

The business travel magazine

A DDP Publication

MICEtalk®

micetalk.com

Meetings • Incentives • Conferences • Events

RNI No.:DELENG/2010/34144



Your MICE trip just got safer with

ASEGŌ

Global Assistance • Travel Insurance

Unique highlights

- Emergency medical expenses up to \$2,50,000
- Coverage for injury or medical emergencies, including evacuation
- Out-patient care and dental cover
- Delay or loss of checked-in baggage
- Trip delay and interruption cover
- Missed connection benefits



24/7 Global
Emergency Assistance



Customisable
Travel Insurance



Multiple Insurance
Companies



Fast Track
Claims Support

Travel Smart. Travel Safe with Asego MICE Travel Protect



For partnership or more details, scan the QR code

Note: Assistance services are provided by Asego Global Assistance Limited. Please note that all insurance is underwritten by an IRDAI authorized underwriter and is a subject matter of collaboration. The content published in this poster is for information purpose only and it does not accept any liability of any sort unless confirmed by an authorized representative of Asego. All insurance policies are sold under the Corporate Agency of Asego Insurance LLP bearing IRDAI registration no. CA0736.

24x7 Helpline: +91 8446582205 | customersupport@asego.in | claims@asego.in



Balmer Lawrie
TRAVEL & VACATIONS

A Legacy of 158 years' Trust,
Reliability and Transparency



For Travel Queries

✉ travel.sales@balmerlawrie.com
☎ 099400 68471

For MICE Queries

✉ singh.ruhi@balmerlawrie.com
☎ 9810515815

For Domestic Holidays

✉ holidays@balmerlawrietraavel.com
☎ 095603 50561 / 095603 97009

For International Holidays

✉ bhatia.neetu@balmerlawrie.com
☎ 098184 06447



बामर लॉरी एण्ड कं. लिमिटेड
(भारत सरकार का एक उद्यम)
Balmer Lawrie & Co. Ltd.
(A Government of India Enterprise)

Regd. Office: 21, N S Road, Kolkata-700 001

☎ www.balmerlawrie.com | CIN: L15492WB1924GOI004835

Foreword



JYOTHI VARMA
CONSULTING EDITOR

Digital Arrivals simplifying MICE Travel

The year 2025 proved to be both challenging and transformative for India's travel and hospitality sector. On the positive side, the industry witnessed a strong recovery in occupancy rates, expansion into tier II and III cities, and increased demand across leisure, spiritual, and MICE segments. Government initiatives and infra improvements supported growth, while partnerships with local communities enhanced sustainability. At the same time, the sector faced notable challenges, including demand-supply imbalances, rising operational costs, and shortages of skilled talent.

standards across hospitality and transport services. Clear policies on visa facilitation, digital pre-clearance of arrival data, and integrated travel infra will reduce friction for business delegates, enabling them to maximise productivity. Moving from aspirational commitments to actionable policies will not only strengthen India's position as a preferred destination for MICE but also reinforce its role as a global business hub. Associations like GBTA are re-entering India market after observing the potential it has to offer. They aim to provide education, resources, and community engagement to help Indian travel professionals

“
Moving from aspirational commitments to actionable policies will strengthen India's position as a preferred destination for MICE.
”

Global economic uncertainties also impacted global arrivals, adding pressure to an already complex setting. Despite these headwinds, the industry remains on a high-growth trajectory, with forecasts indicating double-digit expansion in the coming years. At this crucial juncture, to fully support corporate travellers, India must institutionalise measures that streamline immigration processes, enhance connectivity between business hubs, and ensure consistent

adapt to an industry that is evolving faster than ever.

In this edition, you will see the influence of AI in augmenting technology, bringing it closer to human touch. By enhancing processes, and decision-making, AI demonstrates its role not as a replacement for human capability, but as a supportive force that amplifies efficiency and accessibility across industries.

Happy Reading!

12 The new secret sauce for impactful events



6
India's e-Arrival Card: What's changing for MICE travellers?



8
Move from plans to performance: ICPB



22
AI is here, so stop playing by the rulebook



26
Rock on Delhi! The cultural capital in the making



30
Find out which country is fuelling APAC's biz travel



40
Kochi: Next budget-friendly destination for your event

PUBLISHER & EDITOR

SanJeet

Devika Jeet
devika@ddppl.com

CONSULTING EDITOR

Jyothi Varma

CHIEF EDITOR

Nisha Verma
nisha.verma@ddppl.com

EDITORIAL TEAM

Janice Alyosius
janice.alyosius@ddppl.com

Amita Pandey
amita.pandey@ddppl.com

ADVERTISING – DELHI

Meetu Malhotra
meetu.malhotra@ddppl.com

Jaspreet Kaur

ADVERTISING – MUMBAI

Harshal Ashar
harshal@ddppl.com

Samantha Pereira
samantha.pereira@ddppl.com

ADVERTISEMENT DESIGNERS

Nitin Kumar
Aditya Pratap Singh
Anil Khatri Chhetri

GM – PRODUCTION

Anil Kharbanda

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Ramesh Gupta

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Ashok Rana



DDP Publications Private Limited

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 **MICE**talk 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/do not necessarily reflect any opinion of DDP Publications. All rights reserved throughout the world. Reproduction strictly prohibited. Material appearing in **MICE**talk 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 emailed to nikhil.jeet@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 **MICE**talk 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.

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

WHERE BUSINESS MEETS BEYOND



THE BEST STANDALONE **CONVENTION CENTRE** IN INDIA

Awarded by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India for 2017-18 & 2018-19



INDIA EXPOSITION MART LTD.

 KNOWLEDGE PARK-II, GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR, GREATER NOIDA-201306 (U.P.)

 +91 120 2328 011 20, +91 971 779 0583  www.indiaexpomart.com  marketing2@indiaexpocentre.com

Follow Us



India's e-Arrival card to simplify corporate travel

For foreign nationals, India's new mandatory e-Arrival card allows foreign delegates to pre-submit arrival details online, ensuring a faster travel experience.

By MT Bureau

From 1 October 2025, India has introduced a mandatory e-Arrival Card for all foreign nationals entering the country. This move promises to streamline immigration and improve the experience for business travellers.

WHAT IS CHANGING?

The traditional paper Disembarkation Card is being phased out. Instead, foreign visitors (including OCI cardholders) must now complete their arrival form digitally up to 72 hours before they land. The form can be submitted via:

- the Indian Visa Online portal
- the Bureau of Immigration website: indianvisaonline.gov.in/earrival

- the Indian Visa Su-Swagatam mobile app

There is a transition period of up to six months, during which paper cards will still be accepted, but the government strongly recommends using the e-Arrival option.

BENEFITS

- **Speedier immigration:** By pre-submitting arrival data, delegates can breeze through immigration, saving time, and heading straight to event or transfer.
- **Improved accuracy:** The digital form captures key details: passport, purpose of visit, address in India, travel history, and sends it directly to immigration systems.
- **Lower administrative friction:** Less paper means fewer manual errors and a smoother, more professional arrival experience.
- **Better experience:** For time-sensitive business trips, this digital-first approach aligns perfectly with the needs of modern MICE travellers.

Even with the e-Arrival card, travellers still need a valid visa. The form is not a visa itself. After submitting the form, the foreign visitors will get a QR code or reference number to present at immigration. **MT**

Delegates reduce wait time at immigration by pre-submitting arrival data. This allows them to head straight to their event or transfer



60 Years of Friendship

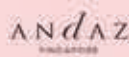
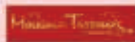
Unlimited Privileges

await Indian MICE groups!



Unlock exclusive privileges with Singapore Tourism Board, spanning travel, dining, luxury stays, and unforgettable experiences.

sentosa





Many policies, not enough action

India's MICE sector is brimming with potential but to compete globally, the country needs to turn intent into structured policy and implementation, says **Chander Mansharamani**, Vice Chairman, ICPB.

By **Janice Alyosius**

India's MICE industry is gaining momentum, but the lack of incentives, reliable data, and a unified marketing strategy continue to hold it back. **Chander Mansharamani**, Vice Chairman, India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB), said that despite strong infrastructure and government initiatives, India needs a dedicated marketing body and incentive framework to compete with global destinations that offer financial support and bidding budgets to attract international events. At present, many competing nations such

as Singapore, Thailand, and South Korea offer incentives, subsidies, and dedicated marketing budgets to draw large-scale international events. India, however, lacks these financial levers. "The key challenge is the absence of a central marketing agency to position India as a MICE destination. We need to study how other countries operate, allocate bidding budgets, and introduce welcome incentives, even small grants based on business volume can make India more competitive," Mansharamani said.

