



ENGAGE

March-April 2023

Volume 3

Issue 2



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From the President's Desk



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

India, with its unique geographical diversity, rich cultural heritage, spirituality and holistic wellness, is at the cusp of transformation as a key travel and tourism destination. We have a huge opportunity for the country and the hospitality sector, following India's G20 presidency, to showcase the coexistence of ancient and modern India. It will also pique the interest of tourists to travel to India as a preferred tourist destination in the world, while providing impetus to the revival of India's inbound tourism post-pandemic.

India is a travellers' kaleidoscope with expansive tourism potential. The goal is to attract 100 million foreign tourist arrivals by 2047. With G20 meetings commencing already, decentralization of these events all over the country, including lesser-known but fascinating destinations, will help in putting them on the global tourist map. Over

200 meetings and conferences will be held in about 50 destinations as a part of the summit. Using the Summit to highlight the country's unique and differentiated travel offerings, India can deservedly claim its position on the world tourism stage for the discerning travellers to explore.

Hospitality companies are leaving no stone unturned to showcase India's cultural essence, and the inherent warmth of *Atithi Devo Bhava* in our service philosophy. It is now time to get together as a fraternity and ensure that the message is seen and heard clearly -

Hospitality is one of our greatest cultural assets and an important cog in the wheel of the nation's development

Indian Hospitality is one of our greatest cultural assets and an important cog in the wheel of the nation's development. We need to fully leverage all that we have to make even greater gains, for all stakeholders, the industry, the workforce, and the nation's economy.

The government's focus on tourism is a very positive move for the industry. Well-planned tourism will boost economies and provide well-paid jobs to local communities. Indian Hospitality industry employs 10% of the total employment directly and millions indirectly. The hospitality sector's wellness is therefore reflective of the nation's health. Let's not waste time to seize the opportunity. G20 is our big moment. Let us all shine together. Good luck to all! **HAI**

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Millets for Health



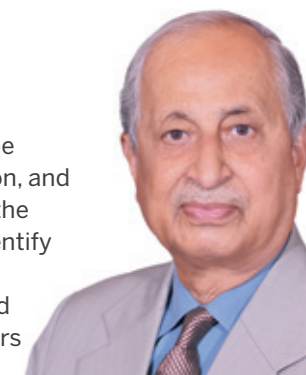
To create awareness and increase production and consumption of millets, the United Nations, at the behest of the Government of India, declared 2023 the International Year of Millets. Chef Ravi Kant, executive chef, The Lalit, New Delhi, shares some recipes.

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Seizing the G20 Tourism Opportunities

A spate of seminars and discussions are probing the opportunities in the horizon, and how to take advantage of the same. It's necessary to identify the broad sectors where investment is required, and then to break up the sectors into micro segments.



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B 212-214, Somdutt Chambers-1,
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T +91 11 26171114, 26171110
hai@hotelassociationofindia.com;
info@hotelassociationofindia.com
www.hotelassociationofindia.com

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

CONSULTING EDITOR
Kunal Advant

CONTENT & MARKETING



editorhai@consociaadvisory.com

DESIGN
Anthony Lawrence
anthonylawrence@gmail.com

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

ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES
info@consociaadvisory.com

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G20 augurs well for Indian hospitality: Bezbaruah

During the G20 presidency year, India will host more than 200 meetings in over 59 destinations in the country. The Hotel Association of India (HAI) has lauded the government effort that will give fillip to tourism. Says MP Bezbaruah, secretary-general, HAI: "G20 Presidency is undoubtedly a huge honour that has come at a very opportune time for India tourism and hospitality. It will further

strengthen India's position on the global tourism map. It can only augur well for the Indian hospitality and will augment hotel revenues and receipts. Its cascading effect should see India emerge as a preferred leisure and MICE destination. The Ministry of Tourism has creditably created tourism related side events to promote different tourism themes and to showcase the richness and variety of Indian tourist destinations."



India to leverage global opportunities and deliver highest ROI: KB Kachru



Speaking at a roundtable organized in the run-up to the Global Tourism Investor's Summit in May, KB Kachru, HAI Vice President and Chairman Emeritus & Principal Advisor, South Asia Radisson Hotel Group, who is also Member of CII's National Committee on Tourism, asserted that the upcoming G20 Summit will support the region in advancement of its economic goals. It's a manifestation of the true spirit of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' or the "World is One Family", he said.

Kachru said: "The opportunity of touching the lives and heart of millions of people across the world is a huge responsibility for India and the nation is putting its best

foot forward with the aim of bringing the world together."

He added: "India is a land of opportunities with the youngest minds and a vast talent pool. Our niche tourist offerings are broad-based encompassing Cruises, Adventure, Medical & Healthcare, Wellness, Sports such as Golf and Polo, MICE, Ecotourism, Cinema, Rural, and Spiritual Tourism. G20 is a great opportunity for India as a nation to showcase our best spots. Tourism is going to be one of the key pillars of the economy and we need to strengthen it. Given the local pull factor & ability of our domestic market combined with recent government policies, we can showcase our diversity to attract foreign investment." **HAI**



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Lemon Tree Hotels launches its fifth property in Kerala

Lemon Tree Hotels Limited announced the opening of its latest hotel, Keys Prima by Lemon Tree Hotels, Thekkady, Kerala. The hotel overlooks the Periyar National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary and features 42 well-appointed rooms, multi-cuisine dining and a fitness center for a perfect getaway.

Thekkady, home to the largest wildlife sanctuary in India, the Periyar National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary, is a dream destination for any tourist visiting India.



'IHCL well poised to achieve goal of 300 hotels by 2025'

The Indian Hotels Company Ltd (IHCL) has stated that it is well poised to achieve its vision of 300 hotels by 2025, from the current portfolio of 260 hotels. IHCL said it accelerated portfolio expansion in FY23, with the signing of 36 new hotels and the opening of 16 new hotels, in the past year.



