven cars. The self-driven cars should have an in-built application for navigation and facilities for the traveller/driver

- Caravan tourism - It should be promoted for road trip holidays as it will give a unique experience to visit many destinations while limiting contact with others. Government should come up with caravan circuits and identified camping spots. These camping spots should have the infrastructure for waste management and other basic services such as water and food. Petrol pumps on the highways can also expand their services for caravans to provide waste management and other basic services including cooking fuel. They can also provide

parking space on a chargeable basis for overnight halts with CCTV for additional security.

- Film industry - Government must encourage film makers to shoot at Indian locales in order to showcase India further to both domestic and foreign markets and subsequently create demand. India should have a single window clearance for all shoots to reduce delay and uncertainties. India should also provide a cash rebate to reduce cost of shootings as movie shoots are a medium to increase footfalls across the country.

Promote the corporate travel segment

Online travel companies and travel management companies in India must develop technology platforms to aid and develop the corporate hotel segment. This would ensure bookings and payments are made from India thus allowing revenues to sit in India rather than overseas as currently payments are made either by overseas associates or out of the per diem foreign exchange allowance for the traveller.

Current trends and patterns indicate bookings and payments are made by the traveller overseas, which can be brought in-house by the companies. Not only will it increase their penetration but will also contribute to government through GST collections.

Create a more conducive business environment

The government should re-visit their regulations, taxation and other norms to increase ease of doing business in India. Organisations are choosing to register their companies abroad citing stable regulations, subsidised tax rates and increased global investor interest as reasons. The Indian

government should look at adopting foreign best-practices to ensure maximum Indian companies register in the country. With a foot in the door through large Indian technology firms already servicing global customers, this can be extended to the travel and tourism sector also.

Guidance for companies in the travel and tourism sector

Hotels

• *Recognise essential workers*

Companies are recommended to offer special packages to healthcare workers and other essential workers. These packages can be in the form of free or lower cost hotel membership offerings. Some hotels are already providing complimentary rooms and giving their highest tier of membership to these workers. Hotels can also consider donating food from the hotel restaurants to local hospitals.

• *Invest in hygiene and communicate with clients*

Hotels need to revise their room cleaning protocols. They need to review how medical assistance facilities can be created/improved to assist travellers. Create a new standard operating process of safety and hygiene to maintain cleanliness in the hotel and train the staff to follow it.

Identify all possible touchpoints and invest in contactless technologies to ensure that all these touchpoints are automated and interaction with hotel staff is minimised.

• *Encourage future bookings*

Companies are suggested to encourage future and potential customers to consider booking travel packages/ hotel bookings in advance at a reduced rate.

Companies could consider providing a discount on future bookings

redeemable up to December 2022.

For e.g. a hotel can offer to provide a 10-day holiday package for 60% of its original sale price. They can offer it as a coupon which can be redeemed by the buyer any time before December 2022

• *Flexibility instead of refund*

Companies can offer to allow the customer to change their dates of bookings without any cost. Companies could also consider providing a reduced price if a customer chooses to re-book instead of cancelling their bookings.

• *Gift cards/vouchers*

Companies can consider providing a gift card or a voucher with a benefit which can be used by consumers later.

• *Promote skill development for employees*

Companies should focus on upskilling the staff to prepare them for the revival stage. Companies should support the employees by helping them develop new skills for the recovery and growth phase post COVID 19. Companies can also liaise with educational institutes to develop online training courses for your staff.

• *Loan staff arrangement*

For staff less than a certain salary threshold (cleaning staff, maintenance etc.) companies could consider discussing feasibility of loan staff arrangement for the next three months with firms who are in the essential services industry. This could help companies in getting short term reprieve on salary cost, while beefing up personnel in essential services.

• *Vendor management*

After assessing the supplier capability

and categorising all operating supplies including perishables in order of importance, the procurement team must ensure proper stock piling.

• *Power and equipment*

Before starting any equipment, a thorough service plan should be made to ensure that all equipment is fully functional and safe. Hotels can also shut down floors with no occupancy, thus helping them save majorly on-air conditioning costs as well as other operational costs.

• *Continuously contact your client base*

Maintain contact with clients through digital marketing campaigns across channels and platforms. Hotels should also try and honour all client reservations and bookings that were cancelled or deferred due to the crisis. The hotels should leverage the opportunity to market the right products through promotional campaigns to cater to the domestic market.

