

the **INBOUND** business magazine

# M!CEtalk<sup>®</sup>

A DDP Publication

Meetings • Incentives • Conferences • Events

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Work-life  
balance:  
**UNEVEN  
SCALES**

Smaller & leaner  
**WEDDINGS**

# Speed networking



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**For the first time in the Indian Subcontinent**

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**M!CE**talk  
Meetings • Incubates • Conferences • Events

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# NEWS



**Niraamaya Retreats Suryavilas has opened in Solan, Himachal Pradesh.**

**Its bouquet of services include a spacious banquet hall for weddings, conferences and events.**

## **ITC Hotels launch their first property in HP – Welcomhotel Shimla**

Welcomhotel has launched its first property in Himachal Pradesh, Welcomhotel Shimla, which offers 47 rooms and suites overlooking the picturesque Mashobra valley. With 3,186 sq.ft. spacious, seamless, indoor banquet spaces & a huge 3,477 sq. ft. outdoor venue called the 'Sunset Garden', surrounded by the majestic Himalayan range, the hotel can host both social & corporate events with élan. The in-house event managers will ensure that all events are personalised & follow safety and hygiene protocols.



## **Sayaji Hotels signs Sayaji Morbi**

Sayaji Hotels have expanded their presence in Gujarat with the signing of a new hotel in Morbi, anticipated to open by June 2021. Sayaji Hotel Morbi features 97 plush guest rooms. With its modern interiors, the 4,500 sq. ft. banquet hall and 1200 sq. ft. conference room offer the ideal venue for M!CE.



**We are extremely delighted about the launch of Sterling Palm Bliss Rishikesh. The resort is a perfect amalgamation of a spiritual adventure and drive-to holiday destination**



## **ITM 2021 from February 18-20, 500 buyers, 200 exhibitors expected**

India Tourism Mart (ITM) 2021 will be held from February 18-20. The event will be mostly virtual, and some part of it will be hybrid. **Subhash Goyal**, Secretary-General, FAITH, revealed, "This year's ITM will be slightly hybrid, but 90 per cent virtual. We are expecting around 500 international buyers and around 100-200 domestic buyers."

## **THE Park Mumbai reopens with unique offerings**



THE Park Mumbai, a boutique luxury hotel located in the heart of Juhu, reopens its doors to guests with enhanced hygiene, cleanliness and safety measures. The hotel is also launching the Happiness Menu, Immunity Booster Drinks Menu, Bartender/ Chef Services at home, Weddings by THE Park – a one-stop destination for intimate wedding experiences backed by the culinary team & the city's best wedding planners.



# Speed networking: Maximise contacts

The concept of speed networking has been used globally by events to ensure that attendees utilise their time optimally thereby making new contacts in a short span of time

**Charmaine Fernz**

**T**he quote by Tim Sanders 'Your network is your net worth' is very apt for truly understanding the potential of having a strong

network in any business. This thought has led many event-based companies to ensure that attendees gain maximum mileage from the concept of 'speed

networking'. The very simple explanation to the concept as per Wikipedia is a meeting format designed to accelerate business contacts. This is done in a

short span of time to ensure attendees access as many contacts thereby building their network. However, despite the concept being in existence for years now,

we, want to understand the effectiveness of speed networking to organisations and the benefits derived.

Explaining the need for good networking, **Ajay Verma**, Commercial Director – India, CWT Meetings & Events, states, “People participate in events for a number of reasons, but networking is arguably one of the most important. In a survey conducted by IAEE, PCMA, and The Experience Institute, three out of every four respondents stated that networking was one of the key reasons for attending events.

The agenda at many corporate events is typically packed with keynotes, presentations and panel sessions, with networking opportunities limited to coffee and lunch breaks. However, in recent years we’ve observed a trend of event organisers increasingly allocating more time and dedicated sessions for attendees to network, and speed networking can certainly be an effective way to facilitate greater levels of interaction and engagement among attendees.”

### THE EFFECTIVENESS

The concept though widely used has witnessed mixed responses from different sectors. While some companies are of the opinion that a few minutes is just right to get our foot in the door, many have actually seen positive results.

Sharing his perspective, **SD Nandakumar**, President and Country Head, B2B & Foreign Exchange, SOTC Travel, explains, “For corporates, speed networking has proven to be the most efficient engagement with their business/channel partners and employees during



Ajay Verma

**Speed networking is an activity that enables our clients to achieve a strong, measurable return on investment at their events**



SD Nandakumar

**The concept strengthens the agenda of meeting people that matter most to your business, especially with limited time on hand**



**QUICK BYTE** Speed networking ensures maximum visibility while also building contacts

events, team building exercises or internal mentoring programmes.”

Subsequently, discussing benefits accrued by speed networking, **Huzan Fraser Motivala**, India Representative, Tourism Ireland, says, “Speed networking has been quiet effective for Tourism Ireland. At our yearly event, the India Sales Mission, we have 15-20 Irish suppliers in attendance who network with around 100-150 Indian travel trade within two hours. We also have a themed dinner wherein 100-150 senior management & decision makers are invited to network & socialise over dinner.

For years, we have been replicating the speed networking workshop and dinner format in two cities, which has proved successful. This gives our Irish suppliers an opportunity to meet and introduce themselves to maximum number of agents over a short span of time and has helped them to generate leads for future business opportunities.”

### MAXIMUM VISIBILITY

It is undoubted that speed networking has several benefits for both the attendees and exhibitors. However, the question in point is, has that meeting resulted in enhancing business. Verma shares, “Speed networking is an activity that enables our clients to achieve a strong, measurable return on investment at their events. Networking allows both informal or scheduled

contact with staff and suppliers to ensure that a face is put to a name, thus building personal networks which are pivotal to future business negotiations, training and sales.”

The common consensus among industry players is the fact that speed networking ensures maximum visibility in a short span of time while also building contacts. As Nandakumar puts it, “These networking sessions help keep meetings quick and within a stipulated time. The concept strengthens the agenda of arranging appointments and meeting people that matter most to your business, especially with limited time on hand. An engaging format of speed networking helps immensely with delegates developing a special rapport with participants.”

Sharing a similar view, Motivala states, “Being a quick meeting set up, this concept has really helped enhance business as we are able to establish contacts with a large base over a short time. The leads to maximisation of return on investment and turns out to be a fruitful visit. Furthermore, this gives a platform for our Irish suppliers to connect with Indian agents for business follow-ups in future.”

Interestingly, **Amit Prasad**, Chief Executive Officer, Le Passage to India has a different opinion. In his view, “We have not converted any major business yet through this mode but have made potential contacts.”

### THE METAMORPHOSES

As the adage goes, change is the only constant, the same can be said about the concept of speed



networking. The concept though kept in its original format has seen several different takes, with the advancement of technology.

Explaining how the concept has moved ahead with times, Verma says, "Speed networking over the years has become more efficient and evolved with technology. While in the past simple networking drinks might have sufficed, our clients are now looking to capture their encounters during speed networking via QR codes to ensure longevity of their events in future. This can be done as simply as allocating QR codes to each event attendee as part of their registration process, which in turn enables those speaking to each other to share contact details via a simple swipe of a mobile phone over a QR."

Nandakumar shares his perspective on how speed networking has gained popularity across a variety of industries as a popular network format. He explains, "Many conferences over the years have adopted innovative structures with introduction on sector-specific speed networking sessions to establish business relationships and expand opportunities for attendees to negotiate, share knowledge and conclude relevant business deals."