Awareness drive

'HAI Hand Hygiene Day' was launched by the Hotel Association of India (HAI) on May 5, to create awareness about the importance of frequent washing of hands for promoting community wellbeing.



Sterling Resorts' Shimla launch

Sterling Holiday Resorts, a leading leisure hospitality brand, with its presence across hills, beaches, jungles, waterfront, heritage, pilgrimage, adventure, and drive-to destinations, announces the launch of its 41st property, Sterling Legacy Shimla. It marks Sterling's 4th property in Himachal Pradesh and 9th in the Himalayas, and is located on Mall Road offering exceptional views.



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MakeMyTrip collaborates with Microsoft

MakeMyTrip has collaborated with Microsoft to make travel planning more inclusive and accessible by introducing voice assisted booking in Indian languages. The new, in-platform tech stack powered by Microsoft Service and Azure Cognitive Services, will converse with the user to offer personalised travel

recommendations based on their preference, curate holiday packages based on variable inputs like occasion, budget, activity preferences, time of travel etc and even help book these holiday packages. It opens the online travel ecosystem for every strata and demographic across the country.



Marriott International eyes 250 hotels in India

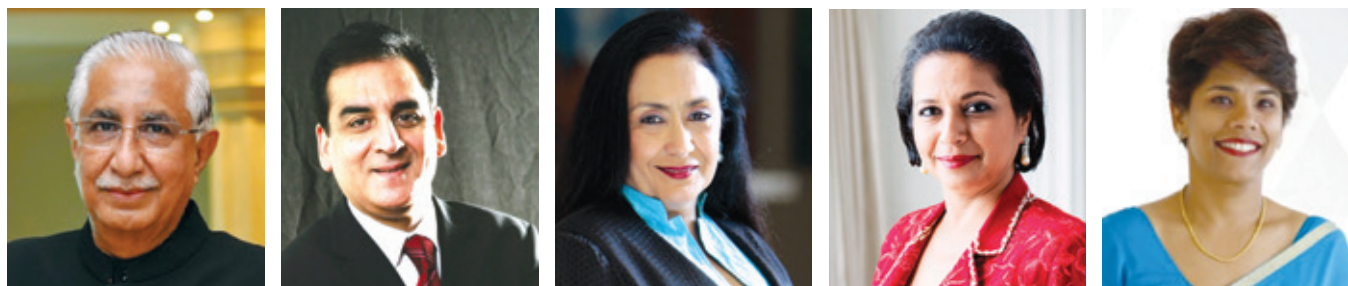


Marriott International has set a target to take the combined number of open and pipeline hotels in the country to 250 by 2025. With 141 hotels operational and 70 in pipeline as of now, the American major's president & CEO Anthony Capuano says conversions will play a key role in the growth globally and in India too. He met Prime Minister Modi who asked the group to look beyond big cities and at India's pristine islands and palaces.

Chalet Hotels' record revenue growth in FY23

Chalet Hotels, which owns premium hotels in cities like Mumbai, Pune, Bengaluru and Hyderabad, has released their Q4FY23 consolidated financial report, indicating a record performance in revenue earnings and EBITDA margins. Sanjay Sethi, member HAI and MD & CEO, Chalet Hotels, speaking on the financial results, said: "It was a year of outstanding rebound marked by several achievements in terms of new peaks in revenue and EBITDA margins. We crossed the INR 500 crore EBITDA milestone for the year. With a strong pipeline, where several capital investments will come in fruition in the next few quarters, we are strategically poised to leverage the strong up-cycle."

Hospitality veterans honoured



The International Hospitality Council, in collaboration with the International Institute of Hotel Management (IIHM) under the mentorship of Dr Suborno Bose, successfully organized the International Hospitality Day (IHD) in April 2023. On this occasion, the Global Hospitality Awards 2023 were also held wherein the prestigious Hall of Fame

Award was awarded to Mr Nakul Anand, Executive Director of ITC, for his invaluable contribution to the hospitality industry. Mr Anand has rewritten the rules of global hospitality with his 'Responsible Luxury' initiatives and transformation of ITC Hotels into a future-forward, pro-sustainability green hotel chain. The Lifetime Achievement Awards

went to industry veteran Mr K.B. Kachru, among others. The Hospitality Honors List 2023 was a veritable who's who of the industry which included Jyotsna Suri, Priya Paul and Ranju Alex, among others. Dr Bose also unveiled his book, The Art of Sustainable Hospitality, which offers a comprehensive guide to sustainable hospitality practices.



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



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

Hospitality puts its Best Foot Forward



The Covid-19 setback led to a reverse globalisation, with each country focusing towards localisation. With many of the wounds healed, thanks to successful vaccination drives, now again MICE events are back. India's G20 presidency comes at an opportune time for the country to show its diverse offerings, and for Hospitality to curate memorable experiences for the delegates.

Team HAI Engage



T

he G20 or Group of 20 is an intergovernmental forum comprising 19 countries and the European Union. Taking up the G20 presidency

this year, India is set to host delegates from all these countries, at more than 200 meetings in around 50 cities. Unlike many big-ticket events that are held in metros only, G20 meetings are being held at various spots in the country, offering huge opportunity to jazz up city infrastructure, as well as the host Hotels. The government is closely engaging and working with the hotel industry for

FOREIGN TOURIST ARRIVALS ON THE RISE

Year 2022
6.19
million FTAs

Year 2021
1.52
million FTAs



Source: Bureau of Immigration





Meetings have been held in Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Udaipur, Ahmedabad, Chennai, and so on. Transport, accommodation, infrastructure at these destinations are crucial to showcase the country among foreign delegates. Many city administrations have elaborate plans to welcome guests. Mumbai got an instant Rs 25 crore makeover budget. From zebra crossings being repainted to traffic islands being beautified and hawkers told to stay away, the maximum city is shining bright. In December, Gateway of India lit up for a visit of G20 delegates. Taj Mahal Palace hotel too jazzed up as a part of the VIP welcome.

