

LeaderSpeak

MAY 2025



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DEAR FRIENDS,

The recent tragedy in Pahalgam, Jammu & Kashmir, serves as a stark reminder of how vulnerable and fragile tourism is. We at HAI extend our deepest condolences to all those affected by the recent tragedy in Pahalgam. Our hearts go out to the families who have lost their loved ones, and we stand in solidarity with our countrymen and armed forces during this incredibly difficult time. At HAI, we are deeply committed to rebuilding trust and create safe, welcoming environments for all guests.

In the last few years, Jammu & Kashmir had been experiencing a remarkable resurgence in tourism. The region was rapidly becoming one of India's most promising destinations, attracting both domestic and international travelers. Recognizing the growth potential, hoteliers had started adding keys—both in existing and new properties. However, this tragic incident has raised concerns and forced a re-think and a re-assessment of the sector.

In times like these, we stand united and draw on our inherent resilience. Let us stay committed and work at supporting the region's recovery. Let us focus on ensuring the safety and well-being of our guests, while working alongside authorities to reinforce security measures. The road ahead may be challenging, but it also holds immense potential. Let us traverse it with determination, rebuild trust, and build a stronger, more secure future for the Incredible India and J&K tourism.

Regards,
KB Kachru
President HAI

HAI NEWS



HAI WELCOMES NEW MEMBER HOTELS

- Sarovar Portico, Badrinath
- Sarovar Premiere, Amritsar
- Welcomhotel By ITC Hotels, Bengaluru
- Namah Resort, Jim Corbett, Uttarakhand
- The Heritage Village Resort & Spa, Manesar Gurugram
- Welcomhotel Chennai
- The Leela Bhartiya City, Bengaluru
- Radisson Hotel Sector-29, Gurugram
- The Dukes Retreat Pvt. Ltd., Khandala
- Grand Hyatt, Gurugram
- Ginger Kalamassery, Kochi

HAI'S 104TH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

The 104th Meeting of the Executive Committee, for the final quarter of FY 2024-2025 was held virtually on the 29th of March 2025 and chaired by the President Mr. K.B. Kachru. After welcoming the Members, President In his opening remarks placed on record his felicitation of Mr. Chadha as CEO of ITC Hotels Limited. Speaking briefly on the Union Budget 2025-26 he mentioned that the importance of tourism and hospitality as an engine of growth and job creation has once again been recognised and highlighted. The announcement to infuse Rs 20,000 crore to States to increase tourism-led employment has reiterated the fact that tourism is a state subject he said and it was a cue for HAI to accelerate the activation of its State Chapters.

CELEBRATION OF 11TH HAI HAND HYGIENE DAY ON 5TH MAY 2025

The Hotel Association of India celebrated World Hand Hygiene Day with great enthusiasm across its member hotels. This initiative aimed to raise awareness about the importance of handwashing to prevent viral infections and respiratory illnesses.

HAI PARTNERS WITH MAKEMYTRIP TO LAUNCH SUSTAINABLE HOSPITALITY HANDBOOK

The Hotel Association of India participated in the first India Travel & Tourism Sustainability Conclave, where it joined hands with the MakeMyTrip Foundation to launch the Sustainable Hospitality Handbook. Designed to help hotels of all sizes adopt greener practices, the Handbook reflects HAI's continued commitment to driving environmentally responsible growth in the hospitality sector.

K.B KACHRU, PRESIDENT, HAI HONOURED AT HICSA 2025 AS INDUSTRY GATHERS TO CELEBRATE 20 YEARS

HICSA 2025 in Mumbai drew 690 participants, reflecting India's booming hospitality sector. Industry leaders praised the event's strategic focus and energy. K.B. Kachru, President, Hotel Association of India received a lifetime achievement award at the Event.

HAI PRESIDENT MR. K.B. KACHRU ADDRESSES FUTURE HOSPITALITY LEADERS AT LALIT SURI SCHOOL VALEDICTORY

Mr. K.B. Kachru, was welcomed by the Lalit Suri School of Hospitality for the valedictory function of its graduating class. Addressing the future professionals of the hospitality industry, Mr. Kachru shared valuable insights, encouraging the students to uphold excellence, adaptability, and a guest-first mindset as they embark on their careers. His presence underscored HAI's commitment to nurturing emerging talent and strengthening industry-academia collaboration.



