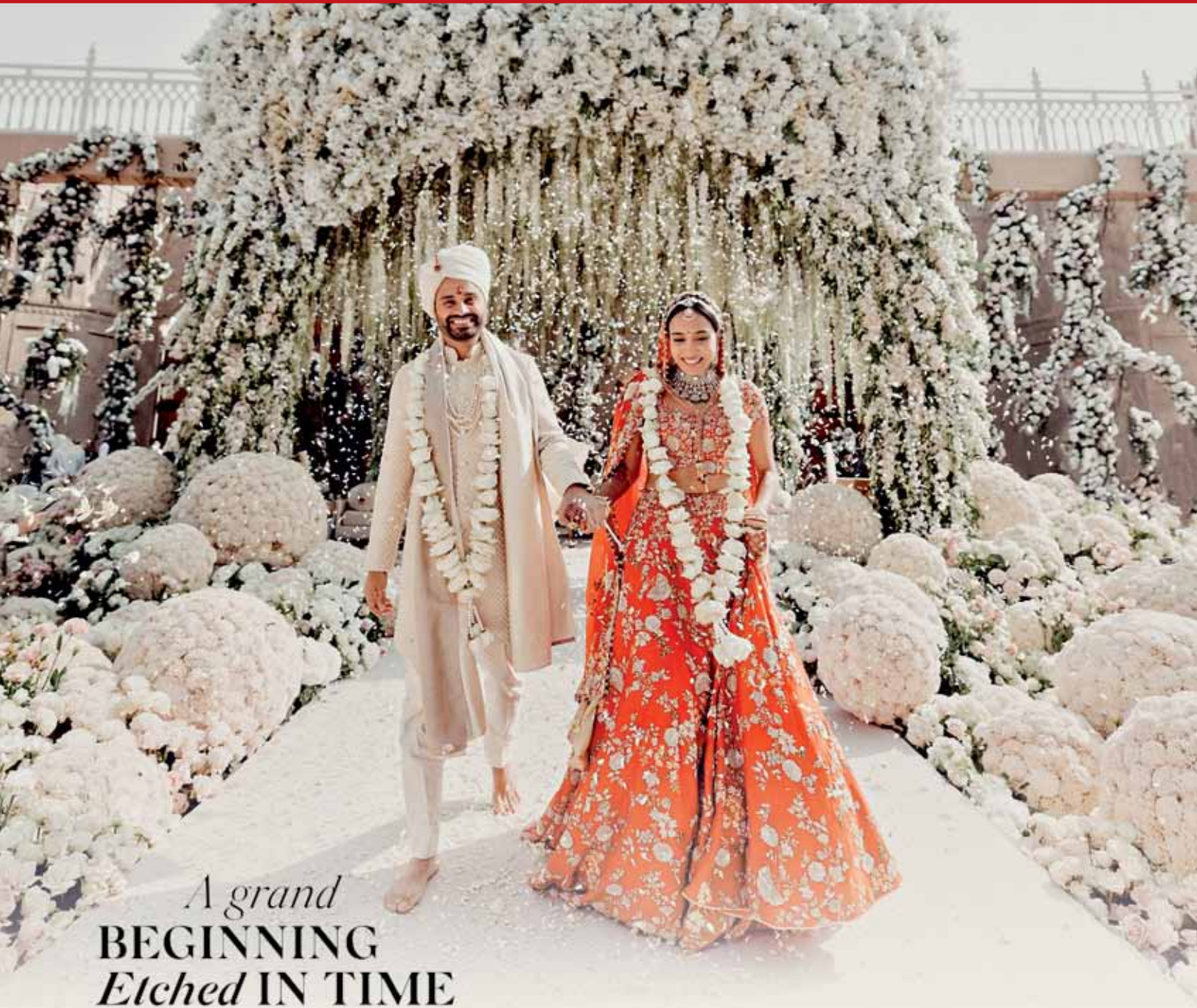


ASIA'S leading business magazine

M!CEtalk[®]

Meetings • Incentives • Conferences • Events

RNI No.:DELENG/2010/34144



A grand
BEGINNING
Etched IN TIME

To know more, connect with us at
+91 7814214000 or jai.reservations@fairmont.com

Fairmont
JAIPUR

ALL ACCOR
LIVE
LIMITLESS

Experience the mélange of

French way of life & Indian hospitality

S O F I T E L
M U M B A I B K C



The grandeur of Sofitel Mumbai BKC is reflected in its unrivalled facilities and personalized service from the heart. Strategically located in the city's central business district – the Bandra Kurla Complex, Sofitel Mumbai BKC is designed specifically for the global traveler, offering multifaceted experiences in cuisine, entertainment and relaxation. 302 rooms and suites, cutting-edge meeting spaces, the Club Millésime Executive Lounge, a wealth of dining options, Sofitel SPA, Sofitel FITNESS, a Hair & Beauty Salon, and a serene open-air pool, make this luxury hotel a haven for both business and leisure travelers.

Visit Sofitel Mumbai BKC for:

- Magnifique Meetings – Grand Salon for over 250 guests, 9 conference rooms, outdoor venue Hriday 20,000 sq.ft.
- Culinary indulgence at 5 award-winning Restaurants and Bars
- Rejuvenation at Sofitel SPA and Sofitel FITNESS
- Unparalleled comfort with Sofitel's exclusive MyBed™, ergonomically designed and made of 7 layers with overlay of mattresses, duvets and a pillow menu
- Pet friendly staycation

contents

Spring 2023

ASIA'S leading business magazine
M!CEtalk
Meetings • Incentives • Conferences • Events

PUBLISHER & EDITOR

Sanjeet

EDITORIAL TEAM

Lipla Negi

lipla.negi@ddppl.com

Hazel Jain

ADVERTISING

Arumita Gupta

arumita.gupta@ddppl.com

Meetu Malhotra

meetu.malhotra@ddppl.com

Jaspreet Kaur

ADVERTISEMENT DESIGNERS

Nitin Kumar

Aditya Pratap Singh

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Anil Kharbanda

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Ashok Rana

MUMBAI: ADVERTISING

Harshal Ashar

harshal@ddppl.com

Samantha Pereira

samantha.pereira@ddppl.com



New Delhi:
72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110001, India
Tel: +91 11 23234177,
E-mail: talk@ddppl.com

Mumbai:
504 Marine Chambers, 43 New Marine Lines, Mumbai
400 020, India
Tel: +91-22-22070129, 22070130
Fax: +91-22-22070131
E-mail: mumbai@ddppl.com

All information in **M!CEtalk** is derived from sources, which we consider reliable. **Information is passed on to our readers without any responsibility on our part.** The contents of this publication contain views of authors and are not the views of DDP Publications.

Similarly, opinions/views expressed by any party in abstract and/or in interviews are not necessarily shared or do not necessarily reflect any opinion of DDP Publications. All rights reserved throughout the world. Reproduction strictly prohibited. Material appearing in **M!CEtalk** cannot be reproduced in whole or in part without prior written permission. The same rule applies when there is a copyright or the article is taken from another publication. Publications reproducing material either in part or in whole, without permission would face legal action.

Editorial enquiries and enquiries concerning the reproduction of articles should be emailed to: talk@ddppl.com, advertising and circulation enquiries should be e-mailed to: nikhil.jee@ddppl.com

The publisher assumes no responsibility for returning unsolicited material nor is he responsible for material lost or damaged in transit. Any material submitted to **M!CEtalk** will not be returned.

The publisher reserves the rights to refuse, withdraw, amend or otherwise deal with all advertisements without explanation. All advertisements must comply with the Indian Advertisements Code as well as the Advertisements Code of South Asia. The publisher will not be liable for any damage or loss caused by the late publication, error or failure of advertisement or editorial to appear.

M!CEtalk is printed, published, edited and owned by Sanjeet, printed at Modest Print Pack Pvt. Ltd., C-52, DDA Sheds, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase - I (New Delhi - 110020) and published at 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi-110001



24

EVENTS

Transforming business of travel



10

TRENDS

High on luxury



30

EVENTS

Bigger & better



22

INTERVIEW

M!CE heading towards strong rebound



35

EVENTS

Abundant opportunities

NEWS

Asia-Pacific M!CE industry to reach \$441 bn by 2025

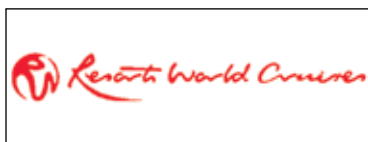
According to a new report published by Allied Market Research, titled, *Asia-Pacific M!CE Industry by Event Type and Country: Opportunity Analysis and Industry*

Forecast, 2018-

2025, the Asia-Pacific M!CE industry generated revenue of \$229 billion in 2017 and is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 8.6 per cent to reach \$441.1 billion by 2025.



Resorts World One starts cruising from Hong Kong



Resorts World One commenced her maiden voyage from the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal for

a weekend high-seas cruise, after arriving in Hong Kong. The 13-deck Resorts World One is the first cruise ship to restart cruises in Hong Kong with a year-round homeport deployment. To commemorate the launch and inaugural sailing of the Resorts World One from Hong Kong, a special celebratory event was held on the cruise ship with over 400 attendees, comprising of local travel and business partners, the media, as well as key influencers.



Türkiye hosts Indian corporate M!CE groups

Türkiye welcomed a successful M!CE familiarisation trip for eminent corporate groups from India recently. The primary objective of this trip was to give the visitors a

chance to engage with local partners and corporate leaders to forge future relationships, while also assisting them in discovering Türkiye's hidden gems. During this six-day tour, the guests were entertained for three days each in Türkiye's two cities, Istanbul and Antalya. It was a successful event attended by many corporate organisations. The trip had a good start as Turkish Airlines came in as the official travel partner, providing flights from New Delhi and Mumbai to travellers' first destination, Antalya. Upon arriving in Antalya, visitors were given a chance to explore an ancient city, Aspendos. Here, they visited the Aspendos Antique theatre. Following this, they spent their day travelling over five-star luxury hotels, where they had a Turkish lunch and dinner, respectively.

PCEB holds Penang Road Show to boost M!CE industry



The Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau (PCEB) recently hosted the 6th edition of Penang Road Show to India 2023 in four different cities in India.

The roadshow attracted

many India buyers from the M!CE industry. A total of 14 registered exhibitors participated and PCEB team welcomed around 800 buyers and trade visitors during the roadshow. There was also networking events hosted in each city to connect and collaborate with India buyers from the M!CE industry. In the roadshow, PCEB launched its very own campaign Chalo Penang in all the four cities.

Corporate travel set to bounce back in 2023



An American Express survey has revealed corporate travel is expected to bounce back with as many as 77 per cent of Indian businesses expecting a growth in their travel budget in 2023 as compared to 2022. These insights were disclosed in survey report titled *Revival of business travel: An India perspective* commissioned by American Express, India with the Centre for Economics and Business Research. **Manish Kapoor**, VP & Head, GCS, American Express Banking Corp., India said, "The sentiment is upbeat for corporate travel in India."

Singapore EXPO: Treading towards attaining Net Zero by '24

Singapore EXPO is taking firm strides towards achieving Net Zero by 2024 with the largest single-site solar rooftop installation in Singapore, as well as the development of the largest electric vehicle charging hub in the eastern part of Singapore. With over 17,000 photovoltaic panels installed on the rooftops of 10 exhibition halls and convention wing, Singapore EXPO would be the country's largest single-site solar panel installation at a total estimated size of about 6.5 football fields. The energy generated from these panels can power 4,000 units for a year. The installation is expected to be completed in October 2023 and once completed, it will replace conventional energy consumption at Singapore EXPO with renewable energy. The venue is also enabling a more sustainable way to travel. Shell will be installing 20 Shell Recharge electric vehicle charging points at Singapore EXPO's carparks, making this the largest charging hub in the eastern part of Singapore. 20 drivers can charge at any single point of time while attending events or enjoying the F&B offerings at Singapore EXPO.