So when G20 Sherpa of India Amitabh Kant along with Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, and many other high-profile visitors, walked along the Gateway of India, it was a moment of great pride.

Other cities too are sprucing up. Siliguri is expecting a tourism boost. The Siliguri Municipal Corporation (SMC) has decked up the city. SMC Mayor Goutam Deb told reporters: “Many delegates will come and visit the most attractive places in Siliguri and Darjeeling.” The second major IT hub in India after Bangalore, Pune hosted the 1st Infrastructure Working Group (IWG) meeting in January, around the theme of, “Financing Cities of Tomorrow: Inclusive, Resilient and Sustainable”. The subjects under discussion at the

the success of the events, to showcase Incredible India in all its diverse aspects.

The theme chosen for this year’s G20 meetings, “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” or “One Earth. One Family. One Future”, drawn from the Maha Upanishad, is a clear indication that the government wants to exhibit India’s vibrancy in all its aspects—infrastructure, spirituality, hospitality and intellectual depth. The covid-19 setback led to a reverse globalisation, with each country focusing towards restoring health and economy, giving impetus to localisation. With many of the wounds healed, thanks in due measure to successful vaccination drives, MICE events are back, and countries are putting their heads

together to control damages caused by climate change. Among the subjects under discussion at the G20 meetings are International Financial Stability, Environment Change, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Sustainable Development, and so on.

India’s year-long presidency will have the G20 dignitaries and media people hopping from one host city to another. G20 will give a boost to the hotel industry. The buoyancy may lead to an increase in room tariffs, likely to be more pronounced in the business group segment. Hotels are thus rolling out the welcome mat. Rates for hotel rooms have been rising in major business cities since the festive season of 2022.



meetings give an indication of the deep desire of all nations to be robust, progressive, and growth-oriented in a sustainable way. There have been Health Working Group G20 meetings in Thiruvananthapuram and Goa, and also scheduled for Hyderabad, Gandhinagar, and so on. India intends to play an active role, representing the Global South.

Chandigarh hosted G20 meetings in March, with lodging of delegates arranged at Hotels Lalit and Hyatt. Welcoming of the high-profile delegates is being overseen by the city administrations. In Chandigarh, for



“For the G20 meetings, our teams are ensuring glitch-free operations... As 2023 was announced Year of the Millets, we put together a menu featuring millets, from desserts to breads, cookies and many more”

SARABJEET SINGH
Senior Vice President – Tamil Nadu and OHL Hotels

instance, Sukhna Lake, Rock Garden and Capitol Complex were some of the major sites jazzed up. Bengaluru, Chennai, Guwahati, Kolkata and Jodhpur are also revving up. The decentralisation of these meetings has helped to uplift infrastructure, opening up tourism and investment possibilities in newer destinations.

To gear up for these events, lobbies of five star hotels are doubling up as museums, there are yoga instructors for delegates at hotels, and local artisans are being curated to showcase local creativity.

Says **Sarabjeet Singh**, Senior Vice President – Tamil Nadu and OHL Hotels, “Our hotels in Chennai, Taj Coromandel and Taj Connemara have been preparing for months to ensure seamless and immaculate experiences for the G20 meetings. Our teams designed various processes to ensure glitch-free operations. One of the service standard was to prepare for a traditional welcome with flower garlands followed by a signature Taj experience of Evening Ritual as our front office women associates walk down the stairs lighting lamps. To ensure the safety of our delegates, we have aligned our security

teams on every floor where the guests are staying and outside the restaurants where they will be dining.”

At the meetings recently hosted, their two iconic hotels Taj Coromandel and Taj Connemara lit up beautifully, displaying the national flag on the façade off the hotel. The hotel lobbies had rangoli designs, highlighting what Incredible India has to offer. Various touchpoints of the hotel showcased IHCL's Paathya initiatives, from using reusable glass bottles to sustainable room amenities and toiletries. Taj Connemara held two dinner events that showcased quintessential Indian culture with lively performances exhibiting the soul and essence of Tamil Nadu.

“During the Summit, our hotels in Chennai put their best foot forward by showcasing the best of Tamil Nadu. As 2023 was announced the Year of the Millets, we put together a menu featuring millets, from desserts to breads, to cookies and many more. Additionally, our chefs focused on wellbeing and nutrition by setting up counters with healthy juices, infused water and more. Chennai's famous Filter Coffee and Murukku became instant favourites,” he adds. He says the city administration released various guidelines to follow and assisted with security personnel. He notes that the buoyancy has helped with additional yield for room rates, and also across food and beverage and ancillary revenues.



“As the sun set in the city, the Grand Staircase in the Sangam lobby came alive with LED lights, Carnatic music and a Bharatnatyam performance. The guests were treated to a showcase of local love, featuring indigenous flavours, curated by our Food Sherpa (chef), made with seasonal ingredients and traditional techniques”

ZUBIN SONGADWALA
Area Manager ITC Hotels, South & General Manager, ITC Grand Chola, Chennai

ITC Grand Chola, Chennai, also hosted G20 delegates. Says **Zubin Songadwala**, Area Manager ITC Hotels, South & General Manager, ITC Grand Chola, Chennai: “Inspired by the Chola dynasty, stretching across eight acres, a luxurious tribute to the splendour of Chola architecture, ITC Grand Chola defines a destination with uniquely carved and textured exteriors that reflect the influence of Chola temple architecture, particularly its finest examples at the Brihadeeswara, Gangaikondacholapuram and the Airavateswara temples. In keeping with the destination, all the delegates were accorded a traditional South Indian welcome.”

As a part of the Chola Experience, they arranged a brief Bharatnatyam performance. “As the sun set in the city, the Grand Staircase in the Sangam lobby came alive with LED lights, Carnatic music and the Bharatnatyam performance, eliciting joy and wonder in the delegates who warmed to the authentic vibes of the destination. The guests were treated to a showcase of local love, featuring indigenous flavours, curated by our Food Sherpa (chef), made with seasonal ingredients and traditional techniques. We also presented an array



of sweet and savoury delicacies from Tamil Nadu on an Ammikaal, a traditional grinding stone used in homes earlier and dabra coffee, in every room.”

