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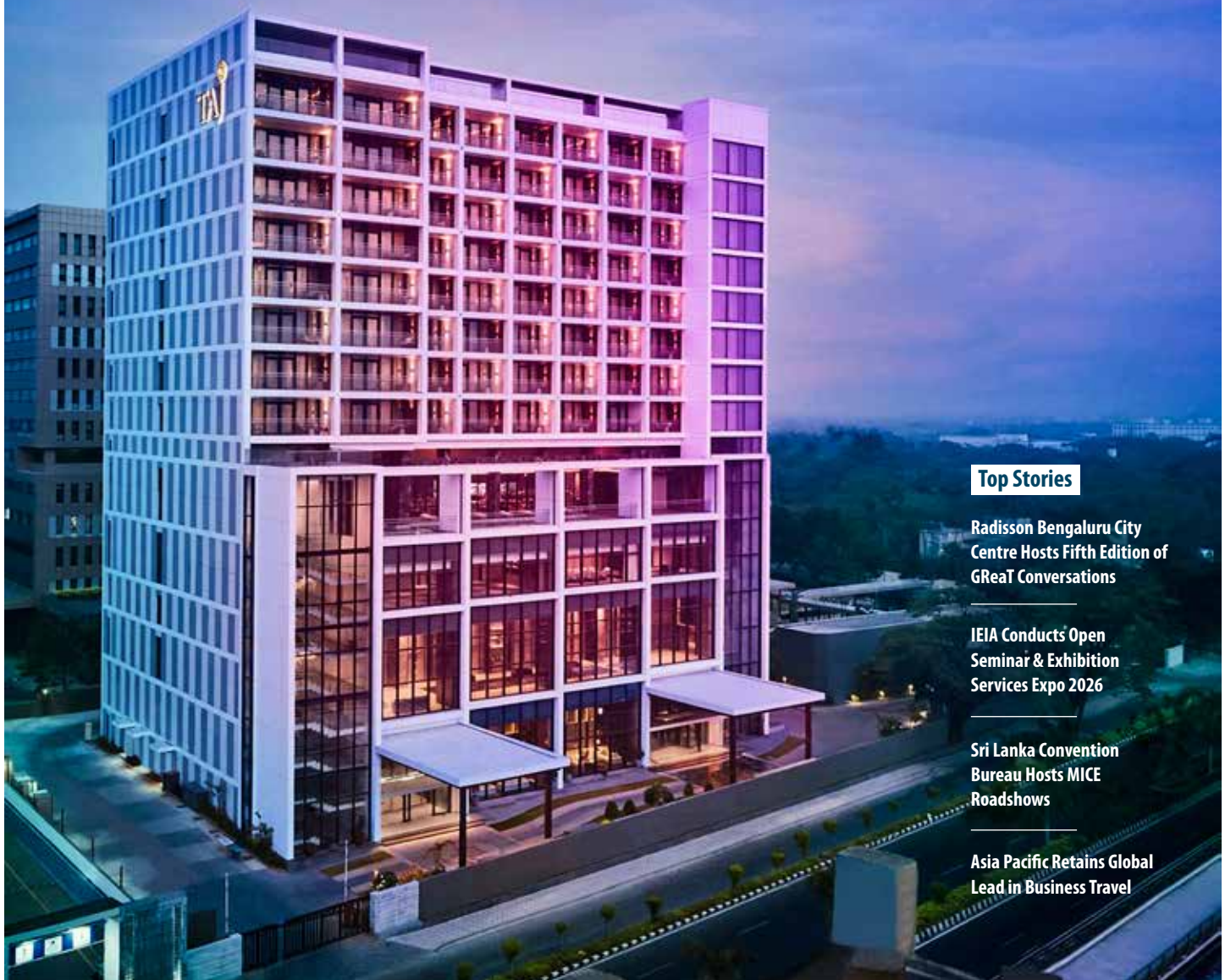
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Chennai's Next Check-In: Growth, Luxury and Lifestyle



Top Stories

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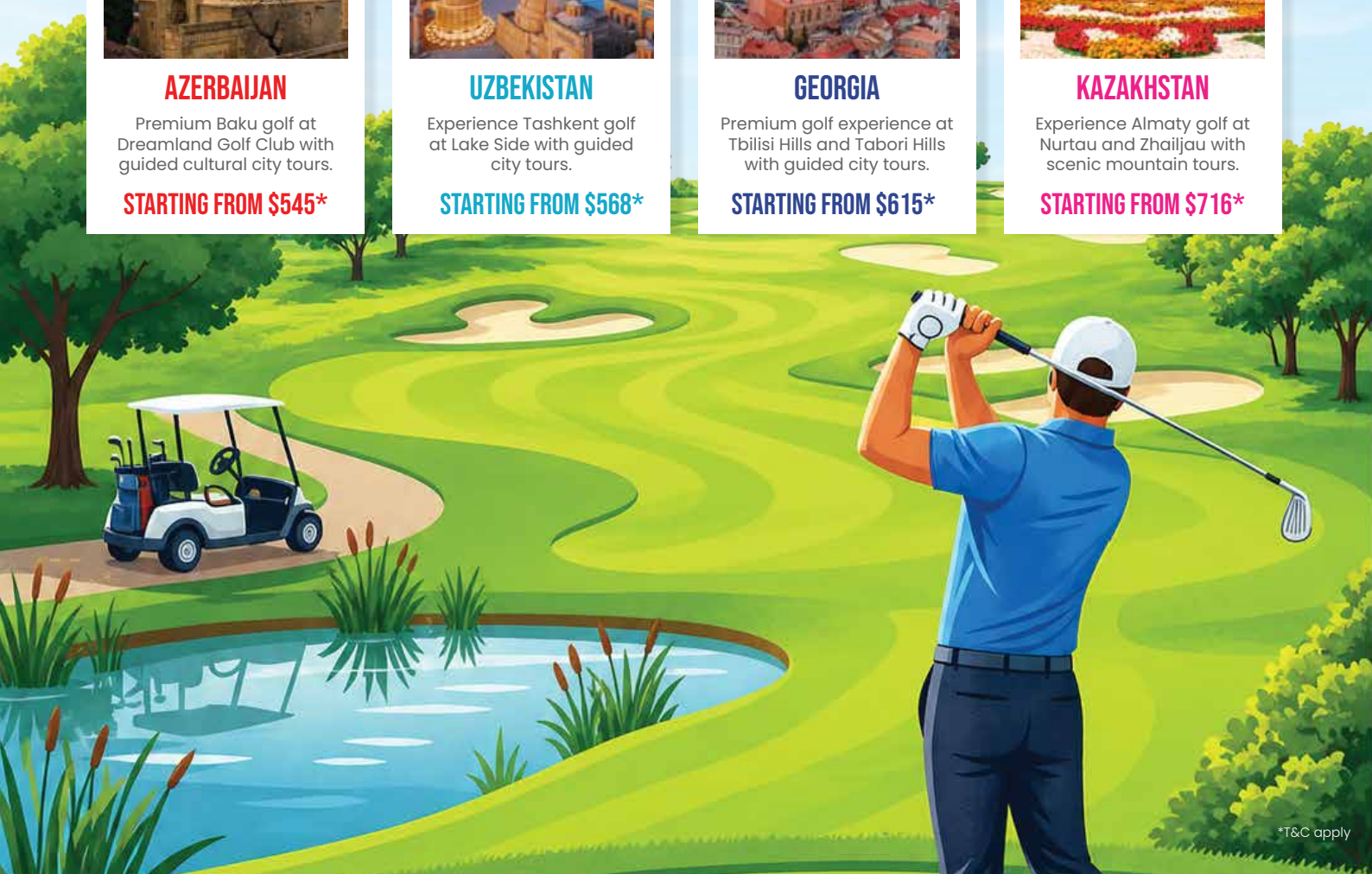
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As India's meetings industry continues its remarkable unpredictable growth trajectory, this edition of MICE-Point highlights the opportunities and challenges shaping the sector today.

Chennai's corporate hospitality landscape is witnessing unprecedented momentum. Driven by the expansion of global capability centres, technology firms, manufacturing investments, and a thriving services economy, the city has emerged as one of India's most dynamic destinations for corporate meetings, business travel, and premium hospitality experiences. The demand for quality venues, innovative event solutions, and business-friendly infrastructure continues to redefine the city's MICE ecosystem.

