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The inauguration of WOHXpo 2025 Mumbai edition by Chef Harpal Singh Sokhi and industry leaders, set the tone for an inspiring and impactful event

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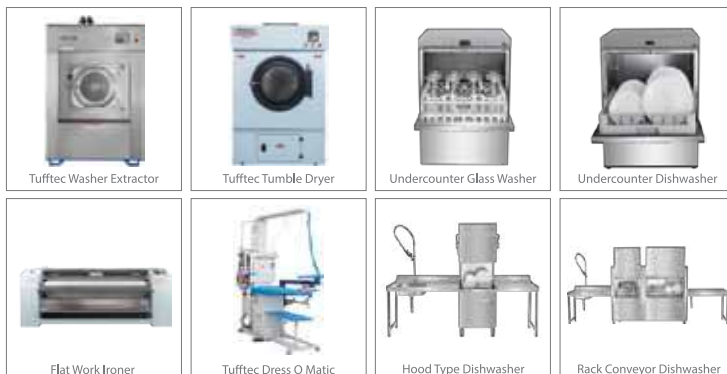


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Riding the food wagon



Steena Joy
Editor

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Ola's entry into the Food & Beverage (F&B) sector in India, primarily through the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), signifies a potential disruption by offering wider access to local restaurants and smaller vendors across the country, potentially impacting the market by increasing competition for established players, while simultaneously empowering smaller businesses with a larger customer reach through its existing user base.

In another announcement this month, Eternal has been unveiled as the new name of Zomato. The name change was made to reflect the company's expansion into other business segments, including quick commerce.

According to Inc42, India's F&B e-commerce sector is set to become a \$35 billion market opportunity by 2025, with a three-year CAGR of 29%.

It is pertinent to note here that the foray into private labels by food delivery platforms has turned into a point of contention between operators and restaurant associations. Can the two co-exist? Yes, they can, but clear differentiation, mutual respect and transparency are key. While private labels by platforms might create tensions in the short term, they can find ways to align their interests with restaurant partners through collaborative ventures, better data sharing, and differentiation of product categories. Both entities have unique strengths, and finding common ground could result in a symbiotic relationship that benefits consumers, restaurants and platforms alike.

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FINALLY, A BIG PUSH FOR TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY BY THE GOVERNMENT

By IWOHN Team

This Budget has proven to be one of the most memorable for hospitality and travel sector professionals. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has adopted a holistic approach to give India's tourism sector a substantial push, aiming to position India as a global leader in both leisure and medical tourism.

From upgrading tourist sites, promoting wellness/wellbeing and medical tourism, promoting heritage tourism to developing infrastructure to accommodate tourists, creating better connectivity, enhancing skillsets of workforce in these sectors, and many more. The Budget takes a comprehensive approach to address the needs of the tourism and hospitality sectors. Reacting to the Budget, Kush Kapoor, CEO, Roseate Hotels & Resorts said, "The Union Budget 2025 presents a forward-thinking approach that is bound to benefit the hospitality and tourism sector significantly. The announcement of visa waivers for select foreign tourist groups will undoubtedly make India a more accessible and attractive destination for global travellers. The provision of Mudra loans to support homestays is a commendable step toward boosting grassroots tourism and encouraging local entrepreneurship. These measures will not only enhance travel experiences but also strengthen community-driven hospitality ventures."

Giving his reaction on the Budget, Dr Sanjay Sethi, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, Chalet Hotels

said, "Key measures, including visa-free access for specific foreign groups, simplified e-visa procedures, and the expansion of the UDAN scheme to 120 new destinations, will greatly improve connectivity and ease of travel, benefiting both domestic and international tourists. The planned development of 50 key tourist destinations in collaboration with state governments is a game-changer, ensuring better infrastructure, improved connectivity, and world-class amenities. This will not only elevate India's global tourism competitiveness but also encourage private sector investment in the hospitality ecosystem."

The measures announced aim to revitalise the hospitality and tourism sectors by enhancing visitor experiences and promoting sustainable growth. Key initiatives include increased budget allocations for infrastructure, a focus on sustainable tourism practices, and new skill development programs to address workforce needs. Additionally, there will be investments in digital technologies to improve visitor engagement and campaigns to encourage domestic tourism.

Aditya Sanghi, CEO of Hotelogix shared, "I welcome the government's commitment to enhancing tourism across 50 destinations linked to Lord Buddha's journey. It will significantly support India's growing religious tourism, which is set to generate a revenue of about 59 billion by 2028 and create 140 million temporary and permanent jobs by 2030. Also, the proposed streamlined e-visa system and Visa fee waiver for tourists from select countries will promote inbound tourism as the country is getting ready to host 3%-5% more foreign tourists in 2025 vs. last year."

Arvind Dadu, Managing Director, Anand Sweets said, "The recognition of Makhana as a superfood and the proposal to establish a Makhana Board in Bihar is a great step towards improving production, processing, value addition, and marketing. Additionally, the announcement of a National Institute of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship, and Management in Bihar signals a deeper commitment to the food processing sector."

Vishal Vincent Tony, Managing Director, Ayatana Hospitality commented, "The expansion of the UDAN scheme to include 120 new destinations will improve accessibility to emerging travel hubs, creating new opportunities for experiential tourism. Additionally, the provision of Mudra loans for homestays will empower local communities and promote unique, culture-driven hospitality. The initiative to develop 50 key tourist destinations in collaboration with state governments is a positive step, ensuring that both India's iconic and emerging locations receive the attention they deserve."

The Finance Minister has also added the bonus of tax exemption for the middle class on incomes up to INR 12 lakh, which will increase domestic consumption on travel, dining, and leisure experiences. ■

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS



The General Budget 2025 offers several key measures for the hospitality and tourism sectors, aiming to enhance visitor experiences and promote sustainable growth:

- **Enhanced Budget:** Increased funding for tourism infrastructure and improved connectivity.
- **Eco-Friendly Tourism Initiatives:** Promotion of sustainable and environmentally conscious tourism projects.
- **Workforce Training Programs:** Initiatives aimed at developing skills in the hospitality sector.
- **Digital Innovations:** Investment in technology to enhance visitor experiences.
- **Domestic Travel Promotion:** Campaigns aimed at encouraging local tourism in the post-pandemic era.
- **Tax Benefits:** Incentives for small and medium-sized businesses in the hospitality industry.
- **Collaborative Partnerships:** Encouragement of cooperation between government and private sectors for tourism development.

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WOHXpo

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SETTING BENCHMARKS





INAUGURATION

The inauguration of WOHXpo 2025, Mumbai edition set the tone for an inspiring and impactful event, with **Chef Harpal Singh Sokhi** gracing the occasion along with **Sudhakar Shetty**, President, Association of Hotels and Restaurants (AHAR) and **Pradeep Chandel**, President, Association of Hospitality Professionals of India (AHPWI). Known for his vibrant personality and culinary excellence, Chef Sokhi welcomed hospitality professionals, exhibitors, and industry leaders to a dynamic platform dedicated to growth and collaboration. The event, held at the Bombay Exhibition Centre, witnessed an impressive gathering of HoReCa sector experts eager to explore emerging trends, innovative solutions, and networking opportunities. With over 250 exhibitors showcasing cutting-edge products and services, the expo proved to be a melting pot of ideas and connections. Shetty also highlighted how WOHXpo plays a crucial role in bringing hospitality professionals together under one roof and offers a diverse range of clients serving the sector. The inaugural session marked the beginning of three transformative days that reinforced WOHXpo's position as a premier platform driving progress in India's vibrant hospitality industry. The coming days were packed with powerful sessions and engaging masterclasses, ending with the Incredible Chef Award ceremony.

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FIRESIDE CHAT: CHEF HARPAL SINGH SOKHI

In his fireside chat with Steena Joy, Editor, Incredible World of Hospitality News, Chef Harpal Singh Sokhi delved into the origins of his globally recognised tagline, Namak Shamak, and the journey that brought it to life.

Chef Sokhi recounted a pivotal moment from 15 years ago when he was at a TV studio recording a show. The director asked him how he wanted to be remembered after his death. Chef Sokhi admitted he didn't have an answer, prompting the director to stop filming and advise him to return once he had clarity.

The answer came from his daughter. An avid reader, she had a book on Mahatma Gandhi in her room. Chef Sokhi recalled, "It was destiny. When I opened the book, it was the Satyagraha chapter. After two days of reading, I realised that Gandhiji had initiated the freedom struggle by focusing on salt—the simplest yet most essential ingredient, one that pinches the most when removed." He likened the value of salt in food to its fundamental role in life: without it, everything

becomes insipid. This realisation inspired the tagline Namak Shamak, which evolved into a memorable jingle that resonated globally. Chef Sokhi emphasised, "Salt is the simplest ingredient, and simplicity brings humbleness and serenity."

The conversation then transitioned to a topic close to Chef Sokhi's heart—biryani—and his book, *The Biryani Leader: Spice Up Your Management*. Speaking about biryani's origins, Chef Sokhi acknowledged that food history is often fragmented and poorly documented. "There are many theories," he explained, "from Mughal soldiers being fed biryani to sustain them, to its Persian origins."

