

Why Chandigarh hotels just love cricket!

Top-end hotels in Chandigarh just love the new T20 format of cricket. Be it the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) or the rebel Indian Cricket League (ICL), it has meant a windfall for these hotels.

While none of the IPL or ICL matches is being played in Chandigarh city itself, the holding of T20 matches in the neighbourhood - the Punjab Cricket Association (PCA) stadium in nearby Mohali for the IPL matches and the Tau Devi Lal stadium in suburban Panchkula for the ICL matches - has led to rooms in top hotels here being booked to capacity.

The reason for cricket teams, officials and others staying in Chandigarh is that leading hotels are located here. The stadiums in Mohali and Panchkula are just 10 and 15 km away from these hotels.

The major bonanza from IPL and ICL is for government-run hotels Mountview and Shivalikview and the private sector's Taj hotel. All teams arriving here for both the tournaments have been stationed in the three hotels.

'The matches being held in Chandigarh's neighbourhood have meant good business for our hotels. With these T20 tournaments being a regular show in future, business will only look up,' Jasbir Singh Bir, managing director of the Chandigarh Industrial and Tourism Development Corporation (CITCO), told IANS.

The corporation runs the Mountview and Shivalikview hotels.

ICL, which held two tournaments in the Panchkula stadium in November last year and March this year, has so far booked 3,181 room nights in the city's only five-star hotel Mountview. ICL also booked 1,216 room nights in Hotel Shivalikview during this period.

With nearly 4,400 room nights, CITCO has done a business of Rs.18.5 million from ICL alone through room bookings in six months.

Top cricketers who stayed in these hotels included Brian Lara, Kapil Dev, Inzamam-ul-Haq, Chris Cairns, Shane Bond and Kiran More.

With the PCA stadium at Mohali being the venue of most IPL matches being played by the Preity Zinta-owned home team, Kings XI Punjab, Chandigarh's hotels are again experiencing boom time.

'The majority of top players and teams stay in Mountview and Shivalikview during the IPL matches. They have appreciated our hospitality,' CITCO general manager-tourism Arvind Malhotra said.

While not being a five-star hotel, Shivalikview has played host to the likes of Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, David Hussey, Muttiah Muralitharan, Stephen Fleming, Umar Gul and John Buchanan.

Top Indian and international players like M.S. Dhoni, Mathew Hayden, Brad Hodge, Rahul Dravid and Graeme Smith have been in the city in recent days to play matches at Mohali.

Besides the teams, IPL officials and Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) officials, hotels in the city have received more bookings from accompanying TV teams and media.

Jaideep Sarin (© IANS / India eNews)