

# Leader Speak

JANUARY 2025



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DEAR FRIENDS,

As we step into 2025, the hospitality industry stands poised on the brink of extraordinary opportunity and transformative innovation. The months ahead hold the promise of continued growth as the travel and tourism sector flourishes and of reinvention, spurred by evolving consumer preferences, large events and demand for unique travel experiences.

Indian travelers are also exploring lesser-known destinations, preferring immersive cultural and natural experiences over the conventional tourist-heavy locales. This trend opens a window of opportunity for boutique, sustainable, and personalized hospitality offerings.

As an industry, we remain committed to innovation, sustainability, and service excellence to meet the growth momentum and customer expectations. In addition the focus on promotion of spiritual tourism including the Maha Kumbh 2025 provide excellent opportunities to showcase India's vibrant heritage and culture to the world.

In our Pre-budget memorandum we have strongly advocated that the industry be given its due recognition and place in the economy given its multiplier effect and the potential to generate jobs across geographies and skill sets. According hotels the infrastructure status, allowing hotels the benefits available to industry and agriculture, single-window clearances, GST rationalization, incentives to propel growth, incentivizing sustainability measures are some of the key recommendations.

Meanwhile, as the apex body, we remain committed to tackling key challenges, including talent development, adoption of the rapid changes in technology in a safe manner and reducing carbon footprints among others.

With another promising year ahead, we will continue to collaborate and to elevate India's position as a global leader in hospitality with the continued active support of our Members. With the ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and Atithi Devo Bhava let us stay focused on providing superior guest experiences, fostering sustainable growth, and building a stronger nation.

Regards,  
KB Kachru  
President HAI

## HAI NEWS



### HAI HOTELS DIRECTORY 2025 RELEASED

The HAI Hotels Directory is a one of its kind publication. A window to the wonderful world of HAI member hotels—some of the finest properties in the region and the world. While fulfilling the need for an authentic compendium of member properties, the Directory also serves as a useful hotel guide to the discerning traveler both international and domestic, whether travelling for business or for leisure. Its unique design features only one member hotel per page. The 2025 edition has been released, detailing 316 hotels across 106 locations. It is also available on the Association's website.

<https://hotelassociationofindia.com/pdf/HAI2025.pdf>

HAI  
HOTELS  
DIRECTORY

INDIA  
2025



Hotel Association of India

## HAI PARTICIPATES IN ASCON MEETING

As a member of the Associations Council (ASCON) of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), HAI actively participated in the Council's meeting held in Bhubaneswar in conjunction with the Utkarsh Odisha – Make in Odisha Conclave 2025, 28th and 29th January. HAI was represented by its Hon'ble Secretary and Chairman of Odisha chapter, Dr. J.K. Mohanty. Ms Bidisha Ganguly, Chief Economist, presented the "State of Economy" at the meeting. This was followed by a discussion with Shri Sampad Chandra Swain, Hon'ble Minister of State, Industries Department (Ind. Charge), Government of Odisha. Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha met and interacted with the participants over tea. Later in the evening, the participants also attended the Networking Dinner of Utkarsh Odisha - Make in Odisha Conclave 2025 and Inaugural Session of the Event. Hon'ble Prime Minister was the Chief Guest at the inaugural held on the 28th of January. HAI appreciates this joint effort of CII and the state government to make Odisha an investment destination of choice. Earlier in the year HAI had launched its Odisha Chapter in Bhubaneswar. Odisha has been identified as a priority State for tourism development as announced in the Budget 2024. HAI will continue to support and collaborate with other industry bodies and the government at all levels to promote a sustainable growth of India tourism specially the hospitality sector. HAI Members including IHCL, Swosti group, Sarovar group of Hotels and Oberoi hotels, have expanded their footprints in Odisha and will continue to explore new opportunities in the State. Swosti Group has already invested Rs.800 crores and employs close to 1700 people. In the pipeline is an investment of another Rs.400 crore over the next two years in the State's tourism.



## HAI IN NEWS



### BUDGET NEEDS TO RATIONALIZE TAXES FOR HOSPITALITY SECTOR, SAYS HOTELS' ASSOCIATION HEAD KACHRU

The hotel industry is banking on the Union Budget 2025-26 for reforms that could lower stay and dining costs, making travel more affordable for consumers.

### BUDGET 2025: INDIAN HOTELS "GROSSLY UNDER-ROOMED" TO COMPETE WITH ASIAN DESTINATIONS, SEEK TAX CUTS

The Hotel Association of India (HAI) has urged the government to grant infrastructure status to the tourism sector in Union Budget 2025. Industry leaders believe this move would provide key benefits and enhance the competitiveness of India's hospitality sector on a global scale.

