

HRAWI Felicitates 75 Years Of Leadership

The Hotel and Restaurant Association (Western India) – HRAWI commemorated its Platinum Jubilee with a landmark Awards Ceremony at its 20th Regional Convention. The celebration featured actor Boman Irani felicitating all Past Presidents of HRAWI for their enduring service, while Dr Shashi Tharoor, Chief Guest at the convention, Member of Parliament, and Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, presented Lifetime Achievement Awards to Dr Ajit B Kerkar, President of Honour, and Vivek Nair, Member of Honour, in recognition of their extraordinary contributions to the hospitality industry. Jimmy Shaw, President, HRAWI, accepted the award on behalf of Dr Ajit B. Kerkar, who was not present to receive it.

The ceremony served as a fitting tribute to the visionaries and stalwarts who shaped HRAWI into one of India's most influential hospitality Associations. Tracing its origins to the legendary leadership of J.R.D. Tata, the Past Presidents honoured at the event included Late A. P. Sabavala, Late Rustom Masani, Late D.R.D. Tata, Late Maneck S. Shaw, Dr Ajit B. Kerkar, Late Manmohan Singh Bedi, Late Pesi M. Shaw, Late Prakash Malik, Late Jehangir Cama, Vivek Nair, Late Sunder N. Awatramani, Late Rabinder Singh Bedi, Dinesh Khanna, S.P. Jain, Suresh M. Talera, Kamlesh Barot, D.S. Advani, Bharat Malkani, Dilip Datwani, Dr Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, Sherry Bhatia, and Pradeep Shetty.

Presenting the awards, Boman Irani shared his personal journey in the hospitality industry, revealing that his first job was as a waiter at The Taj Mahal Palace hotel in Mumbai. He went on to narrate how he started in the basement washing dishes before working his way up to the iconic 'Rendezvous' rooftop restaurant, the most exclusive fine-dining destination of its time.

“Seventy-five years is a remarkable journey. Each of these leaders has carried forward the legacy of Indian hospitality, setting benchmarks of excellence and resilience. It is a privilege to celebrate their contributions to the industry and to the Association,” says Irani.

Presenting the Lifetime Achievement Awards, Dr Shashi Tharoor too captivated the audience with a keynote that positioned tourism and hospitality as “mirrors of a nation’s soul”. Underscoring India’s Viksit Bharat 2047 vision, Dr Tharoor called for decisive movement on three foundational pillars: Image, Infrastructure, and Immigration.

“This evening isn’t just about honouring the leaders and pioneers who have shaped our Association; it’s about celebrating 75 years of an industry that has built careers, created opportunities and welcomed the world with open arms,” concludes Jimmy Shaw.

Over the decades, HRAWI has played a pivotal role in representing the interests of the hotel and restaurant sector across Western India, driving key policy dialogues, skill development programmes and industry growth initiatives. Today, it represents a vast membership base spanning Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa and the Union Territories of Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu.