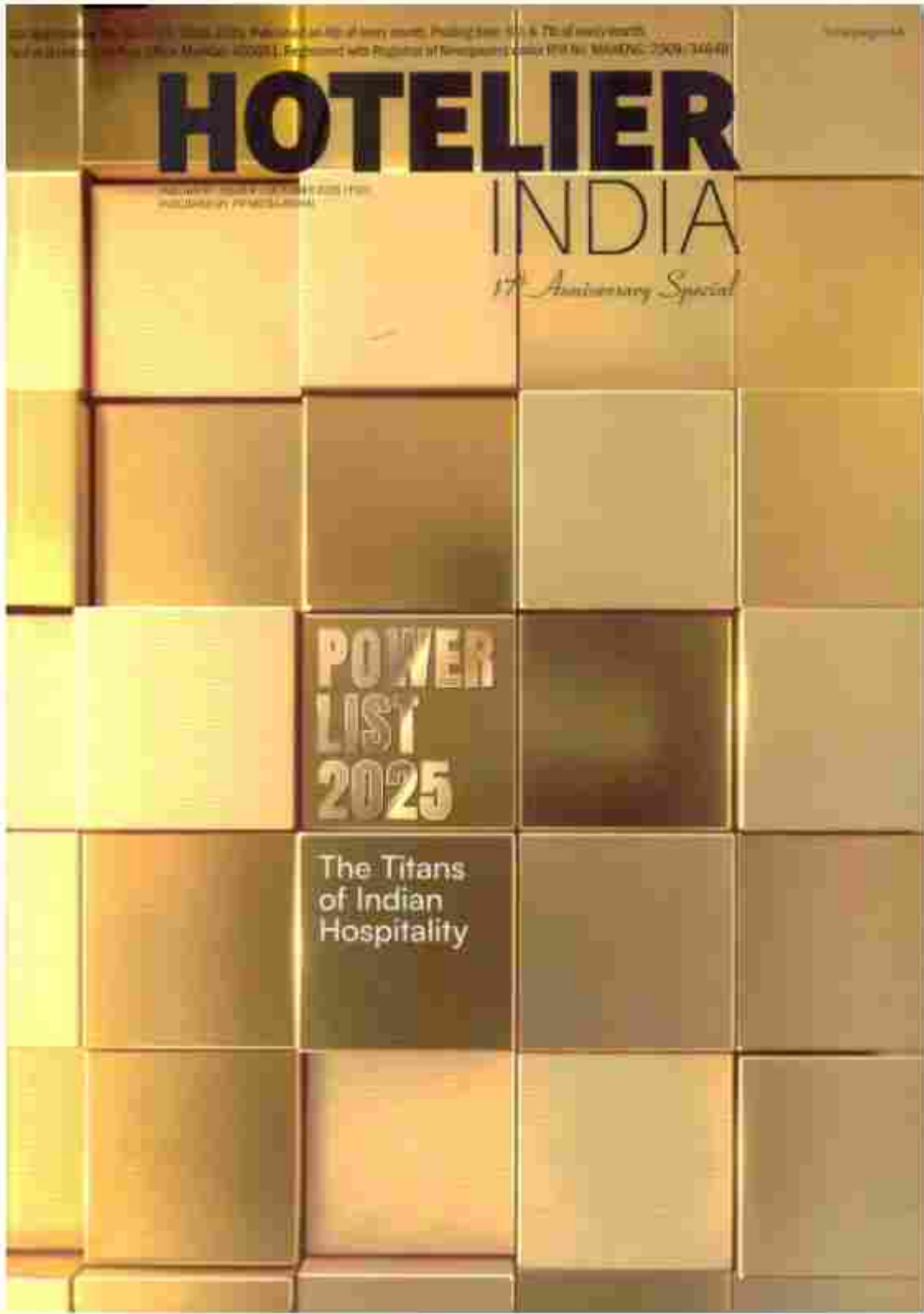


Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	1
Circulation:	62,000		

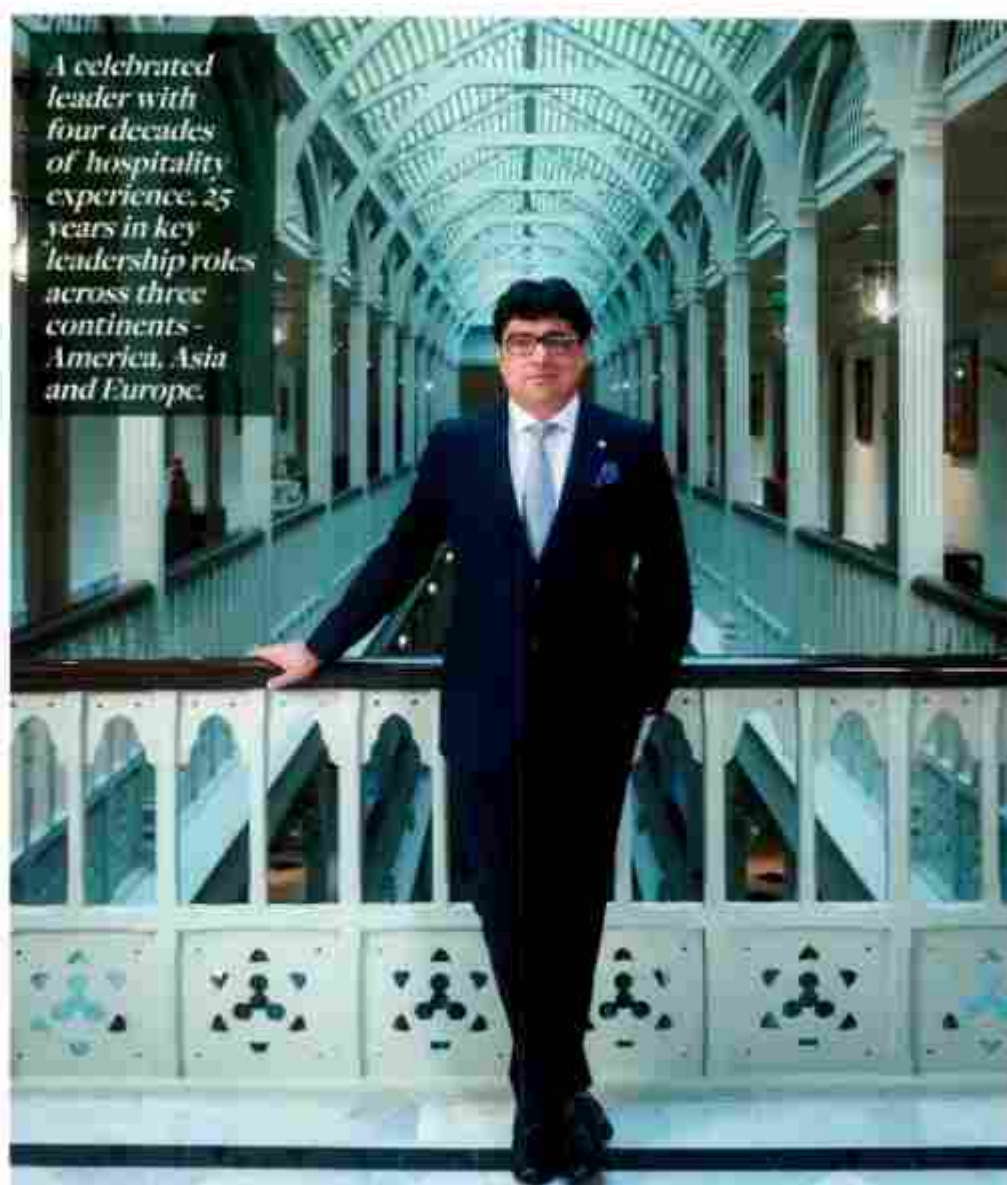


Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	16
Circulation:	62,000		

Cover Story

THE ALCHEMIST OF HOSPITALITY

Puneet Chhatwal
Managing Director and CEO, IHCL



16 | HOTELIER INDIA | OCTOBER 2025

www.hotelierindia.com

Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	17
Circulation:	62,000		

Cover Story

As part of its 75th Anniversary, Hotelier India has introduced its first ever and most prestigious "The Achiever of Hospitality" award which is bestowed upon the Managing Director and CEO of IHCL, Purnot Chaturwal, Company Leader, Purnot Chaturwal.

Chaturwal is a visionary professional with over two decades of Hospitality industry, including five continents - America, Asia and Europe. He built a company that is authority in responsible management and building business that transcend time.

This exceptional achievement deserves a special award of the industry, which recognises and celebrates his exceptional leadership across the country.

Chaturwal is a recognised leader in the industry, consistently and successfully contributing to India's Hospitality industry. The Group Hotel Taj, under his leadership, has received numerous accolades, as per Hotel Finance UK, Taj remains the strongest Indian hotel brand for over a decade in the world stage, listed Property 35-40 in Asia's premium Taj in the World's Strongest Brand - a very rare accomplishment that demonstrates Chaturwal's corporate growth of excellence.

Hotelier India's "The Achiever of Hospitality" is a reference for Purnot Chaturwal's vision, exceptional leadership, and his clear dedication to global Hospitality positioning of India.

