



## India can be a top tourist destination: Puneet Chhatwal President HAI

- Learnings from the pandemic opened new avenues for the hospitality and tourism sector
- How government and private players are working together to achieve pre-covid levels of demand
- India positions itself as a tourism destination with 'Heal in India'

**New Delhi, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2022:** Hotel Association of India (HAI), the apex body for the hotel industry recently organized the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of its signature Event , HAI Hoteliers Conclave on 29<sup>th</sup> September .The 26<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Association was held on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2022 in New Delhi. The conclave was a huge success in bringing together Industry professionals, entrepreneurs, policy makers, industry partners and media, providing a unique opportunity to the Sector to take stock and to plan a brighter and more sustainable future for the Industry as it recovers from its worst crisis. The AGM that was held on the heels of the Conclave was an occasion for Members to reflect upon both – the Industry as well as the Industry Body and its role going forward.

**Speaking on the two occasions, Mr. Puneet Chhatwal, President, HAI said** *“As we come out of the shadows of the worst crisis in the history of the industry, I feel justifiably proud that the industry not only faced the survival threat with grit and rather fought with all challenges that came their way with not only innovative resilience but also showed exemplary humanitarian concern in joining hands with the government to provide succor to the people in distress.”*

Even the Industry Association emerged stronger from the crisis by expanding its membership of hotels as well as hotel companies and further strengthening its positioning in the last couple of years.

Referring to the conversations and speeches of senior members of the government at recent events like the national conference of State tourism ministers, the diamond jubilee of Institute of Hotel Management, Pusa, New Delhi, Mr. Chhatwal mentioned that the industry policy landscape looks very promising. He stated that the industry is extremely hopeful that the new tourism policy will announce the status of Infrastructure for hotels. HAI with the support of the parent ministry has been pursuing this very aggressively with the concerned ministries and authorities.

He also expressed confidence that more and more States will follow the recent examples of Karnataka, Maharashtra and Rajasthan to accord hotels the much-needed status of an industry to enable the sector to prosper by making hotel investments more attractive.

The decision to include the role of tourism and hospitality in the new Trade Policy is another positive development and a very welcome one as it will support HAI's request for continued benefits under the Service Exports from India Scheme (SEIS) and to raise the quantum of scheme rewards for hotels.



Additional key takeaways /excerpts /discussions from the two Events relate to the challenges that the industry is facing and will continue to face. Climate change and sustainability being the most daunting ones. Others include the overarching impact of technology in Industry operations. There is also an urgent need to have a relook at the concept of skilling and capacity building in an age of fast changing technology.

The current volatility in the world - economic, geopolitical and ecological and its impact on tourism & hospitality has to be carefully watched and the industry will have to be quick to respond and adapt to changes, Mr Chhatwal added.

The hospitality sector is firmly on a path of recovery. Both hotel occupancies and average daily rates are improving. The return of corporate and foreign travel would catalyse an increase in the overall performance of both leisure and business hotels. India's 2023 presidency of the G-20 will provide a huge opportunity to the Industry to showcase India and Indian Hospitality while providing a boost to occupancies and revenues.

### **About HAI**

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

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