

GLOBAL FEATURES

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Global Destinations

A Guide To The World of MICE and Tourism

- CES • ATM 2022 • Sofitel • Sayaji • Singapore
- Be Inspired - Mahesh Bhagwat, IPS



Empowering Readers: Our Most Precious Asset

Dear Friends

There's no doubt that COVID-19 pandemic affected the world's largest tech event CES 2022 as many companies decided not to attend but have virtual shows instead. Many publications, including ours, also decided not to attend in person. The visitor count also came down substantially and the organisers decided to close the show a day early.

But all this did not dampen the spirit of the organisers as the show was held in a hybrid format and the dynamic duo Gary Shapiro, president and CEO, Consumer Technology Association (CTA) owner and producer of CES and Karen Chupka, EVP, CES made sure that CES tasted success with a slew of innovations and product launches at the show while on the other hand health protocols were put in place for in-person attendance, including proof of vaccination, required masking indoors, testing and social distancing measures.

After nearly two years, CES returned 'home' to Las Vegas welcoming well over 40,000 attendees in person, including 1800 global media, across 11 indoor and outdoor venues.

As most countries are opening up their borders including India and normal flight services have started Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2022 has got its timing right and will certainly be able to pull in crowds from across the globe. Similar to 2021 format the live and in-person ATM will be from Monday, May 9-11 and will be followed by the virtual edition taking place a week later from May 17-18. Parallel to this event will be the Arabian Travel Week a 10-day long festival of travel and tourism events taking place in Dubai.

As Singapore becomes quarantine-free from 1st April (all travellers vaccinated and children aged 12 and below will be able to enter Singapore with just a pre-departure Covid-19 test) the airline expects more travellers. There will also be no more quotas on the number of daily arrivals and no entry approvals needed for all vaccinated travellers.

We thought it a great idea to focus on Singapore and interact with the two prominent people from Singapore - GB Srithar, Regional Director, India, Middle East & South Asia at Singapore Tourism Board and Sy Yen Chen, General Manager, Singapore Airlines India to get an insight.

Palliative care is about ensuring better quality of life through pain and symptom management. It addresses physical (such as serious pain), social (disfigurement), psychological (amputation) and spiritual (social isolation) issues and treats the patient and their families. This medical speciality has been one of the most overlooked medical treatments. There are three types of palliative care services available in India - Home care (most common and the cost effective one), Inpatient care and the Outpatient care. Although a teeming majority of the population with chronic illness need palliative care, the sad fact is only 1% of our entire population has access to palliative care or pain management even in the form of homecare. It does require passion and commitment. To know more we interacted with two dynamic and dedicated people - Dr. Prince John, CEO, PallEx and his partner Simoni Binoy

Commissioner of Police Rachakonda - Mahesh Muralidhar Bhagwat IPS, has created a niche for himself not just as a Supercop with a string of awards and medals to his name including the globally renowned 'Trafficking in person' report Hero from US Dept of state but also his unique endeavour as a mentor to Civil Services aspirants across the country - completely free of cost. He has also been actively involved in combating modern slavery. As the multi tasker celebrates his silver jubilee as an IPS officer we thought it an excellent opportunity to get our readers inspired.



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Empowering Readers: Our Most Precious Asset

Tech Event

CES

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Be Inspired

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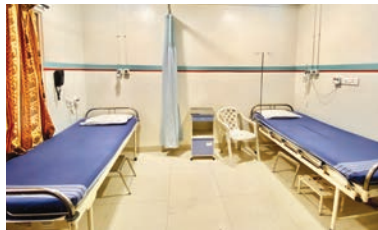
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PallEx takes lead in palliative care giving the much-needed human touch

Palliative care involves not only treating any chronic disease, but also the patient and the family



"You matter because you are you, and you matter to the end of your life. We will do all we can not only to help you die peacefully, but also to live until you die."

- Dame Cicely Saunders

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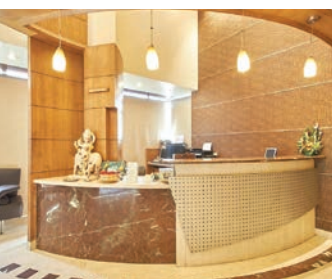
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In spite of COVID threat CES 2022 went live In Las Vegas and tasted success



We were all excited to go CES 2022 (having visited for 15 consecutive years). But the arrival of Omicron made travel a bit problematic so we at Global Technologies, one of Asia's leading tech publication also decided that we won't be physically covering CES 2022 (like many publications) but for our august readers we will update them about new product launches, new tech and major announcements says **Chandragupta Amritkar**.

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and product launches at the show while on the other hand health protocols were put in place for in-person attendance, including proof of vaccination, required masking indoors, testing and social distancing measures.

CES 2022 attracted around 2300 exhibiting companies (including 800+ startups) from across the globe who displayed and launched products featuring innovation across artificial intelligence, automotive technology, digital health, smart home and more. After nearly two years, CES returned 'home' to Las Vegas welcoming well over 40,000 attendees in person, including 1800 global media, across 11 indoor and outdoor venues.

"Innovation came to life this week at CES 2022 – with technologies that will reshape industries and provide solutions to pressing worldwide issues from healthcare to agriculture, sustainability and beyond," said Gary Shapiro. "The CES show floor buzzed with the joy of human interaction and a five-sense innovation experience with products that will redefine our future and change our world for the better."

"CES 2022 furthered global business this week, as our industry gathered – many for the first time in two years – to collaborate, forge partnerships, make deals and advance the economy," said Karen Chupka. "After two years of not being able to connect in person, we were thrilled to welcome our industry back together again face-to-face to experience the latest innovation at CES 2022."

Key Trends at CES 2022

CES 2022 featured transformative technologies that will spur business and shift markets. Key trends included:

Automotive Technology

Vehicle technology was front and center at the show, with



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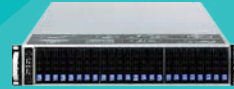
IT Products



Laptops



Tablets



Servers & Workstation

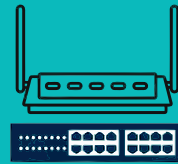


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Phones



Routers & Switches

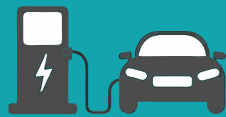


Firewall



4G/5G/Wifi Devices

Others



EV Charging Station



Solar Solution



POS Machines



Self Checkout Kiosk

Annual Production Capacity
1 Million Devices and
Adding ...

Production Linked
Incentive for IT Hardware
& Telecom

OEM / ODM for ICT & IOT Design & Manufacturing Services Company

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more than 190 automotive companies exhibiting, with companies including BMW, Hyundai, Indy Autonomous Challenge, Stellantis and VinFast, Vietnam's first automaker.

Digital Health

The latest in telemedicine, connected health devices and improved health features on wearables were highlights, allowing consumers to take better control of their own health with exhibitors such as Abbott, Essence and Baracoda Daily Healthtech.

Artificial Intelligence

Prevalent throughout the show was artificial intelligence, making products and technologies smarter, more efficient and customizable, advancing nearly every major industry from agriculture to healthcare, automotive, manufacturing and entertainment. Companies included John Deere, featuring the first fully autonomous tractor, and Beyond Honeycomb, with an AI-enabled robot to prep and cook customizable meals.

Startups

More than 800 startups from 19 countries were featured in Eureka Park, the startup hub for CES 2022, including the SkyDrive air taxi; ScenTronix with its EveryHuman algorithmic perfumery and Orbisk, an AI-powered fully automated food waste monitoring system. The Venetian Expo also featured a first-time European Pavilion highlighting the latest tech advancements from Europe.

Keynotes

The CES keynote stage featured leaders across global industries. Top executives delivered addresses including J.H. Han, Vice Chairman, CEO and Head of DX (Device eXperience) division at Samsung Electronics; Mary Barra, chair and CEO of General Motors and Robert B. Ford, president and CEO of Abbott, the first healthcare keynote in CES history. Emmy-award winning FOX Business anchor Liz Claman and owners of Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC), Erin and Faith Ozmen, spoke during the CES Leaders in Technology Dinner.

CES will return to Las Vegas January 5-8, 2023 and many of us will be excited to go again to the Nevada desert.

