

the business travel magazine

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MICETalk

Meetings • Incentives • Conferences • Events

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**WHAT LIES
AHEAD IN
2018**

2018: A YEAR OF OPPORTUNITIES



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editorial

the business travel magazine
MICEtalk
Meetings • Incentives • Conferences • Events

Dear Reader,

The year 2017 saw a lot of landmark changes for the MICE industry. Through our year-end cover story we bring in some insights on the year gone by and the expectations for 2018 from the industry. The government through the new National Tourism Policy, aims to provide single window clearance for organisation of meetings and conferences. The e-visa enhancement gathered cheers from the corporate travel segment. India's e-visa now generates three components — e-tourist visa, e-medical visa and e-business visa.

In the aviation sector, there were some positive changes as well. As per the DGCA (Director General for Civil Aviation) report passengers carried by domestic airlines during Jan-Oct 2017 were 954.45 lakhs as against 813.70 lakhs during the corresponding period previous year thereby registering a growth of 17.30 per cent. This bodes well for the domestic MICE sector. As per CAPA India, the next financial year is expected to be the third consecutive year of domestic growth, registering above 20 per cent. With better connectivity and infrastructure, MICE shall surge in India.

With the magical "brag factor" and aspirational value, international MICE trips have always been a great motivator for employees and dealers. Travellers these days are looking for more experiences while travelling within and outside the country, and travel agencies are evolving and upgrading its MICE facilities in response to these demands.

The initial impact of the Government's economic policies such as GST and demonetisation is also settling down now and MICE clients are looking ahead to a good season. The key segments expected to grow are: corporate MICE travel, incentive groups and destination weddings.

Referral programmes in an organisation can initiate new talent, shares our counsellor Shivani Misri Sadhoo.

We wish you happy reading and a prosperous New Year, with more MICE business coming your way!

Keep reading and giving your feedback to us at:
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contents

DECEMBER 2017



14



24



28

highlights...

- 6** NEWS
News from the world of MICE
- 12** MILESTONES
Focus on MICE
- 14** COVER STORY
Decoding MICE in 2017
- 24** TRENDS
Singapore's MICE 'Passion made Possible'
- 28** ASSOCIATION
GBTA's focus is on education



32



34



36



39



42

31 INCENTIVES
Innovative approach to meetings

32 INTERVIEW
AccorHotels continues to grow in India

34 BUSINESS
Shangri-La: A perfect MICE venue

36 WEDDING
Atlantis gateway for Indian weddings

39 POLICY
GST for MICE: Yay or Nay?

42 DESTINATION
Oman keen on India's slice Of MICE



Regular

48 COUNSELLOR
Shivani Misri Sadhoo on the employee referral programmes benefits



Cover Design
Raashi Ajmani Girdhar

NEWS

PAN INDIA

Marriott rolls out Club Marriott

■ Marriott International has launched the new Club Marriott dining loyalty programme in India. This programme integrates three powerful dining loyalty programmes: Club Marriott, Eat Drink & More, and Star Privilege into a single paid membership programme. The programme provides members with more choices and benefits whenever they dine out in their hometowns or visit one of the 250 participating hotels across 16 brands in 13 countries across the region. “We’re set to reward our guests with memorable experiences,” said **Ralph Frehner**, Vice President, Food and Beverage, Asia-Pacific for Marriott International.



PAN INDIA

Jet announces winter discounts

■ Jet Airways has announced its Winter season offering of up to 30 per cent savings on travel from India to high-demand destinations served by the airline’s international network. Passengers availed the special fares between November 08–14, 2017.

Travel under the offer commences with the coming New Year – effective January 22, 2018, and is applicable on both Premiere and Economy cabin classes. **Jayaraj Shanmugam**, Chief Commercial Officer, Jet Airways, said, “Guests will benefit from substantial savings while enjoying the airline’s famed in-flight service.” The special fares will be applicable on direct and one-stop flights operated by Jet Airways and for both one-way and return journeys.



MIDDLE EAST

Dubai Association Conference in December

■ The Dubai Association Conference will be held from December 11-12, 2017 at the Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC). The conference will focus on building the association community, skills development and sharing best practices. Themed ‘Building a Community’, the Dubai Association Conference is being hosted by the Dubai Association Centre (DAC), a joint initiative of the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) and DWTC. **Issam Kazim**, Chief Executive Officer of Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing, said: “Dubai Association Conference is a step towards fostering a collaborative environment for associations to expand and thrive. We also believe that this conference will mutually support Dubai in its journey to becoming the regional hub for associations, and strengthen the city’s positioning as a gateway to the world’s fastest growing economies.”



NORTH INDIA

Keys Lite Mayfield launched in Gurugram



■ Keys Hotels expands its portfolio in North India with its 4th hotel in the region—Keys Lite Mayfield hotel in Gurugram. Located in sector 44, Keys Lite Mayfield is targeted towards both corporate and leisure travellers. **Anshu Sarin**, CEO, Berggruen Hotels, said, “Gurugram is an important market for Keys Hotels. Though it is located just over 30 kilometers southwest of national capital New Delhi, the city has emerged as a major finance and technology hub in its own right. We see it as one of the major gateways to North India and, crucially, the new hotel allows us to establish our presence in the region.”

Block your dates

for

Travel Shows 2018

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LUXURY SHOW

April 7-8, 2018 (Sat - Sun)
Delhi NCR

Travel Travel

WEDDING SHOW

July 7-8, 2018 (Sat - Sun)
Delhi NCR

BUSINESS SHOW

December 1-2, 2018 (Sat - Sun)
Delhi NCR

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NEWS

SOUTHEAST ASIA

THAI Smile connects Bangkok–Mumbai

THAI Smile Airways has commenced its new flights on the Bangkok–Mumbai–Bangkok route. The airline has already been operating, since the last quarter of 2016, direct flights from Bangkok to Jaipur, Lucknow, Gaya and Varanasi. This new route will help all segments, like leisure, corporate and MICE travellers. THAI Smile operates its Bangkok–Mumbai flights five times a week under the flight no. WE335 Bangkok – Mumbai (BKK-BOM) on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 22.15-01.35 (+1), WE335 Bangkok – Mumbai (BKK-BOM) on Friday and Sunday at 23.55-03.10 and WE336 Mumbai – Bangkok (BOM-BKK) on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday at 02.40-08.55 and WE336 Mumbai – Bangkok (BOM-BKK) on Monday and Saturday at 04.40-10.55.



EASTERN EUROPE, WESTERN ASIA

ACE of MICE in February 2018

The fifth ACE of MICE exhibition is going to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, from February 21-23, 2018. Organised by Turkish Airlines in Turkey, it is the third largest congress of meeting and events exhibition in the world. The event will be held at Istanbul Congress Center with the motto of previous year 'MICE industry convenes with all of its colours!' Held every year by the Tourism Media Group organisation, the exhibition will see 746 hosted buyers from 39 countries flock to the city. Over 9,791 business to business (B2B) meetings have been arranged, over 15,000 domestic and foreign visitors are expected.



GULF

Oman to host UNWTO/ UNESCO conference

The Sultanate of Oman is getting ready to host the second UNWTO/ UNESCO Culture & Tourism Conference from December 11-12, 2017, at the new Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre in Muscat. The conference will bring together ministers of tourism and culture of different countries to identify key opportunities and obstacles for a stronger cooperation between tourism and culture, and to discuss sustainable development that strengthens the socio-economic links, reinforces mutual engagement in the promotion, protection and safeguarding of culture and heritage. The Omani government will be providing a free Oman visa to participants who wish to attend this conference.



GLOBAL

Biz travel safer today than in the past: CWT survey

A recent Carlson Wagonlit Travel study found that while more than one-third (37 per cent) of European travellers are concerned about safety and security, their counterparts from other regions worry more. Components like terrorism only ranks fifth (35 per cent) among safety concerns. 'Forgetting something needed for work' was ranked higher (40 per cent), as did 'losing something important'.



INDIA



FCM introduces international group tours

FCM Travel Solutions, the Indian subsidiary of Flight Centre Travel Group (FCTG), Australia, under its retail leisure arm 'Flight Shop' has launched Group Inclusive Tours (GITs) in the country. Foraying into the segment, Flight Shop has introduced new exclusive itineraries to Europe specially designed for large group travellers. The service will also offer customers the flexibility to choose dates and destinations in its group tours.

Shravan Gupta, Executive Director, Leisure Businesses, FCM Travel Solutions, Indian subsidiary of FCTG, Australia, said, "GITs are the biggest segment in the organised travel sector and are growing at 10-12 per cent every year. Travelling in a group costs lesser and is around 20-30 per cent cheaper than travelling solo to any destination."

CIS COUNTRIES



Air Astana plans to start Mumbai flights in 2019

Air Astana plans to start a new connection to Mumbai in 2019. Currently, the airline operates 10 flights a week between Kazakhstan and India. This includes a daily service between Almaty and New Delhi and three flights between Astana and New Delhi, which started in July this year. **Peter Foster**, President and Chief Executive Officer, Air Astana, said, "India is an important destination for Air Astana and has connected both business and leisure passengers well between both the countries. The number of passengers carried between India and Kazakhstan in 2017 is 43,459, an increase of 43 per cent as compared to that in 2016. In fact, the number of transit passengers travelling from New Delhi via Almaty to other international destinations grew by 33 per cent in 2016."

INDIA

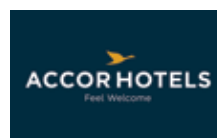


India domestic passenger traffic surges

Global passenger traffic demand in September rose 5.7 per cent compared to the same month in 2016, according to IATA's global passenger traffic results. This was the slowest year-on-year increase since February. Domestic passenger traffic demand climbed 4.2 per cent in September compared to September 2016. India and China continued to lead all markets with double-digit annual traffic increases while elsewhere, results were mixed. Capacity rose 4.7 per cent and load factor slipped 0.4 percentage points to 82.2 per cent. "September's growth in passenger demand was healthy," said **Alexandre de Juniac**, IATA's Director General and CEO.

GLOBAL

AccorHotels to acquire Gekko



AccorHotels has signed an agreement to acquire Gekko, a major player in the business travel hotel

reservation segment. This transaction is in line with the strategy aimed at strengthening AccorHotels' leadership across the entire customer experience by enhancing the range of services offered to business travellers. Gekko's turnkey management tools allow business travellers to manage their online payments, offering them the option of tracking and optimising their costs. **Thibault Viort**, Chief Disruption & Growth Officer, AccorHotels, says, "Since business travellers represent a key segment in the Group's business, our capacity to respond to the specific requirements of this segment across the entire value chain is a factor that really sets us apart."

NEWS

WEST INDIA

Ethiopian launches first B787-9 to Mumbai

■ Ethiopian Airlines has announced the launch of its B787-9 Dreamliner operation to Mumbai. The aircraft made its debut flight to India's capital and metropolitan city of Delhi on October 28, 2017. The Dreamliner fleet which is an integration of design and technology with unique features of biggest windows in the sky, high ceiling, less noise, distinctive lighting, and higher air humidity, has further redefined passengers' travel experience on board. **Tadesse Tilahun**, Regional Director, Indian sub-continent, remarked, "India is a strategic market for Ethiopian, we are pleased to deploy our latest fleet and adding capacity on the existing route."



