

HOTELS & RESTAURANTS INDIA fhrai magazine

Vol 25, Issue 11, November 2025

Pages 72 ₹50

A MONTHLY ON HOSPITALITY TRADE
By DDP Publications



FHRAI MEETS GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT, URGES TO EASE GST BURDEN



FHRAI DISCUSSES **F&B DE-LINKING**, DEMAND NOTICES,
& ITC RESTORATION WITH **FINANCE MINISTRY**

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President's Note



Dear Members and Stakeholders,

Last month, we celebrated Diwali with great fervour, a festival that embodies prosperity, hope, and happiness. Rejuvenated by the spirit of this auspicious occasion, India's hospitality and tourism industry now stands poised to embrace a new era illuminated by abundant opportunities for growth and development. Today, both the luxury and mid-scale hospitality segments are experiencing remarkable expansion, reflecting the evolving aspirations of travellers and India's rising stature as a preferred global destination.

At this pivotal juncture, FHRAI remains deeply committed to promoting the growth of the hospitality sector while persistently addressing the complex challenges that hinder its progress. FHRAI continues to actively engage with the key policymakers to ensure that the voice of the industry is heard, its concerns addressed, and its immense potential is fully realised.

In furtherance of this commitment, I recently held a significant meeting with the Finance Ministry, Government of India, to discuss the long-standing issues of delinking Food & Beverage (F&B) rates from accommodation charges, demand notices issued to members for past GST dues, and withdrawal of ITC following the reduction of GST on rooms priced below ₹7,500 from 12 per cent to 5 per cent. The federation underscored that delinking and restoration of ITC would ensure greater parity and transparency in taxation, promote ease of doing business, and stimulate further investment and expansion in the sector.

Continuing our proactive advocacy, FHRAI recently sent a representation to the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry, to apprise them of the pressing issues arising from ambiguities in the Copyright Act, 1957, that are adversely affecting the hospitality industry. FHRAI highlighted the urgent need for a single window system for copyright licensing.

Recently, we have taken many initiatives to support our members to manage their businesses more efficiently as well as to address the queries and concerns of our members in a more proactive manner. The first one was the launch of the Preferred Vendors Programme as a strategic platform connecting industry suppliers and service providers with hotels, restaurants, and allied establishments across the country.

“FHRAI reaffirms its unwavering commitment to championing the interests of the hospitality and tourism sector, promoting growth and global competitiveness.”

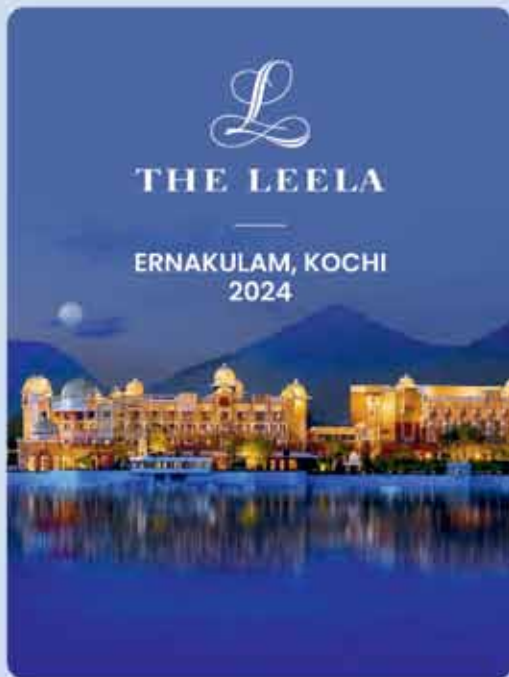
Another important initiative we have taken is the launch of the Member Support & Redressal Cell to assist the members in resolving their complaints, queries, and issues related to legal, regulatory, and operational matters affecting their day-to-day business activities. I urge all our members to take maximum benefit of these member benefit measures taken by FHRAI.

In this season of festivals, let us look forward with optimism and renewed energy. FHRAI reaffirms its unwavering commitment to championing the interests of the hospitality and tourism sector, promoting growth, innovation, and global competitiveness. Guided by the spirit of collaboration and progress, FHRAI continues to be the industry's strongest advocate, illuminating the path towards a more vibrant and resilient future.

Warm regards,
Surendra Kumar Jaiswal
President, FHRAI

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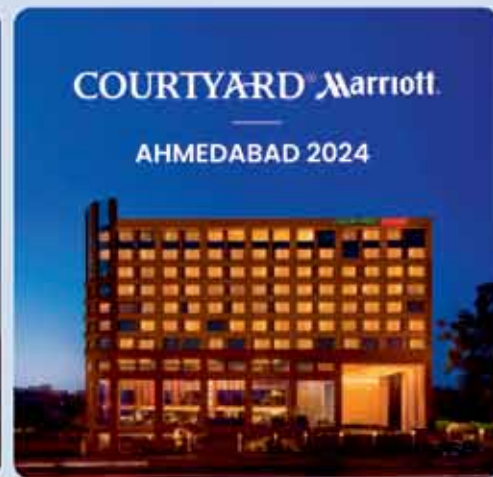


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Leaders congratulate new president

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FHRAI Magazine is printed, published and edited by Devika Jeet on behalf of the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Association of India and published by DDP Publications Pvt. Ltd. 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110 001 and printed at Modest Print Pack Pvt. Ltd., Okhla Industrial Area, New Delhi - 110020

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Leaders congratulate new president

Leaders across India extended their congratulations to **Surendra K Jaiswal** on his new role as FHRAI President, reaffirming their interest to work with FHRAI.



DDP Bureau

Leaders from across the country have extended their heartfelt congratulations to **Surendra Kumar Jaiswal** on assuming office as the President of the Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI). They lauded his appointment as a moment of renewed energy for the sector, emphasising that tourism and hospitality remain vital pillars of every state's economy, driving employment and livelihood generation at the grassroots. Several industry and government representatives have expressed their intent to work closely with the new president to create more growth opportunities, strengthen collaboration, and ensure a thriving future for India's hospitality stakeholders.

Extending his heartfelt wishes to the new president through a personalised letter, Gujarat Chief Minister **Bhupendra Patel** stated, "It is

a natural process to give a chance to new blood in any organisation. Gujarat has always been among the most dynamic, growth-oriented, investor-friendly states in India. With its skilled workforce, techni-

cal expertise, and sustainable ecosystem, Gujarat is a fortunate state wherein public as well as corporate participation in development works is exemplary." He added, "Honourable Prime Minister Shree **Narendra**



BHUPENDRA PATEL

Chief Minister
Gujarat


Bhupendra Patel
Chief Minister, Gujarat State

Dt. 30-10-2025

Snehi Shree Surendra Kumar ji and all the members of The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI),

Saprem Namaskar.

I am much pleased to receive your letter informing me about the team of new office bearers of **FHRAI** for the year **2025-26**. Thank you and congratulations to the new team.

It is a natural process to give a chance to the new blood in any organization. Gujarat has always been among most dynamic, growth oriented, investor friendly States in India. With its skilled workforce, technical expertise and sustainable ecosystem, Gujarat is a fortunate state where in the public as well as the corporate participation for development works is exemplary. **Honourable Prime Minister Shree Narendra Modi** has envisioned the concept of development and growth for our stronger economy in the State. He always emphasizes on promoting new generation, which is a positive gesture. I hereby extend my heartiest best wishes to entire new team of **FHRAI** for a bright future ahead.


(**Bhupendra Patel**)

Shree Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, President,
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PRAMOD SAWANT

Chief Minister
Goa



ROHAN A KHAUNTE

Tourism Minister
Goa

Under Surendra Kumar Jaiswal's leadership, FHRAI will continue to be a driving force in fostering sustainable growth within the hospitality sector

Modi has envisioned the concept of development and growth for a stronger economy in the state. He always emphasises promoting the new generation, which is a positive gesture."

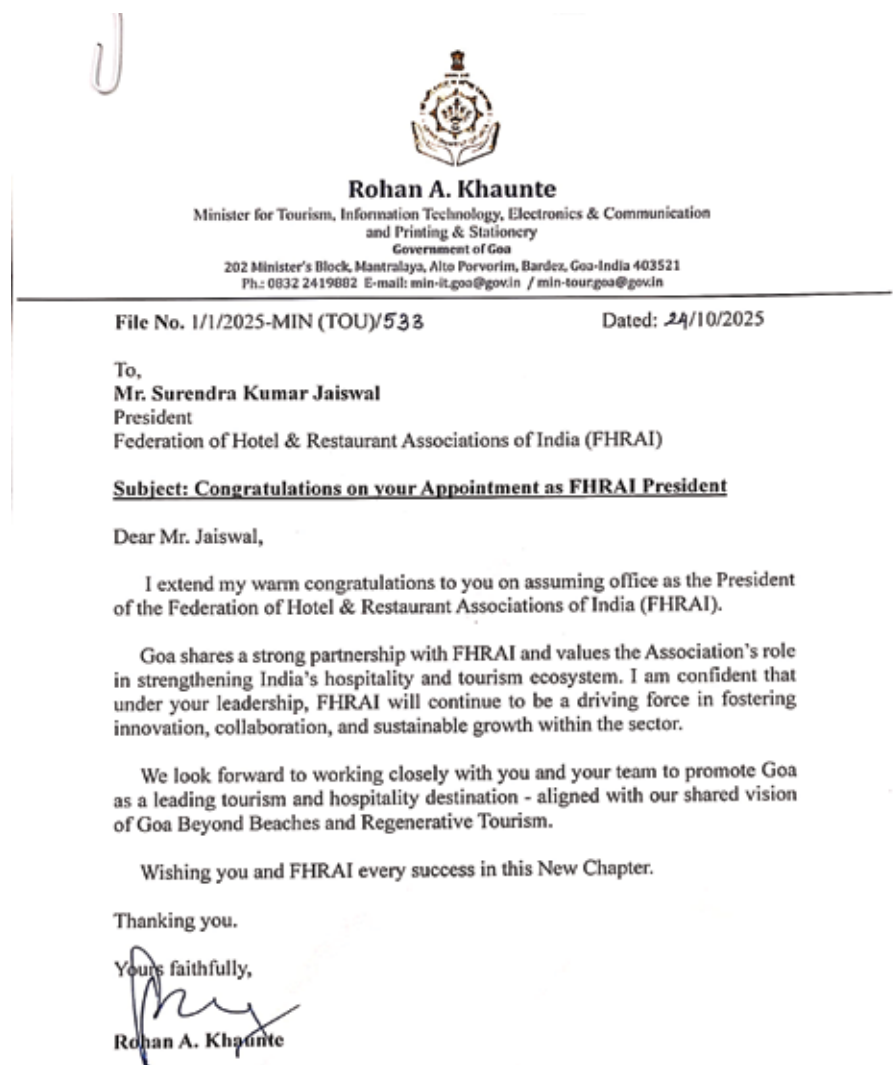
Calling the appointment as the 'next chapter' of the association, Goa Tourism Minister **Rohan A Khaunte** extended his warm congratulations to Jaiswal on assuming office as FHRAI President. Furthermore, he lauded FHRAI's vision under him, highlighting the shared commitment between Goa Tourism and the association to position India as a global leader in tourism and hospitality. He emphasised that both entities are aligned in advancing sustainable growth, skill development, and policy reforms that strengthen India's global standing as a travel and investment destination.

