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**MICE**talk  
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# NEWS

## Ozone Convention Centre to boost India M!CE sector

Fairfield by Marriott Kolkata has inaugurated the Ozone Convention Centre, a multilevel offering of meeting and event spaces. The centre comprises three multipurpose venues, namely Empress Hall, Monarch Hall, and Regent Terrace. It was envisioned with the goal of providing guests with a seamless experience. From a separate lobby leading directly to the halls to elegantly designed elevators and lobby foyers, its functionality is aimed at facilitating guest movement.



Swiss Traffalgaar Luxury Hotels (STLH) has entered the Indian market and is in the advanced stages of finalising the launch of its new hotel. It will house Nashik's largest M!CE facility.



**Arun Kumar**  
Market Vice President-North  
India, Nepal & Bhutan  
Marriott International



**Till May 2022, corporate bookings at our hotels in India have reached 60% of pre-COVID levels. For international travel, we have a recovery of around 55%.**



## BESydney, BEA launch game to market Sydney

Business Events Sydney (BESydney) in partnership with Business Events Australia (BEA), has launched a new online game to showcase the destination appeal of Sydney for incentive events from India, Malaysia, and Singapore – with prizes on offer. The aim of the game is to educate BESydney's corporate clients in South and Southeast Asia, as well as travel agents, inbound operators, and industry. The second phase will see the game launched in Japan and South Korea.



## IFEMA MADRID is operating at pre-pandemic levels

IFEMA MADRID made a strong comeback in the six months since the health crisis reached its pinnacle. In H1 2022, it accelerated its operations to pre-pandemic levels, achieving a record turnover in H1 2022. The firm's income has already topped EUR 115 million, 30 per cent more than foreseen in the budget. The last six months were also a benchmark in sustainability thanks to the Global Mobility Call, an innovation from IFEMA MADRID during the period and a fascinating call to six grand events.



## TCEB to accelerate M!CE capability development



TCEB has formulated the strategy to expedite regional M!CE and thus established regional offices to promote M!CE. In the past period, TCEB accelerated the endeavour in integration of collaborations to expedite M!CE capability enhancement through education network. The objectives are to drive regional M!CE, distribute a quality M!CE workforce, and raise the competitive advantage of M!CE in all regions across Thailand.



## Recovery slows for business events in Q1: EIC Barometer

The Events Industry Council (EIC) has released its 2022 Q1 Global Business Events Barometer, according to which, 80 per cent of global companies surveyed resumed domestic travel in 2022 Q1, and more 55 per cent had resumed international travel. However, recovery across the business events sector eased in 2022 Q1, in part due to the impact of the Omicron variant in key markets. The slight step back in the recovery was indicated by both RFPs (down 2 per cent from 2021 Q4) and hotel group room nights (down 10 per cent from the previous quarter). There were some modest recoveries in group activity through the start of 2022, occurring in the Middle East, North America and Asia-Pacific regions, as indicated by the hotel group room nights index.



## Thomas Cook & SOTC partner with Türkiye Tourism

Thomas Cook (India) Limited and SOTC Travel have signed an agreement with Türkiye Tourism. The partnership aims at targeting India's high viable segments, including millennials and young working professionals, bleisure and corporate MICE groups from India's key source markets: metros, mini-metros, as well as tier-II and III cities. The product portfolio features ready-to-book group tours and covers price points from value, affordable luxury, and premium. The collaboration will focus on building awareness and boosting visits to the destination.



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# Infra & connectivity, key tourism priorities

Citing investments made by various ministries and departments, G. Kamala Vardhana Rao, DG-Tourism, GoI, requests investors to invest in tourism and infrastructure projects.

**G** Kamala Vardhana Rao, Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and Managing Director, ITDC Ltd., has urged investors to invest in the tourism sector. "India will host the G20 meetings next year and it will be organised across various states and cities. The states are also investing heavily in building infrastructure. I urge investors to come forward and invest in the hospitality sector," he said, while addressing the 7th National Tourism Investors Meet 2022, organised by FICCI.

Rao said that the tourism sector is the beneficiary of all the investments by various ministries and departments, including national highways, rural development, civil aviation, and railways. "Every state is focusing on the construction of roads as a part of a rural tourism initiative. And here, technology is playing a pivotal role. Use of modernised equipment is

ensuring that the roads are strong enough and are not damaged by monsoon rains," he added.

His views hold significance in the view of the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan (PMGS-NMP), which was launched to provide multimodal connectivity infrastructure to various economic zones. There are seven engines that drive the plan, comprising roads, railways, airports, ports, mass transport, waterways and logistics infrastructure. Separate budgets have been allocated for each segment, and GoI is working towards achieving macro-economic level growth with a focus on micro-economic level all-inclusive welfare. Working on the lines of PMGS-NMP, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is rigorously working towards the set target of the National Highways Network to be expanded by 25,000 km in 2022-23. The other key area of focus is air connectivity.



**G. KAMALA VARDHANA RAO**  
DG, MoT,  
Government of India &  
Managing Director,  
ITDC Ltd

**WE ARE FOCUSING  
ON IMPROVING OUR  
CONNECTIVITY,  
ESPECIALLY IN  
THE NORTHEAST  
REGION**

Rao said that each year, GoI is taking steps to improve rail and air connectivity,

but air connectivity in the northeastern sector still needs to be enhanced. "The government is focusing on discovering new airports and last mile connectivity. Every year, we focus on improving our connectivity, which is a challenge in many destinations, especially in the northeast region. The Prime Minister has given a target that 100 university students in India should be taken to the northeastern states to show and let them experience the beauty, but connectivity is a challenge. So, apart from roads and highways, the government is focusing on airport development and air connectivity," he added.

He also mentioned the G20 summit. India will hold the G20 presidency on 1 December 2022 and convene the first G20 leaders' summit in 2023. "This is an opportunity for India to recover and bounce back," Rao said, urging investors to invest in the development of new destinations and promote India.







**IT IS A TIME FOR  
OPTIMISM, EVEN IF  
THERE ARE  
STILL CHALLENGES  
ON COSTS,  
ESPECIALLY FUEL**

IATA predicts that with rise in travel, the industry losses will reduce to US\$ 9.7 billion, for a net loss margin of 1.2 per cent.

**T**he International Air Transport Association (IATA) forecasts that airlines industry losses will be reduced to US\$ 9.7 billion (down from an October 2021 loss of US\$ 11.6 billion), for a net loss margin of 1.2 per cent. It represents a significant improvement over losses of US\$ 137.7 billion (-36 per

cent net margin) in 2020 and US\$ 42.1 billion (-8.3 percent net margin) in 2021.

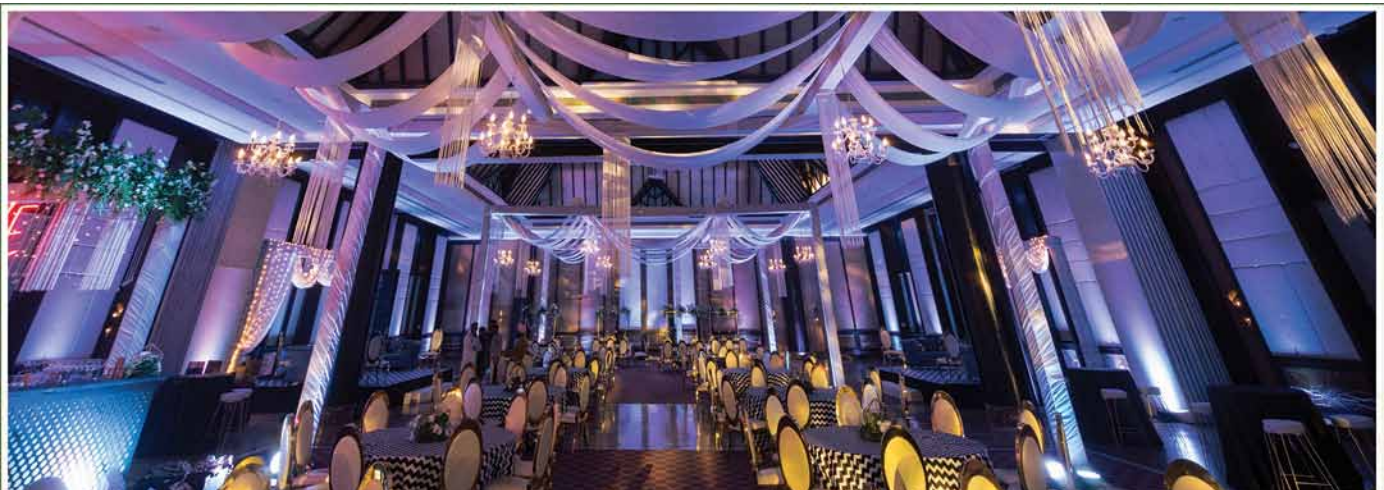
**Revenues:** Industry revenues are expected to reach US\$ 782 billion, or 93.3 per cent of 2019 levels. Flights operated in 2022 are expected to total 33.8 million, which is 86.9 per cent of 2019 levels. Passenger revenues are expected to account for

US\$ 498 billion of industry revenues, more than double the US\$ 239 billion in 2021.

