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News

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By DDP Publications



55TH FHRAI ANNUAL CONVENTION redefines hospitality's futurescape



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Dear Members,

As I look back on the past few months, I am filled with a deep sense of pride and optimism for India's hospitality and tourism fraternity. It has been a truly eventful season that reminded us of our collective strength, resilience, and shared passion for creating memorable experiences.

SIHRA's active participation and support to FHRAI in organising its 55th Annual Convention in Bengaluru was one such proud moment. The convention brought together policymakers, industry stalwarts, and visionaries who echoed a common belief that India's hospitality sector is poised for an extraordinary transformation. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the dignitaries who graced the event and shared valuable insights on how we, as an industry, can collaboratively shape the future of Indian hospitality.

We must align our efforts with the inspiring vision of **Siddaramaiah**, Chief Minister, Karnataka, who so aptly said, "The dreams of a developed India will be realised in the experiences we create for every visitor." His words beautifully encapsulate what we stand for i.e., hospitality that goes beyond service, creating connections that build both cultural and economic bridges. At the national level, **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat**, Union Minister for Tourism, reminded us of the immense potential India holds. While tourism contributes nearly 10 per cent to global GDP, India stands at around six per cent. For us, this gap is not a limitation but translates into an opportunity. With rising disposable incomes and an expanding domestic travel base, the future of tourism looks more promising than ever. Meanwhile, the event also reaffirmed Karnataka's commitment to leading the journey of India's hospitality sector. **DK Shivakumar**, Deputy Chief Minister, Karnataka, revealed that the state government is planning to announce new incentives to attract global investment and promote large-scale private participation in tourism, similar to that of Goa and Kerala.

“
The convention brought together policymakers and visionaries who echoed a common belief that India's hospitality sector is poised for an extraordinary transformation

As the event unfolded, several forward-looking initiatives were discussed by the authorities, and we, as key stakeholders must take inspiration from the words of **V Vidyavathi**, Secretary, Tourism, Government of India, who emphasised the importance of open collaboration and continuous dialogue between policymakers, industry stakeholders, and travellers alike. Her assurance that these valuable discussions and recommendations will be incorporated into the forthcoming five-year Tourism Business Plan is truly commendable and reflects the government's commitment to inclusive growth.

Further, I take immense pride in the success of the Tamilnadu Travel Expo 2025, which beautifully showcased the state's vibrant tourism story that now stands shoulder to shoulder with other leading southern destinations. The overwhelming response this year spoke volumes about its growing impact, with 150 sellers and 250 buyers participating across two expansive halls. This remarkable growth is a testament to the passion and collaboration driving our region's ever-evolving tourism ecosystem.

As we look ahead, SIHRA remains deeply committed to nurturing this spirit of collaboration and empowering our members to play a leading role in shaping the future of Indian hospitality.

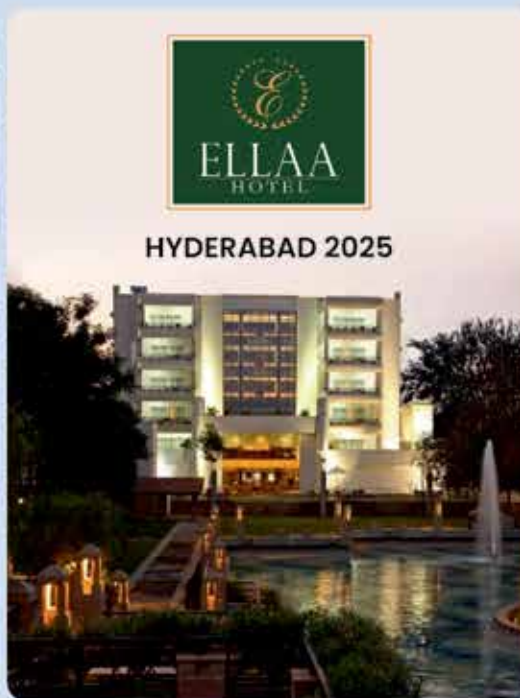
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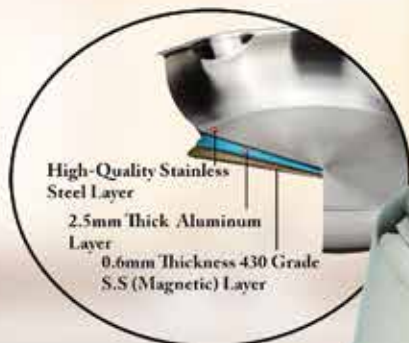
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Aligning state vision with national goals

At the 55th FHRAI Convention, Karnataka CM unveiled a visionary roadmap aligning Karnataka's tourism and hospitality goals with India's Viksit Bharat@2047 mission.

By DDP Bureau

Speaking at the 55th FHRAI Annual Convention, **Siddaramaiah**, Chief Minister, Karnataka, outlined a forward-looking roadmap for the state's tourism and hospitality industry, which aligns seamlessly with the Union government's vision of Viksit Bharat@2047. Reaffirming Karnataka's commitment to lead India's growth story, he said, "The dreams of a developed India will be realised in the experiences we create for every visitor."

ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

Describing Karnataka as a state where "the past and the future co-exist," Siddaramaiah highlighted its unique blend — from the ancient stones of Hampi to the digital brilliance of Bengaluru — as the foundation of a world-class hospitality.

"The hospitality sector alone now contributes approximately ₹25,000 crore to our economy."

SIDDARAMAIAH, Chief Minister, Karnataka

That foundation is already paying off. Domestic tourist footfall in Karnataka reached 30.46 crore in 2024, a remarkable 58 per cent growth since 2022, reflecting both resilience and renewed interest in the state's destinations. This momentum has translated into over 12 lakh jobs, direct and indirect, contributing significantly to livelihoods across the state. "The hospitality sector alone now contributes approximately ₹25,000 crore to our economy, making it a

cornerstone of our prosperity," Siddaramaiah added.