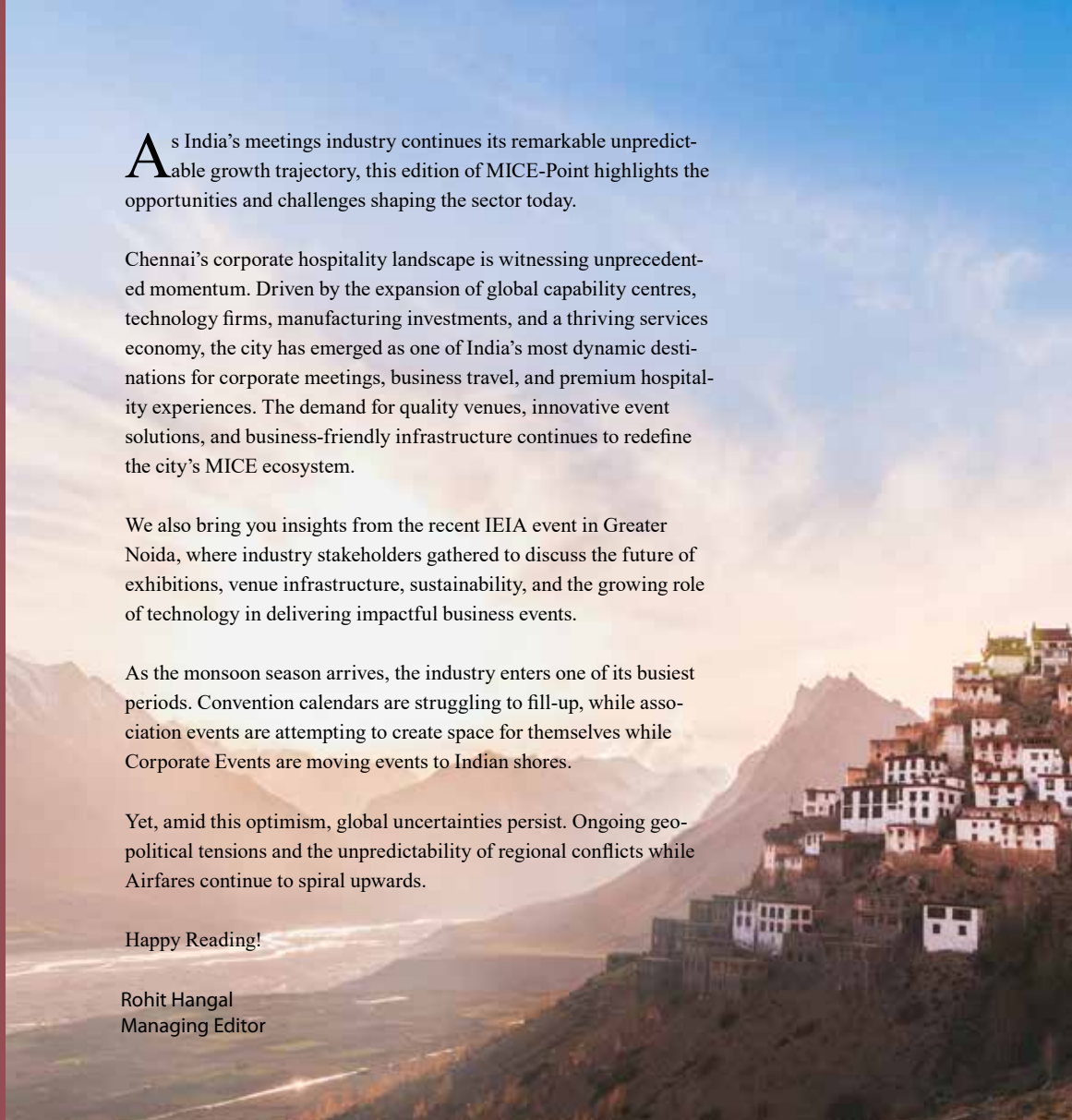
We also bring you insights from the recent IEIA event in Greater Noida, where industry stakeholders gathered to discuss the future of exhibitions, venue infrastructure, sustainability, and the growing role of technology in delivering impactful business events.

As the monsoon season arrives, the industry enters one of its busiest periods. Convention calendars are struggling to fill-up, while association events are attempting to create space for themselves while Corporate Events are moving events to Indian shores.

Yet, amid this optimism, global uncertainties persist. Ongoing geopolitical tensions and the unpredictability of regional conflicts while Airfares continue to spiral upwards.

Happy Reading!

Rohit Hangal
Managing Editor



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Radisson Bengaluru City Centre Hosts Fifth Edition of GReaT Conversations



■ MP BUREAU

Radisson Bengaluru City Centre hosted the fifth edition of GReaT Conversations in collaboration with the Karnataka Event Management Association (KEMA), bringing together leading voices from the events, weddings, airline, and media sectors for a curated round table discussion on the evolving future of corporate events, weddings, and sustainable hospitality practices. Centred around the theme of Green Meetings, the discussion explored how sustainability is increasingly influencing the future of MICE, corporate gatherings, and social celebrations. With businesses and consumers seeking more conscious, meaningful, and environmentally responsible experiences, the session highlighted how hotels and event part-

ners can collaboratively design gatherings that are impactful, efficient, and sustainable. Hosted at Radisson Bengaluru City Centre, the event also reinforced Bengaluru's growing importance as one of South India's leading source markets for MICE, weddings, and lifestyle-led hospitality experiences. Industry leaders discussed the importance of closer alignment between hotels and planners to ensure events are executed responsibly while delivering elevated guest experiences. The session was moderated by Jit Bose, Vice President - Commercial, and attended by Puneet Dutta, COO and Anu Shinoj from GRT Hotels & Resorts. Karnataka Event Management Association was represented by Tony Stephen, President, Srikant Kanoi, Executive Vice President, along with

other key members of the Executive Committee, reinforcing the strong collaboration between the hospitality and events industries. The evening itself was designed as a sustainable meeting experience, showcasing GRT Hotels & Resorts' GReaT Green Meetings initiatives through environmentally conscious event setups, locally sourced culinary offerings, and responsible operational practices. The networking dinner was hosted at the hotel's terrace venue overlooking Ulsoor Lake, offering panoramic views of the Bengaluru skyline and one of the city's premier open-air event spaces. Speaking on the initiative, Vikram Cotah, CEO, GRT Hotels & Resorts, said: "We thank the Executive Committee of the Karnataka Event Management Association

for collaborating with us on another edition of GReaT Conversations and bringing together industry thought leaders to discuss the trends and future of sustainable events. As the MICE and wedding segments continue to grow, hotels and event partners need to create experiences that are not only memorable, but also mindful of the environment and the communities we serve." Conducted as an interactive round table discussion, the event encouraged an open exchange of ideas, insights, and best practices among senior stakeholders from the events and wedding industry, airlines and media. Discussions covered emerging MICE trends, evolving wedding expectations, experiential hospitality, sustainability integration, and the future of responsible events in India.

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Skål International Coimbatore Unveils Countdown to SINC 2026



■ MP BUREAU

Skål International Coimbatore officially launched the countdown to the much-anticipated Skål India National Congress (SINC) 2026, which will be held from August 12–14, 2026, at Le Méridien Coimbatore. The curtain-raiser ceremony, held at The Residency Towers, Coimbatore, brought together leading figures from the travel, tourism, hospitality and government sectors, marking the beginning of preparations for one of India's most significant tourism industry gatherings.

For the first time, Coimbatore—Tamil Nadu's thriving industrial, cultural and entrepreneurial hub—will host the prestigious annual congress of Skål International India. The event is expected to welcome tourism leaders, hoteliers, travel professionals, media representatives and stakeholders from across India and abroad for three days of networking, knowledge-sharing and collaboration under the Skål spirit of “Doing

Business Among Friends.”

The evening celebrated the rich cultural heritage and hospitality traditions of Tamil Nadu, with guests embracing elegant ethnic and regional attire that reflected the destination's vibrant identity. The curtain raiser was organised under the leadership of Ramesh Chandrakumar, President, Skål International Coimbatore, and P.K. Ganesh, Chairman, SINC 2026, along with the dedicated Skål International Coimbatore team.

The event was attended by several distinguished dignitaries, including D. Srinivasan, Managing Director, Annapoorna Hotels; Sathish K.S. (IFS), Regional Passport Officer, Coimbatore; T. Jegatheswari, District Tourist Officer, Coimbatore; Sundar Singaram, Director – Operations, South India Hotels and Restaurants Association (SIHRA); NSN Mohan, Vice President, Skål International; and Sanjeev Mehra, President, Skål International India.

Speaking on the occasion, Ramesh Chandrakumar, President, Skål International Coimbatore, said: “We are proud and honoured to welcome the Skål fraternity to Coimbatore for the first time. Our city represents enterprise, culture and warmth, and we look forward to curating a congress experience that celebrates responsible tourism while showcasing the spirit of Tamil Nadu.”

Highlighting the significance of the upcoming congress, Sanjeev Mehra, President, Skål International India, remarked: “SINC 2026 in Coimbatore promises to be a defining gathering for Indian tourism, where conversations on sustainability and heritage will move beyond ideas into meaningful action. Coimbatore's energy, culture and hospitality make it a perfect host city for this important national platform.”

Emphasising the importance of sustainable tourism practices, NSN Mohan, Vice President, Skål International, said: “Sustainability

is no longer an option for tourism—it is the direction forward. SINC 2026 will create an important platform for global collaboration, innovation and collective industry responsibility.”

Recognised as India's premier annual gathering for travel, tourism and hospitality professionals, the Skål India National Congress serves as a key platform for fostering industry partnerships, facilitating meaningful dialogue and shaping the future direction of tourism in the country.

