

## **Focus on Indian's image as a safe destination is necessary to attract foreign tourists for the survival of Indian hospitality and tourism industry**

After almost a year of living with the pandemic, amidst wide-spread social distancing, the lack of traveller confidence has emerged as a major hurdle in restarting the hospitality and tourism industry in the country. To discuss about the pressing common issues of the industry, ASSOCHAM recently organised a webinar on "International Tourism: India the Destination", which saw wide participation from the hospitality industry stalwarts.

Elaborating on the challenges faced by the industry in the current scenario, Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, Vice President of FHRAI, said, "Drop in demand is a severe issue for the whole industry, as no one knows when we are going to come back. In my opinion, probably after getting vaccines we can see revenge tourism. We need to customise incentives and packages to attract guests. Our leaders should re-think about tax policies of the hospitality industry. A lot has to be done. Our industry is resilient, and we deal with the most perishable commodity."

He also stressed upon some of the crucial needs of the industry which are necessary for survival, "Hospitality, travel and tourism needs to be declared as an industry. Single window clearance and e-visas should be done. We should talk about safe India. We need support from the Government. Because of the high taxes and high airfares, we are losing business; otherwise many people can do their conference here in India. 26 million people are travelling abroad, and if we can attract this huge number, then it can boost our economy."