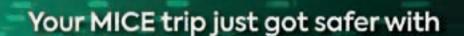
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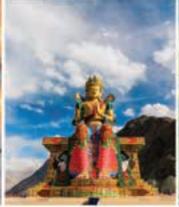














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Foreword



JYOTHI VARMA
CONSULTING EDITOR

Digital Arrivals simplifying MICE Travel

he year 2025 proved to be both challenging and transformative for India's travel and hospitality sector. On the positive side, the industry witnessed a strong recovery in occupancy rates, expansion into tier II and III cities, and increased demand across leisure, spiritual, and MICE segments. Government initiatives and infra improvements supported growth, while partnerships with local communities enhanced sustainability. At the same time, the sector faced notable challenges, including demandsupply imbalances, rising operational costs, and shortages of skilled talent.

standards across hospitality and transport services. Clear policies on visa facilitation, digital pre-clearance of arrival data, and integrated travel infra will reduce friction for business delegates, enabling them to maximise productivity. Moving from aspirational commitments to actionable policies will not only strengthen India's position as a preferred destination for MICE but also reinforce its role as a global business hub. Associations like GBTA are re-entering India market after observing the potential it has to offer. They aim to provide education, resources, and community engagement to help Indian travel professionals

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Moving from aspirational commitments to actionable policies will strengthen India's position as a preferred destination for MICE.

to an industry that is evolving

Global economic uncertainties also impacted global arrivals, adding pressure to an already complex setting. Despite these headwinds, the industry remains on a high-growth trajectory, with forecasts indicating double-digit expansion in the coming years. At this crucial juncture, to fully support corporate travellers, India must institutionalise measures that streamline immigration processes, enhance connectivity between business hubs, and ensure consistent

adapt to an industry that is evolving faster than ever.

In this edition, you will see the influence of AI in augmenting technology, bringing it closer to human touch. By enhancing processes, and decision-making, AI demonstrates its role not as a replacement for human capability, but as a supportive force that amplifies efficiency and accessibility across industries.

Happy Reading!

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India's e-Arrival card to simplify corporate travel

For foreign nationals, India's new mandatory e-Arrival card allows foreign delegates to pre-submit arrival details online, ensuring a faster travel experience.

By MT Bureau

rom 1 October 2025, India has introduced a mandatory e-Arrival Card for all foreign nationals entering the country. This move promises to streamline immigration and improve the experience for business travellers.

WHAT IS CHANGING?

The traditional paper Disembarkation Card is being phased out. Instead, foreign visitors (including OCI cardholders) must now complete their arrival form digitally up to 72 hours before they land. The form can be submitted via:

- the Indian Visa Online portal
- the Bureau of Immigration website: indianvisaonline.gov.in/earrival

the Indian Visa Su-Swagatam mobile app

There is a transition period of up to six months, during which paper cards will still be accepted, but the government strongly recommends using the e-Arrival option.

BENEFITS

- **Speedier immigration:** By pre-submitting arrival data, delegates can breeze through immigration, saving time, and heading straight to event or transfer.
- **Improved accuracy:** The digital form captures key details: passport, purpose of visit, address in India, travel history, and sends it directly to immigration systems.
- Lower administrative friction: Less paper means fewer manual errors and a smoother, more professional arrival experience.
- Better experience: For time-sensitive business trips, this digital-first approach aligns perfectly with the needs of modern MICE travellers.

Even with the e-Arrival card, travellers still need a valid visa. The form is not a visa itself. After submitting the form, the foreign visitors will get a QR code or reference number to present at immigration. MT

Delegates reduce wait time at immigration by pre-submitting arrival data. This allows them to head straight to their event or transfer



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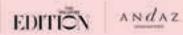






























Many policies, not enough action

India's MICE sector is brimming with potential but to compete globally, the country needs to turn intent into structured policy and implementation, says Chander Mansharamani. Vice Chairman, ICPB.

By Janice Alyosius

ndia's MICE industry is gaining momentum, but the lack of incentives, reliable data, and a unified marketing strategy continue to hold it back. Chander Mansharamani, Vice Chairman, India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB), said that despite strong infrastructure and government initiatives, India needs a dedicated marketing body and incentive framework to compete with global destinations that offer financial support and bidding budgets to attract international events. At present, many competing nations such

as Singapore, Thailand, and South Korea offer incentives, subsidies, and dedicated marketing budgets to draw large-scale international events. India, however, lacks these financial levers. "The key challenge is the absence of a central marketing agency to position India as a MICE destination. We need to study how other countries operate, allocate bidding budgets, and introduce welcome incentives, even small grants based on business volume can make India more competitive," Mansharamani said.

The Ministry of Tourism has taken encouraging steps in recent months, launching a Digital MICE Catalogue







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The key challenge is the absence of a central marketing agency to position India as a **MICE** destination.



CHANDER MANSHARAMANI VICE CHAIRMAN ICPB

covering 60 cities and urging states to establish MICE bureaus. ICPB is now building on this effort with a comprehensive MICE Planner that will expand coverage to 150 cities, detailing venues, connectivity, and pre- and post-tour opportunities. "It is a practical step forward that will help organisers identify venues and plan more efficiently," Mansharamani added.

However, ICPB cautions that the real challenge is perception. "States need to recognise that MICE is not just an industry; it is an economic activity with far-reaching impact on jobs, trade, and knowledge exchange," Mansharamani said. A key missing piece is the lack of credible data on the segment's size and economic

contribution, which has made it difficult to prioritise MICE in tourism policy or budgets.

India's academic strength remains a significant but underleveraged asset. With over 350 medical colleges, 400 agricultural universities, IITs, and IIMs, the country already has built-in support systems that can host global technical and academic conferences.

For 2026, ICPB has mapped an ambitious roadmap including roadshows in India and major international cities, the annual Conventions India Conclave (which hosts over 100 international buyers), and a new MICE Summit to spotlight states with major convention facilities.

To sustain momentum, ICPB recommends dedicating 20-25 per cent of the national tourism media budget to MICE, crafting a year-round marketing calendar, and ensuring India's presence at global events like IMEX and Incentives, Business Travel, and Meetings (IBTM).

"We are optimistic about the future. With world-class venues such as Yashobhoomi and Bharat Mandapam, India already has the hardware. What is missing is the marketing engine and policy-level incentives to make the country a true global MICE hub," Mansharamani said. MT







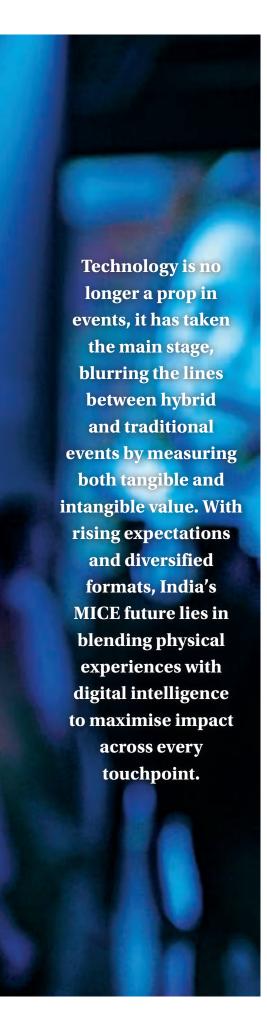
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By Janice Alyosius

ndia's MICE market is undergoing a paradigm shift, where technology and event design converge to influence how venues, hotels, and convention centres gauge true RoI. This infusion is not just enhancing operations, it is sparking a surge in hybrid events and experiential formats that are giving a new direction to the future of events.

What began as a pandemic-driven necessity has now matured into a strategic layer of event design, prompting the industry to rethink 'profitability' beyond traditional occupancy, room nights, and F&B revenue. Today, digital reach, content life cycle, and engagement depth increasingly shape RoI conversations for event planners.

The question now is: Will hybrid events completely eclipse traditional ones as we enter 2026?

According to experts, while physical events remain the backbone of human connection and commercial networking, organisers and venues are recalibrating for an environment where one format no longer fits all. The emerging consensus is apparent that the most successful events, whether hybrid, experiential, or traditional, are those that deliver long-term brand equity, repeat business, and measurable engagement. The MICE ecosystem is now evaluating both tangible and intangible value with equal weight.

NEW DEFINITIONS OF ROI

Hybrid and experiential events have moved far beyond stopgap solutions. They now serve as scalable platforms that enhance content distribution, broaden access, and extend event life cycles. Venues are increasingly integrating technologies like real-time analytics, audience tracking, and digital content monetisation into their RoI frameworks. For hotels and convention centres, profitability today includes engagement per minute, cost per virtual attendee, and post-event traffic on digital channels.

Lakshmi Sridhar, General Manager, Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach and The Bheemili Resort Managed by Accor, said, "Hybrid and experiential events deliver higher long-



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term RoI by driving multi-channel engagement, creating valuable content, and fostering repeat business. Beyond revenue, we evaluate metrics such as cost per attendee, F&B contribution, and digital reach. Today, meaningful engagement and lasting brand recall are just as critical as direct profitability."

TRADITIONAL MEETINGS

Despite rapid digitalisation, in-person events are far from obsolete. The return of large-scale exhibitions, congresses, and corporate incentive gatherings signals the enduring value of face-to-face networking. Industry leaders highlight that physical experiences continue to drive client loyalty, long-term partnerships, and higher on-ground spending.

Sudeep Sarcar, CEO, India Exposition Mart Limited (IEML), echoes this sentiment. "Hybrid events were the need of the hour during the pandemic when physical gatherings were restricted. But MICE is majorly about human connection, meeting people, sharing ideas, and creating experiences together."

At IEML, RoI extends far beyond yield. "We measure RoI not just by occupancy or revenue per event but by brand recall, client retention, and the long-term partnerships that physical experiences nurture."

YIELD & ENGAGEMENT

Hotels and venues are increasingly blending traditional financial metrics with digital performance indicators.