With sustainability and heritage at its core, SINC 2026 will bring together industry leaders and decision-makers to explore emerging opportunities, address evolving challenges and promote responsible tourism development. By blending forward-looking discussions with the timeless richness of India's cultural heritage, the congress aims to inspire actionable outcomes that contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive tourism ecosystem.

IEIA Conducts Open Seminar & Exhibition Services Expo 2026, Celebrating 20 Years of Industry Leadership



■ MP BUREAU

Marking a defining milestone for India's exhibition and MICE industry, the 15th IEIA Open Seminar & Exhibition Services Expo 2026 concluded on a resounding high, bringing together the most influential voices, policymakers, innovators, and global stakeholders under one roof to shape the future of India's exhibition ecosystem. The landmark edition also celebrated a historic milestone — 20 years of the Indian Exhibition Industry Association (IEIA) — commemorating two decades of leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and transformation that have helped position India among the world's fastest-growing and most promising exhibition markets.

Organised by IEIA, the flagship international conclave welcomed more than 1,200 industry leaders, global delegates, CEOs, venue owners, exhibition organisers, service providers, trade associations, and senior government representatives, making it the largest and most influential gath-

ering of India's exhibition industry to date. Held under the compelling theme "When the Right Dots Meet, Industry Moves," the 15th edition served as a powerful platform for collaboration, innovation, knowledge exchange, strategic networking, and business acceleration — reaffirming India's emergence as a global exhibitions and MICE powerhouse. The grand inaugural ceremony set the tone for the event, bringing together eminent dignitaries, senior policymakers, and global thought leaders who underscored the strategic importance of exhibitions in driving trade, tourism, manufacturing, investments, and international business engagement.

The inaugural session was graced by distinguished leaders, including Jawed Ashraf, IFS (Retd.), Chairman, India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO); Suman Billa, IAS, Additional Secretary & Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; Sooraj Dhawan, President, IEIA; Rakesh Kumar, Chairman, India Exposition Mart Limited (IEML); Jagdish Patankar, Hon. Secretary, IEIA; Ubaid

Ahmad, Vice President, IEIA; and Nidhi Sharma, Executive Director, IEIA, along with members of the Executive Committee. Delivering the chief guest address, Jawed Ashraf highlighted the remarkable evolution of India's exhibition industry, noting that the growth of large-scale events and increasing global participation continues to contribute significantly to economic growth and employment generation. Emphasising the enduring value of face-to-face engagement in the age of AI, he underscored the government's role as a force multiplier for the sector and called for integrated, PPP-led collaboration to create seamless experiences for participants and strengthen the overall ecosystem.

In his special address, Suman Billa spoke about the national vision to increase tourism's contribution to India's GDP from 5% to 10% over the next decade, with the MICE segment expected to be a major growth driver. He highlighted that with India emerging as one of the fastest-growing economies globally, exhibitions will play a critical role in show-

ing the country's technologies, manufacturing capabilities, and services to international markets. He also emphasised the need to optimise and better utilise India's expanding MICE infrastructure through proactive collaboration. Sooraj Dhawan, President, IEIA, reinforced the industry's role as a catalyst for national growth, stating that exhibitions are platforms that showcase innovation and manufacturing excellence to the world. He highlighted IEIA's ongoing collaboration with the Ministries of Tourism and Commerce & Industry to strengthen the exhibition ecosystem and contribute meaningfully to India's vision of becoming the "Expo Hub of the World."

Rakesh Kumar, Chairman, IEML, expressed pride in celebrating 20 years alongside IEIA, noting the association's role in uniting organisers, venues, and stakeholders across the country. He added that the upcoming Noida International Airport will further enhance connectivity and unlock new opportunities for the industry, reaffirming IEML's commitment to being a venue built by exhibitors, for exhibitors.

Sri Lanka Convention Bureau Hosts MICE Roadshows in Ahmedabad, Kolkata and Chennai



■ MP BUREAU

The Sri Lanka Convention Bureau, functioning under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism, organised three impactful MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) Roadshows and Evening Networking Sessions in Ahmedabad, Kolkata, and Chennai during the last week of May 2026. This initiative forms part of a focused effort to strengthen Sri Lanka's position as a preferred MICE tourism destination in India, one of the country's most important source markets.

The first roadshow was held on 25th May 2026 at the Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad City Centre in Ahmedabad, followed by Kolkata on 27th May 2026 at the ITC Sonar. The third roadshow took place on 29th May 2026 at the Pullman Chennai Anna Salai in Chennai. The invitees included miche specialists, wedding planners, professional conference organisers, and corporate miche buyers.

India continues to be a leading source market for Sri Lanka tourism in both leisure and MICE tourism, offering immense growth opportunities. It has consistently maintained its position as the best. According to statistics published by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, a total of 531,511 Indian tourists visited Sri Lanka in 2025, representing 22% of the country's total tourist arrivals. Sri Lanka also achieved a historic milestone in 2025 by recording the highest number of Indian tourist arrivals ever received by the country. In addition, Sri Lanka's tourism earnings surpassed USD 3.2 billion during the year 2025.

MICE and business tourism account for approximately 10% of the total tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka and remain a significant sub-sector within the tourism industry. From January to the end of May 2026, Sri Lanka welcomed 1,010,807 tourists, of which 245,981 were from India. This positive trend reflects the growing

demand for travel and the strong connectivity between the two neighbouring countries.

Travel between Sri Lanka and India remains highly convenient, with SriLankan Airlines operating 90 weekly flights connecting Sri Lanka with nine Indian cities. In addition, IndiGo and Air India operate daily flights to Ahmedabad, Kolkata, and Chennai, ensuring seamless accessibility for both business and leisure travellers.

The roadshows showcased Sri Lanka's diverse MICE and tourism offerings, reaffirming that the destination is fully open and prepared to welcome leisure, business, and corporate travellers. The events are specifically designed to engage MICE tour operators, media representatives, influencers, corporate leaders, trade associations, and other key stakeholders from the Indian travel industry. A 24-member delegation comprising leading Sri Lankan tour operators and hoteliers participated in the initiative. The event highlighted the country's diverse

attractions, world-class meeting infrastructure, hospitality, and unique experiences.

These Sri Lanka Tourism MICE promotions were structured to facilitate meaningful B2B (Business-to-Business) interactions and productive dialogue among industry stakeholders. Evening networking sessions will further strengthen professional relationships in a more informal setting. A performance by a Sri Lankan cultural troupe also provided a vibrant cultural showcase, highlighting the country's rich heritage and traditions.

Dheera Hettiarachchi, Chairman, Sri Lanka Convention Bureau, stated, "Sri Lanka is an ideal MICE destination due to its proximity and strong connectivity with India, making it a cost-effective and attractive choice for meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions. These MICE promotions will further showcase Sri Lanka's growth and strengthen tourism and business ties between the two countries."

IWIA Hosts Cocktail Evening at The Imperial, New Delhi

■ MP BUREAU

Indian Wedding Industry Association (IWIA), in partnership with The Imperial, New Delhi, hosted an exclusive Cocktail Evening with curated canapés for its members at Daniell’s Tavern. Designed as a refined networking experience, the evening brought together prominent professionals and thought leaders from India’s wedding and events ecosystem. The gathering provided a platform for meaningful conversations, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas in an elegant and welcoming setting. Neeraj Dhawan, Founder & Chairman, IWIA, shared that the Indian wedding industry is built on relationships, creativity, and collaboration. He emphasised that curated platforms such as this enable members to connect,

share insights, and collectively elevate industry standards. Raghuvir Singh, Founder & President, IWIA, noted that the evening was more than a social gathering—it was a celebration of a growing community. He highlighted that the association with a prestigious hospitality landmark like The Imperial New Delhi made the event even more special for members. Louis Sailer, Senior Executive Vice President & General Manager, The Imperial New Delhi, expressed his delight in hosting the gathering. He remarked that the hotel has long been synonymous with distinguished events and meaningful dialogue, and it was a pleasure to welcome some of the most respected names in the



wedding and events industry. Hosted at one of India’s most celebrated luxury destinations, the evening offered a sophisticated ambience complemented by curated canapés, impeccable hospitality, and engaging conversations. The collaboration between IWIA and The Imperial reflects a

