

BOTT

Business of Travel Trade

TOURISM | MICE | HOSPITALITY | AVIATION | LIFESTYLE

BOTTINDIA.COM



KAZINTM
Trusted • Reliable • Innovative
DMC

GEORGIA UNVEILED

Enchantment in every corner.

Turn to page no. 9 to know more...

Plan Your Holidays to USA

- Customised tour
- Medical Tourism
- Meeting & Incentive trips
- Student's Educational trips
- Event management & Product Launches



op@gmconnect.com | +91 9717288466 | +1 404-838-1160 | +1 703-624-1389



Superfast B2B Travel Portal



Scan & Register



Register Now

& Get The Best Deal on Flights

- ✈ One of the fastest growing travel company.
- ✈ India's leading B2B travel portal.

✉ sales@fly24hrs.com

☎ 011-35938412

www.fly24hrs.com

tbo.com
TRAVEL SIMPLIFIED

Embark on a journey of discovery
& let the wonders of Arabia leave you spellbound.



Saudi
Welcome
to Arabia

Discover the magic of Arabia!



MAYFAIR

Spring Valley

Guwahati

A Retreat For The Discerning



Mayfair Spring Valley Guwahati offers you indulgent, lush & lavish resort in the lap of nature
Perfect for conferences, retreats, weddings or even immersive Assamese experiences
We are the heartbeat of the Northeast

138
ROOMS

60000 SQ.FT
OUTDOOR
BANQUETING SPACE

10850 SQ.FT
INDOOR
BANQUETING SPACE

PRIVATE VILLAS,
SUITES &
EXPERIENCES

AIRPORT 60 MINS
POBITARA SANCTUARY 30 MINS
KAMAKHYA MANDIR 60 MINS
SHILLONG 90 MINS



www.mayfairhotels.com



7099037100 / 7099037118 / 7099037119

CONTENTS

Editor

Priyanka Saxena Ray

Director-Business Development

Gunjan Sabikhi
gunjan@bottindia.com

Design Director

Rajesh Chhetri

Consulting Editor

Aishwarya Srivastava

Senior Correspondent

Anjali Pokhriyal

Social Media Correspondent

Pallavi Sharma

Mumbai Correspondent

Shreya Shimpi

Circulation & Desk

Ashish Sarthak

Vishal Maurya

Published and Printed by
Rai Umraopati Ray on behalf of
More Media Pvt. Ltd., B6, Ground Floor,
Kalkaji, New Delhi - 110 019

BOTT House

Top Floor, E-40, Anand Niketan,
New Delhi: 110021

Email: info@bottindia.com

Phone: 011-8800437575

RNI/DELENG/2019/1343884



f BOTTINDIA



Instagram BOTT_INDIA



in bottindia



Twitter BOTT_Tweets



MICE CITIES IN INDIA

Combining vast MICE venues with Cultural experiences

35

SPOTLIGHT

The 13th Great Indian Travel Bazaar (GITB).....18
is scheduled from May 5-7, 2024 in Jaipur,
Rajasthan. Dipak Deva, Chairperson, FICCI
Tourism & Culture Committee and Managing
Director, SITA, TCI & Distant Frontier shares
more with BOTT.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

India's MICE facilities have evolved to meet 22-29
the global standards, ensuring a seamless
experience for both organisers and attendees.
To understand more about the finer details of this
burgeoning MICE Sector in India, BOTT reached
out to some leading MICE Agents to know their
opinion on growth and potential of MICE in India

INDIA FOR YOU

One of the hallmarks of MICE facilities in 35-39
India is the blend of modernity and tradition. The
venues often encapsulate the rich cultural ethos
of India while offering contemporary amenities. BOTT
brings to you an overview of top 10 MICE Cities in
India and what they offer to a business traveller.

EVENTS AND MORE..... 12, 16, 20 & 43

HOSPITABLE HOTELS 44 - 45

BEYOND BOUNDARIES30 - 34

HOROSCOPE48

FIRST OPINION50

Disclaimer:- All information is derived from sources we consider reliable. It is passed on to our readers without any responsibility on our part. Opinions/views expressed by third parties in abstract or in interviews are not necessarily shared by us. Material appearing in the book cannot be reproduced in whole or in part(s) without express permission from publisher. The publisher reserves the right to refuse, withdraw or otherwise deal with all advertisements without explanation. All advertisements must comply with the Indian Advertisements Code. The publisher will not be liable for any loss caused by any delay in publication, error or failure of advertisement to appear.

Redefining MICE

Saudi Leads the Renaissance

Explore MICE facilities and offerings at
www.VisitSaudi.com



King Abdulaziz Center
for World Culture - Ithra, Dammam

Saudi
Welcome
to Arabia



From the

*Editor's
Desk*

Dear Readers,

In recent years, the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) sector in India has witnessed a remarkable growth trajectory, becoming a focal point in the nation's evolving business landscape. This upward curve is a testament to the numerous intrinsic and extrinsic factors that have come together in favour of India as a burgeoning MICE destination.

The government's robust initiatives aimed at bolstering infrastructural advancements and promoting India as a global MICE hub have played a pivotal role in this growth. The ease of doing business, coupled with the digitisation drive, has further fostered an environment conducive to the flourishing of the MICE sector. Additionally, the country's rich cultural heritage, diverse landscapes, and the blend of traditional and modern ethos offer a unique proposition to international and domestic business communities alike.

Amidst this backdrop, India's MICE facilities have evolved to meet the global standards, ensuring a seamless experience for both organisers and attendees. The country now boasts a plethora of venues equipped with state-of-the-art facilities catering to a wide spectrum of events ranging from small-scale meetings to large international conventions. The cities of Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, and Chennai continue to be strongholds for MICE activities due to their established infrastructure and connectivity. However, emerging destinations like Agra, Varanasi, Udaipur, and Ahmedabad are also making a mark, thanks to concerted efforts by the authorities to boost MICE tourism in these regions.

To understand the realities of the MICE market better, BOTT April Issue reached out to few leading MICE Agents to get their perspective on the various factors that makes India a unique MICE Destination, the potential it has to grow and the initiatives needed to become so. Additionally, we bring to you an overview of some of the leading and still developing MICE cities in India vis-à-vis the popular MICE Outbound Destinations. So, sit back and enjoy reading our BOTT April MICE Special Issue and do share your valuable feedback with us.

Happy Reading!

Priyanka Saxena Ray
priyanka@bottindia.com



Travstarz Global Group

A CTRIP® Invested Company

DMC || CONSOLIDATORS || VISAS || REPRESENTATIONS

visit
QATAR

Stopover QATAR

Special 4 days/3 nights
also available

Package Starting

US \$99

Per Person Per
Night

+91 99711 04656 | bookings@travstarz.com | www.travstarz.com

416/2, 2nd Floor, Ghitorni, MG Road, Opp. Metro Pillar No. 127, New Delhi - 110030

Your Trusted Exclusively B2B Company Since 2009

Members Of:



IndiGo commences operations to/from Hyderabad and Raipur

IndiGo has commenced operations from Jagdalpur, making it its 87th domestic and 120th destination overall, to join the extensive 6E network. The airline has started operating flights to Hyderabad from March 31, 2024, and to Raipur from April 01, 2024. This strategic launch will enhance interstate accessibility and foster economic growth in the region.



Turkish Airlines resumes flying to Tripoli, Libya

Turkish Airlines starts flying to Tripoli, the capital of Libya as of March 28, 2024, again. The flag carrier will operate flights to Tripoli three times a week on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays. Passengers will be able to travel from Istanbul to Tripoli for 379 USD and from Tripoli to Istanbul for 299 USD between 28 March and 31 May 2024, with tickets purchased between 23 March and 15 May 2024.

Air India transforms 'Flying Returns' loyalty programme

Air India today launched its transformed Flying Returns loyalty programme, which prioritises greater ease, more rewards, and recognition for Members, while offering them instant global status and privileges around the world. Flying Returns moves away from the legacy model of miles-based collection of points to a fairer, more equitable spend-based approach.



IndiGo

malaysia airlines

Malaysia Airlines and IndiGo sign MoU to boost connectivity

Malaysia Airlines and IndiGo have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a codeshare partnership and mutual cooperation agreement. Through this cooperation, Malaysia Airlines will strengthen its connectivity into India as the marketing carrier on IndiGo operated flights, while IndiGo customers get to explore more Southeast Asia destinations.

Cleartrip onboards Mahendra Singh Dhoni as brand ambassador

Cleartrip has onboarded the cricketing legend - Mahendra Singh Dhoni as its new brand ambassador. This collaboration marks a historic milestone for Cleartrip as it joins forces with Mahendra Singh Dhoni. Under the bucket of "ClearChoice," the brand aims to inspire travellers to simplify decision-making and ensure seamless and anxiety-free travel experiences.



Everyday unveils a new wonder

THE GEORGIAN ODYSSEY

7N starting from \$360* pp

3N
Tbilisi

Gateway to the Georgian grandeur



2N
Kazbegi

Peaks, history, and adventure with a Gergeti View



2N
Telavi

Spiritual solace amidst lush landscapes



Kakheti
& Signaghi

Indulge in Signaghi's charm & Kakheti's vineyard muse



Inclusions

4 Star Accommodation | Breakfast | Daily Sightseeing | English Speaking Guide | Entrance fees- Tbilisi cable car | Jeep ride in Kazbegi | Wine tasting in Kakheti

In Association With



SUATIS RESORT
KAZBEGI



KAZINTM
DMC

CORPORATE OFFICE

A10/3, DLF Phase I, Gurugram, Haryana - 122002, India
0124-4200130 | geo@kazindmc.com | www.kazindmc.com

OUR OFFICES

• Almaty • Baku
• Tbilisi • Minsk

*T&C apply

San Francisco attracted 23.1 million visitors who spent \$8.8 billion in 2023

San Francisco Travel Association has released 2023 visitor impact according to which the city attracted 23.1 million visitors in 2023, a 5.2% year-over-year increase. Visitor spending grew by 18% to \$8.8 billion. Total 2023 visitor-related spending, including \$494.6 million in meeting planner and exhibitor spending, increased by 20% to \$9.3 billion.



Sarovar Hotels unveils three new hotels in one remarkable day

Sarovar Hotels has announced the opening of three hotels Sarovar Portico Sonipat, Grand Continent Malleshwaram, and Grand Continent Anjuna Goa. With the openings Sarovar has achieved a total of seven openings in 2024, making it the fastest-growing chain in Indian subcontinent. All hotels are located at prime locations across various leading and emerging destinations



Lemon Tree launches 4th property in Himachal Pradesh

Lemon Tree Hotels announced the opening of its fourth property in Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh. This hotel with 49 keys will open in two phases. Of the 49 well-appointed rooms and suites, 28 opened on 28 March 2024 along with Citrus Cafe a multicuisine coffee shop, an expansive banquet space and conference facility as a part of phase I of the launch.



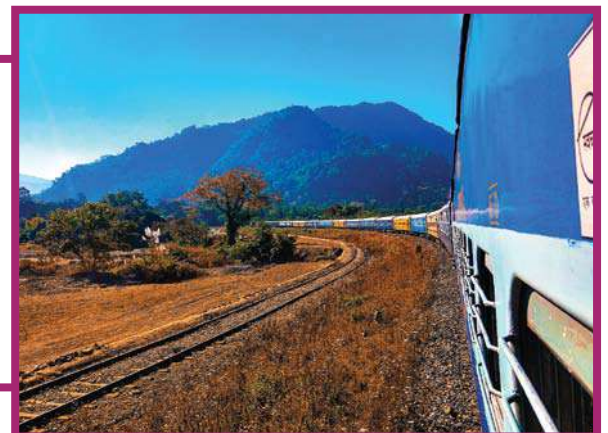
Pride Hotels Group signs Biznotel by Pride, Himatnagar

Biznotel by Pride Himmatnagar will offer a luxurious array of amenities, including exquisitely designed rooms, All Day Dining restaurant, a distinctive open-air dining experience, 8000 square feet Banquet Hall, a Conference Hall accommodating up to 100 guests, a panoramic Roof Top Gym, a rejuvenating Spa, a sparkling Swimming Pool, and a tranquil Jacuzzi.



Explore South India with IRCTC's Special Train

The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) announces South India Darshan Tourist Train. Departing from Jaipur via Ajmer, Chittorgarh and Udaipur on May 3, 2024, this tour will take passengers to the southern regions of India. The 12-day journey will have stops at key destinations including Rameswaram, Madurai, Kanyakumari, Trivandrum, Mallikarjuna, and Tirupati Balaji.



