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It's *not* normal

Recent history has shown that when the smell of danger lurks in a destination, the MICE market is one of the first to take flight.

Thus, it's unsurprising that 18 hours after a bomb detonated at the Erawan shrine in Bangkok's tourist-thronged Rajprasong area, deep in their hearts, after the shock had sunk in, Thailand DMCS knew this was not going to be good for business.

Why, even without so much of a terror attack, just a military coup as we saw in May last year, Bangkok had lost conferences that were looking to be firmed up in the city while major events that were too late in the day to be cancelled had scaled back enormously. What more an attack that looked every bit designed to hurt tourists. That's why the shock: Thailand has survived a dozen military coups over several decades, and gut-wrenching anti-government riots and protests since 2009 yet, the kingdom has always prided itself that virtually no tourist was hurt. All that changed on August 17, 2015.

But here's the thing: the day after the bombing, life was almost back to normal in Bangkok. Hotels and DMCS worked through the night of the tragedy to execute emergency plans, account for guests and staff, and make them feel safe and comfortable. There was a sense of order amid a chaotic situation and in spite of the shock.

The irony is, we now act as if by remote when a terror attack strikes. How did we come to this, to accept that terrorism is 'the new normal'? Terrorism is not normal, full stop. The greatest danger is when we accept it as normal.

Terrorism, as James Reed, CEO/group managing director of Destination Asia, told me "will be THE challenge of the future for the travel industry, be it family holidays, MICE programmes and even cruises. How we address it will also be THE challenge of the generation of leaders of world travel in the next 20 years."

Travel and tourism is not in a position to fight terrorism, this I understand. But I think authorities that aim to be the voice of the industry – the likes of WTTC, UNWTO, PATA, etc – can do more than just send out predictable condolence and regret messages in the wake of a terror attack.

WTTC, for instance, focused its summit in April this area around technological disruptions and reinventions – why not terrorism? Travel & tourism should start discussing and understanding terrorism deeply and openly. Only then can we really find ways how we can play a part, no matter how small, in preventing it.



TTGmice, endorsed by the Asian Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus, is published by TTG Asia Media Pte Ltd, and is mailed free-of-charge on written request to readers Asia-wide who meet a set of predetermined terms and conditions. Annual airmail subscription charges are US\$70 (Asia) and US\$90 (elsewhere). All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in whole or in part without written permission of the publisher.

MCI (P) 165/08/2013, KDN
PPS1140/09/2012(022844), ISSN 0218-849X
Printed by KHL Printing Co Pte Ltd, 57 Loyang Drive,
Singapore 508968.

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We love



Of beauty and substance

Plaza Athenee Bangkok managed a double coup with its recently completed refurbishment — introducing a Thai-Colonial aesthetic throughout key areas of the property and managing the whole process as sustainably as possible.

Design elements pay homage to the hotel's royal roots — it's built on the site of the royal palace of HRH Princess Valaya Alongkorn, the 43rd daughter of King Rama V. The princess was a well known aesthete and guest rooms, public areas and meeting spaces retain visual fidelity to the era in which he lived through the use of elements such as Thai motifs, ornate filigreed designs, Chesterfield sofas, chaise lounge and vintage photography, all of which are complemented by contemporary interior design.

Business events specialists will want to explore the revamped Atheneum Meetings Rooms on Level 6 which incorporates six meetings rooms, a boardroom and lounge. The largest room seats 80 people theatre-style

in its 150m² space. While the area continues with the colonial theme, each room is decked out with the latest audio-visual equipment and has been designed to maximise natural light while providing views of the surrounding cityscape.

Plaza Athenee sourced all the design and workmanship from within Thailand and received ISO 20121 certification for its planning and delivery of sustainable events. The refurbishment, which won the Five Star Asia Pacific Property Award 2014-2015, in the category Best Hotel Interior Thailand, repurposed as much of its former interior elopements, including furniture, as possible under the property's "no waste" policy, making it an ideal venue for groups focused on ensuring their MICE activities leave a minimal impact on the environment.

