

# LEMON TREE HOTELS DEBUTS IN CALCUTTA WITH A 142-ROOM PROPERTY IN NEW TOWN

Contemporary, efficient and fresh. Three words that best describe Lemon Tree Premier — the unmissable, 14-floor, cream-coloured hotel in New Town — that opens doors today. The newest addition to the city's hospitality sector, the upper-mid-scale category hotel is ideal for business, leisure and transit travellers. It has warmth and character, thanks to Calcutta-themed art by local artists. **t2** takes the first look at the first Lemon Tree Hotels property in Calcutta.

**We caught up with Sumant Jaidka, the senior vice-president, operations, of Lemon Tree Hotels at the stylish hotel lobby, to get a lowdown on the new property and the hotel chain regarded as "India's largest in the mid-price segment". Excerpts from the chat...**



**What's the target market for Lemon Tree Premier?**

For a successful hotel, there has to be a mix of corporate as well as leisure. I think we are in a unique position when it comes to the locality we are in. The infrastructure is good. We are only half-an-hour away from the airport. So, from the perspective of corporates, ITs and SEZs, the corporate world is very close to us. Normally, a hotel survives within a radius of 10km, so I think we are located beautifully.

Lemon Tree is in 35 cities and we have a strong loyalty base. This is our first property in the east, which is owned by Lemon Tree. There is one each in Siliguri and Gangtok but those aren't owned by us. Our focus is strong here. If you draw a straight line across India, you will see that the west has progressed very fast while the east has been left behind. But initiatives have been taken to promote this region, especially regions beyond Bengal, as tourist destinations, and we are working in that direction too. That's why we are here. Whenever there's a hotel in one particular city, you aren't only catering to the residents of that city but also looking at outbound business. It always helps in increasing the recall value.

**Was Siliguri and Gangtok more like testing waters before you opened doors in Calcutta?**

Both the properties are doing exceptionally well. It has given us the confidence to come here and we are looking at many more projects in this part of the country. This is just a stepping stone to something bigger and better. Whenever we position a particular hotel, the brand is not led by me. The positioning strategy, be it financials or products, is decided by what the city can pay. They decide what kind of brand they deserve. We are clear in our minds that the mid or the upper-mid-scale segment is the future of India.

**You have a lot of competition around...**

I personally feel competition is healthy. Each one comes with new products and services and price point. Our product is swanky, brand new, rooms are modern and our services are going to be top-end. We maintain high ranks and are confident that we will do the same here. And, like I said, that we are in 35 cities, with 58 hotels and 6,000 rooms, so the visibility is high. We focus on domestic market and we attract a lot of Indians with our price point. And we are sure that we will outperform ourselves.

**What are the short and long-term goals for the hotel?**

Short-term is to ramp-up fast. We are strategically opening in October. Calcutta is very strong in the winters so for the next five months we look very strong. I think that will give us a base to establish ourselves and then build from there. We are also looking at expansion in this part of the country. Our model is very clear — keep our cost controlled and make sure that the occupancy is higher at a particular price point. Our aim is very clear... we are stepping into the east and we want our property to be the talk of the town, grow and be financially viable. Bengalis love travelling and this is one segment we want to cater to.

The brand is more focussed towards managing more properties than owning them. This is the way forward... to lease out the properties and manage them... be asset-light.



**What:** Lemon Tree Premier  
**Where:** BG-9, Premises No. 30-1111, New Town  
**Room inventory:** 142  
**Tariff:** Rs 4,799-plus onwards (inaugural price, valid till October 30)  
**F&B outlets:** Citrus Cafe, Republic of Noodles, Slounge (coming up)  
**Amenities:** Fresco, fitness centre, swimming pool, conference room, banquet hall and meeting space, travel assistance and currency exchange  
**For reservations call:** +91 33 68139900 or visit [lemontreehotels.com](http://lemontreehotels.com)

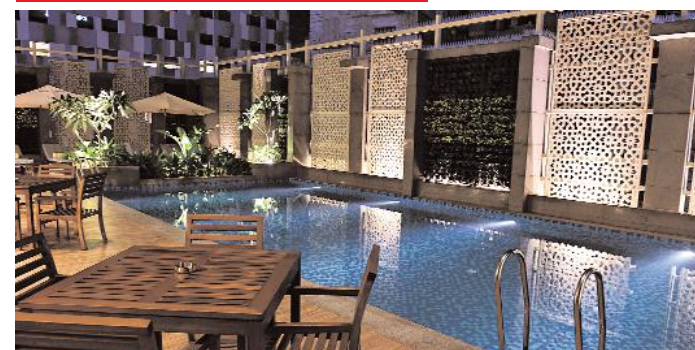
## THE ROOMS



The hotel boasts of three F&B outlets — Citrus Cafe, which is an all-day dining coffee shop; Slounge, the recreation bar that is yet to open; and Republic of Noodles, the pan-Asian restaurant. Citrus Cafe is a 84-seater multicuisine coffee shop with a colourful and bright decor and leather upholstery. Slounge is vibrant yet cosy with chequerboard floor and just the right amount of light for a "chill vibe". It's a 35-seater, and will serve pub food with a focus on tipples. If Asian is your go-to cuisine then there's Republic of Noodles. The 54-seater with grey brick walls, has a red-and-black theme. Interesting light fixtures add drama to the space.



## AMENITIES



The hotel has a 39ft-long swimming pool with a depth of 4 ft. Loungers, fuss-free wooden furniture and touches of green in the form of vertical gardening and plants, make this one of our favourite spots at the hotel. Other amenities include a fitness centre and fresco — the spa, a 2,270sq ft banquet named Tangerine and 1,170sq ft banquet and meeting space called Tangerine 1.

The 142-room property has 76 Deluxe Rooms, 60 Executive Rooms, four Studio Suites and one Presidential Suite, including four interconnecting rooms, and one room for the differently-abled all on and above the fourth floor. While the Deluxe and Executive Rooms are approximately 240sq ft, what differentiates them is the room view (Executive Rooms have city view). The 480sq ft Studio Suites make good use of space by dividing one single room in two parts with the help of a TV cabinet in which one TV set faces the living area and the other, the bed. From these suites you can get a view of the cityscape. With a pop of colour against the otherwise neutral colour scheme, the rooms have a certain energy juxtaposed with understated elegance and subtlety. Apart from the basic amenities and complimentary offerings like iron board, safety locker, free WiFi, and breakfast, each room has orthopaedic mattress, and a fan along with the usual air conditioning. Think of those freezing nights in hotel rooms when you wish you could just switch on a fan instead! In keeping with the global trend (and need) of being sustainable, the toiletries in the well-appointed bathrooms come wrapped in butter paper or are stored in reusable dispensers in place of disposable bottles.

**Text:** Nandini Ganguly. Pictures: B. Halder