HAI IN NEWS



BEYOND METRO CITIES: THE NEXT WAVE OF HOSPITALITY GROWTH IN INDIA

India's hospitality landscape is shifting towards tier-2 and tier-3 cities as travellers seek immersive, culturally rich experiences beyond metros.



HAI WELCOMES SUMAN BILLA AS NEW DIRECTOR GENERAL OF TOURISM

The Cabinet Committee assigned Suman Billa as Director General (DG) of Tourism, while he continues as Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism. Known for his work in Kerala's responsible tourism, Billa is a former UNWTO official.



PILGRIMAGE BOOM TRANSFORMING INDIA'S HOSPITALITY LANDSCAPE

Pilgrimage tourism in India is witnessing rapid growth, driven by improved infrastructure, rising spiritual awareness, and evolving traveller expectations. Leading hotel chains like IHCL, Radisson, Hyatt, and IHG are expanding in sacred cities.

"HOTEL INDUSTRY WILL NOT SUCCUMB TO THE COWARDLY ACTS OF A FEW!"

In the aftermath of the tragic incident in Pahalgam, K B Kachru, President of the Hotel Association of India (HAI) and Chairman, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group, expressed deep sorrow and strongly condemned the act, calling it an attack on humanity, the nation, and the region's tourism-dependent livelihoods.

GOVERNMENT/POLICY NEWS

4TH JOINT WORKING GROUP MEETING ON TOURISM COOPERATION BETWEEN INDIA AND JAPAN

The 4th Joint Working Group (JWG) Meeting on Tourism Cooperation between India and Japan was held on April 8, 2025, in New Delhi. Co-chaired by Ms. Mugdha Sinha, Director General of Ministry of Tourism, India, and Mr. Haraikawa Naoya, Commissioner of Japan Tourism Agency, the meeting focused on enhancing bilateral tourism, particularly through Buddhist site promotions, improving air connectivity, and increasing Japanese student visits to India.

DISCUSSIONS ON NEW TOURISM POLICY UNDERWAY: SHEKHAWAT

Union Minister of Tourism and Culture, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, announced that discussions are underway for a new tourism policy, with proposals from states being considered. The policy will focus on promoting sustainable tourism and improving the tourist experience to prevent shifts to neighboring countries.

STATE NEWS

BIHAR GOVT REVAMPS TOURISM POLICY TO ATTRACT HOTEL INVESTMENTS, BOOST JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Bihar government revamped its Tourism Policy 2023 to attract private investment and boost job opportunities for people with disabilities. Key changes included lowering the minimum investment threshold and allowing two-star and three-star hotels to qualify for incentives, replacing the earlier ₹10 crore requirement for four-star hotels. It also floated RFPs for hotel construction at Patliputra Ashok, Bankipur Bus Stand, and Sultan Palace to modernise hospitality infrastructure and enhance tourism in the state.

HIMACHAL CM URGED TO FORM DEDICATED MINISTRY FOR TOURISM

Tourism stakeholders in Manali have urged Himachal Pradesh's Chief Minister, Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, to create a dedicated tourism ministry to address the sector's challenges.



ARUNACHAL PRADESH LAUNCHES NEW TOURISM POLICY AND BRAND IDENTITY

Arunachal Pradesh launched a new tourism policy and brand identity to position itself as a global travel destination. The policy focuses on sustainable tourism, cultural preservation, skill development, and investment facilitation. Key measures include skill gap assessments, district-level land banks, and a single-window facilitation cell for investors. Highlighting its tribal heritage and natural beauty, the new branding aims to attract experiential travellers and boost domestic and international tourism, with a tenfold rise in foreign tourist arrivals anticipated.



NORTHEAST WITNESSING INCREASE IN DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN TOURIST INFLOW: CENTRE

Tourism in India's northeastern states has seen a significant rise in both domestic and foreign visitors, with 1.2 crore domestic tourists and over 2 lakh foreign tourists in 2023.

INDUSTRY NEWS

CHALET HOTELS AND ITS FUTURE-READY MANTRA: HOW ITS EMPLOYEES' WELL-BEING IS IMPORTANT FOR THE COMPANY

Under the leadership of MD & CEO Sanjay Sethi, Chalet Hotels fostered a meritocratic and inclusive work culture focused on employee well-being and collaboration. Over 90% of its workforce comprised millennials and Gen Z, with promotions based on merit rather than tenure. Gender diversity improved from 13% to 24%, culminating in the launch of the world's first all-women-run hotel—The Westin Hyderabad—in 2023. Chalet trained women from local ITIs for roles in engineering and security. These initiatives helped position the ₹1,417 crore company as a future-ready employer, earning it the 4th spot in Fortune India's Future-ready Workplaces Study 2024.



