

FHRAI GOLDEN JUBILEE CONVENTION DELIBERATES ON INDUSTRY-RELATED ISSUES

TOP ECHELONS AND POLICYMAKERS OF THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY FRATERNITY CAME UNDER ONE ROOF TO DISCUSS THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH THE SECTOR. ODISHA TOURISM LEFT NO STONE UNTURNED TO HIGHLIGHT THE TRUE POTENTIAL AND ESSENCE OF THE STATE.



CM of Odisha, Naveen Patnaik inaugurating the FHRAI Golden Jubilee Convention

Sulagna Ghosh

Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) held its 50th Annual Golden Jubilee Convention from 25-27 September 2015 at Mayfair Lagoon & Convention Centre, Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The Convention with the theme 'Atithi Devo Bhava' witnessed participation of more than 800 delegates.

Naveen Patnaik, Chief Minister of Odisha inaugurated the Convention in the presence of Dr. Mahesh Sharma, Minister of State for Tourism (IC), Culture (IC) and Civil Aviation, Govt. of India; Ashok Chandra Panda, Minister of Tourism & Culture, Govt. of Odisha; Debi Prasad Mishra, Minister of Industries, School and Mass Education, Govt. Odisha; RV Deshpande, Minister for Large & Medium Industries and Tourism, Govt. of Karnataka; Jual Oram, Union Minister of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India; and Vinod Zutshi, Secretary- Tourism, Govt. of India.

The CM said that Odisha offers tremendous scope for tourism development. "Its architectural wonders, lush green forests, flora and



Naveen Suchanti, Sudesh Poddar, T S Wallia, Dr. Mahesh Sharma, Debi Prasad Mishra, Dilip Ray and Ashok Chandra Panda unveiling the Coffee Table Book of FHRAI

fauna and beautiful sea beach attract tourists from various parts of the world," he said. Patnaik assured that his Government will provide all facilities to promote and market Odisha as a preferred destination for tourists.

The State Government has recently launched a New Industrial Policy Resolution 2015 which will give a boost to the industry and thrust to

Cultural Carnival and Heritage Walk marks the celebration of World Tourism Day

To mark the occasion of 'World Tourism Day', a Heritage Walk and colourful Carnival showcasing the culture of Odisha was organized jointly by Odisha Tourism and FHRAI. The Carnival was flagged off by S C Jamir, Governor of Odisha. The walk with the theme- 'Tourism Unites the World' was a cultural extravaganza with tableaux, folk dances and performances. Enthralling thousands of spectators, the carnival procession was led by a group of bikers on luxury bikes with Bollywood diva Mahima Choudhry riding pillion on one of them. The extravaganza also comprised of eight tableaux with different themes, exclusively designed for the carnival. Musical bands of Indian Navy, Odisha police along with dance troupes from Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Uttarakhand, West Bengal and Jharkhand enthralled the audience.



Delegates during the World Tourism Day Carnival celebration

tourism, believes Patnaik. He further stated that for speedy clearance of tourism projects on fast track basis, the Government has set up Single Window Clearance Committee at different levels.

Dr. Mahesh Sharma informed about the Union Government's target to share at least one per cent of world tourism in next three to five years. "To share one per cent of world tourism, we need better infrastructure and for which we have to take the whole country together and understand the tourism potentiality. We believe that tourism cannot be a government's job. All

BUSINESS SESSIONS

Odisha Tourism- Opportunities Unlimited

L.N. Gupta, Principal Secretary- Skill Development, Technical Education and Tourism, Govt. of Odisha and Anil Kumar Samal, Director and Additional Secretary to Govt., Department of Tourism, Odisha were present at the session. Gupta gave a presentation on the different tourism offerings of Odisha, innumerable tourism investment opportunities in the state and the investor friendly policies guaranteed under the Industrial Policy Resolution 2015.



Rajiv Pratap Rudy addressing the Conference

Skill Development in Hospitality Industry

Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Union Minister of State (I/C) of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, gave a detailed speech on the shortage of skill development in the country. He gave examples of countries having skilled and employed people like Korea (96%), Germany (80%) and China (46%), whereas India's share is merely 4.5%. Rudy informed that India would require additional three crore skilled people in the next five years and in order to achieve that the government has set up 36 sector councils.