Since November 2017, Purnot Chaturwal has been at the helm of The Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL) as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, steering the group through a period of extraordinary transformation. Under his leadership, IHCL has delivered responsible and profitable growth, redefining excellence in Indian hospitality. The company's successful execution of consecutive strategic roadmaps is now celebrated globally, earning a place as a case study at Harvard Business School, INSEAD and IMD (International Institute for Management Development), Lausanne.

A Benchmark in Global Hospitality

Under Chaturwal's stewardship, IHCL has set new benchmarks for the industry. The Taj brand has been honoured four times by Brand Finance as the World's Strongest Hotel Brand and recognised as India's Strongest Brand across all sectors for a record fourth time.

IHCL also made history as the first Indian hospitality company to surpass a market capitalization of ₹1 trillion, ranking among the top five globally listed hospitality management companies.

Championing Industry Initiatives

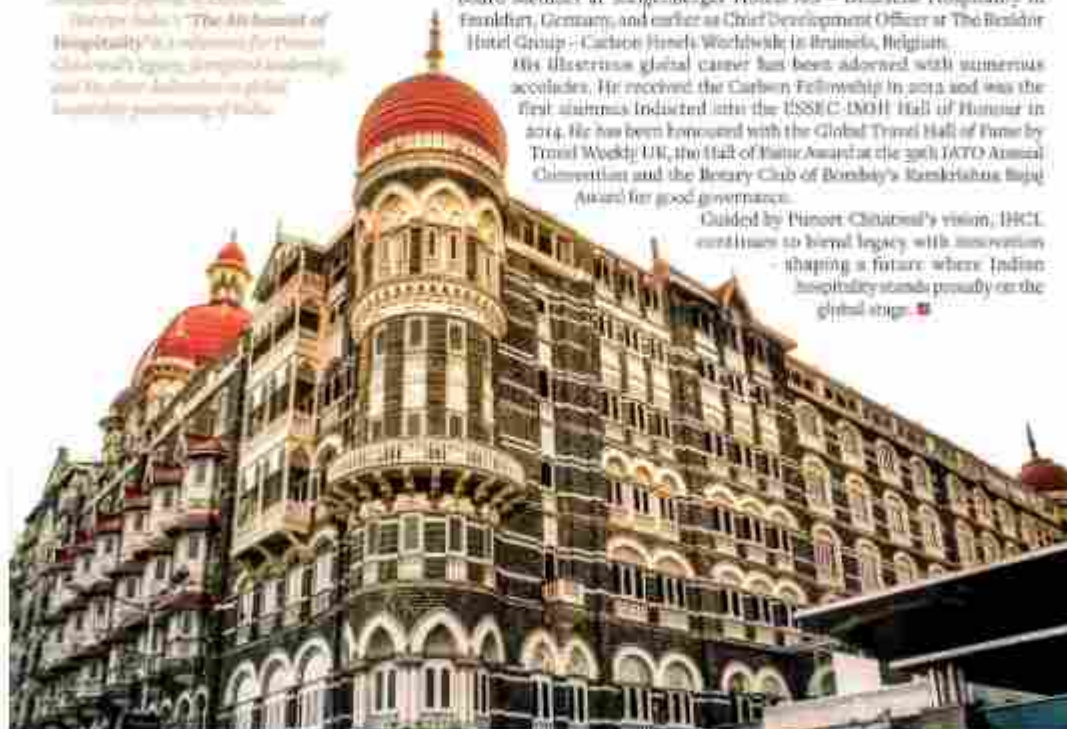
A respected voice and thought leader in Indian tourism, Chaturwal serves as Chairman of the National Committee of Tourism and Hospitality (NCTH) and Chairman of the Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality (FAITH), championing initiatives that strengthen the sector's ecosystem.

A Distinguished International Career

Before joining IHCL, Chaturwal served as Chief Executive Officer and Executive Board Member at Steigenberger Hotels AG - Deutsche Hospitality in Frankfurt, Germany, and earlier as Chief Development Officer at The Resident Hotel Group - Carlson Hotels Worldwide in Brussels, Belgium.

His illustrious global career has been adorned with numerous accolades. He received the Carlson Fellowship in 2013 and was the first alumnus inducted into the USSIC-DMH Hall of Honour in 2014. He has been honoured with the Global Travel Hall of Fame by Travel Weekly UK, the Hall of Fame Award at the 30th JATO Annual Convention and the Rotary Club of Bombay's Ramkrishna Raju Award for good governance.

Guided by Purnot Chaturwal's vision, IHCL continues to honor legacy with innovation - shaping a future where Indian hospitality stands proudly on the global stage. 🇮🇳



Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	18
Circulation:	62,000		

Cover Story



Ajay K. Bhatnagar



Anil Chhabra



Anurag Bhattacharya



Arjun Singh Oberoi



Chandir K. Bajaj



Dr. Jyotsna Patel



Kapil Chughra



K.R. Kachra



Kunal Arora



Manoj Bhat



Nishit Sharma



Pooja (Pati) G. Kulkarni



Pooja Ray



Priya Patel



Rahul Choudhary



Raju Gera



Sakshi Mehta



Dr. Sanjay Sethi



Satish Jain



Saurabh Mahapatra



Sudip Jain



Subal Kumar Choudhary



Suresh Sharma



Vikram Choudhary



Vikram Lalwani



Vikramjit Singh



Vikramjit Singh Oberoi



Zubin Sharma

Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	19
Circulation:	62,000		

Cover Story



As Hotelier India marks its 10th anniversary, we celebrate the leaders who define and drive Indian hospitality. **The Power List 2025** honours the visionaries shaping the industry's future — those who lead with purpose, innovate with courage, and inspire with impact. This year's Power List has been presented in alphabetical order, underscoring the equal significance of each leader's contribution to the industry's growth and transformation.

In this special edition, Hotelier India also brings you exclusive insights from each of these icons — their leadership mantras, their vision for the future of Indian hospitality, and the legacy they aspire to leave behind for the next generation.

This special edition is a tribute to their foresight, resilience, and relentless pursuit of excellence. As we spotlight these icons, Hotelier India celebrates not just their achievements, but the enduring spirit of an industry that continues to evolve, inspire, and lead on the global stage.

Presenting the changemakers powering the future of India's hospitality industry.

Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	20
Circulation:	62,000		

Cover Story

POWER LIST 2025

"The future of Indian hospitality in a single phrase? Boundless possibilities, rooted in tradition and powered by innovation."

Ajay K Bakaya

Chairman, Sarovar Hotels & Director,
Leisure Hotels India

"Sincerity and hard work will always give results," says Ajay K Bakaya, Chairman of Sarovar Hotels and Director of Leisure Hotels India. It's a philosophy that has guided him through nearly three decades of leadership, shaping Sarovar from a single shared office table into a network of almost 140 hotels across six destinations in India, Nepal, and Africa.

Guiding Principles

Bakaya has been at the forefront of building India's mid-market hospitality segment. "The mantra that has guided me is simple—stay grounded, stay curious, and never lose sight of your people. Challenges will come and go, but it is your team and your values that carry you through and define your true success," he says.

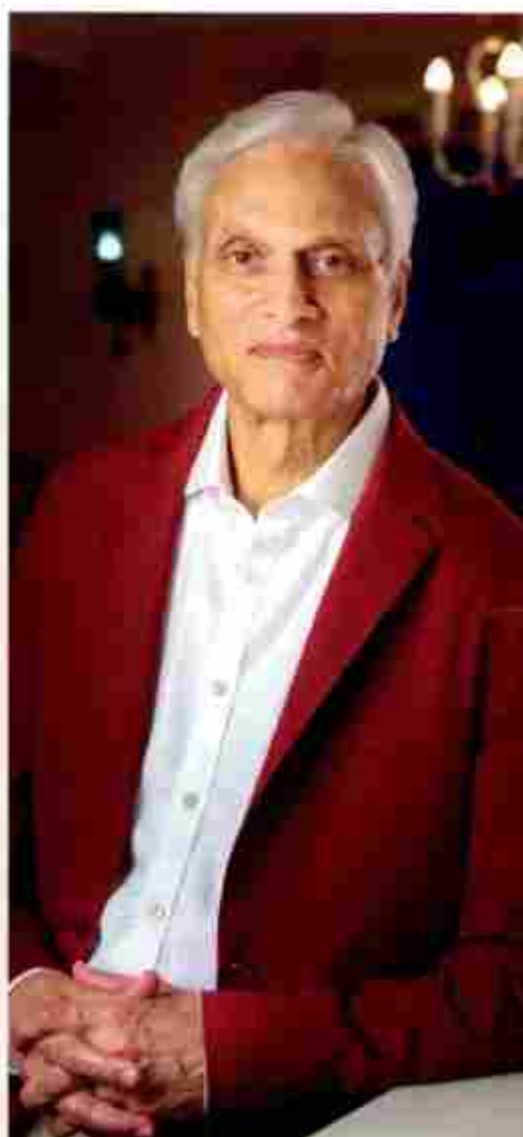
An alumnus of Cornell-ESSEC, France, and the Oberlin School of Learning and Development, he brings global perspective and experience from assignments in India, Australia, Africa, France, and Scotland. His leadership has earned him honours such as PHRA's Entrepreneur of the Year and Hotelier India's CEO of the Year and Hall of Fame awards.