Lodges

• *Compliances*

Lodges need to ensure that they are meeting all revised government and brand norms. They should also continue to follow the health and cleanliness guidelines and reassure guests and employees by intensifying routine maintenance and increasing deep cleaning measures.

• *Investment in contactless technologies* Lodges should accelerate investments in "no touch" technologies such as eye scanners gesture controls and automation to personalise digital interactions while enabling social distancing.

SOURCE: Travel and Tourism: Survive, revive and thrive in times of COVID-19, Grant Thornton-Ficci Report

DISTRIBUTED RESTAURANT

How COVID-19 could impact design of restaurants



► If the situation persists into the summer, the World Travel and Tourism Council projects a global loss of 75 million jobs in the restaurant business

NO industry has been as badly impacted by the current pandemic as the hospitality industry. Sales at restaurants in the US are expected to decline by over €207 billion during the next three months according to the National Restaurant Association. Venues in London are already reporting a 47 per cent drop in year-on-year footfall. If the situation

persists into the summer, the World Travel and Tourism Council projects a global loss of 75 million jobs and over €1.9 trillion in revenue. The question now is, what comes next – what can be done to convince consumers to book again and how to better prepare brands for similar events in the future. 'When the global lockdown starts to be lifted and we begin to

find what many are calling "The New Normal" for the hospitality and travel industry, there won't be a "business as usual" bounce back, but instead a rethink and collective adaption of what hospitality means,' Philippa Wagner, head of Ennismore's insight division, tells Frame. In the first instalment of this two-part series we look at why hospitality brands should



► **Delivery is reengineering the idea of the hospitality business as something that can exist in both a distributed and a consolidated way**

embrace their forced conversion into media-come-delivery providers.

The hospitality industry is far from being strangers with social media (more like co-dependents), but its quickly become the key conduit to maintaining any sort of relationship with absent patrons across all verticals, not least as brands quickly develop delivery services for the first time and need to differentiate.

‘As we shelter in place, seeking solace, normalcy, and comfort food, media-savvy chefs are hellbent on serving it to us via podcasts, social media, and streaming channels,’ explains Forbes columnist Jennifer Leigh Parker. ‘Their common cause: Order take-out! Try one of my recipes! Or, better yet, just watch me cook something so sensational that you relate to me on a deep human level and choose to patron my

restaurants as soon as we reopen.’

Reopening won’t be an end, however. This combination of media (be it social or a more advanced form) and delivery is reengineering the idea of the hospitality business as something that can exist in both a distributed and a consolidated way. If you can’t be on premises, then there’s a palette of takeaway products, in-home experiences, video and conferencing formats



► Outlets such as London's Dyce Dessert Parlour offer environments attuned to photographing food for social sharing

that can bring something of a brand's ethos to your door.

One early responder was fast-casual Mexican chain Chipotle, which has started organizing 'Chipotle Together' sessions on videoconferencing site Zoom and social channels like Instagram. Featuring a roster of celebrities and musicians, these streams aren't just about providing entertainment to distanced customers, but also driving sales, with time-limited codes for free entrées revealed during the

broadcasts. On the opposite end of the spectrum, experience-design studio Kitchen Theory has created a 'Multisensory Dining at Home' service consisting of a four to six-course menu, tableware, table dressing, playlist and sensory elements including texture cubes, projectors, wireless headphones and levitating plates. The evening is presided over by a virtual chef.

Hotel operators are also adopting similar tactics, especially in Asia. Meliá

Hotels has started sharing recipes from the head chef of its Shanghai property on WeChat, as a series of GIFs. Competitor Marriott has launched a four-week series of online Cantonese cooking classes filmed across four of its Guangzhou hotels. Meanwhile, Hilton has been alternating cooking tutorials with workout classes. Indian hoteliers are taking a more product-driven approach, however, with InterContinental Chennai offering food deliveries for regular customers

of its onsite restaurant, while the Taj Hotels group has developed a series of food and wellness hampers.

To an extent these brands are playing catch-up with established media entities moving in the opposite direction. Last autumn Condé Nast food-title Bon Appétit announced that it was creating its own virtual restaurant with delivery platform GrubHub – we've previously written about the publisher's future plans to open hotels.