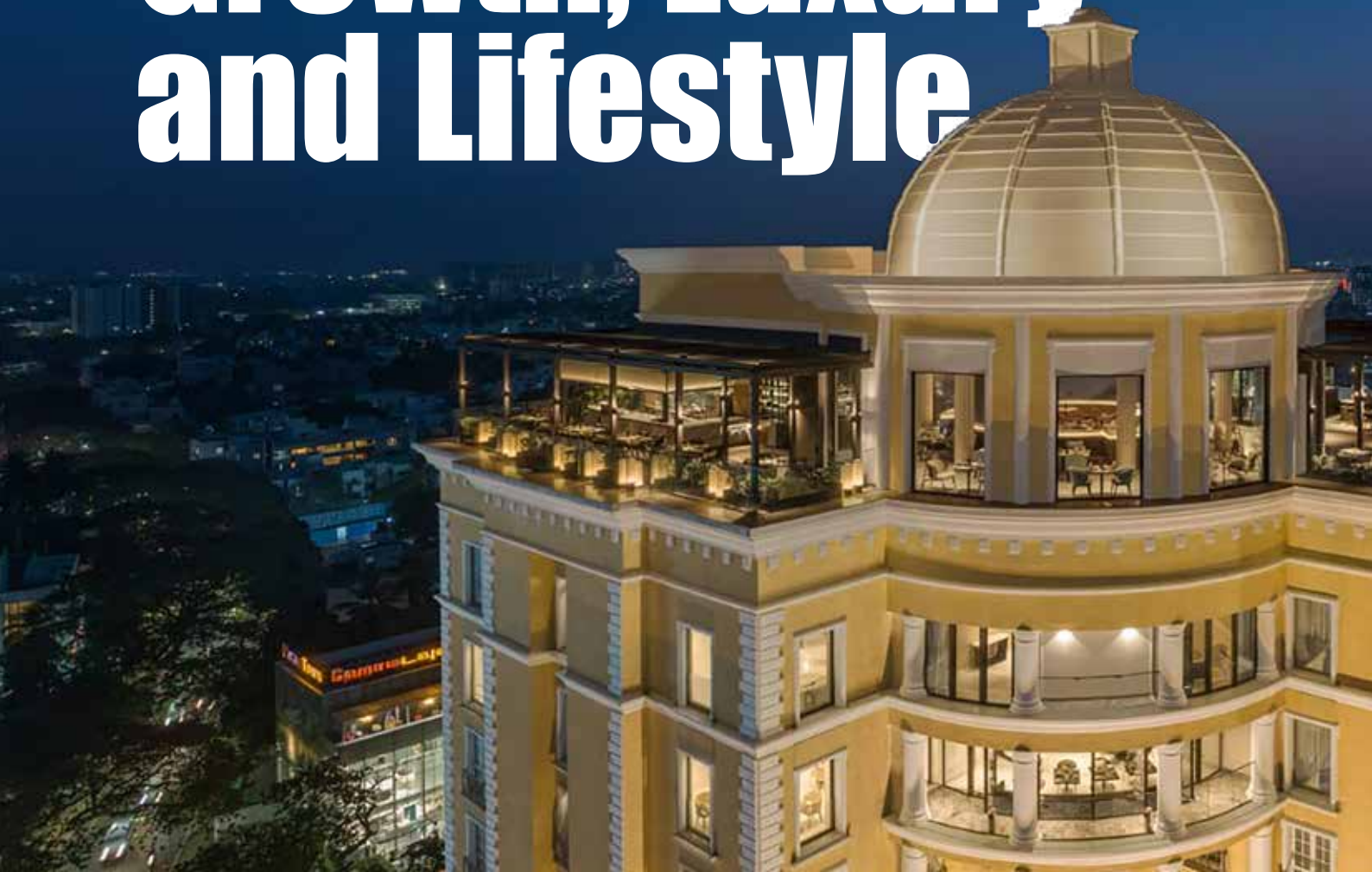
shared vision of elevating premium networking experiences within the wedding and events sector. As IWIA continues to champion innovation, collaboration, and excellence, this exclusive members’ evening stood as a memorable celebration of community spirit and industry synergy.



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Chennai's Next Check-In: Growth, Luxury and Lifestyle



■ NATASHA SREERANJ

For decades, hospitality in Chennai moved to a familiar rhythm. Weekdays belonged to business travellers, weekends were quieter, and the city's hotels thrived on corporate meetings, medical visitors, and long project stays. Today, that rhythm is changing. Chennai is not abandoning its business-first identity, but it is adding new layers – lifestyle, leisure, dining, and experiences – creating a hospitality scene that feels more dynamic and future-ready.

Chennai has always been powered by industry. Automobiles, manufacturing, IT services, healthcare, and port activity have long fuelled strong hotel demand. These sectors are growing again, bringing a fresh wave of corporate travel and renewed investor confidence. New luxury hotels are being planned, and existing properties are upgrading to meet rising expectations. The message is clear: the industry sees Chennai as a market entering a new growth cycle. Corporate travel still forms the backbone

of the city's hotel sector, but the profile of the business traveller is evolving. Longer assignments, consulting projects, and hybrid work have increased demand for serviced apartments and extended-stay hotels. Business districts such as OMR and Guindy are becoming hospitality hotspots, with hotels increasingly part of mixed-use developments that blend offices, retail, and lifestyle spaces. The modern business travellers is no longer just looking for efficiency; comfort, flexibility, and experience now matter just as much.



Quietly but powerfully, medical tourism continues to anchor the city's occupancy. Patients and families from South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa travel to Chennai for treatment, creating year-round demand across hotel categories. This steady flow gives the market a resilience that many leisure destinations lack. While other cities experience seasonal highs and lows, Chennai's hotels often run on a more dependable cycle.

At the same time, the meetings and events

segment is gaining momentum. With increasing investment from the government of Tamil Nadu and growing business activity, Chennai is positioning itself as a major conference and exhibition destination in South India. Large events and conventions are expected to bring new energy to the hotel sector, especially during weekdays when business travel dominates.

Luxury hospitality in the city is entering an exciting chapter. For years, Chennai had a smaller luxury inventory compared to other

metros. Now, that is changing. New projects and brand expansions are gradually creating a more competitive luxury landscape. Yet, the heart of the market still lies in the midscale and budget segments, supported by domestic travellers, medical tourism, and professionals visiting from smaller cities. This balance between premium growth and strong midscale demand keeps the market stable and diverse. Perhaps the most visible transformation is happening in hotel lobbies, rooftops, and restaurants. Hotels are no longer just places to stay; they are becoming places to gather. Rooftop dining, curated food experiences, and weekend staycations are turning hotels into social spaces for both travellers and locals. A younger, more experience-driven audience is reshaping how hotels think about food, events, and entertainment. The result is a hospitality scene that feels livelier than before.

Yet Chennai still faces a perception challenge. Compared with Bengaluru or Hyderabad, it is often seen as more business-focused and less vibrant for leisure travellers. This is changing slowly, but the opportunity remains huge. The city sits at the gateway to destinations such as Mahabalipuram and Puducherry, offering beaches, heritage, and culture within easy reach. With stronger destination storytelling, Chennai could become a key stop on a broader coastal travel circuit.

**ROHIT DAR**

Vice President & Head of Ascott South Asia.

“Chennai has always been a steady and evolving hospitality market, but what stands out today is how traveller expectations are changing. There is a clear shift towards flexibility—guests are no longer looking at stays in silos of business or leisure or in terms of short or long duration. They want the freedom to move between these seamlessly, without compromising on comfort. At The Ascott Limited, we anticipated this shift early on. Our approach has been to build a flex-hybrid model that caters to a wide spectrum of travellers—whether it’s a short business visit, an extended corporate stay, or a leisure-driven getaway that feels more like living than lodging. Chennai, which reflects a more contemporary, dynamic format aligned with the IT corridor and today’s mixed-use travel patterns. What’s interesting is that the market has evolved in the direction we had already anchored ourselves in. Our focus now is on continuously refining these experiences to stay relevant to changing guest needs. Looking ahead, we see strong momentum for this model across South India, where a similar blend of business growth and lifestyle travel is shaping the next phase of hospitality.”

**B. GOPINATH**

CEO, The Residency Hotels.

“Chennai and Tamil Nadu are rapidly emerging as some of India’s most promising hospitality destinations, driven by a strong combination of business travel, medical tourism, cultural heritage, and evolving lifestyle experiences. Chennai, traditionally known as a major corporate and industrial hub, is witnessing a transformation with the rise of luxury hotels, boutique stays, rooftop dining destinations, wellness-focused experiences, and experiential tourism offerings. The city’s thriving IT corridor, automobile sector, healthcare industry, and growing startup ecosystem continue to drive strong demand for hospitality services, while medical tourism attracts visitors from across India and overseas. Improved infrastructure, including metro rail expansion, airport modernisation, and developments along OMR and ECR, is further strengthening Chennai’s appeal as both a business and leisure destination. As consumer preferences shift towards curated dining, destination weddings, luxury stays, and wellness retreats, hospitality brands are increasingly looking at Chennai as a long-term growth market. Several hotel groups are already expanding aggressively across the state. With strong infrastructure development, rising tourism, and growing consumer aspirations, Chennai is well-positioned to become a leading hospitality and tourism hub in India over the coming decade.”

**PROJWAL GHOSH,**

Director of Sales & Marketing, Intercontinental Chennai Mahabalipuram Resort.