Sri Lanka hosts 100 M!CE agents from India, ME & SE Asia

M!CE EXPO 2023, organized by Sri Lanka Convention Bureau and Sri Lankan Airlines recently concluded on a strong note witnessing over 100 buyers from India, the



Middle East, and South East Asia in attendance. "This event was a significant milestone for Sri Lanka's tourism industry, as it provided a platform for a large number of exhibitors to showcase their offerings to a global audience," said **Thisum Jayasuriya**, Chairman, Sri Lanka Convention Bureau. The event highlighted Sri Lanka's natural beauty, cultural heritage and modern infrastructure as a perfect location for companies and organizations looking to hold events, meetings, and conferences in a professional, yet glamorous and lively background. Buyers had the opportunity to travel around the city and other locations in Sri Lanka, hosted by Sri Lanka Convention Bureau, letting them to understand Sri Lanka's M!CE facilities first-hand, in order to acquaint themselves with the island for prospective future investments.

Radisson BLU
RESORT TEMPLE BAY
MAMALLAPURAM

**Timeless Heritage
Wrapped in Luxury**

For More Details call:
+91 7338889595



‘DESTINATION WEDDINGS HOLD TREMENDOUS POTENTIAL’

India should be developed as wedding destination hub, emphasizes PM **Narendra Modi** in post-Budget webinar & advises States to evolve innovative programmes to boost it.

 MT Bureau

Addressing a post-Budget webinar on Developing Tourism in Mission Mode, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said wedding destinations are significant to tourism industry and holds huge business potential in the country. “The middle and upper middle class wants to go for destination weddings and India has not utilised this opportu-

nity fully. Similarly, people travel for conferences across the world and India should create infrastructure for the same in PPP model. Then people will come for conferences and will also stay in hotels, in turn boosting the hospitality industry. Thus, a complete ecosystem will develop,” he averred.

“Similarly, sports tourism is a very important area. After host-

**PEOPLE TRAVEL
FOR CONFERENCES
ACROSS WORLD
& INDIA SHOULD
CREATE INFRA
FOR SAME**

ing Football World Cup, there was a huge impact on the economy of Qatar, as lakhs of people came from all over the world. We can start small, but it can be very big. We must find ways and create infrastructure in the beginning. Whether people come or not, we can take our school and college students, and have meetings of our government there. If



we start giving importance to a destination, automatically more people will start coming and then arrangements will be made,” Modi emphasized.

50 DESTINATIONS

He suggested that India should develop 50 destinations that must be known around the world. “We should digitally promote all these destinations and send promotional material to all embassies for the same. We will target many countries of the world. We must make the whole system very modern and our tour operators also have to think from a new per-



spective. All tourist destinations should have apps in all the languages of the UN as well as that of India and not just in English and Hindi. Not only this, the signages at our tourist destinations should be in all languages too. These are small things. Once we understand its greatness, then we can take tourism forward in a scientific way,” he said.

TOURISM POTENTIAL

He stressed that the potential of tourism in our country is very high. “In this year’s Budget, with the competitive spirit in the country, it has been said to select some tourist destinations of the country for development through the challenge route, which will inspire every stakeholder to make concerted efforts. The Budget has also focused on the holistic development of tourist destinations. For this, there should be a detailed discussion on engaging different stakeholders,” he claimed.

PM Modi insisted that tourism is not just a fancy word and does not just represent people from high income group. “However, in the context of India, the scope of tourism is very wide and old. Yatras have been happening here for centuries, on which the entire economy of many big cities and districts depended.

Despite this age-old tradition, it is unfortunate that no attention has been paid to these places to enhance facilities suited to the times,” he said.

BETTER FACILITIES

He shared that when the facilities for the passengers increase, the attraction for the destination increases, resulting in a huge increase in tourist numbers. “We are seeing this in the country after reconstruction work at Kashi Vishwanath Dham, Kedarghati, Gujarat’s Pavagadh, redevelopment of Kankaria Lake in Ahmedabad and development of the tallest statue of the world—Statue of Unity. This shows that if civic amenities are increased in various places of India, there is good digital connectivity, good hotel, hospitals, no trace of filth, excellent infrastructure, then India’s tourism sector can increase manifold.”

VILLAGE SCHEME

He claimed that villages are also becoming centres of tourism. “Due to better infrastructure, our remote villages are now coming on the map of tourism. The Central Government has started the Vibrant Border Village Scheme in the villages situated on the border. In such a situation, be it homestay, small hotel, small restaurant, we all have

PEOPLE SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO VISIT DIFFERENT STATES TO SOLEMNIZE WEDDINGS AS PER LOCAL TRADITIONS

to work together to support people as much as possible for many such businesses,” he suggested.

FOREIGN TOURISTS

Speaking on foreign tourists coming to India, PM Modi shared, “Today, as the attraction towards India is increasing in the world, the number of foreign tourists coming to India is also increasing. Last year, India received two lakh international tourists, but in January 2023 we received eight lakh foreign tourists. We will have to profile the tourists coming to India from abroad and decide our target group. For people living abroad who can spend more, we need to make a special strategy to bring them to India in maximum numbers. Such tourists may stay in India for a short period of time but will go after spending a lot of money.”



BOLSTERING M!CE BUSINESS



First Global Tourism Investors Summit scheduled from 17–19 May, 2023 will promote India as potential M!CE destination and provide fresh impetus to this segment.



Nisha Verma

The first Global Tourism Investors Summit (GTIS) which will be held from 17–19 May, 2023 in New Delhi, is aimed at promoting India as an investment destination for tourism and provide a common platform for the Central/state governments and the investors to discuss investment possibilities in the tourism industry of India.

Sharing details for the same, **Arvind Singh**, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, said, “The main aim is that we have been seeing significant investment from both domestic and foreign investors mainly in the hospitality and accommodation sector in the past. However, there was no investment in the last two years because of COVID. Thus, GTIS is to rekindle interests of the investors in that sector and to show them the new areas or new products where there are possibilities of investment. We have roped

in the states and we are doing roadshows in various parts of the country. States have come out in a very encouraging way. They will showcase the investible projects they have in hand in different parts in the Northeast, in deep South, Lakshadweep or Andamans, in front of the investors.”

He informed that leading representatives from the domestic sector will be there, and it will be a well participated event. “The states will put forth hospitality projects, amusement parks, theme parks, or any other place of tourist interests, infrastructure creation, taking over of some facilities which have already been created by the states, operation and maintenance of such products, ropeways and many others. Anything that supports tourism infrastructure, and the operation and maintenance of tourism related infrastructure will be showcased at GTIS,” he said.



ARVIND SINGH
Secretary,
Ministry of Tourism

**IN GOA & COCHIN
ALSO, PORTS
HAVE BEEN
INAUGURATED. IN
VIZAG, THE WORK
HAS STARTED**

TRADE FAIRS

Despite overseas tourist offices closing in March, the MoT will take part in all trade shows wherever the tourist offices are there till they are open. “They will not vanish and the officers will be here as part of National Tourism Board of India (NTBI). We had a successful participation in WTM, FITUR and ITB Berlin. Going ahead, we will be participating with the help of local missions and local ambassadors are taking keen interest,” he added.

He also said that while they are getting very good response from the state governments at these events, airlines and hotels from India are not very actively participating with the MoT at international trade fairs unlike other countries.

BUSINESS LEADS

Speaking on how inbound operators would be able to take help of NTBI, Singh said, “As per the proposed structure of NTBI,

there will be someone to head all regions in the board. There will be a trade's pointsman in the board for every region, who will connect tour operators to relevant persons in the embassy or the market representative. If we have someone there, they will give the leads to local travel agents or tour operators to the Indian operators. The local persons will then facilitate the Indian tour operators. The job of the person in the NTBI will be to connect Indian trade with the person stationed locally on ground. On the ground will be the mission person from the embassy and the local marketing representative agency, whom we appoint through a process of selection."

MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Singh said that they also want the marketing campaigns to start early. Before the NTBI comes into being, he informed, "We are taking case by

CRUISE TERMINAL WORK AT MAJOR PORTS IS HAPPENING WITH FUNDING OF MINISTRY OF TOURISM

case approvals for participation in exhibitions and shows like we did at WTM, FITUR and ITB Berlin."

MISSION MODE

Speaking on how the overseas offices will be handing over to the missions, Singh explained, "Our proposal initially was that while we would get the senior level tourist officers back to the country, we would be employing the local level staff within the embassies

so that the transition process is smooth, but that was not agreed to. Hence when we get the staff back, they would be our main personnel from the tourism industry in the board and with their experience globally, they will be helping the trade and doing the handholding in connection with the missions of the local persons who will be there on board. They can travel from India whenever they have to do some physical work, but the station will be at the national headquarters and they will coordinate with the local mission officials and the representatives who have been there."

FAMS FOR OFFICERS

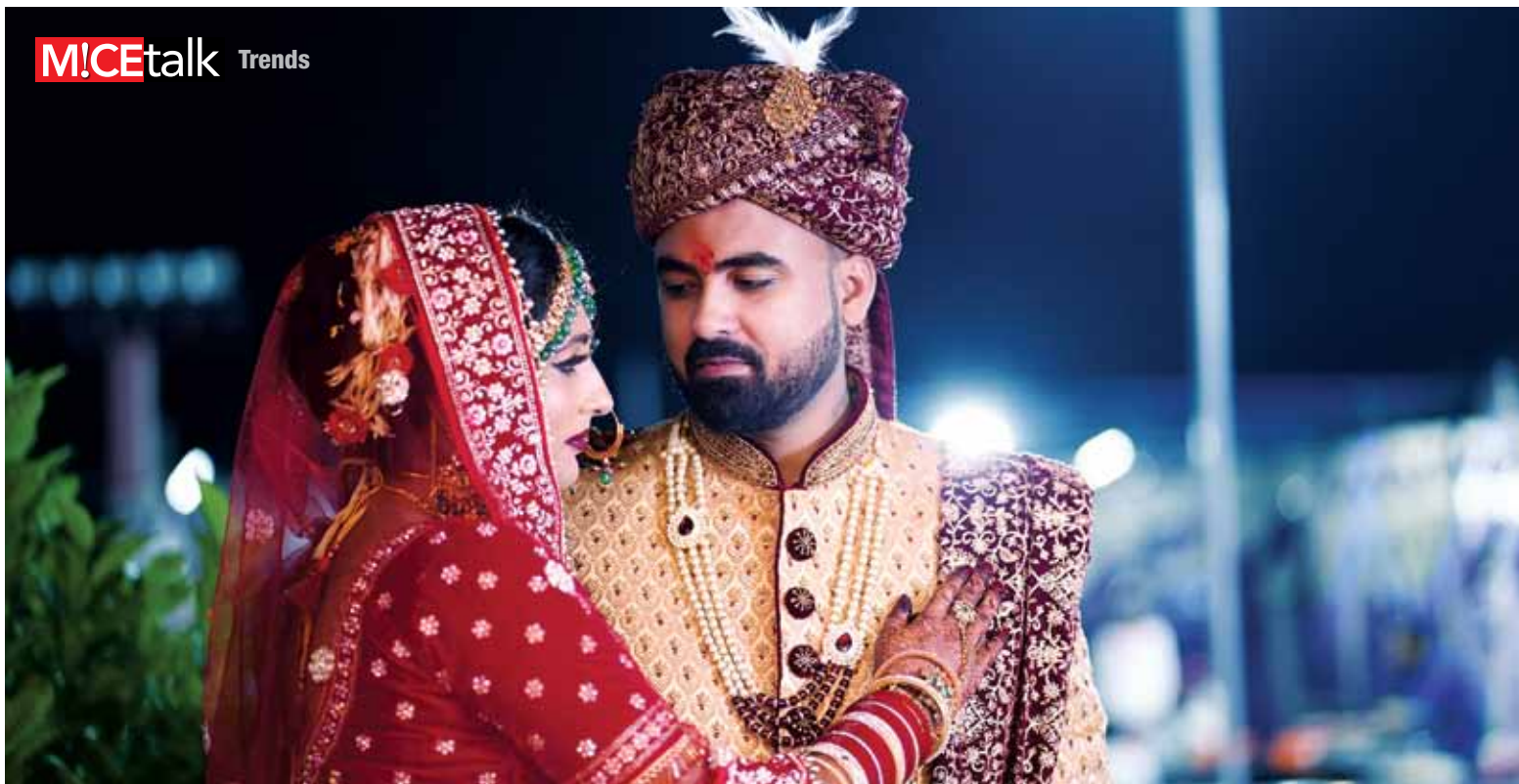
Speaking on updating the tourism officers at missions with the Indian product, especially after the overseas offices close, he said, "We can have a familiarization trips for the new staff which

comes to the NTBI. On industry's suggestions, we can structure a module for them for 1-2 weeks, where they can go somewhere, see, immerse themselves in these places. This will enrich their experience when they talk and market about it."

