

ASIA'S leading business magazine

M!CEtalk

A DDP Publication®

Meetings • Incentives • Conferences • Events

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THE M!CE TECHNOLOGY TAKEOVER



**G-20 SUMMIT—
A game changer**

**BLEISURE
continues to surge**

**ECO-CONSCIOUS
roadmap ahead**

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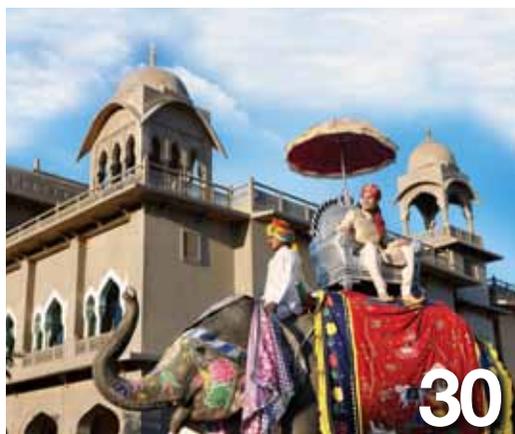
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FHRAI's recommendation to bolster M!CE in India

FHRAI has advised the government to provide free visas on arrival to encourage international corporations to host MICE events in India and make the Indian tourism landscape more competitive. The association has advocated rewarding MICE events in India by providing overseas corporations organising such events with free visas on arrival.



AM Hotel Kollection has inked four new management contracts for assets in Maharashtra, Sikkim, Rajasthan, and Goa. The new hotels cater to both the commercial and leisure markets. These new contracts provide more banqueting facilities under the AM Hotel Kollection umbrella.



Rajeev Jain
Founder & MD,
Rashi Entertainment



Globally, the wedding services market is anticipated to generate \$414.2 billion by 2030.



Sydney adds robust pipeline for events



BESydney has announced three international association bid wins with CogSci 2023, the 67th Commonwealth Parliamentary

Conference 2024 and The Web Conference 2025, as well as two incentive wins with Prudential Assurance Malaysia Berhad and Pru Life UK. BESydney CEO, **Lyn Lewis-Smith**, said, "These bid wins demonstrate that we are continuing where we left off pre-pandemic, with success attracting the world's top events"

TCEB unveils MICE campaign to maximise Thailand reopening



TCEB has launched a new marketing campaign, Thailand MICE Back, to stimulate the industry in response to the country's reopening through four strategic approaches.

Using MICE events to drive the local economy, the bureau projects seeing 6,130,000 MICE travellers, generating 28.4 billion baht in revenue for the country. The scheme aims to increase the confidence of both domestic and international MICE travellers, promote the continued organisation of MICE events, and attract world-class MICE events to the country.

Bleisure travel is back in business: HVS



The concept of bleisure travel is regaining popularity as biz travel continues to grow. As flexible work arrangements and remote work have gained steam, bleisure has become more common across age groups and professionals from various industries. Hence, the global bleisure tourism market, which accounts for 30-35 percent of global business travel market, will reach US\$497.5 billion in 2022 and grow at a 19.5 per cent CAGR over the next decade.

ATM 2023 inks partnership with IHG Hotels & Resorts

The Arabian Travel Market (ATM) has signed an agreement with IHG Hotels & Resorts to become its Official Hotel Partner for ATM 2023, which takes place at the Dubai World Trade Centre on 1-4 May. The hospitality group IHG will officially accommodate almost 200 leading international media and key industry buyers from the UK, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Israel, Turkey, India, the GCC, US, Egypt, and South Africa. The agreement will enable IHG to showcase their InterContinental brand properties in Dubai, as well as voco Hotels, Crowne Plaza Hotels and Resorts, and Hotel Indigo to top industry professionals representing luxury, leisure, MICE, and business travel. In addition, IHG will also host the coveted Official ATM Party.



Pride Group of Hotels enhances its banquet offering

Pride Group of Hotels has added another landmark in Central India with the launch of 'Pride Hotel Bhopal'. Conveniently located in the heart of the city, the hotel is easily accessible to prominent tourist and leisure destinations, marketplaces, and commercial establishments. The hotel is well-connected through rail, road, and air to all major cities. The three state-of-the-art banquets with a capacity to accommodate guests ranging from 50 to 400 are designed to host private parties, small gatherings, and social events. The banquets are well-equipped with all AV facilities to conduct corporate meetings, special alliances, and training and development programmes.

STB's SingapoReimagine Marketing Programme

Local businesses in the tourism and lifestyle sectors are set to get more marketing support with the launch of the SingapoReimagine Marketing Programme (SMP) by the Singapore Tourism Board (STB), as part of efforts to support tourism and strengthen Singapore's appeal as a choice destination for business and leisure. **Chang Chee Pey**, Assistant Chief Executive of STB's Marketing Group, said, "Through the SingapoReimagine Marketing Programme, we hope to rally the local industry to reimagine the way they promote Singapore and work with like-minded partners to cut through the clutter as destinations compete for a slice of the travel pie. For our tourism sector to recover strongly, businesses must cement our position as a must-visit destination with diverse and appealing offerings. I look forward to seeing the innovative and bold marketing ideas that can help us achieve this."



MICE & mega event market to reach \$224.32 bn by 2032

The global MICE industry is expected to generate US\$224.32 billion between 2021 and 2032, increasing from US\$107.2 billion in 2020, at a healthy CAGR of 6.9 per cent. Acquisitions, partnerships, and business expansions among market players are expected to propel the expansion of the MICE industry, according to MR Accuracy Reports. The high operational costs associated with MICE events, which include various hospitality services such as catering, lodging, transportation, tourism, convention facility supply, entertainment, and retail shopping, are predicted to stifle market growth. The APAC MICE industry is expected to grow at a CAGR of 6.7 per cent, generating US\$501.3 billion in revenue.

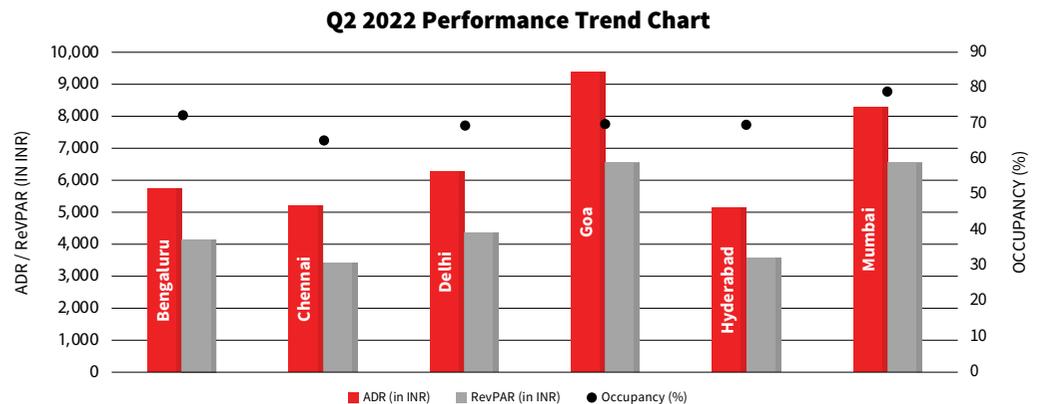
Q2 RevPar garners triple-digit growth

Bengaluru registers the highest growth in RevPAR in Q2 2022 at 660.1 per cent, primarily due to low performance in Q2 2021 resulting from the second wave of the pandemic.

The Indian hospitality sector witnessed strong growth in Q2 2022, primarily driven by demand for weddings and events as well as a stellar recovery in corporate travel. The country was amidst the second wave of the pandemic in Q2 2021, which had a significant impact on the performance of the hospitality sector. As a result, RevPAR witnessed an exponential growth of 339.3 per cent y-o-y in Q2 2022 over Q2 2021. Further, the sector witnessed a stellar 44.6 per cent growth at a pan-India level in RevPAR compared to Q1 2022, as per JLL's Hotel Momentum India Q2, 2022.

The demand across the sector soared during Q2 2022, primarily driven by weddings and M!CE, and business travel. Corporate M!CE demand also saw recovery in the form of corporate off-sites, team meetings, and training. Domestic leisure continued to be a key segment during this period, driven by the pent-up demand of travellers who had not experienced a summer vacation for the past two years.

The next two quarters are expected to remain busy on the back of domestic leisure amidst long weekends and festivals. Business travel will continue to grow and will remain the main demand driver for the sector. While wedding and social function demand will remain a



significant driver, M!CE demand is expected to witness an uptick in the coming months, with many corporate meetings and large-format conferences being planned.

The total number of hotel signings in Q2 2022 stood at 47 hotels with 4,010 keys. Hotel signings surged to 90.9 per cent as compared to signings in Q2 2021. Domestic operators dominated signings over

international operators with a ratio of 52:48 in terms of inventory volume.

“With exponential growth across all performance indicators in business and leisure destinations, Q2 2022 marks the revival of investor interest and stakeholder profitability in the hotel industry. As business travel and corporate off-sites continued to grow, summer holidays offered

a further impetus to the overall demand, resulting in a renewed confidence in the sector. We expect this momentum to continue over the next few quarters on the back of long weekends, festivals, weddings, events, and business travel evenly contributing to this growth story,” said **Jaideep Dang**, Managing Director, Hotels and Hospitality Group, South Asia, JLL.

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Indian M!CE: Can G20 SUMMIT be game changer?

MICE in India is poised for a second coming after pandemic cases subsided. There is an increase in demand for domestic destinations with G20 Summit in sight, opines **Naveen Kundu**, MD, EbixCash. He says the journey of the sector in the country has been rather slow.

MT Bureau

G20 Summit, likely to be held in Bengaluru in 2023, is a positive development for the country to catapult Indian tourism onto the international stage. The country needs to re-position itself as the biggest M!CE destinations in the world. It is spectacular because India is trying this in every city to demonstrate the government's intention to market the country as a tourist destination in the world. Ebix Cash has tried its best to refine the M!CE sector in India, which spent the last 25 years redefining the sector. It is proud of anything that occurs in any region across the country when it comes to the industry.

