

LeaderSpeak

JUNE 2024



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DEAR FRIENDS,

This summer has been different. Temperatures soared breaking all records pushing people to spend most of the time indoors. The General elections concluded recently after a month long festival of democracy. The auspicious period for weddings was shorter. There was an impact on business travel and on the MICE business. The phase was temporary however. Overall sentiment has been positive. Business and retail bookings witnessed a 20 percent year-on-year surge this year and the demand for tour packages has increased by 15 per cent compared to the last year. But the expectation was higher given the recent past performance.

While summer is not the time for inbound, there have been efforts on the part of the ministry of tourism to promote traffic by launching the "coolcations" campaign. India's domestic tourism continues to be driven by spiritual tourism. Under the Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual and Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) scheme, the ministry has identified 26 additional cities for infrastructure development. 46 projects at the cost of Rs. 1629.17 Crore have been sanctioned. A report by an online travel services platform has revealed, amongst other travelling trends, an increase in holiday frequency, spontaneous plans and family-centric trips have stood out. By catering to these trends, hotels can be the most sought after places for breaks.

The return of the incumbent government means a continuity in policies and agenda. As the government prepares for the first 100 days, the industry needs to collaborate and work together to develop a concrete roadmap for hospitality as the emerging engine for GDP growth and employment and play a critical role in India's vision of becoming the third largest economy and a developed nation by 2047.

BEST WISHES & REGARDS

KB Kachru

HAI NEWS



HAI MEMBER HOTELS CELEBRATE 10TH HAI HAND HYGIENE DAY

Every year, HAI and its member hotels observe the Hand Hygiene Day with the primary goal of increasing awareness about the significance of hand washing in preventing the spread of infections. During the 10th HAI Hand Hygiene Day this year, member hotels such as IHCL, Oberoi Group of Hotels, The Park group of hotels, and others organized training sessions, public awareness campaigns, distribution of hand hygiene products, poster competitions, quizzes, seminars, etc involving guests, associates, associate families, vendors and local communities including schools and NGOs. The activities emphasized the importance of hand hygiene and underscored the pivotal role of clean and sanitized hands in fostering a healthy environment both at work and at home.



HAI WANTS INDUSTRY BENEFITS FOR HOSPITALITY SECTOR

There is an urgent need for the hospitality sector to be granted industry benefits at state level and infrastructure status by the Centre for it to attract more investments and play a part in the development of 50 new destinations announced by the government, according to newly elected president of Hotel Association of India (HAI), KB Kachru.

The sector is also hopeful that international tourist arrivals in India will reach pre-pandemic levels by March next year. However it will require ease of getting visas and aggressive campaigns in source markets for the promotion of Incredible India. "The government has declared 50 new destinations. Investors will be interested to invest in these destinations if the infrastructure is there," Kachru, who is also Chairman - South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group, told PTI. He further said, "People will only invest money if the related incentives are given. Unless the industry is motivated to invest in these destinations, we will not achieve what we want." Kachru asserted that the hospitality sector is not "asking for subsidies or things which are difficult for the government."

HAI EC MEETING

The 101st Meeting of the Executive Committee of Hotel Association of India was held on the 22nd of May 2024 at the Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport. The first for the financial year 2024-2025, it was also the first meeting chaired by Mr. Kachru as President of the Association. It saw a record participation.

The President opened the meeting by welcoming the Members. Thereafter he thanked the immediate past President Mr. Puneet Chhatwal and team for taking HAI to the next level.

The highlight of the discussion was the activation of HAI State Chapters. In addition to identifying the key states, EC members volunteered to take charge of a chapter and mentor it.

Members noted the update on activities meetings & events attended, representations made; membership, financial, media and other updates.

Members expressed concern on the slow pace of progress on the proposal of the music industry to come up with a single window for music license fee. There was an interest among Members to collaborate with the International LGBTQ+ Travel Association (IGLTA) to benefit from the burgeoning travel demand of the community.

Other key discussions were on developing a digital framework for the HAI Hotels Directory 2025. The meeting ended on an enthusiastic note with Members resolving that the Association be in a state of full preparedness for making an impactful presentation of the sector to the new government. Showcasing the potential of hotels to generate jobs and the policy interventions required to unleash the full potential that continues to remain largely un-tapped on account of policy impediments would be the key message for the same.



POLICY IN NEWS

COOLCATIONS – COOL SUMMERS OF INDIA CAMPAIGN OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA!

The Cool Summers of India campaign launched by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India at the Arabian Travel Mart 2024 in Dubai, aims to challenge the perception that India is too hot for summer travel. This digital campaign highlights India's potential holiday destinations like hill resorts located in the Himalayas and other ranges. It is an excellent initiative to showcase India's diverse and refreshing destinations.



INDUSTRY NEWS

INDIGO INTRODUCES HOTEL BOOKING SERVICE

Travelers can now easily book hotels and flights using IndiGo's new integrated service, which expedites and streamlines the travel planning process. By collaborating with Vernost Marketing Services Private, who created and oversee the hotel platform, IndiGo is now able to provide customers with access to the vast portfolio of the Expedia Group, which consists of over 700,000 hotels spread across 250,000 locations worldwide.

