

the business travel magazine

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# MICetalk

Meetings • Incentives • Conferences • Events

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## High on MICE

Priti Khanna • Monimita Sarkar • Meera Charnalia • Mansi Arora  
Vibha Bhatia • Ritu Saigal • Sunaina Chatterjee

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# editorial

the business travel magazine  
**MICE**talk  
Meetings • Incentives • Conferences • Events

Dear Reader,

MICE had reasons to smile in June. It was Global Exhibition Day on June 8. And India was among the countries celebrating this day. India has huge potential as a 365-day destination. And the country can leverage this potential for growth in MICE too. Our cover story revolves around the soft gender in this segment. Women have been scaling heights in most places but MICE is among few of the tougher industries to be in. Like hospitality and the services sector, it demands a lot of time and frequent travel. And for Indian women, this is a constraint. Nevertheless there are bravehearts here and these women have spent many years in the industry. They have groomed themselves, studied global practices and are now imparting the same skills to others too. They have seen the industry evolve and are now watching it grow.

Among the destinations, not far from India, where MICE is gaining ground are Dubai and Ras Al Khaimah. The two emirates offer exciting activities and plenty of venues for meetings and gatherings. But India doesn't lack good venues either. There are many hotels as most cities are now geared for business. In Hyderabad, hotel brands are focusing on getting more MICE business. And close to Delhi, Jaipur is gaining ground. It is not only a tourism hub but is emerging as a business hub as well.

Our experts are giving their valuable insights on creating a balance between work and life and trying to minimise errors in our professional lives. Darren Edwards talks about evaluating sessions on a regular basis. It is vital to know what all goes into the making of sessions and the final outcome for proper ROI. Shivani Misri Sadhoo is focusing on one of the most common problems when many people are around—trying hard not to lose your temper. She gives some cool down tips so you don't fall into this trap. Shital Kakkar Mehra has touched upon one of the most common issues today—how to grow your professional network online. Social media is the new trend but who to add in your network and what is the correct way to grow is the important aspect.

Keep reading and giving us your feedback.  
Write to us at [micetalk@ddppl.com](mailto:micetalk@ddppl.com)

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# contents

JULY 2016



## *highlights...*

- 6** NEWS  
**News from the world of MICE**
- 12** LEAD STORY  
**High on MICE**
- 18** NTD  
**Ras Al Khaimah**
- 24** CITY  
**Dubai: Close to India**
- 28** MONEY EXCHANGE  
**bookmyforex.com offers same day service**
- 30** VENUE  
**Novotel Hyderabad Airport**



**32**



**38**



**34**



**36**



**40**

**32** HOTEL  
**Taj Krishna in Telangana**

**34** HOTEL  
**Jaipur Marriott**

**36** AVIATION  
**Air Manas flies to Bishkek**

**38** EXHIBITION  
**10th edition of Starwood Expo**

**40** EVENT  
**GBTA's spotlight on India**

**42** ICPB TALK  
**MICE traffic to India**

## *Regular*

**46** COUNSELLOR  
**Shivani Misri Sadhoo  
on handling your temper  
in a meeting**



**48** TECH EXPERT  
**Darren Edwards on  
session evaluation**



**50** EXPERT  
**Shital Kakkar Mehra  
on online professional  
networking**





# NEWS

## BIEC celebrates Global Exhibition Day

■ The first ever Global Exhibitions Day was held across many countries on 8 June 2016. UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE), and other leading associations and industry players joined hands to launch this event to raise awareness about the value of exhibitions to various stakeholders as well as acknowledge the efforts of those who work in the exhibitions industry. Speaking about the Global Exhibitions Day, Minister for Heavy Industries and Tourism, R.V. Deshpande said, "Bengaluru is known as the Silicon Valley of India for its contribution to the country's IT and BT sector. Government of Karnataka will extend all possible support for making this city a great MICE destination in the years to come."



## Accor renews agreement with CCC

■ AccorHotels and Cyberabad Convention Centre (a joint venture between Telangana State Industrial Infrastructure Corporation Ltd – TSIIIC Ltd and Emaar Properties PJSC, Dubai), announced the renewal of their agreement for the management of the Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre and the Hyderabad International Convention Centre. This follows the successful completion of a 10-year commitment to manage and operate the 287-room hotel and the 15-acre state-of-the-art convention facility in Hyderabad. Cyberabad Convention Centre and AccorHotels also announced a refurbishment programme for the hotel and the convention centre.



## ITPO now has a CISF unit library

■ Shubhra Singh, Executive Director, India Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO) inaugurated a library of the CISF Unit at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. Neeta Singh, DIG, CISF, stressed the need to have better coordination between the CISF and ITPO security personnel through regular orientation programmes. She underscored the need for better skills coordination between security personnel and ITPO to safeguard the exhibition complex, especially when the complex has geared up to its redevelopment plan.

## India at 'Intermoda' in Mexico, January 2017



■ India Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO) is holding India's country level participation in the Intermoda International Apparel & Textile Fair at Expo Guadalajara Exhibition Centre, Guadalajara (Mexico) in January 2017. The participation will offer opportunities for Indian companies to export apparel, textile, leather garments, fashion accessories blouses, skirts, evening wear, woollen shawls, tie and dye items, fashion jewellery, wooden block printed garments, terracotta items.



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# NEWS

## Mercure Hyderabad KCP: Another business hotel for the city

■ Located in the heart of city's shopping, historic and business district, Mercure Hyderabad KCP has five contemporary meeting rooms and banquet halls that can accommodate up to 150 guests. All meeting rooms are equipped with state-of-the-art conferencing technologies. The meeting rooms boast of abundant natural light and ventilation along with panoramic views of the city.



## Le Meridien returns to Singapore



■ Le Méridien® Hotels & Resorts, part of Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc., announced an agreement with Treasure Resort Pte Ltd. for Le Méridien Singapore, Sentosa, following the renovation and conversion of the hotel. The agreement marks the highly anticipated return of the Le Méridien brand to Singapore after nearly a decade. The hotel offers convenient access to the Central Business District and the downtown area via a quick transfer at Harbourfront MRT station.



## AVANI Hotels & Resorts to launch first hotel in ME

■ Minor Hotels, a hotel owner, operator and investor, currently with a portfolio of 146 hotels and resorts in 22 countries across Asia Pacific, the Middle East, Europe, South America, Africa and the Indian Ocean, announced that it will handle the operations of the 216-room Mövenpick Hotel Deira in Dubai. This upscale hotel offers 216 guest rooms and two unique dining



## Facilitating large groups

■ Moving a large group of 714 people has its own challenges, elucidates Vivekk Gupta, Founder and Chairman, Vinayak Travels. The Chennai-based tour operator recently facilitated the four-day visit of this group to Agra, Mathura, Vrindavan, Rishikesh, Haridwar and Delhi. "The itinerary included movement by road, rail and air, keeping in mind the costs," he adds. Exclusive check-in counters were organised at IGI airport, Delhi. There were provisions for wheel chair, medical assistance and a duty manager was assigned too. The group was given special t-shirts and regional language speakers also assisted them. In 2015, the company established an office in the US as well.



# "A theme for M.I.C.E."

Awarded Best Luxury Wedding & MICE Resort 2015 (North & East)

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# NEWS

## Oman gets a convention bureau

■ Oman has a new Oman Convention Bureau by the Ministry of Tourism, Oman. Talking about the initiative, Salim Al Mamari, Director General of Tourism Promotion–Ministry of Tourism, Oman says, “Our ‘Tourism Strategy’ for 2040 has MICE as a major pillar for the future to help us grow and enhance the industry. The objective of the bureau is to support the international and local organisations in hosting their events and cater to their requirements. The main aim is to promote Oman as an ideal destination for the MICE tourism sector.”



## Tunisia offers Visa on Arrival for Indians



■ Tunisia is offering Visa on Arrival for Indians who are travelling in a group of at least 20 people. Addressing a gathering of travel agents and media, Tarek Azouz, Ambassador, Tunisia to India, said, “We have introduced visa on arrival facility for groups. If a travel agent has a group of 20 people, they can send prior information to the embassy and they can get visa at the immigration counter.” Tushar Jain, Group Managing Director, BTC Group, said that Tunisia is trying to attract mice groups from India. “Travel agents can easily apply visa for a group of minimum 20 people. They just need to produce their hotel voucher at the immigration counter and get visa on arrival.”

## Ras Al Khaimah: Growth of 37% in visitor arrivals

■ Ras Al Khaimah has recorded a growth of 37 per cent in visitor arrivals from India during the period of January to April 2016, a remarkable surge over the same period last year, according to Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (TDA). The positive figures indicate that 2016 is witnessing a strong start from India, the fourth largest international inbound market for Ras Al Khaimah. In line with the current tourism development strategy, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Authority recently conducted roadshows and one-on-one interactions with Indian travel trade partners to educate them about the tourist offerings of the emirate.







## ICCA: Spain ranks 4th in the world with 572 meetings in 2015

■ ICCA captured a record number of 12,076 rotating international association meetings taking place in 2015; the largest number of association meetings collected in the year after the meetings took place ever and 571 additional meetings compared to 2014. According to the latest ICCA Ranking Report (2015), Spanish cities Barcelona and Madrid remain in the Top 10 of city rankings in the world, Barcelona at third position and Madrid at fifth position with 180 and 171 meetings in 2015 respectively which ranked Spain in fourth position in the world according to the latest ICCA Ranking Report (2015).



## Trinidad and Tobago: The new popular cruise destination

■ Trinidad and Tobago's popularity as a port of call continues to grow as Princess Cruises announces its 2017-2018 Americas cruise calendar. Some of the world's most luxurious cruise ships added Trinidad and Tobago to their itineraries including the MSC Orchestra, with a capacity of over 2,000 passengers and the World Odyssey which functions as both a travelling university and residential home to over 700 undergraduate students. The Saga Sapphire and Seven Ocean Princess also made a return to Trinidad and Tobago's waters.



## Mountain meetings at RK Sarovar Portico Srinagar

■ Boasting beautiful snow-clad mountain views, RK Sarovar Portico Srinagar, offers fully furnished rooms with air conditioning and free Wi-Fi access. The hotel can cater to conferences and small or medium sized gatherings. Saddam Zaroo, Managing Director, says, "Our boardroom 'Mustafa' has ample space. There is also a round table fixed seating with the maximum capacity of 14. The banquet hall is known as 'Akram' with theatre-style seating of 110, cluster of 65 and round table is 45."

