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Is India ready for inbound MICE?

What does inbound **MICE** mean? Inbound **MICE** refers to attracting global groups for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions in India. These initiatives help the country by inviting investments and boosting tourism, business growth, local economic growth, and employment for local citizens. This also gives the opportunity to build **BRAND INDIA**.

India has significant potential for accommodating the inbound MICE. However, currently the

from reality. Since each touch point is considered a separate unit, it increases the cost of execution.

Can organisations come together to advocate for the infrastructure improvements in India? Can we create an environment, where setting up events is as seamless as it is in Singapore or Dubai? Countries like Spain have risen to similar challenges, and although India's diversity and diverse resources are a significant advantage, it also adds complexity to developing this sector as a whole.

“Indian Government has identified the need and has created some large convention spaces but challenges on accommodation, & transport, need a big push.”

collaboration between touchpoints is not synchronised. Hotels, Convention centers, and airports are working in isolation. Hence, international companies and vendors are looking at more mature markets such as Dubai, Singapore, etc. These countries have invested in creating a separate vertical for MICE groups.

Indian Government has identified the need and has created some large convention spaces but the challenges on accommodation, catering, ground transport, and last-mile connectivity need a big push.

Also, ease of visa for such events needs to be considered. Proper representation in global events on the facilities and convention centers available is far

India offers immense talent and market potential across various industries, making it an ideal destination for product launches. Whether it is FMCG, IT, pharma, or automotive industries, the country has the right audience. Increasing per capita income can also add to the inbound MICE exposure.

There is undoubtedly an opportunity for India to become a leading destination for inbound MICE. However, turning this potential into a viable business proposition remains a challenge, which is yet to be fully realised.

Warm Regards,
Jyothi Varma, Consulting Editor

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Credit woes crippling

India's MICE & business travel

India's business travel and meetings sector has grown exponentially, fuelled by the country's economic growth, which has given rise to the critical challenge of credit management in the sector, says **Naveen Kundu**, Chairman, FICCI Tourism, MICE & Business Travel.



DELAYED PAYMENTS

Delayed payments have become a norm in the industry, causing cash flow problems and impacting business operations. This delay can range from a few weeks to several months, making it challenging for companies to manage their finances effectively.

LACK OF STANDARDISATION

The absence of standardised payment processes and credit policies has exacerbated the issue. Different companies have different payment terms, making it difficult for vendors and suppliers to manage their credit exposure.

CONSEQUENCES

The credit challenge has severe consequences for the industry, including:

- Cash flow problems
- Reduced profitability
- Strained relationships between planners, vendors, and suppliers
- Impact on the overall quality of events

SOLUTIONS

To address this challenge, industry stakeholders must work together to:

- Establish clear credit policies and payment terms
- Implement efficient payment systems, such as online payment gateways
- Foster collaboration and open communication among planners, vendors, and suppliers
- Explore alternative payment models, such as escrow services

By tackling the credit challenge, India's business travel and meetings and events sector can ensure sustainable growth, continued success, and maintain its position as a hub for global events. **In an effort to create awareness about this emerging challenge, Kundu has reached out to service providers through different channels advocating for collective action. He has emphasised that it is high time for industry stakeholders to unite and take immediate action to redefine the terms of credit management and payment cycles.** →



NAVEEN KUNDU
Chairman

FICCI Tourism, MICE & Business Travel

The business travel and meetings and events sector in India has witnessed significant growth in recent years, driven by the country's economic expansion and increasing global connectivity. However, this growth has also brought to the forefront a critical challenge i.e. credit management.

RISING COSTS AND LONGER PAYMENT CYCLES

The increasing costs of organising events, combined with longer payment cycles, have resulted in a credit crunch. This affects not only the planners and organisers but also the vendors and suppliers who provide essential services.



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Finance & insurance driving incentive travel

The Incentive Travel and Motivational Events Global Survey by SITE emphasises the dominance of certain sectors and the evolving challenges of talent shortages and safety. This year's findings provide a roadmap for navigating the industry's future.

By **Janice Alyosius**

Padraic Gilligan, Chief Marketing Officer, Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE), recently unveiled the results of SITE's Incentive Travel and Motivational Events Global Survey. This comprehensive survey offered valuable insights into the incentive travel industry, focusing on key end-users such as corporate planners and executives. The findings revealed current industry

trends, talent shortages, top leadership involvement, and critical concerns such as safety and cost.

"The survey not only validates the importance of incentive travel but also highlights the key challenges we need to address from talent gap to ongoing safety concerns," Gilligan said. As incentive travel continues to evolve in response to international realities, these insightful findings highlighted both challenges and opportunities for industry professionals looking to stay ahead.

LEADING USERS OF INCENTIVE TRAVEL

One key takeaways from the survey is the dominance of the finance and insurance sectors in using incentive travel programmes. Gilligan said, "Finance and insurance companies have consistently been the largest users of incentive travel, and this year is no different." These two sectors accounted for 35 per cent of all responses, emphasising their reliance on incentive travel to drive workplace performance and engagement.

Other key sectors contributing to the incentive travel landscape include technology, pharmaceutical, direct selling and automotive. Notably, the automotive industry is traditionally a strong player in incentive travel. However, their participation was relatively lower than expected in this year's survey. "Automotive did not show a strong presence in this survey, but we had robust participation from other major sectors," Gilligan pointed out.

TALENT GAP: A KEY CONCERN

An intriguing aspect unearthed in the survey is the involvement of professionals from diverse backgrounds, who are at the forefront in designing incentive travel programmes. According to SITE, 48 per cent of these professionals have degrees in non-business fields such as languages, history, and humanities, while the remaining 52 per cent hold degrees in business, commerce, or law.

"We found that the route into this profession is incredibly wide and varied. You have got professionals with degrees in everything from the humanities to business," Gilligan noted. This development poses a serious threat to



the growing talent shortage of qualified professionals in the industry.

Gilligan highlighted that 68 per cent of respondents reported difficulties in recruiting skilled professionals, a challenge compounded by the pandemic.

68% of respondents reported difficulties in recruiting skilled professionals, worsened by the pandemic



"Many left during Covid-19, and we have not fully recovered from that," he said.

CEOs INVOLVEMENT IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Perhaps one of the most surprising findings from the survey was the CEOs involvement in incentive travel planning. The survey revealed that 20 per cent of corporate planners report directly to the CEO. "In one out of five cases, the corporate executive responsible for incentive travel reports directly to the CEO," said Gilligan. "This tells us that CEOs are personally vested in these programmes, further validating their importance in corporate strategy."

Traditionally, these roles are reported to departments such as sales (which still accounts for 30 per cent of respondents)



or travel, and event teams (25 per cent). The increasing level of the involvement of CEOs shows how incentive travel has evolved into a strategic priority.

KEY CONCERNS: SAFETY, COSTS, POLITICAL INSTABILITY

When asked about the challenges they face, 42 per cent of corporate planners cited safety as their biggest concern. “Safety is the single biggest issue keeping planners awake at night,” Gilligan shared. Other major concerns included high costs (35 per cent), political unrest (25 per cent), instability (18 per cent), and budgets (15 per cent).

The responses of survey emphasised that these concerns were consistent across the globe. “Safety remains a top priority, whether it is health security in post-COVID or geopolitical realities,” Gilligan explained. He added the focus

on safety, has not declined yet and has even extended to political instability and economic uncertainty across the world.

INDIA'S GROWING ROLE IN INCENTIVE TRAVEL

The survey received contributions from 100 corporations across the globe, with remarkable participation from India. Gilligan acknowledged the leaders' role from SITE India in driving active participation. India's increased participation is significant considering the globalisation of the incentive travel market and the role of emerging economies in shaping the industry's future. ➔

KEY SECTORS ADDING TO INCENTIVE TRAVEL

- Technology: **15%**
- Pharmaceuticals: **12%**
- Direct Selling: **10%**
- Automotive: **8%**





A Tale of Two Hearts & A Regal Setting

A Fairytale Wedding at ITC Grand Bharat, A Luxury Collection Retreat, Gurugram

ITC Grand Bharat is a haven for couples seeking a surreal wedding experience. Imagine exchanging vows beneath the majestic domes of a royal palace, surrounded by lush greenery at this enchanting retreat. The splendor of architecture with the serene natural beauty of the Aravalli Ranges creates a truly magical atmosphere.

Bejeweled in bespoke royalty, ITC Grand Bharat's palatial design, adorned with grandeur of the domes, intricate frescoes and expansive courtyards echo the magnificence and heritage of India. This architectural marvel with its regal ambiance provides a captivating backdrop for both intimate and grand wedding ceremonies, making it a veritably unforgettable experience.

Indulge in an extraordinary culinary experience at ITC Grand Bharat, where wedding celebrations reach new heights of excellence. Our culinary maestros craft exquisite menus

that blend the finest Indian and global cuisines, each dish a reflection of warmth and artistry. Every celebration is elevated with meticulously curated flavors, ensuring a feast that leaves a lasting impression on your guests. Let our culinary expertise transform your special day into a timeless gourmet affair.

Pamper your loved ones with the ultimate relaxation at ITC Grand Bharat. For those seeking relaxation before the big day, Kaya Kalp – The

Royal Spa offers an array of holistic treatments and therapies. This luxurious wellness retreat provides an escape to rejuvenate and prepare for the most special day of one's life.

Our expansive 300-acre estate offers a perfect backdrop for your love story. Flourishing gardens and manicured lawns create a spellbinding setting for rituals and celebrations, adding touches of elegance to the ceremonies. **Capture**

the magic with stunning photographs against these picturesque outdoor vistas. Our sprawling estate provides ample opportunity to create timeless keepsakes of your special day.

ITC Grand Bharat is dedicated to sustainable luxury. Committed to the ethos of 'Responsible Luxury' environmental conservation, energy efficiency, and community engagement, the retreat strives to minimise its ecological footprint. By choosing the retreat for a wedding, you are not only celebrating in a remarkable venue but also contributing to a more sustainable future.