Gadgets and Innovations@CES 2022

This year again a slew of new product launches were witnessed at CES. Some of the gadgets that caught attention

Asus Zenbook 17 Fold OLED

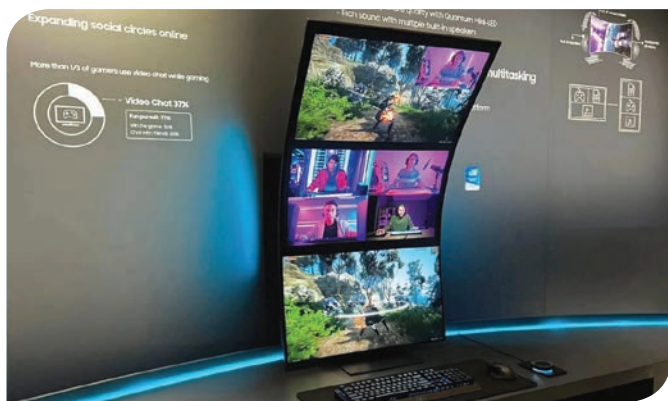
Will foldable PC really be the future? ASUS showcased the ZenBook 17 Fold OLED foldable PC, which when fully unfolded it has a massive 17.3-inches of screen with a 4:3 aspect ratio while



folded, it shrinks down to a 3:2 aspect ratio at 12.5-inches. The laptop delivers the latest 12th Generation Intel Core i7 U-Series processors and supports fast charging of the 75 Wh battery and connections to external displays. Combined with the full-size ASUS ErgoSense Bluetooth keyboard and touchpad, the folding design provides the versatility of multiple modes — PC, Laptop, Tablet, On-Screen Keyboard, Book and Extend. Excited. Unfortunately it will be available only in mid-2022 probably after Computex trade show in Taiwan.

Samsung Odyssey Ark

Our humble computer monitor is all set to get a new image with the Samsung's Odyssey Ark, a new 55-inch curved gaming screen, is a curved display that rotates 90 degrees into portrait orientation for multitasking as well as Zoom calls. While 55-inch screens are commonplace on TVs they will soon be common for monitors. It features a Quantum Dot Mini LED display with 4K resolution, a 16:9 aspect ratio and a sharp curve. With a Height Adjustable Stand one can spin the monitor around from landscape



to portrait. Samsung plans on releasing its new display during the second half of 2022.

Catalyst Total Protection Case for iPhone 13 series

Catalyst an award-winning maker of innovative and stylish protective cases for smartphones and electronic devices launched Total Protection Cases for iPhone 13 Series - iPhone 13, 13 Pro, 13 Pro Max are available in Stealth Black / Marine Blue (this looks more pleasing).

An evolution of Catalyst's iconic waterproof and drop proof cases, these are 500% more waterproof versus the leading competitor. The Total Protection case seals in the device keeping water out up to 33ft (10m) and air-cushioned engineering allows for a drop spec of 6.6ft (2m), +65% higher drop protection than



military standards. Each Total Protection Case is washable with soap and water. The cases can also be cleaned with many EPA approved disinfectants to keep your case clean and safe.

They also introduced the Active Defense Case for the 41mm and 45mm Apple Watch Series 7 which is both shock and scratch resistant. An innovative Aqua Drainage System allows for water

flow, whether users are caught in the rain or swimming lengths in the pool. Catalyst also released a Screen Protector for the Apple Watch Series 7.

Health tech at its best

Health tech was again a major highlight at CES with quite a few start-ups revealing just launched/futuristic products. Some of the prominent ones were - Abbott Laboratories (ABT) promoted devices like its FreeStyle Libre system, the world's smallest, thinnest continuous glucose monitor - a small wearable sensor and smartphone app for diabetes patients to continuously monitor their glucose levels; SelfCare One is focused on providing personalized skin and wellness serums; Elidah revealed a new pelvic floor treatment called Elitone, aimed at combating incontinence; BioSense developed a ketone monitor and mobile app; Oral-B



iO10 electric toothbrush; Omron Healthcare displayed devices like HeartGuide, the first-ever wearable blood pressure monitor in the form of a wristwatch and activity tracker and remote patient monitoring services; Startup firm Siren is developing washable smart socks to remotely monitor diabetes patients for signs of inflammation; Vivoo a home wellness tracker analyzes the user's urine providing nutrition advice; Cubtales wearable therapeutics product deploys light therapy for pain management, treatment of soft tissue injury, wrinkles and acne.

A lot of new electric vehicles were announced at CES: Chevy Silverado EV; Mercedes-Benz Vision EQXX; BMW iX M60; the aerodynamic Chrysler Airflow. Quite a few smartwatches were also launched - Garmin Venu 2 Plus Smartwatch; Garmin Vivomove Sport Hybrid Fitness Tracker; Razer smartwatch and an updated version of the Skagen Falster.



Our values and passion for delivering world-class designs keep us motivated



Many corporate are understanding the importance of user experience and have started incorporating it. A Hyderabad based company Divami has since the last 13 years helped several organisations ideate, design and develop products and applications that enhance user experience. Led by the dynamic duo **Naveen Puttagunta, CEO and Prathima Inolu, Chief Designer & Executive Director, Divami** has completed over 180 projects across numerous industries. In an e-interaction with Global Features, they highlighted the need of design and their companies plans. **Excerpts**

What was the idea behind creating Divami Design Labs?

Divami was founded in 2008 when we turned a floundering product startup into a successful services organization providing UX and UI. We created a service

offering for the rest of the world. Since then, our brand, services, and commitment to our work have evolved. Our values and passion for delivering world-class designs keep us motivated.

How do you view the penetration of design and development concepts in India?

Compared to when we started our journey, people have started giving utmost importance to design and development. We feel excited when we meet with decision-makers or entrepreneurs who come to us because they understand our expertise and allow us to make creative decisions for them. However, we know that, at least in India and the Middle East, the UX UI processes have not reached their full potential yet.

How can good design help in the growth of a company's business?

Contrary to popular belief, features are not enough to get users to adopt your platform. The biggest challenge is identifying user requirements and their behavioral patterns, their preference of interaction with their multiple devices, be it voice, gesture, GPS based, etc. With the evolution of technology, users' interactions with different devices have increased manifold, and getting the right balance between user experience & features has always been our motivating challenge. Augmented reality has been a significant influencer. Designing connected, ubiquitous experiences across multiple devices is a challenge we look forward to. If you want new customers, want them to stay with you for the longest time, you have to offer them the ultimate user experience. With user experience, you must make their lives easier by allowing them to do their job faster and better.

What are your main focus areas, and who is your target audience?

We are a UX UI Design and Design-led development Agency providing services to Technology Software Products, B2B SaaS Platforms, Enterprise Digital Transformation Projects, Consumer

Applications, and eCommerce Marketplaces. Our primary markets are the US, India, Middle East, and Europe. We also complement our Design Services with design-led UI & Mobile App development services.

Can you highlight some of your major projects?

In the past 13 years of journey, we have worked with clients ranging from start-ups to SMEs to big enterprises. And, all of them are equally important for us. Some of our notable clients are HCL, SAP, Andhra government, Spiceworks, PMM, Google, Piramal, Robi Axiata, etc.

How do you view the hospitality segment for your work?

Interestingly, the hospitality sector is one of the few industries that has understood the importance of user experience. With digitization and the advent of AR/VR, big hospitality players are also coming up with their digital platforms and mobile apps that can help travelers book experiences, raise complaints, provide feedback, etc. Naturally, many big hospitality players have reached out to us, and we have partnered with them successfully to deliver a 5-star user experience.

What are your expansion plans, and where do you foresee the company in the next three years?

We desire to build a top-notch Design Studio, and our determination to be recognized as one of the best globally has paid off. Today, we are recognized as one of the leading UX/UI Design Agencies globally. In the next three years, our goal is to be the top design and development agency globally. We have set ourselves some aggressive growth targets and are confident that we will be able to achieve all of them with the current team, structure, and plan in place.



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Sayaji Pune provides numerous opportunities for guest delight



Ajay Kanojia

Continued success of a hotel runs on two pillars – the GM and the Chef. Sayaji Hotel Pune has created a reputation of excellent service accompanied by delicious food. The excellent ambience and spacious rooms with warm hospitality make it a desirable property for both leisure and MICE. Taking a step ahead **Ajay Kanojia, the dynamic GM at Sayaji Hotel, Pune** has recently introduced the studio rooms with a view to attract long staying guests. On the other hand, the hotel also has a **culinary artist Sandeep Bhandari, Sous Chef** who specialises in preparing delicacies and styling the dishes especially deserts. I and my family had several opportunities to relish his dishes as well as witness his creativity.