Sun, Sea & Savings



Unlock super savings with exclusive agent pre-purchase deals for this summer season at Mayfair Goa

Get in touch with us on 92301 92015 today to cash in before 31st March, 2024

ITB Berlin 2024

witnesses strong participation from States, DMCs, Tech, Airlines, NTOs

At the heart of ITB Berlin 2024, the Incredible India Pavilion showcased the rich diversity of India's tourism offerings. Represented by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, alongside state tourism departments from Maharashtra, Kerala, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and numerous others, the pavilion served as a vibrant hub of cultural exchange and exploration..■



EXPLORE TAIWAN

— *Explore New Asia*



For more information, please contact:

TAIWAN TOURISM INFORMATION CENTER IN MUMBAI

Add: Suite No. GRA 102 / 7 Raheja Platinum, WeWork, Marol, Andheri East, Mumbai, Maharashtra - 400059

E: info@blinkbrandsolutions.com | P: +91 98350 69443 | W: taiwan.net.tw



交通部觀光署
Tourism Administration, MOTC

'Thailand is ideal for Indian companies looking to make an impact with their events'

In today's global business environment, selecting the right place for corporate events is crucial. For businesses from India, Thailand has become a go-to destination for hosting Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE). It's not just about the scenic beauty or the tourist spots; it's about how Thailand makes perfect sense for Indian companies looking to make an impact with their events. Cities like Bangkok, Phuket, Pattaya, Chiang Mai, Koh Samui, Krabi, and Hua Hin have become popular choices, each offering something unique for corporate needs. Nitin Sachdeva, CEO, Venture Marketing shares more on why Thailand is a great MICE Destination.



Across cities like Bangkok and Phuket, you'll find a mix of modern convention centres and relaxed resort settings. These places come equipped with the technology and space needed to host successful events.

Easy to Get There

One of the biggest reasons for Thailand's popularity is its accessibility. Direct flights from India are plentiful, making travel hassle-free for event attendees. This ease of access saves time and simplifies the logistics of moving people and materials for events.

Venues for Every Event

Whether it's a large-scale conference or a small team-building retreat, Thailand has venues to match. Across cities like Bangkok and Phuket, you'll find a mix of modern convention centers and relaxed resort settings. These places come equipped with the technology and space needed to host successful events, plus a range of hotel options to fit all budgets.

Food and Culture That Welcomes Everyone

The food in Thailand is a big plus for Indian visitors. Many restaurants and hotels offer vegetarian and Jain food options, making it easy to cater to everyone's dietary needs. The warm Thai hospitality and a culture that values respect and kindness add to the comfort level for Indian delegates.

More Than Just Meetings

Thailand offers a variety of

experiences that can turn a standard corporate event into something memorable. From team-building activities on beautiful beaches to cultural tours in historic cities, there's plenty to do outside of meetings. These activities not only help teams' bond but also provide a chance to experience Thailand's rich culture and nightlife.

A Commitment to Doing Business Responsibly

Thailand is serious about sustainability, which aligns with the values of many Indian companies. Event venues and hotels in Thailand are increasingly adopting green practices, helping organizations meet their sustainability goals while hosting events.

Why Thailand Stands Out

For Indian businesses planning their next MICE event, Thailand offers a combination of practical benefits: easy access, flexible event spaces, welcoming culture, diverse experiences, and a commitment to sustainability. These advantages make Thailand not just a venue for corporate events, but a destination where events can achieve their objectives while offering attendees a rich and engaging experience.

Based on real-world experience, it's clear that Thailand understands the needs of the Indian MICE market and offers solutions that work. It's a practical choice for businesses looking to make an impact with their events. ■



FIJI

We're all about
deep connection.



Tourism Fiji

T: (91) 22 43004500 | E: tourismfiji@globaldestinations.in

W: www.fiji.travel



TBO Academy

hosts 'Saudi Awards Night' in Mumbai

The 'Awards Night' was hosted by the TBO Academy for its top producing agents for Saudi as a destination and celebrating Iftar with the Saudi Tourism Authority. The event was well attended by delegates, travel agents and the media.

Shreya Shimpi

The TBO Academy organised an 'Awards Night' at the Sahara Star Hotel in Mumbai on March 28, 2024, to felicitate its top producing agents for Saudi. The awardees were presented with trophies. The event was held in association with the Saudi Tourism Authority. The Saudi Awards Night was a testament to TBO Academy's commitment to acknowledging excellence and fostering relationships within the travel sector. This event brought together esteemed guests including Vartika Chaturvedi, Leisure, and Key Accounts Head-India – Saudi Tourism Authority, Aarish Khan, Chief Commercial Officer, TBO.COM, Vidhu Lamba, Vice President, TBO Academy and Swati Mahajan, Dty. General Manager, Partnerships.

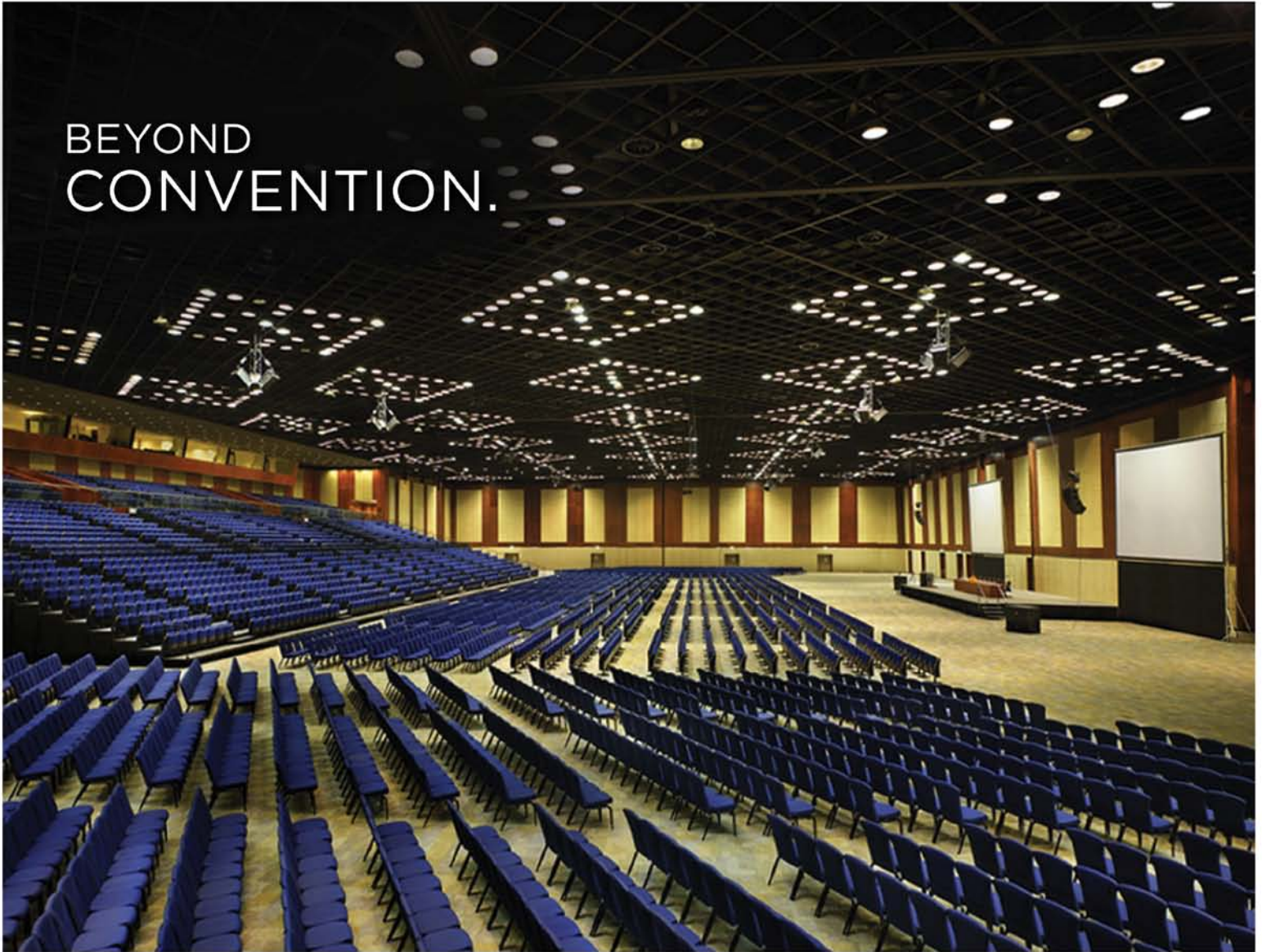
The highlight of the evening was the recognition of ten top agencies who demonstrated unparalleled dedication, and excellence in the travel industry throughout the year. These agencies were lauded for their innovative approaches, exceptional service, and significant contributions to the travel landscape of Saudi Arabia.

In attendance were prominent figures from the travel community, including delegates, industry leaders, and travel agents, who added to the vibrancy and success of the event. Their presence underscored the importance of collaboration and networking in advancing the travel industry in Saudi Arabia and beyond.

TBO's Chief Commercial Officer, Aarish Khan, effusively welcomed the collaboration with Saudi Arabia, highlighting the travel industry's excitement about the destination's burgeoning potential.

Vidhu Lamba, expressed her gratitude and enthusiasm, stating, "We are honoured to host the inaugural Saudi Awards Night, which not only recognises the outstanding achievements of top producers but also celebrates the rich cultural heritage of Saudi Arabia. This event signifies our unwavering commitment to supporting and empowering travel professionals across the Kingdom." ■





BEYOND
CONVENTION.

When you ask for excellence, all roads lead to HICC. Over 17 years, we have hosted great minds, and created infinite memories through our bespoke, trusted service.

Meetings that are more than **just an exchange.**

Talks that are more than **just a speech.**

Ideas that need more than **just a room.**

☎ +91 99662 35085 🌐 hicc.com | novotelhyderabad.com

📍 Novotel & HICC Complex, nearHITEC City, Hyderabad

Dipak Deva

'GITB is a very important show for the state, especially for Inbound Tourism'



Continuing with the annual tradition, the Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), will jointly organise the 13th Great Indian Travel Bazaar (GITB) from May 5-7, 2024 in Jaipur, Rajasthan. To understand more about the event and what lies in store for those who would be attending - Dipak Deva, Chairperson, FICCI Tourism & Culture Committee and Managing Director, SITA, TCI & Distant Frontier shares more with BOTT.

Priyanka Saxena Ray

What emerging trends do you foresee shaping the future of travel in the near future?

The good news is that consumers across all ages/regions are showcasing that travel remains a top priority for them in 2024. Luxury and wellness are expected to be the biggest driver for the high-end market this year. Sustainability will become one of the key drivers for travel choices in the near future; responsible tourism, social consciousness, environmental concerns and unique cultural experiences will be a key focus of this trend.

How do you envision 2024 for Inbound Tourism?

India's record economic growth and the recent G-20 event have created a positive perception of India, rubbing off on India's brand as a great travel destination. However, there have been no marketing initiatives by the government to promote the destination, what they need to do is create a strong digital campaign to promote India. The campaign should be a carefully planned public relation exercises keeping market sentiments in mind, along with airing of state-of-art commercials

to be implemented across print, digital and social media platforms worldwide. This would prove a great step in boosting India's image as a tourist destination.

With the rise of domestic tourism, how do you envision destinations adapting to meet the changing preferences of local travellers?

Destinations will need to be careful that they ensure they don't have over Tourism which will impact the attractiveness of the destination. We saw this in Ladakh a few years ago and some cities are starting to face issues, especially on weekends. Sustainability is key for domestic Tourism. Educating the traveller on the impact they can have on the planet with each trip and how to reduce the same is key.

Could you share insights on the importance of sustainability initiatives within the tourism industry and how they are being implemented?

The government is very strongly committed to making sustainability a key pillar for growth and development at the destination. Initiatives like Travel for Life and India's commitment to sustainable development goals 2030 highlight the importance of sustainability for the tourism industry as well. Industry players are realizing the important of certifications that act as key tools to drive sustainability within the company and the industry at

large. India as a destination offers a lot of sustainable products both in terms of accommodation and experiences.

What developments in tourism infrastructure are crucial for enhancing visitor experiences and supporting sustainable growth?

Trains are the best way to experience a destination, India is progressing in the right directions with trains and making the journey more sustainable for travellers with trains like Vandhe Bharat.

Now we need to look into creating a better facility at monuments.

How does the GITB show contribute to promoting Rajasthan as a travel destination, and what can attendees expect from the event this year?

Rajasthan is a prime state for tourism and Jaipur as a part of the Golden Triangle circuit is what most travellers to India experience. Keeping that in mind, GITB is a very important show for the state, especially with its focus on Inbound Tourism and Buyer - Seller Meet, spread across two days. More than 11 ,000 Pre-Scheduled Structured face to face business meetings will take place between 275 foreign buyers (FTO's) from more than 50 countries, and around 200 Indian Sellers. One can expect a power packed inaugural session and Networking Dinner and the launch of the Knowledge paper on Inbound Tourism. ■



THE RAIL JOURNEYS
A Luxury Initiative by EbixCash



THE DECCAN ODYSSEY

**COMPANION
50% OFF**

**BECAUSE THERE ARE TIMES, WHEN
THE JOURNEY IS THE DESTINATION.**

PRICELESS JOURNEYS, REASONABLY PRICED

A part of the Ebix Group, The Rail Journeys allow you to experience India in a different way. You visit scenic locales to historical destinations to harigage ones while being on the train.

The journey itself is an experience.

Special Offer for 21st Sep & 12th Oct 2024 journeys

For attractive deals, call us at: +91 82877 95986, +91 98738 44455

Write to us at: rail@therailjourneys.com

www.traindeccanodyssey.com

EBIXCASH | via
Travel & Holidays

MTDC
Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation

VFS Global travel trade roadshows attract 1,200 agents across 12 cities

VFS Global, advancing its pre-season engagement with the travel trade in India, recently organised a series of roadshows across 12 cities in India. The programme commenced in Bhubaneswar on 19 February and concluded on 26 March in Kochi. Here's an overview of the roadshows held across the country.

