

LeaderSpeak

JULY 2025



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends

It is mid-year 2025, a time to reflect on how the year has unfolded so far and what we can expect in the months ahead. This period has been full of challenges: poor global economic growth, uncertainties around trade, tariffs, and policies, the complex geopolitical situation, and at home, the twin tragedies of Pahalgam and Ahmedabad. We are indeed operating in times of uncertainty and complexity.

However, there is also much to cheer about. India has become the fourth-largest economy, surpassing Japan. We have witnessed the success of Operation "Sindoor" and the de-escalation of regional tensions, as well as the Axiom 4 mission. The Indian hospitality sector has shown year-on-year growth in occupancy, ADR, and RevPAR. There has been an increase in signings, up 15% by keys and 4% by properties year-to-date April 2025, with almost half of these in tier II and III cities.

Other highlights include the Leela IPO, growing domestic air traffic, record hotel deals, the launch of new hotel brands, and yet another Vande Bharat. Hotel rates have remained firm despite seasonal slowdowns, while investor confidence stays high, with sectoral targets reaffirmed in analyses such as Motilal Oswal Hospitality Report. All of this stands as a testament to our remarkable resilience, resolve, and unity, both as a nation and as a key sector driving economic growth and inclusive prosperity.

Warm regards,
KB Kachru
President

HAI NEWS

HAI WELCOMES NEW MEMBER HOTELS:

- Radisson Blu Hotel Pune Kharadi
- Venezia Sarovar Portico, New Delhi
- The Westin Resort and Spa, Himalayas, Sakalana, Uttarakhand



27th HAI World Environment Day Celebrations 5th June 2025

On World Environment Day 2025, Hotel Association of India (HAI) member hotels nationwide reaffirmed their commitment to sustainability, aligning with the UN theme "Ending Global Plastic Pollution." Activities included plantation drives, plastic-free campaigns, educational displays, and the inauguration of a solar farm, emphasizing clean energy.

HAI IN NEWS

HAI engages with Maharashtra Tourism to strengthen State's hotel sector

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With a robust tourism policy that is well implemented, closely monitored and regularly reviewed, HAI is confident that Maharashtra will continue to thrive as a tourist destination with leading hotel groups and brands expanding their footprint

Charulata Sukhija
Deputy Secretary General,
Hotel Association of India

The Hotel Association of India (HAI) recently met Dr. Atul Patne, Principal Secretary – Tourism, Government of Maharashtra, to discuss strategies for strengthening the state's hotel sector. The HAI delegation was led by Dr. Sanjay Sethi, Honorary Treasurer and Maharashtra Chapter Chairperson, along with Mrs. Charulata Sukhija, Deputy Secretary General. Key discussion points included implementing industry tariff rates for electricity to reduce operational costs, introducing a unified 'One License One Property' (OLOP) excise framework to simplify compliance, and enhancing fiscal incentives under the 2024 tourism policy. These incentives include higher capital subsidies, extended SGST refunds, wage-based incentives for employment, and support for sustainability initiatives. Dr. Patne welcomed the proposals, reaffirming the government's commitment to promoting Maharashtra as a leading tourism state.

Hospitality is the Nation's Growth Engine": K B Kachru's Clarion Call for Policy Reform

HAI President K B Kachru urged GST cuts, hotel infrastructure status, and national skilling to unlock growth. He set a goal of one million new hotel rooms by 2047, boosting jobs, tourism resilience, and economic momentum.





Hotel Association of India hails Delhi's move to ease licensing norms for hospitality sector

HAI welcomes the recent directive issued by the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, which withdraws the requirement for licenses and No Objection Certificates (NOCs) from the Delhi Police for seven categories of trade — including hotels, motels, guest houses, and eating houses. This decisive reform aligns with national efforts to simplify the regulatory framework and improve the ease of doing business in the hospitality sector, thereby bolstering economic activity in the capital.

Post- Pahalgam: Rebuilding the trust that tourism needs to survive

After the Pahalgam attack, Kashmir's tourism sector, with government and industry support, launched recovery drives, discounts, and cultural events to rebuild traveler confidence and revive the region's fragile economy.

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For tourism to flourish in future as an instrument creating employment for the people and wealth for the country, what is needed to be restored is the trust and confidence in the law enforcing agencies to provide safety and security

MP Bezbaruah
Secretary General,
HAI

QUOTE
UNQUOTE



India's travel and hospitality industry gears up for Kashmir's comeback

Over 100 tour operators, with HAI's backing, toured Kashmir to show it's safe. Hotels cut rates by up to 70%. The sector remains determined to revive tourism through confidence-building, policy support, and visible unity.

GOVERNMENT/POLICY NEWS

Omar Abdullah holds a cabinet meet in Pahalgam 'Bloodshed won't stop J&K'



In a powerful gesture of resilience, J&K CM Omar Abdullah held a cabinet session in Pahalgam after the April attack, stressing tourism must be "conflict-neutral." Plans include reopening sites and building a memorial to restore public trust.