Upon Jaiswal's appointment, Khaunte remarked, "Goa shares a strong and longstanding partnership with FHRAI and deeply values the association's pivotal role in strengthening India's hospitality and tourism

ecosystem. I am confident that under the dynamic leadership of Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, FHRAI will continue to be a driving force in fostering innovation, collaboration, and sustain-

able growth within the sector." His letter underscored the association's role in unlocking new opportunities for industry stakeholders and further elevating India's stature as a global tourism and hospitality powerhouse.

Besides, Khaunte expressed his eagerness to work closely with Jaiswal and his team to promote Goa as a leading global tourism and hospitality destination, aligned with their shared vision of 'Goa Beyond Beaches' and 'Regenerative Tourism.' He emphasised that the partnership between the state and FHRAI will not only drive sustainable growth but also bolster Goa's positioning as a model for responsible tourism. Through focused initiatives in investment promotion, skill development, and experience diversification, Goa aims to set new benchmarks in India's evolving tourism landscape. ■



Delink F&B, regularise past GST dues

FHRAI raised key concerns including F&B de-linking and demand notices issued over interpretational gaps.

In an exclusive meeting with the Union Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman**, FHRAI drew attention to the im-

pacts of the new GST rate slabs and called for a fair and simpler tax framework.



Fairer GST framework

In a meeting with Ministry of Finance, FHRAI pushed for a fairer GST framework that create a more equitable and market-responsive tax environment.



FHRAI had a meeting with the Ministry of Finance, highlighting various challenges that are impacting the hospitality industry.

Delinking of GST of F&B charges from room tariffs: The current GST system links restaurant tax rates to hotel room tariffs. Restaurants in hotels charging more than ₹7,500 per night are taxed at 18 per cent with Input Tax Credit (ITC), while those below this tariff are taxed at 5 per cent without ITC. This linkage creates unnecessary complexity, distorts pricing, and discourages tariff revisions during periods of high demand. Many hotels are forced to maintain lower tariffs to avoid pushing their restaurants into the higher GST bracket, which reduces both profitability and tax revenue.

Allowing all hotel-based restaurants to independently choose between 18 per cent GST with ITC or 5 per cent without ITC would create fairness and flexibility. Such a structure would let hotels adjust room prices according to market demand without affecting restaurant taxation. About one-third of new developments in the sector are taking place in the upscale and luxury segments, meaning most would remain under the 18 per cent bracket even after delinking. At the same time, mid-segment hotels would gain the flexibility to revise tariffs during peak seasons, leading to a potential increase of more than ₹4,074 crore in annual GST collections.

Issue of demand notices for past GST dues: The issue of pending GST demand notices also continues to affect hotels across the country.



Many of these disputes stem from interpretational differences rather than non-compliance. Ambiguities over “declared tariff” versus “transaction value” and the classification of “specified premises” have led to multiple cases of misinterpretation. Online travel agencies often display inflated rates that include commissions, even though the hotel receives a lower amount within the exempted range. This discrepancy has led to inflated demand notices and prolonged disputes.

Restoration of ITC: Another major concern is the withdrawal of ITC following the reduction of GST on rooms priced below ₹7,500 from 12 per cent to 5 per cent. While this change aimed to enhance affordability, it disrupted the seamless credit mechanism that underpins GST. Without ITC, hotels cannot claim credit for input taxes paid on rent, maintenance, utilities, and supplies, increasing their cost burden. Smaller establishments are the hardest hit.

Allowing all hotel-based restaurants to choose between 18% GST with ITC or 5% without ITC would create fairness

Restoring ITC, even under the 5 per cent rate, would encourage reinvestment in the hospitality industry. Recognising hotel rooms as “plant and machinery” for ITC eligibility would further reflect the capital-intensive nature of the industry. Revising the room tariff threshold from ₹7,500 to ₹12,500 is also necessary, considering inflation and currency depreciation since 2017. The current threshold no longer represents the actual market conditions or the spending capacity of domestic and international travellers. □

Ease GST compliance burden

A delegation from FHRAI met **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat**, submitting a detailed set of recommendations to alleviate the GST burden for hospitality.



DDP Bureau

A representation group from FHRAI, led by **Surrendra K Jaiswal**, met **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat**, Union Minister of Tourism and Culture, to further advance discussions on the industry's long-pending GST concerns. The industry continues to struggle with the linkage of F&B rates to room tariffs and frequent shifts in GST applicability between 'Value of Services Received' and 'Declared Tariff,' leading to major compliance challenges. Under the current norms, hotels are required to levy 18 per cent GST on all F&B services because one room in the property is priced above ₹7,500 at any time during the year — a provision that has long burdened businesses across categories.

Continuing its discussions with the Union Tourism Minister, the

association further highlighted the persistent ambiguity in the definition of 'Specified Premises,' which continues to create confusion and uncertainty over the applicable GST rate on F&B services. It pointed out that the absence of a clear definition for a 'Unit of Accommodation' has led to varying interpretations across states, adding to the sector's compliance burden.

While the 55th GST Council meeting brought some relief by introducing an opt-in/opt-out provision, the association stressed that past ambiguities remain unresolved. The demand notices issued to hotels, it added, stem not from tax evasion but from prolonged inconsistencies and interpretation issues within the evolving GST framework.

The delegation highlighted that Section 11A of the CGST Act, 2017, was designed to address cases arising from confusion rather than evasion, and urged the government to invoke

The absence of a clear definition for a 'Unit of Accommodation' has led to varying interpretations across states

it for the sector's relief. The association shared a detailed set of recommendations — excluding cases from tax liability where no services were provided such as guest no-shows or unpaid bookings, and issuing a clarificatory note to resolve disputes stemming from the confusion over 'specified premises.' Further, the association requested that all past GST dues from prolonged ambiguities be regularised under Section 11A on an 'as-is basis.' □





FHRAI holds Executive Committee meeting

FHRAI Executive Committee meeting was successfully organised in Lucknow, followed by a visit to the Ram Mandir Ayodhya.



DDP Bureau

A meeting of the FHRAI Executive Committee was successfully held on 27 October at Lucknow-based Hotel Ramada Plaza by Wyndham.

On 26 October, a welcome cocktail dinner was organised for the members. After the meeting, the EC members and their spouses made a divine visit to the Ram Mandir Ayodhya, hosted by the newly elected FHRAI President Surendra Kumar Jaiswal. □





Redefining vendor partnerships for long-term growth

FHRAI's Vendors Programme aims to bridge the gap between its members and vendors and establish a more efficient and mutually beneficial ecosystem.



DDP Bureau

Recognising the growing need for reliable, cost-effective, and quality-driven vendor partnerships across all segments of hospitality, FHRAI has launched the "Preferred Vendors Programme" as a strategic platform. This initiative connects industry suppliers and service providers with hotels, restaurants, and allied establishments across the country.

Key objectives

The programme facilitates trusted partnerships between FHRAI members and credible vendors across key categories such as F&B supplies,

Vendors will gain direct exposure to FHRAI's nationwide network of hotels and restaurants



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equipment, technology, furnishings, utilities, and professional services. It enables cost savings for members through specially discounted rates and negotiated value packages offered by enrolled vendors.

It also provides market access and brand visibility to vendors through FHRAI's expansive network and communication platforms. In addition, it promotes standardisation and quality assurance within the hospi-

tality supply chain by listing only verified and reputed vendors.

Furthermore, the initiative strengthens industry collaboration and creates a mutually beneficial ecosystem for sustainable growth.

Benefits for vendors

Vendors will benefit from inclusion in the FHRAI Preferred Vendors Directory and enrolment as an Associate Member of FHRAI and its Regional Associations, which comes with various allied benefits. They will gain direct exposure to FHRAI's nationwide network of hotels and restaurants and receive recognition as an FHRAI-endorsed partner within the hospitality industry. Vendors will have their logo prominently displayed on the FHRAI website.

They can enjoy extensive branding and promotion through FHRAI's flagship events and participate in networking events and exhibitions. Lastly, vendors will receive additional promotion through FHRAI's website, social media channels, and publications. □



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FHRAI appeals Delhi HC order on Property Tax Assessment

The association sought the Delhi High Court's attention to revoke the Unit Area Method as it makes the hospitality sector less competitive.



DDP Bureau

FHRAI has filed a Letter Patent Appeal (LPA) before the Delhi High Court challenging the recent judgment that upheld the Unit Area Method for assessing property tax under the Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Act, 2003.

The association argued that the current system places an excessive financial burden on hotels already grappling with rising operational expenses, wage pressures, and a slow post-pandemic recovery. The increased tax outflow, it stated, further strains liquidity, limits reinvest-

ment in infrastructure, and hampers overall business sustainability in an industry that is both capital- and labour-intensive.

The court, while disposing of the petitions on 12 September held that the recommendations of the MVC and their adoption by the MCD were in conformity with the statutory process under Sections 116A to 116C of the DMC Act, and therefore valid.

Following the judgment, FHRAI filed an LPA on 30 October, seeking reconsideration of the ruling. The association maintains that the

current structure undermines the competitiveness of Delhi's hospitality sector ❑



Service Charge appeal listed for hearing before the Delhi High Court

FHRAI has approached the Division Bench of the Delhi High Court on the service charge issue, emphasising that it is critical for employee welfare in hospitality.



DDP Bureau

FHRAI has filed a Letter Patent Appeal (LPA No. 277 of 2025) before the Division Bench of the Delhi High Court, challenging the Delhi High Court's judgment regarding service charge regulation, originally decided on 28 March. The case pertains to the Central Consumer Protection Authority's (CCPA) guidelines prohibiting hotels and restaurants from levying service charges. The appellants have argued that service charge is a globally recognised practice forming part of the contractual understanding between establishments and guests, and that

it plays a crucial role in supporting employee welfare across the hospitality industry. While the Delhi High Court upheld the government's position, FHRAI has approached the Division Bench of the Delhi High Court seeking relief and clarity on the issue. The matter was last listed on 22

September but was adjourned due to paucity of time. ❑



A dedicated redressal cell for members

To empower its members, FHRAI has established a “Member Support & Redressal Cell” to fairly address issues impeding their business operations.