A wedding at ITC Grand Bharat is a love story set against the backdrop of regal splendor. The splendour of the palace, the serenity of the gardens, and the sensorial dining experience that elevates a meal to an art form, together create unforgettable memories. It is a celebration of not only your love but also the rich heritage and timeless elegance that the retreat embodies. ➔



ITB India draws travel's titans

The 3-day event created an unprecedented pathway for Indian and South Asian travel markets presenting unparalleled opportunities for quality buyers and global exhibitors.



By MT Bureau

ITB India 2024, a three-day business-to-business trade show, concluded in Mumbai on 13 September 2024. The event, held alongside MICE Show India and Travel Tech India, served as a customised space for fruitful business collaboration in the travel industry.

Held at the Jio World Convention Centre, the event attracted key travel industry professionals. It created unparalleled pathways to the Indian and South Asian travel markets for quality buyers and global exhibitors representing MICE, corporate, leisure, and travel technology sectors. The exhibition gathered high-calibre buyers, brought on board by esteemed partners such as ADTOI, ETAA, NIMA, and OTOAI.

“India’s travel industry is experiencing remarkable growth, and the increasing demand in this market is sparking renewed



ITB INDIA 2024

Over 25,000 business engagements between exhibitors and buyers

600+ top-tier Indian and global buyers

ITB India Gala Dinner witnessed over 400 attendees

Participation of leading industry players, including AsiaPay, Club Med, Collinson Group

interest from around the world,” said **Joyce Wang**, Executive Director, Messe Berlin Asia Pacific, Organiser, ITB India. “This year’s edition proved instrumental in forging strategic partnerships and driving growth in one of the world’s most dynamic travel markets. With a focus on staying ahead of the curve, our conference tracks provided key insights to ensure attendees are future-ready,” added Wang.

The ITB India Conference 2024, themed ‘Future-Ready Travel: Embracing Innovation, Sustainability, and Global Connectivity,’ provided a platform for over 35 hours of in-depth insights into the trends, challenges, and future of the Indian and South Asian travel market. Over 120 industry leaders addressed topics vital to the future of MICE, corporate travel, leisure travel, and travel technology specially focussed on India. The next edition of ITB India will take place from 02 to 04 September 2025 at the Jio World Convention Centre. ➔

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Perks propelling India's MICE industry?

Pratima Badhwar, Head, Commercial, India and South Asia, Accor, discusses the brand's strategic growth, challenges in the competitive Indian market along with sustainability initiatives, and the growing MICE segment.

By **Nisha Verma**

Appreciating Accor's burgeoning growth and brand positioning in India, **Pratima Badhwar**, Head, Commercial, India and South Asia, Accor, said "With 63 operational hotels, including 23 Ibis and Ibis Styles properties, the network is solidified by established brands such as Novotel and Ibis, which are well recognised among Indian travellers. This year alone, we are adding new properties such as the Ibis Styles Mysuru, and expanding with other key openings in Goa, Lucknow, and Mumbai. Our development team is aggressively working on expanding our



PRATIMA BADHWAR
Head of Commercial
India and South Asia, Accor

footprint. The loyalty programme, Accor Live Limitless (ALL), remains central to this, driving engagement and positioning our brands strongly among a customer base that exceeds two million members in India."

COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

The hospitality landscape in India is growing, driven largely by post-pandemic travel demand, claimed Badhwar stressing that this growth presents opportunities for all players. "Accor is working closely with owner groups to provide tailored solutions, from economy to luxury segments. Our diverse portfolio allows us to cater to varied market needs, and our



aggressive expansion plans will keep us competitive. Additionally, our approach includes exploring franchise routes and quick brand conversions to scale rapidly,” she added.

BUILDING BRAND VISIBILITY

The growth of Accor in India has been organic, which has led to strong brand recognition. Badhwar claimed, “Novotel, Ibis, and luxury brands such as Raffles Hotels & Resorts have established clear identities among travellers. Each brand has a distinct appeal that resonates with specific customer segment. As new properties are added, their visibility continue to strengthen.”

ESG INITIATIVES

Talking about ESG initiatives at Accor, Badhwar said, “Sustainability is deeply embedded in Accor’s operations globally, led by initiatives such as eliminating single-use plastics and our commitment to becoming a net zero carbon organisation by 2050. In India, specific focus areas include reducing food wastage and adopting renewable energy solutions. We have also earned Green Key certifications for several properties, underscoring our commitment to ESG goals.”



Accor’s focus extends beyond domestic MICE; the brand is also a strong player in outbound MICE, catering to global destinations

CAPITALISING ON MICE

Accor’s focus extends beyond domestic MICE; the brand is also a strong player in outbound MICE, catering to global destinations. Through partnerships with organisations such as ICCA, ICPB, and EMAA, it continues to enhance its visibility in this segment. The brand also offers value-added benefits like upgraded menus and double reward points for MICE planners under its ‘Choice is Yours’ programme, further incentivising event organisers to choose Accor.

“India’s growing prominence as a MICE destination, domestically and internationally, aligns well with our focus.

Our extensive portfolio, which includes large convention centres like the Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre and newer additions like the Novotel Jaipur, strengthens our positioning. We are also enhancing our MICE offerings with tailored incentives for planners, alongside our ‘The Choice is Yours’ programme,” Badhwar informed.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

When asked about major challenges in India for hospitality, including complex licensing processes and long build timelines, she commented, “The challenges like this are also opportunities. With government incentives and initiatives such as the single-window clearances, the landscape is improving. We remain optimistic about the growth potential of the sector.”

INDIA ON MICE

Accor has been actively participating in discussions led by the Union Ministry of Tourism and other industry stakeholders to improve India’s standing as a MICE destination. “While there is progress, and consolidation, unified efforts could elevate India as a top choice for international conferences and events. This requires visibility, partnerships, and better infrastructure to accommodate large-scale events,” she claimed. ➔



Mass wedding: A CSR initiative

Rashi Entertainment hosted royal wedding ceremony for underprivileged girls, as a part of noble cause in Indian wedding industry. All ceremonies were conducted with traditional rituals.

By MT Bureau

Rashi Entertainment, well-known luxury wedding planner, celebrated its 25th anniversary with a royal wedding ceremony, 'Vivah Utsav,' where 28 underprivileged girls tied the knot.

The event took place on the festive occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi at Nevaeh, Delhi, and marked a unique initiative in India's wedding and event industry. The ceremony witnessed 28 brides exchanging garlands with their life partners in the presence of over 1,000 guests. **Rajeev Jain**, Director, Rashi Entertainment, demonstrated his commitment to creating unique and impactful experiences through Rashi Entertainment's 'Vivah Utsav,' exemplifying a noble cause in

the Indian wedding and event industry. By orchestrating such memorable event, Jain not only celebrated his company's achievements but also enriched the cultural fabric of the industry.

Expressing his joy, Jain said, "I do not have a daughter, but with God's grace and Rashi's success, while celebrating its 25th anniversary with this noble initiative, we are honoured to perform the 'kanyadan' for 28 daughters." Jain added that he found immense

satisfaction in crafting experiences that resonate deeply with people. It came not just from the success of the events, but from his efforts in contributing positively to the lives of others.

The weddings were conducted with traditional rituals, with each couple having a dedicated pandit to ensure that the rituals were performed according to the Shastras. Additionally, each couple received over 50 essential items to start their new married life. ➔

The event marked a unique initiative in event industry



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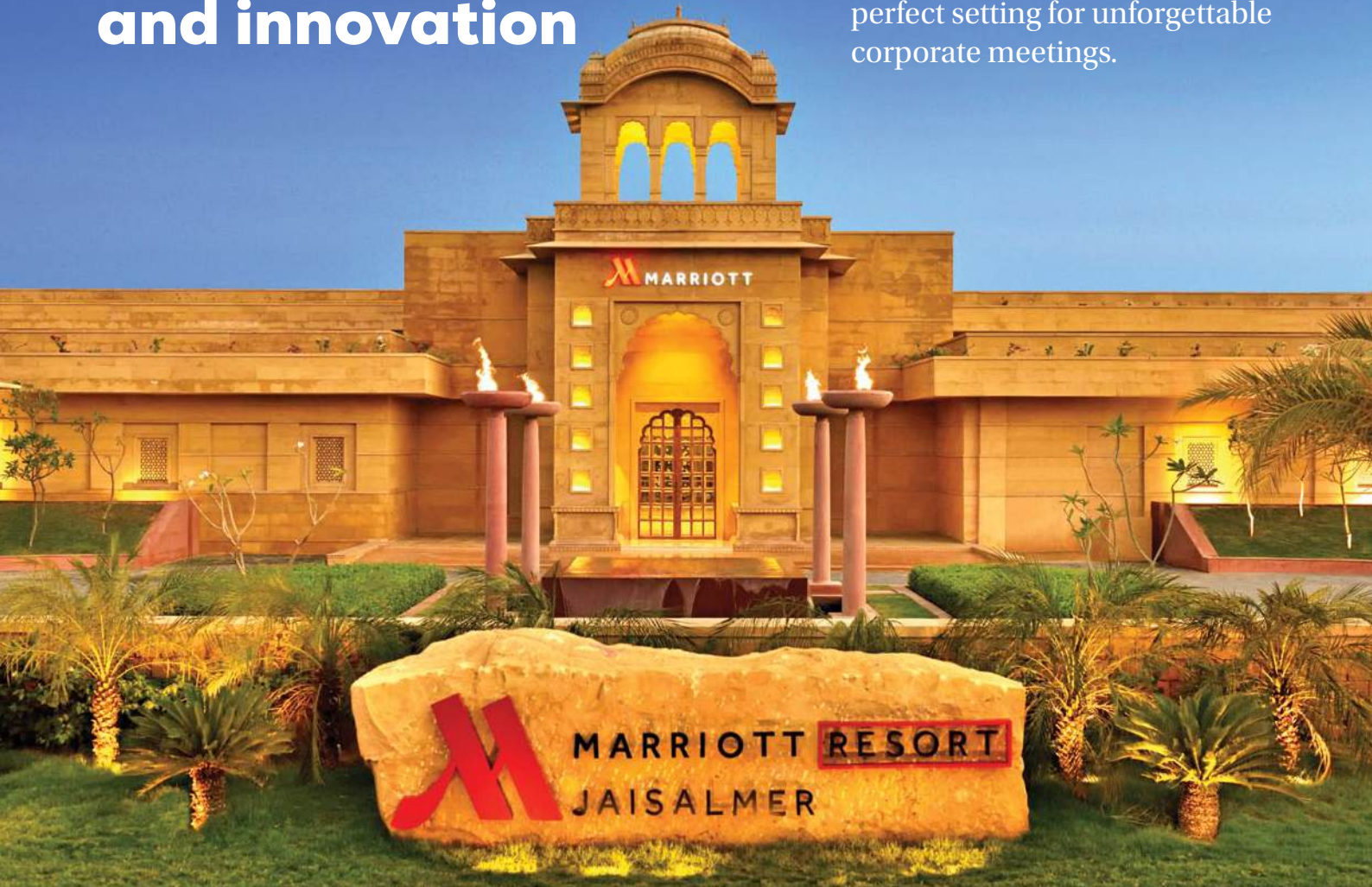
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With versatile venues, Jaisalmer Marriott Resort & Spa offers the perfect setting for unforgettable corporate meetings.