Stylish new venues at The Club



Luxury boutique hotel The Club, which drew much attention from travellers and the design community with its bold black and white interior when it first opened in 2010 in Singapore's heritage enclave, has completed an extensive renovation to give it refreshed guestrooms and new dining destinations.

Located on Ann Siang Hill in a colonial building built in the 1900s, The Club's guestrooms now feature soothing earth tones, eclectic art accessories and bespoke furniture. Its popular B28 underground whisky bar is now joined by a lounge café and bar, a champagne yard, a rooftop bar and the second restaurant by The Disgruntled Chef.

Open for private event hire are Tiger's Milk and The Champagne Yard.

Tiger's Milk on level four is said to be the first Peruvian themed rooftop bar in Singapore. It is able to accommodate private gatherings of 110 guests, and charms with a Parilla grill area.

The Champagne Yard on the ground floor makes a splendid venue for celebrations and high-level networking functions, with space for 24 guests, cocktail style. It offers an extensive selection of premium champagnes and wines. — Karen Yue

The Straits Hotels & Suites opens for business in Malacca

Event planners looking to bring their next incentive or teambuilding programme to popular Malacca now have another hotel option.

The new 352-key Straits Hotels & Suites houses five multi-functional rooms that are open for bookings by the hour or by the day, an all-day dining restaurant, rooftop bar and lounge, gym and sauna.

The deluxe and luxury suites offer kitchenette facilities while the premier and straits suites feature large bathrooms with a bathtub and standing rain shower as well as a sofa set and dining area.

Its location on Jalan Melaka Raya offers guests convenient access to Melaka Parade shopping centre and Dataran Pahlawan Melaka Megamall.



Dreams of grand palaces come alive in the new Reverie Saigon

Luxury hotel, The Reverie Saigon, opens this month in downtown Ho Chi Minh City, bringing with it 286 guestrooms and 15 function venues that are all beautifully furnished to invoke memories of resplendent palaces and chateaus.

Occupying the 27th to 39th floors of Times Square, the property offers clear city views and places guests within a five-minute walking distance from Lam Son Square, City Hall and the Notre Dame Cathedral, while the Museum of Ho Chi Minh City and Reunification Palace are within a kilometre away.

Guestrooms' interior draws on the design genius of four leading Italian furniture designers – Provasi, Colombostile, Giorgetti and Visionnaire – and all feature walls of textured Italian silk, luxury bed linen, and delicate chandeliers and lamps. These rooms are also said to be the city's largest, with regular rooms

ranging from 43-53m² in size and suites from 63-313m².

There are 15 versatile venues for corporate meetings and private events, including the La Scala Grand Ballroom, an ornate room with Swarovski crystal chandeliers and walls lined with silk and onyx. Premium drinks, crystal glassware, carefully chosen scents and top-of-the-line stationery are part of every meeting at The Reverie Saigon.

F&B options include The Royal Pavilion, serving Chinese cuisine; R&J, offering Italian cuisine; Café Cardinal, serving French cuisine; and The Long@Times Square café and bar.

Other facilities include a gym, swimming pool, outdoor jacuzzis, steam rooms, saunas and a spa.

Also located within Times Square is The Reverie Residence with 89 one- and two-bedroom full-service apartments.

InterContinental Wellington unveils high-tech venues

A multimillion dollar refurbishment has boosted InterContinental Wellington's conferencing capability with what is said to be the most technologically-advanced conference spaces in Wellington, New Zealand.

Interactive whiteboards that allow presenters to wirelessly connect via iOS and Android devices, and space-saving disappearing projector screens and data projectors are among the new highlights of the hotel's six meeting rooms. These venues are also equipped with a wall-mounted touch-screen control panel for lighting, sound and visuals, and they all sport a contemporary sleek interior design.

New conference menus have also been developed to allow for broader dietary requirements and dining preferences during events. The hotel has observed a rise in breakfast meetings, for instance.

The conference floor upgrade was the final stage of a two-year refurbishment project that brought sweeping changes to the property's club lounge, club rooms and other facilities.

The Luxury Collection expands to Nanjing

The Grand Mansion, a property under Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide's The Luxury Collection Hotels & Resorts, has opened in Nanjing, China.