**Expenses:** Overall expenses are expected to rise by 44 per cent to US\$ 796 billion in 2021. At US\$ 192 billion, fuel is the industry's largest cost item in 2022. The war in Ukraine is keeping prices for Brent crude oil high. Fuel will account for about a quarter

of all costs in 2022. Labour is the second highest operational cost item.

**Economic factors:** The forecast incorporates an assumption of solid global GDP growth of 3.4 per cent in 2022, down from the strong 5.8 per cent rebound last year. Inflation is expected to remain elevated throughout 2022, waning over the course of 2023. While nominal interest rates are rising, real interest rates are expected to remain low or negative for a sustained period.



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# Focus shifts to hybrid weddings

COVID-19 has disrupted hospitality, especially for weddings, bleisure, and small M!CE demands for top destinations, opines Mark Willis, CEO-IMEA Region, Accor.

## Lipla Negi

**A** global disruption like COVID-19 has not just changed but transformed the hospitality business. Change is driving growth, creativity and innovation at Accor. “As we speak, we currently have 26 properties (5,146 keys). Over the next 24 months, we are expecting to add six new properties to the network,” shares **Mark Willis**, Chief Executive Officer, India, Middle East, Africa, and Turkey for Accor. Accor currently operates 55 properties across India and South Asia with 10,306 keys. As per him, India is showing strong signs of recovery. Accor received a successful response for Raffles Udaipur last year, while its mid-scale and economy brands—Novotel and Ibis—continue to maintain a high brand recall. As the brand continues to strengthen its portfolio in the country,

### ECONOMY BRANDS

We are looking at opportunities to continue our expansion in the Indian market. Our mid-scale and economy brands, Novotel and

Ibis, have an extremely high brand recall in India and a strong focus on the meetings and conventions market, as well as the wedding and social market. The Novotel network, with 21 operational hotels, forms the largest network of mid-scale hotels in the country, with hotels in key cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai, Goa, and Hyderabad. We are also looking for the right partners as we expand our luxury brands.

### DOMESTIC TRAVEL

With evolving guidelines still in place for international travel, domestic travel will be leading the charge in meeting the business and leisure staycation, workcation, and small M!CE demands for top leisure destinations.

### BOOM OF BLEISURE

As we come out of travel restrictions, companies are starting to resume their in-person meetings and events. These gatherings are smaller in format and not as frequent, which reduces the requirements for corporate travel. Alongside the above,

we have also seen an increase in travel being used to combine both business and pleasure (bleisure) by staying in a hotel or serviced apartment with loved ones and continuing to work remotely. Hence, we are seeing an increase in demand for long-stay accommodation.

### CUSTOMISATION IS KEY

Since the beginning of 2022, we have seen a surge in M!CE. This will continue in the coming months as most businesses are gathering

their teams for small events or meetings. To fulfill new requirements, Accor offers customised packages with flexible booking and cancellation policies. We partnered with Microsoft to launch ALL CONNECT, a hybrid meeting concept that enables guests around the world to adapt to the new ways of working supported by Microsoft Teams.

### WEDDINGS GO HYBRID

The pandemic has brought many changes with it in



**THERE IS A POSITIVE DEMAND PICKUP IN M!CE AND CORPORATE BUSINESS**

the hospitality industry, especially for weddings. Novotel, one of Accor's brands, conceptualised “Vivaah by Novotel” for contemporary virtual weddings, a concept that extends a hybrid approach to the festivities while offering an array of customised and flexible packages.



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# Return of corporate travel and events



**Ajay Sampige**, AVP-Operations, Royal Orchid and Regenta Hotels, discusses how hospitality sector is ensuring best amenities for corporates to restore M!CE culture.

**W**ith room bookings, events, and dining, among others, all at a standstill, the revenue of the hospitality industry plummeted. Weddings and corporate events were one of the major revenue-generating elements, which came to a complete halt. With corporations being forced to shift to online mode due to the lockdown, the number of corporate events or meetings held has also decreased. Even after the curfews were relaxed and after a year of complete lockdown, the industry had to go through an extensive phase of struggle to make up for the lost revenue.

Nonetheless, the last 5-6 months have given people a ray of hope. From a completely online mode, the corporates have progressed to a hybrid model. Most IT firms have also switched to offline

mode and started inviting their employees to work from office. We see at least 80-90 per cent of office capacity returned. Companies are getting back to doing interviews in person, and even conferences and conventions are coming back in full force. The industry is witnessing an increase in bookings for M!CE and other corporate travel. Also, most large companies, SMEs, and start-ups are trying to offer breaks to employees by way of booking them a staycation, much like how offsites were organised earlier when people were unsure of taking long flights. This has helped our numbers, which in turn pushed us to bounce back, especially in our resorts.

The vast open lawns of the hotels make them an ideal venue for corporates to organise team-building sessions, activities, and large M!CE events. The banquet and conference rooms in



**AJAY SAMPIGE**  
AVP-Operations, Royal Orchid and Regenta Hotels

## CONVENTIONS ARE COMING BACK IN FULL FORCE

hotels make it easy for teams of all sizes to conduct their events and meetings. So, to shake things up for them, many hospitality firms are

curating special packages for corporate events instead of flouting the same traditional corporate lunch offers. In tier I and II cities, we have witnessed many large events, SAAS, Edtech and Fintech networking dinners, and large international DJ artists in the last few months. F&B companies have also made changes to better serve their customers, such as curating menus for meetings and events. From design to room service, all sections are given extreme care and attention. People are also adapting to digital services. Hotels are catering to this by implementing mobile room keys and virtual tours of the venue, among others.

Once the international market opens up, hotels are all set to offer the best for corporates by organising staycations, off-site working programmes, wellness sessions, and a lot more.





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# A M!CE time in Australia

Hazel Jain

Five Mumbai corporates and SOTC were hosted for six-day luxury famil in Australia by Business Events Australia and Tourism Australia partners, Melbourne Convention Bureau and BESydney.

Even before Australia lifted all travel restrictions for international visitors (effective 6 July 2022), the destination began to observe movement from India, including not just FIT but also student and corporate travel. Taking advantage of the growing interest, Tourism Australia in India organised a business famil—the first famil welcomed by Australia since the border reopened. This is what five corporates had to say about it.

All the activities the group did in Melbourne and Sydney were amazing, according to **Kketan Pabari**, Head-Commercial & Procurement, Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance Company. "If I had to choose, there were two things that really stood out for me. One was the Sydney Cricket Ground, because most Indians enjoy cricket and will love visiting this venue. Glenworth Valley in Sydney, where we went

horseback riding and quad biking, was another one that I really enjoyed from a natural standpoint. It also boasts large open grounds that are ideal for outdoor events. We normally have two sets of individuals travelling on incentives at my company: performers and somewhat better performers, who get an extra two-night stay. So for the A-listers, we would prefer doing something such as the helicopter ride we took from Sydney to Glenworth Valley or even a luxury yacht ride on Sydney Harbour. This is particularly ideal for family incentive trips," he said.

**TOURISM AUSTRALIA SAW INQUIRIES AS EARLY AS MAR-APR 2022**

## NEW DESTINATIONS

**John Pereira**, Manager-Travel, Lupin Limited, stated that this was his first trip to Australia. "Although we have done a few group trips to Australia before COVID-19, I usually created the itinerary based on what our travel partners advised. But now that I have been here, I am more informed about the many destinations, activities, and venues that are available. Every group also has a budget plan in mind. In light of the budget, I now know what can be included and what cannot. We have never brought a group to Melbourne; for six nights, it was mostly just Sydney and the Gold Coast. Therefore, this trip opened my eyes. I understand that we can create an itinerary that includes Melbourne for eight days or longer. There are many things to do in Melbourne, notably around the Melbourne Cricket Ground and Philip Island, where penguin sightings are common," he added.