<https://www.cnbc18.com/budget/union-budget-2025-hotel-association-india-seeks-infrastructure-status-tourism-gst-19548371.htm>

### INDIA VERSUS THAILAND: HOTELIERS SEEK INFRASTRUCTURE STATUS IN BUDGET 2025 TO BEAT COMPETITION

As India's hospitality sector grapples with rising competition from neighboring countries and a manpower shortage, industry leaders are urging the government to address key challenges facing the industry in the upcoming Union Budget.

India is grossly under-roomed in comparison to the competing Asian destinations, said K B Kachru, President, Hotel Association of India (HAI)

### "UNRAVELLING INDIA'S BEST KEPT SECRET" AT TOURISM SESSION AT THE 18TH PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS (PBD).

The tourism session at the PBD was invigorating, featuring inspiring remarks from Odisha's Deputy Chief Minister, Mrs. Prabhati Parida, and Master Chef Sanjeev Kapoor. Key insights were shared by Mr. Balwant Singh, Secretary of the Department of Tourism, Odisha, and Mrs. Jyotsna Suri, CMD of The Lalit Hotels, Palaces & Resorts. The session, masterfully moderated by Akshita M. Bhanj Deo, culminated with Mr. Amitabh Kant declaring Odisha as India's best tourist destination.

HRAO and HAI have already submitted proposals for revising the tourism policy. Industry leaders and investors are optimistic, with many NRIs expressing interest in investing in Odisha, heralding significant economic growth for the state.

## MINISTRY OF TOURISM ORGANIZES SIX - DAY MEGA EVENT "BHARAT PARV" FROM 26TH TO 31ST JANUARY, 2025 AT RED FORT LAWNS

Bharat Parv has been organized annually since 2016, from January 26th to 31st at the Red Fort, New Delhi.

The Bharat Parv-2025 has the components of a display of Republic Day tableaux, performances by the Armed Force Bands (Static & Moving), cultural performances by ZCCs and State/UT troupes, cuisines of India, Food Demonstrations through Studio Kitchens and Crafts Bazaar, pavilions of State Governments and Central Ministries etc.

## MINISTRY OF TOURISM UNVEILS MAJOR INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE MAHA KUMBH 2025 AS GLOBAL TOURISM HUB

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, is set to make the Maha Kumbh 2025 a landmark event not only for spiritual gatherings but also for global tourism. To celebrate this momentous occasion, the Ministry is rolling out several initiatives aimed at boosting both domestic and international tourism.

## TOURISM MINISTRY APPROVES 40 PROJECTS WORTH RS. 3295.76 CRORE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF LESSER-KNOWN TOURISM SITES IN 23 STATES

The Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India, in a big boost for tourism sector, has approved 40 Projects worth Rs. 3295.76 Crore for development of lesser-known Tourism sites in 23 States, across the country. The initiative aims to ease pressure on high-traffic sites and promote a more balanced distribution of tourists across the country.

## HERITAGE TOURISM IN TIER-II CITIES

The Ministry promotes various tourist destinations and products including Heritage Tourism in Tier-II cities through various initiatives including promotional events, assistance to State Governments, stakeholders for organizing fairs and festivals, participation in exhibitions, website and social media.

## INDIA'S RANKING IN THE TRAVEL AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT INDEX

According to the Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) 2024 report published by the World Economic Forum (WEF), India is ranked 39th among 119 countries. In the previous index published in 2021, India was ranked 54th. However, due to a revision in the WEF's methodology, India's 2021 rank was adjusted to 38th place.

## DEKHO APNA DESH CAMPAIGN

Ministry of Tourism launched Dekho Apna Desh People's Choice poll with aim to engage with citizens to identify most preferred tourist attractions across 5 tourism categories - Spiritual, Nature & Wildlife, Adventure, Cultural & Heritage and others. The Ministry has promoted the People's choice poll through various platforms, including Digital, Social Media, Print, Outdoor, SMS and WhatsApp.

## BIDAR, UDUPI TO BE DEVELOPED AS TALENT BASED DESTINATIONS

Bidar and Udupi, two promising tourism destinations in Karnataka, have been selected for development under the Talent-Based Destination Development Program, a key component of the Swadesh Darshan initiative. This program aims not only to enhance the districts, destinations, and individual sites but also to foster a competitive environment among states, encouraging them to attract more tourists by offering improved facilities and experiences. As part of this initiative, the Ministry of Tourism has identified 42 destinations across India, with Bidar and Udupi selected for funding of ₹25 crore and ₹10 crore, respectively.



## GOA'S TOURISM SECTOR PERFORMING BETTER THAN NATIONAL AVERAGE: MINISTER

Goa's tourism sector is surpassing the national average, state minister Rohan Khaunte, emphasizing government efforts to promote local culture.

Speaking at a tourism conclave, he dismissed claims of declining footfall, highlighting Goa's resilience in the competitive sector. He also acknowledged challenges raised by social media influencers and noted government awareness of overcrowding at Baga and Calangute beaches. An action plan will be prepared following the Goa Tourism Board meeting.