“Today’s travellers are seeking far more than just a place to stay — they are looking for authentic and meaningful connections with the destinations they visit. Chennai is increasingly being recognised not only as a strong business hub but also as a destination rich in culture, heritage, scenic coastline, and relaxed coastal charm, offering the perfect setting for restorative escapes and immersive experiences. The East Coast Road corridor has evolved into a preferred destination for weekend getaways, luxury staycations, intimate celebrations, curated wellness retreats, destination weddings, and premium coastal experiences. Moving forward, three key trends are expected to shape the future of hospitality in Chennai. The first is the rise of blended travel, where work and leisure seamlessly come together. The second is the growing emphasis on wellness and experiential hospitality, with guests increasingly valuing thoughtful design, destination-inspired dining, personalised experiences, and holistic well-being. The third is the continued advancement in connectivity and infrastructure, making Chennai even more accessible and appealing to both domestic and international travellers, while also enhancing its attractiveness as a destination for large-scale events, weddings, and corporate gatherings. This transformation presents an opportunity to go beyond traditional hospitality and create experiences that offer guests a genuine sense of place.”

Looking ahead, the rise of bleisure travel may become the city’s biggest opportunity. Business travellers are increasingly extending work trips into weekend getaways, and hotels are responding with wellness offerings, cultural experiences, and short-escape packages. Long-stay living and branded residences are also expected to grow as travel and work become more flexible.

Chennai is not trying to compete with India’s most leisure-driven destinations. Instead, it is building something unique. A hospitality ecosystem rooted in business and healthcare but enriched by lifestyle, dining, and experience-led travel. As new hotels open and infrastructure improves, the city’s hotel industry is gradually rewriting its story. Chennai is moving from being a dependable business stopover to becoming a well-rounded urban destination, where work trips easily turn into memorable stays.





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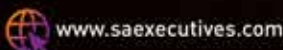
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Prague Strengthens Global Standing as a Premier Meetings Destination with New Unified Brand Strategy



■ MP BUREAU

Prague has reaffirmed its position among the world's leading meeting destinations, ranking 6th globally in the latest International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) city rankings. Compiled by the International Congress and Convention Association, the list evaluated 4,728 cities worldwide, with Lisbon, Paris and Barcelona securing the top three positions. The Czech capital's continued presence in the global top ten underscores its resilience amid growing international competition. Data from the Prague Convention Bureau reveals strong momentum across the meetings and events sector. Smaller gatherings for 50–500 delegates recorded the most significant growth, while Prague also hosted more than 50 major congresses and conferences

in 2025 with over 1,000 attendees each. Among the year's standout events were the 47th Congress of Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism (ESPEN), which welcomed more than 4,700 delegates, and the 25th World Congress of Psychiatry (WPC), attended by over 3,400 experts from 117 countries. The United States, Germany, Great Britain, France and Switzerland remained Prague's key source markets, with international events accounting for 43% of total meetings. One-day events continue to dominate the city's event landscape, with the average meeting duration approaching two days. Looking ahead, Prague is investing in long-term competitiveness through the planned expansion of the Prague Congress Centre, set to begin in June and conclude in 2029. According to Roman Muška,

Director of the Prague Convention Bureau, expanding capacity and strengthening congress acquisition efforts will be vital to securing major international events in the future. To further enhance its global positioning, the city is unifying its tourism and business events messaging under a single brand. Led by Prague City Tourism, the initiative integrates business travel alongside leisure tourism for the first time, supported by funding from the City of Prague and additional investment in the coming years. Tomáš Slabihoudek, Prague Councillor for Culture and Tourism, emphasised the importance of a cohesive identity in today's competitive landscape, noting that strong branding is essential for attracting high-value congresses and conferences. The initiative aligns with Prague's 2024–2027

strategy to reposition the city as a cultivated, premium destination. Jana Adamcová, Vice-Chair of the Prague City Tourism Board, highlighted the role of business tourism in attracting high-spending visitors and boosting the city's international prestige. The new brand identity draws inspiration from historic figures associated with Prague, including Johannes Kepler, Albert Einstein, Christian Doppler and Ernst Mach, positioning the city as a place where creativity, science and innovation converge. The first campaign under the unified brand, "Unconventional Conventions," presents Prague as a destination where ideas thrive in inspiring surroundings, reinforcing its reputation as a premier choice for global congresses and business events.



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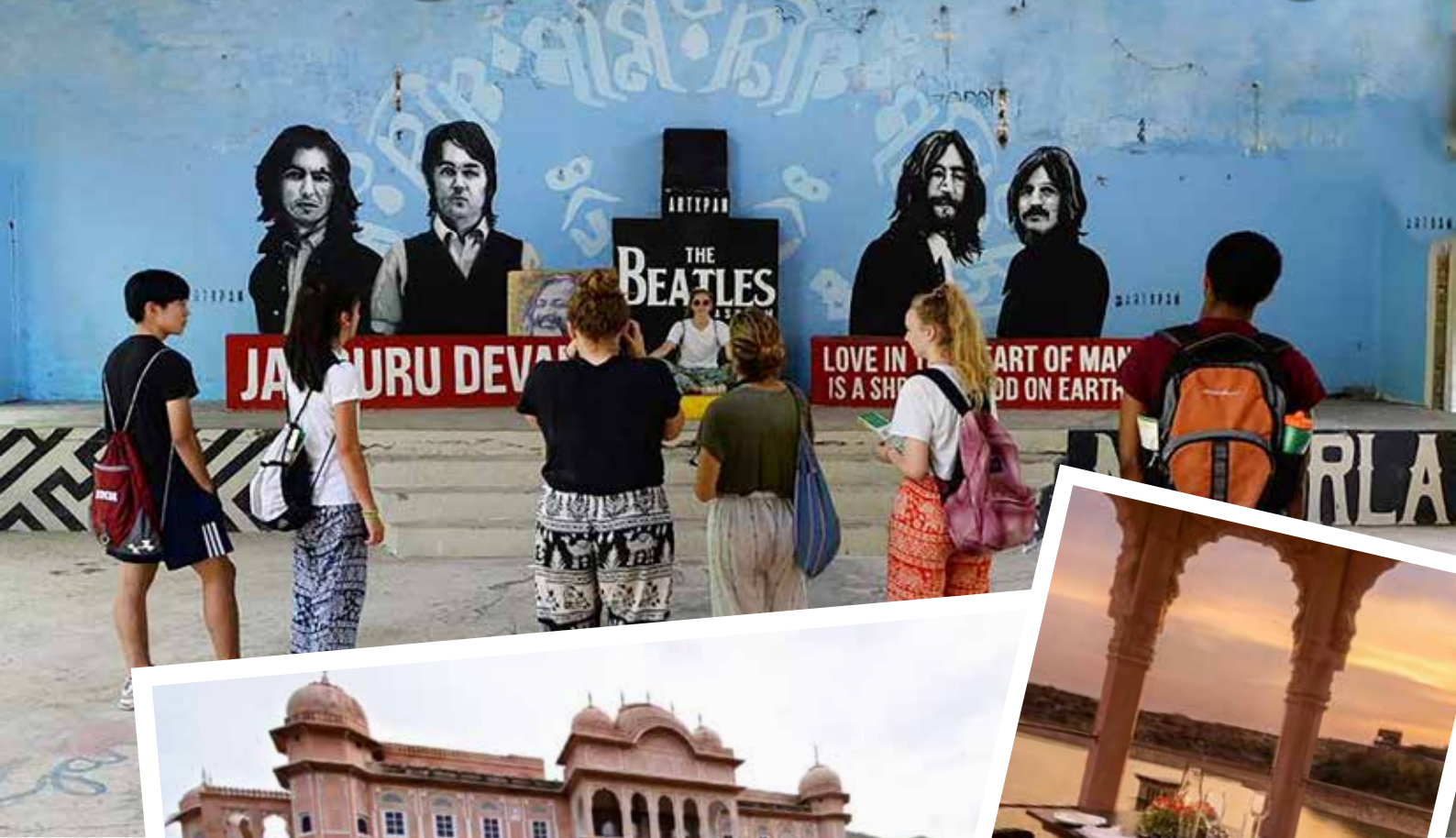
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Where History Meets Hospitality! Marketing India's Timeless Heritage



■ ROHIT HANGAL

When India's world of heritage comes home to live another day, where every stone has a story and every tourist becomes a time traveller, it is never too late to bring focus to Indian heritage as a viable tourism product.

Heritage and India have been and will continue to shock and wow tourists from across the world. Every city and town, every village and corner, you will find a monument or an intangible attribute that has all the markings of making memories of a journey well-travelled. UNESCO, in its wisdom, has accorded 42 sites in India the status of a UNESCO World

Heritage Site. A rather minuscule number, considering the rich heritage the country is blessed with. We can easily add another 100 of them over the next decade if the government supports such an initiative, albeit on the lines of Viksit Bharat!

Speaking with one official of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) a few years back, who casually remarked that the department is very wary as regards indulging in any major excavation work, should they find something of interest and thereon, they spend more time in search of funds to execute, excavate and emerge with another masterpiece of our ancestors! Even the venerable UNESCO World Heritage site of Nalanda has been excavated to less than 10% of its scale.