CRUISE TOURISM

Singh said that when he met global cruise operators for the cruise tourism conference, they were very optimistic. "According to them, the cruise market in India will explode. Thus, we have invested a lot and given money to the ports to invest in cruise terminals. In Mumbai, we have given over ₹50 crores and they are building a very good terminal. In Goa and Cochin also, ports have been inaugurated. In Vizag, the work has started. Cruise terminal work at major ports is happening with the funding of MoT," he shared. ➔





HIGH ON LUXURY

From personalized decor to picking off-season nuptial dates, industry's top wedding planners share hottest trends for 2023.



Lipla Negi

Food has always been the centerpiece of the big fat Indian wedding. It is often used as a benchmark for a memorable wedding and it continues to remain so but with an interesting twist. Explained **Rajiv Jain**, MD & Founder, Raashi Entertainment, "It is no more about a quick grab and go lunch or dinner at wedding. It is now a well-thought curated experience for the guests and family." According to him, sit-down dinners are finding more favour among clients. "A whole restaurant set-up is now being created at weddings as people are willing to spend up to five hours at the lunch or dinner table celebrating their big day. They go with a minimum five-seven course meal where food has to be unique and unforgettable," he stated. This food fetish is not just limited to weddings! The anniversary celebrations are also thinking big when it comes to food. "At my own wedding anni-

versary celebration recently, we had curated an exquisite avocado station for our guests among many other cuisines," he shared.

BIG IS BACK

Small and intimate is out, big fat is in! With COVID mostly behind us now, we are seeing a surge in larger gathering sizes and demand for more elaborate wedding celebrations. This includes requests for more luxury wedding venues, elaborate food and beverage requirements, wedding decor and more meticulously detailed weddings," said **Nanki Chawla**, Wedding Planner, Nanki Chawla Events. Echoing similar sentiments, Jain said, "The whole experience needs to be mega-magnificent nowadays. From budgets to expectations, big rules the checklist for a grand wedding celebration."

PERSONALISATION

The imprint of bride and groom on every aspect of their wedding cel-



RAJIV JAIN
MD & Founder,
Raashi Entertainment

bration is the key focus nowadays and this is achieved with the help of personalisation. "A big trend here is couple personalised theme-based stationery, which includes entire story-based invites. An element which ties the couple together, their common interest or something they both relate to. Even hangover kits are personalised," revealed **Minnat Lalpuria**, Founder & MD, 7Vachan. Besides stationary, the décor has to be personalised. "Couples prefer personalisation of various elements at functions such as event furniture, table scapes, bar designs, among others," agreed Chawla.

PEOPLE ARE SPENDING UP TO 5 HOURS AT LUNCH OR DINNER TABLE CELEBRATING THEIR BIG DAY

ACTIVITY BASED EVENTS

Indian weddings are known to celebrate the togetherness of bonds with family and friends. So as per the demand, wedding planners are also curating activities that couples and guests can enjoy together. "Like white party is no more just décor, it will have an opa act. We did for

**ALL INCENTIVE PROGRAMS
ARE THE SAME, RIGHT?**

WORLD-CLASS RESTAURANTS,
PRISTINE BEACHES &
ANCIENT LANDSCAPES WHERE

DOWN TO EARTH

LOCALS SHARE STORIES
SO INSPIRING THAT YOU ACTUALLY

PUT DOWN YOUR

COCKTAIL

BECAUSE THE WORLD'S

LARGEST REEF

WON'T SNORKEL ITSELF.

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE AUSTRALIA.





MINNAT LALPURIA
Founder & MD,
TVachan



NANKI CHAWLA
Wedding Planner,
Nanki Chawla Events



ARPITA GANDHI
Director & Co-founder,
Weddingline



NIHAL KURIAN
Director, Sales & Marketing,
Renaissance Bengaluru Race
Course Hotel

BRIDES ARE NOT SHYING AWAY WITH SOLO DANCE-BASED ENTRIES. FLASH MOBS ARE ALSO USED FOR SAME

the first-time last year and you will see it trending in most weddings this year. Tomatina festival for haldi instead of just haldi and flowers. Another activity that can be enjoyed together is dance for every entry at each event. Even brides are not shying away with solo dance-based entries. Flash mobs are also used for the same,” explained Lalpuria.

OFF-SEASON WEDDING

“Off-season weddings or non saaya weddings are catching up with the new generation. One of the key advantages of picking an off-season wedding date is attractive discounts at desired venues (resorts/hotels). The costs are more competitive on non saaya dates. Availability of hotels, photographers, planners, decorators, among others is less of a challenge and therefore allows you the flexibility of going with who you want instead of having to settle for someone or someplace due to non-availability,” stated **Arpita Gandhi**, Director & Co-founder,

WITHIN INDIA, WEDDINGS HAVE BECOME AN ALL YEAR-ROUND TREND

Weddingline. Off-season offers a better scope of negotiation, agreed Lalpuria, “We are in a demand supply game when it comes to pricing. So, the off season is beneficial, even for flight tickets. The only thing you are probably compromising

OFF-SEASON WEDDINGS OR NON SAAYA WEDDINGS ARE CATCHING UP WITH NEW GENERATION

wedding season. The lower spend at the hotel, gives the couple the additional monetary benefit which could be used towards their honeymoon travel or setting up their new home. 2023 has a high number of auspicious wedding dates (over 70)

2023 HAS NUMBER OF AUSPICIOUS WEDDING DATES MOST OF WHICH ARE SPREAD OVER MAY & JUNE

most of which are spread over May and June where hotels would see increased wedding revenues,” stated **Nihal Kurian**, Director, Sales and Marketing, Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel.

For those looking for a domestic destination, the chances of getting the desired wedding venue go up with the off season. “Within India, weddings have become an all year-round trend, having said that due to low volume of business for certain destinations, clients are able to get more value for money as hotels are still hungry to maximise their revenues,” explained Chawla. However, she quickly pointed out that the same is not the case with international destinations. ➔

TOP WEDDING DESTINATIONS

Domestic

Jaisalmer
Jodhpur
Udaipur
Mussoorie
Darjeeling
Dehradun
Goa
Mamallapuram
Kovalam

International

Oman
Qatar
Bahrain
Vietnam
Portugal
Turkey
Thailand
Ras Al Khaimah
Abu Dhabi

is on the weather, which you can compensate for by choosing a different destination,” said Lalpuria. Moreover, a discounted rate at hotels makes it an attractive option. “City hotels tend to charge a 15 to 20 per cent premium during the





Some stories have great beginnings...
Wedding celebrations on the banks of
the pristine Chilika Lake is one such!



While acres of sprawling landscape on the banks of the pristine Chilika lake with pure gentle breeze and natural splendor leaves an intoxicating aroma, the contemporary amenities with finest luxury indulgences can leave every soul spell-bound. While an experienced hand at managing wedding affairs helps you get over your anxieties and let you soak in every bit of the moment but it really gets special when a venue has a distinct aura around it and **Swosti Chilika Resort** has that in abundance!



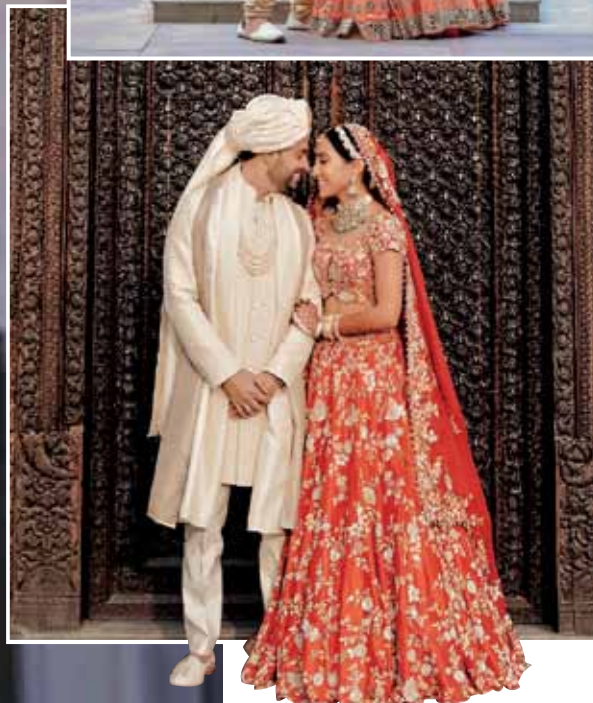
Swosti Chilika Resort

Chilika, Odia Alapur3, Pathara
Via: Gorapali, Odisha-761029
M: 070089 90801, 079783 78916
E: fom@swostichilika.com
www.swostihotels.com

Toll Free No.: 1800 1231 414

MAJESTIC WELCOME TO WEDDINGS

With iconic venues, beautiful settings & spectacular view of Aravalli, weddings at Fairmont Jaipur are magnificent. It has gained distinction of being India's most preferred venue for weddings.



In 2022, the Fairmont Jaipur hosted a whopping 106 weddings, which is the highest since inception. From small to big, royal to contemporary and intimate to colossal, weddings at this iconic property have always been a grand affair. “Wedding segment has seen pent-up demand since COVID, due to the closure of the outbound sector. Hence, the wedding segment started exploring new strategies and locations for destination weddings. Depending on the wedding size and guest count, which can range from 100 to 200 guests, the average wedding cost for a two-night stay starts around ₹1-1.5 crores,” said **Rajiv Kapoor**, General Manager, Fairmont Jaipur.

YEAR-ROUND VENUE

As an increasing number of young couples are not shying away from choosing non-saaya dates for their big day, the wedding segment has seen a phenomenal surge in business. Agreed Kapoor, “Considering the seasons in India, summers have more saaya dates than winters, yet during the winter, the wedding rate dramatically increased in the past year. At the Fairmont Jaipur, the glitz of weddings and shehnai serenades is indeed a constant.” From guest lists to budgets, people are willing to splurge on weddings to create memories for a lifetime and the hotel perfectly caters to the needs of such clients. “By providing excellent services and a wide range of experiences, we seek to encourage the idea of grandest of the feelings and experiences at our hotel. The weddings at the Fairmont Jaipur have not been frugal in any way as our guests believe in making historic wedding moments that they cherish forever,” he shared.