MICE POWERHOUSE

Bengaluru, hosting 15 per cent of India's total MICE events, has emerged as a premier global business tourism hub, attracting high-value travellers and driving demand for premium hospitality services. To meet the rising demand, the state government approved 500 new homestays and 50 mid-scale hotels last year, ensuring balanced growth across regions.

CURATING EXPERIENCES

Moving beyond generic tourism, the state government is promoting curated experiences — from heritage trails through UNESCO sites to coastal get-aways and adventure tourism in the Western Ghats. Bengaluru, meanwhile, is being positioned as the 'Silicon Valley of Leisure,' blending luxury with innovation.

To fuel this transformation, the government has approved subsidies for 54 new hotels and resorts, developed way-side amenities, and allocated ₹200 crore for cruise tourism infrastructure to enhance Karnataka's coastal appeal. "The government can create the framework," Siddaramaiah concluded, "but it is you — the hoteliers and professionals — who bring it to life." ♦

You build the industry, we shape the policy: Dy CM

Poised to woo private players, Karnataka will roll out investment incentives and scale up coastal infrastructure, **DK Shivakumar** said, unveiling plans to elevate the state's tourism landscape.

By DDP Bureau



Speaking at the 55th FHRAI Annual Convention, **DK Shivakumar**, Deputy Chief Minister, Karnataka, highlighted the state's growing prominence in India's tourism and hospitality landscape. Sharing achievements and upcoming initiatives, he emphasised that the government's role is to create an enabling ecosystem for private enterprise to thrive.

"We cannot build hotels; we are only policymakers. You are the ones who build the industry, create happiness, and drive prosperity," he told the gathering of hoteliers and tourism stakeholders.

PARTNERSHIP

Shivakumar underlined that Karnataka, the second-largest contributor to India's economy, is working in close collaboration with the central government to accelerate growth. "We have



25 lakh engineers and over two lakh foreign passport holders working here across diverse sectors like hospitality, IT, and healthcare," he said, noting how Karnataka's talent and technology are central to its success story.

STRENGTH IN DIVERSITY

Karnataka's strength, he said, lies in its cultural and geo-

The government is planning to offer incentives for tourism projects, similar to those in Goa and Kerala, to encourage investment

graphical diversity — from its sun-drenched coastline to the lush Malnad hills, ancient northern heritage, and forested heartlands. "As we build more infrastructure, we also look forward to attracting global investment through the Global Investors Meet," he added. The government is planning to offer incentives for tourism projects, similar to those in Goa and

Kerala, to encourage large-scale private investment.

Outlining new development plans, Shivakumar said the state will soon focus on upgrading its 320-km coastline, enhancing its position as a top-tier tourism destination.

He also revealed discussions with **K Syama Raju**, President, FHRAI regarding a world-class convention centre on Nelamangala Road, which has already attracted interest from international hotel chains.

Urging collaboration to drive inclusive growth and sustainable development while expressing optimism that the deliberations at the FHRAI Convention would yield actionable insights, Shivakumar said, "I am confident that together, the industry and policymakers can shape Karnataka into a model tourism economy." ♦

Hospitality at the heart of India's \$30 trillion vision

While hailing India's growing economy with the vision of reaching \$30 trillion by 2047, **Union Tourism Minister** emphasised that today's investments will define the future of hospitality.

By DDP Bureau

Recently, **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat**, Minister of Tourism, Government of India (GoI) painted an optimistic picture of India's economic and tourism trajectory, linking the nation's hospitality growth directly to its vision of becoming a developed India by 2047.

"Indians are better paymasters now," he claimed at the 55th FHRAI Annual Convention, underscoring the country's rapidly growing travel demand. "There are no rooms available. In every 7–8 years, we will need double the number of hotels."

A TRILLION-DOLLAR LEAP

Shekhawat highlighted India's remarkable economic journey — from a \$2 trillion economy a decade ago to \$4 trillion today — with ambitions to reach \$30 trillion by 2047. "The pace of expansion is extraordinary," he



Gajendra Singh Shekhawat
Minister of Tourism, GoI

said. "As our economy grows, so will the demand for hospitality infrastructure."

He noted that while tourism contributes nearly 10 per cent to global GDP, India currently stands at around 6 per cent — a gap he believes presents immense opportunity. With

rising disposable incomes, expanding middle-class spending, and millions lifted out of poverty, India's domestic travel market is flourishing.

DEMAND–SUPPLY GAP

Rapid economic growth has outpaced hotel development, leading to a demand–supply gap. To address this, the government has granted infrastructure status to 50 iconic destinations, with 18 states adopting this recognition. "This will catalyse investment and reduce the supply gap," Shekhawat said, adding that the tourism sector's growth rate is projected to exceed 20 per cent in the coming years as per a recent analysis by industry stakeholders.

He emphasised India's expanding tourism verticals such as wellness, medical, MICE, and wedding tourism as the new

“As our economy grows, so will the demand for hospitality infrastructure.”

engines of growth. "Hospitality will be the direct beneficiary of this growth," he noted. Calling hotels the "ambassadors of Indian culture," he said every property embodies India's warmth, diversity, and spirit, which is going to be the country's prowess. He concluded that the investments made today will shape the hospitality landscape of tomorrow. "As India moves up to \$8 trillion economy in the next decade, the hospitality will stand as one of the strongest pillars of our growth story." ♦



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Karnataka aims to lead tourism dialogue

At the 55th FHRAI Annual Convention, industry leaders lauded state government initiatives that are turning Karnataka into one of India's most promising and progressive tourist destinations.