The Ministry of Tourism has taken encouraging steps in recent months, launching a Digital MICE Catalogue



THE MOST TRUSTED MICE DESTINATION

Whitefield is where Bengaluru's business and events ecosystem converges.



Home to global headquarters, tech giants and two of the city's most advanced hospitality venues, it offers unmatched convenience, capacity, and connectivity - making it the natural choice for inspired meetings and elevated events.

BENGALURU MARRIOTT HOTEL WHITEFIELD

520 well-appointed guest rooms
6,357 sq. ft. grand ballroom
10,000 sq. ft. event lawn
Pet-friendly premium hotel

SHERATON GRAND BENGALURU WHITEFIELD

360 stylish, modern rooms
17,000 sq. ft. pillar less venue space
4,520 sq. ft. landscaped lawn
5 signature dining outlets

“

The key challenge is the absence of a central marketing agency to position India as a MICE destination.

”



CHANDER MANSHARAMANI
VICE CHAIRMAN
ICPB

covering 60 cities and urging states to establish MICE bureaus. ICPB is now building on this effort with a comprehensive MICE Planner that will expand coverage to 150 cities, detailing venues, connectivity, and pre- and post-tour opportunities. “It is a practical step forward that will help organisers identify venues and plan more efficiently,” Mansharamani added.

However, ICPB cautions that the real challenge is perception. “States need to recognise that MICE is not just an industry; it is an economic activity with far-reaching impact on jobs, trade, and knowledge exchange,” Mansharamani said. A key missing piece is the lack of credible data on the segment’s size and economic

contribution, which has made it difficult to prioritise MICE in tourism policy or budgets.

India’s academic strength remains a significant but underleveraged asset. With over 350 medical colleges, 400 agricultural universities, IITs, and IIMs, the country already has built-in support systems that can host global technical and academic conferences.

For 2026, ICPB has mapped an ambitious roadmap including roadshows in India and major international cities, the annual Conventions India Conclave (which hosts over 100 international buyers), and a new MICE Summit to spotlight states with major convention facilities.

To sustain momentum, ICPB recommends dedicating 20–25 per cent of the national tourism media budget to MICE, crafting a year-round marketing calendar, and ensuring India’s presence at global events like IMEX and Incentives, Business Travel, and Meetings (IBTM).

“We are optimistic about the future. With world-class venues such as Yashbhoomi and Bharat Mandapam, India already has the hardware. What is missing is the marketing engine and policy-level incentives to make the country a true global MICE hub,” Mansharamani said. **MT**



शिवराह bandhan

by Vedic Village Spa Resort

A Luxe village of Eternal Celebrations



Luxe Nature | Soulful Rituals | Seamless Hospitality |
Gastronomic Grandeur | Wellness & Rejuvenation | Events & Recreation |
Diverse Accommodation option

13 acres of Verdant Greenery
Convention, Ballroom & Lounge Space : 21000 Sq.ft
Open space and Lawn : 115,000 Sq. ft
Water body (Natural Lakes) : 40,000 sq ft

For queries call 983082 0445 or mail weddings@thevedicvillage.com



Tech-driven **event** on the rise

Technology is no longer a prop in events, it has taken the main stage, blurring the lines between hybrid and traditional events by measuring both tangible and intangible value. With rising expectations and diversified formats, India's MICE future lies in blending physical experiences with digital intelligence to maximise impact across every touchpoint.

By **Janice Alyosius**

India's MICE market is undergoing a paradigm shift, where technology and event design converge to influence how venues, hotels, and convention centres gauge true RoI. This infusion is not just enhancing operations, it is sparking a surge in hybrid events and experiential formats that are giving a new direction to the future of events.

What began as a pandemic-driven necessity has now matured into a strategic layer of event design, prompting the industry to rethink 'profitability' beyond traditional occupancy, room nights, and F&B revenue. Today, digital reach, content life cycle, and engagement depth increasingly shape RoI conversations for event planners.

The question now is: Will hybrid events completely eclipse traditional ones as we enter 2026?

According to experts, while physical events remain the backbone of human connection and commercial networking, organisers and venues are recalibrating for an environment where one format no longer fits all. The emerging consensus is apparent that the most successful events, whether hybrid, experiential, or traditional, are those that deliver long-term brand equity, repeat business, and measurable engagement. The MICE ecosystem is now evaluating both tangible and intangible value with equal weight.

NEW DEFINITIONS OF ROI

Hybrid and experiential events have moved far beyond stopgap solutions. They now serve as scalable platforms that enhance content distribution, broaden access, and extend event life cycles. Venues are increasingly integrating technologies like real-time analytics, audience tracking, and digital content monetisation into their RoI frameworks. For hotels and convention centres, profitability today includes engagement per minute, cost per virtual attendee, and post-event traffic on digital channels.

Lakshmi Sridhar, General Manager, Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach and The Bheemili Resort Managed by Accor, said, "Hybrid and experiential events deliver higher long-



ARJUN BALJEE
FOUNDER, ICONIQA, &
PRESIDENT, ROYAL ORCHID HOTELS

term RoI by driving multi-channel engagement, creating valuable content, and fostering repeat business. Beyond revenue, we evaluate metrics such as cost per attendee, F&B contribution, and digital reach. Today, meaningful engagement and lasting brand recall are just as critical as direct profitability."

TRADITIONAL MEETINGS

Despite rapid digitalisation, in-person events are far from obsolete. The return of large-scale exhibitions, congresses, and corporate incentive gatherings signals the enduring value of face-to-face networking. Industry leaders highlight that physical experiences continue to drive client loyalty, long-term partnerships, and higher on-ground spending.

Sudeep Sarcar, CEO, India Exposition Mart Limited (IEML), echoes this sentiment. "Hybrid events were the need of the hour during the pandemic when physical gatherings were restricted. But MICE is majorly about human connection, meeting people, sharing ideas, and creating experiences together."

At IEML, RoI extends far beyond yield. "We measure RoI not just by occupancy or revenue per event but by brand recall, client retention, and the long-term partnerships that physical experiences nurture."

YIELD & ENGAGEMENT

Hotels and venues are increasingly blending traditional financial metrics with digital performance indicators.



SUDEEP SARCAR
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
INDIA EXPOSITION MART LIMITED



JIBAK DASGUPTA
DIRECTOR GENERAL & CEO
IMTMA & BIEC

REVENUE LENS

Unlike traditional MICE formats measured on direct financial outcomes, hybrid events introduce parallel revenue streams including virtual sponsorships, cross-platform branding, and paid access to post-event digital content. This has led to new operational models in hotels that now design events for both physical and virtual scalability.

Highlighting that the profitability equation has fundamentally widened, **Sumit Periwal**, Director, Summit Hotels & Resorts, said, “Traditional

formats are measured on direct financial metrics such as room nights, F&B revenue, and space utilisation. With hybrid events, the equation expands as we look at digital reach, virtual sponsorships, and post-event content value,” he explained. “Experiential events are niche and more of long-term investments in brand and client relationships. The yardstick for RoI now includes revenue per available event space, GOP per event, digital engagement rates, and client retention.”





SUMIT PERIVAL
DIRECTOR
SUMMIT HOTELS & RESORTS



LAKSHMI SRIDHAR
GM, NOVOTEL VISAKHAPATNAM
VARUN BEACH & THE BHEEMILI RESORT
MANAGED BY ACCOR



INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY

As event organisers embrace live streaming, advanced AV, AI-driven analytics, and content libraries, the definition of RoI now spans both audience scale and data depth. Hybrid formats are particularly effective in reaching cross-border participants, creating subscription opportunities, and reducing carbon footprints — an increasingly relevant metric for global corporates. **Jibak Dasgupta**, Director General and CEO, IMTMA and BIEC, said the shift is structural. “Audio-visuals, live streaming, and content monetisation have become

increasingly popular. Hybrid events are gaining momentum after the pandemic, allowing organisers to reach out to a broader audience across different locations.” He noted that both formats hold unique strengths. “Traditional conferences demand physical presence, and networking provides a different experience compared to hybrid events. It is essential to evaluate each event’s RoI based on the tangible and intangible value it creates.”

PURPOSE-LED FORMATS

Experts agree that the future of MICE lies in purpose-led event design, as

no single format can fully replace the other. The format of the event is going to be based on audience, objective, sustainability, and required engagement depth.

As India’s MICE sector navigates rising expectations, sustainability mandates, and diversified event models, RoI can no longer be measured by a single metric or a singular format. The future belongs to venues and organisers who can blend physical experiences with digital intelligence, maximising value across every touchpoint from registration to post-event content consumption.