EYEING WEDDING MARKET

Wedding segment has seen pent-up demand since COVID, due to the closure of the outbound sector. Hence, the wedding segment



RAJIV KAPOOR
General Manager,
Fairmont Jaipur

WE ENSURE THAT WEDDINGS AT FAIRMONT JAIPUR ARE CURATED WITH UTMOST CARE

started exploring new strategies and locations for destination weddings. “To enhance the experience at Fairmont Jaipur we have incorporated Butler service, curated special arrival and departure experiences, and designed personalized gestures from curation to detailing for our special wedding guests,” he said.

In the past two years, the wedding marketing campaign has moved to the centre of every revenue growth strategy for hotels. Kapoor affirmed, “In addition to being an ideal wedding destination from the last two years, our exceptional promotional strategies and cordial relationship with all wedding and event planners has offered us an ease of doing business at the hotel which thereby helped us in penetrating the wedding segment. As we plan the weddings based on seasons of the year (winters or summers), the wedding packages are designed to suit the respective time of the year and individual choices of the couples.”

CURATED TO PERFECTION

Fairmont Jaipur is the perfect destination for big fat weddings due to its palatial grandeur, multiple venue options, which include our two large ballroom spaces—Zui and Grand Ballroom along with other smaller venue options for breakout events. “We ensure that the weddings at our hotel are curated with utmost care and detailing to turn our bride and groom’s moments into memories,” said Kapoor.

Over the years, Fairmont Jaipur has become the top wedding destination on everyone’s wish list. The wedding specialists at the property understand the importance of details and work towards bringing visions to life. “A minimum of six months to one year is required for planning each occasion, ensuring ideal aesthetics, seamless event flow, and customized menu to suit the couple’s preferences,” informed Kapoor.

LEADING TRENDS

Talking about the shifting expectations of the young couples,

their families and guests, Kapoor explained, “Destination weddings have made a resurgence and will continue to be popular in 2023 as couples adopt an experience first, and formalities second approach.” The modern standard for wedding planning is organising an unforgettable celebration and taking loved ones to a dream destination. He highlights the role of bride and groom as main decision makers.

F&B IN SPOTLIGHT

The food and drink options offered at any wedding undoubtedly make a statement and constitute a memory that guests frequently remember following the ceremony, even though picking the ideal wedding venue, the décor, and the music is vital. Couples are searching for more locally based options this year. However, Kapoor points out that it goes beyond simply obtaining ingredients from nearby farms. “They embrace the notion of vocal for local by preferring food that is specific to the location or region.” ➔



Economics of sustainable Weddings



Minimalistic wedding has gained popularity among eco-conscious couples. But what does the cost reveal about this much-hyped eco-wedding?



Sakshi Singh

As a result of the environmental toll that thousands of weddings take each year, many engaged couples are opting for green weddings. Eco-consciousness, legislation, and population shifts have all contributed to the rise in popularity of eco-friendly weddings. Everything about a modern Indian wedding is different because of the emphasis on sustainability, including the invitation cards, the wedding attire, the decorations, and the food. Increasing environmental awareness coupled with government regulations and changing demographic profiles

are playing an important role in driving the popularity of sustainable weddings.

On the surface, a sustainable wedding is not very different from a typical Indian wedding, but at a deeper level sustainability has transformed everything from invitation cards and clothes to decoration and dining. In a short period, sustainability has become a big factor for hotel and banquet owners as well as wedding planners and new-age couples. "We have seen a spike in queries for sustainable weddings, they account for approximately 15 per cent of the total queries received. We have noticed that

brides and grooms want to have minimal and sustainable weddings from an environmentally conscious point of view," said **Ramit Sethi**, Founder, Seclude.

"Successfully organising a truly sustainable wedding requires cooperation and more importantly investment from all the stakeholders. Even if a couple wants a sustainable wedding but the hotel does not have the required infrastructure to handle excess food or organic waste, it will not be possible to have an eco-friendly function. Considering the strong demand for sustainable weddings, hotels and banquet halls are investing in long-term solutions.

To reduce plastic waste and water wastage, Moksha The Himalaya Spa Resort installed a water production plant on the premises and introduced glass bottles for guests," informed **Akash Garg**, Chairman and MD, Asia Resorts. Earlier, potable water was transported through tankers, which led to spillage as well as vehicular pollution in the eco-sensitive region.

Similarly, five of the sixteen properties of Seclude operate organic kitchen gardens and all properties have compost pits. "Compost fertilisers are used within the kitchen gardens and for general use and we have been able



RAMIT SETHI
Founder,
Seclude



AKASH GARG
Chairman and MD,
Asia Resorts



ANURAG MATHUR
General Manager,
Sayaji Raipur



PRERANA SAXENA
Founder,
Theme Weavers Designs

SUSTAINABLE WEDDINGS ACCOUNT FOR APPROXIMATELY 15% OF TOTAL QUERIES RECEIVED

FOR SUSTAINABLE WEDDINGS, HOTELS & BANQUET HALLS ARE INVESTING IN LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS

COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF SUSTAINABLE WEDDING DEPENDS ON CHOICES MADE BY COUPLE

WE USED BANANA LEAVES & STEMS FOR DECORATION... SUSTAINABLE WEDDINGS COST LOT MORE MONEY

to have a few events which used compostable cutlery and crockery,” Sethi explained.

Hotel owners and banquet operators have to take a long-term view while getting a property ready to host sustainable weddings as the upfront cost may be high and the returns may not accrue in the immediate future. “For instance, the average cost for a PV panel for outdoor lighting costs around ₹35,000 so there is a gap in terms of how long it takes to cover this initial cost of setup and when we finally see the returns

since the average cost of electricity is ₹6 to ₹9 per unit depending on where you are located,” Sethi said. It boils down to the scale of operations and capital availability for property owners to maximise gains from the sustainability trend.

Not all the cost associated with a sustainable event, however, has to be borne by hotel owners. The bulk of expenditure in an Indian wedding often goes into fooding and decoration and simply opting for compostable crockery and using locally available materials

for decoration couples can help in reducing the environmental impact of a wedding. However, in certain cases, eco-friendly decoration using natural materials can be costly. “We used banana leaves and stems for decoration and the craftsmen had to be specially flown from Vrindavan. It was much more costly than using thermocol... sustainable weddings cost a lot more money,” said **Prerana Saxena**, Founder, Theme Weavers Designs.

On the other end of the spectrum, a sustainable wedding does not always have to be a costly affair. Limiting the food to one or two cuisines can help in reducing wastage as well as reducing costs for the hosts. Additionally, increased use of local materials

and craftsmen can also have a positive impact on the overall expenses. “Using sustainable and eco-friendly decor options such as upcycled or recycled items can be less expensive than purchasing new decorations and opting for digital invitations instead of paper ones can be more cost-effective and eco-friendly. This can also help to reduce the overall cost of the wedding,” said **Anurag Mathur**, General Manager, Sayaji Raipur. “Ultimately, the cost-effectiveness of a sustainable wedding depends on the choices made by the couple,” Mathur added.

With around 10 million couples tying the knot in India every year, even if a tiny fraction opts for an eco-friendly wedding, it is likely to have a profound impact. A strong shift towards sustainable weddings can be observed in large cities. “Around 30-40 per cent of our clientele believe in weddings that are sustainable,” said **Ruchita Bansal**, Founder and Creative Director, Izzhaar. ➔



WEDDING EXTRAVAGANZA



Wilderness weddings are fast catching up & becoming rage among millennials as they offer unique & romantic setting which couples cherish for lifetime, avers **Ayu Tripathi**.



Ayu Tripathi, Director, Aahana - The Corbett Wilderness believes wilderness wedding has always been romanticised throughout history and emphasizes that couples nowadays want a small, intimate, romantic setting where personalization and participation are the key elements.

“Our team of wedding experts at Aahana Resort curates each wedding with great care and attention to detail, ensuring that the entire experience is tailored to match the personality of the couple. From menu planning to games and activities, decor and entertainment, everything is customized to make the wedding

unique and memorable for the couple and their guests. We understand that weddings are once-in-a-lifetime events and therefore, we ensure that every detail is taken care of, so that the couple and their family can focus on having fun and making memories that last a lifetime. The idea of a wedding in the midst of wilderness has been warmly welcomed by our clients, who appreciate the unique and romantic setting that Aahana Resort offers for their special day,” said Tripathi.

DESTINATION WEDDINGS

Tripathi shares that destination weddings have become more in demand than city celebrations in



AYU TRIPATHI
Director, Aahana - The Corbett Wilderness

BUY-OUT TREND IS STILL IN VOGUE. MOST COUPLES OPT FOR BUY-OUT OF ENTIRE VENUE OR RESORT

recent years. “Destination weddings offer a unique and memorable experience for the couple and their guests. Some of the main reasons being, firstly, destination weddings are a more intimate and personal-

ized experience, which allows the couple to invite only their closest friends and family members which creates a more personalized experience for everyone involved. Due to the unique locations, these weddings offer the opportunity to get married in a unique and stunning place. It could be a tropical beach, a scenic wildlife resort, among others and the location can be tailored to the couple’s preferences. Also, destination weddings provide the perfect opportunity for an extended celebration,” added Tripathi.

Tripathi further pointed out, “The buy-out trend is still in vogue. Most couples opt for a buy-out of an entire venue or resort for their destination wedding, which allows for even more privacy and exclusivity. This trend has become more popular due to COVID, as it provides a safer and more controlled environment for the wedding and guests.”

ECO-FRIENDLY WEDDINGS

Tripathi reveals that lots of younger couples these days are aware of the impact a big fat wedding has on its surroundings and are looking for venues that are more responsible and greener. ➔



UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF H.E. SHEIKH KHALID BIN KHALIFA BIN ABDUL AZIZ AL THANI
PRIME MINISTER & THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR



معرض قطر الدولي للسياحة والسفر
Qatar International Exhibition For Travel & Tourism

20-22 NOV 2023
10AM - 8PM
DECC - DOHA, QATAR

DISCOVER PLACES, PEOPLE AND CULTURES



FEATURING
DEDICATED SECTORS



LUXURY



BUSINESS



MEDICAL



SPORTS



LEISURE



CULTURE



HALAL

BOOK YOUR
SPACE **NOW**



NextFairs
SafeEvent
SCAN THE QR CODE TO
VISIT THE WEBSITE
www.qtmqatar.com

devika@ddppl.com
ritul.malhotra@ddppl.com,
+91 9810191852



reimagine M!CE FOR INDIA

Singapore Tourism Board brought together leading minds to share their perspectives on rapidly-changing market at its M!CE Conclave thought-leadership conference in Mumbai on 10 March.



Hazel Jain

More than 100 corporates and travel agents from across India's business world learnt about the power of technology in revolutionising M!CE travel, the market need and potential of collective commitments to sustainability, as well as harnessing experience effectively

to engage young Indian consumers at Singapore Tourism Board's M!CE Conclave held recently in Mumbai.

Over the last few decades, Singapore has established itself as a global business and leisure hub. The country hosted several M!CE events last year, including two of the largest meeting and incentive

groups since COVID, with 2,400 and 3,600 delegates from SBI Life Insurance and Herbalife India, respectively. Singapore continues to build up a healthy pipeline of significant M!CE events for 2023 and will host business events such as the Gastech Exhibition & Conference, which is the world's largest gas and LNG exhibition.