JOURNEY OF M!CE

India is a magnificent and diverse country; it is unfortunate that we have not exploited the opportunities to take the sector forward. Big convention centres and spacious meeting halls could



NAVEEN KUNDU
Managing Director,
Ebix Cash

have been constructed in many cities and townships and India could have steadily demonstrated its prowess to the world. Sadly, that was not to be. The country lost a lot in the past 75 years in M!CE and tourism, because it lacked the infrastructure, and connectivity.

The Prime Minister said unequivocally the government intends to make improvements in every industry, including tourism, over the next 25 years. Despite this, we are far behind the rest of the world

and the closest Asian nations, including Thailand, Dubai, Singapore, and Malaysia, all of which are popular M!CE destinations.

ROLE OF M!CE BIZ

Indian outbound M!CE is currently expanding rapidly. Once the international borders were closed during COVID, the country turned to the domestic market; but as soon as the pandemic impact subsided, we were back on track. According to data, Ebix Cash has completed 105 international groups in addition to around 250 groups during the past two quarters—from April to September. India has an opportunity to earn foreign exchange by luring M!CE to India and retain Indian M!CE.

What does M!CE exactly do? M!CE is a type of tourism that directly enhances the economy through the generation of jobs, consumption, and infrastructure. It provides the government with a significant





amount of taxation. It is a form of inclusive tourism, and the government can market India as a M!CE destination globally and develop the necessary infrastructure to support it. This is because the economy will immensely benefit in three ways: creating jobs, bringing in foreign exchange, and boosting the economy and consumption. No other sector has a more immediate and positive impact than tourism and M!CE.

STRATEGY

There are various tourism boards for India around the world. It is quite unclear how much or what they are accomplishing as far as promoting Indian tourism is concerned. It is quite clear that India has not done a good job of it (promoting tourism) and that the economy is paying a high price for setting up these tourism offices abroad. We can now cut back on the size and cost of those overseas offices. The Union Ministry of Tourism should appoint PR and marketing companies overseas to advocate for India, what is available in India, and what it is all about, rather than having the tourism offices' representatives operate out of the embassy, high commission, or consulate.

Public relations and marketing companies have not been employed by Indian tourism offices abroad. The only activities they engage in are inviting a select few travel agents to roadshows, buy and get them drinks among others, we feel. But the activity should restrict to the travel trade, otherwise how will you connect with the customers and, tourists who will be spending money to visit India? The Incredible India campaign, launched by Amitabh Kant, former Secretary of Tourism, Union government, gave India a



boost, but since then, not much has been done. The only way to make a difference is to employ Public Relations and marketing firms in different countries around the world to promote India as a destination, cut down the size of the overseas tourism government offices, and assign a qualified person to sit outside the Indian Embassy.

REVENUE GENERATION

M!CE will experience a significant increase in income generation once there are more exhibition centres, convention centres of various sizes, and hotel rooms available to accommodate those centres. Therefore, the fundamentals must be established, including connectivity of the infrastructure, conference centres of various sizes, and exhibition centres.

For instance, we have created Aerocity and constructed so many hotels so much so that it is now a beautiful location. Worldmark One, Worldmark Two, and Worldmark Three are excellent sites with sizeable entertainment zones, but where is the enormous

INDIA HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO EARN FOREIGN EXCHANGE BY ATTRACTING M!CE TO INDIA AND RETAIN THE SECTOR

convention centre? The execution of this massive project in India has been excellent, but where is the convention centre? The Dwarka Convention Centre is scheduled to open soon, then one can see how it performs.

The country has a lot to offer with destinations such as Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Puri and getaway cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Goa, Bengaluru, and Kolkata. Where are the convention centres, though? Because there is no space in India for large conventions, even the Indian companies must travel abroad

to hold such events. There is barely any space in India.

INFRASTRUCTURAL DISADVANTAGE

There are not many infrastructure projects underway. They are yet to win the hospitality sector over. Where is the necessary infrastructure? In addition to convention centres, there are numerous additional locations that may be booked for conferences, events, meetings, seminars, outdoor functions, dinners, and lunches anywhere you go in the world. The sector is yet to arrive there yet.

As has been already mentioned, there is currently a willingness to build conference centres. Nevertheless, it is never too late. People have already gone to countries with better infrastructure, so perhaps this is an opportunity for us. We are talking about a period of 25 years, and I have always believed that this will be India's century, even during COVID. Therefore, the solution is straightforward: why not build more conference centres. Centres are being built, but they are not at the level they should be.

ROLE OF INDIAN STATES

Long ago, state tourism boards missed their chance to seize the opportunity. How have they used the land that is at their disposal? The land they have utilized has been in some of those states' greatest places (I did not understand). How did they use it? Safaris, hotels, and resorts have been developed in places where none wants to visit or stay. Look at the available land and the area; have they treated them fairly? They have now turned into a liability because all we do is keep them operating though they are in losses and there is no revenue. There is no one viable and high-revenue-producing tourism board in India. They are all distraught. Herein lies the irony. Then the question arises, why do we need so many state boards?

Firstly, we should not have so many state boards, and secondly, why are they occupying so much land to erect these hotels on if we have the state tourism's cooperation? What kind of hotel have they constructed, and who will stay there? Instead, if it had been developed as a PPP, we could have built massive convention





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and exhibition centres, and good hotels. It would have had a different result.

Consider all of India's hotel brands, including the Taj, the Welcome Group, and the ITC, which are culturally specific hotel chains in India. What actions did they take in the past? There have not been any convention centres or large meeting spaces inside of these hotels. Look at the size of the hall of the ITC Maurya Sheraton, which serves as the primary hotel for any international delegation or sizeable conference. The size of Oberoi's hall is what? Fortunately, Taj Palace had some foresight and constructed an estimated 12,000 sq. ft. hall. However, that would have been a significant convention hotel, so if the cities had centres larger than 15,000–20,000, 25,000 sq. ft., the situation would be different today. It surprises me that they have not even developed conference rooms for conventions. At the time, those who were building hotels were so complacent that they did not even consider the need for convention centres and

sizeable conference and meeting spaces in India.

COMPETITIVE EDGE

Look at Thailand, where there are currently many convention centres in Pattaya, Phuket, and Bangkok. Consider how many convention centres and huge meeting spaces Malaysia has built. Take Singapore, which has conference centres and is a city that is one-third the size of Delhi. Think about Suntec City, built in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Why did we not consider converting Pragati Maidan into a structure resembling Suntec City in the 1980s? No political party or government is to be blamed; we have never lobbied for M!CE or tourism. Other countries persisted. See Abu Dhabi's Etihad Arena or look at the Dubai Convention Centre and think about what they did to the country. There could have been an Expo 2020 held there. We were caught napping with eyes open.

KEY INITIATIVES

It is paramount to keep in mind the government's intentions. India tourism

bodies must collaborate.

Before the G20 Summit, a meeting of tourism ministers is taking place in Himachal Pradesh. Which businesses will they support? I am surprised because we do not even need an invitation to travel there, speak with them, and demonstrate our capabilities as a sizeable M!CE company or as the M!CE Man of India. The ministers gathered at the Sushma Swaraj Bhawan in Chanakyaपुरi, and it was, undoubtedly, a great event where they exchanged ideas. But today there is utter silence. There has been no change.

The biggest opportunity we have had at the G20 Summit thus far, where the public and private sectors must collaborate to make a difference. The G20 Summit will put the Indian M!CE industry to the test in terms of food and beverage, entertainment, conference spaces, transportation, professionalism, personalities, and employment. When I say the private sector, I do not simply mean major corporations; every small firm can make a difference and every aspect will be examined.

SILVER LINING

The current government is making many declarations that are constructive. We hope that now that they are fully awake, they will involve the private sector, including some seasoned industry professionals, and come together to create a future direction for M!CE business in India so that international facilities will come and hold this convention in India, and that they will hold their meetings and conferences in India.

**GOVERNMENT CAN
MARKET INDIA AS
M!CE DESTINATION
GLOBALLY
AND DEVELOP
NECESSARY
INFRASTRUCTURE
TO SUPPORT IT**



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Maximising M!CE potential in India

In 2022, India will be Abu Dhabi's largest source market for MICE. **Mubarak Al Shamisi**, Director of ADCEB, shares the bureau has developed AAD M&I 2.0 to stimulate growth.

Janice Alyosius

The Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism took part in the India Roadshow in Delhi and Mumbai, promoting the emirate as a premier destination for M!CE and incentive travel. Following the pandemic, Abu Dhabi launched the Advantage Abu Dhabi (AAD) Meetings & Incentives (M&I) 2.0 programme, which aims to provide greater value-



MUBARAK AL SHAMISI
Director, ADCEB

adds and additional benefits to remain competitive as the M!CE industry reopens. The Abu Dhabi Convention & Exhibition Bureau (ADCEB) has shifted its approach to M!CE activities, redesigning prior programmes and creatively joining forces with wider stakeholders.

AAD M&I 2.0

As an incentive plan, ADCEB formed the AAD M&I 2.0 programme. "The plan

was designed to help our partners and clients direct more business events to the destination." Meetings, incentives, conventions, and corporate events are some of the verticals included in the programme. In terms of M!CE, India is one of the key source markets. We ensured that our incentive programmes are tailored to the source markets. Hence, it can offer the necessary resources to clients



and groups visiting the destination," said **Mubarak Al Shamisi**, Director, ADCEB.

TAPPING MICE IN INDIA

Meetings have been held all over India by the bureau, showing the great demand for MICE there. The programme was designed to strengthen commercial ties with Indian clients and to provide them with a tool to help attract more leisure or business-related events to the location. "It is tailored to our clients' needs, and how we can further help and lend a hand to them, to have excellent value for their clients coming to the destinations while also aiding the agencies and travel agencies that bring clients to the destination," he added.

OUTLOOK FOR INDIA

Shamsi, emphasising the outlook for the Indian market, stated, "Abu Dhabi's key source market is India. India's corporate and incentive industry is thriving. We have also started to focus on destination weddings, which is an important element or niche that we want to focus on in Abu Dhabi, with India serving as a source market. India is a major source of visitors to Abu Dhabi from India, as well as business events and corporate groups travelling from India. Hence, we are focusing our efforts on a large market."