By DDP Bureau



Serving as both a think tank and a platform for progressive dialogue, the 55th FHRAI Annual Convention showcased the tourism and hospitality industry's growing influence on India's economy. Themed 'Futurescape 2047 — Redefining Hospitality for New India', the convention spotlighted Karnataka's strategic role in shaping the sector's future.

Aligning the state's tourism roadmap with the convention's theme, **HK Patil**, Minister for Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Legislation, Government of Karnataka, described the Karnataka Tourism Policy as a blueprint for growth.

He highlighted tourism-friendly incentives including capital subsidies up to ₹10 crore for convention centres, ₹5 crore

Karnataka recorded 4 lakh foreign and 25 crore domestic tourist arrivals in 2024

for premium hotels, and ₹2 crore for smaller projects, alongside stamp duty and registration exemptions, land conversion fee reimbursements, and industry status for hospitality — all of which positions Karnataka as one of India's most investment-ready states.

Adding to HK Patil's perspective, **MB Patil**, Minister for Large and Medium Scale Industries, Government of Karnataka, noted that Karnataka recorded four lakh foreign and 25 crore domestic tourist arrivals in 2024, underscoring tourism's potential as a driver of employment, investment, and global recognition. **K Syama Raju**, President, FHRAI, commended the government's policy

direction and welcomed the ₹1,350 crore allocation under the state's Tourism Policy 2024–2029 to enhance infrastructure and public-private partnerships. He also appreciated the extension of liquor license validity from one to five years — a move he termed "a major boost for hoteliers".

As the state continues to rise as a global MICE destination, he urged the government to identify new land parcels for hospitality expansion, extend industry status benefits to all hotels, and establish a 3,000-seat convention centre in Bengaluru. Karnataka, he affirmed, is redefining the contours of India's hospitality landscape with vision, policy, and purpose. ♦



Where dialogue replaces declarations

V Vidyavathi, Secretary, Tourism, GoI urged industry stakeholders to collectively find answers to the enduring challenges faced by India's tourism and hospitality landscape.

By DDP Bureau

In a refreshing gesture, **V Vidyavathi**, Secretary, Tourism, Government of India (GoI), graced the 55th FHRAI Annual Convention not merely to speak, but to listen — weaving a gentle rhythm of collaboration, inclusivity, and shared purpose, she turned to the audience for answers on shaping the future of India's tourism story.

Calling for a stronger public-private partnership, she

highlighted that the Ministry's forthcoming five-year Tourism Business Plan would be built on collective insights from industry stakeholders. The plan, she said, aims to elevate tourism's contribution to 10 percent of India's GDP, making it a true driver of economic and cultural growth.

"To attract global tourists with meaningful experiences, we must focus on country-specific strategies," she asserted.



V Vidyavathi
Secretary, Tourism
Government of India

How can we rebrand, refresh, and reinvent the 'Incredible India' campaign to meet the aspirations of new-age travellers?"

we, collectively, create value for tourists?"

"There cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach for travellers arriving from diverse regions with varying expectations."

Her words resonated with those present as she positioned tourism not merely as a business but as a shared emotional experience. "Tourism is probably the only sector that brings a smile to the person who is a tourist," she reflected. "Our endeavour is to bring that same smile to the industry too — we want a win-win for everyone."

Vidyavathi emphasised that tourism extends beyond offices or institutions — it is a joint effort involving the Government of India, state governments, local bodies, industry players, and the tourists themselves. She invited the audience to reflect on a key question: "How do

She urged the audience to ponder questions from a fresh perspective, such as, "How can we rebrand, refresh, and reinvent the 'Incredible India' campaign to meet the aspirations of new-age travellers? What reforms can accelerate ease of doing business across the sector? How can we leverage digital intelligence and data-driven insights to make smarter, more strategic decisions? And finally, how do we harness India's strength as one of the world's leading hospitality hubs?"

Her address was not a monologue but an invitation to a dialogue between policymakers and industry stakeholders. "The purpose is to trigger a discussion," she concluded. "Tourism is not something we speak about from podiums — it is something we build together." ♦



Andhra tourism all about speed & strategy



From hub-and-spoke models to homestays, Andhra Pradesh is shaping a thriving ecosystem for tourism investors, locals, and travellers, says **Kandula Durgesh**.

By **DDP Bureau**

Andhra Pradesh is rewriting the playbook on tourism. Speaking at the sidelines of 55th FHRAI Convention, **Kandula Durgesh**, Tourism Minister, Government of Andhra Pradesh, discussed how the state government has gone beyond the conventional idea of 'ease of doing business' and is now focusing on the speed of doing business — ensuring that projects and policies translate into visible progress on the ground. To give wings to this progress, Andhra Pradesh has accorded industry status to the tourism sector as well.

"Our priority is infra development and crafting experiences that stay with visitors," Durgesh shared. "We are currently focusing on hub-and-spoke models, tourism circuits, and our new policy for 2024–29, which focuses significant attention on



hospitality and resort-style operations. This policy has provided strong support to new hotels and tourism centres across the state." Under this policy, over the past six months, the state has cleared hospitality projects worth nearly ₹723 crore, which will bring 755 hotel keys and create employment

Over the past six months, the state has cleared hospitality projects worth nearly ₹723 crore, which will bring 755 hotel keys

opportunities for around 2,100 people. Beyond conventional hotels, Andhra Pradesh is also nurturing homestays, caravan tourism, and tent-house experiences, opening doors for unique, localised travel offerings.

"Our rich cultural heritage, coupled with a highly condu-

cive government policy, makes Andhra Pradesh a prime destination for tourism investments," Durgesh noted. The state has actively showcased its potential at forums such as ITB Berlin and TTF Chennai, attracting both domestic and global investors.

The numbers speak for themselves, with 21 new hotels and MICE proposals approved in the last six months alone. The government is also rolling out tourism land allotment policies to facilitate further development.