Common event features in 2026

- AI-enabled planning and operations
- Hybrid-ready venues with technology
- Green and zero-waste event frameworks
- Wellness-integrated corporate retreats
- Destinations competing on both accessibility & cultural depth
- Hotels aligning MICE offerings with lifestyle & experiential trends
- Venues expanding capacity to host mega events, seminars, and global conventions



KEY SHIFTS TO DEFINE 2026

As India's MICE sector heads into 2026, corporate expectations have shifted sharply, with companies now seeking events that are not only efficient but strategically designed, culturally rooted, wellness-focused, and anchored in sustainability goals. This is reshaping the market, prompting venues and hotels to reinvent how meetings and experiences are created.

- **Business travel expenditure rising steadily:** According to latest industry estimates, India's business travel spend is projected to grow at an annual rate of 9–10 per cent until 2027 — higher than many Asia-Pacific markets. Offsite meetings have returned to pre-pandemic levels, while incentives and recognition travel are also rising.
- **Domestic destinations gaining strategic relevance:** Tier II cities

such as Visakhapatnam, Coimbatore, Guwahati, and Bhubaneswar are witnessing increased corporate interest due to improved air connectivity, lower event costs, and differentiated cultural offerings along with sustainable options. These emerging destinations are now competing with long-established hubs such as Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad.

- **Wellness and sustainability no longer optional:** Global corporates, especially in domains such as IT, pharma, consulting, and BFSI, are mandating wellbeing-led formats for events and sustainability benchmarks in event RFPs. From carbon-neutral exhibitions to curated wellness breaks, MICE programmes are adapting frameworks once considered niche such as zero-waste commitments, green transportation, and local sourcing influencing venue selection along with vendor partnerships.

As India's MICE sector navigates rising expectations and diversified event models, RoI can no longer be measured by a singular format



● **The rise of AI-powered event platforms:** Platforms such as BIEC's newly developed 'Expo Planner' highlight a major industry-wide move towards AI-driven event intelligence. Such systems streamline communication, scheduling, footfall analysis, lead generation, and matchmaking, offering organisers real-time visibility and actionable insights.

● **Hybrid events evolve into multi-format ecosystems:** By 2026, hybrid events will become a default capability across major venues. This will include

high-capacity, low-latency internet infra, immersive 360° projection, XR stages, and metaverse-enabled showcases for product launches and investor meetings. Digital engagement tools for remote and on-site attendees will be a common sight.

● **Smart venue operations:** RFID-based visitor movement mapping, touchless registration systems, automated catering logistics, and sensor-enabled crowd flow management are becoming standard in new buildings. This is expected to enhance venue operations.

● **Burnout and productivity challenges influencing event formats:** Companies are designing retreats that balance strategic discussions with restorative experiences such as yoga, guided mindfulness, nature immersion, quiet work zones, and cultural discovery.

● **Localisation shaping storytelling and engagement:** Events increasingly feature regional culinary showcases, artisanal crafts, sustainable décor, and community collaborations, allowing delegates to experience the destination meaningfully. **MT**



TAIWAN
WAVES OF WONDER

Experience the Exceptional Luxury travel, reimagined in Taiwan.

“Taiwan’s finest destinations, designed for the discerning traveler.”

For more information, please contact:

TAIWAN TOURISM INFORMATION CENTRE IN MUMBAI

Add: Suite No. GRA 102, Raheja Platinum, WeWork, Marol, Andheri East, Mumbai, Maharashtra - 400059

✉ info@blinkbrandsolutions.com | 📞 +91 98203 71566 | 🌐 eng.taiwan.net.tw

As companies push for sharper outcomes from events, advances in AI and Extended Reality (XR) are becoming central to how event planners measure engagement, training gains, and overall impact of meetings and conferences.



AI, XR anchor future of events



AJAY K WADHAWAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AIR iQ

As hybrid events mature and corporates increasingly demand measurable outcomes, the MICE sector is shifting towards technology integration and sharper performance metrics. Planners no longer rely on intuition; they look for quantifiable engagement levels, competency gains, network efficiency, and RoI visibility. Sector experts say that the next two years will see AI and (XR) move from experimental add-ons to essential planning tools. **Ajay K Wadhawan**, Executive Director, AIR iQ, believes engagement metrics remain the strongest predictor of event success. “The measure of attendee engagement should be gauged by participation throughout the event. Metrics such as attentive attendance tell us whether the event has truly worked.”

He stressed that well-mixed session formats, relevant content, and careful speaker selection influence participation. Networking efficiency, he added, depends heavily on user-friendly meeting apps — the higher

the number of meetings, the greater the networking. Wadhawan sees XR and AI as transformative for RoI, especially in corporate capability-building. “XR solutions can improve competency levels by around 50 per cent and reduce training time by almost 69 per cent,” he noted. While the cost of AI-driven learning may be higher initially, Wadhawan believes that it saves a fortune in the long run through reduced downtime and lower operational losses.

Data integration is becoming central to how MICE planners forecast outcomes. Air iQ uses its own registration technology, a dedicated travel subsidiary offering negotiated rates, in-house hotel contracting, and externally managed engagement tools aligned with HR and admin teams. The result is a single predictive view rather than dispersed data streams. By 2026, Wadhawan expects AI to act as an end-to-end planning engine along with post-event evaluator helping planners track impact with far greater precision than ever before. **MT**



Experience
عُمان
OMAN





How AI is rewriting

the rules of corporate events

Highlighting AI's growing influence, **Rajdev Bhattacharya**, *Global Head, T&E, Wipro*, says it will shift interactions from intangible conversations to quantifiable outcomes.

I tried hosting my first 'hybrid' event back in 2022. The result? Juggling chaos — physical venues, virtual platforms, tech vendors, and a silent prayer that both worlds would somehow sync but in 2025, it is the real deal. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has stepped in as the invisible co-planner and I am absolutely loving it (and learning as I go). With a year gone, I dare say it is just not about innovation and fancy frills. In fact, it will be about survival for our ROI-obsessed industry. Let's explore why:

SMARTER ENGAGEMENT

If there is one thing I have learned in this business, it is that engagement, not headcount, defines success. The 'aha' moment arrives when you realise that AI now personalises every attendee's journey right from the moment they register.

Event platforms are mastering this art too, using machine learning to analyse profiles, behaviour, and interests, and then recommending sessions, exhibitors, and even meetings between like-minded participants.

“

At one large-scale corporate conference, automated check-ins reduced waiting time by 70 per cent and can trim manpower costs by 30 per cent at the next event.

”

preventing bottlenecks before they happen. For an industry that thrives on precision, these are not just efficiencies but risk-management saviours.

ROI THAT FEELS MEASURABLE

Here is the familiar question every corporate buyer hears: What did we get out of this event? AI finally gives us data-backed answers. It tracks every click, conversation, and conversion by turning thousands of micro-interactions into clear and quantifiable outcomes. For once, ROI does not feel like guesswork.

INNOVATE WITH INTEGRITY

Before you roll your eyes at the hype, here is my ‘Spider-Man moment’: With great data comes great responsibility.

AI systems thrive on personal information — from registration details to behavioural insights — which raises real concerns about privacy and transparency.

So, what is the best way forward? Transparent consent processes, limiting unnecessary data capture, and ensuring automation never replaces the human touch. Easier said than done, but it is here to stay. At the end, let us be clear that AI is not replacing creativity; it is amplifying it.



RAJDEV BHATTACHARYA
GLOBAL HEAD, TRAVEL & EXPENSE
WIPRO

Technology now handles the heavy lifting — logistics, data crunching, audience analytics, freeing planners to focus on what truly matters, curating experiences that move people and deliver measurable business impact. As the industry evolves, those who master the blend of AI precision and human imagination will define the next era of MICE. With this thought, I can say, next year, my smartest hybrid events would not just happen instead they will be intelligently designed. **MT**

(Views expressed are the author's own.
The publication may or may not subscribe to them.)

It is not happening only in the West. In India, a major pharma conference in Mumbai used a similar tool to connect doctors with relevant researchers, leading to higher exhibitor ROI, richer conversations, and seamless real-time translation and captioning.

EFFICIENCY

Behind the scenes, AI is quietly transforming event logistics. Facial-recognition check-ins and predictive scheduling eliminate queues and overlaps. At one large-scale corporate conference, automated check-ins reduced waiting time by 70 per cent and can trim manpower costs by 30 per cent at the next event.

We created a use case where AI dashboards monitor real-time attendance, room utilisation, and digital engagement. They can even forecast crowd movement or catering needs,





Data-driven travel management the next big thing

As AI becomes a universal reality, the data-driven insights and predictions are strongly influencing the designing and optimisation of business travel programmes.

With macroeconomic shifts, evolving company objectives and traveller preferences influence the business travel landscape. As a result, the expectation for travel managers to do more with less has become far more prevalent.