## Business at Lords Hotels & Resorts, Agra

■ Lords Hotels and Resorts' property in Agra – Hotel PL Palace is as inviting for MICE travellers and foreign tourists due to its close proximity to Delhi," says P R Bansal, Managing Director, Lords Hotels and Resorts. The 56-room hotel offers Wi-Fi connectivity, LCD TVs with satellite channels, centralised air-conditioning with individual temperature control and 24-hour room service.





# High on MICE

It's time consuming and unorganised, nevertheless women walk the MICE path with poise, undeterred by the multiple challenges that come their way





### Ambica Gulati

**E**ven though the 21st century is all about globalisation and gender parity, the soft gender is constantly striving to maintain a work-life balance. And it's a notch harder when women enter a time consuming industry such as MICE. It was way back in 2011 that Susan Sarfati, CEO, High Performance Strategies and Liz Jackson, President, Jackson Consulting Inc, conducted a survey of 140 women working in the meetings, events and incentive travel industry. The survey showed that many women shared concerns about achieving a sustainable work-life balance and the major challenge standing before them was time management, especially with the 'always-on' social media. "But the MICE segment is inviting more women to this industry which was earlier male dominated. Having led the international MICE vertical at Thomas Cook India for over eight years, I can vouch that while they may still not be at par in absolute numbers, there has been a certain parity established between the two genders in this segment," says Meera Charnalia, Senior Vice President-MICE, Thomas Cook India.

### UPS AND DOWNS

But has anything ever deterred the soft gender? Veterans in the arena don't think so. Priti Khanna, Chairperson, MCI Management India has spent more than two decades



India needs proper certifications and programmes as these add to the professional quotient

**Priti Khanna**  
Chairperson, MCI Management India



in the industry and cites social constraints such as home and security issues and frequent travel.

“However, there have traditionally been more women in the ‘meetings industry’ across the globe, especially in the developed nations. The gender ratio there would be 60 per cent women and 40 per cent men and it’s been a slow turn for India,” says Khanna.

But even then, women are better suited to this kind of work, say the women in the profession. Women have strengths which are apt for connecting with people. Highlighting women as nurturers, communicators, creators and climbers of the corporate ladder, Mansi Arora, Director-North India, Starwood Sales Organization, Starwood Hotels & Resorts India, finds MICE a great place to be in. “Support from the family can play a big role in helping women play a stronger role and have a sustainable career in the industry,” adds Arora.

Despite the natural flair, Monimita Sarkar, Managing Director, KW Conferences, opines, “Women in MICE hold senior and decision-making positions but this percentage is not very high. One finds more women in middle or entry levels. Certain segments like operations for exhibitions have few women. But globally there is a predominance of women in the meetings industry. Case in point is the presidents of three large meeting industry associations, ICCA, IAPCO and The World PCO Alliance, who are women, all duly elected to the highest posts.”

Citing the strengths of women, Vibha Bhatia, Vice President, Alpcord Network, says that a lot of young women are joining the MICE industry as a full time career and she is one of them. “Women have better negotiation skills and they are very good in the art of perseverance, this gives us an edge with our clients in order to negotiate and close the deals. There is also a great amount of trust factor when women are at the forefront, this helps in building long term professional relationship with the clients. We are better listeners, better collaborators and multi-taskers. There are many women working in





The missing factor is seriousness in meetings. Most of the times, there is inadequate information and lack of professionalism

Ritu Saigal  
Director, TWU Travel With Us /Events With Us

the MICE industry across the globe and therefore, it gets easier for us to compete, build trust and negotiate with our counterparts globally.”

But it's not a smooth road. There are glitches. Ritu Saigal, Director, TWU Travel With Us/Events With Us, says that the missing factor is seriousness in meetings. “Most of the times, there is inadequate information and lack of professionalism.”

Sunaina Chatterjee, Chief Executive Officer, Incentives and Conference Planners highlights some myths and says that clients and people around need to cut through the barriers. “People still feel that it is a man's world and women can't finish the work on time, can't negotiate well. But if you are consistent on the path, the advantages come in the form of fame, respect and financial freedom,” adds Chatterjee.

## INTERNATIONAL MIRROR

Training, certification and awareness, these are some of the global practices that India needs to strengthen for women to gain ground. Khanna says that “India needs proper certifications and



We get networking opportunities to meet like-minded people and stalwarts on national and international platforms

Vibha Bhatia  
Vice President, Alpcord Network

programmes as these add to the professional quotient. Globally, these give you an edge.”

And taking steps to fill this gap, the India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB) recently organised a training programme for entry level management, co-chaired by Khanna and Sarkar who are both part of the ICPB training and development committee.

Charnalia stresses upon acumen and aptitude as the driving forces in this vertical. “By adopting global practices, innovative thinking and thorough research, Indian women can easily compete with their counterparts globally,” she adds.

Meeting their counterparts at an international level is also an opportunity to fly higher. Bhatia opines, “The biggest advantage is that we get to collaborate with women in the top leadership internationally. We get great networking opportunities to meet like-minded people and



People still feel that it is a man's world and women can't finish the work on time, can't negotiate well

**Sunaina Chatterjee**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Incentives and Conference Planners

A strong subvention policy on the government's part will help. Levy of taxes has to be more balanced too

**Monimita Sarkar**  
Managing Director, KW Conferences



## INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT

As the tide constantly changes, the journey has many twists and turns. Having started her career in 1994, Sarkar has seen many landmarks in 25 years. "When I joined the industry the concept of the Professional Conference Organizer was not present. The Ministry of External Affairs would get professional organisers from the UK. Gradually this changed, though the arrival of the full service company offering turnkey services took several more years to become an established concept. Associations would give

stalwarts of the industry on various national and international platforms. We enjoy hospitality and travel perks."

out piecemeal services to a range of vendors, with the PCO having basic oversight. This has now evolved to a stage where the PCO is developing bids on behalf of the associations to bring their international conferences to the country," she explains.

Now there is the option of more venues, competition in the market with PCOs, event management companies, travel companies, exhibition companies offering specialised services, say the veterans in a single voice. "A significant reason for growth has been the strong appeal of 'foreign' travel as a reward and performance incentive," says Charnalia.

Also the rise of the hospitality sector has given an impetus to the sector. "With world class hotels,





While women may still not be at par in absolute numbers, there has been a certain parity established between the genders

*Meera Charnalia  
Senior Vice President-MICE, Thomas Cook India*



We have MICE bodies, conventions and bureaus working with the government

*Mansi Arora  
Director-North India, Starwood Sales  
Organization, Starwood Hotels & Resorts India*

India is now among the top MICE destinations in Asia, following closely on the heels of Dubai, Malaysia and Hong Kong. Not only have we seen cities evolve with MICE such as Hyderabad, Kochi but there are other tier II cities that are embracing the MICE culture. We now have many MICE bodies, conventions and bureaus working with the government to bring large conventions to the country. And with the growth and changes in outbound travel related such as addition of international low cost airlines it is now very much in reach of meeting planners with not very

big budgets," says Arora optimistically. But a lot more is needed. "Support from media and the government will help. A strong subvention policy on the government's part will help to attract many more MICE events to our country. Recognition of the many benefits to our economy is the need of the hour. Levy of taxes has to be more balanced, keeping in view the cascading effect when it finally reaches the person making the payment," adds Sarkar. Saigal goes on to add that the industry has increased in turnover but not in processes and systems.

To sum it all up in Sarfati's words, "The 21st century is indeed the century for women to make a major impact and we need to maximise how we can take advantage of this to move ourselves forward, and the meetings industry overall."



# RAS AL KHAIMAH

## The emirate . experience



Haitham Mattar

**Haitham Mattar**, CEO,  
Ras Al Khaimah  
Tourism  
Development  
Authority  
shares the  
USP of this  
emirate and  
the capacity  
it has for  
business events





### What advantages does Ras al Khaimah offer vis a vis the other emirates?

Ras Al Khaimah, the northernmost emirate of the UAE, is just a 45-minute drive from Dubai International Airport and one hour from Dubai's downtown. Along with natural attractions and activities, Ras Al Khaimah boasts a number of ancient archaeological sites, giving visitors a fascinating insight into rich culture.

Ras Al Khaimah has successfully leveraged the appeal of its leisure offerings to international business travellers and has now emerged as one of the top destinations in the international marketplace. Tour operators and companies from all industries now prefer Ras Al Khaimah for their corporate events, conferences, advisory board meetings, incentives, product launches and teambuilding events.

Ras Al Khaimah has over 5,000 rooms across 41 properties, with more than 3,000 rooms in the pipeline across 12 properties by 2019. Building on the strengths and achievements of 2015, the emirate is attracting more investment into the region due to its unique offering for the visitors.

### What is there on offer for Indian MICE operators?

Indian MICE operators can choose what the emirate has to offer based on the need of the group. Business meetings can be held in one of the many meeting rooms of our 5-star and 4-star hotels. The incentive groups can pick some of the best hotels and choose beach and water activities and experience adventure in the mountains and desert or simply soak up the culture and traditions of a few thousand years.

With the Al Marjan Tent, Ras Al Khaimah can be a venue for medium size congresses and the smaller ones easily could be facilitated in our lovely hotels.

### What would Indian business travellers like best about Ras Al Khaimah? Are there special provisions for people with special food preferences such as vegetarians or Jains?

