HOTELS CAPITALISE ON GROWING MICE OPPORTUNITIES

UNCONVENTIONAL CONVENTIONS
The new addresses for your next MICE trip
As light rains down upon centuries of inspiration, you step back through galleries of time in a universal museum stretching over the sea.

You are moved by the story of humanity under a floating dome of light where there is no end to art in sight.
Dear Readers,

With the advent of summer in India, the country progressively witnesses the rise in the temperature of MICE tourism and how it’s business flows. Providing state-of-the-art convention centers, unparalleled hotels and resorts and class-apart technological facilities, India, unquestionably, can become one of the top global MICE tourism players for fetching the maximum number of convention and business travellers, in no time. And to heighten this status, the top metro cities of India aren’t leaving a single stone unturned in giving the best-of-the-best MICE amenities, especially through its hotels. The metro cities have already seen their fair share of the business and are now nothing but saturated in terms of development and expansion. Filling this very deficit and bolstering the hospitality business, are the emerging cities/ states if India that are leveling their presence with that of the big bosses of MICE hospitality. In our July issue of MICEInsiders, which is also our ‘Hospitality Special’ issue, we exchanged thoughts and opinions with representatives of some of the leading MICE hotels in the developing sites in India, understanding how these respective destinations have geared up to take hold of a major chunk of the disseminating and rewarding business.

Speaking of summer, there would be not a single individual who would seek a slice of repose in this tedious weather. Business traveller or not, every tourist deserves an escape from the scorching heat and that is where, we brought a tactfully-crafted list of places one may get lost to at the “Land of Temples”, Uttarakhand. From ice-capped mountain peaks to the flower bed on the valley below, the state of Uttarakhand is a “must-visit” for a quick escapade, at any time of the year.

Followed by which, we talk business! As the convention season emerges, the tour operators must be scratching their heads and notepads in order to provide an uniqueness in their tour planning, henceforth. As today travellers are more experimental, possessing the hunger of newness, we give to you a list of the lesser-known yet wonderfully suitable convention centres from around the world that is all set to host your next planned meeting and therefore, offering a whole new destination to explore.

Other than this, we bring to you the latest and on-going news from across the segments of the industry including the names that join the travel and tourism clan.

I thank you all again for your kind support. We value your feedback and suggestions so please do write to us at varun@versatilemedia.in.

Happy Reading!
HOTELS CAPITALISE ON GROWING MICE OPPORTUNITIES
CONSTRUCTIVE IMPACT OF THE RISING STATES SHARING THE MICE LOAD

MICE Industry in India is well-equipped to cater to the upward demand of business travellers seeking all-inclusive destinations. There’s a reason to rejoice as recent reports indicate that the Indian MICE industry is estimated at USD 1.3 Billion. The Union Government has set an ambitious target for MICE INDIA to achieve two per cent of the global MICE market share by 2025. With that vision, we have to also address the fact that the hospitality industry is impacted by business tourism to a large extent and the same is witnessed in the evolution of the urban centres such as Delhi and Mumbai. They are already attracting a large sum of business travelers; however, the emerging states have upped their ante and are catching up to them to bolster the business tourism in India. We get in touch with the spokespersons of the leading MICE hotels in the developing Indian states to discern how these respective destinations are prepared to take hold of a chunk of the rewarding meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions business.

IN CONVERSATION
12 SECURE HOME WITH HOLIDAY HOME PROTECTION

With travelling being a pivotal part of a majority chunk of people’s everyday lives, Vivek Chaturvedi, Head of Marketing, Digit Insurance elaborates on the importance of having home insurance while you are travelling.

REGULAR NEWS

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• 1st & 2nd guests will be charged as below promotional rate:

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• 3rd and 4th guests will be charged at 50% of promotional rate of 1st guest
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TCEB holds roadshows in Hyderabad and Jayapura

Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) taps into secondary MICE cities in India with the herald of MICE roadshows, eyeing to attract over 13,000 visitors into Thailand to boost meetings and incentives market by which they can generate over 1,000 MB of revenue. Chiruit Isarangkun Na Ayuthaya, President, TCEB disclosed that TCEB has been thinking highly of MICE markets in India, which is considered a MICE market with the second largest number of MICE travellers after China. As a market with high potentiality in terms of population and economic growth, TCEB recognised the cities and thus joined forces with Thai entrepreneurs to hold roadshows that expect to promote meetings and incentives in secondary cities of India.

During March to April, two road shows were held. The first show was in Hyderabad and Jayapura, as these two are big cities with the readiness of MICE travel agents. Also, these two cities are distinct with high potentiality and tendency to encourage working people to have their meetings and incentives events in Thailand. The second roadshow happened in Kolkata and Lucknow, which are secondary cities with a small number of MICE travellers. Interestingly, there are a good number of travel agents with high potentiality qualified to develop as MICE travel agents in the future. TCEB realises that the preparation of networking with agents at the early stage in secondary cities will help to form a long-term business relationship.

Qrius Connect to organise its MICE CONNECT 2019 in Colombo

Qrius Connect recently announced its MICE CONNECT 2019 Sri Lanka edition, which was scheduled to be held on May 9 and 10, is now going to be held on July 2 and 3, 2019 at the Hilton, Colombo. The re-scheduling has been considered due to the recent bomb attacks that took place in Sri Lanka on April 21. Since the incidents, authorities have moved quickly to strengthen the security situation in Colombo and across the country and according to security officials, everything is being done to ensure the safety of all visitors in the future. “I firmly believe that this show will be utmost beneficial to build and strengthen the relations between the Indian buyers and the hospitality brands from Sri Lanka who will be participating and it will also be a confidence booster among all the participating sellers and buyers. I wish to urge everyone to be united and promote Sri Lanka as a beautiful destination as always. I share the immense gratitude to our official partners who have been with us as our strength,” said Nishant Gulliya, Managing Director and CEO, Qrius Connect, the organisers of the show.

Ithaka Travel adds eight European countries to its list

Ithaka Travel, which offers personalised travel planning platform has added European countries to its list of destinations. So far, the platform has catered to users travelling to Thailand, Bali, UAE, Singapore, Malaysia and Turkey. With the addition of Europe, it will now cover eight more countries, namely France, Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Czech Republic and Spain. The platform has officially launched its Europe offerings with their Travel Influencer community from May 20, 2019. In 2018, over a million applications were filed in India for short-stay visas to the continent’s Schengen Area, a 17 per cent increase from the previous year. The number has almost doubled since 2014, almost 1.2 million travellers annually, as per data from a web portal. Realising that there was a greater need for Visa and Forex related services for travellers going to Europe, Ithaka launched their Europe services in partnership with Thomas Cook India. Rahul Singh, Co-Founder and CEO, Ithaka Travel said, “We are thrilled to have added Europe to the list of destinations Ithaka’s travellers can plan for. We had run a survey of our customers asking which destination they would want to travel next and Europe was the overwhelming favourite choice so we knew where we had to go next.”
We help you create your kind of holiday.
MICE Industry in India is well-equipped to cater to the upward demand of business travellers seeking all-inclusive destinations. There’s a reason to rejoice as recent reports indicate that the Indian MICE industry is estimated at USD 1.3 Billion. India occupies the 31st position in the world among global MICE organisers, according to the list of global ranking published by ICCA (International Congress and Convention Association). The Union Government has set an ambitious target for MICE INDIA to achieve two per cent of the global MICE market share by 2025. With that vision, we have to also address the fact that the hospitality industry is impacted by business tourism to a large extent and the same is witnessed in the evolution of the urban centres such as Delhi and Mumbai. They are already attracting a large sum of business travellers, however, the emerging states have upped their ante and are catching up to them to bolster the business tourism in India. We get in touch with the spokespersons of the leading MICE hotels in the developing Indian states to discern how these respective destinations are prepared to take hold of a chunk of the rewarding meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions business.

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By Kritika Dua

MICE tourism in Odisha stands for a well-strategic deal

The Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) segment has shown a growth route across the globe. Corporates from all sectors are now willing to shell out the extra money required to travel out of their home space to host an event in a destination that offers state-of-the-art facilities, new experiences and added value of travel.