Located near Nanjing's iconic Presidential Palace, the new hotel boasts a total of 158 guestrooms, including 15 premium suites and a presidential suite.

Meeting planners can avail themselves of seven meeting rooms and a grand ballroom measuring 557m² and with capacity for 360 pax in theatre-style. High speed Internet access is available in all function spaces.

For dining options, guests can enjoy a large selection of teas at the Xi Lounge, all-day Nanjing cuisine and international dining at The Atrium, or Chinese delicacies at Xuan Ling Ge.

For recreation, there is a fitness center, an indoor heated pool, a spa and a library.

New way to access Singapore's Sentosa island



The existing Mount Faber cable car line has been extended to offer a fun new way to get on Sentosa island.

The new Sentosa Line, now part of the Singapore Cable Car Sky Network, is one of several infrastructural enhancements that Sentosa Development Corporation (SDC) has embarked on to improve connectivity and accessibility on the island.

"It (the new cable car ride) offers a serene ride over our beautiful island, while also greatly improving access between Merlion Plaza, Mount Imbiah and Siloso Point," said

Mike Barclay, CEO of SDC. "We expect it will become the preferred mode of transport for our guests wishing to access the western tip of Siloso Beach, as well as the Shangri-La Rasa Sentosa Hotel, Underwater World Singapore and Fort Siloso," he added.

Guests who wish to ride on both lines are able to buy a Cable Car Sky Pass with an option to top up for unlimited rides. Overseas guests will enjoy a bonus as the new Sentosa Line will be included in the new Standard Sky Pass with no increase from the current price of S\$29 (US\$21.20).

Lanyon enhances event management tools

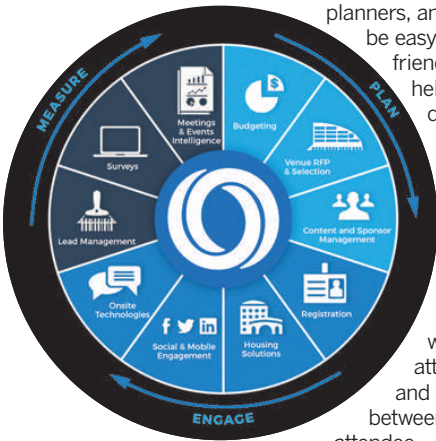
US-based Lanyon, which specialises in cloud-based software for managing business events and travel programmes, has released an enhanced version of its Smart Events Cloud.

The solution, which helps business event planners through the entire lifecycle of their events, now offers a new navigation and user interface that simplifies the meeting and event process into logically ordered key components.

The attendee management module for meetings and events is also completely redesigned, making it easier for the user to plan, design and manage tasks such as theme builder, registration and reporting.

Event theme are also now configurable and business event planners can choose from an existing library of themes or edit a template to create a customised version. A preview feature is also available.

David Bonnette, CEO of Lanyon, said in a press statement: "We have put a particular focus on the user experience for meeting planners, and designed tools to be easy to use and mobile friendly. This is vital as we help companies consolidate their programmes and drive adoption around the globe." Additionally, with the increased usage of mobile devices, Lanyon has released a new mobile app, Lanyon Mobile, which aims to improve attendee experience and deepen engagement between the organiser and attendee.



Escape the four walls that confine at your next meeting

Five-star resort Indigo Pearl in Phuket has introduced *Green Season Meetings*, a unique art-themed interpretation of business events that removes delegates from the boardroom and immerses them in lush tropical landscapes and settings.

Green Season Meetings gives delegates the chance to hold their meetings in an exclusive and tailored setting such as going barefooted in the "boardroom" and discussing business ideas with their toes in the sand.

"It's about leaving the business clothes at home and picking up a paint brush in a tropical paradise, which will appeal to many executives and MICE planners looking for a refreshing change of direction," said Chris Oakes, general manager of Indigo Pearl.

Delegates are also offered interesting teambuilding exercises such as Thai boxing lessons, cooking competition and mixology classes.

The *Green Season Meetings* package is priced at 1,350 baht (US\$38.70) net per day for the half-day package and 1,550 baht net per day for a full day, with a minimum of 15 pax.