MICE TRENDS

Trends have shifted in the new normal, requiring the sector to remain flexible. The bureau is investigating new trends. They are engaging with their clients, gathering feedback, and determining how they can assist them in making those business events that come to the destination rebound vigorously. "The development of Abu Dhabi's 2.0 incentive scheme resulted



from dialogues with our clients in India and other source markets. The goal is to be highly customised and to meet their current needs. We have seen a lot of interest and demand from the Indian market pouring into the destination for corporate events. We are now working with our clients; we are in India in three major cities: New Delhi, Bengaluru, and Mumbai, to focus on them and connect with them face-to-face. We are here with all the available stakeholders to discuss how we can create and fortify our relationship with the industry and India's source market," said Shamisi.

INCENTIVISING TRADE

Shamisi went on to say that the AAD M&I 2.0 programme is the incentive scheme's umbrella. It offers various incentives to clients. "When we say clients, we are referring to the groups that will be there

and being incentivised. We are also actively incentivising travel agencies that work with us to promote Abu Dhabi. The mechanism and execution of the incentive programme ensure that they benefit from driving the business to its destination. We value loyalty and collaboration in Abu Dhabi. We believe that this partnership must have value and be recognised, and that forming strong relationships

WE HAVE SEEN A LOT OF INTEREST FROM THE INDIAN MARKET POURING INTO DESTINATION FOR CORPORATE EVENTS

requires the establishment of loyalty among both our partners and ourselves."

TAPPING WEDDINGS

"We are nearing the culmination of our wedding destination strategy launch process, which we will announce soon. In recent years, the number of destination weddings has risen. To create an environment that looks appealing for destination weddings, we must work closely with our clients, wedding planners, families, and venues. We are confident that Abu Dhabi is capable of hosting destination weddings. We saw a lot of interest from India because destination weddings are very popular; we hosted a lot of Indian destination weddings in Abu Dhabi, which gave us the credibility of Abu Dhabi being a must-destination wedding destination for the Indian market," revealed Shamisi.

Making most of experiential value

Whether it is metropolis or unexplored small town, curated experiences sit at heart of every destination, believes **Samir MC**, Managing Director, Fortune Park Hotels Ltd.

Lipla Negi

When it comes to brand positioning, where is your focus in the new normal?

We are a proud Indian hospitality chain with complete faith in the Indian story; it is well established across the country with a deep understanding of the nuances of the various markets. Interestingly, about 30 per cent of our portfolio's hotels are in the leisure space. Our aim is to open more leisure hotels and expand in tourist locations. We began as a business hotel chain, but we have found a balance by expanding our footprint not only in business and city locations but also in leisure and tourist destinations. By 2025, we aim to establish a 50:50 balance of business and leisure in our portfolio.

Which key destinations are you considering for expansion?

We are on track to open nine to 11 hotels this year. We are in active discussions to close operating contracts in important cities such as Goa, Himachal Pradesh, popular hill stations in Maharashtra, key temple towns in India, and intriguing leisure locations in the Northeast, to name a few. Our efforts to expand our range of business hotels continue. We hope to announce a few more signings this year in key tier II and III cities.



SAMIR MC
MD, Fortune Park Hotels Ltd.

BY 2025, WE AIM TO ESTABLISH A 50:50 BALANCE OF BUSINESS AND LEISURE MIX IN OUR PORTFOLIO

What kind of trends do you foresee shaping the future of domestic tourism?

People have become more open to newer, smaller towns and cities. As more people travel within the country's bounds, new destinations that are financially and geographically accessible are being explored. They prefer to spend more time in one place, away from crowds, rather than travelling between multiple destinations. I believe that domestic travellers will be a profitable development driver for the sector, whereas international travel has yet to take off. It is now up to us to create and curate experiences for our guests wherever they are—be it a metropolis, a pilgrim destination, the hills, or even an unexplored, untouched small town.

When do you expect the complete return of business travel to pre-pandemic levels?

The M!CE segment is still growing, especially since the last several months, when large-scale events have just begun to be curated. We cater to a lot of these small-to-medium sized events in the M!CE sector since the majority of our hotels have an average of 80 rooms available. Since the pandemic, small-to medium-sized weddings present a significant business opportunity. Today, majority of our hotels are equipped with outstanding banqueting facilities where these weddings and other social gatherings are catered. To improve business across the portfolio, we had to constantly innovate and evolve what we were doing, working closely with our hotels.





Rise in demand from Tier 2/3 cities

Focussed on providing extensive regional connectivity, **Sanjay Kumar**, Chief Strategy and Revenue Officer, IndiGo Airlines, foresees aviation demand to go up pre-Covid levels soon.

Lipla Negi

How are you moving towards the goal of upgrading customer experience?

We have recently announced the three-point disembarkation system on our 16th anniversary. This will reduce the waiting time for passengers during de-boarding and improve OTP and operational efficiencies for IndiGo as well as our partners. Last month, Recaro Aircraft Seating (Recaro) BL3710 was selected to outfit IndiGo's brand-new A320neo and A321neo aircraft. We will be the first to feature the bestselling economy class seat in the Indian sub-continent. The BL3710 economy class seat will be installed on 75 Airbus aircraft starting from January 2023.

When we talk about luxury offerings by international airlines, how do you see homegrown carriers faring in comparison?

In India, only 7 per cent of the population travels by air. There is a huge potential for more people to experience air travel. Given that India is a value conscious market, we have

been focussed on providing extensive regional connectivity at affordable fares.

How are you revamping your in-flight menus to attract business travellers?

IndiGo's customers can pre-book their choice of meal until 24 hours in advance, as per taste and medical conditions from the exclusive menu. As we connect with new destinations, we will look at expanding our menu to add on an interesting selection of items from every new destination.

What kind of support are you providing to air ticket and tour operators?

We continue to expand our distribution with travel companies, tour operators and travel partners in order to provide our flight tickets being available across various segments of the market. We have also partnered with large tour operators for offering bundled packages. We are working with our partners for MICE requirements, which we feel will continue to grow in the coming times. We do foresee an overall rise in



SANJAY KUMAR
Chief Strategy and Revenue Officer, IndiGo

passengers can apply via our website or directly call our sales teams for charter bookings. The passengers just need to fill a form detailing their destination, arrival point, travel time, names, address, and other details. Currently, we are using a typical A-320 aircraft with 180-186 passengers seating, which can be commissioned as a domestic passenger charter as well, A321 with 222 passenger seating and ATR with 78 passenger seating.

What are your expansion plans?

The Indian aviation sector has noticed an increase in travel demand from and between Tier II and Tier III cities. We have seen 100 per cent recovery in business travel in the months of April & May. We are currently operating more than 1600 flights per day, compared to 1500 daily flights in February 2020. We recently announced Ras Al Khaimah in the UAE as the 100th destination in our 6E network. We recently upgraded our aircraft from ATR to Airbus on the Delhi-Gwalior route to cater to the increase in travel demand.

WE RECENTLY UPGRADED TO AIRBUS ON THE DELHI-GWALIOR ROUTE

demand at the onset of the festive season.

For MICE bookings, do you offer any discount or complementary services?

We provide a personalised and private experience through our passenger charter services. The

Wide array of sponsor-backed engagements

With a lot more buzz on this year's show floor and programme, delegates can look forward to a compelling IT&CM Asia and CTW Asia-Pacific 2022.

Aside from the business and knowledge components, this year's programme includes a range of sponsor-supported engagements such as the opening ceremony and welcome reception, brand engagements, entertaining in-booth activities, and lucky draws. The show will welcome 312 in-person and remote exhibitors from 132 exhibiting companies and organisations from 23 countries and territories, as well as 387 in-person and remote M!CE, association, and corporate buyers from 56 countries. As the tourism industry recovers, exhibitors from Thailand, the Philippines, Hong Kong SAR, Japan, and South Korea helm the largest exhibiting pavilions to showcase their offerings.

CAPTIVE OUTREACH IN-PERSON

The Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) will host the Opening Ceremony and Welcome Reception at the Bangkok Convention Centre on the evening of the first event day, showcasing Thailand's vibrant, creative, and inspiring art scene. Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), MEET Taiwan, Tourism Promotions Board, Philippines (TPB), Promotion Bureau of the Principality of Monaco-Asia, Korea Tourism Organization, Incheon Tourism Organization, and Gyeonggi



Tourism Organization will share their latest brand highlights and developments with M!CE, association and corporate buyers, and media during their 30-minute session slots on 21 and 22 September.

IN-BOOTH ACTIVITIES AND BUYERS' INCENTIVE

All delegates, especially buyers, can look forward to a buzzing show floor, filled with an extensive line-up of in-booth activities. Highlights include:

- TCEB
 - ▶ CustoM!CE: Discover M!CE Destination as your style with photo gimmick
- Experience DIY craft time with the Taipei City Government. Win lucky draw prizes sponsored by Arcadia Travel Co., Ltd in the booth.

EXHIBITORS FROM THAILAND, THE PHILIPPINES, HONG KONG SAR, JAPAN, AND SOUTH KOREA HELM THE LARGEST EXHIBING PAVILIONS

- Taiwan Tourism Bureau
 - ▶ Experience Taiwan in 360° with a VR experience
 - ▶ Listen to why Taiwan is the perfect place for M!CE and stand a chance to get a special gift

Collaboration with well-known brands has played a significant role in keeping attendees engaged. All buyers have the opportunity to win prizes, such as hotel stays in Bangkok, the Philippines, Hong Kong SAR, and more, after completing their fulfillments and using the event app to rate their appointments. If you want to procure, network, and learn at IT&CM Asia and CTW Asia-Pacific 2022, come to Bangkok, Thailand, from 20–22 September, or virtually from 20–28 September. The event is held in tandem with CTW Asia-Pacific.

Visit www.itcma.com or www.corporatetravelworld.com/apac for more information.



The heart of
Incredible India

MADHYA PRADESH: AN ABSOLUTE WILDLIFE 'WONDERLAND'

The heart of Incredible India, Madhya Pradesh is blessed by nature and alive by wildlife!

Being decked with numerous wildlife hotspots that include 6 tiger reserves, 11 National Parks & 24 Wildlife Sanctuaries, Madhya Pradesh is an absolute wonderland and a wildlife destination without compare. The state is not only known as the "Tiger State of India" but also gained the tags of "the Leopard State, the Vulture State, the Ghadiyal State, and the Wolf State of the country.

