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Cover Story

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The 15th Annual Hotelier India Awards sparkled with grandeur as the entire hospitality industry came together to celebrate excellence.
A comprehensive report on the awards night, followed by the much-anticipated presentation ceremony, unfolds...

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Bibhor Srivastava, Managing Director, Events, ITP Media India, briefing the Jury members for GM of the Year Award interviews

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On a truly memorable evening in Delhi, the JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity transformed into a dazzling hub of celebration as the 15th Annual Hotelier India Awards unfolded with unparalleled grandeur. Industry leaders, hospitality professionals, and aspiring hoteliers converged to honour the finest talents in the sector. The event was a showcase of excellence, recognizing achievements across all facets of hospitality - from young hoteliers and seasoned General Managers to Housekeepers and Chief Engineers.

The Rigorous Judging Process: Upholding Standards of Excellence



The Jury at the Luxury-Upper Upscale room for the GM of the Year Award interview



A shortlisted GM gets grilled by the Upscale-Midscale Jury

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The 15th edition of the Hotelier India Awards saw an unprecedented number of nominations, with entries pouring in across 21 diverse categories. This surge in participation not only underscored the awards' growing prestige but also posed a significant challenge for the distinguished jury members. Their task of sifting through a sea of applications to identify the best of the best was both daunting and rewarding.

The meticulous selection process began last month at the Jury Meet, hosted at JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar. Each nominee was evaluated rigorously, ensuring that only the most deserving candidates progressed to the final rounds.

The most coveted category, 'GM of the Year,' demanded an additional layer of scrutiny. On the day of the awards, shortlisted General Managers arrived from across the nation to face an intense round of interviews with the Grand Jury at JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity. This grilling session reflected the high standards and integrity of the awards.

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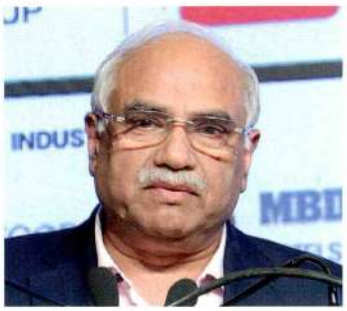
Rahul Sequeira, Managing Director, ITP Media India, delivers the opening address



Bibhor Srivastava, Managing Director, Events, ITP Media India, welcomes the audience



Kada Narayana Rao, Group Deputy MD, Corporate Relations, GMR Group, gives an insightful industry address



Rajesh Mehra, Director and Promoter of Jaguar Group, highlights the vision of his brand

Welcoming the Hospitality Fraternity: An Evening of Camaraderie



A GM interview session on at the Economy-Budget Jury room

As the clock struck 5 p.m, the grand Ballroom of JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity was abuzz with excitement. Hospitality professionals from all corners of the country greeted one another, exchanging stories and fostering connections. The atmosphere was electric, brimming with anticipation and pride.

The evening officially began with the ever-charismatic host, Isha Bhalla, taking the stage. With her vibrant energy and eloquence, she set the tone for the night, emphasizing how the Hotelier India Awards have evolved over the past 15 years to become a hallmark of excellence in the industry. Her words resonated deeply, reminding everyone of the journey and milestones achieved over the years.

The opening address by Rahul Sequeira, Managing Director of ITP Media India, followed, adding a layer of gravitas to the proceedings. His insightful remarks were complemented by an energetic welcome address by Bibhor Srivastava, Managing Director of Events at ITP Media India. Together, they highlighted the significance

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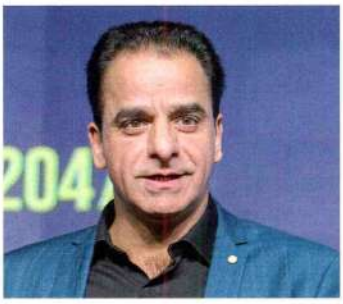
of the awards and the vision behind celebrating the achievements of the hospitality industry.

A special moment in the evening was the felicitation of the host hotel, JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity. Acknowledging their impeccable hospitality and support, Sharad Datta, the hotel's General Manager, was invited on stage to accept a plaque of appreciation. This heartfelt gesture underscored the collaborative spirit that made the event a grand success.

Inspiring Industry Addresses: Words of Wisdom

The evening was elevated by thought-provoking addresses from industry stalwarts. Kada Narayana Rao, Group Deputy MD, Corporate Relations at GMR Group, shared his invaluable insights on the evolving landscape of hospitality. His words were a blend of inspiration and foresight, encouraging the audience to embrace innovation and adaptability.

Rajesh Mehra, Director and Promoter of Jaquar Group, captivated the audience with his compelling vision for the future. Following him, Syed Ishtiyaq, Group CEO and General Manager of Howell India, took centrestage with an insightful address that delved into industry trends and challenges. These speeches not only celebrated the present achievements but also offered a roadmap for the future of Indian hospitality.