As per the press release issued by the ministry, “The ASI operates six dedicated excavation branches located at Nagpur, Delhi, Patna, Bhubaneswar, Vadodara and Mysore, which are mandated to carry out archaeological exploration and excavation works annually. The budget allocation for exploration and excavation has witnessed a substantial increase under the Government of India. In 2024-25, an amount of ₹15.00 crore has been allocated under this head—an increase of about 2.3 times over the allocation of ₹6.53 crore in 2014-15.” This is hugely underbudgeted and is a matter of concern, as ASI protects and maintains approximately 3,698 centrally protected monuments and archaeological sites across India. Unless more resources in terms of manpower and money are allocated to the conservation of heritage monuments, India’s heritage will be at the mercy of encroachers and bounty hunters. State-level initiatives and state archaeological departments are even less funded.

As the government, especially one which has taken it upon itself to create new narratives to reinforce India’s civilizational image, it has been a huge letdown!

The world of heritage and tourism is so connected at the hip, as much as a sculptor is to his muse, as much as he is to his discerning voyeur. A monument to experience will forever be the inspiration for a sculptor or a painter to practice their trade. The National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States defines heritage tourism as “travelling to experience the places, artefacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past,” and “heritage tourism can include cultural, historic and natural resources.”

The key proof of a continuously living civilisation is in its voluminous Virasat in the form of its heritage, which is there to touch, feel and experience from almost every era! India probably has more historical monuments per square metre than any other nation on earth. Every dynasty, irrespective of whether it was home-grown or from the invaders, has left its mark in the form of its heritage value. Showcasing monuments or intangible heritage will always be a destination’s USP (Unique Selling Proposition). No two monuments are alike in their historical significance and contribution to their tourism value.

As monuments bring in a heritage value to a destination, it is the story that brings in the experience. As stories and the storytellers make any destination memorable and add value as a discerning tourist, it is for those in the tourism industry to go niche.

I came across this release issued by Canada-based ‘Bestway Tours & Safaris’ promoting ‘The Beatles in India Tour,’ which claims

that free-spirited travellers can ‘relive’ part of the 1960s and discover wondrous India as The Beatles did on their life-changing 1968 visit there, on ‘The Beatles in India Tour.’ The 18-day tour will be led by Emmy Award-winning film producer and director Paul Saltzman, who stayed with and exclusively photographed The Beatles during their visit to India. “The Beatles wrote 48 songs in 7 weeks on that trip—the single most creative period in their illustrious career,” said Saltzman. Do go over some fascinating promotional videos on YouTube. The fully escorted tour will visit Rishikesh and other spiritual and special Indian sites where The Beatles came together and will meet Indian musicians who know and have performed with members of the group. It includes three days in Rishikesh, a holy city on the Ganges River, which is a gateway to the Himalayas, where The Beatles spent considerable time, and a visit to the former ashram where The Beatles meditated. Travellers will meet Indian classical musician, composer, and Grammy Award winner Ravi Shankar, who taught George Harrison of The Beatles to play the sitar, and visit Ajit Singh, a famous Vichitra Veena player who also performed with Harrison. There will be visits to the historic “Pink City” of Jaipur, Udaipur, the holy city of Haridwar, Mumbai, the capital city of New Delhi, and Agra to see the magnificent “Taj Mahal.” Optional yoga sessions, white-water rafting, and spa treatments can add to the aura.

What differentiates the above package from the regular run-of-the-mill ones that float around is its ability to create an added ‘experience factor’ for the discerning, and it will surely cost about three times the regular package to India. A bit of research and creativity will add more value to bottom lines and yields than playing the number game. About 17 million foreign tourists visited India in 2018, while the domestic traveller reached over half a billion. With the numbers going south the world over, thanks to the ongoing super tearjerker going by the name of Covid 19, travel companies and professionals must be creative and discover new sources of inspiration to design ‘experiences’ for high-value special interest travel individuals and groups.

Travel companies & DMCs focusing on pure numbers will find it difficult to sustain the recession and the competition. Special interest travel in India can be fun, diverse, and highly profitable. The biggest advantage is that there are a few parables, thus less competition. Indians are traditionally great storytellers and will find it easy to take an interest (whether it is based on history, architecture, adventure, wildlife, education, music, Commonwealth World War graves, etc.) and add value to it by creating a marketable destination package around it. We do not have to go a long way to

search for inspiration when we are surrounded by so much around us at our doorsteps. Small and medium enterprises, which cannot match the scales of rates and reach of big multinational travel companies, will find specialising in creating customised and special interest travel more satisfying and profitable than catering to the rate race to bring numbers and wafer-thin margins.

The downside of niche travel is the process of finding a market for your created product, which is where you live with a longer gestation from the time of ‘developing the product’ to ‘marketing’ to being a ‘business,’ which is longer than traditional, ready-made packages. The quality of research used to develop your special interest product and the end user will determine the higher yield he eventually gets for it. New dawn customers will remunerate you for your expertise and knowledge in catering to their interests.

Wikipedia says, “In marketing, product differentiation (also known simply as ‘differentiation’) is the process of distinguishing the differences of a product or offering from others to make it more attractive to a particular target market. This involves differentiating it from competitors’ products as well as one’s own product offerings. The old-fashioned marketing ideology of creating a USP (Unique Selling Proposition) still works most of the time.

There are some interesting little tours in the cities of Bengaluru and Mysore with varied themes that have created interest in the expat community here, international delegations, students, tourists, and even residents, who found another dimension to this city, which oscillated wildly from being a once pensioners’ paradise to the home of the quintessential filter coffee, masala dosas, and some of the friendliest brews!

Use your creative instincts to research and identify, for instance, a ‘Theme for Your Dream’ experience package. Titled after the singing legend Cliff Richard, who was born in King George Hospital, Victoria Street, in Lucknow, on October 14, 1940. How about that for a theme to get cracking on! (‘Theme for Your Dream’ is a hit Cliff Richard number from the early seventies). Nostalgia is the new opium for the heritage buffs from around the world. With every destination around the world, when the going gets tough, the tough go domestic! Mere sloganeering or having the prime minister having to push discerning travellers to travel within is not enough. We have to sensitise state governments to reach out to markets within to have an impact! The attempt to reach out to heritage travel markets is not a smooth highway, though, but it sure commands enough respect to reach out to a market closest to hearts and proximity alike!

Immersive, Iconic, Innovative: Jennifer Wong on the Evolution of Singapore Tourism



■ ROHIT HANGAL

As Singapore continues to strengthen its position as one of Asia's leading leisure and MICE destinations, Mount Faber Leisure Group has emerged as a key player in delivering immersive, experience-led attractions that appeal to global travellers. From the iconic Singapore Cable Car to the award-winning Wings of Time Fireworks Symphony, the group continues to redefine destination experiences through innovation, storytelling and experiential offerings.

In an exclusive interview with Voyager's World, Jennifer Wong, Director, Commercial, Mount Faber Leisure Group, shares insights into evolving traveller trends, the growing importance of the Indian market, experiential tourism, MICE opportunities, and the company's future growth strategy.

Mount Faber Leisure Group has evolved into one of Singapore's most distinctive leisure and lifestyle operators. How would you describe the brand's positioning today in the global tourism landscape?

Mount Faber Leisure Group positions itself as a distinctive leisure and lifestyle operator within Singapore's tourism landscape, focused on creating immersive, family-friendly experiences anchored by the iconic Singapore Cable Car. Building on more than 50 years of operating the Singapore Cable Car, we continue to innovate through experiences such as the world's first chrome-finished spherical cable car cabins.

Spanning from Mount Faber Peak in mainland Singapore to Sentosa Island and connected by the Singapore Cable Car Sky Network, our portfolio is designed to offer

seamless day-to-night experiences, from scenic journeys and dining concepts to immersive attractions. This includes Wings of Time Fireworks Symphony, Singapore's only daily fireworks show, which was recently recognised as the Leading Tourist Attraction of the Year at the Asian Tourism & Hospitality Awards 2025-2026.

Across our offerings, we aim to create experiences that are visually distinctive, easy to enjoy, and memorable for guests of all ages.

What are some of the key trends you are witnessing in visitor behaviour at Mount Faber Leisure Group's attractions and experiences?

Visitors are increasingly seeking immersive, experience-led activities over traditional sightseeing. There is a growing preference for attractions that feel memorable, interactive and unique, rather than simply places to visit. We are also seeing continued growth in multi-generational travel, where families look for shared experiences that can be enjoyed comfortably across different age groups. Experiences that combine convenience, accessibility and broad appeal are becoming increasingly important.

At the same time, visitors are increasingly drawn to visually engaging and highly shareable experiences, reflecting the strong influence of digital and social media on travel planning today. Another notable trend is the rise of after-dark experiences, with travellers extending their itineraries later into the evening. This has strengthened the role of night-time attractions as an increasingly important part of the overall destination experience.

India has emerged as one of Singapore's most important outbound markets. How significant is the Indian traveller segment for your business today?

The Indian market is an important segment across multiple areas of our business, from FIT and family travellers to incentive and group travel. Many Indian guests continue to include the Singapore Cable Car as part of their Sentosa itinerary, often beginning their day with the cable car experience and ending it with the Wings of Time Fireworks Symphony as a Sentosa finale. Attractions such as SkyHelix Sentosa and our SkyOrb cable car cabins have also resonated strongly with travellers seeking visually distinctive and memorable experiences. India remains a priority market for our ongoing product development, partnerships, and trade engagement efforts.