Ajay Kanojia has been a driving force throughout the covid time and making sure the hotel and the staff survive the tough period. In a tête-à-tête with our editor **Chandragupta Amritkar** he spoke about his hotel and his passion. **Excerpts**



Covid truly is changing hotel business be it redesigning, SOPs, F&B options. How do you view the future of hospitality business and the most challenging issues you are currently facing?

Hospitality seems to be moving back to pre-covid levels. Though the pandemic has a long lasting effect but the market, post third wave seems to be promising as the moment and pace of guest flow was not completely stopped as in case of earlier two waves. With constructive government policies and affirmative response from corporate the industry is already showing positive signs. The major challenges are of staffing, increasing material costs, no relaxations in taxes and licenses.

What is the USP of the property and any WOW factors?

The major USP of this property is linked to the serving the travellers in true spirit. Just as our logo identity symbol is banyan tree which provide shelter to travellers in ancient times. In modern world we also provide care with warmth making them comfortable. The location of the property itself is the USP as we are the first 5 star hotel to welcome travellers coming from Mumbai and right on National highway. The wow factor always vary from person to person, as for one fast service is wow and for another it can be car parked at night gets washed the next day morning. Sayaji Pune provides numerous opportunities for guest delight or wow factors.

With competition on the rise what differentiates your hotels from the rest?

Being closest to one of India's largest ICT Hub and easily accessible from Mumbai gives us the first edge. Add to this the kind of facilities we have – inventory size (234 rooms), room size, F&B outlets, large lawn spaces, gym and spa gives us an upper hand in all hospitality needs. Apart from weddings and MICE we have hosted Film and TV crews, sports groups etc.

Experienced your new studio room. What is the idea behind it?

That's turning out to be a great success. Main reasons to have a studio room is for expats and long staying IT professionals. When we say home away from home, for longer staying guest we have provided small kitchen facilities, microwaves, induction with chimney, fridge, washing machine etc, making their long stay comfortable. The studio room has an interconnecting room in case of family.

How do you foresee MICE and weddings in future?

With government easing the restrictions we are observing great flow of queries for weddings and MICE. The events which were not been happening since two years due to pandemic, will go now in full swing.



What inspires you to work in hospitality sector?

Every guest is new and every day is a learning process. I started with F&B background but my passion for this profession and my own keen interest motivated me to learn other elements of hospitality and pay attention to even minute details. Being focused on all the aspects of hospitality is what inspires me every day.

Being a well-known GM, what advice would you like to share with budding hospitality professionals?

Our hospitality sector has seen a drastic setback during the pandemic but anything that goes down also bounces back strongly. So be positive in tough situations is something which every budding hospitality professional must imbibed in themselves. Also be passionate for what you do.

For fresher's it is all about learning the function of your role firstly and after a couple of years start asking to be exposed to new areas – thus shaping your career.



F&B at its best



With a strong F&B the hotel has been able to attract repeat clientele and MICE business. "We have always tried to maintain the quality and our GM always tells us that good gastronomy not only attracts guest but also they are our ambassadors," said **Sandeep Bhandari, Sous Chef** (recently transferred to Effotel by Sayaji Dehradun).

We enjoyed the numerous dishes and must admit the quality and the taste of food was superb. We relished breakfast and lunch at Portico, Sayaji Pune's flagship restaurant that offers all day dining. Relished a musical program at the hotels poolside restaurant – TurQue. The dinner was an experience. Room service was extremely good with perfect timing.

Chef Sandeep truly took us on a culinary journey on the second night when we decided to have room service. Starting with chaat - Palak patta chaat, Sev puri, Dahi puri followed by starters, Bhune mirch ka paneer tikka, Tandoori subz hariyali. The main dishes were Veg- dal makhani, Veg diwani handi, Steamed rice and assorted rotis. The desserts included the chef's specialty - blue berry cheese cake.

To gives us a taste of the bakery items Chef Sandeep prepared a takeaway comprising of some yummy bakery items – pastries, muffins, croissants and chocolates for us to carry back to Mumbai. It was packed expertly in small boxes so there was no spill over.



Enrise by Sayaji, Nashik

Centrally located Banqueting Hotel



Atharva Shirude

It was thanks to my good friend Dinesh Dahiya, Vice President - Sales & Revenue management, Sayaji Group, that I decided to pay a visit to their new hotel in Nashik (Nashik recently got its first Sayaji Hotel - Enrise by Sayaji). The Sayaji brand is fast expanding across India (currently

13 Hotels across 10 Cities with 1400+ Keys) with 3 hotel brands – Sayaji, Effotel by Sayaji, and Enrise by Sayaji.

Enrise by Sayaji is well located in the centre of the city. Having just 38 rooms (but each room being quite roomy), this property with huge banqueting spaces plans to build its reputation as one of the best MICE and wedding venues in Nashik.

On entering what catches your eyes is the spacious lobby with sufficient sofas for visitors and a nice coffee shop (Cafe Calido) serving hot and cool beverages as well as snacks and chocolates. Check in was quick and I proceeded to my room on 4th floor.

The hotel recently opened its bar - Celestia Lounge Bar targeting the young crowd. They also have a Multicuisine Restaurant. While the food is quite tasty, the in room service can be a notch better. Missed the opportunity to interact with the chef.

The banquet rooms are the highlight of the property with the first floor exclusively for only vegetarian banquets. The Allura Banquet Hall located on ground floor is spread over 4300 Sq.ft. and can accommodate 200 to 250 persons. The Admira Banquet Hall located on first floor is spread over 7500 Sq.ft. and can accommodate up to 550 people. The Aspira Banquet Hall is a pillar less, A/C hall with seating for 400 persons. For smaller meetings (75 to 80 persons), training programmes, and conferences there's the Vallabh Conference Hall/Rooms and Ved Conference Hall/Rooms (up to 60 people). The Roof Top Party Lawn is on the sixth floor.

The area surrounding the hotel takes care of parking needs for such huge banqueting areas.

To know more about the property and plans we spoke with **Atharva Shirude, Owner, Enrise by Sayaji, Nashik** as well as real estate developer and a hospitality enthusiast. Excerpts

What made you enter hospitality business?

Hospitality has always been a warm feeling for me, after spending nearly three decades in Nashik doing real estate development, I somehow felt that Nashik needs a facility with a class of the art banquet facility. This motivated me enter into the hospitality sector and inspired me to build a facility which can cater to the ever increasing demand of banquets including stay and quality F&B in Nashik city.

What made you tie-up with Sayaji?

I believe that promoting Indian businesses would be a boon for our country's development. With this belief the first name that came to my mind was Sayaji Hotels - known for their hospitality and food as its strength. So for me it was a no brainer to shake hands with this group.

What are your USPs?

Enrise by Sayaji, Nashik comes with the bouquet of features and uniqueness which differentiates it from others. To name a few – Currently the largest banquet property in Nashik with 5 banquets and capacities ranging from 50 to 600, Pillar less Square Banquets, Uniquely made 'Celestia' lounge, with the astronomical theme, State of the art fine-dine restaurant 'Momentt' with one of its own warm vibe and Rooms with urban and niche features. Add to this its centrally located and one of the few top rated hotels in Nashik with connectivity to the city and highway within in minutes' drive.

What is the potential for hospitality business in Nashik?

Nashik being the wine and onion capital of India, is blessed with calm weather round the year. This has attracted many industrial conglomerates to start their business in Nashik, along with the ever increasing startups making it a hot destination for investments and ventures. Additionally, the enormous agriculture produce makes it a prominent export destination along with the legacy of pilgrimage. The current and future of the hospitality in Nashik seems to be bright long lasting with many citizens looking for a comfortable stay and constant increase in banqueting demand.



I think we could not have got a better location for the property

Lady GMs are few and rare in the hospitality sector, so when I came to know that ibis Pune Hinjewadi had a new lady GM, Sheryl de Sa, and that too who had moved from Goa, my curiosity increased and I decided to make it a point to catch up with her. And I was not disappointed. A career spanning over 17 years of Hospitality, Sheryl de Sa has been associated with Accor for last 6 years and has worked across key properties of Accor Group including Novotel Goa and ibis Styles Goa Calangute. Management and Business Leadership. Interacting with the dynamic, innovative **Sheryl de Sa, GM, ibis Pune Hinjewadi** was indeed a pleasure. Excerpts



Sheryl de Sa



How did you enter the hospitality industry?