He drew a fascinating analogy between biryani and organisational management. "To make the perfect biryani, you need a long list of individual ingredients, each with its unique

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behaviour and purpose. When combined, they create a harmonious dish. Similarly, in an organisation, every individual has a distinct personality, but together, they drive the organisation's success. Each organisation has its own 'flavour,' much like biriyani."

Chef Sokhi also shared insights into leadership and the qualities required for chefs to become successful entrepreneurs. "To be a chef, you need passion and must work more from the heart than the brain. But to be a great leader and entrepreneur, you need to balance passion with the math of selling and entrepreneurship. Passion is the top layer that adds value. That's how legacy restaurants are created."

Discussing the challenges faced by legacy restaurants, Chef Sokhi highlighted their decline. He urged restaurant owners to reconnect with their guests, suggesting they spend time on the shop floor to understand the dining experience firsthand. He also addressed challenges posed by food delivery platforms, where restaurants lose control over the final product. For example, spilled food might not be the fault of the restaurant, the delivery person, or even the poorly maintained roads, but the customer invariably blames the restaurant. Chef Sokhi stressed the importance of customer satisfaction, sharing an example of Fitbit replacing his faulty watch without question when he returned to India. "Restaurants should adopt similar practices, such as replacing a dish immediately to rebuild trust."

Finally, Chef Sokhi touched on the Maslow hierarchy of needs and its relevance to the younger generations, Gen Alpha and Gen Beta. He emphasised the importance of patience and hard work in building lasting legacies. "Many startups have failed because they didn't adhere to these principles. Gen Alpha has immense potential, with tools like the internet and advanced communication at their fingertips. They can leverage these to create something truly extraordinary," he concluded. ■






SUSTAINABLE HOSPITALITY: BALANCING ENERGY, WATER, AND WASTE MANAGEMENT FOR A GREEN FUTURE

Sustainability in the hospitality industry is no longer just a trend—it is a necessity. Experts at the recent panel discussion on “Sustainable Hospitality: Balancing Energy, Water, and Waste Management for a Green Future” explored the challenges and solutions in creating a more sustainable industry while maintaining quality guest experiences.


Moderated by Dr Nayan S Dabholkar, Chief Advisor (Facility Management), Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, the panel featured experts in the field of sustainable hospitality such as Suhail Kannampilly, Managing Director, Concept Hospitality/Fern Hotels & Resorts; Akanksha Singh, Global Manager Sustainability, Radisson Hotel Group; Sanjeev Advani, Vice

President - Sales, The Orchid Group and Naresh Asawa, Vice President, Engineering and ESG, The Leela Hotels.

Dabholkar opened the conversation by asking the panellists what sustainability meant in the hospitality sector. Advani explained that sustainability in hospitality must address three key areas: social, economic, and environmental sustainability.




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L to R: Dr Nayan S Dabholkar, Chief Advisor (Facility Management), IIT Bombay; Suhail Kannampilly, Managing Director, Concept Hospitality/Fern Hotels & Resorts; Naresh Asawa, Vice President, Engineering and ESG, The Leela Hotels; Akanksha Singh, Global Manager Sustainability, Radisson Hotel Group and Sanjeev Advani, VP - Sales, The Orchid Group

“Social sustainability is about empowering communities and fostering a healthy culture,” he explained. “Economic sustainability ensures long-term profitability while maintaining ethical practices. Environmental sustainability focuses on waste management, water conservation, and energy efficiency, all aimed at reducing the industry’s carbon footprint.”

Singh highlighted the stark reality of waste generation in hotels, stating, “A 200-room hotel with a 60% occupancy rate discards over 500,000 plastic bottles and 150,000 mini toiletries into the ocean annually. The hospitality sector is responsible for 8% of total global carbon emissions. The gap between our sustainability goals and actual practices is still vast.”



Government policies supporting green energy initiatives, innovative waste management solutions, and a renewed focus on traditional conservation practices can help the sector achieve a greener future

Kannampilly offered a historical perspective, noting that the hospitality industry inherently began as a sustainable practice. “Hospitality dates back to 15,000 BC when travellers sought shelter in caves. Over time, we have shifted towards a ‘use-and-throw’ model, which has made the industry less sustainable. We need to take a step back and rethink how we can create a truly sustainable product that lasts generations.”

Aswani emphasised that sustainability and luxury are not mutually exclusive. “From the moment we construct a property, we integrate sustainable practices—whether in sourcing, operations, or energy use. Today, luxury and sustainability go hand in hand.”

Water management is a crucial aspect of sustainable hospitality. Kannampilly pointed out that “only 50% of a hotel’s water consumption is attributed to guests, while the rest is used within the property itself. We need to measure and monitor water





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usage, implement efficient water-saving technologies, and improve groundwater quality.” Aswani suggested that sustainability should extend beyond hotel walls. “If a property is near a lake, can we clean it as a corporate social responsibility initiative? Can we help biodiversity through conservation methods?” he asked. Akanksha highlighted the need to engage guests in water conservation efforts. “An average hotel room consumes 1,500 litres of water per day. We

must educate guests and encourage them to participate in conservation.” Kannampilly added, “India traditionally had water-saving practices, such as using thinner towels that require less water for washing. We need to revive such practices.” Advani stressed that small changes can have a big impact. “Even something as simple as filling a glass with only the water you need can contribute to conservation efforts.”

Energy efficiency was another key focus of





the discussion. Aswani outlined two approaches: “Greenfield and brownfield strategies. In palace hotels, 78% of our energy comes from renewable sources. We are also transitioning to energy-efficient equipment and converting boats to electric power.” Advani emphasised the importance of proper waste disposal. “At Orchard, we follow the ‘reduce, reuse, recycle’ model. Wastewater is repurposed for gardening, and food waste is converted into compost through vermiculture.” However, Singh noted that many sustainability efforts focus too much on recycling rather than reduction. “We must prioritise reducing resource consumption and minimising waste at the source,” she urged.

Aswani stressed that sustainability should be embedded in the design stage. “If energy efficiency is not incorporated from the beginning, it becomes difficult to implement at the operational level. We need a clear Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) mandate to ensure long-term success.”

The panel concluded that while the hospitality industry has made progress in sustainability, there is still a long way to go. Government policies supporting green energy initiatives, innovative waste management solutions, and a renewed focus on traditional conservation practices can help the sector achieve a greener future. “Sustainability in hospitality is no longer an option—it is a responsibility. We must go beyond compliance and actively contribute to environmental protection,” Aswani said. ■

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Shirin Batliwala with Dr Laxmi Todiwan



FIRESIDE CHAT: DR. LAXMI TODIWAN WITH SHIRIN BATLIWALA

In an engaging fireside chat, Dr. Laxmi Todiwan, Corporate Trainer, Author and Founder Indian Women in Hospitality sat down with hospitality stalwart Shirin Batliwala, Consultant Hospitality, Food and Beverage, to discuss her inspiring journey, challenges, and key lessons learned from a life dedicated to the hospitality industry.

Growing up in various cities across India due to her father’s railway job, Batliwala eventually moved to Mumbai in 1962. While she initially considered pursuing medicine, she found mathematics—a compulsory subject at the time—challenging, and instead pursued Home Science. This path led her to Catering College, where she discovered her passion for the industry. “The industry chose me,” she remarked. Speaking about the challenges Batliwala faced as a woman in the industry, she said, “The biggest challenge was getting into Food & Beverage at Taj,” she recalled. At the time, women were largely limited to housekeeping roles. However, she persevered and carved a place for herself, even having the honour of serving the Shah of Iran and Aga Khan on multiple occasions.



Another major hurdle was earning the respect of the experienced but less formally educated senior staff at Taj. “We, the Catering College graduates, bonded over this challenge,” she said. Over time, she built rapport with the ‘old guard’ and learned invaluable lessons from the lower rungs of the workforce.

Batliwala credited several mentors who shaped her career. The concept of a “Sutradar” at Taj—a senior figure guiding younger employees—was instrumental in her development. She recalled Subhir Bhowmick as a wonderful teacher and highlighted the influence of Ajit Kerkar, who had an exceptional eye for detail. Working under Ratan Tata was another transformative experience. “He was a perfectionist and even corrected French menu items, having studied in France,” she shared. His meticulous attention to detail left a lasting impression on her.

Discussing leadership qualities, Batliwala emphasised the following:

- **Authenticity:** “Be true to yourself and stand by your principles.”
- **Curiosity and Continuous Learning:** A leader must have an eagerness to learn from all levels.
- **Adaptability:** The ability to quickly adjust to changing circumstances.
- **Analytical Thinking:** Critical for decision-making.
- **Vision:** Essential for driving an organisation forward.
- **Empathy:** Understanding and supporting team members.
- **Empowerment:** Encouraging employees to take initiative and do more.
- **Leading by Example in Tough Times**

One of the toughest decisions of her career came in 1983 when the Taj staff went on strike. “As managers, we took charge—we made the rooms, cleaned everything,” she said. This moment exemplified leadership through action and reinforced the principle that a leader should never shy away from pitching in. She echoed Ratan Tata’s philosophy: “To be a leader, you need to lead with affection.”