INDIA

Vistara registers 84.1% YOY growth for PLF

■ As per the DGCA monthly report, Vistara has topped On-Time Performance (OTP) and Passenger Load Factor (PLF) amongst full service carriers, as well as in consistently maintaining the lowest cancellations and customer complaint rates amongst all pan-India carriers while having zero denied boarding. Vistara's PLF stood at 84.1 per cent. The airline registered a year-on-year growth of 60 per cent in weekly flights from July – Sep 2017, operating close to 100 daily flights across 19 destinations.



GLOBAL



Singapore Airlines retrofits Airbus A380

■ Singapore Airlines has unveiled new cabin products to its Airbus A380 fleet which will be initiated from next month, following an extensive four-year development programme. The new Singapore Airlines A380 will be configured with 471 seats in four classes, featuring six Singapore Airlines Suites and 78 Business Class seats on the upper deck, as well as 44 Premium Economy Class seats and 343 Economy Class seats on the main deck. "The significant investment that we are making with the introduction of new cabin products demonstrates our commitment to continued investment in products and services, our long-term approach to ensure we retain our leadership position, and our confidence in the future of premium full-service air travel," said SIA CEO, **Goh Choon Phong**.

GLOBAL



Cathay enhances Marco Polo Club offerings

■ Cathay Pacific has improved its offerings for its loyalty programme, the Marco Polo Club. Effective December 8, 2017, all Marco Polo Club members will earn more points on Cathay Pacific and Cathay Dragon flights across all distance zones in selected fare classes. In addition, the annual requirement for Green members will be reduced from 100 to 20 club points. Also, the threshold to maintain Green membership will be reduced, allowing members to enjoy exclusive club benefits such as priority check-in and boarding, lounge access redemption amongst other privileges.

SOUTH INDIA**Karnataka International Travel Expo in Bengaluru**

■ Karnataka International Travel Expo (KITE) will be held in Bengaluru from the February 28-March 2, 2018. **Priyank Kharge**, Minister for Tourism, IT & BT, Govt. of Karnataka, said, "Karnataka is home to a large and exciting portfolio of globally acclaimed tourism products with UNESCO World Heritage Sites, splendid wildlife and resplendent nature, virgin beaches to adorn. 'Karnataka International Travel Expo', being held for the first time will provide the impetus to the inbound travel and tourism industry and would enhance the marketing efforts of Karnataka Tourism to promote our destinations to the travel trade from all over the world." KITE will attract over 1,000 delegates from over 25 countries for the three-day event, facilitating over 10,000 pre-matched appointments, buyers and sellers face-to-face meetings, educational forums, and more.

**GLOBAL****iCE group leaves MICE footprint across globe**

■ iCE group is setting stage for coming winter months for the MICE industry. India as a destination sees an influx of tourists from October to March and iCE is leaving no stone unturned to entertain MICE groups for events globally. Being an integral part of international medical conferences iCE participated at World Psychiatry Association 2017 at Berlin. The MICE participants visited the Berlin wall, explored the Nazi history and the famous Ishtar Gate that was the eighth gate to the inner city of Babylon. iCE team also led a group of leading Cardiologists from the continent of Africa to Singapore to attend the Asian-Pacific Congress of Hypertension.



A beautiful white marbled interior tastefully done 5-star hotel with ethnic and serene decor. Ramada Khujraho is located in the heart of town, 2 kms from airport and 3 kms from Khajuraho railway station. The hotel is spread in midst of 14 acres of green surroundings. Ramada Khujraho is known to have the biggest swimming pool in the middle of the hotel. The hotel has 97 rooms with a mix of superior, deluxe and suite. The hotel is known to have the biggest banquet hall in town and perfect for destination for weddings.

31st Gala Night will include:

- Musical event hosted by DJ Elton & Lady DJ
- Lavish Dinner with cocktail snacks.....
- Unlimited Liquor (IMFL)
- Surprise gift

RAMADA
KHAJURAHO

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FOCUS ON MICE

The MICE sector has been steadily witnessing surge in various regions worldwide. Trends in MICE for 2017 showed a sustained pattern for growth in India and round the globe

E-VISA NOW ENCOMPASSES E-BUSINESS VISA

India's e-visa will now have three components — e-tourist visa, e-medical visa, e-business visa. Talking about the various changes in e-visa, **Vinod Zutshi**, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India, said, "For the first time in this country, medical visa is going the



electronic way and so is the case with business visa. The initial period of application has also been extended to 120 days. The validity of eTV has been increased to 60 days now. Also e-tourist visa and e-business visa has been made double entry."



CONCUR, OLA JOIN HANDS TO DELIVER MOBILITY BENEFITS TO CORPORATE CLIENTS

Concur has announced its integration with Ola Corporate, Ola's enterprise solution for business travellers and corporates. Under this innovative partnership, Concur and Ola, India's most popular mobile app for transportation, over 300 local and global Concur customers will have access to the features of Ola Corporate including diverse and customised mobility solutions. **John Gibbon**, Vice President, Platform at Concur, said, "This is a huge value add in our goal to manage business expenses."

SAUDI ARABIA TO INVEST \$1.6 BILLION IN MICE INDUSTRY

Saudi Arabia aims to become the main destination for conferences and exhibitions in the Middle East by 2020. The Kingdom has announced ambitious plans to invest \$1.6 billion in its MICE tourism industry for the coming years to 2019, and several centres and venues will benefit from this financial boost. Traditionally seen as a site for religious travel, Makkah is attracting a number of local companies and government authorities are looking to combine their meeting and training requirements with Umrah pilgrimage. Conrad Makkah Jabal Omar, the first Conrad property opened by Hilton in Saudi Arabia earlier this year, has seen its MICE business grow steadily, driven by demand from pharmaceutical companies and government entities that tend to conduct their meetings, training and development programmes.



33% GROWTH IN INDIAN ARRIVALS TO CANADA

Canada saw a growth of 33 per cent in Indian arrivals for the month of March this year. The remarkable number of Indian tourists who sojourned in Canada has reiterated that the country is an all-year-round destination and the 150th year celebrations will continue to lure Indians through the year. **Pooja Sabharwal**, Account Director, Destination Canada – India, said, "This manifold rise in arrival figures shows that all the diverse offerings of Canada are being extensively explored by Indian travellers. There has been a sharp increase in leisure trips to Canada from India."

MORE INDIAN ARRIVALS IN MUNICH

Munich has seen strong gains in the number of Indian arrivals in February, 2017, recording an increase of 40 per cent in comparison to last year. Additionally, there has also been an increase in the bed nights, which has grown to 31.46 per cent. "This huge rise in the Indian arrival figures to Munich shows that India has successfully maintained a position of one of the top source markets for the Bavarian capital," said **Minoti Gupta**, Manager-Sales, Destination Munich.



8 COUNTRIES ADDED TO E-VISA LIST

The visa services, which have been expanded for tourism, medical and business purposes, has been extended to eight countries namely Angola, Rwanda, Niger, Cyprus, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Mali and Burundi, revealed **Vinod Zutshi**, Secretary Tourism, Govt. of India. "We are also working on extending the e-tourist visa for five other countries among which Italy, Slovak Republic, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan are included."



MAHARASHTRA TO FOCUS ON CRUISE TOURISM

Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Shipping, Government of India; **Jaykumar Rawal**, Minister of Tourism Government of Maharashtra, **Sanjay Bhatia**, Chairman, Mumbai Port Trust, were part of a high-level delegation in Mumbai who announced their collective plan and focus to develop cruise tourism. Titled 'Dawn of Cruise in India' the seminar aimed at encouraging cruise tourism in India, more specifically Mumbai.



'SINGLE WINDOW FOR MEETINGS & CONFERENCES'

The government shall soon roll out a National Tourism Policy, which is expected to provide single window clearance for organisation of meetings and conferences, informed **Satyajeet Rajan**, Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, while addressing the second edition of Global MICE Travel Mart, organised by FICCI jointly with the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, on September 14, 2017, at The Lailt, New Delhi.

ASIA-PACIFIC SEES GROWTH IN THE MEETINGS AND EVENTS SPACE: CWT

A report on future trends in the meetings and events space by the CWT Meetings & Events (CWT M&E), revealed that the overall cost per attendee per day for meetings and events around the globe increased in 2017 and is expected to continue rising next year. Cost per attendee per day for meetings and events in Asia Pacific has increased by 5 per cent in 2017.

INDIAN BUSINESS TRAVEL REGISTER 7.2 PER CENT GROWTH

India's business travel industry has grown by 16.2 per cent over the past five years (2011-2016), according Travelport and World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) report. It has been predicted that Asia-Pacific will lead the way at a predicted rate.



Decoding MICE



in 2017

As we gear up for the new year festivities, we find out how the MICE business has fared in 2017 and what to look forward to in 2018

Kanchan Nath



The MICE segment globally and especially in India has seen a considerable change in the recent years. The projections of the trends in the MICE sector has been promising with corporates planning suitable incentives for their employees and as a whole for MICE groups. With technological advancements, MICE has witnessed evident procurement of tools via apps for enabling efficiency. We unravel some MICE trends for our year-end special while foreseeing the future growth trends for 2018.



AJAY SETH

Head, Outbound MICE
Cox & Kings

MICE SEGMENT IN 2017

The Indian MICE segment has been consistently growing at a rate of 10-15 percent year-on-year. Not only is the market growing in volume and value but following the introduction of more direct flights to key cities across the world, Indian travellers are now venturing further. The year 2017 has also seen an expansion of airline operations in India. For instance, Air India is expanding their footprint across the globe, strengthening and exploring connectivity with newer cities. Indian aviation went strength to strength in 2017 with an entry of newer airlines and connecting two-tier cities with international hubs. According to figures published ahead of the

5th Annual MICE India and Luxury Travel Congress (MILT), India is estimated to generate 6.5 million outbound luxury and MICE tourists annually by 2020, reinforcing the country's influence as a key source market for MICE and luxury travel.

TOP 10 OUTBOUND MARKETS FROM INDIA

- 1) **Dubai**- Dubai has retained its crown as the most popular destination for trade shows and exhibitions with the Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) driving the emirate's popularity among trade visitors from India. Proximity to India, excellent air connectivity and competitive hotel rates make it the most

TOP 10**OUTBOUND MARKETS**

- Malta
- Korea
- Fiji
- Abu Dhabi
- Oman
- Lebanon
- Israel
- Croatia
- Philippines
- Taiwan

popular with Thai locals and foreigners as it offers exclusive and luxury activities with the heritage theme.

- 5) **Spain**- Spain tourism authorities have made a huge effort to expedite the process of issuing a Spanish Schengen visa.
- 6) **Russia**- Moscow, St. Petersburg, Sochi continue to be the most popular, attractive and developed MICE destinations of Russia.
- 7) **CIS countries**- Among CIS nations, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan are the most popular CIS countries for MICE.
- 8) **Amsterdam**- Amsterdam's digital connectivity is amongst the best in the world, supported by the world's largest exchange.
- 9) **Budapest**- The city offers you some exquisite experiences like hosting gala dinners, a private concert with a full symphonic orchestra, a flash mob and a private rental of one of Budapest's thermal baths for your group event.
- 10) **Prague**- As for conference and event planning, Prague offers a large variety of hotels, from modern design and cozy boutiques to large business properties. The largest hotel in Prague comprises of over 791 rooms under one roof and a Congress hall with occupancy of up to 1,500 participants. The Prague Convention Centre offers a hall for 2,764 people and an additional 64 breakout rooms. The historic city core belongs to the UNESCO world heritage and it is at a walking distance from one end to the other. It offers a countless variety of

“ *Newer destinations, better connectivity will drive the Indian Outbound MICE demand* **”**

attractive MICE destination for India.