DDP Bureau

FHRAI recently launched a “Member Support & Redressal Cell” to assist the members in resolving their complaints, queries, and issues related to legal, regulatory, and operational matters affecting their day-to-day business activities.

Under this novel initiative, the association said that queries or issues not requiring reference to a government authority will be addressed and responded to within three working days. Besides, matters requiring government clarification or intervention will be appropriately escalated by

FHRAI to the concerned department or authority, and updates will be shared with the member.

This initiative reinforces FHRAI’s commitment to being a responsive and supportive partner to its members, ensuring that their member voices are heard and their concerns are resolved efficiently.

Members can send

their concerns or queries to redressal@fhrai.com for review and necessary action. □





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A catalyst for positive change

Championing in-depth research, policy studies, and collaborations, FHRAI CERTH serves as a strategic think tank to mould India's hospitality future.



DDP Bureau

With a bold vision to revolutionise India's hospitality and tourism landscape through research, innovation, and policy advocacy, FHRAI established its Centre of Excellence for Research in Tourism and Hospitality (CERTH). Since its inception, CERTH has been a guiding force, providing valuable direction and encouragement to relevant stakeholders across the hospitality spectrum.

The association noted, "The hospitality industry needs data-driven insight, evidence-based policymaking, and a forum where ideas can translate into actionable solutions."

Think tank for India's hospitality

FHRAI CERTH is envisioned as a national resource hub for policy, research, and capacity building. Its mission is to empower the hospitality and tourism sector through:

- Cutting-edge research on trends, challenges, and opportunities in hospitality
- Evidence-based insights to support policymakers and reforms

- Skill development and training programmes to help bridge workforce gaps
- Collaborations with academia, government, and industry to drive sustainable growth
- Promotion of global best practices to enhance India's competitiveness in the global tourism economy

Transformative role

Within a short span, CERTH has produced several influential reports and studies that have started to reshape conversations in the hospitality ecosystem. To sustain its research momentum, CERTH works closely with the Ministry of Tourism and other government bodies. The centre proposed further collaboration with the Ministry to jointly address industry challenges, co-develop policy frameworks, and create tools that strengthen both regulatory and business environments.

Besides, CERTH recently participated in the India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council (SPC) framework, contributing insights on hospitality training exchanges, sustainable tourism initiatives, and cultural cooperation.

"The hospitality industry needs data-driven insight, evidence-based policymaking, and a forum where ideas can translate into actionable solutions."

CERTH also participated in a high-level meeting organised by the Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour & Employment, to discuss the rollout of the Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) scheme. Through its outreach efforts, CERTH is actively encouraging hospitality to adopt the scheme, helping formalise workforce structures and enhance job security.

From policy studies and workforce development to sustainability frameworks and international cooperation, CERTH is not just documenting India's hospitality evolution — it is helping to design its future. ■

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The economics of the culinary world

Organised by FHRAI-IHM, a workshop on “Culinary Economics” led by **Chef YB Mathur** highlighted the applications and benefits of culinary economics.



DDP Bureau

The FHRAI Institute of Hospitality Management (FHRAI-IHM), Greater Noida, organised an intensive workshop on “Culinary Economics” on 9–10 October. Culinary Economics is a key multidisciplinary treatise written by **Chef YB Mathur**, retired Senior Executive Chef, ITC Hotels.

The book explored a structured framework of objective-led systems, protocols, benchmarks, culinary analytics, and econometrics — guiding food professionals to attain higher revenue and increased profitability. Culinary Economics is now a recog-

nised academic discipline, and the book is a bestseller

The event was attended by senior Hospitality Management students, FHRAI-IHM faculty members, and invited chefs and F&B specialists from three prominent hotels, including Hotel Radisson Blu, Hotel Crowne Plaza, and Hotel ExpoInn Suites and Convention.

Key insights

The workshop, led by **Chef Mathur**, discussed why thousands of food and beverage businesses close within their first year of operation despite strong concepts, substantial capital investment, and skilled professionals. He highlighted that the lack

of understanding of fundamental economic principles is the cause of business failures. Chef Mathur exhorted that culinary businesses, along with their related ecosystems, need to adopt new benchmarks, standards, and statutory provisions into their operations.

Besides, the workshop delved into the unique challenges of a culinary business and examined the Indian food and beverage landscape. It highlighted the importance of maintaining healthy relationships with raw material suppliers to ensure cost-effectiveness.

Training on cost management

The workshop provided training that



CHEF YB MATHUR

Retired Senior Executive Chef
ITC Hotels

combined practical culinary skills — such as food preparation, demonstration, transformation, and a customer-focused approach — with financial expertise to steadily increase profitability as the ultimate goal.

The workshop also trained participants in initiating standard recipes, maximising yield through management, and outlining the essentials of dynamic marketing promises, menu analytics, and menu engineering. Furthermore, the chef guided participants in integrating the five standard cost control tools.

Major benefits

The knowledge and practice of culinary economic principles can help reduce costs, increase profitability, and enhance the innovative capabilities of culinary businesses. This knowledge is crucial in building and maintaining

The knowledge of culinary economic principles can help reduce costs and increase profitability

customer trust. In addition, it can improve customer-centric relationships and boost the confidence of the sales and marketing team in terms of product and service quality.

Professionals with higher financial literacy are better equipped in navigating any challenges and disruptions more effectively. In addition, they are empowered to make well-informed economic decisions.

AK Singh, Director, FHRAI-IHM, expressed his sincere gratitude to FHRAI, Chef YB Mathur, the hotels that deputed their chefs and F&B experts, and faculty members under the guidance of Rishabh Mishra, Senior Lecturer. He also thanked the administrative and support staff, along with the enthusiastic students, for making the event educational and memorable.

Singh assured that the institute will continue to foster industry-academia collaborations through targeted training programmes, for the benefit of all stakeholders, under the guidance of FHRAI.

The workshop concluded with the presentation of the “Certificate of Participation” to industry representatives, faculty members, and students at the institute who took part in the workshop. □



HRANI Delegation Meets Delhi Minister of Industries, Food & Supplies and Environment, Forest & Wildlife

A delegation from the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Northern India (HRANI), comprising **Surendra Kumar Jaiswal**, President, FHRAI; **Renu Thapliyal**, Secretary General, HRANI; **Vinod Gulati**, Hony. Jt. Secretary; along with Managing Committee Members **Meena Bhatia**, Vice President & General Manager, Le Meridien; **Virendra Teotia**, Director, Umrao Hotels & Resorts; and **Pranay Aneja**, Managing Director, LA Hotels and Retreats; & industry stakeholders, **Puneet Kumar**, Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel, Delhi Airport; **Puneet Nagia & BB Gupta**, Eros Hotel, Nehru Place; among others, recently met Sh. **Sardar Manjinder Singh Sirsa**, Hon'ble Minister of Industries, Food & Supplies and Environment, Forest & Wildlife, Government of NCT of Delhi, to discuss key issues impacting the hospitality sector.

HThe meeting primarily focused on the rationalisation of consent fees for hotels and restaurants in Delhi. The delegation expressed serious apprehensions regarding the consent fee structure adopted by the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), which presently classifies hotels and restaurants alongside industries for the purpose of levying consent fees.

It was highlighted that the current fee structure — calculated on the basis of land and capital cost, results in exorbitant charges, undermining the financial viability of hospitality

that the pollution load of hotels and restaurants is significantly lower than that of hospitals or industries, as their effluents are largely domestic in nature. The delegation also pointed out the wide disparity between the consent fees applicable to hotels/restaurants vis-a-vis hospitals/nursing homes within Delhi.

Another key concern raised was the recent directive mandating the installation and operation of anti-smog guns in hotels during fixed timings (6:30-9:30 AM, 5:30-8:30 PM, and 1:30-4:30 AM). While reaffirming the industry's commitment to sustain-

able practices and cleaner air, HRANI underscored that the application of this order to hotels is impractical and disproportionate, as hotels are neither major dust generators nor industrial sources of air pollution. The Association requested that the order be withdrawn, kept in abeyance, or suitably modified in its application to the hospitality sector.

The Hon'ble Minister gave a patient and positive hearing to the delegation's concerns and assured that the matter would be escalated to the concerned department for appropriate consideration. □



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Celebrating 75-year legacy of hospitality leadership

HRAWI marked its Platinum Jubilee at the 20th Regional Convention, uniting industry leaders and policymakers to shape India's hospitality future.



HRAWI commemorated its 75th anniversary with the 20th Regional Convention, held on 8 and 9 October 2025, at the Taj Lands End in Mumbai. The Platinum Jubilee edition of the convention drew participation from distinguished policymakers, global hospitality leaders to tourism visionaries who came together to discuss the future of the Indian hospitality industry and the roles and responsibilities in shaping Viksit Bharat 2047.

The inaugural session was graced by an esteemed line up of dignitaries including **Dr Shashi Tharoor**, Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha and Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs; **Mohamed Farouk**, Regional Director (Western & Central Region), India Tourism, Mumbai, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; **Neelesh Gatne** (IAS), Managing Director, Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC); and **Surendra Kumar Jaiswal**, President, Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI). Dr Tharoor, Chief Guest at the conven-

tion, captivated the audience with a keynote that positioned tourism and hospitality as “mirrors of a nation’s soul.” Underscoring India’s Viksit Bharat 2047 vision, Dr Tharoor called for decisive movement on three foundational pillars — image, infrastructure, and immigration. He added, “This sector is a powerful engine of employment and soft power and must be treated as a national priority.”

Elaborating on the future priorities, Farouk said, “In alignment with the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, the Ministry of Tourism is committed to developing 50 benchmark destina-





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tions, implementing a robust Destination Management framework, and actively facilitating investments in hotels and infrastructure to position India as a leading global tourism destination.”

In-depth insight

On day 2, the convention began with a session on “75 Years of Indian Hospitality — The Evolution” by **Vijay Thacker**, Managing Director, Horwath HTL India. The session provided a strategic overview of the industry’s transformative journey, setting the stage for the day’s forward-looking dialogues.

