

# LeaderSpeak

AUGUST 2023



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### DEAR FRIENDS,

There has been an impressive surge in India's travel and tourism industry in 2023 with a notable increase in international tourist arrivals that have grown 25%, establishing the nation's growing allure as a popular destination. The industry's contribution to India's GDP has also reached new heights, now accounting for 10% of the total GDP. These encouraging statistics reflect a strengthening of India's position as a prominent player in the global tourism arena, attracting visitors from all corners of the world. The upcoming G20 summit in New Delhi is expected to further boost the industry and bolster its growth trajectory. We are embracing the future wholeheartedly, as India looks to receiving 25 million foreign travellers by 2030.

**- Puneet Chhatwal**

## HAI NEWS

### 97<sup>TH</sup> EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING: PAVING THE WAY FOR HOSPITALITY'S RESURGENCE

The hospitality industry's journey towards post-COVID recovery took centre stage at the 97th Executive Committee Meeting held at The Connaught, New Delhi-IHCL SeleQtions. With a sombre tone, members commenced the proceedings by observing a few moments of silence in memory of Mr. Anil Madhok, representative of HAI "fellow" member, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts, who unfortunately passed away recently.

The President, then led the meeting with optimistic opening remarks about the industry's post pandemic recovery attributed to the steady rise in both business and leisure travel, coupled with the positive impact of G20-related events. With the upcoming tourist and wedding seasons, scheduled Events like the ICC World Cup and Ms. World Pageant, hotels are poised for a robust growth for the rest of the year.

Central to the meeting's discussions were the two major advocacy agendas that the Association is resolutely pursuing. The first objective is to secure "Infrastructure status" at the national level, in keeping with the nature of the industry and its role in augmenting tourist accommodation – a key tourism infrastructure.

The second crucial requirement for the industry's good health and growth is the access to Industry benefits uniformly across all States and UTs. Encouragingly, some states have already extended these benefits. HAI will continue to focus on securing the benefits in other States and also track the implementation of States that have already notified the grant of industry benefits to hotels.

The Association's role in promoting India as a prominent tourist destination in collaboration with and to supplement the efforts of the ministry of tourism, was also discussed.

Besides advocacy, the meeting provided updates on various financial and legal matters. Members were brought up to speed on recent meetings attended by the Association for an active engagement across the board. Sustainability was a recurring theme throughout the discussions, emphasising HAI's commitment to fostering eco-friendly practices across its membership base.

Another important discussion at the meeting related to PATA Travel that India is proud to host in New Delhi this October. The event will see buyers and sellers of tourism products converge and explore B2B opportunities. It is an opportune time to showcase India tourism. HAI members as key players in the sector are committed to provide their best to the delegates in terms of comfort, convenience and services in the spirit of India's age-old tradition of Atithi Devo Bhavah!



## VICE PRESIDENT HAI MR. K.B. KACHRU, A VETERAN HOTELIER UNVEILS HIS FIRST BOOK

KB Kachru, one of the most respected hospitality industry veteran just published his first book, **Humility and Agility - A Life of a Hotelier**, sharing his extraordinary five-decade journey including the vital lessons learnt in the course of his brilliant career. An admired industry leader, Kachru demonstrates a variety of behaviours that leaders from many walks of life may learn and embrace. His inspirational stories and personal anecdotes have been flawlessly woven into an interesting and gripping read while offering practical insights that readers can apply to their own professional and personal life. In a manner, the book traces the evolution of the hotel industry and the changing landscape thereof. An honest and thorough overview of the sector, its current issues and struggles faced by industry professionals are also visible in the book.

The book can be a beacon of light, in the paths of both - emerging talent and veterans in their journey as hospitality professionals.



## MEETING WITH THE UNION TOURISM SECRETARY AND PRESENTATION OF VISION2047, A REPORT ON THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR'S FUTURE READINESS

As the tourist and hospitality sectors recover and expand following the two horrific years of the pandemic, the Hotel Association of India (HAI) has released a vision and plan for the sector's future.

Mr. K.B. Kachru, Chairman Emeritus and Principal Advisor, South Asia Radisson Hotel Group, Secretary General Mr. MP Bezbaruah, HAI Founding Members Ms. Priya Paul, Chairperson, Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Limited &, Dr. Jyotsna Suri, Chairperson, and MD, Bharat Hotels Limited, along with Mr. Ajay K. Bakaya, Managing Director, Sarovar Hotels Pvt Ltd. and Mrs. Charulata Sukhija, Deputy Secretary General HAI presented Shrimati V. Vidyavathi, Union Tourism Secretary with a copy of the report Vision@2047 - Indian Hotel Industry - Challenges and the Road Ahead.

