

Published Date:	27 Jul 2024	Publication:	The Economic Times [New Delhi]
Journalist:	Anumeha Chaturvedi	Page No:	13
Circulation:	82,273		

AFTER BUDGET BOOST FOR TOURISM IN TWO STATES

Hotels Plan to Make Room in Bihar, Odisha

Anumeha Chaturvedi

New Delhi: More hoteliers could open hotels in Bihar and Odisha after budget proposals sought to help boost tourism in the two eastern states, industry insiders said. Organised branded hotel supply in the two states is currently limited.

On Thursday, Indian Hotels Company (IHCL) announced the opening of Taj City Centre Patna. In Patna, it also has a 70-key Ginger and another Ginger hotel is in the pipeline.

In Odisha, IHCL has six hotels of which two are in the pipeline with three Ginger properties across Bhubaneswar, Kalinganagar and Paradeep, a Vivanta and a SeleQ-tions in Bhubaneswar, and the upcoming Taj property in Puri.

Suma Venkatesh, executive vice president for real estate and development at IHCL, said apart from their capital cities, both states have several commercial hubs and industrial towns that offer potential for hotels in mid-scale to upper up-scale segments.

"IHCL will continue evaluating and expanding its presence across various segments and brands in these regions," she added.

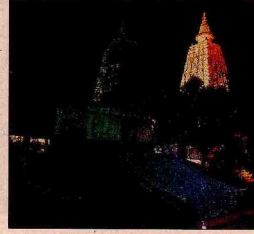
Nikhil Sharma, MD and ASVP, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group, said the government's focus on enhancing spiritual corridors in Bihar and turning Odisha into an ul-

time destination is a 'commendable' step and that his chain is aligned with this vision.

Radisson recently marked its entry into the two states with the signing of Radisson Hotel Patna and the opening of Pramod Lands End Resort, a member of Radisson Individuals in Gopalpur (Odisha), and Sharma said the chain is actively identifying new opportunities and developing a strategic India-focused pipeline.

"With the government's increasing focus on developing tourism infrastructure, hotel chains are expected to plan and expand their presence in these regions," said Mandeep S Lamba, president and CEO, HVS Anarock. "We anticipate more projects to be announced in the mid-term, further enhancing the tourism potential of these states," he added.

Jaideep Dang, MD, Hotels and Hospitality Group, India at JLL said branded supply in Odisha currently accounts for 1,350 keys with a total



A view of Mahabodhi temple at Bodhi Gaya during Buddha Purnima

GETTY IMAGES

of 960 keys in the pipeline. In Bihar, the branded supply accounts for 855 keys with a total of 398 keys in the pipeline which are scheduled to open over the next few years. "Overall, the budget's focus on religious tourism in Bihar and Odisha is expected to drive an increase in tourist arrivals on the back of enhanced connectivity, upgradation of pilgrimage sites and development of tourist

infrastructure, thereby benefiting the hospitality industry in these states," he added.

A Lemon Tree Hotels spokesperson said the chain has an existing hotel in the capital city, Patna, and an upcoming hotel in Motihari, and is continuing to discuss and pursue potential partnerships to establish its footprint in other cities in the state. Lemon Tree also has a 60 key Lemon Tree Hotel coming up in Bhubaneswar.

Manav Thadani, founder chairman of hospitality consultancy firm Hotelivate said there has been a lot more focus on Bihar in the recent past. "The region around Bodhi Gaya has a lot of opportunities that may induce more development and more hotel brands to come into that market," he added.

Nandivardhan Jain, founder and CEO of Noesis Capital Advisors, said extensive infrastructure improvements will make Bihar more accessible and attractive to tourists and investors alike.