Indian travellers are increasingly opting for FIT and experience-led travel. How is Mount Faber Leisure Group adapting its offerings to cater to this shift?

As FIT and experience-led travel continue to grow, we have adapted our offerings to place greater emphasis on immersive, visually distinctive and shareable experiences. At the Singapore Cable Car, we introduced two new experiences designed around evolving traveller preferences. Launched in 2024 as part of the Singapore Cable Car's 50th anniversary, the SkyOrb Cabin is a world-first design innovation featuring a chrome-finished spherical exterior and a full glass floor that creates a striking "floating in mid-air" effect. Developed over five years, the experience was designed to appeal to experience-driven travellers seek-

ing novelty, immersive visuals and memorable moments.

In November 2025, the Singapore Cable Car also launched an interactive day-to-night Pokémon experience, where guests could uncover hidden UV-activated Pokémon designs at night using UV torches. The experience transformed the journey from a scenic ride into a more interactive and exploratory adventure, reflecting growing demand for immersive and participatory experiences.

Beyond the cable car, we further enhanced the fireworks elements in Wings of Time Fireworks Symphony in December 2025, strengthening its positioning as a must-see nighttime finale in Sentosa. We have also introduced bundled products and flexible passes that allow FIT travellers to customise their itineraries based on their interests and travel styles, supporting a more personalised and experience-driven visit.

The Singapore Cable Car and Wings of Time have become iconic visitor experiences. What innovations or enhancements can travellers expect in the near future?

The Pokémon Day-to-Night Adventure Presented by Singapore Cable Car, which has been extended until January 2027, transforms the cable car journey into a layered experience that changes from day to night. By day, guests experience fully themed Pokémon cabins, while at night, UV-activated Pokémon hidden during the day are revealed using guest-held UV torches, creating a more interactive and exploratory experience. Wings of Time Fireworks Symphony has also undergone enhancements to strengthen its position as Singapore's only permanent daily fireworks night show. While the show remains a 20-minute experience, recent enhancements introduced more fireworks-led scenes, a wider variety of effects and a more expansive visual spread across the night sky, creating a more immersive finale experience for visitors in Sentosa.

MICE tourism from India is wit-

nessing remarkable growth. How important is the Indian MICE segment to Mount Faber Leisure Group's overall strategy?

The Indian MICE segment is an important part of our growth strategy, particularly as Singapore continues to see strong demand for corporate and incentive travel from India.

Experiences such as the Singapore Cable Car and Wings of Time Fireworks Symphony are well-suited for incentive groups and corporate itineraries, offering visually distinctive and memorable shared experiences. The Singapore Cable Car has also expanded its capacity with the addition of 13 more Sky-Orb Cabins in November 2025, allowing larger groups to enjoy a premium cable car experience from mainland Singapore to Sentosa Island.

Beyond individual attractions, Mount Faber Leisure Group offers a range of dining options that work especially well for travel trade, MICE, and group itineraries. MFLG also offers a range of event venues and dining concepts across Mount Faber Peak and Sentosa that can accommodate corporate functions, networking events and incentive programmes.

What kind of experiential opportunities does Mount Faber Leisure Group offer for corporate incentive groups, conferences and special events?

We offer a range of unique F&B experiences for groups; for example, our 45-minute cocktail workshop at The Mirabilis Bar @ Mount Faber Peak invites guests to try their hand at making Singapore's most iconic drink — the Singapore Sling. Guests will learn the story behind the cocktail, master the basic techniques, and craft their own version to enjoy at the end of the session. The workshop also comes with a round-trip cable car ride.

The Singapore Cable Car is also differentiated by a portfolio of curated, one-of-a-kind experiences, e.g. enjoying Peranakan cuisine and making your own kueh pie tees (a Peranakan snack—crispy pastry cups filled with a savoury mix of shredded turnip, carrots,

and prawns, topped with chilli and coriander) in the cabin to a fried-chicken-and-beer package in the sky. All of them can be scaled and customised for corporate incentive groups to align the experience with brand or event objectives.

In your opinion, what are Indian corporates and incentive planners looking for today while choosing destinations and venues for meetings and incentive programmes?

Indian corporates and incentive planners today are increasingly looking beyond traditional meeting venues. There is growing demand for experiences that feel memorable, distinctive and able to foster stronger engagement among participants. Convenience, customisation and opportunities for shared experiences are also becoming increasingly important. We offer a combination of meeting venues, dining concepts and attraction experiences that are seamlessly connected via the Singapore Cable Car. The ability to curate flexible itineraries, from scenic cable car journeys to hilltop dining and night-time entertainment, allows planners to create programmes that feel more immersive and memorable for delegates. For example, we can create a customised water banner at Wings of Time Fireworks Symphony to greet delegates with their company logo. It has been well-received by many corporate and incentive groups as a finale for their Sentosa trip. Our unique hilltop setting overlooking the Singapore skyline also offers a distinctive backdrop for meetings, networking sessions and incentive experiences, which continues to resonate strongly with corporate and incentive groups looking for something beyond a conventional venue experience.

Digital engagement and social media-driven travel inspiration are reshaping tourism marketing. How is Mount Faber Leisure Group leveraging digital platforms to attract younger Indian audiences?

We have been hosting content

creators and media partners that reach out to us directly or through our travel agent partners, allowing them to showcase the experiences through authentic and social-first storytelling to attract younger Indian audiences.

What role do partnerships with Indian travel trade, OTAs and tourism stakeholders play in your India growth strategy?

Partnerships with Indian travel trade partners, OTAs and tourism stakeholders play an important role in our growth strategy. These collaborations help strengthen awareness of our experiences within the market and ensure that our experiences are included in the Indian travellers' itineraries. We have been actively participating in Singapore Tourism Board-led trade engagements, roadshows and tourism events in India for many years to strengthen relationships with travel agents, tour operators, and MICE planners. This sustained engagement allows the company to better understand evolving traveller preferences while expanding its reach across both leisure and corporate travel segments.

Mount Faber Leisure Group recently strengthened its India outreach initiatives. What are the key objectives behind this renewed focus on the Indian market?

Our focus is on strengthening awareness of our experiences and keeping the Singapore Cable Car and Wings of Time Fireworks Symphony top of mind among Indian travellers planning a visit to Singapore. We also want to showcase newer and refreshed experiences, particularly immersive and after-dark offerings, to encourage repeat visits to Singapore and Sentosa.

At the same time, we are deepening our engagement with travel trade partners, OTAs, and tourism stakeholders through trade shows, market engagements and collaborative initiatives to strengthen our presence and build longer-term partnerships within the Indian market.

The World of Events and How to Choose the Right Vendors

By Nishanth Kini, Chief Operating Officer, NeuWork Solutions and The Nishe Co.



On paper, the stage looked flawless. The production team had promised cutting-edge visuals that would mesmerise the audience, the caterer arience to satisfy the finest palates, and the décor partner had shared stunning design references that felt straight out of a glossy lookbook. Everything seemed aligned, wrapped in a neat bow of optimism.

Until event day arrived.

The harsh reality of live execution spared no one. The magnificent LED wall flickered and malfunctioned right in the middle of the crucial opening presentation, casting a shadow over the speaker. Behind the swinging kitchen doors, the premium food service lagged, leaving guests glancing at their watches. Outside in the foyer, the grand floral installations stood bare and incomplete, abandoned midway through the setup.

To the audience, it was a rocky event, but behind the scenes, a deeper story was unfolding. It was a lesson learned in real-time, etched in the high-stakes chaos of production: an event is only as strong as the

vendors behind it.

Many people view vendors as mere service providers—names on a spreadsheet tasked with delivering a checklist of items. In reality, they are execution partners, crisis managers, and the ultimate protectors of an organizer’s reputation. Choosing the wrong partner does not just cause a logistical hiccup; it actively erodes client trust, damages the audience experience, and compromises brand credibility. In bustling event hubs like Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi, and Hyderabad, where expectations soar and timelines are razor-thin, the margin for error is non-existent.

The downward spiral usually begins with a single misstep: choosing a vendor based solely on the lowest quote. A cheaper estimate may save money on a spreadsheet initially, but it often extracts a heavier price later through delays, poor execution, technical failures, and the frantic scramble for last-minute replacements. The ultimate question an organizer must ask is not who comes cheapest, but who remains reliable under pressure. During a live show, when the countdown hits zero, absolute reliability is priceless.

A portfolio can easily be dressed up to look impressive, but true experience in a specific niche matter far more than beautiful presentations. A wedding décor company, no matter how exquisite their floral work, may completely misjudge the precision required for corporate branding, rigid conference timelines, and complex technical integration. Conversely, a concert production giant might struggle to curate an intimate, quiet luxury experience.

True reliability is revealed through past execution. The best vendors are not always the largest firms on the market; they are the ones who respond clearly, share realistic timelines, communicate transparently, and raise concerns early. A vendor who dismisses a complicated logistical challenge with a casual shrug and a promise to “figure it out” becomes a liability during crunch time. Clear communication prevents the misalignment, budget confusion, and midnight surprises that keep organisers awake at night.