The delegates were impressed by their sustainability initiatives such as the use of wind and solar energy, the bespoke Zero Mile drinking water, SunyaAqua, produced by the Atmospheric Water Generator (AWG), monitoring of Indoor Air Quality (IAQ), and so on. “The fact that ITC Grand Chola is a LEED Zero Carbon Certified Hotel and aligns every aspect of its operations with this standard was greatly appreciated by the guests,” he adds.

The meetings also took place in Ranchi. Says **Hemant Mehta**, GM, Radisson Blu, Ranchi: “We had requested the government to share the arrival details of delegates in advance. This helped us to plan the arrival experience, right from the airport till the check-in. Each delegate was assigned one staff as point contact during their stay in the Hotel. The hotel maintained the highest levels of security. The entire Hotel is covered with CCTV cameras and monitored round-the-clock. The state government deputed well-appointed Liaison officers and police personnel to ensure the safety and security of the delegates.”

To enhance the Indian experience, he says, Dokra art statues were placed at key locations in the



“G20 has resulted in a lot of interest in Jharkhand, leading to a demand influx. There are many travellers coming into the state from neighbouring source markets like Patna, Kolkata and Jamshedpur for business as well as leisure”

HEMANT MEHTA
GM, Radisson Blu, Ranchi

lobby and the reception counter. Dokra is a non-ferrous metal casting technique which dates back to over 4000 years from the Mohenjo Daro era. Also, uniforms of the frontline staff were inspired by local traditions. Laktho, a traditional sweet snack of Bihar and Jharkhand made of rice flour dough and a thick jaggery syrup, was part of the food highlights. The state government presented the delegates with a welcome hamper showcasing local art, like jackets and tassar silk scarves, dokra mementoes, along with a booklet mentioning the flora, fauna and culture of Jharkhand. Among the other local delicacies were Ragi Chilka Roti, Dhuska, brown rice, Desi Murga jhor, Khasi Mas, Khukadi Masala and Aaru kand (local root vegetable of Jharkhand). Some locally grown millets were also part of the enticing spreads.

He adds: “G20 has resulted in a lot of interest in Jharkhand, leading to a demand influx. There are



“Keeping it all connected with the theme of ‘Atithi Devo Bhava’, which means ‘Guest is God’, the entire setup has been shaped to showcase India as a complete destination. From culture to cuisine, and from music to handicrafts, all aspects have been incorporated.”

VIVEK SHUKLA
CEO, The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group

many travellers coming into the state from neighbouring source markets like Patna, Kolkata and Jamshedpur for business as well as leisure.”

Vivek Shukla, CEO, The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group, says: “We are proud and humbled to host G20 conferences and events across various properties of The Lalit Hotels, Palaces and Resorts. Keeping it all connected with the theme of ‘Atithi Devo Bhava’, which means ‘Guest is God’, the entire setup has been shaped to showcase India as a complete destination. From culture to cuisine, and from music to handicrafts, all aspects have been incorporated. Each meeting is ideated around the respective city and its cultural heritage. The menu is curated on the theme of ‘Unified Flavours of India’ which incorporates local cuisines of the region along with cuisines from different parts of the country.”

Says **Vijay Shrikent**, Area Director & General Manager, Taj Bengal: “Our hotels were chosen for the G20 summit in Kolkata. Special arrangements were made to ensure that all our dignitaries experience ‘Tajness’ – which is our signature hallmark hospitality.” He adds that over two themed dinners hosted for the delegates, the hotel brought alive the cuisine of Bengal. ‘A Kaleidoscope of Taste - Hills to the Seas’, showcased food from the hills of Bengal to the Lands of Nawabs, and from the kitchens of Zamindars to Trade Chroniclers. For the second dinner, they showcased ‘The Ghats of India to the Alleys of Kolkata’, featuring food from the Gangetic journey across the course of the river from Haridwar and Kashi, to Princep Ghat (Kolkata), and to the diverse choices available in Kolkata, in places like China Town, Dalhousie Square, and so on.

The traditional welcome comprised blowing of conch shells, alpana (patterns painted on floor with coloured rice flour) designs on the



“From the grand welcome, to give-aways, floral arrangements and cuisine, no stone was left unturned in highlighting India’s rich and deep-rooted cultural heritage. Our team thoughtfully put together all the unique local elements to enhance the Indian experience”

VIJAY SHRIKENT

**Area Director & General Manager,
Taj Bengal**

pathway, display of artefacts and handlooms, like Baluchari, Kantha and Jamdani sarees, Organic Teas, Organic spices, Ittars, Dokra work etc, along with an enthralling 40-minute cultural show displaying dance forms from the state. “From the garlands on arrival, to welcome amenities, give-aways, floral arrangements to cuisine, no stone was left unturned in highlighting India’s rich and vast cultural heritage,” he says. Among the highlights was the presentation of local Bengali sweets on handcrafted patachitra (cloth based scroll paintings) platters, snake & ladder boards as welcome amenities and handcrafted ittar (perfume) as giveaways. Keeping in mind, the government’s desire to elevate millet as the crop of the future, they included millets in the menu generously. The government stepped in

with newly created facilities, the world class Convention Centre, Exhibition Halls and special experiences of themed dinner cruises. “All this has brought a positive effect on the tariffs owing to the awareness created of the diversity and opportunity in the state,” he says.

Ashok Rathore, Area Director-Rajasthan & General Manager Rambagh Palace Jaipur, says: “We are the custodians of Indian hospitality and Rambagh Palace is a heritage luxury palace showcasing the lifestyle of the Royal Family of Jaipur. Our fine dining Indian restaurant and themes of the rooms/suites are inspired from Royal India. The palace retains its elaborate splendour, extravagantly decorated with hand-carved marble ‘jalis’ or latticework, sandstone balustrades, cupolas and ‘chattris’ or cenotaphs, and Mughal Gardens that echo fairy tales, with history pouring out of every brick and cornice.”