## BENEFITS VS CHALLENGES

The evolution of the concept has also simultaneously seen increased benefits to both attendees and companies alike. However, speed networking works as an invaluable and low cost way to expand an organisation's connections and explore new business opportunities. However, a lot more effort is required for cooperation, business



deals, and sustainable customer loyalty. As Verma shares, "Given today's technology in this arena, we now have the ability to show clients a true ROI. For example, how many attendees visited a particular stand during an exhibition. We can even go to the next level in requesting answers from attendees such as approximate annual spend and company size, which all add to solid quantitative data. This information is also vital during follow-up."

Giving a very logical reasoning to the concept, Prasad explains that companies benefit by making initial contacts while also forcing some buyers to meet new sellers. However, the challenge is the limited amount of time to understand the needs of buyers & sellers & to judge the potential of buyers.

While the benefits are immense for companies, speed networking certainly comes with its own set of challenges such as attendee management which is crucial in any speed networking session and very often a big challenge. "It's an art to help manoeuvre these sessions, and as an organiser you have to keep a constant tab by first giving an introduction to set the agenda, and then continue reminding attendees of



Huzan Fraser Motivala

**Being a quick meeting set up, we are able to establish contacts with a large base over a short time**



Amit Prasad

**We have not converted any major business yet through this mode but have made potential contacts**

ground rules during the session," adds Verma.

## THE FUTURE

The common consensus among industry players is the fact that speed networking is here to stay, be it in-person or even virtually. However, networking of all kinds is pivotal to the success of all events and is invaluable to any business.

As Verma asserts, "Adding in a networking component to your next virtual meeting is a must to ensure attendees stay connected with each other and engaged with content. Virtual networking sessions can be very entertaining if managed correctly – think gamification, attendee avatars, care packages sent to attendee's homes – the opportunities are endless."

Providing a more realistic point of view, Prasad says, "We would look at the concept to be more fine-tuned to meet buyers from specific countries. There should be options to further schedule follow-up meetings where needed."

Reiterating similar sentiments, Nandakumar adds that the concept is getting popular since the last five to seven years and more corporates are making these sessions an integral part of their events as the fast-paced format gives wider reach as well as makes sessions more result-oriented. Undoubtedly, speed networking is a concept that is here to stay, what could change is how the sessions are conducted in times of uncertainty such as the ongoing pandemic. In such scenarios, hybrid events look most likely with a combination of physical and virtual meetings.

**QUICK BYTE** The fast-paced format gives wider reach as well as makes sessions more result-oriented



Smaller boutique properties will be in demand where you can exclusively have only your guests staying in. This 'exclusivity' will continue through 2021, says **Harsh Agarwal**, Founder, hukumkaro

**Smita Kulshreshth**



# Smaller and leaner

## How is the destination weddings industry faring?

While the last couple of months have been promising, it is still not back to the 2019 level of extravaganza. However, more people are opting for destination weddings compared to last year. Weddings that would otherwise happen outside India will now happen within the country. Unexplored destinations have come up to host the big fat Indian weddings that are now smaller and leaner. Khimsar, Arambol, Kumarakom, Hampi, Mashobra and Khajuraho have gained traction. 'Intimate celebrations' is the buzz phrase.

## What trends do you see for destination weddings?

Weddings have gone online, so guests are receiving packed hot food boxes into



Harsh Agarwal



**We plan to expand our presence by setting up offices in Jaipur and Goa to cater to the rise in demand for destination events**



**QUICK BYTE** Khimsar, Arambol, Kumarakom, Hampi, Mashobra & Khajuraho have gained traction

their homes to enjoy while being a part of the function virtually. Receptions have shifted from having buffets to having sit down 7-course gala dinners. At Home Receptions (AHRs) will now happen possibly months after a wedding to introduce the new family member to the family. Outdoor functions will be preferred, so properties with more outdoor venues will be popular. Smaller boutique properties (resorts or palaces) will be in demand where you can exclusively have only your guests staying in. This 'exclusivity' will continue through 2021 and people will prefer inviting only

family and close friends. Welcome and invite kits are becoming more personalised and more expensive. Couples want to express their gratitude to their friends for attending the wedding, and this is a trend we don't see going away. Also, guests will look for a reason to travel. Flight charters have seen an uptick. We have partnered with various international airlines to obtain preferential pricing for our guests.

## What are your plans for this year?

We plan to expand our presence by setting up permanent offices in Jaipur and Goa to cater to the rise in demand for destination events. We also plan to promote more sustainable weddings owing to several lessons that were learnt in the year 2020.

# Work-life balance: Uneven scales of time

COVID-19 has changed the whole concept of 'work-life balance'. The scales of balance have been skewed owing to work from home being enforced, rather than an option.

**Charmaine Fernz**



The year 2020 was a year of surprises and drastic changes... certainly not in the positive way for a majority of the human race. Many concepts that were gaining ground have to be revisited with a new focus. One of the many pertinent issues most corporates focussed on over the past several years was employees attaining the right 'work-life balance' and thereby enhancing productivity. However, the concept was completely shaken and stirred with the onslaught of the pandemic. The global lockdown forced companies to adopt the work from home concept and make the best use of it with technology.

As **Deepa Chadha**, SVP-HR & Corporate Affairs, Vistara, explains, "An ideal work-life balance is about creating an opportunity to become one's ideal self, both professionally and personally. With the professional environment becoming increasingly demanding and competitive, especially in the aviation industry, it is important to consciously work towards maintaining a healthy balance."

## **PANDEMIC = CHANGE**

Going by a report by McKinsey on 'Reimagining the office and

work life after COVID-19' which states that before the pandemic, the conventional wisdom had been that offices were critical to productivity, culture, and winning the war for talent. Companies competed intensely for prime office space in major urban centres around the world, and many focused on solutions that were seen to promote collaboration. Densification, open-office designs, hoteling, and co-working were the battle cries.

According to McKinsey research, 80 per cent of people questioned report that they enjoy working from home. Of the respondents, 41 per cent said that they are more productive than they had been before and 28 per cent said that they are as productive. Many employees liberated from long commutes and travel have found more productive ways to spend that time and enjoy greater flexibility. Many organisations think they can access new pools of talent with fewer locational constraints, adopt innovative processes to boost productivity, create an even stronger culture, and significantly reduce real estate costs. While many a company, witnessed both the benefits and challenges,

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**QUICK BYTE** Research by McKinsey reveals that 80% respondents enjoyed working from home



the work from home concept certainly put up a humongous task for HR professionals. **Mona Cheriyan**, President and Group Head, Human Resources, Thomas Cook (India) explains her perspective saying, “The change in work culture due to the pandemic is not only affecting employees but also poses a challenge for the human resources team. While we at the TCIL always had a work from home policy, we never anticipated it to be implemented on such a large scale and for such a long duration.

The Human Resources team at Thomas Cook has been at the heart of managing employees and helping them cope with the changes in work life during the pandemic. With the expectation of the vaccine and opening of borders, our business is now on the cusp of recovery and the role of HR is becoming even more important.”