While technology has played a pivotal role in supporting the achievement of business travel objectives, AI has emerged as a game changer for travel managers seeking to elevate their travel programmes. AI works by using algorithms to process large amount of data, identify patterns,

and make informed decisions or predictions. AI models can be trained to follow detailed instructions, thus delivering desired outcomes for targeted objectives. “The use of AI in business travel is accelerating quickly,” **Pooja Patil**, Head, Business Development, India, Synergy Global Housing, shared. “At its most basic level, we can leverage AI to formulate customised travel recommendations, such as identifying the best and cheapest flights to Chennai, but where it gets really exciting is AI’s use in managing entire business travel programmes in adherence to travel policy.”



POOJA PATIL
HEAD, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, INDIA
SYNERGY GLOBAL HOUSING

“AI is a force multiplier for travel teams,” **Hanish Vithal**, Chief Technology Officer, SilverDoor, stated. “We are becoming more efficient, tracking carbon footprints, improving traveller experiences, and turning scattered data into strategic insights, all while keeping teams lean. Companies can now scale faster without the traditional overhead.”

REDEFINING BUSINESS TRAVEL

So, as long as an AI model has access to an impactful amount of data, AI holds the potential to entirely redefine the way a business travel programme is managed and optimised. Some examples of how AI is transforming the business travel landscape include:

- **Cost management:** AI can improve cost efficiency by analysing historical spend data, market trends, and policy parameters. For example, AI-driven booking tools can suggest accommodation or flight options that fall within pre-determined rate caps while still meeting traveller comfort and convenience needs.
- **Data analytics:** Tailored Business Intelligence (BI) dashboards powered by AI can identify patterns of overspending, point out areas to cut down on carbon consumption, highlight underperforming suppliers, and even forecast future travel budgets. This allows travel managers to make proactive decisions, demonstrate tangible fiscal savings, and other impactful benefits to leadership.



HANISH VITHAL
CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER
SILVERDOOR

Business Intelligence dashboards powered by AI can identify patterns of overspending, underperforming suppliers, and even forecast future travel budgets

GUEST SAFETY

AI has the capability to enhance guest safety and wellbeing at multiple touchpoints. By leveraging data on location safety scores, real-time travel advisories, historical incident reports, and combining it with traveller demographics, AI can make personalised travel safety recommendations, such as accommodation and transport for solo female travellers.

Speaking on risk management from a wider perspective, Vithal said, “We can now monitor threats in real-time

24/7 with fewer people and better results. When disruptions hit, such as sudden itinerary changes, predictive alerts and automated workflows help us respond in minutes, not hours, with ready alternatives.”

DECARBONISATION

By analysing supplier sustainability credentials, emissions data, and travel patterns, AI tools can recommend lower-carbon travel options and accommodations that support a company’s decarbonisation targets.

“A common misconception is that eco-friendly travel options are more expensive,” Patil noted. “However, with AI comes the opportunity to identify environment friendly options, which are within a company’s fiscal and carbon budgets.”

TRAVELLER PREFERENCES

By understanding both the demographics (such as age, gender, and travel frequency) and psychographics (such as unique lifestyle, cultural, religious, or dietary considerations) of travellers, AI can deliver travel recommendations that make business trips more comfortable and inclusive. In the case of accommodation for example, it can suggest properties with halal dining options for those who practice Islam, providing tailored recommendations without having to spend hours on research.

ADAPTING TO CHANGE

As AI continues to evolve at an extraordinary pace, it is reshaping how business travel programmes are designed, managed, and optimised.

For travel managers, success will depend on their ability to adapt, remain open to experimentation, continuously refining processes and embracing change as technology advances and becomes ubiquitous. The business travel industry is built on its people and meaningful connection between them. This is why, AI should complement, not replace, real humanised and trusted service. The most effective travel programmes will strike a balance between intelligent automation and human empathy, while keeping people and their personal experiences at the heart of every journey. **MT**

(Views expressed are the author’s own. The publication may or may not subscribe to them.)

Can Delhi rock as creative capital?

Delhi's announcement of hosting 30 major cultural events in just 80 days marks an unprecedented creative push, one that promises global visibility but also raises crucial questions.

By **Janice Alyosius**

Delhi government's recent announcement of hosting over 30 major cultural events in just 80 days marks the city's most ambitious entertainment push in recent years. The line-up, spanning Travis Scott to Zakir Khan, signals a clear attempt to reposition the capital as a global creative powerhouse. Backed by the Delhi Government, Event and Entertainment Management Association (EEMA) and PHD Chamber of Commerce and

Industry (PHDCCI), the initiative aims to energise the local economy, and project a new cultural confidence.

But the scale also raises fundamental questions: Does Delhi currently have the infrastructure, logistical muscle, and regulatory ease required to support a festival calendar of this magnitude?

While the government is signalling readiness with improved venues and streamlined support, industry players remain cautiously optimistic. Their core concerns centre around infrastructure gaps, licensing complexities, traffic management, and the need for more purpose-built entertainment arenas. Their inputs offer a realistic picture of what it will take for Delhi to truly emerge as India's Creative Capital.

Rekha Gupta, Chief Minister, Delhi, declared, "Delhi is now fully ready with world-class infrastructure, safety measures, and logistical support to host these events seamlessly. With Modi Ji's vision, Delhi is confidently moving from restrictions to opportunities and from obstacles to success." **Kapil Mishra**, Minister of Tourism, Art &



JOIN AN EXCLUSIVE GROUP
OF PROPERTIES WORLDWIDE
THAT SET THE GLOBAL
BENCHMARK

THE WORLD'S GOLD STANDARD IN
HOTEL SUSTAINABILITY IS HERE

GSTC CERTIFICATION NOW IN INDIA

MORE GUESTS.
LOWER COSTS.
STRONGER BRAND.
SMARTER SUSTAINABILITY.

+91 9871003279 QUALSTAR.CO.IN

AUDITED BY QUALSTAR, CERTIFIED BY UCSL



United
Certification
Systems



Culture, Government of Delhi, added, “My mission is to bring world-class events to the city and firmly establish Delhi as a global creative capital.”

Rajeev Jain, Chair, PHDCCI Entertainment Committee, and Founder and Director, Rashi Entertainment, described the moment as a turning point, “Delhi is unlocking its full potential as a platform for the global entertainment economy. It is poised to become the epicentre of India’s culture and event-driven future.” Infrastructure and licensing Industry voices stress that Delhi still has significant ground to cover. Pointing out that infrastructure remains a primary constraint in the national capital, **Nittin T Dubey**, Founder, Seven Wonders Vacations, said, “We still lack the kind of arenas Delhi needs for large-scale events. There are only one or two major venues, and you cannot repeat every event at the same place.”

He added that the city’s traffic situation and licensing ecosystem remain major pain points. “Permissions from agencies like PPL and IPRS take time, and the costs are huge. These are private bodies, but the government must intervene. For 30–35 events, we need streamlined permissions and better systems.”

BETTER PLANNING

Offering a counterview, **Vikramjeet Sharma**, Founder, Le Florence Weddings, said Delhi already has the backbone needed, if planning is meticulous. “Delhi certainly has the infra: stadiums, arenas, heritage monuments. What we need is careful planning so that heritage sites are protected and traffic is managed well.”

On licensing, he argued that Delhi is ahead of many states. He said, “Delhi already has a clear structure with DCP one-stop licensing, but if the government can bring all permissions — police, fire, Novex, PPL, IPRS, into a true single-window system, it will remove a huge amount of stress for organisers. One-window licensing is essential if we want seamless planning for 30 global events in 80 days.”

He also emphasised the need for better government coordination during large concerts, “When Diljit performed at JLN, traffic was jammed

for hours. That is not on the organiser, traffic management is a government responsibility if we want Delhi to be a concert capital.”

With India’s live events market booming, due largely to young consumers with higher spending power, industry leaders agree on one thing: the potential is massive. But for Delhi to claim the title of ‘Creative Capital’, the next 80 days will be a stress test of its infrastructure, governance readiness, and ability to deliver seamless large-scale experiences. **MT**



RAJEEV JAIN
CHAIR, PHDCCI ENTERTAINMENT
COMMITTEE, & FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR
RASHI ENTERTAINMENT



VIKRAMJEET SHARMA
FOUNDER
LE FLORENCE WEDDINGS



Where meetings meet mindfulness

Blending biophilia suites with dedicated work pods, Radisson Blu Hotel & Suites GRT Chennai is crafting spaces where corporate travellers feel at home, while seamlessly balancing productivity and comfort.