G20 delegates will get to savour royal cuisine



“We are the custodians of Indian hospitality and Rambagh Palace is a heritage luxury palace showcasing the lifestyle of the Royal Family of Jaipur. Our fine dining Indian restaurant and themes are inspired from Royal India”

ASHOK RATHORE

**Area Director-Rajasthan & General
Manager, Rambagh Palace, Jaipur**

from Rajasthan at Suvarna Mahal restaurant as the Palace promotes lost recipes of the erstwhile Royal families. They also have local artisans displaying their products and artefacts such as lac bangles and carpet weaving, among others. The local authorities are also assisting. “The increase in overall occupancy has helped us to achieve category selling and upsell our world class signature suites during high demand,” he adds.

Says **Somnath Mukherjee**, Senior Vice President (West), Taj Lands End Mumbai, “We are leaving no stone unturned, and are conducting internal trainings. We are adhering to the strict health and safety protocols to ensure the safety and well-being of the guests and staff. Our commitment to impeccable hospitality along with the unique blend of India’s culture will ensure that our guests have an unforgettable stay with us.” Taj Lands End has resplendent art, intricate paintings and captivating theme designs at various places in the hotel. For the G20 meetings, they have incorporated traditional Indian fabrics to create an Indie ambience. Cultural activities at the hotel like classical music, dance performances, art and craft exhibitions by local artists are set to delight and captivate guests.

“We are also organizing cooking workshops, food pop-ups, and celebrity dinners with master chefs to provide a glimpse into the culinary secrets of Indian cuisine. Our hotel is a canvas for local artisans to display their exquisite handicrafts, which range from intricate wood carvings and beautiful pottery to colourful textiles and stunning jewellery through various exhibitions,” he adds. “Hosting of major events in the city like the G20 meetings presents a significant opportunity for the hospitality sector. They also put the cities on the global tourist map,” he says.

Rishi Puri, Senior Vice President-Operations, Mayfair Hotels and Resorts, says they have stringent safety protocols in place, and the staff consistently follows the guidelines. “During the G20 summit held in Odisha and the north-eastern region, Mayfair Hotels and Resorts embarked on a



remarkable India-themed beautification journey. Drawing inspiration from the rich cultural tapestry of these regions, the hotel premises were adorned with intricately crafted Odisha artwork and elements reflecting the vibrant traditions of the north-east. This special initiative aimed to immerse guests and delegates in the enchanting beauty of Indian culture, offering a unique and memorable experience during their stay at Mayfair Hotels and Resorts."

The hotels collaborated with local artisans and the talented in-house chefs crafted a diverse menu, highlighting authentic dishes from Odisha and the north-eastern states. Guests were treated to a culinary journey through regional flavours and traditional delicacies. The city administration played a pivotal role in supporting the G20 summit, he said. "They provided invaluable assistance by collaborating closely with the hotel management to ensure seamless logistics, security arrangements, and infrastructure needs."



"For G20, we are leaving no stone unturned, and are conducting internal trainings. We are adhering to strict health and safety protocols"

SOMNATH MUKHERJEE
Senior Vice President (West), Taj
Lands End Mumbai



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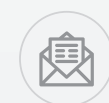
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Many other Hotels like Oberoi and Marriott have welcomed G20 delegates. Other hotels like The Park too have put their best foot forward and made additional efforts in showcasing incredible India in view of the G20 meetings being held across the country. India is gifted with abundant natural aesthetics, that change from region to region, and offers unique experiences to the traveller. As per the Bureau of Immigration, India received 6.19 million Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) during 2022 as compared to 1.52 million in 2021. The Ministry of Tourism has set up a 24x7 Multi-Lingual Tourist Info-Helpline on the toll free number 1800111363 or on a short code 1363 in 12 Languages including 10 international languages (German, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Arabic), Hindi & English for



“During the G20 summit held in Odisha and the north-eastern region, Mayfair Hotels and Resorts embarked on a remarkable India-themed beautification journey. Drawing inspiration from the rich cultural tapestry of these regions, the hotel premises were adorned with intricately crafted Odisha artwork and elements reflecting the vibrant traditions of the north-east”

RISHI PURI

**Senior Vice President-Operations,
Mayfair Hotels and Resorts**

domestic and foreign tourists to provide support service in term of information relating to travel in India.

With G20 meetings this year, foreign tourist arrivals are expected to go up. Well-planned tourism boosts economies and opens up employment opportunities. Indian Hospitality industry provides 10% of the total employment directly and millions indirectly. Hopefully, the sector will report improved figures at the end of FY24, given the tailwinds. **HAI**



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Leading edge

ARVIND SINGH, Secretary (Tourism), shared insights into the huge potential for Tourism.



ARVIND SINGH, Secretary (Tourism)

With India's G20 Presidency, the tourism sector has an unparalleled opportunity to highlight tourism offerings and share India's success stories on the global stage. The government has resolved to develop Tourism in Mission Mode under India's G20 Presidency since December 1, 2022, with focus on convergence and public private partnership. Under India's G20 Presidency, more than 200 meetings are being organized at 59 locations which will give unprecedented opportunity to these destinations to come on the global tourism map. India will consolidate the gains from transformation in connectivity and infrastructure, growing economic power and tremendous improvement in the framework conditions for the growth of tourism in the country to promote and develop tourism in mission mode during Amrit Kaal.

During India's G20 Presidency, the Ministry of Tourism has planned a number of events, engaging not only the government stakeholders but also the travel trade and hospitality sectors. The Ministry of Tourism has already organized two G20 Tourism Working Group meetings in Rann of Kutch (Gujarat) and Siliguri (West Bengal). During the working group meetings, discussions were held on several key priority areas, including Green Tourism, Digitalization, Skills, Tourism MSMEs and Destination

India will consolidate the gains from transformation in connectivity and infrastructure, growing economic power and tremendous improvement in the framework conditions, for the growth of tourism in the country

Management. The next G20 Tourism Working Group meeting is in Srinagar (Jammu and Kashmir).

