

# THE PORTFOLIO OF LTH IS BOUND TO INCREASE: KESWANI

RATTAN KESWANI, DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR, THE LEMON TREE HOTELS GROUP AND CHAIRMAN OF CARNATION HOTELS, EXPLAINS HOW THE POSITIVE ECONOMICS OF AN AREA LEADS TO A LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE AND SUDDEN EXPONENTIAL GROWTH OF BUSINESS.

## Sulagna Ghosh

**After establishing itself as a leading player in its segment across India, how do you see the future of Lemon Tree Hotels (LTH)?**

We shall continue our growth through our owned and managed portfolio. As business cycles improve we shall establish or manage hotels in the north-eastern states, resort and pilgrimage locations. The only limitations are the cost of land, lack of state infrastructure, taxes and delay in licensing. We wish to broad base our portfolio to serve the Indian customer, as a caring brand, with a national footprint.

**LTH operates three brands under its portfolio. Which is the leading one and are there any plans to introduce new brands to cater to a specific segment?**

Each brand hotel excels in its locational subset. The larger growth will be in Lemon Tree Hotels, our midscale brand.

**Are there any new hotels that you are opening in the near future?**

Yes, our second hotel in Chennai, Lemon Tree Hotel; Shimona opened its door to guests a few months back and now we have just opened our third hotel in Hyderabad. Lemon Tree Hotel, Gachibowli is a 190 room hotel that aims to cater to the major IT & financial hub of Gachibowli. With this opening, Hyderabad becomes the only city after Delhi to have all three of the Lemon Tree Hotel brands in its fold. We are also looking at opening a new managed hotel in Baroda soon and are in active talks with many individual hotel owners in various tier II cities across India, that are key business and leisure destinations as well. We do hope to announce more hotels soon.

**Do you have any plans to venture into the international market?**

We will venture into international locations after stabilizing our national footprint. We will go where the Indian customer goes- London, Bangkok, Singapore, New York, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sri Lanka. These locations have an increasing number of Indian visitors; brand recognition and strength of our loyalty program shall create opportunities for us to enhance our footprint internationally.

**Please throw some light on the strategic tie up with real estate company, Assotech Realty.**

Assotech Realty is the pioneer in Serviced Apartment Projects. They have announced a strategic alliance with LTH to manage and operate its premium serviced residences offerings called Sandal Suites. Carnation Hotels is a subsidiary of LTH which engages with realty players to manage operations of their serviced residences. LTH through Carnation Hotels will act as the strategic partner in providing the design consultancy to the project in the initial phase and managing the day to day operation of Sandal Suites later.

With this alliance, we step into a new horizon of serviced residences with the aim to accelerate our growth plans in India. The first project under the aegis of Sandal Suites will be launched in Assotech Business Crestera (ABC) in Noida. Assotech, through Sandal Suites plan to launch 8-10 similar projects in a phased manner over the next 5-7 years with an investment of Rs. 800-900 crores approximately, with our guidance and expertise.



Lemon Tree Hotel,  
Gachibowli



Rattan Keswani

**What are the market development activities that you're doing to promote your brand in the domestic as well as international market?**

We have a brand new website which is now integrated with our booking engine and our loyalty programs. We already have a mobile website and shall introduce a Mobile App soon. This will offer a seamless transaction benefit to our customers with customized offerings across segments. This will enhance our distribution and brand revenues.

**How is your outlook for the year 2015?**

All eyes and ears are on the Union Budget due in February, 2015. If the government announces initiatives to spur growth, rationalize taxes predominantly GST and capex cycles revive, 2015 fiscal promises to be a better year than 2014. We shall continue to grow our brand portfolio with the commencement of our projects in Mumbai, Kolkata and Udaipur. Our managed portfolio shall focus on Trichy, Varanasi, Kolkata, Vizag and a few Tier II cities in Gujarat.