## CRICKET A BIG DRAW

**Cletus Colaco**, Senior General Manager-Market Development, Gulf Oil Lubricants India, showed more interest in cricket venues. He said, "We are deeply associated with cricket since we are the IPL co-sponsors for Chennai Super Kings. We visited the Melbourne and Sydney Cricket Grounds, which were both great. Both offer plenty of space for conferences, gala dinners, and concerts. We were told at Sydney Cricket Ground that they have an events team that can assist us with anything, including team building, which works well for us. Playing beach cricket at Bondi Beach in Sydney was a highlight of our trip. If the weather allows, we can include this as one of our activities. The Melbourne Skydeck is also ideal for social events. Even the Harley-Davidson ride we took in Sydney was enjoyable, and it will work with our distributor groups."





**"We are currently exploring a possible trip to Australia for the T20 World Cup in October 2022"**

**BHAUMIN SHAH**

Associate Vice President, State Bank of India

**"Melbourne and Sydney Cricket Grounds offer plenty of space for gala dinners and concerts"**

**CLETUS COLACO**

Senior General Manager-Market Development, Gulf Oil Lubricants India



**"I now understand that we can create an itinerary that includes Melbourne for eight days or longer"**

**JOHN PEREIRA**

Manager-Travel, Lupin Limited



**"For A-listers, we would add helicopter ride from Sydney to Glenworth Valley"**

**KKETAN PABARI**

Head-Commercial & Procurement, Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance Company



**"Sydney is worthwhile for a five-night visit for a small group of around 100 people"**

**MELVIN JOSEPH**

Deputy General Manager (Sales Service & Administration-Lifestyle), Raymond



**"Several groups are lined up for Australia, most of which will be high-end incentive trips and leadership teams"**

**NAVEEN KUKRETI**

Associate Vice President-M!CE, SOTC Travel



**"We have a pipeline of approximately 10,000 people confirmed for travel this year itself"**

**SAMAR CHOKSI**

Business Development Manager-India, Tourism Australia



State Bank of India (SBI) was also a member of this FAM, and with over 10,000 employees, it organises numerous corporate trips. **Bhaumin Shah**, Associate VP, SBI, said, "We did two groups of 200 pax each to Australia two years ago, which included only Sydney, so the sightseeing options were limited. We only did the Sydney Cricket Ground and the Opera House. But after visiting Australia myself, I am now aware that there are many other options that we can incorporate, especially for our 200-300 top performers. We can provide them exclusive experiences such as helicopter rides and visits to golf courses, among others. We are currently exploring a possible trip to Australia for the T20 World Cup in October, for which we will need to launch a campaign for 300 top performers. We can add Melbourne, but with the budget in mind, we typically keep the trip to four nights."

## NEW OPTION FOR MICE

This visit was a dream for **Melvin Joseph**, Deputy GM (Sales Service & Administration-Lifestyle), Raymond. "We have been visiting other popular countries, such as Dubai, Thailand, and Singapore. But we wanted to explore Australia. There are many prospects, especially in Sydney. We stayed at the Sofitel Darling Harbour, which was centrally located and near key attractions. The Sydney Cricket Ground and the Sydney Opera House were spectacular. Sydney is worthwhile for a five-night visit for a small group of 100 pax. This, combined with a cricket match, will appeal to Indian groups," he said.

From the perspective of a travel operator, **Naveen Kukreti**, Associate Vice President-M!CE, SOTC

Travel, stated that when the pandemic began to wane, his company took several groups to Australia. "In fact, we recently did a 360-person incentive group from Prudent to Sydney and the Gold Coast. On the Gold Coast, we did adventure activities such as seaplane and chopper rides, which are also available in Sydney. This was the first group we took to Australia after the borders reopened. We have several groups lined up for Australia, especially timed around the T20 Series. We are doing an inventory search for around 3,000-4,000 pax. This will mostly be high-end incentive trips and leadership teams. Cricket matches usually see huge movements from India," he said.

Sharing the thought process behind planning the itinerary for this group, **Samar Choksi**, Business Development Manager, India, Tourism Australia, said, "We chose six corporates from Mumbai for this family, of which one was cancelled. Our travel partner, SOTC, chose the corporates that were from different industries. We knew that none of them had visited Australia before, so we wanted to show them the icons of both the cities and some of the experiences that they could enjoy and, in turn, their groups could also enjoy, whether it is a small, medium, or large incentive group. We started seeing inquiries coming into Australia as early as March-April 2022, as soon as borders opened. We have a pipeline of approximately 10,000 people confirmed for travel this year itself. We also wanted to showcase cuisine, so we added western as well as Indian vegetarian food apart from non-vegetarian food. People have the misconception that there is no good vegetarian food available in Australia, so we wanted to bust that myth."



# Small, intimate & sustainable

When pandemic forced weddings to downsize, the call for sustainable nuptials grew stronger, louder.

**Lipla Negi**

In the aftermath of the pandemic, which by the way is still around and not going anywhere, sustainability came out as the silent winner. While the crisis hit the hospitality industry hard, it swiftly brought the need for sustainability to the forefront. Marching forward from its peripheral role to the centre of the recovery roadmap, sustainability grabs the spotlight at big fat Indian weddings too. An increasing number of millennials and hoteliers are pushing for more efforts to turn extravagant weddings into eco-friendly ones. As COVID-19 restrictions cut the wedding party to a size of 50 or fewer guests, young couples and some foresighted hoteliers saw this as an opportunity to make a strong case for sustainable weddings.

## A PANDEMIC TWIST

Though involuntarily, the pandemic became a catalyst, pushing hotels to integrate sustainability into day-to-day operations as well as future strategies. Agreeing to the role of the pandemic in tweaking the way we ring in celebrations, **Amaan Kidwai**, Area Manager, Welcomhotels-North and General Manager, Welcomhotel Sheraton New Delhi, said, "The pandemic has challenged the norm of big fat weddings. In today's scenario, a rising number of couples are keen to reduce the carbon footprint of their wedding through intimate

events with their immediate family and friends."

As the focus shifted to nurturing nature for a better future, couples started seeking brands and properties that could help them with an eco-conscious wedding where both the planet and people are celebrated in harmony. "Climate change is a much discussed topic amongst millennials these days, and it is one of the biggest contributors to the environmental crisis that we are witnessing. They want to live with an intent that is focused on reducing the harm to the environment through their interactions," he opined.

## SMALL, SPECTACULAR

For some, it might be difficult to perceive how sustainability complements the magnificence of a big fat Indian wedding. However, the pandemic smashed that perception too. When COVID-19 restriction forced weddings to cut the frills and squeeze the wedding party to a guest list as small as 50 people, sustainability found its perfect partner in small. "CGH Earth's venues cater to residential weddings of 50 to 200 people. Pre-COVID-19, we found fewer couples opting for this scale of weddings in India. Despite the lifting of government regulations, we find that







people are opting for a smaller scale of weddings. As a result, we are seeing more people choosing to make their special day unique and intimate," states **Michael Dominic**, Chief Executive Officer, CGH Earth Experience Hotels.

Unexpectedly, size drove the demand for sustainability with hotels, from boutique to luxury, brainstorming to incorporate eco-conscious touches, including second-hand décor, biodegradable cutlery, water bottling plants, minimising food waste and avoiding one-time use products. An increasing number of brides and grooms, on the other hand, are trying to ring in sustainability with planet-friendly choices such as wedding invites made





from recycled paper, pots and plants as gifts for guests, less use of fresh flowers, and opting venues that offer sustainable options.

## OUTDOOR NUPTIALS

Sunlight, clear blue skies, lush trees and greenery, balmy beaches and postcard-perfect lawns—open venues offering natural beauty witnessed a surge in demand post-2020. Covid protocols, such as social distancing, whet the appetite for open lawns as preferred venue choice. With a virus looming around, a packed air-conditioned hall did not entice them anymore. As per Kidwai, the pandemic reintroduced people to the charm of open lawns. "More guests at Welcomhotels are choosing outdoor wedding setups for day events, making the best use of natural light and air. They are choosing decor concepts that have recyclable natural elements," he shares while adding, "Combine open lawns with grand heritage, like you get at Welcomhotel Amritsar, and guests get to envisage a green wedding with a historical backdrop."