### THE ADAPTATION

The new change though welcomed by many had a mixed bag of compliments. While many employees were of the opinion that workload had most certainly increased; many were of the view that family time was more productive thereby resulting in enhanced work productivity. **Neerja Bhatia**, Etihad Airways’ Vice President, Indian Subcontinent gives us her opinion stating that, “It has been about managing time effectively – being able to efficiently perform at work while still having time and energy to unwind. There has been an increased focus on managing teams virtually, ensuring they remain driven without burning out. We have learnt to be agile and respond quickly, with the situation evolving at such



Neerja Bhatia



**There has been an increased focus on managing teams virtually**



Deepa Chadha



**It is vital to work towards maintaining a healthy balance**



Mona Cheriyan



**The change in work culture poses a challenge for the HR team**



## QUICK BYTE We have learnt to respond quickly, with the situation evolving at such a rapid pace

a rapid pace. Navigating through uncertainty has surely seemed challenging, but in retrospect, has been a great opportunity to innovate and adapt in more ways than one.”

Sharing a different point of view, Chadha explains, “Among many other things, the pandemic has brought to the forefront, the concept of work from home which offers a good opportunity to maintain a healthy balance between professional and personal responsibilities. Having said that, for organisations in the service industry, it is not possible to completely shift to remote working especially for the frontline / operations staff. Moving ahead whether at

work or in your personal life, leading a disciplined life is the only way to achieve balance. It becomes all the more important in the work from home scenario where your home and office mean the same space. Some important aspects to keep in mind are maintaining a structured routine and following it diligently.”

### MAKING THE MOST OF OPPORTUNITY

Technology was king literally during the lockdown. The work from home atmosphere made companies adopt to practically every technological advancement in order to keep businesses sustainable and profitable. Chadha asserts this



new normal of working from home, we connect virtually every morning and remain connected despite working remotely.”

Cherian further asserts, “At TCIL, we have re-established our organisational culture to adopt more flexible working arrangements. We believe, there will be a major shift towards hybrid working models that capitalise on benefits of both remote and office working. The face-to-face interaction will now be through increased technology interfaces like MS Teams rather than physical meetings.

view saying, “With the shift of workplace from physical office spaces to employees’ homes, companies are continuously strengthening their technology infrastructure to enable seamless virtual collaboration for an efficient workflow. Another aspect which has proved to be a key driver of growth has been organisational culture. At Vistara, the performance-driven culture has kept the entire workforce focused on the business objectives.”

Reiterating a similar viewpoint, Bhatia explains, “Over the past year, we had run comprehensive risk assessments to strategise and plan better, whether it was about identifying opportunities for training, extending support or introducing special policies. For instance, the advisory role played by our HR teams has grown exponentially as they have extended maximum support to navigate this new normal.”

Taking on a different path, Cherian says, “For us at TCIL, the need of the hour is to develop adaptability and resilience in our workforce as we make an

## QUICK BYTE Face-to-face interaction will now be through increased technology interfaces

accelerated shift towards a new, digital economy. We invested and continue to invest in equipping our employees with new skills and helping them to deal with the ‘new normal’. In addition to learning skills related to their roles, we developed competencies in our employees to take on new challenges.”

### THE NEXT STEP

Opportunity in adversity is the best way to lay out how the New Year emerges, and business continues to sustain profits. Two key factors that take precedence is health and business growth. As Bhatia explains, “It is important to prioritise one’s health and wellness. I have believed in the concept of personal enhancement and well-being. In order to strike that right balance, it is important to take care of one’s own physical, emotional and mental health. Subsequently, companies should focus on frequent and timely communication. With the

Cost management has been a business imperative. As our industry has been one of the worst hit by this pandemic, we have been forced to take measures to cut costs by temporarily deferring or reducing employee compensation and benefits. This has also opened the discussion around rethinking employee rewards and benefits in the long-term.

The move to a hybrid working model has also opened up the organisations’ talent pool considerably. It now aids us in hiring talent not limited by physical location. We now have a more flexible structure to accommodate agile working and can hire from all geographies.” Finally, concluding on some innovative strategies adopted, Chadha states that consistent communication & engagement with employees are crucial to Vistara. Several campaigns launched in the past year aimed at establishing a sense of belonging among employees, boosting staff morale and reassuring them while fostering engagement and collaboration.



**The move to a hybrid working model has opened up the organisations’ talent pool considerably**





# M!CE to revive soon

**Sandeep Dwivedi**, Chief Operating Officer, InterGlobe Technology Quotient (ITQ), shares his views on the increasing consumer sentiment to restart travel

The first few weeks of 2021 have renewed our hopes for a recovery, especially with the news of vaccines in the world's major economies. Industry has been staying rather optimistic and estimates a full domestic recovery of 2019 level by 2021, provided substantial risk mitigation, consumer acceptability and aviation adaptability ensue.

In the last quarter of 2020, as consumer sentiment revived, we saw two positive outcomes: first was improved confidence in air travel and second, an increased allocation for flights by aviation ministry. It is only fair to say that a further increase of up to 10% by February 2021 is expected, provided the number of air passengers rise in these initial weeks, number of cases detected on-board decline, and safety is elevated with successful vaccination of frontline aviation personnel.

Although business and M!CE travel has largely declined since the outset of the pandemic, leading to digital management of organisational tasks and reduced brick-and-mortar events, a recovery is expected soon through hybrid events. The sentiment metre in current year points towards growing interest in extending knowledge base, networking and exchanging information in-person. In this case, businesses can learn from the way travel has evolved these

days as a deeply personal phenomena, giving direction to a new race of thoughtful customer experiences and unconventional partnerships within and outside industry. Adopting this approach with regards to evolving customer sentiment in the business travel and M!CE categories, travel businesses can reset momentum and restore traction in the new normal.

time and need for enhanced safety. Snowfall in major northern attractions is also adding to the traction in domestic air traffic.

An interesting trend is picking pace under the name of 'revenge travel' and is likely to grow in 2021, considering limited travel opportunities presented by the year that passed by. With over 50% of India's



Sandeep Dwivedi



## **QUICK BYTE** M!CE travel has largely declined, but recovery is expected soon via hybrid events

It has been witnessed that leisure domestic travel is slowly picking up considering most international routes, including the ones in high demand earlier, are off limits. Domestically, travelling by road appears to be the preferred mode for most leisure travellers. The trend seems to shift towards air travel with the affluence, distance, limitations on

population under 25 years of age and over 65% below 35, travel, including air travel, appears to be one sector likely to recover sooner in the country than its counterparts abroad.

*(The article has been written by Sandeep Dwivedi, COO, InterGlobe Technology Quotient. The views expressed are the author's personal views.)*



**The trend seems to shift towards air travel with the affluence, limitations on time, distance & need for safety**



# Packaging Kevadia

Kevadia in Gujarat now has given fillip to the state's tourism potential, and has everything to offer from a jungle safari and river rafting to M!CE venues

**Hazel Jain**

When Prime Minister Modi stayed a night in Kevadia recently and tweeted about it saying it's 'a must visit', it was evident that this destination was about to become the next big thing India had to offer. While there, the PM inaugurated various development works, including facilities for jetty and boating.

He also launched eight train routes connecting Kevadia to other parts of India, via video-conferencing.

Sharing his view on how Kevadia has managed to package a complete tourism product, **Randhir Singh Vaghela**, IATO Chairman (Gujarat Chapter), says, "With the eight train routes connecting Statue of Unity to the rest of the country, it has made it so easy to package it and create itineraries around this destination.

Of special mention is the Vistadome coach on Jan Shatabdi that connects Kevadia to Ahmedabad. It is a truly unique experience and also has very convenient timings."