- 2) **Singapore**- Singapore which is already a popular MICE destination for Indian corporates, is all set to have another 10,000 hotel room inventories by the end of next year,
- 3) **Bangkok**- From large-scale exhibitions and conventions, to intimate meetings and incentives groups, Bangkok has the venue, accommodation, and creative support you need for enriching and productive functions.
- 4) **Pattaya**- Mostly the beach city of Pattaya is added with Bangkok business travel to make it a bleisure experience. With the latest entry of Royal Princess Ferry service between Pattaya and Hua-Hin (about 2 hours), the royal heritage beach resort family town has witnessed increased business figures. Hua Hin is equally

unique offsite venues either for meetings or for special event management. Famous spa towns, breathtaking castles and chateaux in the close vicinity of Prague are excellent for half-day or full-day trips.

MICE EXPECTATIONS FOR 2018

We expect the trend of MICE among corporates to grow even further. The tendency to explore newer destinations, better flight connectivity and cheaper airfares will drive the demand of Outbound MICE from India. MICE industry needs to recognise the transformation that the business around the world are going through; dynamics of global economies; the technological revolution that are all shaping the concept of even management. Assimilating these changes seamlessly and responding to it with strategic initiatives will only make the industry stronger in the coming year.



MEERA CHARNALIA
Senior Vice President and Head-MICE
Thomas Cook (India)

TOP 10

UPCOMING OUTBOUND

- Eastern Europe
- Croatia
- Hungary
- Baku
- Australia
- New Zealand
- Malaysia
- Singapore
- Sweden
- Dubai

MICE SEGMENT IN INDIA IN 2017

Since demonetisation, it seemed like the industry was hit badly. Corporates couldn't decide how to budget their events. Companies were curtailing their expenses and while enquiries for MICE activities continued, there was a reduction in numbers. Once things settled down, it became evident that the MICE segment wasn't very badly affected as business travel is essential for any company for its growth. The impact of demonetisation was short-term and overall it hasn't been a bad year for the MICE segment in India.

MICE SEGMENT GLOBALLY IN 2017

The MICE segment has tremendous potential and it is a sector that we have strongly and actively been focusing on! With the magical "brag factor" and aspirational value, international MICE trips have always been a great motivator for employees and dealers. Despite the turbulent geopolitical and economic environment, the MICE segment has grown in 2017. Therefore, creating an efficient, productive business travel platform will facilitate in addressing the specific needs of these segments, and fully leveraging the growth opportunities.

TOP 10 OUTBOUND MARKETS 2017

2017 has been a promising year so far for us

at Thomas Cook India. While London, Paris, Rome and Singapore are all time favourites, we have witnessed a newer trend and a strong demand for popular destinations such as Australia. The spectacular scenic beauty and engaging adventure-outdoor experiences offers India's discerning MICE market a diversity of options. Eastern Europe & New Zealand have emerged as top selling destinations.

TOP 10 UPCOMING OUTBOUND MICE

There is growing interest towards new destinations. Upcoming and popular destinations this year are: Eastern Europe, Croatia, Hungary, Baku, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore, Sweden, Dubai.

MICE EXPECTATIONS FOR 2018

At Thomas Cook India, the MICE segment is a powerhouse in our growth story and a key element of our strategic plan for 2018. Next year is already showing an upward trend and looking at newer destinations. Corporates are looking for destinations with experiences to strengthen bonds and connect with members of the company. It is no longer just a rewards and recognition programme. We have organized events that include experiences like white water rafting, zip lining, jungle safaris, snow lunches, glacier dinners, helicopter rides, and water sports.

“ The MICE segment is a powerhouse in our growth story and a key element of our strategic plan for 2018 **”**





MANPREET BINDRA

Vice President and Head MICE
FCM Travel Solutions India

MICE SEGMENT IN INDIA IN 2017

MICE is one of the fastest growing segment in the travel and tourism industry. The year 2017 especially has offered the MICE segment an upswing. Travellers these days are looking for more experience within their travel, and travel agencies are evolving and upgrading its MICE facilities in response to these demands. Our focus for this year has been – extravagant events, new unexplored locations and innovative ideas. However, having said the above, the industry has also experienced some challenges through the year. The introduction of the GST Bill caused few corporate houses to relook at the assigned budgets. For MICE, the biometric visas scheme on Schengen States also made matters difficult as Europe is a popular MICE destination, but the biometric process has made the visa process longer as it requires the applicants to be physically present.

MICE SEGMENT GLOBALLY 2017

Emerging new destinations have mentioned their need to concentrate on evolving markets like China and India. We are interested and eagerly waiting to see how they plan their strategies and conquer the Indian MICE market.

TOP TEN OUTBOUND MARKETS 2017

The outbound market trend observed by FCM follows as below:

Short Haul Destinations- The trends for popular short-haul MICE destinations remain

constant with movements to Dubai for the newly introduced Theme Park and Thailand for its evolving event spaces. Vietnam also gained popularity as a short-haul MICE destination amongst travellers.

Long Haul Destinations - Australia saw a great interest amongst MICE travellers taking advantage of the no biometric regulation unlike Europe. In the year, New Zealand stood out as the one of the most aspirational locations for small to medium size movements.

Unconventional Destinations – With an increased interest to experience the Northern Lights locations, travellers are opting for Scandinavian products - locations like Tromso in Norway and Rovaniemi in Finland are in demand. Popular destinations like Italy, Russia, Athens, Paris, Amsterdam, Prague and Zurich were also in demand. However, Cape Town in South Africa stood out as the MICE traveller's favourite in 2017.

MICE EXPECTATIONS FROM 2018

GDP is seeing robust growth at seven per cent industrial service and output is getting better; we are expecting the same to rub off on MICE, while expecting a double-digit growth.



TOP 10

UPCOMING OUTBOUND

- Croatia
- Slovenia
- Hungary
- Ireland
- Malta
- Serbia
- Romania
- Hungary
- Azerbaijan
- Bulgaria
- Israel

“Emerging new destinations shall concentrate on evolving markets like China and India”



ZELAM CHAUBAL

Director
Kesari MICE

MICE IN INDIA IN 2017

Year 2017 has been great and encouraging for the entire MICE industry of the world and India being on top. It has increased the confidence of the travel industry and we all are looking forward to a positive impact.

MICE SEGMENT GLOBALLY IN 2017

At present data for 2017 is not available but the important and huge take overs and mergers are a great sign to show how big the demand is going to be for MICE and event industry. Wherever we go globally everyone is positive about MICE. During the recent visit to WTM, every supplier and hotelier was very happy about the increased MICE business to the tune of upto 20 per cent, which is great signal for the industry. I feel the global scenario for MICE looks great.

TOP TEN UPCOMING MARKETS FOR MICE

Globally preferred MICE destinations are

Shanghai, Sydney, Tokyo, Dubai, Berlin, Auckland, Seoul, London, Singapore and Vienna. Most of the places have good strategic location.

MICE EXPECTATIONS FOR 2018

I think MICE is ever increasing from India. Usually there is huge pressure on travel agent of price, last minute changes, value-ads and getting things done. We should make advanced planning for smooth execution. Secondly, 3-4 preferred vendors for MICE helps 8-10 travel agents, asking for same hotel and services creates chaos in outside world which they are not used to, leading to failure in understanding Indian MICE sometimes.

Many tourism boards are ready to help to boost Indian MICE so corporates should take advantage and value-add to their MICE. Many newer destinations like Antalya and Central Europe are ready to welcome India, so we should go little beyond. Travel professional's credibility should be valued more than the low price which turns out to huge price for the corporate. Today, the entire market is low price driven which should be changed to become quality driven.

TOP 10

OUTBOUND MARKETS

- Singapore
- Thailand
- Dubai
- Paris
- America
- Bali
- South Africa- Cape Town
- Russia
- Australia
- China

“Many tourism boards are ready to help to boost Indian MICE so corporates should take advantage and value-add to their MICE”



MONIKA WALTER

Director
Eurocursions

OUTBOUND MICE 2017

We specialise in Europe and the UK. For Europe being the largest source market for MICE, this year has been good. We had all kinds of group sizes ranging from 20 onwards to 1500 guests. Even in the months of December, groups are lined up, which is a good sign for MICE. It's been almost double the growth for us compared to last year.

TOP UPCOMING OUTBOUND MARKETS

New and upcoming markets for MICE include Scandinavia (Norway/ Finland/ Sweden), Croatia, Slovenia, Ireland and Iceland.

MICE EXPECTATIONS 2018

The queries for 2018 have already started. We expect it to be a good year for MICE. We feel that corporates have on numerous occasions discovered the destinations of South East Asia and GCC. They want to explore Europe and UK more.

We are ready to suggest to our B2B trade colleagues the best of destinations with innovative itineraries and activities. We expect a good support from all hotel chains like Marriott/Accor, etc. As they are more willing to understand the requirement of an Indian group in terms of food habits, etc.



TOP 10

OUTBOUND MARKETS

- Netherlands (Amsterdam)
- France (Paris/ Nice/ Monaco)
- UK (London & Glasgow)
- Norway (Bergen/ Tromsø)
- Finland (Helsinki/ Rovaniemi)
- Switzerland (Zurich)
- Austria (Vienna/ Innsbruck)
- Germany (Munich/ Berlin)
- Spain (Barcelona/ Madrid)
- Ireland (Dublin/ Belfast)



“Even in the months of December, groups are lined up, which is a good sign for MICE**”**



GAURAV SINDHWANI

Director – Global Sales, India
Preferred Hotels & Resorts

MICE IN 2017

The MICE industry has shown a growth trajectory across the globe in past couple of years wherein the clients from across sectors are more than willing to spend the extra money required to host an event in a destination that offers state-of-the-art facilities, new experiences and the added value of travel.

The MICE movements are now both domestic and outbound, and the industry is benefiting from it with growth of almost 25-30 per cent in MICE over the years.

Post the Goods & Services Tax (GST) roll out from 1 July 2017, MICE related activities were initially hit for the Indian market. The 28 per cent GST rate for rooms with tariff of ₹7500 and above is one of the highest in the world. One of the anomalies that emerged post the GST roll-out was that MICE activities and other events held in

hotels outside of home state are not eligible for Input Tax Credit (ITC). But on a positive side, this has led to MICE clients shifting the business to outbound destinations due to cost implications with India.

TOP 10 OUTBOUND MICE MARKETS

Hong Kong, Dubai, Singapore, Thailand, Paris, London, Malaysia, Indonesia, Prague, and Switzerland.

MICE EXPECTATIONS 2018

With the Indian economy and GDP showing promising growth, the outlook for MICE travel looks quite positive for 2018 both for domestic and outbound destinations. The initial impact of the government's economic policies such as GST and demonetisation is also settling down now and MICE clients are looking for a good season ahead of them. The key segments expected to grow are corporate MICE travel, incentive groups and destination weddings.

TOP 10

OUTBOUND MARKETS

- Hong Kong
- Dubai
- Singapore
- Thailand
- Paris
- London
- Malaysia
- Indonesia
- Prague
- Switzerland

“ The MICE movements are now both domestic and outbound, and the industry is benefiting from it ”





PANKAJ WADHWA

Director of Sales & Marketing
Sofitel Mumbai BKC

DOMESTIC MICE 2017

According to the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, during the first quarter of 2017, India became the first ever market to record 580,000 visitors in any one quarter. This massive 23 per cent growth between January and March, 2017, and a strong second quarter performance in comparison to last year has showcased India's stance as a hotspot for MICE and leisure tourism.

