



HAI Launches Odisha Chapter

Prioritizes Sustainability and Increased International Tourist Footfall

Odisha, 16 Sept 2024- The Hotel Association of India (HAI), the apex body of hotels across India, launches the Odisha Chapter under the Chairmanship of its Honorary Secretary Dr. J.K. Mohanty, *Managing Director*, Swosti Premium Limited. HAI has been relentlessly pursuing the Government for according due recognition to the tourism & hospitality sector for its immense potential to generate jobs, contribute significantly to the national, regional and local economies and in promoting inclusive growth. Hotels in the region also contribute to several SDGs. This recognition should be at both levels of the government- Centre and State level

As Tourism plays out mostly at State level, it is important that there be a forum to prioritise the growth and development of hotels, a key infrastructure for tourism. At the State level, HAI has identified one key policy intervention that can provide a fillip to hotels. Every State should extend to the hotels, the benefits provided to manufacturing and to agriculture in terms of better rates for utilities, lower property taxes etc. Cost of hotel operations is high and mostly fixed. Industry benefits will help in cost reduction making the hotels more competitive and making investments in hotels more attractive.

The HAI State Chapters have been created to focus on this key agenda in each region. The Chapter will put together a core group drawn from local HAI member hotels for support. The Chapter will map the various schemes available in States targeted at incentivizing investments by any industry. It will also enumerate the incentives available to hotels (new and operating) in terms of financial incentives, power, rate of interest and labour. The specific and local pain points of the Sector will be identified as will be the best practices by the State.

Odisha has been identified as a priority State for the development of tourism as announced in the Union Budget of 2024-2025. It is a fortunate coincidence that Odisha marks the launch of HAI's first State Chapter. The Chapter will interact regularly with the state tourism department and the local stakeholders to promote sustainable Tourism and Hospitality. There will be efforts by the Chapter towards expanding the HAI's footprint in the State

Odisha has a robust tourism policy and has allowed certain subsidies like capital investment subsidy, employment subsidy, subsidy on electrical duty, subsidy for environment protection infrastructure and SGST subsidy. The Chapter will work towards ensuring that benefits declared/notified are made available to the hotels.

Odisha has immense potential for tourism development by improving connectivity, enhancing tourism infrastructure including quality hotels and promoting tourism domestically as well as in key source markets overseas.

HAI members are planning to expand their presence within the state. The Association's founding members, deeply committed to the planet and the community, HAI is the only industry body in India that fully supports and aligns with the WTTC's Global Hotel Sustainability Basics initiative.

The EC Members including, Mr. K.B. Kachru, HAI President Chairman – South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group, Mr. Rohit Khosla, *Vice President* HAI, Executive Vice President (Ops.), The Indian Hotels Company Limited, Dr. J.K. Mohanty, Member & Hon. Secretary of the Hotel Association of India and Managing Director of Swosti

Group., Mr. M.P. Bezbaruah, Member (E-Officio) and Secretary General, Mr. Vikram Oberoi, *Corporate Member*, HAI, *Managing Director & CEO*, EIH Limited, Mr. Ajay Bakaya, *Fellow Member*, HAI, *Managing Director* Sarovar Hotels Pvt. Ltd. & Mr. R. Shankar Member HAI, *President - Corporate & Legal Affairs* EIH Ltd., were in Bhubaneswar to formally launch the chapter.

HAI team met senior Government officials and Hon'ble **Deputy Chief Minister, Smt. Pravati Parida** to discuss the possibilities to collaborate with state authorities to enhance the State Tourism. It is heartening to note that the Odisha Government has a robust tourist policy. However the share of domestic and foreign tourist visits to the State is low.

The Deputy Chief Minister welcomed HAI's initiative of launching the chapter and stated that she looks forward to a strong collaborative partnership between HAI and the government. This initiative will help Odisha become one of the top 5 states in terms of tourism and hospitality.

Mr. Samarth Verma, IAS and Managing Director of OTDC and Mr. Balwant Singh, Joint Secretary, GOI were also present at the meet

Speaking at the launch event, **Mr. K.B. Kachru, President** HAI & Chairman – South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group, emphasized, *"We are happy to introduce the Odisha Chapter, which marks a significant milestone for the Association and the hospitality sector. This chapter will help us promote the state's tourism with the support of HAI hotel members. Odisha has a rich cultural heritage, natural beauty, and historical monuments and requires to be promoted."*

Mr. Rohit Khosla, Vice President of HAI and Executive Vice President (Operations) at The Indian Hotels Company Limited, stated, "Odisha is rapidly gaining popularity among travelers, drawn by its culture, heritage, and natural beauty. The positive aspect is that 4-5 star hotels are increasingly interested in the state and are ready to expand. We are optimistic that the HAI Odisha chapter will assist in the state's growth and foster collaboration with stakeholders. HAI is committed to the betterment of the industry and will continue to work towards job creation and economic contribution."

Mr. M.P. Bezbaruah, Member (Ex-Officio) and Secretary General of the Hotel Association of India, said, *"We are thrilled to introduce the HAI Odisha Chapter, a key initiative by the Association that will help us collaborate with the government to implement innovative policies and initiatives to promote tourism. HAI is dedicated to not only enhancing the state's tourism appeal but also creating significant job opportunities*

for local communities. Together, we will drive growth and development, establishing Odisha as a premier global tourism destination.”

Dr. Jitendra Kumar Mohanty, Member & Hon. Secretary of the Hotel Association of India and Managing Director of Swosti Premium Limited, added, *“As part of HAI, our goal will be to collaborate with Govt bodies, local stakeholders, communities, and industry partners to realise the full potential of the Sector to the advantage of the local community and the State economy.*

About HAI

Established in 1996, Hotel Association of India (HAI) has evolved as an integrated hospitality industry platform to keep pace with the growing buoyancy ushered in by the liberalization of Indian economy in the mid-90s. With its membership extending from major hotel groups; boutique, heritage and small hotels, HAI represents the entire spectrum of the industry. Its Executive Committee is a potent combination of the commitment of hotel owners on one hand and hard-core professionalism of hotel managers on the other. As the apex Industry Body, HAI works in the areas of Promotion of Regional Cooperation and Hospitality Research & Education in addition to taking Industry centric initiatives. By launching Unprecedented ‘Social Inclusion’ initiatives, HAI also projects the ‘Social Face’ of the Indian hospitality industry”