

# LeaderSpeak

NOVEMBER 2024



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DEAR FRIENDS,

As the festive season wraps up and we move into the peak wedding and year-end travel periods, hotels are geared up for a busy time. There is renewed activity and an anticipation of growth in revenues following a relatively slow period of April to July. A study by the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) estimates that total wedding expenditures this season will reach around ₹6 lakh crore, marking a 41% increase from last year. There is bound to be a marked increase in demand for hotels on the back of an estimated 48 lakh weddings.

Weddings in India are more than just events; they are vibrant cultural showcases. India is poised to establish itself as a leading global wedding destination.

At the India Pavilion during the 2024 World Travel Market (WTM), the spotlight was on wedding tourism and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) tourism —two lucrative segments that have seen significant growth in recent years. India offers luxurious venues, rich traditions, and diverse locations for couples wanting unique and memorable experiences for taking their vows and tying the knot of matrimony.

I extend my congratulations and best wishes to you all as the industry looks at busy and exciting times progressing on its trajectory of post covid recovery. Let us grow together responsibly and in a sustained manner.

**BEST WISHES & REGARDS**

**KB Kachru**

## HAI NEWS



### HOTEL ASSOCIATION OF INDIA ORGANISES SUSTAINABILITY CONCLAVE, LIFE@100' HAI & GSTC SIGN A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The Hotel Association of India (HAI) organised the "LiFE @ 100" Sustainability Conclave with Jaquar Group at its LEED platinum-certified Manesar office, emphasizing its commitment to sustainable hospitality. Suman Billa, Additional Secretary of Tourism, highlighted the need for responsible growth and industry collaboration on sustainability policies. HAI President K.B. Kachru called for joint efforts and investment in training to help hotels achieve India's Net Zero goals. Vice President Rohit Khosla led the "Pledge for LiFE," committing HAI members to Net Zero by 2050, ahead of India's 2070 target.

The event also marked a significant milestone with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between HAI and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). This partnership aims to promote awareness and certification of sustainable practices among HAI member hotels, strengthening HAI's dedication to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through continued initiatives and collaborations in sustainable tourism.



## TOURISM MINISTRY RELEASED A GUIDE TO HELP STATES/UTS IMPLEMENT 'INDUSTRY STATUS' FOR TOURISM SECTOR

On September 27, 2024, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, introduced a Handbook for Granting and Implementing Industry Status for the Tourism and Hospitality Sector aimed at guiding States and Union Territories (UTs) in formally recognizing tourism as an industry. This initiative is intended to improve ease of doing business in the sector and attract increased private investment.

While a number of States and UTs have already categorized tourism as an industry or have granted it industry status through official notifications, many tourism units have yet to fully access the associated benefits. The handbook addresses this gap by providing a structured roadmap for implementation, equipping States and UTs with tools to ensure tourism businesses can effectively leverage the benefits of industry status.



## KARNATAKA GOVT CLEARS NEW TOURISM POLICY, EYES INR 1,500 CR INVESTMENTS

The Karnataka cabinet approved a new tourism policy, setting ambitious goals to boost the state's tourism sector. The government aims to attract investments totalling around ₹1,500 crore, enhancing infrastructure and services to support tourism growth. Karnataka seeks to draw 20 lakh foreign tourists annually, aspiring to rank among the top five states in international arrivals. Additionally, with a target of 48 crore domestic tourists, the state aims to secure a position among the top three states in domestic tourism.

To achieve these objectives, the policy emphasizes infrastructure improvements, innovative experiences, and partnerships with the private sector to make Karnataka a leading travel destination.

# NEW OPENINGS



## AMRITSAR WELCOMES LEMON TREE HOTELS' NEWEST PROPERTY

Lemon Tree Hotels announced its latest signing, Keys Select by Lemon Tree Hotels, Amritsar, which will be managed by Carnation Hotels Private Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Lemon Tree Hotels Limited. Expected to open in FY 2027, Keys Select by Lemon Tree Hotels, Amritsar, will feature 45 well-appointed rooms, a restaurant, a rooftop lounge, a meeting room, a swimming pool, a fitness centre, and other public areas. Sri Guru Ram Dass Jee International Airport, Amritsar, is approximately 13 km away, while the Amritsar Railway Station is 2.4 km away. The hotel is easily accessible by both public and private transport.