By **Janice Alyosius & Amita Pandey**

Every time a corporate employee boards a flight for yet another conference or boardroom meeting, they carry with them the same silent wish that their hotel stay would feel less like a layover and more like home. To cater to this wish of many corporate travellers, Radisson Blu Hotel & Suites GRT Chennai has taken the lead and come forward with innovative ways to serve corporate guests. Reimagining what a business stay should be, they have blended thoughtful design, warm



VIKRAM COTAH
CEO, GRT HOTELS & RESORTS

service, and smart details that transform routine travel into something that feels a lot closer to home. **Vikram Cotah**, CEO, GRT Hotels, described it best, “Our mainstay in this hotel is of corporates. So 80 per cent of our business is through corporates. We are very strategically located, very close to the airport, just 15 minutes to the national and international terminals.”

Staying in this hotel does not feel like you are stepping into a typical high-rise, glass-and-steel metro hotel. Instead, you walk into a space alive with greenery, natural light, and soft music. “Corporates do not want to come back to the usual thing,” Cotah explained. “They want to just unwind. You will walk around and see biophilia everywhere, you will see plants, and then you listen to music.” He emphasised that the property aims to impact all five senses of guests. Sharing a unique detail about the property, he said, “Interestingly, the biophilia floor carries petrichor — the smell of earth when it rains. We created that smell so that corporates feel completely rejuvenated after a long day of conference or meeting.” But rejuvenation is not limited to ambiance. The hotel also features a 3,500 sq ft gym, where trainers guide guests with passion, making it a playground for wellness rather than just another gym. Even when hunger calls, the homely feeling continues at the dining table. “We tell stories with our food,” Cotah emphasised. The ‘Ministry of Chutney’, born as the only Anglo-Indian restaurant in the city, revives centuries-old culinary traditions, while ‘Curry Theory’ reinvents Tamil Nadu’s street food with a modern twist.

What truly sets the brand apart in the region is its knack for weaving technology and design into experiences, which are in sync with the fast-paced corporate life. It features a sleek lobby podcast room called ‘Techverse’, where you can record podcasts and separate work pods designed for quiet productivity. “We have taken care of even the smallest details. These are the value-adds that the corporate, would look for,” concluded Cotah. With all these thoughtful details, GRT is curating dream spaces where corporate visitors can feel at home, no matter how far they roam. **MT**



India powers APAC business travel

India is fast emerging as the engine of Asia Pacific's business travel growth, driving record spending and redefining how corporates move, meet, and grow.

By **Dr Shehara Rizly Fernando**

Business travel is soaring globally and nowhere is this momentum more evident than in the Asia Pacific (APAC) region, capturing unprecedented attention, where demand, connectivity, and corporate engagement are rising in tandem.

According to **Elle Ng-Darmawan**, Regional Director, APAC, Global Business Travel Association (GBTA), the Asia Pacific region now accounts for over 40 per cent of global business travel spending. "India is a key driver of this momentum," she said. "It is one

of the fastest-growing business travel markets globally and its corporates are travelling with purpose; expanding, training, and building connections."

What is striking about India's role in this growth story is how technology has amplified its reach. Across APAC region, 78 per cent of business travellers are comfortable using AI-driven booking platforms, while 72 per cent rely on mobile wallets — the highest rate globally. For India, this shift translates into smarter, more agile travel management systems that cater to the evolving preferences of companies and travellers balancing cost control with productivity.

A Unit of GRT Hotels & Resorts

Radisson

BENGALURU
CITY CENTER

ULSOOR LAKE



Elevate Your Stay. Empower Your Day

Experience the perfect balance of comfort and productivity with our **Business Class Rooms starting from INR 9500 plus taxes***

Upgrade to Business Class

Complimentary daily Sunshine breakfast | Happy Hours between 6 – 8 PM at Kari Theory
Early check-in & late check-out (subject to availability) | High-speed Wi-Fi for seamless productivity
Save up to 50% on Signature Therapies at Bodhi Prana | 2 Pieces of complimentary laundry per day
24 Hours access to Outdoor Pool & Gym | Personalized services & premium in-room amenities
Earn Radisson Reward



*T&C Apply

SIMPLY DELIGHTFUL

Call us at 0 80622 10103 | Email: reservations@rdbcc.com
2, Gangadhar Chetty Road, Ulsoor, Bangalore- 560 042.





Corporate travel today is not just about getting from one meeting to another. It is a strategic driver for growth. Indian businesses are investing heavily in travel for sales, training, and conferences; three areas that directly impact market reach and skill development. “Travel enables relationship-building and knowledge-sharing, which are essential for success in fast-evolving markets like ours,” Elle explained.

Although, the post-pandemic world has brought new priorities. Duty of care now sits at the top of every travel manager’s agenda. “The more people a business has travelling, the greater the responsibility to ensure their safety,” Elle added. Technology plays a key role here, helping companies track employee movement and respond swiftly to disruptions or crises.

Sustainability is another major theme shaping India’s corporate travel approach. With 59 per cent of companies across APAC expected to track their travel emissions by the end of this year — which is double the figures from last year — green policies are becoming standard practice globally. Indian corporates are no exception, as they increasingly align travel policies with environmental commitments and global Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) goals.

“

Indian businesses are investing heavily in travel for sales, training, and conferences; three areas that directly impact market reach and skill development.

”



ELLE NG-DARMAWAN
REGIONAL DIRECTOR, APAC
GBTA

In light of this momentum, GBTA is doubling down on India. After the success of its Asia Pacific conference in Singapore, the association has launched an India advisory board and is hosting its first GBTA India Business Travel Summit in New Delhi in November. The aim is to provide education, resources, and community engagement to help Indian travel professionals adapt to an industry that’s evolving faster than ever. For India, business travel is no longer a cost, it is an investment. As companies compete for global opportunities, India’s ability to blend technology, sustainability, and human connection may well define the next chapter of corporate travel across the Asia Pacific. **MT**



Driving across Madhya Pradesh

With the arrival of winter, Madhya Pradesh invites you to road trips filled with misty windshields, adventure, and unforgettable stories waiting around every bend of this majestic state.

Winter in Madhya Pradesh is pure magic — the crisp mornings, gentle sunshine on golden fields, and bonfire nights under starry skies. It is the best time to hit the road and explore the heart of India, where superb highways, charming pitstops, and magnificent destinations make every drive unforgettable.

HERITAGE HIGHWAY GWALIOR–BHOPAL (557 KM)

Start your journey in Gwalior with hot *kachori-sabzi* before exploring the majestic Gwalior Fort. Head south to Narwar Fort for panoramic views, visit Surwaya's 13th-century temples, and unwind at Shivpuri's lakeside tourist village. The next day, explore Scindia cenotaphs, Madhav National Park, and George Castle. Enjoy lunch at Chanderi's Kila Kothi, stop at Pranpur's women-run café, and conclude with Eran's Varaha sculpture, Sironj's *dari* weavers, and Islamnagar before reaching Bhopal.

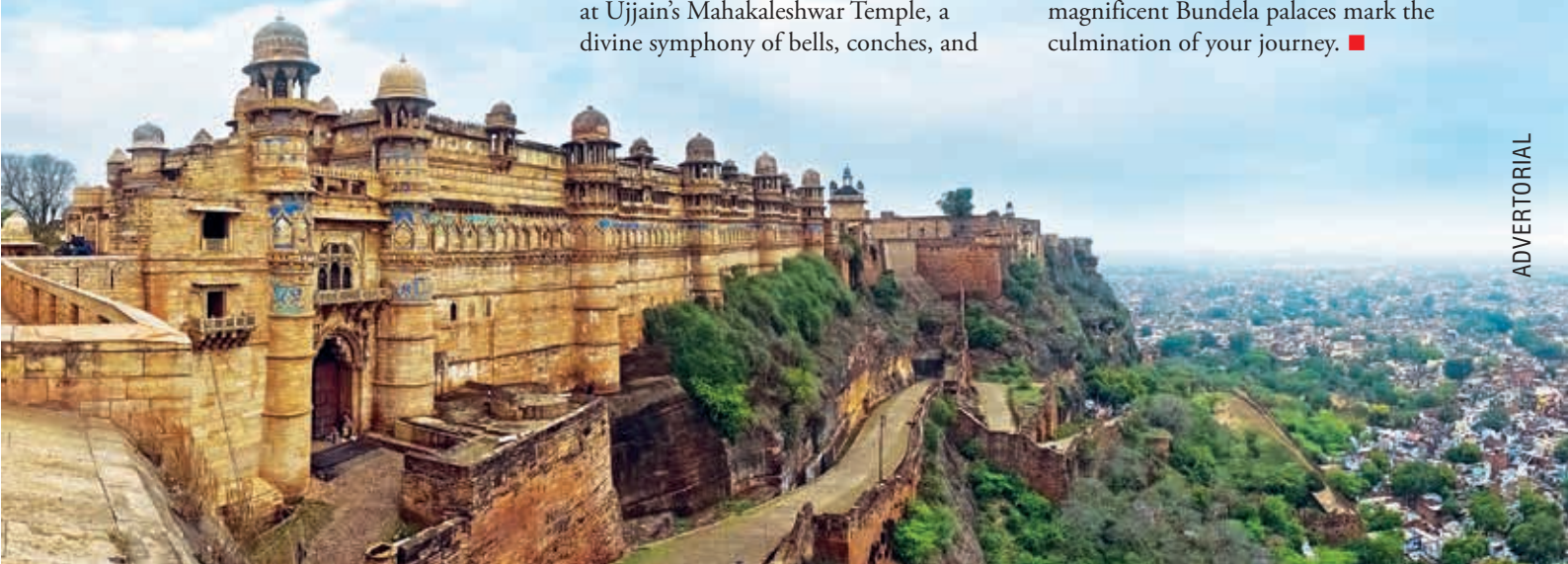
PILGRIM'S PROGRESS UJJAIN–BURHANPUR (578 KM)