As far as MICE tourism in Odisha is concerned, it stands for a very successful and well-strategic deal. In Odisha, numerous hotels have come up with different five-star and deluxe to luxury and budget hotels in different cities and these renowned hotels and resorts are also known for the best MICE facilities in Odisha where new wings can be given to the business growth.

Swosti Group, the first choice for any mega- or mini-conferences held in Odisha

Swosti Group (Hotels-Resorts-Travels-Education) has become the epicentre of MICE business in Odisha with the largest convention hall (Chanakya) at Swosti Premium Bhubaneswar, which is now classified as five-Star and Swosti Chilika Resort is an exclusive MICE venue in one of the most pristine locations in the country on the banks of the largest lake in Northern Hemisphere (Chilika Lake). Swosti Chilika Resort is the perfect venue for planning your conferences, meetings, corporate get-togethers, MICE events or other business meetings. Its conference hall and meeting room is furnished with modern amenities and accompanied by our dedicated team, promises to create all your corporate events seamless and successful. Swosti Group has remained the first choice for any mega- or mini-conferences held in Odisha.

J K Mohanty
CMD, Swosti Group
Hyatt Place Hampi caters to the ever discerning clientele looking for a meeting space with a difference

Hyatt Place Hampi caters to the ever discerning clientele looking for a meeting space with a difference. Our Meeting Places offer flexible spaces and support from our Gallery Host to make meetings and events a success. We have two Meeting Places, wherein Meeting Place 1 is a banquet hall spread over 3,300 sq. ft and can accommodate up to 200 people in a theatre setup. The hall has an adjacent Banquet Patio Lawn spread over 4,000 sq. ft and is ideal for weddings or corporate dinners overlooking the lush green gardens. On the other hand, Meeting Place 2 is a dedicated conference room with a boardroom setup that measures 470 sq. ft, equipped with the finest hi-tech accessories and can accommodate up to 18 persons.

Besides the Meeting Places, we have four banquet lawns ranging from 5,000 to 12,000 sq. ft, which are the largest banqueting spaces in Hampi. Whether it is a group of 20 or 500 attendees, our team will coordinate every last detail and will provide all the support to organisers and attendees for a successful and productive meeting or social experience.

For any other activities such as outdoor team building games, cricket, volleyball and basketball and more, our guests are free to make requests and we accommodate them in our lawns spread across the hotel. We also provide excursions to the majestic ruins of Hampi or boulder climbing experiences. Our biggest advantage is the location itself, as the hotel is situated right next to Vidyanagar Airport connecting directly to Bengaluru and Hyderabad which in turn is well-connected with all major cities in India making this a perfect destination for conferences across India.

Achieving guests’ loyalty by delivering uncomplicated experiences, purposeful service and being business casual

Hampi has now become one of the must-visit global destinations and we aim to achieve our guests’ loyalty by delivering uncomplicated experiences, purposeful service and being business casual. With the help of our guests, we have reimagined the select service experience and focus on creating a place that offers 24/7 convenience, stylish spaces and casual, modern comforts; a place inspired by a conversation with our guests- imagined by them, for them.

The Fern- An Ecotel Hotel, Ahmedabad presents one of the best options for hosting mid-size functions

The Fern- An Ecotel Hotel, Ahmedabad is the city’s only environment-friendly property. We are also Gujarat’s first ecotel hotel. The hotel does a lot of MICE business due to its strategic location as well as the kind of services provided by the hotel. Ahmedabad has been recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, making it the first Indian city to be added to the coveted list. Ahmedabad as a location boasts of some of the biggest events of pharma, technology, F&B industry and more. For events of very large scale, the city has a few bigger venues including Mahatma Mandir Convention and Exhibition Centre, GMDC Ground and Helipad Ground. However, we present one of the best options for hosting mid-size functions. The Fern- An Ecotel Hotel, Ahmedabad has three modern and classy venues for hosting these events. Conference halls in our hotel are equipped with all the latest services and facilities including easy internet connectivity, projector for slide show presentation and other crucial means of communication, among others. Our conference halls can accommodate delegates ranging from 25 to 250 persons coming here to attend the conferences. You can easily rely on us for holding key corporate meetings and conferences of the business travellers.

The Fern- An Ecotel Hotel, Ahmedabad is the city’s only environment-friendly property.
**JW Marriott Kolkata is the ultimate destination to host larger than life MICE events, conferences and dream weddings**

JW Marriott Kolkata, located 16 km away from Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Airport, equidistant to the city centre and old business district that embodies luxury and elegance. The hotel offers personalised service, coupled with one of the largest banqueting facilities of 38,370 sq. ft. area, making it the ultimate destination to host larger than life MICE events, conferences and dream weddings. With major locations in proximity to the hotel, the venue is easily accessible by the guests and vendors enhancing the utilisation of the area to host various gatherings and events under the same roof.

The magnificent pillarless grand ballroom, Sangam is spread across an area of 13,450 sq. ft. and accommodates up to 1,500 to 2,000 guests approximately. The hotel also has 281 spacious rooms with luxury amenities, which make it a remarkable accommodation or venue choice for large scales residential conferences and weddings. Also, the banquet spaces can offer voluminous work areas with wireless high-speed internet access enhancing the quality of stay of our guests at the hotel.

Our culinary expertise lies in captivating guests with tailor-made bespoke menus to suit the guest palate and event type. We have speciality chefs from myriad experiences with Marriott brand strength to fly in chefs from across the globe, crafting every delicacy to perfection in absolute par with the choice of the patrons. The hotel ensures thematic set up planned intuitively for different delegates with multiple budget options. We believe in strong marketing attributes of our products and facilities achieving greater awareness and visibility globally through various MICE forums helping us in generating queries on a wider scale. We engage with local tourism bodies and associations to bring our offerings to the forefront through roadshows in various source markets.

As business travellers are mostly running on a schedule, we compile distinctive services which are appropriate for the substance of their gathering. In-house dedicated culinary team to design bespoke menus, meeting planners supporting the event with the Meetings Imagined concept, distinctive meeting set-up fulfilling guest expectations, video wall with multiple LED panels for multi-dimensional presentations, events team help in elevating themed set up and decor elements, state-of-the-art video conferencing facilities for vast audiences and dedicated concierge team to organise heritage walks of the city.

**Creating themed experiences for our customers to suit the mood of the event and the flavour profile of the attending guests**

Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway, being part of the Marriott family has been instrumental in driving a lot of business travels into the city as we cater largely to the IT and financial conglomerates that have set up their base in Bengaluru. We offer a gamut of services on property which include accommodation in tastefully decorated rooms and suites, variety of delectable cuisines in dining options, large banqueting options for guests to host conferences and social gatherings to the tune of 1,000 guests.

In addition to our above mentioned on property features, we create themed experiences for our customers to suit the mood of the event and the flavour profile of the attending guests. These experiences include but are not limited to, curated menus, flamboyant displays and impeccable service to ensure unforgettable events for both the host as well as their guests.

**Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway is considered to be amongst the choicest destinations for large scale events**

Bengaluru is the MICE destination to be looked at in India. The city has a large number of convention spaces that can host events to the tune of 8,000 to 10,000 plus people. These convention spaces have the infrastructure to cater to all needs from high-speed internet and parking to other house-keeping and hygiene facilities as well.

Bengaluru also has the room inventory in and around these convention centres ensuring accommodation for all delegates with multiple budget options.

Some five-star hotels also provide catering services, among which Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway has carved itself a niche, earning recognition in the market owing to expertise honed over four years of outdoor catering experiences at large format outdoor catering events, at these convention centres. Our Grand Ballroom is among the largest pillarless ballrooms in the city and is considered to be amongst the choicest destinations for large scale events. We are also among the only hotels to have a pre-function area as large as our grand ballroom in addition to nine break-out venues, making it an ideal MICE venue, adding to the Bengaluru MICE landscape in our signature Grand way. In addition to our focus on food quality and hygiene, all guests are treated with our fabled Indian Hospitality, which is an experience, we’ve learned, they have held dear over the years.