The roadshows enabled the company to share insights on their plans for the upcoming peak travel season and provided the agents a platform to address the challenges that they encounter.

Besides Bhubaneswar and Kochi, the other cities where these roadshows were conducted included Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Jalandhar, Chandigarh, New Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore, and Chennai. Over

1,200 agents from across these cities participated in the event.

The focus of the events was to reiterate the need to book appointments in advance as most countries accept visa applications up to 90 days (3 months) before the date of travel. According to the revised Schengen Visa Code, effective February 9, 2020, one can apply for a Schengen visa up to 6 months before the date of travel. Another issue that was reiterated at the meet was

that visa appointments are free and it's only available on www.vfsglobal.com. The agents were also updated on the operational changes taking place within the regions and VFS Global took the opportunity to promote Visa At Your Doorstep (VAYD), services and Premium Lounge.

The VFS Global team who addressed the travel agent community included Vishal Jairath, Head—South Asia, Visa Operations; Sharad Gowani, Regional Head—West, and Jaya Amit Mitra, Regional Head—South India, Sri Lanka and Maldives.

The event received overwhelming response from travel association such as the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), and the Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI). Jyoti Mayal, President TAAI and Ajay Prakash, President, TAFI, addressed the agent community in Delhi and Mumbai respectively. ■



'To grow collectively, travel fraternity has to work ethically & in collaboration'

Today, as MICE or Event planners - it is becoming more and more difficult to sustain. Small and medium size companies are struggling to make ends meet. The big players have their own set of struggles. The landscape is competitive and we all are resilient. But the pain points are increasing. **Tanuja Pandey, MICE Expert shares more...**

Daily we are faced with unreasonable demands of corporate clients, the unreasonable taxation deadlines and fines. To add to these woes -now our 5-star hotel partners also seem to have become rigid, inflexible and have started making their own rules! Hotels don't even pay our rightful commissions on time and hold back our GST in the commission invoice! I recently faced this with a renowned chain and on questioning them they said no other agent is objecting! I was shocked at this attitude and reply!

Holding back the GST payment on the invoice is against the law.

Clients were doing this already and now even the hotels are doing so! What this means is that the hotels and clients both hold back our hard-earned money and are eating interest on it and literally funding themselves!!

Sadly, none of the associations are speaking up or opposing this practice and that leads to us getting bullied. The second major concern is how the clients and hotels have started dealing directly

The time has come to stand united and put an end to all this or my friends, we all will be in debts and out of work. Are we working for charity? Where is the actual real relationship as partners? Is the camaraderie and friendship we see at networking events between agents, hotels & suppliers only superficial until the business is secured?

and are using the travel planners just for invoicing and credit. And if the client has contracted directly but invoiced through agency, hotels are refusing rightful commission to the agency.

Last but not the least, the corporate clients are the ones who walk happily to the bank after squeezing the agents and playing them against each other. And to

lock the business, agents are working on minus or zero margins, why?

The time has come to stand united and put an end to all this or my friends, we all will be in debts and out of work. Are we working for charity? Where is the actual real relationship as partners? Is the camaraderie and friendship we see at networking events between agents, hotels & suppliers only superficial until the business is secured?

Do not cry or complain against OTA's or embracing technology – that is the way forward. Technology is an enabler, use it to your advantage. It brings in transparency and accountability.

Instead, ask relevant questions. Raise your voices against these unethical practices, kickbacks and delays in

getting your rightful commissions back from hotels or dropping your margins to accommodate client's unreasonable demands.

We should have following best practices

- Create a charter for all MICE & Travel agents to not go below 5 % markup or management fees.



- Insist on your Commission to be released in 48 hours and not later than a week after checkouts.
- Insist on 100 % advance payments from all clients OR at least 90% as minimum benchmark.
- Insist on your rightful 10 % commission from hotels if they bypass you and are dealing with clients direct. If the contract is in your agency name – you have a right to the commission.
- One umbrella association should be formed to address the complaints of all stakeholders

My resolution is to fight it out and not buckle under unreasonable demands. Be the change you want to see. Its only "Together" that we can make a difference!

(Tanuja Pandey, MICE Expert; Founder Director Miceonline; Executive Committee Member - NIMA and Former Advisor NTAC, Ministry of Tourism)

The Evolving & Strengthening landscape of MICE Sector in India

In recent years, the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) sector in India has witnessed a remarkable growth trajectory, becoming a focal point in the nation's evolving business landscape. This upward curve is a testament to the numerous intrinsic and extrinsic factors that have come together in favour of India as a burgeoning MICE destination.

The government's robust initiatives aimed at bolstering infrastructural advancements and promoting India as a global MICE hub have played a pivotal role in this growth. The ease of doing business, coupled with the digitisation drive, has further fostered an environment conducive to the flourishing of the MICE sector. Additionally, the country's rich cultural heritage, diverse landscapes, and the blend of traditional and modern ethos offer a unique proposition to international and domestic business communities alike.

Amidst this backdrop, India's MICE facilities have evolved to meet the global standards, ensuring a seamless experience for both organisers and attendees. The country now boasts a plethora of venues equipped with state-of-the-art facilities catering to a wide spectrum of events ranging from small-scale meetings to large international conventions.

To understand more about the finer details of this burgeoning MICE Sector in India, BOTT reached out to some leading MICE Agents and here is what they had to say –

Compiled by Priyanka Saxena Ray & Anjali Pokhriyal

AMARESH TIWARI

Vice Chairman, ICPB



MICE in India

India is one of the fastest growing economy of the world. If the trend continues for next 6-7 years, India will become strongest world economy. Events

“Each event that is held in India, creates great opportunities for delegate experience along with multiple languages, networking and availability of industry experts in large numbers. India’s unity in diversity, vast cultural heritage and religious tolerance along with huge Infrastructure growth in venues, hotels, rail, road, airports and last mile connectivity has a good impact for MICE Industry growth.”

- Amaresh Tiwari

such as the G-20 Summit created world class infrastructure across our country as we demonstrated our capabilities to organise international events in every state and Union Territory of India. Political stability, strong democracy with good governance coupled with factors such as ease of doing business, E-visa, last mile connectivity, vast network of airport, highways, rails, waterways has given the confidence to people in MICE Sector to organise events in India. ICPB has been pushing for an exclusive MICE brand – Meet In India, which will further

enhance the demand for MICE in India.

Top Performing & Potential MICE Cities

Delhi/NCR, Mumbai, Gandhinagar, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Cochin are the top performing MICE cities in India. With the coming up of Bharat Mandapam, Yasho Bhumi in Delhi, JIO Convention centre in Mumbai, Mahatma Mandir and Gift City in Gandhinagar, Ahmedabad and Biswa Bangla in Kolkata, India has created good MICE infrastructure, thus creating huge demand for MICE in India and in the next decade or so, atleast 3-4 Indian cities will be in the top 100 in global MICE Destinations.

The emerging MICE cities, such as Jaipur, Indore, Bhubaneswar, Khajuraho, Greater Noida, Lucknow, Varanasi, Goa are setting new trends and creating good demand and might become good business generating MICE hubs in the future.

Unique advantages India offers as a MICE Destination

India’s major advantage is mainly industry / associations driven where for each kind of conference the local

knowledge and expertise is available in abundance. Each event creates great opportunities for delegate experience, multiple languages, networking and availability of industry experts in large numbers. India’s unity in diversity, vast cultural heritage and religious tolerance along with huge Infrastructure growth in venues, hotel, rail, road, airports, last mile connectivity make good impact for MICE Industry growth as well.

What we lack

When we compare what we have

in India to some of the top MICE destinations in our part of world, such as, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, China, Taiwan, South Korea etc. we realise that their MICE eco system is very strong and very professional. Whereas in India, the mindset of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India is way different as it feels that MICE is a niche market and does not need any promotion. Due to this mindset, there is no marketing or promotional strategy in place. India MICE Board was formed almost 2 years back and till now not a single Physical meeting happened and no concrete framework created. India Convention Promotion Bureau does not get any support from MoT. MICE sector has the potential to grow 3.5 times as compared to the leisure market, unfortunately without Political and Bureaucratic willingness we are lagging behind and unable to compete.

CHANDER MANSHARAMANI

Managing Director, Alpcord
Network Travel & Conferences



MICE in India

MICE business in India is poised to grow buoyed by recent initiatives by Ministry of Tourism and India is all poised to become a country of great economic importance, keeping its growth trajectory and potential

in mind. It wouldn't be wrong to say that MICE has already been the priority area, especially if you look at the recent trends where the development has been unprecedented, whether it is for an offsite program for the corporate or National Conventions and Exhibitions.

The burgeoning MICE sector in India is a testament to our nation's evolving business ecosystem. The recent inauguration of two world-class convention centres, Bharat Mandapam and Yashobhoomi Dwarka Convention Centre in Delhi significantly underlines our readiness to host global congregations.

Unique advantages India offers as a MICE Destination

India has unique natural and cultural advantages, which have collectively given India the status of a strong Global Leadership in every sector – be it hospitality, travel, adventure, heritage, spiritual and religious. The unique advantage India has is a clear competitive advantage to be one of the top ten countries to play host destination for International scientific, technical and medical conferences. India has all the pre-requisites of being the preferred destination in the world having more than 500 medical colleges, 400 agricultural universities, IIT's, IIM's – all pointing towards India having a clear advantage in hosting the International Conferences.

Top Performing & Potential MICE Cities

In my opinion, the top ten MICE performing cities is of course Delhi, which has emerged as the most preferred MICE destination with two major convention centres with direct connectivity. The other major emerging cities are Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Jaipur, Agra, Varanasi, Indore and Goa.

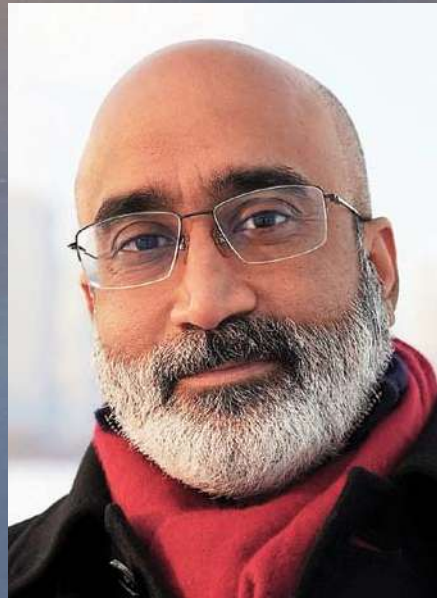
Technological Advancement

On the technology front, the recent initiative by Ministry of Tourism in developing Nidhi Plan portal is a great

development as it will provide market intelligence and requisite insights for developing MICE industry.

ROHIT KOHLI

Joint Managing Director, Creative Travel Group



MICE in India

It's actually incorrect to state that the MICE sector in India has had an overall growth. In 2024, India doesn't figure in ANY list of top international MICE destinations for International business. Yes, there is a very large

“India is today at the forefront of technology and advancement. Leveraging technologies like AI or VR or AR, events in India can become even more immersive, interactive, and personalized. Opportunities to create globally accessible conferences and events in hybrid formats is unlimited. India can reach beyond its physical boundaries and create a whole different experience for those who can't visit for a variety of reasons, and create a huge destination recall for the future.

- Rohit Kohli

growth in the Indian domestic MICE business, which is a natural progression due to many underlying factors including economic growth, infrastructure development, technological advancements and changes to corporate trends in travel. India has not even reached 1% of its potential to become a global player in the MICE industry. Aside from China which is obvious, many of India's neighbours

have built tourism economies on the back of global MICE movements into their countries.

Top Performing & Potential MICE Cities

Most of the MICE business is still centred around the major cities in India, i.e., New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Chennai. This is due to the fact that most of the meetings and events infrastructure has been created in and around these cities.

However, the cities that could potentially become MICE hubs include Goa, Cochin, Pune, Jaipur, Kolkata and Chandigarh. These cities have some unique characteristics, and with the right investments in infrastructure, marketing, and industry collaboration, they could potentially become major destinations in India's MICE landscape.

Unique advantages India offers as a MICE Destination

India has it all – history, heritage, accessibility, enhanced infrastructure, and availability of large-scale professional services are all fantastic factors that would appeal to the world as a destination for MICE. What's

missing is the political will to promote India to the world.

What we lack

Today India has regressed in its marketing efforts. The country doesn't stand anywhere in a global preference for global professional events. The only global events performing well are the ones supported or backed by the Government. India is slow in

leveraging its distinctive advantages. With so much happening and the way infrastructure has grown in the country, India can very easily solidify its position as a global choice for hosting the world.

Role of Emerging Technologies

India is today at the forefront of technology and advancement. Leveraging technologies like AI or VR or AR, events in India can become even more immersive, interactive, and personalized. Opportunities to create globally accessible conferences and events in hybrid formats is unlimited.

India can reach beyond its physical boundaries and create a whole different experience for those who can't visit for a variety of reasons, and create a huge destination recall for the future.