Some brands are going further by engaging consumers on unexpected entertainment channels. Diner chain Denny's is taking advantage of a surge in interest in gaming, creating a brand account on online services for all the major console platforms and giving discount codes to players it meets during each session. It hit the maximum number of friends for a single Nintendo Switch account in one day. Airbnb, which has seen bookings free fall since the start of the outbreak, has accelerated its pivot towards being a more experience-led proposition, by creating a platform for its hosts and guides to stream paid-for digital tutorials in everything from wine tasting to Olympic rowing.

This enforced period of innovation will leave many of these hospitality brands irrevocably changed, and likely for the better, given that returning to previous models will likely be impossible. If hotels, restaurants and bars aren't viable as a standalone option with reduced customer density, maintaining these new marketing and revenues streams will be a necessity.

This will see several pre-pandemic trends gain wider adoption. Outlets such as London's Dyce Dessert Parlour and Shenzhen's Doko Bar, both of which offer environments attuned to photographing food for social sharing, are well placed for a future in which premises are as much stage set as

Indian hoteliers are taking a more product-driven approach, such as the Taj Hotels group has developed a series of food and wellness hampers

service space. Similarly, Starbucks' experimental pickup-only store, which opened in New York at the end of last year, will likely now see a much faster and broader rollout. Restaurants, which have for several years struggled with the increasing through-flow of delivery drivers on the restaurant floor, will start to reshape to accommodate them and pick-up-only customers more effectively.

Together, these forces mean that the idea of a hospitality brand as something tied to a specific place and time will switch to something more diffuse.



► Some restaurants offer a four to six-course menu, table dressing, playlist and sensory elements to make everything photogenic

'WELLNESS AND CARE MUST COME FIRST'

Tejinder Singh moved to Kolkata as the Area Manager East ITC Hotels & Cluster General Manager ITC Royal Bengal & ITC Sonar in the wake of Covid-19. He heads ITC Hotels East. He oversees ITC Sonar and ITC Royal Bengal at Kolkata. In addition, he is responsible for the launch of upcoming WelcomHotel properties at Bhubaneswar, Kathmandu and Port Blair.



AN alumnus of IHM Pusa and ITC Hotel Management Institute he is popularly known as 'Teji'. He began his journey more than two decades ago at ITC Maurya in 1994 as a management trainee. Since then he has held senior management positions at several ITC Hotels in Delhi, Jaipur and Hyderabad setting definite and impeccable examples for his successors. He has also garnered management expertise through international exposure in the aviation industry as the General Manager, Customer Services and In-Flight Dining, for Europe, UK & North America based in Brussels and subsequently as the General Manager, Service Delivery & Guest Experience. He interacted with Mystic East in an exclusive interview.

How are you handling your new responsibility as the Area Manager, East and Cluster General Manager in this pandemic situation?

At ITC Hotels we take exceptional pride in being an organisation with a long tradition of putting employees first. Our ethos of Responsible Luxury, translates into a unique service culture where associates intuitively create moments of delight for every guest. Since the onset of the pandemic, our



topmost concern continues to be the safety, security and well-being of our associates and their families as well as preparation to expedite a return to the new normal. The WeAssure initiative introduced is an industry first in enhancing hygiene and safety protocols within our Hotels. We have also re-engineered our guest experience with special training to associates and low contact engagement including digital ordering and e-payment solutions. These initiatives are in keeping with our ethos of Responsible Luxury and embodied by the Namaste, symbolic of the finest Indian traditional hospitality.

Are you also looking after the new upcoming WelcomHotel properties at Bhubaneswar, Kathmandu and Port Blair? What's the status of these projects?

I am responsible for the launch of the new hotels and ensure the operations and stakeholder expectations are met. They are unique hotels, rooted to the soil and will add value to the region. The hotel at Kathmandu is our first in Nepal and is being conceived as an iconic property in the true tradition of ITC. It not only will carry forward the legacy but will also be a hotel which people of Nepal will be proud of. The Hotels in Bhubanes-

war and Port Blair are in advanced stages of completion and will be opening shortly.

What was the impression of Kolkata before you took over?

Kolkata is a charming city with a lot of warmth. I was told that it is a city which grows on you, a leading city of modernity and tradition and a bastion of 'Bhadralok' – always gracious. I was looking forward to my time here.

What was your most important assignment after beginning your journey in the hospitality sector?

