



## HOTEL AND RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION (WESTERN INDIA)

Dear Members,

We are already one month into the New Year and, I would like to acknowledge that the industry is slowly but surely clawing its way back to pre-pandemic levels of business. There is a sense of optimism and the tourism sector is upbeat. Also, India's G20 Presidency could not have come at a better time and the Government too realizes this opportunity as a low hanging fruit. The Ministry of Tourism (MoT's) proposed launch of a global 'Visit India 2023' campaign to draw more international tourists to position India as a preferred tourist destination in Asia is a clear indication of the Government's vision. The commencement of new Mumbai Metro lines in the suburbs, the launch of several Vande Bharat trains, the lighting up of streets and highways with decorative LEDs and the new generation of traffic signals at junctions among other things are really making a difference.

The Hon'ble FM's inclusion of tourism in her Union Budget speech earlier this month, has reassured industry players about the Government's commitment towards the sector. While the Budget did not meet our exact expectations, it has sent out all the right signals required for the industry's recovery and growth. The Hon'ble FM stressed on promoting tourism on mission mode, with the active participation of States, the convergence of Government programmes and public-private partnerships. This is especially good news for regional tourism and hospitality. The industry expects appropriate allocation to be made to hospitality as per sector-specific planning envisaged by the MoT in conjunction with the industry.

Earlier this month, HRAWI delegates met Shri Mangal Prabhat Lodha, Hon'ble Tourism Minister, Government of Maharashtra to discuss the way forward for promoting tourism in the State. Another meeting between your Association and the Principal Secretary of Tourism, GoM; and the Director of Tourism Department is slated for formulating the new Tourism Policy for the State. The tourism policy was last released back in 2016. The Minister sought feedback from the hospitality industry on building Sambhajinagar as a tourism hub and has invited HRAWI and its members to propose plans to develop hotels in the region. The Government is setting the tone which requires the industry to be participative and inclusive for the progress of tourism and hospitality in the State.

I also want to emphasize on the need to invest in the training and development of human resources in the hospitality industry. We need to upskill and reskill our workforce to meet the demands of a rapidly changing industry. This will not only enhance the guest experience but also contribute to the industry's growth and development. One of HRAWI's continued efforts towards this has been conducting FSSAI's FoSTaC training programmes. Over the last six years, HRAWI has successfully trained and certified 2466 hospitality professionals across



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India's Western region in food safety and hygiene and now we are ramping up the frequency of the training sessions.

As we move forward, we need to ensure that the hospitality industry continues to innovate and adapt to changing market trends and consumer needs. We must prioritize the use of technology and innovation to enhance the guest experience and improve operational efficiencies. This will enable the industry to become more sustainable, eco-friendly, and future-ready.

Best wishes,

Pradeep Shetty, President, HRAWI

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