Begin at dawn with the *Bhasma Aarti* at Ujjain's Mahakaleshwar Temple, a divine symphony of bells, conches, and

chants. Warm up with *poha-jalebi* in the morning chill, then visit Bhartrihari Caves and Gadkalika Temple. The next day, explore Jahaz Mahal, Rani Rupmati Pavilion, and other medieval treasures. Visit the Buddhist Bagh Caves, honour Baji Rao's cenotaph, and join Narmada *aarti* at Maheshwar Fort. Watch the town's weavers at work before seeking blessings at Omkareshwar. Conclude at Burhanpur, steeped in Mughal heritage and home to the original tomb of Mumtaz Mahal. End with the city's *kebabs* and sweet *Daraba*.

BUNDELKHAND & BEYOND REWA–DATIA (597 KM)

This route blends wilderness with heritage. Begin in Rewa with little-known palaces like Govindgarh and Vynkat Bhavan, taste *Indrahar*, and spot white tigers at Mukundpur. Continue to the mighty Bahuti Falls, the state's tallest. Explore Art Ichol near Maihar, then head for safaris at Panna National Park to see tigers and sloth bears. Stay like royalty in Orchha, where Lord Ram is worshipped as a king, or raft along the Betwa River before enjoying a Bundeli thali at a Ladpura Khas homestay. End at Datia, where magnificent Bundela palaces mark the culmination of your journey. ■



Sabre's playbook for smarter biz travel

With its AI-driven platform, Sabre is helping travel management firms simplify operations and deliver more personalised journeys to corporates, writes **Brett Thorstad**, VP, Agency Sales & Airline Distribution, APAC, Sabre.



BRETT THORSTAD
VP, AGENCY SALES & AIRLINE
DISTRIBUTION, APAC, SABRE

Expectations placed on Travel Management Companies (TMCs) have never been higher. Travellers want flexibility, personalisation, and safety. Corporates want cost control, visibility, and compliance. Meanwhile, TMCs are caught in the middle, navigating a fragmented content landscape while trying to deliver seamless experiences. To tackle this chaos, at Sabre, we believe that technology can act as a bridge and lead the way for every stakeholder.

Our integrated ecosystem connects air, hotel, ground transport, and more through a unified marketplace powered

by Sabre APIs and underpinned with systemic AI. This is not just about access; it is about relevance. By harmonising traditional and Low-Cost Carrier (LCC) offers with industry-leading New Distribution Capability (NDC) and lodging content, we help TMCs deliver richer, more personalised options without compromising on duty-of-care or operational efficiency.

However, content fragmentation remains a challenge. A recent Sabre-commissioned global study found 91 per cent of agencies use four or more booking systems, with half managing seven or more API integrations. This complexity drives up

While GenAI chatbots have shown the potential, it is agentic AI that can eliminate friction between traveller intent and fulfilment

Media Partner

The business travel magazine
MICEtalk[™]
Meetings • Incentives • Conferences • Events



Where the business events world meets in Asia Pacific

REGISTER NOW:
AIME.COM.AU

MELBOURNE

9-11 FEBRUARY 2026



+4,500
VISITORS

+20,000
MEETINGS

+700
HOSTED BUYERS

costs and strains resources. While direct airline connections absolutely have a role to play within the ecosystem, further Sabre analysis found they can introduce more complexity than clarity.

Promises of cheaper fares and richer content often fall short, with buyers facing fragmented service, inconsistent experiences, and scalability challenges. Our response? SabreMosaic™ Travel Marketplace — a multi-source content platform that consolidates disparate data into a single, intelligent stream, empowering agents to serve travellers better, faster, and smarter.

The upcoming year 2026 will be the year of agentic AI. That is where real transformation lies. Sabre is pioneering agentic-ready APIs that allow autonomous systems to act on behalf of travellers with the potential to book flights, secure hotel rooms, and even file expense reports. These APIs connect to our proprietary Model Context Protocol (MCP) server, which acts as a universal translator with one of the richest data sets in travel and AI agents. That data set spans over 50 petabytes giving Sabre's AI models the breadth and depth to make smarter, faster decisions. Imagine a disruption proxy agent that waits on hold with

A new global study reveals that 91% of travel agencies use four or more booking systems, with half managing seven or more API integrations

an airline, rebooks a flight, pays with stored credentials, and updates the traveller's calendar — all without needing intervention. Or a hotel ops agent that confirms late arrivals and arranges oat milk for breakfast. Our agentic APIs are not hypotheticals, in fact, we are already in beta phase with a set of customers.

We are building out experiences with them and validating use cases. The goal is to expand that beta in the coming months to include more developers and more customers. Our new AI whitepaper, 'Chat as the New Influencer: From Conversations to Clicks', forecasts a seismic shift in how travel, both leisure and corporate, is discovered, personalised, and booked.

While GenAI chatbots have shown the potential, it is agentic AI that can eliminate friction between traveller intent and fulfilment. Conversational commerce powered by agentic AI is not just a new channel but a new paradigm, poised to redefine the traveller journey and unlock unprecedented growth across the industry — akin to how commerce via social media revolutionised retail industries over the past decade.

In short, Sabre is not just reacting to industry shifts, we are anticipating them, and shaping them. Through intelligent APIs, modular platforms, and agentic AI, we are helping TMCs move from fragmented systems to fluid experiences. **MT**

(Views expressed are the author's own. The publication may or may not subscribe to them.)



Media Partner

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

SATTE

India & Asia's Biggest Travel Expo



Official Media Partner



informa markets

25-27 Feb 2026

Yashobhoomi
(India International Convention &
Expo Centre), New Delhi



YEARS.

**ENDLESS LEGACY.
INFINITE OPPORTUNITIES.**



REGISTER NOW

₹2500/- AT ₹500/-

FOR MARKETING AND ALLIANCES

SURENDRA SINGH
M: +91 98197 19695 | E: surendra.singh@informa.com

MANISH PANDEY
M: +91 96536 88140 | E: manish.pandey.in@informa.com

FOR STALL BOOKING OR BRANDING OPPORTUNITIES CONTACT

MUMBAI ISHAAN NAHAR | M: +91 99201 95621 | E: ishaan.nahar@informa.com
NEEL PATEL | M: +91 7977341296 | E: neel.patel.in@informa.com

DELHI SANJIBA NINGTHOUJAM | M: +91 98107 21549 | E: sanjiba.ningthoujam@informa.com
MANKIRAN KAUR | M: +91 96505 92631 | E: mankiran.kaur@informa.com

KOCHI SANJEEV NAIR | M: +91 98462 49568 | E: snair03@gmail.com

www.satte.in

End-to-end travel solutions on the horizon



Adhip Nath Palchaudhuri and Ashok K Gupta along with other stakeholders at the event

Balmer Lawrie Travel & Vacations outlined plans to expand beyond ticketing into hotels, cabs, insurance, visas, and vacation packages with end-to-end, tech-driven MICE solutions.

By Janice Alyosius

After a challenging start to the year, India's MICE sector is showing remarkable resilience, with companies adapting quickly to evolving market demands. Balmer Lawrie's recent annual gathering in Delhi highlighted this optimism, underscoring the industry's ability to bounce back despite earlier setbacks.