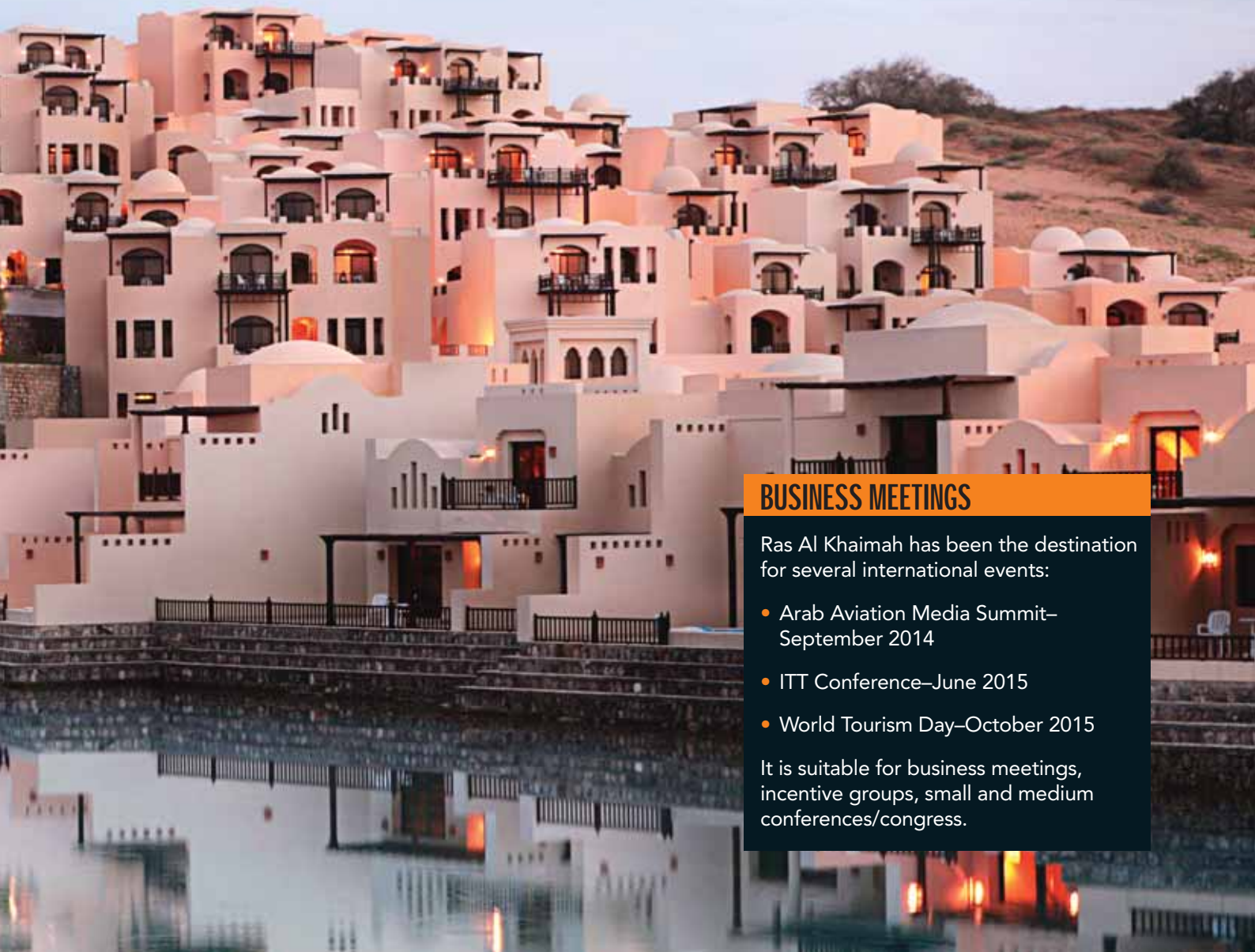
Ras Al Khaimah's strength lies in its versatility and richness of culture. The hotel accommodation ranges from the luxurious and idyllic to the more functional properties. In addition, there are many recreation activities like desert safari, falcon shows,

## BUSINESS MEETINGS

Ras Al Khaimah has been the destination for several international events:

- Arab Aviation Media Summit– September 2014
- ITT Conference–June 2015
- World Tourism Day–October 2015

It is suitable for business meetings, incentive groups, small and medium conferences/congress.







water sports, seaplane rides, cruise dinners that Indians can indulge in. Ras Al Khaimah has many dining options: from traditional Arabic cuisine to the finest steakhouses. Their cuisine is known for its delicious dishes and recipes passed from one generation to another. Therefore, traces of Indian, Egyptian, Iranian and Turkish influences can also be found in local dishes. Special preferences of vegetarians can also be taken care of at almost all the renowned dining places.

#### **Would a large group be able to hold a conference within the premises of the hotels?**

As mentioned earlier, the emirate has 5,000 rooms across 41 hotels. This number of hotel rooms will increase by 3,500 rooms by 2019 across 12 hotels including hospitality market leading brands such as Marriott, Accor, Crown Plaza and City Max Hotels. The emirate offers two of the UAE's most luxurious hotels in the beachfront Waldorf

Astoria, the Banyan Tree Ras Al Khaimah Beach Resort as well as the Banyan Tree Al Wadi in the heart of the desert.

In addition, the man-made Al Marjan Island is expected to have 20 hotels by 2025. Built in 2013 and made up of four individual islands (Treasure, Breeze, Dream and View), Al Marjan Island provides the ultimate experience of opulent leisure, with 5-star hotels, spas and restaurants. DoubleTree by Hilton, Rixos Bab Al Bahar and Accor Marjan Island Resort and Spa are all located on Al Marjan Island.

#### **Can Ras al Khaimah be a good wedding destination for Indians?**

Ras Al Khaimah has the magic to make memories last for a lifetime. The pristine beaches, romantic sunsets, natural landscapes make it a perfect location for weddings.





*The emirate has 5,000 rooms across 41 hotels. This number of hotel rooms will increase by 3,500 rooms by 2019 across 12 hotels including hospitality market leading brands such as Marriott, Accor, Crown Plaza and City Max Hotels*



## VISA REQUIREMENTS

**Passport:** Copy of first and last page of passport with the validity of minimum six months from the date of travel.

**Photo Specification:** Copy of passport size photographs with 60%-80% face coverage, light background and without border (Size: 35mm x 45mm).

**Please Note:** Photograph should not be more than three months old, scanned/stapled and should not be used in any of the previous visas.

**Ticket:** Confirmed Return Air Ticket.

- Visa can be applied online.
- Duration of Stay: 30 Days
- Visa is valid for a period of 58 days from the date of issue.

Source: Udaan

The opulence and grandeurs of the hotels in the Ras Al Khaimah makes the emirate a natural fit for big Indian weddings. Waldorf Astoria, Ras Al Khaimah, Banyan Tree Ras Al Khaimah Beach, The Cove Ratana Resort are some of the great locations to host an Indian wedding.

### What is the USP of Ras al Khaimah for business travellers?

With year-long sunshine and 64 km of white sandy beaches, Ras Al Khaimah has enjoyed a steady stream of visitors from within the region and beyond in recent years. Home to the highest mountain in the UAE, Jebel Jais is one of Ras Al Khaimah's most unique features.

With warm summers and moderate winters, sun-seeking tourists flock to Ras Al Khaimah for its blue skies, clear seas and endless variety of activities. It is truly a destination offering

activities to suit all tastes, adventure seekers and spa-goers.

The emirate has a rich history with evidence of ancient civilisations that date back to the Ubaid period from 5000-3800 BC. A real look into the past, 9,000 years, to be exact, the remnants of the emirate's earliest settlers can still be seen today, from pearls that match those from the Mesopotamia period, tombs from the Iron Age and daily items from The Later Islamic Period. One of the most popular sites is the Palace of the Queen of Sheba (the palace and private abode of Queen Zenobia). It sits at the top of a hill 200 metres above the village of Shamal and provides a breathtaking view.

One can venture to the highest peak in UAE, Jebel Jais, nearly 2,000 metres tall. Another Ras Al Khaimah's natural treasure is a 90-foot-deep natural sulphur water spring. Its castle-like structure is nestled in the mountainous village of Khatt, adjacent to the Hajar mountains, just 20 minutes from the city. Complete the experience with a precious hot stone treatment! Afterwards, gulf residents traditionally set up a picnic against the dazzling sunset with food and refreshments provided by a local café.

Built in 2013 and made up of four individual islands (Treasure, Breeze, Dream and View), Al Marjan Island provides the ultimate experience with 5-star hotels, spas and restaurants. Double Tree by Hilton, Rixos Bab Al Bahar and Marjan Island Resort and Spa all call the island home, each offering a bespoke variety of indulgent experiences. Spend an afternoon at Rixos' authentic Turkish Hammam, on the golf course at the Hilton or at one of Marjan Island Resort's eight restaurants. They are surrounded by a bright blue sea and set against the spectacular backdrop of the Arabian Peninsula.

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UAE Dirham	18.4194	18.3159

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Sudarshan Motwani

**Hazel Jain**

With outbound travel taking off on a high note, it isn't far for foreign exchange companies to mushroom and create a USP for their product. One such company is *BookMyForex.com*. Launched in October 2012 in Gurgaon, it compares exchange rates and service quality metrics across hundreds of banks and exchange companies and connects the customer with the most ideal forex vendor in real time. But this is not its uniqueness. This marketplace for retail foreign exchange and private remittances offers a zero margin service which allows customers to buy forex at exact inter-bank rates.

Founded by father-son duo Sudarshan and Nitin Motwani and funded by Faering Capital (Deepak Parekh), BookMyForex is primarily a B2B portal. **Sudarshan Motwani**, Founder and CEO, BookMyForex, says, "Any retail customer with no matter how small forex requirements will now be able to receive forex at dead accurate live inter-bank or mid-market rates that currently only ultra large corporates could manage or at a rate at which banks buy/sell currencies in lots of USD one million or above. This is achieved at the back of very high volumes that BookMyForex as single entity manages for our channel partners, banks/

RBI authorised and reputed exchange companies."

He adds that banks and moneychangers keep margins of two to five per cent in cities to as high as 10 to 12 per cent at airport counters. "They also often charge fees over and above these rates. Through our arrangements with banks and exchange companies, we have access to wholesale rates," reveals Motwani.

"Also, in most cases, local moneychangers quote inter-bank rates without being linked up to a live data feed and where corporates just have to take their word. Those rates can be inaccurate and most corporates fail to check. We take live fx rate screen to their computers and mobile phones," Motwani explains.

Talking about the kind of companies that are best suited for this kind of a set, he adds, "We are a good option for corporates that are looking for transparency and hassle-free service. Our model also does not require any agents."

BookMyForex is now working towards having a presence in bigger tier II and III cities. While it conducts all its business using online tools, it also plans to have a physical task force soon.