He adds that the Statue of Unity has by itself become a great destination for tourism. The seaplane launched on October 31 added another feather to Kevadia's cap.

"Believe me, there are so many activities added around the Statue of Unity that it is now a minimum two-night destination and we are hoping that it will soon become one of the global destinations that every tourist would like to visit," Vaghela adds.

Kevadia is also registered as the country's first green railhead with a green building certification.



**Randhir Singh Vaghela**

**There are so many activities added around the Statue of Unity that it is now a minimum two-night destination**



**QUICK BYTE** There is an auditorium for M!CE and events, plus two hotels and two Tent Cities

With the new trains – that are existing routes extended to Kevadia – Vaghela says that it has become easy to create itineraries for all budgets.

"Those who can't afford a car or a flight can now use the trains. Everybody can visit Kevadia now. It has given a 100 per cent boost to tourism. All the new activities are on right now while observing all health and safety protocols. There is a jungle safari, river rafting, an auditorium for M!CE and events, plus two hotels and two Tent Cities for accommodation," he shares.

Vaghela, along with other travel agents, was invited by Gujarat Tourism to visit the Statue of Unity for a familiarisation tour and experience of the activities in September 2020. "We have already sold a lot of packages. I feel Kevadia can be a great tourism destination not just for Gujarat and the rest of India but worldwide, as our PM is the biggest tourism ambassador for us," Vaghela adds.



# Movements in India



**Rajneesh Malhotra**  
Chief Operating Officer  
Chalet Hotels, Mumbai

Chalet Hotels has promoted Rajneesh Malhotra to Chief Operating Officer. Malhotra has been instrumental in driving operational strategies for the company in his previous position of Vice President – Operations & Asset Management. Having joined the company in April 2019 and with over 25 years in hotel operations, Malhotra will focus on driving operational excellence continuing to report into Sanjay Sethi, MD & CEO of Chalet Hotels.



**Chandrashekhar Joshi**  
General Manager  
The Leela Palace Jaipur

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts has appointed Chandrashekhar Joshi as the General Manager of The Leela Palace Jaipur. In his new role, Joshi will launch the soon to open 200 room Palace, a reflection of modern palatial grandeur, inspired by the Rajputana heritage. He will be instrumental in introducing The Leela Palace Programming and signature Palace Service to the Pink City. With over 20 years of experience, Joshi has worked with Le Meridien Pune, JW Marriott Juhu Mumbai, Renaissance Bali Uluwatu Resort & Spa, to name a few.



**Shiv Bose**  
GM, Sheraton Grand  
Chennai Resort & Spa

Sheraton Grand Chennai Resort & Spa has appointed Shiv Bose as the General Manager of the property. He has almost two decades of illustrious experience in the hospitality industry. In his new role, Bose will be spearheading the team and developing the hotel's operations to deliver stellar service standards. Prior to joining Sheraton Grand Chennai Resort & Spa, Bose was the General Manager at Courtyard by Marriott Bengaluru Hebbal.



**Thomas Abraham**  
GM, Hyatt Regency Pune  
& Residences

Hyatt Regency Pune & Residences has appointed Thomas Abraham as General Manager, in addition to his role of AVP for Hyatt Hotels, Central India. Abraham brings 27 years of experience in the hospitality industry and has spent over 13 of those years with Hyatt. He moves to Hyatt Regency Pune from the iconic Park Hyatt Hyderabad. Abraham will focus on strengthening the operational strategies of the hotel, while overseeing all nine Hyatt properties in Central India.



**Deep Preet Bindra**  
GM, Courtyard by  
Marriott, Ahmedabad

Marriott International has appointed Deep Preet Bindra, as the General Manager for Courtyard by Marriott, Ahmedabad (Ramdevnagar). With his rich and diverse experience spanning over 17 years in the hospitality and services sector, Bindra will lead the team at the hotel to strengthen its position in the value-driven market of Ahmedabad. Bindra has worked with JW Marriott at Aerocity in New Delhi and Marriott Whitefield in Bengaluru.



**Ajay Kanojia**  
General Manager  
Sayaji Hotels Pune

Sayaji Hotels Pune has appointed Ajay Kanojia as their General Manager. An industry veteran with almost 15 years, Kanojia has experience in the luxury and upscale hotel segment. In his new role, he will be responsible for delivering high levels of customer service and successful positioning of the hotel. Kanojia will also be responsible for curating strategic initiatives that will lead the hotel to continue its guest-focused approach and consolidate its leadership position.



**Kiran Chaljoju**  
Portfolio Director of Sales &  
Marketing  
Holiday Inn Express

Kiran Chaljoju has been appointed as the Portfolio Director of Sales & Marketing for a portfolio of 10 Holiday Inn Express hotels under the SAMHI ownership effective Nov 23, 2020. Chaljoju comes with around 17 years of rich experience in spearheading Sales and Marketing operations with expertise in luxury, mid-scale and value segments of the hotel industry. He has worked with well established brands like IHCL, Oberoi Hotels and Resorts and ITC Hotels.



**Amit Sangwan**  
Director of Operations  
Fairmont Jaipur

Fairmont Jaipur has announced the promotion of Amit Sangwan from Director of Food & Beverage to Director of Operations, with all four verticals of Food & Beverage, Culinary, Front Office and Housekeeping reporting directly to him; he will also be responsible to maintain and enhance guest satisfaction. Prior to joining Fairmont Jaipur in August 2019 as Director of F&B, Sangwan was previously associated with renowned hotels like Pullman, Novotel and Leela amongst others. He has won various accolades from the industry.

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Volume XII Issue 1 January-February 2021 16 pages

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**With its skilled workforce, world-class facilities and commitment to safety, Singapore can lead the way in organising business events in the new normal.**

— **Ms Katariina Rohrbach**

Managing Director  
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SINGAPORE:

# FORGING A NEW STANDARD FOR BUSINESS EVENTS

In these extraordinary times, Singapore continues to stand as a premier business events destination connecting the world to Asia. While COVID-19 has altered the events landscape, the fundamentals that have made Singapore successful – our vibrant business environment, outstanding infrastructure and future-ready workforce – remain unchanged.

## Raising the bar for health and safety

As international business travel resumes, you can trust that Singapore will safeguard the well-being of visiting delegates and staff. We remain committed to upholding the highest standards of health and safety and to giving all our visitors peace of mind when they come to the Lion City.

Hotels, restaurants, exhibition halls and other establishments have adopted

new Safe Management Measures, such as social distancing and heightened cleaning of premises, to ensure reduced public health risk. Beyond these, the Singapore Government also launched SG Clean, a national mark of excellence for cleanliness, hygiene, and infection control.

## Innovating for the future of business events

Singapore's events industry is also implementing unique solutions to meet the emerging demands of a new era of business travel. Local companies are reinventing themselves – from enhancing digital offerings to developing forward-looking concepts for hybrid and virtual events.

For example, in June, homegrown event organiser Web in Travel (WIT) engaged more than 750 tourism business leaders to discuss the future of the industry in a

global virtual summit. During the dinner break, WIT sent curated care packages to Singapore-based attendees and later even held a virtual dance party.

With this mindset of continuous innovation, it is no wonder that Singapore was recently named the world's most competitive economy for the second consecutive year (IMD World Competitiveness Ranking, 2020).