I graduated in Science, Nutrition and Dietetics from Goa College of Home Science, Panjim. In Goa hospitality and tourism is big so it was no brainer for me to opt for this segment. Initial years were tough and had the opportunity of cross training and experiencing many departments but over the years sales and marketing became my core strength.

How do feel about the Pune market?

It's such a fantastic city. Pune market has a lot to offer for tourists as well as corporate. Pune has a large influx of travellers be it for business, education or leisure purposes and good hotels will always be in demand. I think with many existing hotels and quite a few in the pipeline it is the place to be.

What are ibis Pune Hinjewadi USPs?

This is our group's third property in Pune and I think we could not have got a better location for the property. It's the only hotel of international repute in this region. A recognised brand name for both domestic and international travellers. We are located just opposite Wipro Technologies and between Phase I and II of Hinjewadi IT Park. Hinjewadi is already the hub for the IT in Pune with all the top ICT companies having their presence and located within a 10 minute drive - International Biotech Park, MNCs like Infosys, Tech Mahindra, Wipro, Accenture, IBM etc. So we are able to attract quality clientele.

What are the facilities?

The hotel has 136 modern, sound proof rooms with all necessary amenities. The rooms feature the signature Sweet Bed bedding

concept by ibis. We offer complimentary high speed WI-FI access. For those who are more familiar with using mac PC we have two of them in the lobby. We have a nice open lawn for guests to enjoy the evening with a drink from the bar. Then a fitness center for fitness enthusiasts.

For food enthusiasts the hotel features its signature 'Spice It' restaurant with the cuisine prepared from the freshest locally sourced ingredients by our Chef. The Chur Chur Paratha is a must along with Dal Makhni and Raita.

What about the meeting spaces?

Ours being a business-friendly location we do have suitable meeting facilities- two meeting rooms equipped with state-of-the-art conferencing facilities that can cater up to 85 delegates. MICE has started to pick up in a good way. Do you see that chai ka thela in the lawn? This thela was lying ideal and I thought why not convert it into a utility item. So now for MICE event guests to give them a feel of a healthy roadside chai as well as some bhel puri/ chattr we use it. (I had the pleasure of enjoying the tasty bhel and felt she is truly an innovative GM with an eye for detail).



What are your plans in near future?

With the pandemic, though I hope it will disappear soon, I look at some of the positives for my business – a shift of segmentation. When this hotel opened it was mainly a business hotel but during covid it being a leisure and staycation hotel – infact in the long run for weekends we will surely keep getting guests for staycation. Also we have plans to have a wedding venue in the long run.



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PallEx: India's first private palliative centre for all chronic illness



Dr. Prince John

Palliative care is about ensuring better quality of life through pain and symptom management. It does require passion and commitment. Had the pleasure of interacting with two dynamic and dedicated people - **Dr. Prince John, Medical Director, PallEx and Co-founder Simoni Binoy** who shed more light on Palliative care. Excerpts



Simoni Binoy

Palliative care is quite new in India - can you enlighten our readers?

Palliative care aims at improving quality of life of patients and families suffering from any chronic illness. It addresses physical (such as serious pain), social (disfigurement), psychological (amputation) and spiritual (social isolation) issues and treats the patient and their families. This medical speciality has been one of the most overlooked medical treatments. There are three types of palliative care services available in India - Home care (most common and the cost effective one), Inpatient care and the Outpatient care. Although a teeming majority of the population with chronic illness need palliative care, the sad fact is only 1% of our entire population has access to palliative care or pain management even in the form of homecare. Quite a few states have palliative care policies in place but implementation is skewed. It still continues to be a neglected speciality mainly as it's not a financially rewarding model as well as lack of palliative training even in medical curriculum and awareness.

What are the most challenging aspects as well as most rewarding aspects of your work?

The most challenging aspect is spreading the awareness about need of palliative care, convincing patients and families because they need to look at palliative care especially in terminal illness. I find it most rewarding when I can help a patient who is suffering by providing the medication and the emotional support required.



Off late we have been receiving patients who are looking up online and when doctors are referring patients directly to us that somewhere makes me feel rewarded for all the hard work we have put for PallEx. Although it's just a tip of the iceberg but still it's a beginning.

How would you like to see palliative care develop in India and what role is PallEx playing?

Train more Doctors in palliative care, simplify opioid access policies, educate people about palliative care through press, social media and other avenues. Also government should train more health workers, ensure palliative care policies are implemented in all government, private, PHCs and train anganwadi workers for its robust implementation. Most of the palliative centres in India focus only on cancer patients. We need to have more centres that cater to any chronic illness including cancer. We at PallEx has gone against the NGO format and developed India's first private palliative centre which caters to all chronic illness. PallEx aims at opening centres in tier 2 and tier 3 cities where palliative care is hardly available. We have also started Aveksha Elder Home.

Aveksha Elder Home?

We realised that most of the eldercare facilities, although few of them are really good, lack good medical support. My speciality is in palliative and geriatric care, hence for us getting into this space was the next step. We have a robust medical set up, hence the same set of Doctors are at Aveksha and at PallEx thereby providing continuity of care. Also, we wanted to set up a facility which will provide them a luxurious environment which is spacious and takes care of all their needs. We realised people who have had a good luxurious life will never be interested in spending their last good years of life cooped up in a small room.

That's great. But you will need good investors?

Yes, we will need investors as ours is a boot strapped venture. If we have to grow organically and exponentially, we need like-minded investors who believe in palliative care. We need investments to market PallEx, ideate and organically chalk out a program which benefits the end customers.



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There will be dedicated sessions for Saudi Arabia and India on the Global Stage this year



Danielle Curtis

As most countries are opening up their borders including India as normal flight services have started Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2022 has got its timing right and will certainly be able to pull in crowds from across the globe. Similar to 2021 format the live and in-person ATM will be from Monday, May 9-11 and will be followed by the virtual edition taking place a week later from May 17-18.

As technology has started to play a vital role in all industries more so after the pandemic, hospitality industry is no exception and innovations are expected to be showcased – IoT (internet of things), AI (artificial intelligence), VR/AR (virtual reality/augmented reality) etc.

As the show gets ready to open its doors to the hospitality fraternity next month we at **Global Features** thought it ideal to do an e-interview with **Danielle Curtis, Exhibition Director ME – Arabian Travel Market**. Excerpts

What can visitors expect this year?

Under the theme, ‘The future of international travel and tourism’ ATM 2022 will host more than 1,500 exhibiting companies and from over 90 countries, spread over 10 exhibition halls. Over 20,000 attendees are expected.

Previously called Travel Forward, the revamped and rebranded ATM Travel Tech event will take place on the ATM Travel Tech Stage, hosting seminars, debates and presentations as well as the inaugural ATM Draper-Aladdin Start-up Competition.

The dedicated ARIVALDubai@ATM forum, meanwhile, will cover current and future trends for tour operators and attractions, focusing on growing business through marketing, technology, distribution, thought leadership and executive-level connections.

ATM will once again play an integral role in Arabian Travel Week, a festival of events dedicated to enabling travel professionals from all over the world to collaborate and shape the recovery of the Middle East travel industry through exhibitions, conferences, breakfast briefings, awards, product launches and networking events.

Other highlights include:

Returning to the Global Stage this year are two dedicated sessions for the hotel industry. The first session will dive into the future of the region’s hotels and the second session will investigate the current trends and what motivates guests in 2022.

Dedicated sessions for key source markets India and Saudi Arabia:



There will be dedicated sessions for Saudi Arabia and India on the Global Stage this year, followed by informal networking opportunities with buyers from these key markets.

Aviation – Experts in the industry talk about trends, strategies and the Middle East market and what challenges and opportunities they face.

UNWTO will be returning this year with a dedicated session on the Global Stage. A range of topics will also make their debut on the seminar programme this year including sports, retail and city tourism as well as the Future of Transport.

What’s in store for participants in the start-up competition?

The inaugural ATM Draper-Aladdin Start-up Competition, which will take place on the ATM Travel Tech Stage on Tuesday 10 May 2022, will see 15 start-ups go head-to-head. Spanning



ibis Pune Hinjewadi: Your Home Away From Home

Strategically located between Phase I and II of Hinjewadi IT Park it provides easy access to business parks.