Govt to develop 77 eco-tourism sites, generate Rs 200 crore in five years

India will develop 77 ecotourism sites over five years, targeting 200 crore revenue. The plan promotes sustainability, local jobs, and biodiversity, aligning with India's push for responsible tourism.

Govt to develop 77 eco-tourism sites, generate ₹200 crore in five years

MINISTRY OF TOURISM
The Ministry of Tourism has announced a plan to develop 77 eco-tourism sites across India over the next five years. The initiative aims to generate ₹200 crore in revenue while promoting sustainable tourism, local employment, and biodiversity conservation. The sites will be developed in a phased manner, with a focus on ecotourism, adventure tourism, and cultural tourism. The plan also includes the development of infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and accommodation facilities, to support the growth of the tourism sector. The Ministry has also launched a campaign to promote eco-tourism and encourage tourists to visit these sites. The plan is part of the government's broader strategy to boost the tourism industry and create jobs for the youth.

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Ministry of Tourism Celebrates International Day of Yoga 2025 at 40 Iconic Tourist Sites Across India

India celebrated the 11th International Day of Yoga at 40 tourist sites, promoting wellness, cultural heritage, and sustainable tourism with widespread participation and digital outreach.

Union Tourism Minister visits Kashmir, appeals to countrymen to attend upcoming Amarnath Yatra

Union Minister Shekhawat visited Kashmir, urging nationwide participation in the Amarnath Yatra. The trip reinforced security, high-lighted economic importance, and aimed to rebuild faith in Kashmir as a safe destination.

Union Tourism Minister visits Kashmir, appeals to countrymen to attend upcoming Amarnath Yatra

The Hindu Bureau
New Delhi
Union Tourism Minister Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat expressed hope that tourism in Kashmir, which saw a dip after the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22, will return to normal by the end of the year.
"The way tourism has recovered in J&K in the last



couple's scale, sculptural richness, and strategic location atop a plateau overlooking the valley," he added.
About the Anant Naga temple in Anantnag, the Union Minister said he had an enriched morning at the temple complex.
"These stories that are re-mains of the mighty temples once built by King

Kashmir".
The one-on-one focused on a range of initiatives including tourism, promoting local talent, and creating sustainable tourism as a key to

India's MICE Industry Set to Be a Major Economic Driver, Generating High-Quality Jobs: Union Tourism Minister Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat

The "Meet in India Conclave 2025" aims to establish India as a premier global MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions) tourism hub, supported by economic growth and infrastructure development.



STATE NEWS

Meghalaya Launches New Film Tourism Policy to Surge Global Filmmaking, Support Local Talent, and Promote the State's Natural Beauty and Culture across India and International Markets

Meghalaya launched a film tourism policy offering grants, a state OTT platform, and plans for a film institute. The initiative promotes filmmaking, local talent, and positions Meghalaya as a creative tourism hub.

Restaurants & hotels cheer move that was 'much awaited'

The Delhi government's removal of the Police Eating House License was welcomed by restaurants and hotels as a long-awaited reform. Industry leaders say it will save time and costs, boost ease of business, and encourage fresh investments.



STATE NEWS



Odisha Tourism Conclave 2025 sets roadmap for growth and global recognition

Odisha's conclave outlined strategies for global branding, infrastructure upgrades, and sustainable tourism. Officials and industry leaders aim to position Odisha as a premier destination blending culture, nature, and responsible travel.

Smt. Thakur reviews the Safe Tourism Destination for Women Project under Nirbhaya Fund at NIPCCD, Indore

Minister Savitri Thakur reviewed Nirbhaya-funded initiatives across 50 MP sites, ensuring safe, inclusive tourism. She met trained women now working as guides, vendors, and operators, boosting local economic empowerment.



Smt. Raksha Khadse Reviews Extensive Development Initiatives in Unakoti District, Tripura under 'Poorvottar Sampark Setu' Programme

Union MoS Raksha Khadse reviewed Tripura's Unakoti development under 'Poorvottar Sampark Setu,' stressing eco-tourism, sports, agriculture, and infrastructure. She praised flagship schemes' impact, pledging to transform Unakoti into an "inspirational" district.



INDUSTRY NEWS



Tata-run IHCL opens its Ginger Hotel in Dehradun

IHCL's Ginger Dehradun adds 72 lean-luxe rooms in Uttarakhand's Doon Valley, catering to both business and leisure travelers. It reflects Ginger's scalable model for high-growth regional hubs.

CII to push hospitality career in a big way in 10-city Industry-academia connect' Roadshow

CII's roadshow promotes hospitality careers across ten cities with ITC and EHL, offering skill-linked diplomas and internships to bridge industry-academia gaps and prepare youth for real-world hotel jobs.



Tour operators ask PM Modi for ₹1000 crore allocation to increase foreign tourist arrivals

IATO asked PM Modi for ₹1,000 crore to expand Incredible India, e-visas, and aviation access, aiming to revive foreign tourist arrivals still below pre-2019 levels.