Reflecting on industry changes, Batliwala noted that technology has become a key enabler. “Twenty years ago, everything was manual. Now, people are too dependent on computers,” she observed. While technological advancements have improved efficiency, she believes retaining the human touch is vital in hospitality.

For young professionals entering the field, Batliwala offered timeless wisdom: Love the industry and enjoy working with people. Remember that the guest is always right. Persevere—don’t give up on the industry. ■

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L to R: Lebana Penkar, Senior VP, Human Resources, Arrivae; Sonia Sharma, Director of Human Resources, Hilton Mumbai International Airport; Vidhi Vikram, Group Director, The VITS Kamats Group; Maitreyee Lovalekar, Senior Instructor, IHM Mumbai; and Debarati Roy, Founder, IMAGE by Debarati.



PANEL DISCUSSION: GLASS CEILINGS TO GLASS SLIPPERS: MENTORSHIP MATTERS

The hospitality industry plays a crucial role in India's economy, contributing 10% of the nation's GDP and employing a significant number of women—54% of the total workforce. However, despite this representation, only 8% of women in hospitality hold senior leadership roles.



Addressing this disparity was the focus of a recent panel discussion moderated by Lebana Penkar, Senior Vice President, Human Resources, Arrivae. The panel featured industry leaders including Sonia Sharma, Director of Human Resources, Hilton Mumbai International Airport; Vidhi Vikram, Group Director, The VITS Kamats Group;

Women need to set boundaries and normalise discussions around mental health



Maitreyee Lovalekar, Senior Instructor, IHM Mumbai; and Debarati Roy, Founder, IMAGE by Debarati. Penkar opened the discussion by asking the panellists about gender equity and opportunities for women in hospitality.

Vikram highlighted the importance of mindset in achieving equity. "Equity comes from within. Along with professional life, women also have personal lives to balance, but that shouldn't stop us from taking opportunities," she said. "We need to understand our strengths and work towards them. Equity should be seen as equal for both men and women."

The conversation then turned to the concept of the "glass ceiling" and whether it remains a reality in today's workplace. Sharma challenged women to push past these barriers. "Are you strong enough to shatter the glass ceiling?" she asked. "You need to come across as a strong individual. Do your homework—when you know your subject, people will listen to you."

Roy took a different approach, arguing that many of these limitations are self-imposed. "The glass ceiling exists within us," she stated. "We need to break it first. Yes, biases exist, but we need to believe that we can overcome them. Building a support system is essential, and we have to let go of this idea of perfection—because it doesn't exist."

Lovalekar echoed this sentiment, adding that assumptions about family expectations can often hold women back. "We assume so much about how our families will react, but often, we don't even ask for their support," she said. "We need to take that step."

Building a support system is essential, and we have to let go of this idea of perfection—because it doesn't exist



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BREAD KNIVES STRAIGHT POINTED & ROUND TIP 	BREAD KNIVES STRAIGHT TIP 
PALLETTE SPATULA 	BENT SPATULA 
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The discussion then shifted to workplace challenges. Lovalekar pointed out that “many older-generation men still don’t take women seriously. They feel that women lack the ‘killer instinct’ required to lead.”

Roy questioned the societal expectation that women must control everything at home.

“Why do we feel the need to be the boss at home too?” she asked. “You need to delegate. Let go of the perfectionist syndrome. The glass ceiling remains within us.”

The conversation also addressed the issue of balancing work and home responsibilities. Vikram acknowledged that “after marriage, priorities change, but it’s up to us how we plan our work schedules.” Lovalekar stressed the need for women to set boundaries and normalise discussions around mental health. “We need to stop playing the victim card,” she said. “Women need to be open about their struggles and set clear boundaries.”

Sharma noted the different expectations placed on male and female leaders. “If a woman has a family, people assume she has support. But if she’s single, the assumption is that she has no life outside of work,” she pointed out.

As the discussion came to a close, each panellist shared their thoughts on what it takes to break through career barriers. Lovalekar encouraged women to put themselves first: “Prioritise yourself.” Roy emphasised self-confidence, saying, “Believe in yourself.” Vikram stressed the importance of a positive mindset: “A positive mental attitude is key.” Sharma urged women to practice self-care: “Empathise with yourself. Self-love comes first.” ■





GM'S CONCLAVE HOTELS VS. ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION – CO-EXISTING IN A COMPETITIVE MARKET

The hospitality industry is undergoing a remarkable transformation, driven by the interplay between traditional hotels and the growing prominence of alternative accommodations. This dynamic evolution was the focal point of GM's Conclave, "Hotels vs. Alternative Accommodation: Co-existing in a Competitive Market."

Moderated by Steena Joy, Editor, World of Hospitality, the session brought together a panel of industry experts: Rahul Janve, General Manager at Courtyard by Marriott Mahabaleshwar; Rahul Makhija, General Manager at The Park Navi Mumbai; Amit Chawla, General Manager - Brand

Operations at Fortune Select Exotica, Navi Mumbai (ITC Hotels Group); and Bipendra Gupta, Area Director - Mumbai and Goa, Lemon Tree Hotels.

As the discussion commenced, Janve noted that the market has witnessed a significant shift in customer preferences, with a

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growing demand for experiential travel and personalised services. "Customers are looking for tailored experiences and personalised service," he said. Chawla added that the post-Covid era has seen a change in expectations, with people becoming more inquisitive and willing to try new things. "People are not brand/place loyal now. This is all thanks to social media and the late Millennial and Gen Z markets, who want to explore places and take pictures. Post-Covid, expectations have changed, product quality and perceptions of people have changed. People are inquisitive to try something new," he said.

Makhija pointed out that the market dynamics have changed, with work-from-home and sustainability becoming key factors. "There is an emphasis on experiences post-Covid and biophilic designs are gaining popularity," he said. Gupta added that the concept of staycations has emerged, and

alternative accommodation has benefited from this trend. He also highlighted the need for hotels to collaborate with alternative accommodation providers to offer unique experiences and services.

The panellists also discussed the challenges faced by hotels in competing with alternative accommodation. As Chawla said, "Consistency is where alternative accommodation has a lead, as there is a certain amount of consistency since they work on a very narrow concept." However, Janve pointed out that hotels have the advantage of big brands and big money, which allows them to invest in quality and consistency. The panellists emphasised that the hospitality industry in India has tremendous potential for growth, and both traditional hotels and alternative accommodation will co-exist and thrive.

Alternative accommodation, including homestays, villas, and apartments, has become increasingly popular amongst travellers. These options offer a unique and personalised experience, often with more space and flexibility than traditional hotels. As Gupta noted, "Alternative accommodation provides you more privacy, and we see opportunities to collaborate with villas in Mahabaleshwar." Makhija added that alternative accommodation can offer a more authentic and immersive experience, especially for travellers looking to connect with local cultures.

The discussion also touched on collaboration with alternate accommodation providers for services such as providing accommodation for pets, which has become a growing trend in the hospitality industry. Gupta noted that pet-friendly accommodations can be a major differentiator for hotels, especially amongst travellers who

Clockwise:
Koustav Mukherjee
Amit Chawla
Bipendra Gupta
Rahul Janve
Rahul Makhija



consider their pets part of the family. Janve added, "The pet market is a big opportunity in India, and hotels can collaborate with alternative accommodation providers to offer pet-friendly services." Chawla added that many alternative accommodation providers already offer pet-friendly options, and hotels can learn from their experiences.

The panel discussion also highlighted that the key to success lies in understanding the changing needs of customers and adapting to the evolving market dynamics. As Chawla said, "We are such a diversified country, with a huge population and we have opportunities for all segments." The panellists agreed that the hospitality industry must continue to innovate and adapt to the changing market landscape, leveraging technology and social media to stay ahead of the competition. Speaking about market strategies that brands are adopting in the wake of competition from alternate accommodation, Gupta said, "Branded hotels are strategising to retain customers by adding on to loyalty programs, parks, offers and incentives and customers are brand-centric because of this. Many customers are loyalty members of many

brands now - they choose wherever they want to stay when they travel. Earlier only a few brands offered loyalty programmes, now many do and clients also want to be a part of these because cumulatively they get the benefit."

The session concluded with the discussion emphasising the importance of digital marketing and social media in promoting alternative accommodations. Janve said, "E-commerce and OTAs have played a major role in promoting alternative accommodations." Chawla added that social media has become a crucial tool for hotels to connect with customers and promote their services. However, he also emphasised the importance of having the right people, right product, and right processes in place to succeed in the hospitality industry. "If basic services are not provided, putting money into social media and digital marketing won't help. We need the right people, right product, and right processes to deliver a great customer experience." The panellists agreed that this is crucial for hotels to stay competitive, especially in the face of growing competition from alternative accommodation providers. ■



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Dr Nitin Nagrale, Founder & General Secretary, HPMF



HPMF WESTERN INDIA CONCLAVE 2025



The Hospitality Purchasing Managers’ Forum (HPMF), a consortium of purchasing professionals from the hospitality industry, encompassing star hotels, catering companies, stand-alone restaurant chains, retail chains, e-commerce platforms and airlines held their HPMF Conclave 2025 at the recently concluded WOHXpo in Mumbai. On the occasion, Dr. Nitin Shankar Nagrale, Founder and General Secretary, HPMF showcased highlights of the association’s growth since its inception, motivating members to continue showing their support to industry and events. He also shared a future vision of HPMF to the attendees showcasing the diverse work that would be done.