Vision & Growth

Beyond boardrooms, Bakaya finds inspiration on his cycle. Having completed the 1,000 km Tour of the Nilgiris, he explains, "Fitness teaches you patience, perseverance, and discipline—qualities that mirror what it takes to build a sustainable business."

Under his stewardship, Sarovar Hotels has grown into one of India's leading hotel management companies, with brands such as Sarovar Premiere, Sarovar Portico, Homestay, and Golden Tillep spanning the 3, 4, and 5-star spectrum. Now part of the Paris-headquartered Group Du Louvre, Sarovar operates in a global network of 1,700 hotels across 60 countries.

As he looks to the future, Bakaya is optimistic about what lies ahead. "The future of Indian hospitality in a single phrase? Boundless possibilities, rooted in tradition and powered by innovation."



Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	22
Circulation:	62,000		

Cover Story

POWER LIST 2025

"The Indian hospitality industry shall bloom beautifully, attracting travellers with its ever growing tapestry of stories and experiences that resonate globally and make India truly unique."

Anil Chadha

Managing Director, ITC Hotels Limited

Anil Chadha, Managing Director, ITC Hotels Limited, is a seasoned hospitality leader whose career is deeply intertwined with the growth and success of ITC Hotels. Appointed to the role in January 2025, Chadha brings over three decades of experience, marked by operational excellence, visionary leadership, and a deep commitment to learning and innovation.

An alumnus of the Wellesley Group Graduate School of Hotel Administration (WGSHA), Manipal, Chadha began his journey with ITC Limited in 1992. Over the years, he has held key leadership roles, including Divisional Chief Executive of the erstwhile Hotels business in 2023 and Chief Operating Officer from December 2019.

A Distinguished Career Across Iconic Properties

Chadha has spent nearly his entire professional life with ITC Hotels, leading flagship properties in New Delhi, Agra, Kolkata, Bengaluru, and Chennai. He also served as Area Manager - Southern Region, and later as Vice President (South) in 2017. His elevation to Vice President - Operations in 2024 marked another milestone in his leadership journey, overseeing the brand's operations across India.

Industry Recognition and Influence

A respected voice in Indian hospitality, Chadha is a member of the Executive Committee of the Hotel Association of India and the CH National Committee on Tourism and Hospitality. His outstanding contributions have earned him several prestigious accolades, including the 'Distinguished ITC Chairman Alumni Award 2024' by WGSHA, Best CEO 2024 by WE Global Employee Choice Award and many others.

Vision for the Future

Reflecting on the road ahead, he says, "The Indian hospitality industry shall bloom beautifully, attracting travellers with its ever growing tapestry of stories and experiences that resonate globally and make India truly unique."

Leadership Mantra

His guiding belief remains grounded in humility and curiosity: "Never stop learning because life never stops teaching."

Through his lifelong association with ITC Hotels and unwavering pursuit of excellence, Anil Chadha continues to shape the future of Indian hospitality with vision, authenticity, and purpose.



Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	24
Circulation:	62,000		

Cover Story

POWER LIST 2025

"True leadership is not about being the loudest voice in the room, but about being the steady hand when the waters are rough, and the enabler who helps others rise."

Anuraag Bhatnagar

Chief Executive Officer,
The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts

Anuraag Bhatnagar brings over 30 years of experience in luxury hospitality. Renowned for his strategic vision and inspirational leadership, he has led some of India's most prestigious and international hotel brands, consistently delivering exceptional guest experiences while driving operational excellence. Since joining The Leela in 2020, Anuraag has elevated the brand's stature, expanding from 7 to 13 luxury hotels across India, with properties in Jaipur, Gandhinagar, Shreeya City Bengaluru, Kovalam, Ashramam, and Hyderabad.

A Legacy of Stewardship and Purpose

Reflecting on the legacy he wishes to leave behind, Anuraag shares: "I would like my legacy to be one of stewardship, purpose and possibility. Hospitality is far greater than the buildings we create. It is about shaping ecosystems where culture is celebrated, people are empowered and purpose is never compromised. If the next generation of leaders can look back and say they were inspired to lead with courage, to build with conscience and to champion authenticity and innovation as the very soul of their work, then I would feel my journey has been worthwhile."

The Future of Indian Hospitality

On India's hospitality evolution, he notes: "Rooted in tradition, reimagined for tomorrow. Our traditions, stories and visuals offer an infinite canvas, as living, breathing experiences reimagined for today's traveller. The strength of India lies in its ability to harmonise centuries of timelessness with modernity, tradition with innovation, local soul with global relevance. This is India's moment to move beyond being a destination, to become a cultural force and a benchmark of hospitality excellence on the world stage."

Leadership Manna

Anuraag's guiding principle has been simple yet powerful: "Lead with clarity, act with courage, and care deeply for people. Challenges are inevitable, but how you show up during those moments defines you. True leadership is not about being the loudest voice in the room, but about being the steady hand when the waters are rough, and the enabler who helps others rise. Humility is our greatest asset, and if you build trust, inspire confidence and stay true to your values, the results will always follow."

Anuraag Bhatnagar continues to shape The Leela as a benchmark for Indian luxury hospitality, blending tradition, innovation, and a people-first ethos.



Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	26
Circulation:	62,000		

Cover story

POWER LISTS 2025

Arjun Oberoi has worked closely with the Late PRS Oberoi, Former Executive Chairman, EIH Limited, to plan and develop many Oberoi and Trident Hotels

Arjun Singh Oberoi

Executive Chairman, EIH Limited

Arjun Singh Oberoi is the Executive Chairman of EIH Limited.

Strong Foundation in Operations

Oberoi has been an Executive Director of the Company for over two decades and has over 30 years of experience in the hotel industry. He has a strong foundation in hotel operations dating back to the early part of his career.

Collaboration with PRS Oberoi

Oberoi has also worked closely with the Late PRS Oberoi, Former Executive Chairman, EIH Limited, to plan and develop many Oberoi and Trident Hotels.

A Leader par Excellence

In his previous role, he was responsible for the Project Development team of The Oberoi Group. He took on this role when he joined the Corporate Office of EIH Limited in 1996. He has also been a member of The Oberoi Group and McKinsey & Company team responsible for re-engineering systems and processes within the food and beverage departments of 'The Oberoi' city hotels.



Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	28
Circulation:	62,000		

Cover Story

POWER LIST 2025

"I would like to be remembered for building institutions rather than just hotels. The legacy should be about creating a culture of professionalism, integrity, and entrepreneurship."

Chander K Baljee

Chairman & Managing Director,
Royal Orchid Hotels Limited

Chander K Baljee, a veteran with over five decades of experience in the hospitality industry, currently serves as the Chairman & Managing Director of Royal Orchid Hotels Limited, a publicly listed company on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) in India. A thought leader in the ever-evolving hospitality space, Baljee has numerous achievements to his credit, including the rapid setup and expansion of Royal Orchid & Regenta Hotels, one of India's leading hotel brands.

Building a Pan-India Brand

Under his leadership, Royal Orchid Hotels has grown into a trusted name with over 6,500 rooms and 180+ restaurants across 110+ hotels in 65+ locations, spanning the luxury, upper mid-market, and budget categories in India, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. The brand enjoys the loyalty of more than 125,000 members, a number that continues to grow steadily.

Baljee specializes in establishing and profitably operating hotels, making him a sought-after expert across owned, leased, managed, and franchised hotel models. His success story has also been chronicled in the best-selling book 'Stay Hungry Stay Foolish' by Randeep Bhasal, which captures the journeys of 12 entrepreneurs from IIM Ahmedabad.

His Vision and Legacy

When asked about the legacy he hopes to leave behind, Baljee shares: "I would like to be remembered for building institutions rather than just hotels. The legacy should be about creating a culture of professionalism, integrity, and entrepreneurship. If the next generation feels inspired to innovate, stay guest-focused, and at the same time build businesses that endure beyond individuals, that would be the legacy worth leaving."

Looking Ahead

On the future of Indian hospitality, Baljee is optimistic: "Boundless possibilities, powered by innovation and talent."

Leadership Mantra

His leadership philosophy remains rooted in resilience: "Resilience and consistency. No matter how difficult the environment, staying the course with discipline, believing in people, and keeping the guest at the center of decisions has always helped me overcome challenges and build forward."



Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	29
Circulation:	62,000		

POWER LIST 2025

Cover Story

"Lead with resilience, listen with empathy and act with conviction — that has been my mantra in every challenge and every triumph."

Dr Jyotsna Suri

Chairperson & Managing Director,
The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group

Dr Jyotsna Suri has been associated with Bharat Hotels since its inception, taking charge as Chairperson & Managing Director in 2006. Under her leadership, The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group has become one of India's foremost privately-owned domestic hotel brands, with a strong luxury focus.

Legacy of Inclusivity and Innovation

On the legacy she wants to leave, Dr Suri shares, "A legacy of integrity, inclusivity, and innovation — where hospitality is not just about service but about creating experiences that celebrate India's culture and warmth."

A Bright and Vibrant Future

She remains optimistic about the sector's trajectory. "The future of Indian hospitality is bright, vibrant and exciting."