This was followed by a session on “Mixed-Use Development: Hospitality’s New Frontier” moderated by Thacker, featuring **Suma Venkatesh**, Executive VP, IHCL; **Raghu Sapra**, Head of Hospitality, Embassy; and **Sanjay Sethi**, CEO & MD, Chalet Hotels Limited as panellists. The discussion revolved around integrated developments redefining hospitality and tourism infrastructure across India.

In addition, a parallel luncheon session delved into the transforma-

“This sector is a powerful engine of employment and soft power and must be treated as a national priority.”

tive role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in hospitality, focusing on enhancing both cybersecurity and operational productivity. Leading the discussion, **Rajesh Chopra**, Head, Hospitality Business Vertical, Ingram Micro, outlined the current trends and future trajectory of AI. He was joined by AI specialists **Zeba Merchant**, Microsoft Product Specialist, Ingram Micro; and **Tapan Chaturvedi**, Channel Head for India and South East Asia, Adobe; who detailed the specific capabilities of their respective platforms tailored for the hospitality sector. Another session on “Master Franchising: Scaling Hospitality the Smarter Way” was moder-

ated by **Megha Agarwal**, Partner, Khaitan & Co. Panellists included **Abinash Ashok**, VP, Hotel Operations & Development, Choice Hospitality, Suba Hotels; **Akhil Gupta**, CBO, Treebo Hotels; **Chetan Arora**, Director, IHOP; and **Dheeraj Gupta**, Founder & MD, Jumboking, who discussed franchising strategies that drive scale and efficiency.

Moderated by **Bibhor Srivastava**, MD, Events, ITP Media, “Home-grown & Growing: India’s Emerging Hospitality Brands” session highlighted the evolution and growth of brands rooted in India’s diverse hospitality ethos. The final session on “From Old World Charm to New Age Cuisine,” moderated by **Dr Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Jt. Managing Director, Pritam Group of Hotels, explored how India’s culinary heritage is evolving to meet global expectations.

Recognising excellence

The convention culminated in a glittering Awards and Felicitation Ceremony, celebrating 75 years of HRAWI’s leadership and contribution to India’s hospitality growth



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story. The highlight of the evening was the felicitation of HRAWI's Past Presidents, presented by renowned actor **Boman Irani**, who served as the Chief Guest for the occasion.

Among those honoured were late **AP Sabavala**, late **Rustom Masani**, late **DRD Tata**, late **Maneck S Shaw**, **Dr Ajit B Kerkar**, late **Manmohan Singh Bedi**, late **Pesi M Shaw**, **Dinesh Khanna**, **Suresh M Talera**, **Kamlesh Barot**, and **Pradeep Shetty**.

Dr Ajit B Kerkar, President of Honour, and **Vivek Nair**, Member of Honour, were presented with the Lifetime Achievement Awards in

recognition and honour of their extraordinary contributions to the hospitality industry.

Positive outcome

The 20th Regional Convention was successfully organised under the guidance of the HRAWI Convention Organising Committee chaired by **DS Advani**, with **Chetan Mehta** as Co-Chairman.

The committee comprised **Dr Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, **Gurbir Singh Bedi**, **Mohd. Nayeem Sait**, and **Rishi Mehra**. Their collective efforts, along with the support of the HRAWI Executive Committee and



Secretariat, ensured the convention's resounding success.

"This milestone convention is not just a celebration of HRAWI's 75-year legacy but also a reaffirmation of our commitment to shaping the future of Indian hospitality. From being the country's first hospitality association to growing into one of its strongest industry voices, our journey has been defined by resilience, innovation, and unity," noted **Jimmy Shaw**, President, HRAWI, adding "We share the Government's vision of *Viksit Bharat 2047* and stand ready to partner in this growth story." □

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Members unite at SIHRA's 74th Annual General Meeting

SIHRA organised its 74th Annual General Meeting in Chennai, where over 100 members attended the event.




DDP Bureau

The SIHRA 74th Annual General Meeting was successfully held at the Feathers Hotel in

Chennai on 30 September. The event brought together more than 100 members from across the hospitality industry.

Attendees had the opportunity to engage in insightful discussions

with the SIHRA President and the Executive Committee. The meeting reaffirmed SIHRA's commitment to fostering continuous improvement, growth, and excellence within the hospitality sector. 



Sundar Singaram attends SKAL Coimbatore as Guest of Honour

SIHRA Director of Operations graced the oath-taking ceremony of the newly appointed President of SKAL International Coimbatore.



DDP Bureau

Sundar Singaram, Director of Operations at SIHRA, was invited by SKAL International Coimbatore to grace the swearing-in ceremony of its newly appointed President, **Ramesh Chandrakumar**, who is also a distinguished member of SIHRA.

Singaram attended the event as the Guest of Honour. The event was a grand affair, reflecting the vibrant hospitality culture of the region. It



witnessed a huge gathering of prominent hoteliers and hospitality indus-

try leaders from Coimbatore and the surrounding areas. 



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Over 50 hoteliers join Hoteliers' Interaction Meeting

At the Hoteliers' Interaction Meeting, Sundar Singaram updated about SIHRA's various initiatives aimed at strengthening support for its members.



DDP Bureau

SIHRA recently organised "Hoteliers' Interaction Meeting" at Lilac Hotel, Kumbakonam. The event witnessed the participation of over 50 hoteliers, who actively engaged with Sundar Singaram.

During the meeting, Singaram outlined SIHRA's various activities, focusing on the support services provided to its members. Key services discussed included the TTE and KTM initiatives, aimed at enhancing operational efficiency and industry collaborations among hoteliers. The interactive session provided a valuable platform for sharing insights and addressing industry concerns. □



Thiru R Rajendran, Tourism Minister, Tamil Nadu, was greeted by **Sundar Singaram**, Director of Operations, SIHRA.

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New routes boost Goa's tourism footprints

Rohan A Khaunte discusses how Goa is reinventing its tourism story, blending ease of doing business with sustainable hospitality.



Lipla Negi

What are the steps taken by the government to make Goa more hospitality-friendly, including industry status, fiscal incentives, and faster clearances for hotel development?

The Government of Goa is committed to strengthening the state's hospitality ecosystem through policy support, streamlined systems, and on-ground facilitation. To encourage investment in quality accommodation, the state has introduced faster clearances for hotel development through a dedicated single-window mechanism, ensuring ease of doing business and reducing procedural delays. As part of our Ease of Doing

Business initiative, we have reduced documentation requirements for hotel registration from 10 documents to just 2, which can now be submitted online through the Goa Online portal. On the service side, visitor safety and assistance are being enhanced through the 1364 Tourism Helpline and the Beach Vigil App, enabling prompt response, coordinated support, and an improved experience for travellers.

Our vision is anchored in regenerative tourism, encouraging responsible development that benefits local communities, protects natural assets, and elevates cultural experiences. This approach ensures that hospitality growth goes hand-in-hand with community welfare and environmental stewardship.



ROHAN A KHAUNTE

Minister for Tourism
Government of Goa

Are there policies in place to encourage eco-resorts, non-plastic



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Hotel registration has been simplified, with only two documents now, which can be submitted easily through the Goa Online portal

operations, and green certifications for hotels?

Homestay and Bed & Breakfast Scheme, empowers Goan families to host guests in their own homes. This helps showcase our culture, cuisine, and everyday living while creating new livelihood opportunities, particularly in the hinterland. By enabling communities to directly participate in tourism, the policy supports our vision of regenerative tourism.

In addition, the department is facilitating the development of private eco-resorts that follow responsible best practices. Projects such as the Taj eco-resort, along with the upcoming Goa Tourism eco-resort at Anjunem Keri, strengthen our sustainable tourism portfolio and provide nature-based experiences.

We are also enhancing stays within natural surroundings through government properties such as Bondla Sylvan Cottages by Goa Forest Development Corporation and Farmagudi Residency Hill Retreat, which offer immersive, quiet stays in green landscapes. Alongside this, we continue to encourage tourism to reduce their dependence on single-use plastics and work towards W recognised green standards. These steps complement our broader commitment to responsible, community-centred tourism development.

How is the state evolving its tourism narrative beyond leisure — towards wellness, culture, and authentic local experiences?

We are consciously repositioning Goa as a destination that offers

depth and diversity. While leisure remains a strong pillar, our focus has widened to celebrate wellness, spirituality, heritage, and immersive community-based experiences.

Initiatives such as spiritual tourism circuits like Ekadasha Teertha, heritage precinct development, nature and hinterland trails, and culinary mapping are helping travellers engage more meaningfully with Goa's identity. Local festivals, craft clusters, and traditional performing arts are being promoted to ensure that cultural narratives are preserved and shared with the world.

This approach aligns with our regenerative tourism model, which encourages tourism that supports community prosperity, protects ecology, and enhances visitor understanding. What we are building is not just tourism growth but a thoughtful journey where travellers return with a deeper appreciation of Goa's spirit.

With connectivity emerging as a key growth driver, how is Goa partnering with airlines and global travel networks?

Connectivity remains the backbone of tourism, and we are actively engaging with domestic and international carriers to expand route networks, introduce new charter opportunities, and streamline seasonal operations. Goa has strengthened its presence in newer destinations such as Ekaterinburg, Kazakhstan, Novosibirsk, and Moscow, resulting in 34 charter flights from Russia and Central Asia in October 2025 alone. Further, TUI Airways has commenced direct charter services from Manchester and London Gatwick, enhancing access for travellers from the United Kingdom. We are also working to deepen our presence in emerging markets across Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and other regions, broadening global interest in Goa. ■



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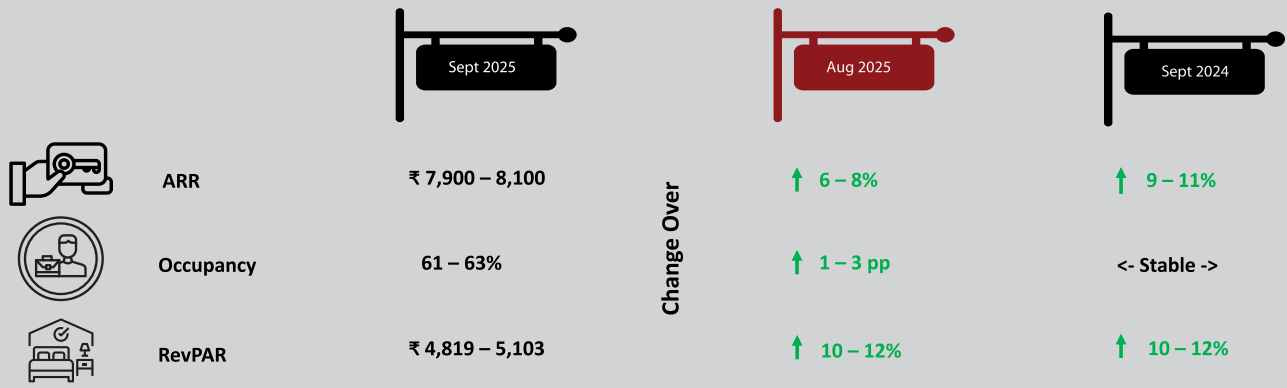
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Source: HVS ANAROCK Research; Data for Calendar Year
Cover Image Courtesy: La Estoria, Goa - IHCL SeleQtions

Bengaluru leads with double-digit growth in ARR's

India's hotel sector delivered strong results in September, with ARR's ranging from ₹7,900 to ₹8,100 and occupancy remaining stable at 61–63%.

