

Dear Members,

While July is usually a quiet month for the hotel and restaurant industry, this year has been notably eventful. The presentation of the Union Budget 2024-25 by Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman marked a significant milestone, especially given the newly elected Government's vision for Viksit Bharat 2047 and its goal to accelerate sector growth to \$3 trillion by 2047. The budget, however, disappointed the industry and fell short of our expectations.

In collaboration with our apex association FHRAI, HRAWI had submitted key demands to the Finance Minister aimed at revitalizing our sector. These included GST rationalization, infrastructure status, and policy reforms to ease doing business. Unfortunately, these issues were not addressed in the budget. But we do see the focus on infrastructure, rural development, and skill enhancement as beneficial for both the country and our sector. These initiatives are expected to foster growth. The commitment to developing iconic cultural sites and promoting diverse forms of tourism holds promise for attracting a broader range of domestic and international visitors.

The budget is a narrative of cautious optimism, where the industry's disappointment is tempered by the recognition of potential growth catalysts embedded within the budget's framework. The road to Viksit Bharat is long, and the hospitality sector's role in this journey is undeniably significant. With continued dialogue and strategic action, the industry can align itself with the national vision and contribute to India's developmental story.

The period also saw your Association successfully convening two transformative conclaves titled 'Empowering Hospitality Conclave & Awards'. They were held at Hotel Center Point in Nagpur and The Grand Bhagwati in Ahmedabad. Both the conclaves enjoyed great traction and saw the participation of stalwarts from the industry, policy makers and law enforcers. A variety of topics ranging from Cybersecurity Essentials to the new Maharashtra Tourism Policy 2024, fire safety, and pest management were delved into in detail. Both the conclaves also featured an award function where your Association honoured and celebrated the remarkable contributions of professionals within the hospitality industry.

I cannot over emphasize the importance of these conclaves and events. These gatherings are meticulously structured, offering a wealth of knowledge and practical applications that directly impact the day-to-day operations of hotels and restaurants. Through these events, participants gain valuable insights into industry best practices, innovative technologies, and strategies to enhance guest experiences and profitability. These conclaves provide a unique platform for learning about the latest policies and regulations from subject matter experts. Engaging with these experts allows us to stay abreast of the evolving landscape of hospitality management, ensuring compliance and leveraging new opportunities for growth. By attending these sessions, we not only enhance our professional expertise but also contribute to the overall advancement and excellence of the hospitality industry. Additionally, these conclaves are an excellent platform to enhance your network within the industry.

In another landmark initiative, your Association, in collaboration with The Indore Hoteliers Association (IHA), participated in the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' mega tree plantation drive which set a new world record. This drive, which saw the planting of 1.1 million saplings in a single day in Indore, was led by Hon. Kailash Vijayvargiya Ji, Minister of the Government of Madhya Pradesh. Dignitaries such as the Hon. Home Minister of India, Shri Amit Shah Ji, and the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Shri Mohan Yadav Ji, were present, marking Indore's remarkable achievement in the Guinness Book of World Records. The event also highlighted the active participation of Mr. Sumit Suri, President of IHA, and an extensive team of hoteliers. The planting of trees is a vital step towards combating climate change, ensuring biodiversity, and sustaining the health of our planet for future

generations. In just one week, the collective efforts that included the participation of over 700 hoteliers have resulted in the addition of 5.1 million saplings to Indore's green landscape.

I am also happy to convey that HRAWI conducted three Food Safety Supervisor Training in Advance Catering (FoSTaC) programmes, in partnership with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), in Khandala at the Dukes Retreat on July 12, in Mumbai at Hotel Le Grande on July 10, and at Hotel Airport Centre Point in Nagpur on June 22. With this, the number of professionals successfully trained and certified by HRAWI through FSSAI's FoSTaC Training Programme stands at 3,083. These programmes underscore the hospitality sector's dedication and your Association's commitment to elevating food safety standards in the hospitality sector.

As we reflect on these achievements and look ahead, it is clear that the dedication and collective efforts of our members are driving our industry's progress. Let us continue to engage, innovate, and collaborate, ensuring that we not only meet but exceed the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Warm regards,

Pradeep Shetty, President, HRAWI