BARUN GUPTA

General Manager, Expo Inn Suites and Convention

MICE in India

The MICE sector in India is experiencing a significant upward trajectory, driven by various factors. The government's proactive initiatives to enhance infrastructure and position India as a global MICE destination have been instrumental in this



growth. Additionally, the increasing globalization of businesses, coupled with the country's thriving economy, has fuelled the demand for MICE events. Moreover, the rising awareness

"The MICE sector in India is experiencing a significant upward trajectory, driven by various factors. The government's proactive initiatives to enhance infrastructure and position India as a global MICE destination have been instrumental in this growth. Additionally, the increasing globalization of businesses, coupled with the country's thriving economy has fuelled the demand for MICE."

- Barun Gupta

and importance of networking, knowledge sharing, and professional development have further contributed to the expansion of the MICE sector in India.

Top Performing & Potential MICE Cities

Currently, cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, and Chennai are recognised as top performing MICE destinations due to their established infrastructure and connectivity. However, cities such as Hyderabad, Pune, and Jaipur hold immense potential to emerge as major MICE hubs. With strategic investments in infrastructure development, promotion, and collaboration between stakeholders, these cities can enhance their appeal and attract a greater share of MICE events.

Unique advantages India offers as a MICE Destination

India offers a plethora of unique advantages as a destination for MICE events. Firstly, its rich cultural heritage provides a distinctive backdrop for events, offering attendees an immersive and enriching experience. Secondly, the country's diverse geography, ranging from bustling metropolises to serene landscapes, caters to a wide range of event preferences. Furthermore, India's continuous infrastructure development, including state-of-the-art convention centres and hotels, ensures world-class facilities for organisers and attendees alike.

Role of Emerging Technologies

Emerging technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI) are revolutionising the MICE experience. VR enables organisers to

create immersive virtual environments for exhibitions and conferences, offering attendees the opportunity to participate remotely. AI-powered tools streamline event management processes, enhance personalization, and optimize attendee engagement. By incorporating these technologies, organisers can elevate the MICE experience, driving greater participation and satisfaction among attendees.

NAVEEN RIZVI

Executive Director - ICEM

Vice President - Site India Chapter



MICE in India

The MICE sector in India is experiencing significant growth, driven

by several key trends and factors that are reshaping the landscape of business tourism in the country. One of the primary growth trends in the MICE sector is the increasing demand from both Corporations and Associations for unique and immersive conference and event experiences.

Another contributing factor to the growth of the MICE sector in India is the country improving infrastructure and connectivity. Investments in modern convention centres like Bharat Mandapam, Yashobhoomi, and Jio World Convention Centre, exhibition venues, hotels, and transportation networks across the country have significantly enhanced India's ability to host large-

proposed opening of new airports in the country like Noida International Airport at Jewar in Uttar Pradesh will further enhance connectivity and increase capacity.

Top Performing & Potential MICE Cities

Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Agra, Goa, Kolkata, Kochi, Udaipur, and Jaipur stand as quintessential destinations for MICE business in India. With excellent accessibility from across the country through air, rail, and road networks, these cities effortlessly draw in conference and event delegates. These cities provide an ideal blend of business

expansion in India. Varanasi holds profound cultural significance, with its recent infrastructural developments and government initiatives paving the way for hosting spiritual retreats, conferences, and heritage-themed events. Chandigarh modern infrastructure and serene surroundings, coupled with its proximity to the Himalayas, present an appealing option for corporate retreats and conferences. Vishakhapatnam scenic beaches and growing infrastructure offer opportunities for hosting corporate gatherings amidst natural beauty. Khajuraho boasts the Maharaja Chhatrasal Convention Centre and UNESCO World Heritage sites, making it an enticing option for cultural and corporate gatherings.

Associations can now bid for big conferences and congresses in India, leading to increased opportunities for hosting prestigious international events. Talking about connectivity, the proposed opening of new airports in the country like Noida International Airport at Jewar in Uttar Pradesh will further enhance connectivity and increase capacity.

- Naveen Rizvi

Unique advantages India offers as a MICE Destination

One of the unique advantages India offers is its vibrant cultural heritage, which provides a rich backdrop for MICE business. With a history spanning millennia, India boasts iconic landmarks, sandy beaches, royal palaces, and spiritual Ghats – all offering attendees a truly immersive experience amidst centuries-old architecture and traditions. This cultural richness adds a layer of depth and authenticity to events, creating memorable experiences that resonate long after the gatherings have concluded.

Furthermore, India's rapid

scale events and accommodate the needs of diverse MICE clients. Moreover, with the availability of larger convention centres,

Associations can now bid for big conferences and congresses in India, leading to increased opportunities for hosting prestigious international events. Talking about connectivity, the

and leisure, allowing attendees to attend conferences, and indulge in sightseeing excursions, cultural experiences, and team-building activities, making them prime choices for MICE business.

Varanasi, Chandigarh, Vishakhapatnam, Hampi, Khajuraho, and Andaman and Nicobar emerge as promising contenders for MICE



infrastructure development plays a pivotal role in enhancing its appeal in the MICE sector. The country has witnessed significant investments in modern convention centres like Bharat Mandapam, Yashobhoomi Convention Centre, and Jio World Convention Centre, which are equipped with state-of-the-art facilities.

Role of Emerging Technologies

Emerging technologies such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence are revolutionizing the MICE landscape, offering unprecedented opportunities to create immersive, interactive, and personalized event experiences. By harnessing the power of VR and AI, event organisers can captivate audiences, foster meaningful connections, and elevate overall attendee satisfaction, positioning events at the forefront of innovation and engagement in the digital age.

How Industry Associations can boost MICE in India

Industry associations such as the Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE) India Chapter and the India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB) play pivotal roles in driving initiatives that promote excellence and innovation in the MICE sector. These associations through their educational programs, networking events, and advocacy efforts, foster collaboration among industry stakeholders, encourage best practices, and raise awareness about the importance of delivering exceptional experiences to MICE clients. They provide platforms for industry professionals to exchange ideas, explore new trends, and enhance their skills, thereby contributing to the continuous improvement of India's hospitality and tourism industry. In addition to government and association initiatives, hotels, venues, and service providers across India are increasingly focusing on enhancing their offerings and capabilities to meet the diverse requirements of MICE clients. From investing in state-of-the-art facilities and technology infrastructure to offering

customizable event packages and experiential add-ons, the hospitality industry in India is committed to delivering seamless execution and customer satisfaction at every stage of the event planning process. This customer-centric approach, combined with a culture of hospitality and warmth, positions India as a preferred destination for MICE clients seeking unforgettable event experiences tailored to their unique preferences and objectives.

RUBIN CHERIAN

General Manager, Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre & Hyderabad International Convention Centre (HICC)



MICE in India

In recent years, the MICE sector in India has witnessed significant growth, reflecting a vibrant landscape of corporate engagements, events, and conventions. This growth can be attributed to several key factors. Firstly, India's emergence as a global economic powerhouse has positioned it as a preferred destination for international business gatherings. With a robust infrastructure, diverse cultural landscape, and a burgeoning economy, India offers a compelling backdrop for MICE activities.

Secondly, the governments initiatives

to promote the tourism and hospitality sectors have played a pivotal role in driving MICE growth. Policies aimed at easing visa procedures, developing world-class convention facilities, and promoting India as a business-friendly destination have bolstered confidence among event organizers and attendees alike.

Furthermore, advancements in technology have transformed the way events are organized and executed, making them more immersive and interactive. From virtual conferences to hybrid events, technology has opened up new avenues for engagement, attracting a broader audience to MICE activities.

Moreover, the growing emphasis on experiential marketing and networking has propelled the demand for unique venues and tailor-made experiences. Hotels and convention centres, such as Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre & HICC, are at the forefront of this trend, offering state-of-the-art facilities, customizable event spaces, and top-notch services to cater to the evolving needs of event planners and delegates.

Top Performing & Potential MICE Cities

Leading MICE cities in India include Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad, boasting robust infrastructure and connectivity. Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre HICC exemplifies Hyderabad's appeal as a MICE destination.

Emerging hubs like Chennai, Pune, Jaipur, and Ahmedabad show promise due to growing industries and cultural attractions. Chennai's IT and automotive sectors, Pune's industrial growth, Jaipur's heritage sites and Ahmedabad's commercial significance position them as future MICE hotspots.

Unique advantages India offers as a MICE Destination

India offers distinct advantages for MICE sector as compared to other countries. Its rich cultural heritage provides a unique backdrop, allowing delegates to immerse themselves in centuries-old traditions and architecture, setting India apart as a memorable

destination.

Moreover, India's rapid infrastructure development has led to the establishment of world-class convention centres, hotels, and transportation networks in cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad, exemplified by Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre & HICC. This ensures seamless event execution and attendee comfort, enhancing the overall experience.

Furthermore, India's geographical diversity adds to its appeal. From the majestic Himalayas to the tranquil backwaters of Kerala, the country offers a variety of scenic landscapes and climates, allowing event planners to craft tailored experiences.

Role of Emerging Technologies

Emerging technologies like virtual reality and artificial intelligence significantly enhance the MICE experience. Virtual reality enables remote venue exploration, enhancing accessibility and engagement. AI-powered tools personalise attendee experiences, optimise logistics, and analyse data for better decision-making. Incorporating these technologies enriches the overall MICE experience. At Hyderabad International Convention Centre (HICC), we embrace these advancements, leveraging our state-of-the-art facilities and commitment to innovation. By integrating these cutting-edge technologies, we foster interactivity, efficiency, and personalization, ultimately elevating the event experience.

Initiatives for boosting MICE

Initiatives are underway to streamline execution and elevate customer satisfaction further. Collaborative efforts are being undertaken among industry associations and government bodies to develop standardised guidelines for event planning, ensuring consistency and professionalism across the sector. Additionally, partnerships with event planners ensure comprehensive event management solutions, optimizing client experiences, particularly exemplified by HICC's commitment to excellence.

Jasmine Duggal

Director, Minar Group



MICE in India

India, a vibrant tapestry of cultures and colours, is not just a land of ancient traditions and breath-taking landscapes; it's also emerging as a dynamic hub for MICE events. With a staggering growth rate of 8.8% from 2015 to 2019, the MICE sector in India

What sets India apart as a MICE destination is its kaleidoscope of experiences, where every corner tells a story, and every event unfolds against the backdrop of centuries-old heritage and modern marvels.

Its cultural heritage, vibrant festivals, and diverse landscapes captivate the imagination, while its evolving infrastructure and world-class amenities ensure a seamless experience for every event attendee. Here, tradition meets innovation, and the result is an unforgettable journey that leaves a lasting impression on every guest.

- Jasmine Duggal

is on an upward trajectory, propelled by its thriving economy, increasing globalization, and visionary government policies aimed at promoting tourism and business events. It's a journey of growth and transformation, where each event is a chapter in India's evolving narrative of hospitality and excellence.

Top Performing & Potential MICE Cities

Factually, Mumbai, Delhi, and

Bangalore emerge as the shining stars of India's MICE landscape. These vibrant metropolises, with their pulsating energy and world-class infrastructure, have carved a niche for themselves as top-performing MICE cities. Yet, amidst this urban symphony, however, I believe cities other cities like Hyderabad, Chennai, and Jaipur are quietly gearing up to steal the spotlight. With their burgeoning infrastructure, cultural richness, and untapped potential, they're poised to become the next big names in the MICE arena, weaving their tales of success.

Unique advantages India offers as a MICE Destination

What sets India apart as a MICE destination is its kaleidoscope of experiences, where every corner tells a story, and every event unfolds against the backdrop of centuries-old heritage and modern marvels. Its cultural heritage, vibrant festivals, and diverse landscapes captivate the imagination, while its evolving infrastructure and world-class amenities ensure a seamless experience for every event attendee. Here, tradition meets innovation, and the result is an unforgettable journey that leaves a

lasting impression on every guest.

Role of Emerging Technologies

Scaling up into the realm of possibilities, where AI & technology blurs the lines between reality and imagination. Likewise, in the world of MICE events, emerging technologies like virtual reality and artificial intelligence are the architects of tomorrow's experiences. With virtual reality and artificial intelligence

as their allies, event planners are pushing the boundaries of creativity and engagement, transforming every event into a multisensory extravaganza that captivates the senses and sparks inspiration.

The Future of MICE

In the ever-evolving landscape of MICE events, adaptability is the key to success. India's hospitality and tourism industry have embraced this ethos wholeheartedly, crafting bespoke experiences that cater to the diverse needs of every client. From customised event packages to personalised concierge services, the industry's commitment to excellence knows no bounds. I come from Minar; a hardcore inbound company, I can proudly say that India's MICE sector is not just meeting expectations; it's exceeding them, one event at a time. It's a journey of innovation and collaboration, where every event is a testament to India's unwavering dedication to hospitality and service excellence.

Siddharth Kapoor
Ebix Travel & Holidays Ltd.



MICE in India

Overall, the MICE sector in India is poised for continued growth, driven

by ongoing investments, strategic initiatives, and the country's increasing prominence on the global stage. Some of the key factors attributed towards the growth of MICE sector in India are listed hereunder:

- India's rapid economic growth has led to an increase in disposable income and corporate spending.

"India offers several unique advantages as a destination for MICE events compared to other countries. Our rich cultural heritage spanning thousands of years provides a unique backdrop for MICE events. From historic palaces and forts to intricately designed temples and vibrant festivals, India offers a plethora of culturally significant venues and experiences."