SUDEEP SARCAR
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
INDIA EXPOSITION MART LIMITED



COVER STORY MICE talk

JIBAK DASGUPTA DIRECTOR GENERAL & CEO IMTMA & BIEC

REVENUE LENS

Unlike traditional MICE formats measured on direct financial outcomes, hybrid events introduce parallel revenue streams including virtual sponsorships, cross-platform branding, and paid access to post-event digital content. This has led to new operational models in hotels that now design events for both physical and virtual scalability.

formats are measured on direct financial metrics such as room nights, F&B revenue, and space utilisation. With hybrid events, the equation expands as we look at digital reach, virtual sponsorships, and post-event content value," he explained. "Experiential events are niche and more of long-term investments in brand and client relationships. The yardstick for RoI now includes revenue per available event space, GOP per event, digital engagement rates, and





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INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY

As event organisers embrace live streaming, advanced AV, AI-driven analytics, and content libraries, the definition of RoI now spans both audience scale and data depth. Hybrid formats are particularly effective in reaching cross-border participants, creating subscription opportunities, and reducing carbon footprints an increasingly relevant metric for global corporates. Jibak Dasgupta, Director General and CEO, IMTMA and BIEC, said the shift is structural. "Audio-visuals, live streaming, and content monetisation have become

increasingly popular. Hybrid events are gaining momentum after the pandemic, allowing organisers to reach out to a broader audience across different locations." He noted that both formats hold unique strengths. "Traditional conferences demand physical presence, and networking provides a different experience compared to hybrid events. It is essential to evaluate each event's RoI based on the tangible and intangible value it creates."

PURPOSE-LED FORMATS

Experts agree that the future of MICE lies in purpose-led event design, as

no single format can fully replace the other. The format of the event is going to be based on audience, objective, sustainability, and required engagement depth.

As India's MICE sector navigates rising expectations, sustainability mandates, and diversified event models, RoI can no longer be measured by a single metric or a singular format. The future belongs to venues and organisers who can blend physical experiences with digital intelligence, maximising value across every touchpoint from registration to postevent content consumption.





KEY SHIFTS TO DEFINE 2026

As India's MICE sector heads into 2026, corporate expectations have shifted sharply, with companies now seeking events that are not only efficient but strategically designed, culturally rooted, wellness-focused, and anchored in sustainability goals. This is reshaping the market, prompting venues and hotels to reinvent how meetings and experiences are created.

- Business travel expenditure rising steadily: According to latest industry estimates, India's business travel spend is projected to grow at an annual rate of 9–10 per cent until 2027 higher than many Asia-Pacific markets. offsites Offsite meetings have returned to pre-pandemic levels, while incentives and recognition travel are also rising.
- Domestic destinations gaining strategic relevance: Tier II cities

such as Visakhapatnam, Coimbatore, Guwahati, and Bhubaneswar are witnessing increased corporate interest due to improved air connectivity, lower event costs, and differentiated cultural offerings along with sustainable options. These emerging destinations are now competing with longestablished hubs such as Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad.

• Wellness and sustainability no longer optional: Global corporates, especially in domains such as IT, pharma, consulting, and BFSI, are mandating wellbeing-led formats for events and sustainability benchmarks in event RFPs. From carbon-neutral exhibitions to curated wellness breaks, MICE programmes are adapting frameworks once considered niche such as zero-waste commitments, green transportation, and local sourcing influencing venue selection along with vendor partnerships.

- Hybrid-ready venues with technology
- Green and zero-waste event frameworks
- Wellness-integrated corporate retreats
- Destinations competing on both accessibility & cultural depth
- Hotels aligning MICE offerings with lifestyle & experiential trends
- Venues expanding capacity to host mega events, seminars, and global conventions



As India's MICE sector navigates rising expectations and diversified event models, RoI can no longer be measured by a singular format





- The rise of AI-powered event platforms: Platforms such as BIEC's newly developed 'Expo Planner' highlight a major industry-wide move towards AI-driven event intelligence. Such systems streamline communication, scheduling, footfall analysis, lead generation, and matchmaking, offering organisers real-time visibility and actionable insights.
- Hybrid events evolve into multiformat ecosystems: By 2026, hybrid events will become a default capability across major venues. This will include
- high-capacity, low-latency internet infra, immersive 360° projection, XR stages, and metaverse-enabled showcases for product launches and investor meetings. Digital engagement tools for remote and on-site attendees will be a common sight.
- Smart venue operations: RFID-based visitor movement mapping, touchless registration systems, automated catering logistics, and sensor-enabled crowd flow management are becoming standard in new buildings. This is expected to enhance venue operations.
- Burnout and productivity challenges influencing event formats: Companies are designing retreats that balance strategic discussions with

Companies are designing retreats that balance strategic discussions with restorative experiences such as yoga, guided mindfulness, nature immersion, quiet work zones, and cultural discovery.

• Localisation shaping storytelling and engagement: Events increasingly feature regional culinary showcases, artisanal crafts, sustainable décor, and community collaborations, allowing delegates to experience the destination meaningfully. MT





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Al, XR anchor future of events



AJAY K WADHAWAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AIR iQ

s hybrid events mature and corporates increasingly demand measurable outcomes, the MICE sector is shifting towards technology integration and sharper performance metrics. Planners no longer rely on intuition; they look for quantifiable engagement levels, competency gains, network efficiency, and RoI visibility. Sector experts say that the next two years will see AI and (XR) move from experimental add-ons to essential planning tools. Ajay K Wadhawan, Executive Director, AIR iQ, believes engagement metrics remain the strongest predictor of event success. "The measure of attendee engagement should be gauged by participation throughout the event. Metrics such as attentive attendance tell us whether the event has truly worked."

He stressed that well-mixed session formats, relevant content, and careful speaker selection influence participation. Networking efficiency, he added, depends heavily on user-friendly meeting apps — the higher

the number of meetings, the greater the networking. Wadhawan sees XR and AI as transformative for RoI, especially in corporate capability-building. "XR solutions can improve competency levels by around 50 per cent and reduce training time by almost 69 per cent," he noted. While the cost of AI-driven learning may be higher initially, Wadhawan believes that it saves a fortune in the long run through reduced downtime and lower operational losses.

Data integration is becoming central to how MICE planners forecast outcomes. Air iQ uses its own registration technology, a dedicated travel subsidiary offering negotiated rates, in-house hotel contracting, and externally managed engagement tools aligned with HR and admin teams. The result is a single predictive view rather than dispersed data streams. By 2026, Wadhawan expects AI to act as an end-to-end planning engine along with post-event evaluator helping planners track impact with far greater precision than ever before. MT









the rules of corporate events

Highlighting AI's growing influence, **Rajdev Bhattacharya**, *Global Head, T&E, Wipro*, says it will shift interactions from intangible conversations to quantifiable outcomes.

tried hosting my first 'hybrid' event back in 2022. The result? Juggling chaos — physical venues, virtual platforms, tech vendors, and a silent prayer that both worlds would somehow sync but in 2025, it is the real deal. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has stepped in as the invisible co-planner and I am absolutely loving it (and learning as I go). With a year gone, I dare say it is just not about innovation and fancy frills. In fact, it will be about survival for our ROI-obsessed industry. Let's explore why:

SMARTER ENGAGEMENT

If there is one thing I have learned in this business, it is that engagement, not headcount, defines success. The 'aha' moment arrives when you realise that AI now personalises every attendee's journey right from the moment they register.

Event platforms are mastering this art too, using machine learning to analyse profiles, behaviour, and interests, and then recommending sessions, exhibitors, and even meetings between like-minded participants.



66

At one large-scale corporate conference, automated check-ins reduced waiting time by 70 per cent and can trim manpower costs by 30 per cent at the next event.

"

preventing bottlenecks before they happen. For an industry that thrives on precision, these are not just efficiencies but risk-management saviours.

ROI THAT FEELS MEASURABLE

Here is the familiar question every corporate buyer hears: What did we get out of this event? AI finally gives us data-backed answers. It tracks every click, conversation, and conversion by turning thousands of microinteractions into clear and quantifiable outcomes. For once, RoI does not feel like guesswork.

INNOVATE WITH INTEGRITY

Before you roll your eyes at the hype, here is my 'Spider-Man moment': With great data comes great responsibility.

AI systems thrive on personal information — from registration details to behavioural insights — which raises real concerns about privacy and transparency.

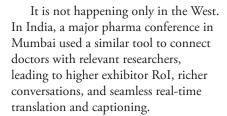
So, what is the best way forward? Transparent consent processes, limiting unnecessary data capture, and ensuring automation never replaces the human touch. Easier said than done, but it is here to stay. At the end, let us be clear that AI is not replacing creativity; it is amplifying it.



RAJDEV BHATTACHARYA GLOBAL HEAD, TRAVEL & EXPENSE WIPRO

Technology now handles the heavy lifting — logistics, data crunching, audience analytics, freeing planners to focus on what truly matters, curating experiences that move people and deliver measurable business impact. As the industry evolves, those who master the blend of AI precision and human imagination will define the next era of MICE. With this thought, I can say, next year, my smartest hybrid events would not just happen instead they will be intelligently designed. MT

(Views expressed are the author's own. The publication may or may not subscribe to them.)



EFFICIENCY

Behind the scenes, AI is quietly transforming event logistics. Facial-recognition check-ins and predictive scheduling eliminate queues and overlaps. At one large-scale corporate conference, automated check-ins reduced waiting time by 70 per cent and can trim manpower costs by 30 per cent at the next event.

We created a use case where AI dashboards monitor real-time attendance, room utilisation, and digital engagement. They can even forecast crowd movement or catering needs,





Data-driven travel management the next big thing

As AI becomes a universal reality, the data-driven insights and predictions are strongly influencing the designing and optimisation of business travel programmes.

ith macroeconomic shifts, evolving company objectives and traveller preferences influence the business travel landscape. As a result, the expectation for travel managers to do more with less has become far more prevalent.