**Compiling distinctive services which are appropriate for the substance of their gathering**

Sheraton Marriott, renowned for its extensive splendid ballroom, also offers a 3200 sq. ft. Living Room. This is a residential-style venue comprising multifunctional meeting studios, dining areas and an open kitchen, enabling guests to seamlessly accommodate business meetings, casual breaks, wedding rituals or host the multifarious occasions.

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ITC Gardenia has the city’s largest MICE venue which is the key USP

ITC Gardenia is an extremely MICE friendly hotel and our banquet offerings have been designed keeping the target consumers’ requirement in mind. The hotel takes its inspiration by the Garden City that Bengaluru is referred as and conceived architecturally as a distinct building set in a garden atmosphere, with the interiors and exteriors amalgamating onto each other within the realm of aesthetics and landscaping sensibilities. The property is also Asia’s first LEED PLATINUM certified hotel, located centrally in the heart of Bengaluru’s central and commercial business district. We present our guests with distinctive rooms, culinary offerings and overall safety and security.

We take pride in our large and versatile range of banqueting facilities over two levels with independent access and the largest MICE venue in the city. The Mysore Hall, spread across an area of 5885 sq. ft. with five breakout rooms, among which two are spacious boardrooms equipped with the best audio-visual facility.

MICE Promotional Offers are personalised according to the ever-changing demands of the corporate or social segments

ITC Gardenia offers the best-in-class facility and features that the city has to offer. We have undertaken certain initiatives under our Responsible Luxury umbrella, each of which is unique to the brand and the city of Bengaluru, to cater to the ever-growing MICE requirement. Alert Meets is a signature menu offering for Meetings & Conventions, is aimed at enabling guests with the luxury of making informed choices from a signature menu that focuses on delicious, hearty and healthful, revitalising gourmet preparations that use seasonal produce and the finest of ingredients. One Bite Wonder is bite-sized snacks, which are unique, small tastings of ‘Caringly sourced; mindfully prepared’ snacks that underscore a well-being philosophy.

Offering curated destination experiences to our guests

The large conferences and meetings hosted at the convention centre make it possible for us to act as aggregators for the city’s other five-star hotels contributing to the overall healthy growth of hospitality in Cochin. We have flexible indoor and outdoor event spaces. There are curated destination experiences suited for families with kids, couples and women travellers such as sunset cruises on the traditional houseboats, treks to Thattekad Bird Sanctuary, private visit of the majestic Athirapally waterfalls and customised heritage tours of Fort Kochi and Mattancherry. There are customised activities for groups and business meets.
Intended towards further establishing Dubai’s repute as a premier business event destination, Dubai Business Events (DBE) is constantly working on raising the benchmark for hosting business events in the emirate. Steen Jakobsen, Assistant Vice President, DBE speaks about the convention bureau’s focus on attracting regional and international associations as they gear up to host a robust portfolio of business events in the year ahead. He also highlights that DBE while moving forward in tandem with an ever-evolving landscape of Dubai, has also ramped up efforts for its top source market India.

What are the main aims and objectives of DBE for strengthening the MICE landscape in Dubai?

Dubai Business Events (DBE), the city’s official convention bureau and a division of the Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing, aims to attract business events from around the globe. Our aims and objectives include partnering with local stakeholders, hosting international planners and decision makers from the business events industry, attending relevant international trade and business events and enhancing our network globally. DBE also offers corporations and associations, guidance and support in planning international business events in the emirate.

To reach out to Indian meetings industry professionals, we have both inbound study missions, giving planners and agents an opportunity to explore the latest offerings in Dubai, as well as roadshows across key cities in India itself, allowing us to engage with them in their home market. In addition, we have offices in India to ensure we are at hand to offer advice and support to meeting and event planners based in India who are interested in bringing their events to Dubai.

What are the new projects that DBE is working on, in order to raise the benchmark of doing MICE business in Dubai?

As the city’s official convention bureau, Dubai Business Events’ main goal is to position Dubai as the premier host city for international business events and attract meetings, conferences and incentive programmes to the emirate. We are constantly working on raising the benchmark for hosting business events in the city. A few years ago, DBE established the Dubai Association Centre (DAC) as a joint initiative of the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) and Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC). DAC’s aim is to become a gateway for international associations that are looking to tapping into the rapidly transforming city and establish regionally headquarters in Dubai. This December, DAC will host the second Dubai Association Conference.

Kindly elaborate on DBE’s newest initiative of online venue finder. How is it supposed to assist travel trade fraternity?

We are currently developing an online venue directory for the city. The directory will offer a new city-wide tool for meeting and conference planners to search for suitable venues for events of all kinds and sizes across Dubai. In addition to standalone venues, it will also incorporate meetings spaces across the city’s hotels. The development of this tool will give stakeholders across the city a new way of keeping their offerings on the radar of business event professionals while at the same time giving the planners themselves a simple way of finding options that meet their needs.

What is the current position of India as a source market for DBE? What share of revenue does India offer, at present?

During the first quarter of 2019, Dubai welcomed 565,000 overnight visitors from India. This built on the 15.92 million international overnight visitors in 2018, with India retaining its position as the largest source market for visitors for the 4th consecutive year, with over two million overnight visitors. This position is also reflected in business events visitation, with India being the number one source market.

DBE has a dedicated representative office and team in India that is constantly working and connecting with planners, buyers and industry professionals from across the country to extend our efforts. Over the course of 2019, the DBE team and stakeholders from Dubai is visiting cities in India including Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai, Pune, Ahmedabad and New Delhi. In addition, DBE participates in several industry specific conferences and workshops across India to promote the emirate as host city for meetings and incentive programmes.

What all do you look forward to from 2019?

2018 was a record year for DBE with a 62 per cent increase in the number of delegates that will come to Dubai over the next few years as a result of bid wins. A 13 per cent growth in bids won indicated a shift towards larger-scale events, and the estimated economic impact these successful bids are set to have will be AED 1.2 billion over the coming years. Dubai won major bids last year including the World Congress of Gastroenterology set to take place in 2021 with a total of 6,000 delegates in attendance and many more.

Dubai is set to host a robust portfolio of business events in 2019 which include: World Conference on Desalination and Water Re-use from October 20th to 24th, World Congress of Neurology from October 27th to 31st, International Academy of Astronautics Human in Space Symposium from November 11th to 14th, IFHIMA International Congress November 17th to 21st, as well as the Anway APAC Expo from December 9th to 14th, among others.
Kerala records seven pc rise in tourist arrivals in January to March 2019

Tourist arrivals in Kerala shot up by 6.82 per cent in the first quarter of 2019, as compared to the statistics recorded last year. The total number of tourist arrivals (both domestic and foreign) during January to March 2019, was 46,12,937 as compared to 43,18,406 during the same period in 2018.

The number of domestic tourists arriving in the state was 41,90,468 as against the figures of 38,77,712 during the corresponding period in 2018, registering an increase of 8.07 per cent. However, the arrival of foreign tourists suffered a dip of 4.14 per cent. “Last year’s floods were unprecedented in fury and devastation and it battered large swathes of the state, affecting its infrastructure that had a bearing on the tourism sector. There was rampant apprehension that Kerala’s tourism would take a long time to recover. But we were able to allay these apprehensions by swiftly putting in place an effective action plan to win back the confidence of tourists,” said Tourism Minister Kadakampally Surendran. “The uptick in domestic tourist arrivals is a strong testimony to it.” Ernakulam, with an increase of 108,169 domestic tourists, registered the highest growth among the 14 districts of the state.

IRCTC offers affordable Shillong, Guwahati Tour Package

IRCTC Tourism offers a range of tour packages to destinations within the country and abroad. IRCTC or Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Tourism is offering Splendour North East Air Package - to Guwahati and Shillong from Kolkata at a starting tariff of INR 19,819 per person, according to its website. The tour will be for four nights and five days and will commence on Kolkata on August 10. The package will include economy class flight bookings of IndiGo.