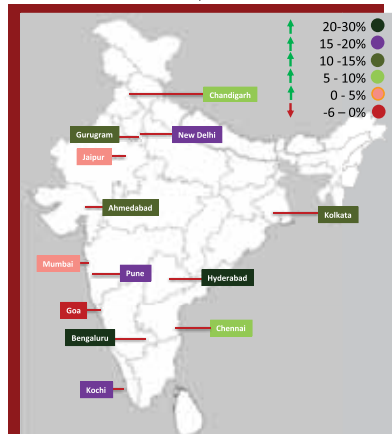


DDP Bureau

According to the HVS Anarock's October report, the Indian hospitality industry recorded a healthy performance in September, with continued growth in average room rates (ARRs) and stable occupancies. The sector saw a strong growth as demand from

ARR Trends Across Key Indian Markets

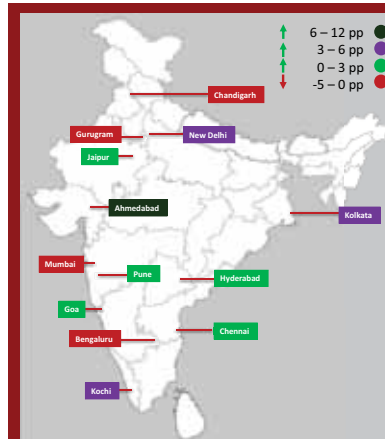
(Year - on - Year Growth: September 2025)



Source: HVS ANAROCK Research; Data for Calendar Year

Occupancy Trends Across Key Indian Markets

(Year - on - Year Growth: September 2025)



Source: HVS ANAROCK Research; Data for Calendar Year; pp - percentage points

corporate travel and MICE segments gained momentum.

ARR trends

In September, the ARR ranged between ₹7,900 and ₹8,100, continuing its upward trajectory with several markets experiencing double-digit growth. Bengaluru and Hyderabad emerged as the top performers, reg-

The sector saw a strong growth as demand from corporate travel and MICE segments gained momentum

istering year-on-year (Y-o-Y) growth of 25–27 per cent and 2123 percent, respectively. In contrast, Goa was the only market to experience a dip in average rates.

Occupancy trends

Occupancy levels held firm at 61 to 63 per cent at the national level. It recorded a slight Y-o-Y improvement, reflecting steady performance despite ongoing regional variations. Ahmedabad saw the highest growth in occupancy rates. This increase was likely driven by a surge in trade shows, sectoral expos, and national conferences, along with corporate activity at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT-City). □



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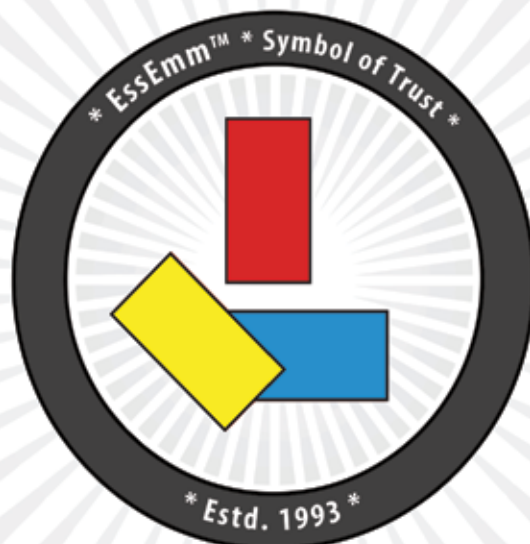
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2026-27



Industry expectations ahead of Union Budget 2026-27

Prior to Union Budget 2026-27, the industry strongly presses to address a long-awaited industry status and ITC reinstatement to unlock growth opportunities.

Removal of ITC deters hotel investment: **HRAEI**



SUDESH PODDAR

President
HRAEI

“

Industry status will allow the sector to avail long-term funds under the RBI Infrastructure lending norms.”

The recent decision by the GST Council to simplify hotel room tariffs into two slabs of 5 per cent and 12 per cent is a good step. This will surely make hotels more affordable and boost demand in the tourism and hospitality sectors. However, the removal of Input Tax Credit (ITC) may deter hotel investment and expansion. Retaining ITC alongside the reduced rate would have been more beneficial for sustainable sectoral growth.

As we approach Budget 2026, one of the key and longstanding demands of the hospitality sector is industry status. This will allow the hospitality sector to avail long-term funds under the RBI Infrastructure lending norm

criteria to offer quality accommodation supply and in turn, stimulate higher global and domestic travel demand. Although industry status has been accorded to tourism and hospitality by many state governments, the incentives and privileges associated with an industry have not been conferred to the sector. The industry really needs for the Centre to step in and grant industry status to hospitality across the country and set up a corpus fund to incentivise all states to align their policies and set off any losses that may occur due to its implementation.

Another expectation is a dedicated infrastructure development allocation, particularly for tier II and tier III cities, which can further catalyse regional tourism. Improved road, rail, and air connectivity, along with upgraded civic amenities, will attract investments in budget and mid-scale hotels.

Finally, introducing single-window clearances for hotel projects will encourage new entrants and facilitate expansion. The hospitality industry interacts with more than a dozen departments at both central and state levels; simplifying these processes will enhance operational efficiency and investor confidence. □



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Preserve ITC benefits alongside GST cut: **HRANI**

“

One of the long-standing demands is the granting of industry status to the hospitality sector.”



GARISH OBEROI
Hon Treasurer
HRANI

The recent GST Council's decision to simplify hotel room tariffs into two slabs of 5 per cent and 12 per cent is a welcome step. Reducing the tax on rooms priced up to ₹7,500 to 5 per cent will make Indian hotels more affordable and attractive to both domestic and international travellers. This reform will directly boost tourism demand, increase occupancy, and encourage more spending across the hospitality value chain. However, the removal of Input Tax Credit (ITC) may deter hotel investment and expansion. Retaining ITC alongside the reduced rate would have been more beneficial for sustainable sectoral growth.

As we approach Budget 2026, there are high expectations from the hospitality industry. One of the long-standing demands is the granting of industry status to the hospitality sector. This recognition would enable hotels to access financing at par with other infrastructure sectors, regularise policies across states, and encourage long-term investments. The hospitality sector is a key pillar of tourism and employment generation, and formal industry recognition would empower it to contribute more effectively to India's long-term growth vision.

A dedicated infrastructure development allocation, particularly for tier II and tier III cities, can further catalyse regional tourism. Improved road, rail, and air connectivity, along with upgraded civic amenities, will attract investments in budget and mid-scale hotels. This will not only decentralise tourism from major metros but also create significant

job opportunities for youth in their home states — reducing migration and supporting inclusive growth.

Though the removal of police licensing is a progressive reform that simplifies business operations, boosts entrepreneurship, and improves the ease of doing business, further measures such as rationalising compliances and introducing single-window clearances for hotel projects will encourage new entrants and facilitate expansion. The hospitality industry interacts with more than a dozen departments at both central and state levels; simplifying these processes will enhance operational efficiency and investor confidence.

Overall, the budget should aim to make hospitality a driver of India's economic momentum. Savings on essentials may increase discretionary spending in leisure and travel, fuelling further growth. Addressing industry-specific concerns through fiscal incentives, infrastructure support, and policy reforms will ensure holistic progress, sustained investment, and global competitiveness — especially in segments like MICE, wellness, and spiritual tourism.

With the right policy push, India's hospitality sector can become a key enabler of the nation's vision for a developed economy by 2047. ▣



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Grant a comprehensive infrastructure status: HRAWI

“

The hospitality industry is tangled in a complex web of 35 to 100 licenses and permits.”



JIMMY SHAW

President
HRAWI

As the Union Budget 2026-27 approaches, all eyes are on the government's strategy to fuel India's next phase of economic growth. One sector that holds unparalleled, yet under-leveraged, potential is tourism and hospitality. For it to truly become the employment and GDP engine it is destined to be, the budget must address three critical, long-pending reforms.

First, the sector urgently needs comprehensive infrastructure status. The current policy, which restricts this status to large hotels in cities of over a million people, is myopic. It ignores the reality of India's tourism landscape, where heritage towns, spiritual centres, and emerging destinations, often in smaller cities, are the very heart of the industry. By lowering the project cost threshold to ₹10 crore and removing the population criteria, the government can unlock a flood of affordable, long-term funding. This is not just about building luxury hotels; it is about developing the budget and mid-market segments that form the backbone of a robust tourism ecosystem.

Second, we must implement Ease of Doing Business at the earliest. The hospitality industry is tangled in a complex web of 35 to 100 licenses and permits, a far cry from the single-digit requirements in global hubs like Singapore. This bureaucratic maze deters investment and stifles growth. The solution lies in establishing a genuine single window clearance system at both central and state levels, simplifying norms and introducing deemed approvals. A business-friendly environment is not a luxury; it is a prerequisite for competing on the global stage.

GST has become even more convoluted for the hospitality and food service industry than when it was launched and needs a thorough relook and overhaul involving dialogue with stakeholders. The department remains in denial of principle flaws, such as linking different services in an unprecedented manner, its stubborn refusal to accept inflation adjustments over several years, arbitrary definition of luxury without any basis, poor understanding

of the unique nature of accommodation services, and severe impacts from denial of ITC — all of which are all serious roadblocks and detrimental to our Hon. PM's Viksit Bharat 2047 vision. Unfortunately, these issues are having worse impacts on MSME business operating in tier II and III towns and cities.

The vision of a US\$ 3 trillion tourism economy and exceeding 100 million jobs across the formal and informal tourism-linked sectors is within reach. The upcoming budget presents a pivotal opportunity to provide the sector with the infrastructure recognition, operational ease and tax rationalisation it needs to finally take flight. For the sake of India's socio-economic transformation, we hope the government is listening. □



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Create a uniform GST structure: SIHRA

“

A progressive, tourism-focused budget will not only strengthen the hospitality ecosystem but also create ripple effects across allied sectors.”