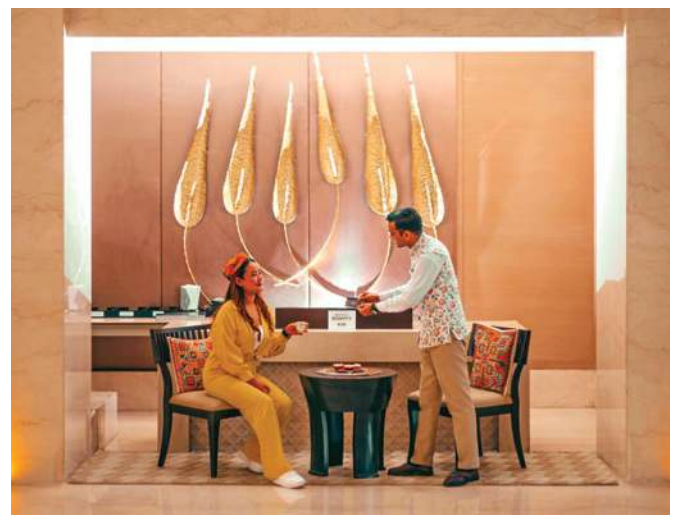
By MT Bureau

Jaisalmer Marriott Resort & Spa offers an ideal setting for corporate meetings and events, blending luxury with modern amenities in a captivating desert landscape. Located in the heart of the golden city, this five-star resort combines cultural heritage with contemporary comforts, making it an exceptional choice for corporate gatherings, conferences, and social events.

The resort offers a variety of indoor and outdoor venues, including an elegant ballroom, comfortable meeting venues, and spacious lawns, which can accommodate groups of all sizes. The ballroom of 4,160 sq. ft. is perfect for meetings and conventions, coupled with other spaces spread across 52,000 sq. ft. encompassing indoor and outdoor venues. The multiple venues at the resort become a perfect setup for events that require a change of location to juxtapose the celebration.

The resort's dedicated events team ensures that every detail is meticulously handled, from preferential catering menus to tailored event themes. With premium accommodations, exceptional dining venues, a rejuvenating spa, and a host of leisure activities, guests will have a customised itinerary during their stay.

Jaisalmer's scenic beauty and cultural heritage provide an inspiring backdrop for gatherings, encouraging creativity and team collaboration. Needless to mention the comforts of the resort along with genuine warmth in hospitality will make your stay truly memorable. ➔



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Madhya Pradesh isn't just a state it is a vibrant canvas of festivals where tradition, adventure, and luxury blend seamlessly. All these fairs and festivals interweave the souls

of different destinations. All these events are meticulously crafted by Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board to promote the destinations and increase tourist footfall.

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Taiwan woos Indian corporates with incentives

Planning a large incentive trip can be daunting, but Taiwan’s 2024 plan makes it effortless. With easy visa policies and personalised perks, Taiwan is the ideal destination for Indian corporates to elevate their incentive travel.

By MT Bureau

Taiwan’s 2024 incentive plan is a golden ticket to unforgettable corporate travel experiences.

Offering a blend of cutting-edge infrastructure, rich culture, and unbeatable financial perks, Taiwan is rapidly emerging as a prime destination for Indian businesses seeking to elevate their corporate events.

Taiwan is not just showcasing a destination; it is offering an experience that rewards you. With travel subsidies as high as NT\$2,000 per person and up to NT\$500,000 per event, Taiwan makes incentive travel both extraordinary and cost-effective. Meanwhile, if a corporate organises incentive tours to Taiwan for two consecutive years, then each person receives an additional NT\$200 (₹516). It is a win-win for companies looking to reward their teams while optimising travel costs. While the financial benefits

REWARDS FOR INDIAN CORPORATES

- 30-300 people
NT\$400 (₹1,033) per person
- 301-1,000 people
NT\$600 (₹1,549) per person
- Over 1,000 people
NT\$800 (₹2,066) per person

are enticing, Taiwan offers far more. The country delivers a blend of business and leisure, making corporate trips not just productive but also enriching.

For groups of 200 or more, an additional subsidy of NT\$120,000 (₹3,10,064) is available to visit iconic cultural sites like Sun Moon Lake and Jiufen, as recommended by the local government. These experiences are not just perks; they create transformative and unforgettable moments for your team.

Planning a large incentive trip can be overwhelming, but Taiwan’s 2024 plan provides tailored support to make it seamless. The plan offers subsidies for preliminary inspection trips, covering flights and accommodation for two decision-makers. For groups of 300 or more staying at least four days, Taiwan provides up to NT\$200,000 (₹5,16,516) in subsidies. If you are organising trips for more than 1,000 attendees, expect even more personalised perks.

Taiwan is more than just a business-friendly destination; it is where cutting-edge technology meets ancient culture. From futuristic skyscrapers to centuries-old temples, Taiwan offers the best of both worlds. With easy visa policies, robust infra, and world-class venues, the 2024 incentive plan makes Taiwan a more attractive option, with subsidies that make it a no-brainer for Indian corporates looking for their next rewarding destination. ➔

2025: Year of Indian MICE

NIMA celebrates its 10th anniversary with two key initiatives, the 'Year of Indian MICE Tourism' and 'World MICE Tourism Day,' to shape the future of the sector in India and beyond.



By **MT Bureau**

The Network of Indian MICE Agents (NIMA) marked its 10th anniversary this year, celebrating a decade of dedicated service to the Indian MICE industry. NIMA has consistently been a pioneer for Indian MICE agents, advocating for professional growth, industry standards, and the global promotion of Indian MICE tourism. Since its inception in 2014, NIMA has stood by its core commitments, and as it steps into its second decade, the organisation's vision is stronger than ever.

2025: YEAR OF INDIAN MICE TOURISM

To complement ongoing government efforts, particularly by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to promote India as a global MICE destination, NIMA has declared 2025 as the 'Year of Indian MICE Tourism.' This initiative aims to foster nationwide engagement,

with a series of events and activities planned from Raipur to Ranchi, Madurai to Mohali, and Agra to Amritsar.

The declaration underscores NIMA's vision to position India as a premier MICE destination, recognising the economic and cultural significance of the industry. These events will highlight the strength of Indian MICE tourism and showcase its potential on the global stage.

These events will highlight the strength of Indian MICE tourism and showcase its potential on the global stage

WORLD MICE TOURISM DAY

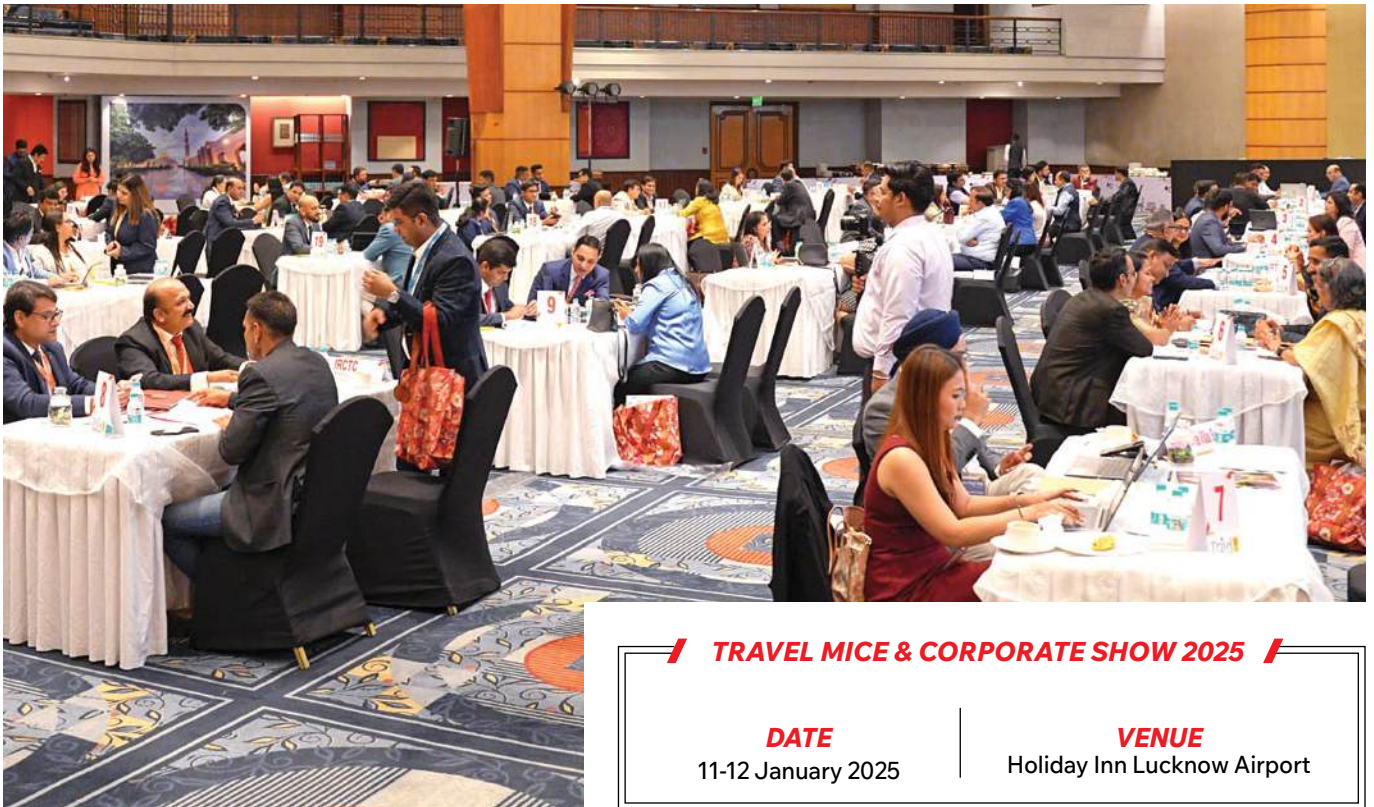
In a significant move, NIMA has also announced 21 June as 'World MICE Tourism Day.' This date, marking the summer solstice, was chosen as it symbolises the peak of the travel and events season in the northern hemisphere. Conferences, exhibitions, and business events take place worldwide during this period, making it the perfect time to recognise the global impact of the MICE industry. **Gajesh Giridhar**, Founder, NIMA, emphasised the importance of launching this annual celebration to create awareness and drive the MICE agenda forward.