On the first day, passengers will be flown to Guwahati on an IndiGo flight from Kolkata and transferred to Shillong upon arrival at Guwahati. On way to Shillong, the travellers will be taken to Umiam Lake in Shillong, following check-in to the hotel, after which, the individuals will be taken for a visit to Don Bosco Museum, Lady Hydari Park and Wards Lake. On the second day, travellers will proceed for a day trip to Cherrapunji. Visits can be made to Elephant Falls, Nawkhalikai Falls, Mawsmai Caves, Dwan Syiem View Point, Eco Park, Seven Sisters Falls and Ramkrishna Mission. Day three will include a visit to Mawlynnong. In the evening, travellers will return back to Shillong for dinner and an overnight stay. On the fourth day, they would be taken to Guwahati and checked-in to the hotel. The passengers can go for local sightseeing on this day. On the fifth day, travellers would check out from the hotel and will be taken to visit Kamakhya Temple. Later, they will be transferred to the airport for the return flight to Kolkata, according to IRCTC Tourism.

Goa embraces India's first Electric Vehicle Tourism

As Goa welcomes India’s maiden Electric Vehicle initiatives, the tourism sector in the state witnesses a surge. Samarth Kholkar, CEO and Co-founder, B: Live explains the idea behind the initiative. B: Live is India’s first Electric Vehicle tourism venture.

“Our objective is to create a scalable and profitable business by driving sustainable and Experiential tourism on electric Vehicles. We are in the business of creating remarkable, authentic and unique experiences through sustainable mobility on electric vehicles. Our company offers experiential tours on electric cycles for tourists who are looking for authentic and immersive experiences in Goa. This service has unique curated routes and experiences which allow the tourists to discover the hidden gems with well-qualified tour guides. The Electric Cycles ensure the service is more inclusive,” said Kholkar.

Orchha makes it to tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage sites

The historical town of Orchha in Madhya Pradesh has been included in UNESCO’s tentative list of World Heritage Sites. Surendra Singh Baghel, Minister of Tourism & Narmada Valley Development Authority (NVDA) shared in a statement that a detailed proposal was made by the tourism department in collaboration with Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and was sent to the UNESCO in this regard. Mandu is already included in UNESCO’s tentative list.

Orchha near Jhansi is one of the biggest tourist attractions in Madhya Pradesh and home to some unique architecture and buildings. Nestled on the banks of river Betwa, it was founded in the 16th century by the Bundela Rajput Chief, Rudra Pratap. The town is also famous for its two elevated minarets called Saavan and Bhadon and its four palaces: Jahangir Palace, Raj Mahal, Sheesh Mahal, and Rai Praveen Mahal – and for its concept of open bungalows, stonework windows, and animal statues depicting the culture of Bundelkhand. It is the only place in India where Lord Ram is worshipped as a king with a dedicated temple in his name called Sri Ram Raja Mandir. The majestic River Betwa flows through the town of Orchha, enchanting visitors with a picturesque sunset view while they explore the ruined settlement.
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UNCONVENTIONAL CONVENTIONS
The new addresses for your next MICE trip

One of the most significant facets of MICE tourism, today, is the need of discovering an accurately-suited convention centre. To accommodate this demand in today’s revived economy and a growing need for venues with widely accessible technology, convention centres across the globe are expanding to stay ahead of the curve. Incredible convention centres aren't limited to the frequently-visited destinations anymore; MICEInsiders shares a few of the favourites that are emerging yet making it big.

By Sayanti Halder

Fira Barcelona Gran Via Conference Centre, Spain
It is a fact that Spain is beyond Churros, Paella, museums and flamingo dancing and the Fira Barcelona Gran Via Conference Centre is a perfect example of this fact. The Fira Barcelona Gran Via Conference Centre is located in a new business development area, very close to Barcelona airport and connected to the public transport network. It is a huge building with interesting modern designs and is one of the largest and most modern venues in Europe, designed by the Japanese architect Toyo Ito. Its outstanding features are its architecture, functionality and commitment to sustainability; it has one of the largest rooftop photovoltaic installations. The eight pavilions, connected by a walkway that channels the flow of visitors, provide cutting-edge services and logistics.
Milano Congressi or Milano Convention Center, Italy
Milano Convention Centre (MiCo) or the popularly-known Milano Congressi is the congress centre in Milan, Italy. MiCo is home to the most important international association and corporate events that choose it for its features of 18,000 seats, 65 conference rooms and 50,000 square meters of exhibition space, organisational skills and the expertise, the cutting-edge technology, the variety and flexibility of the offer and the services. The spaces covering an area of almost 80,000 square meters are designed for maximum flexibility and the most intuitive connection of the areas, which is why all the rooms are modular and can accommodate from 20 to 4000 people in theatre style of seating.

Vancouver Convention Center, British Columbia
Located on Vancouver’s waterfront with a dramatic mountain backdrop, the award-winning Vancouver Convention Centre offers one of the most beautiful settings in the world and convenient access to all the major visitor amenities in the downtown core. As British Columbia’s flagship convention centre, the facility hosts over 500 events and welcomes thousands of attendees each year. Since its opening, their mandate has been to generate economic and community benefits for British Columbia through the management and marketing of the province’s premier convention and exhibition facility. To elevate Vancouver as the preferred convention destination, the Vancouver Convention Center is creating inspiring and sustainable experiences for its clients and visitors.

Tivoli Congress Center, Denmark
Tivoli Hotel & Congress Center is designed by Kim Utzon Architects and is one of Copenhagen’s largest congress and conference venues. The impressive Tivoli Congress Hall can accommodate up to 2,400 people and is particularly suitable for meetings, exhibitions, lectures and large company parties. An additional 52 conference rooms and two auditoriums of varying sizes can be combined in a myriad of ways and thus cover every need for events with a total of up to 5,500 participants. With a location in the heart of Copenhagen, Tivoli Hotel & Congress Center can give the meeting participants direct access to shopping, rides, museums, architecture and nature with minimal transport time.
Indian groups to visit Ireland with Thomas Cook and Tourism Ireland

Thomas Cook India is set to bring 650 Indian visitors to Ireland over the coming weeks. Four groups, totalling 650, will travel to Ireland here between now and early July. The visiting groups represent MICE professionals and are made up of top performing senior business executives, who travel to different overseas destinations each year, as a reward for their performance over the previous year. In 2018, an estimated 45,000 visitors from India visited Ireland. In 2019, an estimated 650 Indian visitors to Ireland over the coming weeks. Four groups, totalling 650, will travel to Ireland as a reward for their performance over the previous year. In 2018, an estimated 45,000 visitors from India visited Ireland as a premier destination.

Thomas Cook India, said, “I am delighted with the amazing support from Huzan and Team Tourism Ireland, that has been invaluable in our successful pitch and confirmation of four prestigious corporate MICE groups to Destination Ireland. We’ve been handpicked unique inclusions and engaging experiences that showcase Ireland to this critical segment of decision makers and travel influencers and we look forward to sending many more such groups in future.”

Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre reaches 15,000 events’ milestone

As the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre gears up to open its expansion in July, the venue is proud of its contribution to Malaysia jumping one place to ninth in the Asia-Pacific and the Middle East region according to the latest ICCA (International Convention & Conference Association) Country and City Rankings 2018. Malaysia held 134 meetings in 2018, which moved the country up four places to 33rd position in the overall ICCA rankings. The report also saw Kuala Lumpur climb to 34th for international meetings - up to four spots on the previous year and retain its 10th position in the Asia-Pacific and the Middle East region. According to the Centre’s GM, Alan Pryor, “We are delighted that, of the 68 meetings held in the city, 32 per cent or 22 were held at the centre, attracting more than 20,000 participants to Kuala Lumpur that contributed over RM147 million in economic impact to Malaysia.”