Every assignment has been special and significant. I have been a core member of the pre-opening team of ITC Hotels and played an integral role in the launch of several hotels, namely ITC Grand Chola in Chennai, WelcomHotel Jodhpur, WelcomHotel Bella Vista, Chandigarh, ITC Grand Bharat, Gurugram as well as WelcomHotel Dwarka, New Delhi. In addition to ITC Kohenur where I served as the General Manager & Pre Opening of ITC Kohenur. My current posting at ITC Hotels Kolkata is also a special assignment; it is the city of ITC. I was very humbled when I was assigned by ITC Hotels' senior leadership to helm the glorious hotels and the region. Anybody in my position will feel privileged to be appointed for this responsibility, so was I. I am confident that with support of my colleagues and the city, we will be able to deliver to the expectations

Tell us something about your launch of 274 luxury destinations in Hyderabad's HITEC City?

An integral part of the pre-opening team as the General Manager & Pre Opening of ITC Kohenur, my foremost responsibility was the positioning and launch of the 274 luxury desti-



nation located in the heart of Hyderabad's new business district (HITEC City), with six food and beverage offerings, a large convention centre, meeting rooms, and Spa. Thus, developing strategy amidst stiff competition and leading the way for ITC Kohenur which eventually became one of the leading business hotels in Hyderabad in its first year of operation was a proud achievement.

What is your plan for ITC Sonar and ITC Royal Bengal?

ITC Royal Bengal along with ITC Sonar ensures the ITC Hotels Kolkata complex is unlike any other experience currently available in this part of the world. Accommodation benchmarks

have been reset and of course there is our unmatched offering in MICEW, Food & Beverage. In every way, it is a 'One of a Kind' Experience that we are very humbled to bring to Bengal. My endeavour would be to uphold the brand value in ITC's own city and keep the flag of ITC Hotels flag flying high. In terms of F&B we many new openings to look forward to- Club Prive an exclusive, paid membership Club, comprising of a lounge, bar, reading facility, private dining and meeting & board rooms—a haven in which the emphasis is on meticulous service and access to complete privacy, Rooftop bar at the highest level at ITC Royal Bengal- SkyPoint, as well as Eden

Pavilion where we will be serving you a taste of Kolkata on a plate.

How are you surviving the pandemic?

With the decade strong 'Responsible Luxury' as our guiding premise, we, at ITC Hotels, are committed towards delivering world-class luxury experiences that address the most critical needs of wellbeing and safety through responsible practices. Reinforcing our globally acknowledged ethos of 'Responsible Luxury', ITC Hotels has launched a path-breaking initiative called 'WeAssure'. This unique programme is designed in collaboration with medical professionals and disinfection experts to

further enhance the existing hygiene and sanitization protocols.

Given the unprecedented circumstances before us, as part of the 'WeAssure' initiative, ITC Hotels has implemented additional measures by revamping service policies and protocols. Having instituted new health and safety measures as a part of the ever-evolving operating procedures, we are ceaselessly ensuring the well-being of our guests and employees. Through these endeavours, we would enable our discerning guests a continued experience of their favourite stay & dining destination within a safe haven. For example, in order to ensure safety of food preparation, ITC Hotels has implemented stringent measures and protocols, including mandatory temperature checks for all Chefs and F&B associates, strict ingredient regulations and frequent disinfection of the kitchen area and equipment. Guests will make their selection on the basis of Hotels meeting the highest standards of safety and hygiene. ITC Hotels staycations have been immensely popular, especially at ITC Sonar and ITC Royal Bengal. This requirement for safe staycation is a growing trend. City Residents are keen to take a break away from their homes to a brand and location they trust.

With the changing environment, diners have taken a strong liking for our takeaway menus serving the best from ITC Hotel kitchens. Crafted with care and handled with utmost hygiene to ensure wellbeing, the mindfully curated menus ensure unique food experiences with local love using fresh seasonal and local ingredients offering our discerning guests celebrated preparations from ITC Hotels home delivered by the Hotel as well as through Swiggy & Zomato, following a contact less service.



What are the innovations the industry requires to thrive in the post-pandemic situation?

Following the pandemic, we believe that the wellness dining market will definitely keep rising. Eating and living with a conscience or Responsible Dining is going to become a strong part of the ethos of the food industry, and more businesses will take a greener and more sustainable approach to their operations. Healthy, local and responsible eating is a major concern for our guests. ITC Hotels' ten-year strong ethos of 'Responsible Luxury' underlines the chain's culinary brands and initiatives to present innovative cuisine experiences while adhering to superior standards of

food safety and hygiene.