K SYAMA RAJU

President
SIHRA

As we approach the Union Budget 2025-26, the hospitality industry remains optimistic that the Government will recognise its crucial role in driving India's economic growth, employment generation, and tourism-led development. The sector is not merely a service provider but a key contributor to GDP, foreign exchange earnings, and rural-urban economic integration.

The industry has demonstrated remarkable resilience post-pandemic, yet it continues to grapple with structural challenges — high taxation, limited access to institutional credit, and inadequate infrastructure support. A focused policy push and fiscal incentives from the government can unleash the full potential of this sector, aligning with the national vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Key expectations

Infrastructure and industry status: Hospitality should be accorded formal industry status across all states, enabling hotels and restaurants to access lower interest rates, utility tariffs, and financing benefits on par with other infrastructure sectors.

Rationalisation of GST: The sector seeks a rationalised and uniform GST structure — particularly by bringing restaurants and hotels into the 5 per cent slab under the input tax credit (ITC) regime and aligning room tariff slabs to make India more globally competitive.

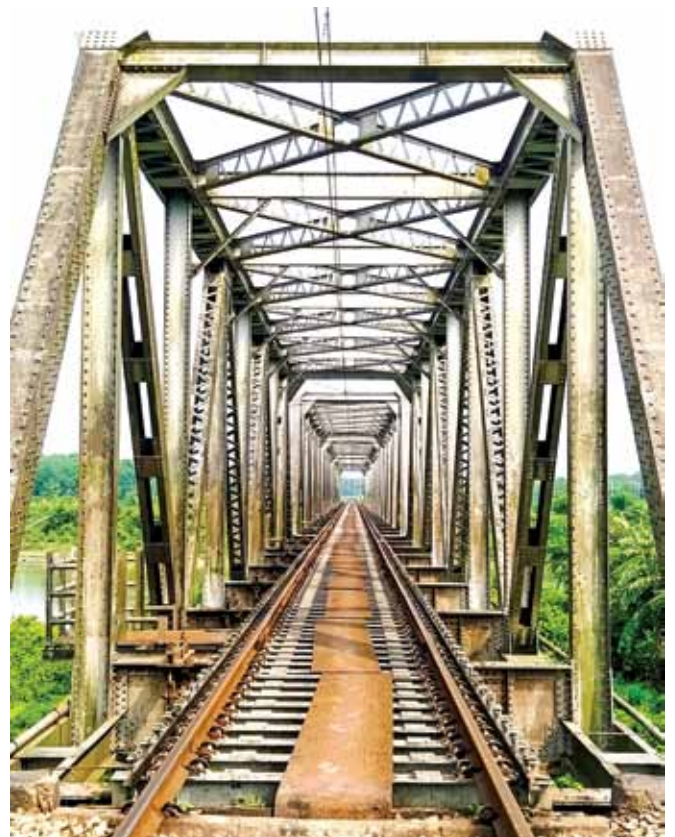
Tourism infrastructure development: Enhanced budgetary allocation for tourism circuits, heritage conservation, and destination development is essential. Support for tier II and tier III cities will help decentralise tourism and create new employment hubs.

Skill development and employment: The Government's Skill India mission should integrate tailored hospitality training modules, in partnership with industry associations such as SIHRA, to bridge the manpower gap and enhance service quality.

Ease of doing business: Simplification of licensing norms and creation of a single-window clearance system for hospitality establishments would significantly improve compliance efficiency and encourage new investments. **Incentives for sustainable operations:** The budget should introduce fiscal incentives for green buildings, renewable energy adoption, and waste management in hospitality enterprises to promote sustainability and align with India's climate goals.

A progressive, tourism-focused budget will not only strengthen the hospitality ecosystem but also create ripple effects across allied sectors — transport, agriculture, handicrafts, and services. We urge the government to view tourism and hospitality as a long-term economic multiplier and an instrument of inclusive growth.

With the proper policy support, India's hospitality industry is poised to be a global benchmark for sustainable growth and service excellence in the coming decade. ▣



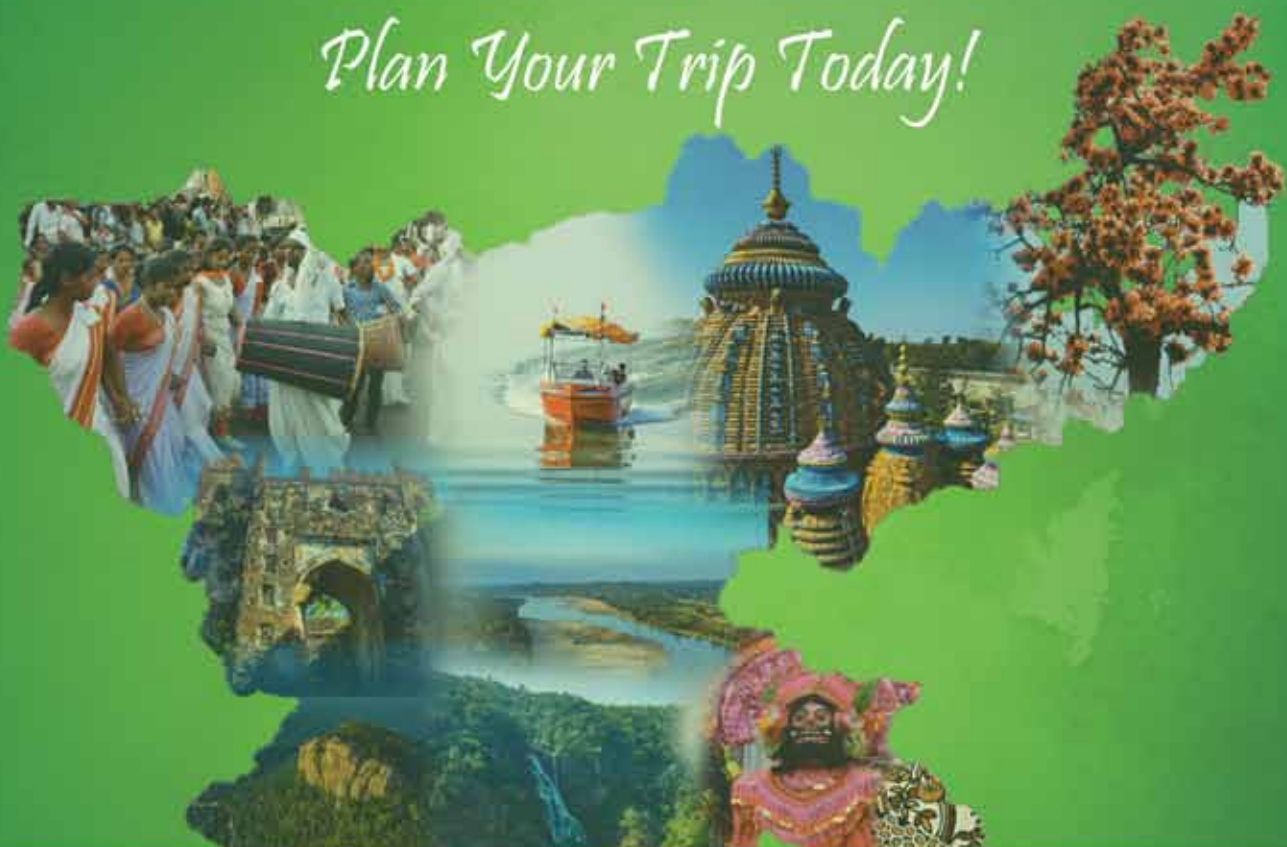


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Tapping into the millennial mindset

Chalet Hotels Limited eyes adding nearly 900 keys to its expanding portfolio with the launch of its new brand ATHIVA Hotels & Resorts.



Lipla Negi

Chalet Hotels Limited has unveiled its new hotel brand, ATHIVA, designed to capture the evolving preferences of modern travellers. The brand targets those who identify with the millennial and Gen Z mindset, guests who value flexibility, authenticity, and experience-led stays. Explaining the brand positioning, **Gaurav Singh**, Chief Operating Officer, Chalet Hotels Limited, said, "ATHIVA is not confined to a specific demographic bracket. It is for travellers who think and explore like today's Gen Zs and millennials. The brand's services and design philosophy are

tailored to meet the needs of this mindset that prioritises connection, creativity, and convenience."