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Shivani Misri Sadhoo talks about how the event based industry is changing at a quick pace



# NEWS



**Oman Air will operate five weekly flights to Dubai. The airlines will maintain its comprehensive safety programme throughout all elements of the travel journey.**



## SingapoReimagine MICE Virtual Show on March 3-4, 2021

The two-day tradeshow will connect with up to 40 leading suppliers including convention centres, hotels, unique meeting venues, DMCs and tour operators in Singapore. It will bring updates on Singapore's progress towards the resumption of business events, showcase new & reimaged M!CE experiences and conduct virtual tours & culinary masterclasses.



**We are excited to introduce the Hyatt Regency brand to Cambodia. We look forward to welcoming business and leisure guests to an energising new space**



## IMEX 2021 in Frankfurt cancelled

IMEX 2021, due to take place at Messe Frankfurt from May 25-27, has been cancelled. IMEX in Frankfurt is a hugely global event – exhibitors and buyers represent 150+ countries. Though the IMEX team believes that a resurgence will come, sadly it will not happen in time for them to deliver a strong and successful event in May. The event will be held on April 26-28, 2022.

## Israel to focus on leisure & M!CE

Israel's Ministry of Tourism, as part of its wider promotional activities in the UAE, is all set to participate at the Arabian Travel Mart and Expo Dubai in 2021. The strategy is to focus Israel as a leisure and a M!CE destination through various B2B and B2C activities. The UAE and Israel signed a mutual visa waiver agreement following the normalisation of ties between the two countries, enabling travellers to obtain visas on arrival.



## Emirates resumes flights to Saudi, Oman and Kuwait



Emirates Airlines announced that flights to Saudi Arabia, Oman and Kuwait have resumed. Emirates flights to and from Dammam, Jeddah and Riyadh have begun. All customers, excluding Saudi nationals, who hold a ticket to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and have visited Argentina, Brazil, India, South Africa or United Kingdom within the last 14 days will not be accepted for travel at their point of origin.



# ‘Festival Economy’ policy

The goals of the ‘Festival Economy’ policy are to enhance the destination city’s reputation & contribute to sustainable development, says Nichapa Yoswee, Senior VP–Business, TCEB

MT Bureau

**T**hailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) has launched a ‘Festival Economy’ policy to nurture partnerships between professional festival associations and local city governments to co-create new festivals with lasting economic, social and environmental impacts.



Nichapa Yoswee

At the launch on December 1, 2020 in Bangkok, TCEB put this policy into action by signing a MoU with Phetchaburi province, Ratchaprasong Square Trade Association (RSTA) and Thai International Events & Festivals Trade Association (TIEFA) to jointly work on projects under the ‘Festival Economy’ policy. **Nichapa Yoswee**, TCEB Senior Vice President – Business,

**Each city has a distinctive signature festival that can be promoted and recognised internationally**

states, "The partnership and collaboration between these associations and city governments are the key that will result in ‘One City, One Licensed Event’– the idea that each city has a distinctive signature festival that can be promoted and recognised internationally – within five years.

The goals of the ‘Festival Economy’ policy are to energise the destination city’s economy, to enhance the city’s reputation, and contribute to the sustainable development of the city."

In tandem with the launch of ‘Festival Economy’, TCEB has also unveiled a campaign named ‘Thailand Power Up’ aiming to empower festival owners in order to enhance festivals in Thailand and to maintain international fan base engagement by utilising technology and an online platform. More importantly, this campaign offers three packages that will help all

festival owners to overcome the challenges posed by COVID-19. ‘Thailand Event Line Up’ is a broad-based subsidy scheme for festival organisations. New or existing festivals which are able to create business, social, and environmental impacts are eligible.

‘N2N (New to Normal) Tech Savvy’ supports festival owners in acquiring technology and innovation that will help to manage their festivals more efficiently. TCEB also offers MICE Innovation Catalog which contains lists of the technologies available to be selected.

‘International Mega Event and Market Penetration’ is for festival owners who are looking to launch festivals in Thailand which must include plans for development, adaptation, international promotion, and the rationale of selecting Thailand as the host country.

**QUICK BYTE** ‘Thailand Power Up’ aims to empower festival owners in order to enhance festivals



# FITUR 2021

## for recovery of tourism

IFEMA is focusing all its effort on presenting an edition aimed at contributing to the revival of tourism at a time when FITUR's role as a driving engine is critical and decisive

MT Bureau

The 41<sup>st</sup> edition of the International Tourism Fair, FITUR 2021, will be held from May 19-23 at Feria de Madrid. This comes after a meditated decision that, exceptionally, makes this event essential to the recovery of the tourism industry, at a time that will still preserve its high international impact and thus, promote the professional reunion of companies, countries and

destinations and provide a much-needed boost to the worldwide tourism activity.

### RELAUNCHING TOURISM ACTIVITY

For its part, IFEMA is focusing all its effort on presenting an edition aimed at contributing to the recovery of tourism at a time when FITUR's role as a driving engine is critical and decisive. Therefore, it is especially important

to focus on optimising its rallying power, in addition to enriching its specialised content and new business niches, as well as promoting knowledge areas that contribute towards relaunching both the national and international tourism activity, as one of the world's main growth engines and especially for Spain, where tourism is the main sector, both in terms of GDP and employment.

FITUR has the unanimous support from Spain's tourism industry and it is currently the world's second major trade fair, and first regarding its impact on the

Latin American market. Each edition brings together over 11,000 companies from 165 countries, as well as official representatives from a large number of nations from around the world. It is also Spain's major event for the tourism business, with over 250,000 attendees from around the world, as well as for innovation and promotion of new tourism segments, technological leadership in tourism management and a tool for knowledge transfer.

FITUR's high level of representation is also acknowledged by the support from the World

**QUICK BYTE** Each edition of FITUR brings together over 11,000 companies from 165 countries







Tourism Organisation UNWTO, with the head office in Madrid; a bond that is also embodied in the Governing Board of Affiliate Members of the UNWTO which is currently chaired by IFEMA/FITUR. Its annual event entails an economic impact of €330 million, with the ensuing direct outcome on the recovery of tourism activities and boosting of the sectors linked to tourism.

### **‘EVENT OF EXCEPTIONAL PUBLIC INTEREST’**

The Spanish Government has declared FITUR an ‘Event of Exceptional Public Interest’ for its contribution to the recovery of tourism in Spain. This

**Even though the 41<sup>st</sup> edition is still a few months away, it already has strong institutional & business backing**

designation is an important gesture of institutional support for IFEMA and its International Tourism Fair and acknowledges its work to encourage business development and recovery in the tourism sector.

The award of ‘Event of Exceptional Public Interest’ (AEIP) has been included in this year’s National Budget. The award became effective on January 1, 2021 and lasts for three years, until December 31, 2023. It will provide special support over three years and further encourage the revitalisation of Spain’s tourism industry and its image as a tourist destination. The budget was published in Law 11/2020, of December 30,

on the General State Budget for 2021. Along with the support that accompanies this government recognition, the AEIP award will further strengthen FITUR’s efforts to encourage and promote market recovery, and boost and revitalise Spain’s tourism image. This legal status will enable FITUR to promote private sector participation in a critical edition for the national tourism industry. It will also help strengthen public-private cooperation links, bringing companies together to support this goal that has already produced such brilliant results in other areas of the economy.

### **TOURISM RECOVERY SPECIAL EDITION**

IFEMA is working on the contents of FITUR Especial Recuperación Turismo (FITUR Tourism Recovery Special Edition). This edition will focus on the need to revitalise Spain’s leading industry to enhance its leadership position, management capacity, strength as one of the foundations of the economy, and its intelligence for innovation and sustainability. In this context, it is important to emphasise how, over its 40-year history, FITUR has grown and consolidated its position as one of the most effective tools for promoting, developing, innovating and boosting the tourism industry in Spain.

