

# LeaderSpeak

DEC 25-JAN 2026



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends

2025 saw Indian hospitality decisively shift from recovery to expansion. With the festive sparkle of Diwali, Christmas, and New Year, India's hospitality landscape bursts with renewed energy. The HVS-ANAROCK MONITOR (December 2025) highlights sustained momentum in India's hotel sector, with November 2025 witnessing strong performance with occupancy rebounding to 72 - 74% alongside sharp ARR growth (15 - 17% MoM and 10 - 12% YoY), led by robust demand across key metro and leisure markets.

This growth reinforces our collective focus on enabling policies, especially infrastructure status, rationalisation of taxes, and access to easier financing, to support the next phase of capacity creation aligned with Tourism Vision 2047. Equally critical is continued investment in talent and sustainable, locally rooted development that meets global standards. As we begin another year, the sector is therefore looking at sustained momentum and a clear outlook of continued expansion and resilience. India's hospitality rebound is set to continue, with branded hotels expected to post 7-8% RevPAR growth in FY2026 and ARR of ~₹8,400-8,600, driven by strong domestic demand and infrastructure-led travel growth. We look forward to a supportive budget and remain committed to working with industry stakeholders and policymakers to build a future-ready, sustainable, and globally competitive hospitality ecosystem.

*Warm regards,  
KB Kachru  
President*

## HAI NEWS

### NEW "CORPORATE" MEMBER

HAI welcomes M/s Ambuja Neotia Hotel Ventures Limited as a member in the "Corporate" category which is the highest category of Membership available. Mr. Giriraj Damani who is a whole time Director, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Executive Officer for the group as the company's nominee will represent the Ambuja Neotia group wrt HAI

### HAI meets with Chhattisgarh Govt

HAI reaffirmed its commitment to tourism-led growth in Chhattisgarh at the Chhattisgarh Tourism Investor Connect 2025, holding discussions with senior state tourism officials on strengthening industry-government collaboration. The dialogue focused on supportive hotel policies, GST rationalisation, infrastructure status, skilling, and public-private partnerships to unlock the state's growing tourism and investment potential.

### Leadership transition at Chalet Hotels Ltd.

Dr. Sanjay Sethi, CEO & MD, Chalet Hotels Ltd. will be stepping down from his executive roles at M/s Chalet Hotels Ltd. Mr. Shwetank Singh will assume the role of CEO & MD and will be representing the group in HAI Executive Committee, effective 1 February 2026.

### 107th EC Meeting Reviews Industry Growth and HAI Priorities

The 107th Executive Committee meeting reviewed industry performance for Q3 FY 2025-26, noting continued growth in occupancy, ADR and RevPAR, alongside encouraging new signings and brand launches. Members were updated on key engagements with the UP government, ongoing quarterly activities, and media and legal developments. Discussions focused on preparations for the upcoming HAI Hoteliers' Conclave, strengthening state chapters, increasing member participation, and outlining future skilling initiatives.

### HAI Participates In the pre-budget Consultation For The Union Budget 2026-2027

HAI participated in the Pre-Budget consultations for Union Budget 2026-27 chaired by Shri Vivek Chaturvedi, Member (Tax Policy), CBIC, with representation from Mr. R. Shankar (EIH Ltd), Mr. Mohit Gupta (IHCL) and Ms. Charulata Sukhija, Deputy Secretary General, HAI. The Association presented submissions on direct taxes, indirect taxes (GST, Customs & Excise) and policy issues including FTP, highlighting tax rationalisation, ease of doing business, sustainability incentives and growth measures; GST recommendations were also heard by the Chair despite not being part of the annual budget review.

### NEW MEMBER HOTELS

- **TAJ COCHIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, Cochin**
- **EKANTE BLISS IHCL SELEQTIONS, Tirupati**
- **THE YELLOW HOUSE -IHCL SELEQTIONS, North Goa**
- **GATEWAY BEKAL, Kasaragod**
- **THE WORLD, Surat**

### HAI Attends the Pre-Budget Meeting chaired By Hon'ble Finance Minister Government of India

HAI participated in the pre-budget consultations chaired by the Hon'ble Finance Minister. Represented by Secretary General Mr. M. P. Bezbarua, HAI highlighted key macro challenges faced by the hospitality sector. The Association emphasised granting infrastructure status to hotels, extending uniform industry benefits across states, and improving ease of doing business by reducing approvals and compliance costs. GST-related concerns were also raised, including rationalisation of GST, restoration of ITC under the 5% slab, review of room-rate thresholds, and delinking GST on hotel restaurants from room tariffs.



## Hospitality push: Industry body seeks sector-specific reforms, infrastructure status for hotels ahead of Budget

The Hotel Association of India (HAI) has urged policymakers to prioritise sector-specific reforms to drive growth and resilience in the hospitality industry, reiterating its long-standing demand for infrastructure status and industry benefits for hotels ahead of the Union Budget.