Radisson signs three hotel deals in East India as part of expansion drive

Radisson added nearly 400 rooms with new properties in Deogarh, Puri, and Ranchi, serving pilgrims and tourists. The move strengthens its Tier-2 and regional presence amid rising domestic travel.

OYO most profitable Indian startup in FY25: Ritesh Agarwal

OYO became India's most profitable startup, driven by tech-led efficiencies, strong budget hotel demand, and disciplined global expansion. CEO Ritesh Agarwal hailed it as a milestone for India's evolving startup ecosystem.

Oyo most profitable Indian startup in FY25: Ritesh Agarwal

Global travel tech platform Oyo has become the most profitable Indian startup with a profit after tax of ₹623 crore in 2024-25 (FY25), its founder Ritesh Agarwal told employees in a townhall on Thursday, sources said. According to documents accessed by PTI, in the firm's unaudited financials, the FY25 profit after tax (PAT) grew 172 per cent from ₹229 crore in the preceding year. It achieved an adjusted Ebitda of ₹1,132 crore in FY25.



India's tourism sector to gain from global uncertainty: WTTC

WTTC predicts 7% annual tourism growth as India attracts travelers seeking stability and diverse experiences, positioning it as a future global tourism powerhouse.



Kedarnath Yatra generates ₹200 crore business

This year's Kedarnath Yatra brought ₹200 crore in a month, with over 5 lakh pilgrims boosting hotels, transport, and local businesses despite initial weather disruptions.



Tourism to contribute 10% to GDP by 2030

India's tourism is set to contribute 10% to GDP by 2030, driven by spiritual travel, connectivity, and supportive policies, doubling from 5% in 2022–23.

"Tourism to contribute 10% to GDP"

India's tourism sector should contribute 10 per cent to India's economy by 2030, in line with global benchmarks, Tourism and Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat (pictured) said on Friday.



"India will align with global standards, with 10 per cent of GDP coming from tourism. As our economy grows, parallelly our aspirational class will grow and those people that have emerged from below the poverty line will commonly go for spiritual tourism," the minister said at the CII Annual Business Summit.

"We're working on this with a vision to grow various aspects, including spiritual and religious tourism, and the government has created policies to enable overall tourism experience," he said, noting that destinations like Ujjain's Mahakal corridor have attracted over 1 million visitors in a month. India's domestic tourists have the potential to become a larger contributor to the country's tourism sector.

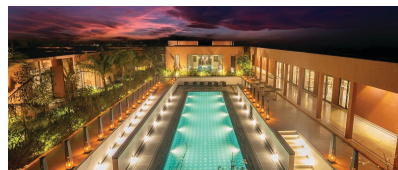
Oberoi Group Announces Recipients of Prithvi Raj Singh Scholarship

The Oberoi Group announced the recipients of its prestigious Prithvi Raj Singh Scholarships, honouring hospitality professionals who exemplify learning, leadership, and service. CEO Shailja Singh praised their passion and commitment, highlighting Oberoi's drive to foster global best practices and future-ready growth in hospitality.



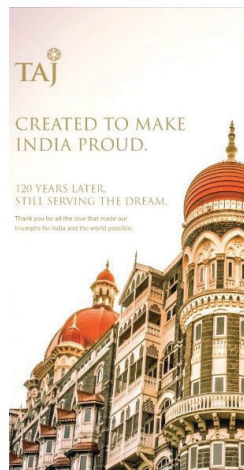
Oberoi Group launches 'Elements by Oberoi' to champion sustainability in luxury hospitality - BusinessToday

The Oberoi Group unveiled 'Elements by Oberoi,' focusing on sustainability across energy, water, waste, and local sourcing. It strengthens eco-friendly luxury, aligning operations with global climate and conservation goals.



ITC Hotel Expands Presence in Bengal

ITC Hotels is expanding its footprint in West Bengal with the launch of new properties aimed at boosting the state's tourism and hospitality infrastructure. This move aligns with ITC's broader strategy of deepening its regional presence to promote travel and employment, and garner further investments into the industry.



Brand Bharat's rise: India's top brands drive global growth and influence | Press Release | Brand Finance

Taj Hotels retains its title as India's strongest brand and earned the elite AAA+ brand strength rating for the fourth consecutive year. Taj's consistent brand strength is underpinned by its international expansion and premium service excellence.

Lemon Tree Hotels Announces New Properties in MP, Itanagar, Maharashtra, and a Major Expansion in Surat, Gujarat



Lemon Tree Hotels expands its national footprint with new properties in Madhya Pradesh, Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh), and Maharashtra, and introduces a new over hundred-room Lemon Tree Premier in Surat, Gujarat, strengthening its presence across key emerging destinations.

Ranju Alex honoured with Bharat Gaurav Award 2025 in UK

Ranju Alex, Marriott International's Regional Vice President for South Asia, was honoured with the prestigious Bharat Gaurav Award 2025 at the House of Commons, British Parliament. The accolade celebrates her exceptional leadership in hospitality, championing diversity and inclusive growth, and her ethos of "Excellence with Humility." Alex joins past luminaries like Indra Nooyi and Sunita Williams in receiving this global recognition.