Last year was an extremely complex one for the tourism industry, and FITUR Tourism Recovery Special Edition will therefore be an opportunity to join forces behind the shared goal of reviving tourism in Spain. Even though the 41<sup>st</sup> edition is still a few months away, it already has strong institutional as well as business backing.



Singapore's TravelRevive hybrid event gave us a glimpse of how M!CE events will look like in a post-COVID world. **Andrew Phua**, Executive Director (Exhibitions & Conferences), STB shares more details.

**Hazel Jain**



# New start for exhibitions



**Andrew Phua**

## Has Singapore started conducting physical M!CE events since it opened officially to events?

Singapore has made steady progress in the resumption of business events under STB's Safe Business Event Framework (SBE), which requires event organisers to implement Safe Management Measures to meet a set of health and safety outcomes. In July 2020, STB started accepting applications for business events with a capacity of up to 50 physical attendees. Building upon the successful trial of this framework in a pilot hybrid event in August 2020, further relaxation was announced in September to

trial events with up to 250 attendees.

## Tell us more about this pilot hybrid event.

TravelRevive was Asia-Pacific's first international travel tradeshow to take place physically during COVID-19 on November 25-26, 2020. Powered by ITB Asia and the Singapore Tourism Board, the event attracted close to 1,000 attendees onsite, of which 65 were foreign delegates from over 14 countries in Asia, Middle East and Europe. With 36 exhibiting companies, TravelRevive had close to 600 scheduled buyer/seller meeting appointments on site.

## Are there any international events coming to Singapore in 2021?

TravelRevive reinforced Singapore's position as a top marketplace of ideas in the Asia Pacific and as a safe and trusted Global-Asia node for M!CE and business. Its successful execution has demonstrated how the tradeshow experience can be made safe yet fruitful for attendees – with the degree of interaction that they were used to before COVID-19. At TravelRevive, two MoUs were also inked to anchor the ASEAN Regional Headquarters of new entrants – Messe Munich and Fiera Milano, signifying their confidence in Singapore as a regional M!CE hub. In addition, the Infocomm Media Development Authority and STB signed a one-

**QUICK BYTE** TravelRevive reinforced Singapore's position as a safe Global-Asia node for M!CE

year MoU with B2B event organiser Informa Tech to launch a new international technology event in Singapore slated for the second half of 2021.

### Are there any new incentives for MICE groups from India?

India is one of the key sources of business traffic to Singapore, particularly for the MICE segment. There are four programmes which are customised to meet the needs of corporates, events planners and the delegates, for different group sizes. These schemes are catered specifically to help them to plan better and pitch more confidently should Singapore be a destination of choice.

One point to note is that these support schemes are offered before the decision on destination selection is made, typically during the bidding stage. We aim to influence the decision so that the schemes can be effective.

- INSPiRE (In Singapore Incentives & Rewards) is a scheme which supports small groups (group size between 20 to 250 pax) & offers more than 60 pre-curated experiences to choose from.
- BEiS (Business Events in Singapore) is a financial support scheme targeted at large groups which offers corporates a financial grant to help them enhance the quality of their travel program.
- SMAP (Singapore MICE Advantage Program) is a bundle of benefits that various Singapore stakeholders offer to the delegates.
- STARS (Special Travel Agent Rewards Singapore) is a reward program to reward MICE agents and event planners

for securing groups to Singapore. These schemes are being reviewed regularly. In fact, we have just made enhancements to the schemes in light of the COVID-19 situation to ensure that they are able to meet the changing needs of the corporates, MICE agents and event planners and to keep Singapore competitive as a top-of-mind MICE destination for the Indian market.

### What learnings do destinations, event planners & convention centres take away from the past year?

The industry is currently experiencing an accelerated digital transformation, and traditional event set-ups may no longer serve the needs of event planners in this new environment. Digitisation, flexibility of



venue spaces as well as health and safety protocols will be event planners' key priorities following the resumption of the industry.

Social distancing will also shape how various aspects of social and business activities will be conducted in a post-COVID world. The MICE industry is rethinking on how business events will be organised and



## COVID-19 has pushed the fast-forward button & accelerated digital transformation and adoption across the world

deliver new value. It has been observed that various alternative meeting formats that allow people to meet and interact remotely have emerged. COVID-19 has certainly pushed the fast-forward button and accelerated digital transformation and adoption across the world.

Today, consumers use screens and live virtual experiences more than ever, and that's exactly how the space will be redefined – a consumer-centric offering that is digital-enabled and data-empowered. Public spaces are being re-designed to provide safe distancing, touchless solutions and hygiene practices for delegates and employees' safety assurance. Virtual spaces are being transformed to augment physical meetings.

### Do you think hybrid events will be the future for this industry?

Hybrid event formats have become increasingly significant, where content is delivered virtually, while ensuring that the digital aspects complement in-person events. We will certainly see more hybrid events as the industry evolves its landscape and experiences.



# Fiesta Filipinas launched

The virtual festival has been organised to simulate the experience of a festival through a combination of live and pre-recorded videos and live workshops and activities

**Manas Dwivedi**

**T**he Department of Foreign Affairs, Philippines, in cooperation with Department of Tourism & National Commission for Culture and Arts has launched 'Fiesta Filipinas: An Online Celebration of Philippine Festivals'. This is a six-part, multi-format online event series from December 2020 until May 2021. The virtual festival has been organised to simulate the experience of a festival through a combination of live & pre-recorded videos and live workshops and activities.

The project aims to showcase Philippine festivals, culture and traditions to a global audience. Every month for the next six months starting December, the Department of Tourism (DOT) will feature one virtual town fiesta, showcased as a way for locals to introduce their cultural festivity to the world stage, so that the Filipino diaspora and tourists can enjoy what the country has to offer, and invite people to visit once the pandemic is over.

During the launch, **Roberto P Alabado III**, Undersecretary, Tourism Regulation, Coordination & Resource Generation, said that DOT will identify 100 destinations and give them its stamp of approval, providing what hotels and resorts to stay in and the services available. "This type of project whets the appetite of tourists who would like



## **QUICK BYTE** The DOT will identify 100 destinations and give them its stamp of approval



**Roberto P Alabado III**



**Marie Yvette Banzon-Abalos**

to experience our culture," he says.

**Marie Yvette Banzon-Abalos**, Executive Director, Department of Foreign Affairs, says, "Fiesta Filipinas is an innovative approach to promote Philippine culture and is a way of bringing Philippine culture and celebrations closer to people's hearts despite the limitations of the pandemic."

The first Fiesta Filipinas virtual event celebrated the Christmas season, with the Giant Lantern Parade (December 19), to be followed by the Sinulog, Ati-Atihan and Dinagyang Festivals (January 30, 2021), the Panagbenga Festival (February 27, 2021), Visita Iglesia (March 20, 2021), Lami-Lamihan Festival (April 24, 2021), and end with the Flores De Mayo/Santacruzán (May 29, 2021).