Emphasising the company's forward-looking approach, **Adhip Nath Palchaudhuri**, Chairman and Managing Director, Balmer Lawrie Travel & Vacations, said, "We are seeing strong traveller demand returning and festival season bookings are surpassing last year. Going ahead, we plan to expand our offerings beyond ticketing into hotels, cabs, insurance, and visa services, creating a one-stop solution for both corporate and individual customers. We are leveraging technology partners to enhance service delivery and cater to consumer needs. The focus is on blending business with leisure, providing experiences that go beyond traditional MICE setups." Adding insight into operational strategies and customer engagement,

The focus is on blending business with leisure, providing holistic experiences

Ashok K Gupta, Human Resources Manager, Balmer Lawrie Travel & Vacations, affirmed, "With the growth of both travel and vacation divisions, we are making concerted efforts to convert all our travel clients for vacations, packages and overseas travel. We have provided self-booking tools for ticketing and automated vacation packages to meet evolving requirements."

Speaking about the potential in the MICE and leisure segments, **RS Louis**, Director, Service Businesses, Balmer Lawrie Travel & Vacations, added, "There is a huge demand. We



RS Louis and Ashok K Gupta enjoying Balmer Lawrie's annual meet

are already into MICE segment, but there is significant opportunity to grow this business. We are strengthening tie-ups with hotels and transport providers and creating end-to-end packages, covering travel, hotels, and immersive experiences." As leaders stressed innovation in corporate travel experiences, Palchaudhuri noted, "MICE is no longer just about meetings. It is a mix of business and pleasure. Adding entertainment, short treks, or nature activities enhances the corporate agenda and creates a memorable attendee experience." **MT**

INDEVA expands footprint



INDEVA Hotels & Resorts has partnered with Royal Estcon to operate new The Mor Stays property, marking another significant milestone in its expanding portfolio.

By MT Bureau

INDEVA Hotels & Resorts, a unit of India Expo Mart (IEM), has entered into a management agreement with Royal Estcon to operate a new property under its budget brand, 'The Mor Stays', marking another milestone in its growing Delhi NCR portfolio.

The upcoming hotel will feature 30 well-appointed rooms, a multi-cuisine restaurant, and a banquet facility, catering to the increasing demand for high-quality, affordable accommodation among business and leisure travellers alike. Positioned for modern, value-driven guests, The Mor Stays combines efficiency, contemporary design, and warm

hospitality to elevate the economy stay experience. The leadership teams from both the brands expressed optimism about the partnership, citing shared commitment to quality and guest satisfaction. The agreement further strengthens INDEVA's vision to build a network of smart, budget-friendly hotels across key destinations in India and beyond. **MT**

THE LEELA
PALACES HOTELS RESORTS

PIONEER YOUR BUSINESS JOURNEY

Host your next meeting or event in an atmosphere of refined elegance. With versatile spaces, cutting-edge technology, and exceptional service, every detail is designed to enhance productivity and collaboration. Experience luxury and sophistication tailored to your needs.

For reservations call: 1800 1031 444 | Email: reservations@theleela.com | www.theleela.com | [@theleela](https://www.facebook.com/theleela)

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts: Bengaluru, Chennai, Jaipur, New Delhi, Udaipur, Bhartiya City Bengaluru, Delhi, Gandhinagar, Gurugram, Mumbai, Ashtamudi, Kovalam and Hyderabad.

Scan to know more



Kochi emerges as pocket-friendly event hub

Blending business with Kerala's warmth and wellness, Crowne Plaza Kochi is fast becoming a favourite for corporates seeking meaningful meetings, cultural experiences, and great value beyond metro cities.

By **Janice Alyosius**

Crowne Plaza Kochi is fast emerging as one of the country's most dynamic and value-driven event venue in Kerala. With nearly 60 per cent of its business now coming from the MICE segment, the hotel is redefining what corporate gatherings in tier II destinations can offer when scale, technology, culture, and wellness are combined with a distinctive Kerala touch. **Dinesh Rai**, General Manager, Crowne Plaza Kochi, said, "Over the past three years, MICE has increasingly driven both occupancy and F&B revenue for us. Corporates are now looking for venues that seamlessly integrate business with leisure, and Kochi fits into that vision perfectly."

CULTURE & CONNECTION

Crowne Plaza Kochi has positioned itself at the intersection of business

and well-being — a growing trend among corporates blending meetings with rejuvenation and local immersion. The hotel houses Kerala's largest spa spanning 13,644 sq ft, along with two swimming pools, a fitness centre, and five award-winning dining outlets.

"Blended travel is the future, and our brand is designed around it. We curate cultural performances like Kathakali and Kalaripayattu for small gatherings and even offer snake boat race experiences right from our backwaters. These authentic touches transform meetings into memorable experiences," Rai said.

KOCHI'S GROWING APPEAL

With its scenic backwaters, convenient air connectivity, and competitive pricing, Kochi is steadily becoming a preferred MICE destination for corporates seeking high value without compromising on luxury. "Unlike tier I cities where costs are evidently higher,



DINESH RAI
GENERAL MANAGER
CROWNE PLAZA KOCHI

“
Unlike tier I cities where costs are higher, Kochi allows large-scale events with the global standards at better value.
”

Kochi allows large-scale events with the same global standards at far better value,” Rai explained.

TECH INVESTMENT

Responding to post-pandemic expectations for hybrid meetings, Crowne Plaza Kochi has upgraded its digital infra. All meeting spaces are now equipped with advanced AV

systems, high-speed connectivity, and platforms that support seamless virtual participation. “The demand for large-scale meetings has not declined; it has evolved. With that in mind, our venues are designed for flexibility — ergonomic layouts, smooth guest flow, and technology that supports both physical and virtual attendees,” Rai pointed out. On the pricing front, the

hotel maintains a flexible, partnership-driven model. “While our rates have increased in line with national trends, we tailor packages for repeat clients and long-term partnerships. Our goal is to build value through loyalty benefits via IHG One Rewards.”

SUSTAINABILITY ADDS TO ROI

Sustainability and operational efficiency have become integral to the property’s MICE proposition. “We replaced single-use plastic bottles with an in-house glass bottling plant that produces 1,000 bottles a day, eliminating over 30,000 plastic bottles a month. This not only supports environmental goals but also optimises costs for our clients,” Rai shared. With a 60:40 business mix tilted towards MICE, Crowne Plaza Kochi is a clear example of how tier II destinations are rewriting India’s corporate travel narrative. “Corporates today want more than meeting spaces; they want experiences that balance productivity with purpose. At Crowne Plaza Kochi, we have built exactly that balance, where work, wellness, and culture come together effortlessly.” **MT**



Behavioural science for impactful events

At IMEX Las Vegas, experts showed how understanding human behaviour fuels smarter negotiation, deeper engagement, and more meaningful event outcomes.

By **MT Bureau**

At its core, every event is an act of persuasion. Whether it is winning over clients or aligning partners, success depends on understanding people. Negotiation is not only about striking deals — it is about empathy, awareness, and creating spaces where everyone feels heard.

READING THE ROOM

The first step is empathy. You cannot

negotiate or design a great event without knowing what your audience wants. Often, it is not just about cost or convenience — delegates may crave recognition, growth, or belonging. When planners look beyond logistics to decode these motivations, they build experiences that truly resonate.

SAFETY BEFORE STRATEGY

Events thrive when people feel safe to speak, share, and connect. That is why creating psychological safety is not a luxury — it is a strategy. It could

mean rearranging seating, setting clear expectations, or helping introverts participate without pressure. As one expert noted, “Simply removing a few chairs changes the energy in the room.”

MERCH IS MEMORY

Physical objects — those event giveaways we often overlook can play a subtle but powerful role in memory. A well-designed token, linked to an emotional takeaway, helps participants carry the event’s message home.

COLLABORATION

True negotiation is not about compromise — it is about discovery. The analogy of two people fighting over an orange sums it up perfectly. Once they realised one wanted the juice and the other wanted the rind, both walked away satisfied. Event professionals too can unlock better results when they look for mutual benefit rather than fixed outcomes.

POWER OF PSYCHOLOGY

The most impactful events back intuition with insight. Surveys, data analytics, and close collaboration with marketing teams help demonstrate tangible RoI. **MT**

Travel

M!CE & CORPORATE SHOW

10–11 January 2026 | Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway



INDIA'S MOST POWERFUL CORPORATE TRAVEL MARKETPLACE IS BACK

Two days of curated meetings, purposeful networking, and partnerships that last.



What makes this show matter

- 2,000+ pre-scheduled B2B meetings
- 100% verified corporate buyers
- 25+ exhibiting brands and destinations
- 85% senior-level decision-makers
- Knowledge sessions, keynotes, and a networking gala dinner

New ideas. Real business. Long-term growth.

**Be part of India's most focused
MICE & Corporate Travel event**

Let's build the future of business travel together.