### New Year's Eve 2025: Hotel rates rise 10–20% as festive packages get grander

December bookings demonstrate robustness in demand, with average daily rates generally increasing by 10-12% year on year, said KB Kachru, president of the Hotel Association of India. "Although we witnessed a bit of regional softness mid-year, the industry showed remarkable resilience and is ending 2025 on a strong note," he added.

### Hotel Association of India Sets the Future of Luxury Hospitality in India with Traditional Hotels Leading the Charge with Tailored and Sustainable Offerings



The Hotel Association of India is paving the way for the future of luxury hospitality in India, where traditional hotels are taking the lead with innovative, sustainable offerings. As travelers increasingly seek unique and eco-friendly experiences, these iconic establishments are redefining luxury by blending opulence with sustainability.



### Rocking concert economy taking shape in India

For India's hospitality and travel sectors, the concert economy has unlocked a new era of opportunity. KB Kachru, president of the Hotel Association of India (HAI) & chairman—South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group, said this is a "dual opportunity" for hotels. "Firstly, operators can leverage surge-period demand around marquee events.



### Are Sacred Routes Reshaping India's Infra And Investment Landscape?



In smaller cities of faith, the rhythm of hospitality is changing. KB Kachru, President, Hotel Association of India and Chairman—South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group, observes that pilgrimage towns like Ayodhya, Varanasi, and Prayagraj have moved beyond seasonal spikes to sustained, year-round demand.



### The Grammar of Indulgence

Luxury is getting a facelift—from being about 'having more' to 'feeling more,' says K.B. Kachru, President of the Hotel Association of India and Chairman, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group. "Travellers today want stories they can live, not just services they can buy."



### Winter peak, wedding rush, VIP visits, amid IndiGo crisis sends Delhi hotel rates spinning

India's branded hotel sector recorded an Average Daily Rate (ADR) growth of 8.3 percent and a RevPAR increase of 12.1 percent in FY 2024–25, noted KB Kachru, President, Hotel Association of India (HAI) and Chairman – South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group, citing Hotelivate data.

## GOVERNMENT/POLICY NEWS

### Incredible India 2.0 Initiative

The Ministry of Tourism launched the Incredible India 2.0 campaign, shifting from generic promotions to theme-based outreach in key international markets. The initiative highlights India as a holistic destination with a focus on sustainability, responsible tourism, and the promotion of MICE tourism through digital platforms and global events.



### Setting-Up of Home Stays under PMJUGA

The Ministry of Tourism under Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan (PMJUGA) a sub-scheme of Swadesh Darshan Scheme provides funding support for development & renovation of Tribal Homestays and village community requirements.



**Unlocking India's tourism potential: Policy reforms needed to boost hospitality growth**



India's tourism Vision 2047 is part of the wider vision of Viksit Bharat and becoming the third largest economy in the world. The agenda now should be of one word—Implementation. The potential of tourism is immense and well documented. It is only necessary to see that no shadow falls between the idea and the reality.

### Secondary airports in metros trigger hospitality boom

Around Navi Mumbai, multiple hotel and mixed-use developments are taking shape alongside the planned Aerocity, with projects such as large-format, branded business hotels being planned to cater to corporate travel, events, and transit demand," said MP Bezbarua, secretary general, Hotel Association of India.





## Union Ministry of Tourism to Establish City-Level Convention Promotion Bureaus to Boost MICE Tourism

The Union Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, is set to establish city-level convention promotion bureaus as independent bodies, in partnership with stakeholders, beginning in 2026, to significantly boost India's Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) tourism ecosystem.

### Projects Under SDS and Prashad Schemes

The Ministry of Tourism through its ongoing schemes of 'Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD)' and Swadesh Darshan, complements the efforts of the State Governments (SGs)/UT Administrations (UTs) by extending financial assistance to them for developing tourism related infrastructure in the country, including the State Government of Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.



### Development of Tourist Destinations

Tourism development is led by State Governments and UTs, with the Ministry of Tourism supporting infrastructure creation through Swadesh Darshan 2.0 and Challenge Based Destination Development (CBDD) schemes. Under these initiatives, 89 projects worth 2,856 crore have been sanctioned to develop sustainable tourism destinations across India.



### Tourism Promotion Through Netflix



The Ministry of Tourism entered into a non-commercial Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Netflix Entertainment Services India LLP with aim to promote Indian tourism destinations globally through cinematic storytelling.

### Fix Local First: Centre pushes cleanup of tourist hubs

India's tourism sector faces several structural challenges, including a shortfall of nearly four lakh quality hotel rooms nationwide, the absence of destinations offering high-quality end-to-end tourist experiences, overcrowding at established locations, and a lack of coordinated destination management. These issues were highlighted by the Centre at the recently held 5th National Conference of Chief Secretaries.