We endeavour to offer our guests healthy, sustainable food, whilst eliminating food waste. In order to achieve this, we have invested in training and recruiting talent in alignment with our objective of increasing the warmth and service of our function. People have also woken up to the fact that any green effort to save the planet ultimately equates to an effort to save ourselves. They have realized that, for us to live better quality lives for longer, we must treat ourselves and our environments better. Wellness and care must come first. This has been ITC Hotels core philosophy for Planet Positive Experiences.



STATE SURVEY: ASSAM

AWESOME ASSAM

The Tourism Policy of Assam encourages the Private Sector to proactively participate and invest in tourist places in the beautiful state



TOURISM activities in Assam have developed sporadically and in an unplanned manner. Also due to very limited government funds made available to the tourism sector and hesitation of the private sector to invest due to various issues, tourism promotion and marketing activities have always taken a back seat.

Overall public sector tourism is groping in the dark and has been sub-optimally functioning with limited financial and human resource capacity. Also, the private sector feels that the Government does not provide them full support. It is often not enough just to have the right

product; there is a felt need that the Government should support the tourism sector, provide security and a conducive environment. The private sector should also provide investments and the people of Assam ought to be involved and participate in this development.

Assam has special things to offer, but it needs to get the framework in place so as to realize the benefits. This policy will remain valid till 31.03.2022 and may be extended further, if required.

VISION

Assam becomes a nationally and internationally acclaimed all-season Tourist destination for its unique wildlife, bio-diversity and experience of an unexploited wonderland. Tourism is to be one of the main sources of income generation for the people. It will also be a vibrant and significant contributor to the sustainable development of the State of Assam.

MISSION

i) To bring in maximum footfalls to Assam. ii) To promote Assam Tourism with a new approach of vigorous massive campaigning. iii) To build a global brand 'Awesome Assam' to attract National and International Tourist iv) 3.4 In keeping with "Act East Policy" of Central Government, we will have close v) collaboration with other neighboring countries like Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos Vietnam, South Korea, Japan, China & other South East Asian Countries harping on the similarities of these communities with the people of Assam vi) Identify most popular and attractive tourist destinations and develop tourist infrastructure in an around them vii) To encourage Responsible Tourism (RT) in the state with a view to preserving environ-

ment eco-systems in keeping with Sustainable Development Goals viii) To facilitate extensive involvement of private sector and active participation of local community in all aspects of Tourism promotion ix) To create an investment friendly atmosphere for promotion of Tourism by making full use of Ease of Doing Business x) To conduct special skill development Certificate programs of local youths in Hospitality and for Tourism Sector, the advantage of Government of India's Skill India and 'Hunar Se Rojgar tak' shall be leveraged xi) Adopting Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Tourism Sector xiii) To ensure safety and security of the tourists xiv) To promote Spiritual Tourism centering on Kamakhya Temple as India's most powerful Shakti- Peeth highlighting Ambubachi Mela xv) To promote Wildlife Tourism centering on one-horned Rhinoceros xvi) To promote Tea Tourism of Assam xvii) To provide 'Excellence Awards' annually for Tourism xviii) Promote Film Tourism by developing single Window clearances and providing incentive to film makers xix) A special incentive package in the form of logistic support within Assam should be provided to the film producers to kick start their arrivals xx) Development of Wayside amenities on Tourism Routes in a PPP mode xxi) Development of Package tours to destinations of other states by suitable engagement with their Tourism departments and Tour operators of Assam.

OBJECTIVES

i) To make Assam a tourist Hub for North East India ii) To market Assam as a hot destination for the tourists from East & South East Asian Countries iii) To leverage innovative forms of Tourism such as Cruises, Ethnic Tourism, Tea & Golf, leisure Tourism,

River tourism in Assam could be a great way to spend holidays. Luxury cruises can draw more domestic and international tourist traffic to Assam



► **The river Brahmaputra is intrinsic to the socio-cultural life in Assam**



► **Assam has been a unique place on earth for the cultural and ethnic diversities**

Transit Tourism, Adventure Tourism and Monsoon Tourism iv) To develop positive, Tourist friendly and reciprocal culture among local tour operators, guides and hospitality providers v) To upgrade skill, quality and professionalism of all service providers connected with tourism vi) To develop tourism packages to cater to various types of tourists and market them through global and local tour operators vii) Popularizing local and community hosts to promote Bed and Breakfast, cottages on stilts accommodation all across the Tourist spots/destinations viii) Developing Assam into an all season tourist destination ix) To focus on benefits for the

Community from tourism x) To create enabling environment for investment.