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





TRAVEL INSURANCE

Insurance for assurance

The MICE industry knows its risks, but true reliability emerges when organisers embrace smart safeguards with insurance solutions turning uncertainty into confidence.



DEV KARVAT
FOUNDER
ASEGO

By **MT Bureau**

Large-scale events bring together organisers, corporates, venues, and delegates, where even minor disruptions from flight delays to medical emergencies or political unrest can derail months of planning. Embedding Asego's solutions, like WaitMate and TrackMate, ensures lounge access during delays and real-time baggage tracking, allowing organisers to focus on experiences.

Asego has introduced specialised insurance products to address the growing diversity of MICE formats. For travel at sea, their cruise trip protection solution covers missed port departures and medical needs onboard, ensuring seamless journeys even in complex itineraries.

Furthermore, their liability protection solutions go a step further, safeguarding event organisers against claims, disputes, and operational risks. Extending this protection to travel agencies, Asego's Travel Business Protect offers a comprehensive shield against errors, operational exposures, and identity theft, while also including emergency travel assistance. With their new Dolphin platform, available on

both web and mobile, policies can be issued, endorsed, or extended in less than two minutes. For MICE organisers handling hundreds of delegates, this reduces friction, eliminates errors, and ensures compliance.

Speaking about how Asego's product are meticulously designed to safeguard the travel partners, **Dev Karvat**, Founder, Asego, remarked, "At Asego, our focus remains clear — to partner with the travel trade and deliver simple, relevant products, and round-the-clock assistance, so both travellers and businesses can operate and grow with confidence in a volatile environment."

The perception that insurance adds unnecessary cost to an already expensive event is a myth that must be dismantled. In reality, insurance protects revenue streams, reduces liability exposure, and builds delegate confidence in many ways.

By embedding structured assistance and insurance in planning an event, MICE organisers future-proof their business models, and unlock ancillary revenue opportunities. The future of MICE lies not in choosing between profit and protection but in recognising that one fuels the other. It makes the execution seamless and stress free. **MT**



SATTE gears up for next big leap

Celebrating its record-breaking 2025 edition, SATTE convened key industry stakeholders to review achievements, share insights, and chart a smarter, more technology-driven roadmap for 2026.

By MT Bureau

Building on the record-breaking success of its 2025 edition, South Asia's Travel & Tourism Exchange (SATTE) convened an exclusive stakeholder dialogue to set the course for 2026. The session brought together leading partners and industry representatives to celebrate milestones, review feedback, and outline strategic priorities for the coming year. The 2025 edition marked SATTE's most successful outing to date, welcoming 40,000 visitors and over 2,000 exhibitors at the Yashobhoomi Convention Centre.

A highlight of the discussion was the enhanced digital infrastructure at Yashobhoomi, which ensured seamless connectivity, efficient navigation, and stronger engagement throughout the venue. The infrastructure and IT teams credited upgraded systems and new collaborations with internet providers for delivering uninterrupted,

high-speed access that transformed delegate interactions. With 24.6 per cent year-on-year growth, SATTE has consolidated its leadership as South Asia's largest travel and tourism exhibition. The 2026 edition is projected to attract more than 45,000 attendees, underscoring its global reach and industry relevance. Planned enhancements include new food courts, vending zones, and additional entry gates, all aimed at improving crowd flow and visitor comfort.

Stakeholders commended SATTE's focus on inclusivity and its efforts towards empowering small and medium tourism operators by giving them access to a world-class platform. Its strength lies in supporting tourism operators who cannot afford overseas exhibitions and can participate at SATTE in a very economical manner. As SATTE prepares for a more technology-driven 2026 edition, it continues to shape the future of travel trade networking and innovation across the region. **MT**

MOVEMENTS



JULIEN FEUGER
Vice President
UNICEO France

UNICEO® has appointed Julien Feuger as its Vice President for France. Currently, Director of Global Congresses at BeOne Medicines, Feuger brings over two decades of global experience spanning France, Spain, and the United States. He has led major initiatives in event strategy, previously serving as Global Lead for Events & Branding at Almirall and Head of Congresses & Events at AbbVie France. He also teaches event strategy and management at the University of Barcelona.



PRAKASH JAYADEVAN
COO
The Residency Hotels

The Residency Hotels has appointed Prakash Jayadevan as its Chief Operating Officer. In this role, he will lead operational strategy and enhance performance across properties. With extensive hospitality management experience, Jayadevan brings strong expertise in service excellence and business optimisation. His operational insight and customer-centric approach are expected to elevate The Residency Hotels' position in a competitive hospitality landscape.



AJIT SINGH DHANKAR
General Manager
Wyndham Mohali

Ajit Singh Dhankar has been appointed as the General Manager by Wyndham Chandigarh Mohali. In this role, he will oversee end-to-end hotel operations, including property performance, sales and marketing strategy, revenue management, and overall profitability. He will drive brand service standards and implement key initiatives to strengthen team development. Dhankar previously served as General Manager at Parallel, a Radisson Individuals member in Udaipur, where he managed full hotel operations.



SATPREET SINGH
Associate Director, Sales
Grand Mercure at
Gopalan Mall

Grand Mercure Bengaluru at Gopalan Mall has appointed Satpreet Singh as Associate Director of Sales. With over a decade of experience across leading brands, he brings strong expertise in sales, revenue growth, and client management. Singh has previously held senior roles at Trinity Hotel Whitefield, Lemon Tree Whitefield, Hyatt Centric, and The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore. In his recent pre-opening leadership role at Trinity Hotel Whitefield, he drove market penetration and increased ADR to strengthen market positioning.



SREEJITH KOTTLA
General Manager
Ramada By Wyndham
Alleppey

Ramada by Wyndham Alleppey has appointed Sreejith Kottla as its General Manager. In this role, he will oversee overall hotel operations, drive guest satisfaction, maximise revenue, manage staff performance, and maintain quality and financial standards. He will also focus on strengthening Alleppey's position as a leading MICE destination. Kottla previously served as General Manager at Joys Hotels & Resorts in Thrissur, Kerala, where he was responsible for managing hotel operations and driving sales.



ABHISHEK SABHERWAL
Director, Sales
Andaz Delhi, by Hyatt

Abhishek Sabherwal has been appointed as the Director of Sales by Andaz Delhi, by Hyatt. With over two decades of experience in luxury hospitality, sales, and business development, he brings extensive expertise and a strong growth record across leading hotel brands. Known for leading high-performing teams and managing global key accounts, he has consistently strengthened revenue across corporate, MICE, and leisure segments while driving guest engagement and long-term client partnerships.



ASHUTOSH JAYEE
General Manager
Ramada Plaza By Wyndham
Jammu Vijaypur

Ashutosh Jayee has been appointed as the General Manager by Ramada Plaza by Wyndham Jammu Vijaypur. In this role, he will oversee hotel operations, staff management, sales, and marketing to strengthen overall performance. Jayee previously served as Head of Sales & Marketing at Radisson Blu Jammu, where he focused on brand standards, revenue generation, and client retention. He will now play a key role in ensuring Ramada Plaza Jammu Vijaypur continues to deliver quality service and exceptional value to guests.



URVASHI JHA
Cluster Marketing &
Communications Manager
Fairmont and Raffles Jaipur

Fairmont and Raffles Jaipur has appointed Urvashi Jha as the new Cluster Marketing and Communications Manager. With global experience in luxury hospitality and brand communications, she brings expertise in digital strategy, market positioning, and integrated storytelling. Jha has led campaigns that enhanced brand visibility and strengthened positioning for business and leisure travellers. Her strengths span digital strategy, influencer collaborations, F&B promotions, and consumer engagement.

SARAWAK WHERE CULTURE INSPIRES. NATURE CONNECTS BUSINESS GROWS



In Sarawak, the rhythm of culture meets the calm of nature – and together, they inspire a new way to connect. Rising from the heart of Borneo, BCCK2 is more than a venue; it's a living canvas for collaboration, innovation, and growth. Designed with sustainability at its core, this future-ready convention hub unites people, ideas, and industries under one visionary roof. With cutting-edge facilities, lush surroundings, and limitless potential, BCCK2 transforms every meeting into a meaningful experience.



CONTACT US

☎ 022 6741 1120

🌐 www.malaysia.travel

✉ tmmumbai@tourism.gov.my

follow us    



REDEFINE YOUR BUSINESS TRAVEL WITH YOUR VISA CORPORATE CARD.



Experience seamless travel with Visa Corporate Card:



Effortless payments
across the globe



Cashless
convenience



Transparent and
controlled expenses



Audit-ready reporting and more

*T & C Apply: [visa.co.in](https://www.visa.co.in)

Talk to us: VCSIndia@visa.com