**This type of project whets the appetite of tourists who would like to experience our culture**

**It is a way of bringing Philippine culture and celebrations closer to people's hearts despite the pandemic**



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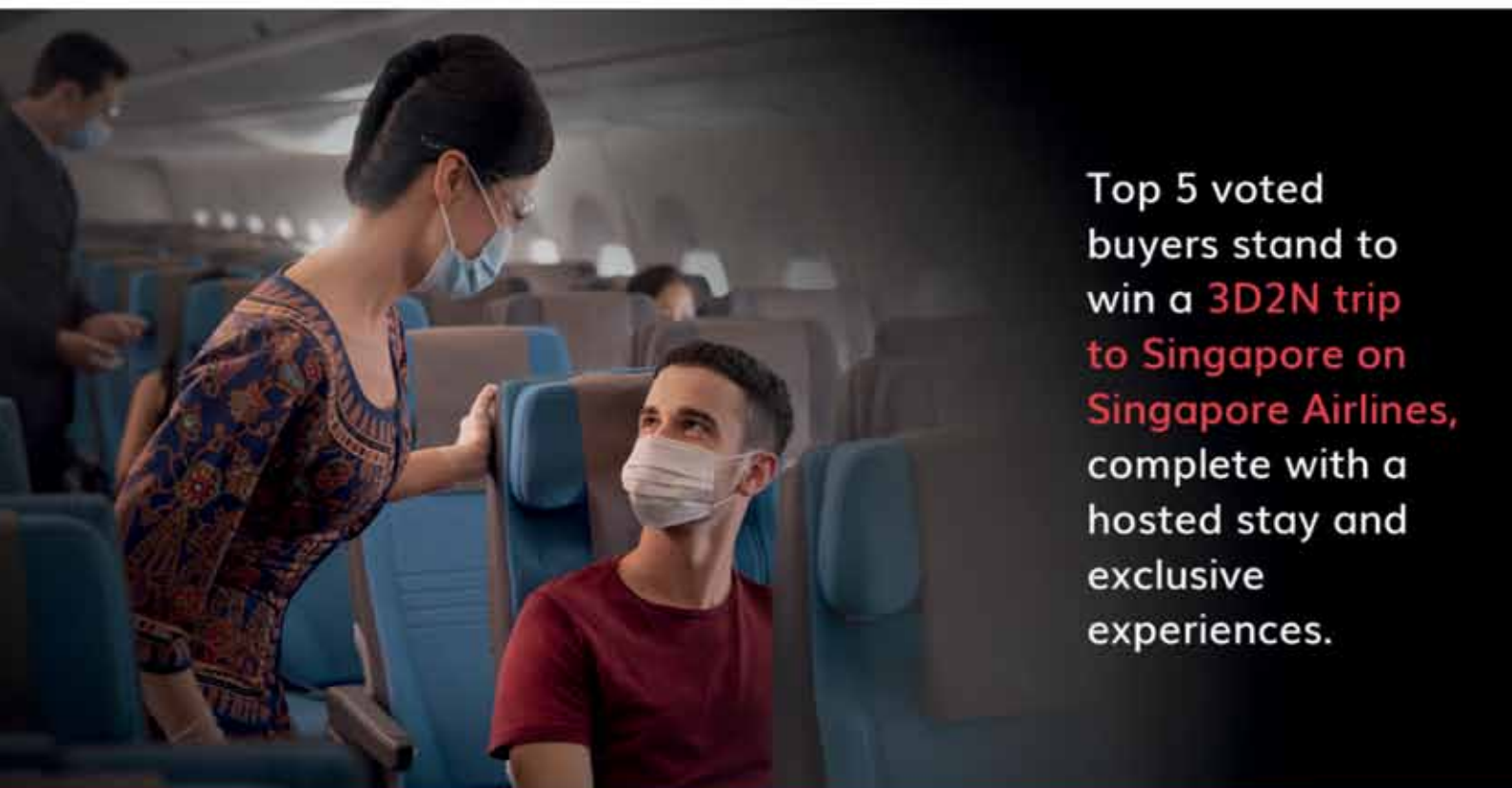


## MICE Virtual Show

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# 'India, a priority market'

We had to rethink our promotional strategies, says Ksenya Boykova, Head of International Affairs & MICE, Moscow Project Office for Tourism and Hospitality Development

**Nisha Verma**

The Moscow City Tourism Committee recently held the Discover Moscow Digital Roadshow in India. Claiming that India is a priority inbound tourism market for Moscow, **Ksenya Boykova** said, "The number of tourists from India to Moscow has almost doubled over the past 10 years, reaching 89,000 in 2019.

In the year 2019, India ranked third in the Asia Pacific region, excluding China, in terms of the number of foreign tourists in Moscow. Before the pandemic, the number of tourists coming from India to Russia had been growing by 18-20 per cent annually, and in terms of growth rates, India ranked fifth, leaving even China behind."

When asked about the aim behind organising the digital roadshow, she revealed, "The current situation allowed us to rethink Moscow's promotional strategies and create new digital products. We have launched several interesting projects which, we are confident, have aroused the interest of the Indian professional audience.

In the new reality, we saw great potential in online tools, including digital roadshows, in terms of presenting the tourism potential and Moscow's newest tourist products, as well as establishing direct business contacts with Indian companies. Hence, we decided to hold the first digital roadshow in India that actually covered all



## **QUICK BYTE** The number of tourists from India to Moscow has almost doubled over the past 10 years



Ksenya Boykova

### **GETTING E-VISAS**

From January 2021, tourists from India will be able to apply for e-visas. Three out of the 29 entry points where the visa procedure will be simplified to enter Russia are located in Moscow, at the largest Russian airports, Sheremetyevo, Domodedovo and Vnukovo

the regions of India (which would be challenging for an offline roadshow)."

The four-day event hosted not only companies from Moscow (tour operators and hotels), 25 of which introduced themselves and their products at online meetings, and more than 10 companies that took part in the virtual exhibition remotely, but also over 600 representatives of the Indian tourism industry.

Boykova further revealed, "Indian companies took part in webinars presenting the tourism potential of Moscow and new projects of the Moscow City Tourism Committee, and as a result of the event, they held over 1,500 online negotiations with Moscow companies. We

received positive feedback from our Indian colleagues, which reinforces the value of the digital roadshow format during this challenging time." Moscow offers opportunities for cultural tourism as well as business and educational tourism.

### **E-VISAS FOR INDIAN TOURISTS**

From January 2021, tourists from India will be able to apply for electronic visas. Three out of the 29 entry points where the visa procedure will be simplified to enter Russia are located in Moscow, at the largest Russian airports, Sheremetyevo, Domodedovo and Vnukovo. Besides becoming a more comfortable urban environment, new attractions for tourists in Moscow have also emerged, including Zaryadye Park, VDNH, Moskvarium, the Dream Island amusement park and the Moscow Cable Car.



# Business events: Trends 2021

Individual travel incentives will become the norm as people will feel more comfortable when traveling solo or at the most with one companion, says Shivani Misri Sadhoo

**T**he event-based industry is changing at a quick pace. From more exclusive travel destinations to stricter sanitation norms and entry protocols, there are several trends which appear promising for 2021. Let's look at some of them.

## REMAINING CLOSER TO HOME

Business events that were conducted in far away and exotic locations used to be considered great, but now that people are quite reluctant to travel long distances, companies are looking at local and regional venues that are closer to their headquarters.

## PRIVATE LOCALES

If travel is needed for events, expect to see a rise in the demand for private and ultra-exclusive locations where the number of people who can enter is easily enforced. Private locales like a good resort are a luxurious and alluring option to consider.

