

ICS Group, Mantis partner to launch Ayana project

Mumbai-based ICS Group recently announced that they have consummated a joint venture with the Mantis group based in South Africa, an owner and operator of a global portfolio of iconic boutique luxury hotels.

The ICS Group has built a successful track record in partnering with South African companies and has existing joint ventures with Bentel Associates to provide architectural services and Old Mutual Property to provide property management and asset management services. In addition, the chairman, Deepak Premnarayan is on the board of FirstRand Bank, South Africa's leading diversified financial services company.

The new joint venture named Ayana will address the untapped opportunity in the boutique luxury segment of the market in the Indian sub-continent and south-east Asia. The venture is focused on providing hospitality services to high-end boutique hotels and lodges, primarily in nature destinations. Ayana offers a prospective client a truly world-class one-stop service, taking a project from conception and feasibility through to planning, detailed design, construction, and eventually management and marketing.

The Mantis Group has a 20 year track record in providing their guest unique experiences that include high-end safari lodges in Africa, the Ice Hotel in Sweden, eco-lodges in South America, leisure hotels in Europe and luxury expeditions to Antarctica. Similarly, Ayana's focus over the next few years is to design and operate iconic hotels in nature destinations and targets to have eight properties under management in the next three years.

Establishing a model for eco-tourism

The first project is a ten room luxury safari lodge at Pench National Park, which is expected to be operational by 2013, priced at approximately INR25 000 a room per night. In developing this lodge, the company intends on establishing a successful model for eco-tourism by providing a meaningful and unique experience to its guest while ensuring the protection of India's spectacular wildlife and natural heritage.

Speaking about the joint venture, Kunal Premnarayan, group CEO of ICS Realty said the luxury boutique segment in India is at a nascent stage and there is immense potential in the sector. "The tourism industry in India is developing and evolving as the country witnesses a steady increase in inbound international travelers. We believe this is the most opportune time to make our foray in to the hospitality sector and are delighted to have an experienced and globally reputed partner in Mantis."

Commenting on the announcement Akhil Behl, CEO of Ayana said: "Our objective at Ayana is to share untouched nature destinations with our guests, providing the ultimate luxury experience. Mantis has an established record in providing once in a lifetime experiences to the boutique luxury clientèle and a strong philosophy towards conservation and eco-friendly practices. They have been acclaimed the leading conservation company in the world on multiple occasions. These

attributes make Mantis our preferred partner to address the India opportunity."

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