We are hopeful that the G20 tourism ministers' conference in Goa, due later this year, would focus on sustainable tourism to support the environment and create opportunities for local businesses. India plans to promote green tourism, open up to 50 new tourism destinations, and launch a publicity campaign in overseas markets during its presidency of the G20 this year.

Growth propeller

The Tourism sector has emerged as one of the key drivers of growth for the economy. The travel and tourism sector in India contributed significantly to the country's GDP and in terms of employment, the sector generated 70.04 million jobs directly and indirectly in 2021-22. India is one of the few countries in the Asia Pacific for inbound tourism to recover faster in 2023.



The whole world is experiencing a recovery in Tourism. As per The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) reports Travel & Tourism GDP is set to grow on average by 5.8% annually between 2022 and 2032, outpacing the growth of the overall economy (2.7% per year).

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, India has received 6.19 million foreign tourist arrivals in 2022, with a growth rate of 305.4% as compared to 1.52 million in 2021. The government is taking a 360-degree view for the development of tourism sector in the country. The development of tourism infrastructure has been accompanied with due focus on enhancing rail, road and air connectivity to ensure that the accessibility to tourist destinations is easy from all corners of the country. The Ministry of Tourism has recommended 59 tourism air routes to the Ministry of Civil Aviation, and 51 have already been operationalized.

Visit India Year 2023 initiative was kicked off on 31 January this year and with proper plans and activities

More than one lakh G20 foreign delegates will visit India this year and they will be able to witness the variety, richness and diversity of India's culture, including monuments and festivals

G20 Tourism Working Group discussions have been held on several key areas, including Green Tourism, Digitalization, Skills, Tourism MSMEs and Destination Management

for promoting tourism. More than one lakh G20 foreign delegates will visit India this year, and they will be able to witness the variety, richness and diversity of India's culture, including monuments and festivals.

The government is keen to attract global investment into the tourism and hospitality sector along with investments in tourism infrastructure, technology, skill development, startups and more and actively working towards this. The Global Tourism Investors Summit to be held at New Delhi is focused towards attracting investment in the tourism sector.

The Ministry of Tourism, in coordination with WTTC an organization which works to maximize the inclusive and sustainable potential of the travel and tourism sector by partnering with governments, communities and other stakeholders to drive economic development, create jobs, reduce poverty etc, is organizing WTTC CEO Forum on 21 June 2023 at Goa. I am sure these sessions will lead to meaningful discussions and will have a direct impact on the country's tourism industry. **HAI**

● Destination

Truly Unique: THE RANN OF KUTCH

With its offbeat tourism experiences, spectacular landscapes and thriving events' scene, the Rann of Kutch is a force to reckon with.

BY RIAAN JACOB GEORGE



Champaner



Dhwarkadhish temple



Ghir jungle safari



Sharmishtha Lake Vadnagar

Easily considered as one of the most offbeat tourism experiences in India is the Rann of Kutch. With its ubiquitous festivals, its famous Kutchi cuisine and a thriving scene of art and crafts, the Rann of Kutch is increasingly popular among tourists, both domestic and international. Travel agents that we spoke to affirmed the increasing popularity of this destination among their clientele, largely among those looking for a more immersive cultural experience, those looking to partake in the region's glamps and to enjoy local music and culture. The Great Rann of Kutch is a massive salt marsh of the Thar Desert. It is situated a quick 90-minute drive from Bhuj. Access does, however, require you to stop at the local police station for a permit to access the world's largest salt desert.

Most recently, the Rann of Kutch was in the news for having hosted the first tourism working group meet in February 2023 as part of India's G20 Presidency. During this rendezvous, themes such as Rural Tourism for Community Empowerment and Poverty Alleviation were discussed with different stakeholders. In addition to this, the tourism-centric discussions touched upon themes like green tourism, digitalisation, tourism MSMEs, empowerment of youth and finally effective destination management strategies.

The famous Rann Utsav in Kutch needs no introduction. This festival is spearheaded by the tourism board of Gujarat and spans across several months, usually starting in November. People come here from across the globe to enjoy the unique landscape of the 'white desert'. In fact, this is one of the few places in India known for its exquisite tented accommodation options, effortlessly blended into the landscape. The Rann Utsav sees a host of cultural manifestations like concerts, exhibitions, art showcases in addition to recreated art villages, adventure sports, hiking and food experiences. A recommended itinerary would be to spend a couple of days at the festival soaking in the cultural experiences, enjoying folk music and contributing to local economies, followed by an easy itinerary around the state. Read below our recommendations in Kutch:

KUTCH: THE MUST-DO LIST

Hodko is a small picturesque village known for its unique culture. Interesting to note that in Hodko, the women play an important role in the socio-economic life of the place by their speciality handicrafts such as embroidery, weaving and pottery,



Tent city



Vadnagar Hatkeshwar Mahadev

The Rann Utsav sees a host of cultural manifestations like concerts, exhibitions, art showcases in addition to recreated art villages, adventure sports, hiking and food experiences



Ambaji



Statue of Unity

in vibrant hues for which the region is famous. The village is not only interesting from a generational craftsmanship point of view but also to see how its women have put together a host of social initiatives for education, water conservation and more. The best way to experience Hodko is to stay with a local family and have an immersive experience in the many homestay options available. Another popular tourist destination is **Kala Dungar**, which offers a host of attractions and activities. This hill is just under 500 metres above sea level and offers panoramic vistas of the surrounding region. Don't forget to visit the Dattatreya Temple, dedicated to Lord Dattatreya, which attracts scores of devotees throughout the year, especially in December. A must-visit in Kala Dungar is the Gandhi Nu Gam, which is a handicrafts village. The village is renowned for its Kutchi forms of art like pottery, embroidery and weaving. Here, you can interact with the artisans at work and buy art from them directly, thereby contributing to the local economy.

