

Kerala four star classification inspection needs to be expedited: FHRAI

The total waiting list under the four star classification inspections in Kerala has soared to above 80 hotels since the end of 2019, according to the Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI)—because of unavailability of a full-time regional director at the India Tourism office for the southern region since the end of 2020.

FHRAI submitted a representation to the Minister of Tourism G Kishan Reddy requesting classification inspection of hotels in Kerala that are four star and above to be done expeditiously. To increase the efficiency and to expeditiously clear the backlog, the FHRAI has requested the appointment of a permanent Regional Director for South India.

“The State’s policy stipulates star classification of hotels as criteria for obtaining liquor license and it has definitely helped promote tourism in a big way while supporting affordable tourism. However, many of the hotels depend majorly on the revenue generated from liquor sales as income from rooms and banquet services is nominal. Therefore, obtaining Star Classification has become imperative for the survival of these hotels. As of today, the total waitlist for four star classification inspections in Kerala has soared to above eighty hotels. Among these, some are pending since the end of 2019. The hotel industry in Kerala is going through immense trouble because of this and so, we request the Hon’ble Tourism Minister to urgently set up an efficient mechanism to expedite the Classification Inspections of 4 Star and above hotels in the State,” said Mr. Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, vice president, FHRAI.

The FHRAI has cited the unavailability of a full-time Regional Director at the India Tourism Office for Southern Region since the end of 2020 as a major reason for the pending glut. For three star hotels, the waiting period has been reduced due to the appointment of two dedicated teams, but the same for four star categories and above continues to get delayed. In the four star categories and above, around twenty hotels are pending to be classified since the first half

of 2020 and another twenty-five since the second half. Now, twenty-five new ones have got added to the list since the first half of 2021.

“The present Regional Director for South holds charge of more than ten states and is burdened to undertake the classification inspections in an effective and timely manner. Only ten hotels have taken up for classification in the month of August 2021 and the last inspection was conducted in March 2021. The hotel industry in the state is undergoing great turmoil due to the extraordinary surge in infections and frequent lockdowns, and this has led to huge financial losses to hotels. Urgent measures need to be taken to ensure that all pending classification inspections in Kerala are cleared on priority. It would greatly help if the Minister considers creating more simultaneous committees to clear the backlog. We also request that a permanent Regional Director be appointed at the India Tourism Office for the Southern region to ensure that the classification inspections are conducted without inordinate delay,” concluded Mr. Kohli.