Before finalising any partnership, looking past the pitch decks to hear from previous clients is essential. Every vendor performs beautifully when things go smoothly, but the real test of a partner is what happens when things go wrong. Punctuality, composure under pressure, and technical competence are what separate professionals from amateurs.

Modern events are heavily dependent on technology. Whether managing massive LED walls, intricate lighting arrays, complex sound engineering, or seamless digital registration platforms, technical capability is critical. True professionalism means having robust backup systems, top-tier equipment, and an on-ground support team prepared for any glitch.

A good vendor executes tasks, but a great partner understands the overarching intent. The most successful collaborations happen when vendors align deeply with the event’s objectives, the brand’s tone, and the audience’s expectations. An event is never just a collection of isolated services; it is one connected, living experience.

To protect these relationships, verbal assurances must always yield to written clarity. Professionalism begins when deliverables, timelines, payment terms, technical specifications, and contingency responsibilities are documented. Clear contracts reduce confusion and establish mutual respect from the outset.

Over time, the strongest event teams move past transactional vendor relationships to build long-term collaborations. When working repeatedly with a trusted circle, coordination improves naturally, efficiency increases, creativity grows, and execution becomes second nature.

Every seasoned organiser eventually reaches the same turning point, realising that the ultimate success of an event is never decided on the stage. It is decided days, weeks, and months prior, in the strength of the team assembled backstage.

When the final curtain falls, the event ends successfully, the audience applauds, the client smiles, and the guests leave with unforgettable memories. Backstage, away from the spotlight, the organiser quietly breathes a sigh of relief and thanks the production lead, the caterer, the décor team, and the technicians. They know the quiet truth of the industry: great events are never created alone. They are built through partnerships.

Choosing the right vendors is never about simply finding suppliers. It is about discovering reliability, alignment, communication, and trust. In the volatile world of live events, vendors do not just support a reputation—they become it.



Asia Pacific Retains Global Lead in Business Travel with \$700B Spend Forecast for 2026

■ MP BUREAU

Business travel across the Asia Pacific is set to maintain a strong growth trajectory, with the region projected to remain the world's largest business travel market in 2026 despite ongoing geopolitical uncertainty and economic pressures. Total business travel spending across the region is forecast to exceed \$700 billion USD, accounting for more than 40% of global outbound spending and reinforcing Asia Pacific's position as a critical driver of global corporate mobility.

These insights were unveiled during the Global Business Travel Association APAC Conference 2026, held 12–13 May at Marina Bay Sands and co-located with Worldwide ERC APAC 26 for the fourth consecutive year. The event attracted more than 1,100 registered attendees from 35 countries, bringing together corporate travel buyers, suppliers, policymakers and industry leaders to examine the evolving landscape of business travel and its growing economic influence. According to the latest Global

Business Travel Index (BTI) analysis, the Asia Pacific is expected to reach \$700.9 billion USD in business travel spending in 2026, representing a year-over-year increase of 10.9%. China is forecast to lead the region with \$408 billion USD in spending, accounting for 58% of total APAC business travel expenditure. Other major markets, including Japan, South Korea, India, Australia, Taiwan, Indonesia and Singapore are all projected to record strong growth, reflecting the region's expanding economic activity and global connectivity.

Suzanne Neufang, CEO, Global Business Travel Association, said, "Business travel continues to demonstrate its resilience and relevance worldwide, notwithstanding geopolitical challenges, with APAC leading that momentum. Our latest data underscores the region's strong growth and the critical role business travel plays in driving economic expansion, fostering innovation and strengthening in-person connections. Strategic investment in travel remains essential for organisations navigating an increasingly complex global environment."

The top five APAC markets for business travel spending—China, Japan, South Korea, India and Australia—are projected to generate \$623.2 billion USD combined, representing just over 40% of the global business travel forecast of \$1.69 trillion USD in 2026. Growth across the region is being fueled by sectors such as manufacturing, utilities, construction and administrative services, highlighting the deep connection between business travel and core economic activity.

Despite the strong outlook, industry sentiment remains cautiously optimistic. Findings from GBTA's April global survey show optimism among APAC professionals declining from 56% in January to 46% in April, while pessimism remained steady at approximately 25%. This reflects ongoing concerns around cost pressures, geopolitical uncertainty and evolving risk and safety considerations impacting travel programs worldwide.

The conference also highlighted the significant economic contribution of business travel to Singapore. Early findings from GBTA's upcoming International Economic Impact Study reveal that business travel to and within the city generated \$8.1 billion

USD in industry-driven revenue in 2024, including \$1.3 billion USD in tax contributions and support for 33,636 jobs. Additionally, business travel contributed \$2.9 billion USD in local value-added revenue, with 56% of every dollar spent remaining in the local economy—underscoring Singapore's role as a global hub for business travel, meetings and events.

Among conference attendees were 327 corporate travel buyers from 205 organisations representing a combined \$21.3 billion USD in annual travel spend, while half of all delegates attended the event for the first time.

Elle Ng-Darmawan, Senior Director, APAC for GBTA, said, "Our APAC conference highlights both the momentum of this region and GBTA's deepening commitment to supporting its growth. As the region's global influence continues to expand, we are strengthening connections, advancing learning and ensuring our members are equipped to navigate change and capitalise on emerging opportunities."

With strong spending forecasts, continued innovation and deeper collaboration across the ecosystem, Asia Pacific remains firmly positioned at the forefront of global business travel growth.



AAGMAN BAURY
Hotel Manager- Conrad Bengaluru

Conrad Bengaluru has announced the appointment of Aagman Baury as its new Hotel Manager. In his new role, Aagman will oversee overall hotel operations, focusing on delivering exceptional guest experiences, strengthening operational efficiencies, and driving sustainable growth.

Commenting on his appointment, Aagman Baury said, "I am delighted to join Conrad Bengaluru and look forward to working with a talented team to further elevate the hotel's positioning as a leading luxury destination."



K. VIJAY MOHAN
Co-Chairman for Andhra Pradesh Chapter - IATO

The Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) Executive Committee has announced the appointment of K. Vijay Mohan as Co-Chairman of the IATO Andhra Pradesh Chapter. Through this appointment, IATO aims to strengthen its presence in Andhra Pradesh further and expand its membership base across the state. Mr. Mohan's leadership is expected to play a key role in enhancing industry collaboration and creating new opportunities for tour operators and travel professionals in the region.

Given his longstanding association with officials from Andhra Pradesh Tourism and his deep understanding of the local tourism ecosystem.



TISHTAR PARAKH
Country Manager for India - Tourism New Zealand

Tourism New Zealand, the national tourism board responsible for promoting New Zealand as a visitor destination, has appointed Tishtar Parakh as the Country Manager for India. Based in Mumbai, she will lead Tourism New Zealand's efforts to grow visitor demand and further strengthen trade and industry partnerships in the Indian market.

As travel preferences shift toward authentic and immersive experiences, Tishtar will work closely with travel trade partners, airlines, and industry stakeholders to inspire more Indian travellers to explore New Zealand.



YOUNIS KHAN
Hotel Manager - The Lalit Ashok Bengaluru

A seasoned and dynamic hospitality professional with a career spanning several decades, Younis Khan has been appointed as the new Hotel Manager at The Lalit Ashok Bangalore. With a strong foundation in Front Office operations, Younis has developed expertise across operational management, sales and marketing strategies, revenue optimisation, guest experience enhancement, team development, and service excellence.

On his appointment, Younis Khan remarked, "I look forward to contributing to the hotel's continued success, collaborating with the talented team, and creating memorable experiences for our guests."



NIKHIL KOTHA
Director of Sales - Shangri-La Bengaluru

Shangri-La Bengaluru has announced the appointment of Nikhil Kotha as Director of Sales. In his new role, Nikhil will spearhead the hotel's sales strategy, focusing on strengthening market share, enhancing commercial performance, and unlocking new business opportunities across key segments.

Nikhil Kotha, Director of Sales, Shangri-La Bengaluru, said, "I am excited to join Shangri-La Bengaluru and look forward to contributing to the hotel's continued success. My focus will be on strengthening strategic partnerships and driving impactful, sustainable sales initiatives."



INNU LAMA
The Cluster Learning & Development Manager- Hilton Hotels Bengaluru

Hilton has announced the appointment of Innu Lama as Cluster Learning & Development Manager for its Bengaluru portfolio, covering Hilton Bengaluru Embassy Manyata Business Park, Hilton Garden Inn Bengaluru Embassy Manyata Business Park, Hilton Bangalore Embassy Golflinks, Hilton Bengaluru Embassy Tech Village, and Hilton Garden Inn Bengaluru Embassy Tech Village.

In her new role, Innu will be responsible for driving the cluster's learning strategy, focusing on leadership development, talent progression, and strengthening service culture.

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- ◆ Keynote: India's MICE Opportunity
- ◆ Infrastructure and Policy Discussions

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