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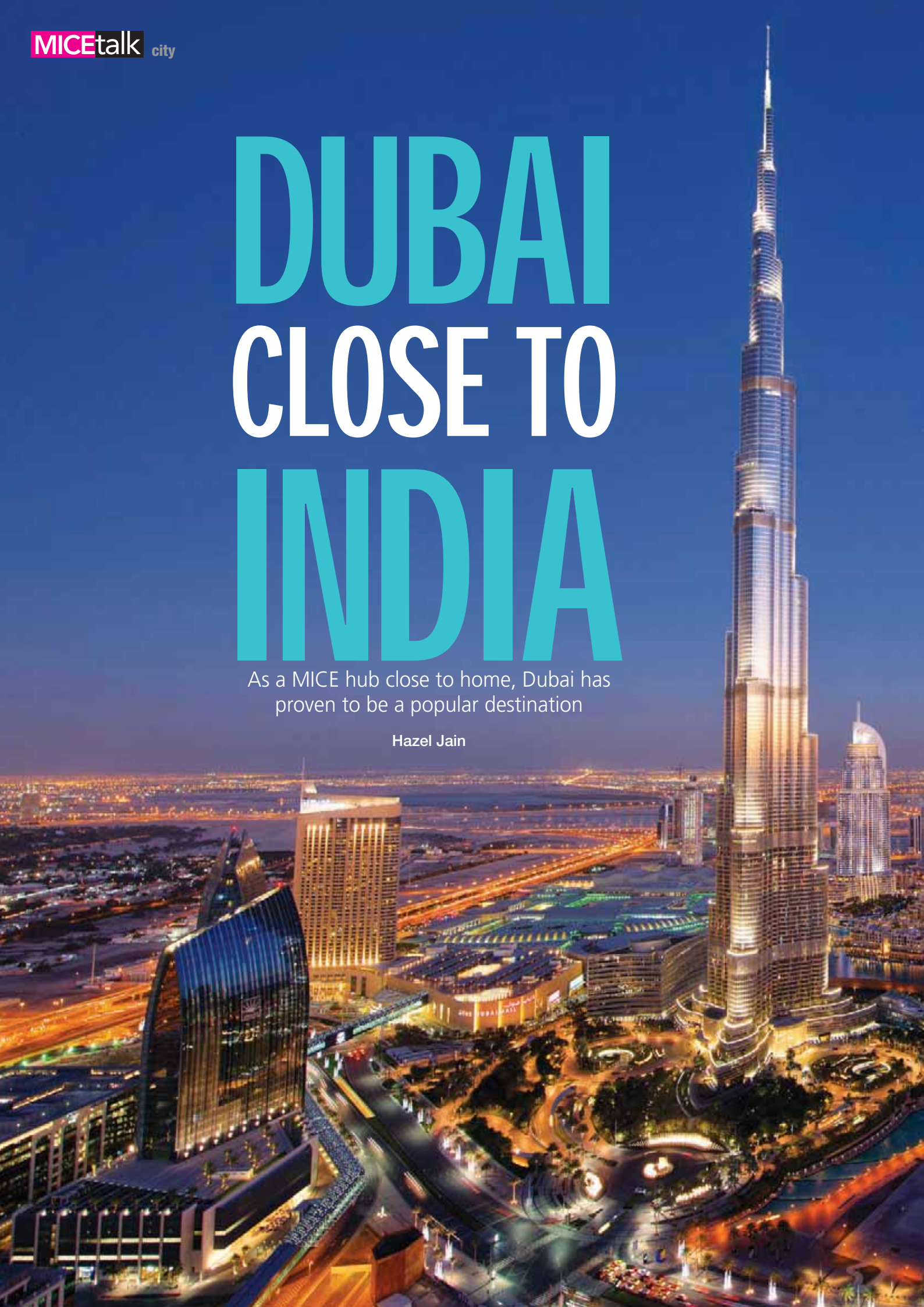
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# DUBAI CLOSE TO INDIA

As a MICE hub close to home, Dubai has proven to be a popular destination

Hazel Jain





When it comes to MICE, Dubai counts itself among the top five destinations in the international marketplace. India is the top international source market for Dubai as per the latest 2015 annual figures revealed by Dubai's Department of Tourism & Commerce Marketing (Dubai Tourism). With a year-on-year growth of 26 per cent, bringing in over 1.6 million tourists, India was the second fastest growing top 10 source market for Dubai Tourism in 2015.

With a goal to sustain and grow this level of popularity is Dubai Business Events (DBE). As a division of the Dubai's Department of Tourism & Commerce Marketing, DBE has the mandate to establish Dubai as a premier business event destination by promoting the destination and attracting international meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions that can help in growing economic development, jobs and knowledge creation in the emirate. A secondary goal for DBE is to grow the emirate into a global knowledge hub by showcasing Dubai's strategy is fully synced with the broader agenda of emirate, and in line with the Dubai Vision 2021.

The DBE team has a full calendar of events to engage with people across the business events sector. DBE attends leading international industry events to promote DBE's capacity to assist with meeting planning and Dubai's

diverse business event offering. DBE also hosts study missions in Dubai, bringing hosted buyers and meeting planners to the city to discover Dubai first-hand. Additionally, DBE team members participate in sales missions to meet directly with local stakeholders.

DBE, Dubai's official convention bureau, offers accessible service that partners with, and facilitates partnerships for, business event planners and companies around the world.

## TOP CONVENTION CENTERS

- Fort Island–Conference Centre at Madinat Jumeirah:** A unique outdoor venue surrounded by waterways and located at the heart of Madinat Jumeirah, this 1,750 square meters versatile event space can accommodate up to 1,400 guests. The space is the perfect venue to hosts cars, large marquees, music concerts, weddings, festivals, expeditions and much more. Connected by four bridges, the venue is accessible via Souk Madinat Jumeirah, Mina A 'Salam and the Conference & Event Centre.
- Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC)**  
 The Dubai World Trade Centre's (DWTC) recent 15,500 square metre extension increased exhibition capacity to over 122,000 square metres. With this infrastructure expansion and further development of the DWTC complex, the







Steen Jakobsen

# STRONG pipeline

**Steen Jakobsen**, Director, Dubai Business Events

## Can you share some statistics about the Indian MICE travellers to Dubai?

Based on the results of a research conducted by DIVS (Dubai International Visitors Survey) FY 2015, 27.4 per cent of Indian visitors are business travelers which equates to 438,555 visitors in 2015.

## What makes Dubai a great destination?

Dubai is home to significant industry clusters within healthcare, IT, trade and financial services. The industry has been further convinced by Dubai's hygiene factors comprising including global connectivity, with regular flights to 240 destinations, state-of-the-art facilities and world-class infrastructure. Dubai is also establishing a reputation as a knowledge hub, which is a leading factor for attracting more business events.

DBE works with large incentive groups to provide customised itineraries that can cater

to any industry or trip type. Incentive groups are interested in cultural/heritage/historical aspects of Dubai. Long-haul incentives generally provide participants with 'once in a lifetime' experiences and experiences that are far removed to what they would typically experience in a short-haul destination such as shopping, dining and lounging in the sun.

## From which part of the world do you get more MICE traffic?

Most of the events that were bid for and brought in to Dubai are predominantly derived from the Middle East & North African (MENA) region, followed by Europe and North America. A total of 64 bids and proposals for international association congresses were submitted in 2015 by DBE, and we are building a stronger pipeline. We are expected to submit more than 75 bids and proposals this year alone.



“

*Incentive planners are also interested in activities that are unique to Dubai, such as hot air balloon rides over the desert, seaplanes and skydiving*

”

region's largest venue operator continues to act as a key growth driver for Dubai's events industry, helping the city to position itself as a dominant force in the international events delivery arena.

## THINGS TO DO POST EVENTS

The city's expanding cultural and heritage offerings remain a major draw for visitors, with 49 per cent of business travellers engaging in the rich sites of the souks and old Dubai, which is set to further increase with the launch of key rejuvenation projects. Incentive planners are also interested in activities that are unique to Dubai, such as hot air balloon rides over the desert, seaplanes and skydiving over the Palm, desert safari dinners, and falconry demonstrations. Also popular are afternoons spent at the Al Fahidi Historical District

in Old Dubai and Dubai Creek. The city's beaches and marinas continue to be a major draw for international travellers. The city's long-standing icons, The Palm Jumeirah and The Burj Al Arab hotel remain strong visitations drivers.

As such, in 2015, the multi-experience Downtown Dubai remained the city's most iconic destination, with the world's largest shopping centre, Dubai Mall, at the forefront. With its rich shopping offering, year round family activities, including the captivating Dubai Aquarium, it remained the most visited attraction with 86 per cent of all international travellers going there. The adjacent Dubai Fountain came in second place at 67 per cent and one of the world's most 'selfied' attractions and largest tower, Burj Khalifa, saw over 30 per cent visitation.





## DID YOU KNOW?

Dubai remains one of the most connected cities in the world for Indians with seven airlines currently providing 99 non-stop large capacity flights per week to the top cities in India with a flight time of under four hours.

## NEW PRODUCT OFFERINGS

Overall, Dubai attracted more than 14.2 million overnight visitors, recording a strong 7.5 per cent increase over 2014. His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General, Dubai Tourism, said “South Asia, especially India, has performed phenomenally well. India has always been a key market for us and we believe our efforts to adopt a highly segment-specific approach in cities with the highest connectivity and latent capacity, as well as building stronger trade ties in market with digital travel intermediaries, have yielded results and the trend will continue.”

The year 2015 also saw progressive bilateral talks between the two nations spurred by the state visit from Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the UAE. Tourism-related infrastructure and capacity

enhancement investment is expected to gain momentum in 2016 through more segment-specific offerings such as culture and heritage attractions and theme parks, in addition to continued focus on strengthening the business environment.

Dubai will soon open doors to four exciting new theme parks. IMG Worlds of Adventure, Bollywood Parks Dubai along with Hollywood-inspired motiongate Dubai and family favourite LEGOLAND Dubai by Dubai Parks & Resorts. LEGOLAND will allow families to take part in Dubai Tourism will be further strengthening its festivals calendar that resonates very well with Indian visitors with key events like the popular Dubai Food Festival, Dubai Motor Festival and Dubai Summer Surprises (DSS) that highlights the city's summer calendar.





# SPECIAL PACKAGES

## on offer

With the growing trend of MICE, some hotels have deals for frequent users



*Offers for corporate bookers, business travel agents, professional conference organisers or individual*



### **Shangri-La Events Collection & Golden Circle Event Planner:**

Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts launched the Shangri-La Events Collection and Golden Circle Event Planner Rewards, a loyalty programme for meeting and travel professionals. This programme offers meeting and travel professionals and any Golden Circle member the ability to earn elite status as well as earn and redeem points for groups, meetings, conferences and events across the Shangri-La, Kerry and Hotel Jen portfolio. This offer can be availed by corporate bookers, business travel agents, professional conference organisers or individual bookers who book meetings and events on behalf of his or her employers, clients or others. Additionally, travel agents, and professional or freelance social events organisers are also qualified to become a member of Golden Circle Programme.