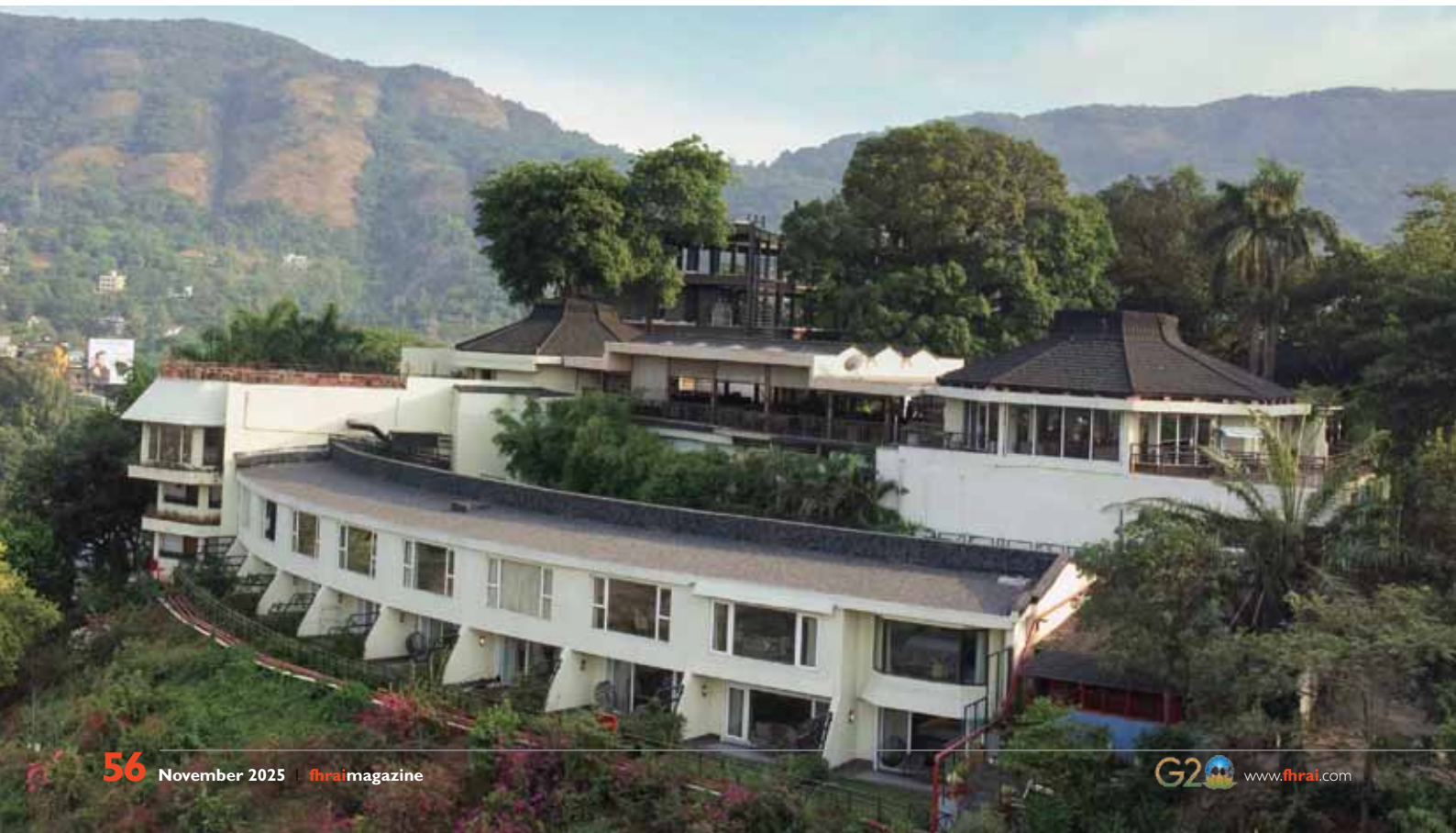
A part of the K Raheja Corp group, the Mumbai-headquartered company has already announced a portfolio of six Athiva properties, with three projects currently underway as greenfield developments. Together, these six hotels will add approximately 900 keys to the company's portfolio. "For now, the brand's expansion strategy remains focused on India, with no immediate plans to venture beyond national boundaries. Within the country, the team continues to evaluate prime locations for both hotels and resorts, identifying strategic opportunities to position Athiva in markets that align



GAURAV SINGH

Chief Operating Officer
Chalet Hotels Limited

awith its brand ethos and growth vision," he further informed.





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INSP20D	230VAC 50HZ	500	296x370x75mm	Inbuilt	275x350mm	Inbuilt	4.5Kg
INS2BRA	230VAC 50HZ	1000	800X400X100mm	Inbuilt	787X387mm	Inbuilt	9.700Kg
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Beyond metro cities

India's expanding travel map is opening possibilities well beyond the metros, and Chalet Hotels is tapping into this momentum with strategic intent. As Gaurav explained, the first six ATHIVA properties already reflect a diverse mix of locations, including destinations within drivable distance from major cities, such as the brand's debut in Khandala. The expansion strategy, however, is not defined by city tiers but by potential. "Since we own our assets, we also invest in the supporting infrastructure. What matters is the strength and suitability of the opportunity," he said.

While many hospitality players are leaning toward asset-light expansion, Singh focussed on how the brand is taking a deliberate, ownership-driven approach with its new brand. Of the six properties announced, three are greenfield projects currently under development.

"ATHIVA is not confined to a specific demographic bracket. It's for travellers who think and explore like today's Gen Zs and millennials"

Elaborating on the rationale, Singh said, "Chalet has a strong legacy and operational expertise built over more than 25 years. For now, the strategy is clear — ATHIVA hotels will be owned and operated by us."

He further said that as the brand evolves, they may explore partnerships, but the immediate priority is to strengthen the foundation through our own assets."

Growth inspires confidence

While domestic tourism continues to drive the hospitality sector's momentum, inbound travel is still on a gradual recovery path. Gaurav acknowledged that international arrivals have historically been cyclical, with fluctuations linked to global travel trends and economic conditions. He noted that both the central and state governments are actively working to strengthen tourism infrastructure and improve connectivity across destinations.

Despite the cyclical challenges of recent years, from the pandemic to economic slowdowns, the confidence in India's growth story continues to deepen. Gaurav observed that both domestic and international investors view India as a long-term opportunity rather than a short-term play. "The India story is just taking shape. Interest levels are high, and most investors see this as a market with sustainable potential," he noted. ▣

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Avartana turns one, launches Sunday Lunch Experience

Rooted in authenticity yet shaped by innovation, Avartana at ITC Maurya redefines Southern dining for today's discerning gourmand.



DDP Bureau

To mark its first anniversary, Avartana at ITC Maurya has launched Sunday Lunch Tasting Experience. Perched on the rooftop, the restaurant offers views of Delhi's ridge while presenting a nine-course tasting menu where age-old recipes meet contemporary craft.



As Avartana at ITC Maurya turns one, it celebrates its vision, where innovation, precision, and emotion come together on every plate. In just a year, this award-winning restaurant has redefined modern South Indian cuisine, transforming familiar flavours into refined expressions of artistry and intuition.

Culinary symphony

The Sunday Lunch Tasting Experience showcases the depth of South India's culinary heritage, inviting guests to savour bold flavours, intricate textures, and a sensory performance. The curated menu features French-Pressed Tomato Rasam, Stir-Fried Chicken, Cauliflower Crunch, and Uthukuli Chicken.

The artistry extends beyond the plate. Rustic earthenware, ornate steel cutlery, and contemporary glassware frame the culinary narrative, while open kitchens invite diners to witness gastronomy in motion.

Complementing the dining experience is Avishka, a curated cocktail menu inspired by South India's spice trails

Every element and gesture echoes the refined warmth and hospitality that define ITC Hotels.

Complementing this culinary symphony is **Avishka**, a collection of crafted cocktails inspired by South India's rich history and spice trails. Each concoction blends age-old ingredients with modern flair, paying homage to the region's rhythm, mysticism, and magic. With just 54 seats and an private dining room for ten, Avartana offers exclusivity with warmth and authenticity. ▣

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An amalgamation of comfort & luxury

At Premier Fine Linens, hotel linen is more than just fabric — it speaks volumes of hospitality standards, emphasising premium quality and guest comfort.



DDP Bureau

What sets Premier Fine Linens apart from other brands is its customer-centric approach — prioritising functionality, longevity, and comfort. As a subsidiary of the Premier Group, it has carved out a distinct identity by building on a rich textile legacy that dates back to 1945.

While thread counts may appear similar across brands, true quality lies in the details. **Shanthi Srinivasan**, Managing Director of Premier Fine Linens, shared, “The whiteness index of our hospitality bed linens ranks among the best in the market, and our products are engineered for superior laundry performance, delivering lasting value to hoteliers.” With an in-house R&D team and vertically integrated manu-

**SHANTHI SRINIVASAN**Managing Director
Premier Fine Linens

facturing, the brand controls every stage, from fiber selection to final finishing, ensuring consistent quality and innovation.

Setting new benchmarks

From fibre selection to final weave,

Premier Fine Linens ensures its products are crafted to deliver exceptional comfort and a sense of luxury. Built on two key pillars — guest comfort and value for hoteliers, its linens combine softness and elegance with long-lasting performance.

Diversification strategy


“Diversification drives our growth. We have expanded both category width and depth,” said Srinivasan. Beyond bed linen, the brand now offers a comprehensive range of products, including bath linen, F&B linen, mattress protectors, pillows, quilts, and more. To support this expansion, Premier Fine Linens has also scaled up its manufacturing capacities.

Changing trends

The hospitality industry is evolving rapidly, and so are client expectations. Today, customers demand shorter lead times without compro-



“The brand now offers a comprehensive range of products, including bath linen, F&B linen, and more.”

missing on quality. Recognising this shift, Srinivasan noted, “We have restructured our business model to be more agile and responsive, enabling us to deliver faster while maintaining our standards.” 

Going beyond the bounds

From exploring new markets to forging new partnerships, The Hotel-Spider team remains firm & committed to shaping India's hospitality in 2025 and beyond.



DDP Bureau

The Hotel-Spider team has been riding a wave of excitement and activity, making a mark across India's hospitality landscape in 2025. From vibrant Booking.com, Discover India events to energising industry gatherings like FHRAI in Bangalore and HRAWI in Mumbai, the company's made its presence felt in a meaningful manner.

Exploring diverse markets and forging valuable new connections, the experiences have powered the team's understanding of what Indian hoteliers need, helping them deliver tailored, reliable tech solutions.

Recently, the team gathered at Gurugram, where the enthusiasm for the upcoming season was palpable. United, energetic, and laser-focused, they are already gearing up to make 2026 a landmark year for Hotel-Spider and their hospitality partners.

Each interaction, partnership, and discovery is fuelling the Hotel-Spider team to remain a trusted ally for channel management and direct booking technology, ensuring every hotelier is ready to succeed now and in the future.

For more information,
Contact: +91 8929800252
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India's hotel demand to outpace supply through FY2028

ICRA projects that an 8–10% rise in hotel demand will drive premium occupancy to 74% and average room rates (ARRs) to ₹8,500 by FY2026.



DDP Bureau

According to rating agency-ICRA, the number of premium hotel rooms in India is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5–6 per cent from FY2025 to FY2028, based on the agency's inventory database.

In comparison, demand is expected to grow at a faster pace of 8–10 per cent. As a result, occupancies across premium hotels are projected to improve by 200 bps to 72–74 per cent, and average room rents (ARRs) to ₹8,200–₹8,500 in FY2026, 3–6 per cent higher over the previous year.

ICRA added that premium hotel key additions are democratised in this cycle, across tier I and tier II/III cities, given the increased acceptance of the latter among travellers, and space and land constraints in the former.

"India's annual premium hotel room inventory across 12 major cities crossed the 1 lakh mark in FY2023 and is slated to cross 1.2 lakh keys in the next fiscal. However, demand growth is expected to continue to outpace the supply addition, at least over the next three years," said Srikumar Krishnamurthy, Senior Vice President and Co-

Group Head, Corporate Ratings,
ICRA Limited.



Leave a positive trace not a carbon imprint

From govt-backed policies to ethical sourcing, industry leaders stressed the changing approach towards green tourism will help reap economic benefits.



