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President's Note



Dear esteemed FHRAI Members,

The Union Budget for 2024-25 presented a bold fiscal approach, emphasising long-term prudence rather than short-term measures. It prioritised sustainable job creation through domestic manufacturing and strengthens the role of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the economy. The focus of the Budget on youth skilling, formalising employment generation, sustained infrastructure investment combined with increased capital expenditure is likely to incentivise private sector participation.

While this year's Union Budget does not introduce major transformational changes for the tourism and hospitality sectors, its emphasis on infrastructure development, employment generation, skill enhancement and the promotion of religious tourist sites offers some silver linings for the sector. These initiatives will help address some critical challenges the sector currently faces. Notably, policy reforms have not been included in the Budget, despite the widely recognised multiplier effect of tourism on employment and the overall economy.

FHRAI submitted its post-Budget recommendations to **Nirmala Sitharaman**, Union Finance Minister. These recommendations highlighted significant challenges faced by the tourism and hospitality sectors that were not at all addressed in the Budget. Key areas of concern include GST rationalisation, the unfair linkage of GST on food services in restaurants to room rates for accommodation, the need for infrastructure status and measures to enhance ease of doing business.

India's hospitality sector stands at a crossroad, with an imperative to prioritise sustainability. Policy measures and incentives play a central role in motivating hotels to invest in sustainable practices. By harmonising regulations, incentives, and industry guidelines, we can foster a more environmentally conscious and resilient hospitality industry.

Internationally, the hotels are increasingly recognising the significance of sustainability, with hotel owners, operators, and guests now prioritising responsible environmental practices. The government can incentivise sustainable investments by providing tax benefits, grants, or subsidies, thereby easing the financial burden on hospitality establishments. Operational adjustments are essential for enhancing sustainability of hotels.

“

The Budget does not introduce major changes for the tourism and hospitality sectors. Its emphasis on infrastructure development, employment generation, skill enhancement and promotion of religious tourist sites offers some silver linings for the sector.”

Steps such as installing water-saving fixtures, optimising laundry and irrigation efficiency and implementing waste management programmes such as recycling and composting, among others, can reduce the volume of waste sent to landfills.

By integrating sustainability into their operations, hotels play a crucial role in protecting the environment and inspiring the broader community to embrace more eco-friendly lifestyles. FHRAI urgently calls on the government's attention to revitalise the tourism sector. By focusing on the tourism industry, FHRAI believes it can become a central pillar of economic advancement, aligning with the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

With best regards,
Pradeep Shetty
President, FHRAI



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CONTENTS

AUGUST 2024



18

Planet-friendly practices inspire industry change

In Hospitality Highwire, Anil Chadha outlines the path forward for the sector with a focus on sustainability, technical integration & immersive experiences.

18



THIS MONTH

10 FHRAI Desk

70 Movements

FEATURES

10

FHRAI, SIHRA request support for GST reforms

FHRAI is making relentless efforts to delink GST rates for restaurants from room tariffs within hotels to achieve a more transparent tax structure.

16

Call for fair review of parking practices

FHRAI seeks Delhi Development Authority's clarity on reassessing Delhi hotels under new parking norms of two ECS plus metro deduction.

16



10



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54

Embracing community-based tourism

By focusing on local culture, community-based tourism provides travellers with genuine experiences, such as tasting regional cuisine, among others.



65

New partnership tackles issue of food insecurity

IHG Hotels & Resorts joins forces with Action Against Hunger in a mission to resolve global hunger, with guests donating points to support cause

42

Kochi's high occupancy boosts sector in June

Nationwide hotel occupancy rates were stable in June and year-on-year, but city-specific performances varied significantly, reveals HVS Anarock report.



62

Domestic tourism faces overtourism challenges

Domestic tourism in India is growing, but faces challenges from overtourism requiring sustainable practices to balance growth with ecological preservation, reckon hoteliers.



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FHRAI, SIHRA seek state backing for **GST** reforms

FHRAI is making relentless efforts to delink GST rates for restaurants from room tariffs within hotels to achieve a more transparent tax structure.

India's hospitality sector is burdened with some of the highest GST rates globally, significantly driving up costs for both domestic and inbound tourism. This high GST rate places India at a competitive disadvantage compared to neighbouring countries. The fluctuating GST slabs within the same hotel, based on whether the room rate is above or below ₹7,500, further complicate compliance and extend these challenges to food and beverage services.

On June 25, 2024, **Pradeep Shetty**, President, FHRAI met with **Nirmala Sitharaman**, Union Finance Minister to propose a uniform GST slab of 12 per cent



Pradeep Shetty
President
FHRAI



Nirmala Sitharaman
Union Finance Minister
Government of India



FM advised the industry to get support from state governments, as each state has equal say in the GST Council

for all hotels and to delink GST rates for restaurants from room tariffs within hotels. Sitharaman supported the proposal but noted that, as each state has equal weight in the GST Council, the industry should also seek support from state governments.

Following Sitharaman's advice, FHRAI and SIHRA have embarked on a concerted effort to rally state-level support. Representatives from these organisations have met with key state officials across the country, seeking their backing to present the proposal to the GST Council.



FHRAI and SIHRA delegations held a meeting with **K Lakshminarayanan**, Tourism Minister, Government of Puducherry, to discuss the unfairness in linking GST on food services in restaurants to room rates. The Minister assured his support for resolving the issue. The delegation included Arumugam, **K Amarnath**, EC Member, SIHRA, **G Anand**, Secretary, Pondicherry Hotel Association (PHA) and **G Prashant**, EC member, PHA.

On 21 July 2024, a delegation of FHRAI and SIHRA, led by **SK Hari Arumugam**, Executive Committee Member, FHRAI, met with **KN Balagopal**, Finance Minister, Government of Kerala, and submitted a representation regarding the delinking of GST rates for restaurants from room tariffs within hotels. Other members of the delegation included **Suresh Pillai**, Vice President, SIHRA, **Baby Mathew** and **M Manoj Babu**, Members, South Kerala Hoteliers Forum.

Another delegation comprising **M Venkadasubbu**, Executive Committee member, FHRAI, Arumugam and **Sundar Singaram**, Director, Operations, SIHRA, held a meeting with **Thiru Thangam Thennarasu**, Minister, Finance and Human Resources Management, Government of Tamil Nadu, to request support of the state for highlighting the issue in GST Council.



FHRAI, SIHRA delegations have met with officials in states proposing delinking of GST rates for restaurants from room tariffs within hotels




A delegation under the leadership of **K Syama Raju**, President, SIHRA and comprising Arumugam, **Subramaniam Holla** and **Veerendar Kamat** from Bangalore Hotel Association met with **Krishna Byre Gowda**, Minister of Revenue, Government of Karnataka and the GST Commissioner, Karnataka to seek their support in raising the issue with the GST Council.

On 10 August 2024, another delegation, including Arumugam, **RV Swamy**, President, A P Hotels Association, and Singaram met with **Payyavula Keshav**, Finance Minister, Government of Andhra Pradesh and submitted a request letter to delink GST rates for restaurants from room tariffs to the GST Council. ❑

UNFAIR TAX BURDEN ON HOTEL INDUSTRY

FHRAI requests the Puducherry government to address GST practice of linking food service taxation in hotels to room rates.



FHRAI has written to **K Lakshminarayanan**, Tourism Minister, Government of Puducherry, highlighting the issues faced by the hotel industry in the UT regarding the application of GST on food services. The concern centres on instances where food services are unbundled and unrelated to the provided accommodation. “The current practice of linking taxation of food services in restaurants to the room rates charged for accommodation is erroneous and poses several challenges. This approach contradicts the fundamental principle of GST, which emphasises levying taxes on goods and services related to specific tax groups,” stated FHRAI.

In a letter to Lakshminarayanan, the Federation enumerated challenges and inequities with the present practice and sought urgent redressal on following issues:

- **Against the principle of GST:** The principles of GST advocate for taxing goods and services based on their specific classifications. Levying GST on restaurant food services tied to room rates contradicts this principle, resulting in confusion and an inequitable tax imposition
- **Violation of good principles of taxation:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while describing GST during its launch as a ‘good and simple tax,’ was referring to adherence to the fundamental principles of taxation, including equity, certainty, convenience, and efficiency

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Unfortunately, this unfair practice, which lacks any precedent in the history of Indian indirect tax laws and applicability, makes it impossible for consumers to ascertain with certainty the applicable tax, while availing food services in a hotel restaurant.

Levying GST on food service based on room rates can blur the distinction between accommodation and food costs, creating an unfair perception of pricing and service. Connecting and insisting that hotels must instantly change the rate levied on food services from 5 to 18 per cent, the moment the hotel charges more than ₹7,500 for a single room unit in the entire year, creates a hardship on the hotels and expect them to monitor the same every single day. It also contradicts the ease of doing business (EoDB) and by no means is practical nor efficient and exposes the hotels to potential harassment, fines, and litigation with the GST department.

- **Unrelated services:** The imposition of GST on food services in restaurants based on room rates, even when these services are unrelated to the accommodations provided, presents an issue of unjust linkage. These are distinct and separate services catering to different needs of the guests.

Under GST, goods and services are identified and defined separately to ensure and facilitate applicability and levy of different taxes. If any two similar items of goods and services are identified, GST places them under the same Harmonised System of Nomenclature (HSN) and Services Accounting Code (SAC) tax group codes. Currently, GST identifies hotel accommodation and food services as two distinctly different services and has allocated different HSN codes. There is no logical reason to link the

tax rate of one service to another, as GST has erroneously done by connecting food service tax in hotels to room accommodation rates. Urgent rectification is needed to delink these services.

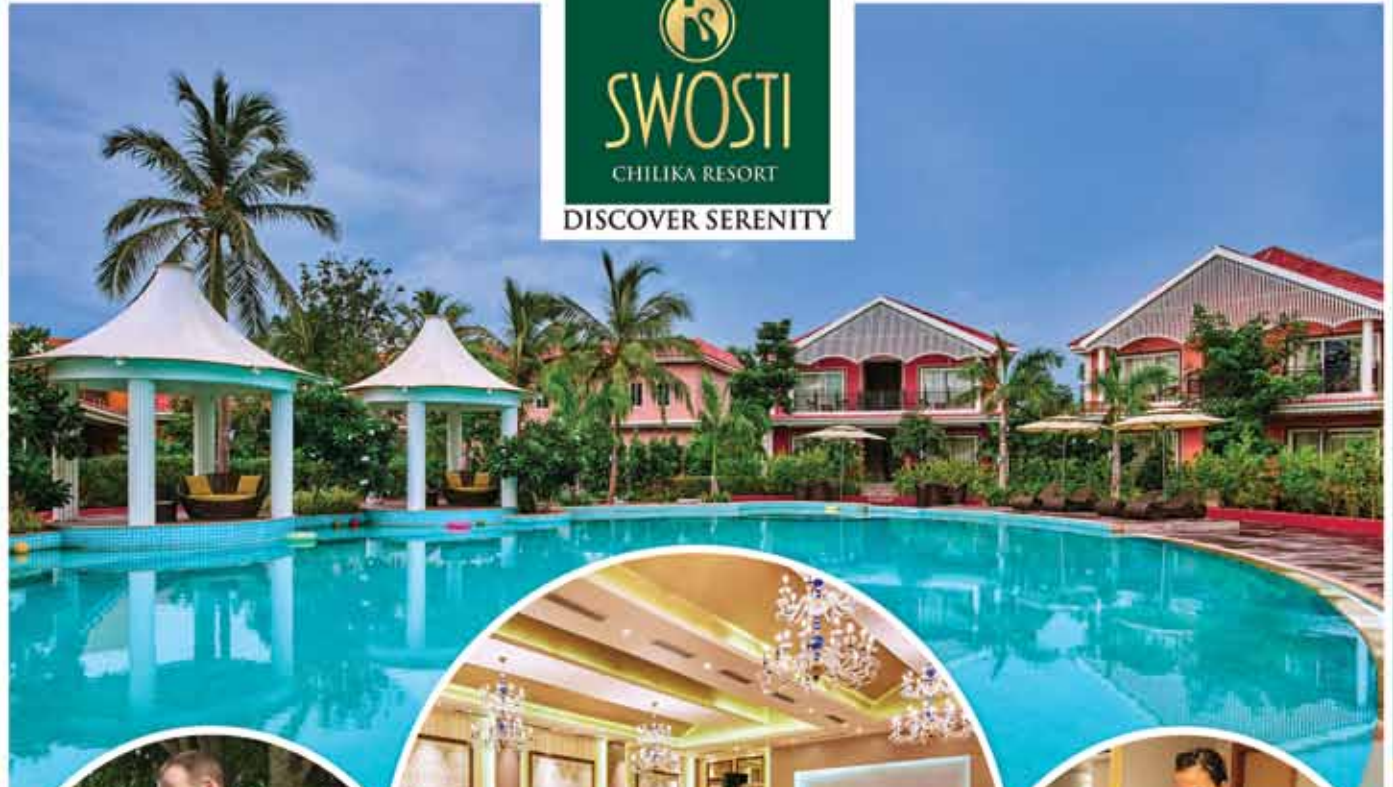
“

Linking the tax rates of different services, such as food and room accommodation, is illogical and a mistake in GST.”