Talking about the package, Alok Chakravarty, Director of Sales and Marketing, Shangri-La's-Eros Hotel, New Delhi, says, "This event planner package is available at all Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts across the world and now we have two properties in India. This also gives an edge to the event planners to transfer the credit to our sister hotels internationally."

And can it be availed outside the country of residence as well, Chakravarty answers, "The points can be redeemed across Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts."

**Legendary Meeting Package at The Knickerbocker, New York City:** Located just minutes away from



Broadway and Bryant Park, The Knickerbocker has 7,800 sqft of indoor and outdoor space on its St. Cloud rooftop. It can accommodate up to 250 guests. On the fourth floor, The Salon can hold up to 160 guests and offers 2,200-sq.ft. of meeting space, adjacent to Charlie Palmer at the Knick. Also on offer is cuisine from the award-winning signature restaurant bearing the name of its celebrity chef, Charlie Palmer. Team-building experiences such as a boot camp fitness break led by a certified trainer, a master culinary course with the chef, or a rooftop mixology class at sunset can also be organised.

Shawn Hauver, Managing Director at The Knickerbocker, says, "The commercial intersection and Midtown Manhattan neighborhood has become a hub for the corporate sector, and we wish to provide a boardroom experience that extends beyond the traditional boardroom walls that is welcoming and relaxing, yet fun and ultimately, productive."



# Travel

## WEDDING SHOW

Travel Wedding Show, India, 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> Jul  
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# AIRPORT Meetings

Awarded the 'The Best Airport Hotel' and 'The Best Eco-Friendly Hotel' by South India Travel Awards, Novotel Hyderabad Airport can cater to all kinds of meetings, says **Ravi Khubchandani**, General Manager, Novotel Hyderabad Airport



Ravi Khubchandani

## **What are the facilities for business meetings?**

Novotel Hyderabad Airport is a modern living, full service upscale five star hotel that gives you the joy of travelling and meeting with luxury and convenience. The meeting and conference venues at Novotel Hyderabad Airport offer state-of-the-art professional and administrative facilities with a capacity to host up to 2,500 guests. The ultra-modern meeting rooms are designed to provide customised services and facilities to make all meetings at Novotel a success. Added to this, you have the assistance of a highly professional events team to help you manage any event from start to finish.

## **Do you have any special packages for MICE?**

At Novotel Hyderabad Airport we manage every event, whether business or social in a much personalised way. Since every event has its specific requirements, we specialise in offering customised MICE packages. Our facilities are

well recognised and greatly appreciated by our clients.

## **How many conferences and conventions have been held at the hotel?**

The hotel opened its doors in 2008. The space and ambience of our venues have attracted many events and have become a preferred MICE destination for many corporates globally.

Further, 305 guest rooms with varied configurations including suites and multiple event venues make us an ideal wedding destination.

## **What kind of technology do you offer?**

The MICE venues are equipped with high definition projectors, audio/video conferencing facilities, high speed internet connection, ergonomic seating, ambience lighting and sound proof meeting rooms. We promise great comfort and guest satisfaction.







**Is there a special event team to facilitate the process?**

Each event at Novotel Hyderabad Airport is managed by a dedicated event manager. Our well-trained team is capable of providing innovative solutions, ensuring perfectly orchestrated events.

**What about the F&B needs—do you have provisions for special meals? Can you cater to certain health requirements as well?**

The banquets team is complimented with an efficient food and beverage team which facilitates flexible options to cater to any special needs of any guest.

**Have you ever hosted a closed door meeting for high profile people? What has been the response?**

High profile meetings are a regular affair at Novotel Hyderabad Airport. We ensure complete security, privacy and dedicated

## Ease OF MEETING



### VENUES

Meeting and conference venues offer state-of-the-art professional and administrative facilities with a capacity to host up to 2,500 guests



### ACCOMMODATION

305 guest rooms with varied configurations including suites and multiple event venues



### AIRPORT

Rajiv Gandhi International Airport

“

*Since every event has its specific requirements, we specialise in offering customised MICE packages*

”

services to all our guests. Some of the regulars are High profile corporate leaders, dignitaries and celebrities. As a 5-star airport hotel we are well equipped to facilitate all the requirements of any high profile meeting or event.





# MICE IN **TELANGANA** YOUNG & VIBRANT

Kanchan Nath



K Mohanchandran

## How is Hyderabad evolving as a business city?

Hyderabad is coming out of a slow two years that is 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. Those two years saw Hyderabad at its lowest in terms of occupation, visitation and international travelfairs. Now there are two things happening, one there is a natural rebound because of business prospects due to the new government and secondly it being the youngest state they are very keen to attract investments. Google has brought its largest off-site office here; Amazon has put up its largest warehouse here. Wal-Mart is there. Taj on the other hand has had a major reorganisation in terms of the way they have structured the people. In most of our cities today where we have multiple hotels we have kind of an area director role to synergise these operations.

## What plans does the Taj Group have?

I am in charge of five hotels there, The Taj Krishna, Taj Deccan, Vivanta by Taj-Begumpet, Taj Banjara and Taj Falaknuma Palace. On one side is the rebounding business opportunity and on the other is our chance to consolidate. With this portfolio of five hotels, Hyderabad is about five and half thousand hotel rooms which are at the five stars and five star deluxe levels, which is

divided roughly half in the centre of the city and half in the new part of the city called Cyberabad. We have 784 rooms that means we are 12 per cent of the total inventory of the city, among these five hotels. I think there is a great opportunity for us to meet various price points of travellers. As an example we go from ARR of 5,000 at Banjara to 25,000 at Falaknuma Palace. So we are pitching ourselves for MICE to delegations which is a huge opportunity.

## Who are the target groups for MICE?

Taj Falaknuma Palace is slightly separate from the rest of the group because that is still largely leisure, let's say special events. Then there is the central pool which is the heart of the city that is Taj Krishna, Taj Deccan, where the corporate occupancy is about 50 per cent, rest is a mix of weddings and large scale conferences. Taj Banjara is very popular with the film fraternity and traditionally it is a hotel where a lot of the longstay shootings have happened. There is a very thriving film industry in Hyderabad. Everybody must have heard of Ramoji film city. The Tamil and Telugu film fraternity shoots there and that is very active. That is another segment that we are trying to build our work into. Then there is Vivanta by Taj-Begumpet which is our newest







## Ease OF TRAVEL



### VENUES

The Taj Krishna, Taj Deccan, Vivanta by Taj- Begumpet, Taj Banjara and Taj Falaknuma Palace



### AIRPORT

Rajiv Gandhi International Airport



*We have 784 rooms that means we are 12 per cent of the total inventory of the city. I think there is a great opportunity for us to meet various price points of travellers*



hotel. That's in its fifth year of operation now. That is closer to the army base. So each hotel has its traditional pool and the opportunity to grow into other areas.

In the financial year, Q1 and Q2 we were at 40 per cent, Q3 was 48 and Q4 we will end at 56 per cent. In 2014 to 2015 we ended at 40 per cent. This year we will be at 48 per cent. RevParr for Krishna was at 6002. Hyderabad is still behind many of the cities, the only good news is that it is climbing steadily. The goal still remains to achieve good occupancies.

### What are the MICE offerings in Hyderabad?

Hyderabad is the only city which I know apart from Delhi that has its own convention and visitors' bureau that is Hyderabad Convention Visitors Bureau (HCVB), stakeholders are the state government, GMR airport, HITECH

city, 6,000 seater convention centre and there are individual hotel members that subscribe each year, we are one of them. There job is to go and pitch the city of Hyderabad for 5,000 plus delegate conferences going on. They are competing against destinations like Shanghai, Melbourne, Dubai, Colombo, among others. Last year we had 5,000 delegate plus conventions coming to the city.

### What are the high points of Hyderabad?

The city dates back to the 1400s. It has all the history of the Nizams. It was the largest Muslim state of India, even at the time of independence. On the other end, there are also the fabulous elements of cuisine. Close to the hinterland of Hyderabad is Hampi, which is a world heritage site. I think slowly there is an opportunity to build a circuit around there. Lots can be done to develop the tourism product.





# MARRIOTT OF THE PINK CITY

Exotic location, open spaces and facilities at Jaipur Marriott make it an ideal setting for a corporate group or a wedding

Hazel Jain

A combination of traditional luxury and modern convenience, the Jaipur Marriott Hotel is entrenched in the cultural legacy of India's Pink City. Located in a prime area near Jaipur International Airport, it is also close to the business district as well as many historical landmarks of touristic interest.

The property offers 317 guestrooms with state-of-the-art facilities featuring Marriott signature revive

bedding, four fixture bathrooms, iHome docking stations and plush interiors. Its rooms and suites are designed for comfort and feature luxury bedding, marble bathrooms and high-speed internet access. Additional amenities include a full-service spa, a fitness centre and an outdoor pool as well as kids' splash pool.

## CORPORATE PUSH

Corporates can take advantage of its 31,000 sq ft



# 'Incentives for groups'

**Rohit Dar**, General Manager, Jaipur Marriott, on MICE

## What kind of numbers do you do from India and abroad for business travel/MICE?

Jaipur is one of the most sought-after MICE destinations in India and Jaipur Marriott has positioned itself as the preferred MICE hotel with a large room inventory as well as meeting spaces. This segment contributes over 50 per cent of the total hotel business. We have a 80:20 mix of domestic and inbound MICE business and apart from attending leading fairs like IMEX and WTM London, we also attend 'M CUBE' every year which is organised by Marriott India. This meet is attended by all the senior industry partners and GMs of

all MICE hotels in Marriott India portfolio. We also host familiarisation trips for PCOs, event, conference and wedding planners throughout the year.

## Are there any incentives for large groups?

Yes, we do offer incentives for big corporate groups. Jaipur is a seasonal destination and we offer special room rates depending on the group size and the time of the year. Currently, we are having a group offer '4 Perks For Free' where clients can avail four perks for free while booking their meetings before July 31, 2016 and the stay period should be between May 1 till September 30, 2016.



**Rohit Dar**  
General Manager  
Jaipur Marriott Hotel



of indoor and outdoor venue space which is also perfect for weddings and other social events. The expansive banquet facilities include two ballrooms, six breakaway venues, meeting rooms and a lawn to accommodate over a 1,000 people. There are in-house professional event planners too.