A short drive from Kala Dungar is the **Kutch Desert Wildlife Sanctuary** and the nearby **Flamingo City** where you will find the famous flamingos. This is one of India's best spots to see flamingos in the wild. It is also termed as Flamingo City, but it is actually an island, which attracts wildlife enthusiasts between October and March to see the pink flamingos. Spend some time at leisure exploring the wildlife sanctuary and to spot local flora and fauna as well as a host of adventure activities like water sports, jet skiing and parasailing. Once you are done with a bit of outdoorsy activity, make sure you drive to the nearby town of **Mandvi**, known for its exquisite heritage and historic landmarks, for example, the Vijay Vikas Palace that dates back four centuries and the Shyamji Krishna Varma Memorial. In Mandvi too you can go up close with artisans who specialise in block printing and embroidery.



Alferd Musuem

Travel agents that we spoke to affirmed the increasing popularity of this destination among their clientele, largely among those looking for a more immersive cultural experience, those looking to partake in the region's glamps and to enjoy local music and culture

If you are still looking for another artsy destination to visit, the traditional Kutchi homes and lanes of **Nirona** art village will absolutely charm you. Here, you can enjoy Nirona's famous art forms—the rogan art, lacquer wood work and copper bell art, traditions that have been passed down from one generation to another. These products are created in the village and sold at local markets, handicraft fairs and Rann Utsav. Interesting to note that Mandvi was a thriving trade and arts hubs in centuries gone by. While it is no more than a sleepy village now, its history is still alive.

At the heart of Kutch's textile industry is the quaint village of **Bhujodi**, a testament of the region's weaving history that goes back centuries. In fact, the village is so famous for its weaves that the style now goes by the monicker of Kutchi weaving. The Indian Government has granted the prestigious GI (Geographical Identification) tag to the Kutchi shawl, which is now being revived and reinterpreted by haute couture designers across India. The village houses over 200 specialised artisans, most of whom are descendants of



Shivrajpur Beach



Somnath



Kalo Dungar

weaver clans. They could take about 10 to 12 days to create one shawl and these are highly prized in the market now. Visitors can go into the village to see the men sitting at the looms, and the women operating the yarn process and keeping the looms ready.

And finally, if you are looking for an easy excursion from Bhuj, make sure to drive down to **Sumrasar** village, located 25 km away. This village is solely dedicated to embroidery and preserves more than three dozen embroidery styles like suff, khareek, paako, Rabari and mutava. The artisans here are largely women. Kutch is also home to some of the region's oldest and most gorgeous temples, some dating back several centuries. Spiritual tourism is an important aspect of the Kutch experience. The Koteswar Temple, the Koteswar Mahadev Temples and the Ambe Dham Temple are just a few names to bookmark, though there are dozens of such heritage temples located across the state.



Dang



Kutch

KALA RAKSHA

One of India's most loved artisanal communities, Kala Raksha was founded in 1993, which went on to create the Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya, the first institute of design for traditional artisans. Kala Raksha is known to produce some of India's best patch work products, proudly made in Kutch. All this is done using only natural raw materials, which translate into clothes and home decor furnishings quite effortlessly. If you are around, look for its British founder Judy Trader, who lives in Kutch, and enjoy a rendezvous with her. **HAI**



Images courtesy:
Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Limited,
Government of Gujarat



MILLETS FOR HEALTH

To create awareness and increase production and consumption of millets, the United Nations, at the behest of the Government of India, declared 2023 the International Year of Millets. Chef Ravi Kant, executive chef, The Lalit, New Delhi, shares some recipes.

Barnyard Millet Risotto

METHOD:

- Take a bowl, add barnyard millet to it, wash it and let it soak for 30 minutes.
- Now take a pan, add some butter.
- As the butter melts post 3-4 seconds, add chopped garlic to it and sauté.
- Now add some chopped onion, leeks and celery and sauté for another 2-3 minutes.
- Then add mushrooms, capsicum and sweet corn and cook for 1-2 minutes.
- Now add soaked barnyard millet to the pan and mix together with all ingredients in the pan.
- Then add some water to it and let it simmer for 5-10 minutes.
- Finish the risotto with cooking cream.

INGREDIENTS:

Barnyard millet: 60 gm	Button Mushroom: 8 gm	Butter: 3 gm
Onion chop: 8 gm	Wild Mushroom: 5 gm	Cooking Cream: 2 gm
Garlic chop: 3 gm	Parmesan cheese: 3 gm	American sweet corn: 10 gm
Leeks Chop: 4 gm	Salt: 2 gm	Capsicum: 10 gm
Celery Chop: 4 gm	Black crushed pepper: 1 gm	



Guacamole Pearl Millet Green Salad

METHOD:

- Take a bowl, add Foxtail millet to it, wash it and let it soak for 30 minutes.
- Now take another bowl, add chopped avocado, jalapeño and romaine lettuce.
- Then add chopped tomatoes, carrots, onions, cabbage and green chilies to it.
- For enhanced flavour, add chopped coriander along with mint leaves with the soaked foxtail millet to the bowl.
- Now add the seasoning, serve it on the plate and drizzle the vinaigrette dressing over the salad (dressing is made as per the recipe given below).

INGREDIENTS:

Avocado: 50 gm	Romaine lettuce: 75 gm	Foxtail: 100 gm
Tomato: 30 gm	Coriander: 2 gm	Green chili: 1 gm
Red onion: 10 gm	Jalapeno: 1 gm	Ginger: 10 gm
Cabbage: 10 gm	Lime juice: 5.9 gm	Black salt: 1 gm



Vinaigrette Dressing

METHOD:

- Take a bowl, add vinegar, lemon juice, honey shallots, garlic, clove and mustard and start whisking the mix.
- Add olive oil slowly and the dressing will be emulsified.
- Check the seasoning and add it to the salad.