The state is blessed with national parks and Tiger Reserves in Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Panna, Satpura, Sidhi (Sanjay Dubri) and Pench. It also has Madhav National Park, Van Vihar National Park, Kuno National Park, Dinosaur Fossil National Park and Ghughwa Fossil National Park.

Through this article, we will take you to the four most visited national parks of the state

KANHA NATIONAL PARK AND TIGER RESERVE

The world famous Kanha National Park has been the source of inspiration for Rudyard Kipling, a famous writer for his outstanding creation- "The Jungle Book". It houses one of the rarest species of deer- the Barasingha. It has not only hiked the population of the tigers but also brought back the swamp deer (Barasingha) from the brink of extinction. Located in the Mandla and Balaghat district, this national park is also home to large herds of antelopes, bison and

leopard. You would also be able to find Asiatic leopard, Indian wild dog, sloth bear, Indian bison or gaur, jungle cat, Asian palm civet, honey badger, Indian porcupine, smooth coated otter, greater false vampire bat, Indian pangolin, mouse deer, leopard cat, and rare birds as well.

HAVE AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE AT NATIONAL PARKS IN MP

- Walking and cycling in the buffer zone
- Take a safari in an open jeep
- Camping (Tree and Gypsy Camping at Satpura National Park)
- Trekking

SAFARI BOOKING:

<https://forest.mponline.gov.in>

PENCH NATIONAL PARK AND TIGER RESERVE

Pench National Park and Tiger Reserve lies in southern Madhya Pradesh bordering Maharashtra. The teak forest of Pench is rich in wildlife and is especially famous for wild dogs. Jackals, wild dogs and rhesus monkeys can be seen foraging for food in the densely-wooded jungles. One can also see herds of gaur (Indian bison), chital, sambhar, nilgai, and wild boar etc. Cheetal, sambar and neelgai are found grazing in the forests and the banks of the river. Large herds of gaur are often spotted in the bamboo patches.

PANNA NATIONAL PARK AND TIGER RESERVE

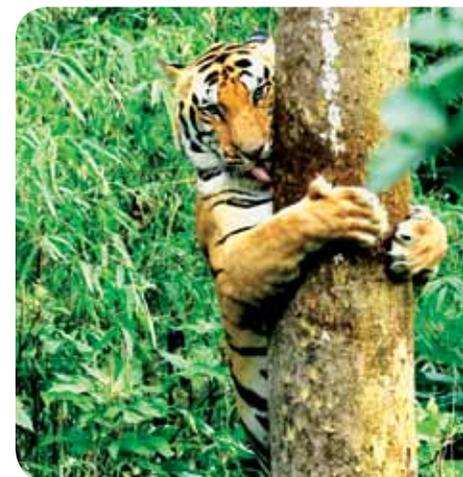
Spread across the Panna and Chhatarpur districts

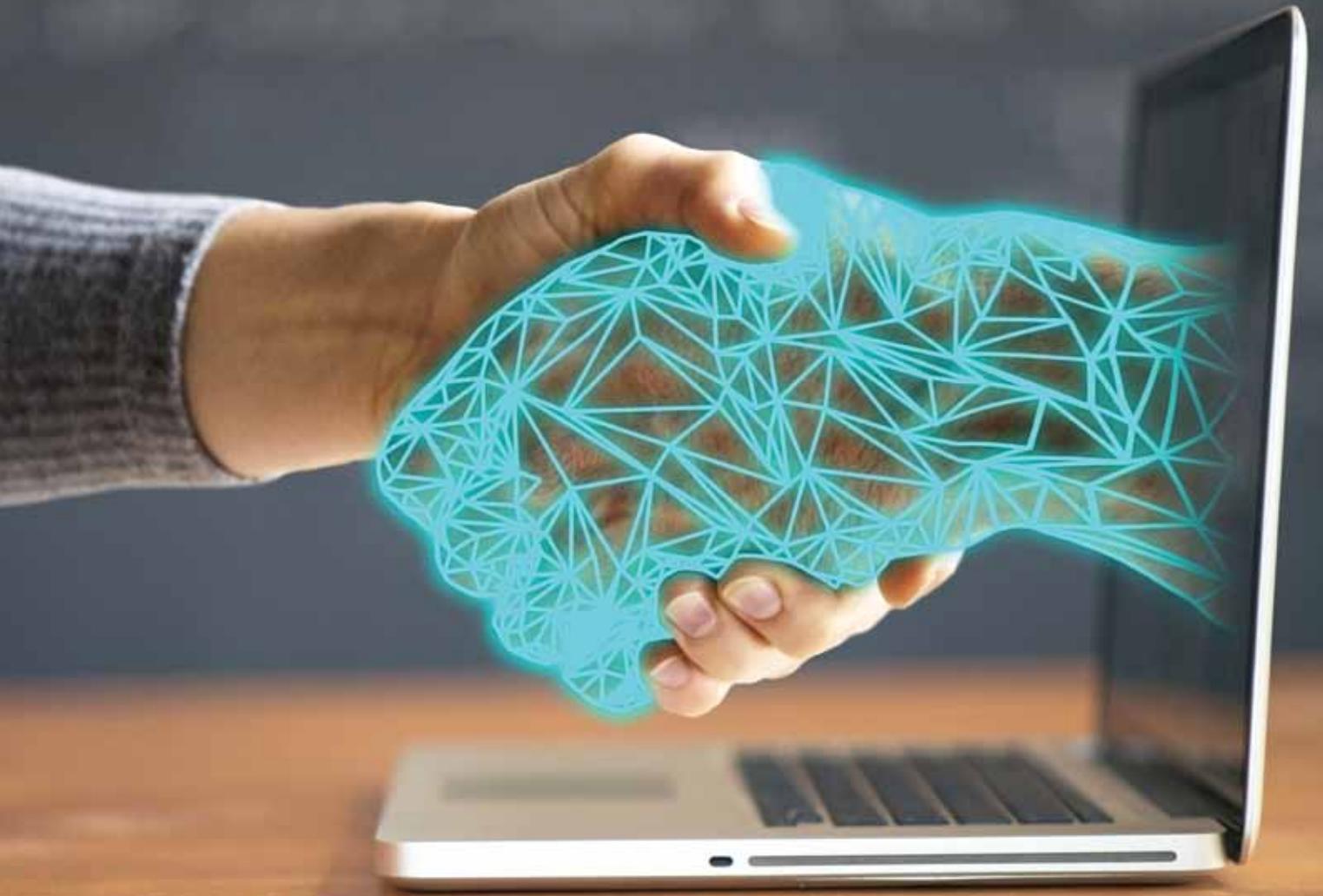
in Madhya Pradesh, Panna National Park and Tiger Reserve is located about 32kms from the World Heritage Site of Khajuraho. Panna received the Award of Excellence in 2007 as the 'best maintained national park of India,' by the MOT, GOI. Panna has an enviable reputation as a Tiger Reserve, with its high density of tigers; it rarely disappoints those coming to see the big cat. Leopard, wild dog, wolf, hyena and caracal and smaller cats can be seen easily. Sloth bears have their favourite home in the rock escarpments and undisturbed vales. The avifauna comprises more than 200 species including a host of migratory birds. Ghariyal, a huge reptile found only in the Indian subcontinent can be spotted at Ken Ghariyal sanctuary which lies about 25 km north of Panna Tiger Reserve's entry gate at Madla.

BANDHAVGARH NATIONAL PARK AND TIGER RESERVE

Bandhavgarh National Park, Madhya Pradesh is the place to visit if you want to spot the big cat. India's top dwelling for tigers, it has the highest density of Royal Bengal tigers in the world. All the white tigers of the world trace their roots to Bandhavgarh National Park. This National Park is first in India to launch "The Hot Air Balloon Safari" for tourists. The sight of the majestic tiger up close can trigger a sense of awe in you.

- Hot air balloon safari booking at Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve: www.skywartz.com





THE M!CE TECHNOLOGY TAKEOVER

The last two years have been disruptive. For some, in a good way, but for many, adversely. If there has been one constant, it is the adoption of 'technology' in unimaginable ways.

Charmaine Fernz

Taking a simple business meeting, until just two years ago, having a business meeting meant personal interaction. Virtual meetings were a distant thought and only a necessity if required. Today, we have a different picture — boundaries blurred, meetings virtual, and a spokesperson reachable at the click of a button. This is what a post-pandemic world looks like across all industries, and M!CE is no different.

However, what was evident was the impact, especially on the tourism, hospitality, and aviation industries, taking the biggest jolt. M!CE, being a part of the umbrella, did have its fair share of troughs. Nonetheless, fast forward two years, come 2022, and the world is slowly but steadily

moving back to normalcy. As **Sanjay Kumar**, Chief Strategy and Revenue Officer, IndiGo explains, "Today, corporates have realised the potential of technology and have very effectively embraced the new normal. Virtual meetings have become the norm. However, we believe that once the situation goes back to pre-pandemic days, corporations will certainly want to go back to times of physical meetings."

Arif Patel, Chief Commercial Officer, ITC Hotel, states that while events will look and feel different today, we believe that there is a demand to create, connect, and collaborate, whether that's in-person or a hybrid format. "Building on ITC's deep-rooted expertise in delivering high-quality meetings and events, we simplify and streamline event planning and



SANJAY KUMAR
Chief Strategy & Revenue
Officer, IndiGo

execution, with attendee safety and wellbeing as top priorities," said Patel.

He further explains, we offer a comprehensive set of technological solutions to guarantee that guests' planning goes unhindered at every stage and across every phase of their event. To ensure this, we have the virtual hotel tour, and even a group bill facility that makes our guest experience seamless.