## INDIVIDUAL TRAVEL INCENTIVES

Incentive-based travel programmes are an amazing way to motivate employees and celebrate their achievements within the company. In 2021, event sector trends suggest that group incentive travel will be a thing of the past and individual travel incentives will become the norm as people will feel more comfortable when traveling solo or at the most with one companion. Thus, instead of organising an incentive trip for a huge team

or a group of people, provide incentive trips for employees on an individual basis during various times of the year.

## HYBRID BUSINESS EVENTS

Once live meetings and events start, prepare for a hybrid of in-person and virtual presence to become the trend. As several employees already have good experience with video conferencing apps and virtual meetings, give them an option of attending your company's event in person or through a virtual platform.

## REVISED CAPACITY

With restaurants and events operating at lesser capacity, expect the same restrictions to be there for meetings and events in 2021.

## ENHANCED SANITATION PROCEDURES

For the safety of your event attendees, it is crucial to practice strict sanitation protocols.

## PRE-ENTRY CHECK-UP

While COVID is still there, consider requiring all attendees to take the test in order to be able to be present during the meeting or event.



Shivani Misri Sadhoo  
Founder, Saarthi  
Counselling Services

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**QUICK BYTE** Once live meetings and events start, prepare for a hybrid of in-person and virtual presence to become the trend



# NEWS



**Union Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh**

**Puri said negotiations are on with**

**Australia, Italy, Japan, New Zealand,**

**Nigeria, Bahrain, Israel, Kenya,**

**Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Korea**

**& Thailand for bilateral flight operations.**



## Abu Dhabi Specialist Programme

'Abu Dhabi Specialist Programme' is an e-learning platform which will educate travel trade industry professionals with all destination-related information about the emirate through a series of online courses. The Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi will roll out the programme in three phases and several languages across 17 markets, including India. The first phase is set to be launched on May 1, to be available to travel professionals on [abudhabispecialist.com](http://abudhabispecialist.com).



## SpiceJet to connect Mumbai with RAK

SpiceJet has announced the launch of 21 new domestic and international flights including the introduction of two weekly flights from Mumbai to Ras Al-Khaimah from January 15. It will also increase frequency on the Delhi-Ras Al-Khaimah sector to four flights a week. SpiceJet will be the first airline to connect Jharsuguda with direct flights to Mumbai & Bengaluru.

## Conrad Maldives' India rep: ISA Tourism

ISA Tourism will be the India representatives for Conrad Maldives Rangali Island resort. **Manas Sinha**, Director of ISA said, "With this partnership, the ISA team will focus on building Conrad Maldives' awareness within the travel trade & driving reservations from the luxury outbound travel market. They will also generate leads for corporate meetings."



## MOT's international campaign

**Meenakshi Sharma**, Director General, Ministry of Tourism, says, "MOT has started a conversation with MoHA and MEA on how to open up international tourism. Even if the D-day may not be known yet, we need to know how to go about it and what more can be done to make India an attractive destination again. Our

international campaign says that we are COVID-proof and that we are ready to work when the international market is ready."



## Vistara to fly Delhi-Frankfurt direct

Vistara has announced special, non-stop flights between Delhi and Frankfurt, starting February 18, 2020. The twice a week flight on Thursdays and Saturdays will be part of the 'transport bubble' formed between India and Germany and the aircraft will be Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner.



# Movements Abroad



**Satya Anand**  
President – EMEA, Marriott International

Marriott International announced Satya Anand has been appointed President of Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA), a division that encompasses over 75 countries and territories. Anand was most recently the company's Chief Operations Officer, Luxury & Southern Europe and Global Design for EMEA. In his new appointment, Anand will spearhead Marriott International's post-COVID-19 recovery approach across the region.



**Jamel Chandoul**  
Senior VP – Retail, MEA Amadeus Dubai

Amadeus has appointed Jamel Chandoul as Senior Vice President – Retail, Middle East and Africa, effective January 1, 2021. He will also be responsible for the Travel Channels business across the Middle East and Africa. Chandoul joined Amadeus in 2011 as Head of Global Sales for Amadeus Rail. In 2014, he took over as General Manager of Gestour in Strasbourg after the company's acquisition by Amadeus. He was subsequently appointed as Commercial Director of Amadeus France & managed both roles from 2016 until this year.



**Jennifer Catto**  
Chief Marketing Officer  
Travelport, New York, USA

Travelport has appointed Jennifer Catto as its new Chief Marketing Officer. Catto is an award-winning marketing executive, with two decades of leadership experience. Catto's responsibilities include elevating Travelport's brand, enhancing lead generation and defining and communicating a new confident, distinct and compelling company narrative. She reports directly into Greg Webb, CEO. She has also joined the company's Senior Leadership Team.



**Thomas Schmelter**  
Area General Manager  
IHG Hotels

IHG Hotels at Dubai Festival City announces the appointment of veteran hotelier Thomas Schmelter as Area General Manager of IHG Hotels at Dubai Festival City overseeing four properties and the Dubai Festival Arena. He is responsible to drive the performance of InterContinental, InterContinental Residences Suites, Crowne Plaza, Holiday Inn and Dubai Festival Arena by InterContinental at Dubai Festival City with a total number of 1,600 rooms & over 10,000 sqm of event venues.



**Ryan Yeoh**  
GM, Gulf & ME  
Singapore Airlines, Dubai

Singapore Airlines has appointed Ryan Yeoh as General Manager Gulf & Middle East, based in Dubai. In his new role, Yeoh will be responsible for all aspects of SIA's commercial and operational activities across the Gulf & ME. Yeoh joined Singapore Airlines in 2011 & has held various leadership roles in Singapore, Southeast Asia, and North Asia, positioning him well to lead SIA in the equally challenging and exciting Gulf and Middle East region.



**Samir Messaoudi**  
General Manager  
Sheraton Oman Hotel

Sheraton Oman Hotel has announced the appointment of Samir Messaoudi as General Manager of the hotel. He brings nearly two decades of experience to his new role. Messaoudi has been associated with Marriott International since 2006. He has worked in various roles in the US before moving to the Middle East in 2010. Messaoudi joined the Sharq Village & Spa, a Ritz Carlton Hotel as the Director of Banquets and gained thorough F&B experience in his roles in Doha, Dubai, Jakarta and Oman.



**Yasser Bahaa**  
General Manager  
Radisson Blu Hotel  
Cairo Heliopolis

Radisson Blu Hotel, Cairo Heliopolis has appointed Yasser Bahaa as General Manager. With more than 30 years of experience in the hospitality industry, he has a track record of driving best practices to position brands into market leaders. Bahaa is a customer-centric & result-driven hotelier with varied experience in ME & GCC. At Radisson Blu Hotel, Cairo Heliopolis, his aim is to deliver excellent best-in-class service, memorable and the highest quality of guest experiences.



**Mohamed Abdallah**  
Director of F&B  
Fairmont Bab Al Bahr  
Abu Dhabi

Fairmont Bab Al Bahr has appointed Mohamed Abdallah as the Director of Food and Beverage. In his new role, Abdallah will provide strategic leadership and oversee the operation of the hotel's diverse F&B outlets as well as its banqueting and catering services. Abdallah has 16 years of experience in Abu Dhabi where he brings a wealth of knowledge in enhancing revenue for conference and banqueting operations. With his expertise and fresh insights, Abdallah will ensure the Fairmont Bab Al Bahr continues to provide guests with the best culinary experiences.