Speaking about the STB's efforts to promote Singapore's unique brand of reimagined M!CE travel in the Indian market, **GB Srithar**, Regional Director, India, Middle East, South Asia & Africa, STB, said, "M!CE is traditionally important segment for Singapore and India is one of our key source markets. In that regard, we are happy

to organize a M!CE Conclave in Mumbai—Reimagine the Future, Unlocking the New Era of Business Travel. Our focus is simple: we would like to communicate that redefining your M&I travel is possible in Singapore, with our incredible density of extraordinary destination experiences. The array of incentive schemes we have in place makes it easy for clients to invest in their reimagined M&I trip to Singapore.”

STB offers the Business Events in Singapore (BEiS) Scheme, which allows group movements of more than 250 pax. Cash grants are given to such groups who are spending couple of nights in Singapore. It has also recently revamped its Singapore Incentives & Rewards (INSPIRE) Global 2.0 Scheme for groups smaller than 250 pax. This offers more than 80 experiences and is complimentary for corporates.

STB also recently launched SingapoRewards—a new programme that offers complimentary hidden gem experiences for international visitors. Announced on 7 March, 2023, it will run through 2023 and offer visitors the opportunity to try one of nearly 40 off-the-beaten path experiences for free. Srithar added, “Singapore’s proximity, within a 3.5 to 5.5 hours flying radius, and the extensive network of flights directly connecting 16 gateways across India to the destination, allow Indian travellers the chance to easily and repeatedly experience Singapore’s destination experiences. We are taking a comprehensive approach to changing the way travellers live, work, and play, as well as rekindling the passion for Indian M!CE travellers through new and innovative experiences.”

SUSTAINABILITY: HUGE FOCUS

Singapore has been certified as a sustainable destination based on the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)’s Destination Criteria, after being the first to apply the certification process

on a country level. This reflects Singapore’s longstanding efforts and commitment in becoming a sustainable urban destination.

Underlining Singapore’s focus on sustainability, Srithar said, “It is such a serious, necessary, existential need that has redefined public conversation in practically every sphere. Thankfully, for Singapore, sustainability has been on the minds of our leaderships—both political, as well as through public-private partnerships. We are exceptionally mindful of the fact that Singapore is just 720 square kilometres of a low-lying island. When sea levels rise, Singapore may no longer be an island. We are very clear that this issue has to be addressed very deliberately, and to plan for it far beyond our time. We have found creative solutions to everyday challenges; for instance, Singapore is the only country in the world to have a net zero vehicle growth rate—a policy implemented in 2017—and carbon emissions are also being taxed since 2019.”

The GSTC Criteria are the global standards for sustainable travel and tourism, and Singapore was certified based on its performance in four pillars: sustainable management, socio-economic sustainability, cultural sustainability and environmental sustainability. Singapore’s achievement reflects the commitment towards the Singapore Green Plan 2030 and is also in line with the STB’s Tourism Sustainability Strategy. This sets out actionable strategies for the tourism industry so that Singapore can become a sustainable urban destination.

In October 2022, STB signed a Global M!CE Sustainability Alliance with six M!CE stakeholders to explore new solutions for green events. In December 2022, STB and Singapore Association of Convention & Exhibition Organisers & Suppliers launched the M!CE Sustainability roadmap to raise sustainability standards across Singapore’s M!CE industry. It has also encouraged



GB SRITHAR
Regional Director,
India, Middle East,
South Asia & Africa, STB

**M!CE IS IMPORTANT
SEGMENT FOR
SINGAPORE & INDIA
IS ONE OF OUR KEY
SOURCE
MARKETS**

tourism stakeholders to incorporate elements of sustainability into their experiences.

SINGAPORE AS AN EXPERIENCE

Also presenting at the event was **Sukumar Verma**, Managing Director, Informa Markets Singapore. Sharing insightful statistics on India’s demographic dividends, he said, “India’s population is 65 per cent under 35 years and 52 per cent millennials and Gen Zs. These are very high numbers compared to global averages, and they indicate the market opportunity that lies in India. All of this points to how M!CE is going to be reshaped by these two segments, and three key trends that I foresee are bleisure, experiences, and sustainability.”

He added, “With millennials—and Gen Z soon in the future—travelling frequently for business, experiential travel is slowly



SUKUMAR VERMA
Managing Director,
Informa Markets
Singapore

**BLEISURE
TRAVELLERS
WANT DIVERSE
EXPERIENCES,
INCLUDING CULINARY
& LIFESTYLE**

becoming the norm in M!CE movements. With more and more business travellers combining leisure elements as part of their trips, these bleisure travellers seek out diverse experiences in the destinations, including culinary, lifestyle and cultural immersions.”

Showcasing the Singapore F1 as an example, Verma said, “It is a whole experience: built around the race are a plethora of events and festivals that showcase destination Singapore. The M!CE industry is gravitating towards this, and increasingly, market dynamics are creating some very specific trends for M!CE travel. We are seeing 90 per cent of global scheduled capacity come back online, with Asia Pacific itself almost there. Business travel is expected to grow, adding to which is India’s booming markets.” Verma further stressed the importance of recognizing and responding to these trends, a view shared by attendees in the ballroom that evening. ➔

M!CE INDUSTRY HEADING TOWARDS STRONG COMEBACK

With growing progression in travel & tourism sector—M!CE, Weddings & Events segment is going to witness significant growth in 2023, points out **Manish Dayya**.



MT Bureau

From ideas to innovation, what gets you most excited about 2023?

I am thrilled about the possibilities that this year brings for innovation and creativity in the hospitality industry. The ever-changing landscape of the industry offers numerous opportunities to differentiate our hotel from the competition by introducing new and exciting features that cater to the evolving needs of our guests. At Sofitel Mumbai BKC, we believe that French luxury is always modern and understated which is stylish, chic and sophisticated and the destination Mumbai really is the heart for such experiential stays even while on business travel. One of our main goals this year is to further enhance the guest experience by leveraging technology to deliver

personalized services through our Cousu main service culture.

Another area of focus for us in 2023 is sustainability. We recognize the importance of minimizing our carbon footprint and preserving our environment for future generations. Our goal is to keep evolving and implementing sustainable practices throughout our hotel operations and every touch point including our ongoing efforts to reducing food waste, using eco-friendly products and incorporating energy-efficient systems, among others.

Are big M!CE groups back? How has past two years impacted needs & demands of corporates?

Yes, M!CE has increased majorly owing to the pending travel by the corporates since last year. With the



MANISH DAYYA
GM,
Sofitel Mumbai BKC

happening on weekends as well, majorly due to space availability. Also, numerous conferences which would traditionally take place in international destinations have now chosen Mumbai as a destination owing to the new convention centre in BKC, Mumbai.

Our magnifque meeting experts at Sofitel Mumbai BKC always are on hand to ensure magnifque experiences and smallest details are tailor-made to perfection and help cater to the M!CE needs.

Any business travel trends that you would like to highlight for 2023?

The current travel and corporate demand has witnessed and crossed all the milestones and benchmarks of the past and Mumbai airport being the busiest airport is testimony to that based on the intelligence reports available. The ongoing trends of short booking lead time continues to be the demand driver.

Corporates are concerned about jump in hotel rates? Can we expect rates to cool off anytime soon?

Mumbai has challenge of demand and supply. The corporate rates have been stagnant and growing at snail's pace for past couple of years and we have only seen the rates rationalising in current scenario. ➔

**M!CE HAS
INCREASED
MAJORLY OWING TO
PENDING TRAVEL
BY CORPORATES
SINCE LAST YEAR**

continued surge in demand and pending incentive groups, hotel has seen M!CE business that are higher rated and demand more personalisation with anticipated service. Demand is not restricted to weekdays anymore, there are groups



PACHMARHI

Queen of Satpura beckons



Picturesque hill station of Madhya Pradesh, Pachmarhi provides stunning setting having rich heritage & natural beauty where travellers can unwind in summers.

Summers knocking at the door and the travellers are all set to enjoy their vacations/staycations. With the new trends in the travel industry, Madhya Pradesh has emerged as one of the hotspots for travel lovers post-COVID because of its responsible and activity-based tourism. Madhya Pradesh is home to several verticals which can attract any travel lover. The state is rich in wildlife, heritage, culture and spirituality and on top of that there are countless potential destinations which are relatively untapped in Madhya Pradesh. However, talking about the unique summer experiences, The heart of Incredible India offers an eclectic mix of forests, waterfalls and hills which is rich with natural beauty and recreational activities specially designed to promote wellness tourism.

Talking about the best summer spots of Madhya Pradesh, it is impossible to miss out on the crown jewel of Madhya Pradesh—Pachmarhi. The hill station provides a sublime tourism experience for the visitors for wellness and spiritual tourism.

Pachmarhi is one of the most enchanting hill stations of central India which flourished around 10,000 years ago and is an exemplary example of archaeologi-



cal treasure. It is also regarded as Satpura ki Rani and is situated over 1,000 meters from sea level which is also the highest point of Madhya Pradesh. The administration of the Pachmarhi is under Pachmarhi Cantonment Board, which serves the Indian Army. The hill station is developed around the Satpura Forest Area and there are plenty of natural recreational activities that are arranged for the tourists. These activities include gypsy camping, tree camping, bird watching, star gazing, mobile camping and many more activities. Tigers, Leopards and Bisons are easily sighted in this region which is a once in a lifetime experience for many tourists.

Other than that, plenty of adventure activities such as paragliding, ziplining, trampolining and bungee jumping are also facilitated. Sunrise-sunset walks and cycling

tours have also emerged as one of the most anticipated activities in Pachmarhi. The laser and sound show is conducted for the tourists to enjoy after the sunset, along with that tourists can also enjoy bonfire and live music. Pachmarhi is a great family destination which fits the adventure needs of all members of family. Waterfalls such as Bee Falls, Apsara Vihar Falls and Silver Falls are a must visit for visitors travelling in the summers.

HOW TO REACH PACHMARHI

By Flight

The nearest airport is Raja Bhoj Airport in the state's capital Bhopal (around 222 km) which has daily flight services from Delhi and Mumbai and 13 major cities of India. One can easily get a taxi from Bhopal to Pachmarhi.

Jabalpur to Pachmarhi is also just 300 km, so one can opt for this route as well.

By Train

Pachmarhi is just 54 km by road from the Pipariya railway station. Several direct trains link Pipariya with important cities such as Surat, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Kanpur, Patna, Pune, Kolkata, Agra, Delhi, Varanasi, among others. One can easily get a taxi from Pipariya to Pachmarhi as it is the most accessible way of reaching Pachmarhi.

By Road

Plenty of state-owned and private buses are available for Pachmarhi from nearby cities such as Bhopal, Jabalpur, Nagpur, Indore, and from prominent tourist attractions such as Kanha National Park and Pench National Park.





TRANSFORMING BUSINESS OF TRAVEL

At 8th edition of Travel M!CE & Corporate Show in Chennai, corporates & professionals from airline, travel & hospitality industries deep dived into high-octane discussions.



With more than 1,000 fruitful business meetings, the 8th edition of Travel M!CE and Corporate Show concluded successfully in Chennai. Over a span of two days, the select gathering welcomed corporates and professionals from airline and hospitality sectors as well as international tourism boards. Over the years, the platform has earned a reputation for bringing decision makers and stakeholders under one roof for an insightful interaction and deliberation powered by meetings that strictly deliver business.

