

BW HOTELIER



B W H O T E L I E R . C O M



ALL THE COUNTRIES ACROSS THE GLOBE TAKE TOURISM AS ONE OF THE BIGGEST SOURCES OF GDP BUT WE ARE YET TO TAKE A STEP IN THAT DIRECTION, SAYS **SUJOY GUPTA**, CHAIRMAN AND MANAGING DIRECTOR, SAMRAAT GROUP

'INDIA NEEDS TO HAVE LUCRATIVE POLICIES FOR TOURISM'



BW HOTELIER JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2023 www.bwhoteller.com



BY BW BUREAU

PICTURE THIS: A young boy loses his father, in 1985, at 13. The kid, along with his eight-year-old sister and mother, is left homeless and the family sleeps on footpaths. It is during this phase that he realises the importance of a home and dreams of becoming a builder one day. His dream gets further consolidated after watching Bollywood potboiler Trishul almost a year later. He begins laying the foundation of his life by taking up a job as a waiter in a small restaurant opposite Nashik Road Railway Station. With hard work and honesty, he becomes a KOT (Kitchen Order Taking) boy and then a bartender. He graduates to takes over as a cashier and thereafter as a front office executive, assistant manager and then a manager. As he has spent most of his formative years in the hotel industry, he dreams of owning a hotel one day. The first stint happens in 2005 with a 20-room lodging, Hotel De-Rajnigandha which later, in 2008, is sold off. In 2006, he enters the field of real estate.

Today, almost 17 years later, Sujoy Gupta is the Chairman and Managing Director of Samraat Group which has completed 40 million sq ft of commercial and residential spaces with 5,000-plus happy families residing and 3,000-plus offices. Over this period, the Group has been awarded 100-plus national and international awards too. Not this alone, he owns Hotel Courtyard by Marriott – Nashik comprising 113 keys, two large banquets and four restaurants which was inaugurated in November 2020 on his son's birthday.

"Courtyard by Marriott is the first major brand of Samraat Group to venture into the hospitality business. We are a renowned brand in the real estate industry and one of the topmost brands in

north Maharashtra," says Gupta, adding that they have also signed with Marriott International for the Westin Resorts and Spa at Nashik and Fairfield by Marriott at Shirdi. "Both the hotels will open to public by 2025-26 and will be one-of-their-kind in the country. We will open Courtyard by Marriott – Aurangabad in 2027," he informs.

Talking about the opportunities he sees as an investor in Nashik, Gupta says, "Not only does the city has great weather, it is among the 10 fastest growing cities in Maharashtra and holds a very important position in Hindu mythology and Indian history. It offers unique opportunities with tourism products like wine, farm, pilgrimage and cultural tourism. Apart from great weather, the city is known for Kumbh Mela held here once every 12 years with the next falling in 2027. As the city is almost three hours from both Mumbai and Pune, it serves as a perfect weekend destination. It is well connected to Surat and Ahmedabad with Shirdi just 90 minutes away. Then there is proximity to two international airports, in Nashik and Shirdi. The city is also coming up with a Metro. As an investor, I see that in the coming four-five years, Nashik is going to be one of the biggest hub in IT sector, manufacturing and pharma industry. It will also create a lot of job opportunities for people in and around the city."

With several leading hospitality chains having grabbed the market share in mid-market hotel segment, Gupta too is targeting the same. "Hence our second venture is in Nashik which will be followed by Shirdi and Aurangabad. I feel Bhubaneswar, Kochi, Ahmednagar and Kolhapur also have enough opportunities for branded hotels in mid-segment bracket," he says.

To succeed in this competitive industry, the Samraat Group

BW HOTELIER JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2023 www.bwhoteller.com

House of Gourmet -
Alfresco

Studio II & III



Outdoor Pool

CMD says that one always needs to give the end user the best experience. "We strive to provide each experience differently and in the best possible way. May it be a Courtyard, Westin or Fairfield, I personally take charge with my designers and consultants on each and every aspect from the concept, design, exteriors, interiors, furniture and fixtures, lights, kitchen, banquets and restaurants along with all other concepts. I ensure the best consultants are hired and the best products are delivered to get the best experience which one should always remember and pass it on to others." The second most important thing he believes is that if one takes good care of his staff, they take good care of the clients. "I ensure the staff is forever satisfied and we give them various incentive from time to time. Once they join the hotel, our staff never wants to leave unless there is some intimation from the operator management," he shares.

Sharing his views on the challenges hotel owners face in the current situation and what, according to him, is the way forward, Gupta feels that the Government policies are not as lucrative in India as they are internationally. "All the countries across the globe take tourism as one of the biggest sources of GDP whereas India is still to make better policies for tourism and more importantly, the will to implement policies at national level



The Escape Lounge



Club Stratos

SAMRAAT GROUP HAS PLANS TO COME UP WITH HOTELS IN AURANGABAD, SAPUTARA AND AHMEDNAGAR BY 2027-28

House of Gourmet
Private Dining Room

needs to be there. They hardly exist at the state level. Lockdown situation, like it happened during the pandemic, can have a huge impact on the hospitality industry and then there can be attrition of staff due to high international salaries. Then the smaller cities specifically have challenges on HR front and the trade unions can be big deterrents in some cities along with local and social connections creating issues. Additionally, the inflation in prices are not equal to the sale price of food and rooms. In fact, India is the cheapest destination per room per dollar and costly when it comes to the expenses. Not to forget, the control of operators on many unwanted and undesired issues."

To maintain balanced and good relations with the operator company and ensure best returns on investments for the assets, Gupta shares that meeting on regular basis with hotel staff and operator company representatives like responsible hotel head, accounts head, sales and marketing head, HR head and all other related operator representatives once a month or quarterly makes you more comfortable. "We discuss the progress of the hotel, understand their plans and priorities and the issues faced, if any. These regular meetings enable the hotel owner to put forth any issue related to the growth of the hotel, benefits to the staff, return on investments thus ensuring the hotel gets best returns on

investment. The hotel staff understands your regular visits and supervision and pays more attention to the job. It affects the growth of the hotel in a positive way."

On real estate front, Samraat Group is going on with four major projects of which two are near completion. "We are adding a new Asian speciality restaurant at Courtyard by Marriott and will be operational soon. Four more big residential-cum-commercial projects are in the pipeline over next three years. Westin Resorts and Spa, Nashik opposite Sula Vineyards and Fairfield by Marriott near Shirdi Temple will be open by 2025-2026. There are plans to come up with hotels in Aurangabad, Saputara and Ahmednagar by the end of 2027-2028. These will be launched by 2029-2030. Samraat Group is also getting ready to come up with its IPO by 2027 and we have already started working on it," informs Gupta.

Sharing his outlook for 2023, the Samraat Group CMD says that the year will definitely be a very good one for the hospitality industry as people have already started to go out for vacations and food. "The hunger for vacation for Indians has increased and I believe 2023 will see its peak in the hospitality industry. It is also learnt that many chains are signing more and more hotels throughout the country, expecting the number of hotels to rise drastically in the next three-four years," he shares. ■