As NIMA moves into its second decade, the organisation remains committed to supporting Indian MICE agents, empowering them with the skills and resources needed to succeed in a dynamic global market. With initiatives like the 'Year of Indian MICE Tourism' and 'World MICE Tourism Day,' NIMA continues to shape the future of MICE tourism in India and beyond. →

Empowering dialogues and partnerships at



Travel MICE & Corporate Show has been designed to bridge the gap, forge valuable connections, and drive business growth among industry stakeholders and its delegates. It has added value to the delegate's businesses and paved way for valuable dialogues.



TRAVEL MICE & CORPORATE SHOW 2025

DATE
11-12 January 2025

VENUE
Holiday Inn Lucknow Airport

By **Janice Alyosius**

The 10th edition of the Travel MICE and Corporate Show, held recently at Hyderabad Marriott Convention Centre, served as an ideal platform for corporates to meet the right vendors, build partnerships, and stay updated with the latest industry trends. The show witnessed around 2,300 B2B meetings involving

33 exhibitors and 72 buyers. Along with the panel discussion focused on the future of sustainable practices in travel industry, participants and delegates at the show shared how the event empowered them to make informed decisions and add value to their business. It served as a vital catalyst, fostering direct connections between buyers and exhibitors. They expressed how the event provided valuable

insights into the evolving needs of industry professionals, highlighting how stakeholders can collaboratively enhance mutual understanding of market dynamics. By facilitating open dialogue, the event enabled participants to share knowledge, address challenges, and explore opportunities for growth, and adapt strategies accordingly. Overall, the show was instrumental in bridging gaps within the industry.



DEV KARVAT
Founder and CEO
Asego



GAURAV NAGWEKAR,
Head Corporate Travel
Reliance Industries

Congratulations to the DDP team for organising this outstanding event! It serves as a fantastic platform for both buyers and sellers in the corporate space. With a few programmes like this, it provides sellers a valuable opportunity to showcase new services while gaining insights into the evolving needs of corporate buyers.

Conversations with industry professionals help us connect and understand what is important in the market. This event helps us stay in tune with the industry, making it a must-attend for everyone involved.

One of the key advantages of attending forums like this is the chance to connect with like-minded professionals and gain insights into how corporates, suppliers, and SMEs are navigating the travel industry. It is a great platform to understand current trends, innovations, and the challenges we all face. Engaging in these discussions not only broadens our perspective but also helps us identify new opportunities for collaborations. These interactions are invaluable for anyone looking to stay informed about landscape of the travel sector.



SONIA REGO
Corporate Sales and Marketing Manager
West and South India, Turkish Airlines



VINITEE MISHRA
Senior Manager Global Travel and Immigration
Utopia India (Prometheus Group Inc.)

I would like to congratulate the DDP team for organising such an event. Initially, I was not confident about having potential corporate clients on a Saturday, but I was pleasantly surprised by the turnout. We had high-profile corporates from various cities, including Bengaluru, Pune, Hyderabad, Delhi, and Ahmedabad. During the event, I had 33 productive meetings and many of the companies I had not interacted with before, showcasing a lot of potential for Turkish Airlines to engage in new contracts and explore the MICE sector.

The event provides an opportunity to meet face-to-face with various vendors, which definitely adds value to our business. We can establish direct connections and reach out to them as needed. It is a customised approach where we know exactly which vendor to contact based on our requirements. It is always a pleasure to connect with each one of them. Attendees appreciated the opportunity to share their thoughts, exchange ideas, and be heard. It is important that such events are not one-sided, but rather foster active, engagement and opens valuable dialogue.



RAVNEET MANN

VP Sales
Carzonrent India

I must say this show is an excellent platform for both buyers and exhibitors. It offers a great opportunity to connect with prospective clients and meet top-tier companies, all under one roof. I believe every company in the field should attend this event to explore such valuable connections. We are excited to continue offering our service and encourage all corporates in touch with us, as well as potential new clients, to explore the subscription model. It is the next big thing in corporate mobility, and we are here to serve you.



JOHN DENNIS LAZAR

Travel and Facility Manager
Sea6 Energy

I want to say that DDP team has done an excellent job with this event. It is truly a one-stop shop for everything—whether it is hotels, convention centers, MICE movements, or tourism boards. As a buyer, I have had the opportunity to meet a wide range of sellers, and it has been valuable. It was my second time attending. This time too it has been an excellent platform for building contacts and taking discussions to the next level. I have had many fruitful conversations, and finalising partnerships with the vendors has been seamless.



JASMINDER S BRISHAN (JASSI)

Professional Consultant
Onity Group Inc.

It was fantastic to be back at the Travel MICE and Corporate Show. This year, we were excited to see new vendor partners like Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation and Jio Convention, adding a local perspective. The richer local flavour enhanced the experience altogether. It was a wonderful opportunity to connect, and discover innovative products. Engaging with these new partners allows us to understand local preferences and market trends, paving way for exciting partnerships and gather industry knowledge.



ROMITA MER

Associate Director, Sales
JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort and Spa

This event always serves as an excellent platform for networking with professionals from corporate space we may not have connected with in the past. It offers a great opportunity to build new relationships. We have generated two to three leads for upcoming business, which is a fantastic start to potential partnerships. Being based in Bengaluru, this event has helped us to meet clients from other cities, which is a huge advantage. I am confident that the connections we have made will benefit us in the future.

**MOHAMMED ZUBER MYAGERI**

Head of Procurement
FIS GlobalW

I have been attending the Travel MICE and Corporate Show for the past three years, and I want to express my appreciation for the efforts made by DDP Publications. It provides valuable insights into the travel and tourism industry, helping us as travel managers to stay updated on what is essential and significant at the moment and what is the current market dynamics. The detailed information shared help us build strategies that align with industry trends, allowing us to perform our responsibilities more effectively.

**MADHU VACHHANI**

Associate Director
Administration, Khaitan & Co

The Travel MICE and Corporate Show enables attendees to explore new options and meet various vendors. It is not just about meeting people or vendors; it is also a fantastic networking platform. What stands out to me is that every year brings something new—whether it is innovative visa services now handled by specialised organisations rather than just travel management companies or emerging experiential travel options. These new developments provide fresh perspectives and knowledge that we can take back and implement.

**JOYSON PINTO**

Senior Manager
Facilities and Administration, Altimetrik

I have been attending the Travel MICE and Corporate Show for a few years now. I appreciate how well-organised the event was and the supplier connections I made at the glittering event. Attending such business event provided me with 15 to 20 useful supplier contacts. It was not just about the meetings for me, I have also gained personal value from the experiences and insights this event offered, especially through the informative panel discussions. Overall, this event has been a fantastic resource for both my professional and personal growth.

**PRITHVI ANAND**

Director of Sales and Marketing
Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre and HICC

The Travel MICE and Corporate Show, organised by DDP Publications, is one of the finest industry events. This is my fourth time attending it, and I intend to participate every year. The show is focused, linking MICE organisers and hotels with their clients in a productive setting. It provides a platform for building meaningful networks, which ultimately leads to increased enquiries and business conversions. The event's structured approach provides an opportunity for professionals to strengthen business relationships.



State initiatives to drive India's MICE

The MICE industry is rapidly growing in India, fuelled by government support, expanding infrastructure, and global outreach. With a focused approach, some key states have transformed their game on infra development to attract international events and boost the local economy.

**SHEO SHEKHAR SHUKLA**

Principal Secretary
Government of Madhya Pradesh
Department of Tourism and Culture
and MD, MPTB

robust growth, driven by the increased globalisation of businesses, and the rise of virtual platforms. The report projects a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 6.7 per cent from 2024 to 2032, with the market anticipated to soar to US\$1407.45 billion by the end of this forecast period.

In parallel, Grand View Research highlights that the Asia Pacific region commanded a substantial 22.86 per cent of global MICE revenue in 2023. Notably, the Indian MICE market is set to grow at an impressive CAGR of over 13 per cent from 2024 to 2030. This rapid expansion is fuelled by significant support from both central and state governments, which are actively enhancing MICE destinations throughout the country.

Sheo Shekhar Shukla, Principal Secretary, Government of Madhya Pradesh, Department of Tourism and Culture and Managing Director, Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, emphasised the state's strategic position in the MICE sector. "It is a gateway to showcasing our infrastructure, rich cultural legacy, adventure tourism, wildlife sanctuaries, and historical sites." The recent IATO annual convention in Madhya Pradesh, which attracted over 1,200 participants, underscored the state's growing capabilities to host large-scale events and its commitment to becoming a leading MICE destination.

The Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board is actively expanding its offerings—converting heritage sites into luxury accommodations and enlarging its hotel network. Shukla noted, "By expanding our hotel infrastructure and enhancing

By MT Bureau

The MICE industry has been a crucial driver of the nation's economic growth. It offers considerable economic benefits through income generation and substantial employment opportunities across various sectors, including accommodation, food

and beverage services, convention facilities, transportation, tourism, and entertainment. The industry's growth underscores its pivotal role in boosting economic development and generating jobs globally.