- **Non-bundled services:** Under indirect taxes, including GST, there is a concept of “bundled services” wherein goods and services from different categories are sold together and thus requires special treatment of tax. It is a common practice to tax the “bundled service” based on the tax applicable to the primary service. Thus, all other goods and services, which when bundled along with the primary service are considered as secondary services. They inherit the tax applicable to the primary service.

In hotels, rooms may be sold along with meal plans, and it is fair to charge the meal plan at the same tax rate as accommodation. However, in restaurants, which are operated by the hotels, the customers can enjoy food service independently of accommodation and those do not have any inherent connection with accommodation, these services are not bundled or offered as combined packages. Therefore, there is no valid reason to their tax rates. □





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Demand for fair parking review

FHRAI seeks Delhi Development Authority's clarity on reassessing Delhi hotels under new parking norms of two ECS plus metro deduction.



FHRAI has sought clarity on the reassessment of parking guidelines for hotels in Delhi undergoing additions, alterations, or expansions under the new dynamic parking regulations. The federation has requested the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) to clarify whether these hotels could be reassessed, including existing parking provisions, under the new guidelines of two equivalent car spaces (ECS) plus metro deduction.

Key issues outlined

In a letter addressed to **Manju Paul**, Commissioner Planning, DDA, the FHRAI outlined critical issues with the current parking norms:

- **Inconsistency and inequity:** Hotels built after 7 February 2007 and before 20 September 2021 are governed by the stringent norms of three ECS. The disparity in these norms raises questions about equitable treatment and disregards the principle of requirement-based parking. Guests visiting hotels, regardless of their construction date or area, have similar parking needs.

In a letter addressed to Manju Paul, FHRAI outlined critical issues with current parking norms related to hotels in Delhi

- **Underutilisation of parking infrastructure:** The extensive parking infrastructure created by hotels built after February 2007 in compliance with the three ECS requirement remains unutilised. Reassessing these hotels in case of expansion under the new dynamic norms would allow for a more efficient use of existing infrastructure, enabling these hotels to add new floor area ratio (FAR), which is currently available but unutilised and using the existing unutilised parking infrastructure to meet the parking demands of the newly added areas.
- **Non-alignment with modern urban planning:** Hotels cater to transient domestic and foreign tourist arrivals, who use cabs among others for transportation thereby eliminating the requirement for extensive parking infrastructure. This is the reason why

hotels have been assessed, according to the new requirement of two ECS (plus 30 per cent metro deduction) in the new dynamic parking norms policy. By reassessing existing hotels undergoing addition and alteration under the said norms, DDA would be promoting a sustainable and logical framework for urban development.

Reinstatement of provision

In addition, FHRAI highlighted a public notice dated 25 September 2013, which included a provision to reduce parking norms from three ECS to two ECS. This notice required a comprehensive parking plan, while revising building plans to access additional FAR. However, this provision was omitted from the final gazette notification. The federation has called for the reinstatement of this provision to ensure alignment with the updated dynamic parking norms. □

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Hospitality's future shines brighter with green initiatives

In Hospitality Highwire, **Anil Chadha** outlines the path forward for the sector with a focus on sustainability, technical integration & immersive experiences.

"We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children."

Sustainability will be the biggest game changer in hospitality and the above quote summarises it perfectly. Travellers today are looking beyond the usual; it is not just what is in the room but what surrounds it.

Single-use plastic products are frowned upon, while Sunya Aqua-water in glass bottles is a favou-

rite beverage. Clean air is highly valued, and "Namaste", the universally accepted and admired distant yet warm greeting, adds a special touch.

Sustainable development provides the best opportunity for course correction. At ITC Hotels, we set our green goals many years ago and are pleased to share that we have already surpassed

the 2030 sectoral emission targets established by COP21.

For over a decade, ITC Hotels have been a trailblazer in sustainability, with our ethos of responsible luxury delivering both luxury and planet positive experiences. ITC Hotels is the world's largest chain of hotels with the highest number of USGBC LEED Platinum certified hotels.

Our continuous efforts in energy conservation, enhancing efficiency, and engineering green buildings, along with our recent achievements—being the first twelve USGBC LEED Zero Carbon certified hotels and the world's first five LEED Zero-Water certified hotels—humbly inspire us. We

hope these accomplishments encourage others in their sustainability journey.

ITC Grand Chola, Chennai has implemented ultra-efficient atmospheric water generator (AWG) technology. This patented technology extracts water from the atmosphere, which is naturally and continuously replenished, making it a viable and sustainable process. Approximately 70 per cent of the drinking water is now generated using this technique.

More than 99 per cent of the waste generated by ITC Hotels is recycled or reused. All ITC hotels have onsite organic waste converters and many properties also feature bio-methanation plants, that produce biogas from waste, which is used in the kitchens.

“

We set our green goals many years ago and have already surpassed 2030 sectoral emission targets established by COP21.”



Anil Chadha
Chief Executive
ITC Hotels



Architect of ITC Hotels' expansion

Anil Chadha, an alumnus of the Welcomgroup Graduate School of Hotel Administration, joined ITC Hotels in 1992 and has spent his entire career with the company. Chadha has been instrumental in overseeing the seamless functioning of diverse portfolio of brands, including ITC Hotels, Welcomhotels, Fortune Hotels, WelcomHeritage, and the recent addition of two more brands: Mementos in the luxury space and Storii in the premium segment.

Above 50 per cent of our consumption in food & beverage is locally sourced. Additionally, over 70 per cent of our ongoing consumables, by cost, are FSC certified, locally sourced, recyclable, recycled, sustainably harvested, or organic.

Storytelling

Guests today seek experiences that leave a lasting impression. What better way to achieve this than by creating compelling narratives about various aspects of the property that resonate with guests and make their stay truly memorable? Whether it is

“

All ITC hotels have onsite organic waste converters and many properties also feature bio-methanation plants, that produce biogas from waste.”



super deluxe luxury havens or boutique properties, heritage architecture or regional flavours, and local art or personalised service, guests appreciate stories that evoke nostalgia or interest.

Immersive experiences

In recent years, there has been a growing global interest in experiential travel, where travellers immerse themselves in a destination's rituals, culture, traditions, cuisine, and people. Travellers seek explorations without guided tours or typical itineraries. They want to thoroughly experience trails and treks, seeking authenticity and 'near-nature' moments.

Food tourism

One of the strongest trends post-COVID is the rise of food tourism, particularly regional cuisine. Travellers are now interested in the 'produce process,' which includes visits to farmers' markets, farms, or interactions with home chefs. This interest extends beyond innovative culinary experiences to activities beyond the table. It is said that in India, food changes every 100 kilometers, and our rich culinary heritage and diversity offer unique and versatile tastes at every stop. Overall, this focus on food tourism underscores a broader movement towards deeper, more authentic travel experiences.



“

Hospitality industry has already benefited from AI-powered chatbots, which have transformed online customer interactions by providing quick and engaging responses.”

and has evolved to include advanced data analytics, automated messaging, and VR and AR tools that enhance reservations and personalised customer experiences. While food was the most visible experience, technology has quietly become a major enabler of guest delight.

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer just science fiction. Whether it is personalising guest services, curating menus based on diner preferences, optimising kitchen operations, or enhancing inventory management, AI is poised to redefine processes and deliver faster, more efficient service. The hospitality industry has already benefited from AI-powered chatbots, which have transformed online customer interactions by providing quick and engaging responses, eliminating long wait times for replies. ■



Rise of bleisure

For many corporate travellers, work trips extend into leisure as they explore destinations and experience local favourites, from food to rituals. People now effortlessly combine work with travel, opting for a location-independent lifestyle. Many prefer to take frequent relaxation breaks while maintaining work responsibilities. This convergence of travel and work has given rise to a new concept known as bleisure travel.

Technical integration

Another post-COVID vertical that has revolutionised many industries, especially hospitality, is technology. It began with contactless check-ins



Hospitality sector yearns for policy reforms

Despite Union Budget's focus on infrastructure and skill development, it fails to address crucial changes needed for hospitality growth, states FHRAI.

FHRAI has expressed disappointment with the Union Budget for failing to address some of the crucial changes required to address the issues facing India's hospitality sector. As the industry aims to become a US\$3 trillion economy by 2047, the Budget does not reflect the significant reforms needed to accelerate this growth.

Missing structural changes

- **Key demands not met:** FHRAI noted that important demands from the tourism and hospitality sectors, such as GST rationalisation, granting infrastructure status, easing the business environment, and implementing essential policy reforms, have not been addressed.

- **Discontent among stakeholders:** Industry stakeholders are upset as there were hoping for more targeted measures to be announced in the Union Budget.

Recognising positivity

Pradeep Shetty, President, FHRAI, said, "Although the Budget falls short of our expectations for transformative changes in the tourism and hospitality sectors, we acknowledge its positive focus

“

Government's proactive approach to enhancing tourism through development of spiritual and cultural landmarks promises substantial economic and social benefits."