TECHNOLOGICAL SHIFT

Technological advancements in the M!CE industry were a focus, but the pandemic practically made every industry dependent on technology to survive, and this industry was no different. As **GB Srithar**, Regional Director (India, Middle East and South Asia) of the Singapore Tourism Board states, "Our

VIRTUAL MEETINGS HAVE BECOME THE NORM. CORPORATES HAVE EMBRACED TECHNOLOGY





M!CE industry has been agile and resilient during this period, transforming business models and event formats and adopting digital solutions and virtual engagements to augment face-to-face events. Marina Bay Sands Singapore has launched a hybrid event broadcast studio with hologram functionalities at its Sands Expo and Convention Centre. Their cutting-edge Hybrid Broadcast Studio at the Sands Expo and Convention Centre saw the introduction of Mixed Reality (MR) capabilities. The MR technology is set to enlarge the studio's hybrid tech toolbox, empowering event planners to transform their events through show-stunning presentations. It integrates the virtual and physical worlds to create an immersive and interactive presentation. MR technology allows presenters to have a more meaningful interaction



MANDEEP S LAMBA
President & CEO,
HVS South Asia

**ALL POPULAR
INTERNATIONAL
M!CE LOCATIONS
ARE TAKING
MEASURES TO
RESURRECT THE
SEGMENT**

with digital data and the environment, bringing presentations to life through hyper-realistic visuals."

Sushil Shamlal Wadhwa, Founder and CMD, Platinum World Group, explains that companies will realise the cost savings technological advancements bring; companies will take only the top achievers for trips abroad in time to come, while medium achievers will join in virtually. The ability to seamlessly find the right balance between technology and on-ground events will be the key in the future.

Elaborating further, Patel suggests that Hyatt undertakes dedicated measures to prioritise safety, technology, support, and wellness across all offerings, laying the groundwork for a new age of events that will be more inclusive. Hybrid events are an essential method to increase participation and allow those who are unable to go to

participate in the conversation. 'Together by Hyatt' is a new suite of meetings and events designed to assist planners at every stage of the planning process as we reimagine what events can be.

HERE TO STAY

Technology is here to stay. This is an affirmative thought, as technology should not overwhelm you but should open your eyes. Asserting his view in an article in HVS, **Mandeeep S Lamba**, President and CEO of HVS South Asia, says all popular international M!CE locations are taking measures to resurrect the segment, with Singapore and the UAE leading the way, having hosted multiple hybrid events successfully in the past year, with even international delegates in attendance.

An example of the resurgence was the recently concluded Expo 2020 Dubai, which recorded 24.1 million

Maharashtra

grants

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to all approved hotels

To avail the benefits of industry status,
hotels need to register with Maharashtra Tourism

Hotels in the districts of
Konkan, Nasik, and Pune regions
may contact us for more details



+91 9871003279, support@qualstar.co.in, subha.bhaskar@qualstar.co.in



SUSHIL SHAMLAL WADHWA
 Founder & CMD, Platinum World Group

THE ABILITY TO SEAMLESSLY FIND THE RIGHT BALANCE BETWEEN TECHNOLOGY AND ON-GROUND EVENTS WILL BE THE KEY IN THE FUTURE

physical visits. In addition, virtual fans can continue to experience the event, building on an incredible total of about 250 million visits that the Expo 2020 Dubai virtual community attracted throughout the six months.

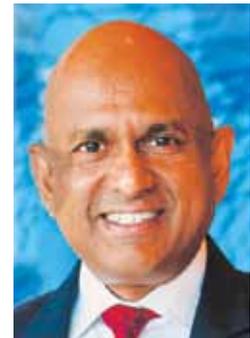
Lamba further adds that the M!CE segment in India, which was limited to only social events in the last year, is also gradually coming to life. Business events such as dealer meetings and company training are set to return in the coming months, with corporate India resuming a 'work-from-office' model.

THE WAY AHEAD

Industry statistics state that growth figures for global M!CE tourism are pegged at a compound annual growth rate of 7.5 per cent and will reach US\$1.2 trillion (about ₹70 lakh crore) by 2023. With this optimism and despite all limitations and hurdles, the M!CE industry is always considered very

resilient. Industry players are very optimistic about the year ahead and the next year, with few markets looking to return to normalcy at the earliest.

As Lamba explains, in the long run, India's M!CE segment, which accounts for a minuscule one per cent share in the global market, has the potential to become a significant demand driver for the tourism sector in the country. The government recently released a draft National Strategy and Roadmap that includes recommendations aimed at positioning India as a popular M!CE destination. Improved M!CE infrastructure, targeted marketing campaigns, institutional support, and skill development, among other things, are expected to help the country boost its share of global M!CE business by two per cent in the next five years and improve the country's International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) ranking to the top 20.



GB SRITHAR
 Regional Director (IMESA), Singapore Tourism Board

MR TECH WILL ENLARGE HYBRID BROADCAST STUDIO'S TECH TOOLBOX, EMPOWERING EVENT PLANNERS TO TRANSFORM THEIR EVENTS



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1. QualStar is the **ONLY** body in India whose certification is recognised in **over 100 countries**
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3. All government benefits are available to hotels classified by QualStar
4. QualStar has been empanelled by Maharashtra Tourism for industry status inspections.



Bleisure continues to surge

With bleisure and work-from-anywhere travel trends, a growing number of hotels are melding relaxation, entertainment, and dining under one roof.

Travellers now view vacations as a crucial facet of their emotional well-being. There has been a notable rise in travellers blending their business and leisure travel. People have embraced domestic tourism and are ready to travel to newer, drivable destinations. It can become a destination if it is in a desirable area and has reliable lodging.

DESTINATION WITHIN THE PREMISES

Every time hotels open their doors in a location, especially one that is untapped and

does not already have an influx of hotels, it helps to create a destination and boost the economy. Hotels help in promoting underutilised places and create a destination by welcoming and drawing more visitors. The goal of the marketing is to highlight the location's advantages before tying the hotel product to them. Everyone is excited about helping guests explore the location and creating memorable experiences since guests are more than willing to try something new.

NEW EXPERIENCES

You can experience the might

of the mountains and the warmth of the valley at the Hyatt Regency Dehradun, the 'heart of the hills'. The Petite Chef's Club engages our young guests; Cook with a Chef for the elderly; and Say it with Photos—unleash your inner photographer as you capture the scenic surroundings. Our in-house specialist conducts the group mobile photography session. The Bar Pathshala—after attending The Malt Bar's spirited cocktail making workshop, you will be the perfect house party host. We offer Zumba, yoga sessions, cycling trails, and much

more. The Malsi Nature Walk, located next to the hotel, is a serene and energising trail, and our naturalist makes it fun and informative. We provide a variety of offsite and onsite events and are continually adding new ones to keep our guests engaged during their stay. For our younger guests, we offer Camp Hyatt. Craft projects, pottery, kite flying, scavenger hunts, and even story times, among others, are available for children aged 3–12 years.

BLENDING WORK & FUN

The hotel is nestled amid the foothills of the



HARKARAN SINGH
General Manager,
Hyatt Regency Dehradun

CREATING MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES BY ASSISTING GUESTS TO EXPLORE THE LOCATION IS WHAT EXCITES EVERYONE

Musoorie hills. All of our accommodations offer fabulous views, be it of the Himalayan foothills or the lush green Malsi forest. At the Hyatt Regency Dehradun,

there are several spaces that allow you to be at ease and at peace while working, as well as high-energy spaces such as the rooftop outlets and our culinary hall, Range.

GAINING TRACTION

Today, individuals working across diverse industries and organisations are empowered with the opportunity to explore options for remote working and b-leisure travel. This has changed the way people look at both work and travel today. Moreover, many companies are encouraging b-leisure travel to help their employees de-stress and, in turn, perform better at work. Thus, more and more working professionals are seizing every opportunity to travel and spend time with their loved ones.

the start. The Hyatt Regency Dehradun has introduced another leisure destination as well as a key addition to the destination weddings and MICE segments with its expansive event spaces and inventory of 263 keys. Guests have given us raving reviews, and we are ensuring we listen to their feedback, which is the most critical tool we have to better ourselves and the experiences we offer to our guests. We are a pet-friendly hotel, and all of our guests appreciate it. The ask is always to create experiences, and that is what we are doing and adding to a host of new experiences in the coming quarter.

RAVING REVIEWS

Our guests have been really pleased and supportive from

Hotels becoming destinations in themselves is the travel trend of combining work commitments with entertainment. Having emerged around a decade ago, it continues to grow. More people consider exploring new places while travelling for business. Such trips require more thorough planning. So, travellers could use help from OTAs, hotels, and other travel providers.

consumers evaluate the location of hotels surrounding potential sites.

DIFFERENTIATING FACTORS

Hotels must offer much more than a room to be competitive today; they must deliver an experience. We work hard to differentiate our guest experience from that of our competitors in the sector today. We can begin by segmenting it into phases that touch different points in the journey of the traveller: pre-stay, in-stay, and post-stay.

RIGHT LOCATION IS KEY

The location has a significant impact on the demand for the hotel and hence on the price we can charge in the market. The success of a hotel location is determined by its proximity to demand generators and transit connectivity. We must recognise that what we have will not change in our local surroundings, which may have a negative impact on our business. Also, new social media platforms such as TripAdvisor and Google, as well as guest reviews on other OTAs, provide us with valuable data into how

THRIVING BLEISURE

Recent trends that mix work with travel that is not strictly business travel are redefining business travel while also helping to keep the travel industry afloat and waiting for full-scale business travel to return. The fusion of work and life can be hard and cause conflicts, but it also brings the traveller new opportunities. The separation of paying for business and leisure will only get easier as new solutions come into play.

TO BE COMPETITIVE IN THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR TODAY, HOTELS MUST PROVIDE MUCH MORE THAN A ROOM



PANKAJ GUPTA
General Manager, Crown Plaza New Delhi Mayapuri Vihar Noida





The very nature of travel has undergone significant change. Customers today seek out holistic experiences rather than just a hotel that can accommodate them. This may be done by curating F&B packages, including local experiences, leisure activities on-site and nearby, and local experiences.

BECOMING THE MAIN ATTRACTION

Guests' current travel trend shows that they seek hotels and resorts that offer personalised experiences. The F&B service shapes a guest's experience by showcasing the region's authentic dishes. The Chaupal, where guests are given a complete local experience with rural tea stalls, snacks, and games, is the perfect urban experience at Courtyard Aravali Resort. We are now cultivating our own vegetables to provide our customers with a farm-to-table experience. All of our rooms have chromecast-enabled televisions, making us the only resort with the facility.