According to a report by the Research and Markets, the global MICE industry reached a valuation of approximately US\$783.70 billion in 2023. This market is expected to experience



connectivity, we aim to offer a seamless and enriching experience for visitors. Our goal is to make Madhya Pradesh a top choice for both domestic and international travellers for both MICE and tourism.”

The state boasts modern convention facilities such as the Maharaja Chhatrasal Convention Centre in Khajuraho and the Brilliant Convention Centre in Indore, and the Khushabhau Thakre Convention Hall in Bhopal, which provide latest amenities complemented by state’s stunning landscapes and rich cultural heritage. “Our modern convention facilities with latest amenities, combined with our rich cultural backdrop, create an unparalleled setting for MICE events. We are committed to providing a unique blend of business and leisure that ensures a memorable experience for delegates, making the state an attractive destination for large-scale international conferences and exclusive corporate retreats” Shukla added.

To enhance its tourism profile, the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board is engaging with travel agents and MICE planners through incentive programmes, training sessions, and workshops. Collaborations with travel platforms such as MakeMyTrip and RedBus, aim to diversify promotional efforts and include homestays in the tourism mix.

Highlighting the Kerala’s growth and readiness to position itself as a key player in the MICE sector, **PB Nooh**, Director, Kerala Tourism, shared insights into Kerala’s increasing prominence as a MICE



PB NOOH
Director
Kerala Tourism

destination. “Kerala seamlessly hosted the G20 Sherpa meeting at a small village like Kumarakom, which is testament of the state’s preparedness to host more events,” Nooh remarked. The key strength of Kerala is its accommodation capacity. It has multiple luxurious hotel brands catering to a wide range of corporates. He further added, “However, we are not complacent with the present scenario. We are identifying the gaps related to other infrastructure development for bigger conferences, and we are trying to plug in those gaps.”

One of Kerala’s strategic initiatives includes promoting the state as a prime



wedding destination by leveraging its picturesque locales and excellent connectivity. Nooh highlighted, “The government is committed to creating a conducive environment for destination weddings, attracting couples from around the world, and subsequently boosting tourism and local economy.” Kerala’s scenic offerings ranging from serene backwaters and pristine beaches to charming hill stations—make it an enticing and mesmerising location for weddings and MICE.

To boost its domestic and global appeal, Kerala Tourism has been actively organising campaigns to showcase its latest facilities and tourism products. Nooh emphasised, “Kerala’s USP is its partnership with other stakeholders of the industry, consistently providing inputs for evolving products. We aim to enhance MICE events by addressing the dynamic needs of corporate clients for personalised experiences.” Kerala has been conducting B2B meetings, particularly in Europe, and is targeting emerging markets to attract foreign event organisers.

Regarding infrastructure development, Nooh noted, “There are certain gaps which we have identified in terms of infrastructure development, and we are working on it. Moreover, to achieve international standards, we require assistance from the private sector as well.” This proactive approach underscores Kerala’s commitment to advancing its MICE capabilities and maintaining its competitive edge in the global market.

Mohamed Farouk, Director, Ministry of Tourism, Bengaluru Office, expressed that Karnataka is a rising star in the MICE industry. He said, “When it



MOHAMED FAROUK
Director, Ministry of Tourism
Bengaluru Office

**Karnataka
is keen to
establish the
International
Travel Bureau**

comes to MICE, Karnataka has a lot of potential. You name any IT company, and you will find that in Bengaluru or in any part of Karnataka.” This tech hub, with its dominance in IT and other industries, is primed to become a top destination for business travellers and international events. “Similarly, industry-wise, whether it is automobiles or manufacturing, you will find all the important big corporate



names in Karnataka. So, in terms of MICE, there are a lot of business travellers who come to Karnataka,” Farouk emphasised, pointing to the state’s established corporate presence as a key driver for MICE growth.

The state government is keen to harness this potential by establishing the Karnataka International Travel Bureau, modelled after the India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB), which operates under the Ministry of Tourism. Farouk stressed on the significant impact such an initiative could have on the state’s MICE landscape. “The formation of such a bureau will be a big boost for the MICE industry, which will bring a lot of international conferences, conventions, incentives, and tour programmes to Karnataka,” he added.

He urged that the state government must actively participate in prominent international MICE events to attract global business such as IMEX across the world, underscoring the need for global outreach to position Karnataka as a premier destination on the international MICE map.

Highlighting the shifting focus of Rajasthan tourism, specifically towards the MICE and wedding sectors, **Anand K Tripathi**, Assistant Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, said, “Traditionally, we have been known for our heritage—forts, palaces, havelis, temples, sand dunes, and the Palace on Wheels.” He stressed that while heritage tourism remains a core aspect of India’s tourism identity, new



opportunities have emerged. “MICE and wedding tourism are the new emerging areas where we want to focus more. Our royal heritage gives us an immense advantage in terms of wedding tourism. People want to relive that royal era and feel a sense of grandeur in their weddings,” he remarked.

In recent years, India has made significant strides in promoting royal wedding tourism, offering venues that allow couples to celebrate their wedding in palaces. Tripathi explained, “We are promoting royal wedding tourism. We organised the first wedding expo in association with the Ministry of Tourism in May during the Great India Travel



“To promote royal wedding tourism, we organised the first wedding expo in association with the Ministry of Tourism in May.”

ANAND K TRIPATHI
Assistant Director General
Ministry of Tourism, Government of India



Bazaar.” This event provided a platform to connect foreign tour operators with India’s luxury wedding venues, boosting the country’s unique offerings. “We bring them here from across the countries and showcase our properties along with other states,” Tripathi added.

Additionally, Rajasthan, in particular, is refining its investment strategies to support tourism-related activities, including hotels, restaurants, and other properties. “We have a very well-thought-out investment policy, in which we give various sorts of incentives and concessions to those who want to invest in the state’s tourism sector,” Tripathi asserted. He also mentioned that the state government is in the process of updating these policies to make Rajasthan an even more attractive destination for investors.

On the horizon is the ‘Rising Rajasthan Investment’ event, which will spotlight investment opportunities across various sectors, with a focus on tourism. “It is a very opportune time for us to come up with the new policy so that investors feel assured and confident to put in their money in the state,” Tripathi affirmed, noting that a pre-event focusing on tourism investment would take place



Rajasthan government will be updating policies to attract investments

in October 2024, ahead of the main event scheduled for December 2024. As Indian government has launched initiatives such as ‘Meet in India’ to bring in more global conferences and meetings to the country, Indian states have also buckled up to do their part. This is a carte blanche moment for Indian states, when they can strike like a pioneer and show the world how meetings are done. ➔



Racing to the future

sustainability at a cost



With a holistic approach, corporate travel must prioritise sustainable business practices, driven by technological innovation, to meet shifting expectations in travel.

By **Janice Alyosius**

The corporate travel industry has undergone significant changes since the pandemic, compelling it to adapt to evolving traveller expectations, rising costs, and the urgent need for sustainable practices. Corporates are struggling to navigate these critical challenges, particularly in managing cost and sustainability and leveraging technology. Given the scenario, it calls for effective corporate travel management that can provide a

structured way to streamline the process. It can ensure sustainable practices while also keeping costs under control and achieving business goals.

Corporate leaders expressed their perspectives on these developments, highlighting both the challenges and opportunities ahead for corporate travel management and other allied goals.

BALANCING COST AND SUSTAINABILITY

Today, the most pressing challenge for corporate buyers is managing costs while promoting sustainable travel practices.

Jasminder S. Brishan (Jassi), Professional Consultant, Onity Group Inc., explained, “As corporate buyers, we often look at the cost perspective, but the reality is that securing competitive corporate rates has become increasingly difficult.” After the pandemic, the resurgence of travel demand has led to higher occupancy rates at hotels, which in turn affects pricing. “Travellers are also more inclined to stick with brands they know and trust, making it challenging for us to diversify our options,” she added.

Despite these hurdles, sustainability should not take a back seat.



Organisations must shift from luxury to necessary requirements and prioritise the long-term importance of sustainable travel to navigate cost-related issues. “It is essential for suppliers to demonstrate how sustainable choices can lead to cost savings. This could motivate corporate buyers to opt for greener hotel options,” Brishan suggested. By aligning financial incentives with sustainability, suppliers can encourage corporate clients to make choices that benefit both their business goals and the environment.



NATHUMAL SHARMA
Deputy General Manager
Ultratech Cement

WHAT ARE THE SETBACKS?

Today, the industry is grappling with new challenges that have emerged post-pandemic. Greener travel options come with higher costs, hindering the widespread implementation of the sustainable travel practices. **Nathumal Sharma**, Deputy General Manager, Ultratech Cement, emphasised,

Suppliers need to demonstrate how sustainable choices can lead to cost savings. This could motivate corporate buyers to opt for greener hotel options



JASMINDER S. BRISHAN
Professional Consultant
Onity Group Inc.





RAGHURAM MOKSHAGUNDAM
India People and Operations
Blankfactor India

“Navigating the post-pandemic landscape has been complex, particularly with travel restrictions and ensuring traveller’s safety. Rising travel costs and the integration of sustainable practices further complicate the situation.”

He further added that the National Tourism Organisations can play a pivotal role in attracting corporate travellers. By promoting their destinations as safe and business friendly, it can enhance the appeal. Additionally, tailored packages that include conference facilities and unique cultural experiences can attract corporate buyers.

Besides, the expectations of corporate travellers are rapidly changing as the travel landscape evolves. This rising expectation presents challenges for corporate buyers. **Joyson Pinto**, Senior Manager, Altimetrik, noted, “The market has changed significantly where hotel rates have increased by 30 to 50 per cent. Executives expect nothing less than five-star experiences, which come at a much higher price.”

This shift in expectations is coupled with a noticeable gap in service quality. Pinto pointed out that while prices have increased, suppliers have not enhanced their service levels to match. This disconnect presents a significant challenge for corporate travel managers who are tasked with ensuring they get value for their investments.

COST MANAGEMENT

Corporate travel is a major expense area for many business operations. It is important to create effective corporate travel management strategy to keep costs under control and avoid excessive spending. Outlining the importance of financial management in corporate travel management, **Raghuram Mokshagundam**, India People and Operations, Blankfactor India, said, “Typically, we start by consulting the finance team to establish budgets before planning any events. This approach is crucial in today’s climate, where managing costs effectively is pivotal than ever.”