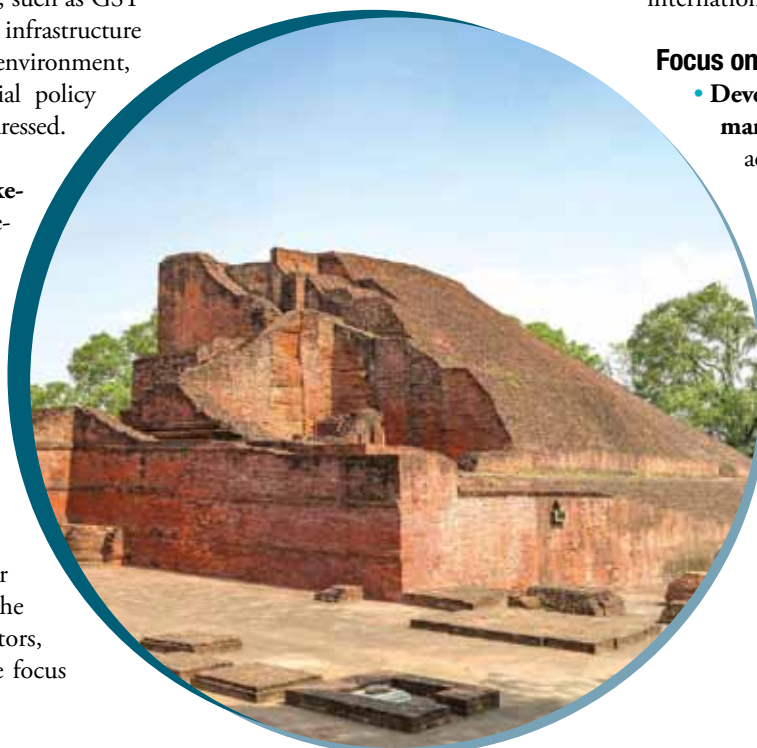
on infrastructure, rural development, and skill development. These initiatives are crucial for overcoming current challenges and fostering growth. The com-

mitment to develop iconic cultural sites and promote diverse forms of tourism is commendable and holds promise for attracting a broader range of domestic and international visitors."

Focus on religious tourism

- **Development of spiritual landmarks:** The government's proactive approach to enhancing tourism through the development of spiritual and cultural landmarks, such as the Vishnupad Temple in Gaya and the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodhgaya, guarantees substantial economic and social benefits.

- **Investment in historical sites:** Plans for Rajgir and Nalanda represent a significant investment in promoting India's historical and educational legacy.





- **Support for Odisha:** The commitment to supporting tourism in Odisha will highlight the state's unique attractions and encourage sustainable practices that preserve its ecological balance and cultural heritage.

Infrastructure development

- **Boosting domestic travel:** Investments in infrastructure and rural development are expected to boost domestic travel in India. Improved roads, transportation, and facilities in rural areas will encourage Indians to explore their own country. These comprehensive strategies are expected to not only boost tourist numbers but also contribute to sustainable tourism development, ensuring long-term benefits for the regions involved.
- **Growth in domestic tourism:** These initiatives are likely to fuel further growth in domestic tourism, supporting existing destinations and encouraging the creation of new attractions and facilities.

Emphasis on youth employment

- **Job creation and skill development:** The Budget's emphasis on youth employment and skill development is seen as a positive development, particularly for the hospitality sector. This focus aims to address workforce challenges and enhance the sector's capability to meet growing global demands.



“

Budget's emphasis on youth employment and skill development is seen as a positive development, particularly for the hospitality sector.”

Travel sector growth

- **Commitment to global travel destination:** The Budget underscores the government's commitment to positioning India as a top international travel destination.

Key focuses include developing spiritual sites and promoting cruise and beach tourism to attract both domestic and foreign tourists, thereby capitalising on country's extensive coastline. □

Indore hoteliers set world record in planting saplings

HRAWI and Indore Hoteliers Association have planted 1.1 million saplings in just one day thereby setting a new world record.

HRAWI and the Indore Hoteliers Association (IHA) recently took part in the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' mega tree plantation drive, setting a new world record by planting 1.1 million saplings in Indore in just one day.

Around 30,000 people, including over 40 non-resident Indians (NRIs) from Indore exhibiting enthusiasm, participated in the tree planting campaign on the Revati Range hills, along the Indore-Ujjain Road.

Under the guidance of **Kailash Vijayvargiya**, Urban Development and Housing Minister, Government of Madhya Pradesh, the plantation drive saw participation from **Sumit Suri**, Executive Committee Member and State Co-ordinator, Madhya Pradesh, HRAWI, and President, Indore Hoteliers Association and several hoteliers. The event was also graced by **Amit Shah**, Union Home Minister, and **Mohan Yadav**, Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh. Their participation marked a historic achievement as Indore set a new record in the Guinness Book of World Records. More than 700 hoteliers from the city joined the drive, showcasing a collective commitment to environmental sustainability and community engagement.

“

By planting 1.1 million saplings in single day, Indore surpassed previous world record of 926,000 saplings set by Assam.”

“This initiative was part of the large-scale tree planting campaign 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam', launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to commemorate World Environment Day. The campaign aims to plant 1.4 billion trees nationwide, with 5.5 million trees in Madhya Pradesh, including 5.1 million in Indore. With a collective effort, we are thrilled to have set a world record by planting 1.1 million saplings in a single day. We hope to carry forward this momentum next year with the same passion and dedication. It would be incredibly encouraging to see the youth join this initiative in even larger numbers,” **Suri** said.

“The success of this plantation drive highlights the increasing focus on sustainability and green investments within our sector. We remain committed to aligning our sustainability goals with the Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) initiative, making daily efforts to safeguard the environment and encouraging others to embrace eco-friendly practices,” **Pradeep Shetty**, President, HRAWI, said, echoing similar sentiments. By planting 1.1 million saplings in a single day, Indore surpassed the previous world record of planting 926,000 saplings set by Assam. This achievement highlights the city's commitment to combating climate change. □



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Hospitality industry welcomes Maharashtra's tourism initiatives

HRAWI applauds Maharashtra's 2024 tourism policy for substantial financial support, fiscal incentives, and focus on eco-tourism and cultural preservation.

HRAWI has complemented the Maharashtra government's new tourism policy for 2024, highlighting its potential to transform the state's tourism landscape. The policy, which emphasises sustainable development and cultural preservation, marks a significant step towards transforming Maharashtra into a premier global tourist destination.

"We are thrilled about the Maharashtra government's tourism policy 2024. This progressive framework, aimed at positioning Maharashtra as a premier global tourist destination, is a game changer for our industry. The policy's strategic initiatives and incentives are set to attract investments and create more than 30 lakh jobs. Additional Floor Space Index (FSI), relaxed building restrictions to expedite projects, capital subsidies, State Goods and Services Tax (SGST) reimbursement, electricity duty exemptions and interest subventions on loans are some of the key requirements of the industry. We believe, once implemented, it will give a big push to the state's tourism and hospitality sectors. We anticipate its effective implementation within the stated objectives and the ease of doing business (EoDB) framework," said **Pradeep Shetty**, President, HRAWI.

Substantial financial support

Under the new tourism policy, an annual financial allocation of ₹1,666 crore is sanctioned. This investment is earmarked for incentives and operational support, ensuring backing of the tourism sector. The policy also promises to facilitate fast-track clearances, provide additional FSI, and relax building restrictions, thereby encouraging new developments and expansions in the tourism sector.

Fiscal incentives

The policy introduces several fiscal incentives, including capital subsidies, SGST reimbursement, electricity duty exemptions, and interest subventions. These measures are designed to reduce the financial burden on tourism businesses and stimulate growth. Additionally, the policy emphasises the enhancement of tourism infrastructure. This includes the


such as Best Tourism Village, Homestay, and Agro-Tourism units.

Focus on ecotourism

A major component of the policy is its focus on ecotourism and cultural preservation. By prioritising these areas, the policy aims to support projects that promote sustainable tourism practices and revival of indigenous arts, culture,

Under the new tourism policy, an annual financial allocation of ₹1,666 crore is sanctioned for incentives and operational support

installation of Wi-Fi, CCTV, and a 24x7 tourist-police helpline to ensure safety and connectivity for visitors. The policy also features awards for tourism ventures

and cuisine. This focus aligns with the National Tourism Agenda, improving coordination between the state and central governments. 



Food safety training boosts hospitality standards

HRAWI in association with FSSAI, conducted FoSTaC programme, equipping 18 hotel professionals with essential skills and knowledge in food safety.

HRAWI in collaboration with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), recently conducted a Food Safety Supervisor Training in Advance Catering (FoSTaC) programme. This initiative, held to elevate food safety standards within the hospitality sector, attracted 18 dedicated professionals from various segments of the industry.

The training session was led by **Praveen Andrews** from Parikshan, a food safety organisation. The programme aimed to provide participants with in-depth knowledge and practical skills essential for maintaining high standards of food safety. It covered critical aspects of food handling, preparation, hygiene, sanitation, and waste management, ensuring that attendees are well-equipped to implement safe food practices in their respective workplaces.

FoSTaC programme covered critical aspects of food handling, preparation, hygiene, sanitation, and waste management



The training panel featured experts, including **Oscar Pereira**, Operation Manager, Hotel Le Grande, **Sadanand Mohanty**, Purchase Manager, Hotel Le Grande, **Trupti Pawar**, Secretary General, HRAWI, and **Manasi Parab**, Administration Assistant, Training and Seminar, HRAWI. Their collective expertise provided guidance, enhancing the learning experience for all participants. HRAWI has trained and certified 3,048 professionals, contributing to enhancement of food safety standards in hotels. ▣

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HRAWI's Conclave & Awards recognises Nagpur hoteliers

Industry leaders discuss new Maharashtra Tourism Policy 2024, cybersecurity essentials, technology for enhancing guest experiences, and skill training.

The recent Empowering Hospitality Conclave & Awards, hosted by HRAWI, brought crucial issues to the forefront. One pressing concern was the growing trend of holding the hotel and restaurant industries accountable for drunk driving accidents caused by patrons outside their premises. Delving into the growing trend of restaurateurs being held responsible for accidents caused by intoxicated patrons, the industry sought guidelines from industry stalwarts, policymakers, and law enforcers participating in the conclave.



Pradeep Shetty, President, HRAWI, voiced the industry's frustrations, emphasising that restaurateurs are being unfairly held responsible for accidents occurring outside their premises. He argued the industry needs clearer regulations to avoid undue prosecution, drawing a comparison to how shopkeepers selling knives are not held accountable for crimes committed with their products. "The hotel and

restaurant industry remains committed to responsible alcohol service and adherence to guidelines. Wherever we are wrong, we are happy to be corrected. However, lately, the restaurant industry has been feeling the full might of enforcement despite operating within the framework of the law. A guest consumes alcohol in a restaurant, causes an accident outside, and the restau-



rant gets blamed. The industry seeks guidance on what regulations it should follow to avoid prosecution for incidents that occur outside its premises," Shetty said.

Dr. Sagnik Chowdhury, DDG and Regional Director (Western & Central), MoT, Government of India, was the Chief Guest of the conclave. He acknowledged

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The conclave also featured **Rajesh Chopra**, Head, Hospitality Business Vertical, Ingram Micro India, who presented on how technology can be an enabler for enhancing guest experiences and driving profitability. He also discussed cybersecurity essentials for the hospitality industry.

Julfesh Shah, former Vice Chairman, WIRC, ICAI, discussed the New Maharashtra Tourism Policy, 2024, emphasising its impact on the sector. "The new policy offers a 20 per cent cash subsidy (up to ₹20 crore) for tourism projects such as hotels and resorts, significantly boosting investment," Shah said. The new tourism policy also includes a 15 per cent subsidy for other facilities with a cap of ₹15 crore. Shah highlighted additional financial benefits in Vidarbha, such as 100 per cent SGST refunds and interest subvention on loans. "This policy will be a game changer, generating employment and attracting significant investment to Maharashtra," he added.

Hemant Khadse, CEO, East Corp Group, discussed fire safety for guests and



the effort to create a platform for exchanging insights on various sectoral issues. He congratulated HRAWI for organising the seminar and noted, "Guests from all parts of the world visit the country, and the hospitality sector is essentially a melting pot of cultural exchanges. Enhancing guest experiences is our core offering; we are more than just places to stay."