STRATEGIES

Assam Tourism website: An interactive and fully comprehensive website of Assam Tourism will be launched wherein all required information for any prospective domestic or international tourist will be readily available at the click of the mouse. The website will contain linkages to all sorts of information and bookings including Hotels, Air Travel, Rail & Road, Bus, Home Stays, Bed & Breakfast accommodation, Restaurants, Details of Tourist destinations, packages, Fairs and events, Route maps etc. It will

have the facility for two way interactions with all stakeholders such as Tourists, Tour Guides and Tour operators. Hoteliers, Restaurateurs etc to collect feedback information on Do's and Don'ts, weather and local cultures will also be hosted to guide the prospective tourists.

A vigorous campaign through social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Blogging sites will be launched to attract the younger up-coming generation of Tourists. A special cell for maintenance & updating of information will be created for sustainability. A separate statistical cell shall also be created for Management Information System, generation



► **Water sports and river rafting can be organised in the vast river networks**

of statistics and their analysis.

Regular Meet with the National and International Tour Operators Association & Hoteliers & Restaurateurs Association will be organized. Fam tours will also be organized regularly.

Building Brand: In spite of having tremendous tourism potential, Assam has not yet aggressively marketed itself. A comprehensive marketing strategy will be chalked out in consultation with professional agencies. A brand image of Assam as “Awesome Assam” will be created

Speedy rivers of Assam provide an enormous scope for the development of water based adventure tourism

portraying the state's uniqueness and exotic beauty. The brand name will be translated to Hindi and other National and International languages. A renowned celebrity will be roped in as brand Ambassador of Awesome Assam. A blitz-Krieg National & International Promotional Campaign shall be launched to build “Awesome Assam brand through newspapers lifestyle magazines, in-flight magazines, TV advertisements, Talk shows, Road shows, Travel marts and Tourism stalls and kiosks etc.

TOURISM AVENUES

Wildlife Tourism: An attractive feature of Assam's forests is its colorful wildlife. Some of the species are exclusive to the state. Assam is famous as the home of one-horned rhinoceros which is its unique selling point apart from the fauna. Though most of the domestic and international tourists are drawn towards Kaziranga and this heritage site has got best tourist facilities with private participation, yet the Government will develop infrastructure around individual Wildlife sanctuaries such as Manas, Pobitora, Orang, Pani Dihing, Barail and Nameri at Dibru-Saikhowa across Assam to accommodate tourists and resort to aggressive marketing to position Assam as Wildlife destination of the world.

Spiritual Tourism: After wildlife, it is the spiritual tourism which attracts pilgrim tourists to Assam. Centering on the most famous Shakti-peeth, Kamakhya Temple atop Nilachal hill top in Guwahati city, the religious/spiritual tourism can catapult Assam into a major spiritual tourism destination in the country. Assam is known among the pilgrims and domestic tourists as a wonderland soaked in Shakti-pooja, mysticism, tantric practice, mythology and black magic of Mayong with Kamakhya as the epicenter. This advantage shall be turned into revenue spinning machine and local employment creation by right interventions utilizing Government of India funds under PRASAD scheme. The Government will endeavour to help put in place best practices for the Management of the Temple.

An annual four day Ambubasi Mela at Kamakhya temple during the month of June has come to be known as Mahakumbh of the East where lakhs of people and sadhus congregate. This shall be highlighted

in publicity campaigns in domestic tourist circuits with an appropriate tagline giving forceful punch to spiritual tourism.

Hajo is another centre where people from three religions- Hindu, Muslim and Buddhists converge for pilgrimage. It has always been a symbol of communal harmony for the country and will continue to be projected as such. Hajo will also be linked with Guwahati city tour/ day tour.

"Sankardev Trail" or "Vaishnav-Trail"- projecting Vaishnavite cultural proliferation in Assam will be developed in Barpeta-Bordua-Majuli.

Efforts shall be directed for preparing Buddhist circuits in the State to woo large numbers of Buddhist pilgrims.

Ethnic Tourism: Assam has been a unique place on earth for the cultural and ethnic diversities. The state is a

home land of various ethnic tribes and groups, each having its own cultural heritage. Ethnic Tourist circuits will be developed to attract the tourists from all over the world. The ethnic socio-cultural and religious festivals will be organized where Songs and dances, display of colourful dresses, tasting of innumerable varieties of both vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes is the main feature.