Driving to an offbeat destination with your wedding party in tow has also popped up as a big travel trend. Dominic believes that solemnising one's nuptials at an offbeat destination offering breathtaking views gives an opportunity to combine rejuvenation with celebration. "CGH Earth's unique wedding venues on the backwaters, in a spice garden,

a royal residence, a vintage hotel on the waterfront, and on the beach have all become desirable choices. We also find couples and their families choosing CGH Earth for the values of the brand, which are being sensitive to the environment, benefiting local communities and having an overall ethos that is local," explains Dominic.

## INTIMATE, IMMERSIVE

Intimate worked wonderfully for sustainable weddings. The fewer the guests, the higher the wedding's sustainability score. Intimate weddings help hotels save money on food costs. It also helps them curate a more immersive experience. Dominic believes that young couples are choosing immersive over extravagant and hence zeroing in on properties that speak sustainability clearly. He shared, "Intimate weddings at CGH Earth are plugged into the ongoing



**AMAAN KIDWAI**  
Area Manager,  
Welcomhotels-North  
and General Manager,  
Welcomhotel Sheraton  
New Delhi

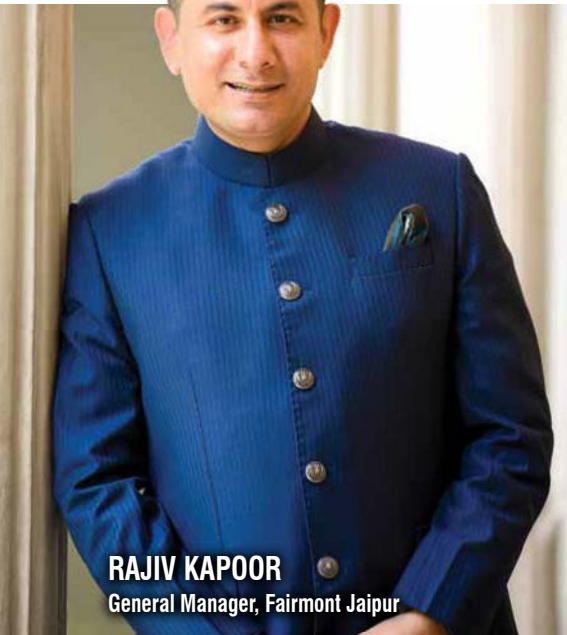
## MORE COUPLES ARE KEEN TO REDUCE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF THEIR WEDDING THROUGH INTIMATE EVENTS

offerings of our resorts and hotels, where most weddings are residential in nature. The very core of our offering revolves around responsible tourism and sustainability practices. Couples who align with this thought seek us out. All of them, when on their recce, are inspired by all that we do. And though we do not control the wedding decorations, we see couples responding to our spaces and making choices that do not impact the environment."

To help guests reduce carbon footprints, hotels are increasingly looking for innovative and sustainable ideas to make a wedding unforgettable yet kinder to the planet. "Just replace unmindful consumption with mindful planning," suggested **Siddharth Chakravarty**, Sustainability Director, Six Senses Fort Barwara, and added, "By choosing a seasonal menu, going for smaller portion sizes, going hyper-local with experiences, employing renewable sources of energy, choosing natural materials, and ensuring no extra single-use plastic packaging is used, we can streamline the guest pick-ups and drops with more planning, employing cars and buses from the hotel for local transport, using more open spaces to reduce electricity usage, and recycling or no trash wedding décor can be planned."







**RAJIV KAPOOR**  
General Manager, Fairmont Jaipur

# Sustainable weddings in the offing

In India, the trend towards eco-friendly weddings is still gaining traction and young couples are leading the way, opines **Rajiv Kapoor**, GM, Fairmont Jaipur.

**MT Bureau**

## Has the pandemic made weddings sustainable?

The pandemic has made weddings more intimate and sustainable. With the downsizing of gatherings, people are opting to celebrate in places that are open and have good venues and experiences to offer. Sustainable weddings help to conserve and make better and smarter decisions. For example, an organic meal will cost the family more than a regular one, but the reduced number of people helps to balance the expense! The hotel saves money on food waste because there are more live stations instead of large buffet setups.

## Are young couples making the switch to sustainability?

Sustainable weddings are still picking up the pace in India. But yes, the new generation of couples are at the forefront of driving this change. We see people opting in for alternatives to heavy decorations, food measurements, and especially the millennial couples are eager to put their foot forward to initiate green initiatives. For now, we have received such queries from a few couples who are mindful of their actions.

## What distinguishes weddings held before and during the current phase of the pandemic?

The majority of our revenue is generated through weddings, constituting 75 per cent of the total revenue. Pre-pandemic, weddings were larger than life with huge gatherings. However, in the current scenario, weddings have been more intimate; people are more

for destination weddings. It has got India on the global map for extravagant and luxurious weddings. The focus has always been on transforming the venue as per our guests' and their families' requirements to make their wedding the most momentous day of their lives. Yes, it can go hand in hand with the big fat Indian wedding. Choosing a wedding in a sustainable

fashion serves the purpose of greater global ethics without affecting a fairy-tale wedding. At Fairmont Jaipur, we are mindful of each action. We produce our own greens, do waste management, have grey water management, e-bikes for city tours and recently have also set up EV charging stations. We make sure we speak about these initiatives to our guests and curate a wedding for them.

## FAMILIES AND COUPLES ARE EXPLORING OPTIONS TO KEEP IT ALL NATURAL AND FREE OF PLASTIC WASTE

thoughtful, personalising and customising, opting for destination weddings with their close-knit group of family and friends.

## Can sustainability go hand in hand with the magnitude of a big fat Indian wedding?

Fairmont Jaipur is one of the most preferred venues





# Experiential M!CE makes inroads

**Sunishchal Parasnis**, Director of Sales & Marketing, Hyatt Regency Dehradun, observes that M!CE is moving toward becoming experience-centric.

**MT Bureau**

**H**ow has the M!CE market responded to the property since its launch?

The hotel opened in mid-March of this year and provides a great mix of indoor and outdoor event space. There was a lack of event spaces in the hills, and the combination of a big room inventory and event spaces in the most

**Are there any trends you have observed for M!CE?**

M!CE is making a robust recovery this year. The opening of international destinations will shift some shares. However, the domestic market's share is growing. A key M!CE trend is that it is becoming more experience-centric. Customers want a destination and a hotel with tailored experiences on and around the property.

offers are transient, we are not employing any tactics. We have focused on developing an end-to-end M!CE planning process and curating experiences for groups. Another key strategy is to build loyalty with our 'World of Hyatt' rewards.

**How much has the business changed since 2020?**

Since 2020, the hospitality business has changed

**Do you offer special deals or discounts for wedding planners and travel agents?**

High-end destination weddings are a key segment for us and the hotel is amongst the few hotels in leisure destinations in India that can host weddings of 250 rooms and more than 700-800 pax under one roof. More than discounts or packages, we focus on offering a seamless planning experience. Customers and partners, we believe, prefer working with hotels that provide value, flexibility, and a creative approach. Packaging of certain services and value additions, among others, are used as short-term tactics to entice agents and planners.

**Do you see young couples consciously opting for a sustainable wedding?**

While there is still a long way to go for the Indian wedding fraternity, we have seen some shifts in preference patterns. Young couples are more open to hotel suggestions for sustainability in event planning, menus, and local procurement, among other things. Wedding planners are also trying to brainstorm on sustainability while planning and procuring set-up materials, energy conservation in event planning, and eco-conscious themes.