A Leadership Mantra of Resilience and Empathy

Her guiding philosophy is rooted in empathy and conviction. "Lead with resilience, listen with empathy and act with conviction — that has been my mantra in every challenge and every triumph."

Recognition and Industry Influence

Dr Suri has received over 50 national and international awards, including the prestigious Order of The Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star from the Government of Japan — becoming the first Indian woman to receive this honour since its commencement in 1974. She also holds multiple industry leadership roles, including Past President of FICCI, Vice Chairperson of WTTC India Initiative, and member of the boards of Governors for NCHMIT and the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs.

Through her global recognitions and strong advocacy, Dr Jyotsna Suri continues to set benchmarks for integrity, inclusivity, and leadership in Indian hospitality.



Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	30
Circulation:	62,000		

Cover Story

POWER LISTS 2025

"Let the work be your win. When you see the very act of doing high-quality work as a victory, every day becomes progress, every challenge an opportunity."

Kapil Chopra

Founder & CEO, The Postcard Hotel

"The future of Indian hospitality lies in creating iconic landmark hotels—living monuments that embody our culture, redefine global luxury, and stand as enduring testaments to India's excellence," says Kapil Chopra, Founder & CEO of The Postcard Hotel.

Creating Identity

Since 2018, Chopra's vision has guided the brand in crafting intimate, highly differentiated stays in hidden destinations. "I didn't just want to build hotels—I wanted to create a brand with a distinct identity, one that reflects the essence of each destination while delivering exactly what the guest seeks," he notes. This philosophy has propelled The Postcard Hotel to international recognition for its thoughtful design and deeply personalised guest experiences.

While many may have had the idea, he believes the combination of him and his team lay in trusting India's potential—and in fusing the belief, focus, and relentless drive to bring it to life by creating iconic brands.

Celebrated Scores

The results speak for themselves. With a brand score of 9.6 on Booking.com—the highest for any luxury hotel brand worldwide—The Postcard Hotel has won eight honours at the World Travel Awards in both 2024 and 2025, including "World's Leading Emerging Boutique Hotel Brand." Its properties too have been celebrated: The Postcard on the Arabian Sea in Karnataka was named "World's Leading Boutique Beach Hotel" for two years.

Success Mantra

Chopra's entrepreneurial journey, however, extends far beyond hotels. He is also the Founder of EasyDiner, India's largest instant restaurant reservations platform, powering over one lakh restaurants across 300 cities and serving three million diners monthly. Earlier, as President of Oberoi Hotels and Resorts, he drove the group to international acclaim, while his public health initiative, Charity Beds, earned him the Hindustan Times Trailblazer Award in 2015.

His leadership mantra remains simple yet powerful: "Let the work be your win. When you see the very act of doing high-quality work as a victory, every day becomes progress, every challenge an opportunity."



Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	31
Circulation:	62,000		

POWER LIST 2025

Cover Story

With decades of visionary leadership, K B Kachru continues to inspire the industry—shaping policies, nurturing talent, and driving sustainable growth in Indian hospitality.

K B Kachru

President, Hotel Association of India;
Chairman - South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group

K B Kachru is a veteran leader in the Indian hospitality industry and currently serves as Chairman - South Asia for the Radisson Hotel Group (RHG). Since 1996, he has played an instrumental role in building and expanding RHG's business across South Asia. He continues to serve on the governing board of the Group's South Asia business entities, including its joint venture companies, guiding strategic direction and growth.

Industry Leadership and Advocacy

Beyond his corporate role, K B Kachru is deeply engaged in shaping the future of India's tourism and hospitality ecosystem. He is the President of the Hotel Association of India (HAI), a governing member of the Tourism and Hospitality Skill Council (THSC), and serves on the national committee of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Tourism Committee.

Over the years, he has been part of several state and national advisory committees and has served on the Board of Directors for the Tourism Corporation of various state governments. He has also been a Board of Governors member at the Institute of Hotel Management, New Delhi and was appointed to the Governing Board of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Trust, J&K, one of India's most prominent religious destinations.

K B has also contributed to several leading industry bodies, including the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) India Chapter, American Society of Travel Agents of India, Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Association of India (FHRAI), and the India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB).

Pioneering Initiatives

He spearheaded the formation of the Institute for International Management and Technology (IMT) in collaboration with Oxford Brookes University, UK, reinforcing his commitment to hospitality education.

During his tenure at the India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), he led The Ashok Group of Hotels and National Duty-Free Operations, and introduced duty-free arrivals at key international airports across India.

Awards and Global Recognition

K B Kachru has been honoured with the Carlson Fellowship by Carlson Companies, USA, and has received global recognition for his contributions to tourism at WTM (London) and ITB Berlin. With decades of visionary leadership, he continues to inspire the industry—shaping policies, nurturing talent, and driving sustainable growth in Indian hospitality.



www.hotelierindia.com

OCTOBER 2025 | HOTELIER INDIA | 31

Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	32
Circulation:	62,000		

Cover Story

POWER LISTS 2025

"We need to continue to stay rooted in genuine human connection and that's the edge that will keep Indian hospitality not just relevant but inspirational on the global stage."

Kiran Andicot

Senior Vice President - South Asia,
Marriott International

Kiran Andicot, Senior Vice President - South Asia, Marriott International, oversees both Operations and Development across a dynamic portfolio of 173 hotels in India, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. In this pivotal role, he is responsible for aligning growth with operational performance, accelerating conversions and openings, deepening owner partnerships, and strengthening leadership across some of Marriott's most important and fast-growing markets.

With nearly three decades of experience across hotel operations, consulting, and development, Kiran began his career with the Oberoi Group and IHCL, before moving into consulting with HVS India and EY Dubai, covering the Middle East.

Kiran joined Marriott International in 2006 as part of the Development, Planning & Feasibility team and has played a key role in driving the company's growth strategy over the past 16 years. As Senior Vice President - Development, he achieved record milestones, including signing more than 220 hotels in South Asia and sealing a landmark deal with Concept Hospitality to affiliate The Fern's 115-property portfolio with Series by Marriott. In 2024, his team recorded 43 hotel signings totaling 7,200 rooms, expanding Marriott's footprint into Tier 2 and Tier 3 markets.

Widely respected for his business acumen, market insight, and strong stakeholder relationships, Kiran's ability to bridge development and operations gives him a unique perspective in driving sustainable growth and operational excellence.

The Future of Indian Hospitality

He believes, "The future of hospitality in India lies in blending India's cultural soul with modern innovation, embracing technology and retaining environmentally conscious. We need to continue to stay rooted in genuine human connection and that's the edge that will keep Indian hospitality not just relevant but inspirational on the global stage."

A Leadership Mantra Built on People and Vision

"For me, leadership has always been about staying grounded in a clear vision while remaining adaptable to change. I truly believe that people are the cornerstone of every organization's success, that empowering people, nurturing strong partnerships and building a solid foundation of growth is what will lead us to maintain our momentum of success." With a steadfast vision and people-first philosophy, Kiran Andicot continues to shape a future where Indian hospitality stands as a global benchmark of excellence, authenticity, and innovation.



Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	33
Circulation:	62,000		

POWER LIST 2025

Cover Story

With a blend of strategic foresight, financial discipline, and global perspective, Manoj Bhat continues to steer Mahindra Holidays toward sustained growth and innovation.

Manoj Bhat

Managing Director and CEO,
Mahindra Holidays & Resorts India Limited

Manoj Bhat is responsible for defining and executing the company's strategic direction. A member of the Mahindra Group Executive Board, he plays a pivotal role in shaping the group's long-term growth and value creation.

A Career Built on Strategy and Financial Leadership

With 28 years of extensive experience in strategy, M&A, finance, corporate planning, governance, and controllership, Bhat brings a wealth of expertise to the hospitality sector.

In his prior role as Chief Financial Officer of the Mahindra Group, he was instrumental in leading the Group Finance leadership team, with a sharp focus on capital allocation and performance management across the Mahindra Group.

Earlier, as Chief Financial Officer at Tech Mahindra, he was responsible for the Finance and Secretarial functions across its subsidiaries in over 90 countries. He also led the M&A and Corporate Planning function, guiding Tech Mahindra through a significant phase of global growth.

Bhat began his career with HCL Print Systems, where he worked in various finance and strategy roles across multiple geographies, building a strong foundation in global business operations.