Featuring Suraj Nair, Founder, Travel Spends; Ashish Arpit, CEO, itilite; Gaurav Nagwekar, Head, Corporate Travel, Reliance Industries; Jyoti Varma, renowned industry expert and consultant, Travel M!CE and Corporate Show and an audience of around 200-strong professionals and deci-



SURAJ NAIR
Founder,
Travel Spends

**BALANCE OF
DEMAND & SUPPLY
OVER PERIOD OF
TIME IS GOING TO
BRING SOME SANITY
TO MARKET**



GAURAV NAGWEKAR
Head, Corporate Travel,
Reliance Industries

**BLOCKCHAIN TECH
IS GOING TO CHANGE
ENTIRE TRAVEL
PROGRAMME &
HOW INDUSTRY
WORKS**

sion makers from corporate airline, travel and hospitality industries, the panel discussion witnessed highly animated and forward-looking conversation around—the right fit TMC—a myth or reality? The subject touched upon the right pain points and attracted varied yet insightful perspectives from the panellists and audience alike.

NEW CHALLENGES

Riding on the rising demand for in-person events, M!CE makes a big comeback on corporate calendars. With an unspent budget and an appetite to connect and converse, the corporates are back with incentive travel and big M!CE groups. Reflecting upon the spectacular recovery of M!CE, **Suraj Nair**, Founder, Travel Spends said, “Bouncing back from COVID, the business started zooming up. Hotel and airline costs went over the roof and many of us, heading travel



vertical at corporates, are still grappling with these things.” While M!CE is back with a bang, the price rise has got many corporates staring at the pertinent question of how do we control costs? Addressing the question, Nair believed, “The balance of demand and supply over the period of time is going to bring some sanity to the market.”

Highlighting two major challenges for TMCs, **Gaurav Nagwekar**, Head, Corporate Travel, Reliance Industries explained, “Talent is an area where TMCs are losing their pulse.” He underlined how volumes have grown up, not just in India but also globally and suggested that the entire travel fraternity needs to go back and re-engineer how best they can retain the talent. Automation and digital platforms make up for the second major challenge. He stated, “I do not think any one of these travel companies are even close to what corporates are expecting. Most of the TMCs are only talking about profiling and online booking tools whereas, corporates are talking about digital platforms, mobile adoption.”

COLLABORATION

While discussing the expectations of corporates and deliverables by TMCs, both the speakers unanimously agreed on working towards a more integrated platform to support each other and reduce the gap between expectations and reality. Delving into the complexity of processes, **Ashish Arpit**, CEO, itilite explained, “Booking is one aspect of digitization programme. Before booking there are a series of workflows, which need to be automated and there comes the complexity. For instance, the kind of approval rules which one company will have, will be very different from what other companies will have. Now the way any tech company will build its product is to ensure that they built their product in such a way that it caters to a lot of companies because they should not be

investing resources in mapping the workflow requirement of each and every company. Hence, our focus has been to not only automate the booking process but also accommodate the company policies and rules around it.”

He further stressed upon the need to take into consideration the behavioral aspect of the traveller as well as approvals to unlock the true value of data. “When it comes to the post-booking phase, it is important to see what aspects of your travel management booking you can bring online because then you can play back the data, which corporates need. For instance, if your approvals are happening online how can you get data on how many exceptional approvals are happening. If I can automate the entire workflow, I can get a lot more insight into the behavioural aspect of the traveller as well as approvals,” he reckoned.

PLUG-IN & PLAY

Underlining how one supplier cannot bring everything under the



ASHISH ARPIT
CEO,
itilite

**BEFORE BOOKING
THERE ARE
WORKFLOWS,
WHICH NEED TO BE
AUTOMATED & THERE
COMES COMPLEXITY**

roof, Nair asked the corporate representatives if they are ready to create the framework wherein, they allow the people to plug and integrate into their system. Agreeing with the idea, Nagwekar said, “Building the framework is very critical for any corporate in this era. It will give me control to renegotiate and understand how the market is flowing in each aspect. But it is equally important to understand that it is not just air and hotel rather, it is air, hotel, visa, insurance, forex, among others, so that as a Travel Manager we are able to get a holistic approach. It can only happen if we build our own framework and jointly work with digital travel companies.”

The discussion around the need of one framework, brought into spotlight the significance of the supplier ecosystem. Explained Arpit, “We are also dependent on our supplier ecosystem. For instance, if we talk about ground transport, there is some investment that has to be made from ground transport vendors as well if we want to bring them online. What we can do from our side is to develop a plug-in and play model that in areas where we cannot go very deep, we have our own supplier ecosystem who we plug in so that corporates just have to deal with one player and that player in return is talking to an ecosystem of suppliers.” There was a clear consensus on the fact that the only way forward is to digitize your travel. Nagwekar stated, “We are talking about ChatGPT. With blockchain technology, it is going to change the entire travel programme and how the industry works. We need to come together jointly and work on it.”

RFPs NOT HOT ANYMORE

While the panellists and audience agreed that it is never one size fits all scenario, they differed on the subject whether RFPs of hotels are required or not? “Gone are the days when RFPs are used to be a hot cake,” stated Nair. In a major



JYOTI VARMA
Consultant, Travel M!CE
and Corporate Show

**CONCEPT OF LOWER
PRICE WINS NEEDS
TO CHANGE. IT IS NOT
RIGHT THING TO PUSH
DOWN SUPPLIER
ON PRICING**

departure from 2019, most of the corporates accepted that they do not ask for RFPs anymore. Bouncing back the question to the audience, Nagwekar asked, “Do we need RFPs?”

Taking the question, **Leena Andrews**, Group Travel Manager, APAC said, “We need to have a preferred list in our system. We must make sure that people are staying in our preferred hotels. It helps track them better and ensure they are safe and healthy.” To this Nair added, “While you have no control over price hike, the process helps you buy better and you still enjoy early check-in, late check-out and penalty wave-off.”

Varma summed up, “The concept of lower price wins needs to change. It is not the right thing to push down the supplier on pricing. Let the buyer also decide what this service costs the vendor. Corporates need to see—will that service be valuable to them. Right now, we do not think as insiders but outsiders, which has to change.” ➔



EXPONENTIAL GROWTH



M!CE sector is poised for quantum jump as travel is back on track post-COVID. Medical conferences & weddings will be driving most of M!CE businesses, says **Aveek Sengupta**.



How is M!CE industry shaping in 2023?

The M!CE industry is yet to bounce back to its true pre-COVID potential as many companies have resorted to hybrid or virtual events this year. I am certain though that we shall see a boom in M!CE in 2023 and 2024. Ahmedabad already has some big conferences and events lined up for the year and many more in the pipeline leading to optimism in this segment.

Though our country is an established tourist destination globally, it is still an emerging destination for M!CE.

Infrastructure plays an important role in establishing a M!CE destination and increasing domestic air connectivity to cities such as Ahmedabad will help develop this market as an important M!CE destination for the country. Upskilling and developing the talent pool for the industry is the need of the hour.

Do you agree that physical events have an edge over hybrid or virtual?

I truly feel face-to-face events are more in demand and definitely more desired by participants and companies alike, as nothing can replace the physical human interaction and the emotional

connect. I also believe that face-to-face events transmit much more closeness and attendees and participants can create more bonds between them, thus generating an enriching experience. In addition, the impact on attendees is much greater as compared to virtual meet-ups.

What kind of upgradation your hotel has seen in past two years?

COVID has ensured a sharp learning curve for the world and hospitality in particular. At Taj Skyline Ahmedabad and Vivanta Ahmedabad, SG Highway, we have invested in technology for contactless check-ins and check-outs, QR code access for menus, upgraded our



AVEEK SENGUPTA
Cluster GM-Gujarat & GM,
Taj Skyline Ahmedabad

BUSINESS TRAVELLERS ARE NOW LOOKING FOR EXPERIENCES THAT WILL ENHANCE THEIR BUSINESS TRIPS

ordinate with the local authorities and be in contact daily. From traditional welcome experiences for the delegates such as Garba and Dhol to specially created tricolour garlands—the experiences were unique and culturally immersive. The special Millets counter was a resounding success along with thoughtful turn-downs such as Copper water, soaked almonds, foot soaks, among others.

How demands and needs of business travellers changed over the past two years?

With the learnings of the last two years in place, business travellers are now looking for experiences that will enhance their business trips. Be it wellness based experiences, Yoga sessions, healthy food menus, work places with scenic views, cultural experiences, among others. At Taj Skyline, Ahmedabad and Vivanta Ahmedabad, SG Highway, we have some amazing set-ups at our club lounge that offers stunning views/finest sunsets at the Sindhu

Bhawan Road and as the only high-rise in the area, we are at an advantage. Apart from this, our newest hotel Taj Gandhinagar Resort & Spa, Gujarat will be the perfect destination to reboot yourself after a long conference when it opens later this year. Hybrid travel is the new mantra—make the most of every moment.

Are big M!CE groups back? How are you attracting corporates?

Big groups are not fully back yet except weddings, we saw a great demand in big medical conferences. Ahmedabad as a destination is growing with new projects in cities such as Gandhinagar, Dholera, Sanand, among others and, we are leveraging the strength of our sales teams across geographies to reach out to the corporates.

What is the contribution of weddings in your total revenue?

Our wedding contribution at Taj Skyline, Ahmedabad is close to 12 per cent. Guests are now willing to pay more for newer/fresh experiences/thematic dinners/fusion cuisines. Pillarless banqueting facilities are in demand, we already have plan to add one pillarless hall to our existing space of 15,000 sq meters at Taj Skyline Ahmedabad to cater to this demand. The recent trend of booking the entire hotel exclusively is on the rise with even higher levels of customization. In terms of menu planning there is a gradual shift towards healthier selections. Ingredient-based dishes with plenty

of healthful superfoods are in high demand—gluten-free, sugar-free, or vegan dishes in smaller portion are popular.

Hospitality trends that you see gaining dominance in the coming years?

Bleisure travellers and hotel work spaces: Working remotely has become commonplace for many employees and is forecasted to become more than just a passing trend. A shift accelerated by the global public health crisis, an unprecedented number of high-profile companies announced that they will adopt a hybrid or flexible approach to working remotely.

Holistic hospitality, health and well-being: Preventative medicine and self-care are undisputedly trending right now. Our newest hotel—Taj Gandhinagar Resort & Spa, Gujarat which opens later in the year has been created as a holistic wellness destination.

Digitalized guest experiences: Apps are increasingly important in the way hoteliers manage the services they provide to their customers and can now control many aspects of the guest cycle and experience.

Artificial Intelligence: The Chatbots have proven to be a customer service asset both during the booking process and in responding to recurring questions. This is especially important in an industry such as hospitality which is expected to be on 24 x 7. ➔

banquet facilities and uplifted our pre-function areas for buffet layouts, strengthened our IT facilities for meeting set-ups, and most importantly, taken this time to increase our Wi-Fi bandwidth across the board for faster and more efficient speed. Apart from this, with QMIN, we can now cater to event virtual M!CE events with F&B offerings from our signature restaurants in the comfort of the office or home set-ups across the country.

What immersive experiences you are curating for the G20 delegates?

While hosting the G20 here in Ahmedabad, we had to closely co-





BIGGER & BETTER

Connecting over 350 exhibitors with 400 hosted buyers along with 3,000 visitors in attendance, 30th anniversary of AIME 2023 heralds exciting era for M!CE & events industries.



Kickstarting an eventful year full of possibilities, Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME) recently celebrated its 30th anniversary in Melbourne, Australia. 25 countries, 33 media representatives, 400 plus hosted buyers, 350 exhibitors, 3,000 visitors and more than 12,000 meetings—the two-day tradeshow packed a punch with great networking opportunities and hive of activity. Going a notch up, the new event features included: The Accor Hosted Buyers Lounge, a Tech area and a Wellness Café, an enormous kangaroo and a special anniversary

lanyard featuring First Nations' artwork (sponsored by Business Events Geelong)—giving the event some fabulous touches of Australia.