For homestays, the state has identified nearly 100 areas, ensuring that travellers experience Andhra Pradesh's culture and warmth first-hand. "We are committed to creating a tourism ecosystem that balances heritage, modern infrastructure, and immersive experiences," Durgesh concluded. ♦



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Hospitality powers 20% of Puducherry's revenue



After captivating tourists with its cosmopolitan charm, Puducherry is now turning its focus toward spiritual tourism, revealed the UT's Tourism Minister.

By DDP Bureau

In Puducherry, the hospitality sector is not just a business — it is the heartbeat of the local economy. Speaking at the 55th FHRAI Annual Convention, **K Lakshminarayanan**, Minister of Tourism, Government of Puducherry, revealed that nearly 20 per cent of Puducherry's total revenue comes from the hospitality industry. "Tourism is growing year by year," he said, expressing optimism about scaling the sector to new heights.

The confidence is well placed. Puducherry now welcomes around 19 lakh visitors annually, and its Indo-French heritage continues to draw global attention.

The Union Territory (UT) has been ranked 2nd in the world for its cosmopolitan character and welcoming spirit, next only to France. This recognition is



not by chance. "It is born from our people's open heartedness, their ability to make every visitor feel at home." As the global travel trend shifts toward spiritual experiences, the UT too stands poised to become a must-visit religious destination. Increasingly, people are realising that material success does

India's cultural diversity draws travellers back time and again simply because it is impossible to experience it all in one visit

not always equal happiness. They seek destinations that offer solace, reflection, and connection — and UT, with its spiritual and cultural diversity, is naturally positioned to lead this shift.

Emphasising on India's cultural diversity that draws travellers back time and again sim-

ply because it is impossible to experience it all in one visit, the minister observed, "Every hundred kilometres in India, one encounters a completely different culture." He added that this cultural richness gives India a distinct edge over many Western destinations. With its lively Tamil quarters and charming French district that boasts nearly 200 restaurants serving global cuisines, Puducherry too embodies this diversity. To further boost the industry, he said that the UT government supports the FHRAI's demand of de-linking restaurant tariffs from room rates, a long-standing request from the association. "We have taken the matter to the council and are hopeful of a positive response," he said. Currently, hotels operate under a 5 per cent GST structure without Input Tax Credit but reforms are being studied to make operations more viable. ♦

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Transforming hospitality

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From redefining India's hospitality to tapping the tourism potential of tier II cities, the 55th FHRAI Convention brought together policymakers & experts driving the country's trillion-dollar economy.







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By DDP Bureau

// Fast, precise, versatile — that is the iVario Pro in a nutshell," said **Mr Vishal Raman**, Managing Director, RATIONAL India. iVario Pro stands as a game-changing innovation, redefining efficiency, and performance in every hotel kitchen it enters. The basis for this claim is its thin pan base with powerful heating elements that reach 200 degrees in only approximately 2.5 minutes. In combination with its intelligence, the iVario Pro regulates temperatures automatically so that nothing sticks or boils over. "This has a positive impact on energy consumption and guarantees excellent food quality."

Another advantage of the iVario Pro in mise en place and service is its flexibility. "In the two-pan models, iVario 2-XS and iVario Pro 2-S, you can boil, fry, or deep fry different foods at the same time," said Mr Raman. If even several dishes are to be prepared at the same time, the pans can be divided into a total of up to four zones — the temperature is controlled separately for each zone. "This minimises waiting time for guests without compromising on food quality," says Mr Raman.

This creates a more relaxed working environment for the kitchen team. The iVario Pro



automatically monitors and regulates the cooking process, gives recommendations for action, and signals when food needs to be turned or stirred. It is so simple to operate that even non-specialist staff can work

with the cooking system after a short training period.

Choosing the iVario Pro means saying goodbye to unnecessary equipment and optimising kitchen processes and food qual-

Choosing iVario Pro means not only saying goodbye to unnecessary equipment but also optimising kitchen processes and food quality

ity. "Less space, less time, but more power. The iVario Pro is a game changer in the restaurant kitchen," Mr Raman concluded. Further information on the iVario Pro, the models, advantages, and performance examples can be found at rational-online.com. ♦



Convergence of culture & care at **TTE 2025**



TTE 2025 reimagined Tamil Nadu's travel narrative beyond religious tourism, highlighting medical and wedding tourism along with experiences rooted in local culture.

By **DDP Bureau**

The 2nd edition of the Tamilnadu Travel Expo (TTE) unfolded in Madurai with impressive enthusiasm, reaffirming the state's growing stature as one of India's most versatile travel destinations. With the tagline 'Explore Beyond Heritage', this year's edition went beyond temples and traditions, showcasing Tamil Nadu's expanding appeal in wellness, medical, wedding, and experiential tourism.

Organised by Travel Club Madurai, with support from the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, Tamil Nadu Tourism, South India Hotels and Restaurants Association (SIHRA), and the Confederation of Indian

Industry (CII), the event brought together key stakeholders, policy leaders, and hospitality professionals under one roof — or rather, two.

"We had only one hall in the first edition," shared **Sunder Singaram**, Director of Operations, SIHRA. "But this time, the response was overwhelming — sellers came from across India. We had to expand to two halls, hosting 150 sellers and about 250 buyers. With such participation, we are confident TTE will soon become a biennial event, returning in 2027."

BEYOND TEMPLES

While Tamil Nadu's temple heritage has long defined its global

Tamil Nadu alone saw around 306 million domestic and 1.6 million global visitors

tourism identity, TTE 2025 aimed to show that the state's story stretches far beyond stone carvings and rituals.

Dr G Vasudevan, Managing Director, Fortune Pandiyan Hotel, highlighted the growing focus on unexplored destinations and experiences.

