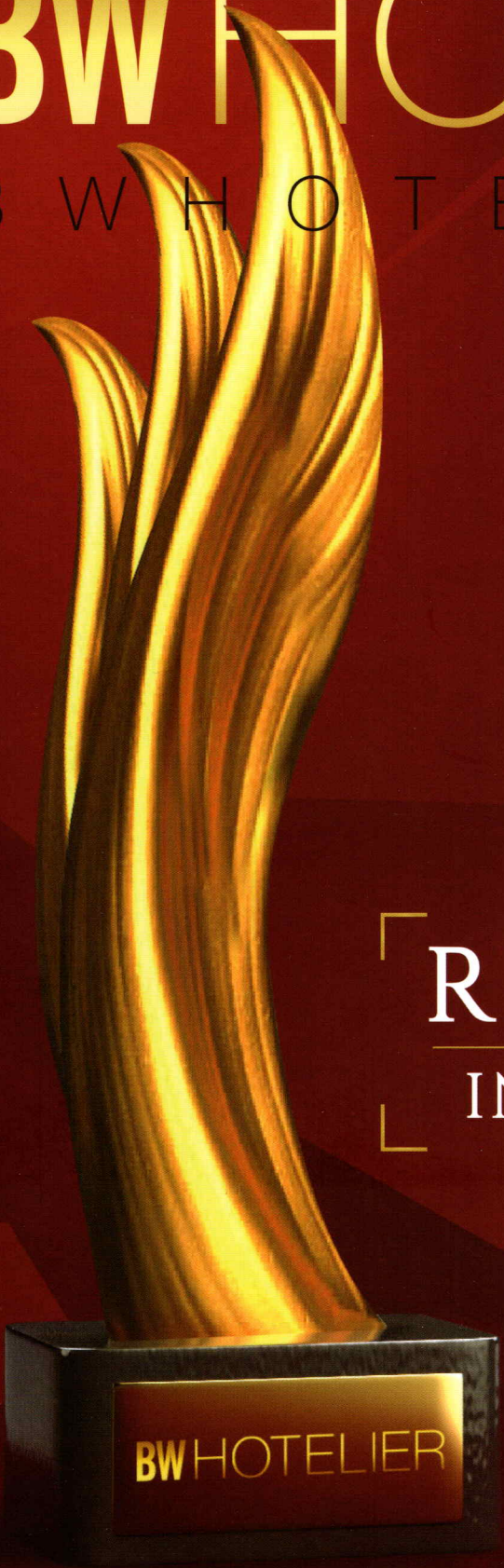


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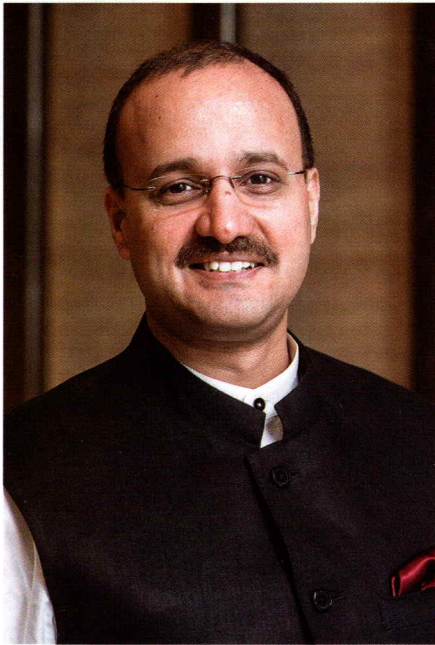


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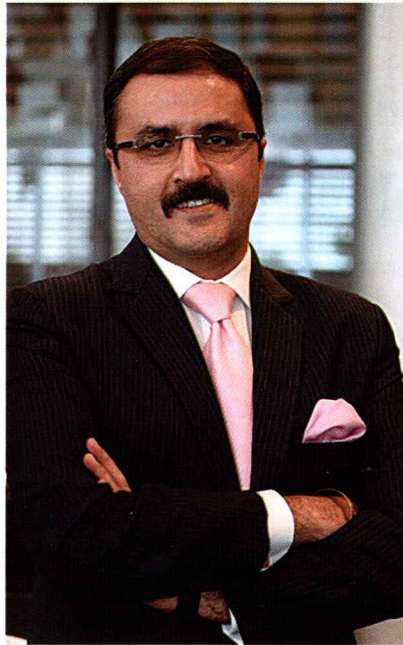
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NEED TO BE MULTI-FUNCTIONAL, INNOVATIVE, ALIGNED