With 136 contemporary rooms featuring signature Sweet Beds, complimentary WIFI, 2 meeting rooms, a restaurant with alfresco seating and the renowned Hub bar. ibis Pune Hinjewadi becomes an ideal choice for business travellers and leisure staycations.

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the segments of travel and transportation, hospitality tech, and experiences and attractions, each pitch will last for five minutes and will be followed by a five-minute Q&A session with ATM's panel of industry judges.

The overall winner will receive a minimum of \$30,000 up to a maximum of \$500,000 investment, a DASC Certificate and the chance to appear on Tim Draper's TV show, Meet the Drapers, where they compete for another \$500,000 while gaining access to a crowdfunding network of 12 million viewers. A further two runners up will receive the DASC Certificate only.

The aim of the ATM Draper-Aladdin Start-up Competition is to help intensify the race to a sustainable future for travel and tourism. In conjunction with AladdinB2B and Draper Associates, ATM 2022 will showcase technologies and innovations from the brightest minds in travel, transportation, hospitality, experiences and attractions.

In addition to a place in the competition, each finalist will have the opportunity to invest in a pod located in ATM 2022's start-up area; access to a booking and matchmaking platform powered by AladdinB2B and Draper VC, which can be used to arrange meetings with prospective investors; and global exposure through ATM Travel Tech's various marketing platforms.

The competition's panel of expert judges will also be on hand share their extensive start-up experience, offering tips on the most effective fundraising methods, the biggest challenges faced by new ventures, and the best channels to reach investors.

Is Emirates extending any discounts for ATM 2022 participants?

Yes, as ATM's official airline partner, Emirates has extended a promotional code to attendees of the ATM 2022 in-person show in Dubai, when they travel between 4th and 17th May. For more information, please visit: <https://www.wtm.com/atm/en-gb/help/venue-and-travel.html>

What COVID precautions will be in place for ATM 2022?

UAE remains one of the most Covid-secure countries on the planet, with consistently low case rates and robust measures to ensure tourists' safety at every stage of their visit. Like its neighbouring emirates, Dubai is committed to maintaining the highest hygiene and safety standards. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) has endorsed its pandemic management, awarding the city a 'Safe Travels' stamp.

Wearing masks in outdoor areas is optional but remains mandatory in public indoor spaces. Social distancing has been relaxed but the one-metre physical distancing between worshippers in mosques and places of worship still applies.

We encourage all guests to frequently check country entry requirements including visa regulations and latest travel guidelines with their airlines and the country of destination's travel authority before travelling.

Arabian Travel Week: A global hub of innovation

Arabian Travel Week is a 10-day long festival of travel and tourism events taking place in Dubai as the international travel industry will come together to take part in numerous events. The travel events that are part of Arabian Travel Week are: the live Arabian Travel Market exhibition, luxury travel event ILTM Arabia, travel technology exhibition Travel Forward, ARRIVAL Dubai for the tours and attractions sector, regional Buyer Forums, and ATM Virtual, the online edition of the ATM exhibition.

ILTM Arabia is an essential sales and marketing opportunity for travel specialists. ILTM Arabia is the hub for curated meetings for the Middle East region's most exclusive and sought-after travel designers, and the world's finest hospitality brands.

ARRIVAL @ ATM Dubai features sessions covering digital, tech, distribution and more for operators of tours, activities, attractions and experiences. Designed for the entire In-Destination Experiences Industry, from the small experiences operator to the largest attractions in the world.

While Arabian Travel Week takes place from 9-19 May, ILTM Arabia will be held from 10 - 11 May



With our guests, we want to be laser focused on guest satisfaction and experience, and drive loyalty



Sandeep Walia

Marriott properties are seeing a rapid growth across Middle East with more than 100 properties in pipeline. Despite COVID crisis in 2021 Marriott International added 20 new properties to the region's portfolio. One of the pillars towards this success is **Sandeep Walia, Chief Operating Officer for Marriott International in the Middle East (including Egypt and Turkey)**. A seasoned hospitality professional Sandeep has been with the group since 2005. With Arabian Travel Market, Dubai scheduled in May we thought it best to interact with one of the top and well known hospitality professional in Middle East. **Excerpts**



The COVID-19 crisis has affected almost all the global sectors especially the hospitality industry. What is your recovery plan as COVID gets subdued?

We have been extremely pleased with our performance across the Middle East. Following a difficult period in 2020, the industry has made significant progress over the past year. As a business, we saw meaningful recovery across the Middle East in 2021. The region's forward-looking approach, on-going government initiatives and innovative support schemes for the private and hospitality sectors have helped drive resilience across the market.

As we look at the travel industry today, we're seeing a growing confidence in travel, customers are actively planning future travel and global research showed that those planning to travel had increased to 78 % by the end of December. Our teams continue to maintain their innovative spirit and remain prepared to adapt to evolving consumer trends in 2022.

Our recovery will continue to focus on driving loyalty, guest experience, our associates, supporting our owners and further expanding our footprint across the region. Looking ahead, I am incredibly optimistic and look forward to continued recovery in 2022 and the prospects for meaningful growth in the coming years.

How do you view ATM, Dubai 2022 going in person?

Marriott International has a longstanding relationship with the

Arabian Travel Market and we look forward to the event every year. The event provides us a fantastic opportunity for us to connect with regional and global buyers in person, especially following the challenging two years we have all had as an industry.

Relationships are extremely important in this travel industry and this event gives us the chance to continue on building existing relationships but also developing new ones. We are excited to be able to do this in person during ATM.

What will you be displaying at ATM and any special announcements?

ATM is a dynamic platform on which we can showcase our brands and properties. The focus on our brands is important, especially for new customers, because it gives us a stage to present our distinct lifestyle brands.

Relationships are extremely important in this industry and especially in this part of the world. While we get the opportunity to network and discuss business at ATM, it also gives us the opportunity to celebrate our relationship with our partners. We thank them for their ongoing support and being committed and loyal to working with Marriott International. We also reinforce our commitment to strengthening our partnership with them and working together to drive success.

Where do you see Marriott hotels in next 3 years?

We are incredibly optimistic about Marriott's future in the Middle East. This is an important region for the company, and we see opportunities to further grow our portfolio in this market.

We want to continue putting ourselves in a greater position to succeed and support our vision of being the Region's Favourite Travel Company. In order for us to do that, we will continue to focus on what we do best - serving our guests and taking care of our people. With our guests, we want to be laser focused on guest satisfaction and experience, and drive loyalty. With our associates, the focus will remain on culture and providing learning and development opportunities for them to further grow in their careers.



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I believe this is the right time for Indians to visit as attractions will be less crowded



GB Srithar



As Singapore aims to regain its position as a leading tourist center, a nucleus for business and MICE and an aviation hub, we thought it best to interact with the never ageing, zestful, lively **GB Srithar, Regional Director, India, Middle East & South Asia at Singapore Tourism Board**. Excerpts

How has COVID affected Singapore tourism?

Never in the history of ST have we seen anything like this travel virtually standstill – not even during SARS, which hit us in 2003. COVID has been handled by our government as rationally as possible taking plenty of steps to mitigate the effect of COVID. We had a tourism action committee set up, Singapore clean and many other initiatives were implemented in a very co-ordinated manner. While I am happy that Singapore is opening its borders for fully vaccinated travellers without quarantine, we are still moving cautiously with certain safety precautions.

So will this attract many Indian tourists?

The timing is perfect as it coincides with Indian summer holiday season and Indians looking forward to a nice sweet holiday with family. Through travel, trade and airlines feedback, we know that there is a pent up travel demand and Singapore is one of the top-of-mind destinations for a lot of Indian travellers. We are expecting a substantial number of Indian tourist arrivals this year, though it may take some time to reach the pre-covid levels.

We also recently launched ‘SingapoReimagine Reopening campaign’ across India to woo Indian tourists back to Singapore. I



believe this is the right time for Indians to visit as attractions will be less crowded.

Can you give some statistics?

India has always been one of the key source markets for Singapore. In 2019, Singapore welcomed 1.41 million visitors, making India the third largest source market after China and Indonesia. India was also the number one source market for cruise holidays and a top source for MICE travel in Singapore.

While in 2021 Singapore tourism industry which saw the lowest international tourist arrivals since data was kept in the 1970, Indians made up the second-largest group of visitors by nationality to the island with 54,000 arrivals.

What new and interesting attractions can Indians look forward too?