"The Expo shines a light on lesser-known treasures," he said. "Beyond Meenakshi Temple, Thirumalai Nayakkar Mahal, and the Gandhi Memorial Museum, Madurai offers the Keeladi Museum, which displays artifacts from a 2,500-year-old civilisation; Vilachery village known for its clay dolls; and wetlands that host migratory birds. Even a heritage walk from the Meenakshi Temple to the Palace now offers a journey through time." This narrative of Tamil Nadu that is alive, layered, and diverse resonated through every discussion at the expo.

TOURISM BY NUMBERS

At the event, **Venkatesan Dhattareyan**, Regional Director



(South), Indiatourism Chennai, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, presented an optimistic picture of the Tamil Nadu's travel landscape along with India's tourism narrative. "India witnessed a substantial rise in tourism last year, welcoming 9.95 million foreign tourists, while domestic travel surged to about 2,950 million," he noted. "For Tamil Nadu alone, we saw around 306 million domestic and 1.6 million global visitors." He added that these figures underscore both the opportunity and responsibility that come with growth. "Although Tamil Nadu

now has four international airports — Chennai, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai, and Coimbatore — creating multiple gateways for both leisure and business travellers but increasing flight frequencies and exploring new routes from tourist hubs like Kochi would further strengthen connectivity." Dhattareyan also underlined the rising potential of MICE and wedding tourism, suggesting a dedicated expo to spotlight these expanding segments in the state.

WEDDINGS

Tamil Nadu is emerging as a

The state's
45,000 registered
temples,
many of them
centuries old,
hold immense
potential as
wedding venues

unique wedding destination, combining grandeur with spirituality. Singaram and others

underlined the collective effort needed to position the state on India's booming wedding tourism map.

"Many are promoting their venues individually, but we must work together," Singaram said. "Imagine temple backdrops for weddings — Hall of thousand-pillars in Madurai, the Thirumalai Nayakkar Mahal, or ASI-protected mandapams like Pudumandapam. We are in dialogue with the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department (HR&CE) to make temple weddings a cultural showcase."

Adding to this, **Vikram Cotah**, Independent Director, Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation, and CEO, GRT Hotels & Resorts, noted that Tamil Nadu's 45,000 registered temples, many centuries old, hold immense potential, especially as wedding venues.

"Just as Rajasthan has its palace weddings, Tamil Nadu can be known for temple weddings. It is not just about luxury, there is a spiritual dimension to weddings here," he said. He highlighted that infrastructure and connectivity will be key in its promotion, noting that the state is investing in new roads, airports, and trade centres, while private players are exploring Public Private Partnership





models to develop large-scale venues in the state.

MEDICAL TOURISM

If heritage draws visitors to Tamil Nadu, healthcare keeps them coming back. The state remains a powerhouse in medical tourism, with world-class hospitals, skilled doctors, and cost-effective treatment options.

"Cities like Chennai, Coimbatore, and Madurai have established themselves as global healthcare hubs," Dhattareyan noted at TTE 2025. "India's advantage lies in affordability, quality, and communication with paramedics and doctors fluent in English. Tamil Nadu's medical institutions are leading this movement."

Representing this sector, **Mahesh Kumar**, Chief Administrative Officer, Sri Ram Krishna Hospital, spoke of their

A Kaveri Nadi Parikrama can become a powerful tourism circuit, connecting heritage, culture, and ecology

legacy of excellence. "We are not just participants in the global trend, we aim to lead it," he said. "For over five decades, our mission has been to deliver compassionate, cutting-edge care at affordable prices."

Sri Ramakrishna Hospital has achieved several milestones — from performing Tamil Nadu's first kidney transplant outside Chennai to completing



India's first swab liver transplant between two hospitals in 2025. "Medical travel is creating new opportunities," he added. "Healthcare today is truly global and Tamil Nadu is ready to embrace this change."

NEW CIRCUIT

In a forward-looking suggestion, Dhattareyan proposed the creation of a 'Kaveri Circuit', akin to the Narmada Parikrama in Madhya Pradesh. "The Kaveri River is Tamil Nadu's lifeline," he said. "A Kaveri Nadi Parikrama can become a powerful tourism circuit, connecting heritage, culture, and ecology along the river's flow."

EXPLORING MADURAI

KJ Praveenkumar, District Collector, Madurai, echoed the event's central theme by stressing on moving beyond the surface of Tamil Nadu's current tourism narrative. "People usually come with a checklist — visit

Meenakshi Temple, buy sarees, and leave. But Tamil Nadu is much more than that," he said. "We have amusement parks, beaches, wildlife, ancient art forms like Bharatanatyam, and a gastronomic culture that celebrates diversity."

He added that Madurai stands as a symbol of safe and soulful tourism. "We cater not only to religious travellers but also to those seeking affordable healthcare, culinary experi-

ences, and traditional weddings. This balance makes Tamil Nadu truly unique."

As the conversations at TTE 2025 unfolded, leaders claimed that Tamil Nadu is redefining what travel means in the modern era. From ancient temples to advanced hospitals, from eco-villages to wedding venues, the state is crafting a holistic story of heritage meeting innovation.

"Tourism in Tamil Nadu has only begun to scratch the surface of its potential," said Praveenkumar in his closing remarks. "We have one of the longest-lived civilisations in continuous existence, and our responsibility now is to tell that story authentically, collectively, and globally." With its renewed focus on collaboration and storytelling, TTE 2025 did exactly that by inviting the world to explore beyond heritage and experience the living soul of Tamil Nadu. ♦





Revolutionising hospitality operations with AI solutions

Singaram (Arvind) Sundar, CEO, StejasSYS, talks about how his organisation is addressing operational challenges in the hospitality sector through AI-based technologies.

By DDP Bureau

As a tech innovator, what are the challenges hoteliers seek to address through your solutions?