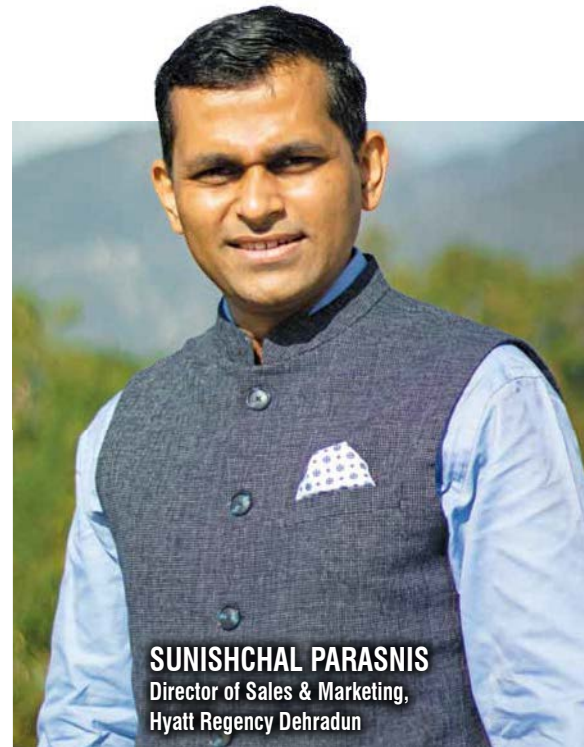
## WEDDING PLANNERS ARE TRYING TO BRAINSTORM ON SUSTAINABILITY WHILE PLANNING AND PROCURING MATERIALS AND ECO-CONSCIOUS THEMES

dramatically. Consumers are shifting toward more experiential travel. Domestic travel has become more influential and potential than ever, and travellers from smaller feeder markets are equally involved in setting these trends.

**What are your strategies to entice M!CE stakeholders?**

As M!CE demand rises, inconsistent supply of some ancillary services becomes a challenge. There is a lack of event production facilities and transport services during peak seasons. Since discount

accessible Himalayan valley with moderate temperature conditions makes it ideal for larger-scale conferences and weddings. The hotel has got encouraging response, with clients from all major cities expressing an interest in holding their events there.



**SUNISHCHAL PARASNIS**  
Director of Sales & Marketing,  
Hyatt Regency Dehradun







**Japan.**  
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**JTB**  
*Perfect moments, always*



Furano Biei Norokko Train

# COOL SUMMER Meetings & Conferences in HOKKAIDO JAPAN

## Hokkai Heso Matsuri (Bellybutton Festival) in Furano

Furano is located at the center of Hokkaido, hence it is supposed as the bellybutton of the region. And they happily celebrate this fact. On **28th and 29th July** of every year they hold the "Bellybutton festival".

Children and men get funny faces drawn around their bellybutton and **dance in a parade**. The face is covered by a big straw hat and it appears as if the belly is the face of the dancer. Women add the glory by dancing in their summer Yukata.

**Foreigners can also participate** in this festival by applying on the below website. It is on "first come first serve basis" so it is recommended to apply as soon as the booking is open. The cost is JPY2500 which includes the costume rental. <https://hesomatsuri.com/entry/>

This fun event can be a dash of **ice breaking, team building and frolic** amidst the serious conferences and meetings.

The group can stay at the several hotels like **Highland Furano**, which is a hybrid of western and Japanese style. Surrounded by lush forests and **lavender fields**, Highland Furano boasts natural hot spring baths. They have unique matted Japanese banquets as well as western style banquets. Maximum capacity is around 130 people. To check details please log on to <https://www.highland-furano.jp/banquet/>



Hesomatsuri

But if you have a **larger group**, it is recommended to stay at **Asahikawa**. It is around 1 hour by train from Furano. This city has its own attraction like **Asahiyama Zoo** where people can observe **the animals in their natural habitats**. In this city there are **unique venues** like **Asahikawa Design Center**, **large resorts** like **Hoshino Resorts OMO7 Asahikawa** with world class facilities accommodating around **1200** people. Please check the following link for more information

<https://www.japanmeetings.org/plan-your-event/search/city-detail.html?id=3>



# Ringling eco-conscious wedding bells

Sustainability is big fat responsibility for Radisson Blu Resort Temple Bay Mamallapuram, shares **Ameet Raj Kundu**, Cluster Commercial Head, Radisson Hotels of GRT.



**AMEET RAJ KUNDU**  
Cluster Commercial Head,  
Radisson Hotels of GRT

**EVERY  
HOSPITALITY  
LEADER  
MUST DIRECT  
THEMSELVES  
TOWARDS  
SUSTAINABLE  
WEDDINGS**

**W**eddings at Radisson have always been a grand occasion, and the Radisson Blu Resort Temple Bay, Mamallapuram has long been associated with celebrations. Wedding season has us overbooked and the staff is filled with joy sharing service. During this season, there is usually a significant contribution to our revenue. As the pandemic struck, weddings at Radisson got more intimate. We made sure the weddings were more beautifully structured and planned, keeping in mind the COVID-19 policies. When it comes to marketing ourselves as a wedding venue, we do not comply with the norms of how beautiful the property is, but how beautiful a wedding is in someone's life.

## ADDING VALUE

We consider travel agents and wedding planners partners who help us create an experience. We have proactively curated different experience packages to coordinate with our partners to deliver a timeless heritage wrapped in luxury. At Radisson Blu Resort Temple Bay Mamallapuram, one can attend 14 events and yet have their own exclusive experience. Planning and brainstorming also made us realise the need for a pure vegetarian kitchen dedicated to weddings and other events on demand.

## BIG, GREEN WEDDINGS

Sustainability has been a big fat responsibility for us. We also recently honoured our sustainability mindset with the new mascot, Oliver Blu—

promoting conversation and conservation. The property has themed weddings that promote more natural outcomes for the wedding than those artificially created. From decorations to utilities such as water bottles, exclusive provisions are made to sustain nature. Grander weddings on sustainable grounds are an opportunity and a challenge, but that is something the staff thrives on.

## RAPID ADOPTION

The pandemic pushed weddings to be more intimate. In terms of revenue, we do see some effects take place, but we have not seen a drop in people starting their new phases of life. When it comes to how beneficial sustainable weddings are, there is no point of debate here. Every hospitality leader

must direct themselves towards eco-friendly weddings as soon as possible.

## SHIFT IN MINDSET

A decade ago, it was the whole family that made the decision. But, the young couples have a changed mindset towards nature. From the decorations to gift bags, they make conscious choices that are sustainable. Most couples opt for a natural backdrop, decorative items, and F&B cutlery. The gift bags are requested to be made of jute or cotton.




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Incentive Travel & Conventions, Meetings

**CTW**  
Asia-Pacific  
Corporate Travel World

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# Rajasthan, the land of exotic weddings

The well-designed hotels by Lords Hotels & Resorts in Rajasthan offer the greatest amenities, making one's dream wedding day a beautiful and unforgettable reality.

Rajasthan is a land of rich heritage, culture, safaris, sand dunes, lush forests and wildlife, making it a unique wedding destination. In Rajasthan's rustic surroundings, Lords Hotels and Resorts have some charming jewels in the form of well-designed properties, which are ideal settings to make one's dream wedding day a memorable reality.

Leading the magnificent pack is the Shree Vallabh Vilas Lords Plaza, Nathdwara, located adjacent to the Shrinath Ji Temple. It offers a magnificent view of the town and the Aravalli Hills, and is spread across two acres of land. For weddings, the property is well maintained with a spacious banquet hall that has the capacity to accommodate 500 people, as

well as a lush lawn. The hotel offers two complimentary rooms for the bride and the groom's family.

Lords Inn Malviyanagar, Jaipur is a newly launched boutique hotel that features 36 spacious and well-designed guestrooms and a lavish banquet hall that can accommodate over 300 pax. There are also two roof-top spaces, where wedding *phas* and receptions can be conducted. The hotel offers

two complimentary rooms for the bridal entourage.

Lords Plaza, Jaipur, is a boutique property built with *jharokas* and contemporary architecture and décor. The hotel features banquet venues that are ideal for wedding anniversaries, with a capacity of more than 100 pax. The hotel offers a room on a complimentary basis, and all other arrangements can be organised by the hotel with the help of outside vendors.

Located 372 kms from Jaipur is the Lords Inn, Jodhpur. The hotel is an ideal destination for a *sangeet* function or an engagement party. Guests are offered a complimentary room and free access to the roof-top swimming pool. There is also a 40 per cent discount on the spa facility and a 15 per cent discount on the party buffet.

Lords Inn, Udaipur, located in the heart of Udaipur at Govardhan Vilas, is another ideal place to conduct a big fat Indian wedding. This property offers a spacious banquet space for more than 200 pax. The hotel offers a complimentary room on booking the venue. One can also access the roof-top swimming pool.