Special Guest **Dr. Ravinder Singal**, Police Commissioner, Nagpur City, acknowledged the hospitality industry's concerns, but emphasised the broader

Dr. Ravinder Singal acknowledged hospitality industry's concerns, but emphasised broader perspective, law enforcers must maintain while enforcing law and order

perspective law enforcers must maintain while enforcing law and order. "No one needs to fear if they have not broken the law. I am open to discussion with HRAWI, and maybe together we can find a solution that can be replicated across Maharashtra," Singal said.

staff in hotels, including passive fire measures, egress, and regular maintenance. **Jitendra Gawade**, Key Account Manager, Envu India, presented on pest prevention techniques, emphasising on how to choose pesticides and pest control operators for hotels. □



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New partnerships and opportunities



India International Travel Mart, opened by **K Lakshminarayanan** and **K Syama Raju**, provided a platform for professionals to explore opportunities.

K Lakshminarayanan, Tourism Minister, Government of Puducherry, and **K Syama Raju**, President, SIHRA, recently inaugurated the India International Travel Mart (IITM) in Bengaluru recently. The

event marked a significant occasion for the travel and tourism industries, drawing attention from various stakeholders and industry professionals. The event included travel agents, tour operators, destination management companies (DMCs),

hotels, resorts, national tourism offices, technology platforms, online travel sites, and more. It provided a podium for the travel industry to connect and grow their business. The event offered a valuable opportunity for travel agents seeking partners in various areas, such as religious travel, adventure, family vacations, honeymoons, or conference destinations for their companies.



SIHRA interactive meeting

Over 45 hoteliers participated in the recent SIHRA interactive meeting held at Gem Park Ooty, which received positive feedback from attendees. **Suresh Nair**, General Manager, Gem Park and President, NHRA, hosted the event. During the meeting, members had the opportunity to engage with **Sundar Singaram**, Director, Operations, SIHRA on a range of topics, including the e-pass system and strategies for promoting year-round occupancy. A presentation on the Tamil Nadu Travel Expo was organised,



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INS2BRA	230VAC 50HZ	1000	800X400X100mm	Inbuilt	787X387mm	Inbuilt	9.700Kg
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K Syama Raju
President
SIHRA

and hoteliers showed interest in participating in the event.

TTE Trichy sellers' roadshow

The TTE Trichy sellers' roadshow at Courtyard by Marriott was attended by 40 people. 10 of them signed up for table space right away, and many others showed interest. The event featured presentations and opportunities for direct engagement, allowing attendees to explore new business prospects. It was organised and hosted by the Sangam Group, which played a key role in ensuring its smooth execution and success. The roadshow not only facilitated networking opportunities but also highlighted emerging trends and prospects for future partnerships within the industry.


APHRA's GST proposal

A delegation from the Andhra Pradesh Hotels and Restaurants Association

Over 45 hoteliers participated in recent SIHRA interactive meeting held at Gem Park Ooty, which received positive feedback from attendees

(APHRA), led by **RV Swami**, President, APHRA, presented a memo to **Loganathan Murugan**, Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting. The memo asked the GST Council to separate the GST rates for restaurant food services from those for hotel room rates. APHRA suggested a GST rate of 5 per cent on restaurant services without input credit and 12 per cent with input credit, independent of the room tariff. Swami stressed that linking food service taxes to room rates creates difficulties and asked the Union Minister to support separating these taxes.

MoU signed

The Department of Catering and Hotel Management at Hindusthan College of Arts and Science (Autonomous) Coimbatore recently signed a MoU with SIHRA. **Sundar Singaram**, Director, Operations, SIHRA, and **Dr. Premkanna** from Hindusthan College exchanged the MoU. The main goals of the MoU are to offer human resource support, conduct a placement drive, run student and faculty development programmes, and connect the college with SIHRA and its events to improve students' knowledge in the field. 



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L to R: Renu Thapliyal, Secretary General, HRANI; Dr. Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar, Executive Director, HRH Group of Hotels, Udaipur; Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, Chairman, Convention, President, UPHRA, Vice President, FHRAI & Hony. Secretary, HRANI; Sh. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Hon'ble Minister of Tourism and Culture, Government of India; and Garish Oberoi, President, HRANI.

Underlining significance of sustainability & technology in shaping future of hospitality, the 3rd HRANI Convention concluded with a resounding success.



Lipla Negi

Themed Udyan bharatam Rising India - Shaping a New Era in Hospitality & Tourism, the 3rd Hotel and Restaurant Association of Northern India (HRANI) Convention united policy makers, top hoteliers, industry experts, students and entrepreneurs from F&B industry to 'innovate-elevate' the future of tourism in the country. The two-day event, held at India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida, was inaugurated by Chief Guest **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat**, Minister of Tourism & Culture, Govt. of India, **Dr. Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar**, Executive Director, HRH Group of Hotels

and EC Member, FHRAI, **Garish Oberoi**, President, HRANI and **Surendra Kumar Jaiswal**, Honorary Secretary, HRANI and Vice President, FHRAI.

Speaking from the podium, **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** hailed the hospitality industry, underscoring its contribution towards GDP and employment generation in the country. "The tourism and hospitality is going to be the biggest driver of growing Indian economy. The aim is to make India top tourist destination in the world, which is in line with Prime Minister's vision of 'Viksit Bharat,'" he said. The minister urged the industry to contribute towards the development of

new destinations in order to de-congest key tourist destinations. "These new tourist hotspots will need sufficient supply of hotel rooms where the role of hoteliers comes in sharp focus," he added.

Addressing the association's demand for GST rationalisation and infrastructure status, he assured, "I understand the pain points of the industry and will take it up with the Prime Minister and Finance Minister," and requested all the stakeholder and representatives present to also approach state governments for GST advocacy. "Every state has an equal weightage of right in GST Council. If the GST anomaly is highlighted by the states



Gajendra Singh Shekhawat
Minister of Tourism & Culture
Government of India



Mukesh Kumar Meshram, IAS
Principal Secretary Tourism & Cul-
ture, Government of Uttar Pradesh



Garish Oberoi
President
HRANI



Surendra Kumar Jaiswal
Honorary Secretary, HRANI
and Vice President, FHRAI

“

Need to decongest popular tourist destinations by developing new ones; contribution of hotel sector in tourism's growth is paramount.”

“

Uttar Pradesh Tourism Policy 2022 has introduced a number of fiscal and non-fiscal incentives to facilitate investors and hoteliers.”

“

Following in the footsteps of UP, Rajasthan, and Uttarakhand, more states are coming on board to offer infra status to our industry.”

“

From Artificial Intelligence to sustainability, all the sessions have been highly successful witnessing packed attendance.”

too then I assure you all that Indian government will definitely try to a realistic solution to it,” he said. He further called for a collective efforts to support the government's initiative to develop 'holistic destination'. “We all need to work towards taking the sector's contribution in economy from 8 per cent to 14 per cent in the coming years,” he exhorted.

Talking about the spectacular performance of domestic tourism, **Mukesh Kumar Meshram, IAS**, Principal Secretary Tourism & Culture Government of Uttar Pradesh, said, “Uttar Pradesh is the number one destination in the country that too with 48 crore tourists. In order to accommodate the surge in domestic tourists, we need more rooms. Uttar Pradesh Tourism Policy 2022 has introduced a number of fiscal and non-fiscal incentives to facilitate investors and hoteliers in term of throughout hand holding from registration till operations.” He shared that the government is keen to address the issues faced by investors and keen to support the sector in every possible way.

Garish Oberoi, President, HRANI, described the convention as a handshake between the hoteliers, students, stake-

holders, bureaucrats and senior officers from states. “During these two days we have come to know what states are doing to promote and support tourism and what the industry is doing for the hotel & restaurant fraternity.” Appreciating the efforts of Uttar Pradesh government in supporting the industry, he said, “They have granted infrastructure status and our member have started receiving the benefits of it. Other states such as Rajasthan and Uttarakhand have also given the sector an infra status. Gradually more and more states are coming on board.”

Adding to it, **Surendra Kumar Jaiswal**, Honorary Secretary, HRANI and Vice President, FHRAI said, “From Artificial Intelligence to sustainability, the sessions have focused on key areas shaping the future of hospitality. We have converted our meeting into conclaves and taking these conclaves to different states in the Northern region. This brings all stakeholders on one platform and look into their key issues.” At its convention, the Association also felicitated the industry leaders with awards, recognising their contribution towards service excellence.



Celebrating hospitality excellence

The 3rd HRANI Convention recognised hospitality leaders for their pivotal role in the sector's growth and evolution.



Ms. Ankita Jaiswal, Chairperson, Sustainable Tourism Committee, HRANI & UPHRA receiving the honour from Sh. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Hon'ble Minister of Tourism & Culture, Govt of India



Dr. Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar, Executive Director, HRH Group of Hotels, Udaipur receiving the honour from Sh. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Hon'ble Minister of Tourism & Culture, Govt of India



Nikhil Sharma, MD & Area Senior VP, South Asia Radisson Hotel Group receiving the honour



Animesh Kumar, Director, Franchise Operations, Eurasia, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts receiving the honour



Ajay Bakaya, Managing Director, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts receiving the honour



Shivin Kumar S/O Lt. Rajindera Kumar receiving a posthumous award on behalf of his father



Arpana Pradhan, Senior Manager, Corporate Communications, The Oberoi Group receiving the honour



Rohit Khosla, EVP Operations, IHCL receiving the honour



Meena Bhatia, VP & GM, Le Meridien New Delhi receiving the honour



Sudeep Jain, MD, South West Asia, IHG Hotels & Resorts receiving the honour

A confluence of ideas: Thought -provoking sessions at the 3rd HRANI Convention



The legacy of heritage restaurants

L to R: Chef Davinder Kumar, President, Indian Culinary Forum; Akash Kalra, MD, United Coffee House; Rakesh Roy, Director, Elchico Hotels & Restaurants, Allahabad; Namit Gulati, Director, Gulati Restaurant, Pandara Road; and Kumar Savar Malhotra, Partner, The Embassy Restaurant, Delhi



Leadership speaks

L to R: Animesh Kumar, Director, Franchise Operations, Eurasia, Wyndham Hotels and Resorts; Ajay Bakaya, MD, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts; Aashish Gupta, Founder, Strategy Pluto & Consulting CEO, FAITH; Nikhil Sharma, MD & Area Senior VP, South Asia Radisson Hotel Group; and Sudeep Jain, Managing Director, South West Asia, IHG Hotels & Resorts



The states perspective

L to R: Renu Thapliyal, SG, HRANI; Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, Chairman, Convention, President, UPHRA, VP, FHRAI, & Hony. Secretary, HRANI; Mukesh Kumar Meshram, IAS, Principal Secretary, Department of Tourism & Culture & DG, UP Tourism, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh; DPS Kharbanda, Administrative Secretary cum CEO, Invest Punjab; and Garish Oberoi, President, HRANI



The future of Indian cuisine

L to R: Dhiraj Dargan, Brand Chef, Comorin, Gurgaon; Vikram Batra, Co-founder, Café Delhi Heights; Inoshi Sharma, IRS, Executive Director, FSSAI; Celebrity Chef Rakesh Sethi, Corporate Executive Chef, Radisson Hotel Group; Manoj Rai, CEO, Punjabi by Nature; and Amit Bagga, Co-founder & CEO, Daryaganj



Sustainability in hospitality and tourism

Akanksha Singh, Global Sustainability Manager, Radisson Hotel Group; Ankita Jaiswal, Chairperson, Sustainable Tourism Committee, HRANI and UPHRA, and Director, Ramada Plaza and Ramada Encore Lucknow; Vivek Jain, Representative, Uttar Pradesh Eco-Tourism Board; and Avni Tripathi, Director, Ahana The Corbett Wilderness

Maidam gets World Heritage status

India hosted its first-ever World Heritage Committee session, marking an important moment for global heritage preservation.



