

Where the ROOMS Have Gone

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If you are trying to book a room in the hotels of Gurgaon these days, be forewarned. You might strike a brick wall as there is no room available at all. The occupancy is almost to the full. Well, after all Gurgaon is not known as the Millennium City for nothing.

There are actually few hotels in Gurgaon namely Bristol, the first to open in Gurgaon, Fortune Select Global, Park Plaza, The Lemon Tree in Udyog Vihar and City Centre and The Trident

Hilton. And these days the demand for rooms in these hotels is more than the supply because of more and more corporate offices shifting to Gurgaon. Till about early 2003, travellers to Gurgaon stayed in Delhi and made a daily trip to the suburb. The commuting to and fro did not take much time and Gurgaon was also not a great place for fun and relaxation in the evenings. In the last two years though all that has changed. Increasing road congestion and building of the flyovers on the NH-8 has made the commuting from Delhi to Gurgaon about two hours during peak hours. Gurgaon itself has had a tremendous makeover in terms of malls, restaurants, shopping and good places to spend the evening. Travellers to Gurgaon today prefer to come to the city the night before, rather than the morning of their work. And they prefer staying in Gurgaon rather than in Delhi to avoid the extended commuting time. The hotels in the city have not been able to rise -up to this huge need for rooms. "However this is soon to change with some very high quality accommodation already in the market and many more coming-up," informs Cyrus Madan, deputy general manager, Lemon Tree Hotels. " We are sold out on most of the days. Last week we had approximately 98% occupancy. We are a business hotel and serve corporate clients and usually have a healthy mix of foreign and Indian nationals staying with us. According to me the reason you can't find rooms in Gurgaon is because the demand is way more than the supply. Gurgaon has developed as a destination of choice for all MNCs, and at such a fast pace that the basic necessities such as hotel rooms have not been able to keep up with that pace," shares Rubal Chaudhry, general manager, Park Plaza.

"Both the Lemon Tree hotels are doing exceedingly well. Since the focus of these hotels is the business traveler, these hotels only take a marginal dip on a Friday or a Saturday. Year round our average occupancy percentage in both hotels is 80. This last week there has been no let- up even on the weekend with occupancies averaging close to 96%,"informs Cyrus Madan."The market for hotels is buoyant all over the country and therefore the occupancy is almost 100% through the week but drops marginally over the weekend. For the month of November, the occupancy was over 90%. Most of the guests are business travelers but we do also get groups from abroad that are transiting through Delhi."

"The Indian economy is on the upswing and with that there is a major rise in the numbers of business travellers. It is not just difficult to get rooms in Gurgaon. The same is true of Delhi and in fact nearly all-major business destinations. Bangalore is another such story where the occupancies are very high and so are the room rates," shares Chandan Singh, general manager, Fortune Select Global.

Most of these hotels are comfortable and apt to suit the modern day corporate. "The Lemon Tree hotels are "smart hotels" designed to meet the requirements of the business traveller, both Indians and foreigners. Our hotels are priced at 40-50 percent, the price of a five star hotel", explains Cyrus Madan. "The Fortune Global at Gurgaon is in fact the first select hotel of the Fortune chain, which means that in its service and product delivery it is just a notch lower than a five star hotel" adds Chandan Singh. Park Plaza is elegantly designed and fashionably styled on the lines of a European cosmopolitan business hotel. "There's freedom of space and it is equipped with world class facilities," says Rubal Chaudhry.

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