Overwhelmed with the response received from the buyers and exhibitors, **Silke Calder**, Event Director, AIME, said, “The event industry has bounced back big time. We had 40 per cent more hosted buyers attending this year than 2022. The 2023 showfloor was also 50 per cent bigger than the previous year.” In partnership with the Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB), the AIME team launched their 30-year celebratory event at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.



SILKE CALDER
Event Director,
AIME

The success of AIME 2023 is an assuring proof of the fact that virtual is not going to replace

**EVENT INDUSTRY
HAS BOUNCED
BACK BIG TIME.
WE HAD 40% MORE
HOSTED BUYERS
ATTENDING THIS
YEAR THAN 2022**

face-to-face events. Agreed **Julia Swanson**, CEO, Melbourne Convention Bureau, “AIME is

the perfect example of this. Last year, we went face-to-face as well as online for all those who could not make it. But this year, we just went ahead with in-person events because the demand for online was not there. Feedback from delegates and organisers points towards the viewpoint that people want to get back together to connect and learn again. Technology will continue to play a role in amplifying the reach of an event or conference, but face-to-face will take the lead.”



JULIA SWANSON
CEO,
Melbourne Convention
Bureau

KNOWLEDGE PROGRAMME

AIME is the leading trade event for the meetings and event industry in the Asia Pacific region. It is where industry decision-makers connect, create and do business. So, it was apt for the tradeshow of this scale to kick-off the celebration with a knowledge programme where elements such as wellness, community and culture were brought into sharp focus. The programme also included an address from Australian tennis star, Jelena Dokic and witnessed a mix of industry business leaders and renowned professionals as well as keynote speakers share their knowledge and experience.

The theme of the knowledge programme was Your industry. Your opportunity. Explained Calder, “What is the opportunity for the events industry now? We put together a diverse range of speakers and sessions to create space for us as individuals, and together as an

MELBOURNE IS BUSINESS EVENT DESTINATION. WE TAKE ONE SHOW AT TIME & FOCUS MORE ON QUALITY

industry, to inspire leadership, creativity and map a better path forward.” The speaker sessions were complemented by EQ (emotional intelligence) and IQ (intelligence) streams, designed to address both the hard and soft skills needed to thrive in the business events industry. In between sessions, the music from SongDivision brought learnings from the day to life.

AIME’s first-ever Knowledge Program Advisory Committee was chaired by MCEI Kwang with Anna Patterson, Bronwen Largier, Paula Rowntree, Qifen Wang, Robyn Johnson, Shelley Ryan and Tegan Secombe as members and attendees were both challenged and entertained by keynotes from the likes of futurist Professor Ben Hamer, supported by ICMI Speakers and Entertainers.

MARVEL OF MELBOURNE

The spectacular welcome event at Marvel Stadium Melbourne was full of dreamy elements. From music to fireworks, the delegates and guests were in for a series of pleasant surprises. Produced by Peter Jones Special Events, the state-of-the-art pearl theming of the celebration was mirrored in a directional menu curated by Victorian producers, Delaware North, featuring delights such as Akoya Pearl oysters, Gippsland beef empanadas, and crispy pork belly baos.

Speaking on the sidelines of the event, Swanson highlighted the significance of the trade show. “This year is all about creating strong B2B connections on the showfloor. With this event, we wanted to take the lead. Someone had to go first, so we did it and

gave others the confidence to move forward. It was all about reconnecting the community and getting the collaborations happening again.” Looking back at the 30-year journey of AIME and the growth of the city, she said, “Melbourne is a business event destination. We take one show at a time and focus more on quality.”

PARTNERSHIPS

“India is a growing market for Melbourne and Victoria,” stated Swanson. Sharing MCB’s strategic plans, she added, “We have seen growing interest from the India market for bringing corporate incentive groups to Melbourne. We have good aviation partnership now between Melbourne and India with Air India and Qantas that is higher than what it was. We will continue to work in the Indian market.”

Spotlighting indigenous incentive programmes, desire for wellness and sustainability as future trends shaping the event industry,



Swanson revealed that a rising number of people are looking for more outdoor spaces, health-based programmes and venues that can deliver events in a more sustainable way. “We have done a lot of work in developing sustainable toolkits and programmes, and really work with our partners in bringing sustainable products to our clients. Also, history, culture and storytelling will be the spirit of events in coming years,” Swanson pointed out. ➔

VIRTUAL IS OFF OUR BACK



While addressing the media on day one of AIME 2023 at THE LUME Melbourne, Matt Pearce began his welcome speech with “virtual is off our back, thankfully!” — a statement that echoes relief, retrospection, and hope - all at once. With more than 30 years of collective experience in media and events industries, he surely knows the significance and strength of in-person events and how much the industry has suffered in absence of physical events in the past two years. “It is not off our back quite yet, but it will be,” he quickly rephrases his statement as we sit down for this conversation.

PHYSICAL EVENTS

According to Pearce, the hybrid component for mainstream conferences will fall away. But virtual will remain for some education and some professional development. He explained, “We have already seen the strong comeback of in-person events. Some associations and some

conferences are still running a virtual component of this. But it is coming at a cost. It is more expensive to run and record everything and put it online. At the same time, we all are experiencing inflations. So, the costs are going up anyway. Therefore, a time will come when all people say that all our costs have gone up, we cannot do this, so what can we save. I think then the virtual or the hybrid will be the bit that goes on the basis that people still want to meet.”

DATA INTERPRETATION

Sharing his thoughts on technology as an enabler and not a solution always, Pearce puts the spotlight on data integration as a future trend. He opined, “One thing that we must understand is that digital gives you data, which offers you an insight into what people are doing when they are dropping off and what subjects they like and so forth. We also tried to manage our databases when we were not able to meet.”

In person events have come back strongly. Hybrid components for many companies will fall away. Weighing physical vs virtual, **Matt Pearce** throws light on future of events.



MT Bureau



MATT PEARCE
CEO,
Talk2 Media & Events

FOR AIME, BUYER POOL FROM INDIA OFFERS GOOD OPPORTUNITIES OF BUSINESS GROWTH

REVENUE GENERATION

Putting together an event of this scale is no mean feat, and Pearce credits AIME’s eagle-eye focus on generating potential revenue for its exhibitors and buyers over the decades. He highlighted, “We ask ourselves—Will people have an

appointment that generates potential revenue for them? So, it is the understanding of what the buyer is looking for. Our buyers have to answer potentially thirty questions about what they are looking for, and likewise, the exhibitor has to answer those thirty questions as well. It is putting that depth of understanding together that would give the best match. So, we spent a lot of time studying data.”

LARGE POOL OF BUYERS

India is one of the key markets for several events and exhibition companies. For AIME, the buyer pool from India offers good opportunities of business growth. “We focus on India from the buyer’s perspective because we know a lot of buyers are interested in coming out of India,” he shared.

ESCALATED COSTS

The cost of hosting events has gone up significantly, however Pearce feels that this would help people to identify and invest in best ones only. “As the cost is going up, the poor shows that are not doing well will fall and the strong ones will get stronger. However, this may not mean they will become more profitable, but they will get bigger as they have the ability to ride out the storm.” ➔

100% RECOVERY IN M!CE SEGMENT

Meera Charnalia reflects on growing appetite of M!CE sector in 2023 & believes G20 Presidency will provide further impetus as it encompasses 200 meetings, among others.



The desire to explore hidden gems and indulge in unique experiences powered by unspent budgets are driving corporates towards domestic M!CE destinations. Agreed Meera Charnalia, Senior Vice President & Head, M!CE, Thomas Cook (India), “Incentives are leading the demand and comprise approx. 75–80 per cent of our M!CE portfolio. Our domestic M!CE travel has seen an uptick in the past two years and it is expected to grow further.”

Giving fillip to recovery and revival of the M!CE segment, she feels that G20 Presidency helps put India's M!CE capabilities into the spotlight like never before. She stated, “The G20 Presidency of 12 months with a diversity of venues signifies a multi-pronged benefit—not just for the M!CE segment, but also a wide range of adjacent sectors across the ecosystem—and a boost to local economies. The series of over 200 meetings, conferences and year-long engagements include youth activities, cultural performances and site excursions that serve to showcase respective city-venues and this will no doubt benefit local suppliers/operators.”

DOMESTIC M!CE

Domestic M!CE has been a key strategic focus for Thomas Cook



MEERA CHARNALIA
SVP & Head, M!CE,
Thomas Cook (India)

INCENTIVES ARE LEADING DEMAND AND COMPRISE APPROX. 75–80 PER CENT OF OUR M!CE PORTFOLIO

India with the company managing multiple events across Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Chennai and Goa. The company's M!CE team has also managed an inbound group of 400 customers in the National Capital Region and 6,000 delegates from across 130 countries, including UK, USA, Africa, Australia and Singapore.”

“Goa and Jaipur are the top meeting/conference favourites”, she shared, “followed by Kashmir, Leh Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Kerala and Andamans for incentive programmes.” Top metros such as Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai and Hyderabad continue to see strong demand. The restart of commercial scheduled flights to and from India witnessed a significant uptick for international destinations such as Europe (Switzerland, France and Italy), UK, Australia and South Africa.”

UNIQUE EXPERIENCES

With positive corporate sentiment driving demand post-COVID, M!CE travel is gaining momen-

tum for both international and domestic destinations. “We witnessed strong recovery in our M!CE business in 2022—with over 100 per cent growth vs its pre-COVID levels. The company has delivered over 200 physical groups of between 100–2,500 delegates per group, with spends of over ₹3–4 lakh per person for premium groups,” she admitted. In addition to incentive groups and meetings, the company has successfully managed over 75 international and domestic events.

New and more immersive experiences are high on demand. She added, “Having held back on spending for three years, there is a growing appetite for exclusive experiences and increased spending.” ➔

STRIDING AHEAD

Top M!CE groups in 2022

- **Thailand:** 2,500 delegates
- **UAE:** approx. 2,000
- **Turkiye:** almost 1,000
- **Australia:** over 650
- **South Africa:** over 600

M!CE destinations in vogue

- **International:** Europe (France, Switzerland, Italy, Hungary), Thailand and UAE
- **Domestic:** Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai and Goa

Thriving M!CE hotspots

- **International:** Australia, South Africa, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia
- **Domestic:** Kashmir, Leh Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Kerala and Andamans

Corporates eyeing for

- Selection of location basis requirement of services
- Budget for the event
- Activities and experiences
- Sorting out visa formalities
- Re-assurance of a trusted travel partner

EXCITING YEAR AHEAD



Robust pipeline of more than twelve thousand beds added in past two years is testament to Australia's position as preferred biz event destination, underlines **Robin Mack**.



While the country's borders were closed, the domestic business activity and robust infrastructure development never paused for a break. Talking how fast the cityscape was upgraded and transformed to surprise travellers from around the world, **Robin Mack** shared, "The growth we had was unprecedented. In that two-year period, we have one hundred new renovated hotels, coming to the pipeline of twelve thousand beds. A new experience has come through as well and that pipeline of new hotels is really continuing." From Melbourne to Brisbane, Australian cities are redefining luxury hospitality experience with some gravity-defying line-up of premium hotels. He added, "Right here in Melbourne, we have Ritz Carlton, which opens in March. Soaring 80 storeys and with the reception lobby on level 80, it is pretty spectacular. Then we have the W hotel opening in Sydney in October. We have got huge development going on in Brisbane—a massive complex with three beautiful hotels.

One being the Star Grand Hotel which opens later this year. People who have not visited Australia in several years have been commenting on how much it has changed. It is just not about Melbourne, it is around the country."