Navigating the post-pandemic landscape has been complex. Rising travel costs and the integration of sustainable practices further complicate the situation.





Effective cost management needs a strategic approach to steer the complexities involved in corporate travel management. This will make it easier for companies to address the cost inefficiencies of unmanaged travel without overlooking comfort and safety.

EMBRACING INNOVATIONS

As the corporate travellers continue to evolve, technology will play an increasingly significant role. The advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data analytics will redefine how businesses and travel partners operate. “The next big trend will likely involve using AI for personalised travel planning, real-time updates, and enhanced user experiences,” Sharma asserted. This technological shift is poised to create a more efficient and enjoyable travel experience for employees.



GAURAV NAGWEKAR
Head of Corporate Travel
Reliance Industries

Asserting the critical role of technology in transforming corporate travel management, **Gaurav Nagwekar**, Head of Corporate Travel, Reliance Industries, expressed, “Since we digitised our travel processes in 2016, we have seen a significant shift in how we manage bookings.” His company is now transitioning to an Application Programming Interface (API) model that will enhance the booking experience through mobile apps—allowing travellers to book their journeys seamlessly.

Transitioning to digital transformation requires collaboration from all stakeholders to reap various benefits such as automating booking systems, negotiating rates and monitoring expenses. Nagwekar said that to achieve a comprehensive digital transformation, suppliers, be it airlines, travel management companies, or



this new landscape demands innovative thinking, strategic planning, and a readiness to embrace technology. This complex milieu underscores the necessity for collaboration between corporate buyers and suppliers to navigate challenges effectively.

By prioritising sustainability, enhancing service quality, and fostering personalised experiences, the corporate travel sector can thrive in this rapidly changing setting. The future of corporate travel hinges on a collective commitment to excellence, ensuring that both companies and their employees can enjoy the benefits of travel while effectively addressing the challenges that lie ahead. It is time that all the stakeholders in the industry should come up with innovative and cost-effective solutions that not only enhances a traveller's experience but also provides a sense of sustainable living. ➔

ground transportation vendors, must embrace automation. This shift is not merely about improving efficiency but also about enhancing travel experiences.

“Safety and security are pivotal, but travellers increasingly expect personalised experiences as well,” he added.

Therefore, incorporating critical digital tools is crucial to deliver the right blend of value, safety, and personalised services.

Incorporating critical digital tools is crucial to deliver the right blend of value, safety, and personalised services

SHIFT IN INCENTIVE TRAVEL

Incentive travel has also undergone a significant transformation. Organisations are shifting their focus from traditional luxury trips to more meaningful and personalised experiences. Employees are looking for opportunities that promote wellness and offer unique cultural experiences. “Today’s incentive trips must provide flexibility and avenues for personal enrichment,” Sharma said. This shift presents an opportunity for travel providers to rethink their offerings. Rather than simply catering to luxury expectations, suppliers should consider how to create experiences that resonate on a deeper level with corporate travellers.

GOING FORWARD

The corporate travel industry finds itself at a critical threshold, facing rising costs, increasing traveller expectations, and a strong push for sustainability. As the corporates highlight, adapting to



The background of the poster features a blue-toned world map with glowing white lines representing flight paths or connections. In the lower right, there are silhouettes of people in business attire looking at a tablet, with a city skyline at night visible in the background. A red dot is positioned above the letter 'v' in the word 'Travel'.

Travel

MICE & CORPORATE SHOW

Save the
DATE

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Cairns elevates Australia Next experience

Key international business planners delve into Australia’s rich incentive offerings and exceptional event delivery capabilities during an immersive two-day experience in Cairns for Australia Next 2024.

By **Lipla Negi**

Turbocharging Australia’s vibrant business events pipeline, Business Events Australia’s premier incentive showcase, Australia Next, successfully convened over 80 international buyers, 96 Australian industry sellers, and 15 media professionals in Cairns/Gimuy, Tropical North Queensland this year.

In partnership with Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef, this two-day event provided an immersive experience to the delegates showcasing the region’s business events expertise, unique offsite event opportunities, and breathtaking World Heritage landscapes with the aim to attract more business to the region.

AN EARLY COMEBACK

Traditionally the signature incentive showcase has been held every two years. But after having the showcase on pause for four years, the team felt that it was important to give buyers more opportunities to explore and experience upcoming and latest incentive offerings around the country. “We are already seeing global business events return to Australia, with the latest numbers from Tourism Research Australia showing they contributed A\$4.6 billion to our visitor economy in the 12 months to March 2024,” shared **Phillipa Harrison, MD**, Tourism Australia. She further stressed that the leads generated by Tourism Australia play a critical role in the recovery of business events industry.





Last year the incentive showcase in Adelaide/Tarntanya generated 212 business leads across the country to date, worth A\$192 million

Last year our incentive showcase in Adelaide/Tarntanya generated 212 business leads across the country to date, worth A\$192 million. “While that Total Trip Spend is above the levels we experienced in 2019, the number of visitors arriving in Australia for an international business event is at about 75 per cent of what we have seen in the past and we hope hosting Australia Next in Cairns in 2024 will help to drive the industry’s recovery and future growth,” she asserted.

TRANSCENDING GOOD TO GREAT

From the Great Barrier Reef to lush tropical rainforests, incentive planners from 10 key global markets had the opportunity to explore firsthand the unique tourism experiences and world-class venues in Cairns. The two-day event launched at the newly redeveloped Cairns Convention Centre, which garnered acclaim for its strategic location. Just a 10-minute drive from Cairns Airport, the

venue is within walking distance of hotels, restaurants, and marina.

Paying tribute to the local First Nations people, ‘Welcome to Country’, a traditional ceremony was performed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to formally welcome visitors

to their land and show respect to the traditional owners and ancestors. It was followed by a captivating performance by Sounds of AustraNesia, a cultural performance group, which showcased the vibrant cultures of the four regions of Oceania through their performances.





Queensland at The Sugar Shed at Yorkeys Knob Cane Farm. This venue pushes the boundaries of traditional incentive experiences, transforming the notion of corporate event backdrops. Surrounded by fields, farm machinery showcased food and drinks, while guests enjoyed an unforgettable BBQ under the clear night sky. With both indoor and outdoor spaces, The Sugar Shed can accommodate events of up to 250 for banquets and 1,000 for cocktail receptions.

OUTDOORS WONDERS

Kicking off Day two with Australia Next Breakfast, hosted by Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef, in partnership with Tourism & Events Queensland. While one group boarded the cruise for a breathtaking experience of Great Barrier Reef, the other embarked on scenic exploration of the Daintree Rainforest and wildlife. Straight out of geography textbooks, the towering umbrella of trees stand custodian of centuries-old local tradition and tribes. It is with these unique outdoor experiences that Australia wants to redefine the incentive business events for the international buyers. "Tourism and

INDIGENOUSLY INNOVATIVE

On Day one, buyers and sellers engaged in pre-scheduled meetings at the Cairns Convention Centre, while the media group ventured to Trinity Beach Palace, a luxurious private beachfront estate just 20 minutes north of Cairns. Boasting 135 meters of pristine beach,

it is ideal for high-end corporate events. The afternoon featured opportunities to sample Aboriginal food curated by Samantha Martin, known as the Bush Tukka Woman.

As the day drew to a close, everyone gathered for a stunning sunset amidst the lush sugarcane fields of Tropical North



With outdoor experiences, Australia wants to redefine incentive business events, globally

Events Queensland’s Business Events strategy sees us aiming to achieve 20 per cent of the Australian market share by 2027, a growth of four per cent, which will bolster our international visitor numbers,” said Patricia O’Callaghan, CEO, Tourism and Events Queensland.

No quintessential Queensland experience is complete without patting kangaroos and holding a koala for a photo. Following this wildlife encounter, the Kuranda Scenic Rail, winding through the dense rainforests and stunning mountain landscapes of Barron Gorge National Park, stood out as a top highlight of the two-day event. The



CAIRNS CONVENTION CENTRE



After a recent multi-million-dollar expansion, an array of world-class amenities has been added to the centre, including a new 410-seater plenary, new exhibition space, ballroom for up to 500 guests, and an outdoor terrace overlooking the Trinity Inlet. With a total of 45,000sq.m. of event space, it offers a 2,330-tiered-seat auditorium and 5,000-seat arena.

journey reaches its peak as you cross the Barron Falls, plunging approximately 125 meters, cascades dramatically over a rocky precipice into the lush rainforest below, elevating any business itinerary to new heights. Cairns is dotted with scenic beaches, dense forests, and latest convention facilities, all supported by a strong pipeline of hotels.

AUSTRALIA NEXT 2025 HEADS FOR MELBOURNE

Continuing its successful run for third consecutive year, Business Events Australia’s signature incentive showcase, Australia Next 2025 is scheduled to take place from 01 to 03 December 2025 in Melbourne/Narrm. “Our signature incentive showcase has not been held in Melbourne in more than a decade so it will be great to once again take global business events buyers to Victoria,” said **Robin Mack**, Executive General Manager, Commercial & Business Events Australia, Tourism Australia. The programme will be delivered in partnership with the Melbourne Convention Bureau. ➔



Mulling expansion

courting MICE travel

After welcoming 70,000 Indian passengers in the last five months, SriLankan Airlines aims to unleash its potential to serve Indian MICE and wedding groups.

By **Surbhi Sharma**

If you are searching for a destination that can fulfill all your MICE needs and manage everything impeccably, then you must consider Sri Lanka and fly with SriLankan Airlines to execute all your plans.

Whether you are organising a corporate MICE event or a vibrant Indian wedding, Sri Lanka offers the perfect backdrop for unforgettable memories. With SriLankan Airlines leaving no stone unturned in making your journey seamless, you will arrive ready to experience the island's enchanting allure.

From pristine beaches and breathtaking landscapes to historic venues, Sri Lanka promises unforgettable stays for both business and celebration.

In a candid conversation, **Richard Nuttall**, CEO, SriLankan Airlines, said, "As Indians are increasingly choosing the island nation for MICE and weddings,



hotels, resorts, and conference facilities including the Sri Lanka Convention Bureau (SLCB), with more developments on the horizon.