While technology has played a pivotal role in supporting the achievement of business travel objectives, AI has emerged as a game changer for travel managers seeking to elevate their travel programmes. AI works by using algorithms to process large amount of data, identify patterns,

and make informed decisions or predictions. AI models can be trained to follow detailed instructions, thus delivering desired outcomes for targeted objectives. "The use of AI in business travel is accelerating quickly," Pooja Patil, Head, Business Development, India, Synergy Global Housing, shared. "At its most basic level, we can leverage AI to formulate customised travel recommendations, such as identifying the best and cheapest flights to Chennai, but where it gets really exciting is AI's use in managing entire business travel programmes in adherence to travel policy."



POOJA PATIL
HEAD, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, INDIA
SYNERGY GLOBAL HOUSING

"AI is a force multiplier for travel teams," **Hanish Vithal**, Chief Technology Officer, SilverDoor, stated. "We are becoming more efficient, tracking carbon footprints, improving traveller experiences, and turning scattered data into strategic insights, all while keeping teams lean. Companies can now scale faster without the traditional overhead."

REDEFINING BUSINESS TRAVEL

So, as long as an AI model has access to an impactful amount of data, AI holds the potential to entirely redefine the way a business travel programme is managed and optimised. Some examples of how AI is transforming the business travel landscape include:

- Cost management: AI can improve cost efficiency by analysing historical spend data, market trends, and policy parameters. For example, AI-driven booking tools can suggest accommodation or flight options that fall within pre-determined rate caps while still meeting traveller comfort and convenience needs.
- Data analytics: Tailored Business Intelligence (BI) dashboards powered by AI can identify patterns of overspending, point out areas to cut down on carbon consumption, highlight underperforming suppliers, and even forecast future travel budgets. This allows travel managers to make proactive decisions, demonstrate tangible fiscal savings, and other impactful benefits to leadership.



HANISH VITHAL
CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER
SILVERDOOR

Business
Intelligence
dashboards
powered by
AI can identify
patterns of
overspending,
underperforming
suppliers, and
even forecast
future travel
budgets

GUEST SAFETY

AI has the capability to enhance guest safety and wellbeing at multiple touchpoints. By leveraging data on location safety scores, realtime travel advisories, historical incident reports, and combining it with traveller demographics, AI can make personalised travel safety recommendations, such as accommodation and transport for solo female travellers.

Speaking on risk management from a wider perspective, Vithal said, "We can now monitor threats in real-time 24/7 with fewer people and better results. When disruptions hit, such as sudden itinerary changes, predictive alerts and automated workflows help us respond in minutes, not hours, with ready alternatives."

DECARBONISATION

By analysing supplier sustainability credentials, emissions data, and travel patterns, AI tools can recommend lower-carbon travel options and accommodations that support a company's decarbonisation targets.

"A common misconception is that eco-friendly travel options are more expensive," Patil noted. "However, with AI comes the opportunity to identify environment friendly options, which are within a company's fiscal and carbon budgets."

TRAVELLER PREFERENCES

By understanding both the demographics (such as age, gender, and travel frequency) and psychographics (such as unique lifestyle, cultural, religious, or dietary considerations) of travellers, AI can deliver travel recommendations that make business trips more comfortable and inclusive. In the case of accommodation for example, it can suggest properties with halal dining options for those who practice Islam, providing tailored recommendations without having to spend hours on research.

ADAPTING TO CHANGE

As AI continues to evolve at an extraordinary pace, it is reshaping how business travel programmes are designed, managed, and optimised.

For travel managers, success will depend on their ability to adapt, remain open to experimentation, continuously refining processes and embracing change as technology advances and becomes ubiquitous. The business travel industry is built on its people and meaningful connection between them. This is why, AI should complement, not replace, real humanised and trusted service. The most effective travel programmes will strike a balance between intelligent automation and human empathy, while keeping people and their personal experiences at the heart of every journey. MT

(Views expressed are the author's own. The publication may or may not subscribe to them.)



Delhi's announcement of hosting 30 major cultural events in just 80 days marks an unprecedented creative push, one that promises global visibility but also raises crucial questions.

By Janice Alyosius

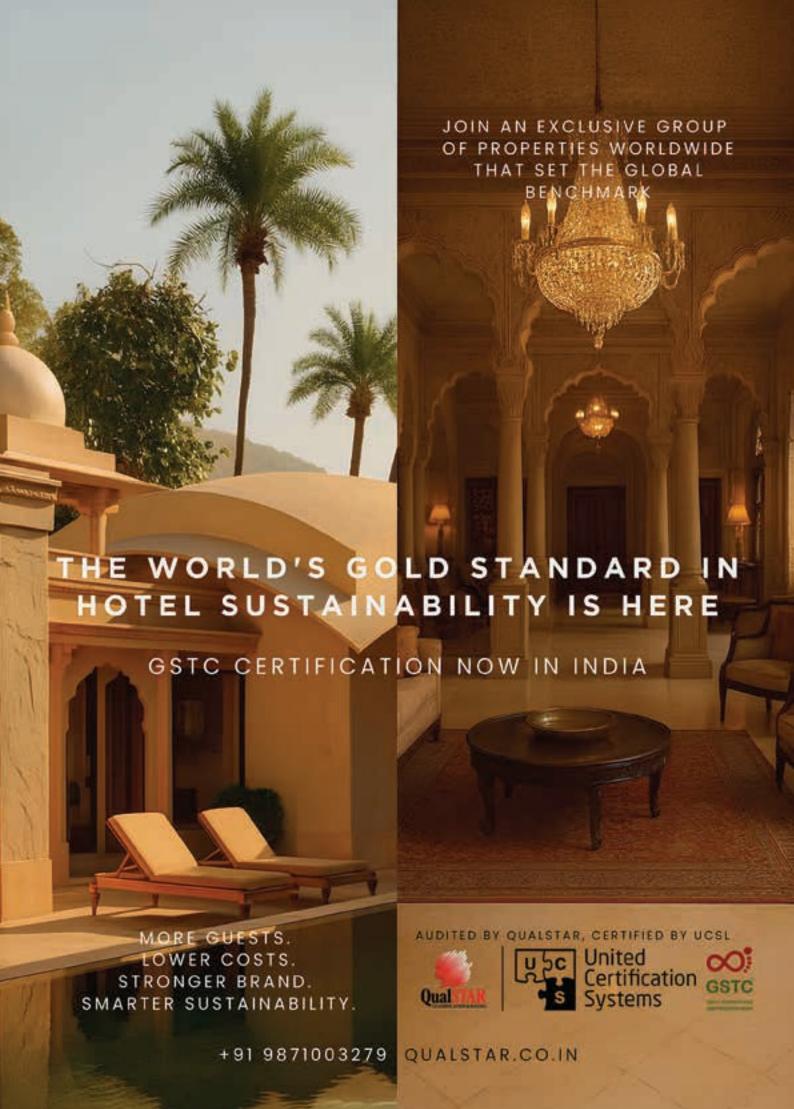
elhi government's recent announcement of hosting over 30 major cultural events in just 80 days marks the city's most ambitious entertainment push in recent years. The line-up, spanning Travis Scott to Zakir Khan, signals a clear attempt to reposition the capital as a global creative powerhouse. Backed by the Delhi Government, Event and Entertainment Management Association (EEMA) and PHD Chamber of Commerce and

Industry (PHDCCI), the initiative aims to energise the local economy, and project a new cultural confidence.

But the scale also raises fundamental questions: Does Delhi currently have the infrastructure, logistical muscle, and regulatory ease required to support a festival calendar of this magnitude?

While the government is signalling readiness with improved venues and streamlined support, industry players remain cautiously optimistic. Their core concerns centre around infrastructure gaps, licensing complexities, traffic management, and the need for more purpose-built entertainment arenas. Their inputs offer a realistic picture of what it will take for Delhi to truly emerge as India's Creative Capital. Rekha Gupta, Chief Minister, Delhi, declared, "Delhi is now fully ready with world-class infrastructure, safety measures, and logistical support to host these events seamlessly. With Modi Ji's vision, Delhi is confidently moving from restrictions to opportunities and from obstacles to success." Kapil Mishra, Minister of Tourism, Art &





Culture, Government of Delhi, added, "My mission is to bring world-class events to the city and firmly establish Delhi as a global creative capital."

Rajeev Jain, Chair, PHDCCI Entertainment Committee, and Founder and Director, Rashi Entertainment, described the moment as a turning point, "Delhi is unlocking its full potential as a platform for the global entertainment economy. It is poised to become the epicentre of India's culture and event-driven future." Infrastructure and licensing Industry voices stress that Delhi still has significant ground to cover. Pointing out that infrastructure remains a primary constraint in the national capital, Nittin T Dubey, Founder, Seven Wonders Vacations, said, "We still lack the kind of arenas Delhi needs for large-scale events. There are only one or two major venues, and you cannot repeat every event at the same place."

He added that the city's traffic situation and licensing ecosystem remain major pain points. "Permissions from agencies like PPL and IPRS take time, and the costs are huge. These are private bodies, but the government must intervene. For 30-35 events, we need streamlined permissions and better systems."

BETTER PLANNING

Offering a counterview, Vikramjeet Sharma, Founder, Le Florence Weddings, said Delhi already has the backbone needed, if planning is meticulous. "Delhi certainly has the infra: stadiums, arenas, heritage monuments. What we need is careful planning so that heritage sites are protected and traffic is managed well."