Global Exposure and Board Leadership

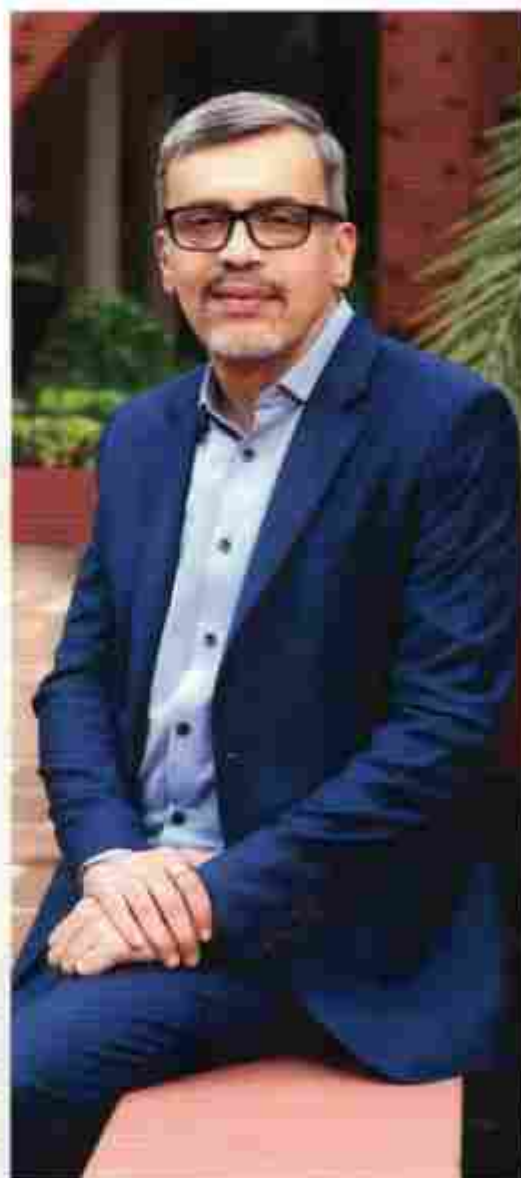
Bhat's leadership extends beyond Mahindra Holidays. He currently serves as a Director on the Boards of Holiday Club Resorts Oy (Finland), Pinarfarms S.p.A, and Smartshift Logistics Solutions.

He has also served as a Director on the Boards of Tech Mahindra, Classic Legends, and Mahindra Summit, reflecting his wide-ranging influence across industries from technology to sustainable energy.

Academic Excellence

Bhat holds a Bachelor's degree in Technology from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Mumbai, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) from the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Bangalore — two of India's most prestigious institutions.

With a blend of strategic foresight, financial discipline, and global perspective, Manoj Bhat continues to steer Mahindra Holidays toward sustained growth and innovation, embodying the leadership excellence that defines India's hospitality sector.



www.holidayresorts.com

OCTOBER 2025 | OCTOBER 2025 | 33

Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	34
Circulation:	62,000		

Cover Story

POWER LISTS 2025

"Lead with clarity, act with courage, and serve with humility. This balance has guided me through challenges and continues to shape my journey."

Nikhil Sharma

Managing Director & COO,
South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group

Nikhil Sharma is the Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer for South Asia at Radisson Hotel Group (RHG), headquartered in Gurugram. With over two decades of experience in the hospitality sector, he is at the helm of RHG's dynamic South Asia region, overseeing a portfolio of more than 100 hotels in operation and development.

In his current role, Nikhil is instrumental in driving the Group's strategic growth, operational excellence, and revenue expansion across South Asia. He is committed to strengthening leadership in the Indian market, fostering meaningful partnerships, and positioning RHG as an employer of choice within the hospitality ecosystem. His leadership reflects a deep understanding of the region's unique market dynamics and a visionary approach to hospitality management.

A Distinguished Career Path

Before joining RHG, Nikhil held leadership roles with several prominent hospitality brands. As Market Marketing Director for Kurats at Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, he successfully navigated various facets of business operations. As Chief Operating Officer at Ginger Hotels (IHCL), he led the brand's successful transformation and expansion. Notably, he was a founding member of Lemon Tree Hotels, playing a pivotal role in establishing it as one of India's fastest-growing upscale hotel chains.

Nikhil's academic credentials include a degree in Catering and Nutrition from IIM Pune, New Delhi, along with advanced programs at IIM Bangalore and Cornell University, New York.

Leadership Mantra and Legacy

"Lead with clarity, act with courage, and serve with humility. This balance has guided me through challenges and continues to shape my journey."

Nikhil believes in a people-first philosophy and hopes to inspire the next generation to do the same. "I would like my legacy to be the belief that hospitality is not just about hotels, but about people. If the next generation leads with care—for their teams, their guests, their communities, and the planet—then I would consider my journey meaningful."

Vision for Indian Hospitality

"From rooms to relationships." This succinct phrase reflects his belief that the future of Indian hospitality lies in building meaningful connections beyond business.



Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	35
Circulation:	62,000		

POWER LIST 2025

Cover Story

"Listen to your heart and never fear failure. There are many ways to skin a cat. No matter what the problem, a solution always exists, so one should never give up and always continue to work towards finding the right solution."

Patanjali (Patu) G Keswani

Chairman & Managing Director, Lemon Tree Hotels

Patanjali G Keswani graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Electrical Engineering from IIT Delhi in 1981 and completed his Post Graduate Diploma in Business Management from IIM Calcutta in 1983. He began his career with the Tata Administrative Services (TAS) and spent 17 years with the Tata Group, including as Senior Vice President of the Tiji Group of Hotels. He later worked with A.T. Kearney Inc. as Associate Consultant and Director before founding Lemon Tree Hotels in 2002, encompassing the enormous potential in India's mid-market hospitality segment.

Today, Lemon Tree Hotels owns and operates 120+ hotels with 120+ in the pipeline, and is listed on the NSE and BSE. A strong advocate for inclusive employment, about 10% of Lemon Tree's workforce comprises individuals from disadvantaged segments, earning multiple National Awards from the President of India for its work in employing persons with disabilities and creating barrier-free environments.

Keswani has also contributed to industry growth as a member of the Sector Skills Council for Hospitality, Travel and Tourism (NSDC), former Chairman of the Skills Council for Persons with Disability (SCPD), and member of the UGA and Board of Governors of IIT Delhi.

Legacy for the Next Generation

"Build brands that are resilient and business models that are designed to withstand seasonality, economic downturns, evolving supply side dynamics and as we saw a few years ago an unprecedented global health event. This requires you as a hospitality leader to be agile, experiment and innovate and always have a pulse on the consumer's buying behaviour."

Future of Indian Hospitality

"It is poised to take off fuelled by a combination of factors but primarily by the rising mid-discretionary spending, increased airport and airline capacity as well as the expansion of the highway network."

Leadership Mantra

"Listen to your heart and never fear failure. There are many ways to skin a cat. No matter what the problem, a solution always exists, so one should never give up and always continue to work towards finding the right solution."

A visionary leader with a heart for inclusion and innovation, Patu Keswani continues to inspire a generation of hoteliers to build businesses with purpose, resilience, and empathy.



www.hotelierindia.com

OCTOBER 2025 / HOTELIER INDIA 35

Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	36
Circulation:	62,000		

Cover Story

POWER LIST 2025

"Stay grounded, yet stay ahead," is the mantra with which Pooja Ray continues to redefine experiential luxury, positioning MAYFAIR Hotels & Resorts as a brand that embodies elegance, innovation, sustainability,

Pooja Ray

Managing Director, MAYFAIR Hotels & Resorts

Pooja Ray is a dynamic leader in India's luxury and heritage hospitality, combining a passion for service excellence with a deep commitment to sustainability, cultural authenticity, and immersive experiences. As Managing Director of MAYFAIR Hotels & Resorts, she has positioned the brand as a hallmark of refined luxury, where every property reflects local heritage, architecture, and environment, while offering world-class comfort and personalised service.

Born into a family of reputed hoteliers in Kolkata, Ray's formative years were shaped by experiences in Kolkata, Delhi/Dubai, and London. After marrying renowned hotelier Dilip Ray, she contributed significantly to hotel operations, bringing a sharp eye for detail and an intuitive understanding of customer priorities and functional aesthetics.

Strategic Growth with Purpose
Under her stewardship, MAYFAIR has expanded significantly, with 18 properties across India, each known for its distinctive blend of culture and luxury. Growth at MAYFAIR has always prioritised quality over scale.

A Living Museum of Art and Heritage
The group has earned a reputation as a "living museum of art and heritage," curating one of Indian hospitality's largest private collections with 40,000 artworks, 8,500 artifacts, and 3,000 antiques. Ray has also championed eco-friendly practices, with over 0.5 lakh trees and plants and 20,000 shrubs planted across MAYFAIR resorts, reflecting the brand's philosophy: "Stay with us, stay with nature."

Beyond Hospitality: Cultural Storytelling
A creative visionary, Ray ventured into filmmaking with her acclaimed project *The History of Tea*, which received international recognition at the 11th Dada Sahar Phalke Film Festival. This initiative underscores her passion for presenting Indian culture and storytelling on a global stage.

Guided by a Mantra
Guided by her mantra: "Stay grounded, yet stay ahead," Pooja Ray continues to redefine experiential luxury, positioning MAYFAIR Hotels & Resorts as a brand that embodies elegance, innovation, sustainability, and cultural storytelling, creating meaningful journeys that leave a lasting imprint on every guest.



Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	37
Circulation:	62,000		

POWER LIST 2025

Cover Story

"The future of Indian hospitality is set for a decade of fantastic growth as the Indian economy is growing, and the demand and consumption or the appetite for travel and unique stay experiences are increasing at all levels."

Priya Paul

Chairperson, Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels

Priya Paul is a philanthropist and Chairperson of Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels (ASPHL), where she has played a significant role in shaping the group's vision across hospitality, philanthropy, and women's empowerment.