**Rohit Dar**, General Manager, Jaipur Marriott Hotel, says, "We understand that meetings are more than just about tables and chairs. Our focus starts with people and the purpose of their meeting. We know that people gathered for a training session would have various needs than those gathered for a networking event. By focusing on the purpose, we design a better meeting experience for the attendees and help them achieve desired outcomes. This is the philosophy behind 'Meetings Imagined'. MeetingsImagined.com is the digital platform used by Marriott that houses visual inspiration and expertise and we use it for ideation, planning and collaborating."

The hotel also encourages green meetings by recycling of event supplies wherever possible, collecting and reusing items such as table numbers and signage to cut back on the depletion of environmental resources. Dar adds, "We try

## THINGS TO DO

- Sightseeing options include the City Palace, Birla Temple, Jal Mahal and Jaigarh Fort. Rajasthani village-themed restaurants (Chokhi Dhani) can also be visited for dinners.
- For business travellers, the hotel also offers high-speed internet access, wi-fi along with multiple dining options such as Okra, Saffron and Jaipur Baking Company. Guests can unwind at O2 Spa or the gym.

to reduce the total amount of printed collateral by using double-sided printing and Power Point presentations. All of our ballrooms are designed in a manner that ensures natural daylight is available and the guests also prefer the same. This helps save energy costs and also leaves less carbon footprints."



*The hotel also encourages green meetings by recycling of event supplies wherever possible, collecting and reusing items such as table numbers and signage to cut back on the depletion of environmental resources*





# KYRGYZSTAN

## on India's MICE map

**Sharad C. Goel**, MD, Lark Logistics, GSA of Air Manas in India, shares about the new connectivity by Air Manas and how Kyrgyzstan can be the next MICE destination for India



Sharad C. Goel

**Nisha Verma**

**Please tell us about the new flight between Delhi-Bishkek.**

Air Manas started operating in India from February 2015 with two flights a week. From June we have added one more flight on this route. Apart from Tuesdays and Fridays we are now operating on Sundays as well. From Bishkek, one can have convenient connections to Moscow and Istanbul.

**Are you focusing on MICE business?**

The majority of those visiting Kyrgyzstan currently are leisure tourists. However, our recent roadshow in Delhi focused primarily on MICE, and there were MNCs, industrialists and agents who can promote MICE. Bishkek has a number of good hotels, and also offers good

food, service and nightlife. The people are very cooperative and there is no difficulty for tourists in terms of safety. Issyk Kul Lake has beautiful beaches and water sports facilities. If companies want to have their meetings there, then we, along with Air Manas office in Kyrgyzstan would organise everything for them.

**How has the response of the roadshow been?**

With this roadshow we assume to fulfil our target. Leisure tourism is already established, while MICE tourism still needs to be developed in the right earnest. After the roadshow, we have received 10-15 enquiries of big groups of more than 100 people each. In fact, Kyrgyzstan could be a very beautiful wedding destination. And the biggest advantage is that the flight is only three hours, and the rates are very low.



We start from \$300 plus, and with big group, the rates are fixed. We do not charge anything extra. Air Manas is a LCC. We do not have any business class and food is on call. There are soft drinks and liquor available on board, and we are starting to sell liquor and cigarettes as well in the near future.

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We have sent  
around 8,000-  
10,000 Indians  
to the country”



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Starwood Hotels and Resorts hosted the 10th edition of the Starwood India Expo 2016 across four cities in the country. Close to 2000 customers attended the roadshow

A portrait of Nicholas Maratos, a man with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a blue blazer over a light blue checkered shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a solid light blue.

**Anupriya**

**T**he  
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show, **Ni**  
Sales,  
I

**Nichlas Maratos**

**Nichlas Maratos**

of the road show says, “This road show is a platform to bring our customers and hotels together. The agenda is to talk about our new openings, new markets etc. across the globe.”

**Barun Gupta**, Account Director (Global Sales) - Starwood Sales Organization, Starwood Hotels & Resorts, says, "This is the 10th anniversary for Starwood expo and there is more participation from India and abroad. The India market is growing worldwide, these kinds of road shows help us educate our customers and grow our business year on year."

About upcoming hotels Maratos says, "Across Asia-Pacific we have 320 hotels. We open a hotel every 10 days and sign a deal roughly every seven days. In India, we have 54 hotels, another 47 are under construction. We will be launching W in the middle of the year and we have a new hotel opening in Pushkar too." Also, Starwood will be launching W in September





which is expected to change the entire party scene in Goa. Barun says, "2016 seems to be an exciting year for Starwood. This year we are coming up with an iconic brand of Starwood in India, that is, W. We are launching it this September. W is one of the iconic hotels of Starwood and for Goa it's going to be an iconic property especially for North Goa. Once W comes in, it will change the entire party scene."

Regarding the key markets for Starwood Maratos says, "A lot of our growth is in China, India and Indonesia but we have growth across the board. We have a new opening coming up in Srilanka, we are opening one more property in Nepal, we just opened two hotels in Bhutan, and

we have a St. Regis coming up in the Maldives. We opened Tribute in Indonesia and Japan." About the new initiatives Saliankar says, "One of the big initiatives that we would like to continue with is to grow our MICE and group business globally. Today the traveller is looking for multiple destinations and newer destinations to travel and Starwood is equipped with it. With 1,300 hotels across all prime locations, we want to leverage that and bring it to the next level. We also want to focus on our SPG Pro which is a loyalty programme for customers. The third focus is the growth in the regions like India, Maldives, Srilanka, Bhutan and Bangladesh. So we are getting properties everywhere."





# GBTA's spotlight on India

With India predicted to be ranked among the top five business travel markets in the next 15 years, Global Business Travel Association has re-launched its India chapter

Ahana Gurung

From No. 24 in 2000 to the 10th ranked market in the world in 2013, the business travel industry in India has worked its way up the rankings of major global business travel markets, according to the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) Foundation's first GBTA BTI Outlook-India report. What's more, WTTC World Economic Report India 2016 predicts that business travel spending will likely see a growth of 8.7 per cent in 2016 to Rs 1,302.9 billion, and rise by 7.2 per cent per annum to Rs. 2,610.3 billion in 2026.

To make the most of the gradual but steady growth, GBTA has once again re-established its presence in India, in partnership with business travel management consultancy ProKonsul. Commenting on the decision to re-enter the Indian market, **Gaurav Sundaram**, Regional Director India, GBTA states, "India is the 10th largest global business travel market worldwide and is also the fastest growing market. Despite its size and growth, the country still did not have an industry forum which looks at the issues and challenges of business travel in India





Gaurav Sundaram



## BOOMING BUSINESS TRAVEL

- GBTA Convention on July 20 in Denver, Colorado
- India to emerge among top five markets in business travel spending by 2030.
- Business travel spending is expected to grow by 8.7% in 2016 to ₹1,302.9bn, and rise by 7.2% pa to ₹2,610.3bn in 2026 according to WTTC.

which is why GBTA felt the market was right for a re-entry. In the course of the next 12 months, we expect to establish a very sound India chapter and anticipate more than 500 GBTA members based out of India," he shares.

Sundaram informs that GBTA has a focused plan for the next few months which includes establishing a strong member base, developing quality educational content and events, and reinstating the leadership that GBTA had earlier. He sheds light on some major events in the pipeline and says, "We will be conducting at least two events this year - one is India Education Day in August where we are inviting several international speakers with 150-200 buyers who will talk about the best practices in business travel. For the first time, we will also have a trade show floor during the India Education Day targeting business

travel buyer and suppliers in the industry. Following this, we will be organising another education day in Singapore on the sidelines of ITB Asia in October. It will involve both Indian hosted buyers as well as local buyers from Singapore and the rest of Asia."

Use of technology, approach of travel managers and implementation of the best practices are some of the ways in which the business travel community can leverage and improve their efficiency, feels Sundaram.

"A lot of the big companies in India continue to operate in legacy mode where they use call-to-book facilities with travel agents. You can do a lot more if you use the best practices in technology for optimal results. The question is do you want to minimise the fee and compromise operations or offer a fair price and drive optimisation of value?"

“

*We will be conducting at least two events this year—one is India Education Day in August where we are inviting several speakers with 150-200 buyers who will talk about the best practices in business travel*

”

# MORE MICE TRAFFIC TO INDIA

**Chander Mansharamani**, Vice-Chairman,  
India Convention Promotion Bureau,  
talks about boosting MICE as it can add  
substantially to India's economic growth

Samapti Das

## What is the MICE scenario in India?

MICE has been picking up for the last two years. Basically ours is a not an industry; we call this an economic activity. So this economic activity in regards to the Government of India has come on a level. India is the third largest economy in the world. Business is directly related with the economy of the country. One of the reasons is that more events are now happening in India as compared to some years back.

## How much growth have you seen in the past two to three years?

We don't have any figures as such. We don't know what the size of the industry is and what the growth is. Unless you know these it is very difficult to plan for the infrastructure and all. We did a research with IIM Bangalore three to four years back about how much infrastructure India needs and they came out with the result that India has an excess of capacity.

They were right in the sense that 87 per cent of the conferences happen in the world which is less than 10,000 delegates. So, we need to have those kind of figures to know as to where we should put in our money. According to me, there has been growth of 15-17 per cent in the past two to three years.

## What is the road ahead for ICPB?

Our road ahead is to encash this opportunity. In case we don't encash it now, we will be too late. The economy of the world is not doing that well. But India is doing very well despite the economic situation. ICPB has started doing many activities. One is roadshows, as we strongly believe that 85 per cent of the conference business basically originates in India, whether it is an international or a domestic conference. For international conferences, organisations across the world need the support and involvement of their representatives in India. So, we have started roadshows across the country. We had our first roadshow in Hyderabad and there are three more

roadshows lined up in Bengaluru, Mumbai and Jaipur. We try to involve the state government and tell them the economic and social impact of holding an event in the city, so that they give priority to MICE.

## How closely are you working with the Ministry of Tourism?

We work very closely with the MOT as you know our President is Suman Billa who is also the Joint Secretary, MOT. The recently held conference on 'MICE Tourism in India' was the first we held with ASSOCHAM to deliberate upon the MICE policy in the future. MOT has also taken the MICE segment as a priority and they are working on a MICE development board which they are planning to implement it through ICPB.

## What are you doing to promote more inbound travellers for MICE?

From September onwards we are planning to do roadshows outside India also. There are associations which organise their annual events across the world. Along with MOT, we are looking at having roadshows at destinations where there are association base. Geneva has headquarters of different associations and Brussels and Amsterdam are other destinations where we are planning to have the roadshows.