So, unfold your story of togetherness with a lavish celebration at Lords Hotels and Resorts.





# Wedding TRAVEL SHOW

**1-2 October 2022**  
**Hyatt Regency, Dehradun**



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**[www.travelshowindia.com](http://www.travelshowindia.com)**

Hospitality Partner





# Blending work with relaxation

Courtyard by Marriott Aravali Faridabad, Haryana aims to grab a larger piece of Delhi-NCR's M!CE and wedding markets.

**MT Bureau**

**T**he boom in the leisure segment continues to entice hotel chains to explore offbeat destinations and add new properties to their expanding portfolio. Situated amidst the foothills of the beautiful Aravali ranges, the 158-key Courtyard by Marriott Aravali Resort opens its doors to guests looking for a quick escape that is out of the city and yet a short drive away from the capital region. "There is a big population in the mid-range, which wants an affordable resort experience, and Courtyard Resorts offer great value for money," says **Arun Kumar**, Market Vice President

– North India, Nepal, and Bhutan at Marriott International.

The resort underlines a 'first' for both the American hospitality major and its Indian investor. While it is the very first Courtyard by Marriott resort in India, the property also marks the entry of Mankind Pharma, one of the top pharmaceutical brands in India, into the hospitality industry. Speaking about this new addition to the brand's portfolio, **Ranju Alex**, Area Vice President, South Asia at Marriott International, said, "The opening marks the 23rd Courtyard by Marriott property in India, attesting to the robust growth and popularity of the brand in the



**THERE IS A BIG POPULATION IN THE MID-RANGE THAT WANTS AN AFFORDABLE RESORT EXPERIENCE**

country. Our select service portfolio is also driving momentum for growth in the region with an exciting pipeline. We look forward to continuing to expand consumers' travel choices

by bringing guests a diverse range of experiences in the region."

The resort seamlessly blends the natural beauty of the Aravali ranges and resort hospitality with the objective of attracting families and corporates alike. Spread across eight acres, the resort boasts some unique features, such as family rooms with bunk beds for kids, a multi-tier swimming pool, and more than 21,000 sq. ft., of banquet space and an awe-inspiring 360-degree walking trail. With an inventory of 158 rooms and ample banquet space, the resort aims to become the go-to M!CE destination in the Delhi-NCR region. The space includes five multi-functional rooms equipped with top-of-the-range technology and 11,000 sq. ft., of lush outdoor lawns, ideal for weddings and other social events. "The hotel is perfect for our independent, forward-thinking guests who want to pursue their personal and professional passions while on the road. From rooms to food, it has been designed to cater to the needs of the modern traveller who does not mind combining work with relaxation," said **Rajneesh Kumar**, General Manager, Courtyard by Marriott Aravali Resort.







**JULIA SWANSON**  
CEO, Melbourne Convention Bureau

# India, a key market for Melbourne

Julia Swanson, CEO, Melbourne Convention Bureau, reveals that India has now become the largest source of leads out of the APAC market.

**Hazel Jain**

## How important is M!CE traffic from India for Melbourne?

Currently, India has become the largest source of leads in the APAC market, for which we have been increasing our engagement activity. We are seeing smaller groups travelling more frequently, with a focus on team-building and more sustainability-focused activities.

## How do sports and entertainment events help Melbourne attract more high-spending visitors?

Melbourne prides itself on being the sports capital of Australia, with its enviable sporting precinct of stadiums, pools, tracks, and fields. It hosts international events such as the Australian Open, the legendary Boxing Day cricket test at the MCG and the Formula 1 Grand Prix. These major events attract a large number of visitors from around the world and also expose Melbourne to the world via international broadcasting.

## What is the average night stay in Melbourne?

The average length of stay in Melbourne for Indian visitors is around four nights, and the city is easy to navigate. The

natural beauty of regional Victoria is just a short drive away for those looking to venture further afield.

## What kind of engagements is Melbourne CB looking to conduct with M!CE stakeholders in India?

While travel was not optimised through COVID-19, we ensured the Indian market was up to date with the latest happenings in our city with inspiring product showcases via live-streaming and webinars from a host of interesting locations. One of my favourites was with Australian cricket coach and former Australian cricketer Brad Hodge, who joined the Melbourne Convention Bureau at the Melbourne Cricket Ground to present a destination training webinar for key Indian travel agents.



Now that travel is back, we have started hosting FAMs.

## Is Melbourne prepared to conduct hybrid events?

While there is a pent-up demand for in-person events, hybrid event options are par for the course today. Melbourne is well set up to service this, with many venues adding hybrid and streaming options to their AV mix. The growth of technology was already happening but escalated from COVID-19. Together with our innovative partners, MCB can support the delivery of events and ensure you are maximising your reach and growing your audience. We have created a user-friendly hybrid events guide for Melbourne, which details hybrid solutions and professional conference organiser services.

## VENUES FOR THE INDIA MARKET

Melbourne is ever-changing its offering with new attractions and experiences. Two that spring to mind include THE LUME Melbourne, Australia's first permanent digital gallery. At THE LUME Melbourne, you will step inside an epic art adventure, where every sense is fully immersed. The Melbourne Showgrounds, the city's largest and most versatile venue, offer unique and flexible indoor and outdoor spaces designed to host a variety of events and activities.

## GUIDELINES FOR INDIAN VISITORS

From 12:01 am on 6 July 2022, people are able to travel to and from Australia without being required to declare their COVID-19 vaccination status. Travellers entering Australia no longer require a negative pre-departure test. A visa is required to visit Australia for business or tourism. Electronic Travel Authorisation (eTA) is required for visa-exempt visitors entering Australia.





# Back with the hybrid paradigm

With their first hybrid event, IT&CM Asia and CTW Asia-Pacific return to Bangkok with a well-rounded programme that increases visibility through streaming.

**I**T&CM Asia and CTW Asia-Pacific 2022 return with their first hybrid event in Bangkok, Thailand from 20–22 September 2022 and are set to go virtual from 20–28 September 2022. After two years of meeting virtually, the hybrid concept introduces new and improved initiatives such as hybrid business meets, 3D virtual exhibitions, and scheduled meetings with streaming broadcasts and remote participation. **Lynette Tey**, Event Manager, TTG Events, shared, “This year’s show aims to deliver a brand new format like never before, differentiating IT&CM Asia and CTW APAC 2022 hybrid from any other experience.”

**Hybrid business meets:** Parallel in-person and virtual appointment tracks offer multiple ways to connect.

**3D virtual exhibition and walk-in meets:** 3D mode visuals promise an engaging experience for delegates,

## THE EVENT INTRODUCES INITIATIVES SUCH AS HYBRID BUSINESS MEETS AND 3D VIRTUAL EXHIBITIONS

made possible by Official Technology Partner EventsAir.

**Scheduled meetings x 24:** The heart of IT&CM Asia and CTW APAC’s value proposition returns with a renewed focus on F2F scheduled meet opportunities, both in-person and remotely.

### HYBRID FORMAT

The first hybrid format will be a three-day in-person event and a nine-day virtual networking that extends exposure with on-demand



viewing and exclusive virtual-only content. It offers international delegates stronger online and offline platforms for networking. Some of the in-person programme highlights are:

**Brand engagement:** Open to delegates to harness the latest brand highlights or engage with featured brands.

**Enhanced attendee APP:** A full suite of interactive tools for seamless interaction.

**Bonus virtual meets (optional 1630-1800**

**hrs):** These slots provide opportunities for in-person delegates to connect with remote attendees at times friendly to the latter.

Some features of the virtual networking event are:

**On-demand content:** Have full access to exclusive virtual event content at any time.

**On-demand networking conversations:** Ignite conversations with delegates anytime during the virtual event in this interactive and engaging feature.



**JULIETTE LOSARDO**

Exhibition Director, World Travel Market London

# Physical events get the second wind

COVID-19 forced events sector to chart new course with virtual shows, but appetite to meet again is strong, as per Juliette Losardo, Exhibition Director, WTM London.