Syed Ishtiyaq, Group CEO and General Manager, Howell India, spoke about industry trends



Host Isha Bhalla led the evening's proceedings with her charm and eloquence

Honouring Legends and Trailblazers: A Tribute to Excellence

The awards ceremony began on an emotional note with the presentation of the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award to Patanjali Keswani, Chairperson and Managing Director of Lemon Tree Hotels. In a heartfelt speech, Keswani expressed his gratitude to Hotelier India.

The Hall of Fame Awards were another highlight of the evening. Kapil Chopra, Founder and CEO of The Postcard Hotel and Chairman of the Board at EazyDiner, and Anuraag Bhatnagar, CEO of The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts, were celebrated for their remarkable contributions. Their acceptance speeches reflected their unwavering passion for innovation and their commitment to redefining hospitality standards.

Celebrating Culinary Excellence: A Feast for the Senses

The culinary world was in the spotlight as the Celebrity Chef of the Year Award



Eager audience at the gala awards night in rapt attention

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Vinodini Rao, Editor, Hotelier India; and Bibhor Srivastava present the Host Hotel plaque award to Sharad Datta, General Manager of JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity

The awards ceremony began on a vibrant note with the presentation of the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award to Patanjali Keswani, Chairperson and Managing Director of Lemon Tree Hotels.

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was presented to culinary maestro Kunal Kapur. In his acceptance speech, Kapur graciously acknowledged the recognition, emphasizing his dedication to pushing culinary boundaries and inspiring aspiring chefs. His achievements serve as a testament to the vibrant and evolving culinary landscape in India.

Recognizing Excellence Across Categories: Applause and Accolades

The anticipation reached its peak as winners across 21 categories were announced one by one. Each declaration was met with thunderous applause and joyous cheers. While nominees proudly collected their certificates, the winners gleamed with pride, holding their trophies high - a symbol of their hard work, dedication, and excellence.

The categories spanned the breadth of the industry, ensuring that every facet of hospitality was celebrated. From front office management and guest experience to operational efficiency and housekeeping, the awards recognized the diverse



Presentation of the Lifetime Achievement Award: (L-R) Rahul Sequeira, MD, ITP Media India; Bibhor Srivastava, MD, Events, ITP Media India; Kada Narayana Rao, Group Deputy MD, Corporate Relations, GMR Group; Patanjali Keswani, Chairperson and MD, Lemon Tree Hotels; KB Kachru, Chairman Emeritus and Principal Advisor, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group; Aman Kapoor, CEO, Airport Land Development, GMR Airport Limited; Vinodini Rao, Editor, Hotelier India

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Presentation of the Hall of Fame Award: (L-R) Syed Ishtiyaq, Group CEO and General Manager, Howell India; Aman Kapoor, CEO, Airport Land Development, GMR Airport Limited; Bibhor Srivastava, MD, Events, ITP Media India; Rajesh Mehra - Director & Promoter, Jaguar Group; Kapil Chopra, Founder and CEO, The Postcard Hotel, & Chairman of the Board at EazyDiner; Kada Narayana Rao, Group Deputy MD, Corporate Relations, GMR Group; KB Kachru, Chairman Emeritus and Principal Advisor, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group; Rahul Sequeira, MD, ITP Media India; Sheetal Sadana, Commercial Director, Hotelier India

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Rahul Sequeira, Bibhor Srivastava, Kada Narayana Rao, KB Kachru and Sheetal Sadana present the Celebrity Chef of the Year Award to Chef Kunal Kapur



Presentation of the Hall of Fame Award: (L-R) Syed Ishtiyaq, Group CEO and General Manager, Howell India; Bibhor Srivastava; Kada Narayana Rao; Anuraag Bhatnagar, Chief Executive Officer, The Leela Palaces Hotels & Resorts; Rajesh Mehra - Director & Promoter, Jaguar Group; Rahul Sequeira; Sheetal Sadana

talents that make Indian hospitality a global benchmark.

A Night of Celebration and Connection

As the formal proceedings concluded, the celebrations continued late into the night. Guests indulged in a sumptuous feast meticulously curated by the F&B team at JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity. Sizzling cocktails and gourmet delicacies added to the festive atmosphere, creating an unforgettable experience for everyone present. The evening also saw lively photoshoots and animated conversations, as industry veterans, winners, and delegates bonded over shared experiences and aspirations (see 'Glimpses' for more pictures).

The Legacy Continues: A Beacon of Excellence

The 15th Annual Hotelier India Awards was more than just an event; it was a celebration of the spirit of hospitality. It shone as a beacon of excellence, highlighting individual and collective achievements that have shaped the industry. As the night came to a close, it left an indelible mark on all attendees, inspiring them to continue striving for greatness.

With each passing year, the Hotelier India Awards grow in stature, raising the bar for recognition and celebration within the industry. This year's edition was a resounding success, setting a new benchmark for future events. As the hospitality fraternity looks ahead, the legacy of the awards promises to inspire generations to come.