OUTBOUND MICE 2017

Nowadays, the guests are well travelled and knowledgeable about the global hospitality standards and due to this, their demands for services and facilities have also increased. On a global scale, the MICE segment has shown a growth of 10-15 per cent.

TOP 10 OUTBOUND MICE MARKETS 2017

With regards to India, the largest and fastest growing segments that contribute to India's outbound market are weddings, large leisure groups, incentives and events. The GCC (Gulf Corporation Council), witnessed an unprecedented spike in arrivals from India, with both Dubai and Abu Dhabi, naming India as their top source market for the year. Over the years, arrivals in Sweden have steadily increased, with approximately 740,000 tourists arriving from India in April, 2017. With reference to this, India remains as one of the top 10 source markets in the world. The other increasingly popular

destinations would be Bali, Bangkok, Manila, Kuala Lumpur, Jordan, Bahrain and Vienna.

UPCOMING OUTBOUND MICE DESTINATIONS 2017

A few destinations that have come into focus as new and upcoming outbound MICE ones are: Colombo, Fiji, Sanya.

MICE EXPECTATIONS FROM 2018

The future of the luxury tourism sector in India looks promising, taking into consideration the increasing demand for exotic and unique holiday experiences from Indian travellers. The holiday makers are becoming more evolved and they do not want to compromise on anything, but the best. As Indian companies are globalising, and the Indian market has started to integrate with the world economy, there has been a surge of business travel in India. Overall, the Indian market is seeing aggressive growth across all segments. As the political and economic stability increases in the country, there is an expectation that the demand for MICE will rise a whopping 15-20 per cent in 2018, and with the number of brands that are launching and growing their base in India, the hospitality industry is absolutely geared up to take the challenge.



TOP 10

OUTBOUND MARKETS

- Dubai
- Abu Dhabi
- Sweden
- Bali
- Bangkok
- Manila
- Kuala Lumpur
- Jordan
- Bahrain
- Vienna

“MICE will rise a whopping 15-20 per cent in 2018, and the industry is geared up for it”

Singapore's MICE 'Passion Made Possible'

Singapore Tourism Board (STB) together with Singapore Economic Development Board recently unveiled the country's new unified brand to market Singapore internationally for tourism, and MICE



"Travellers look for curated itineraries to experience the local cultures."

G B Srithar
Regional Director,
South Asia, Middle East &
Africa, Singapore Tourism Board



"The idea is to target the passion of the consumers with Singapore's many possibilities."

Adrian Kong
Area Director
India and Sri Lanka, Singapore
Tourism Board



"We are on track to receiving a record number of visitor arrivals into Singapore."

Jeannie Lim
Executive Director,
Conventions, Meetings &
Incentive Travel, Singapore
Tourism Board

Kanchan Nath

Passion made Possible, the new brand strategy from STB, aims to attract the discerning traveller with a focus on curating experiences for MICE through its local people and culture. The brand was derived to capture the spirit of the nation in a way that builds affinity, affiliation and top-of-mind recall for choosing Singapore as a destination to visit.

MAXIMISING BRAND IMPACT

Elucidating on the new brand, **G B Srithar**, Regional Director, South Asia, Middle East & Africa, Singapore Tourism Board, said, "As travellers are increasingly discerning, they look for curated itineraries that allow them to understand a little more about the local cultures in a destination through its people. Singapore's new identity 'Passion made Possible', allows us to showcase Singapore's offerings through the voice of the local talents."

Adding on about what is possible in Singapore's incentive and MICE space, he said, "Conversations has become a key word for us. People are looking for conversations, people want to be inspired. We are looking at an inside out approach to marketing. How do we bring the voices of Singaporeans and Singaporean residents in the experience that the MICE clients are looking for? To make it a little more memorable and differentiated, we have tried to achieve this through the new unified brand, Passion Made Possible. Increasingly people don't want to come and see the place, they want to come and connect with the place."

He concludes, "We have an excellent product, but what is it that really makes Singapore tick? A key criteria emerged which elucidated on possibilities; how we had the water miracle, how we worked on reclaiming land from the sea. Possibilities on their own lacked the human touch. While people initiate possibilities, it is pertinent to note what drives them? The key idea was passion, passion drives people to do what they do."



Further giving an idea of the new concept, **Adrian Kong**, Area Director, India and Sri Lanka, Singapore Tourism Board added, "The key trust of the marketing strategy are: 1) Telling a great Singapore story 2) targeting the right fans 3) enhancing our delivery. Telling a great Singapore story includes 1) Brand review 2) The whole Singapore story 3) Global Brand campaign 4) Content led storytelling." As per research it was found out that 47 per cent people have a strong idea of which brand they will buy before the need to purchase is triggered. There is a need to increase the mindshare of Singapore at the passive stage."

7 PASSION TRIBES

There is now a shift in the marketing approach from transactional to aspirational. From what visitors can do in Singapore to what visitors can be in Singapore. Elaborating on going beyond what they can do in Singapore, Kong said, "We want to build passion tribes by bringing together like-minded people who have similar passions. The idea is to target the passion of the consumers and appeal to their aspirations with Singapore's many possibilities that can feed these passions. Therefore, we have come up with the concept of seven passion tribes."



These include: 1. Don't just eat, be a foodie: how we can showcase the people behind the culinary concepts, the Singaporeans, expats; 2. don't just shop, be a collector; 3. don't just sightsee, be an explorer; 4. don't just plan or attend business events, be a progressor; 5. don't just watch or play sports be an action seeker; 6. don't just visit museums and galleries, be a culture shaper; 7. don't just go out, be a socialiser."

"People do not remember facts, but they remember stories, so we want to connect through storytelling. For eg, the earlier promotion was, 'Visit Check Jawa, a unique wetland in Singapore'. Now it is, 'how passionate nature lovers in Singapore pursued its preservation!'" concludes Kong.

GROWTH STATISTICS

The tourism sector continued to grow in the first half of 2017 for Singapore. From January to June 2017, International Visitor Arrivals (IVA) increased by four per cent over the same period last year to reach 8.5 million visitors. Tourism Receipts (TR) also grew 10 per cent to reach \$12.7 billion. Sharing the tourism growth story for Singapore, **Jeannie Lim**, Executive Director, Conventions, Meetings & Incentive Travel,

“For tourist arrivals from January to June 2017, India stands at the third position”

Singapore Tourism Board, said, "I think we are on track to receiving record number of visitor arrivals into Singapore. India remains a very important market for us. Last year, we were very excited that we reached our one million mark, in terms of outbound from India into Singapore. This year we are hoping to exceed that.

For tourist arrivals from January to June 2017, India stands at the third position, showing a growth of 15 per cent vs 2016 with arrivals at 660,000." In terms of visitor arrivals from January to June 2017, China was first, with five per cent growth and 1,553,000 arrivals. Indonesia was second at 1,469,000 arrivals, with four per cent growth. Malaysia was fourth and Australia fifth."

Elaborating on the benefits of bringing events to Singapore, she adds, "We look very much at global connectivity. There are many meetings that want an international audience. Within just a short 7-hour flight radius from Singapore there is access to over 4 billion people. No one can deny the growth of India, China and South-East Asia."



Glimpses from **STB MICE FAM**

Singapore Tourism Board's pan regional MICE familiarisation trip, saw key corporates, MICE intermediaries and media from India, Sri Lanka and the UAE. Here are some snapshots





GBTA'S FOCUS is on EDUCATION

The Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) will focus on three major conferences in India in 2018 to bring more education to the market, because the needs of the market grow along with its size

Hazel Jain



Michael W. McCormick

Michael W. McCormick, Executive Director & COO, Global Business Travel Association (GBTA), was in Mumbai recently to share his perspective about how the India market (and the Asia Pacific region) for business travel is playing out against the background of the global marketplace. "The big headline though is that India is the fastest-growing business travel market among all the major markets. It moved into the top 10 in size and at the current growth rate it will reach number eight in the world within a few years," he says.

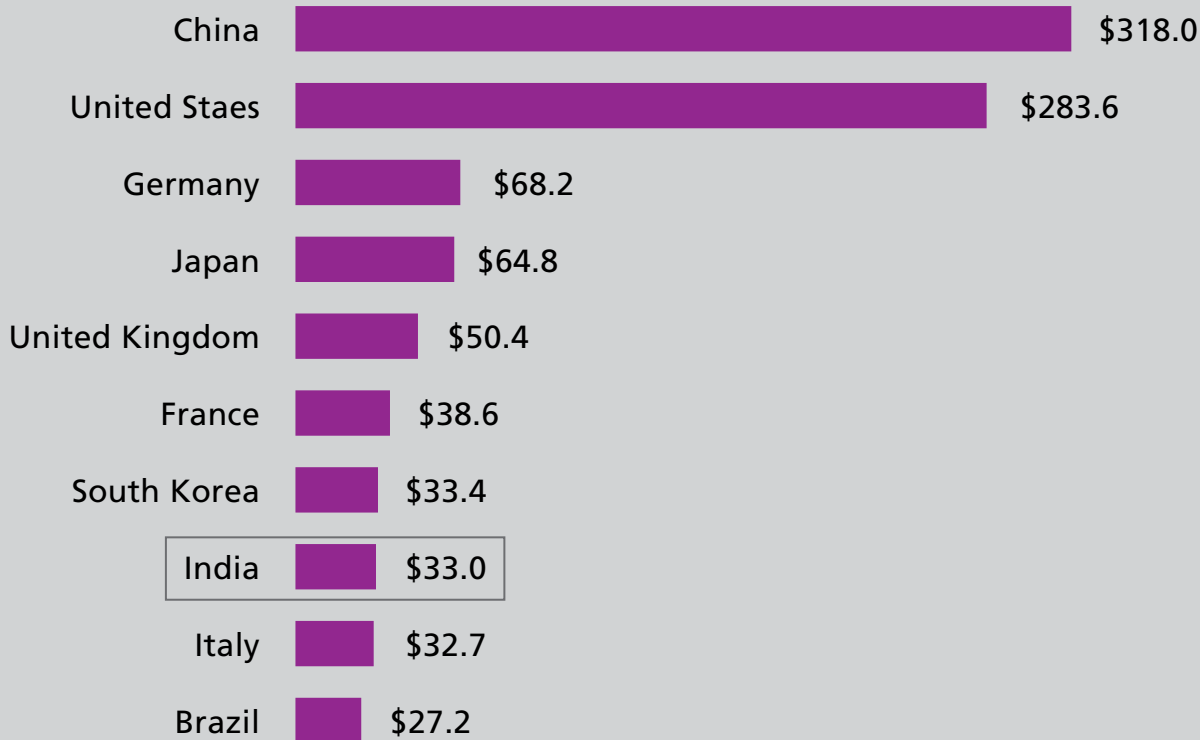
This is big news, not just for Indian corporate companies but also for service providers who assist their travels. The market dynamics are changing, McCormick says, with China surpassing the US last year and becoming the world's largest business travel market.

"The world order is changing where growth is tied directly to jobs and the economy. Business travel drives business growth. The growth in India has been phenomenal. The only country where the growth is similar in size and type is China," he adds.