Thailand Travel Mart Plus (TTM+) 2019 concludes in Pattaya

Thailand’s most important B2B travel trade show, the Thailand Travel Mart Plus ‘Amazing Gateway to the Greater Mekong Subregion’ (TTM+) 2019, kick-started on June 5. Under the theme of ‘New Shades of Emerging Destinations’, TTM+ 2019 has attracted a total of 351 buyers (including 50 Indian buyers), 371 sellers, and around 130 international and domestic media. For the second consecutive year, the event is being held at the Ocean Marina Yacht Club, Pattaya, the biggest marina in Southeast Asia. The mart that lasted for three days, came back this year in a bigger and brighter format that clearly reflects the new sense of direction in a rapidly evolving and highly competitive global environment. The overall focus of the show was Thailand’s emerging destinations nationwide, 55 provinces with spectacular beauty, heritage, cultural and culinary attractions.

Yuthasak Supasorn, TAT Governor said, “This year’s theme reflects a strong continuation of our long-standing strategy to promote our emerging destinations with the aim of creating jobs and distributing revenue nationwide, from major cities to local communities, while creating sustainability by balancing the number of visitors to the destinations.”

Hong Kong registers a growth of 7.3 per cent from India

Hong Kong had registered a growth of 7.3 per cent from India as close to 83,000 Indian visitors arrived into Hong Kong in Q1 2019. While Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru continue top three source markets; there is a growing demand from Ahmedabad, Cochin and Pune. In 2018, 50 per cent of overnight visitor arrivals were from the young mid-career segment and we also saw growth in a family segment that contributed close of 34 per cent of overnight visitor arrivals from India with an average length of stay of four nights.

Puneet Kumar, Director, Market Development (India) at Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) shared, “We want Hong Kong to stay on top of mind among Indian travellers and to continue building their affinity towards Hong Kong. In 2019, our focus is to efficiently communicate and engage with the young affluent Indian travellers to bring alive Hong Kong’s core experiences such as living culture and festivals, rejuvenated local neighborhoods, soft adventure and more.”
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Oman Tourism conducts three-city India roadshow

Continuing its outreach in India, the Ministry of Tourism, Oman conducted roadshows in Bengaluru, Pune and Mumbai. As part of this exercise, the Ministry along with destination management companies, hotels, attraction operators and Oman Air connected with over 200 notable travel and tour companies. The interactive platform, with pre-fixed meetings, allowed trade partners to network and learn more about the diverse product offerings and experiences that Oman has to offer. Lubaina Sheerazi, India Representative, Ministry of Tourism, Oman said, “Tourism is on the rise and inbound arrivals from India have significantly increased in the last few years. India represents a substantial and vast market for Oman, given the high percentage of travellers willing to travel abroad and experience new destinations. We have been observing a steady year-on-year increase in tourist arrivals to Oman from India and are extremely pleased with the consistent growth. While Mumbai is one of our primary source markets, Bengaluru and Pune have shown immense potential as we see a rise in the number of outbound travellers from these cities. They are constantly on the lookout for unique destinations and Oman fits the bill perfectly.” In 2018, Oman recorded 12.37 pc growth in Indian tourist arrivals with 357,147 travellers visiting the country vis-a-vis 317,844 in 2017 making India as the second highest source market. Keeping up with this growth trajectory, Oman has already witnessed a 17 per cent increase in the period of January to April 2019 with 130,011 Indian visitors to Oman in comparison to 111,123 during the same period in 2018.

AWEX, Visit Brussels and Wallonia Belgium Tourism organised an educational workshop

Wallonia in India (AWEX Mumbai), Visit Brussels and Wallonia Belgium Tourism jointly organised a destination training workshop in association with Maratha Chamber of Commerce Industry and Agriculture and TAAP in Pune, recently. The presentation highlighted the hidden gems of Belgium. Introducing Walloonia to the audience, Emmanuelle Timmermans, Trade and Investment Commissioner from AWEX said, “We realised that even regular visitors to Belgium are not always aware of some of the hidden gems of Belgium. One of those is the new sensational city of Dinant, which was voted one of Europe’s Best Destinations in 2019.”

She highlighted the most popular tourist attractions in Wallonia. Talking on Belgium’s promotional goals for 2019 and 2020, Timmermans said, “We would like to attract an increased number of visitors from India to our Region. Wallonia tourism is truly hidden as many truths are unknown to the world. Tourism trends are changing now; tourists believe more in unique experiences such as amazing activities, beautiful memories and mysterious places. Wallonia is one destination for all generation group and for all type of tourism interests let it be, FIT, Luxury, family, MICE or educational tourism, Walloonia has lots to offer to everyone.”

Botswana implored to adopt the MICE strategy for the development

According to a recent report, MICE can make Botswana a leading tourism destination, an African diamond capital and contribute to sustainable tourism development, African Tourism Partners, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Kwakye Dankor has said. Speaking during the MICE symposium in Gaborone on June 3, 2019, Dankor said that worldwide practice showed that every fourth individual out of tens of millions people goes abroad on a business trip once in a while. “International practice in Meetings, Incentives, Congresses, Exhibitions (MICE) tourism development and its potential benefits for Botswana is not only desirable, but also needful,” she added while commenting that the growth of such segment had made the development of MICE tourism relevant. Botswana was strengthened revenue could be earned and unemployment would be solved. Dankor pointed out that there was a lack of appreciation and understanding for the tourism industry saying other countries especially the Asian and European countries had made the tourism industry a priority hence they received more arrivals of tourists. She stated that the new trends in tourists’ demands created possibilities for many countries to be competitive in the international market, adding that business travel managers expected business travel to increase in the coming years.
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The worldwide exhibition for incentive travel, meetings and events return to Frankfurt that recreated a wider platform for the top MICE players across the globe between May 21 and 23, 2019, bringing together destinations, venues, tech providers and more, recently at Messe Frankfurt, Germany. Among the many exhibitors, New Zealand, Senses of Cuba, Barcelona Convention Bureau, Visit Brussels, Kempinski Hotels, Melia Hotels and Latvia. During the three days of the trade show, planners met with more than 3,500 suppliers from every sector of the global meetings and events industry.

The event has been hailed as a success with over and above 300 international key MICE players attending. Guests enjoyed networking with key industry professionals and also experience a real hologram in action, sharing thoughts on the present as well as the future MICE event technologies, as well as win unique round trip to Oman. IMEX Frankfurt 2019 was hosted at the Mantis Roofgarden, Frankfurt.

At IMEX Frankfurt this year, the usual parade of promotion and celebration was on display around the show floor. Concern about the industry’s future, though, was common in discussion with leaders, particularly in the areas of sustainability and the health of group bookings overall. This year, sustainability became a stronger focus for the meetings and events sector but some raised the concern that greenwashing and the perception of events as wasteful and could decrease demand for events in the future, particularly if these issues become a political focal point around the world. A common refrain across IMEX Frankfurt has been not only the value of events to destinations but also the narrative that the sector will continue to grow quickly in a time of relative economic uncertainty. Not everyone buys into this narrative, though.

The four-day event of 2019’s edition of IMEX in Frankfurt also featured many of the content ideas and feedback, received this year. Reflecting current trends within the events industry and the world at large, topics such as diversity and inclusion, collaboration and co-creation plus the circular economy were explored. In addition to this, IMEX's preshow education day, 'EduMonday' that took place on May 20 included 'She Means Business' - a conference celebrating the role of women in the meetings industry. EduMonday began with a keynote speaker after which, the programme offered learning opportunities in the industry in both German and English. Also, on May 21, Ovation Global DMC, Marriott International, Dorier Group and Oman Tourism Board (Ministry of Oman) hosted the second edition of ‘TechnOvation’, the only tech after work event at IMEX Frankfurt. Marriott International together with Oman Tourism also offered a prize of direct flight and accommodation for three-days and night stay in the fabulous W Muscat in Oman part of Marriott International. This prize enables the winner to experience first-hand one of the premium destinations offered by Ovation Global DMC.