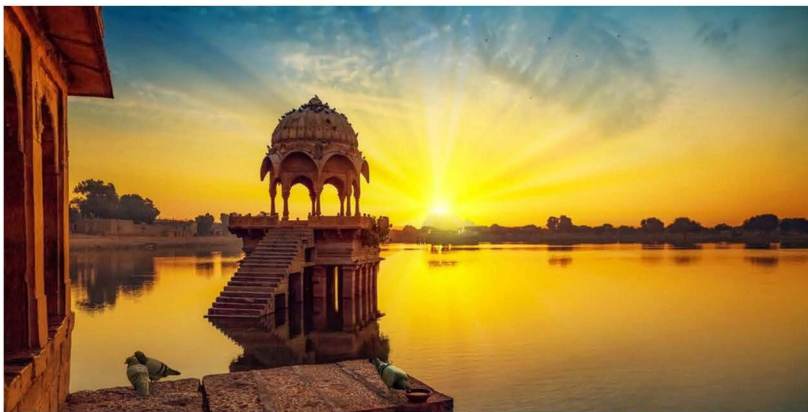
IHCL TO BUILD A 700-HOTEL PORTFOLIO BY 2030

Indian Hotels Company (IHCL) added 100 new locations in FY2025, including 74 signings (95% capital-light) and 26 openings, expanding its portfolio to 380 hotels. Aligned with its 'Accelerate 2030' strategy, the growth was led by Ginger and Gateway brands. IHCL also entered Bahrain and Ras Al Khaimah, adding 800+ keys. Key domestic openings created 2,500+ jobs, reinforcing its leadership and target of 700 hotels by 2030.



HYATT HOTELS TO DOUBLE INDIA CAPACITY IN 5 YEARS

Hyatt Hotels Corp. plans to double its properties in India over the next five years, aiming to add 50 more to its existing 50. Six new hotels are expected to open this year in cities like Kochi and Jaipur.



INDIA'S TRAVEL & TOURISM SECTOR TO GROW 7% OVER NEXT 10 YEARS: WTTC

World Travel & Tourism Council President Julia Simpson highlighted that India's travel and tourism sector is set to grow by 7% over the next decade, with its contribution to the economy expected to soon reach the global average of 10%. Currently, 7% of India's economy relies on this sector.

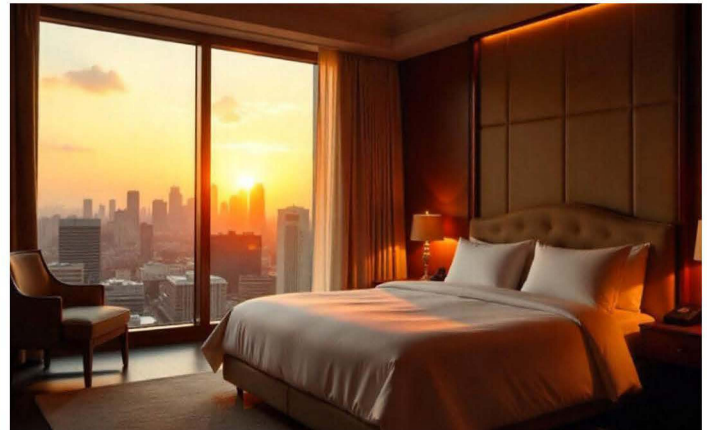


INDIGO PARENT & ACCOR TIE-UP TO HAVE 300 HOTELS IN INDIA BY 2030

IndiGo's parent company, InterGlobe, partnered with French hospitality giant Accor to create India's fastest-growing hospitality enterprise, targeting 300 hotels by 2030.

MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL SET TO INVEST IN CONCEPT HOSPITALITY, MARKING A SHIFT IN STRATEGY

Marriott International, the parent company of brands like JW Marriott and Westin, invested \$15 million in Mumbai-based Concept Hospitality.



LEMON TREE HOTELS SIGNS NEW PROPERTY IN RAJASTHAN

Lemon Tree Hotels announced the signing of Lemon Tree Resort in Mori Bera, Rajasthan, which was expected to open in FY27.