In 2016, India jumps from the 10th to the 8th Largest Business Travel Market in the World

Top 10 Business Travel Spending markets-2016 in billions of \$USD



Source: GBTA BTI™ Outlook: Annual Report and Global Forecast, July 2017

Of course, China's growth story started 10 years ago that has continued in scale till date. According to McCormick, the volume is amazing. "But you see a similar pattern and growth trend happening in India. Part of that has been the buildup in the infrastructure – in both airlines and hotels and everything else that is needed to service the market – has also grown substantially with more investment coming in," he says. It obviously takes time for that kind of investment to come into the marketplace and mature. But there is continued investment and that bodes well for the Indian market.

He also sees more and more Indian companies investing in business travel now. "This is in terms of domestic as well as international travel and India will see more and more inbound business travelers as well," he forecasts.

The programmes that GBTA has developed in India are bringing in expertise to the marketplace. McCormick says, "Business travel is truly an investment and when companies have that mentality then they start to see the return on investment. The good news is that companies in India are seeing a high RoI. But they then start asking how they can get more for their money.



“Business travel drives business growth. The growth in India has been phenomenal”

‘How can we invest that money wisely?’ So that’s when our programmes come into play. Because the way that you do that is now by limiting these expenses so much as it is using it wisely.”

SAFETY ON PRIORITY

When McCormick talks to buyers globally, the single biggest issue he says they are dealing with is safety apart from things like contracting, etc. Managing risks has become a priority. “In the last 10 years, the overall marketplace for

'Three large conferences in 2018'

Gaurav Sundaram, Regional Director, India, GBTA, speaks about India and its intricacies while throwing some clarity on the GST regime



What have you planned for 2018?

We intend to conduct three large annual conferences next year – in Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru, which are the three primary hubs for business travel. We are not likely to replicate the workshop series that we did this year. We are also looking at introducing professional education and development in business travel through the GBTA programmes of corporate travel experts, and advancements in global travel professional certification in India. Here, we are customising the content for India and we intend to do it through our national network of offline training centres as well as online self-learning programme so that professionals who can't go back to the classroom can also benefit. We are also planning to look at strategic meeting management as an area of activity.

Is there a lack of education on business travel in India?

Yes, there is. Firstly, there is no industry

body in India yet that represents business travel apart from GBTA. TAAI and TAFI associations don't focus on business travel at all. There is no advocacy on business travel issues with the government. There are similar challenges with airlines, and various other operators. There is clearly a need for education and a need for representing the interests of corporate travel buyer and industry with the powers that be.

What did this GBTA Conference 2017 in Mumbai focus on?

We had research presenters, a CXO round table which was very well-received last year, as well as a panel on GST among other things. We did a session on GST even in Delhi this August but it focused more on the logic behind the GST, the overarching principles and values, and what should the industry be preparing for. In Mumbai, the session focused on the operational aspect of the GST and how it impacts business travel.

Is there little more clarity on GST now as far as business travel is concerned?

Yes and no. There are certain stakeholders in the industry who are not willing to come forward and verbalise, like airlines for instance.

“We are focusing on 3 major events conferences and bring more education to the market”



business travel – the way companies travel, the global economy that we are all in, dependencies between countries – has changed travel patterns forever. The days of having a predictable travel destinations and even the percentage of travel that is done domestically verses internationally

has changed. These overall patterns have changed the way we look at everything. You have travellers going to destinations where they are more likely to travel alone, more likely to go to a destination they are not familiar with or places that have different levels of security risks,” he says.

As a result, companies have tweaked their responsibility to their employees and they have to be very aware of being able to contact their travellers at all times and be able to issue advisories, be able to help and assist them in need.

“These issues have changed the priorities for companies. We also work closely with government officials,” McCormick adds.

INDIA FOR GBTA

Speaking about the India market, McCormick says, “We are very excited about India. We have been very happy with the response we have received in the last two years. It has met all our projections for growth or exceeded them. We are trying to focus on three major events conferences and bring more education to the market. The size of the market is growing as are its needs.”

INNOVATIVE approach to MEETINGS

Bharathi Shetty, MD & CEO, Frontier Holidays, talks about her company, the MICE market and the trends for corporate incentives

What is your USP?

Founded in 1998, Frontier Holidays today stands out as one of the most trusted customised travel and tourism planning entity with its specialised focus on MICE in a nation which is the 7th largest tourism economy of the world. Headquartered at Bengaluru, the company prides in its offering which unlike the conventional tourism companies consists of multiple itinerary options, suiting the needs of any type of traveller, be it self-drives, coach tours, backpackers transport, chauffeur limousines, helicopters, cruises, trains, treks or safaris.

What have the trends been for outbound MICE for 2017?

At the 5th Annual MICE India and Luxury Travel Congress (MILT), it was projected that India is expected to generate 6.5 Million outbound luxury and MICE tourists annually by 2020. Currently India accounts for 1.5 million outbound MICE travellers and 3.6 million outbound luxury travellers. As calculated by Mastercard, both markets are forecast to grow at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 8.6 per cent to 2020. MICE travel in the recent times has seen considerable increase. The traditional 'boardroom-style' space is being replaced by an innovative approach where huge outdoor meeting spaces, smaller cosy nooks for limited gatherings and different kinds of seating are being requested. The focus is on creating conducive settings and it is no more a surprising sight to see delegates assembled around a campfire or at a bar. Few trends favouring MICE would be:

Opening of newer destinations: Organisations are open to do events and conferences in cruises, exotic islands and luxury destinations. The introduction of low cost carriers and competitive edge over the pricing has made international destinations affordable. Classic example, a place like Dubai an all-inclusive package is easily available at about ₹38000/- to ₹40,000/- if planned and booked in advance.

Teambuilding activities: Cookery workshops, volley ball game, hiking, scuba diving, etc, are now part of the checklist for conferences and

meetings. Organisations are now starting to see value in the same and consider more as valuable investment of time and money.

Competition: Training budgets are being revamped to ensure best-trained sales and management personnel for survival in the competitive global economy.

Advancing Technology —Tourism industry is not immune to technology. The ever increasing need to be connected and access to the world of information at the fingertips has given birth to non- convention meetings and conferences styles

Budgets and Pricing – The catch is to plan ahead and choose a right travel partner.

What have been the trends for corporate incentives for 2017?

In 2017 we did operate quite many incentive tours to London, Europe, Scandinavia, USA and South-East Asia. Companies are finding alternate methods to motivate and keep the human resource at its best. One of the best is providing exotic locations for the incentive tours which gives a push to enhance performance. Targets and businesses are driven by incentive tours to ensure people perform at a par.

“Currently, India accounts for 1.5 mn outbound MICE & 3.6 mn outbound luxury travellers”



Bharathi Shetty





ACCORHOTELS

continues to grow in India

Jean-Michel Cassé, Chief Operating Officer - India and South Asia, AccorHotels, shares his view on the industry, the year gone by, and the group's performance in India



Jean-Michel Cassé

Jessy Iype

Over the past decade, how has the Indian market been for AccorHotels in terms of growth and demand?

The Indian market has been very friendly to us. Our brand has been positioned well as compared to others in the market. For AccorHotels, we realise that we have a total of 53 hotels that have been opened and by the end of the year, we will grow 55 in number with 10,000 rooms in only 10 years. Though we say everything takes time in India, we have successfully managed all these openings in this duration. A brand that supports this growth is Novotel, which opened its first property in Hyderabad, along with a state-of-the-art convention centre. This is the only convention

“The Indian market has been very friendly to us. Our brand has been positioned well”



centre hotel that saw the entire country visit it for various conferences and events. From heads of state to the who's who of the country, they have all paid a visit to the convention centre and the hotel. Novotel is well-recognised because of this hotel. The second brand that has been accepted well is ibis, and for its development we have partnered with InterGlobe, a partnership that has been beneficial for us.

What environmentally friendly measures does your brand undertake?

We have a huge programme called Planet 21, which has seven pillars. Each of the pillars corresponds to measures that have been taken in every hotel, like reducing the carbon footprint, saving energy, etc. Apart from this, we also project CSR and training initiatives that help us do our bit for the society. We have a substantial investment in the well-being of the society.

Tell us about the group's expansion plans in India

In addition to the 30 hotels in the development pipeline that will provide 5,000 rooms, the 55 hotels at the end of the year are going to give us an inventory of 10,000 rooms.

Kindly throw light on the challenges the MICE industry in India is facing.

The GST was a necessary step to be undertaken; it was a structural policy requirement for the

industry and its future, that was to not have a negative impact on it. For the economy segment such an ibis hotel for instance, the GST was a favourable move as it eliminated the business of the brand being subjected to a generic tax in addition to state-wise taxes. For the luxury segment on the other hand, GST doesn't make much of a difference and is more or less on the same lines as earlier. The F&B industry, too, is now subjected to a reasonable tax rate than it was earlier. This new regime is supportive of the F&B industry globally and the MICE opportunities we have. The rate of 28 per cent, when compared to the rest of the world, is a bit high because whenever you pitch for a MICE event, you are compared to destinations like Malaysia and Indonesia, compared to which India seems more expensive. As a hotel, our rates are very competitive, but for the rest of the world, the impact of GST reflects a higher number.

Please elaborate on the incentives you offer to MICE groups.

For MICE groups, we have to align our price to the environment. Destinations like Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia offer competitive rates, making it imperative for us to adjust our prices so that the MICE event doesn't shift to another destination. In today's time, what needs to be taken care of for MICE and leisure groups is the security in some cities and the looming issue of pollution in metro cities like Delhi.





SHANGRI-LA:

A perfect MICE venue

Vivek Braganza, Director of Business Development (India), Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts talks about the international Hotel portfolio for Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts from the perspective of the Indian MICE market



Vivek Braganza

Kindly elucidate on the MICE venues.

As Shangri-La, we are very proud of the products we have across Asia Pacific. From the MICE and weddings perspective we have products which are very suited to the Indian customer. In a roadshow, held in September this year we had five hotels across three destinations present. There was Bangkok, Chiang Mai from Thailand and Hambantota and Columbo from Sri Lanka, Rassa Ria Resort from Kota Kina Balu in Malaysia.

Kindly elaborate on the MICE facilities at these venues.

The venue capacities range from weddings for 250 people as a residential format right up to the Shangri-La Columbo which has a 17000-square foot ball room and can accomodate 1500 people in one event in the round table arrangement. Not only the diverse spaces that we offer but really the kind of destinations, where the hotels are located is very suitable to India.

What has been the growth trend for the wedding market from India?

The opportunity for us is really like the tip of the iceberg, we have seen tremendous growth in excess of 50 per cent year-on-year from the MICE segment and some of the most popular destination for us continue to be Thailand, a very known destination for India. Sri Lanka has opened up after 20 years so its fantastic to have them. We do very well in Muscat and Malaysia and of course, Hong Kong and Singapore are firm favorites.

At the Bengaluru property we are responsible for opening very divergent markets, new opportunities are coming in from the Middle East as well as China. What is really driving the Shangri-La's event collection, is a programme that we use for MICE meetings and events. Also, our association that we launched this year, along with Taj inner circle, Shangri-La Golden circle, allows you to earn and burn your points both ways.



What are the trends seen in the international MICE segment?

We are seeing an uptake in demand. There have been a few macro-economic changes in terms of demonetisation and the impact of GST. Indians continue to travel abroad. It's seen as something aspirational to go abroad. It's becoming easier to do so, the connectivity to the major destinations is improving. Connectivity to the secondary destinations is also improving. We already have the product in those markets. We are usually the market leaders in those particular places and so it's great to have that from India.

What are the trends that you are noticing for destination weddings?