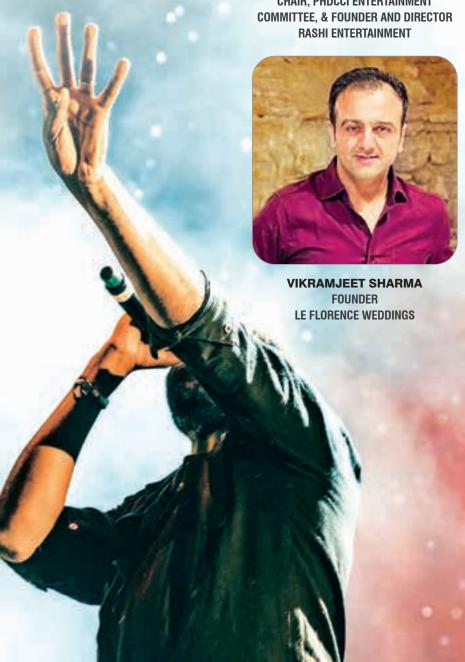
On licensing, he argued that Delhi is ahead of many states. He said, "Delhi already has a clear structure with DCP one-stop licensing, but if the government can bring all permissions — police, fire, Novex, PPL, IPRS, into a true single-window system, it will remove a huge amount of stress for organisers. One-window licensing is essential if we want seamless planning for 30 global events in 80 days."

He also emphasised the need for better government coordination during large concerts, "When Diljit performed at JLN, traffic was jammed for hours. That is not on the organiser, traffic management is a government responsibility if we want Delhi to be a concert capital."

With India's live events market booming, due largely to young consumers with higher spending power, industry leaders agree on one thing: the potential is massive. But for Delhi to claim the title of 'Creative Capital', the next 80 days will be a stress test of its infrastructure, governance readiness, and ability to deliver seamless largescale experiences. MT



RAJEEV JAIN CHAIR, PHDCCI ENTERTAINMENT



Where eetings eet indfulness

Blending biophilia suites with dedicated work pods, Radisson Blu Hotel & Suites GRT Chennai is crafting spaces where corporate travellers feel at home, while seamlessly balancing productivity and comfort.



By Janice Alyosius & Amita Pandey

very time a corporate employee boards a flight for yet another conference or boardroom meeting, they carry with them the same silent wish that their hotel stay would feel less like a layover and more like home. To cater to this wish of many corporate travellers, Radisson Blu Hotel & Suites GRT Chennai has taken the lead and come forward with innovative ways to serve corporate guests. Reimagining what a business stay should be, they have blended thoughtful design, warm



VIKRAM COTAH
CEO, GRT HOTELS & RESORTS

service, and smart details that transform routine travel into something that feels a lot closer to home. Vikram Cotah, CEO, GRT Hotels, described it best, "Our mainstay in this hotel is of corporates. So 80 per cent of our business is through corporates. We are very strategically located, very close to the airport, just 15 minutes to the national and international terminals."

Staying in this hotel does not feel like you are stepping into a typical high-rise, glass-and-steel metro hotel. Instead, you walk into a space alive with greenery, natural light, and soft music. "Corporates do not want to come back to the usual thing," Cotah explained. "They want to just unwind. You will walk around and see biophilia everywhere, you will see plants, and then you listen to music." He emphasised that the property aims to impact all five senses of guests. Sharing a unique detail about the property, he said, "Interestingly, the biophilia floor carries petrichor the smell of earth when it rains. We created that smell so that corporates feel completely rejuvenated after a long day of conference or meeting." But rejuvenation is not limited to ambiance. The hotel also features a 3,500 sq ft gym, where trainers guide guests with passion, making it a playground for wellness rather than just another gym. Even when hunger calls, the homely feeling continues at the dining table. "We tell stories with our food," Cotah emphasised. The 'Ministry of Chutney', born as the only Anglo-Indian restaurant in the city, revives centuriesold culinary traditions, while 'Curry Theory' reinvents Tamil Nadu's street food with a modern twist.

What truly sets the brand apart in the region is its knack for weaving technology and design into experiences, which are in sync with the fast-paced corporate life. It features a sleek lobby podcast room called 'Techverse', where you can record podcasts and separate work pods designed for quiet productivity. "We have taken care of even the smallest details. These are the value-adds that the corporate, would look for," concluded Cotah. With all these thoughtful details, GRT is curating dream spaces where corporate visitors can feel at home, no matter how far they roam. MT



India is fast emerging as the engine of Asia Pacific's business travel growth, driving record spending and redefining how corporates move, meet, and grow.

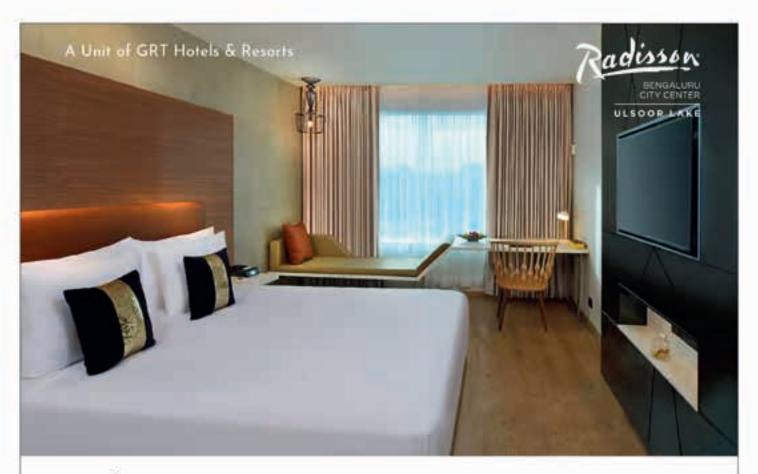
By Dr Shehara Rizly Fernando

usiness travel is soaring globally and nowhere is this momentum more evident than in the Asia Pacific (APAC) region, capturing unprecedented attention, where demand, connectivity, and corporate engagement are rising in tandem.

According to **Elle Ng-Darmawan**, Regional Director, APAC, Global Business Travel Association (GBTA), the Asia Pacific region now accounts for over 40 per cent of global business travel spending. "India is a key driver of this momentum," she said. "It is one

of the fastest-growing business travel markets globally and its corporates are travelling with purpose; expanding, training, and building connections."

What is striking about India's role in this growth story is how technology has amplified its reach. Across APAC region, 78 per cent of business travellers are comfortable using AI-driven booking platforms, while 72 per cent rely on mobile wallets — the highest rate globally. For India, this shift translates into smarter, more agile travel management systems that cater to the evolving preferences of companies and travellers balancing cost control with productivity.



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Corporate travel today is not just about getting from one meeting to another. It is a strategic driver for growth. Indian businesses are investing heavily in travel for sales, training, and conferences; three areas that directly impact market reach and skill development. "Travel enables relationship-building and knowledgesharing, which are essential for success in fast-evolving markets like ours," Elle explained.

Although, the post-pandemic world has brought new priorities. Duty of care now sits at the top of every travel manager's agenda. "The more people a business has travelling, the greater the responsibility to ensure their safety," Elle added. Technology plays a key role here, helping companies track employee movement and respond swiftly to disruptions or crises.

Sustainability is another major theme shaping India's corporate travel approach. With 59 per cent of companies across APAC expected to track their travel emissions by the end of this year — which is double the figures from last year — green policies are becoming standard practice globally. Indian corporates are no exception, as they increasingly align travel policies with environmental commitments and global Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) goals.

Indian businesses are investing heavily in travel for sales, training, and conferences: three areas that directly impact market reach and skill development.



ELLE NG-DARMAWAN REGIONAL DIRECTOR, APAC GBTA

In light of this momentum, GBTA is doubling down on India. After the success of its Asia Pacific conference in Singapore, the association has launched an India advisory board and is hosting its first GBTA India Business Travel Summit in New Delhi in November. The aim is to provide education, resources, and community engagement to help Indian travel professionals adapt to an industry that's evolving faster than ever. For India, business travel is no longer a cost, it is an investment. As companies compete for global opportunities, India's ability to blend technology, sustainability, and human connection may well define the next chapter of corporate travel across the Asia Pacific. MT



Driving across Madhya **Pradesh**

With the arrival of winter, Madhya Pradesh invites you to road trips filled with misty windshields, adventure, and unforgettable stories waiting around every bend of this majestic state.

inter in Madhya Pradesh is pure magic the crisp mornings, gentle sunshine on golden fields, and bonfire nights under starry skies. It is the best time to hit the road and explore the heart of India, where superb highways, charming pitstops, and magnificent destinations make every drive unforgettable.

HERITAGE HIGHWAY GWALIOR-BHOPAL (557 KM)

Start your journey in Gwalior with hot kachori-sabzi before exploring the majestic Gwalior Fort. Head south to Narwar Fort for panoramic views, visit Surwaya's 13th-century temples, and unwind at Shivpuri's lakeside tourist village. The next day, explore Scindia cenotaphs, Madhav National Park, and George Castle. Enjoy lunch at Chanderi's Kila Kothi, stop at Pranpur's women-run café, and conclude with Eran's Varaha sculpture, Sironj's dari weavers, and Islamnagar before reaching Bhopal.

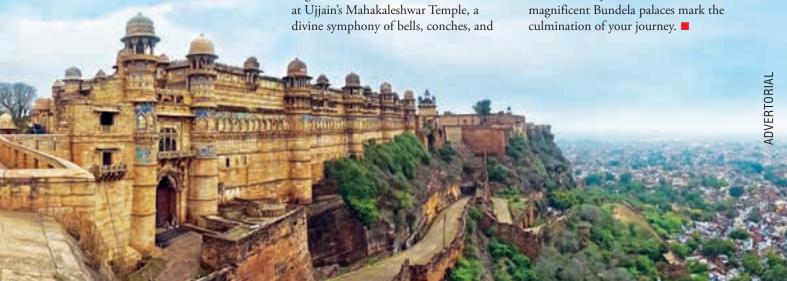
PILGRIM'S PROGRESS **UJJAIN-BURHANPUR (578 KM)**

Begin at dawn with the Bhasma Aarti at Ujjain's Mahakaleshwar Temple, a

chants. Warm up with poha-jalebi in the morning chill, then visit Bhartrihari Caves and Gadkalika Temple. The next day, explore Jahaz Mahal, Rani Rupmati Pavilion, and other medieval treasures. Visit the Buddhist Bagh Caves, honour Baji Rao's cenotaph, and join Narmada aarti at Maheshwar Fort. Watch the town's weavers at work before seeking blessings at Omkareshwar. Conclude at Burhanpur, steeped in Mughal heritage and home to the original tomb of Mumtaz Mahal. End with the city's kebabs and sweet Daraba.