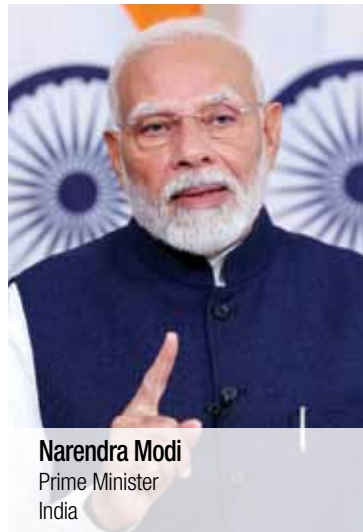
DDP Bureau

In a momentous occasion for India's cultural and historical landscape, the country hosted for the first time World Heritage Committee session. The 46th Session of the World Heritage Committee was inaugurated by Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**.

The World Heritage Committee is tasked with overseeing all matters related to world heritage and making decisions which sites should be added to the World Heritage List. The session, therefore, represents a crucial moment for shaping global heritage preservation policies.

During the inauguration, Modi highlighted the importance of the event by applauding the committee's role in fostering global heritage awareness. He also applauded the return of more than 350 heritage items from abroad.

In his address, the Prime Minister extended his congratulations to Northeast



Narendra Modi
Prime Minister
India

India's Maidam for joining UNESCO's World Heritage List, expressing belief that Maidam with its unique cultural significance will become more popular and gain more traction after bagging a place in the list. Modi emphasised the significance of the expertise gathered from around the world at the session, noting that

Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended his heartiest congratulations to Maidam for being the new entrant to the UNESCO World Heritage List

India's ancient contributions to science, engineering, urban planning, and water management are pivotal to understanding global heritage.

He encouraged the international community to promote mutual appreciation of each other's heritage, boost tourism, and create job opportunities through the discussions and outcomes of the 46th World Heritage Committee meeting. In a gesture of international collaboration, India will contribute US\$1 million to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. ■



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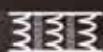
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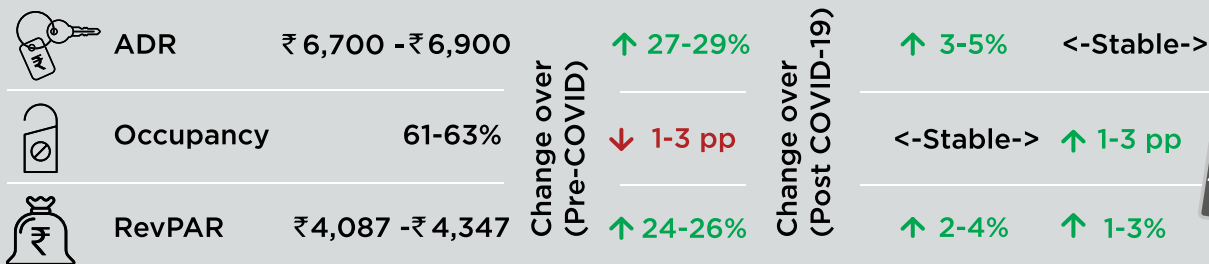
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Source: HVS Research

Kochi leads in hotel occupancy growth

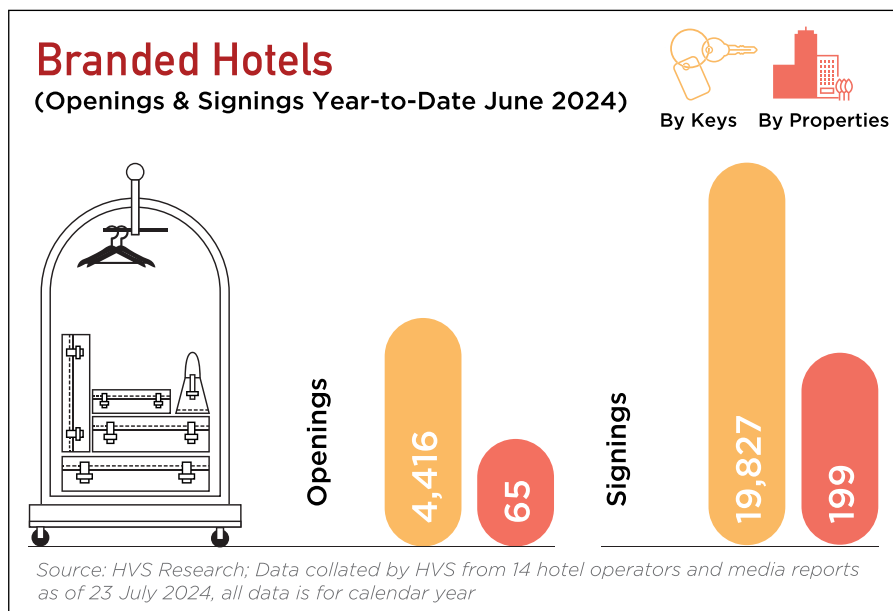
Nationwide hotel occupancy rates were stable in June and year-on-year, but city-specific performances varied significantly, reveals HVS Anarock report.

DDP Bureau

The nationwide occupancy rates for hotels remained flat both in June and on a year-on-year basis, reflecting a period of stability for the hospitality industry as per as HVS Anarock's Hotels & Hospitality Overview, June 2024. However, individual city performances varied significantly, with some regions showing notable growth and others facing challenges.

Kochi emerged as the standout performer, registering the highest increase in occupancy rate. The city's occupancy grew by 7 percentage points year-on-year, marking a significant growth compared to other cities.

In contrast, Hyderabad and Mumbai experienced slight declines in their YoY occupancy rates, ranging from 1 to 3 percentage points. Despite these decreases, both cities saw substantial increases in their average rates, indicating a higher revenue per available room (RevPAR). Hyderabad led the way with over a 9 per cent YoY increase in average rates, while



Mumbai followed closely with a 7 per cent rise. These figures suggested while occupancy might have dipped slightly, the higher rates have compensated by boosting overall revenue.

On the other hand, Goa and Kolkata were the only markets to witness a fall in

average rates during June when compared to the same period last year. Kolkata faced a particularly sharp decline, with rates dropping by nearly 6 per cent from May 2024. This downturn highlights potential challenges in maintaining pricing power in these markets, possibly due to seasonal factors or increased competition. □

Shaping India's Culinary Landscape



Can you introduce yourself and describe your main roles at Fagor India?

I'm Girish Ghatage, Business Head-Retail for Fagor India, with over 20 years in the Food Service & Hospitality Industry. My role involves overseeing company Retail operations in India, ensuring building retail network across India and to develop OEM branding for product lines. I also oversee seamless project execution and focusing on managing installations to ensure it meets manufacturer recommendations for long-term reliability.

How does Fagor India operate and support its clients?

Fagor India has a strong presence with offices in Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru, complemented by a nationwide distribution network with warehousing facilities in Hyderabad and Mumbai for retail and project deliveries across India. We focus on delivering exceptional service through

Girish Ghatage, Business Head-Retail for Fagor India, shares his vision for the future of the food service industry. With over 20 years of experience, Girish explores how technology and sustainability are shaping India's culinary landscape and highlights Fagor India's role in driving innovation and excellence.

continuous training for our partners and strict adherence to international standards. Our support includes comprehensive pre-site inspections and post-installation audits to ensure everything is set up correctly from the start. We offer a wide range of products, including Modular Cooking Equipment, Combi Ovens, Dishwashing, and Refrigeration, catering to various industry needs with a commitment to quality and reliability.

What is your vision for the food service industry in India?

India's culinary heritage is diverse and captivating. With evolving consumer preferences and technological advancements, the food service industry is undergoing a significant transformation. I believe technology will

enhance customer experiences and streamline operations. For instance, smart kitchens and AI can offer personalized culinary experiences. Sustainability is also crucial, and I envision a future where eco-friendly practices are standard. At Fagor, we adhere to high European standards to contribute positively to the planet.

How do you see the future of the food service industry unfolding?

I'm optimistic about the future. With a growing appetite for new experiences and a willingness to embrace change, I believe the food service industry in India will continue to thrive. The integration of technology and a commitment to sustainability will drive innovation and transformation, making food not just sustenance but a celebration of culture, innovation, and community.





Policy changes crucial for green hotels

Hotels need financial incentives, innovation support, training, and public recognition to overcome sustainability challenges and adopt greener practices.

Hotels need financial support for sustainability: **HRANI**



Garish Oberoi
President
HRANI

“

Simplifying process for obtaining green certifications can help hotels comply with regulations and demonstrate their commitment to sustainability.”

As the hospitality industry embraces environmental responsibility, hotels are recognising the importance of sustainability. However, transitioning to greener practices presents financial and operational challenges, making policy changes essential.

Financial incentives are crucial, as high initial costs for energy-efficient systems, renewable energy installations, and waste management technologies can be high. Governments can offer grants, subsidies, and low-interest loans to ease these costs and make investments feasible.

Tax benefits, such as deductions for green technologies and credits for sustainability certifications, provide significant financial relief. Allowing hotels to deduct eco-friendly renovation costs from taxable income makes such investments more attractive and helps sustain green initiatives.

Simplifying the process for obtaining green certifications can also help hotels comply with regulations and demonstrate their commitment to sustainability.

Support for innovation and research is essential for advancing sustainable technologies. Policymakers should fund research into new eco-friendly materials and technologies to foster industry innovation. Collaborative efforts between government agencies, research institutions, and the private sector can lead to cost-effective and efficient solutions, pushing the boundaries of sustainability.

Training and education programmes are vital for effective implementation. Hotels need well-informed staff to manage and promote sustainable practices. Government-supported training initiatives in energy management, waste reduction, and sustainable operations can equip employees with the skills needed for successful implementation, making sustainability an integral part of hotel operations.

Since alternative green products are often relatively more expensive, governments could provide subsidies to manufacturers. This support can lower production costs for eco-friendly materials and technologies, making them more affordable for hotels.

Public recognition and awards for sustainability achievements can be powerful motivators. Establishing accolades for hotels that excel in environmental efforts can inspire others, raise awareness,

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Environmental audits ensure sustainable hotel operations: **HRAEI**

“

One of the important ways to create an eco-friendly environment is by using three strategies—Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.”



Sudesh Poddar
President
HRAEI

As the Indian government recognises the importance of sustainability in the hospitality sector, it encourages hotels, resorts and restaurants to implement sustainable practices through various policies. It also offers incentives, including tax rebates for green projects and funding for renewable energy initiatives. There are regulation systems connected to compliance to environmental standards, while encouraging accountability and transparency. In essence, the government aims to ensure that businesses contribute to environmental protection and promote responsible tourism practices.

To further enhance compliance to sustainable practices, the government could encourage hotels water wastage. As ground-

water levels deplete rapidly and rivers run dry in summer and winter, water has become a precious natural resource. Hotels should utilise modern motion-sensing faucets to reduce water wastage. Additionally, more incentives should be provided to hospitality establishments for harvesting rainwater during the monsoon season.

There must be incentives for encouraging hotels, resorts and restaurants for replacing plastic and opting for non-biodegradable materials such as jute, terracotta, bamboo and to other eco-friendly strategies. Going paperless and adopting digital methods are other significant steps toward sustainability.

Various forms of green energy are already in use, and the hospitality industry should further adopt solar heaters, biofuels, combined heat and power (CHP) systems, wind farms, and geothermal energy.