“The Advisory Board members at HPMF, about 20 odd individual experts from different industries, are helping us to curate the next vision and mission for the hospitality industry. For HPMF specifically, we have identified 100 activities at this



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moment which we aim to achieve in the next 1,000 days. Going forward will also help the government and local communities of our society to do best not only for themselves at the individual level, but also contributing to the economy. Thus, this process will enable learning, helping suppliers of the industry. In the bargain, we will be able to create a better economic atmosphere for India. I am extremely proud that HPMF is contributing holistically to the cause of developing India," Nagrale informed. ■





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The Indian Hospitality Leadership Awards, held at WOHXpo Mumbai in collaboration with Association of Hospitality Professional Welfare of India (AHPWI) celebrated remarkable achievements in the hospitality sector. Lt. General KJ Singh PVSM AVSM & Bar, former Army Commander-in-Chief Western Command, was honoured with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award. Mihir Sarkar, Executive Director of Byke Group Hotels, received the Best Vegetarian Hotels accolade, while Vivek Kumar, Chairman of Clarks Exotica Convention Resort & Spa, was recognised as Best Chairman. Satyen Jain, CEO of Pride Group of Hotels, was awarded Best CEO. Esteemed celebrity chef Manjit Singh Gill was also recognised for his culinary excellence and contributions to hospitality. Led by Pradeep Chandel, President, AHPWI, the event saw many professionals come forward and applaud the journey of these individuals. ■





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Steenia Joy, Editor, Incredible World of Hospitality News; Neha Garg, Principal Designer, Studio Jane Designs; Jaideep Gupta, Director, Jaideep Aurovindo Gupta Hospitality Consultants; and Jugal Mistri, Principal Architect, Jugal Mistri Architects and Ketan Sheth, Chairman, IIID MRC and Founder, Principal Director and Designer, Goldmine Project Consultants



SUSTAINABLE HOTEL DESIGN

The concept of sustainable hospitality design has become a crucial aspect of the industry, with industry experts emphasising the need to incorporate eco-friendly practices into hotel design.

The World of Hospitality Expo hosted an insightful panel discussion on Sustainable Hotel Design. The panel featured Neha Garg, Principal Designer, Studio Jane Designs; Jaideep Gupta, Director, Jaideep Aurovindo Gupta Hospitality Consultants; and Jugal Mistri, Principal Architect, Jugal Mistri Architects, with Ketan Sheth, Chairman, IIID MRC and Founder, Principal Director and Designer, Goldmine Project Consultants. The discussion explored how sustainability transforms the hospitality sector and the creative approaches adopted to achieve eco-friendly design.

According to Garg, "Hospitality is referred to as a home away from home, and sustainability is an important part of hotel design. We are looking at moving towards a more slow living lifestyle, where we are connected to nature."

However, incorporating sustainability into design can be challenging, particularly in cities such as Mumbai where space is at a premium. Gupta said, "It is difficult for restaurants to incorporate sustainability, but people are slowly moving towards it. Kaia Goa, for example, is a slow living space with an emphasis on sustainability." Gupta suggested that restaurants can focus on sustainability in their food and beverage offerings by utilising local ingredients and reducing plastic use in cutlery.

Mistri emphasised the importance of social practices in hospitality, stating, "Developers are receptive to sustainability, but it is more about experience gratification than necessity." Sheth added that the 3Rs - reduce, reuse, and recycle - are crucial in sustainable design and that it is a myth that sustainable designs are expensive. "You can substitute with

sustainable materials that are cheaper," he said.

Garg highlighted the importance of sustainability in events, as well, citing the example of Coldplay concerts, which used kinetic energy dance floors to power the stadium. "Hospitality is not limited to permanent set-ups, it extends to events as well," she said. "Events need to focus on being sustainable."

When it comes to the cost of shifting to sustainable designs, Garg explained that the hospitality industry is a high-investment industry, and that initial investment is substantial. However, she emphasised that sustainability is also about reusing, recycling, and reducing, which can help hotels save costs on running expenses. "By practising these principles, hotels can ensure they save cost on running expenses," she said. "Sustainability helps preserve the Earth and reduce costs in the long run."

Mistri added that setting up a sustainable place from scratch is cheaper than changing from a normal to a sustainable set-up. "For restaurants, if you make it mandatory, people will use it," he said. "However, online platforms have changed dynamics, and most deliveries use single-use plastic, so it is difficult to keep it sustainable," Gupta added that the cost of sustainability depends on the location and that retrofitting is more expensive than starting from scratch.

Sheth emphasised the importance of planning to reduce costs. "If you plan, costs will not increase too much," he said. "We can use sustainability to attract an audience as well. Today, the investment is high, but over time, we can recover the cost." Garg added that when a set-up becomes carbon credit neutral, it becomes more attractive to investors.

The panellists also discussed the importance of education and awareness in ensuring sustainability. Gupta stated, "Education and awareness are important to ensure sustainability." Garg emphasised the importance of biophilic designs and utilising local materials for building. "Nature is the best healer, and we are going back to our roots," she said. "Bringing the outside to the inside is one of the most inexpensive ways of decorating a place."

Using local materials and biophilic designs can also reduce costs and create immersive experiences. Gupta noted, "By utilising local materials such as laterite stone and bamboo, we can keep interiors cool and add cultural value to the space." Jugal Mistri added that utilising local products can bypass the costs of bringing goods from a different city and

enhance the culture of the place.

There are challenges in implementing sustainable designs, including the loss of traditional construction practices and the difficulty of finding artisans who can work with local materials. Garg said, "Many traditional construction practices are fading, and it is very difficult to get people to do this. The cost is also higher as people are fewer." Gupta added that 70% of local artisanship is becoming extinct as children are not carrying the craft forward.

The panellists emphasised the need for government support and education to promote sustainable designs and preserve local cultures. Sheth stated, "We need to get into rural areas where people have the hidden art but not exposure to work." Garg noted that some international countries are retaining cultures by incorporating elements of their local culture into construction and that India should make it mandatory to imbibe local culture in building designs to ensure sustainable designs. Mistri added that the government should create a WeWork model fabrication lab where artisans are invited and offered a workshop with all technology and set up. This will help generate more interest in the next generation of artisans.

The panellists also highlighted the importance of incorporating sustainability into hospitality design and the need for education, awareness, and government support to promote sustainable practices. Garg said, "Sustainability is not just about reducing costs, it is about preserving the Earth and creating experiences." ■



By utilising local materials such as laterite stone and bamboo, we can keep interiors cool and add cultural value to the space





Sanjeev Shukla, Principal Consultant, 3S Kitchen Design; Sadanand Acharya, Principal Consultant, S.A Design; P Sravan Kumar, Co-founder, Excellence Hospitality; Vishwanath Pandey, Founder & Principal Consultant, THI Hospitality Consultants; Naresh Shahani, Hotel, Restaurant and Food Facility Consultant and Sanjiv Deshmukh, Founder, Kitchen Solutions.com



FSCAI PANEL DISCUSSION: AUDIT AND COMPLIANCE

It is not easy to set up a food service establishment or hotel. There are numerous regulations, licenses, and norms that must be followed. Some are relevant, some may not be, and some should be reconsidered. The challenge is to balance business acumen with compliance requirements

The panel discussion on Audit and Compliance featured insights from key industry leaders, including moderator P. Sravan Kumar, Co-founder, Excellence Hospitality and panellists included Sanjeev Shukla, Principal Consultant, 3S Kitchen Design, Naresh Shahani, Hotel, Restaurant and Food Facility Consultant, Sadanand Acharya, Principal Consultant, S.A Design; Vishwanath Pandey, Founder & Principal Consultant, THI Hospitality Consultants and Sanjiv Deshmukh, Founder, Kitchen Solutions.com.

Kumar opened the discussion highlighting the conflict between food science and law. "For example, handling non-vegetarian food requires overnight chilling, allowing it to thaw in a controlled environment. However, a food safety inspector might insist that meat should never be kept out, which would mean placing it directly on the burner—something impractical and flagged during inspections."

Deshmukh emphasised, "Meat, like any perishable food, requires specific handling. The best practice is overnight chilling, but food safety inspectors must understand that proper processes exist, just as they do for

vegetables. Education is key—inspectors should be well-versed in these procedures. If there is a violation, it should be clear and justifiable. Standard operating procedures (SOPs) must be streamlined and clarified by the authorities."

Shahani addressed the complexities of licensing. "Managing, procuring, and complying with licenses is challenging. The way forward is to work with specialised consultants who understand licensing requirements. Membership in industry associations keeps establishments informed. Regulations exist for a reason—cost-cutting can have serious implications. Standalone restaurants and hotels must be aware of their applicable licenses and the necessary steps for compliance. Additionally, alternative resources like renewable fuels should be explored to offset operational costs. A detailed track record of all requirements and renewals is essential."