RAJNEESH KUMAR
General Manager,
Courtyard by Marriott
Aravali Resort

GUESTS LOOK FOR HOTELS AND RESORTS THAT PROVIDE THEM WITH TAILOR-MADE EXPERIENCES WITH ADDED PERKS, AMENITIES, AND TOUCHPOINTS

MAKING IT ALL POSSIBLE FOR GUESTS

Our centrally located pool is the resort's biggest draw. The property was designed with the new age of travellers in mind, who seek unique and exclusive experiences. The resort is spread across eight acres of land around the scenic Aravali hills, which are at a drivable distance from Delhi-NCR. Shibendu Choudhary, our Executive Chef, has worked extensively on F&B menus for all of our outlets. We offer recreational activities such as bicycling across the resort, pool Zumba, yoga sessions led by our in-house certified yoga instructor, and a complete solution for children through Giggles, the kids room. We have kept our focus on local and global cuisines, which are showcased at Huang, our Pan-Asian restaurant, and The Aravali Kitchen.

THE URBAN RETREAT

The Courtyard by Marriott Aravali Resort not only acts as the ideal weekend getaway for guests, but it also serves

as the ideal off-site location for corporations. It acts as the ideal urban retreat, capable of serving as both a resort and a workstation, thanks to its versatile and flexible board rooms. The property's Levo spa is an excellent addition for guests to de-stress, as is our modern gym centre, designed to satisfy fitness aficionados.

WORK-LIFE HARMONY

We have seen that b-leisure travel is gaining traction, and not just among millennials. It has evolved into a novel perk that many firms now provide to their employees as well as a means of achieving work-life balance. Business travel frequently includes a leisure element for corporate travellers. Hotels must start adapting to customer demands as business travel expands. The Courtyard by Marriott Aravali Resort was designed with functionality in mind. The resort offers seamless travel for both business and leisure travellers, with sophisticated meeting rooms equipped with the latest AV equipment.

luxury brands for up to 70% less
welcome gifts that give me more

THIS IS MY KIND OF HOLIDAY.

discover yours.

If you're looking for a stylish day out, look no further. Discover hundreds of your favourite designer brands for up to 70% less all year round. Make your European holiday even brighter with our summer sale season and an exclusive offer just for you.



TAX FREE SHOPPING

Non-EU residents can enjoy a tax refund on products purchased in our European centres. Our friendly Guest Services teams are ready to assist with more information.

EXCLUSIVE SUMMER PROMOTION

Contact Vijay D'Souza at Buzz Travel Marketing on gccsales@mcarthurglen.com or +971 52 711 7557 for more details on claim your summer VIP benefits.



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- GUCCI
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- KARL LAGERFELD
- MICHAEL KORS
- MOSCHINO
- OFF-WHITE
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- PRADA
- STELLA MCCARTNEY
- VALENTINO
- VERSACE

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An opportune time for India

In a paradigm shift after the pandemic, M!CE industry is more inclined towards the domestic market. Industry players say the segment has a lot of potential.

Janice Alyosius

M!CE industry is gaining momentum in India. With the shift in focus from Europe to Asia-Pacific in the aftermath of the pandemic, the country, with its infrastructure facilities becoming on par with that of developed countries, is poised to become a preferred destination for M!CE events.

“A lot has changed in the M!CE industry over the past

two years. In 2020, the M!CE industry was worth US\$215 billion worldwide. And Indians mainly used to organise M!CE events and weddings outside India. But this year, in 2022 after COVID-19, people have started to organise M!CE events and weddings in India due to the difficulty of obtaining European visas and high airfares, which is a positive change for the Indian market,” shared



SUBHASH GOYAL
Chairman,
STIC Travel Group

**DUE TO DIFFICULTY
IN OBTAINING
EUROPEAN
VISAS AND HIGH
AIRFARES, MICE
EVENTS HAVE
SHIFTED TO INDIA**





Subhash Goyal, Chairman, STIC Travel Group.

The M!CE industry has opened up after almost two years and there is a lot of potential. Visa for many source markets for India is difficult to avail, the Indian domestic market is in advantage of this fact. Those who used to choose international destinations for hosting M!CE, weddings and other events are now exploring Indian destinations, which is giving boost to the India's M!CE industry and the economy. "Everyone is exploring new destinations. Those who never wanted to travel to India, they are now ready to travel because only a few destinations are open abroad. This is giving the domestic market an opportunity to grow their business," said **Gajesh Girdhar**, Chairman, Emeritus.

Another point to emphasize is the enhancement of destinations. There are so many places that are unexplored and have the potential to host M!CE and

weddings better than doing it abroad. The downside is that people don't know about these places yet. Therefore, proper presentation and promotion of the unexplored and unpopular destination is essential to leverage the potential of the domestic market in the M!CE segment.

"Destination showcasing is very important. When we talk about a place for example Rajasthan, most of the people just know Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, the famous places. But there are some not so famous yet places with huge potential. So, destination presentation is a very important aspect. we need to present the destination and their potential to the corporates," said Girdhar.

India has a lot to offer in itself. Big international players, tourism boards are targeting Indian cities to promote themselves and incentivise the corporates to host M!CE events abroad. Due to the difficulty in visa facilities and



GAJESH GIRDHAR
Chairman, Emeritus

**THOSE WHO
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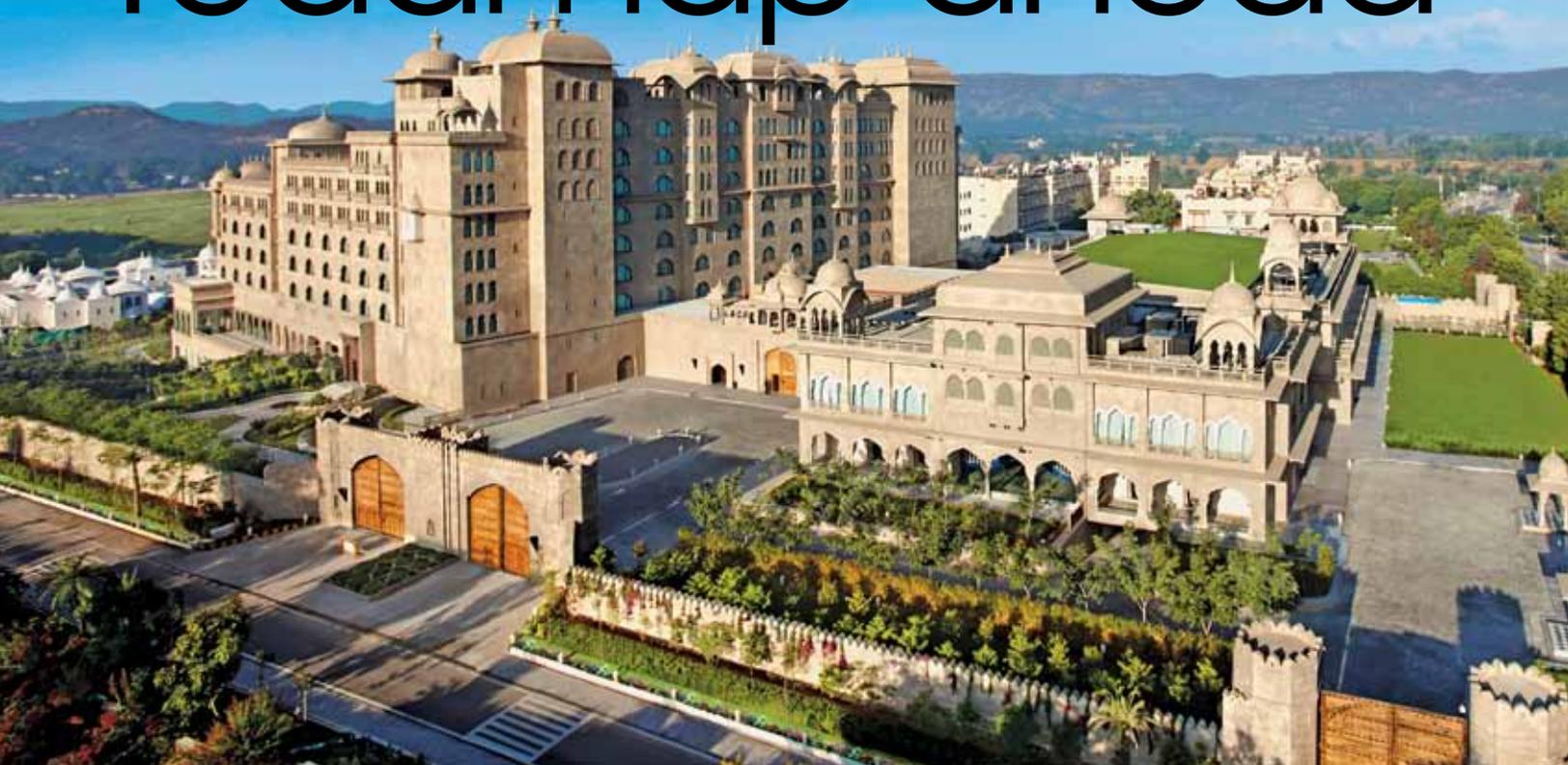
other restrictions hosting M!CE abroad is a little tough at the moment, though some

have already started. But this is a boon for the India's domestic market.

There is a healthy competition between each state to gain opportunities for this segment. Hotels are ramping up their spaces and creating facilities to host M!CE events and weddings.

Speaking on the parallel lines Goyal said, "States in India are competing with each other and many new M!CE sites are popping up. Pragati Maidan is ready, Noida Convention Centre is ready, Hyderabad Convention Centre is doing great in Rajasthan. In addition, there is a conference centre in Gujarat. There are many convention opportunities in Kerala. So, we have great opportunity to organise M!CE events in India. If we compare it to pre-pandemic levels, a lot has changed for the M!CE industry, as each state has its own unique beauty, unique culture and unique cuisine. I think there is a lot to offer the M!CE sector in India."

Eco-conscious roadmap ahead



Being sustainable is a new mantra that is gaining popularity. Let us explore sustainable techniques and architectural principles that are being used by hotels.

Charmaine Fernz

The word ‘sustainability’ is a much-talked-about subject that has witnessed growth in spurts across the hospitality industry. Today, many hotel properties are built with the environment and their surroundings in mind. These initiatives are not just restricted to one department but have an overall impact. Simultaneously, being sustainable is also using local resources, which means giving back to the community.