## STATE NEWS

### Uttar Pradesh's Hospitality Sector Set for Major Growth with Tata Group's Vision to Build 60 New Hotels by 2026

Uttar Pradesh is rapidly emerging as one of India's most sought-after tourism destinations, driven by a sharp rise in domestic and international travel to iconic landmarks like the Taj Mahal and Varanasi.



### Andhra Pradesh: A New Era in Tourism with INR 30,000 Crore Investment Boost

Andhra Pradesh's tourism sector is undergoing a major transformation, driven by INR 30,000 crore in private investments over the last 16 months. These investments are set to significantly boost accessibility and position the state as a global tourism destination.

### Telangana's Rising Global Summit 2025 Marks New Era with Rs 117 Crore Hospitality Development in Yacharam, Catalyst for Bharat Future City

Telangana's Rising Global Summit 2025 has heralded a transformative chapter in the state's ambitious growth plans, with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a groundbreaking Rs 117 crore hospitality development in Yacharam.



### Tourist footfall surges in Mizoram, hotels packed: Min

Tourist footfall during the year-end festivities has surged in Mizoram this year, with many visitors joining locals in Christmas celebrations at different churches of Aizawl and participating in Christmas community feasts.

## INDUSTRY NEWS

### ICON of the 25 @ ICONIC awards K B Kachru: +Lifetime achievement award

K B Kachru was honoured as an ICON of the 25 at the ICONIC Awards, along with receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award for his outstanding contribution to the industry.



### Puneet Chhatwal Named 101 Icon Hotelier of the World – Lifetime Achievement Award 2025

Mr. Puneet Chhatwal, MD & CEO of The Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL), has been awarded the 101 Icon Hotelier of the World – Lifetime Achievement Award 2025. The accolade recognises his visionary leadership and outstanding contribution to the global hospitality industry, highlighting his role in shaping IHCL's growth and international prominence.



## Dr. Jyotsna Suri honoured with living legend award at Hospitality Horizon 2025

Dr. Jyotsna Suri was conferred the prestigious Living Legend Award at the Hospitality Horizon Top 50 Hotel Awards 2025, held on 27 November at Hilton Mumbai International Airport, in recognition of her exceptional leadership and enduring contribution to the Indian hospitality industry.



## Vikramjit Singh Oberoi honoured

Vikramjit Singh Oberoi, Managing Director and CEO of EIH Limited (The Oberoi Group), was honoured with the prestigious Hall of Fame recognition at the Hotelier India Awards 2025. With over 25 years of experience, he has been recognised for his exemplary leadership in upholding global benchmarks of luxury and service, and for his pivotal role in re-engineering systems and processes across the Oberoi Group.

## IHCL's Puneet Chhatwal calls HR the nation builder as India aims for \$30 trillion economy at CII's 15th HR Summit

At the 15th edition of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) HR Conclave, Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director and CEO of Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL), delivered a powerful keynote titled Reimagining India's Growth Story: HR as a Nation Builder.



## Lemon Tree Hotels Accelerates Expansion Across India and Nepal

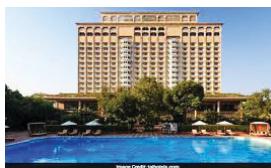


Lemon Tree Hotels continues its growth momentum with new signings and launches, including properties in Rajasthan, Haryana, Kartarpur, and its first international property in Nepal, reinforcing its presence across India and South Asia.



## ITC appoints Amitabh Kant as Independent Director for 5 years

ITC Limited has announced the appointment of former IAS officer Amitabh Kant as an Independent Director for a five-year term, effective January 1, 2026.



## IHCL Expands Portfolio with Key Launches and Signings Across India

IHCL strengthens its diverse portfolio with new additions, including SeleQtions properties in Nadiad and Varanasi, Ginger's entry into Meghalaya, the signing of a Ginger Hotel at Mumbai Airport Terminal 2, and the opening of Ginger Ahmedabad, Kristar—highlighting the group's strategic expansion across key destinations and travel hubs.

## Sarovar Hotels launches Vandhara Sarovar Premiere in Jim Corbett



Sarovar Hotels has announced the opening of Vandhara Sarovar Premiere in Patkote, Jim Corbett, marking the brand's entry into one of North India's prominent leisure destinations. The launch strengthens Sarovar's presence in Uttarakhand and aligns with its broader expansion strategy across leisure and regional markets.



## Sarovar Hotels brings back, Book Now, Pay Jab Aap Aao, for stress-free year-end travel

As year-end travel momentum builds across the country, Sarovar Hotels has relaunched its popular guest-first campaign, Book Now, Pay Jab Aap Aao, offering travellers complete flexibility and a seamless booking experience while planning their New Year getaways.

## Wyndham to open India's first Ramada Hotel & Suites in Kochi



Wyndham Hotels & Resorts has announced the signing of Ramada Hotel & Suites by Wyndham Kochi Infopark, marking the debut of the Ramada Hotel & Suites brand in India. The 69-room property is scheduled to open by mid-2026 and is being developed in partnership with AGA Hotels and Apartments Pvt. Ltd.

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