Heart Talk: Dil Se

Prabhu Chawla, Editorial Director of The New Indian Express had a face to face talk with Rakesh Sarna, MD and CEO, Indian Hotels Company Ltd. Chawla raised some hard-hitting questions to Sarna like whether the brand 'Taj' has lost its charm and is going through a bad patch to which Sarna asserted that the brand is here to stay and will do well in the years to come. Chawla raised another question on the introduction of sub-brands of Taj (Vivanta, Gateway, Ginger) to which Sarna said that these brands were introduced by IHCL not because it was not confident about the Taj brand. "We introduced Ginger as we thought it will do well because of halo around the Taj," said Sarna.

Voice from the Top

The session was moderated by Mandeep Lamba, MD- India (Hotels & Hospitality Group), James Lang Lasalle, India and panelists included Zubin S Songadwala, GM, ITC Maurya New Delhi; K. Mohanchandran, Area Director- Hyderabad and GM, Taj Krishna; David Foskett, MBE Emeritus Professor, University of West London; M W Liam Steevenson, Master of Wine from UK. The panelists concluded with the fact that human interface will remain forever in the hotel industry and technology should be deployed in a manner without disturbing the human touch.

Iconic hospitality properties creating Tourism Destinations- Is it lack of Government support or absence of Entrepreneurship

The session was moderated by B.M. Gupta, Chief General Manager, Tourism finance Corporation of India Ltd. and panelists included Chander Baljee, C&MD, Royal Orchid Hotels; Subhash Goyal, President, Indian Association of Tour Operators; Suresh Kumar, MD, Fortune Park Hotels Ltd.; and Ashley Monteiro, MD, Pathfinders Travel Co. Ltd. Gupta said that there is a need to create such products that attracts investors and tourists. Monteiro gave the example of casino business that brings back the money to the country and said that we should think out of the box.

Social Media & Technology- Influence on Hospitality Business

The session moderated by Ronald Scott, Hospitality Expert from the UK, witnessed Mike Kistner, CEO, RezNext Global Solutions; Ritesh Agarwal, CEO, Oyo Rooms; Nikhil Ganju, Country Manager, TripAdvisor; Binu Mathews, CEO, IDS Next Business Solutions; Farhana Haque, Head- Machine to Machine, Vodafone; Upendra Jit Singh, CMD, Webel; and Atul Prabhu, Founder CEO, RoomCentral. The panelists discussed upon the advantages of social media and the need to leverage it for business opportunities. "Hotels should consider it as an opportunity and not as a threat. If we are not going to embrace it, the business is going to fall," opined Kristner.



Mike Kistner, Ritesh Agarwal, Ronald Scott, Nikhil Ganju, Farhana Haque, Binu Mathews during the session

the stake holders including the hotel industries will have to cooperate to boost the sector that would generate more employment," he said.

Addressing the inaugural, Ashok Chandra Panda, said that the state has drawn a roadmap for tourism development and investment promotion. He also urged Dr. Mahesh Sharma for single window clearance of tourism and hospitality sector development projects along with taking up dedicated projects under Central Govt. schemes in Odisha.

Debi Prasad Mishra spoke on the investor-friendly policies of the state and said that clearances for green projects would not take more than 15 days in the state. "A GIS platform has been activated where prospective investor can get all the information on the land availability online," he said.

T S Walia, President, FHRAI, said that decision to hold the convention outside metro cities was deliberate and would help in taking the benefits of tourism to smaller cities.

3D MAP OF ODISHA UNVEILED AT AIRPORT

A 3D map of Odisha containing information about tourist destinations in the state was unveiled by Ashok Chandra Panda, Tourism and Culture Minister, Government of Odisha, at Biju Patnaik International Airport. The map would serve as an eye opener for air travellers and tourists, who can have a synoptic view of Odisha's flora, fauna and tourism spots.

Dilip Ray, C&MD, Mayfair Hotels and Chairman, Convention Organizing Committee, said that through this convention they endeavor to highlight the potential of tourism sector as a major source of foreign exchange earnings for



3D map of Odisha at the Airport

the country. "The convention would go a long way in exposing the innumerable opportunities for tourism in the East and North East of India," he said.