Deshmukh also touched on the conflict between hotel chain norms and compliance. "For instance, car parking regulations—requiring 200 parking spaces for a 200-room hotel—are strict. Compliance is non-negotiable. Brand standards exist but can be



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flexible. Compliance is crucial for both guests and staff. Owners increasingly recognise the importance of staff safety due to high turnover rates. Even small restaurants are implementing fire suppression measures. Compliance consultants play a crucial role in mediating between hotel owners and local authorities to achieve a balanced approach."

On Kumar's question about licensing norms for temporary establishments such as bhandaras, festivals, and outdoor catering, Acharya responded, "Temporary kitchens do not have specific licensing norms. They follow local statutory requirements but lack dedicated licenses. Events receive approvals, but not the kitchens themselves. Regulatory bodies should lay down compliance guidelines, but adherence varies across states. For large events like the Kumbh Mela, dedicated consultants and officers should oversee different compliance aspects. Establishing licensing bodies for temporary events would improve product quality and employee safety."

The discussion then shifted to GST and taxation ambiguities. Pandey remarked, "There are several ambiguities in taxation. Some areas have well-defined guidelines, but food safety regulations lack clarity. Taxation inconsistencies create confusion. For example, a samosa sold over the counter attracts 18% GST, but if consumed at a table, it is taxed at 5%. Retailers struggle to navigate these classifications, while authorities remain rigid. Additionally, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) mandates testing of all stocked items in sweet shops every six months, adding to the operational burden. Industry organisations are working on addressing these inconsistencies and pushing for reforms."

Kumar then steered the discussion towards

food safety audits. "How do food safety audits benefit entrepreneurs?"

Deshmukh responded, "Food safety is integral to every food service establishment. Restaurants undergo third-party inspections and audits to ensure adherence to SOPs for food handling."

Kumar inquired about mandatory audits in hotel establishments. Deshmukh explained, "There are no government-mandated audits. Hotels conduct audits to maintain high service standards. Internal SOPs dictate food safety measures. Mystery audits also occur, keeping establishments on their toes. The government should establish clear guidelines so operators know what is expected. An organised regulatory body would help bridge this gap."

Kumar outlined three essential audits: "Electrical audits, solid waste audits, and water audits are mandatory. What should a broad checklist for these audits include?"

Shahani elaborated, "Utility consumption—water, power, and solid waste disposal—is critical. In Mumbai, municipal trucks no longer collect garbage from hotels, necessitating in-house waste management. Power costs comprise 10-15% of turnover, making efficient consumption vital. Hotel departments must be accountable for energy use, and design considerations should integrate energy-efficient solutions from the outset. Water consumption monitoring is improving with metering systems that track usage across different kitchen sections. Sustainability measures, such as steam cleaning instead of excessive water use, help reduce costs. Dubai operates under the Dubai Food Code, where chefs must complete a kitchen management programme to ensure compliance. Such training should be incorporated into culinary education in India." ■



Testimonials



★★★★★

This is a great exhibition and the best part is Incredible Chef Challenge where I see a lot of students participating. This is something fantastic that the World of Hospitality has done and I'm so happy to see the skills of these students. It is important that they rise up to a certain level and this is a platform to test it. It offers them an opportunity to enhance their knowledge, hence I feel that this chef challenge is incredible.

Chef Harpal Singh Sokhi

★★★★★

Visiting the World of Hospitality Expo is a great experience for the fact that they put up a great exhibition. This year, I was part of a lovely panel discussion on Sustainable Hospitality, and it was great meeting such excited environmentalists and having a good discussion on how the hospitality industry is progressing with regards to sustainability.

Suhail Kannampilly, MD, Fern Hotels

★★★★★

It has been a pleasure to be a part of a panel discussion on sustainability, energy, water and waste efficiency at the World of Hospitality Expo. It's an amazing event organised by the team which offered a lot of sustainable elements and are visible at various stalls.

Akanksha, Global Sustainability Manager, Radisson Hotel Group

★★★★★

I've been visiting World of Hospitality Expo every year and attending its conferences. This year, I got to see new things, meet new people and explore new ideas, and I'm looking forward to continue doing so in future.

Dr Vikram Kamat, Owner, VITS Kamat Group

★★★★★

The great attraction for me was being the part of GM's Conclave; the discussion on hotels and the alternative accommodations, offered great insights, helped me meet a few colleagues from the industry, and also allowed me to understand their perspective of alternative accommodations.

Amit Chawla, GM, Brand Operations, Fortune Select Exotica Navi Mumbai

★★★★★

I come from a scenic destination and thanks to World of Hospitality Expo for giving me this opportunity to participate at the GM's Conclave and share my thoughts about the alternate accommodation, which is an ever-changing ever evolving space, boosted by e-commerce platforms bringing the completely unorganised segment to the forefront.

Rahul Janve, GM, Courtyard by Marriott, Mahabaleshwar



MASTERCLASS BY CHEF GAUTAM MEHRISHI

Celebrity Chef Gautam Mehrishi, Corporate Executive Chef, Mahindra Holidays and Resorts India Limited, mesmerised the audience during his Masterclass at WOHXpo Mumbai. His culinary expertise and engaging personality made the session dynamic and interactive. Chef Mehrishi emphasised the importance of local ingredients and shared insights on combining traditional flavours with modern techniques. The participants were treated to a delightful experience, as Chef Mehrishi demonstrated how to bring innovation to the table and present it beautifully. The Masterclass was a huge success, leaving ICC participants and visiting students inspired and motivated to experiment with their culinary skills. ■



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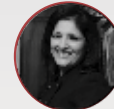
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MASTERCLASS BY CHEF TUSHAR MALKANI

The Masterclass by Chef Tushar Malkani, Executive Chef, The Yellow House, Goa (IHCL SeleQtions), was a culinary journey filled with creativity and expertise at WOHXpo in Mumbai. Chef Malkani captivated the audience with his detailed insights into ingredient selection, flavour balance, and innovative techniques that elevate the dining experience. The participants, including eager culinary students and ICC attendees, were enthralled by his focus on regional flavours and sustainable ingredients. The engaging session concluded with participants gaining invaluable knowledge and practical skills, making the session a true highlight of the expo. ■

										
										
										
										
										
		 <p>WORLD OF HOSPITALITY BUSINESS EVENTS FOR HORECA PROFESSIONALS</p> <p>22 23 24 JAN, 2025 Bombay Exhibition Centre, NESCO, Goregaon (E), Mumbai</p> <h1>THANK YOU</h1> <p>TO ALL OUR ESTEEMED PARTNERS For Making The Show A Resounding Success!</p>								
										
										
										
										
										
										
										
										
										



HOSPITALITY TRAILBLAZERS

The Hospitality Trailblazers Awards at WOHXpo Mumbai recognised and celebrated the finest restaurants in the vibrant city of Mumbai. These culinary gems were honoured for their innovation, quality, and commitment to offering unparalleled dining experiences. From redefining traditional flavors to embracing modern techniques, these trailblazers have left an indelible mark on the city's food scene. Their recognition highlighted their role in elevating Mumbai's position as a culinary capital, inspiring others to follow their lead.



RESTRO BAR HITCHKI

Hitchki Resto Bar, housed under Mirah Hospitality is a popular chain known for its vibrant atmosphere and Bollywood theme. It offers a mix of regional Indian cuisine with a modern twist alongside classic and creative cocktails. The restaurants boast quirky décor and a fun vibe, making them ideal for a lively evening out with friends or a night of dancing. With multiple outlets across Mumbai, Bangalore, and Nagpur, Hitchki is a great choice for those seeking delicious food, refreshing drinks, and a touch of Bollywood nostalgia.

MIDDLE EASTERN BAYROUTE

Bayroute is a fine-dining restaurant chain in Mumbai, offering authentic Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cuisine from regions like Egypt, Turkey, Lebanon, Morocco, and Greece. With multiple outlets, including locations in Cuffe Parade, Powai, and Juhu, each venue features elegant interiors adorned with traditional Middle Eastern décor, creating a warm and inviting ambience. The menu boasts a variety of dishes such as Baharatli Hummus, Koshari, and Baklava, all crafted to provide an exquisite gastronomic experience. Bayroute continues to innovate with new menu offerings, solidifying its reputation for excellence in the culinary landscape.



STREET FOOD CAFE MUTTUSWAMI

Café Muttuswami, part of the Ramee Hospitality project, is a celebrated South Indian dining destination with 4 years of spreading the Nostalgic heartfelt South Indian meals. Founded by Raj Shetty, with leadership from Rajit V. Shetty as Managing Director and Saurabh Gahoi as Sr. Vice president at Ramee, the brand showcases authentic regional dishes and street food favourites at its outlets in Dadar, Khar, and Pune. Every meal blends tradition, quality, and innovation. Its inviting spaces and heartfelt hospitality ensure a memorable experience. Whether for breakfast, coffee, or a hearty meal, Café Muttuswami celebrates South Indian flavours with excellence.



THAI THAI NAAM

Thai Naam - established in Andheri by Jawairia Merchant, Thai Naam caters to those seeking a genuine Thai culinary experience. Their menu boasts a comprehensive selection of traditional dishes, encompassing flavorful soups, curries, and decadent desserts. The restaurant's ambience is meticulously crafted to evoke the essence of Thailand, featuring decorative screens and wooden carvings that transport diners to Southeast Asia. Thai Naam offers an ideal setting for both seasoned Thai food enthusiasts and those seeking an introduction to this exciting cuisine.