- Siddharth Kapoor

- Significant investments in infrastructure including the construction of convention centres, hotels, and transportation networks have improved our ability to host large-scale events.
- Some of the key initiatives led by the Indian Govt. such as 'Incredible India' and streamlining the visa processes.
- Our diverse culture and competitive pricing have attracted event organizers from around the world.

Top Performing & Potential MICE Cities

Several cities in India have emerged as top performers in MICE sector. The top 3 performing cities in India include Goa. With its scenic beauty, beachfront resorts and vibrant nightlife, Goa is an attractive choice for corporate gatherings and incentives. Next, Kochi's modern convention centres and scenic backdrops appeal to event organizers which is located in the southern state of Kerala. Lastly, Jaipur is best known for its heritage, rich history and luxurious hospitality and is most certainly a popular destination for corporate retreats.

In addition to these top-performing MICE cities, several other cities in India show potential for future development into major MICE hubs. These include

Ahmedabad, Pune and Lucknow.

Unique advantages India offers as a MICE Destination

India offers several unique advantages as a destination for MICE events compared to other countries. Our rich cultural heritage spanning thousands of years provides a unique backdrop for MICE

events. From historic palaces and forts to intricately designed temples and vibrant festivals, India offers a plethora of culturally significant venues and experiences. The significant investments in infrastructure development including state-of-the-art convention centres, hotels, transportation networks, and digital connectivity is another strong advantage we have. Thirdly, the geographical diversity encompassing mountains, deserts, beaches, and forests allows for a wide range of event settings and activities.

Role of Emerging Technologies

Emerging technologies, including virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI) play a significant role in enhancing the (MICE) experience in several ways, such as:

- With the rise of hybrid and virtual events, AI-powered platforms facilitate seamless interactions between virtual and in-person attendees.
- Facial recognition and biometric technology enhance event security and streamline the check-in processes.
- AI-powered Chatbots provide 24/7 support to attendees before, during, and after events such as event information, assist with registration process. ■

Singapore's MICE

industry continues to boost with SECB's innovative initiatives

Singapore, renowned for its prowess in hosting Asia's most prominent events, is once again in the spotlight for its groundbreaking advancements in the Business Travel and Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions (BTMICE) sector. At the heart of this success story lies the Singapore Exhibition and Convention Bureau (SECB), the lead government agency dedicated to championing the business events industry in the nation.

SECB's vision is clear: to position Singapore as a dynamic business events destination, where an ecosystem of ideas, people and technology converge to catalyze innovation and foster wide networks. The bureau's relentless efforts have not only solidified Singapore's reputation as a world-class MICE destination but also propelled it to the forefront of global recognition.

What sets Singapore apart is its combination of a pro-business environment, world-class facilities, professional services, and award-winning unique event venues, all nestled within a rich and vibrant Asian setting. This winning formula has attracted countless organizations seeking to tap into the fast-evolving

Asian market and beyond.

Singapore's strategic location as a major air, sea, and telecommunications hub in Asia further enhances its appeal. With market access to over 4 billion people within a 7-hour flight radius and connectivity to 400 cities in 100 countries and territories, Singapore offers unparalleled accessibility for business events of all scales.

Central to SECB's mission is the development of innovative programmes that enrich the MICE experience in Singapore. Two such initiatives stand out: the Singapore Incentives & Rewards (INSPIRE) programme and the Singapore MICE Advantage Programme (SMAP).

The INSPIRE programme curates tailored itineraries, showcasing the best of Singapore's dining, entertainment, attractions, and team-building activities. With close to 80 options available, MICE groups can immerse themselves in unique experiences that complement their event agendas, enhancing both business and leisure aspects of their visit.

On the other hand, the SMAP

programme offers event organizers and MICE delegates exclusive benefits, including cost savings and enhanced meeting experiences. From discounted airline tickets to seamless event planning assistance, SMAP ensures a smooth and rewarding experience for all involved.

SECB's support extends beyond financial aid, encompassing facilitation in securing venues, introductions with government agencies and local associations, and comprehensive marketing and publicity support. These efforts bolster Singapore's standing as an award-winning MICE destination and reinforce its commitment to excellence in the global events arena.

As Singapore continues to innovate and elevate its offerings in the MICE industry, the future looks brighter than ever for business events in the Lion City. ■



Korea

Emerging as a leader in the MICE Industry

South Korea has strategically positioned itself as a premier destination for MICE tourism. This strategic advantage extends beyond the undeniable allure of its culture, which seamlessly blends ancient traditions with modern innovation. Here is what solidifies Korea's reputation as the ideal venue for any corporate event:

Immersive and Enriching Experiences:

- **A Tapestry of Time:** Korea offers a unique cultural landscape, where historical sites stand alongside breathtaking natural beauty and vibrant urban centres. This juxtaposition creates a perfect blend of experiences that fosters attendee engagement and leaves a lasting impression. Imagine facilitating a strategic planning session in a serene palace garden, followed by an evening of team building amidst the dazzling neon lights of Seoul. Such experiences are readily available in Korea.

Security and Sustainability: Cornerstones of Success

- **Unwavering Safety:** Korea boasts an exceptionally low crime rate, ensuring a secure and stress-free environment for attendees. This allows them to fully focus on the event's objectives.
- **Commitment to Green Practices:** Demonstrating a strong environmental conscience, Korea implements a multitude of eco-friendly practices throughout its MICE infrastructure. This resonates strongly with organizations prioritizing responsible event planning.

Effortless Accessibility: A World of Connections

- **Global Reach:** Korea is strategically located and offers seamless accessibility from various corners of the world. Numerous international airports provide direct flights from major cities, minimizing travel fatigue for attendees.
- **Streamlined Navigation:** A well-developed transportation network within Korea allows attendees to navigate effortlessly across the country, ensuring they arrive at meetings and events promptly.

World-Class Infrastructure: Setting the Stage for Success

- **Unmatched Facilities:** Korea is well-equipped to host successful events of all sizes. State-of-the-art convention centres boast cutting-edge technology and comprehensive amenities. High-speed internet connectivity and excellent transportation options further ensure a smooth and efficient event experience for both planners and attendees. ■



Mauritius

Perfect venue for small & large MICE gatherings



Mauritius stands out as a premier destination for hosting Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE)., the island caters to gatherings ranging from intimate groups to grand assemblies accommodating up to 5000 delegates.

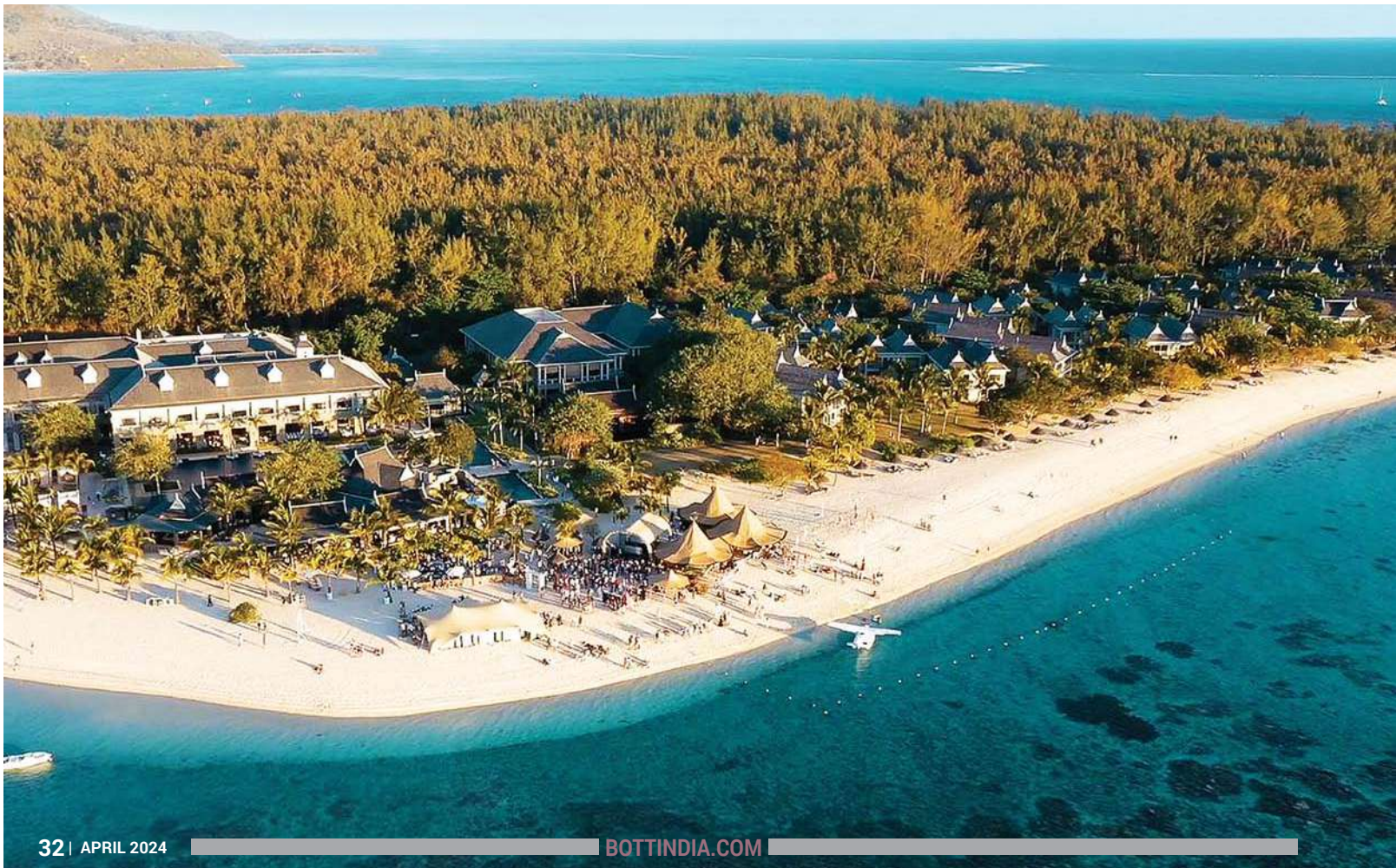
Non-stop flights from major Indian cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, and Chennai make Mauritius easily accessible for guests

flying in from various locations. The streamlined visa process, facilitated through online applications, adds to the convenience, making it a central meeting point for gatherings.

Mauritius boasts an array of cutting-edge conference venues and meeting spaces. The Swami Vivekananda Conference Centre in Pailles, equipped with 10 meeting rooms, stands out for its capacity to host up to 5000 participants. The Freeport A'Famosa Exhibition & Convention Hall and the Trianon Convention Centre offer accommodation for up to 2000 and 3000 delegates, respectively. Additionally, the Caudan Arts Centre in Port Louis accommodates up to 430 participants, complementing the many hotels across the island offering conference facilities.

Seasoned tour operators proficiently handle all MICE requirements, offering airport assistance to activities on the island suitable for large groups.

MICE participants are ensured a memorable experience in Mauritius, thanks to its network of excellent local suppliers and the world-class cuisine that it's renowned for. The recent VAT exemption policy offers a 15% exemption on accommodation costs. This has added further appeal for MICE travel groups. ■





Qatar

An ideal destination for MICE Groups

Qatar is strategically located to connect the East and the West. The city offers a dynamic fusion of traditional Qatari heritage and contemporary luxury with world-class accommodation, purpose-built venues, and convenient transport links for attendees, making it an enticing choice for large-scale business gatherings. It also stands out as an ideal destination for MICE groups due to its proximity to India, with its efficient public transportation system, as well as Hamad International Airport that ensures seamless connectivity for international delegates with multiple daily direct flights from 15 cities across India, it's easier than ever for Indian groups to reach their destination in just four short hours.

At the heart of Doha's allure are its world-class convention centres, like the iconic Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC), and the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre, equipped with cutting-edge technology and ample space to accommodate large-scale conferences and exhibitions. QNCC is the beating heart of Doha's MICE scene. It is one of the largest and most technologically advanced venues in the Middle East. The venue is ideal for hosting a wide range of events with 52 flexible meeting rooms, a 4,000-seat multi-purpose conference hall, a 2,300-seat theatre, and three auditoriums with state-of-the-art production and presentation facilities



accompanied by staff dedicated to making every event shine.