BUNDELKHAND & BEYOND REWA-DATIA (597 KM)

This route blends wilderness with heritage. Begin in Rewa with littleknown palaces like Govindgarh and Vynkat Bhavan, taste *Indrahar*, and spot white tigers at Mukundpur. Continue to the mighty Bahuti Falls, the state's tallest. Explore Art Ichol near Maihar, then head for safaris at Panna National Park to see tigers and sloth bears. Stay like royalty in Orchha, where Lord Ram is worshipped as a king, or raft along the Betwa River before enjoying a Bundeli thali at a Ladpura Khas homestay. End at Datia, where magnificent Bundela palaces mark the



Sabre's playbook for smarter biz travel

With its AI-driven platform, Sabre is helping travel management firms simplify operations and deliver more personalised journeys to corporates, writes **Brett Thorstad**, *VP*, *Agency Sales & Airline Distribution*, *APAC*, *Sabre*.





BRETT THORSTAD

VP, AGENCY SALES & AIRLINE
DISTRIBUTION. APAC. SABRE

xpectations placed on Travel Management Companies (TMCs) have never been higher. Travellers want flexibility, personalisation, and safety. Corporates want cost control, visibility, and compliance. Meanwhile, TMCs are caught in the middle, navigating a fragmented content landscape while trying to deliver seamless experiences. To tackle this chaos, at Sabre, we believe that technology can act as a bridge and lead the way for every stakeholder.

Our integrated ecosystem connects air, hotel, ground transport, and more through a unified marketplace powered

by Sabre APIs and underpinned with systemic AI. This is not just about access; it is about relevance. By harmonising traditional and Low-Cost Carrier (LCC) offers with industry-leading New Distribution Capability (NDC) and lodging content, we help TMCs deliver richer, more personalised options without compromising on duty-of-care or operational efficiency.

However, content fragmentation remains a challenge. A recent Sabrecommissioned global study found 91 per cent of agencies use four or more booking systems, with half managing seven or more API integrations. This complexity drives up

While GenAI chatbots have shown the potential, it is agentic AI that can eliminate friction between traveller intent and fulfilment





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costs and strains resources. While direct airline connections absolutely have a role to play within the ecosystem, further Sabre analysis found they can introduce more complexity than clarity.

Promises of cheaper fares and richer content often fall short, with buyers facing fragmented service, inconsistent experiences, and scalability challenges. Our response? SabreMosaic™ Travel Marketplace — a multi-source content platform that consolidates disparate data into a single, intelligent stream, empowering agents to serve travellers better, faster, and smarter.

The upcoming year 2026 will be the year of agentic AI. That is where real transformation lies. Sabre is pioneering agentic-ready APIs that allow autonomous systems to act on behalf of travellers with the potential to book flights, secure hotel rooms, and even file expense reports. These APIs connect to our proprietary Model Context Protocol (MCP) server, which acts as a universal translator with one of the richest data sets in travel and AI agents. That data set spans over 50 petabytes giving Sabre's AI models the breadth and depth to make smarter, faster decisions. Imagine a disruption proxy agent that waits on hold with

A new global study reveals that 91% of travel agencies use four or more booking systems, with half managing seven or more API integrations

an airline, rebooks a flight, pays with stored credentials, and updates the traveller's calendar — all without needing intervention. Or a hotel ops agent that confirms late arrivals and arranges oat milk for breakfast. Our agentic APIs are not hypotheticals, in fact, we are already in beta phase with a set of customers.

We are building out experiences with them and validating use cases. The goal is to expand that beta in the coming months to include more developers and more customers. Our new AI whitepaper, 'Chat as the New Influencer: From Conversations to Clicks', forecasts a seismic shift in how travel, both leisure and corporate, is discovered, personalised, and booked.

While GenAI chatbots have shown the potential, it is agentic AI that can eliminate friction between traveller intent and fulfilment. Conversational commerce powered by agentic AI is not just a new channel but a new paradigm, poised to redefine the traveller journey and unlock unprecedented growth across the industry — akin to how commerce via social media revolutionised retail industries over the past decade.

In short, Sabre is not just reacting to industry shifts, we are anticipating them, and shaping them. Through intelligent APIs, modular platforms, and agentic AI, we are helping TMCs move from fragmented systems to fluid experiences. MT

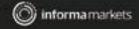


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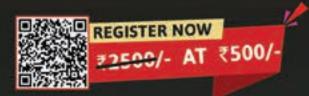
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End-to-end travel solutions on the horizon



Adhip Nath Palchaudhuri and Ashok K Gupta along with other stakeholders at the event

Balmer Lawrie Travel & Vacations outlined plans to expand beyond ticketing into hotels, cabs, insurance, visas, and vacation packages with end-to-end, tech-driven MICE solutions.

By Janice Alyosius

fter a challenging start to the year, India's MICE sector is showing remarkable resilience, with companies adapting quickly to evolving market demands. Balmer Lawrie's recent annual gathering in Delhi highlighted this optimism, underscoring the industry's ability to bounce back despite earlier setbacks.

Emphasising the company's forward-looking approach, Adhip Nath Palchaudhuri, Chairman and Managing Director, Balmer Lawrie Travel & Vacations, said, "We are seeing strong traveller demand returning and festival season bookings are surpassing last year. Going ahead, we plan to expand our offerings beyond ticketing into hotels, cabs, insurance, and visa services, creating a onestop solution for both corporate and individual customers. We are leveraging technology partners to enhance service delivery and cater to consumer needs. The focus is on blending business with leisure, providing experiences that go beyond traditional MICE setups." Adding insight into operational strategies and customer engagement,

The focus is on blending business with leisure, providing holistic experiences

Ashok K Gupta, Human Resources Manager, Balmer Lawrie Travel & Vacations, affirmed, "With the growth of both travel and vacation divisions, we are making concerted efforts to convert all our travel clients for vacations, packages and overseas travel. We have provided self-booking tools for ticketing and automated vacation packages to meet evolving requirements."

Speaking about the potential in the MICE and leisure segments, **RS Louis**, Director, Service Businesses, Balmer Lawrie Travel & Vacations, added, "There is a huge demand. We



RS Louis and Ashok K Gupta enjoying Balmer Lawrie's annual meet

are already into MICE segment, but there is significant opportunity to grow this business. We are strengthening tie-ups with hotels and transport providers and creating end-to-end packages, covering travel, hotels, and immersive experiences." As leaders stressed innovation in corporate travel experiences, Palchaudhuri noted, "MICE is no longer just about meetings. It is a mix of business and pleasure. Adding entertainment, short treks, or nature activities enhances the corporate agenda and creates a memorable attendee experience." MT

INDEVA expands footprint



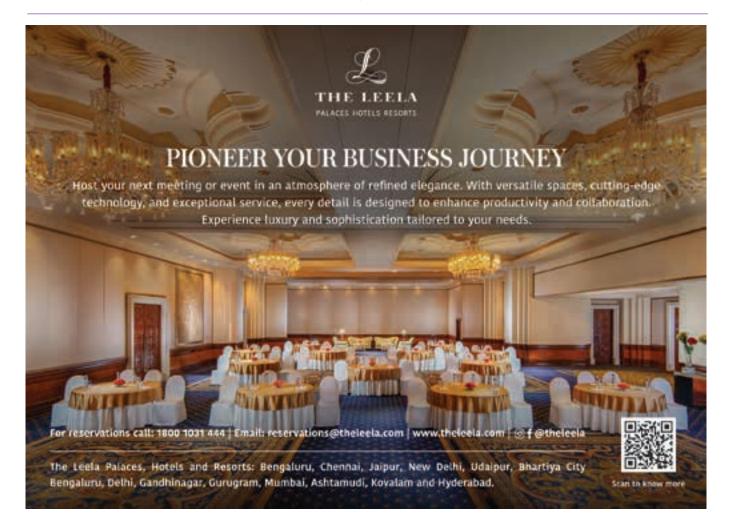
INDEVA Hotels & Resorts has partnered with Royal Estcon to operate new The Mor Stays property, marking another significant milestone in its expanding portfolio.

By MT Bureau

NDEVA Hotels & Resorts, a unit of India Expo Mart (IEML), has entered into a management agreement with Royal Estcon to operate a new property under its budget brand, 'The Mor Stays', marking another milestone in its growing Delhi NCR portfolio.

The upcoming hotel will feature 30 well-appointed rooms, a multicuisine restaurant, and a banquet facility, catering to the increasing demand for high-quality, affordable accommodation among business and leisure travellers alike. Positioned for modern, value-driven guests, The Mor Stays combines efficiency, contemporary design, and warm

hospitality to elevate the economy stay experience. The leadership teams from both the brands expressed optimism about the partnership, citing shared commitment to quality and guest satisfaction. The agreement further strengthens INDEVA's vision to build a network of smart, budget-friendly hotels across key destinations in India and beyond. MT





as pocket-friendly event hub

Blending business with Kerala's warmth and wellness, Crowne Plaza Kochi is fast becoming a favourite for corporates seeking meaningful meetings, cultural experiences, and great value beyond metro cities.

By Janice Alyosius

rowne Plaza Kochi is fast emerging as one of the country's most dynamic and value-driven event venue in Kerala. With nearly 60 per cent of its business now coming from the MICE segment, the hotel is redefining what corporate gatherings in tier II destinations can offer when scale, technology, culture, and wellness are combined with a distinctive Kerala touch. Dinesh Rai, General Manager, Crowne Plaza Kochi, said, "Over the past three years, MICE has increasingly driven both occupancy and F&B revenue for us. Corporates are now looking for venues that seamlessly integrate business with leisure, and Kochi fits into that vision perfectly."