INGREDIENTS:

Olive oil: 30 ml	Black pepper: 0.001 gm	Clove: 0.001 gm
Vinegar: 15 ml	Salt: 0.002 gm	Mustard: 1 gm
Lemon juice: 10 ml	Shallots: 1 gm	Herbs: 0.001 gm
Honey: 1 ml	Garlic: 1 gm	



Seizing the G20 Tourism Opportunities

A spate of seminars and discussions are probing the opportunities in the horizon, and how to take advantage of the same. It's necessary to identify the broad sectors where investment is required, and then to break up the sectors into micro segments.

By MP BEZBARUAH

Secretary General, Hotel Association of India



G20 scheduled meetings under India's presidency have now crossed the century, that is, the halfway mark. The way the term G20, which was hardly known in India beyond the elite, has now entered the lexicon of the common man is incredible. The whole range of engagements are by now well known—covering government, business, people in 13 sectoral discussions in Working Groups leading to the Summit in September. Initiated in 1999 after the Asian Financial Crisis it developed, in the wake of the global economic and financial crisis of 2007, it's the "premier forum for international economic cooperation". By now both the content and the reach have expanded much beyond the original formulation as reflected in the 13 sectoral groups. Under India's presidency startups have been added. Fresh from the horrors of Covid-19, no wonder that disaster risk management will be another area of serious discussions. And now in the spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the global south has been associated, with emphasis on what the PM has called "human centric globalisation".

A spate of seminars and discussions are probing the opportunities in the horizon and how to take advantage of the same. One long term benefit is obvious—it provides an opportunity to showcase the variety, richness of tourism attractions and the emerging economic strength of the country to establish a brand presence in key tourism markets which dominate the GDP and trade of the world, and from where 60 per cent of the foreign tourists arrive in this country.

Some features of the G20 initiatives of the Ministry of Tourism will have long-term impact on the

growth of the sector. First, decentralisation of G20 events to far corners of the country from Arunachal Pradesh in the east to the Rann of Kutch in the west has encouraged creation of infrastructure, and opening up possibilities of newer destinations. In the words of Shri Arvind Singh, Secretary in the Ministry, "this is generating a local ripple of positive activity and sentiment which is promising for the tourism sector". It is to be hoped that the infrastructure created will be of durable nature. Such decentralisation may also slowly help to rectify the imbalance in tourism performance in the country with 5/6 states enjoying 50-60 per cent of tourist arrivals. Second, the focus of this decentralisation has been on the people at the grassroots level. All the events showcase local art and craft, cuisine and culture, bringing out the richness and variety of the Indian tourism attractions, providing local income and employment and also strengthening local capacity building.

In the backdrop of a vision for one trillion-dollar tourism economy and 100 million foreign tourist arrivals by 2047, attention has naturally fallen on the huge investment requirements to make that a reality. For the first time, a Global Investors Summit to explore India as a preferred tourism investment destination has been organized. As a preliminary to the meeting, the Union Minister of Tourism held

Decentralisation of G20 events to far corners of the country, from Arunachal Pradesh in the east to the Rann of Kutch in the west, has encouraged the creation of infrastructure



G20 meetings provides an opportunity to showcase the variety, richness of tourism attractions and the emerging economic strength of the country

a series of wide-ranging consultations with the industry and other stakeholders. These are all very well intentioned. However, the basic issues that need attention are broadly known and it will be worthwhile to stay focussed on urgently drawing up an action programme. Some of the pertinent issues can be briefly mentioned.

First, it is necessary to clearly identify the broad sectors where investment is required and then to break up the sectors into micro segments. Thereafter projects on which investments can be made will have to be formulated. For example, it is known that much investment will be required to augment accommodation, civil aviation capacity, MICE facilities, perhaps create good adventure and leisure facilities. The need should be identified and prioritised. The prospective investors should be able to discuss specific project portfolios rather than broad generalities.

Second, the proposed investment summit is intended to showcase India as a "preferred" investment destination. The choice will depend on the overall investment ecosystem in the country in general and in the tourism sector in particular. As a corollary, the entire "ease of doing business" procedures as well as the incentives available should merit a comprehensive assessment to make them internationally competitive. It must start from what is obvious and can be done. The projected

In the backdrop of a vision for one trillion-dollar tourism economy and 100 million foreign tourist arrivals by 2047, attention has naturally fallen on the huge investment requirements to make that a reality

goals of tourist arrivals will require corresponding expansion of accommodation. Indian hospitality has the capacity to invest for such expansion. It has been asking for the necessary incentives like "infrastructure status" and "industry status" to encourage that investment. There is a time lag from investment to completion of the project. Some announcements before the proposed summit will be only logical and appropriate.

Third, it is understandable that while the tourism ministry is receptive to such suggestions the power for such decisions and other incentives to make investment happen lie with other ministries. Tourism ministry has identified 20 ministries which have a key role to play in total tourism development. Therefore, the "convergence" that the Finance Minister outlined in the budget speech should be an effective procedural system sooner than later.

Fourth, it is known that foreign direct investment has also a cost in terms of remittances of capital gains. On the other hand, "atmanirbhar" has been the essence and pride of the resurgent India. It is essential to identify what areas are more suitable for foreign investment and where local investments will be preferred.

Fifth, the first stop for any investment is availability, at one place, of proper information about regulatory processes.

A portal showing real time information on schemes, procedures and programmes would be a very essential part of ease of doing business.

Sixth, as the government policy is very appropriately attuned to decentralised development, the investment opportunities will have to be spread out. Therefore, the states will have a prominent role to play. The states differ widely in capacity, resources, procedural requirements and so on. To develop a proper pan India investment climate, many efforts will have to go into affecting harmonization of the enterprise among the states.

These are only some illustrative examples. Lots of things go into making a proper investment climate. "The most important stage of any enterprise," philosopher Plato had said long back, "is the beginning". That holds good even today. **HAI**



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