IMEX Chairman Ray Bloom described the 2019 show in Frankfurt, which drew to a close on 23 May, as “an outstanding week of business, learning and experiences to stir the imagination”. The IMEX Chairman claimed the show as the largest ever IMEX. “There had been approximately 4,500 exhibitors and 3,800 hosted buyers”, he said. IMEX CEO Carina Bauer picked that the experiences in the new Discovery Zone and fresh ideas in the Red Lab and the new technology as show standouts. The social side of the show included a five-kilometre IMEXrun, Association Evening and SITE Nite, while the gala dinner saw major industry awards handed out. The dates for 2020’s version of IMEX Frankfurt got announced as on May 12 to 14, 2020.
After a glorious success last year, the annual trade show named Asia Pacific Incentives Meetings Event (AIME) will return in 2020 offering exhibitors’ unrivalled access to the world’s incentive industry decision makers. Being one the leading trade event for the meetings and event industry in the Asia Pacific region, AIME has a well-deserved reputation as the place where the incentive tourism market sees business done. The event is actually a stage where several primary solutions and products are to be put on show. These will be about Travel, MICE, Meetings Industry, Event Management and Event Planning. Evolving with time, AIME 2020 is ready to project an improvised podium and exhibition arena, based on the feedback gathered over the last one year.

Now in its 27th year and taking place at Melbourne Convention Exhibition Centre, Australia from February 17 to 19, 2020, AIME brings together the right buyers with the right exhibitors from the Asia Pacific region and across the world. Across three vibrant days, AIME delivers the forum for connecting with a wide range of buyers and exhibitors, brought together with a common spirit of curiosity and desire to do great business together. The three-day event will be spread across knowledge exchange and trade exhibitions during the day and networking events in the evening. This year around 4500 industry leaders and professionals are coming together in Melbourne, Victoria Australia for AIME 2019.

The curated hosted buyer program ensures that the buyers who attend Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Industry are ready to do business. “Our bespoke PSA system will align over 14,000 meetings between Exhibitors’ destination and services and the needs to the buyers delivering real value to the industry. In a friendly, welcoming environment when the key stakeholders in the industry gather, knowledge transfer and learning are fostered and the power of connection and community are realised at AIME,” shares Matt Pearce, CEO of AIME and adds, “Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event brings together the right buyers with the right exhibitors from the Asia Pacific region and across the world. It delivers the forum for connecting with a wide range of buyers and exhibitors, brought together with a common spirit of curiosity and desire to do great business together.” Reed Travel Exhibitions is the PCO of AIME 2019, Asia-Pacific Incentives & Meetings Expo.
Raffles welcomes new hotels in China and the Maldives

Raffles Hotels & Resorts recently announced the opening of Raffles Shenzhen and Raffles Maldives Meradhoo. Both hotels opened in May and are now accepting reservations. Known as havens for royalty, film stars, artists and writers, many remarkable stories and cultural moments have taken place within the plush confines of Raffles hotels and resorts. “The Raffles collection now includes 14 properties across 12 countries, with a carefully curated list of distinguished addresses in leading markets around the world,” said Chris Cahill, Deputy CEO of Accor. “With a storied history spanning more than 130 years, Raffles is currently experiencing a renaissance, with a robust project pipeline that will see the portfolio add an additional eight to ten hotels over the next few years.” Jeannette Ho, VP-Raffles Brand & Strategic Partnerships said, “We are delighted to invite guests to experience the impeccable service, intuitive charm and extraordinary adventures upon which the Raffles legend has been built.”

Hilton celebrates 100th anniversary with ‘Acts of Hospitality’

With more than 5,700 properties around the world – and a new hotel opening every day, Hilton recently celebrated its milestone 100th anniversary on May 31. To mark the occasion, hundreds of hotels around the world, including throughout the Asia Pacific, are extending Hilton hospitality beyond their doors by taking ‘Acts of Hospitality’ to their communities – everywhere from Sydney to Shanghai and Delhi to Tokyo.

“One hundred years ago, Conrad Hilton had a noble idea that travel can make the world a better place,” said Chris Nassetta, President and CEO of Hilton. “That deep-rooted sense of purpose has fueled our transformative impact all across the globe, as we have welcomed three billion guests, employed 10 million team members and contributed USD one trillion in economic impact. And in the years to come, we will do even more to positively change the world through our Hilton Effect Foundation.”

As it looks ahead to its next century, Hilton also announced the creation of The Hilton Effect Foundation, which will help create a better world to travel by investing in both organisations and people having a positive impact on the communities Hilton serves.

The Grand New Delhi aims at upping the ‘MICE’ ante

By Gagneet Kaur

With a unique design and style, optimum utilisation of space, along with enviable MICE facilities and a resort-like vibe, the Grand New Delhi is special in many ways. Nestled in the heart of Delhi NCR, the hotel is a magnet for corporate and leisure guests alike due to its strategic location, with MICE being the area of strength.

Pradipta N Biswas, General Manager, The Grand New Delhi, while boasting about the significant strengths of the hotel shares that the major chunk of business is attributed to both the MICE and wedding segment. “MICE, being one of our strongest selling points and the hotel being positioned primarily as a wedding destination, have always worked well in our favour. With over 30,000 square feet of versatile meeting space including the Grand Ballroom, which is the largest pillar-less banqueting facilities in the city along with two boardrooms and three conference rooms equipped with state-of-the-art technology, making us a preferred choice for corporate MICE and destination weddings. The large space that we have has indeed become one of the distinguishing factors for the hotel. The hotel being synonymous with its ambiance and picturesque setting has, today, become a popular choice for several couples who opt to take their vows in the eye-catching premises. Last year, we hosted around 22 weddings. This year, the season has started on a slightly slower pace however, we are confident of surpassing this figure by hosting more weddings at the hotel. We also aim at increasing the guests’ length of stays wherein we are eyeing both these segments and have chalked out the strategies for the year ahead. MICE has contributed to a 30 per cent increase in revenue and we definitely aim for a surge in 2019,” Biswas shares.

While its own strengths have helped establish the hotel as a visitor rendezvous for the wedding guests and corporates, organic one-on-one meetings with the suppliers and promotions in the wedding exhibitions, Biswas feels are the best marketing tools. “Since the wedding segment is the major revenue generating segment today, we are trying to leverage the best out of it. Rather than banking on traditional marketing, we rely more on real-time engagements. We have been constantly meeting and discussing collaboration strategies with key suppliers and wedding planners. Going further, we are also planning to participate in the fairs and exhibitions, wedding planner shows where we are expecting to get enhanced visibility,” he adds.

Talking about the policies and survival strategies that he brings to the table after taking the charge, Biswas enlists that manpower, key areas of cost reduction which includes HLP, optimisation of resources, constant innovation in F&B facilities, offering special banquet packages for summer season are some of his mandates to maintain the smooth functioning. Summing up, Biswas says that product maintenance and constant upgradations make for the success of any hotel and The Grand New Delhi is no different. “My aim has always been to persistently work on trying to position this hotel as a complete resort and optimise guest experiences in the best possible ways.”
Business travellers to generate maximum revenues in hospitality

Revenues from business travellers will grow significantly over the next few years, according to a CII-PWC report. Although MICE has not been a significant contributor to the Indian hospitality sector so far, this trend is likely to change with better planning as well as improved infrastructure. On the other hand, few CEOs believe that leisure travel will keep pace with growth seen in business travel and MICE. A large section of leisure travellers continues to perceive hotels as a luxury.

The Indian tourism and hospitality industry has emerged as one of the key drivers of growth among the services sector in India. Tourism in India has significant potential considering the rich cultural and historical heritage, variety in ecology, terrains and places of natural beauty spread across the country. Tourism is also a potentially large employment generator besides being a significant source of foreign exchange for the country. During 2018, FEES from tourism increased by 4.70 per cent year-on-year to USD 28.59 billion. FEES during January 2019 was USD 2.55 billion.

InterContinental Yokohama Pier 8 Hotel to open in November 2019

InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) has announced InterContinental Yokohama Pier 8 will open its doors to guests in November 2019 in the Minato Mirai area of Yokohama. The franchise agreement was made by IHG’s domestic operating company, IHG ANA Hotels Group Japan and Yokohama Grand InterContinental Co., Ltd. InterContinental Yokohama Pier 8 will be built on the premises of the ‘Yokohama Hammer Head Project’ which is developed by SHINKO PIER CRUISE TERMINAL Co. Ltd. in collaboration with Yokohama City. The new-build luxury hotel will be located in the same building as a cruise ship terminal where large cruise ships will be anchored. Together, the precinct will offer guests a new luxury experience that blends both the InterContinental brand and Yokohama’s distinct history and colourful lifestyle.