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EUROPEAN NEUMA

Neuma, located in the renowned restored colonial-era bungalow, is owned by Karan Johar and known for its artistically pleasing European ambience. Neuma is Bollywood filmmaker Karan Johar's debut foray into the hospitality industry in partnership with Bunty Sajdeh, CEO of Cornerstone Sport & Dharma Cornerstone Agency, and True Palate Café Pvt. Ltd. The restaurant celebrates the true flavours of European cuisine. Pronounced 'Noo-Maa,' Neuma means the vital spirit that exists within each of us and connects us all, transporting one to a different time and space. Located in an iconic colonial-era bungalow on Mandlik Road in Colaba, Neuma aims to bring stylish yet relaxed fine dining and nightlife to the most coveted locations in South Mumbai.



CASUAL DINING ONE8 COMMUNE

Helmed by India's favourite batsman Virat Kohli, one8 Commune in Juhu is a casual dining and bar space. Located in the iconic bungalow of Kishore Kumar, celebrates the joy of belonging to a community. It's a space for everyone, to relax, chill, hangout and just unwind, with a "homely" yet elegant social vibe. The diverse menu features an array of global flavours, ranging from vegetarian and non-vegetarian delights to a dedicated section of Virat's favourite dishes.



DECOR NKSHA

Nksha - South Bombay's fine-dine restaurant reflects the vision of mapping the diverse Indian culinary influences worldwide. Newest brainchild of food connoisseurs, Pranav M. Rungta and Chef Vikram Arora, the two culinary masterminds who stand as the helming entrepreneurs of Churchgate Hospitality Private Limited (CHPL). It pays homage to the city's cosmopolitan food temperament; Nksha offers a niche dining experience that evokes the wonders of Indian fare in the form of comfort food. With the presentation at the heart of service, little details can be found in thoughtfully curated glasses and Kansa thalis sourced from Delhi's specialised Khari Baoli market.



SEAFOOD MAASLLI RESTAURANT

Maaslli Seafood Restaurant is renowned for its authentic seafood dishes and warm ambience. With a menu featuring Saraswat and GSB cuisine, it offers a delightful culinary experience. Popular dishes include GSB style Sukke and Tirfal Curry. The restaurant is praised for its fresh ingredients, customisable options, and friendly service. Maaslli is a must-visit for seafood lovers seeking quality food at reasonable prices. Whether dining in or ordering for home delivery, Maaslli ensures a memorable gastronomic journey.



MULTI CUISINE DINE & BAR KOA

Koa, located at Korum Mall, is a vibrant new cafe and bar that blends Bohemian aesthetics with culinary excellence. Offering a dynamic fusion of American, Thai, Continental, Asian, and Italian cuisines, Koa's menu is a celebration of creativity, crafted with passion and precision to delight the senses. Designed as a "room to share," Koa's open-plan space fosters a sense of community with its circular bar, intimate dining rooms, and cabana-inspired window tables. The interior seamlessly combines nature, vibrant hues, and bespoke craftsmanship, creating an inviting atmosphere where spontaneous moments and joyful gatherings unfold. The visionary behind Koa, Prasuk Jain, renowned for his culinary ventures, brings a unique blend of minimalist sophistication and old-world warmth to the space. Koa is more than just a dining destination—it's a celebration of togetherness, creativity, and flavor. ■



AHAR ZONAL MEET

The AHAR (Indian Hotel & Restaurant Association) Zonal Meet was a significant highlight at WOHXpo Mumbai, bringing together 400 esteemed members from the hospitality sector. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from regional heads who came out in strong support, showcasing the association's commitment to industry growth and collaboration. The gathering served as a platform for strategic discussions, networking, and knowledge-sharing among industry veterans. AHAR's presence underscored WOHXpo's reputation as a premier hub for hospitality professionals, fostering connections and innovations that will continue to propel the industry forward. ■







L to R: Viraj Kadam, EHK, Sofitel Mumbai BKC; Ketan Kerkar, EHK, Novotel Mumbai International Airport; Rinku Mandal, EHK (Cluster), The LaLiT Mumbai; Amol Pol, Associate Director of Services; Radisson Blu Pune Kharadi; Prasad Sonawane, Cluster EHK, Lemon Tree, Mumbai International Airport; Piyush Singh, EHK, IBIS Mumbai



CLEAN WARRIOR HONOURS

The Clean Warrior Honours at WOHXpo Mumbai celebrated the unsung heroes of the hospitality industry – the dedicated housekeepers who work tirelessly behind the scenes to maintain impeccable service standards. This heartfelt recognition acknowledged their commitment, resilience, and invaluable contribution to guest experiences. With their meticulous attention to detail and unwavering dedication, these clean warriors are the backbone of the industry, ensuring every space is welcoming and pristine. ■







MASTERCLASS BY CHEF DEV KASALKAR

Chef Dev Kasalkar, representing Chef's Kitchen Institute of Culinary Arts & Hotel Management, led an inspiring Masterclass at WOHXpo Mumbai, where culinary enthusiasts gathered to absorb his wealth of knowledge. With a strong emphasis on craftsmanship, Chef Kasalkar walked the participants through innovative techniques and the importance of precision in every dish. He skillfully connected local ingredients to global flavours, sparking creativity among attendees. His warm interaction and hands-on demonstrations made the session both educational and memorable. The participants of the ICC and culinary students applauded his teaching approach, leaving them with enhanced skills and creative ideas to implement in their culinary pursuits. ■



INCREDIBLE CHEF CHALLENGE

The Incredible Chef Challenge (ICC), held at WOH Xpo Mumbai in association with WICA, proved to be a spectacular celebration of culinary artistry and innovation. With over 200 participants, including a strong representation of seasoned professionals alongside aspiring student chefs, the competition highlighted the sheer diversity and passion driving India's culinary landscape.

Judged by an esteemed panel of industry icons, including Chef Sudhir Pai, Chef Altamsh Patel, Chef Tushar Malkani, Chef Suresh Shetty, Chef Dinesh Khandare, Chef Vivek Kadam, Chef Rachna Chirag Elavia, Chef Dean Rodrigues, and Chef Abdul Qader, the challenge pushed participants to demonstrate their technical skills, creativity, and understanding of flavors. The jury's expertise and invaluable feedback added immense value to the competitors' learning journey.

As dishes were meticulously crafted and presented, the atmosphere buzzed with excitement and determination. Chefs showcased their mastery over ingredients, plating techniques, and innovation, creating culinary masterpieces that left the audience and judges in awe.

The ICC served as more than just a competition – it became a platform for growth, learning, and recognition. By bringing together culinary talent, the challenge not only set benchmarks for excellence but also strengthened India's evolving gastronomic landscape. ■





ICC 2025 MUMBAI



WINNERS ICC 2025 MUMBAI



ICC WINNERS

In **Artistic Pastry Showpiece**, Professional category, the Bronze went to Naresh Rane, TajSATS Air Catering, Silver to Tisha Nair from The Sugar Project and another Silver to Vinayal Ghangale from TajSATS Air Catering, and the final Gold to Kinjal Jaiswal, The Sugar Project. Mitra Rao won a silver from Maharashtra State Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology and Research Society, Pune in the students category.

In the **Plated Desserts Category**, Professional Category, the Bronze was won by Sachin Chand, ITC Grand Central, and Silver by Mohd. Aasif Khan from Hotel Sahara Star, Nisha Kamble from TajSATS Air Catering with Gold winners Poonam Vishwakarma, TajSATS Air Catering and Siddhi Rathod from Academy of Pastry & Culinary Arts. In the Students category, Bronze went to Ishmeen Kaur, Culinary Academy of India and Abdulmuej Maner, Chefs Kitchen Institute of Culinary Arts; Silver to Shrishti Gupta from Academy of Pastry & Culinary Arts. Along with Gold winner Zara Shah, Academy of Pastry & Culinary Arts.

In the **Plated Appetisers category**, Professional segment, the Bronze awards were presented to Sowmiya Parui from ITC Grand Central, Sahil Sawant from Meluha The Fern - An Ecotel Hotel, Powai, and Prathamesh Jadhav from Holiday Inn Mumbai. The Silver was claimed by Sagar More from Sofitel Mumbai BKC, Rahul Kumar from Holiday Inn Mumbai, Nishant Dhanu from Hotel Sahara Star, and Vijay Rawat from TajSATS Air Catering. The coveted Gold went to Ashish Kaintura from Hotel Sahara Star. Darsham Desai from TajSATS Air Catering also earned a well-deserved Gold for his culinary excellence.

In the **Plated Appetisers category**, Students segment, the Bronze awards were presented to Yokeshwaran K from SRM Institute of Science and Technology and Arya Dighe from Sheila Raheja Institute of Hotel Management. The Silver was awarded to Aarushi Mehrishi from the Academy of Pastry & Culinary Arts, Nitin Power from Chefs Kitchen Institute of Culinary Arts and Hotel Management, and Lokesh Yerubandi from the Culinary Academy of India. The prestigious Gold was claimed by Rihan Nadaf from Chefs Kitchen Institute of Culinary Arts and Hotel Management and Rohit More from Training Ship Rahaman for their remarkable culinary creations.