“

*We strongly believe that  
85 per cent of the conference  
business basically originates  
in India, whether it is  
an international or a  
domestic conference*

”









# TRAINED FOR MICE

The first from India Convention Promotion Bureau, this entry level management training programme focused on the development of good MICE professionals





Working on leveraging the advantages India offers as a MICE destination, ICPB organised this first training programme to impart strong human resource skills to the industry. The programme attracted more than 70 participants from ICPB members and non-members covering different segments of the industry such as hotels, PCO, travel agents, tour operators and institutes.

The two-day interactive programme comprised four sessions with presentations from learned industry speakers. The sessions were simply prepared by experts and came with case studies. The programme was a clear focus on what goes into the making of a successful business meet. It involved technical aspects of going through many details, including things like site inspection, checking the equipment and being physically present. Session 1 on 'Beyond Vendor Management' covered topics on Registration Process, Payment Gateway, Abstracts and E-Posters. Session 2 focussed on 'PCO-Hotel interaction', covering topics on How to contract, Site-visits-how to prepare for them to meet client expectations, Mock session with an Association.

Session 3 was on 'Venue Selection & Space Management', focussed on Venues available, Venue selection, Innovative use of space, Space management. Session 4 was on 'Relevance of Social Media & Mobile Apps' revolving around

Digital marketing and its importance, Mobile Applications and their impact, Latest available offerings, Case Studies This session on Relevance of Social Media & Mobile Apps was conducted through GoToWebinar/GoToMeeting--a live meeting over the web with Alec Sonenthal, Director of Technology Development, Centium Software, Las Vegas Nevada.

The speakers included Chander Mansharamani, Vice Chairman, ICPB and Managing Director, Alpcord Network Travel & Conferences Management Company; Amaresh Tiwari, Managing Director, AT & Seasons Vacations Travel; Saurabh Bhargava, Associate VP - Sales, North India, Taj Hotel Resorts & Palaces; Priti Khanna, Chairperson, MCI Management India and Co-Chair ICPB Training & Development Committee; Monimita Sarkar, Managing Director, KW Conferences and Co-Chair ICPB Training & Development Committee; Amit Saroj, Director, Attitude Events; Vishal D'souza, Managing Director, MCI Management India; Leslie Morrison, Director Sales and Marketing, Leela Ambience Hotel; Dilpreet Singh, Director Operations JW Marriott Aerocity; Rajesh Prasad, Director, Sun Business Machines and Sandeep Amar, CEO, Indian Express Digital.

ICPB planning more training programmes. And the one for middle level management is being planned for September 2016.

**“**  
The two-day interactive programme comprised four sessions with presentations by speakers from the industry  
**”**



Shivani Misri Sadhoo  
Founder  
Saarthi Counselling  
Services

# How to handle your **temper** in a meeting

Workplace is probably one of the most complex places where pressures are high and tempers run haywire. But it is also the place where you need to walk the talk



*“If you feel the anger rising, stop what you are doing. Close your eyes and take deep breaths”*

Most of us have gone through a situation where our favourite project was cancelled after all the hard work, when our boss assigns more work when we were already overloaded, our leaves get cancelled or we do not get satisfactory increment. And the feeling that surges through at that moment is anger! And it's a huge struggle to control this at that moment. Sometimes one does fail to control the outburst and protests. And then suffer the repercussions.

## WHAT CAUSES ANGER?

Spiritual texts define anger as a demon inside the person. Some examples of when anger originates:

- You were overburdened with work and missed to clearly communicate the same to your boss or co-worker.
- You were focused on your thoughts and interpreted your co-worker or your boss' point.
- You could have fallen in a controversial trap by a senior.

## HOW TO OVERCOME ANGER

- Treat every person with courtesy and respect, as you would treat anyone else. Just because one person behaves in an unprofessional manner that doesn't mean you should follow him/her as well.

- If your co-worker or subordinate takes you for granted even as you are polite, it's time to re-evaluate your leadership qualities.
- Try to be assertive. If the other person is rude and unprofessional, then explain that you refuse to be treated that way and calmly leave the situation. Remember to set the example.
- If you disagree with your co-worker or with your boss's point of view, then watch out for early signs of anger. Stopping your anger early is the key. Remember, you can choose how you react in a situation.
- If you feel the anger rising, stop what you are doing. Close your eyes and take some deep breaths. This will interrupt your angry thoughts and helps you realign on a more positive path. It will help you become more harmonious also.
- Picture yourself when you're angry. If you imagine how you look and behave while you're angry, it gives you some perspective on the situation. Is your face red when you are shouting? Are you waving your arms around? Would you want to work with someone like that? Probably not!



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# BEST PRACTICES FOR Session Evaluation II

Evaluating your sessions and events enables you to gather valuable insights from your attendees, sponsors and exhibitors



*Darren Edwards is the founder of Invisage Creative Services in Australia. With more than 23 years experience in the meetings and events industry, Darren's passion is to connect people through supply of creative design and innovative event tech solutions.*  
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In the competitive world of trade shows, meetings, conferences, and conventions, you need accurate, timely feedback in order to determine future strategic plans for continued success and to keep your stakeholders coming back for more, event after event. In Part One of this topic we covered the following best practices:

- Make the evaluation easy to complete
- Keep the evaluation brief, in length
- Put thought into your session evaluation questions

Here in Part Two we will continue to address the best practices for evaluating your events.

## SET ASIDE TIME TO COMPLETE EVALUATIONS

A very common reason for low session evaluation response rates is that little or no time is left at the end of the session. Presenters



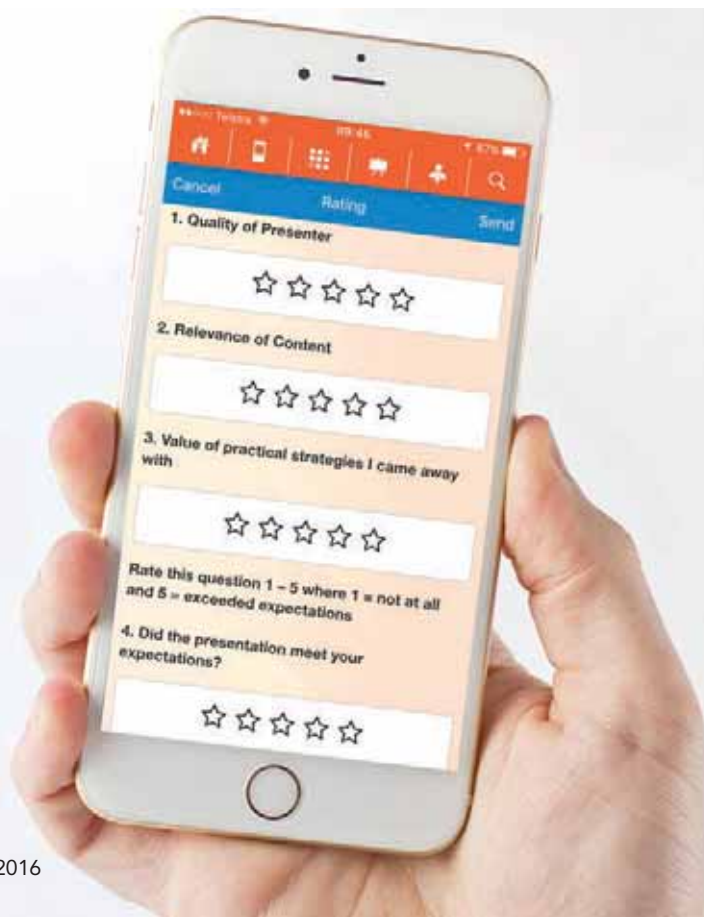
and session moderators are often left with a sheepish look on their faces, half-heartedly reminding attendees to complete the session evaluation form. The trouble, obviously, is that the session has ended and the audience wants to get out to their break, or head over to lunch, or hit the road after a long day. Set five minutes aside and encourage attendees to participate.

If you find your session has run overtime, I would encourage you to be mindful about forcing evaluations on attendees. If your crowd obviously wants to get out of there, you can always remind them at the start of the next session to complete evaluations for the last one.

## INCENTIVISE COMPLETION OF SESSION EVALUATIONS

Another creative way to get around low response rates is to create incentives for attendees. If your event has sponsor giveaways, the raffle tickets could in part come from how many evaluations an attendee completes. If a giveaway prize isn't available, a simple audience leader-board such as announcing the top evaluation performers, could be enough.

Alternatively, you can appeal to an attendee's sense of duty. When asking attendees to complete a session evaluation, remind them that the evaluations are a great benefit for





presenters, and for the organisers to make the event better next time around.

### MAKE EVALUATIONS ANONYMOUS BY DEFAULT

A common phenomenon biasing session evaluations is a scenario where participants respond overly positive, because they think that's what organisers and presenters want to see. It's called good participant bias. At a restaurant, it's a bit like telling the waiter that the food is great, even though you think it's mediocre.

Good participant bias can be avoided, in part, by ensuring attendees that their feedback is being recorded anonymously. This is particularly important when anonymity is high-stakes, like at a corporation's internal employee conference. (Would you be willing to assign negative ratings to an executive at your company, if your name was rubber stamped on the session evaluation?) We recommend making anonymity the default, and, if necessary, allowing attendees to opt-in to identifying themselves.

**Note:** If you are incentivising evaluations, you have to record who has been submitting them. Make sure you explain that identifying data will be discarded following the incentive's culmination.

### FINALLY, USE THE FEEDBACK

This echoes my earlier point that is no point collecting it in the first place if it's just going to sit on a server somewhere for all time. If attendees are spending a few minutes per session completing your evaluations, they would absolutely appreciate seeing their suggestions recognised and acted upon. After the event concludes, and after you have had a chance to compile responses, you can send an update to attendees explaining what you heard and how you plan to address it for the next event. This shows attendees that you value their feedback and that you're committed to improving. This is also a step toward creating a community around your event (communities are powerful). Just make sure you follow through on improvements.

### PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

- Make it drop-dead simple for attendees to submit feedback.
- Only ask what needs to be asked (keep it short).
- Ask questions that meet your goals.
- Set aside session time (not attendee time) for evaluations.
- Consider incentivising the completion of session evaluations.
- Make anonymity the default.
- Complete the circle by acting upon feedback.