One of the important ways to create an eco-friendly environment is by using three strategies—Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. Hotels need to reduce the amount of waste generated. Recycling also plays a very important role in the process. It is not only limited to plastic or glass. One

can recycle various things such as fused bulbs, cans, cartons, and cartridges. Waste treatment is another alternative for materials that cannot be recycled. Reusing resources processed through reducing and recycling completes the cycle of creating an eco-friendly and sustainable environment.

Environmental audits are a must for monitoring infrastructure with sustainability in mind. Once a hotel begins implementing sustainable practices, investing in environmental audits becomes necessary. If the hotel meets all audit criteria, it can receive Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification.



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Financial incentives boost hotel sustainability efforts: **HRAWI**

“

Interest-free or low-interest loans for green projects can encourage hotels to invest in energy-efficient technologies, water conservation systems.”



Pradeep Shetty
President
HRAWI

The hospitality industry plays a key role in advancing sustainability, and policy changes can improve its ability to invest in and adopt sustainable practices. The current landscape provides opportunities for hotels to reduce their environmental impact, but significant policy support is needed to drive widespread implementation.

- **Financial incentives and subsidies:** One barrier to sustainability in hospitality is the high initial cost. Policies should introduce financial incentives such as grants, subsidies and tax breaks to offset these costs. Interest-free or low-interest loans for green projects can encourage hotels to invest in energy-efficient technologies, water conservation systems and waste reduction initiatives.



- **Simplified and streamlined approval processes:** The approval process for implementing sustainable practices often involves red tapism that can deter investment. Streamlining processes and establishing a clear regulatory framework can expedite the transition to sustainable operations. Simplifying the approval of eco-friendly modifications and providing technical support can further encourage hotels to pursue sustainable projects.
- **Recognition and certification programmes:** Introducing government-backed recognition programmes can motivate hotels to adopt green practices. Certifications signal quality and commitment to sustainability, attracting environmentally conscious travellers. Establishing standards and recognition programmes can also give hotels a competitive edge.
- **Education and training:** Investment in education and training is crucial for equipping hotel staff with the knowledge and skills needed to implement sustainable practices effectively. Policies should encourage partnerships between educational institutions and industry bodies to develop comprehensive training programmes that focus on sustainability in hospitality.
- **Public-private partnerships:** Public-private partnerships can significantly promote innovation and the sharing of best practices. Policies that encourage collaboration between government bodies, industry leaders and technology providers can lead to the development of cutting-edge solutions that drive sustainability.
- **Consumer awareness and engagement:** Policies should also focus on raising consumer awareness about the importance of sustainability in hospitality. Campaigns that educate travellers about the environmental impact of their choices can create demand for sustainable options, encouraging hotels to prioritise eco-friendly initiatives.

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Incentivise green investments in hospitality sector: **SIHRA**

“

Hospitality industry can significantly reduce its carbon footprint by promoting local sourcing of food and materials.”



K Syama Raju
President
SIHRA

As President of SIHRA, I represent an industry that impacts our region's economy, culture, and environment. The hospitality sector provides value to society and holds a responsibility towards sustainability. It is time for us to fully embrace this responsibility, and for that, we need support from policies that encourage and enable hotels to invest in sustainability initiatives.



- **Incentivise green infrastructure investments:** The hospitality sector can promote sustainability by offering financial incentives for green infrastructure investments, including subsidies or tax breaks for energy-efficient technologies such as solar panels and LED lighting. Additionally, offering low-interest loans or grants for retrofitting existing properties to meet green building standards can make sustainable practices more accessible, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises.
- **Simplify regulatory processes for sustainable certifications:** The government can simplify and streamline the process of obtaining sustainability certifications such as LEED or Green Globes for smaller establishments by creating a one-stop portal for all sustainability-related certifications and reducing bureaucratic hurdles. This will encourage more hotels to pursue these certifications, raising overall environmental standards in the industry.
- **Implement waste management mandates with supportive infrastructure:** Policy intervention in waste management is crucial. Mandating waste segregation and composting in hotels requires infrastructure support, including access to municipal composting facilities and recycling plants. Guidelines on best practices and practical implementation of these mandates are also essential.
- **Encourage local sourcing and sustainable supply chains:** The hospitality industry can significantly reduce its carbon footprint by promoting local sourcing of food and materials, with the government providing tax incentives and establishing regional supply chain networks to facilitate a transition to greener operations without disrupting service quality.
- **Promote awareness and education on sustainability practices:** The success of sustainability initiatives relies on the knowledge and commitment of those implementing them. Government policies should fund training programmes for hotel staff and management on best practices, using public-private partnerships for effective dissemination.
- **Develop a framework for sustainable tourism:** Sustainable tourism is crucial for the hospitality industry's future, necessitating policies that promote responsible tourism practices, community development incentives, and support for projects preserving natural and cultural heritage, thereby reducing environmental impact and enhancing local community well-being. □

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Power of personal guest engagement

From curated culinary events to bespoke services, personalised experiences boost room occupancy and emotional loyalty, opines **Manish Dayya**.



Lipla Negi

A game changer for any hotel today is the trend of tailor-made experiences. By offering a new perspective, this trend redefines the traditional concept of hotel stays, which were once limited to a clean bed and basic amenities. Today, hotel stays are anything but basic. Bespoke experiences have emerged as the top distinguishing factor in the industry. **Manish Dayya**, General Manager, Sofitel Mumbai BKC confirmed, “Discerning clients are seeking more personalised and exclusive experiences. They request bespoke amenities, curated culinary events, and immersive cultural exchanges. To meet these demands, we regularly host culinary festivals in collaboration with home chefs and cultural exchange programmes with chefs from our sister hotels around the globe. Additionally, we have partnered with L’Occitane at Sofitel Spa to offer



Manish Dayya
General Manager
Sofitel Mumbai BKC

uplifting wellness experiences featuring French cosmetology.”

The demand for luxury has increased significantly, prompting hotels to innovate

“Discerning clients are seeking exclusive and unforgettable experiences. They request bespoke amenities, curated culinary events, and immersive cultural exchanges.”

and exceed expectations. Dayya observed, “We strive to deliver not only exceptional service but also to create unforgettable experiences that set us apart in the luxury hospitality market. The Accor Live Limitless (ALL) programme enables us to offer added value to our guests through exclusive rewards, which further drive room occupancy and revenue. This approach fosters emotional loyalty, encouraging repeat visits and solidifies our reputation for excellence in luxury hospitality.”

He further highlights several developments at the hotel. “Our latest food festival, the ‘Flavours of Punjab’ at Pondichery Café, showcases the diverse flavours of Punjab, crafted by guest chef Sherry and our own chef Shrikant. Additionally, we are introducing an exclusive range of Diwali hampers—Samaroh—carefully curated for corporate and luxury gifting. These hampers have been thoughtfully curated to cater to corporate and luxury gifting needs.” He believes that these new offerings, along with the team’s continuous efforts to enhance guest experiences, ensure that every visit to the property is memorable and exceptional. □



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A WIN-WIN APPROACH COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM

By focusing on local culture, community-based tourism provides travellers with genuine experiences, such as tasting regional cuisine, among others.

In recent years, community-based tourism (CBT) has emerged as a transformative approach that champions sustainability, economic empowerment, and cultural preservation within local communities. Unlike conventional tourism, which frequently channels wealth to large corporations and external entities, CBT directs economic benefits to local residents. This enriches travel experiences and helps safeguard indigenous cultures and fragile environments.

According to Sustainable Travel International, tourism supports 319 million jobs globally, rep-

resenting one out of 10 workers. Cultural heritage tourism alone injects around US\$171 billion annually into local economies. However, for every US\$100 spent on tours to developing countries, only US\$5 stays in the local economy. This is worrisome and underscores the need for inclusive and community-focused tourism initiatives, ensuring that tourism growth is balanced and equitable.

Indigenous populations, comprising 5 per cent of the world's populace, account for 15 per cent of those living in extreme poverty. CBT aims to reverse this trend by empowering local communities with



sustainable economic opportunities, fostering resilience and preserving cultural heritage for future generations.

What is CBT?

CBT is a type of tourism that focuses on the local community and its culture. It is a way for tourists to experience the local way of life and to learn about the history and traditions of the community. While CBT allows travellers to explore the culture and lifestyles with the locals about the destination, it is equally a great way to support local businesses and help the community to develop.

CBT offers travellers a unique and immersive experience beyond typical tourist attractions. It allows visitors to fully embrace a destination's culture by engaging with local communities and participating in their daily activities. A highlight of CBT is indulging in traditional cuisine, where travellers can savour authentic flavours and learn about local culinary traditions.

Importance of CBT

CBT fosters sustainable and inclusive development by involving the local communities directly in tourism. This approach empowers the residents with income and employment opportunities, while preserving cultural heritage, traditions, and



natural resources. By offering authentic and immersive experiences, CBT promotes not only cultural exchange and understanding but also enriches visitor experiences and benefits host communities in the long-term. Additionally, the CBT encourages responsible travel practices and environmental stewardship, aligning tourism growth with the well-being of local populations and ecosystems.

Here are five points on how community tourism can be beneficial to the hospitality sector:

- **Enhanced cultural experience:** Community tourism allows travellers to engage deeply with local cultures, traditions, and lifestyles, providing unique experiences. This enhances the appeal of hospitality services that promote local culture
- **Economic benefits to local communities:** By involving local communities in tourism, a portion of tourism revenue is directed to local businesses, artisans, and service providers. This boost can improve local infrastructure and benefit the hotel sector and then to a vibrant local economy
- **Sustainable tourism development:** Community tourism promotes sustainability through small-scale, eco-friendly initiatives preserving natural resources and cultural heritage. The hotels embracing these principles can attract environmentally conscious tourists
- **Diversification of tourism offerings:** Integrating community tourism allows the tourism sector to offer locally-driven activities such as local tours, cultural workshops, and traditional cuisine. This diversification provides guests with options and enhances the destination's overall appeal
- **Strengthened community relations:** Collaborating with local communities fosters positive relationships, creating a more than welcoming environment for tourists. Hospitality businesses



Dr. Niraalee Shah
Founder, Image Building
and Etiquette Mapping

“Integrating community tourism allows the hospitality sector to offer unique, locally-driven activities and experiences, such as local tours.”





By luring the visitors, tourism generates revenue for businesses from hotels and restaurants to local crafts and services, increasing income and improving standard of living.”

that actively engage with local communities gain stronger local support, improved guest satisfaction, and positive word-of-mouth promotion

Economic empowerment through tourism

Economic empowerment through tourism drives sustainable development, creates jobs, and boosts local economies. By attracting them, tourism sector generates revenue for businesses from hotels and restaurants to local crafts and services, increasing income and improving standard of living. This also fosters entrepreneurship, providing opportunities for new enterprises, and promoting cultural exchange as well as heritage preservation. Ultimately, tourism sector is a significant catalyst for economic growth and social empowerment which helps to alleviate poverty and build resilient, thriving economies.

Preserving cultural heritage

Hotels and resorts across India play an important role in preserving cultural heritage by incorporating local traditions, architecture, and arts into their design and guest experiences. They also showcase traditional craftsmanship in decor, offer authentic regional cuisine, and promote local cultural activities in order to celebrate India's rich heritage and educating guests about its diverse cultural tapestry. Partnerships with local artisans will assist in sourcing materials and employing building techniques to sustain these crafts.

Challenges and opportunities

The hospitality industry in India faces challenges

and opportunities in community tourism. The challenges related to this sector include balancing authenticity with commercial viability, ensuring the sustainable development along with increasing foreign and domestic tourist arrivals, and integrating the local communities into the tourism value chain.

