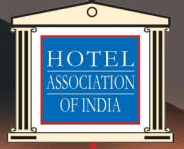


LeaderSpeak

MARCH 2025



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DEAR FRIENDS,

We are in the final quarter of FY 2025, and it is astounding to see how the year has set the stage for innovation and transformation. The past few months have highlighted the immense potential of the hospitality and tourism industry.

The iconic Maha Kumbh Mela, showcased India's deep-rooted spiritual heritage, highlighting the rising wave of sustainable spiritual tourism. The success of this larger-than-life event offered a phenomenal boost to the tourism and hospitality industry. While the demand for hotels and premium stays surged by 20-30% during Kumbh, the momentum continues to remain strong, encouraging further investment in infrastructure and services that cater to this segment.

Additionally, the Union Budget 2025-26 acknowledged tourism and hospitality as key drivers of job creation and inclusive growth. With an allocation of ₹20,000 crore, the focus is now on enhancing infrastructure and connectivity to major tourist destinations across the country. Leveraging these developments, we aim to build a more robust hospitality sector. With evolving customer expectations, increasing digital integration, and expanding investment opportunities, the Indian hospitality sector is on the brink of a transformative era.

Strengthening domestic tourism remains a priority, with enhanced regional connectivity, uniquely curated experiences to attract travelers. The coming months hold great promise and we will continue to advocate for policies that drive industry growth and align with global standards.

Regards,
KB Kachru
President HAI

HAI NEWS



HAI ENGAGES WITH GOA CM TO DRIVE HOSPITALITY GROWTH

Hotel Association of India (HAI) met with the Chief Minister of Goa, Hon'ble Dr Pramod Sawant, to discuss issues related to Goa tourism, particularly those that directly concern hotels. HAI President K.B. Kachru, accompanied by M.P. Bezbaruah (Secretary General), Nikhil Sharma (Managing Director and Area Senior Vice President for South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group), Vinay Albuquerque (Director, Alcon Victor Group), and Jack Ajit Sukhija (President of the Travel and Tourism Association of Goa), discussed a wide range of issues related to tourism growth and development in the region. These discussions focused on infrastructure development, policy support, and skill development. The HAI delegation also met with the Minister for Tourism, Rohan Khaunte. The Chief Minister thanked HAI for its continued support to the state and appreciated its role in fostering a vibrant tourism and hospitality sector.

ANOTHER PUSH FOR TOURISM BUT IS IT ENOUGH

The Budget 2025-26 recognizes and highlights the importance of tourism and hospitality as an engine of job creation and a promoter of inclusive growth. An infusion of ₹20,000 crore to increase tourism-led employment will help several states that house top tourist destinations build infrastructure and boost connectivity. However, the onus has been placed on states to acquire land for constructing hotels and other necessary facilities.

HAI COMMITTED TO THE PROMOTION OF JAMMU & KASHMIR TOURISM & HOSPITALITY

The Hotel Association of India (HAI) has played a key role in supporting Jammu & Kashmir's tourism growth. At a recent meeting in New Delhi, chaired by the J&K Tourism Department's Commissioner Secretary, HAI President and Radisson Hotel Group South Asia Chairman, Mr. K.B. Kachru, highlighted Jammu & Kashmir's potential to regain its status as a top global destination with improved infrastructure and connectivity. He emphasized HAI's commitment to the region and anticipated significant hotel inventory growth. The industry also recommended that the government develop a marketing plan in collaboration with stakeholders before launching the direct train from Delhi to ensure sustainable tourism growth.

OBITUARY



HOTEL ASSOCIATION OF INDIA (HAI) MOURNS THE LOSS OF ARVIND SINGH MEWAR: A ROYAL ICON OF INDIAN HOSPITALITY

The Hotel Association of India (HAI) expresses its sorrow at the passing of **Shri Arvind Singh Mewar**, a distinguished member of the erstwhile royal family of Mewar and the 76th Custodian of the House of Mewar. He passed away on March 16, at the age of 81, after a prolonged illness.

Arvind Singh Mewar's significant contributions to tourism, hospitality, and cultural preservation have left a lasting impact. As Chairman of the HRH Group of Hotels, he transformed royal properties into renowned heritage destinations, enhancing Rajasthan's global tourism appeal.

Expressing his grief, HAI President K.B. Kachru praised Mewar's dedication to preserving India's heritage and advancing heritage tourism. He credited Mewar's visionary leadership in positioning Udaipur as a premier luxury destination and leaving a lasting legacy in the hospitality industry.