CULTURE & CONNECTION

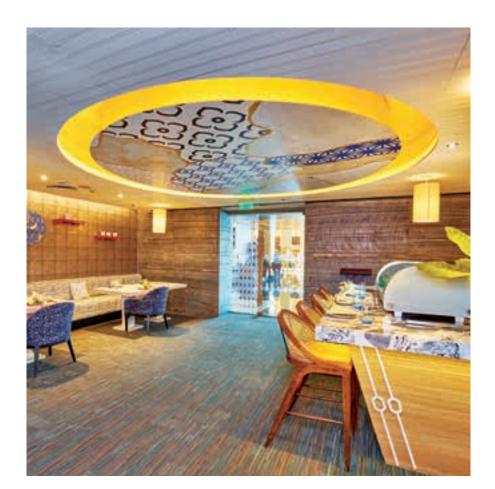
Crowne Plaza Kochi has positioned itself at the intersection of business

and well-being — a growing trend among corporates blending meetings with rejuvenation and local immersion. The hotel houses Kerala's largest spa spanning 13,644 sq ft, along with two swimming pools, a fitness centre, and five award-winning dining outlets.

"Blended travel is the future, and our brand is designed around it. We curate cultural performances like Kathakali and Kalaripayattu for small gatherings and even offer snake boat race experiences right from our backwaters. These authentic touches transform meetings into memorable experiences," Rai said.

KOCHI'S GROWING APPEAL

With its scenic backwaters, convenient air connectivity, and competitive pricing, Kochi is steadily becoming a preferred MICE destination for corporates seeking high value without compromising on luxury. "Unlike tier I cities where costs are evidently higher,







DINESH RAI GENERAL MANAGER CROWNE PLAZA KOCHI

Kochi allows large-scale events with the same global standards at far better value," Rai explained.

TECH INVESTMENT

Responding to post-pandemic expectations for hybrid meetings, Crowne Plaza Kochi has upgraded its digital infra. All meeting spaces are now equipped with advanced AV 66

Unlike tier I cities where costs are higher, Kochi allows large-scale events with the global standards at better value.

99

systems, high-speed connectivity, and platforms that support seamless virtual participation. "The demand for large-scale meetings has not declined; it has evolved. With that in mind, our venues are designed for flexibility — ergonomic layouts, smooth guest flow, and technology that supports both physical and virtual attendees," Rai pointed out. On the pricing front, the

hotel maintains a flexible, partnershipdriven model. "While our rates have increased in line with national trends, we tailor packages for repeat clients and long-term partnerships. Our goal is to build value through loyalty benefits via IHG One Rewards."

SUSTAINABILITY ADDS TO ROI

Sustainability and operational efficiency have become integral to the property's MICE proposition. "We replaced single-use plastic bottles with an in-house glass bottling plant that produces 1,000 bottles a day, eliminating over 30,000 plastic bottles a month. This not only supports environmental goals but also optimises costs for our clients," Rai shared. With a 60:40 business mix tilted towards MICE, Crowne Plaza Kochi is a clear example of how tier II destinations are rewriting India's corporate travel narrative. "Corporates today want more than meeting spaces; they want experiences that balance productivity with purpose. At Crowne Plaza Kochi, we have built exactly that balance, where work, wellness, and culture come together effortlessly." MT



Behavioural science for impactful events

At IMEX Las Vegas, experts showed how understanding human behaviour fuels smarter negotiation, deeper engagement, and more meaningful event outcomes.

By MT Bureau

t its core, every event is an act of persuasion. Whether it is winning over clients or aligning partners, success depends on understanding people. Negotiation is not only about striking deals — it is about empathy, awareness, and creating spaces where everyone feels heard.

READING THE ROOM

The first step is empathy. You cannot

negotiate or design a great event without knowing what your audience wants. Often, it is not just about cost or convenience — delegates may crave recognition, growth, or belonging. When planners look beyond logistics to decode these motivations, they build experiences that truly resonate.

SAFETY BEFORE STRATEGY

Events thrive when people feel safe to speak, share, and connect. That is why creating psychological safety is not a luxury — it is a strategy. It could

mean rearranging seating, setting clear expectations, or helping introverts participate without pressure. As one expert noted, "Simply removing a few chairs changes the energy in the room."

MERCH IS MEMORY

Physical objects — those event giveaways we often overlook can play a subtle but powerful role in memory. A well-designed token, linked to an emotional takeaway, helps participants carry the event's message home.

COLLABORATION

True negotiation is not about compromise — it is about discovery. The analogy of two people fighting over an orange sums it up perfectly. Once they realised one wanted the juice and the other wanted the rind, both walked away satisfied. Event professionals too can unlock better results when they look for mutual benefit rather than fixed outcomes.

POWER OF PSYCHOLOGY

The most impactful events back intuition with insight. Surveys, data analytics, and close collaboration with marketing teams help demonstrate tangible RoI. MT



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The MICE industry knows its risks, but true reliability emerges when organisers embrace smart safeguards with insurance solutions turning uncertainty into confidence.



DEV KARVAT FOUNDER ASEGO

By MT Bureau

arge-scale events bring together organisers, corporates, venues, and delegates, where even minor disruptions from flight delays to medical emergencies or political unrest can derail months of planning. Embedding Asego's solutions, like WaitMate and TrackMate, ensures lounge access during delays and real-time baggage tracking, allowing organisers to focus on experiences.

Asego has introduced specialised insurance products to address the growing diversity of MICE formats. For travel at sea, their cruise trip protection solution covers missed port departures and medical needs onboard, ensuring seamless journeys even in complex itineraries.

Furthermore, their liability protection solutions go a step further, safeguarding event organisers against claims, disputes, and operational risks. Extending this protection to travel agencies, Asego's Travel Business Protect offers a comprehensive shield against errors, operational exposures, and identity theft, while also including emergency travel assistance. With their new Dolphin platform, available on

both web and mobile, policies can be issued, endorsed, or extended in less than two minutes. For MICE organisers handling hundreds of delegates, this reduces friction, eliminates errors, and ensures compliance.

Speaking about how Asego's product are meticulously designed to safeguard the travel partners, **Dev Karvat**,
Founder, Asego, remarked, "At Asego, our focus remains clear — to partner with the travel trade and deliver simple, relevant products, and round-the-clock assistance, so both travellers and businesses can operate and grow with confidence in a volatile environment."

The perception that insurance adds unnecessary cost to an already expensive event is a myth that must be dismantled. In reality, insurance protects revenue streams, reduces liability exposure, and builds delegate confidence in many ways.

By embedding structured assistance and insurance in planning an event, MICE organisers future-proof their business models, iand unlock ancillary revenue opportunities. The future of MICE lies not in choosing between profit and protection but in recognising that one fuels the other. It makes the execution seamless and stress free. MT



SATTE gears up for next big leap

Celebrating its recordbreaking 2025 edition, SATTE convened key industry stakeholders to review achievements, share insights, and chart a smarter, more technology-driven roadmap for 2026. By MT Bureau

uilding on the record-breaking success of its 2025 edition, South Asia's Travel & Tourism Exchange (SATTE) convened an exclusive stakeholder dialogue to set the course for 2026. The session brought together leading partners and industry representatives to celebrate milestones, review feedback, and outline strategic priorities for the coming year. The 2025 edition marked SATTE's most successful outing to date, welcoming 40,000 visitors and over 2,000 exhibitors at the Yashobhoomi Convention Centre.

A highlight of the discussion was the enhanced digital infrastructure at Yashobhoomi, which ensured seamless connectivity, efficient navigation, and stronger engagement throughout the venue. The infrastructure and IT teams credited upgraded systems and new collaborations with internet providers for delivering uninterrupted, high-speed access that transformed delegate interactions. With 24.6 per cent year-on-year growth, SATTE has consolidated its leadership as South Asia's largest travel and tourism exhibition. The 2026 edition is projected to attract more than 45,000 attendees, underscoring its global reach and industry relevance. Planned enhancements include new food courts, vending zones, and additional entry gates, all aimed at improving crowd flow and visitor comfort.

Stakeholders commended SATTE's focus on inclusivity and its efforts towards empowering small and medium tourism operators by giving them access to a world-class platform. Its strength lies in supporting tourism operators who cannot afford overseas exhibitions and can participate at SATTE in a very economical manner. As SATTE prepares for a more technology-driven 2026 edition, it continues to shape the future of travel trade networking and innovation across the region. MT

MOVEMENTS



JULIEN FEUGER Vice President UNICEO France

UNICEO® has appointed Julien Feuger as its Vice President for France. Currently, Director of Global Congresses at BeOne Medicines, Feuger brings over two decades of global experience spanning France, Spain, and the United States. He has led major initiatives in event strategy, previously serving as Global Lead for Events & Branding at Almirall and Head of Congresses & Events at AbbVie France. He also teaches event strategy and management at the University of Barcelona.



PRAKASH JAYADEVAN C00 The Residency Hotels

The Residency Hotels has appointed Prakash Jayadevan as its Chief Operating Officer. In this role, he will lead operational strategy and enhance performance across properties. With extensive hospitality management experience, Jayadevan brings strong expertise in service excellence and business optimisation. His operational insight and customer-centric approach are expected to elevate brand standards and strengthen The Residency Hotels' position in a competitive hospitality landscape.



AJIT SINGH DHANKAR General Manager Wyndham Mohali

Ajit Singh Dhankar has been appointed as the General Manager by Wyndham Chandigarh Mohali. In this role, he will oversee end-to-end hotel operations, including property performance, sales and marketing strategy, revenue management, and overall profitability. He will drive brand service standards and implement key initiatives to strengthen team development. Dhankar previously served as General Manager at Parallel, a Radisson Individuals member in Udaipur, where he managed full hotel operations.