Under her leadership, THE Park Hotels and ZONE by The Park have grown into a leading collection of luxury boutique hotels. The company today has more than 35 hotels across India under different brands and has successfully completed a landmark IPO, strengthening its presence in the country's hospitality sector.

Strategic Leadership and Governance

Paul is on the Board of Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Limited, Apeejay Shipping Limited, DLF Limited, and DLF Cyber City Developments Limited. She also contributes actively to the industry's growth as a Honorary Member of the Hotel Association of India and the World Travel and Tourism Council - India Initiative, and serves as a member of the G20 World Travel and Tourism Committee.

Championing Social Causes

A strong advocate for social impact and women's empowerment, she is also the Founder Director and former Chair of the South Asia Women's Fund (now Women's Fund Asia) and has been on the board of Breakthrough India.

She is also a member of Harvard Business School's South Asia Advisory Board, and currently serves on the board of the Population Foundation of India, World Monuments Fund India, and World Monuments Fund Global.

Laurels and Recognition

Paul has also been awarded the Padma Shri in 2012, and the Insignia of Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite (National Order of Merit) in 2014 by the President of France. Over the years, she has received numerous awards and recognitions from the industry, media, and various organizations.

Bright Future Ahead

"The future of Indian hospitality is set for a decade of fantastic growth as the Indian economy is growing, the demand and consumption or the appetite for travel and unique stay experiences are increasing at all levels," she believes.

With her visionary leadership and deep social commitment, Priya Paul continues to redefine Indian hospitality, blending design, culture, and purpose into a powerful legacy of excellence and empowerment.



www.hotelierindia.com

OCTOBER 2025 / HOTELIER INDIA 37

Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	38
Circulation:	62,000		

Cover Story

POWER LIST 2025

"What I'd like to leave behind is a mindset. That true leadership in hospitality means honouring tradition, embracing innovation, and creating authentic experiences while uplifting the communities around us."

Rahul Chaudhary

Managing Director and CEO of CG Corp Global and CG Hospitality Holdings

Rahul Chaudhary serves as Managing Director and CEO of CG Corp Global and CG Hospitality Holdings, carrying forward the Chaudhary family's 140-year-old legacy. Recognized by 'Forbes' as Nepal's first billion-dollar corporation, the group spans 261 brands and 200 companies, employing over 20,000 people across sectors including FMCG, Real Estate, Telecom, Cement, Power, Banking, and Education.

Building a Hospitality Powerhouse

At the heart of the empire lies CG Hospitality. Under Rahul's leadership, it operates 209 hotels and resorts with 15,000 keys across 12 countries and 130 destinations. Partnerships with global giants like Marriott, IHG (Taj, Taj Signature, Vivanta), Jetwing Hotels, DoubleTree by Hilton, and Fairmont stand alongside homegrown brands such as The Fern. By 2030, the portfolio is expected to exceed 600 hotels with more than 20,000 keys.

Strategic Collaborations with Marriott

Among his most defining achievements is the collaboration with Marriott International. Rahul led the conversion of The Fern at San Remo in the Philippines into the first Autograph Collection resort. Another landmark deal involves Marriott's new Series by Marriott brand, which will affiliate Fern Hotels. Fern currently operates 89 hotels with 27 more signed across India, with plans to reach 300 by 2030.

His Legacy and Vision for Indian Hospitality

For Rahul, legacy is not about numbers alone. "What I'd like to leave behind is a mindset: that true leadership in hospitality means honouring tradition, embracing innovation, and creating authentic experiences while uplifting the communities around us."

When asked to describe the future of Indian hospitality in one phrase, he calls it: "Eco-forward, authentically Indian, globally relevant." He adds, "India is at a defining moment — ready to be recognized as one of the world's great exporters of hospitality concepts."

Leadership Mantra

Rahul's journey is defined by resilience and adaptability. "I've grounded, stay agile, and never stop learning." For him, setbacks are lessons that sharpen instincts and fuel long-term vision.

In Rahul Chaudhary's story, humility and ambition converge — positioning Indian hospitality firmly on the global stage.



Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	39
Circulation:	62,000		

POWER LIST 2025

Cover Story

"While technology, shifting guest expectations, and global connectivity are transforming the industry, real progress is achieved by integrating growth with cultural depth, inclusivity, and environmental responsibility."

Ranju Alex CEO, South Asia, Accor

An acclaimed hospitality professional with nearly three decades of experience, Ranju Alex began her career with The Oberoi Group in 1983 and has since held several leadership positions across leading hotel brands.

Before joining Accor as CEO, South Asia, Accor, Ranju served as the Regional Vice President for South Asia at Marriott International, where she oversaw operations of over 170 hotels across the region. Her exceptional contributions to the industry were recently recognized with the Bharat Gaurav Award, a prestigious honour celebrating her achievements and leadership.

Legacy of Leadership

Reflecting on her vision, Ranju shares, "Leadership is about shaping a culture that creates lasting impact, breaks down barriers, challenges the status quo, and leads by example. To me, it means building trust, balancing operational discipline with genuine care, and fostering inclusive, sustainable growth."

She believes that hospitality's true essence lies in human connection. "At its core, hospitality is about meaningful personal connections, emotions, and celebrating special moments. If the next generation of leaders can strengthen this industry with greater resilience, relevance, and heart, then we will have truly succeeded."

Vision for the Future

"The future belongs to responsible growth. While technology, shifting guest expectations, and global connectivity are transforming the industry, real progress is achieved by integrating growth with cultural depth, inclusivity, and environmental responsibility."

Adding that Accor's strength lies in balance, she says, "At Accor, we're proud to champion a distinctive approach — combining global excellence with India's innate warmth and authenticity."

Leadership Mantra

"Leadership isn't defined by a title—it's about inspiring confidence and providing direction when it counts. It's rooted in listening, decisive action, and putting people at the heart of everything. True leadership empowers teams, fosters accountability, and drives responsible growth."

"Challenges are inevitable, but a steady, focused leader fortifies both the organisation and the people who bring it to life." With her unwavering focus on people, purpose, and progress, Ranju Alex continues to redefine hospitality leadership—proving that true teams don't just lead industries, they inspire generations.



www.hotelierindia.com

OCTOBER 2025 | HOTELIER INDIA | 39

Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	40
Circulation:	62,000		

Cover Story

POWER LISTS 2025

"Our industry is built on human connections, and while business results are important, the true measure of success lies in the lives we touch."

Rahool Macarius

Market Managing Director – Eurasia,
Wyndham Hotels & Resorts

Rahool Macarius, Market Managing Director – Eurasia, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, is a seasoned hospitality leader with a strong vision for expanding Wyndham's presence across the region. Focused on strategic growth, guest experiences, and owner partnerships, his leadership is defined by innovation, sustainability, and operational excellence. Under his stewardship, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts is strengthening its position as a key player in the dynamic Eurasia hospitality market.

With more than 25 years of experience, Rahool has held leadership roles across several global hotel groups. His expertise spans financial strategy, operations management, and stakeholder engagement, making him well-equipped to lead Wyndham's operations across India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and the Maldives. His appointment marks a return to Wyndham, where he earlier served as Director of Commercial for the region.

A firm believer in an owner-first approach, Rahool is deeply committed to fostering trust-based relationships with hotel owners, partners, and teams to deliver long-term value and success.

A Legacy of People-First Leadership

Reflecting on the legacy he hopes to leave behind, Rahool says, "If there is one legacy I would like to leave, it is the belief that hospitality is about people first. Our industry is built on human connections, and while business results are important, the true measure of success lies in the lives we touch. A guest who feels at home, an associate who finds growth and purpose, or a community that benefits from our presence — these are the lasting impressions that matter most."

Future of Indian Hospitality

"Deeply rooted in tradition, reimagined for tomorrow," he believes is the future of Indian hospitality. It lies in blending timeless warmth and generosity with innovation, sustainability, and digital transformation — creating a balance between authenticity and agility, he adds.

Leadership Mantra

"The mantra that has guided me consistently is humility with consistency." He emphasizes that grounded leadership, listening, and respect build trust and resilience, helping leaders create impact that endures well into the future.



Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	41
Circulation:	62,000		

POWER LIST 2025

Cover Story

"Indian hospitality is about opening doors, building friendships, and creating shared memories that transcend borders. Indian hospitality goes beyond service and luxury."

Dr Sanjay Sethi

Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer,
Chalee Hotels Limited

Dr Sanjay Sethi is the Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer of Chalee Hotels Limited, a \$1 billion listed company that has emerged as a leader in India's hospitality and real estate landscape. Under his stewardship, Chalee oversees over 1,000 hotel keys, 2.4 million square feet of office space, and luxury residential projects across key Indian cities.

Since returning to Chalee in 2018, Dr Sethi has played a pivotal role in its transformation — leading the company's successful public listing in 2019 and positioning it as one of India's most respected integrated hospitality platforms.

A Distinguished Career Across Iconic Brands

Dr Sethi's illustrious career spans several decades and includes founding Keys Hotels and a 14-year tenure with the Taj Group, where he built a strong foundation in hospitality leadership and operational excellence. His experience across hotel development, brand creation, and strategic growth has cemented his reputation as one of India's most forward-thinking hospitality leaders.