In the **Three-Tier Wedding Cake category**, Professional segment, the Bronze was awarded to Priya Kamble from Hotel Sahara Star. Silver accolades were shared by Rajesh Chauhan from ITC Grand Central, Shrikant Salvi from TajSATS Air Catering, and Rhutvij Chodankar from Avatara Mumbai. The coveted Gold was claimed by Madhuri Chandrakant Patil from My Cake for her exceptional creation. In the Students segment, Prachiti Yadav from ITM IHM Institute Nerul, Navi Mumbai earned the Silver, while the Gold was triumphantly secured by Durva Kadam from Sheila Raheja Institute of Hotel Management for her splendid craftsmanship.

In the **Vegetable and Fruit Carving**, Professional category, the Gold was awarded to Devendra Y. Waghmare from The Taj Mahal Palace for his exceptional artistry and precision. In the Students category, the Bronze went to Janarthanan M from SRM Institute of Science and Technology. Silver accolades were shared by Sathish C and Bharath E, both from SRM Institute of Science and Technology. The Gold was secured by Sree Vaishnavi Gudla from the Culinary Academy of India for her outstanding craftsmanship.

In the **Live Cooking category**, Professional category, the Bronze went to Prathmesh Salunke from Hotel Sahara Star. The Silver was awarded to Rahul Kadam from TajSATS Air Catering, while the Gold was secured by Shravani Patil from ITC Martha for her exceptional culinary creation.

In the Students category, Bronze honors were shared by Punit Sahare from Chefs Kitchen Institute of Culinary Arts and Hotel Management and Aditya Waikar from ITM Institute of Hotel Management Oshiwara. Silver recognition went to Amit Chate from Chefs Kitchen Institute of Culinary Arts and Hotel Management. Gold accolades were jointly awarded to Pavan Kumar and Aaron Bobby Mathews, both from the Culinary Academy of India, for their remarkable live cooking performances.

BEST ORGANISATION
TajSATS Air Catering

BEST INSTITUTE
Chefs Kitchen Kohlapur

WINNERS ICC 2025 MUMBAI



It was an immense pleasure for me to be part of the GMs panel discussion at World of Hospitality Expo. I expect to see this kind of platform regularly to take hospitality to a different level, bringing out the importance of all segments, while uplifting the segments of homestays and B&Bs.

Koustav Mukherjee, AVP - Gujarat, Pride Hotels & Resorts



We've participated in World of Hospitality Expo and the response we got has been really great. We are a brand that uses no sugar, no preservative and no concentrate, and we hope everybody who visited our stall must have liked the product and will buy it.

Varun, Co-Founder, No Filter



We are the leading manufacturer of washer extractors and world-class laundry equipment in India, supplying to major hotels groups, hospitals, commercial launderers and many more. We are thankful to the World of Hospitality organisers for giving us this platform to showcase our products, meet a lot of hoteliers and associate with potential users.

Puneet Singh Bhatia, MD, Wonder Clean Equipment Pvt Ltd



We are the biggest manufacturer in this industry, mostly specialising in mattresses for hotel purpose, offering different range and different models. WOHXpo has been a very good platform for us and we got a very good response the very first day that continued.

Lalit, Duroflex

Testimonials



It is my second consecutive year participating at World of Hospitality Expo. It has been super helpful and provided me a platform, helping me showcase my complete product portfolio and get in touch directly with key decision makers. I would like to thank WOHXpo and hope to exhibit here in the coming years.

Dhruv Narula, Raj Tandoors



We are based in Bengaluru and have a facility over there. We have been regularly participating in this exhibition there. This is the first time we participated in the Mumbai edition, and it's been a great experience where we were able to showcase our equipment and services on a big platform like this.

Sharon and Renji, Cornell India



Ours is a brand which is more than 50 years old, dealing in dairy products. Now, we have ventured into other areas and in this exhibition we have showcased our whole portfolio which is not only dairy, but also bakery products. The World of Hospitality platform has given us the opportunity to showcase our product range and the response has been really good.

Sahib Singh Bajaj, Owner, Punjab Sind

BHUMI WORLD FACTORY OUTLET MALL: Revolutionising the scope of hospitality

MAHARASHTRA'S BIGGEST F&B DESTINATION: The hospitality industry is set to witness a transformative change with the grand unveiling of Bhumi World Factory Outlet Mall, a visionary project dedicated to redefining excellence in hospitality. The project is a significant milestone in the industry, bringing together industry leaders, F&B brands, and hospitality enthusiasts eager to explore the future of premium experiences.

A fresh approach

Bhumi World Factory Outlet Mall is an ambitious initiative that aims to establish a global benchmark in luxury, innovation, and customer-centric experiences. With a keen focus on sustainability, cutting-edge technology, and world-class service, the project is poised to reshape the hospitality landscape by becoming India's first international-standard factory outlet mall.

Bhumi World is committed to achieving excellence. Thus, the project envisions to transform the vast expanse of 200 acres into a captivating recreational destination that goes beyond just offering a shopping experience; it aims to become a haven for all who seek adventure, relaxation, and connection. It will be an all-encompassing ecosystem within itself, offering a high-end facility that becomes the ultimate hub for every retail, entertainment and leisurely desires.

Key features of Bhumi World

The project of Mumbai's leading factory outlet mall spread across 12 acres, is designed to incorporate several ground-breaking features that distinguish it from conventional hospitality ventures offering a flexible mix:

- Leasable option of 60+ F&B units
- 100+ Retail Brands
- Strong footfall: 20 million annual estimated footfall
- A blend of global and local culinary brands



- Focus on F&B: Retail will be 40:60
- 700 Surface Car Parking Space
- 2500+ seating amphitheatre for Live Shows and Screenings
- 25000 Sq.Ft. gaming zone
- 4 Screen Miniplex
- Located on the Samrudhhi Expressway
- 4 Acre One Golf Arena
- Largest no. of Food Trucks

Bhumi World Factory Outlet comes across as a new spot for the best deals for top brands with 32+ leasable F&B options and a fine dining experience in the mall building.

- 15 food court outlets
- 14 Atrium kiosks
- 3 Rooftop restaurants

Food avenue building

Bhumi World will eventually become a new landmark for fine dining in Bhiwandi. Its Food Avenue building will be a 3-storeyed culinary haven. Filled with leading cafes, QSRs, sky lounges, fine dining, and multi-cuisine restaurants and sports bars, the place will be a perfect spot for social gatherings.

If that is not enough, there will be 3 'Drive Thru Outlets' – offering quick service, and fresh food for busy days, ensuring people effortlessly grab favourite dishes for their journeys.

The concept of garden restaurants

will also be a proposition, a total of 3 such propositions, offering dining experience amidst nature.

Furthermore, there will be 20+ food truck outlets, offering choices from street food to international delicacies, perfect for quick bites and outdoor gatherings in the open air seating for community celebration.

Retail recreation

From live events, and concerts, to entertainment, Bhumi World is a one-stop destination for everything in recreation. It will offer 2,500+ seating amphitheatre for people to have leisure moments with the offering of open mic nights and movie screening.

Way Forward

Starting from the first week of March until the first week of May 2025, we are focused on giving the spaces to the brands for fit-outs, ensuring a ready-to-move-in environment that aligns with their expectations. The first week of May 2025 will be the tentative official launch of our partnered showroom. Following the launch till the next three months, we will drive curiosity and insight into customer needs. Our campaigns aim to maintain a sustained brand image, and we expect a footfall of around 20 MN annually, with lots of events and activities planned round the year. ■

COMET: A pioneering solution for LPG equipment and installations

Mugatlal & Bros was established in 1942 and soon became a pioneer in the industry with its brand 'Comet'. The company started manufacturing, trading, and importing kerosene products such as stoves, blowlamps, Petromex, burners, gas mantles, and spares. Since the 1980s, the company has been expanding its offerings in LPG equipment and installations. They have continuously sought to enhance the variety and quality of their products, resulting in an exclusive range of fuel-efficient products and services available today in both local and international markets.

The company designs specific and specialised turnkey projects, overseeing everything from planning to commissioning industrial heating and kitchen equipment, including receiving areas, storage,

preparation, cooking, service, refrigeration, exhaust systems, and washing facilities. Their products are fabricated from high-grade stainless steel and other metals. They specialise in LPG gas pipeline installations and services, offering everything from small jets to bulk tanks, including burners, regulators, valves, filters, meters, hoses, manifold systems, pigtailed, and conversion technology from other fuels to LPG systems. In recent years, they have added tableware, buffet ware, cutlery, bar accessories, cookware, and utensils to their product profile.

The company caters to hotels, restaurants, caterers, cafés, banquet halls, fast food joints, cloud kitchens, canteens, mess halls, ice cream parlours, coffee shops, supermarkets, food courts, industrial kitchens, hotel management and catering colleges,

laboratories, confectioneries, community kitchens, poultry operations, and industrial production facilities.

Mugatlal & Bros serves as a one-stop complete quality solution for the heating industry, kitchen equipment, and food and beverage products.