They differ from destination to destination, a more established destination like Thailand or Malaysia, they already have a significant amount of suppliers on the ground and a connect on the ground. A DMC support, a decorator or floral partner, they are very sorted. When you look at destinations further, if you are looking at China, say for example, you are thinking of having an event in Sania, a beach resort destination, that's when things are a little different. That's when the hotel steps in. We use our network and our connect to the regional office that I run here in India where we connect with the hotels and have that dialogue to see what set-ups can be managed. It's a partnership with the wedding planner, to be able to launch that destination for India. For MICE, the events collection is a very successful programme that we have running. What the events collection does is that it gives a benefit of three per cent. The three per cent comes back from the master bill on an

“Indians continue to travel abroad, the connectivity to destinations is improving”

existing event and a 10 per cent that you can use for the next event at Shangri-La. It's a significant advantage in this day when margins are tight for most event planners and it also gives you points over and above that. It's unique in the industry and in India it has been received very well.

Elucidate on the trends in outbound incentive?

Corporates are aware of destinations around the world. Some 400-500 people travelling together, with the ability to be able to host them in terms of accommodation as well as a variety of venues. That's a new trend we see the corporates are seeking out. They are used to the options in India and want to explore outbound. What's really hot right now is Sydney. We are seeing a lot of activity going there. Kota Kina Balu in Malaysia is an opportunity and Sri Lanka is just opening up. So the amount of enquiries we have there is really astounding. China is a long-haul destination for us from India.

With Shangri-La, we do have the inventory in Tier-2 cities as well. It's a work in progress, we are always suggesting new destinations; Shenzhen in China, across the border with Hong Kong is very popular, similarly, we will see more as the years go by. The synergy across partnerships across companies is very important in this day and age. We are trying to look at different venues, something exciting, little more casual, yet a business setting.

ATLANTIS gateway for INDIAN WEDDINGS

The great Indian wedding is often synonymous with terms like grandeur, extravagant and more. **Saida El Massmoudi**, Director, Wedding Events, elucidates on how apt a venue The Atlantis is for Indian destination weddings



Saida El Massmoudi



Kanchan Nath

The Indian wedding segment is seeing a surge in destination weddings due to the demand of a wedding getaway trend being witnessed for the current generation. Indians are the preferred clients for destination weddings, primarily because of the numerous events they hold.

Massmoudi throws light on this trend and gives her views, "The destination weddings coming from India is important for us especially in terms of revenue and numbers. Mainly because of the number of functions they do and the kind of luxury they look for. The minimum spends they have per event and the kind of consumption there is during the event."

DESTINATION ATLANTIS

Destination wedding have surged for Atlantis as well. The number of clientele the hotel deals in

the one-stop-shop and it's a destination within a destination being in The Atlantis."

INDIAN CLIENT, THE RIGHT CATCH

The Indian clientele is well aware of what they require for their special day to be extraordinary. To add to this need, a perfect venue is like a dream come true. Telling us why the Indian wedding client is such a catch, Massmoudi adds, "The Indian client does not only invite/bring his family only to celebrate the son's wedding, but they are also looking for holidays within the same period for their guests. Also for the bride and groom to stay after the function for few days to relax. We offer numerous activities, adventures and attractions. Guests like to go to the aqua venture, ladies go for the spa, pamper themselves. Post event, post wedding parties, after parties, outdoors, indoors. That's what makes Atlantis a bit unique and more desired by the client from



shows the demand to have a destination wedding for the India market. Giving an idea about the number of people invited to such weddings, she says, "Destination weddings that we have done so far range from 140 rooms up to 400 rooms. The biggest was held in October last year and it was for 800 people. They did more than five functions with us and most of them stayed with us more than five nights. They spent more than 3-4 million UAE Dirham (AED)."

Talking about the kind of weddings they can facilitate, she says, "We do weddings that range from 1 to 5 million Dirhams. We customise the packages to facilitate the process for the customers. That is based on their budget, on what they are looking for. Based on the food they are looking for, the services, the added values that we provide, whether they are going to have activities like the attraction with the dolphins. Special menu if they are asking for Jain food, pure vegetarian. Specifications like that. It is basically

“Destination weddings that we have done so far range from 140 rooms up to 400 rooms”

India. They look for different unique venues for the experience and to have memories from that wedding. We have a variety of marine and entertainment attractions, as well as 17 hectares of waterscape amusement at Aquaventure Waterpark, all within a 46-hectare site. It is home to one of the largest open-air marine habitats in the world, with over 65,000 marine animals in lagoons and displays including The Lost Chambers Aquarium, a maze of underwater corridors and passageways providing a journey through ancient Atlantis."

Aquaventure features 18 million liters of fresh water used to power thrilling waterslides, a 2.3-kilometer river ride with tidal waves and pools, water rapids and white-water chargers. Dolphin Bay, the unparalleled dolphin



“Yearly the growth from 2015, 2016 and 2017 can be pegged at 10 per cent”

conservation and education habitat, and Sea Lion Point were created to provide guests a once in a lifetime opportunity to learn more about one of nature's most friendly mammals.

DOING IT DIFFERENTLY

When the traditional ceremonies are done differently, it only adds to the colour to the holy ceremony. Atlantis tries to offer Indian groups the same with a touch of their own. “In case of clients coming from India, even if the ring ceremony is already done, they like to repeat it in a different way. We give them ideas. Something unique that they have not experienced elsewhere. For example, the Dolphin bringing the ring to the groom to present it to the bride. We have the Oceana restaurant with aquarium, then the divers can have a message for the bride or the parents, like ‘will you marry me’ or this is our ring ceremony. Something like that which is out of the ordinary, that people can get to have at their engagement party/ring ceremony.”

Vendors are an important component to the wedding segment. Giving an idea about arrangements at weddings, she adds, “We have suppliers and vendors within the country in Dubai, we also have a lot of people that we deal

within India. Sometimes the client comes ready with their wedding planner, we advise them for local vendors to facilitate some things, like the horse, *puja* equipment, small things needed can also be provided. Sometimes we provide the wedding planners. We are there for the clients and we give them guidance.” There are numerous upcoming trends that the Indian millennials follow to keep up the pace. Talking about trends in Indian weddings, Massmoudi adds, “Indian weddings are full of joy and surprises, they are very unique. I think in the old days, the parents used to take decisions, they decided on the décor, the menus and the arrangements. Nowadays, the youngsters are getting more involved. They bring in the fresh, modern ideas in terms of the weddings, entertainment, celebrities who are going to be in the *Sangeet* function. Fireworks, maybe cake hanging from the ceiling. For every wedding there is something unique.”

“Yearly the growth from 2015, 2016 and 2017 can be pegged at 10 per cent. The packages are convenient. We have special packages for the Indian market per function, say for the *mehndi*, *sangeet*, etc. The room rates as well are very convenient, added value of whatever benefits they get with it. We have done 350 Dirham weddings per person, food only not the room. We have also done 1000 Dirham weddings per person, food only. For a three-night, four-day wedding it would cost about 3500 to 5000 Dirham per person,” concludes Massmoudi.

GST for MICE: Yay or nay?

India is coming to terms with the new tax regime, the Goods and Services Tax (GST). Few industry experts elucidate on whether GST has been a boon or a bane for the MICE segment

Jessy Iype

The hospitality and tourism sector in India contributes to the growth of the national economy in a major way. The recent announcement of the GST regime has created some ripples around the segment. Lack of input tax credit (ITC) under the Goods and Services Tax has impacted the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) segment with cancellations and postponement of events, according to the Hotel and Restaurant Association of India. One of the anomalies that emerged post GST rollout was that MICE activities and other events held in hotels outside of the home state were not eligible for input tax credit (ITC). Some experts unravel more on this

While some suggest a more clarity on the Goods and Service tax policy, some say it could affect the MICE industry in terms of Input Tax Credit among some of the issues that needs to be pondered upon. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) was implemented on July 1, 2017 and was aimed to bring in the 'one nation one tax' system

in India. Being hit while unprepared was what the industry witnessed. The MICE industry has a lot of components in its umbrella like venue, travel, advertising, accommodation, and catering, among more. The tax regime would impact these segments or not is what the industry insiders are comprehending upon. The tax regime has made the country appear a not very viable MICE destination globally for events as MICE does not only constitute meetings, conferences, events but also the leisure time that MICE groups look forward to and avail during the MICE tours. The tax regime shall effect the entertainment tax in some states and so the MICE agents shall witness some hiccups. The government be it the centre or states together should ensure to allow time for agents and hotels to adapt to the new system to make India as a preferred destination for MICE events worldwide among stiff competition of other destinations like Dubai, Southeast Asia, etc.

“The tax regime has made the country appear a not very viable MICE destination globally”



Anshu Sarin

CEO

Berggruen Hotels



The reduction of GST rates from earlier 18 per cent to 5 per cent irrespective of air conditioning is a welcome move. It will spur people to eat out and hotels like us will have more people eating lunch and dinner in-house. This rate reduction will also provide a fillip to the industry's growth and result in increased footfalls. GST is a positive tax reform and shall transform the entire industry thereby leading to increased growth. As with any path-breaking futuristic tax reform, there may be few impediments especially in the initial phases with regards to implementation and supply chain. One of the main reasons for input tax credit was to avoid double taxation. Hence, we feel that the removal of input tax benefit should be reconsidered in the larger interest of the industry.

**Akashdeep Chanana**

Director

Leisure and Travel World

Nowadays, the hotel industry has its major revenue coming from MICE and destination weddings at popular destinations. Corporates are still working on smooth operations for their organisations due to introduction of GST. Forget about new bookings, confirmed bookings are under major impact as of now. Looks like it will take few months for the hotels, vendors, event agencies and travel agents to get back to the fruitful situation.

Nooch HomrossukhonDirector- Meetings and Incentives Department
Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau

We are still learning and evaluating the impact that GST will make. Its still early days, however, we are positive that its good for long term growth from India. We saw corporate clients had put their decisions on hold when the tax had to be rolled out and now we see them planning as per the provisions pertaining to their sectors. We are hopeful on the positive outcome from this biggest tax reform in India.

**Narendra Prabhu**

General Manager

Signature Club Resort

One of the glitches that emerged after GST roll out was that advance bookings being cancelled and no new bookings. Even though major chunk of our MICE business is from Bengaluru itself, the confusion prevailing and uncertainties are forcing corporates to think twice before booking a venue. ITC is available if the entity arranging the MICE has their GST registered in the state where it is held. Not receiving a set-off for an expense will be discouraging for any business to conduct MICE outside of their state is a major drawback and has a drastic effect on revenues. For instance, the upcoming wedding season in December is one of the top grossers for the banquets division of any resort is predicted to be flat this year. Corporates are holding events in the same state where they are registered under GST hitting the hoteliers.

Anil Kalsi

Managing Partner

Ambe World Travels



The problem with GST today is about ambiguity in numerous compliances, codes, invoice and report uploads, with no clear guidance. A new surprise springs up at every stage and compliance is centrestage and business comes next, as per the situation today.



Satyajit Kotwal

General Manager
The Resort Madh Marve

Post GST roll out, the major impact that emerged was that MICE activities and other events held in hotels outside of home state were not eligible for Input Tax Credit (ITC). This has been leading to cancellations and postponements for pre booked events. There is an overall reduction in MICE bookings across hotels in India as compared to the same period last year. Most companies are considering holding events in the same state where they are registered under GST. The non-receipt of ITC for business undertakings holding MICE in states other than the ones they operate in is the biggest drawback of GST for hospitality.



