

Published Date:	7 Feb 2024	Publication:	The Economic Times [Ahmedabad]
Journalist:	Anumeha Chaturvedi	Page No:	1
Circulation:	16,031		

FILE PHOTO



## Lemon Tree Goes Big on Expansion, Plans to Open 30 Hotels this Year

Anumeha Chaturvedi

New Delhi: BSE-listed Lemon Tree Hotels will double down on expansion this calendar year with plans of opening 30 hotels with over 2,000 rooms.

It launched 1,375 new rooms across 14 hotels last year, including India's biggest hotel — the 669 rooms Aurika Mumbai Skycity in the last calendar year.

The hospitality chain said this year's expansion includes the opening of a Lemon Tree Resort in Bhutan in addition to its existing Lemon Tree Hotel, and the launch of 3-4 hotels and resorts in Nepal.

Lemon Tree Hotels said it is expanding in key tier-1, 2- and 3- markets, including Jaipur, Gurugram, Jamsheerpur, Meerut, Jabalpur, Thiruvananthapuram, as well as important leisure, pilgrim and wellness destinations such as Goa, Udaipur, Kumbhalgarh, Somnath, Dehradun and Kanha. It is looking to expand its Aurika Hotels & Resorts brand with two new resorts. The 110 key Aurika,

Kasauli is slated to open towards the end of this year, and the 132 keys Aurika Rishikesh will open early next year.

"The large Indian chains will drive consolidation in the hospitality sector through lower inventory hotels, because the economics or cost structure of international chains doesn't support this kind of expansion at present," said Patanjali Keswani, chairman and MD of Lemon Tree Hotels in an interview with ET. He said more conversions will drive the growth of Lemon Tree Hotels this fiscal year.

"I had said we will cross 10,000 rooms. Of which, 60% will be owned by us. We opened India's biggest hotel in Mumbai. Now our operating owned inventory is close to 6,000 and our managed inventory is about 4,500 rooms. So put together its 10,500. We are there," said Keswani.

"We will sign another 3,000-4,000 rooms. A lot of this is conversions, which could mean standalone hotels or some other branded hotels getting into our portfolio," he added. He said premiumisation is happening across categories, and it is very 'healthy', because typically 2-3 years after that, the domestic middle-class consumers start moving a lot of items from discretionary to the non-discretionary categories.

anumeha.chaturvedi@timesgroup.com

anumeha.chaturvedi@timesgroup.com