However, these challenges offer several opportunities for fostering cultural exchange, preserving India's rich heritage, and promoting inclusive growth. By investing in the local infrastructure, supporting local businesses, and promoting responsible tourism practices, the Indian hospitality sector could enhance the visitor experiences, uplift the local economies, and empower communities thereby enriching the tourism landscape of the country.

Conclusion

The hospitality industry in the country is known to play a significant role in community tourism by promoting local culture, rich heritage, and sustainable practices. The hotels and resorts attract both global and domestic travellers, while empowering local communities economically and socially. As the country evolves as an international tourist destination, the relationship between both hospitality and community tourism will remain central to its appeal.

(The views expressed are solely of the author. The publication may or may not subscribe to the same)



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NATIVE WISDOM DRIVES SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

Strengthening their commitment to sustainability, hotels are turning to native knowledge and local craftsmanship for eco-friendly products.



Lipla Negi

As the call for sustainability gains momentum, hotels and hospitality brands are revisiting traditional roots, turning to native knowledge to envision and create a range of eco-friendly products. Tapping into their eco-consciousness, they are roping in local artisans to revive lost techniques and revisit the time when technology had not yet taken over and natural materials ruled the roost.

The beauty of native knowledge lies in its ability to inspire both introspection and a broader perspective. “Native knowledge is essential in fostering a deeper connection with the planet, as it encompasses practices that have coexisted harmoniously with nature for generations. At Moksha Himalaya Spa Resort, we implement several practices rooted in this wisdom such as water conservation, replacing plastic with paper packaging and engagement with local communities. By employing 80 per cent of our workforce from Himachal Pradesh, promoting local dances and cultural activities, we support the local economy and preserve cultural heritage,” said **Akash Garg**, Chairman and Managing Director, Asia Resorts.

Even hospitality brands are leaving no stone unturned to innovate and cater to the rising demand for planet-friendly products. Homegrown brands play a crucial role in reviving the native knowledge about biodegradable materials that meet both quality and sustainability benchmarks. “At Nestin Ventures, sustainability means incorporating the wisdom of traditional and local practices into the modern world. We strive to create products that not only meet high standards of quality



Ankur Modi
CEO
Vetra Furniture

“**All products we create are handmade by skilled labour. Raw material includes natural cane and bamboo which are eco-friendly.**”

and performance but also contribute to a healthier planet for future generations by blending past and present practices harmoniously. Our products are inherently sustainable and have minimal environmental impact and are both innovative

and rooted in ecological responsibility,” pointed out **Chakradhar Rao**, CEO, Nestin Ventures.

Hotels drive demand

Where there is demand, there is supply. Suppliers are adopting indigenous practices for creating products which are receiving a boost from hotels. Hotels and resorts are seeking out these products to align with their sustainability goals and enhance their offerings. “We receive requests from several hotels regarding sustainability, and while we address these needs, we also take measures internally to support sustainable practices. For instance, we use aluminum for the framework of all our furniture, a material known for its durability and high reusability, which aligns with our commitment to sustainability. Additionally, we have minimised the use of machinery in our production process, relying instead on skilled craftsmanship,” **Ankur Modi**, CEO, Vetra Furniture, said, agreeing.

Constantly experimenting and evolving to cater to the discerning taste of hotel guests, the brands also prioritise sustainability and innovation in their products. “Our product line includes biodegradable and compostable napkins, table covers, cutlery, and bed linen as well. Our Bio Dunisoft Napkins, made using OC-BioBinder from renewable resources such as corn and lemon peels are popular. We are witnessing a significant rise in demand for these eco-friendly products



Chakradhar Rao
CEO
Nestin Ventures

“**At Nestin Ventures, sustainability means incorporating the wisdom of traditional and local practices into the modern world.**”

as hotels increasingly prioritise environmental responsibility,” Rao agreed.

Pushing the envelope

The hotel industry often adheres to international standards that favour certain types of techniques or material. Nevertheless,



Rupesh Srivastava
CEO
Therapedic India

“**Our mattresses are made with rebonded foam on the firmer side and normal HR foam on the softer side.**”



the supplier fraternity never stops trying. “Plush mattresses with pocket or bonnell springs as the base core are mostly favoured in hotels. However, a significant portion of Indian customers do find these mattresses soft and uncomfortable. To cater to the local population, we have developed dual comfort mattresses that offer both softness and firmness in a single product. These mattresses can be flipped to suit the comfort of the guest,” **Rupesh Srivastava**, CEO, Therapedic India explained, sharing an example.

“This is made with rebonded foam on the firmer side and normal HR foam on the softer side. Rebonded foam is an indigenous product, commonly available in India and other Asian countries,” he added. When materials are sourced locally and traditional techniques are used, it boosts the local economy and provides the community with employment opportunities. Sourcing locally and employing traditional methods create a more sustainable and interconnected local economy, befitting both individuals and the broader community. “All the products we create are handmade under the craftsmanship of skilled labour. We also promote women employment. The raw material includes natural cane and bamboo—completely eco-friendly,” Modi elaborated. When such products reach a hotel room, gallery, or spa, their journey becomes a story of sustainable success for everyone involved. The guests not only admire these products but also incorporate them into their



Akash Garg
CMD
Asia Resorts

“**We implement several practices rooted in native wisdom such as water conservation, replacing plastic with paper packaging, among others.**”

lifestyle, making sustainability a part of their daily routine. In this way, the journey of these products not only highlights their inherent value but also encourages a ripple effect of positive change, aligning personal lifestyles with global sustainability goals. □



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A CALL TO REDUCE EXCESSIVE TOURISM



Domestic tourism in India is growing, but faces challenges from overtourism requiring sustainable practices to balance growth with ecological preservation, reckon hoteliers.



Sakshi Singh

Domestic tourism in India is expanding rapidly, with Indians likely to spend US\$410 billion on travel by 2030. While tourism supports many families and boosts the country's economy, it also brings challenges such as overtourism. For instance, last Christmas saw 28,000 vehicles congesting the Atal Tunnel in Manali, and 55,000 vehicles overwhelming Shimla's traffic system.

Many tourist destinations are located in ecologically-sensitive areas that cannot handle excessive tourism for a short time. These areas are experiencing visitor numbers that far exceed their capacities. A blanket ban on tourism will have negative effects, so regulated and sustainable tourism is the only viable solution. The Indian tourism ecosystem must adopt a multi-pronged approach, making existing activities sustainable, while promoting alternative destinations to reduce stress on overvisited locations. "To address overtourism, hospitality chains should focus on boutique properties with limited inventories in various Indian destinations. Dispersing accommodations across different locations can prevent overcrowding and preserve the authenticity of these areas," **Shikhar Kumar**, Managing Director, Stone Wood Hotels & Resorts, suggested.

Overtourism causes issues such as increased waste, pollution, and environmental damage. It affects the local population's quality of life and impacts the natural landscapes and culture that attract tourists. If not controlled, excessive tourism can lead to permanent changes. It also increases resentment among locals as the cost of living rises with the influx of wealthier travellers. Local governments are exploring various measures to reduce excessive tourism, including environmental taxes, entry permits, water conservation, and solid waste management.

The authorities in tourism-dependent areas are creating laws to attract environmentally conscious tourists and reduce tourism's negative impact. Eco-tourism resorts promote sustainable practices and organic lifestyles that can play a key role in this strategy. These resorts not only operate sustainably but also raise awareness about responsible tourism.



Michael Dominic
MD and CEO
CGH Earth

“
There is a shift towards the alert independent traveller, who seeks enriching experiences beyond just luxurious spaces.”



Erika Rathi
Director
Namaste Dwaar Resort



In a developing country such as India, where tourism generates significant employment, seasonal overtourism poses challenges for hill stations.”

“There is a discernible shift towards what we term as the alert independent traveller. The alert independent traveller is characterised by a sophisticated approach, seeking more than just luxurious built spaces. Instead, they are drawn to destinations that offer enriching experiences, focusing on personal benefits and educational value. This evolution in traveller preferences has been keenly observed and adapted to at CGH Earth. Our properties are thoughtfully designed to meet the needs and preferences of the alert independent traveller. We place emphasis on crafting experiences that transcend surface-level satisfaction, aligning with the traveller’s pursuit of depth and significance. This commitment, however, does not diminish the importance. We attribute to providing comfort and exceptional service,” **Michael Dominic**, Managing Director and CEO, CGH Earth, said.

Reducing footfall at tourist hotspots could harm a sector that supports many families. However, the total numbers obscure a potential solution. While tourist arrivals are increasing, the growth is uneven. Destinations already under strain are seeing a faster

rise in visitors, worsening the impact on local services and infrastructure. For instance, in 2021, Mussoorie received 12.3 lakh tourists, while Kausani, Bageshwar and Ranikhet in the Kumaon region together received just one lakh travellers. Kausani and Ranikhet are scenic, have good connectivity and would require just a couple of hours more to reach from Delhi, but are not as popular

as Mussoorie. Actively promoting alternative destinations and simultaneously developing supporting infrastructure could help in limiting the negative aspects of tourism. Hotel operators too have a role to play. By spreading out inventory across destinations and increasing awareness through targeted campaigns, organised players can play their part in supporting sustainable tourism.

“In a developing country such as India where tourism generates significant employment, seasonal overtourism often poses challenges for hill stations and pilgrimage centres. To counter this, promoting less frequented destinations such as the Lakshadweep Islands can provide opportunities for tourism development, particularly for cruise lines seeking alternatives to crowded beach resorts,” **Erika Rathi**, Director, Namaste Dwaar Resort, pointed out. Stakeholders in ecologically sensitive areas such as the Western Ghats and upper Himalayas can be nudged to operate boutique resorts with limited inventory that would attract high-paying travellers. It has been observed that new-age tourists are open to paying a premium for hotels that promote sustainability. It will ensure that the local culture and ecology remain intact, and they operate profitably.

Addressing overtourism requires a comprehensive strategy balancing tourism growth with ecological preservation. Promoting sustainable tourism practices, dispersing tourist activities to less crowded destinations, and encouraging boutique properties can reduce the negative impacts of excessive tourism. By adopting eco-friendly measures and raising awareness about responsible tourism, we can ensure that tourism supports local economies without harming the natural and cultural heritage of these destinations. With efforts from governments, businesses, and travellers, we can create a tourism model that benefits everyone. ▣



New alliance addresses food insecurity

IHG Hotels & Resorts joins forces with Action Against Hunger in a mission to resolve global hunger, with guests donating points to support cause.



IHG Hotels & Resorts has announced a new multi-year alliance with the international NGO Action Against Hunger, supporting its crucial mission to address food insecurity and hunger affecting millions worldwide.

The global hotel chain will fund and support Action Against Hunger's nutrition programmes, with a particular focus on early detection of malnutrition in children and providing life-saving treatment through local community outreach. Additionally, IHG will raise awareness about the campaign among millions of guests globally and offer them the chance to donate IHG One Rewards points to the cause. For instance, donating 10,000 points can screen approximately 124 children for malnutrition, while 7,500 points can provide nutritious food for one child for six weeks, helping them recover.



Elie Maalouf
CEO
IHG Hotels & Resorts

Elie Maalouf, CEO, IHG Hotels & Resorts, said, "Food sits at the heart of our hotels and hospitality, nourishing people and communities, and yet we know it remains desperately in short supply for millions of people, despite enough being produced to feed everyone on the planet. This is a problem the world can solve if societies, organisations and businesses work together. IHG Hotels & Resorts is proud to partner with Action Against Hunger on their life saving work, in addition to the many other long-standing partnerships we have with charities in local markets. Collectively, we want to help create lasting change in a world where people are nourished."