SATPREET SINGH Associate Director, Sales Grand Mercure at Gopalan Mall

Grand Mercure Bengaluru at Gopalan Mall has appointed Satpreet Singh as Associate Director of Sales. With over a decade of experience across leading brands, he brings strong expertise in sales, revenue growth, and client management. Singh has previously held senior roles at Trinity Hotel Whitefield, Lemon Tree Whitefield, Hyatt Centric, and The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore. In his recent pre-opening leadership role at Trinity Hotel Whitefield, he drove market penetration and increased ADR to strengthen market positioning.



SREEJITH KOTTLA General Manager Ramada By Wyndham Alleppev

Ramada by Wyndham Alleppey has appointed Sreejith Kottla as its General Manager. In this role, he will oversee overall hotel operations, drive guest satisfaction, maximise revenue, manage staff performance, and maintain quality and financial standards. He will also focus on strengthening Alleppey's position as a leading MICE destination. Kottla previously served as General Manager at Joys Hotels & Resorts in Thrissur, Kerala, where he was responsible for managing hotel operations and driving sales.



ABHISHEK SABHERWAL Director, Sales Andaz Delhi, by Hyatt

Abhishek Sabherwal has been appointed as the Director of Sales by Andaz Delhi, by Hyatt. With over two decades of experience in luxury hospitality, sales, and business development, he brings extensive expertise and a strong growth record across leading hotel brands. Known for leading highperforming teams and managing global key accounts, he has consistently strengthened revenue across corporate, MICE, and leisure segments while driving guest engagement and longterm client partnerships.



ASHUTOSH JAYEE General Manager Ramada Plaza By Wyndham Jammu Vijaypur

Ashutosh Jayee has been appointed as the General Manager by Ramada Plaza by Wyndham Jammu Vijaypur. In this role, he will oversee hotel operations, staff management, sales, and marketing to strengthen overall performance. Jayee previously served as Head of Sales & Marketing at Radisson Blu Jammu, where he focused on brand standards, revenue generation, and client retention. He will now play a key role in ensuring Ramada Plaza Jammu Vijaypur continues to deliver quality service and exceptional value to guests.



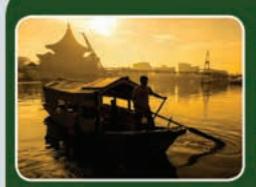
URVASHI JHA Cluster Marketing & Communications Manager Fairmont and Raffles Jaipur

Fairmont and Raffles Jaipur has appointed Urvashi Jha as the new **Cluster Marketing and Communications** Manager. With global experience in luxury hospitality and brand communications, she brings expertise in digital strategy, market positioning, and integrated storytelling. Jha has led campaigns that enhanced brand visibility and strengthened positioning for business and leisure travellers. Her strengths span digital strategy, influencer collaborations, F&B promotions, and consumer engagement.





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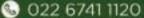


in Sarawak, the rhythm of culture meets the calm of nature — and together, they inspire a new way to connect. Rising from the heart of Borneo, BCCK2 is more than a venue; it's a living canvas for collaboration, innovation, and growth. Designed with sustainability at its core, this future-ready convention hub unites people, ideas, and industries under one visionary roof. With cutting-edge facilities, lush surroundings, and limitless potential, BCCK2 transforms every meeting into a meaningful experience.



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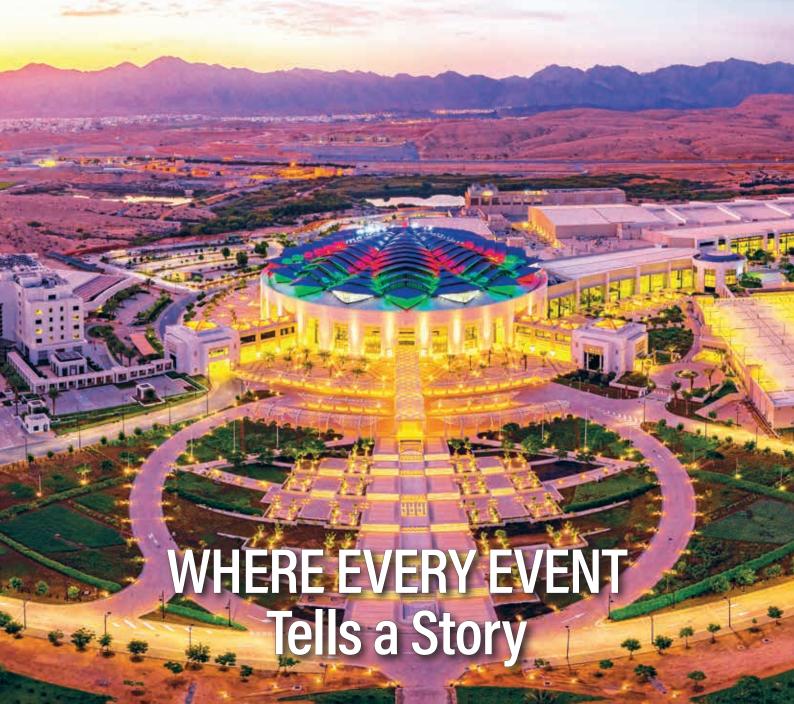
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Khalid Al Zadjali Director, OCB

Oman deepens ties with India

Tailor-made incentives, stronger partnerships, and niche experiences drive Oman's growing engagement with India, says Khalid Al Zadjali, Director, OCB

s global MICE travel resets, Oman has quietly emerged as a promising short-haul destination for Indian corporates. Just a two-and-a-half-hour flight from Mumbai or Delhi, the Sultanate is positioning itself as a premium yet accessible hub for incentive groups and meetings. For Khalid Al Zadjali, Director, Oman Convention Bureau (OCB), India is not just another source market - it is a strategic priority. "From the MICE perspective, India is one of our main markets in Asia. The proximity, strong air connectivity, and cultural understanding between both countries make India a natural partner," he says.

Oman's connectivity with Indian cities gives it an undeniable edge. The destination is connected to 11 Indian cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kochi, and Hyderabad, with direct and even double-daily flights. For Indian corporates, this accessibility, coupled with authentic Arabian hospitality, makes Oman a refreshing alternative to more saturated regional hubs — close enough for short-haul travel, yet

distinct enough to feel like a real escape.

Highlighting the shifting demands from India's event industry, Al Zadjali said, "Earlier, incentive groups were large and industrywide, but now corporates prefer niche, focused experiences. The length of stay is shorter, and events are more specific with deeper engagement, and the spending per delegate has become stronger. Indian corporates today are more value-conscious but still experiencedriven." This evolution aligns perfectly with Oman's nature-driven offerings like desert camps, coastal cruises, and rich heritage settings ideal for groups seeking space and meaning.

Recognising India's growing importance, OCB is investing in long-term partnerships with Indian travel agents, MICE specialists, and corporates. These collaborations cut across sectors such as pharma, BFSI, and manufacturing, helping introduce Oman directly to clients through joint promotions and site visits.

"We have an incentive manual, but we prefer to tailor-make support based on group size, economic impact, and activities planned," says Al Zadjali. Financial aid is not the only focus — often, OCB offers logistical or creative support to ensure smooth execution. "Indian clients want something memorable," he adds. "One happy group becomes your best promoter."

Looking ahead, OCB plans deeper engagement. "We are in talks with two global hotel brands active in both India and Oman to jointly promote their Omani properties," says Al Zadjali. With bleisure rising, OCB now bundle pre/post tours into conference registrations and design spouse programmes for value-adding experiences. "Oman is not a cheap destination, but it offers tremendous value," Al Zadjali asserts. "It is safe, high-quality, and culturally rich - delegates feel looked after from the moment they arrive." For Indian corporates seeking something different, Oman delivers understated luxury and authenticity. "Now, they want something real. That is where Oman wins. Our goal is to keep working hand-in-hand with our Indian partners to deliver experiences that stay with people long after they return home."



A premier destination for global events

Strategically positioned at the crossroads of Asia, Africa, and Europe, Oman offers the perfect blend of business and leisure with state-of-the-art convention centres and accomodations nestled amid scenic landscapes.

Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre - Muscat

Location: 10 minutes from Muscat Int'l Airport

Overview: OCEC is Oman's flagship MICE venue. It is part of the larger Madinat Al Irfan Urban

Development Project, offering integrated

hotels and leisure spaces.

Facilities & Capacity:

Auditorium 1: 3,200 seats **Auditorium 2:** 456 seats

Exhibition Halls: 5 halls totaling 22,000 sq m of column-free

space (can host 10,000+ delegates)

Banquet Halls: Multiple halls for gala dinners and

award shows

Meeting Rooms: 20+ meeting rooms with advanced AV and

translation systems

JW Marriott, Crowne Plaza Muscat OCEC **Hotels Nearby:**

Hotel (both connected via skybridge)

Unique Features:

Sustainable and LEED Gold-certified building

Ample parking and can cater up to 12,000 guests

Oman International Exhibition Centre Location: Near Muscat Int'l Airport

Overview: Previously, the primary exhibition

> venue before OCEC. It hosts trade fairs, exhibitions, and medium-scale events.

Up to 5,000 attendees, with Capacity:

multiple halls and outdoor

exhibit areas.

Madinat Al Irfan Business District

Overview: A large-scale business

> hub surrounding OCEC featuring conference spaces, exhibition zones, and luxury hotels. Ideal for corporate summits, conventions, and

product launches.

Additions: Retail spaces, residential

> areas, and more business towers enhancing the MICE infrastructure & eco-system.



Top group adventures for MICE

Oman presents an array of exciting activities and attractions ideal for MICE groups looking to combine business with leisure and team bonding. With options suitable for 50–100 participants, these experiences are designed to inspire collaboration, relaxation, and cultural discovery, offering something for every kind of group. From immersive heritage encounters and marine adventures to wellness retreats and high-profile indulgences, Oman provides the perfect setting for memorable group experiences and team-building activities.