The Hospitality Vision 2047 Report outlines several future possibilities and what the industry might feasibly achieve by the year India celebrates 100 years of freedom.

Appreciating HAI's initiative, Shrimati V. Vidyavathi said that the report is a helpful tool for the country's and for India Tourism Aspirations for 2047. The document outlines the potential of the Indian hotel industry in the next 25 years and explores the prospects for stakeholders in the hotel industry to collaborate.

The HAI team also apprised the Hon'ble Secretary, about the Association, its objectives and activities. Other issues discussed were domestic tourism especially religious tourism, promotion of UNESCO heritage sites in the country and the PATA Travel Mart being scheduled to be held in New Delhi in the first week of October. There was a commitment to move forward together.

## A WARM WELCOME TO M/S WYNDHAM HOTELS & RESORTS INDIA PVT. LTD. AS MEMBER

M/s. Wyndham Hotels & Resorts India Pvt. Ltd., based in Gurgaon, has joined the Hotel Association of India (HAI) as a valued member in the "Fellow" category. Mr. Nikhil Sharma, Managing Director-Eurasia, will represent the company in its association with HAI.

M/s. Wyndham Hotels & Resorts India Pvt. Ltd. has an impressive portfolio of over 50 managed and franchisee hotels across India, highlighting their significant presence in the Indian hospitality sector.

As an esteemed Fellow member of HAI, M/s. Wyndham Hotels & Resorts India Pvt. Ltd. will extend its support to various Association activities and initiatives. We extend a warm welcome to M/s. Wyndham Hotels & Resorts India Pvt. Ltd. and to Mr. Nikhil Sharma and look forward to their valuable contributions towards efforts to further the interests of the Indian hospitality industry.







## **HONORARY SECRETARY HAI, MR.J.K. MOHANTY RECEIVES HONOURS FROM KALINGA INSTITUTE OF INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY (KIIT) , ODISHA FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS THE INDUSTRY**

Mr. J K Mohanty, CMD, Swosti Group & Chairman of the Hotel & Restaurant Association of Odisha, was awarded the degree of Doctor of Letters (Honoris Causa) by KIIT, deemed to be University at its 19th Annual Convocation of held on August 19, 2023 .The honour was conferred by His Excellency, Governor of Odisha, Sri Ganeshi Lal, in recognition of Mr. Mohanty's outstanding contributions to the growth of the tourism industry in Odisha.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Mohanty, said, "I am grateful to Lord Jagannath, the blessings of my parents, family members, friends, and well-wishers, and Dr. Achyuta Samanta for recognising my dedication and contribution in the field of tourism." This honour not only enhances my drive but also serves as a reminder of the obligation I have to continue working for the benefit of Odisha tourism and to all my staff who have contributed to my success," stated Mr. Mohanty.

## **REMEMBERING VINCENT RAMOS, A RENOWNED HOTELIER**

Hotel Association of India is deeply saddened by the unfortunate and untimely demise of Mr. Vincent Ramos, Senior Vice President, IHCL. Ramos was a well-known name in the IHCL, having resurrected a handful of Taj's dormant properties. Humble, ever helpful and passionate about hospitality, he was an industry champion both for IHCL and for Goa. His contribution to HAI State Chapter for the region was invaluable.

We pray for his noble soul to rest in peace and for strength to his family. HAI will miss him deeply.





## TOURISM IN INDIA IS A MEANS OF ACHIEVING LONG-TERM GROWTH AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT: GOVT.

As the globe proceeds towards a new era of travel and discovery, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID pandemic, India's tourism sector is prepared to take centre stage, the government told Parliament during the recently concluded monsoon session. The tourism minister G Kishan Reddy informed the Lok Sabha that the ministry's recently drafted National Tourism Policy includes a comprehensive set of strategic objectives aimed at transforming India into a thriving and year-round tourist destination while fostering sustainable development and preserving the nation's rich cultural and natural heritage.

Further elaborating, he said that the policy's key pillars revolve around five core principles. The first goal is to increase tourism's contribution to the Indian economy by attracting more visitors, encouraging longer stays, and encouraging increased spending. By capitalising on the huge potential of the country's diversified landscapes and cultural fabric, India can entice tourists from around the world all year long, generating significant economic growth, according to the minister.