PERKS FOR INDIAN AGENTS

“By launching the New Distribution Capability (NDC) platform in India, SriLankan Airlines is giving agents access to discounted fares, free date changes, and incentives on flown segments,” Richard said while adding that the airlines also run periodic promotions, webinars, and familiarisation tours for agents.

EXPANSION PLANS

Talking about the plans to expand their outreach in India, Nuttall commented, “We aim to gradually increase our frequencies to existing destinations in India over the coming months, while adding more new cities to our medium-term plans.”

With the objective to capture a larger share of the Indian market, SriLankan Airlines intends to increase the current flight frequencies between Indian cities and Sri Lanka. The airline is also drafting the groundwork for expanding the network next year. However, in the upcoming months, the significant challenge lies in securing enough aircraft when it comes to expanding the network further and tackling operations in more Indian cities. →



“By launching the NDC platform in India, SriLankan Airlines is giving agents access to discounted fares”

RICHARD NUTTALL
CEO
SriLankan Airlines

the national carrier is equipped with the capacity to accommodate MICE groups from multiple source cities. Through special airfares, discounts, and top-notch inflight services including lip-smacking international gastronomy, the airline stands alone as the most trusted, safe, and premier MICE service provider in Sri Lanka.”

HASSLE-FREE AIR TRAVEL

Highlighting that the SriLankan Airlines flies to nine Indian cities, Nuttall revealed, “We provide exclusive airfare packages and specialised services, including airport facilitation and onboard amenities for big MICE groups. For hassle-free journey, we promote online check-in and have introduced self-check-in kiosks, and a bag drop facility at the international airport.”

To host large MICE and wedding gatherings in Sri Lanka, there are modern





Right time to engage with Indian market

La Mamounia, the historic luxury hotel nestled in the heart of Marrakech, is setting its sights on the burgeoning Indian wedding market. **Pierre Jochem**, General Manager, La Mamounia, recently shared insights into the hotel's ambitious plans and strategies during an exclusive interview.



By **Lipla Negi**

The Indian travel market is not an untouched turf for **Pierre Jochem**, General Manager, La Mamounia. Two decades ago, he served as the General Manager of The Imperial, New Delhi, making this visit akin to a homecoming. “My bond with India is not just professional but deeply emotional,” he shared. His deep understanding of iconic properties and his ability to harness their historical and cultural significance for strategic business growth have been his unique advantage.

La Mamounia sits on 20 acres of land and features 209 luxurious rooms. Two-thirds of its gardens are over 1000 years old. “We celebrated our 100th Anniversary in 2023. It is close to the international airport and markets of the old city, making it an ideal location,” he added.

The Indian market is relatively small, representing less than one per cent. However, Pierre Jochem sees this differently. “In business, it is crucial to diversify your market share. You do not want to rely too heavily on just one or two markets,” he asserted.

With a significant surge in the number of travellers, Jochem views it as a promising time to penetrate into the Indian market. “Morocco, with its rich cultural heritage, offers something unique. We believe it is time to engage with the Indian market, connect with the press, and establish ourselves as a compelling destination for Indian travellers,” he explained.

Considered as Morocco’s La Grande Dame, the hotel commands a legendary status in the luxury hospitality industry. Jochem shared, “We specialise in



PIERRE JOCHEM
General Manager
La Mamounia

weddings. That is one of the reasons we are here to explore the wedding segment, as it is a big affair here.”

Sharing his plans, he mentioned the brand aims to host two to three weddings, especially from Indian hotels that have upgraded their wedding offerings. “We are not a corporate hotel, which is an advantage for us. We can make decisions swiftly and execute them even faster. We are receptive to new ideas to enhance guest satisfaction. We can also turn the hotel into a private oasis for a wedding,” he highlighted.

To boost the brand’s visibility and market share in India, offering discounts or special rates is not the preferred approach of La Mamounia. Instead, the focus is on connecting with key individuals in Delhi and Mumbai and helping top wedding planners understand Mamounia’s legacy and luxury. The next move is to make more visits to establish a strong presence in the Indian wedding market and draw more travellers. ➔

“The hotel sits on 20 acres of land and features 209 luxurious rooms”





Sustainability

A necessity for all events

With a growing collective commitment from planners, suppliers, and destinations, there is a shared understanding that implementing sustainable practices has potential benefits, offering opportunities to foster responsible decision-making.

By **MT Bureau**

Sustainability in the meetings and events industry is no longer a future goal but a present necessity. With growing awareness of environmental impact, companies are prioritising sustainable practices, aligning their events with global efforts to reduce carbon footprints, manage waste, and promote social responsibility. As highlighted in *Global Sustainability Trends and Best Practices for Meetings and Events* by BCD Meetings and Events, the challenge remains in

balancing memorable event experiences along with the protection of our planet.

GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY TRENDS AND BEST PRACTICES

When it comes to incorporating sustainable practices into meetings and events, there is no time to waste. Individuals, corporations, and governments have already recognised the opportunity that would be brought by more sustainable future. And with benchmarks and regulations already in place, the journey towards a greener industry is well underway.

TOP CHALLENGES TO SUSTAINABILITY

Following challenges are highlighted by organisations, expert interviews, and eco-minded vendors.

Cost

Sustainable solutions tend to be expensive, which challenges budget goals.

Travel

Aviation accounts for two per cent to three per cent of world's greenhouse emissions and can account up to 75 per cent of event emissions.



principles. This adds accountability and provides partners with a clear understanding of your values and how you are planning to reach your goals.

Strike a balance

If hosting a 1,000-person event, consider converting smaller meetings into hybrid programmes to offset the large footprint of the major event.

Site Selection

Rather than hosting one large event, create three or four regional events that are within driving distance of most attendees. Select a venue in the central part of a city to add public transit as a viable option. Keep all the agendas in one building. Ensure the selected venues have sustainability programmes in place.

Food & Beverages

Ban single-use straws and disposable silverware. Encourage people to bring reusable water bottles that can be filled at stations throughout your venue. Serve meals a la carte instead of offering a buffet, to reduce waste. Offer creative vegan dishes, with locally sourced ingredients.

Food waste

Hotels and restaurants often find difficulty in managing excess food and beverage going to waste.

Customer experience

An unpleasant event experience yet sustainable can lead to the event message being overlooked.

Communication

It is often difficult to explain to delegates reasons behind initiatives like meatless meals, venue selection, etc.

Politics

Views on ecological policy vary from country to country. As a result, organisations have to decide whether to do business with governments that only align with their values.

READING THE LARGER PICTURE

Sustainability is not a one-time initiative but should be seen as a guiding principle for companies. Following initiatives can change the overall impact:

Make a commitment

Make commitment to prioritise sustainability during decision-making process. Measure your current event portfolio’s carbon emissions to see where you stand and make improvements.

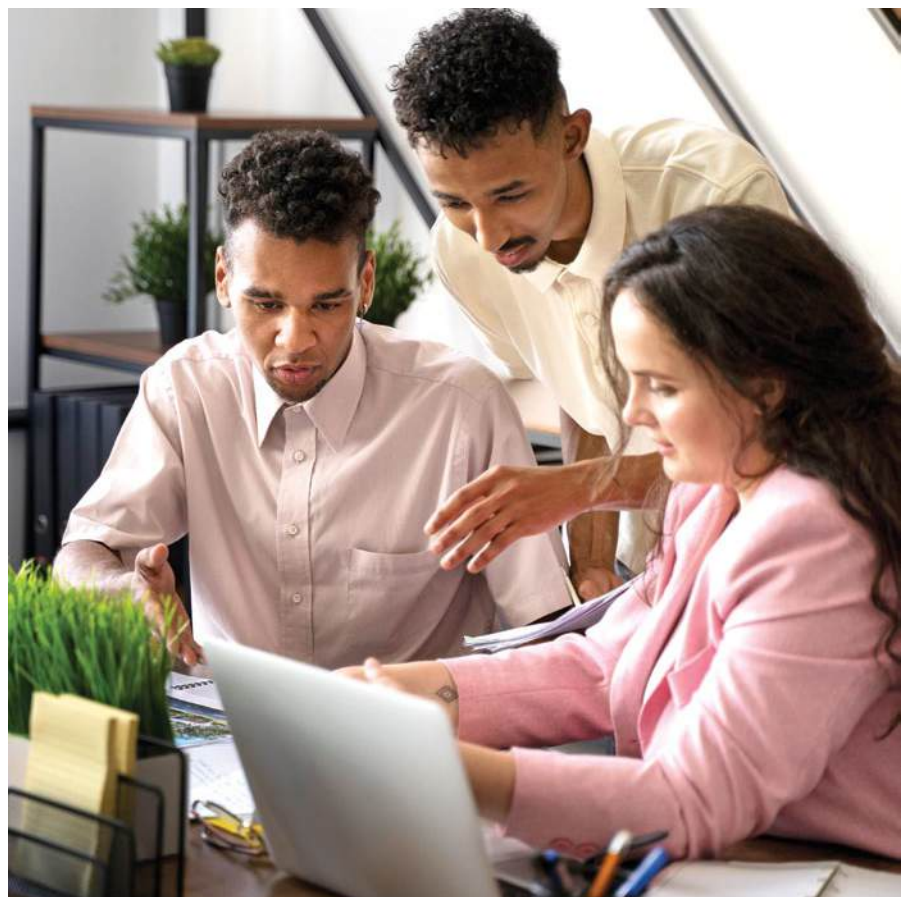
Take it easy

Begin with manageable first steps that would not disrupt attendees’ expectations.

For example, remove single-use plastic, select a venue that limits waste, and use local vendors, but wait on taking meat off the menu.

Put it in writing

Create a checklist or one-pager that describes sustainability goals and



Rather than hosting one large event, create three or four regional events that are within driving distance of most attendees. Unite them with an event app

environment

How far can you travel on one metric ton of carbon?*

3,922 km plane	18,868 km electric vehicle
9,524 km bus	24,390 km train
5,208 km gas car	

*Stats from [MeetGreen](#)

London to Paris Emissions, per passenger*

2.4 kg of CO2e car	66 kg of CO2e plane	96% lower emissions savings by train
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*Information from [Eurostar](#)

During a typical five-day conference, **2,500 attendees** will use **62,500 plates**, **87,500 napkins**, **75,000 cups** or glasses and **90,000 cans** or bottles. Stats from [MeetGreen](#)

f&b

Beef has a **larger impact** on the environment because the land needed to raise cows is so vast and requires much more resources as a result. Additionally, cows emit a massive amount of methane, which has been rated as **10%** of the world's greenhouse gases.