Additionally, Qatar's world-class hotels, including renowned hotels such as The Ritz-Carlton, Hilton Salwa, Westin, Crown Plaza, and Rixos provide exceptional accommodations and meeting venues tailored to the needs of all kinds of MICE travellers. ■

Seychelles

Offering a unique MICE Experience

Seychelles offers a unique and exotic setting for MICE groups seeking a picturesque backdrop for their events. This archipelago of 115 islands in the Indian Ocean boasts stunning beaches, crystal-clear waters, and lush tropical landscapes, only a 4.5-hour flight away from Mumbai. The destination provides an unparalleled environment for business gatherings with a touch of relaxation and adventure. Seychelles' boutique resorts and luxury hotels on Mahé and Praslin, such as Constance, Raffles, and Kempinski, offer world-class conference facilities and elegant multi-functional meeting rooms amidst breath-taking natural surroundings, ensuring a productive yet rejuvenating experience for delegates. Ideal for MICE groups of 100-150 people, Seychelles offers a myriad of outdoor activities beyond meetings, including snorkelling and kayaking at various beaches, hiking trails through lush vegetation, and even golfing, allowing attendees to unwind and explore the destination's natural beauty. For a retreat for a small group of high-powered executives, the destination offers many island-hopping experiences, scuba diving, and private sundowners on a yacht and more. With its warm climate, pristine beaches, and tranquil ambience, Seychelles offers a unique MICE experience that combines business with leisure in an unforgettable setting. ■



Unveiling India's **MICE Destinations** Fusion of Venue Diversity and Cultural Richness

One of the hallmarks of MICE facilities in India is the blend of modernity and tradition. The venues often encapsulate the rich cultural ethos of India while offering contemporary amenities. Spacious exhibition halls, well-equipped conference rooms, high-speed internet connectivity, and advanced audio-visual systems are now a norm. The professional event management services, proficient in handling diverse requirements, ensure smooth operations from inception to conclusion. Furthermore, India's strategic geographical location acts as a bridge between the East and the West, making it a convenient meeting point for global stakeholders. The well-connected air and ground transport networks facilitate easy accessibility to MICE venues across the country. Here's a look at the top 10 MICE Cities in India and what they offer to a business traveller -

Anjali Pokhriyal

DELHI-NCR

Delhi, India's national capital, has solidified its position as a premier hub for the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) industry, attracting both domestic and international attention. Boasting an outstandingly developed infrastructure, the city offers an extensive chain of venues suitable for a diverse range of events.

From renowned establishments such as the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, Siri Fort Auditorium, to the NDMC Convention Centre, the newly-opened Yashobhoomi in Dwarka, the iconic Bharat Mandapam in Pragati Maidan, Talkatora Stadium, Indira Gandhi International Centre, Old World Hospitality at India Habitat Centre,



Vigyan Bhawan and The Ashoka are just some of the world-class venues that provides sophisticated event spaces capable of accommodating gatherings of varying scales, from intimate conferences to large-scale conventions. These

venues range from accommodating 500 pax to around 15000 attendees. Not to forget the very popular India Expo Mart in Greater Noida, which was the go-to MICE Venue when Convention Centres in Delhi were undergoing reconstruction



and renovation.

In addition to these established venues, Delhi Tourism has also transformed its cultural landmarks like Dilli Haats and the Garden of Five Senses into unique event spaces, infusing gatherings with a cultural flair while offering ample opportunities for shopping and exploration. Dilli Haat Janakpuri has a state-of-the-art auditorium with seating of up to 800 people along with a cultural event space.

Moreover, Delhi's hospitality landscape further enhances its appeal, with prominent hotel chains strategically located across the city, including hubs like Aerocity and Central Delhi. This vast expanse of accommodation options ensures convenience and accessibility for event attendees.

With its blend of world-class infrastructure, cultural richness, and hospitality offerings, Delhi stands as a beacon for the MICE industry.

MUMBAI

The Indian MICE tourism market has evolved and intertwined hugely in the Business travel space, especially in metro cities like Mumbai that have today become a travel hub for the MICE sector.

Mumbai happens to be the world's 29th largest city in GDP that is India's economic hub of commerce, industries and related services including tourism.

Mumbai provides high-end leisure opportunities for incentive tours catering very well to the needs of the MICE event organizers.

Mumbai MICE Industry can be categorically divided depending on the nature of the event as there are more Hotels Brands in luxury and upscale venue segment namely St. Regis Mumbai, Starwood Hotels and Resorts, Renaissance Mumbai Convention Centre With 230,000 sq. ft. of indoor and outdoor convention space and Hotel, Taj Mahal Palace, Taj Lands End, Trident BKC, Grand Hyatt which offer over 1,000 sqm space for banquet and conference with 620 sq mt of space, ITC Maratha, ITC Grand central for holding conventions and conferences.

For holding large conferences and inter-cultural extravaganzas – Venues like the NCPA, Nehru Centre, World Trade Centre and for Exhibitions

cum Congresses venues like Bombay Exhibition Centre and MMRDA ground are more ideal.

Large players like Reliance have also come up with Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre, which has taken the MICE quotient in Mumbai to another level. The newly adapted MICE properties of today are well equipped to take up the MICE challenge as reflected by their high-end meeting technology ranging from high resolution HD projectors and modern LED lights and fixers, video conferencing, direct satellite feeds to outdoor landscapes and break away spaces, to attract the clients who are very selective in terms of novelty without compromising the quality.

GOA

Goa has traditionally been a go-to place for leisure and adventure.



However, the tiny and most loved tourist state is now fast emerging as a preferred destination for MICE travel among Indian corporations.

The destination offers all elements like premium/luxury hotels with meeting space, remarkable cuisine from across India and scope for team building activities as well as nightlife.

In addition to investing in infrastructural development including new highways and larger airports, the state government also introduced interesting activities like helicopter rides, hot air balloon, seaplanes and more to create further allure for the destination. States have delivered physical groups of about 100-500

delegates each with budgets as high as over ₹75,000 - ₹1 lakh per person.

Among the notable venues for exhibitions and conferences in Goa are The International Centre Goa, Grand Hyatt Hotel, Manvins Panjim Goa, Park Hyatt Goa Resort, Vivanta by Taj Holiday Inn Resorts Goa, Marriott Goa, Hotel Palacio De Goa, Gallery Gitanjali Panaji Inn, Dr. SPM Indoor Stadium, Hotel Fidalgo, Novotel Goa and numerous small and mid-size boutique properties that are perfect for combining business with pleasure.

JAIPUR

When thinking about Jaipur, what comes first to the mind is its glorious history and vibrant culture. Tourists from all over the world flock here to get a glimpse of the fascinating traditions of Rajasthan. With its excellent infrastructure and famed hospitality, the city also makes an ideal destination for conducting business activities. From trade shows, global conferences, international expos, to literature festivals, several large-scale events are held here every year. For instance, Rajasthan has been hosting the Jaipur Literature Festival for the past 15 years and making it a world-class event.

There are many factors that make Jaipur the preferred destination for MICE Tourism starting with its brilliant connectivity to not just all major cities of Rajasthan but also big metro cities

through easy accessibility by air, rail and road. The infrastructure across all MICE venues matches the global standards and is ideal for taking holding an event of any magnitude. Many venues also provide sight-seeing, historical and cultural tours for MICE tourists as a part of their service. With endless attractions like forts, palaces, natural landscapes etc. Jaipur provides all the basic business amenities at a very economical rate, be it transportation, communication or accommodation. Which again makes all the cities of Rajasthan stand out for MICE tourism. In his 2023–24 Budget, the CM announced the development of MICE centres for international level conventions and exhibitions in the popular tourism hotspots of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, and Ajmer. Each of these centres will cost approximately ₹100 crore.

Talking about the top venue for MICE in Jaipur, there are many hotels

which offer world-class meeting meeting spaces such as the Trident Jaipur, with 110 square feet of event space, and The Raj Palace, with 140 square feet of event space. The convention centre, Jaipur Exhibition & Convention Centre contains 19,760 square feet of exhibit space across 15 meeting rooms. In addition, there are Jaipur Marriott Hotel, Fairmont Jaipur, The LaLiT Jaipur, Hotel Clarks Amer, The Oberoi Rajvilas Hotel, Radisson Blu Jaipur, Le Meridien Jaipur Resort & Spa, ITC Rajputana, a Luxury Collection Hotel and many more. The newly-opened Novotel Jaipur has also enhanced the MICE landscape of the region.

KOCHI

Kerala, renowned for its rich cultural heritage, stunning natural landscapes, and cutting-edge infrastructure



for business gatherings, is rapidly establishing itself as a sought-after destination for MICE events. Leading the charge is Kochi (Cochin), the bustling commercial heart of the state, boasting domestic airports, top-notch convention centres, and upscale hotels tailored for MICE activities. Kochi's advanced technological facilities for business gatherings rival global standards, as evidenced by successful events like Pedicon, Octicon, and the KMA international conference, collectively drawing 7,000 attendees and highlighting Kochi's allure as a premier MICE destination. The city's picturesque backwaters, stunning beaches, and mist-covered hills provide idyllic settings for business events, complemented by a vibrant calendar of national and international expos, trade fairs, and meetings. With numerous conventions on the horizon, Kochi's appeal as a MICE destination continues to grow. Amidst nature's embrace, Le Meridien, Cochin stands out with its well-appointed conference and banquet facilities. Notably, Kochi boasts of exceptional convention centres capable of accommodating up to 5,000 delegates collectively. Anchored by events such as the Kerala Travel Market (KTM), the state's largest biennial tourism summit, Kochi solidifies its position as a premier destination for MICE activities.

AGRA

Uttar Pradesh is quickly becoming a favourite destination for business events, thanks to its large convention spaces, luxurious five-star hotels, and numerous pilgrimage sites. Agra provides an



exciting backdrop to many a corporate events and meeting in Agra. Landmark properties such as the The Oberoi Amarvilas, The Jaypee Palace Hotel and Convention Centre, Phool Bagh, Mumtaz, Clarks Shiraz Hotel, Shehnaz Hall, Akbar Hall, Tower Hall, Mughal Sheraton, Taj Hotel & Convention Centre, Holiday Inn, Hoard Park Plaza, Grand Hotel and many more .

With three UNESCO-listed World Heritage sites—including the Taj Mahal, Fatehpur Sikri, and Agra Fort—drawing in MICE travellers, the state has always been a hot-spot of both tourism as well as MICE. While cities like Noida, Lucknow, Ghaziabad, and Agra have been traditional favourites for people coming from Delhi, the new hubs on the MICE horizon now includes Ayodhya, Varanasi, and Prayagraj, which are fast emerging as new hotspots. Varanasi boasts the Rudraksha International Convention Centre, shaped like a shivling, with a seating capacity of 1,200

and modern facilities ideal for MICE gatherings. Additionally, the state offers significant incentives—ranging from 50 to 70 percent—to corporates organizing such events.

Agra is solidifying its position as a premier MICE destination.

BENGALURU

While Delhi and Mumbai remain favourites for business travellers, Bengaluru has become an increasingly popular meeting destination for international companies to host events. Large gatherings are simple to hold in the city because there are plenty of hotels and conference spaces. In addition to being a great destination for business.

While presenting the budget for 2022-23, CM Basavaraj Bommai had said that his government will upgrade Bengaluru into (MICE) hub of the country because of its world-class infrastructure in technology, transport facilities, air connectivity with other global cities and overall ease of doing business in the city.

The top most preferred MICE venues in Bengaluru are the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre with 57 acre of land and the four main exhibition halls offer flexible layouts and, in addition, nine conference halls feature capacity for meetings of between 20 and 1,400 people. India's first Ritz-Carlton is a landmark property that features a flexible range of





meeting venues. The Oberoi is another favourite that offers dedicated staff for planning corporate events. It also has the Golden Lotus Boutique Suites with palatial, colourful rooms ideal for respite between meetings and the hurly-burly of the city streets; there is Vivanta by Taj – Whitefield with its futuristic architecture. The Leela Bangalore features 17 spaces suitable for MICE events is just a short drive from the Airport. Hilton Garden Inn Bengaluru Embassy Manyata Business Park is again a famous MICE venue. Lastly, not to forget the M Chinnaswamy Cricket Stadium comes with capacity of 50,000 people.

Bengaluru also has plenty of cultural events, including theatres, museums, art galleries and retail outlets for leisure. WTCA Global Business Forum, India Digital Enabler Awards, Global Startup Summit, India CFO Summit are some of the big MICE events lined up this year in the city.

HYDERABAD

Hyderabad has emerged as one of the leading metros in India for MICE destinations. The City of Pearls ticks all the right boxes. It is well-equipped with the necessary infrastructure for hospitality, easily accessible by road, train, and air, rich in history, and offers a wide range of experiences from traditional arts to cuisine. To put it briefly, it's the perfect location for a



corporate conference or convention. As a technology hub, Hyderabad has a perfect blend of convention facilities supported with a sufficient number of national and international hotel brands to host world class business events. The Hyderabad International Convention Centre (HICC) is able to meet the requirements of a convention of 5000, a seminar for 500 or a meeting of 50, Ramoji Film City, Accor hotel and Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre (NHCC) have helped to promote the MICE business in the city. Hyderabad Convention Visitors Bureau (HCVB) is India's first and only regional Convention Visitors Bureau initiated by the State Government to promote Hyderabad as India's premier MICE destination. To host exhibitions,

there is Hyderabad International Trade Expositions Limited having uber-modern facilities to host international events. To the traveller, Hyderabad offers a fascinating panorama of the past, with a richly mixed cultural and historical tradition spanning 400 colourful years. The Shilpkala-Vedica, a multipurpose convention centre-cum-auditorium which is the second biggest Convention Centre of India. the Viceroy Hotel and Convention Centre overlooking the picturesque Hussain Sagar Lake are some of the important MICE venues in Hyderabad.

Hyderabad has been the base for many international conferences and conventions including Travel and Tourism Fair in the recent past. ■

ETAA organises Fam trip to Anantum Gateway Resorts



The Enterprising Travel Agents Association (ETAA) recently organized a Fam Trip to Anantum Gateway Resorts in Corbett National Park from March 1 – 3, 2024. A group of 42 ETAA members embarked on a bus journey from New Delhi to the resort.