**Devika Seth**

## How has the exhibition space evolved since the pandemic?

The event and travel industries have been adversely affected. We examined how business interactions might take place in the absence of face-to-face events. We found new ways to bring our community together that were not in our standard practices. We held virtual events and launched online portals. We considered how we might measure, value and track leads in a more centralised manner. We analysed how we can invest in the right areas to ensure that relevant shows are delivered in today's environment. We developed event technology and explored strategies to ensure that our customer interactions are no longer reliant on people handing out business cards. Thus, smart technologies are in development, and the pandemic has enabled us to capitalise on this. People need to do business, and they are concerned about what business continuity will look like amid such a crisis. As we ease limitations and return to normal life, WTM will serve as a meeting point for people. So far, our exhibitors and buyers have shown a yearning to be onsite.

## How will technology impact travel exhibitions?

The ability to capitalise on technology and test virtual channels has shown that they can also work. However, these are effective in small groups. Hence, face-to-face will be the way to go, and event technology will play a key role in exhibitions. This year, we are looking at technologies that will allow you to track who you meet and how you connect with them in a smart way, as well as enable visitors to collect brochures and information from exhibitors with one-tap technology.

## What new can the sector expect from WTM this year?

Many facets of the show will be different this year, but our focus will be on what value looks like for our audience. Real business issues are vital since our sector is struggling with infrastructure, recruiting and consumer confidence. We want to support the industry in overcoming these challenges. Development of a conference programme is also underway. The focus will be on experience and remapping all buyers globally who purchase travel and ensuring we know who and where they are, what they are responsible for, and encouraging them to use WTM as a channel to purchase travel.

## When will you reach the pre-pandemic numbers?

Bookings are still being made at a lower rate than earlier, but they have been robust so far. Will we be bigger than 2019? I am not sure. Will we be bigger than 2021? Definitely. We will eventually creep up to 2019 levels. Due to high demand, we hope to

be back in full swing by 2024 with all the bells and whistles.

## Will the WTM portfolio continue its virtual events?

We have decided not to go virtual for WTM London this year. We receive much higher satisfaction ratings for face-to-face events than for virtual or hybrid events.



**MANY FACETS OF THE SHOW WILL BE SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT THIS YEAR, BUT OUR MAJOR FOCUS WILL BE ON WHAT VALUE LOOKS LIKE FOR OUR AUDIENCE**

## What will be the COVID-19 safety protocols?

By November, we hope to be in a better position. We have distributed 145 million vaccines across the UK, and curbs on everyday lives and overseas travel have been lifted. So, wearing masks would not be mandatory. Cleaning and sanitation stations will be installed across the exhibition floor and conference halls. We will go above and beyond what is necessary. We are learning to live with the virus and must make sensible decisions.



# Digital products to enhance our reach

**Amit Mehta**, Country Manager-South Asia, Malaysia Airlines, discusses special at-the-airport and on-board services offered for M!CE groups.

**MT Bureau**



**AMIT MEHTA**

Country Manager-South Asia, Malaysia Airlines

## How are you fortifying your ties with trade partners?

We have an excellent relationship with our trade partners. We have service agents across India, including tier I and II cities, and come up with tailor-made promotions and offers. Our products such as Horizontal Fare Family give them the advantage of offering a fully flexible product for their clients. We also invest in digital initiatives to expand our reach in these cities. One of our most recent initiatives is the self-service MH Group Bookings portal, which provides an optimised travel experience.

## Do you offer special fares or services for group bookings?

From corporate incentive trips to large-scale destination events, we have MHBiz Events. Both organisers and delegates get exclusive benefits, such as flight discounts, complimentary tickets, and more. It also supports incentives and events with special fares, dedicated check-in counters, prearranged airport meet and greet service, and welcome on-board announcements. As a key partner to Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) and Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau (PCEB), we promote the country as Asia's business events hub.

## Are there any plans to add more routes and carriers?

We are reviewing the opportunities in the Indian market and will add new routes, increase frequencies, or upgrade aircraft wherever needed. We are anticipating pre-pandemic capacity for India by the end of this year. The tender exercise for the A380 is ongoing, and we are still targeting the A380 fleet to exit in 2022. We are expecting to take delivery of 25 new Boeing 737-8 aircraft from May 2023 through the beginning of 2026. We are currently operating 29 weekly flights from India from five major cities in India: Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Chennai.

## How do macro-economic factors pose new challenges?

We are now facing a significant headwind with high fuel prices. The current Russian-Ukrainian crisis has posed challenges in managing operational costs. Fuel prices at current levels of US\$ 110/bbl to US\$ 130/bbl account for approximately 40–45 per cent of the group's total operational costs, an increase of approximately 35–40 per cent from a year ago. The challenge is to work towards the right level of supply of seats versus the level of demand that is expected to exist in the market. Too much supply, and we are likely to see a price war.

## How is technology shaping the future of air travel?

The pandemic made us realise the need to rethink ways of conducting airline business. We empowered our workforce to remain agile and be equipped with the necessary skillsets. We have moved a significant portion of our processes online and accelerated our digitalisation efforts to ensure our staff can operate remotely and flexibly as a business.

**SELF-SERVICE  
MH GROUP  
BOOKINGS  
PORTAL OFFERS  
DIRECT BOOKING,  
PROMPT  
RESPONSES**





# WITNESS RURAL INDIA IN THE “HEART OF THE COUNTRY”: MADHYA PRADESH

Rural tourism is gaining popularity among travellers, and why not? Exploring rural destinations can help you learn about the traditional roots of a state!



**M**adhya Pradesh has it all if you want to take some time away from the hustle and bustle of city life and tour village houses, sample simple yet tasty meals, engage in tribal culture, and soak in the natural and unpolluted surroundings. The local communities are involved in tourism activities, including upclass lodging facilities, local food, folk music, rural sports, and art and crafts. The homestays in the villages are made of local materials, keeping rooms protected from the heat. Madhya

Pradesh is nominated in the 'Best Tourism Village' category for the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Award in September 2021. The village has hills, forest, and a river in its vicinity. A visit to this village would let you learn about its history and architecture. Tourists can partake in various farming activities, take a tractor ride around the village, and meet the villagers. One can enjoy water sports activities such as river rafting and kayaking on the Betwa River. Tourists experience folk songs, folk

## HOW TO BOOK

**ORG - DHARSHNA:**  
7747007502, 9179875638  
**NEAREST RAILWAY STN.:**  
CHHATARPUR  
**NEAREST AIRPORT:**  
KHAJURAHO

Park. Pandav waterfall is 13 km away, while Ranesh waterfall is 18 km. Ken River is at a drivable distance of 6 km from Dhamna. You can also buy souvenirs made by the locals, such as terracotta, fridge magnets, car hangings, and garden stakes, among others. **Basata** is 31 km from Khajuraho and 11 km

## HOW TO BOOK

**ORG - BUNDELI CULTURE:**  
9669666939  
**NEAREST RAILWAY STN.:**  
CHHATARPUR  
**NEAREST AIRPORT:**  
KHAJURAHO

bags, cushion covers, and so on.

## KHOKHARA & THADIPATHAR

Here, you can learn about the tribal people's way of life while relaxing by the river. You can also experience soothing music of tambura or tanpura, dancing, caves,



Pradesh Tourism (MPT) has introduced rural tourism to provide a safe and sustainable tourism experience. The state tourism board won two international awards for its rural tourism project at the World Travel Market (WTM) Responsible Tourism Awards 2021, held in London from 1-3 November 2021. Here are some villages where you may see the rich Indian culture:

## LADHPURA KHAS

Situated 6 km from Orchha, Ladhpora Khas village in MP's Niwari district was

## HOW TO BOOK

**ORG - HARITIKA:**  
9926353281  
**NEAREST RAILWAY STN.:**  
JHANSI

dances, and other cultural activities apart from having food cooked on a clay stove.

## DHAMNA & BASATA

You can find unique handmade keepsakes in Dhamna and Basata villages. **Dhamna** is 25 km from the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Khajuraho and 6 km from the Panna National

from the Panna National Park. Pandav and Ranesh Waterfalls are 18 and 16 km, respectively. You will need to drive 11 km to go boating on the Ken River.