“Collectively, we want to help create lasting change in a world where people are nourished, always welcome and respected.”



"While hunger is a widespread challenge, we can end chronic hunger for everyone for the first time in human history. Realising that vision will take bold action, we are grateful for IHG's will, wisdom and leadership in advancing this significant cause. Hunger makes it harder for hundreds of millions of people around the world to learn, work, dream and realise their full potential. IHG's generous support will help advance our work to create a world where every life is well nourished," **Ashwini Kakkar**, Chair, Action Against Hunger International Network, said.

Several IHG hotels across the country have actively participated in meal preparation and food distribution efforts, collaborating with NGOs, old age homes, and schools for the visually impaired. ▣



Tech investments boost operational efficiency

Hospitality industry is evolving with technology. **Yogeesh Chandra** guides hoteliers on investment, operational efficiency, organisational restructurings and training challenges.



DDP Bureau

The hospitality industry is experiencing a transformative wave as technology infiltrates every facet of the business. To remain competitive, industry leaders are investing in state-of-the-art technologies worldwide, aiming to boost operational efficiency and minimise manual labour. This raises the critical question: Where are competitors directing their investments, and why?

To address this, RateGain recently unveiled its 'The State of Distribution for 2024' report prepared after surveying different regions and property types. This comprehensive guide is designed to aid hospitality leaders in strategic decision-

making, prioritising technology investments, and organisational restructurings.

Underlining the importance of report for Indian hoteliers, **Yogeesh Chandra**, Chief Strategy Officer, RateGain, said, "It addresses the immediate needs of hoteliers to adapt to technological advancements, shifts in consumer behaviour, and broader market dynamics, facilitating planning for the remainder of 2024 and the budgeting season for 2025. Large chains can focus on integrating solutions with their existing infrastructure to minimise disruption, while mid-size chains can leverage insights on scalability. Independent hotels can identify technologies offering the best return on investment to stay competitive."

“

Large chains can focus on integrating solutions with their existing infrastructure to minimise disruption, while midsize chains can leverage insights on scalability.”

Findings

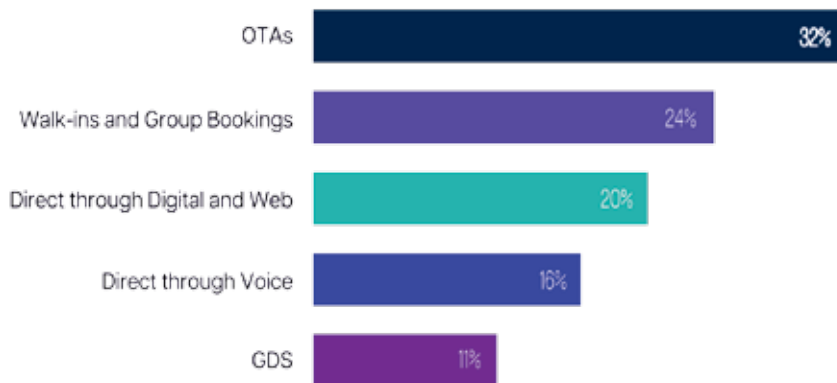
Large hotel chains register 36 per cent of overall bookings from direct channels, and 32 per cent bookings come from Online Travel Agencies (OTAs). By maintaining diverse portfolio of booking channels, big brands witness wide market reach, and it acts as a cushion against occupancy volatil-

ity. In mid-size hotels, 40 per cent of the bookings come from OTAs due to limited marketing budget. They do strategic deployment of channel management technologies to optimise their online presence, aiming for rate parity, and maximising revenue across platforms. Independent hotels experience, most of the bookings through

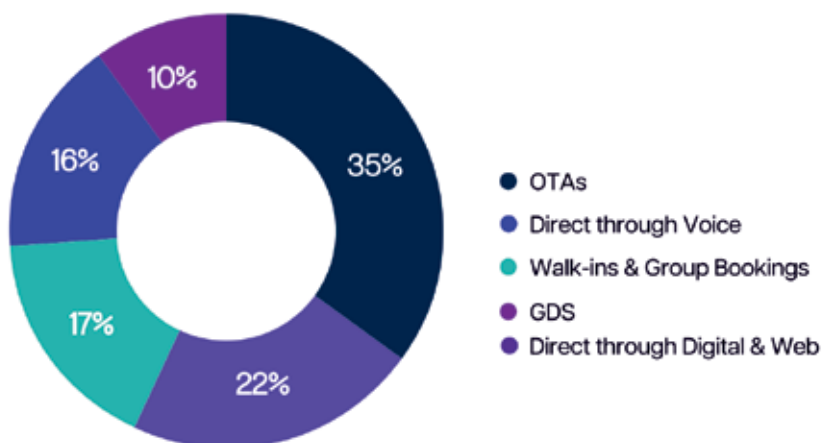


Yogeesh Chandra
Chief Strategy Officer
RateGain

Percentage distribution of bookings among different channels in large international hotel chains



Percentage distribution of bookings among different channels



direct channels, while 27 per cent of bookings come from digital channels and web drives as they lack loyalty programmes.

Type of technologies used

Technologies used to capture bookings are the prime focus of hotels across all regions and property sizes. Many hotels have not invested in tools that manage customer data, generate analytics, distribute content, and automate marketing processes yet. Booking engine, CRS, RMS, and analytics tools have extremely high penetration to manage data efficiently across all properties with an integrated and data-driven operational framework. The report showcased a trend of low investment and prioritisation of marketing automation and content management systems. Mid-sized hotel chains continue to depend heavily on third-party channels for the majority of their bookings.

Learnings for Indian hotels

Underlining the learnings for Indian hotels, Chandra said, “While current technologies are centred on inventory booking and directing bookings to hotel websites, it is now imperative to leverage AI tools and services to understand traveller’s behaviour better. By tracking intent, hotels can sell not just inventory but also ancillary services, and analyse seasonality, city trends and demographics, among others.”

Major challenges for hotels

Chandra said, “Hotels in India face major challenges with cutting-edge technology. Investing in technology training is recognised as a key strategy to tackle these challenges.” □

Products & Services

Transform spaces with artistic design »

The Jardin Collection by Peacock Life is a home collection inspired by the love between birds and blossoms. The collection includes an oval tray, a tissue box, a magazine holder, and a bin cum planter. The hand-painted metalware expresses artistic elegance and charm, bringing lightness and joy to any home. The collection is complemented by a soft green backdrop and a metal base. The Oval Tray is a centrepiece for gatherings, serving loved creations, or displaying candles and tea lights.



« Beauty and functionality in décor

Miraliving is a one-stop décor solution for futuristic art objects that make homes warm and fashionable. Their range of art objects and furnishings evoke beauty, harmony, and functionality, featuring opulent materials, intricate embroidery, and vases and table lamps. Miraliving offers a wide array of decorative items, from velvet cushions with jewelled embellishments to tabletop décor settings, aiming to be the epitome of glamour for Indian living spaces. Miraliving aims to underscore its commitment to manifesting exemplary design with aesthetic sensibility.

Classy touch for celebrations »

Frazer and Haws has introduced a silver collection of cake and cheese platters, ideal for enhancing table settings with a touch of sophistication. These platters are perfect for every occasion, from casual gatherings to formal celebrations. Available in a variety of elegant designs, these platters are crafted to leave a lasting impression at any event. With their appeal, they bring an air of class, luxury, and elegance to any home, making every party an unforgettable experience.



Vintage meets modern »

Luxury design house, Rosabagh, has launched the Navanya collection, a bespoke collection of cane and oakwood furniture that combines vintage design with modern aesthetics. The collection combines functionality with fine craftsmanship, creating fluid and modern spaces. The collection features unique stains, colours, custom accents, and custom accents, resulting in tasteful backdrops. The mood-board includes sofas, chairs, tables, and bar tables in marble stone, as well as renaissance-inspired chairs, mirror-and-wood side tables, and art-deco-inspired crystal chandeliers.



« Modern art-inspired glasses

Lucaris has launched its MUSE collection in India, a blend of modern luxury and innovative design. The collection includes five distinct glasses, including Bourdeaux, Burgundy, Cabernet, Chardonnay, and Sparkling, each crafted from premium crystal. Drawing inspiration from geometric modern art, the collection features a wide, flat bottom with a proper taper, allowing optimal interaction between wine and air. This scientific approach ensures maximum release of the wine's exquisite flavours and aromas, resulting in a journey of discovery with every sip.

Minimalistic and off-beat »

PortsideCafé has introduced a modern twist on mid-century classic chairs. These chairs, designed with minimalistic and off-beat silhouettes, evoke memories of 'Parisian' cafes and are priced to resonate with various moods. They are versatile, lightweight, and can elevate any space, from trendy restaurants to open offices. The chairs are a blend of nostalgia and modernist vision, paying homage to a timeless classic with PortsideCafé's bohemian style. They are designed without arms, making room for more at the table and keeping them close for stronger connections. □



MOVEMENTS

ASHWNI KUMAR GOELA

VP, Operations
Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport



Ashwni Kumar Goela has been elevated to Vice President, Operations at Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport. With over 24 years of experience in the hospitality industry,

Goela has demonstrated his commitment to excellence, innovation, and the highest standards of service. His tenure as General Manager has seen significant achievements, including increased guest experience, top line, and profitability in the last six years.

AMIT KUMAR SHARMA

Cluster General Manager
The Fern Hotels and Resorts



The Fern Hotels and Resorts has announced the appointment of Amit Kumar Sharma as the new Cluster General Manager, Maharashtra. With an experience of over

two decades in hospitality sector, Sharma brings a wealth of expertise, with successful tenures across various hotel brands. He has previously worked with brands such as Hyatt, InterContinental Hotels & Resorts and Le Meridien.

DANIEL DOLATRE

General Manager
Hyatt Regency Delhi



With over 30 years of experience in hospitality sector, Daniel Dolatre brings in a wealth of experience in his role as the new General Manager at the Hyatt Regency Delhi. His main

role would be to oversee the strategic and tactical growth initiatives for hotel operations. Dolatre brings extensive experience to this role, having served as General Manager for a diverse range of hotels across South America and Europe throughout his career.

JASVIR BELWAL

Director, Operations
Sofitel Mumbai BKC



Jasvir Belwal has been appointed as the Director, Operations, Sofitel Mumbai BKC. In his new role at Sofitel Mumbai BKC, Belwal will oversee operations and facility

management processes. His key areas of expertise include budgeting, forecasting, and mentoring. Belwal boasts a rich experience spanning 20 years in the hospitality industry. Throughout his career, he has worked with some of the most renowned hotels.

GAURAV PALEJA

Director, Sales
Courtyard by Marriott Mahabaleshwar



Gaurav Paleja has been announced as the new Director of Sales at the Courtyard by Marriott Mahabaleshwar. Paleja has almost 20 years of experience in the luxury resort market. He has

worked in Hilton Shillim and The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group. His ability to develop and implement business strategies makes him an ideal choice for the role. He has a proven track record of creating and executing strategic plans that drive growth.

SHIVNEET POHOJA

Executive Chef
ITC Maurya New Delhi



Shivneet Pohoja has been appointed as the Executive Chef at ITC Maurya, New Delhi. With a career spanning over two decades, Chef Pohoja possesses a wealth of expertise.

In his new role, he will be leading a team focused on creating exquisite menus, while embracing global influences across all dining experiences. He specialises in sustainable Indian cuisine including farm to fork and plant-based cuisine.

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