Tea & Golf Tourism: Since discovery of tea in 1823, tea-gardens have become an integral part of Assam's landscape. Each of these thousands of lush green tea gardens in Assam is a treasure house of exotic beauty of nature with colourful people and their enchanting songs and dances, sprawling bungalows, and residential facilities. Many of these tea gardens have polo fields and golf courses.

There are as many as thirty air strips and helipads maintained by the tea



► Assam is famous as the home of one-horned rhinoceros



► **Kamakhya Temple can catapult Assam into a major spiritual tourism destination in the country**

garden management. This facility can be included within attractive tourist packages.

River Tourism: The State of Assam has an extensive river network. Brahmaputra is intrinsic to the socio-cultural life in Assam. Assam has immense opportunities to develop river tourism and water leisure activities. Colourful canal barges, boating, luxury cruisers, motor boats, dolphin shows, under water-world, water sports and lighters, parasailing, river rafting, water amusements and more. River tourism in Assam could be a great way to spend holidays. International standards of luxury cruises can be a great driver to draw more domestic and international tourist traffic to Assam.

Government will promote river taxi services between the North and South banks at Brahmaputra at places of tourist interest.

Transit Tourism: For many of the tourists, particularly for foreigners, Guwahati is not only a tourist destination but also is perceived as a halt or the entry-point to the north eastern states. It is a city from where one could connect to other parts of Assam or get in and out of the north-east. On average, a tourist spends about two days in transit which could be turned as a great opportunity to promote Guwahati City based Tourism titled as 'One day in Guwahati' or 'Two days in Guwahati'.

Adventure Tourism: The enchanting blue hills and speedy rivers of Assam provide an enormous scope for the development of water based adventure tourism. Recently, some of the adventure sports activities like rock-climbing, trekking, para-sailing, water sports, river rafting and angling are promoted by the Department of

Tourism. Tourism Department will join hands with Adventure Institute of Sports Department to design various adventure activities at tourist sites catering to tourists in particular. This will generate a lot of employment opportunities for local youths.

Monsoon & Leisure Tourism: Assam has early onset of Monsoon, generally beginning from 15th of May, compared to most other parts of India where Monsoon arrives only in late June or early July. Maximum day temperatures remain around a comfortable 27-34 degrees centigrade with plenty of rain when the large part of western India simmers under successive heat waves with temperatures soaring as high as 38-45 degrees. The comparatively cooler climate and fulsome rains coupled with summer vacations in other parts of the country is a major advantage for

Assam to attract domestic travellers.

Eco Tourism: Assam has immense scope for ecotourism. The state is virtually free from industrial pollution. Its green forests, blue hills, enchanting rivers are the basis on which eco-friendly tourism can be developed. For that a host of matters to be properly addressed are: Development of good approach roads to the spots of tourist attraction and eco-camping. Creation of infrastructural facilities like good quality tents, cottages-on stilts with provisions for food and other logistics

Promotion of Film Tourism: Single Window Clearance System to film makers, serial producers, documentary makers etc shall be ensured through Tourism website to facilitate fast track clearance of all required approvals/ permissions for film shooting in Assam. Assam shall motivate reputed filmmakers of Hindi / English / other foreign languages for film shooting in Assam through attractive incentives.

Development of Tourism infrastructure: A tourist is central to the entire scheme of Tourism activities. A tourism destination must deliver quality service, environment and customer satisfaction to a tourist. Our endeavour should be to deliver a feel good experience to all categories of tourists which can be achieved only by providing quality basic amenities at the destinations. This shall include services in hotels, restaurants, places of interests, upkeep and maintenance.

Keeping above in view, the major infrastructure deficit at identified destinations shall be attended on a priority basis. Since multiple line departments such as local municipalities, Public Health Engineering, PWD, Water-supply, Electricity and Waste management will be involved, the

Tourism Development Mission will co-ordinate all the matters among various segments of tourism

New amenities to be developed at various tourism destinations shall go through a rigorous process of site selection, sustainability & local architecture. Public /Private Partnership shall be encouraged wherever feasible. Bhramyamaan or Mobile Theatre is the simple largest entertainment sector of Assam and rarely found in other states of the country should be integrated with the Tourism sector. The Tourism Department will work actively in collaboration with the cultural department for its development.