As **Trent Fraser**, CEO of Choice Hotels Asia-Pacific

says, a lot of changes to improve a hotel’s sustainability level can be made that are relatively low cost. “Making sustainable choices when replacing in-room appliances, light bulbs, and choosing environmentally friendly cleaning products can make a huge difference without being excessively costly,” he adds.

Citing an example, Fraser says that the Comfort Inn City Centre Armidale, Australia, instantly saved AU\$35,000 a year in gas bills when it upgraded its heating and hot water systems to

heavy industry heat pumps, which are driven by solar power. The entire hotel is now heated using just 6 kW of electricity, which is the equivalent energy use of three AC units. Furthermore, Australia’s rolling lockdowns allowed hotels to review their practices and seek ways to reduce costs and wastage. “We have seen many positive steps toward improving sustainable practises,” adds Fraser.

In a recent survey of Choice Hotel properties, 100 per cent of hotels were giving guests the option to reuse

towels and opt out of daily cleaning of their rooms, and 97 per cent of hotels surveyed had transitioned 80 per cent or more of their lighting to energy-efficient LED bulbs. 97 per cent of properties had removed, or never offered, plastic cups and stirrers in rooms, and 87 per cent had removed, or never offered, plastic cutlery and tableware. Further, 90 per cent of the properties had water-efficient toilets, while 80 per cent were using smart showers or low-flow showerheads, as well as recycling bins for guests.



Awareness about sustainability in the industry has gained momentum in the last decade as it involves areas that impact social, economic, and environmental aspects of hotel operations and development.

Alexandra Woop, Executive Director, Interior Design, India, Middle East & Africa at Accor, believes that some of the largest contributors to environmental defects in the hospitality industry are energy usage and water consumption (i.e., heating, ventilation and air conditioning, water for guests, laundry services, irrigation, cleaning, maintenance, etc.). Also, the reduction of waste production is becoming an integral part of the strategy.

"The common misconception is that going green for hotels is remarkably expensive. There is a lot of research about the economic benefits of eco-friendly investments. Reducing expenses and costs is a desirable incentive in any business. The latest environmental advancements and technologies promote cost

efficiency and reduction for those who choose to invest. 'Reduce, reuse, recycle' is the mainstream motto that hoteliers go by when it comes to waste management and energy usage," adds Woop. Woop continues by outlining the benefits of investing in hotels so they may become more eco-friendly properties. Employees and customers will be more comfortable and eager to support an environmentally conscious company, and hoteliers can expect long-term cost benefits. Moreover, modern industrial leaders must have a strong commitment to the environment. Investments in hotels will serve as a public example of innovation and efficient social responsibility.

CARVING A NICHE

Radisson Hotel Group has committed to achieving Net Zero by 2050 and is validating its targets based on science-based targets and has taken active steps towards this goal. Two main routes are increasing the energy efficiency of buildings and transitioning to



ALEXANDRA WOOP
Executive Director, Interior Design, India, Middle East & Africa, Accor

SOME OF THE LARGEST CONTRIBUTORS TO ENVIRONMENTAL DEFECTS IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY ARE ENERGY USAGE AND WATER CONSUMPTION

Sustainability also played a big part in Quality Hotel City Centre Coffs Harbour's recent refurbishment. Sharing his views, General Manager **Michael Dougherty** says, "I believe sustainability is more of a responsibility rather than a focus on cost-saving. It is a duty of care, and while cost savings can be achieved, it is more about leaving a minimal footprint. We implement initiatives such as room waste recycling, elimination of all single-use plastics such as moving room amenities to bulk dispensers, energy-efficient lighting and solar energy generation."

THE IMPACT

Sustainability is the future of the hospitality industry.





JACOBO SAN NICOLAS LOPEZ-BOSCH
SVP, Head of Technical Services, RHG

INDIA WILL BE ONE OF OUR FOCUS COUNTRIES WHERE WE CAN COVER 55% OF THE REDUCTION BY ON- AND OFFSITE SOLAR

renewable energy.

"Together with Accenture, we defined our global renewable energy strategy. The immediate focus is to reduce our carbon footprint by 30 per cent in the next five years, as well as reduce consumption of natural resources, use renewable energy and phase out single-use plastics. India will be one of our focus countries where the strategy shows that we can cover 55 per cent of the reduction by on- and offsite solar. The remainder of the target is covered by purchasing green electricity certificates, or EACs. The strategy in India will deliver a net saving on utility costs to our owners," says **Jacobo San Nicolas Lopez-Bosch**, SVP, Head of Technical Services, Radisson Hotel Group. He explains that there are certain

sustainability measures that the modern traveller expects from a prominent hotel and we need to meet these basics. This is one of the reasons why we played a key role in the development of the Hotel Sustainability Basics to ensure the industry is acting together towards the goal of Net Zero by 2050 with concrete measures and as a united industry. The Hotel Sustainability Basics will raise the global starting level of hotel sustainability in a transparent and coherent way for all travellers and stakeholders, promoting responsible and sustainable travel globally. It will be rolled out across RHG by the end of 2023. The next step will be to ensure that our leased properties are compliant by 2030. We must improve the efficiency of our buildings by reducing utility costs

"In general, hotels do have to invest more money to take action steps towards Net Zero and better energy use. The payback is generally less than 10 years, but this is an investment that we, as an industry, need to make to protect our planet. The hospitality industry needs to come together to help mitigate and tackle sustainability. Sustainability in tourism is a reality," asserts Lopez-Bosch.

MAKING A POINT

Sustainability is not a luxury nor an expense. It is the need of the hour. As **Kush Kapoor**, CEO of Roseate Hotels & Resorts, asserts, we are committed to moving towards sustainable living and are taking mindful steps, hand in hand with professional experts, to be guided on this journey. Sustainability is the need for the future. Simply put, non-sustainable items will eventually die out. It is to be remembered that while incorporating sustainable

designs might cost a bit initially, over the long run the costs more than balance out.

Kush explains with examples such as the usage of LED light fixtures, water harvesting tanks in each property for saving and reusing rainwater, the use of solar energy panels to heat water, and using bio-degradable bags for waste disposal are some of the steps that we have taken. All single-use plastic has been discarded as well. "For us, sustainability is not a marketing tool. It has now begun to define us. We conserve around 1,000 uncut trees in our New Delhi urban resort. All Roseate Hotels are non-smoking. Food waste is turned into compost across all of our properties and then used for gardening," Kapoor continues. Roseate Hotels is becoming self-sustainable. This year, Roseate will launch a bouquet of signature products such as tea, coffee, cookies, and wines. These portfolio additions will help save money, make the brand self-sustaining, and gain better control over the quality of the products, which are largely cultivated on our organic farms.

MOVING AHEAD

Sustainability comes at a cost, but the cost produces benefits in the long run. This is a common sentiment expressed by many across the industry. The right investment can reap abundant savings and enhance your way of giving back to society. As **Nikhil Sharma**, Regional Director for Eurasia, Wyndham Resorts & Hotels EMEA, says, while introducing sustainable practices may incur varying upfront costs, they help to improve energy efficiency, reduce emissions, conserve water, and reduce waste. He adds that Wyndham Hotels & Resorts is committed to environmental stewardship. Wyndham Green, the global

sustainability programme, has seen high levels of engagement across EMEA, reflecting the properties' commitment to addressing the ongoing climate crisis and recovering more sustainably from the pandemic.

In conclusion, sharing his view, **Chander K Baljee**, Chairman and MD, Royal Orchid Hotels, says, hotels must invest more in sustainable initiatives. This could include social, economic, and environmental aspects of hotel operations and development. Moreover, it is a major concern for modern-day travellers and consumers on a global scale. Many brands have already launched sustainable initiatives and are concerned with their social duties and environmental impact. But, when perusing hotel websites, there is often no clear message.



CHANDER K BALJEE
Chairman & MD, Royal Orchid Hotels

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Marriott's new venture in Hyderabad

Marriott International presented its hallmark event, India Market Place, at Westin Hyderabad Mindspace & saw large attendance from hotels under Marriott brand across India.

Nisha Verma

The Marriott India Market Place was introduced to Hyderabad for the first time, with The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace serving as the perfect host. Marriott's hospitality offerings were diverse, with over 30 hotels participating in the event.

HYDERABAD DEBUT

Amitabh Rai, CGM, Westin Hyderabad Mindspace and Hyderabad Market, Marriott International, shared, "Hyderabad is quickly becoming a primary feeder market for many other Indian cities. People considered Mumbai, Delhi,

8 MARRIOTT HOTELS IN ONE MARKET, WITH 3 MORE IN PIPELINE, SHOWS HYDERABAD'S IMPORTANCE

Bengaluru, and even Kolkata to be major markets, but with new businesses arriving and a proactive government in terms of infrastructure

development, Hyderabad has risen to prominence. It is also a watershed moment for Marriott as a brand. We are India's largest hotel chain, with 135 properties and growing. We must establish strong roots in the Hyderabad market."

At Marriott International, **Abhishek Rajagolkar**, Area Director Sales & Distribution for South & East India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh, stated, "It was divided into two sessions. Around 140 people attended the afternoon session of one-on-one meetings. The evening focused on engagement and networking, with senior executives from various companies in

attendance. The soiree drew close to 150 people." He went on to say, "This is a common occurrence in Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru. We held it in Kolkata, Ahmedabad, and Hyderabad this year. We are even planning a trip to Chennai in the near future."

WHY HYDERABAD

Rai revealed that the company already has seven Marriott hotels in Hyderabad and is currently building an eighth, which will be the city's next Westin. "Eight Marriott hotels in one market, with three more opening in the next few years, shows Hyderabad's importance to Marriott," he stated.





INTEGRATING CLUSTER

Rai noted that they are integrating many things in the Hyderabad cluster. "We are synergising our operations and marketing as a cluster. Thus, all hotel purchases in Hyderabad are now clustered, giving us greater bargaining power with vendors. The plan is to operate and maximise our efficiency," he said. However, he added, "We will hold various events for customers. We are planning a golf event in October that will be a Marriott Golf Tournament involving many Marriott brand hotels, and we will get our customers to fly in people from outside to play in this tournament and have a gala evening. We also have many activities planned on the ESG front."