HOT DEALS

Regal Kowloon Hotel, Hong Kong

Regal Kowloon Hotel in Hong Kong's Tsimshatsui has introduced a series of themed coffee breaks for corporate meetings.

To enjoy one of seven themed coffee breaks, planners need only to upgrade their regular coffee break with a top up of HK\$60 (US\$7.80) per pax.

The seven themes include *Tropical Fever*, which features tropical fruits dishes and Mixed Berries Smoothie; *Vegetarian Refreshment*, which offers a refreshing selection of greens; as well as five others that draw inspiration from Hong Kong, Japanese, English, Thai and Singaporean cuisine.

A 10 per cent service charge applies.

Contact rkh.banquet@regalhotel.com.

Sheraton Macao Hotel

Meeting planners can expect to stretch their dollar when they take an event to Sheraton Macao Hotel, Cotai Central.

The new *Meet for Free in Macao* offer gives planners the freedom to choose a reward that works best for their group. The four complimentary options are:



- Stay for Free – Receive one night free when booking a minimum of two nights
- Meet for Free – Get a free meeting package when booking meetings across two days or more



Regal Kowloon Hotel (left); Sheraton Macao Hotel

- Eat for Free – Receive up to HK\$500 F&B credit with every HK\$500 spend per delegate
 - Travel for Free – Get round-trip ferry tickets between Hong Kong and Macau and coach transfers to and from the ferry terminal
- To qualify, planners must book a two-night stay for up to 750 rooms or 1,500 attendees at Sheraton Macao Hotel. Bookings must also be made between now and December 31, 2015 for meetings held by August 2016. Other terms and conditions apply. Email sales.macao@sheraton.com.

Airbnb gets serious about business travellers with new tools

Airbnb is rolling out new tools for its Business Travel programme as part of its efforts to expand its popularity beyond the leisure travel market.

The new suite of tools allow visibility into employee travel itineraries booked through Airbnb, as well as providing financial reporting data and central billing systems.

Three components – the Activity, Report-

ing and Employees tabs – make up the new product suite. On the Activity Tab, travel managers can catalogue current and upcoming employee trips. The Reporting Tab allows the collection and management of booking reports, while with the Employees Tab, administrators can manage approved and pending employees who have been permitted to book trips through Airbnb.

Since it went live last July, more than 250 companies have joined up, including companies like Google, Twilio and SoundCloud.

Kelly Cammer, Twilio's travel manager, said: "Not only are we able to get better insight into how and when our employees are using Airbnb, but travellers are able to choose a place that feels like home at a price that fits our travel budgets."



Nobu Manila

Bearing the DNA of its A-list owner, the restaurant entertains the senses and impresses **Rosa Ocampo**

I settled on Nobu Manila for a night out with a visiting Singaporean friend. A well-travelled bon vivant, the lady's not so easy to please. But she was delighted with my choice. More than fine dining, Nobu is fun dining: good food in a relaxing ambience, luxurious indulgence that's neither staid nor stuffy.

MICE application

Nobu Manila has imprints of its A-list owner: Multi-awarded actor Robert de Niro, Hollywood producer Meir Teper, and culinary genius chef Nobu Matsuhisa who lends his name to the eponymous restaurant.

A dramatic flair and artistry pervade the Zen-chic interiors, the dinnerware, the way food is served and presented. Even the cut and colour of staff "kimonos" add to the theatrical quality.

This dramatic allure is best experienced at night when ceiling lamps catch curves and crests, floor lights beam on footpaths, and mood lighting subdues and highlights corners here and there.

The view wows, a fitting theatrical backdrop of the City of Dreams Manila's Fortune Egg (where Pangea and Chaos nightclubs are),

whose entire dome is gilded by golden lights.

Nobu Manila has 335 seats including indoor at the Chef's table, sushi bar, two teppanyaki tables, two private dining rooms, and tables encased in eye-catching wood panels. The outdoor terrace has floating cabanas that lend a luxury resort feel.

Since lunch is not served, private business gatherings can be arranged



at the restaurant then. Dinner functions are welcome too.