Rahul Pandit, MD & CEO,
Hamstede Living



Atul Bhalla, Area Manager West, ITC
Hotels & GM, ITC Maratha



Manish Sodhi, CEO, Hotel Sahara Star

BY: **BWH BUREAU**

THE COVID-19 pandemic has drastically changed the operation of numerous sectors in the world, including hospitality. Eminent panel consisting of prominent industry honchos joined together in the 5th edition of the 'Indian Hospitality Awards and Summit 2020' to represent their work and share perspectives for leading the industry from touch-less to delivering numbers. Moderated by Rahul Pandit an esteemed panel comprising of the General Managers of some of the best-known hotel properties in the country came together to share their perspective on the impact of pandemic and what all needs to be done as business today and for the coming tomorrow.

Parveen Chander Kumar said, "The impact of the COVID on business has been quite deep and even six months down the pandemic, we are still struggling. The most sensitive business is the industry of hotels. There are huge amount of losses accumulating in most of the hotels. Also, food and beverage industry has come to a halt."

"Having an engaged body of associates will remain the key moving forward because guests will come back, business will come back," stated Chris K. Franzen.

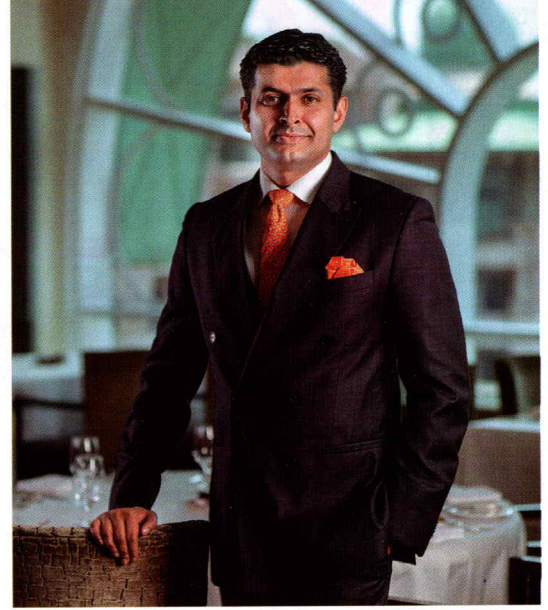
He said multitasking will be the credo of the future "My guidance to owners in these challenging times is to trust the management teams. Be very careful with the short-term



Chris K. Franzen, Area Vice President – West India, GM, Grand Hyatt Mumbai Hotel & Residences



Parveen Chander Kumar, Area Director-West India and GM, Taj Lands End Mumbai



Kunal Chauhan, General Manager, The Leela Palace, Bangalore

solutions or decisions,” he added.

Furthermore Pandit asserted, “No dominating society exists today without a strong hospitality structure. We need to have pragmatic development norms in the country. We are going to see a massive yield compression for next four years, leisure is going to be a silver lining.”

PRICING AND PROFITABILITY

Sharad Puri said that the need of the hour was to be cautious on pricing. “Dropping rates will not create demand, we need to create and generate demand. Also, profitability has been hit terribly and to maintain it we need to keep a very good eye on rates because input costs are going to go down,” he said.

Kunal Chauhan talked about how to turn crisis into an opportunity, “We’ve had quite a hit here and we see this will at least, run through entire 2020. Demands will take some time to come back. However, there are many opportunities which exist such as staycations, distance drivable destinations which happens to work very well for us because we are surrounded with many cities. They’ll be a concise effort by all hoteliers trying to showcase the leisure feel that Bangalore can bring in,” he said.



Sharad Puri, General Manager, JW Marriott, Juhu, Mumbai

Chauhan also emphasised on the microscopic view of every cost lever to ensure that the asset quality does not deteriorate which is very important to the hotels’ business.

Atul Bhalla, Area Manager West, ITC Hotels & GM, ITC Maratha, mentioned, “It’s been an extremely tough time for all of us. I see the hotel industry as first to go out and last to come in, in situations like these which have a negative impact. In terms of profitability, numbers dropped very heavily. I have never seen such an impact ever in my life. It is not going to come back soon; we need to rationalise cost completely.”

Manish Sodhi, CEO, Hotel Sahara Star shadowing upon his brand said, “Nobody was aware of the next steps after whatever happened in March. The management has had a conscious call that

our hotels will remain closed till the time we know that it’s safe to open. Within those five months we’ve ensured the parameters in terms of safety of guests and for our team members are per industry norms. We are happy to announce that few weeks from now, we’ll go live. All the guest aspects have become no-touch or low-touch. We’ll ensure that whenever guest checks in, they’ll have safety barrier without compromising the human feel. ■