79-101 CO2e

Range of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions from beef herd production, compared to 3-21 kilograms of CO2e from chickens.

[Bloomberg News](#)

At its core, sustainability's purpose is to leave the world a better place. As such, diversity, human rights, and health (physical and mental) are now incorporated into the discussion. A healthier environment results in a greater ecosystem for doing business and improving events.

Social Responsibility

Make sure speakers come from a variety of backgrounds. Moreover, ensure venues meet regulations for attendees who use mobility devices. At the same time, have sign-language translators at these events for persons with hearing disability. Additionally, encourage sponsors to use their funds for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities. Along with all these initiatives, work with Convention or Visitor Bureaus, and DMCs to partner with local organisations. Above all, try to promote local causes on event communication apps during marketing process.

Waste Management

Reduce printed materials and use recycled products. Make electronic name badges; use digital signage. Try to go completely paperless and use more digital tools.

MOVING FORWARD

Sustainability is not just a phenomenon. Businesses must incorporate it into their decisions. For meetings and events, the challenge for organisers is to continue to providing experiences that could be cherished by the attendees, and simultaneously has to be organised in a responsible way. The factors to watch in the future include:

Technology

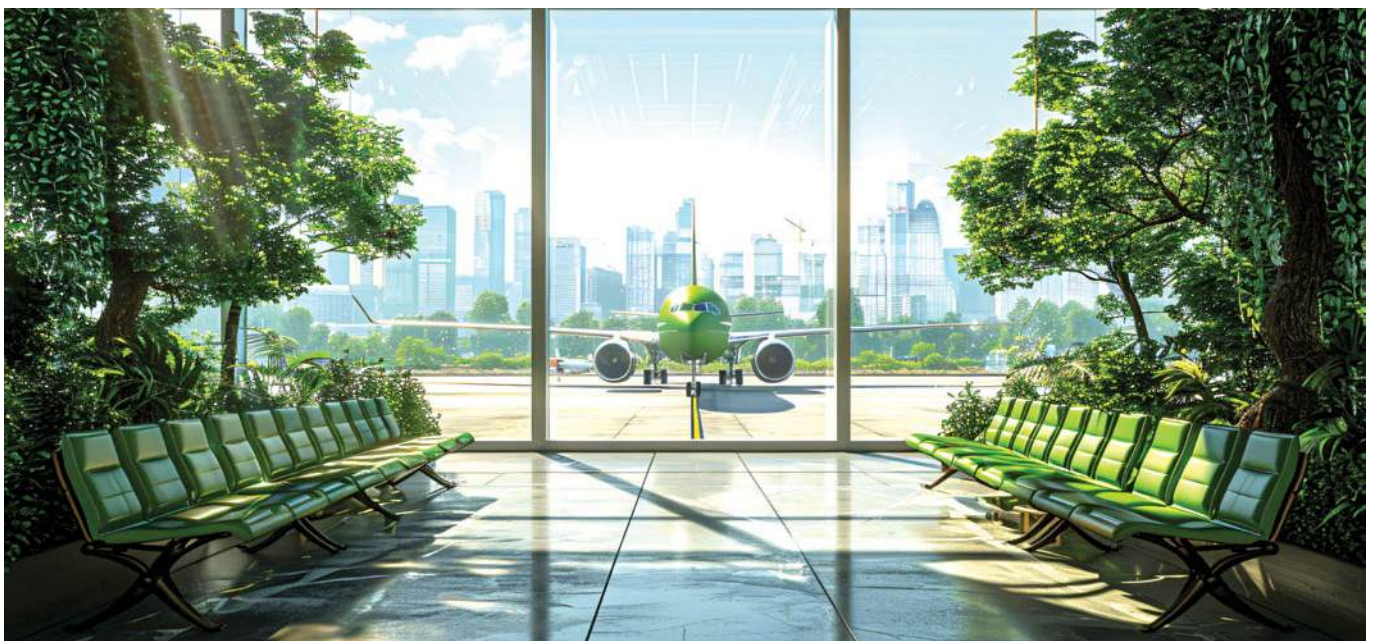
Virtual events will never replace in-person gatherings, but Artificial Intelligence (AI) will play a key role in incorporating sustainability within meetings and events.

Climate Change

As extreme weather impacts all regions of the world, meeting and event planners will be asked to continuously adapt to preserve host destinations.

Education

Staying on top of new trends is vital. It is crucial that all stakeholders educate themselves toward responsible events →



Fostering meaningful dialogue

Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME) is set to take it a notch higher with an expanded footprint, ready to accommodate more than 600 exhibitors, 650 hosted buyers, and over 20,000 meetings.



By **MT Bureau**

The Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME) is set to become the number one business event in the APAC region with its 2025 edition. The event will take place at magnificent Melbourne



EL KWANG
Founder, BEAM

Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) in Australia, from 10 to 12 February 2025.

The Knowledge Programme during AIME 2025 will be based on the theme, 'We Matter!' It will celebrate the global business event industry as a catalyst for economic growth. Hosted and curated by **El Kwang**, Founder, BEAM, the Knowledge Programmes' speakers and topics are guided by the Knowledge Programme Advisory Committee, consisting of eight leaders from the events industry in the APAC region.

Kwang said, "We are creating a platform that not only reflects our collective strength but also propels our industry forward with purpose and confidence." Although, "The growth of AIME 2024 was just phenomenal, we are confident our team will deliver an event in 2025 that would be bigger and better than ever," **Silke Calder**, Event Director, AIME, added.



SILKE CALDER
Event Director, AIME

AIME as a platform, links global and local buyers with world-class exhibitors from APAC region and around the world. For the first time, UFI Asia-Pacific Conference 2025 will also co-locate with AIME at MCEC, and is scheduled to take place from 13 to 14 February 2025. ➔

MOVEMENTS



SHUVENDU BANERJEE
General Manager
Holiday Inn New Delhi
Int'l Airport

Shuvendu Banerjee has been appointed as General Manager of Holiday Inn New Delhi Int'l Airport, bringing over 20 years of hospitality expertise. Previously, GM at Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla, he excelled in operational excellence and strategic partnerships. In his new role, Banerjee will aim to elevate guest experiences with innovative services, strengthen industry ties, and drive growth. With his deep knowledge in sales and marketing, he will lead brand's business and leisure destinations.



NITIN TANWAR
Director of Rooms
Grand Hyatt Gurgaon

Nitin Tanwar has been appointed as the Director of Rooms at the Grand Hyatt Gurgaon. In his new role, Nitin will be responsible for the overall functioning of the rooms division, which includes spearheading front office, housekeeping, reservations, and guest service. With over 17 years of experience, Tanwar brings immense knowledge and a proven track record of success to this role. His journey from Executive Housekeeper to Director of Rooms exemplifies his exceptional leadership and strategic planning skills.



NEHA RAWAT
General Manager
Pride Elite Haridwar

Neha Rawat has been designated GM of Pride Elite Haridwar by Pride Hotel Group. With over 15 years of experience, Neha brings a proven track record in managing front-office operations, strategic planning, team leadership, and customer relations. In her new role, Neha will oversee the operations of the hotel, ensuring compliance with the standards, while driving guest satisfaction, profitability, and market growth. Her leadership is anticipated to strengthen Pride Elite as a leading hospitality provider.



DEEPAK LAKRA
Operations Manager
Cozzet Mahad, Maharashtra

Deepak Lakra has been appointed as the Operations Manager for Cozzet Mahad, Maharashtra by Cygnett Hotels & Resorts. In this role, he will oversee the pre-opening operations, ensuring the hotel delivers world-class experiences and upholds the standards of the brand. Previously, Lakra has held key roles across both the Middle East and India. His expertise in operations management combined with his understanding of F&B services is expected to bring more success to the brand.



JULIEN SOYEZ
Vice President
Communications, Jumeirah

Jumeirah has appointed Julien Soyez as its Vice President of Communications. With a background in luxury fashion and lifestyle communications, leading key events and initiatives, Julien will play a pivotal role in advancing the brand's communication strategy and building brand visibility in new markets. He will oversee all areas of Jumeirah's communications and social media. Julien's previous roles include brand marketing for some of the world's most iconic brands, such as Gucci, Cartier, Louis Vuitton, and Marc Jacobs.



SHARAD SINGH
Hotel Captain
Moxy Mumbai Andheri West

Marriott International's Moxy Mumbai Andheri West has appointed Sharad Singh as its Hotel Captain. With a career spanning over 17 years, Sharad's leadership style encompasses strong analytical skills, and passion for guest satisfaction. His previous experience includes key roles at JW Marriott Pune, Marriott Hotels and Resort Jaipur, and Renaissance Mumbai Hotel & Convention Centre. His expertise spans across operations, marketing promotions, customer relationship management, and service excellence.



UMEISH YADAV
General Manager
Development, Sarovar Hotels,
Gurugram

Sarovar Hotels has appointed Umeish Yadav as the new General Manager, Development at its corporate office in Gurugram. Umeish brings a wealth of experience in the hospitality industry, encompassing hotel operations, strategic planning, brand enhancement, and revenue optimisation. He possesses a deep understanding of the industry. His diverse experience in both national and international hotel chains equips him to play a pivotal role in supporting Sarovar's strategic growth interests and enhance its brand value.



SURAJ KUMAR RATH
Operations Manager
Cozzet Victoria, Bhubaneswar

Cygnett Hotels & Resorts has appointed Suraj Kumar Rath as the Operations Manager for Cozzet Victoria, Bhubaneswar. With over 20 years of experience, Rath is expected to deliver memorable guest experiences. Previously, he has occupied key roles with global brands such as ITC Fortune Park Hotels, Mayfair Hotels & Resorts, Swosti Premium, and ITC Welcome Heritage. Known for his experience in operations, innovation, marketing, and execution, Rath is a result-driven person with a proven record of success.



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交通部觀光署
Tourism Administration, MOTC