Our product line addresses several operational challenges. Many hoteliers seek solutions that make hotel and F&B operations more efficient using technology that is not only innovative but also purposeful and easy to deploy. The focus is always on simplifying operations while enhancing guest experience — and that is where our technology steps in.

How are you innovating within your product range?

We have three main verticals — hospitality, F&B, and wellness. For hospitality, we have developed AI-based products that sit on top of standard hotel systems like PMS, booking engines, and channel managers. One of our flagship innovations is a 24x7 AI concierge that enhances guest experience through



Singaram (Arvind) Sundar
CEO, StejasSYS

real-time sentiment analysis. By capturing and analysing guest data, we help hotels make smarter business decisions. In F&B, our solutions manage the entire journey from procurement to kitchen to Point of Sale.

With complete data tracking, we identify inefficiencies and food wastage points. Within three months of implementation, hotels typically see a 20 per cent reduction in food waste, which is significant for large properties. We also use AI-driven demand forecasting to predict meal requirements accurately, minimising waste even further.

For hospitality, we have developed AI-based products that sit on top of hotel systems like PMS, booking engines, and channel managers

For the wellness segment, we have built a comprehensive platform that partners with resorts to offer curated wellness retreats — three-day, five-day, or longer programmes integrating yoga, meditation, spa therapies, nutrition, and Ayurveda. We design the programme end-to-end, train the staff, and the resort executes it. It is a complete ecosystem that enhances guest wellbeing while generating leads for the resorts.

How did the 55th FHRAI Annual Convention help you connect with prospective clients?

This event was truly an eye-opener. It gave us an opportunity to meet decision-makers. These are exactly the businesses we aim to serve through technology. The event opened doors for us to connect to the potential users and understand their real challenges. ♦



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Kanyakumari: Budget stays & soulful temples

Sharing insights on Kanyakumari's tourism sector, **Chandran**, Owner, Hotel Sea View, highlights how his hotel caters to mid-segment travellers drawn to the city's serene spirituality.

By **DDP Bureau**

At the southernmost tip of India, where the land bows to meet the sea, lies Kanyakumari — a town where time seems to slow and stories rise with every tide. With its breathtaking sunrises, soulful temples, and windswept coastline, this Tamil Nadu gem blends natural splendour with spiritual serenity. Every corner reveals a view that feels both timeless and new.

Known for its spiritual charm and rich heritage, Kanyakumari largely attracts mid-segment travellers

In an exclusive conversation, **Chandran**, Owner, Hotel Sea View, shared his insights on Kanyakumari's evolving tourism tapestry. "Domestic arrivals are growing rapidly here, though inbound tourism still trails behind Kerala," he said. He proudly points to the town's signature landmarks such as the Vivekananda Rock Memorial, the new glass bridge, and the ethereal sunrise and sunset points that draw travellers.

Known for its spiritual charm and rich heritage, Kanyakumari largely attracts mid-segment travellers. Yet, as Chandran notes, the destination remains an untapped treasure for MICE and wedding tourism. "It is a small place — primarily leisure-driven," he admits, "but the potential is immense."

NEW HORIZONS FOR TOURISM

Chandran envisions a more dynamic future for Kanyakumari, one that blends adventure with youthful energy. "A cable car service in the nearby hills could attract thrill-seekers," he suggests. "Kanyakumari is the only place in Tamil Nadu with a ferry service on the open sea, a unique experience that already draws huge crowds. That distinctiveness deserves to be celebrated and expanded."



A short exhibition or film on local heritage can help travellers understand what makes each city unique."

AFFORDABLE HOSPITALITY

Recalling the evolution of Kanyakumari's hospitality landscape where there is no dearth of mid-segment hotels, Chandran shared his family's inspiring journey.

His father entered the business decades ago, starting with just four rooms priced at two rupees a night — at a time when the town had only two hotels. Today, that humble beginning has grown into a thriving brand



with 16 properties across Kanyakumari, with Hotel Sea View standing as its flagship.

With 60 rooms, including 35 offering uninterrupted ocean views, the property blends comfort with character. "From your bed, you can see the sunrise, the sea, and the ferry," Chandran says with quiet pride. Most of his guests are middle-class families seeking a comfortable yet affordable stay. "They usually travel for six or seven days," he shares. "They want value without compromising on quality — a preference common among travellers visiting this city."

Speaking about the role of travel agents in driving his hotel's growth, Chandran notes, "Nearly 70 per cent of our bookings come through travel agencies. We offer them better rates than online portals."

His hotels also provide free railway station transfers and discounted cab fares from nearby airports — thoughtful gestures that enhance guest satisfaction.

Underlining a trend that he has observed among the travellers visiting Kanyakumari, he said, "Here most visitors prefer room tariffs under ₹4,500, though they expect all modern amenities. Typically, tourists spend two to three nights here before moving on to other destinations."

PROMOTING CULTURAL IDENTITY

To further boost tourism in Kanyakumari, Chandran believes storytelling holds the key. "Every place — be it Madurai, Rameshwaram, or Kanyakumari — has its own legend. A short exhibition or film on local heritage can help visitors understand what makes each city unique. When visitors from North India come here, many do not know why we celebrate Pongal or the legends behind our temples." He believes that showcasing these stories can deepen travellers' understanding of Kanyakumari's cultural fabric.

To him, preserving heritage and promoting tourism go hand in hand. "Our legends and festivals define Kanyakumari's spirit," Chandran concludes. "If we tell our stories well, visitors will connect with the destination." ♦



Science of sleep, perfected for hospitality

As King Koil expands its footprint through collaborations and design-led initiatives, the company is focusing on crafting exceptional sleep experiences for luxury hotels.