## MADLA

The village is at the gate to the Panna National Park. Khajuraho is 25 km and the Ken River is within walking distance of 2 km. Pandav Waterfall is 7 km away, while Ranesh Waterfall is 24 km away. You could also get exquisite mementos such as tote bags, lunch

## HOW TO BOOK

**ORG - GSS:** 6266229565  
**NEAREST RAILWAY STN.:**  
KHAJURAHO  
**NEAREST AIRPORT:**  
KHAJURAHO

waterfalls, and herbal lore. Sanjay Dubri National Park is 30 km from **Khokhara**, while Barchar Waterfall is only 1 km away. **Thadipathar** is 28 km from the national park. It is a confluence point for the Gopad and Mahan rivers, which are about 1.5 km apart, while Charakapani waterfall is 2 km away.



# Movements



**Amit Sachdeva**  
CGM, Hyderabad Marriott  
Hotel & Convention Centre and  
Courtyard by Marriott Hyd.

Having been in the hospitality industry for over 20 years, Sachdeva brings with him a rich experience in both the business and luxury segments of hotels. He has previously worked with a bouquet of prominent hotel chains, including Marriott, The Imperial, The Oberoi Hotels and Resorts and Accor Hotels. His last assignment within Marriott International was as General Manager at Courtyard by Marriott Gurugram Downtown, Gurgaon. Prior to this, he was AVP-Operations for DLF's super luxury condominium, The Camellias in Gurgaon.



**Tekla Maira**  
Regional Director of Sales-India  
Banyan Tree Hotels and  
Resorts

Maira has been appointed as the Regional Director of Sales-India for its five key hotels and resorts in Thailand, viz., Banyan Tree Bangkok, Banyan Tree Phuket, Angsana Laguna Phuket, Cassia Phuket, and Homm Bliss Southbeach Patong. Her expertise and rich experience will see her implement innovative sales and marketing strategies for Thailand hotels during the ongoing pandemic and create greater awareness for the global multi-brand ecosystem of Banyan Tree Group in India.



**Manish Deolekar**  
General Manager  
Grand Victoria The Fern Resort &  
Spa, Panchgani

Deolekar has been a part of the group for the last decade and has helmed various leadership roles within the brand, the most recent being Executive Assistant Manager at The Fern Residency Mumbai. He will be responsible for positioning the hotel as a defining benchmark in luxury hospitality in the region. He has earlier held various roles in sales and operations and worked across brands such as Taj, Accor, and Starwood Hotels. He is focused on targets, both financial and qualitative, with a passion for guest service and people.



**Manu Nair**  
Director of Operations  
Indore Marriott Hotel

With over 14 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Nair, in his new role, will be responsible for overseeing smooth functioning across departments and leading the strategic and business operations of the property. His journey at Marriott commenced with JW Marriott Juhu in F&B in 2008. For his exceptional contribution at the property for around eight years, he received several accolades and role elevations. Prior to joining Indore Marriott Hotel, his most recent role was at Goa Marriott Resorts & Spa as the Director-F&B.



**Gaurav Sinha**  
Hotel Manager  
JW Marriott Bengaluru

Sinha, who earlier held the position of Director-Operations at the property, has been elevated to the position of Hotel Manager. With over two decades of experience in the industry, he exhibits a vast knowledge of management systems, guest service, and overall support functions. He has showcased a proven record of attaining goals, cost control, and building strong customer relationships to ensure repeat and referral business.



**Neha Kapoor**  
Director of Rooms  
JW Marriott Kolkata

Kapoor joins the team with over a decade of expertise in room division operations and extensive excellence in sustaining VIP relations across some of the country's prestigious hospitality brands. Her key responsibility areas will incorporate room inventory management and working in close coordination with all the departments to ensure a positive and better guest experience. She will look into establishing a repeat clientele through public relations, feedback, and training and revisit the luxury quotient of the hotel.



**Vikram Singh Rathore**  
Area General Manager  
Golden Tulip Jaipur

Rathore is result-driven, highly motivated with experience of more than two decades in the industry and has expertise in operations and revenue management and strategic planning. He is a seasoned hospitality professional with a strong background that boasts an ascending career graph. Prior to Golden Tulip Jaipur, he was with Suba Group of Hotels as a Regional Head, Rajasthan. In the past, he has worked with hospitality brands such as Sarovar, IHG, and ITC.



**Shruti Sengupta**  
Manager-Marcom, Courtyard by  
Marriott Mahabaleshwar

Sengupta will be responsible for leading the diverse integrated marketing and communication projects, promoting brand strategies and initiatives and providing the best hospitality experience to the guests at the property. She will also head the promotional campaign, including ideation and implementation of marketing strategies, digital marketing, and brand positioning for the launch of the luxurious villas of Courtyard by Marriott Mahabaleshwar.



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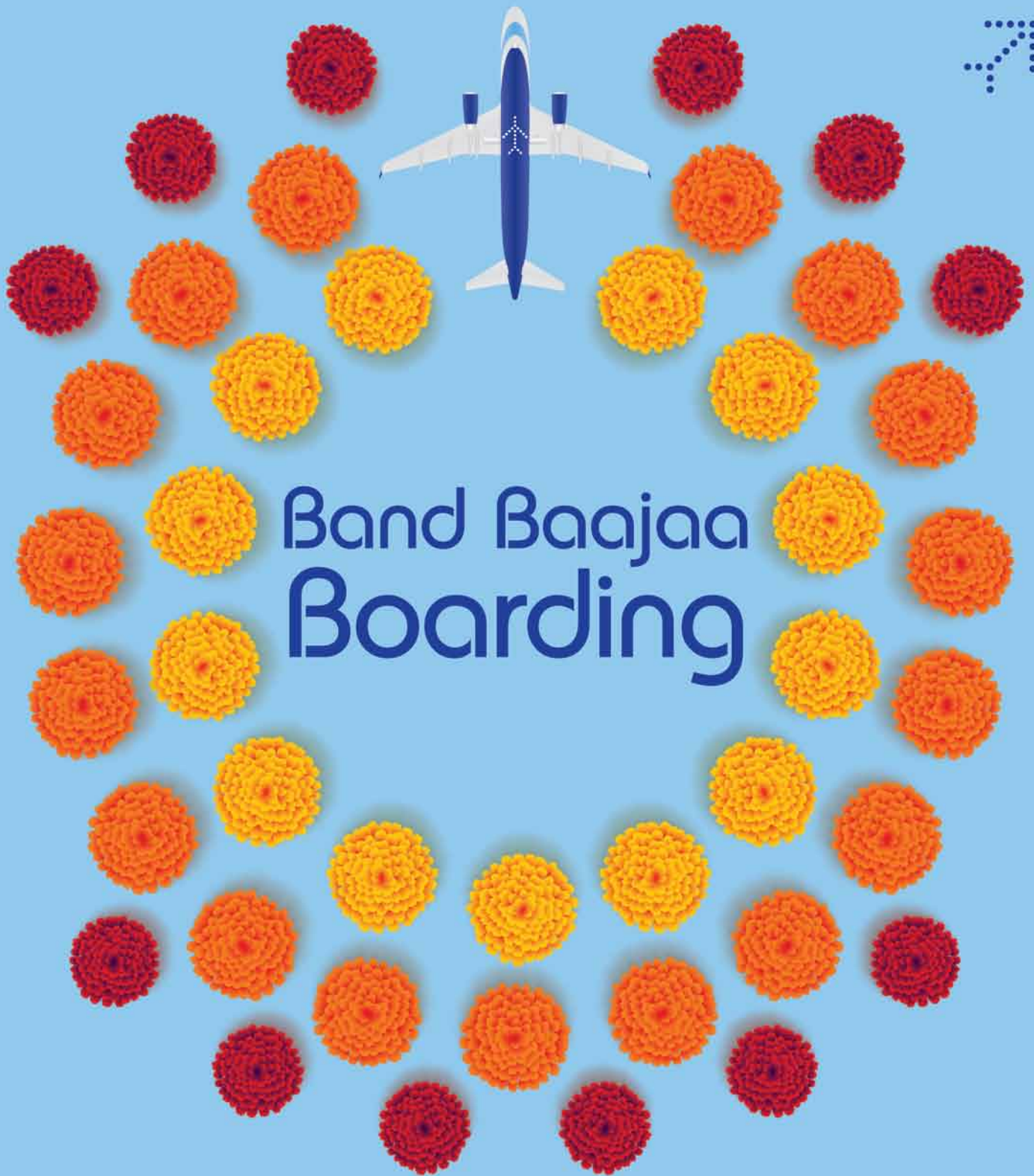
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