GOVERNMENT/POLICY NEWS

THE UNION BUDGET 2025-26 INTRODUCED KEY INITIATIVES

The government has allocated 2,541.06 crore to enhance infrastructure, skill development, and travel facilitation. Key initiatives include:

- **Hotels in 50 select destinations to get Infrastructure status benefits**
- **Top 50 Tourist Destinations:** Developed in partnership with states for world-class facilities and connectivity.
- **Revitalizing Spiritual & Medical Tourism:** Strengthening pilgrimage sites and promoting "Heal in India."
- **Support for Homestays:** Providing MUDRA loans to boost local hospitality.
- **Incentives for States:** Rewards for effective destination management, including cleanliness and marketing.
- **Simplified Travel:** Streamlined e-visas and visa fee waivers for select tourist groups.



GOVERNMENT/POLICY NEWS

MINISTRY OF TOURISM PARTICIPATES IN ITB BERLIN 2025

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, participated in the International Tourism (ITB) held from March 4th to 6th 2025 in Berlin. ITB serves as a key platform for the global tourism industry, bringing together tour operators, travel agencies, hoteliers, transport providers, destinations, and tech companies. The India Pavilion was inaugurated by H.E. Ajit Gupte, Ambassador of India to the Federal Republic of Germany, in the presence of Mr. Kandula Durgesh, Minister of Tourism, Andhra Pradesh, and Mr. Dharmendra Bhav Singh Lodhi, Minister of Tourism, Madhya Pradesh. Co-exhibitors included State Tourism Departments, IRCTC, and travel service providers, offering a platform for industry connections and promoting new itineraries.

PM ADDRESSES THE POST -BUDGET WEBINAR ON BOOSTING JOB CREATION - INVESTING IN PEOPLE, ECONOMY, AND INNOVATION

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Post-Budget Webinar on Employment, emphasizing the theme "Investing in People, Economy, and Innovation" as a roadmap for Viksit Bharat. Prime Minister Modi emphasized the tourism sector's potential to contribute up to 10% of India's GDP and create employment for crores of youth. Highlighting budget measures to boost tourism, he announced the development of 50 destinations with infrastructure status for hotels to enhance accessibility and local jobs. He also underscored initiatives like 'Heal in India' and 'Land of the Buddha' to attract global tourists. Stressing tourism's impact beyond hotels and transport, Modi encouraged investment in health, yoga, wellness, and education tourism, calling for a detailed roadmap to advance these initiatives.

STATE NEWS

MAHA TO ACCREDIT PRIVATE HOSPITALS UNDER HEALTH TOURISM POLICY

The Maharashtra government aims to implement an accreditation system for private hospitals across the state as part of its comprehensive health tourism policy. Spearheaded by Health Minister Prakash Abitkar, this initiative seeks to establish Maharashtra as a leading hub for medical tourism by providing top-quality healthcare services to international patients.



PRAYAGRAJ GEARING UP TO ATTRACT TOURISTS THROUGHOUT 2025; STATE RECORDING HIGHEST NO. OF DOMESTIC TOURISTS: UP TOURISM

Prayagraj is preparing to welcome tourists year-round with various attractions. The Water Laser Show, introduced during the Mahakumbh at the Sangam's banks, along with facade lighting at multiple religious and spiritual sites, will remain in place for the next five years. According to Jaiveer Singh, Uttar Pradesh's Minister of Tourism and Culture, this initiative aims to offer visitors from both India and abroad a distinctive and engaging experience.

RAJASTHAN PLANS NEW INITIATIVES TO FURTHER BOOST TOURISM IN THE STATE

The Rajasthan government has devised a comprehensive strategy to enhance tourism within the state, according to an official from the tourism department. The plan emphasizes the growth of Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) tourism, along with promoting leisure tourism.

KARNATAKA CM UNVEILS TOURISM POLICY 2025-2029 AT KARNATAKA INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL EXPO

Karnataka Tourism inaugurated the second edition of the Karnataka International Travel Expo (KITE) 2025 at Taj West End, Bengaluru, following the resounding success of its inaugural edition. KITE was inaugurated by Siddaramaiah, Chief Minister of Karnataka. CM Siddaramaiah launched the Tourism Policy 2025-29, urging investors, tour operators, and industry professionals to help make Karnataka a global tourism hub.



INDUSTRY NEWS

CHALET TO BUY WESTIN RESORT FOR 530 CRORE

Chalet Hotels Ltd is set to acquire Mahananda Spa and Resorts Pvt Ltd, the owner of The Westin Resort & Spa, Himalayas (TWRS) in Rishikesh, for an enterprise value of ₹530 crore. According to a statement from Chalet Hotels Ltd (CHL), the company's board of directors has approved the acquisition. The Westin Resort & Spa in Rishikesh began operations in January 2023, and the total capital employed stood at ₹407 crore, with a net worth of ₹401 crore as of December.