List of products & services

The company offerings include gas burners, gas valves, gas regulators, gas pipes and pigtailed, gas stoves, gas meters, portable gas stoves, gas reticulation and L.O.T. systems, and gas pipeline installations. It also provides kitchen equipment, bakery equipment, catering equipment, induction kitchen equipment, tables, cabinets, counters, trolleys, racks, ovens, sinks, kitchenware, cookware, bakeware, pizza supplies, barware, tableware, cutlery, crockery, buffetware, chafing dishes, knives, tools, and other hotel supplies. ■



SAUMIL SHAH

GALILEO ASSOCIATES: Innovative Cleaning Solutions

Since 2006, Galileo Associates has been a trailblazer in the cleaning industry, providing modern and professional cleaning tools for the hospitality sector. Under the leadership of Sunil Puri, a seasoned expert with over 25 years of industry experience, Galileo has become synonymous with quality and innovation in manual cleaning solutions.

The company offers a diverse range of products designed to meet the stringent cleaning requirements of hotels, resorts, and other hospitality establishments. Their solutions include high-quality

microfiber mops for both dry and wet cleaning, known for capturing minute dust particles, reducing water consumption, and minimising the need for chemical usage. Additionally, these mops come with rust-free aluminium or stainless-steel handles, making them ideal for sterile environments.

Galileo's heavy-duty floor squeezes and window cleaning products are designed for robust, efficient performance. Their speciality brushes cater to various cleaning applications across industries, while microfiber dusters ensure lint-free

cleaning, enhancing overall hygiene. A standout product is the urinal gel screen, which offers superior sanitation in washrooms. Some of their other top products are a multi-utility cart, a small linen trolley, a mini bar trolley, scissor mop with stainless steel handles.

With a strong focus on quality and innovation, Galileo Associates continues to be a trusted partner for hospitality businesses seeking advanced, sustainable, and efficient cleaning solutions. Their expertise and wide product range make them a valuable contributor to maintaining impeccable cleanliness and guest satisfaction in the hospitality industry. ■



SUNIL PURI

Transforming the cleaning equipment industry in India: Rossari Professional and Sprintus partnership

In the age where environmental sustainability is at the forefront of industry innovation, Rossari Professional is taking a monumental step by partnering with Sprintus, a recognised leader in sustainable cleaning solutions. This collaboration aims to revolutionise the cleaning equipment landscape in India, offering advanced, carbon-neutral cleaning machines that align with global sustainability goals. By integrating Sprintus's eco-friendly technologies with Rossari Professional's extensive expertise in surface hygiene, the partnership sets a new benchmark for environmental stewardship and operational efficiency in the cleaning sector.

The evolution of the cleaning industry

The cleaning equipment industry in India is evolving rapidly, driven by heightened awareness of hygiene standards, legislative movements towards sustainable practices, and the growing demand for eco-friendly solutions. Traditional cleaning machines often rely

on chemicals and energy-intensive processes that contribute to carbon emissions and environmental degradation. As businesses and municipalities increasingly seek ways to operate sustainably, the need for innovative cleaning solutions that reduce environmental impact is more pressing than ever.

The partnership between Rossari Professional and Sprintus aims to address these needs by introducing equipment that not only meets but exceeds the expectations for sustainability. This transformation will usher in an era characterised by environmentally responsible cleaning practices, enhanced efficiency, and low operational costs.

Elevating technology and service delivery Rossari Professional has long been committed to delivering high-quality products and services in the cleaning sector. Through its collaboration with Sprintus, it intends to elevate these

standards further by focussing on several key areas:

Sustainable Solutions: The partnership will introduce advanced cleaning equipment that is carbon neutral, utilising environment-friendly materials and sustainable manufacturing processes. These solutions will

help businesses reduce their carbon footprint while maintaining high standards of cleanliness.

Innovative Machinery: The inclusion of Sprintus's product lines such as Floory, Eratec, and additional offerings in categories like Dry Vacuum Cleaners, Wet and Dry Vacuum

Cleaners, Sweepers, and Specialty Range will enhance the diversity and efficiency of cleaning operations across different industries. These machines are designed for efficiency, user-friendliness, and sustainability, making them ideal for various settings, from commercial spaces to industrial facilities.

Comprehensive Support and Training: Rossari Professional is committed to enhancing customer experience through rigorous training and support programs. By educating users about sustainable practices and proper equipment usage, the company aims to ensure maximum efficiency and longevity of its products.

A vision for the future

Vanchinathan S, Head of Sales - SAARC, expressed his enthusiasm about the partnership, stating, "Our collaboration with Sprintus is a significant step towards a greener future for the cleaning industry in India. Together, we are committed to delivering sustainable,



“

By integrating Sprintus's eco-friendly technologies with Rossari Professional's extensive expertise in surface hygiene, the partnership sets a new benchmark for environmental stewardship and operational efficiency in the cleaning sector

VANCHINATHAN S,
HEAD OF SALES - SAARC, ROSSARI
PROFESSIONAL

KEY FEATURES OF SPRINTUS FLOORY AND ERATEC

FLOORY:

- **ECO-FRIENDLY DESIGN:** Floory machines are designed with sustainability in mind, using recyclable materials and low-energy consumption technology.
- **HIGH EFFICIENCY:** These machines deliver superior cleaning performance, enabling operators to cover larger areas in less time while using minimal resources.
- **QUIET OPERATION:** Constructed for low noise levels, making them suitable for use in environments where noise reduction is essential, such as hospitals and educational institutions.
- **USER-FRIENDLY INTERFACE:** The intuitive controls allow easy operation and quick adjustments, empowering users to adapt to various cleaning tasks efficiently.

ERATEC:

- **ADVANCED FILTRATION SYSTEM:** The Eratec series features state-of-the-art filtration technology that captures fine dust particles, providing a cleaner and healthier environment.
- **VERSATILE APPLICATIONS:** Suitable for both hard and soft surfaces, making it a versatile choice for various industries, including retail and hospitality.
- **DURABLE CONSTRUCTION:** Built to withstand rigorous daily use while ensuring a long lifespan, reducing the need for frequent replacements.
- **CARBON-NEUTRAL OPERATION:** These machines are engineered to operate with minimal carbon emissions, aligning perfectly with the global shift towards sustainability.

innovative solutions that not only enhance efficiency but also empower businesses to make environmentally responsible choices. This partnership represents our dedication to setting new standards in cleanliness and sustainability.”

The partnership between Rossari Professional and Sprintus stands to redefine cleanliness in India through the lens of sustainability. By integrating advanced, carbon-neutral equipment into the market, they are not only

improving cleaning standards but also contributing positively to the environment. This collaboration exemplifies how technological innovation and environmental responsibility can coexist, paving the way for a cleaner and greener future in the Indian cleaning equipment industry. Together, Rossari Professional and Sprintus are not just making cleaning more effective; they are leading the charge towards sustainable practices that benefit everyone. ■

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Movements

Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield



● Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield is excited to announce the appointment of **Lakkimsetti Siva Kumar** as its new Director of Finance. In this pivotal role, Siva will lead the hotel's financial operations, playing a key part in shaping the hotel's financial strategy, optimising operational efficiencies, and driving continued success. Siva stepped into this role following his successful tenure as Director of Finance at Aloft Bengaluru Outer Ring Road, where he played an instrumental role in overseeing financial operations, enhancing financial processes, and managing the property's finances with excellence.



● Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield also announced the appointment of **Chef Gaurav Paul** as the new Executive Chef. With over 20 years of extensive culinary experience, Chef Gaurav brings a wealth of knowledge, creativity, and passion for innovative cuisine to the esteemed hotel. Chef Paul's impressive journey in the hospitality industry includes leadership roles at some of the most prestigious brands, such as Hyatt Regency Kolkata, Vivanta By Taj MG Road Bangalore, Radisson Chandigarh, The Chancery Pavilion, Bangalore Carnival Cruise Line & many more.

Hilton Bangalore Embassy Golfinks



● **Siddhant Arora** - Food and Beverage Manager
In his new role, Siddhant Arora brings over nine years of experience in the hospitality industry, focusing on operations management, strategic partnerships, and revenue enhancement. At Hilton Bangalore Embassy GolfLinks, he will oversee a dynamic operation in the various Food and Beverage Outlets. Arora has held pivotal positions at prestigious hospitality brands, including Hilton, Taj Hotels, and IHCL.



● The hotel also welcomed **Maleeni Roy Barman** as the Human Resources Manager. She brings over seven years of experience in strategic HR management, talent acquisition, and organisational development. Maleeni's dynamic leadership and innovative HR practices will play a key role in fostering a strong workplace culture and driving employee engagement. Roy has held significant roles at esteemed organisations, including JW Marriott Kolkata and Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway. She holds a Master's degree in Hotel Management from the Institute of Hotel Management, Bangalore.

Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel

● Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel announced the appointment of **Darshan M.R.** as the Director of Engineering - Repair and Maintenance Department. With extensive experience and a strong technical background, Darshan is set to bring new energy and expertise to this critical leadership position.

Prior to joining Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel, he held several key roles, including Chief Engineer at leading hospitality brands including Sheraton Grand Chennai Resort & Spa and Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park. His expertise includes managing operations and maintenance of diesel generators, water treatment plants, and advanced Building Management Systems (BMS). ■



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