RISING ADRs

When asked about rising ADRs across the country, Rai cited a study and stated that inflation has increased by nearly 12 per cent from 2019 to now. "What was worth ₹100 in 2019 is now worth ₹88. As a result,

hotel rates in 2019 have been reduced by 12 per cent, and there is a push to significantly raise the rates. Since the cost of everything has increased, including flights, and people are paying, we must go into the market with confidence. Rates for most city hotels are steadily rising," he stated. Rajagolkar added, "Recovery versus 2019 is an important goal we have had for a long time. We have seen signs of recovery over the last two months. Most of our hotels have nearly matched or even exceeded 2019 levels. The resorts' prices were already higher than in 2019, but our business and city hotels have seen a return of that recovery. The plan is to grow past the 2019 levels in 2022 and 2023."

TRADE LIAISONS

Rai stated that, similar to the Market Place for corporate clients, they have a separate thing for MICE and tour operators. "We take them offsite to our hotels, and all of the hotel GMs join and spend two days with them," he noted.

WEDDINGS ON

Rai reiterated that Marriott offers a complete wedding solution to those wanting to have weddings there. "We have wedding specialists not only in Hyderabad but in most Marriott hotels across cities. We have a wedding

ones are primarily focused on intimate weddings, whereas our larger hotels are heavily engaged in evolving the entire 360-degree experience. Even our business hotels, which had probably never seen a wedding before, are beginning to see the value in the segment. We now have a dedicated national sales team of 30–35 wedding planners," he stated.

TERTIARY CITIES LIKE TRICHY AND SILIGURI ARE SEEING GOOD DEMAND AS COMPARED TO KEY CITIES

team that includes specialist chefs and even a traditional Maharaj," he asserted.

Weddings, as per Rajagolkar, are an evergreen market. "Every Marriott hotel hosts weddings. The smaller

BRAND EXPANSION

Rajagolkar remarked on a statement from Marriott's top management about having 27 properties in India over the next 18 months "A Courtyard by Marriott in Trichy is one of the many hotels that will open soon. A Le Meridien is opening in Amritsar. Rishikesh will soon have a Westin. These are all new destinations with unique hotels."

While many of these new destinations are spiritual, Rajagolkar agrees that spiritual tourism has always been strong in India. However, Marriott did not have many hotels in these areas.

MOVEMENTS



Hemant Tenneti

CGM, The Westin Mumbai Powai
Lake & Lakeside Chalet, Mumbai
– Marriott Executive Apartments

Tenneti has held various leadership roles within Marriott International, most recently leading the Operations Discipline for South Asia as the Senior Area Director of Operations. He will be at the helm of day-to-day operations in his new role, ensuring personalized, high-quality service to all guests and will continue to offer a home base for locals and travellers to explore Mumbai. He joined the company in 2011 as the Director of F&B at the Renaissance Mumbai Convention Centre and Marriott Executive Apartments, Mumbai.



Arjun Kaggallu

General Manager
Novotel Kolkata Hotel and
Residences

Kaggallu will be responsible for looking after the overall operations of Novotel Kolkata Hotel and Residences with 340 keys. He comes with over 17 years of rich hospitality experience across leading global hospitality brands across India, Europe, and the USA. His last assignment was at the Hyatt Centric Candolim Goa as a General Manager, and he looks forward to his new role and time in the City of Joy. He holds an E-Cornell Certification along with a Bachelor of Science in Hospitality and Tourism Management from Business School Chardonne.



Vikram Singh

Director of Sales and Marketing
Indore Marriott Hotel

With over 21 years of experience, Singh brings along a wealth of knowledge in the F&B and S&M domains. He will be responsible for driving commercial objectives and enhancing the brand positioning of the Indore Marriott Hotel. His Marriott career began in the year 2008 with the Hyderabad Marriott & Convention Centre. Subsequently, he moved to JW Marriott Chandigarh, and before joining Indore Marriott, he was associated with Fairfield by Marriott Lucknow as Director of Sales.



Ramnik Choudhary

Director of Sales and
Marketing Crowne Plaza Jaipur,
Tonk Road

Choudhary comes with an overall experience of 21 years in the hospitality industry. His last assignment was with Raffles Udaipur. With a strong skill set and experience, Ramnik plans to lead the team towards organisational success and set new benchmarks. With an extensive knowledge of sales, revenue generation, marketing, e-commerce, pre-opening, and loyalty, Ramnik is committed to ensuring both the development and growth of the organisation and the team.



Vikas Mittar

Director of Finance
Pullman & Novotel New Delhi
Aerocity

Mittar is an established hospitality expert in directing the fiscal planning of the brand. Having worked with international operators, he has first-hand experience in developing robust internal control processes and compliance. Ensuring adherence to financial laws and guidelines, retaining constant awareness of the company's financial position, acting to prevent problems, developing the corporate fundraising strategy, and managing relationships with partners and investors will be the core of his responsibilities.



Sandeep Kaul

Director of Rooms
JW Marriott Bengaluru
Prestige Golfshire Resort
and Spa

Kaul will oversee setting up the overall operations of the resort's 301 residential rooms and spa division. He will be an overseer of the front office, housekeeping, spa, and leisure, and will be in charge of recruiting the heads of departments for their respective teams. With his result-driven persona and the ability to build strong customer relationships by curating customised experiences for his guests, the luxury hotelier aims at creating luxurious and intimate experiences by bringing innovative ideas to the table.



Sandeep Basu

Associate Director-
Development & Operations
Cygnett Hotels & Resorts

Basu will play a key role in meeting Cygnett's aggressive growth goals. He brings with him an incredible track record of over two decades of experience in the hospitality sector, having essayed roles in various renowned companies like Hyatt, ITC Hotels, The Park Hotels, and Sheraton. He is an articulate and passionate hotel professional with a strong business acumen. Cygnett Hotels & Resorts, established in 2014, operates a diverse portfolio of economic, midscale and upscale properties in key business and leisure locations.



Namrata Salaria

New Crowne Meeting Director
Crowne Plaza Greater Noida

Salaria is an experienced sales leader with a demonstrated history of working in the hospitality industry for over 17 years. She is a result-oriented and passionate sales professional with a wealth of experience in enhancing sales, marketing, and revenue streams. She has a deep understanding of the market, having worked with renowned brands like Hyatt Hotels, The Lodhi, Hilton Hotel Group, Intercontinental New Delhi, Shangri-La Hotel, The Imperial New Delhi, Hilton & Double Tree by Hilton, and Andaz Delhi.

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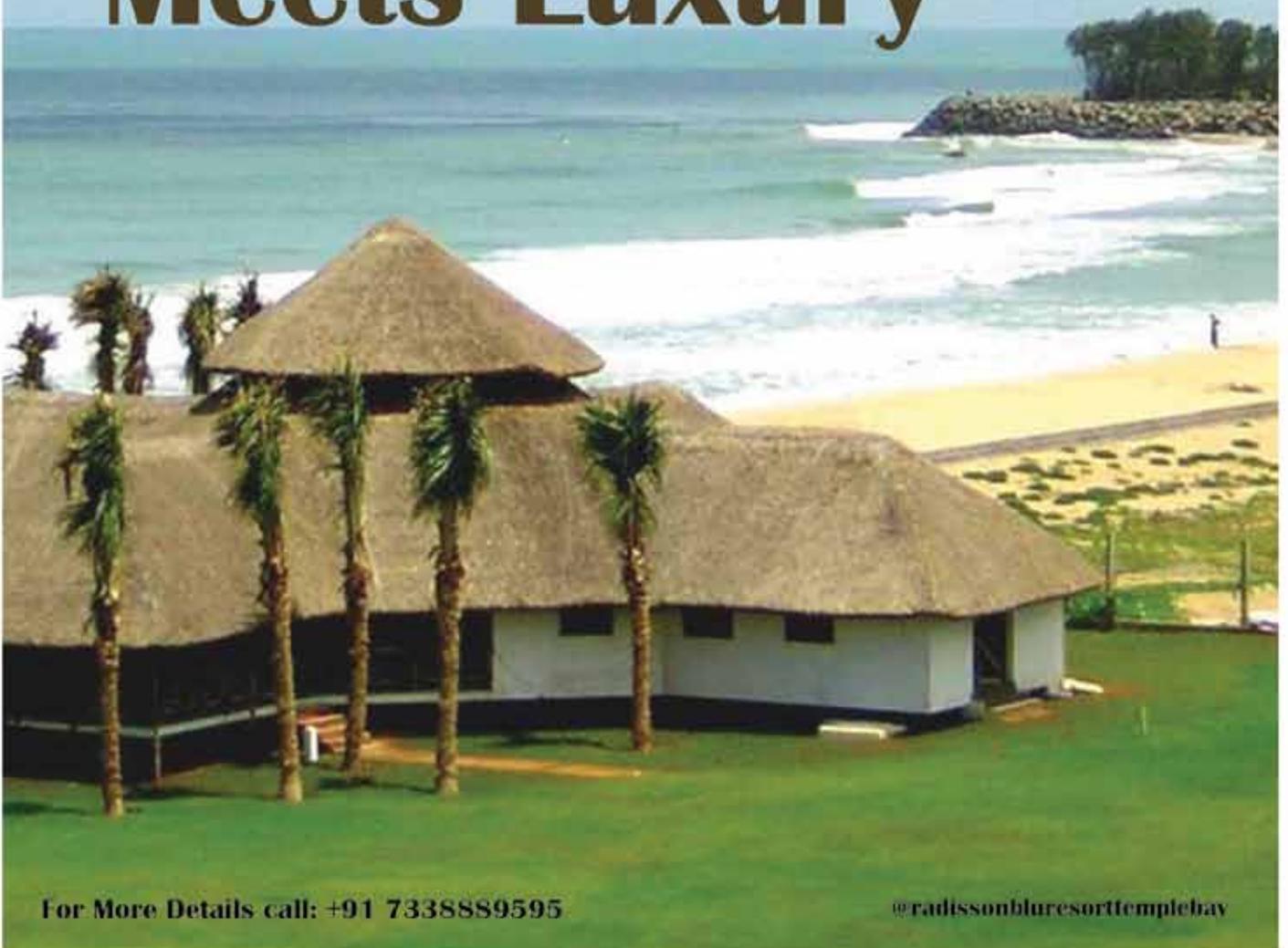
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