## WITH NO REVIVAL PLAN IN PLACE, NCLT ORDERS LIQUIDATION OF TULIP HOTELS

The Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal has ordered the liquidation of the once-iconic Tulip Hotels after the creditors of the company failed to receive any viable resolution plan. The tribunal also appointed Krishna Gopal Ratanlal Maheshwari as the liquidator.



## LEMON TREE HOTELS EXPANDS FOOTPRINT WITH NEW PROPERTIES IN GUWAHATI

Lemon Tree Hotels Limited has revealed the signing of two new license agreements for properties in Guwahati, Assam, further expanding its footprint in the region. These hotels, will be managed by its subsidiary Carnation Hotels Private Limited.



## SAROVAR HOTELS TO OPEN ROYAL TULIP KATHMANDU, NEPAL'S LARGEST HOTEL WITH CITY'S BIGGEST MICE FACILITY

Sarovar Hotels has joined forces with The Massif Hotel to introduce Royal Tulip Kathmandu, set to become both the largest hotel and the biggest MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) destination in Nepal.

## INDIAN HOTELS IHCL Q3 RESULTS FY 2025 OUT! TATA GROUP'S TAJ HOTELS QUARTERLY EARNINGS, FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE DETAILS

Tata Group-owned IHCL said its profit after tax (PAT) grew 28.8 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to Rs 582.31 crore in the third quarter of the financial year 2024-25 against Rs 451.95 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal.



## IMPERIAL TOBACCO COMPANY OF INDIA LIMITED HOTELS LAUNCHES VISIONARY GLOBAL GROWTH DRIVE POST-DEMERGER

India's ITC Hotels embarks on global expansion post-demerg, targeting neighboring countries and West Asia with an asset-light growth strategy. The move follows the recent demerger of its hotels division, ITC Hotels Ltd., which is poised for a stock market debut in the coming weeks.

Operating under six distinct brands—ITC Hotels, Fortune, Mementos, Storii, WelcomHeritage, and Welcomhotel—the group has already made its mark internationally by opening its first property in Sri Lanka last year.

## COLDPLAY AND WEDDINGS TO DRIVE GROWTH AT INDIAN HOTELS CO.

Taj Hotels' parent company Indian Hotels Company (IHCL) is expecting the January to March quarter to record double-digit growth. "With large-scale events like Mahakumbh, concerts like coldplay and the extended wedding season in the fourth quarter, we remain confident of delivering all the metrics," said Puneet Chhatwal, managing director and CEO of IHCL.



## OYO PLANS TO ADD 500 HOTELS IN RELIGIOUS HUBS ACROSS STATES IN 2025

Oyo, the travel tech unicorn, is set to expand its presence by adding 500 hotels in key religious hubs across India in 2025. The company's strategic move is aimed at capitalizing on the growing religious tourism sector, with hotels planned in prominent destinations such as Ayodhya, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Puri, Haridwar, Mathura, Vrindavan, Amritsar, Ujjain, Ajmer, Nasik, and Tirupati.



## SERVING THE 40 CRORE DEVOTEES AT MAHA KUMBH

The Maha Kumbh 2025, the world's largest spiritual gathering, is currently taking place in Prayagraj, drawing over 40 crore devotees from around the globe.

In a bid to enhance the experience for these pilgrims, SmartQ, a subsidiary of compass group and the fastest-growing food and facility management services provider, is transforming the culinary offerings at the event with its cutting-edge SmartQ Rasoi Food Court.



## TAJ HOTEL AND CONVENTION CENTRE IN AGRA REOPENS AFTER TRANSFORMATION

The Taj Hotel and Convention Centre, Agra, has reopened following an extensive transformation, offering modern amenities alongside a tribute to the city's cultural and architectural heritage.

## MUMBAI'S SEA ROCK HOTEL REBRANDED AS TAJ BANDSTAND, CONSTRUCTION TO BEGIN IN SECOND HALF OF 2025

Mumbai's iconic Sea Rock Hotel will come up in a new avatar as Taj Bandstand. The Indian Hotels Company Ltd (IHCL) will begin construction on the sea-facing plot in Bandra in the second half of 2025.



## INDIAN HOSPITALITY DRIVES A RESURGENCE FUELED BY NON-METRO GROWTH IN 2025

The Indian hospitality industry is on a growth trajectory, driven by rising demand, expanding non-metro markets, and promising trends in revenues and occupancy rates.

### Where are Indians headed in 2025?

The dominant travel theme for 2025 is community, where travelers are increasingly drawn to like-minded groups that share their passions, seeking to push boundaries for more meaningful experiences.

Indian travelers, in particular, are showing a preference for smaller, less crowded destinations as alternatives to popular tourist hotspots. They are looking for unique experiences that blend natural beauty with cultural richness, steering away from traditional mass tourism to discover hidden gems that offer a more personalized and authentic travel experience.