CEO Hans Heijligers of IHG ANA Hotels Group Japan said, “We are very pleased to open a hotel that will be a new symbol in the same place as our first InterContinental in Japan.”

Hotel chains grabbing market share in mid-segment

According to a recent report, hospitality chains are fast grabbing market share in the mid-market hotel segment valued over USD four billion. Millennials, as a group of customers, are driving faster growth of these hotel chains. Hotel chains accounted for 30 per cent of the USD 3.3 billion mid-market hospitality revenues in 2016. Their share has risen to 37 per cent of USD 4.4 billion in 2019 as the share of non-chain hotels fell from 70 per cent to 63 per cent. While the mid-market segment was estimated to be growing at 10 per cent in 2018, hotel chains were growing by 18 per cent. On the other hand, the non-chain segment was reportedly growing by six per cent. Fortune, Ginger, Lemon Tree, Fab and OYO Townhouse have been growing faster than the market, according to a study by RedSeer Consulting. Some of the chains have multiple brands within mid-segment to cater to different price points. “The growth of the segment is largely driven by higher demand as well as Premiumisation.

One of the key factors for higher demand is the growth of the corporate sector in India and increased the mobility of the workforce. From a demographic point of view, as more millennials are joining the workforce and gaining higher spending potential, they have a higher tendency towards travelling, both for professional and leisure purposes, compared to previous generations,” said Ujjwal Chaudhry, Associate Director, RedSeer Consulting. Millennials are going to constitute a large chunk of their customer pie as 35 per cent of the Indian population and almost half of the working population will be millennials by 2023. Tech-enabled services provide an alluring proposition to millennials due to convenience and transparency. Millennials show high levels of loyalty towards a certain hotel brand. Mid-segment hotels are increasingly investing in creating high stickiness through rewarding loyalty programmes. Tech-enabled players in the mid-market segment have the highest number of monthly active users on their websites and a larger portion of sales coming from their own websites. Further, millennials spend 40 per cent of the income on leisure and eating out. This dispensable income will translate in consumers preferring mid-segment hotels to budget hotels.
UTTARAKHAND
The unobserved side of heaven

A place of myth and mountains, the dramatic terrain of Uttarakhand is covered with holy peaks, lakes and rivers. Morning views from any place in this state are invigorating where the crimson rays of the sun kiss the snow-laden Himalayas. Twisting roads and high-altitude hiking trails that lead to spectacular pilgrimage sites where tales from Hindu epics are set, Uttarakhand offers limitless opportunities for tourism and adventure. From pilgrimage, temples, wildlife tours, bird watching, rafting, mountaineering, skiing, trekking, camping to Yoga and meditation, there is something for everyone in the “The Land of Gods”

By Sayanti Halder

VALLEY OF FLOWERS AND HEMKUND SAHIB – Blend of Beauty and Charity

One of the most beautiful places to visit in Uttarakhand is the Valley of Flowers for the perfect blend of nature and spiritual worship, for your vacation. Valley of Flowers is one trek where many people begin their journey of trekking in the Himalayas. And why not? It is one of those rare natural botanical gardens in India. Flowers bloom everywhere in a riot of colours. On one side of the flower-decked valley tall cliffs climb to the sky. The other side is guarded by snow-clad mountains while the serene river glides through the middle of the valley. Additionally, Hemkund Sahib is a holy place for the Sikh community. Don’t discount the exhilarating climb to Hemkund Sahib – an alpine lake at 14,300 ft. That such a large clear water lake can be present at this altitude is hard to fathom! Of course, the langar (meal) at the Gurudwara is to die for!

CHOPTA – A Pristine Camping Destination

Chopta is one of those hill stations, which will tempt you for life. With a blend of adventure and tranquility, it suits almost everyone’s taste. Chopta is one of the least-explored hamlets in the Himalaya. At an elevation of 2,680 m, it serves as a base point to famous treks to Tungnath and Chandrashilla. It also offers some amazing 360-degree panorama of the majestic mountains with the Trishul, Nanda Devi and Chaukhambha peaks stealing the show. Chopta is a picturesque hamlet which is still unexplored by travellers and also famous as the ‘Mini Switzerland of Uttarakhand’. This hushed abode is enclosed by the dwindling pines, deodars, rhododendrons and other conifers that can be found in this region making Chopta rich in flora and fauna. Wake up with cool salubrious breeze and chirping of birds in Chopta which is a far cry from the blaring horns of the cities.
KANATAL – A Thrill of the Mountains

Kanatal is a serene and picturesque suburb of Mussoorie, snuggled on the Chamba-Mussoorie road. Though not so popular, Kanatal is picture-perfect and boasts of the heavenly scenery, luxuriant vegetation and bountiful adventure activities. At an elevation of 8,500 feet, the village offers mesmerising views of the Shivalik mountain range and lush green and brown pine forests. Among the most fun Uttarakhand destinations, Kanatal makes for a perfect weekend getaway. If you are looking for a holiday with solemn peace but are disturbed with a bit of fun and thrill at times, take a trip to Kanatal – away from the urban hassles. Besides stunning natural beauty, there are a number of interesting things to do in Kanatal that include some thrilling water activities and camping for adventure lovers, families and friends. The mighty Tehri Dam is a ‘must-visit’ spot in this zone.
AULI – A Haven for Winter Sports

From snow-covered peaks to wooden huts, Auli is not less than a perfect European village in Asia. It is situated at an astonishing height of 2505 meter, which offers a magnificent view of the crescent and panoramic views of the great Himalaya. Auli is adjacent to the religious shrine of Badrinath where the breathtaking view of snow-capped peaks surrounding Auli, gives an astounding view of the place. Visit this destination in Uttarakhand which is highly recommended to the mountain and adventure lovers. Being popular as the ski destination of India, Auli is the emerging winter destination and hill station of Uttarakhand. Popularly known for its snowy slopes, Auli has everything that an ideal tourist dreams of. The mountain sports activities can be enriching to the spirit of an adventure sports lover. If there is a picturesque setting that is perfect, then this must be it.

CHAKRATA – A Secluded Hill Town

Renowned as a picturesque picnic spot, Chakrata in Dehradun District of Uttarakhand is a hill station and a famed tourist destination located at an altitude of about 7000 feet above the sea level. The town was known earlier as Jaunsar bawar, a small hamlet of Jaunsari tribe. This small and secluded hill town of Chakrata is an ideal place for those who are looking for a place to be silent and enjoy the beauty of the hills. With postcard-size houses, serene quaint hills and birds chirping in the background, Chakrata is a peace lover’s dream destination. For those looking for a simple and quiet place where they can just enjoy the view of nature and amazing climate, Chakrata offers several tourist spots including Tiger Falls, Kanasar, Kalisi, Lakhmandal and Chilmiri Neck.
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The MICE industry size was valued at USD 805 million in 2017 and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 7.6 per cent to reach USD 1,439.3 million by 2025. MICE industry offers tourism services in which organisers and suppliers that manage and deliver meetings, conferences, exhibitions and other related events held to achieve a range of professional, business, cultural or academic objectives. MICE industry growth shall have a positive impact on the growth of businesses, cities, destinations and other covered spectrums. Organisers of MICE events also provide other creative services that include show displays, directional signage, banners, kiosks/exhibit space, event photography and AV/technical production in addition to event marketing and sponsorship management, group air fulfilment, on-site event logistics and staffing, supplier management, virtual meetings and risk management services.

There has been a surge in the presence of corporate industries all around the globe. This has increased the frequency of business activities such as client meetings, brand promotions and employee training activities and has supplemented the growth of the global MICE industry. Moreover, the rise in government initiatives to promote SMEs and liberalisation of market entry to increase FDI has boosted the growth of this market even further. Other significant factors that promote the growth of the market are a change in the lifestyle of business travellers to seek leisure trips, rapid urbanization and industrial growth. Furthermore, infrastructural development and continuous technological advancements in emerging nations have fueled industry growth. However, the high cost associated with MICE events and uncertain global geopolitical conditions hampers the growth of the market. Factors such as investments in infrastructural development and technological advancements are expected to provide avenues for growth in the coming future.