By DDP Bureau

As King Koil, a well-known name in the hospitality sector for the premium quality mattresses, expands its footprint through collaborations with leading hotel chains, key hospitality exhibitions, and immersive engagement programmes with architects and designers, **Aman Goel**, Business Head (Hospitality), King Koil India, shares insights into what truly goes into crafting the perfect guest experience.

How do you align your brand philosophy with the comfort standards of 5-star hotels?

Our philosophy revolves around creating bespoke sleep experiences — blending science, craftsmanship, and luxury to



Aman Goel
Business Head (Hospitality)
King Koil India

meet the exacting comfort standards of 5-star hotels.

What are the key factors hotels look for when selecting a mattress partner?

They seek partners who deliver quality, durability, customisation, consistency, and post-sales support — all areas where King Koil has set benchmarks.

How does King Koil help hospitality partners maintain consistent sleep quality across different properties?

We design every hospitality mattress with a deep understanding of how guests sleep — factoring in body ergonomics, climate conditions, and usage cycles typical to hotel operations. Our products are custom engineered

for hospitality, ensuring durability without compromising comfort. Beyond manufacturing, we work closely with hoteliers to design Sleep Experience Programmes — aligning room categories with mattress specifications, ensuring a consistent brand promise across locations.

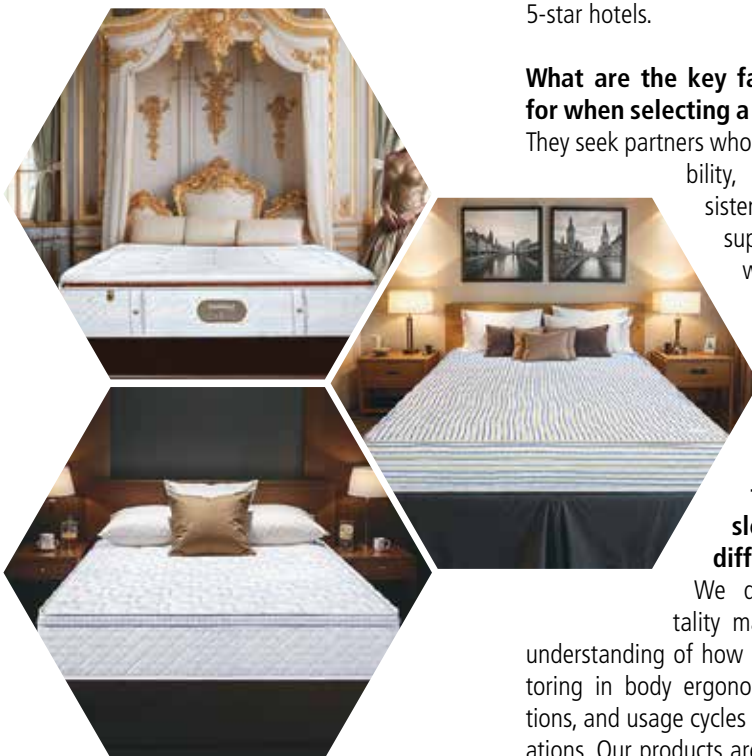
In an industry where mattresses are often seen as a cost, how does King Koil redefine them as an investment?

At King Koil, we have always believed that comfort is not a cost centre; it is a strategic investment. Our experience of over 120 years globally, and more than two decades in India, has shown that the right sleep solution enhances not just the guest's experience, but also the hotel's reputation and revenue. A mattress that lasts, performs, and delights pays back in loyalty and word-of-mouth far beyond its price tag.

Our philosophy revolves around creating bespoke sleep experiences blending science, craftsmanship, and luxury

Which regions or hotel segments are driving your growth currently?

Our growth is being propelled by luxury and boutique hotel projects across metro cities, resort destinations, and emerging tier II markets. Additionally, we are currently focusing on expanding our portfolio with next-generation sleep technologies in key markets. ♦



ITW India relocates; new HQ operational

With a growing team, ITW India has inaugurated its new headquarters, marking another milestone as it prepares for upcoming offices in Bengaluru and Mumbai.

By DDP Bureau

ITW India (FEG Division) has inaugurated a new office in Gurgaon, which will serve as the company's headquarter in the country. The new facility features a state-of-the-art experience centre, purpose-built for live cooking demonstrations, warewashing systems, and food preparation innovations — underscoring the brand's ongoing commitment to excellence and innovation in the industry.

Speaking about its growth, **Razi Haider**, Country Manager, ITW India (FEG Division), said, "As the team has grown now, we have opened a new spacious office here in Capital Business Park, Tower II, Gurgaon. The new facility is designed not just for administrative



Razi Haider
Country Manager
ITW India (FEG Division)

operations but also as an interactive experience centre."

EXPANSION STRATEGIES

ITW India continues to strengthen its presence in South India, witnessing rising demand across Bengaluru, Chennai, and Hyderabad. "We currently have an office in Bengaluru and will soon be relocating to a larger facility nearby by 2026," he shared, adding that the company's sustained efforts are driving promising growth across key southern markets.

He further revealed, "Soon, we will be opening an office in Mumbai in 2027 to serve the Western India region."



The new Gurgaon facility is designed not just for administrative operations but also as an interactive experience centre

AI-POWERED PRODUCTS

On the innovation front, ITW recently launched its FLOW Line flight-type dishwashing machine, featuring AI-based technology for improved efficiency and automation. The product will be showcased at the upcoming Milan Show. "Our customers increasingly seek AI-driven solutions, and we have already incorporated these technologies in both our dishwashing and cooking equipment," he stated. ♦



Philip Logan
Group President
Ridhira Group

Ridhira Group has appointed Philip Logan as Group President. In this role, Logan will lead the group's roadmap across hospitality, wellness communities, residential real estate, and lifestyle ventures. His mandate includes scaling wellness resort communities, launching master-planned developments, and embedding wellness-driven living into every project. Logan brings with him three decades of global leadership experience across Asia, Europe, and Australia, with senior roles at EMAAR, Accor, Royal Orchid Hotels, and Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia. In India, he is known for his transformative leadership at Hyderabad International Convention Centre.



