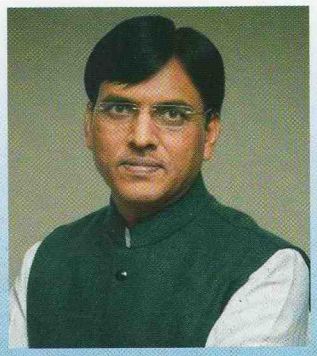
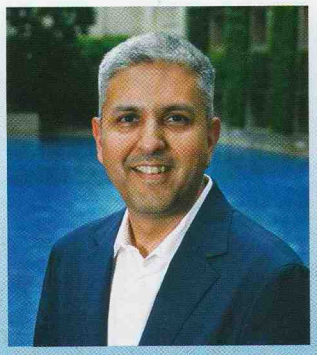


Mandaviya: the event will strengthen our country's position on the global sporting map



Singh: it will accelerate infrastructure and connectivity across all of Gujarat

presence and pipeline across the state. We have Lemon Tree Premier on the Sabarmati Riverfront at the upscale end, Lemon Tree Hotel in Navrangpura at the upper-midscale and Keys Select near Ashram Road in the mid-market. That matters more than proximity to any one venue. Today, our footprint in the state stands at 32 properties, comprising 12 operational hotels and a robust pipeline of 20 upcoming hotels. The pipeline includes Vadodara, Navsari, Bhuj, Bhavnagar, Gandhidham, Junagadh, Gir, Surat, Valsad, Pavagadh and Garudeshwar, among others, across our portfolio of brands. And we remain open to evaluating opportunities in Gujarat, including acquisitions, where the asset, location and economics are compelling. Timelines vary depending on project execution and approvals, particularly across a portfolio that spans managed and franchised properties. What is constant is that Gujarat stays central to our expansion strategy; we see real headroom not just in Ahmedabad and the major commercial centres, but across the state's industrial corridors, pilgrimage circuits, wildlife and nature destinations and emerging leisure markets. Our approach to growth is disciplined and increasingly asset-light. We see significant opportunities to expand through management contracts and franchises, which enable us to bring our brands and operating expertise into attractive markets by partnering with potential partners. At the same time, if an owned or acquired asset offers the right strategic location, attractive economics and long-term value creation potential, we would certainly evaluate it. The objective is to build a high-quality network that creates sustainable value for the company and our partners," he adds.

Gujarat's 200-km-long coastline combines leisure, marine ecology, heritage and high-density pilgrimage corridors and the opening for branded hospitality is to build destinations around that mix, rather than just build on the waterfront, informs Singh. The state's focus on infrastructure has already been a real enabler for tourism and commerce in Gujarat. Sustaining development ahead of 2030 means continued investment in multi-modal connectivity, which means regional air routes, high-speed rail, last-mile road infrastructure, along with faster, more predictable approvals for hospitality projects. For hospitality operators, key considerations include project land acquisition, sustainable asset economics and streamlined municipal and environmental clearances. Furthermore, as new tourism circuits emerge, public-private alignment on last-mile transit, localised urban amenities and trained talent pipelines is essential. A destination thrives when visitor transit, local experiences, and hotel inventory develop as an integrated ecosystem.

The 2030 Commonwealth Games can be a defining moment for Ahmedabad and a powerful catalyst for Gujarat's tourism economy. The opportunity extends beyond accommodating athletes and spectators – it can establish the state as a global destination for sports, business, leisure and cultural tourism.

Long-term portfolio

"Gujarat remains a priority growth market for us," observes Nikhil Sharma, MD & COO, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group. "We have seven operational hotels and five properties under development across the state. We continue to evaluate opportunities in Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar and other high-potential business, industrial, pilgrimage and leisure destinations. Our strategy is not dependent on a single event. We are building a long-term portfolio aligned with Gujarat's expanding corporate base, industrial corridors, wedding and MICE demand, spiritual tourism and domestic leisure market". Gujarat's hospitality sector, however, faces multiple challenges, Sharma adds. "The biggest challenge is ensuring that new capacity is supported by sustainable demand beyond the Games. Development must, therefore, be part of a broader destination strategy rather than driven only by short-term event demand. Gujarat's coastline remains one of India's most promising and relatively underdeveloped leisure-tourism opportunities. Realising this potential will require clearly identified tourism zones, environmentally responsible development, improved connectivity and sustained destination marketing. With the right ecosystem, Gujarat can create compelling coastal circuits for domestic and international travellers".

Experts believe that a co-ordinated, long-term tourism roadmap would have the greatest impact in Gujarat going ahead. Priorities should include single-window and time-bound approvals, infrastructure support for tourism zones, stronger connectivity, incentives for sustainable hotel development and industry-linked skill-development programmes. The Commonwealth Games should also be used to showcase destinations beyond Ahmedabad through integrated heritage, wildlife, coastal, culinary and spiritual circuits. The true legacy of the Games will be measured by the sustained tourism and economic value