Industry Leadership and Policy Influence

Beyond corporate leadership, Dr Sethi is a recognized thought leader and a key voice shaping India's hospitality future. He serves as Honorary Treasurer of the Hotel Association of India, Chair of the CII Western Regional Council – Tourism, and is a member of FICCI's Real Estate Committee, actively contributing to policy development and advocacy. He is also a Certified Independent Director by the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs, reflecting his strong governance focus.

The Future of Indian Hospitality

Sharing his vision, Dr Sethi says, "Indian hospitality is about opening doors, building friendships, and creating shared memories that transcend borders."

Leadership Mantra

Guided by deep values, Dr Sethi shares, "Respect people, embrace challenges, and keep human connection at the core of everything you do. My guiding mantra is simple: respect people deeply, treat every challenge as an opportunity to grow, and never lose sight of the human connection at the heart of hospitality."

Dr Sanjay Sethi's journey is a testament to visionary leadership — blending strategy, empathy, and purpose to redefine Indian hospitality.



www.chaleehotels.com

OCTOBER 2025 | HOTELIER INDIA | 41

Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	42
Circulation:	62,000		

Cover Story

POWER LIST 2025

"When discipline meets empathy, and when numbers are aligned with human connection, challenges become opportunities and success becomes sustainable."

Satyen Jain

CEO, Pride Hotels Group

As the driving force behind Pride Hotels Group, Satyen Jain has been instrumental in shaping the group's journey into one of India's most trusted names in the hospitality industry. The brand opened its first hotel in Pune in 1987, and since then has evolved into a diverse portfolio of upscale and midscale hotels and resorts.

Today, Pride Hotels spans 34 destinations across India, offering guests a perfect balance of modern comforts and authentic Indian warmth.

Vision: Truly Indian & Traditionally Luxurious

Guided by his vision anchored in Indian values, personalized service, and guest satisfaction, Jain has successfully blended tradition with contemporary hospitality trends. This ability to harmonize heritage and modernity has created a unique positioning for Pride Hotels Ltd., making it Truly Indian & Traditionally Luxurious, and incorporating the essence of India in every stay.

Legacy for the Next Generation

"Legacy, for me, is about nurturing a culture of authenticity and enduring strength. I want the next generation of hospitality leaders to inherit a brand ethos where Indian warmth, integrity, and innovation come together seamlessly. If I can inspire them to carry forward a tradition that blends timeless values with progressive ideas, then I would consider my journey truly meaningful."

The Future of Indian Hospitality

When asked to describe the future of Indian hospitality in one phrase, Jain responds succinctly: "Globally Indian, yet deeply local."

Leadership Mantra

"As a Chartered Accountant by profession, I have always relied on discipline, clarity of thought, and a structured approach to decision-making. But in hospitality, the heart of success lies in people. Guests, associates, and partners are the real strength of this industry. My guiding mantra has been to balance analytical precision with a people-first philosophy. When discipline meets empathy, and when numbers are aligned with human connection, challenges become opportunities and success becomes sustainable."

With an unwavering commitment to Indian values and a vision rooted in authenticity, Satyen Jain stands tall among India's hospitality icons — a leader shaping a legacy that is as enduring as it is inspiring.



Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	43
Circulation:	62,000		

POWER LIST 2025

Cover Story

"When leadership is driven by purpose, every action becomes part of a greater mission — whether enhancing guest satisfaction, uplifting team morale, strengthening brand reputation, or making a positive community impact."

Souvagya Mohapatra

Managing Director (India, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka),
Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts

"My journey in the hospitality industry over the past three decades has been shaped by the challenges I embraced and my passion for excellence through innovation. Two key principles that have guided me are leading with empathy and serving with purpose," affirms Souvagya Mohapatra, Managing Director (India, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka operations), Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts.

People First

With an exceptional record in luxury hotel development, guest relations, revenue growth, brand building, and property launches, Mohapatra shares, "In hospitality, we always put people first. Whether it is about guiding a team or addressing a challenging guest situation, empathy allows us to see things from others' perspectives, ease tension, and forge authentic connections. During difficult times, leading with empathy fosters trust and loyalty among our teams and with guests."

Purposeful Leadership

Starting his career with the Oberoi Group, Mohapatra spent most of his professional journey with MAYAHE Hotels & Resorts, rising from Hotel Manager to Executive Director. He witnessed the group's expansion from two hotels to 11 world-class properties. "When leadership is driven by purpose, every action becomes part of a greater mission — whether enhancing guest satisfaction, uplifting team morale, strengthening brand reputation, or making a positive community impact," he maintains.

Such attributes, he adds, become critical during adversity, be it staffing shortages, economic challenges, or periods of peak stress. "They remind me to remain human, keep my focus sharp, and set the right example for those around me."

Innovation & Beyond

He views the future of Indian hospitality as "innovation and cultural heritage meeting personalisation." As he explains, "We see Indian hospitality blending its rich traditions and warmth with cutting-edge technology, sustainability, and highly tailored guest experiences."

A member of several reputed industry bodies, Mohapatra views his legacy not only in properties built or milestones achieved but in the knowledge and decision-making skills he now seeks to share with the next generation of hospitality leaders.



www.hotelierindia.com

OCTOBER 2025 / HOTELIER INDIA 43

Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	44
Circulation:	62,000		

POWER LIST 2025

Cover Story

"The coming years will bring experiences that blend comfort with purpose, where modern practices and traditional values come together to create a system that is both economically strong and environmentally responsible."

Suhail Kannampilly

Managing Director, Concept Hospitality Pvt. Ltd.
(Parent company of The Fern Hotels & Resorts)

With over 25 years of experience in the hospitality sector, Suhail Kannampilly has played a pivotal role in transforming The Fern Hotels & Resorts from a fledgling brand into one of India's fastest-growing hotel chains, renowned for its environmentally sensitive hospitality model.

As alumnus of IIM Mumbai, Suhail's career reflects a deep understanding of both hotel operations and corporate finance. His leadership style blends hands-on operational expertise with a sharp strategic vision, a combination that has been instrumental in the group's expansion across India and beyond.

Widely recognized for championing sustainable hospitality practices, Suhail has consistently focused on scaling operations while maintaining brand integrity and guest satisfaction. Under his stewardship, The Fern Hotels & Resorts continues to strengthen its position as a key player in India's evolving travel and tourism landscape.

Vision for the Future of Indian Hospitality

When asked to describe the future of Indian hospitality in a single phrase, Suhail says, "Sustainable hospitality rooted in responsibility is the way forward for Indian hospitality."

He believes the industry's growth will be measured not just by size or scale, but by how thoughtfully it engages with the environment, local communities and the expectations of conscious travellers. "The coming years will bring experiences that blend comfort with purpose, where modern practices and traditional values come together to create a system that is both economically strong and environmentally responsible. Hotels will evolve into spaces that nurture wellbeing, celebrate culture and foster meaningful connections."

Leadership Mantra

At the core of Suhail's leadership philosophy is a simple yet powerful principle: "Leading with clarity, empathy and purpose has guided me through every challenge and continues to define my journey. Challenges are approached as opportunities to learn and success is measured not just by results but by the positive impact created for colleagues, guests and the communities we serve."

With his unwavering focus on sustainable growth and purposeful leadership, Suhail Kannampilly continues to redefine what it means to build a hospitality brand that is both profitable and planet-positive—setting new benchmarks for the industry's future.



www.hotelierindia.com

OCTOBER 2025 / HOTELIER INDIA 45

Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	45
Circulation:	62,000		

Cover Story

POWER LIST 2025

"Leadership is about empowering others to grow, innovate and lead with empathy. I want to leave a legacy that emphasises the power of genuine care and creating meaningful experiences not just for guests, but also for colleagues and communities."

Sunjae Sharma

Managing Director - India & Southwest Asia, Hyatt

With nearly three decades in hospitality and over two decades at Hyatt, Sunjae Sharma has witnessed – and shaped – the evolution of the industry in India. Having held leadership roles across Hyatt's flagship properties, from Grand Hyatt Mumbai to Hyatt Regency Chennai and Kolkata, he now spearheads the company's operational and growth strategy across India and Southwest Asia.

Empathetic Guidance

"For me, leadership is about empowering others to grow, innovate and lead with empathy," he says. "I want to leave a legacy that emphasises the power of genuine care and creating meaningful experiences—not just for guests, but also for colleagues and communities."

Under his stewardship, properties like Grand Hyatt Mumbai set new international benchmarks as multidimensional lifestyle destinations. His journey has seen him move from food & beverage and operations roles to managing 16 hotels as Area Vice President, before stepping into his current role as Managing Director.

Soulful Innovation

Looking ahead, he envisions Indian hospitality as "heartfelt hospitality meets innovation with agility." As he explains: "We're blending tradition with technology, luxury with sustainability, and service with soul. The future traveller seeks more than just a stay—they want experiences that feel personal, purposeful and reflective of India's rich culture and evolving spirit."

Leadership Explained

Guided by his mentors—"be present, be agile and put people first"—he believes that humility, trust and collaboration remain the true cornerstones of leadership. "Leadership isn't about having all the answers, but about showing up, inspiring trust and navigating change together," he reflects.