Pallavi Sharma

Upon arrival, the delegates were greeted warmly in the local Kumaoni style, fostering a sense of cultural immersion. Set against the backdrop of the majestic Corbett National Park, this excursion promised a fusion of opulence and natural beauty.

Upon their arrival at the resort, the ETAA members were warmly welcomed in the traditional Kumaoni style, setting the stage for an immersive cultural experience. The evening unfolded with gestures of appreciation exchanged between ETAA and Anantum Gateway Resorts, fostering a sense of unity and gratitude among the participants.

As the adventure continued into its second day, ETAA members had the opportunity to explore the essence of Anantum Gateway Resorts through a comprehensive property tour. From luxurious accommodations to state-of-



the-art facilities, the resort left no stone unturned in providing guests with an unparalleled experience of comfort and sophistication.

However, the true highlight of the trip was the exploration of the lush surroundings of Corbett National Park. ETAA members immersed themselves in the natural splendour, from exhilarating wildlife encounters to serene nature walks, each moment serving as a tribute to the unparalleled beauty of the region.

Evenings at Anantum Gateway Resorts were nothing short of magical, with mesmerizing live music adding an elegant touch to the gala atmosphere. Under the canopy of the night sky, laughter and camaraderie filled the air as ETAA members formed lasting bonds amidst the pristine wilderness of Jim Corbett's sanctuary.

Anantum Gateway Resorts epitomises luxury intertwined with nature's bounty, offering unparalleled hospitality, exquisite dining experiences, and a plethora of recreational activities. Whether indulging in rejuvenating spa treatments, embarking on thrilling jungle safaris, or simply basking in the tranquillity of the surroundings, Anantum Gateway Resorts caters to every guest's desires.

The Fam Trip organized by ETAA served as a testament to the union of luxury and adventure, reminding participants of the inherent beauty of the natural world and the profound joy that comes from immersing oneself in it. Anantum Gateway Resorts stands as a beacon of excellence in hospitality, inviting travellers to embark on a journey of discovery and indulgence amidst the enchanting landscapes of Jim Corbett's sanctuary. ■

Dusit International strengthens presence in India with three-city Showcase

Dusit International successfully concluded its three-city India Showcase, visiting Kolkata, New Delhi, and Mumbai from April 1 – 5, 2024. The events highlighted Dusit's signature services, guest experiences, and expertise in catering to Weddings, Leisure, and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions).

BOTT Desk

The Showcase provided a platform for eight participating Dusit Hotels to connect with key travel trade and media partners across India's major cities. Led by Sanjana Bhattachan (Corporate Director - Global Sales, MICE and Corporate), Korakot Kanchanapiroj (Director - Distribution Strategy & OTA Partnerships), and Rakesh Bhandari (Director of Global Sales, India), the event offered insights into Dusit's unique brand of Thai-inspired hospitality and its diverse portfolio. Participating hotels included - Dusit Thani Abu Dhabi, Dusit Thani Maldives, Dusit Thani Laguna Singapore, dusitD2 Naseem Resort, Jabal Akhdar, Oman, Dusit Thani Pattaya, Dusit Thani Laguna Phuket, Dusit Thani Hua Hin and the Flagship Dusit Thani Bangkok. The three-city roadshow attracted over 250 partners representing various segments, including MICE, Luxury Travel, Honeymooners, Social Groups, Wedding Planners, and Event Organizers. ■



The Palladium Hotel Group hosts exclusive Yacht party along with Global Destinations in Mumbai

The gathering provided a platform to discuss exciting updates, upcoming developments and the latest hospitality trends within the Palladium brand with Sandra Polo Canudas, Asia & ME Commercial Director, Palladium Hotel Group. The event was well attended by around 20 plus members which included travel agents, delegates and the media.

Shreya Shimpi

The Palladium Hotel Group along with Global Destinations hosted an exclusive yacht party in Mumbai on March 22, 2024 starting from the Gateway of India. Meaningful conversations, eclectic food and drinks with the gorgeous backdrop of the iconic Taj Mahal Palace Hotel and the setting sun made it a remarkable evening. The delegation present for the event included Fernando Heredia Noguera, Cónsul General, Consulado General de España en Mumbai, Elisa Robles Fraga, Director - Spain Tourism Board, Tourism Counsellor – Embassy of Spain India, Lisha Krishnan, Travel Trade Tourism Office of Spain – Mumbai, Sandra Polo Canudas, Asia & ME Commercial Director, Palladium Hotel Group, Pranav Kapadia, Founder, Global Destinations.

“We are happy with the way everything is going. We have changed

the whole procedure for the Visas. At least in Mumbai, the applicants get their visas in forty-eight hours after the submission. If you apply on Monday, by Wednesday, the applicant can have their passport at home. We have received plenty of applications. In total, we are doing forty per cent more than it was before the pandemic. We are very happy about it. The team is very motivated. We are receiving plenty of Indian tourists in Spain. The aim is not only to promote tourism to Spain but to give Indians the freedom of movement which we have in Europe,” said Fernando Heredia Noguera, Cónsul General, Consulado General de España en Mumbai.

“India is a growing and important market for us. The number of tourists visiting from India is more than those before the pandemic. We have seen good growth across all segments such as MICE, FIT, couples as well as solo

travellers. Indian tourists enjoy all kinds of experiences such as cultural, heritage as well as gastronomical. They like experiential travel. We are a very diverse country. It is not as big as India but as diverse as India. When Indian travellers come to Spain, they are so pleased that they come back again,” said Elisa Robles Fraga, Director - Spain Tourism Board, Tourism Counsellor – Embassy of Spain India.

“From the Palladium Hotel Group perspective, we are seeing good growth coming from India. The Palladium Group caters to honeymooners, people who love partying, beach lovers and families which is very important. The Consulate and Tourism Spain have done a fantastic job of getting visas very easily. When they give long-term visas, we have seen repeat clients coming to Spain,” said Pranav Kapadia, Founder, Global Destinations. ■



Erco Travels

celebrates 25 years of Excellence and unveils new logo



Erco Travels recently commemorated its Silver Jubilee on March 15, 2024, at Hotel Le Meridien, New Delhi. The event was a momentous occasion for the company, marked by the unveiling of their new company logo, symbolising their journey of growth, resilience, and commitment to tourism industry.

Ravi Gosain, Managing Director, Erco Travels, expressed his heartfelt gratitude on this significant milestone, stating, "As we celebrate our 25th Anniversary, we reflect on the remarkable journey that has brought us to this momentous occasion. Our new logo represents not just our growth, but also our unwavering commitment to showcasing the beauty of India to travellers around the world, while embracing sustainable practices. We take great pride in being at the forefront of the Indian inbound travel industry. Our focus on providing personalised experiences, coupled with our extensive network of partners and commitment to sustainable tourism, sets us apart as leaders in the industry." ■

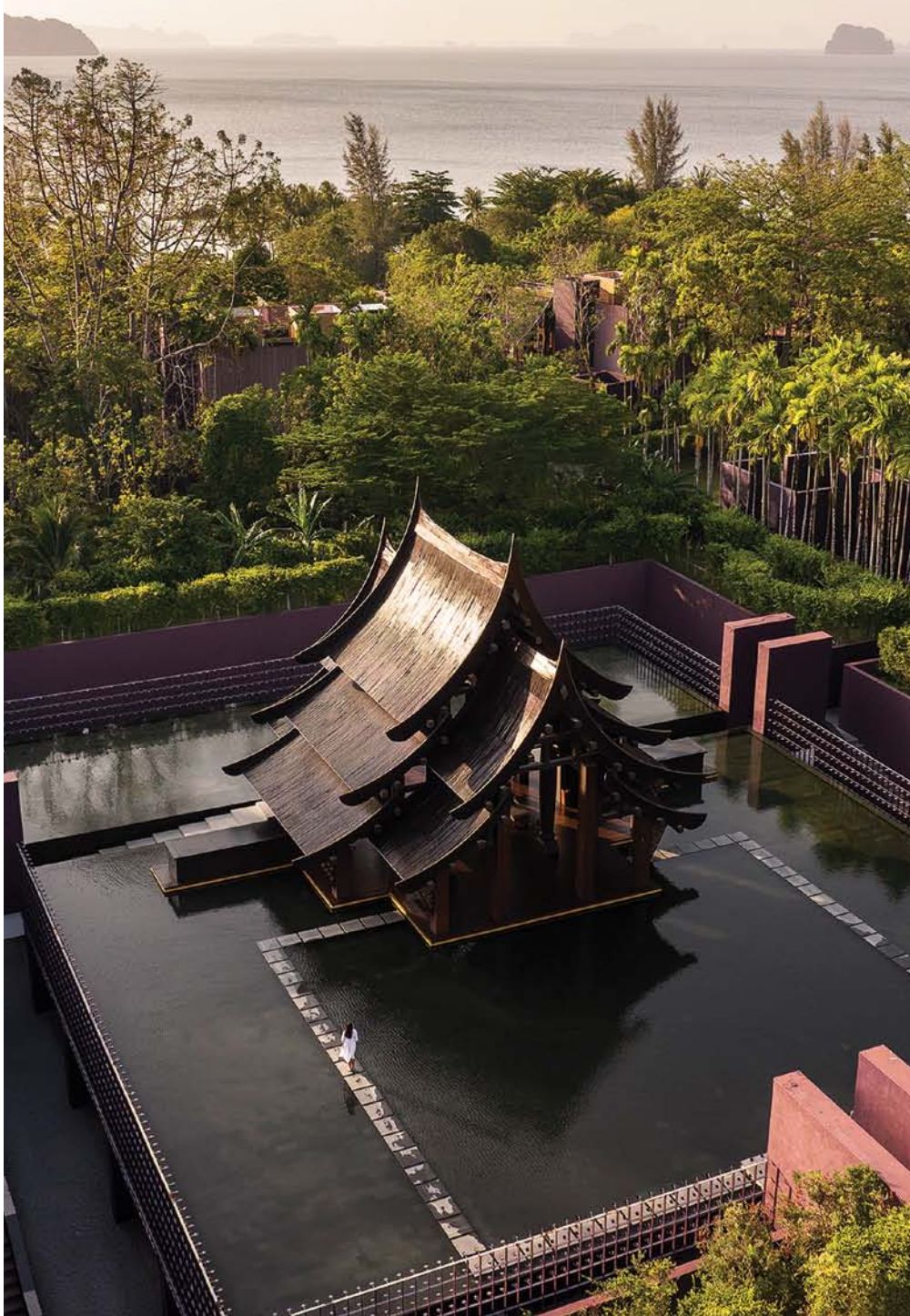


Phulay Bay

Pioneering sustainability, elevating luxury and championing inclusivity

*Located within the breath-taking landscapes of Thailand, Phulay Bay, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve, stands as a hidden gem, where the allure of nature meets the epitome of luxury. This 5-star Krabi beach resort offers a sanctuary where guests can awaken to the serene practice of beachside yoga and unwind with sumptuous dinners accompanied by panoramic ocean views. Catering to the diverse needs of its guests, Phulay Bay places a special focus on health-conscious menus. In an exclusive chat with **BOTT**, **Vidhya Sagar**, the General Manager of Phulay Bay, offers insights into the resort's commitment to delivering exceptional experiences.*

Anjali Pokhriyal



What recent initiatives has Phulay Bay, A Ritz-Carlton Reserve, implemented to enhance guest experiences?

At Phulay Bay, enhancing guest experiences is paramount. Recently, we've introduced several initiatives to elevate our guests' stays. From the moment they arrive at our open-air pavilion, they're immersed in exceptional Reserve experiences. Our personalised services, managed by a dedicated team including Personal Hosts and Experience Ambassadors, ensure a transformative stay. We've also added beachside yoga sessions to promote holistic well-being. These initiatives resonate with the evolving demands of luxury hospitality, ensuring guests not only feel pampered but also rejuvenated.

Could you elaborate on the significance of the Indian market for Phulay Bay, A Ritz-Carlton Reserve, and how does the hotel tailor its offerings to cater to Indian travellers?

The Indian market holds great importance for us at Phulay Bay. With India's growing economy and evolving lifestyles, there's a rising demand for transformative travel experiences. To cater to Indian travellers, we've curated a diverse vegetarian menu available across all our restaurants, comprising 30% of our overall offerings. Additionally, we've introduced the innovative concept of 'Anytime Breakfast' to ensure guests can enjoy breakfast at their convenience. Our personalised wedding options, including Signature, Intimate, Beach, Pavilion, Candlelight, and Bespoke ceremonies, cater to various preferences. With dedicated event planners and versatile venues accommodating gatherings of 120 to 200 people, we strive to make every moment special for Indian guests.

How is Phulay Bay, A Ritz Carlton Reserve integrating sustainability practices into its operations and guest experiences, and what impact has this had on the overall guest satisfaction?