Sujeet Kumar

General Manager
Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway

While earlier, there were multiple impositions on tax percentages for banquet rental, food and soft beverages, taxed anywhere between 23 to 35 per cent, they are now collated under the GST at a flat 18 per cent, which includes tax revenue collected by both central and state government. Additionally, GST is applicable only on place of supply, due to which if a company is headquartered out of Karnataka and does its function or event at any city in Karnataka the relevant hotel would not raise an IGST invoice, which effectively would mean that the company would not be able to claim a set off for the taxes paid. Overall, the impact of the respective tax slabs has reduced, thus reducing the cost to the final guest, which ideally gives us an advantageous price point to close the business at the property.

Eashita Ghosh

Promotional Manager
Tibet Tours and Travels

The current financial scenario in our country is combating the percussions and connotations of Goods and Service Tax (GST). Initially the special rate of the hotel included the sale tax, entertainment tax, luxury tax and VAT above only 9 per cent additional as service tax which was levied on the total billing amount. After the introduction of GST the hotel did not abolish the initial taxes (sale, VAT, luxury, entertainment and others) which was included in the total rate of the hotel instead they have included the additional 28 per cent of the GST on the tariff of the hotel. The invoice generation after the introduction of GST is too complicated.





OMAN keen on India's Slice Of MICE

After seeing tremendous response from India's leisure market, Oman is keen to attract the MICE business from here. With focus on incentives and big-ticket events, the Oman Convention Bureau intends to ease rule and regulations

Hazel Jain



Khalid Al Zadjali

Just over a year old now, close to completing two years of existence, the Oman Convention Bureau is a department under the Ministry of Tourism, Sultanate of Oman that was created purely to focus on attracting MICE business to Oman. It not only looks after developing MICE opportunities in Oman but also improving them, easing the rule and regulations as well as facilitate prompt communication between the private sector and the government.

This indicates Oman's seriousness of developing and promoting itself to the MICE market. The bureau is now preparing to tap the India market aggressively. On his first sales visit to India recently, **Khalid Al Zadjali**, Director, Oman Convention Bureau, met key MICE operators and corporate companies in Mumbai and New Delhi to explore strategic partnerships with them. He says, "The idea is to have strategic partnerships with a couple of key travel companies here in

India and discuss how we can work together. The next step is to bring Oman suppliers to India with a focus on MICE."

The bureau has made a plan that outlines the major source markets and India figures prominently in it. "India is one of the major source markets that we will focus on in the next three to five years. It already figures in the top five international markets for us. When we talk about India, we talk about the incentive market – it is really strong. The incentive groups are always looking for something unique something new and this is something that Oman can offer. Even Indian weddings have become popular here and the largest group that we have handled so far is 1,100 people," Zadjali says.

CONVENTION CENTRE

The first phase of the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC) located opposite the airport opened last year. This included the exhibition hall with a total area of 22,000 sqm that can be divided in five halls. It also has 10-12 meeting rooms around it, which is

“In the last five years, Oman has witnessed 82 per cent growth in Indian arrivals”

already doing well. Phase two will be completed by second quarter of 2018 that will include the convention hall. This hall will be a dome structure and will be able to seat 3,200 pax in theatre style. "It will have the latest AV facilities. There will be 35-40 meeting rooms above that as well. This will take the total number of meeting rooms in this centre to 45. Attached to this will be two hotels – JW Marriot and Crown Plaza," Zadjali adds.

JW Marriot will be a five-star property with 300 rooms, and walking distance from it will be the Crown Plaza Hotel which is a four-star property with 600 keys.

This will be operational by October 2017. These hotels will complement the world-class OCEC facility once they get started. In fact, the OCEC has already booked big-ticket events such as the

upcoming UNWTO event in December 2017. "We have also won two other huge international congresses. One is the World Cancer Congress in 2020 that will see about 4,500 to 6,000 attendees. So in all, this development includes the convention centre, two star hotels, and two big ballrooms that will come up in the second phase. All this is expected to be completed by the first quarter of 2018. We expect the ballrooms to be taken up by functions and weddings, etc," Zadjali adds.

INCENTIVE IS HUGE

According to him, India's incentive market is strong which is good for Oman since it can offer a lot of options. "Why Oman? There are so many reasons. It is close to India with just a 2.5 hour flight to Muscat. The connectivity is amazing with roughly around 200 flights per



FACT FILE

Air connectivity

- OmanAir has 150 flights per week from Muscat to 13 destinations in India including Delhi and Mumbai
- Air India has more than 30 direct flights weekly
- Jet Airways offers more than 21 flights weekly direct from India to Muscat
- Other flights operating on this route include Indigo, Spicejet and Air India Express

Visa process

The country offers joint tourist visa with Qatar as well as Dubai. The process for group visas is an average of five to seven working days for processing

week. Culturally, we are very similar. Moreover, we offer value for money when it comes to incentives. We have so many activities to do that you can actually make a 14-day itinerary with different activities to do everyday," he says. Plus, big groups are not a problem for Oman. Zadjali expects to be ready with a variety of options for hotel rooms with about 3,000 more rooms coming up between 2017 and 2018. There are also other infrastructure and tourism projects within the ninth five-year development plan 2016-2020 that the Oman Tourism Strategy will reinforce.

The Oman Convention Bureau does offer groups incentive programmes but they are all tailor-made with no fixed slabs. So the level of incentive will depend up on the size of the group, their spending power, the itinerary, total budget, etc. Zadjali says, "We also offer assistance from the logistics side. First we study the economic impact that the group will make for Oman and then decide on a case to case basis. While we can cater to all budgets, Oman is truly an experience that we can offer to the MICE segment. It has a wow factor with an authentic Arabian experience." Offbeat activities here include dolphin watching and turtle watching.

MICE in metropolis

Delhi and the neighbouring National Capital Region showcase prominent scope for MICE activities. Eminent hoteliers of the region impart knowledge on the same

Kanchan Nath



Harpreet Vohra

General Manager, Radisson Blu Faridabad

MICE offerings

The first five-star deluxe property of Radisson Blu Faridabad is an upscale business hotel in the city of Faridabad. The hotel boasts one of the largest banquet and convention venues in the city center, which covers an area of 10,000 sqft and has the capacity to host up to 1000 people. State-of-the-art audiovisual equipment, convention facilities, elegant banquet and free high-speed Internet enhance the productivity of corporate functions. The customised dining and catering packages add a touch of ease to any business meeting. The venue has hosted events and conferences in theatre style, accommodating up to 500 people and in cluster style accommodating up to 250 people.

Specialised services

Radisson Blu Faridabad is an ideal venue for organising management workshops, training sessions, conferences, cocktail dinners and other corporate functions. It offers a convenient location with five-star amenities that include an upscale gym, spa and swimming pool and a well-informed concierge service. We customise packages as per the requirements of the client. The hotel offers a special 'Brain Food' menu for MICE events and meetings.

Brain Food is a new concept developed for meetings and conferences to help maintain delegates' concentration levels during events.

The special menu includes a variety of healthy food options like fish, fruits and vegetables, whole grains, drinks and desserts with natural sweetener. This concept is based on serving food that keeps blood sugar levels stable and supplies optimal nutrition for the brain.

MICE pipeline

MICE segment has contributed substantially to the revenue of the hotel. In 2017, 40 per cent of our revenue has been generated through MICE events. The convention centre has hosted conferences for many reputed organisations. Our client list includes corporates like CII, IOCL and Escorts. There are many conferences that are lined up in the coming months of the year like doctor conferences, kid carnival exhibitions and products launches.

Impact of GST

MICE revenue has surely been impacted by GST but taking it positively we are associating with MICE agencies and planning to move ahead with GST as our taxes is 18 per cent on rooms and food and 18.9 per cent on liquor.

MICE in Faridabad

The city is one of the largest business and industrial hubs in the NCR and is home to an array of corporate sites. The location has an added advantage of its proximity to a direct connectivity to South Delhi via metro.

“

The venue has hosted up to 500 people in theatre style

”



DID YOU KNOW?
Delhi is largest commercial centre in Northern part of India



SM Azmat

President Sales & Marketing
Jaypee Hotels and Resorts

MICE offerings

The total banqueting area at Jaypee Greens Golf & Spa Resort, Greater Noida is 51,160 sqft and at Jaypee Palace Hotel & Convention Centre, Agra is 47,290 sqft.

Specialised services

We offer a varied range of services for meetings, incentives, conferences and events of all sizes – national or international. Our team helps in planning a customised event as per the requirement & budget of the client. From suggesting the apt venue to being flexible with the menu to planning some out of the box activities to surprise as well as help them unwind during long meeting hours, we provide it all.

A distinctive factor that Jaypee Greens Golf & Spa Resort, Greater Noida offers is the presence of Six Senses Spa, a unit of the globally renowned Six Senses Spa (Thailand) in India. Spread over 90,000 sqft, it not only offers a mesmerising array of holistic therapies administered by professionals but it also adds a different aspect of wellness following their mantra of 'Conferences with Difference'.

MICE pipeline

For Jaypee Greens Golf & Spa Resort, MICE is



one of the major revenue generating streams and 2017 has been performing better than 2016 till date. We look forward towards generating incremental business by bringing in international conferences as well which has always helped in putting us on the global map for international convention centres.

Location in NCR

NCR has become a large hub of corporate and MICE travel. Today, corporates have started using the hotels in NCR, keeping in mind the close proximity to Delhi, banquet capacity, luxury and vast expanse offered by them. The hotels in Aerocity may be preferred by business travellers because of the proximity to the airport but presently they lack infrastructure facilities.



“The total banqueting area at Jaypee Greens Golf & Spa Resort, Greater Noida is 51,160 sqft”

Sumit Gogia

Director of Events, Hyatt Regency Delhi

MICE offerings

We have more than 32,000 sqft of banqueting area, which is divided into two main venues, as well as a combination for break out rooms that allow us to host a plenary session and multiple breakout sessions simultaneously. All venues combined can easily host corporate events and MICE for 1000–1100 guests. Most of our social events can host up to 3000 guests on an average.

Specialised services

We offer a one-stop-shop for all our events. Our food & beverage offerings have always been of superior quality as we incorporate our restaurants in the banquet venues. We have also moved away from the standard buffet concept and have migrated to the 'Theatre Kitchen' concept.

Impact of GST

GST has enabled all the hotels to pitch on the same platform pan India, giving Delhi hotels an opportunity to retain business.

Challenges

Delhi Government's policies related to licenses, poor upkeep of heritage monuments, and the



chaotic traffic are a few factors that don't attract MICE to this part of the country.

MICE in Delhi

In terms of locations, hotels in the city centers are slightly more expensive than the hotels on the outskirts of Delhi, be it Aerocity or Gurugram hotels. Any major conference with a reasonable paying propensity will prefer Central Delhi instead of doing it in the outskirts.





Alok Kaul

Director of Operations, JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity

MICE offerings

We have 24,000 sqft which includes the Crystal Ballroom and a large pre-function area along with the banquet porch which is ideal for exhibition set ups. Depending upon the stage size we can accommodate up to 1400 guests in theatre style seating

Specialised services

Dedicated event planner, themed coffee breaks, innovative buffet set ups, state of the art inbuilt audio visual, speakers/ VIP lounge. The hotel has become a very popular venue for international congresses, as well as corporate launches and high end business meetings. The hotel is currently forecasting to meet and exceed group and catering budgets.