44 | HOTELIER INDIA | OCTOBER 2025

www.hotelierindia.com

Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	46
Circulation:	62,000		

POWER LIST 2025

Cover Story

"Guests may come for luxury, but they will return for the authenticity of our culture, our food, our festivals, our spirituality, and the extraordinary human touch that no algorithm can replicate."

Vikram Cotah

CEO, GRT Hotels & Resorts

Hotelier, storyteller, and thought leader with over four decades of experience, Vikram Cotah, CEO, GRT Hotels & Resorts, has transformed GRT Hotels from a regional player into one of South India's most admired hospitality groups, with 11 operating hotels and an ambitious roadmap to reach 50 by 2030. Cotah is now steering GRT into the global luxury space with the upcoming Perpetua Island Resort in the Maldives, part of Marriott's Luxury Collection.

Presence over Perfection

"My mantra has always been 'Presence over perfection,'" avers Cotah. "Perfection is elusive, but presence—being fully there for your team, your guests, and even for yourself—creates trust, excellence, and transformation."

He expands, "In the toughest of times, I've found that showing up with authenticity and compassion matters far more than having all the answers. This belief has guided me from boardrooms to guest interactions, and it continues to shape how I lead today."

Redefining Luxury

Bleeding experiential travel with sustainability to redefine luxury, he institutionalised The Great Butterfly Effect—GRT's ESG framework—embedding plastic-free operations, carbon-conscious guest programmes, and technology-enabled personalisation. He also pioneered Gent Living, a wellness-driven approach making well-being central to both guest and employee experiences. "Global in standards, Indian at heart" is how Cotah envisions the future of hospitality. "Guests may come for luxury, but they will return for the authenticity of our culture, our food, our festivals, our spirituality, and the extraordinary human touch that no algorithm can replicate," he vouches.

Representing the country at the UN International Youth Forum in Bangkok, he positioned Indian hospitality as a model for responsible growth.

Soulful Hospitality

Author of 'Maji in a Mango Tree' and the forthcoming 'Soul Express', and a passionate mentor, he has built a culture of empowerment at GRT. "The legacy I want to leave behind is soulful hospitality—an industry where success is measured not only by revenue and occupancy but by the depth of human connection we create."



www.hotelierindia.com

OCTOBER 2025 / HOTELIER INDIA / 45

Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	48
Circulation:	62,000		

Cover Story

POWER LISTS 2025

"For me, true leadership is about balancing results with relationships — creating sustainable success while ensuring that every team member, partner, and guest feels seen, respected, and valued."

Vikram Lalvani

Managing Director & CEO, Sterling Holidays

"I draw strength from a simple but powerful philosophy: Stay grounded. Stay grateful. Stay growing," shares Vikram Lalvani, Managing Director & CEO of Sterling Holiday Resorts Limited.

"This philosophy is deeply embedded in Sterling's core values. From honesty and integrity, I've learned that transparency builds unshakable trust. From being result-oriented, I've embraced accountability without politics. As a team player, I've understood that ego breaks, but collaboration builds. I push hard, but never at the cost of the families behind us, reflecting our value of being handworking with balance. I champion risk, but with prudence. Above all, I never forget to follow the golden rule: Treat others the way you wish to be treated. These aren't just values on paper — they've been my compass through every challenge."

Transformation Leader

With over three decades of leadership in hospitality, leisure, and IT, Lalvani wants to be remembered not just for expanding Sterling's footprint, but for nurturing a culture where hospitality leaders pursue through challenges without losing heart, innovate without losing direction, and lead without losing humanity. "For me, true leadership is about balancing results with relationships — creating sustainable success while ensuring that every team member, partner, and guest feels seen, respected, and valued," he maintains.

Culture & Experience

Looking ahead, Lalvani envisions a distinctive path for the industry, one that is "rooted in culture, scaled by experience, and driven by emotion. India's hospitality future will be shaped by deeply local stories, digitally enabled journeys, and emotionally intelligent service — where technology enhances warmth, not replaces it."

A mechanical engineer with an MBA and advanced leadership certifications from Wharton, Cornell, and IIMs, he is also Chairman of AIRDA. A passionate traveller and film enthusiast, Lalvani continues to blend work with his passions as he builds Sterling into India's leading leisure hospitality brand.



Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	49
Circulation:	62,000		

POWER LIST 2025

Cover Story

"Tomorrow's Indian hospitality will be modern, inclusive, and globally admired—while staying unmistakably Indian at its core."

Vikramjit Singh

Founder, ALIVAA Hotels

"I'd like the next generation to inherit an industry that is more inclusive, more resilient, which thinks scale and is globally admired—while staying unmistakably Indian at heart," says Vikramjit Singh, Founder, Chairman & Managing Director of ALIVAA Hotels and Resorts.

Shaping a Legacy

A seasoned hotelier with over 25 years of experience, Singh has played an influential role in shaping India's hospitality landscape. An alumnus of Harvard Business School's Advanced Management Program, Mayo College, and Shri Ram College of Commerce, he further sharpened his expertise with a Post Graduate Diploma in Hospitality Management from the Taj Group of Hotels.

Before establishing ALIVAA Hotels, he spent nearly two decades with Lemon Tree Hotels, where he was instrumental in driving revenue strategies, building sales channels, and enhancing customer experiences. His impact saw him rise to the role of President after serving as Chief Sales Officer. "Lead with clarity, act with compassion, and grow through change," he says, describing the mantras that have defined his leadership journey.

Striking Balancing

At ALIVAA, Singh now channels his vision into creating a brand that reflects both global ambition and Indian warmth. His approach balances efficiency with authenticity, drawing on his extensive operational and strategic experiences. "The future of Indian hospitality can be envisioned as heritage meeting innovation, where global standards blend seamlessly with a local heart," he notes. "Powered by technology yet rich in authenticity, it promises mindful travel and timeless hospitality."

Beyond his corporate journey, Singh has also contributed to industry forums, including chairing the Hospitality and Tourism Committee of the PHD Chamber of Commerce in 2023, and serving on the Board of Governors at IMR Union University, Dehradun.

Beyond Hotels

For him, hospitality is about more than hotels—it is about building an ecosystem of resilience, inclusivity, and global admiration. As he leads ALIVAA into the future, his words capture both aspiration and intent: "Tomorrow's Indian hospitality will be modern, inclusive, and globally admired—while staying unmistakably Indian at its core."



www.hotelierindia.com

OCTOBER 2025 | HOTELIER INDIA | 49

Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	50
Circulation:	62,000		

Cover Story

POWER LISTS 2025

With over 25 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Vikramjit Oberoi took up the role of Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of IHH Limited in 2015.

Vikramjit Singh Oberoi

Managing Director and
Chief Executive Officer, IHH Limited

Vikramjit Singh Oberoi is the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of IHH Limited.

He holds a Bachelor's degree in Science from Pepperdine University, California, USA and has over 25 years of experience in the hospitality industry.

Rise through Leadership Ranks

Oberoi joined the Board as a Non-Executive Director on 15th December, 1995. He became a Whole-Time Director and was designated Deputy Managing Director in July 2004.

Visionary at the Helm

In July 2007, he was re-designated as Joint Managing Director of the Company. On November 28th, 2013, he was re-designated Chief Operating Officer and Joint Managing Director of IHH Limited, and took up the role of Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer on April 06, 2015.



Published Date:	31 Oct 2025	Publication:	Hotelier India [National]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	51
Circulation:	62,000		

POWER LIST 2025

Cover Story

"The next generation of leaders will be digitally fluent and strategically agile but what will set them apart is their ability to lead with empathy, navigate complexity, and connect with both teams and guests on a human level."

Zubin Saxena

Senior Vice President & Regional Head,
Hilton South Asia

"In a future defined by speed and sharp operational thinking, emotional intelligence will be the real differentiator," believes Zubin Saxena, a seasoned leader with over 25 years of experience in the global hospitality industry. "The next generation of leaders will be digitally fluent and strategically agile but what will set them apart is their ability to lead with empathy, navigate complexity, and connect with both teams and guests on a human level. That balance is what the future of hospitality will demand."

Precision Meets Personalisation

Senior Vice President & Regional Head for Hilton South Asia, Saxena's pivotal role sees him leading a team of industry-best professionals supporting 75 operating and pipeline hotels.

Responsible for steering growth and enhancing the brand's presence in South Asia, he sees the future of Indian hospitality as "Precision meets personalisation - a future where operational excellence is paired with bespoke experiences that capture the soul of every destination."

Global Journey

An alumnus of the University of Glasgow, with a master's degree with distinction in business administration, Saxena has carved a distinguished career, serving as the Managing Director and Area Senior Vice President at Radisson Hotel Group for eight years. His journey also features pivotal roles at InterContinental Hotels Group, Jones Lang LaSalle Hotels, and JLL New York, where he demonstrated expertise in strategic development, operations, and advisory capacities.

Disciplined Growth

"Speed means nothing without clarity," he says, illustrating his leadership mantra. "In a market growing as fast as South Asia, it's tempting to chase everything at once. But I've learned the power of focus, picking the right partners, empowering our teams, and staying deeply connected to the market pulse. Growth is exciting, but sustainable growth takes discipline." ■



www.hiltonindia.com

OCTOBER 2025 | HOTELIER INDIA | 51