At Phulay Bay, sustainability and conservation have been integral to our philosophy long before they became buzzwords. We've implemented various sustainability initiatives across our operations. For instance, we're actively exploring solar energy solutions to reduce our carbon footprint. Additionally, we have systems in place to minimise food waste, repurposing it for animal consumption or conversion. We prioritise sustainable farming and seafood sourcing, obtaining our seafood from responsibly managed farms. Our commitment to sustainability extends to our plastic-free environment, with reusable bamboo straws, glass bottles, and cloth bags. We source drinking water from a natural spring in the Naga Mountains and prioritise local seafood and ingredients from our Chef's garden. Moreover, by hiring locally, we not only support the community but also provide guests with authentic experiences. ■



Lyfe Hotels

Setting the standard for Luxury and Sustainability in Bhubaneswar



Nestled in the heart of Odisha, the land of Jagannath and beloved attractions for tourists and business travellers alike, lies the beacon of luxury and hospitality – Lyfe Hotels and Resorts. With its commitment to excellence, Lyfe Hotels embodies the essence of exquisite living and exceptional service. As the name suggests, it offers a unique fusion of comfort and sophistication, striving to create a true home away from home for its esteemed guests.

BOTT DESK

Upon entering Lyfe Hotels, guests are enveloped in care and warmth. Every facet of the experience is meticulously curated to elevate the guest's stay, from the opulent accommodations to the flawless service. Boasting a range of options, including standard rooms, deluxe rooms, and 12 studio suites, with a presidential suite underway, Lyfe Hotels

provides every reason to savour life's moments. Guests are treated with unparalleled respect and attentiveness, as the dedicated staff takes pride in delivering intelligent and efficient service. Situated at the prime location of Janpath, a mere 10-minute drive from the airport, Lyfe Hotels ensures seamless connectivity, making it an ideal choice for both leisure and business travellers.

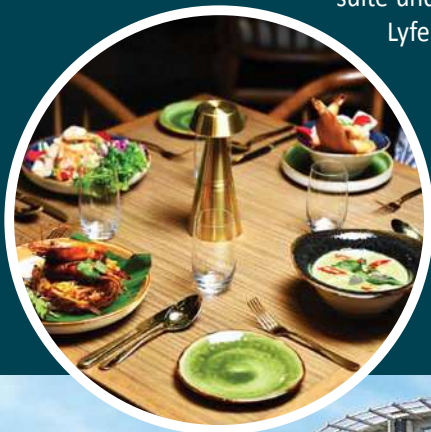
Sonal Sahoo, Director and Promoter, Lyfe Hotels says, "The genesis of Lyfe Hotels stemmed from a desire to craft a hospitality experience that seamlessly integrates the rich cultural tapestry of Bhubaneswar with sustainable living practices. Our brand distinguishes itself through its central location, personalised service, and dedication to offering

guests a blend of local flavour and eco-friendly amenities, ensuring a memorable stay that respects the environment."

Sahoo also elaborated on their sustainability initiatives and expansion plans, emphasising their commitment to cultural richness and environmental consciousness. "As we expand, we remain steadfast in our focus on locations aligned with our brand values. Our growth strategy emphasises key tourist destinations while upholding sustainability. Through green initiatives such as renewable energy sources and waste reduction programs, we not only support our growth but also contribute to preserving the planet for future generations."

In line with their dedication to guest well-being, Lyfe Hotels ensures the safety and comfort of solo women travellers through thoughtful measures. Female staff members cater to their needs, and each room is equipped with a safety kit, reflecting the hotel's commitment to guest security and care.

Looking ahead, Sahoo expressed optimism regarding tourist inflow in 2024, citing Bhubaneswar's growing appeal as a cultural and historical hub. With anticipated growth in visitor numbers, Lyfe Hotels stands ready to welcome guests with its hallmark hospitality and unwavering commitment to sustainability, setting a new standard for responsible tourism in the industry. ■



The Leela Palaces, Hotels & Resorts and GHA highlight Indian Market's tourism potential

UAE-headquartered Global Hotel Alliance (GHA), which this year marks its 20th anniversary, highlighted the Indian market's unbridled tourism potential at an event at The Leela Ambience Gurugram. Later, the two came together to address media at a joint event at The Leela Palace New Delhi Le Cirque where expansion plans, special benefits, travel trends, sustainability efforts and more was discussed widely with the media.

BOTT DESK

GHA's stellar performance in India is indicative of the industry's sharp upward trajectory, with revenue generated by its 13 Indian hotels across three brands (Leela, Araiya and Oaks) hitting a record US\$68 million revenues in 2023, up from a previous pre-pandemic (2019) high of \$65 million, while the number of GHA DISCOVERY members residing in India also reached new heights, topping more than half a million (540,000), up 21% on 2022. Indian members also spent more at GHA hotels in India and around the world than ever before, generating a record \$60 million in hotel revenues, up 46% year-on-year and surpassing the 2019 total of \$41 million.

Domestic travel in India accounts for half of travel revenue in 2023 (51%), while international travel picked up strongly and surpassed the 2019 ratio, with the US, UK and Australia the top source markets for inbound travel. Meanwhile, preferred outbound destinations for India's GHA DISCOVERY members were Singapore, Thailand and the UAE respectively.

"With India one of the world's fastest-growing domestic and international travel markets, as reflected in our 2023 results, the first Skift India Summit presented a timely opportunity for GHA and our long-term partner of 17 years, The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts, to highlight the untold potential for expansion, from elevating GHA DISCOVERY membership among



Anuraag Bhatnagar and Christopher Hartley

residents to boosting awareness of our growing India portfolio – this year increasing to 14 hotels across four brands – to our 26 million global loyalty members," said GHA CEO Chris Hartley.

During the event, Anuraag Bhatnagar, Chief Executive Officer, The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts, said, "These Indian market trends, coupled with growing appetite to visit India from GHA DISCOVERY's 26-million-strong global membership, present immense opportunities for our portfolio of hotels, which not only offer luxury accommodation, but the destination experiences that today's

travellers seek, from adventure, to cuisine, to nature."

India's hotel sector is booming, poised to contribute \$1.5 trillion to the country's economy by 2047, up from \$65 billion in 2022, according to Hotel Association of India forecasts. GHA plans to expand its hotel portfolio in India and is in discussions with several hotel brands to provide a broader range of destinations and segments for GHA DISCOVERY members. One new addition coming later this year is Anantara Hotels & Resorts opening its first property in North India later this year, the Anantara Jaipur Hotel. ■

Know what your stars say about April 2024



Tarot Card Reading is the art and science which helps understand the present status and the future course. It helps to apply course correction, if required. Tarot Card can be used for shaping Career, Health, Finance, Business,, Relationship, Marriage, Match-making, etc. **Ms. Richa Srivastava, a renowned Tarot Card Reader** conducts exclusive Tarot reading under the banner - Tathaastu. Here are her predictions for April 2024.



March 21 – April 20

Work hard and carefully plan your strategies. A drastic change in your surrounding environment would stimulate your creativity and help you achieve better results. Do not invest in risky ventures. Mutual trust and comprehension may strengthen your relationship.



July 23 – August 21

If you are willing to be flexible and open to new opportunities, this could be a turning point in your career. Expenses may arise this month. Be sure to give all of your plans a serious consideration. This is a great time to host a small get together.



November 23 – December 22

Some people may want to take this month to think things over. Know your strengths and work on your weaknesses. Those interested in beginning a professional life may soon be able to do so. Couples can plan for relaxation and better bonding.



April 21 – May 21

If you keep an optimistic outlook, you can surely achieve your goals. Get ready to put in the effort and pursue your goals. Maintaining a stable family budget is important to avoid wasteful spending. Pay attention to your partner. Take care of your health.



August 22 – September 23

There can be professional and financial benefits for you if you listen to and implement suggestions. You must strike a balance between your professional and personal lives to keep your relationship running smoothly. A likely time for meeting your prospective partner.



December 23 – January 20

Now is the time to step up confidently take on any and all professional obstacles that may lie in your path. You may be spending a little more than you earn, so it's time to look at your budget. Don't bother getting involved in debates that aren't relevant to you.



May 22 – June 21

Be cautious in your career and financial dealing this month. Those who are thinking of making a career change should hold off for a while longer. If relations within your family have been tense, it may be good idea to make plans to spend some time together.



September 24 – October 23

Start making use of your skills. Work hard to achieve your goals, even when the odds are stacked against you. To maintain peace and harmony at home, it is important to communicate openly and confidently with everyone in your family.



January 21 – February 19

Having an efficient work ethic and a keen eye for detail can help you rise in the professional ranks and even earn you recognition from your peers. Weigh your options carefully before committing. Take good care of your health.



June 22 – July 22

Positive emotions are likely to persist throughout this month for you. Examining your investment portfolio to eliminate losses may be a sensible move. If you want to feel fit and energised, sticking to an exercise routine may be essential.



October 24 – November 22

It may be a career high point for you if you manage to pull off a particularly challenging task with flying colours. Keep your goals in mind as you move forward while following the rules. You should avoid making crucial financial decisions.



February 20 – March 20

Now is the time to institute structure and discipline at home or on in the workplace may help reap benefits. This month your partner is likely to be encouraging and supportive of you. Plan to manage your finances. Start meditation.

Host State



RAJASTHAN

The Incredible State of India!



Ministry of Tourism
Government of India



13th Edition

®©

THE GREAT INDIAN

travel bazaar'24

May 5-7, 2024 | Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

BLOCK YOUR DATES
FOR INDIA'S BIGGEST INBOUND TRAVEL PLATFORM



HIGHLIGHTS

Presence of more than **250** Foreign Tour Operators across the globe

More than **11,000** Pre-Scheduled Structured face to face business meetings

300 Exhibition booths comprising of Indian DMC's, State Tourism Boards, Hotels and many more

Power Packed Inaugural Session Networking Dinner

For Sponsorship & Exhibition Please contact

Hina Gupta / Dolly Issar

91 - 9560664465/8826275246

gitbstall@ficci.com

www.greatindiantravelbazaar.com

PARTNERS

Theme State



Partner States



Diamond Partners



Gold Partners



Silver Partners



Supported By



Media Partner



#First Opinion



"IHG is leading sustainable practices, transitioning from bathroom miniatures to larger-size amenities to reduce single-use plastic waste. This commitment will be implemented across IHG's entire estate, removing an estimated 200 million tiny bottles of shampoo, conditioner, body wash, and lotion per year. IHG was the first global hotel company to commit to removing bathroom miniatures in 2019, a crucial step in its pledge to eliminate single-use items throughout the guest stay by 2030. Additionally, IHG's Journey to Tomorrow Responsible Business plan plays a significant role in preserving biodiversity."

Anand G Nair, General Manager, InterContinental Chennai Mahabalipuram Resort



"Royal Orchid Hotels is planning to add 30-35 new properties with about 2,000 rooms in the 2024-25 fiscal as part of its expansion plans across India. We are expanding very fast and have already crossed 100 hotels mark. In terms of places where these new hotels will come up. We're looking at all over India. In fact, we trying to focus on places where we are not present right now like Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and some other places. These new properties will be across various segments under the management contract."

Chander K Baljee, Chairman and Managing Director, Royal Orchid Hotels



"Today is a momentous day for us as we launch three hotels simultaneously. This is a rare achievement, and we owe it all to our dedicated and hardworking teams who have worked tirelessly to make this possible. We express our sincere appreciation and thanks to the owning companies who have placed their trust in our brand and people, and have contributed significantly to Sarovar's growth. We remain committed to providing value to all our stakeholders and every member of the Sarovar family. Together, we will continue on this journey towards success and growth."

Ajay K Bakaya, Managing Director, Sarovar Hotels and Director Louvre Hotels India



"The recent move by Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) to take passengers back from plane to boarding area in case of a delay is a very welcome move as it surely is very frustrating & suffocating for passengers to be stuck in an aircraft due to technical glitches and then repeat the whole check-in process. We are still waiting for clearer guidelines as to time period to be kept in consideration before implementing this process in case of a delay. In future too, more inputs should be taken from TAAI as an association to make travel seamless and a pleasant experience with better technology and coordination."

Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI



"I am incredibly honoured and excited to serve as the next President and CEO of Brand USA. The U.S. is one of the world's premier travel destinations that will only continue to draw and delight visitors from across the globe, and we are well positioned for future growth and success. I want to thank Chris for his many years of leadership and his friendship. I look forward to joining this team and working across the industry to propel us forward."

Fred Dixon, President & CEO, Brand USA

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

AIR INDIA 

FLY PREMIUM ON OUR UPGRADED B777s

NON-STOP

BOM  USA

**EXPERIENCE
PREMIUM
ECONOMY**

**ENHANCED
MENU**

**TUMI
AMENITIES**

**SPACIOUS
SEATS**

BOOK NOW



www.airindia.com

*T&C Apply.

Looking for comfort and convenience for your clients' visa submission process?

Choose VFS Global's

VISA AT YOUR DOORSTEP

service

With **Visa At Your Doorstep**, as an optional service, the VFS Global team will visit your clients' location to complete the entire visa submission including the biometric process, as per their convenience and flexibility. Your clients do not need to visit our Visa Application Centre, as VFS Global's team will visit their location.

Available on weekdays, weekends, and public holidays.

Service includes:

- ✓ Visa submission process
- ✓ Biometric information (fingerprint & digital photograph)
- ✓ Passport collection & delivery

The 'Visa At Your Doorstep' service is offered for 18 destination countries in India:

Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland and the United Kingdom (On Demand Mobile Visa).



Scan to know more

Book 'Visa At Your Doorstep' for your clients now

Visit: www.vfsglobal.com/visa-at-your-doorstep/

For exclusive deals and incentives, write to us on:

b2bsales@vfsglobal.com