HOPE-FUL 2025 FOR INDIAN HOSPITALITY

HVS ANAROCK HOPE Conference 2025, one of India's premier hospitality and travel summits, took place from February 26 to 28, 2025, at the Taj Cidade de Goa Horizon in Goa. This annual event brought together industry leaders, investors, hotel owners, and operators from both Indian and international hospitality sectors. Emphasizing the event's importance, Mandeep Singh Lamba, President & CEO South Asia, HVS ANAROCK, remarked, "HVS ANAROCK HOPE 2025 serves as a catalyst for shaping ideas, building partnerships, and reimagining the future of hospitality. The Indian hospitality sector is at a pivotal moment—experiencing remarkable growth, expanding into new markets, and adopting innovation like never before."

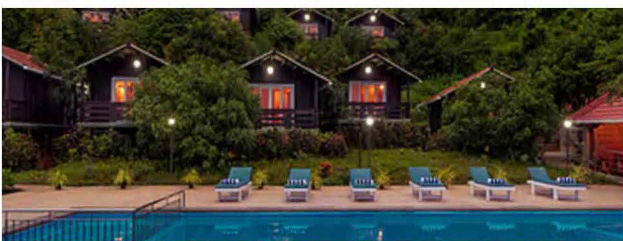
RADISSON HOTEL GROUP LAUNCHES NEW RESORT IN KHOPOLI

Radisson Resort Khopoli, an upscale property combining comfort and convenience, is a notable addition to Radisson Hotel Group's growing presence in Maharashtra. It joins the Group's established brands in the state, including Radisson Blu, Park Inn by Radisson, and Country Inn & Suites.



IHCL AND MINISTRY OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP SIGN AN MOU FOR HOSPITALITY SKILL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE IN GOA

The Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Goa, to establish India's largest hospitality skilling centre in Goa. This initiative aims to boost employment opportunities for the youth in the state by offering specialized training programs tailored to the evolving demands of the hospitality industry.



SAROVAR HOTELS LAUNCHES HIGHLAND SAROVAR PORTICO IN SINDHUDURG

Sarovar Hotels, partnering with Highland Constructions Pvt Ltd, has launched the Highland Sarovar Portico in Sindhudurg, Maharashtra. Set in the tranquil Konkan region, famed for its pristine beaches and rich culture, the hotel is a peaceful retreat.

WYNDHAM SEES RENAISSANCE OF DEMAND FOR ITS BRANDS IN INDIA

India recorded the highest growth rates for Wyndham Hotels & Resorts in 2024, surpassing all other global markets in terms of new hotel signings and contract executions, according to Geoff Ballotti, President and CEO of the world's largest hotel franchising chain. "Incredible opportunities lie ahead for India, especially when your Prime Minister identifies tourism as a key driver of economic growth," Ballotti stated in an interview with ET. He shared these insights during the HVS Anarock HOPE 2025 conference held in Goa.



LEMON TREE HOTELS SIGNS NEW PROPERTY IN PUNJAB

Lemon Tree Hotels has announced the signing of its upcoming property, Lemon Tree Hotel, Zirakpur, Punjab. Expected to open by Q2 of FY 2027, the hotel will be managed by Carnation Hotels Private Limited, Lemon Tree Hotels' wholly owned subsidiary and management arm. The property will offer 80 well-appointed rooms, banquet facilities, a conference room, a restaurant, a fitness center, and other public spaces.



HOTELS TO ADD OVER 100K ROOMS IN 5 YRS

India's organized hotel industry is expected to expand significantly, adding over 100,000 rooms and surpassing the 300,000 mark by 2029. This growth is anticipated to be driven by factors such as spiritual tourism, increasing prosperity, and major infrastructure developments, according to a recent report. The upcoming supply is primarily concentrated in leisure destinations, particularly religious tourism hubs. While some short-term challenges may arise, there is strong confidence that the hotel industry will continue to thrive, supported by increased discretionary spending and improved occupancy rates.

HILTON TO LAUNCH 75 HAMPTON HOTELS IN INDIA

Hilton has announced a strategic licensing agreement (SLA) with NILE Hospitality to launch 75 Hampton by Hilton hotels across India, expanding the brand's global presence of over 3,000 properties. This move underscores Hilton's commitment to growing in the Indian market, following a 2024 agreement with Olive by Embassy to introduce 150 Spark by Hilton hotels in the country.