Sanjay Pandita
Hotel Manager, Hilton Garden
Inn Bengaluru Embassy
Manyata Business Park

Hilton Garden Inn Bengaluru Embassy Manyata Business Park has appointed Sanjay Pandita as the Hotel Manager. With over two decades of experience, Pandita brings deep expertise in hotel operations, service excellence, and revenue growth to the role. In his recent position as Director of Operations at Aurika Mumbai International Airport, he oversaw operations across multiple restaurants, extensive event spaces, and guest services. In his new role, he will be responsible for driving operational excellence, ensuring profitability, and delivering exceptional guest experiences.



Sunil Yadav
Director, Finance, Marriott
Executive Apartments,
Bengaluru UB City

Marriott Executive Apartments, Bengaluru UB City, has appointed Sunil Yadav as Director of Finance. With 19 years of experience in the hospitality sector, Yadav is known for his financial acumen, governance frameworks, and cost optimisation strategies. Honoured for delivering the highest gross operating profit in the Bengaluru Marriott market, he has implemented robust audit systems, shortened debtor cycles, and ensured regulatory compliance while driving profitability. In his new role, he will lead financial strategy, enabling sustainable growth and operational efficiency for the newly launched property in the city.



Reshma Godbole
Director, Sales & Marketing,
Le Méridien Mahabaleshwar
Resort & Spa

Reshma Godbole has been appointed as the Director of Sales & Marketing by Le Méridien Mahabaleshwar Resort & Spa. With over 20 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Godbole brings a strong track record of driving sales strategies, building market presence, and delivering business growth for leading luxury hotel brands. In her new role, Godbole will spearhead the resort's sales and marketing initiatives, overseeing strategic partnerships, market expansion, and revenue growth, while further enhancing the property's positioning as a premier leisure and MICE & wedding destination in Mahabaleshwar.



Sheel Jadeja
Director, Sales, Marriott
Executive Apartments,
Bengaluru UB City

Marriott Executive Apartments, Bengaluru UB City, has appointed Sheel Jadeja as Director of Sales. Jadeja brings over 14 years of experience in sales and revenue management across luxury hospitality brands, driving business growth and market expansion. Known for his strategic acumen, relationship-building skills, and innovative approach, he has led sales teams to achieve exceptional revenue performance and brand visibility. In his new role, he will spearhead market outreach strategies, partnerships, and revenue optimisation, positioning the property as the preferred address for extended stays and luxury experiences in Bengaluru.



Mahesh Kini
Director, Operations, Marriott
Executive Apartments,
Bengaluru UB City

Marriott Executive Apartments, Bengaluru UB City, has appointed Mahesh Kini as Director of Operations. With over 25 years of experience across India and the Maldives, Kini brings a wealth of expertise to the property. He has been instrumental in launching and relaunching award-winning dining concepts, including the successful revamp of Alba and UNO Izakaya at JW Marriott Bengaluru. In his new role, he will spearhead the property's overall operational strategy, champion sustainability initiatives, and introduce innovative dining experiences tailored to the needs of today's modern travellers.



Vineet Kumar
Director, Rooms
Courtyard by Marriott
Bengaluru Hebbal

Courtyard by Marriott Bengaluru Hebbal has appointed Vineet Kumar as the Director of Rooms. With over 14 years of experience in the industry across leading international brands, Kumar brings a wealth of operational expertise and a strong acumen for delivering refined and personalised guest experiences. His career includes leadership roles at esteemed properties, such as Sheraton Hyderabad Hotel, Novotel Hyderabad Airport, Oakwood Residence Kapil Hyderabad, Jaipur Marriott Hotel, JW Marriott Mussoorie Walnut Grove Resort & Spa, Radisson Blu GRT Chennai, and The Lalit Grand Palace Srinagar.



Gayatri Dravid
Group Head, Corporate
Communications &
Marketing, Rosetta Hospitality

Rosetta Hospitality has appointed Gayatri Dravid as Group Head of Corporate Communications and Marketing. With nearly two decades of experience in hospitality communications and brand strategy, Dravid steps into this role having championed marketing and PR mandates for some of the most renowned hospitality brands in India. In her new role, she will spearhead the group's marketing mandate: communications, public relations, and integrated marketing, overseeing all facets from brand storytelling to media outreach, reputation management, and digital innovation.



Sandeep Mohan
Director, Food & Beverage,
Hyatt Regency Trivandrum

Hyatt Regency Trivandrum has appointed Sandeep Mohan as Director of Food & Beverage. In his previous roles, Mohan has held leadership profiles across some of the world's most prestigious hospitality brands, including Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts, Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts, and Grand Hyatt Kochi. Known for his strong operational expertise, guest-centric approach, and ability to lead high-performing teams, Mohan has consistently contributed to enhancing food and beverage offerings across luxury hospitality environments. In his new role, he is expected to execute innovative strategies that will enhance the dining experiences for the guests.



Siddharth Khurana
Front Office Manager, The
Leela Bhartiya City Bengaluru,
Hotel Conventions Residences

Siddharth Khurana has been appointed as Front Office Manager by The Leela Bhartiya City Bengaluru, Hotel Conventions Residences. With an extensive experience across Hyatt Hotels in Gurgaon, Amritsar, New Delhi, and Ludhiana, Khurana is known for driving guest loyalty, service innovations, and managing large teams across front office and guest services. He brings expertise in categories such as MICE, corporate travel, and luxury experiences. At The Leela Bhartiya City Bengaluru Hotel Conventions Residences he will lead front office operations, ensuring seamless service and personalised guest experiences.



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