*Another creative way to get around low response rates is to create incentives for attendees. If your event has sponsor giveaways, the raffle tickets could in part come from how many evaluations an attendee completes*






## Tourism Investors Meet (TIM) 2016

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➔

B2G  
Meetings

➔

Sellers  
(State Govts)

#### Business To Business Meetings (B2B)

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(Investors)

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# Professional NETWORKING ONLINE

It's important to keep connecting and grow your business network but equally important to remember the rules



Professional networking websites have become extremely popular, offering a platform to connect and communicate with like-minded business persons. How many times have you received an e-invite which reads 'I'd like to add you to my professional network...' making you wonder who is this person and have you ever met him? Though the internet has thrived on the basic principle of free information without any censorship, certain 'netiquette' rules still apply.

- **Your Profile:** Like your resume, if there's nothing unique about it, people will ignore your web presence. Add a little more to the formatted listing of your educational background, professional achievements and photograph.
- **Invitation:** As this serves as an e-handshake and helps create a good impression, invest time on it. The standard invite will be either ignored or will make you look like a 'climber' (somebody who wants to grow their network to impress others). When inviting, make it easy for people, by adding a point of reference—where did you meet, how you know them. This takes time but saves them precious time clicking on your profile.
- **Who makes up your network?** Establish clarity on who you want and why you want them, making it easier to build your network. At times, we blindly accept requests because either it takes too much effort to research on the person or even after checking their profile, we were still clueless. Would you like to be linked with someone who has dubious credentials/contacts? Some people have a strategy—only accept invites from people who are either real friends or people they have worked/ communicated with in the past.
- **Quality over quantity:** Professional networking sites are not a race to see how many contacts you can notch up. Instead, connect with a few and concentrate on converting these into meaningful relationships.
- **Strangers:** While I agree that limiting your contacts to people you already know defeats the idea behind online networking, make sure you have a good reason to accept requests from complete strangers, as you will be known by the company you keep!
- **'No, thank you':** Some people send out invites by the dozen and such random invitations are best ignored. On the other hand, if somebody does not respond to your request, don't confront/ remind them, gracefully accepting that they did not wish to respond.
- **Communicating:** Would you ever walk up to a person at a networking event, shake hands and say 'Now that we are friends, I am going to ask you for a favour'? Then why expect it from online strangers? Invest time in establishing your reputation by connecting and contributing before requesting for favours/referrals. Resist the urge to send surveys/chain mails/forwards to your contacts.

- **Keep business and personal lives separate:** Professional sites are for conducting business only. Maintain this divide by not inviting your contacts/colleagues to join your social network, putting them in an awkward position, as accepting your invite means allowing you access to their private lives too.

View these networks as another networking tool that can be employed to increase your visibility and connections. While internet helps you reach out to more people, the old-fashioned rules of networking still apply.

**Q. Is it critical to network within one's company as well?**

**A.** Although networking externally is considered critical for corporate success, networking internally is equally important for your career. Connecting with your colleagues, creates value for you and your organisation for today and for the future. These contacts will stay with you many years after you may have left. Having said that, strike a healthy balance so as not to be seen as 'sucking up'!

Benefits of networking internally are:

- Improves your personal brand as you gain visibility—projects you as a winner
- Knowing people and information beyond your cubicle can be useful for completing projects
- Help you retain your job, especially in a downturn

**HOW TO NETWORK:**

- **With senior leaders:** Develop a list of seniors you admire/wish to connect with and invest time building these relationships. Ask an internal 'connector' to link you with these leaders. Request for a short meeting, go prepared with relevant questions and use this opportunity to learn more about the senior and to project yourself as a competent professional.
- **With your boss's peers:** If you enjoy a good relationship with your boss, request him to introduce you to his peers. Tread carefully, as these could be his rivals!
- **With your peers:** Step outside your comfort zone by interacting with colleagues from other departments. To be viewed as a team player, it's important to be liked by your colleagues. A few ideas you can build on:
  1. Send congratulatory emails when others get promoted.
  2. Sign-up for cross-functional projects and open-day training programs
  3. Start an internal lunch forum, or newsletter/ intranet, inviting contributions from others
  4. Assist with organising events for example office parties, Friday drinks, CSR initiatives, conferences and cultural events

Networking is all about building relationships; it's a 'give and take' process that requires time and effort to keep it going but reaps huge dividends.

“  
*Establish clarity on who you want and why you want them, making it easier to build your network. At times, we blindly accept requests because either it takes too much effort to research on the person or even after checking their profile, we were still clueless*

# For a successful TRAVEL PLAN

Here is what you need to keep in mind when putting together everything for your trip, what you need to carry and how much to carry

“

*Make sure you plan in advance, have a valid passport, tickets, insurance, vaccine certifications*

”

## BAGGAGE TIPS

Baggage is something important and must not be left till the last minute:

- If you are holding a conference there is always a large amount of excess baggage for all the equipment and supplies.
- Based on how many people are travelling in the group reduce their baggage weight and distribute the excess baggage within their personal baggage allowance by ensuring you check-in together.
- Get an approximate idea of how much baggage allowance will be spare for you to use.
- If you feel there is more excess baggage than the total allowance, work out a good rate through your travel agent or directly with the airline.
- Check if the airline is willing to waive a certain number of excess kilos as a special deal for the group.
- Enquire in advance for all special requests regarding meals on the flight and inform the airline accordingly.
- As a result of terrorist activities, airports have increased security checks before allowing passengers to board.
- It is important to get to the airport with plenty of time to manage the check-in congestion.
- All liquids, gels and aerosols must be in three ounce (84 millilitres) or smaller containers, and they must be placed in a single, quart-size, zip-top, clear plastic bag.
- List of things-to-carry for all delegates: Take along airline tickets, driver's license, travel insurance papers (leave unnecessary cards at home).
- Carry foreign currency (cash, traveller's checks, credit cards).
- Car keys, house keys. (Leave unnecessary keys at home). Do not carry things that you don't need with you.
- Carry your presentation on a memory stick or your laptop, if required.
- Take enough business cards for distribution.
- Do not pack travel documents or money in a suitcase that may get lost. Take important documents and money in a wallet or purse that you can access at all times.
- Make sure that your luggage has a tag with your name, address and telephone number.
- Tie a colourful ribbon or attach distinctive stickers to your luggage so that you can identify it easily.
- Most airlines have a specification for the handbag. do study these requirements before deciding what you are carrying in your hand. And make sure it's light enough!







## AUGUST 2016



**TRAVEL TECHNOLOGY SHOW**  
Gurugram, India

**Travel**  
TECHNOLOGY SHOW

INDIA INTERNATIONAL  
**FOOTWEAR FAIR 2016**



**INDIA INTERNATIONAL  
FOOTWEAR FAIR (IIFF)**  
New Delhi, India



**LA CITA**  
USA



**ACTE GLOBAL  
CORPORATE TRAVEL  
CONFERENCE**  
Beijing, China

## SEPTEMBER 2016



**WORLD LUXURY  
EXPO**  
Seoul  
South Korea



**ASTANA  
LEISURE**  
Kazakhstan



**MEETING  
PLANNERS RUSSIA**  
Moscow



**JATA**  
Tokyo, Japan



**MICE ASIA  
PACIFIC  
EXHIBITION**  
Suntec,  
Singapore



**IT&CM ASIA**  
Bangkok  
Thailand

## OCTOBER 2016



**INTERMOT**  
Cologne, Germany



**ITB ASIA**  
Singapore

# movements



**Vijay Dutt**  
General Manager  
The Ashok  
New Delhi

India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) has appointed Vijay Dutt as General Manager for its flagship hotel The Ashok, New Delhi. Dutt is known for his excellent leadership skills, innovative thinking and creative approach. With 28 years of extensive experience, he brings a wealth of industry knowledge in the luxury hotel segment. In his previous role he held senior management positions as General Manager, Lalitha Mahal Palace, Mysore; Resident Manager of The Ashok, New Delhi.



**Joydeep Ghosh**  
Director Sales and Marketing  
Mövenpick Hotel & Spa  
Bangalore

Joydeep Ghosh has been re-appointed as Director, Sales and Marketing at Mövenpick Hotel and Spa Bangalore. He brings with him an extensive experience of over 20 years. At Mövenpick Hotel and Spa Bangalore his role would be to add on to the existing sales revenue, get new companies on board and to look after the smooth operations of sales and marketing. He will be actively involved in strategising and planning of marketing initiatives.



**Vipin Khattar**  
General Manager  
Hyatt Regency  
Dubai Creek Heights

Vipin Khattar has joined Hyatt Regency Dubai Creek Heights from his position as General Manager of Hyatt Regency Sharm El Sheikh Resort. As General Manager, Vipin Khattar will oversee the strategic and financial performance of the property. Khattar has a wealth of experience gained from 16 years in the hospitality business. He joined Hyatt Hotels in October 2002 as a Convention Sales Manager in the pre-opening team of Grand Hyatt Dubai.



**Vishal Singh**  
General Manager  
Hyatt Regency  
Pune

Vishal Singh stepped into the hospitality industry in 1996. He has worked at premium hotels in New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Goa, before moving to Pune. An MBA in Marketing and graduate of IHM, Pusa, New Delhi, he is passionate about food & beverage. Singh has had a long association with Hyatt. This is his second stint with Hyatt, having previously worked in the chain for seven years. He started his career with the Hyatt as Conferencing & Banqueting Manager at Hyatt Regency Delhi in 2002, and moved up to Assistant Director of Food & Beverage.



**Hoshang Garivala**  
Director of Operations  
Oakwood India

An integral member of the Oakwood group, Hoshang Garivala joined Oakwood in 2011 as general manager of Oakwood Residence Naylor Road Pune, where he also undertook the management of the former Oakwood Premier Pune. Under his leadership, both properties produced significant improvements and results, for which he was awarded 'Oakwood General Manager of the Year' in 2012 and given the responsibility to lead the team opening Oakwood Residence Kapil Hyderabad.



**Atul Kumar**  
General Manager  
India Awadh Hotel  
Lucknow

The India Hotels group (Varanasi/Lucknow/Mussorie) announced the appointment of Atul Kumar as General Manager of its property in Lucknow. Kumar, an IHM Kovalam passout, brings with him 13 years of experience in the hospitality industry with specialisation in operations. He has an avid interest in food and beverage. Prior to this appointment, Kumar worked with Fraser hospitality, Taj Mansingh Delhi, Leela Gurgaon. Kumar has played a crucial role in sales and marketing, relationship and management contract, finance and human resource.





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