LEMON TREE HOTELS MARKS 20 YEARS OF HOSPITALITY

May 31st marked the twentieth anniversary of the first Lemon Tree Hotel in Udyog Vihar, Gurugram, which opened in 2004. Over two decades, the company has grown into one of India's largest hotel chains, with over 100 hotels and more than 10,000 rooms in India and abroad, and a market cap exceeding INR 112 billion. Chairman and Managing Director Patanjali G. Keswani reflected, "We've come a long way since launching Lemon Tree Hotel, Udyog Vihar. In the past twenty years, we've strived to provide value and positively impact our stakeholders, including team members, guests, investors, shareholders, owner partners, and vendors."



DR. JK MOHANTY, MANAGING DIRECTOR SWOSTI PREMIUM LIMITED RECEIVES LEGENDARY BUSINESS ENTREPRENEUR AWARD

Dr. JK Mohanty, a stalwart in the world of business, & Honorary secretary of Hotel Association of India (HAI), was honored with the prestigious "Legendary Business Entrepreneur Award" at the BNI Bizpro event. With an illustrious career spanning decades, Dr. Mohanty has exemplified innovation, leadership, and resilience in the entrepreneurial landscape. Awards like these not only celebrate individual achievements but also inspire others to strive for excellence in their own endeavors. As the founder of several successful ventures, Dr. Mohanty has left an indelible mark on various industries, ranging from hospitality to education. His visionary approach, coupled with a relentless pursuit of excellence, has not only transformed his own enterprises but has also inspired countless aspiring entrepreneurs globally.

SAROVAR HOTELS STRENGTHENS ITS TOP MANAGEMENT WITH STRATEGIC PROMOTIONS

Sarovar Hotels has strengthened its top management by promoting three key executives: Rajesh Ranjan, Nipun K Vig, and Akshay Thusoo. With a wealth of experience exceeding three decades, Rajesh Ranjan has been named as Senior Vice President - Development. In this new capacity, he will lead all business and project development endeavours, encompassing global franchising and management contracting. Nipun K Vig, another seasoned professional with over 30 years of experience, he has been promoted to Senior Vice President - Operations. In this role, he will oversee the profitability and sustainable growth strategies for all properties within the Sarovar group. Akshay Thusoo, boasting more than 15 years of experience spanning hospitality, media, and automotive sectors, has been promoted to the strategic role of Senior Vice President - Commercial. In this crucial position, he will supervise sales, revenue, distribution, and marketing operations, driving initiatives geared towards expanding business and increasing market share.



RADISSON HOTEL GROUP DEBUTS IN BIHAR, TO START OPERATIONS IN Q4 2027

Radisson Hotel Group, signed its first hotel in Bihar - Radisson Hotel Patna, in partnership with Naturals Dairy Private Limited. The hotel is expected to be operational by Q4 2027. The hotel is located in Patna's Patliputra area and easy accessibility to the Patna Airport and Railway Station.

"We are excited to achieve another milestone in our journey of expanding our presence in tier 2 and 3 regions of the country. The signing of our first hotel in Bihar, Radisson Hotel Patna, is a testament to the Group's dedication to delivering quality accommodation across every corner of the country while bringing unexplored destinations to travellers' radar. As we set our foot in the market, we look forward to raising the hospitality standard by delivering quality accommodations backed by exceptional service," said Nikhil Sharma, Managing Director and Area Senior Vice President, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group.



IHCL STEPS INTO NAGPUR - OPENS A GINGER HOTEL

Indian Hotels Company (IHCL), has announced the opening of Ginger Nagpur Airport Road. The hotel's lean luxe design philosophy allows guests to seamlessly blend work and leisure in vibrant, contemporary spaces. The 86-key Ginger Nagpur Airport Road is part of a mixed-use development that includes one of the city's premier shopping malls.

Deepika Rao, Executive Vice President - New Businesses, Hotel Openings & Corporate Communications, IHCL, said, "the opening aligns perfectly with IHCL's strategic vision of establishing a presence in key commercial centres. As an emerging metropolis and the primary business hub of Central India, Nagpur holds significant potential. We are delighted to debut the Ginger brand in the city with the opening of Ginger Nagpur Airport Road."

PARAS HEALTH APPOINTS NAKUL ANAND AS INDEPENDENT DIRECTOR ON BOARD

Veteran hotelier and former President of Hotel Association of India, Nakul Anand has been appointed as an Independent Director on the Board of Paras Health. The company expects to benefit from Anand's vast experience in the service industry, in streamlining operations to optimize hospital workflows. Paras Health aims to leverage Anand's strategic insights and experience in sustainable business models from Hospitality to Hospitals and Health. Notably, Anand has been acknowledged for his vision and commitment towards the tourism and hospitality industry and was also recognized as the 'Corporate Hotelier of the World 2019' by Hotels Magazine USA.



ROBUST INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT & IMPROVED ACCESSIBILITY TO PROVIDE IMPETUS TO 'WED IN INDIA': MANISHA SAXENA, DG, MINISTRY OF TOURISM

Manisha Saxena, IAS, Director General of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, highlighted how India's cultural richness and the rapid infrastructure development, such as the doubling of the number of airports and enhanced digital and physical connectivity, are facilitating destination weddings globally.

The Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with the Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan, and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), is organizing the 'Wed in India' expo. This event is also supported by the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Rajasthan (HRAR), the Indian Heritage Hotels Association (IHHA), and the Rajasthan Association of Tour Operators (RATO).