RESILIENT MARKET

Currently, there are fifteen priority markets that Tourism Australia works on globally and India is one of those key markets. As per Mack, the high-end clients are already coming back to Australia. "If I look at November as a month from 2019 vs 2022, we are 94 per cent back in terms of Indian visitors," he informed. Getting innovative with their promotions, a global campaign was launched globally for business events last year with a quirky headline—all the business events come with Kangaroos. The team is upbeat about the return of Dreamtime 2023, which will be held from 7 to 10 November in Adelaide, with international buyers and media visiting other Australian destinations pre and post the event. Business Events Australia is also



ROBIN MACK
Executive GM,
Commercial & Business Events
Australia, Tourism Australia

**IF I LOOK AT
NOVEMBER AS
MONTH FROM 2019
VS 2022, WE ARE
94% BACK IN TERMS
OF INDIAN VISITORS**

hosting the Asia Mega Famil Showcase in April 2023 with host city partner BESydney.

ABOVE COMPETITION

Mack believes that event places blessed with beautiful outdoors and natural beauty will have an edge as the global MICE market opens post-COVID. "We have got great destinations around the country, which are not too busy and people will love to visit such places post-COVID when they start to travel. We are really blessed with beautiful outdoors. We conducted a survey without revealing that it was being done for Australia, and we have scored number one in terms of best incentive destination, number one in terms of safety and security, great business events facility, and the climate which put us above our competitors," he said.

SUSTAINABILITY

If 2022 was much about recovery and retaining back, Tourism Australia looks at sustainability as a key priority in 2023. "It is not only about restoration and protection of our natural environment but also sustainability of other business events in the pipeline and getting business events back continuously for Australia," he stated. ➔



ABUNDANT OPPORTUNITIES

Hospitality & travel trade stakeholders put forth suggestions to help promote Odisha as prominent MICE destination in recently concluded 5th Odisha Tourism Conclave.

5th Odisha Tourism Conclave concluded on a strong note with tour operators, hoteliers, central and state govt officials, stakeholders from tourism, hospitality and air-line sector, intellectuals and media representatives deliberating over Odisha's MICE tourism potential.

Conclave was inaugurated by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha, Naveen Patnaik virtually in the presence of other dignitaries.

"Odisha holds huge tourism potential due to its 500-km coastline, hill ranges, rivers, lakes, among others which needs to be highlighted. Assistance of highest level of subsidies and grants will act as a major boost for this sector. Tourism and travel sector will come up as the emerging sector in the country," said **Puneet Chhatwal**, MD, Taj Group of Hotels.

Rajiv Mehra, President, Indian Association of Tour Operators, said, "Convention and MICE tourism promotion especially for the state of Odisha should be taken up on priority basis. More star category/luxury hotels in Odisha is need of the hour, especially around Chilika lake area. Tribal tourism promotion in conjunction with neighbouring states should be taken up. Indian



RAJIV MEHRA
President, Indian Association of Tour Operators

MICE TOURISM PROMOTION ESPECIALLY FOR ODISHA SHOULD BE TAKEN UP ON PRIORITY BASIS

hoteliers/tour operators reimbursement for foreign promotion trips/foreign roadshow participation should be increased from ₹75,000 to at least ₹2/2.5 lakhs." He further announced that IATO will hold its annual convention in Puri in 2025.



PUNEET CHHATWAL
MD, Taj Group of Hotels

ODISHA HOLDS HUGE TOURISM POTENTIAL DUE TO ITS 500-KM COASTLINE, HILL RANGES, RIVERS

J K Mohanty, CMD, Swosti Group of Hotels & Chairman, HRAO delivered the welcome address and gave brief introduction to the motto and objective of the conclave. Mohanty said, "At least two destinations from Odisha



J K MOHANTY
CMD, Swosti Group of Hotels & Chairman, HRAO

ODISHA IS SLATED TO ORGANIZE AT LEAST ONE G20 MEET RELATED TO TOURISM SECTOR

will be on Government of India's list of Dekho Apna Desh 2.0 where 51 destinations from India would be developed as major tourist destinations in the country. Odisha is slated to organize at least one G20 meet related to tourism sector." ➔

INSPIRING AND ANIMATING

Accor held its hotel exhibition series, Accor Showcase recently. Travel agents, corporate clients & M!CE organisers were briefed about Accor's new developments, products & services.



CAPTIVATING ENTHUSIASM

Recently concluded Global Panorama Showcase (GPS) provided platform to tour operators & travel agents to delve into diverse tourism attractions & business opportunities.



STEP FORWARD

Witnessing green shoots after COVID downturn, global hotel chain Hyatt is betting on M!CE, weddings & social events segment to boost its revenue.



Hyatt has been focusing on M!CE and weddings this year. Hyatt's recent campaign Weddings at the Hyatt has been successful, with videos going viral on social media, shared Shrikant Wakharkar, Area Vice President, North and General Manager, Hyatt Regency Delhi. "The brand is looking at weddings in a big way and will focus on M!CE at large-format and destination hotels in Goa, Cochin and Jaipur," mentioned Wakharkar.

Adding to what Wakharkar said, **Barun Gupta**, Director, Sales and Marketing, Hyatt Regency Delhi said, "Given our vast inventory and impressive banquet facilities, our primary focus will be on weddings and M!CE events. We have three sets of banquet halls, including the mansion and the Regency Ballroom, that are perfect for hosting a mix of weddings and M!CE events. This year, with the availability of inventory in the city and the increasing amount of M!CE and group business, we are well-equipped to cater to them."

Elaborating further on the wedding segment, Gupta said, "Many people prefer resort locations for residential weddings, but we have also seen a rise in residential weddings happening in city hotels, especially in the west. We are pioneers in providing complete residential



BARUN GUPTA
Director, Sales & Marketing,
Hyatt Regency Delhi

**WE ARE PIONEERS
IN PROVIDING
COMPLETE
RESIDENTIAL
WEDDING SETUPS
WITHIN HOTELS**

wedding setups within hotels, with the number of rooms and various banquet spaces and outdoor areas that we offer. In addition to catering to local weddings, we also host inbound weddings from markets such as USA and UK, with numerous NRI weddings scheduled for this year. ➔



MOVEMENTS



Himanshu Bahuguna
Director, Sales & Marketing
Expo Inn Suites & Convention

Graduated from IHM Bhopal and having master's in business from Apeejay School of Management, Himanshu Bahuguna, as Director, Sales and Marketing, Expo Inn Suites and Convention will be mentoring the team and present Expo Inn Suites and Convention as a destination for MICE and social events. Bahuguna is a seasoned sales and marketing professional having 15 years' experience working with brands such as Hyatt Regency, Radisson Hotel Group, The Grand Vasant Kunj, Jaypee Hotels, Svelte Hotel & Personal Suites, McDonalds North India.



Abhishek Mukherjee
Director, Sales
Fairfield by Marriott Kolkata

With a career spanning over 13 years, Abhishek Mukherjee brings with him vast knowledge and understanding of the hospitality sales and marketing. As Director, Sales, Fairfield by Marriott Kolkata, he will be overseeing and guiding the hotel's sales team in engaging with other teams to implement successful strategies and identifying opportunities for growth. Mukherjee has worked with top tier hospitality brands since completing his graduation in Bachelors in Hospitality and Hotel Administration from IHM Kolkata.



Gargi Guha
Director, Marketing & Comm.
The St. Regis Goa Resort

An experienced professional with over two decades of cumulative experience in sales and marketing, Gargi Guha joins The St. Regis Goa Resort as Director, Marketing and Communications, essentially for her luxury experience. Previously, she has also worked with Marriott International under the Ritz Carlton brand in Bangalore. In her current role, Guha will be largely responsible for positioning and leveraging the brand's legacy in delivering its message as a luxury brand. She is certified WSET Level 2 and has received MBA from University of Wales.



Anurag Mishra
Director, Finance
JW Marriott Hotel ND Aerocity

Anurag Mishra is a Bachelor's degree holder in Commerce from Lucknow University and a Chartered Accountant. Prior to joining as Director, Finance, JW Marriott Hotel New Delhi Aerocity, Mishra served a host of organisations in senior roles such as Auditor with Vikas Kochhar and Associates and Assistant VP, Genpact. He has also played key roles in Ramco Systems, Le Meridien Hotel – Coimbatore, among others. Mishra has 15 years experience in financial management and a comprehensive understanding of establishing, enhancing & monitoring financial & accounting functions.



Vinod Nair
General Manager
Ramada Khajuraho

In his new role as General Manager, Ramada by Wyndham Khajuraho, Vinod Nair will be responsible for overseeing the hotel operations, sales, marketing, among others. Prior to joining Ramada, Nair has worked in the hospitality industry for over 20 years and served as General Manager, Ramee Group of Hotels, Mumbai and prior to this as Food & Beverage Operations Director, Radisson Blu, Dubai. Nair also has a considerable experience in chain hotels such as Hilton & Millennium hotels in London. Nair received degree in Hospitality from City of London Business College, London.



Sreelakshmi Dinesh
Training Manager
JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru

JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru has appointed Sreelakshmi Dinesh as their new Training Manager. Dinesh has been a part of the hospitality industry since 2015 when she began her journey as an Industrial Exposure Trainee at Taj Bekal Resort & Spa. Since then, she has worked with hospitality brands such as The Oberoi Bangalore, Army Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology, Bangalore, and Hyatt Centric MG Road Bangalore, handling various operational activities. Sreelakshmi holds a Master's degree in Business Administration in Hotel Management.



Naseebullah Khan
Front Office Manager
Angsana Oasis Spa Bengaluru

Angsana Oasis Spa and Resort Bengaluru has announced the appointment of Naseebullah Khan as their new Front Office Manager. Khan brings with him over a decade of professional experience in the hospitality sector. He has worked with brands such as Accor, Fenzinn Hotel, Wyndham Garden, Swissotel, Ramada Encore and Taj, among others. Khan holds a BSc degree in Hotel Management from IHM Chennai and is passionate about delivering excellent service and hospitality. Khan hails from Kerala and enjoys playing cricket and traveling in his leisure time.

Form IV

Statement about ownership and other particulars about newspaper MICEtalk to be published in the first issue every year after the last day of February

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Place of publication | : 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110001 |
| 2. Periodicity of its publication | : Quarterly |
| 3. Printer's Name | : SanJeet |
| Nationality | : Indian |
| Address | : 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110001 |
| 4. Publisher's Name | : SanJeet |
| Nationality | : Indian |
| Address | : 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110001 |
| 5. Editor's Name | : SanJeet |
| Nationality | : Indian |
| Address | : 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110001 |
| 6. Name and address of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one percent of the total capital | : SanJeet, 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110001 |

I, SanJeet, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.
Date : 01/03/2023

Sd/-
SanJeet
Signature of the Publisher



Introducing Wyndham Shela Ahmedabad

- 70,000 sqm banqueting space
- Host up to 3,500 banquet guests
- 160 guest rooms
- 34 meeting rooms

Welcome to Wyndham Shela Ahmedabad. A stunning convention hotel with easy access to the train station, airport and key business hubs of the city. Enjoy superb facilities including business centre, executive suites, spa, pool and restaurants.

Find out more at [WyndhamHotels.com](https://www.WyndhamHotels.com)



NEED INSPIRATION FOR YOUR NEXT BUSINESS EVENT?



Whether you're an event planner or a visiting delegate, the interactive Melbourne eGuide dishes up inspiring new and undiscovered experiences of our friendly city.

Get the inside scoop on Melbourne from local industry experts. Learn about the latest places to stay, eat and play. Get exciting ideas for memorable incentive trips or pre and post conference travel. And find extraordinary event spaces.



read now
eguide.melbournecb.com.au