Community involvement in Tourism: Participation and the acceptance of the local community is the key to make Tourism a success. Tourism development at any destination should first benefit the local community in terms of economic and social gains. The economic objective of the Tourism industry is basically generating employment opportunities for the local population. Increased incomes will help local people to enjoy a better standard of life which will have an enabling effect on the community to live in harmony with their surroundings.

Skill Development: There is a large gap between demand and supply of skilled manpower in the tourism sector. A detailed study on HRD in the tourism sector in Assam is required to highlight the education system in travel, tourism and hospitality. Attempts would be made to facilitate common standards, uniformity and harmony in curriculum, faculty qualification and education delivery. Attempts would be directed towards making the hospitality and tourism sector a popular career option by providing skills that can bring attractive wage offers.

Local Transport Improvement:

Transport from airport, railway stations, bus stations or any other point of disembarkation upto the tourist destination and between the destinations is the most crucial factor from tourist point of view. Safe, secure and reliable Transport Services are of utmost importance. Prepaid and meter taxi services to the destinations shall be regulated through the transport department. The taxis may carry the logo of the tourism department once all standards and certifications are made.

Development of Wayside amenities: Development of modern wayside amenities with public conveniences at intervals of about 40 kms in major roads and also at the tourist destinations is the need of the hour. These facilities should consist of food joints with local /ethnic /continental cuisines, grocery shops, medical stores, coffee shops, play areas for children and good, clean lavatories etc. This would be developed in PPP mode with incentive to the entrepreneurs.

Further each petrol pump on major roads leading to popular tourist destinations will be compulsorily required to provide basic wayside facilities (toilets, tourist maps display of tourist emergency helpline No), for tourists.

Development and maintenance of Signages and Road-Maps throughout Assam will be taken up on priority, through PWD (Roads)/ NHAI etc.

Tourism goes hand in hand with Ease of Doing Business: To encourage Private Sector investment in tourism related projects, a web based online single window application will be set up in co-ordination with other departments to enable fast, transparent and easy approvals.

A single window clearance system will be developed to facilitate fast track clearance of all required approv-



► **Today Assam is connected with new bridges and highway networks**

als/permission for film shooting in Assam.

Ownership and Proactive role of State Government/Tourism Department: The Tourism Department shall not only facilitate tourism promotion but take full onus and pro-actively participate in matters like Brand Building, Publicity campaign, IT initiatives, market research, destination development, promotion of fairs and festivals, skill development and income generation of the people.

Budget provisions shall be reasonably enhanced for the tourism sector. Active collaboration with Central Govt. and proper implementation of Central Schemes.

Public Private Participation (PPP) in Tourism: Existing tourism infrastructure manned by ATDC/Assam Tourism shall be given to the Private sector for operation and management. Wayside Amenities such as Information Kiosks, Souvenir Shops, Public toilets, dhabas on tourism routes and at tourism destinations shall be developed in PPP mode.

Bed & Breakfast and Homestay owners shall be encouraged to use the Tourism Website portal which will lend them authenticity and enhance their bookings.

Development of River Cruise, On-shore infrastructure on Brahmaputra, Golf Course-cum-Resort and Convention Centre. For any other Tourism related Mega projects suitable Government land will be provided to the private investors on lease basis through Assam Tourism Development Corporation.

Incentives: Tourism shall be accorded industry status in Assam and all facilities & incentives applicable to Industries shall be available to Tourism Industry also. A tourism unit means a hotel, lodge, wayside amenity, restaurant, homestay, resort, boat used for cruise or as may be notified by the Government from time to time.

Private investments: Private sector will be encouraged to proactively participate and invest in tourist places in the Tourism sector. A special

incentive will be offered as an additional 10% capital grant upto Rs.25 lakhs for investment in remote/potential tourist destinations of Assam. For private properties in the Tourism sector, both existing and new, 25% of investment on renewable sources of energy will be reimbursed subject to a maximum of Rs.10 lakhs.

The incentive/subsidies mentioned in this Tourism Policy will be applicable to an individual unit/ beneficiary only once for a particular activity.

The eligible tourism unit may avail the incentives either under the Assam Tourism Policy, 2017 or under any Scheme or Policy of the Central or State Government. However, this shall not debar/preclude the unit, which avails incentives under any Scheme or Policy of Central Government or State Government, from availing of any incentive offered under the Assam Tourism Policy, 2017 provided the same has not been provided and availed of under such Scheme/Policy.

Source: Assam Tourism Policy, 2017



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