Plenty my friend. Firstly the Museum of Ice Cream will be a great attraction for families and ice-cream





enthusiasts where guests will be able to enjoy a variety of ice cream treats during a guided tour. The SkyHelix Sentosa, Singapore's highest open-air panoramic ride will be a thrill for youngsters.

This gondola ride rotates 35 metres above ground along a vertical helix-like structure. For outdoor lovers and cycling enthusiasts a new cycling/hiking route has been created. The first phase of the Round Island Route has opened on the eastern side of Singapore, covering a total of 75km. At Resorts World Sentosa guests can spend time at Southeast Asia's largest LEGO Certified Store spanning over 3000+ square feet. Then we have the Once Upon A Time On The Orient Express offering visitors a chance to embark on a fascinating journey through the history of the Orient Express - featuring two original train carriages along with 300 heritage items.

What about MICE and corporate travel?

Corporate travel should start picking up soon. We are currently fine-tuning the experiences for meetings and incentives as well as refreshing our offerings for MICE and cruise travel.



Sy Yen Chen

Singapore is now quarantine-free for fully vaccinated travellers

It was at the first in person tourism event that I had the pleasure of interacting with the dynamic and aviation enthusiast **Sy Yen Chen, General Manager, Singapore Airlines India** and the charming delightful **Anushka Gurnaney, PR Manager, Singapore Airlines India**.

They shared some great news for Indian agents and travellers – the arrival of Airbus

A380 to Mumbai. “Pandemic impacted International travel bringing all passenger aircrafts to a standstill. Later bubble flights and domestic travel with restrictions were started. But I believe our airline was most impacted as we do only International travel. I am sure with us bringing back our iconic Airbus A380 to Mumbai after a long absence of 723 days we will be flying many Indians to Singapore. Our A380 super jumbo has a loyal fan base in India,” Said Sy Yen Chen.

As Singapore becomes quarantine-free from 1st April (all travellers vaccinated and children aged 12 and below will be able to enter Singapore with just a pre-departure Covid-19 test) the airline expects more travellers. There will also be no more quotas on the number of daily arrivals and no entry approvals needed for all vaccinated travellers.



Catering to all types of clientele Singapore Airlines remains one of the few airlines to offer five classes of service – suites, first class, business class, premium economy class, and economy class. Singapore Airlines Suites are only provided on the Airbus A380-800 whose service has now started from Mumbai.

While talking on the inflight F&B service Sy Yen Chen said, “Naturally we have Indian and vegetarian options for august guests. We have a variety of international culinary too- planned by celebrity chefs from across the globe. In addition for our premier passengers (Suites, First and Business class) we have ‘Book the Cook’ service where specific dishes may be selected in advance from an extensive menu.”

The airlines renowned KrisFlyer frequent flyer programme (a Star Alliance Partner) has attracted many Indian travellers. Apart from earning and redeeming miles members can also earn miles with 200+ partners in air and on ground.

Bharat Khel Mahotsav aims at a nationwide sports and health fitness celebration day



Navin Shetty

Navin Shetty, a dynamic personality and well known for his sports fondness recently came up with a slew of initiatives for the sports fraternity. He has also written to our Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi on the potential for sports and opportunities that have arisen. He proposed an interesting concept "Pradhan Mantri Khel Arogya Abhiyan" for further development of the sports ecosystem at the core grassroots level. In a thought-provoking conversation **Navin Shetty, Founder, Krish Sports Foundation** spoke about his pet project. **Excerpts**

Why this keen interest in developing sports in India?

Are you aware that India has the worst population to medals ratio at the Olympics? India has won only 35 Olympic medals till date and stands at 53rd position in all-time Olympic medal tally. I believe sports in India has enormous potential for expansion. Only we must find a method to include sports into our everyday life in order to take advantage of India's demographic dividend.

What are the opportunities?

Indians have a great passion for sports and thus there is plenty of potential for sports to grow. With India's demographic advantage, the country can play a pivotal role in the expansion of the sports industry. In order to achieve this, we must focus on grassroots growth and performance excellence through a forward-thinking vision and programme that incorporates the whole sports ecosystem.

But opportunities are not limited to just playing sports. One can look at involving the tourism and medical fraternity too as I believe there is tremendous business potential for sports tourism and sports medicine. Have you noticed the colourful t-shirts that each IPL team has? Well the sporting goods and clothing businesses too will grow.

So what do you suggest?

I have come out with a concept called 'Bharat Khel Mahotsav' that aims at a nationwide sports and health fitness celebration day where communities and families and organization come forward to participate in fitness activities. This in turn will help promote healthy living leading to behavioral changes ensuring a healthy mind and body.

Apart from professional games, we can look at spreading awareness of indigenous games like the three-legged race, tug-of-war, hide and seek, dodge ball, 7 tiles and many more that require minimal skills and all the fun and fitness too while creating bonds.

How do you plan to go about?

I have already written to our Pradhan Mantri Ji. The Bharat

Khel Mahotsav should have national significance and a day of the celebration, preferably on a weekend like Sunday. The Bharat Khel Mahotsav day will be inaugurated by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi Ji in Delhi by lighting the Khel Mahotsav Torch, which will be a nationwide awareness campaign and will be telecasted live across the Nation on TV channels.

In India, Section 135 of the Companies Act makes it mandatory for companies having a certain net worth to formulate a CSR policy. Companies in their CSR policies can include "training to promote rural sports, nationally recognised sports, Paralympic sports, and Olympic sports as well as "construction, renovation, maintenance of stadiums, gymnasiums and sports science support including rehabilitation centres" as permissible CSR activities.

Strategic CSR programmes that incorporate sports have the ability to attract communities of all ages, from toddlers to senior citizens. States can identify and allocate unused university land areas inside the respective university campus in different states/districts for building playfields, sports complexes, stadiums, etc that can be used to play every day.

Can you throw more light on your foundation?

Sport has the potential to be a catalyst for change. Keeping this in mind Krish Sports Foundation was formed in August 2019. Based in Mumbai it aims at the development of sports ecosystem at grassroots level exclusively for tribal population of India.



India is one of the top markets for Ethiopian Airlines

It's always a personal pleasure meeting with the Regional Director of Africa's largest airline in Mumbai and this time it was no different. The smiling **Tigist Eshetu, Ethiopian Airlines, Regional Director, India Sub-Continent** has been a force to reckon with within the airline thanks to her experience, knowledge, dedication and a thirst to keep learning and innovating.

In normal times Ethiopian Airlines would be flying to a total of 127 destinations worldwide and to 62 destinations in Africa providing the fastest route from India to African countries as well as to Brazil via Addis. Many Indians also opt to use the airline to fly to Europe with a stopover in Addis so they can have a nice one day leisure in Ethiopia before taking the night connection to reach Europe early next morning. I have personally used this route many a times experiencing the famed Ethiopian Business Class - Cloud 9 flatbed seats. As the pandemic seems to diminish and flights out of India operating, **Global Features** interacted with Tigist Eshetu. Excerpts



Tigist Eshetu

Great to know that airlines are back in service globally. What is Ethiopian Airlines schedule from India and connecting flights?

The travel Industry waited with bated breath for the resumption of schedule flights and Ethiopian Airlines is all geared up to resume operations with a frenzy. We will commence daily operations out of Mumbai and Delhi and thrice weekly operations out of Bengaluru. All our morning departures have immediate connections with a turnaround of approximately one hour. The double daily operations will also be a value addition within a couple of months.

Which vaccination certificates are valid for Ethiopian Airlines?

Ethiopian as an Airline does not have a specific vaccination requirement. However, we do comply with countries entry regulations and expect passengers to do the same. All passengers have to do the RT-PCR test prior to travel. Internally, the company follows 100% mandatory vaccination rule for crew members, airport staff as well as staff serving in other service areas. Also currently visa on arrival is not available in Ethiopia. However, e-visa is available.

As per a McKinsey report leisure trips will fuel the recovery. Your views?

Although the McKinsey report indicates that leisure trips will out weight corporate travel since business travellers got used to online virtual meetings during the pandemic, Africa has its fair share of corporate travellers who must travel for onsite projects.

However, from our recent interactions with tour operators at various forums, we envisaged a great interest in the leisure market and have received overwhelming queries for group and FIT bookings. We gauge that after the lull of the pandemic, the Indian market is raring to go back to the pre covid days. This is very encouraging for the airline industry.

How do you plan to project the airline in India? What about the F&B offerings - especially Indian?

India is one of the top markets for Ethiopian Airlines. And we have the experience of over 55 years serving India. Assessing the demand on the ground, we expand our destinations in the coming years.