Activities

Suitable for 50-100 pax



Culture & Heritage: Muscat city tour, exploring historical sites like Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque & National Museum, and tour of the vibrant markets

Marine Experiences: Dolphin watching and snorkelling excursion, scuba diving, sunset dhow cruise, horse riding on the beach, and private boat charter on A'Daymaniyat Islands



Wellness Activities: Group yoga and meditation in the mountains. Spa and wellness retreat at a luxury resort, sunrise beach walks, and group reflections

Adventure: Quad bike excursion, motorbike ride, Via Ferrata Al Jabal Al Akhdar, trekking, wadi experience, and Al Jabal Al Akhdar experience









Restaurants

Bahja Restaurant (Sohar)

Cuisine: Multi-cuisine with Indian section

Capacity: 100 guests

Copper Restaurant (Shatti Al Qurum)

Cuisine: Fusion with Indian flavours

Capacity: 70 guests

Kargeen Café (Al Khuwair)

Cuisine: Arabic & Indian Fusion

Capacity: 150+ guests (outdoor garden setting)

Mumtaz Mahal Restaurant (Qurum)

Cuisine: North Indian, Mughlai, (Specials: Jain food, full vegetarian menu, and group buffet options) Capacity: Up to 150 guests (indoor + terrace)

Shopping

Muttrah Soug (Muscat)

USP: One of the oldest markets in the Arab world. Ideal for exploring Omani handicrafts, frankincense, silver jewellery, khanjars (daggers), and textiles

Group Benefit: Guided shopping tours and cultural walk-throughs available

Mall of Oman (Bowsher)

USP: Oman's largest mall with over 300 international

brands, VOX cinemas, and Snow Park

Group Benefit: Convenient for shopping and leisure with multiple restaurants and cafés

Souq es Sabt (Seasonal Market)

USP: Open-air market held on weekends with local artisans, food stalls, and handmade products — great for cultural immersion

Nightlife

Al Ghazal Pub (InterContinental Muscat)

British-style pub

USP: Popular with expats; great for relaxed networking evenings

Muscat Hills Beach Club

Dining facility at Muscat Hills Resort

USP: Beachfront setting, shisha, lounge seating — great for unwinding after meetings or events

The Cave Complex (Muscat)

A cluster of themed restaurants and lounges built into a hillside with options of international and Omani cuisines

USP: Ideal for large corporate dinners or themed evenings

Where world-class infra meets genuine hospitality

Oman's infra and abundance of premium hotels make it a standout MICE destination. Combining modern facilities with Arabian hospitality, the Sultanate offers the perfect setting for global conferences and corporate gatherings.

9 Al Wusta

Crowne Plaza Duqm

Guestrooms: 213
Suites/Villas: 21
Meeting Rooms: 7
Largest Meeting Capacity: 400
Outdoor Space: 400 capacity
Restaurants/Cafes: 5

☑ info@cpduqm@ihg.com

9 Jebel Akhdar

Alila Jabal Akhdar

Guestrooms: 86 Suites/Villas: 12

Largest Meeting Capacity: 160 Outdoor Space: 120 capacity Restaurants/Cafes: 2

iabalakhdar@alilahotels.com

Anantara Jabal Akhdar

Guestrooms: 115 Suites/Villas: 33 Meeting Rooms: 5

Largest Meeting Capacity: 110
Outdoor Space: 300 capacity
Restaurants/Cafes: 3

☑ jazzi@anantara.com

DusitD2,

Guestrooms: 252 Suites/Villas: 44 Meeting Rooms: 4

Largest Meeting Capacity: 200 Outdoor Space: 250 capacity

Restaurants/Cafes: 1

☑ mary.violaria@dusit.com

9 Masira Island

Masira Island Resort

Guestrooms: 22 Suites/Villas: 2 Meeting Rooms: 1

Largest Meeting Capacity: 75 Outdoor Space: 200 capacity Restaurants/Cafes: 3

□ reservations@masiraislandresort.com

9 Muscat

Al Bustan Palace, A Ritz Carlton Hotel

Guestrooms: 250 Suites/Villas: 52 Meeting Rooms: 16

Largest Meeting Capacity: 1400 Outdoor Space: 3000 capacity Restaurants/Cafes: 5



Crowne Plaza Muscat

Guestrooms: 200 Suites/Villas: 5 Meeting Rooms: 9

Largest Meeting Capacity: 450 Outdoor Space: 1200 capacity

Restaurants/Cafes: 6

☑ maha.atieh@ihg.com

Crowne Plaza OCEC

Guestrooms: 295 Suites/Villas: 17 Meeting Rooms: 7

Largest Meeting Capacity: 350 Outdoor Space: 500 capacity

Restaurants/Cafes: 3 ☑ mathew.deepak@ihg.com

Desert Night Camp

Guestrooms: 39 Suites/Villas: 39 Meeting Rooms: 1

Largest Meeting Capacity: 30 Outdoor Space: 200 capacity

Restaurants/Cafes: 1

□ reservations@desertnightscamp.com

Grand Hyatt Muscat

Guestrooms: 280 Suites/Villas: 5 Meeting Rooms: 8

Largest Meeting Capacity: 1000 Outdoor Space: 500 capacity

Restaurants/Cafes: 9 ☑ majed.yehya@hyatt.com

Grand Millennium Muscat

Guestrooms: 328 Suites/Villas: 6 Meeting Rooms: 8

Largest Meeting Capacity: 800

Restaurants/Cafes: 5

⋈ H1201.sales04@millenniumhotels.com

Hormuz Grand Muscat

Guestrooms: 231 Suites/Villas: 25 Meeting Rooms: 11

Largest Meeting Capacity: 360 Outdoor Space: 250 capacity

Restaurants/Cafes: 4

☑ Alaa.elchaar@radissonhotels.com

InterContinental Muscat

Guestrooms: 258 Suites/Villas: 10 Meeting Rooms: 6

Largest Meeting Capacity: 500 Outdoor Space: 700 capacity

Restaurants/Cafes: 7

Jumeirah Muscat Bay

Guestrooms: 195 Suites/Villas: 24 Meeting Rooms: 4

Largest Meeting Capacity: 500 Outdoor Space: 100 capacity

Restaurants/Cafes: 3

Maryam.AlBalushi@jumeirah.com

Kempinski Hotel Muscat

Guestrooms: 310 Suites/Villas: 40 Meeting Rooms: 11

Largest Meeting Capacity: 1500

Restaurants/Cafes: 3

☑ firas.rashid@kempinski.com

Mysk Hotel

Guestrooms: 193 Suites/Villas: 8 Meeting Rooms: 3

Largest Meeting Capacity: 100

Restaurants/Cafes: 3

Ramada Encore Muscat

Guestrooms: 163 Suites/Villas: 23 Meeting Rooms: 1

Shangri-La Al Husn Resort & Spa

Guestrooms: 180 Suites/Villas: 16 Meeting Rooms: 12

Largest Meeting Capacity: 850 Outdoor Space: 1500 capacity

Restaurants/Cafes: 5

☑ lori.collins@shangri-la.com



Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah **Resort & Spa**

Guestrooms: 460 Suites/Villas: 28 Meeting Rooms: 11

Largest Meeting Capacity: 850 Outdoor Space: 1500 capacity Restaurants/Cafes: 18 ☑ lori.collins@shangri-la.com

Sheraton Oman Hotel

Guestrooms: 230 Suites/Villas: 27 Meeting Rooms: 14

Largest Meeting Capacity: 1200

Restaurants/Cafes: 4

khalid.albalushi@sheraton.com

The Chedi Muscat

Guestrooms: 158 Suites/Villas: 38 Meeting Rooms: 2

Largest Meeting Capacity: 50

Restaurants/Cafes: 8

□ reservation@chedimuscat.com

W Muscat

Guestrooms: 251 Suites/Villas: 28 Meeting Rooms: 7

Largest Meeting Capacity: 275 Outdoor Space: 900 capacity

Restaurants/Cafes: 7

Majid.AlZadjali@whotels.com

Wyndham Garden Muscat

Guestrooms: 143 Meeting Rooms: 5

Largest Meeting Capacity: 150

Restaurants/Cafes: 3

9 Salalah

Al Baleed Resort Salalah by Anantara

Guestrooms: 136 Suites/Villas: 96 Meeting Rooms: 2

Largest Meeting Capacity: 110 Outdoor Space: 500 capacity Restaurants/Cafes: 3 ☑ jazzi@anantara.com

Crowne Plaza Resort Salalah

Guestrooms: 153 Suites/Villas: 19 Meeting Rooms: 4

Largest Meeting Capacity: 550 Outdoor Space: 2000 capacity

Restaurants/Cafes: 5

Manuel.Levonian@ihg.com

Fanar Hotel and Residences

Guestrooms: 577 Suites/Villas: 16 Meeting Rooms: 2

Largest Meeting Capacity: 110 Outdoor Space: 1000 capacity

Restaurants/Cafes: 4

□ reception@fanarhotel.com

Hilton Salalah Resort

Guestrooms: 133 Suites/Villas: 14 Meeting Rooms: 4

Largest Meeting Capacity: 249 Outdoor Space: 700 capacity

Restaurants/Cafes: 4

□ ahmed.massoud@hilton.com

Juweira Boutique Hotel

Guestrooms: 87 Suites/Villas: 21 Meeting Rooms: 1

Largest Meeting Capacity: 14 Outdoor Space: 800 capacity

Restaurants/Cafes: 3

□ reservations.juweira@juweirahotel.com

Salalah Rotana Resort

Guestrooms: 422 Suites/Villas: 13 Meeting Rooms: 5

Largest Meeting Capacity: 402 Outdoor Space: 1000 capacity

Restaurants/Cafes: 4

M marketing.salalah@rotana.com



Destination Management Companies

Abundance Tourism

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