## FILM TOURISM CATCHING UP THE PACE IN INDIA

The rise of film tourism in India is a phenomenon that is quickly gaining momentum. Bollywood, is one of the largest in the world, and its films are seen by millions of people around the world. As a result, the locations used in Bollywood films have become increasingly popular tourist destinations. The Indian government and the Ministry of Tourism are actively promoting film tourism. The recent announcement on the National Strategy for Film Tourism by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India will soon be launching the Incredible India Campaign which will become one of the major contributing factors to the Indian Hospitality industry.

Film tourism is going to have a positive impact on the tourism and hospitality sector in India. Tourists who come to India to visit film locations spend money on accommodation, food, transportation, and other activities. This helps boost the economy and create jobs. The Indian Film industry has witnessed a growth of over INR 172 billion in 2022. This would make it one of the fastest growing segments of the tourism industry worldwide, the Indian M&E industry is estimated to grow at 10.75% to INR 4.12 lakh crore by 2025 according to PWC reports. The Indian government and the Ministry of Tourism are confident that film tourism will continue to grow in the years to come.



## TRAVEL FOR LIFE INITIATIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) is a visionary initiative spearheaded by Honourable Prime Minister of India, Sh. Narendra Modi. As a global mass movement, it empowers individuals and communities to combat climate change and safeguard the environment. Green Tourism, a top priority for India's G20 Presidency, takes centre stage in this endeavour. The Ministry of Tourism's Travel for LiFE program is a pivotal component, fostering eco-conscious practices among tourists and businesses. By adopting the "Travel for LiFE Actions," they contribute significantly to environmental protection and climate action. With robust IEC and Capacity Building efforts, the program aims to raise awareness and drive tangible positive impacts. G. Kishan Reddy, Minister for Tourism, Culture, and Development, leads the charge towards a sustainable and resilient tourism sector, promoting India's G20 priority of Green Tourism.

## CRUISE TOURISM! A NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

The Indian cruise industry is currently in its nascent stage, but it has the potential to grow exponentially in the coming years, according to the recent announcements made by the Ministry of Tourism and the Government of India in the latest National Strategy for Cruise Tourism. The country has a long coastline and a diverse range of destinations, which makes it an ideal location for cruise tourism. The government is taking several steps to promote cruise tourism in India. These include developing new cruise terminals, improving infrastructure at existing ports, and offering tax breaks and other incentives to cruise operators, including promoting India as a cruise destination through the Incredible India campaign.

According to the Ministry of Tourism, the Indian cruise industry is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10% between 2023 and 2041. This growth will be driven by a number of factors, including the increasing popularity of cruise tourism globally and a growing middle class in India with disposable income to spend on travel. The estimated revenue from cruise tourism in India is expected to reach ₹35,500 crore (US\$4.5 billion) by 2041.





## LEMON TREE HOTELS SIGNS NEW HOTEL IN ZIRAKPUR

Lemon Tree Hotels has inked an agreement to open an 80-room hotel under the Lemon Tree Hotel brand in Zirakpur, Punjab. The property is slated to open in the second quarter of FY27 and will be operated by Carnation Hotels Private Limited, the company's wholly-owned subsidiary and management arm. Lemon Tree Hotels has signed nine hotels since the beginning of this fiscal year, adding around 700 rooms to its portfolio across India. Nepal is also included in this figure.



## THE LALIT GROUP PRESENTS THE HEALTHY MILLET MENU HONOURS INDIA'S CULINARY HERITAGE.

The Lalit Group has now introduced an amazing culinary event called "Shree Anna" - a celebration of India's neglected millets. This state wide initiative, which is being held at all Lalit hotels, highlights the nutritional value and variety of millets while also supporting local farmers.

The Healthy Millet Menu honours India's rich culinary and agricultural traditions. "Not only are millets high in nutrients, but they also provide a sustainable solution that benefits both our health and the livelihoods of our farmers," stated Chef Ravi Kant, Executive Chef at The Lalit New Delhi.

## THE DOMESTIC MARKET HAS FULLY RECOVERED: IHCL

Indian Hotels Company Ltd (IHCL), the country's largest hotel chain and owner of Taj, is 'poised' for expansion in the context of India's infra-structural development, according to Puneet Chhatwal, MD and CEO of Tata's hospitality arm. IHCL's ARR was 16,800 in Q1FY23, with a 62% occupancy rate. The RevPar was 4,200 per night.



## KERALA GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES BIDDING GAME TO ENTICE TOURISTS

After planning to popularise various scenic locations in the state that have been featured in hit movies in order to boost the state's tourism sector, the Kerala government has taken another innovative step to entice tourists from across the country and abroad through a bidding game that allows them to win vacation packages at low prices. The tour pack is available in the game 'Holiday Heist.'