Ethiopia and India have very similar cultures, cuisine and hospitality is a key word in both countries. Onboard Ethiopian Airlines, travellers experience a mix of cultures, the welcoming smile, clean and hygienic environment and extraordinary food which includes a wide choice of Indian cuisine. In fact, we generally have an Indian Chef based in our Inflight Catering Section in Addis Ababa to upgrade the traditional meal service.

For those travelling beyond how can they plan to use Ethiopia as a stopover?

The tour operating wing of Ethiopian Airlines "Ethiopian Holidays" have several packages from overnight up to 7 days stay and more. The team is also geared to tailor specific packages depending on an individual or group requirement. For the cost of airfare anywhere in Africa be it East, West or South Africa, passengers can stopover in Ethiopia, enjoy one of the packages while also receiving a discount on airfare to entice the traveller to experience the beauty and cultures of Ethiopia.

Do you think cargo has become more important to the industry?

Cargo became the "saviour" amidst the outbreak of the pandemic. When all passenger flights came to a standstill, our freighters operated overtime carrying the vaccines and other cargo across the globe. The cargo hub in Ethiopia was busier than ever and Ethiopian Airlines managed to be resilient of the loss with additional cargo services. We call this standing by each other through thick and thin.



Vandal-Bar & Lounge@Meluha, The Fern



As Meluha The Fern, one of the finest five-star hotel in Hirandani Powai celebrates its 11th Anniversary it's their recently opened Vandal-Bar & Lounge creating vibes among the youngsters across Mumbai.

"Finally I believe our central suburbs has got a bar with an extensive collection of the finest wines, spirits and an excellently designed cocktail bar. I am sure it will be the happening place and the best venue for those who relish quality night life and want to enjoy an unmatched experience," said Punish B Sharma, VP Operations, The Fern Hotels & Resorts.

Visiting the bar had the pleasure of interacting with Chef Parimal Sawant, Culinary Director at The Fern Hotels & Resorts. Entering the Vandal-Bar & Lounge you get captivated by glitter and well done interiors. One gets enamoured by the imposing

chandelier with hundreds of shimmering lights and the L shaped bar in the corner.

On top of the bar is the DJ console perched on the first floor fitted with the state-of-the-art music system. The mighty speakers dangling on chains from the high ceiling. "We have some of the best acoustics in town, having invested substantial to give patrons a great experience," said Chef Parimal Sawant.

The elaborate drinks menu has been curated keeping in mind everyone's preferences. Starting from signature cocktails to martinis, crafted gin & tonic to shooters, aperitifs to scotch, single malts to bourbons everything is on the menu. The menu also comprises extravagant champagnes, red and white wines. They have a special section for those who prefer non alcoholic drinks.

The side dishes/snacks provided are bought to catch the attention as they are quite reasonably priced. "Guests will love our Pizza by slice served with olive oil/ coriander oil, oregano, chili flakes and rock salt that's priced at just Rs.150/-. They also relish the peri peri," said Chef Parimal Sawant.



Kerala Travel Mart 2022 to be an in person event



Finally the much awaited Kerala Travel Mart (KTM) will take place from May 5-8, 2022 and the good news is that it will be an in person event. Now in its eleventh edition, KTM has become an integral part of events in the field of tourism. The biennial event has been successful in bringing travel agents from all over the globe to familiarize with the destinations and tourism activities in Kerala.

According to Kerala Tourism Additional Chief Secretary Dr Venu V., Director V.R. Krishna Teja IAS, and KTM Society President Baby Mathew, the event's inauguration ceremony will be followed by three days of talks at Samudrika Convention



Centre in Willingdon Island.

KTM 2022 will focus on caravan and Adventure tourism. The government is coordinating efforts across departments to advance Caravan Tourism (a public-private partnership) . KTM 2022 will also highlight the government's tourist activities in upstate Malabar. KTM has already attracted over 1,100 international and local buyers as well as 100+ journalists from across the world have signed up to cover the event. From 30th April -5th May 2022 pre mart tours have been organised by KTM so that one can get a feel of Kerala.

Sofitel: A perfect blend for the connoisseur



Vikas Kapai

Sofitel Mumbai BKC, the only Sofitel in India from the well-known French hospitality company Accor, is a perfect blend of the French lifestyle and Indian hospitality, an amalgamation of great design and architecture, superb F&B and lots of greenery feels **Chandragupta Amritkar**

When I met Vikas Kapai, GM, Sofitel Mumbai BKC I was pretty impressed by his jovial nature as well as the grandeur of the hotel and

thought it a good idea to cover the hotel.

The sanitized vehicle with a well-mannered chauffeur picked me up from home. The chauffeur informed me about the sanitisation kit (with 3 masks) in the vehicle. At the hotel entrance non-invasive temperature checks was done by security (safety conscious can be happy that hands free sanitiser dispensers are placed throughout the hotel). The check in was smooth and I was taken to my suite.

Strategically located in the central business district of the city the hotel looks magnificent – the façade is impressive and lobby with its marble, the chandeliers, the sandstone stupas in-between lobby seating all add to the grandeur.

“I think the entire architecture of the hotel is wow. Look outside the window (we were having lunch) see those hanging structures - they are like elephant trunks. Look at the greenery outside – in a city hotel we have our own garden with fresh vegetables and herbs used by our chefs add to this the luscious lawns – it’s an urban oasis. If you notice we have an excellent blend of French and Indian culture. Thanks to the International Miaja Design Group, I believe our hotels design is unmatched,” said Vikas Kapai, a product of the well renowned Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology, Pusa, New Delhi and with over three decades of hospitality experience.

Designed by the Singaporean based Miaja Design Group, headed by the beautiful, charming and delightful Isabelle Miaja (I had met her in Singapore), who after seeing the photos that I sent on WhatsApp said “Lovely. Thanks for bringing back memories. It’s our first hotel in India and I am very proud of the final outcome. If you notice all guest room interiors are a perfect blend of French elegance and Indian culture.” Not just the interiors the French flair is unmissable as the staff frequently uses Bonjour and /or Namaskar greeting. Also, in the lobby you cannot miss the motifs of Indian and French elements.

The hotel has 302 rooms (165 Luxury Rooms, 106 Club

Millésime Rooms, 8 Junior Suites, 22 Prestige Suites and one lavish Imperial Suite) spread across 14 floors with 14th floor being a Club floor and having the Imperial Suite that is not only spacious (over 1,700 sq.ft.) but also magnificent and certainly a family’s delight. Its also a place where lot of shootings are done. For Club-level guests there’s access to the Millésime lounge which was closed. I was told it offers a panoramic view of Mumbai’s suburban skyline.

The hotel has 5 restaurants & bars Including Pondichery cafe – all-day dining, Jyran – tandoor dining & lounge, Tuskers – vegetarian dining & bar, Artisan – chocolaterie pâtisserie épicerie, Le bar diamantaire – lobby lounge. I relished all my breakfast and meals at Pondichéry Café including the famous Thali and Mumbai Vada Pav. I tried out in-room dining and the pizza was superb and pasta was comforting. But the desserts were so yummy....

So FIT – the gym has state-of-the-art machines equipped with a personal TV, games, iPod port and Internet, as well as Yoga. There’s a hair salon and the spa had reopened. The hotel has 9 meeting rooms including 1 grand salon ballroom and a very green outdoor venue.

“We hope the hotel to stabilise soon as international travel gains momentum. A resurgence in corporate stays, MICE and wedding business will make a big difference. The only positive is that I believe staycations are here to stay. Staycations in business hotels was unheard off precovid but people who have never been to a five-star hotel have started to experience it with their families. I am sure Mumbai will never face weekend vacuum as many are relishing staycation benefits,” said Vikas Kapai



Get inspired by Mahesh Bhagwat, IPS

A multi tasker with a golden heart



Commissioner of Police Rachakonda - Mahesh Muralidhar Bhagwat IPS, has created a niche for himself not just as a Supercop with a string of awards and medals to his name including the globally renowned 'Trafficking in person' report Hero from US Dept of state but also his unique endeavour as a mentor to Civil Services aspirants across the country - completely free of cost. He has also been actively involved in combating modern slavery. As the multi tasker celebrates his silver jubilee as an IPS officer we thought it an excellent opportunity to get our readers inspired. In a tête-à-tête with our editor, **Chandragupta Amritkar** he gives insights on his work and passion. Excerpts

Being an engineer from College of Engineering Pune (COEP) – one of India's oldest and a leading engineering college. What made you change track and opt for civil services?