DDP Bureau

Old-world luxury is characterised by marble, chandeliers, and air-conditioned spaces. Losing relevance in today's context, luxury hospitality is increasingly adapting to the new reality of facilitating sustainable and ethically responsible experiences. Moderating the session titled, "From footprint to fingerprint: Engineering sustainable hospitality that is

personal, profitable & planet-friendly," **Vikram Cotah**, Chief Executive Officer, GRT Hotels & Resorts, said, "The topic is about not only doing less harm to the planet earth but also how we can leave it a better place."

Sharing his company's commitment towards sustainable hospitality, Cotah explained that sustainability was initially embraced as an initiative but has evolved into a movement to eliminate plastic bottles across all their properties. He is of the belief that sustainability should not be seen

merely as a cost but as an investment that creates long-term value.

Tackling challenges

Today, the hospitality industry is experiencing a new surge of momentum towards sustainability and responsible tourism. Despite this positive shift, there is still a lack of a clear strategy for sustainable tourism in India. **Manoj Kumar**, IFS, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Principal Secretary to Government (Forest), FEE Dept,



Government of Karnataka, raised concerns about whether the government is adequately prepared in terms of policy and implementation. He also delved into the initiatives taken by the government and the steps that still need to be taken.

Kumar pointed out that while there has been significant progress in certain areas — such as water management, technology, energy innovation, and various initiatives for solid waste management — India is still in the early stages when it comes to construction materials. Although the country has developed its own Forest Stewardship Certification, it remains a challenge to obtain Forest Stewardship Agreement (FSA) certified materials. This poses difficulties in identifying whether the materials are sourced sustainably.

According to **Michael Dominic**, Managing Director and Co-promoter, CGH Earth, the industry needs a holistic ecosystem that prioritises environmental care. “It is not for tourism’s sake that we create a better environment; the entire population



deserves to live in a great environment.” He echoed the sentiments of one of the champions of responsible tourism, Harold Goodwin’s definition of responsible tourism — it is about making better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit.”

Dominic also talked about their efforts to achieve sustainability goals, against all odds. “One of our biggest sustainability experiments was at Spice Village in the early 2000s. It required an investment of nearly ₹2.5 crore to make the entire property run on solar energy. Despite the obstacles, we managed to meet about 80 percent of our energy needs through solar power. Due to adverse weather conditions, we could not reach 100 percent.” He stressed that the investment was worthwhile, despite the difficulties faced.

New narrative of luxury

Today, luxury is all about experiences that touch the soul. When you can create such experiences, it becomes the greatest form of luxury. **George Ramapuram**, Managing Director, Evolve Back, explained,

“We focus on experiences rather than just material comforts. It is not about providing the softest bed or the most comfortable rooms, the services and experiences we offer should be deeply meaningful. For instance, enjoying a candlelit dinner on a moonlit deck is far more luxurious than being inside a room with air-conditioned comfort.” Moreover, the construction costs for sustain-



MANOJ KUMAR

IFS, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Principal Secretary to Government (Forest), F&E Dept, Government of Karnataka





able resorts are significantly lower compared to other options. “By developing resorts that prioritise sustainability and focusing on creating unique experiences, we can charge more. This approach is the way forward for sustainability, regeneration, and leaving a meaningful footprint,” Ramapuram added.

Highlighting the paradox in luxury hospitality, **Sathya Prakash Varanashi**, Founder, Sathya Consultants, said that in high-end restaurants and hotels, bedsheets are

often discarded, not because they are worn out, but because they have been washed. This pursuit of perfection leads to unnecessary waste.

Varanashi advocates the theory of ‘living without’, a philosophy that he tries to embrace in life. “If you look at the dictionary meaning of luxury — it is defined as something which is basically attached, added, and not needed.” So, businesses must focus on experiences, which is the perfect luxury, and avoid indulging in lavish waste of resources.

Luxury hospitality is no longer about comfort but about experiences that touch the soul

Strategic investment

Sustainability is often not a key concern in discussions within the construction and investment sectors. **Davashish Srivastava**, Senior Director, Development, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group, stated, “In many meetings, sustainability features are mentioned briefly or ignored completely. This raises concerns, as sustainability is often considered costly. This is how the perception has been groomed in the industry.” He further stressed the importance of educating people about how investment in sustainable development projects can be profitable and encourage a long-term growth.

To truly embrace sustainability, hotels must align with its principles. It is not just about constructing a ho-



MICHAEL DOMINIC
Managing Director and
Co-promoter, CGH Earth



GEORGE RAMAPURAM
Managing Director
Evolve Back



**SATHYA PRAKASH
VARANASHI**

Founder, Sathya Consultants



DAVASHISH SRIVASTAVA

Senior Director of Development,
South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group



D SURESH

Associate Director - Market
Development, GBCI India

tel; it is about consistently living by those principles year after year. Srivastava asserted “While sustainability cannot be imposed, we can certainly advise, and encourage this mindset. We have aggressively been doing so for the benefit of everyone.”

Shifting approach

Earlier, only commercial develop-

ers discussed sustainable materials. Now, the hospitality sector has started engaging in conversations about materials and construction costs.

D Suresh, Associate Director, Market Development, GBCI India, emphasised, “This shift is encouraging us to not only focus on construction but also on how the hospitality industry can advance sustainability

in its operations and achieve net-zero goals.”

He further noted, “There is traction from a section of travellers who prefer to stay in environmentally responsible hotels. Besides, corporations are looking for green hotels that prioritise sustainability for their accommodations. This reflects a broader market interest.” □



Products & Services



◀ Sculptural showerhead

GRAFF has unveiled the wall-mounted version of the Riva Chandelier Shower. Inspired by the luminous silhouette of a contemporary chandelier, the new wall-mounted version retains the sculptural and luxurious character of the collection, while introducing added versatility and design potential. The new configuration offers endless customisation possibilities, adapting seamlessly to any interior style.

Classic elegance ▶

Perna Mohan Design Studio's hand-tufted accent chair is designed to add refined elegance and guest comfort to premium hotel interiors. Upholstered in a beige-gold floral fabric with a plush tufted backrest, it enhances the ambience of lobbies, suites, lounges, and guest rooms. The front legs feature carved detailing for a classic touch, while the rear legs are sleek for strong support and balance.



◀ Surreal design

Poltrona Frau has partnered with Argentine digital artist Six N Five (Ezequiel Pini) to create the Moonbeam table lamp. The table lamp creates the illusion of a solar eclipse. Poised above a flat rectangular base of natural brass, a slender disk — available in Pelle Frau® ColorSphere® Impact Less or in brass, partially overlaps a larger luminous disk in pearl white satin glass. ■



Brewing revenue

Turning conversations into currency, an artisanal coffee machine represents both a smart investment and a luxury experience, driving loyalty & long-term profitability.



Lipla Negi

Over the last few years, India has witnessed a remarkable evolution in coffee appreciation. Hospitality brands today are moving far beyond standard commercial blends; they want freshness, provenance, and craftsmanship. This shift is bringing two parallel trends into the mainstream — bean-to-cup convenience and artisan-driven brewing.

Bean-to-cup machines allow hotels to deliver consistency, speed, and high-quality extraction at scale, something that is essential for breakfast buffets, lounges, and banquets. At the same time, guests are increasingly curious about pour-overs, manual brewing, single-origin coffees, and personalised cups. This is where artisanal brewing becomes the differentiator, transforming coffee into an immersive, luxury experience.

Cutting-edge equipment

The innovation philosophy of Kaapi Solutions is rooted in the very idea of how technology should enhance flavour, not complicate it. The brand brings the world's most advanced coffee machines, grinders, and brewing systems to India, and also invests

deeply in calibration, training, and after-sales support to ensure that every machine performs at its best.

The equipment comes with smarter controls, automated workflows, and data-driven precision from temperature stability and milk texturing to extraction profiling. This empowers baristas and culinary teams to deliver consistency across hundreds of cups without losing the soul of the coffee.

What makes Kaapi unique

Kaapi Solutions' growth strategy focuses on strengthening regional service networks to ensure quick, reliable technical support for first-time operators; driving training-led growth through workshops and hands-on learning at the Kaapi Academy; and offering tailored equipment solutions designed for smaller formats and emerging markets.

As sustainability is becoming central to hospitality, Kaapi Solutions'



VIKRAM KHURANA

CEO

Kaapi Solutions

machines focus on energy efficiency, reduced wastage, and durability, enabling hotels to run high-performance beverage programmes while keeping operational costs in check. It is this balance of innovation, reliability, and flavour-first engineering that sets Kaapi Solutions apart. □

Kaapi Solutions serve the perfect balance of innovation, reliability, & flavour-first engineering



Movements



Himanshu Batra
General Manager
Welcomhotel Jodhpur

ITC Hotels has appointed Himanshu Batra as the new General Manager of Welcomhotel Jodhpur. With 17 years of experience, he brings along operational expertise, strategic leadership, and a commitment to excellence in creating guest experiences. Over the years, he has held key leadership roles across several iconic ITC Hotels.



Vijaya Kumar
General Manager
Grand Chennai by GRT Hotels

GRT Hotels & Resorts has appointed Vijaya Kumar as the General Manager of Grand Chennai by GRT Hotels, the group's flagship property. His elevation to this role marks a big internal promotion in GRT Hotels & Resorts. Over the years, he has worked with leading brands including Taj and ITC.



Ranit Nag
GM, Howard Johnson by
Wyndham Kolkata Airport

Howard Johnson by Wyndham Kolkata Airport has appointed Ranit Nag as General Manager for the hotel. In his new role, Nag will be responsible for the entire hotel's strategic growth and innovation, leadership, and revenue and sales. He will also take care of financial management, and operational control, compliance, and safety.



Sabarinath R
Director, Sales and Marketing,
Pullman Hotels & Resorts

Pullman Hotels & Resorts has appointed Sabarinath R as the Director of Sales and Marketing for Pullman Chennai. He has over 20 years of experience in luxury hospitality. Previously, he served as Vice President, Business Development South at Foodlink, F&B Holdings, and Director of Sales and Marketing at The Leela Palace Chennai.



Mayank Agarwal
Group General Manager, Revenue,
Summit Hotels and Resorts

Mayank Agarwal has been appointed as the Group General Manager of Revenue at Summit Hotels and Resorts. With expertise in revenue optimisation and market analytics, he has been key in driving Summit's commercial success. His market understanding has led to sustained profitability of the group.



Poonam Tipnis
Head of Sales
Rosetta Sakleshpur

Rosetta Hospitality has appointed Poonam Tipnis as Head of Sales for Rosetta Sakleshpur. With nearly three decades of experience in luxury hospitality, Tipnis brings in a legacy of strong leadership and a nuanced understanding of guest-centric sales strategies. She is also known for her ability to strengthen market presence. ▣

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