## SAROVAR HOTELS AND PRABHU GROUP UNVEIL CLOUD9 SAROVAR PREMIERE, THEIR SECOND PARTNERSHIP HOTEL IN GOA

Sarovar Hotels, in partnership with Prabhu Group, announced the opening of Cloud9 Sarovar Premiere in Palolem, Goa. This premium retreat, located at the scenic confluence of the Talpone River and the Arabian Sea, offers stunning views and easy access to Palolem Beach. The hotel features 160 elegantly designed rooms, a pool, the Hebe Spa, and diverse dining options, including Trophe, an all-day restaurant, and 74° NE, a rooftop venue with panoramic ocean views. With banquet facilities for weddings and events, Cloud9 Sarovar Premiere is an ideal destination for relaxation and celebration.



## RADISSON HOTEL GROUP EXPANDS PRESENCE IN BENGALURU

Radisson Hotel Group has signed its sixth property in Bengaluru—Radisson Hotel Bengaluru Aerospace Park. Set to open by Q2 2027, the 157-room hotel will create over 250 jobs. Located 20 minutes from Kempegowda International Airport and near major corporate hubs, it aims to strengthen Radisson's presence in India's Silicon Valley, catering to business travelers and corporate professionals.



## INDUSTRY NEWS

### AIR INDIA TO DEPLOY A350 SERVICES ON ULTRA-LONG-HAUL ROUTES

Private carrier Air India commenced Airbus A350 services on ultra-long-haul routes with the deployment of the aircraft on the Delhi-New York route.

This comes at a time when the Tata-Group run carrier has temporarily cancelled some 60 flights to various US destinations between November 15 and December 31 on account of the non-availability of some of its widebody planes due to maintenance and supply chain issues. Air India currently has six Airbus A350-900 aircraft in its fleet.

### THAILAND IS NOW VISA-FREE FOR INDIANS 'UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE' – INDIA REPORT

Thailand has extended its visa waiver for Indians "until further notice". This is a significant move in bolstering tourism, which many are speculating could become a permanent arrangement. This waiver allows Indian visitors to stay in Thailand for up to 60 days, with the possibility of a 30-day extension. The extended visa waiver aligns with Thailand's strategy to revive tourism post-pandemic, particularly given the large number of Indian tourists who visit each year. By simplifying entry requirements and increasing the allowable stay duration, Thailand is likely hoping to attract longer visits and boost spending in sectors like hospitality, retail, and local attractions.

### INDIA SHOWCASES TOURISM POTENTIAL AT WORLD TRAVEL MARKET 2024 IN LONDON

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, participated at the World Travel Market (WTM) in London from November 5-7, 2024, to boost inbound tourism and position India as a premier travel destination. Held at Excel London, India's presence includes a delegation of about 50 stakeholders, such as state tourism boards and hospitality providers, aiming to showcase the country's rich cultural diversity. The India Pavilion highlighted niche tourism experiences, including wellness retreats, adventure tourism, eco-tourism, and gourmet travel, tapping into the strong UK-India tourism link, with nearly 1.9 million members of the Indian diaspora in the UK and 920,000 UK visitors to India in 2023. India's pavilion this year showcased the diverse offerings of Wedding tourism, MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) tourism, and Mahakumbh, tapping into unique cultural, religious, and professional tourism niches.

### CHALET HOTELS ANTICIPATES MARGIN BOOST WITH BENGALURU EXPANSION AND THE DUKES RETREAT REOPENING

Sanjay Sethi, MD & CEO of Chalet Hotels, shared on CNBC-TV18 that Q2 saw a 10% growth in rates and RevPAR, with steady occupancy levels. He expects double-digit RevPAR growth for the industry. Despite The Dukes Retreat in Khandala being closed for renovations, Chalet plans to add 130 rooms in Bengaluru by year-end, with expansions in Delhi, Navi Mumbai, and Goa to enhance its portfolio.

### FHRAI HOSTS A SUCCESSFUL THREE-DAY CONVENTION IN GOA

The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI), the world's third-largest hospitality association, held a three-day convention in Goa under the theme "Tourism @2047: Invincible." The event focused on the future of hospitality with an emphasis on resilience, innovation, and sustainability, featured keynote insights from IHCL MD and CEO Puneet Chhatwal, who spoke on leadership and strategic growth. Inaugurated by Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Goa CM Dr. Pramod Sawant, the convention brought together around 800 delegates for discussions and networking.



### HILTON ON AN EXPANSION SPREE IN BENGALURU

Hilton has signed an agreement to open the Hilton Garden Inn in Whitefield, Bengaluru, marking its growth in India's Silicon Valley. Set to open in early 2025, this will be Hilton's third Whitefield property, joining the DoubleTree by Hilton, which opened earlier this year, and the upcoming Curio Collection by Hilton. Developed in partnership with Minerva Executive Apartment Private Limited, this addition will expand Hilton's Bengaluru portfolio to seven operating hotels and ten in the pipeline.