After passing out in 1990 as an engineer BE (Civil), I joined an organisation by name CDSA (Centre for Development Studies and Activities) in Pune. They were having a project of western ghat development and as part of project I was stationed in backwater of Mulshi river. There were 8 villages adopted for water development. I was there for 2.5 years and during that time I came in close contact with Zilla Parishad CEO and other officers. Impressed and encouraged I went to State Institute for Administrative Careers, Mumbai that provides assistance and coaching for candidates from Maharashtra for civil services. In 1994 I appeared for civil services with subjects Marathi literature and history and was selected in 1995 for IPS.

Marathi literature. So, did you write the UPSC exams in Marathi language?

Correct. Being from Marathi medium and working in rural area I developed lot of confidence that I can express better in Marathi. The only drawback - as resource material was in English, I spent a lot of time in translation. In 1990 Bhushan Gagrani who was 3rd topper also wrote in Marathi medium and he is sort of a role model to us as we came to know we can write civil services in Marathi and other vernacular languages.

You have mentored many successful civil aspirants. Any secrets to the mentoring?

In 1992-94 when I was preparing for civil services as well as working, I got good guidance from many mentors who used to help me in Pune and Mumbai. Then I thought of giving back to society. Even before my selection I used to teach in study circle in Pune to aspirants for PSI, MPSC – social reformers of Maharashtra is subject of expertise. I was having that aptitude for teaching and we used to also take mock interviews. So that background helped me and later I continued mentoring.

Earlier the reach was very limited. But the arrival of WhatsApp in 2015 changed the scenario as in one group you can have 256 students. So, I started exploring the opportunity to mentor students



across the country and not limited to civil services but also forest services, ITBP, CISF, BSF etc. Right now, I am running 7 groups for different exams. The rate of success has steadily risen and today I take great pride in saying that I successfully guided more than 800 civil service aspirants and other exams.

UPSC is probably one of the most difficult exams in India and 800 successful is superb. How do you get time?

It's my passion and I have learned to balance profession and passion. Last year alone out of 850 selected in country 135 were mentored by me. I believe everyone should spare some time to pursue ones passion.

There are many comments on bureaucracy being a pawn in the hand of politicians and there's a need for an overhaul.

Basically, we are working in an elected democratic form of government. If there's any illegal or unconstitutional kind of thing, we definitely are putting our foot down as we are accountable to the constitution of India. When your dos and don'ts are clear no one will ask you undue favours.

On the other hand, we do give an emphatic hearing to them also. People come to them with a lot of hope. Directly saying no to them - they may not like it so we buy some time and then we can explain if it's possible or not or how it can be done within the framework. If explained logically and clearly, they understand.



CP Mahesh Bhagwat IPS helping people whose houses got inundated due to incessant rains in Balapur police station of Rachakonda Commissionerate in 2020.

Your fight against human trafficking is well known globally. Can you through light on your innovative techniques and approach to investigating cases?

Human trafficking is second most organised crime in the world, after drugs. Trafficking can be for different purposes – sex, forced labour, organ trade, adoption. It is an organised crime and we have to go to the root and from source to destination. Source is from where the supply is going on and destination where exploitation is going on. We have to control this organised crime.

What we do in trafficking cases especially sex trafficking - under the existing laws we have preventive detention act where a person from an organised syndicate can be detained for one year by the CP or collector of the district. During this period, we do the investigations and file chargesheet and in the fast track court we try to make sure they get convicted. At the same time, we are also providing rehabilitation, restoration to the victims through NGOs.

In Hyderabad we have anti trafficking NGO devoted exclusively to eradicating forced prostitution and sex trafficking. It's headed by Padma Shri Sunitha Krishnan. Then there's the Bachpan Bachao Andolan headed by Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi that focuses on ending bonded labour, child labour and human trafficking and also helping them in rehabilitation and education.

We also do interstate and inter country coordination especially Bangladesh and African countries. We contact the consulate so that they can be repatriated to their home country.

Any particular SOP that you would like to highlight?

Ours is twofold strategy – one is strong law enforcement against the trafficker and second is rescue, rehabilitation, repatriation of the traffic victim. Rescue protocols like victim's identity is withheld, even from media. On the other hand, we are exposing the trafficker as well as the customer to the media.

I have used legal provisions to close sites where human trafficking is known to occur e.g., brothels, hotels and residential apartments as well as crackdowns on labour trafficking.

What about the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report Heroes Award by the US state department?



US Consul General of Hyderabad Katherine Hadda & the then DG Road safety Krishna prasad IPS handed over Trafficking in person report hero award 2017 in Hyderabad to CP Mahesh Bhagwat IPS

Yes, I have been conferred with the award in 2017. I was recognised for my vital role in elevating human trafficking as a government priority, and my innovative approach to investigating cases and dismantling trafficking operations.

I have also started a school programme for migrant children of Odia brick kiln workers to prevent them from working as child labourers in Telangana. Almost 1000 children have received education in their native language as teachers were brought from Odisha. The children were deprived of education and health care and today an NGO continues to track the children on return to their home state.

On a personal front how do you relax, maintain yourself and even have time for your family?

Sunday we all will be at home until and unless there's an emergency. Then friends of course – college, school, literary group, my mentoring, Marathi dramas, cultural activity etc. All this helps me to remain relaxed and positive.



In a relaxed mood with his spouse Sunita Mahesh Bhagwat, IFS

As a hotel chain we are at an advantage as most of the SOPs are properly placed

Considered by some as the encyclopedia of hospitality industry and by some as the father of green hotels in India, a visionary and a successful hotelier **Param Kannampilly, CMD, Concept Hospitality Pvt Ltd.** with over 40 years of experience in the Hospitality and the group on the way to touch 100 hotels we at **Global Features** thought it the right time to get an insight into the group and its success. **Excerpts**



Param Kannampilly



As we enter a Post Covid world what challenges and opportunities do you foresee?

All of us were in peculiar kind of circumstances due to the onslaught of the pandemic. All the sectors suffered badly, however the hospitality industry was hit the hardest due to obvious reasons, as there was no one who was willing to travel. However, things have improved a lot and the overall economic situation is gradually getting to normalcy. As of now the occupancies have started going up. The challenge right now is to increase the ARR's especially in the business hotels. The leisure segment has been doing well for some time now. It is only the business hotels in the metros and tier I cities that are not picking up as much as any hotelier would like.

As a hotel chain we are at an advantage as most of the SOPs are properly placed. Anyone who has patronized us even once is aware of the service ethos which the company has perfected over a period of time. This pandemic has helped us improve our hygiene standards a few notches and that is surely going to give us a competitive advantage.

You were one of the few hotel brands that kept expanding in India inspite of COVID. Your comments.



Yes, we opened quite a few properties throughout the pandemic. I thank our partners kept their trust in us. Also, as a hotelier we knew that the situation would not last forever and it was a temporary phase. Another factor which went in our favour was the geographical spread of the company. While one state was in lockdown, the other state was open. We also are blessed to be catering to various segments of hospitality. Our leisure properties did very well during the tough phase.

Can you throw light on the current status of your Group?

We are amongst the fastest growing hotel brands in India, with 88 hotels & resorts currently operational under management or opening shortly across 72 locations in India and internationally, under The Fern, The Fern Residency, The Zinc by The Fern and Beacon Hotels brands.

We endeavour to instill the core values of environment friendliness among our entire Fern family. Sustainability is not merely a philosophy, but a way of life for us. We are seriously committed towards the cause of the environment and we do not believe in doing mere lip service. One of the company's flagship properties, Meluha-The Fern is the first LEED Gold (Leadership in Energy and Environment Design) and Ecotel Certified Hotel.

What kind of experience can one expect on choosing to stay at any of the Fern hotels?

We are not providing just stays, but fond memories that are going to stay forever. We try to train our staff right from the doorman to the house keeping guy that cleans the room to maintain a smile and do the work to the best of their abilities. The best marketing strategy is word of mouth publicity that will not only provide repeat clientele but will also get new business.

Having built a successful hotel brand what advice would you give to those entering this segment?

A hotelier has to make a lot of sacrifices. There is no substitute for hard work. There are no fixed timings. When everyone else is holidaying, you have to work even longer hours. If one is ready to face challenges on an everyday basis only then he should enter the hospitality industry.



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