The industry has been segmented based on event type and region. Based on event type, the market is segmented into meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions. By region, the market has been studied across four regions namely, North America, Europe, Asia-Pacific and LAMEA. In 2017, the meeting segment accounted for the highest share in the MICE industry. This is attributed to the increase in the globalisation of businesses and rise in the number of (SME) Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise all over the world. The incentive segment is estimated to be the fastest growing segment in the event type segment during the forecast period. Incentive travel is a management tool for rewarding and motivating sales representatives, dealers, distributors, production workers and support staff. Also in some cases, customers. The company rewards sales representatives who reach sales targets by sending them on trips. Usually, the incentive trip comes with hotel stays, tour packages and planned activities such as dinners, parties and games. The market for incentive segment is driven by the rapid growth in the travel and tourism industry coupled with infrastructural developments and increase in the globalisation of businesses.

In 2017, Europe dominated the MICE industry and is expected to continue this trend throughout the forecast period. Asia-Pacific along with Europe decades has positioned Asia-Pacific as the fastest growing market in the world. The Asia market for MICE industry is driven by high penetration of internet and technology and by strongly influenced government policies of China, which are focused on regulating the moderate growth of the economy. Moreover, most of the countries in this region are emerging nations and these economies offer lucrative business opportunities for investors.

Key Benefits for MICE industry:

• The MICE industry research report provides a quantitative analysis of the current trends, estimations and dynamics of the market size from 2018 to 2025 to identify the prevailing market opportunities
• The key countries in all the major regions are mapped based on their market share
• Porter’s five forces analysis highlights the potency of buyers and suppliers to enable stakeholders to make profit-oriented business decisions and strengthen their supplier buyer network
• Major countries in each region are mapped according to their revenue contribution to the global industry. Market player positioning segment facilitates benchmarking and provides a clear understanding of the present position of market players
• The report includes revenue generated from the sales of the MICE industry and forecast across North America, Europe, Asia-Pacific and LAMEA
• MICE Industry report includes analysis at regional as well as the global level, key players, market segments, application areas, and growth strategies
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Thai Airways’ regional subsidiary Thai Smile is set to become Star Alliance’s second Connecting Partner airline. The Connecting Partner programme was launched in 2016 to fill gaps in regional connections between the alliance’s full member airlines. As a Connecting Partner, Thai Smile does not need to fulfil commercial relationships with all full members but partner with just three. It will meet these criteria by the end of the year, Star Alliance said.

The airlines will be meeting in challenging times. 2019 is expected to be the 10th consecutive year of airline profits, but rising costs, trade wars and other uncertainties are likely to have an impact on the bottom line. The prolonged grounding of the 737 MAX aircraft is taking its toll. And aviation, like all industries, is under intensified scrutiny for its impact on climate change. The agenda will be full,” said Alexandre de Juniac, Director General and CEO, IATA.

Hosted by Korean Air and held for the first time in the Republic of Korea, the event is expected to attract more than a thousand top leaders from among IATA’s 290 member airlines, their suppliers, governments, strategic partners, international organisations and the media.
Singapore Airlines introduces Airbus A350 on Kolkata route

Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport has announced that Singapore Airlines has introduced its Airbus A350-900 aircraft on the Kolkata-Singapore sector. The A350-900 features higher ceilings, larger windows, an extra wide body delivering more space and comfort as well as lighting designed to reduce jet lag. Fitted with the new regional business class and economy class cabin products, the A350-900 medium haul business class cabin has 40 seats in a one-two-one arrangement that ensures direct aisle access for every customer, while the economy class cabin has 263 seats arranged in a 3-3-3 configuration.

Korean Air to discontinue first-class on India routes

Korean Air has announced that starting June 1, the airline will cease to operate its First Class Cabin on Airbus A330-200, which operates on Delhi (KE 482/KE 481) and Mumbai (KE 656/KE 655) routes. The airline has a total of six first-class cabins, which will be discontinued starting next month. As per the revised configuration, the airline will only have a two-class configuration on both the Delhi and Mumbai routes. The business class seats would increase from 24 to 30 and the economy class cabin would remain to have 188 seats. The statement from Korean Air also informed that the above-mentioned aircraft and routes, ‘the two-class configuration’ will also be implemented on several other aircraft and routes including Toronto, Vancouver, Brisbane, Auckland, Nadi and Vladivostok.

Boeing signs deal with AAI on air traffic management

Boeing has signed a pact with Airports Authority of India (AAI) to come up with a 10-year plan to modernise air traffic management in India. The US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) will fund the 18-month project which will focus on navigation, communication and modernisation of air traffic management. The agreement aims at developing a road map for AAI to upgrade the Indian National Airspace System. The modernisation of this system will be based on local and global best practices to use airspace capacity, improve communications and invest in surveillance, navigation and air traffic management. Boeing will analyse current processes and technologies to tap efficiency improvements which can be implemented while maintaining a safe and practical airspace system.

Kerala becomes the first state to have four international airports

Kerala has become the first state in the country to have four airports of international standards with the inauguration of the Kannur International Airport. Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan jointly flagged off the inaugural Air India Express flight, carrying 186 passengers to Abu Dhabi, at the airport near Mattannur town in the morning. With the commissioning of the airport, the state has become the first in the country to have four international airports with Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode being the other three.

Speaking at the inaugural function, Prabhu said the commissioning of the greenfield airport was expected to pave way for the state’s overall development and prosperity, especially the northern region. “The Kannur airport, built on a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode, will become a new benchmark of how airports will be constructed in the country. The airport will help the non-resident Keralites (NRKs), especially in the Gulf region, besides boosting tourism and exports, which will result in several job opportunities,” he added.

Jazeera Airways to start Delhi-Istanbul flight from June 19

Kuwait-based Jazeera Airways will start new operations from Delhi to Istanbul via Kuwait, from June 19. The new flight will land at Sabiha Gokcen International Airport in Istanbul and would depart from New Delhi on Wednesday and Friday at 8:15 am and will land at 9:50 am. From Kuwait the flight departs at 10:45 am to land in Istanbul at 2:15 pm. The return flight from Istanbul will be on Wednesday and Saturday, which would land in Kuwait and then fly to New Delhi on Thursday or Sunday to land at 7:30 am.
Mohammed Shoeb
Pride Hotels appoints Mohammed Shoeb as Associate Vice President, Pride Plaza Aerocity, New Delhi. Shoeb will be responsible for providing strategic guidance in operating the hotel in line with international brand standards whilst meeting employee, guest and owners expectations. During his tenure at the Accor Hotels, he was involved in the successful opening and operation of Novotel Vishakhapatnam, Varun Beach and Novotel Chennai, Sipcot.

Gayatri Bist
Holiday Inn Chandigarh Panchkula has appointed Gayatri Bist as General Manager. Bist’s last assignment was with Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad as Executive Assistant Manager. Having worked at various reputed hotels across India, she brings with her 18 years of rich experience in various domains in the hospitality industry. Bist has an extensive background in senior leadership roles in both Sales and Operations. She has a well-defined vision for the hotel.

Abhilash Kumar
Hyatt Regency Gurgaon has announced the appointment of Abhilash Kumar as Director of Sales and Marketing. In his new role, Kumar will be overseeing the operations of the hotel. He began his career in 2005 with Hyatt Regency Mumbai from where he moved to Hyatt Regency Delhi in November 2006 as Assistant Restaurant Manager. In a career spanning nearly 14 years, Thakur has held various positions at different properties across India.

Clifford Coutinho
The Westin Mumbai has announced the appointment of Clifford Coutinho as Director of Sales. Prior to this, Coutinho was associated with The Westin Mumbai Garden City as the Assistant Director of Sales. In his new role, he will be responsible for leading and further evolving all aspects of the sales, driving revenues, promoting brand strategies and providing the best of The Westin Mumbai Garden City’s hospitality experience to the guests.
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