MICE in Aerocity

Infrastructure to host a large convention is still missing in NCR. The travel time between locations do not help. Aerocity has proven to be a very centrally located option to stay and conduct business meetings for corporates and transit tourists alike. With conference facilities of almost one lakh sq feet within the JW Marriott and other hotels, put together, one can plan national / international seminars for up to 5000 delegates with just 10 mins drive from the airport and accommodation all inside the Aerocity premises beating the traffic and saving time.



“One can plan national / international seminars for up to 5000 delegates”



Heddo Siebs

General Manager, Andaz Delhi

MICE offerings

Andaz Delhi offers more than 37,500 sq ft of meeting and event spaces that are ideal for small-scale business meetings, large conferences or distinctive celebrations. Each of our innovative spaces is designed in a modern style with comfortable seating and can be customised to meet preferences. With over 37,500 sqft of event space and the right size of room inventory supporting it, MICE is definitely a huge driving factor for us. Even though we only opened a few months back we are extremely thankful for the market response so far and positive for the future opportunities within this segment.

Specialised services

Each of these spaces can be customised for any occasion, from themed cocktail parties, al fresco dinners to stylish birthday and anniversary celebrations. Fluid layouts, functional design and show kitchens staffed by friendly chefs and baristas create a fun environment that encourage interaction and conversation.

From venue choices, menu designs, theme ideas, audio/visual needs, and everything in between, the event experience is vibrant and highly personalised for each of our esteemed guests. Whatever your personal style is, our professional events team is available to assist throughout your event to ensure it all runs smoothly.



Impact of GST

We are optimistic about the overall business and we do not feel pressure on that front.

MICE in Aerocity

Our concept of being a lifestyle product in Aerocity, where all other hotels offer a rather traditional corporate set-up gives us an edge. Every bit of Andaz is inspired by the indigenous neighbourhood, where we offer a kaleidoscope of local culture. The entire Andaz experience, from the airport pick-up, to the whole look and feel of our property when our guests enter and begin their journey here contributes to enhancing our hotel's appeal.

Here we celebrate our 'Delhi Heroes' who create magic away from the spotlight and curate immersive tours for guests to view Delhi from these unsung heroes' perspective.





Visa Requirements



Oman

☒ Following documents required to obtain the Oman tourist visas:

1. The Applicant must hold a valid passport (with photocopy of the identification pages).
2. Passport should be valid for six months.
3. 1 Blue background Coloured passport size photograph.
4. Last country visited (visa copy shall be provided).
5. Date of the last country visited.
6. Confirmed Hotel booking.
7. Confirmed onward / return air ticket.
8. All visa applications are referred to Oman and the approval can take from 4 to 5 working days.
9. In Sultanate of Oman, the Immigration office is closed on Fridays and Saturdays.



Singapore

- ☒ **Passport:**
Original Passport with the validity of minimum six months from the date of return and minimum two blank pages.
- ☒ **Visa Application Form:**
Form 14A to be duly filled and signed by the applicant.
- ☒ **Photo Specification:**
Two recent passport size colored photographs with matt or semi matt finish, 80% face coverage, white background and without border (Size: 35mm x 45mm).
- ☒ **Covering Letter:**
Covering letter from company on its letter head mentioning the naming list & passport details of all applicants along with the purpose & duration of the visit and detailed day to day itinerary. The letter should be duly signed by the authorized signatory & addressed to – The Visa Officer, Singapore High Commission, Delhi.
- ☒ **Accommodation Proof:** Hotel booking.
- ☒ **Airline Reservation:** Confirmed Air Ticket.

Source: Udaan

Hire me, sire!

Companies follow the norm of a referral programme diligently. This saves them time from job postings, screening process. Counsellor **Shivani Misri Sadhoo** reveals more...



Shivani Misri Sadhoo
Founder
Saarthi Counselling
Services



Job recruitment process is essential to support employee referral programme



When organisations involve their employees in its recruitment process, it asks its employees to refer someone suitable for a vacancy. This improves the work culture, provides opportunities for good team building, motivates employees and most importantly, an employee referral programme saves recruitment cost and time for the organisation. The role of employee referral programmes are:

1. A faster hiring process than a traditional one:

According to industrial average, it generally takes 29 days to hire a referred candidate, compared to 39 days to hire a candidate through a job posting or 55 days to hire a candidate through a job site or through recruitment outsourcing agency.

2. Improves company culture:

A successful employee referral programme is an indicator for healthy organisational culture. A good company culture keeps your employees happy and when employees are happy, they happily refer the organisation to their friends or ex-colleagues.

3. Employer branding:

In today's world of the digital market, posting job opening information by employees on their social media profiles proves a great way for strengthening brand image of the company. These posts generally reach to thousands of people.

4. Better hiring results: Generally, employee referral programmes result in better quality hiring because employees understand their departmental or team job requirement in a better way and hence they invite friends or ex-colleagues with whom they had worked in the past, know their work potential and are sure that they would be an ideal fit for the post.

THE RELEVANCE

Employee referral programme requires a proactive and serious participation by the organisation. When employees refer their organisation to a friend or relative, they generally put their social image and credibility at stake. Which is why an active job recruitment process is essential to support employee referral programme or else the programme will backfire – i.e. it will damage the employee morale and work culture rather than doing the opposite. Let's us take a scenario, say an employee calls up his friend and tells him that there is an opening in his department. However, due to layoff pressure, indecisiveness for on-going job recruitments process whether the new vacancies would be filled or not, hence the HR never callbacks the employee's friend.

In such scenario, the employee would build an impression that the organisation is inefficient, poorly managed, does not value its employees and the company may witness have limited future growth.





DECEMBER 2017

IITM	Hyderabad	1-3
TRAVEL BUSINESS SHOW	New Delhi	2-3
ILTM (INT'L LUXURY TRAVEL MARKET)	France	4-7
BAHRAIN TOURISM ROADSHOW	Mumbai	6
INDIA CARGO AWARDS- NORTH& EAST	New Delhi	20
INDIA TRAVEL AWARDS- NORTH	New Delhi	21

JANUARY 2018

MEETINGS MOROCCO MARRAKECH	Morocco	11-12
IITM	Kochi	11-13
IITT (INDIA INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL & TOURISM EXHIBITION)	Mumbai	11-13
GPS	Nagpur	15-17
IITT (INDIA INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM FAIR)	Ahmedabad	16-17
FITUR	Spain	17-21
OTM	Mumbai	18-20
JHARKHAND TRAVEL MART	Ranchi	19-21
ASEAN TOURISM FORUM CHIANG MAI	Thailand	22-26
DUSIT INTERNATIONAL INDIA OFFICE ROADSHOW	Mumbai	29
DUSIT INTERNATIONAL INDIA OFFICE ROADSHOW	Bengaluru	30
TOURISM EVENTS QUEENSLAND	Chennai	30
TOURISM EVENTS QUEENSLAND	Bengaluru	31
SATTE	Delhi	31-Feb 2



Travel Business show in December

The show promises to showcase serious one-on-one meetings

The Travel Business Show, an exclusive MICE event par excellence, is coming to Le Meridien Gurgaon, from Decemeber 2-3, 2017. The show promises to showcase a good bumber of serious one-on-one meetings. The show is expected to also have 35 prominent coporate buyers and 35 MICE agents. **Sarika Bhambani Rawal**, Vice President, Travel Business Show, says. "The show is a diverse forum featuring the best of MICE brands. Successful meetings are scheduled to take place between a selection of exhibitors, and top-level buyers. At Travel Business Show, networking and building relationships enhances future dealings."

India Travel Awards in North

The awards will be held on Dec 21 at the The Lalit, New Delhi

The India Travel Awards- North will be a formal black-tie ceremony, aimed at recognising the achievements and contribution made by the travel industry players in boosting the tourism and hospitality industry in India. The awards are supported by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, and other esteemed trade bodies. **Gunjan Sabikhi**, Convener, India MICE Awards points out that the travel industry in India is a big revenue earner and contributes a major share to the tourism and hospitality industry of the country. The industry has evolved a great deal over the last few years and has become so big that it is unmissable on the global map. Sabikhi says, "Without the efforts of the various people associated with it, I don't think the industry would have reached where it has now. India Travel Awards-North is a token of appreciation, more than mere acknowledgment, of the dedication and toil that people of the industry have put in. I am sure the show is going to be a great success."



movements



André Blattmann
Board of Directors
Swiss International
Air Lines (SWISS)

André Blattmann, former Chief of the Swiss Armed Forces, has been appointed to the Board of Directors of Swiss International Air Lines (SWISS). He will take up his position on 1 January 2018. Blattmann succeeds Montie Brewer, who will step down from the Board at the end of this year. He was admitted to the Swiss Armed Forces' flying and anti-aircraft troops' instructor corps in 1984, and served as an instructor at recruit schools for anti-aircraft troops. He went on to hold various further positions before being appointed Deputy Chief of the Armed Forces in 2008.



Christoph Mares
Chief Operating Officer
Mandarin Oriental
Hotel Group

Christoph Mares has been promoted to Chief Operating Officer, effective 1, January 2018 and will be responsible for global hotel operations as well as overseeing the operational functions of Food and Beverage, Rooms and Quality, as well as Spa and Wellness. He will be based at the Group's Hong Kong corporate office, moving from his current position in London as Executive Vice President, Operations Director, Europe, Middle East, Africa and India (EMEAI). Mares has over 25 years' experience in luxury hotel management around the world.



Ashish Kishore
Managing Director
Global Business Travel (GBT)

American Express Global Business Travel (GBT) has announced the appointment of Ashish Kishore as the new Managing Director for GBT, India. In his new role, Kishore will have overall management responsibility for GBT's business in India. He will be part of the Asia Pacific leadership team, reporting into Elyes Mrad, Managing Director, International. Previously, Kishore was Vice President at online travel portal, Yatra.com, where he was responsible for the development of products, marketing and sales across the hotel and holiday area of the business.



Rupam Das
Regional Director-
Operations & BD
Clarks Inn Group of Hotels

Rupam Das has been transferred and promoted as Regional Director-Operation & Business Development at Clarks Inn Group of Hotels. In the current profile, Das will be responsible to bring in increased efficiency in hotel operations, enhanced brand visibility as well as oversee growth of the company's hotel portfolio through new acquisitions across its various brands. Additionally he is also heading Clarks Holidays, a vacation ownership offering by Clarks Inn that seeks to redefine leisure experiences of discerning holiday travellers, both in India and overseas. Das brings with him 21 years of experience.



Ujwal Wal
Director of Sales & Marketing
Sheraton Grand Bangalore
at Brigade Gateway

Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway welcomes Ujwal Wal as the new Director of Sales & Marketing. With an experience of over 12 years in the hospitality industry, Wal has worked with brands like Taj Group, Marriott International, IHG Hotels & IHHR hospitality group. He brings with him an extensive experience in sales and marketing. At Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway his role would be to ensure smooth operations of revenue, sales and marketing. His responsibilities will involve leading & motivating the team to achieve the sales targets along with strategising and planning of marketing initiatives.



Aditya Shamsher Malla
General Manager
Double Tree by Hilton
Pune - Chinchwad

Double Tree by Hilton has appointed Aditya Shamsher Malla as the General Manager at its Pune hotel. An industry veteran with more than two decades in the business, Malla has been a part of some of the best global brands such as Marriott, Hyatt, Oberoi Hotels and Resorts, Starwood Hotels and Resorts, Shangri La International and Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces. In his new role as the General Manager, he will be responsible for curating strategic initiatives that will lead the hotel to continue its guest focused approach and consolidate its leadership position. He will focus his efforts to deliver year-on-year growth, focus on staff engagement and spearhead corporate social activities.

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