F&B concept

Nobu is known for Japanese fusion food, inspired by chef Nobu's stay in Peru where he substituted local ingredients for Japanese ones that were not available. At Nobu Manila, there is an eight-course degustation menu that comprises mainly of beef and seafood, and another featuring Japanese hot and cold dishes. The well-curated wine list includes Nobu sake and Matsuhisa wine.

I opted for some of the signature dishes. Black cod den miso is sweet and flavourful, the result of marinating the special fillet overnight in a sauce of miso, sugar and sake. Each is topped by red ginger and served on a leaf. Rock shrimp is fried to just the right crunch and dipped in a special sauce. Yellowtail fish is cooked with jalapeño for some Latino flavour, giving it a bit of a kick.

For dessert, we shared the chocolate bento box which is green ice cream and chocolate fondant lava cake served in what else but bento box. Ice cream is velvety and the lava cake is gloriously rich.

Service

The young staff are attentive yet discreet, friendly but not overly so. They helped us with our orders. They know their stuff.

We wanted to look around as it's our first visit. A passing waitress guided us towards the al fresco terrace and patiently answered our questions.

The friendly service extends to the hotel general manager, Marlon Hirsh, who I chanced upon at the lift lobby shepherding people into and out of the lift which was unfortunately small and slow. I lapped at the chance to ask him several questions. He gave me his attention and shook my hand afterwards, never mind that it was an ambush interview.

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Entertainment City, Parañaque 1701, Manila,
Philippines
Telephone: (632) 691-2882, 691-2885;
Email: NobuRestaurant@cod-manila.com

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Shocked industry members brace for fallout of Bangkok bombing

By Raini Hamdi

Bangkok city is calm but turbulence reigns in the minds of industry members as to how much damage August 17's blast – the first directly aimed at tourists – will affect tourism.

Though it's still early days, when asked to assess the impact, players believe huge markets for Thailand, such as MICE, would be among the first flashpoints.

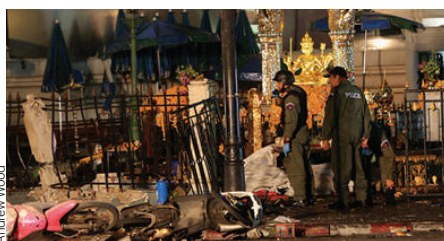
"The real danger to the Thailand travel industry is the MICE sector," said James Reed, CEO/group managing director of Destination Asia.

"Our MICE clientele is 85 per cent Fortune 500 corporations or top 50 companies in the US, the UK, continental Europe, Australia and ASEAN, and this is a very sensitive market segment as the participants are the corporations' best sales executives. Few corporations will take the risk of sending their best employees to an incentive or corporate meeting if there is any possibility of a terrorist attack."

Reed expects the immediate reaction to be not only cancellations of MICE programmes, but no new RFPs for corporate events in the future.

"The effect of a terrorist attack can linger for up to 12 months, if not longer, and in my career I have seen many similar 'risk/go or no go' scenarios."

At press time all DMCs interviewed said their clients were accounted for but were un-



Andrew Wood

sure whether cancellations would stream in over the next few days.

Laurent Kuenzle, CEO of Asian Trails, said: "Today and in the next few days we will see what the imminent impact will be and how the booking status develops, including cancellations and a slow down of new bookings."

Ensuring the safety and comfort of clients who are in the city is paramount, agreed members.

Chris Bailey, COO of Centara Hotels & Resorts: "Our main objective in the coming days is to ensure the safety and of course comfort of our in-house guests as they continue their visit to Thailand. As the dust settles we will get some clarity on the fallout, if any, and due to our history and past varying experiences, we will start to work on the journey back if needed."

"We have to stay focused. Thailand needs its visitors and we have many thousands of associates here that need their positions within this vital industry."

{ In brief }

LICC kicks off a busy first year

Malaysia's Langkawi International Convention Centre (LICC) has secured 10 regional conferences and played host to several high profile events such as the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting in March and the ASEAN Leaders Summit in April, since its opening on March 1.

SriLankan Airlines commits more India flights

National carrier SriLankan Airlines is planning to increase services from India, the destination's largest source market, in an effort to support Sri Lanka Convention Bureau's (SLCB) goal of growing inbound MICE business. At press time in early August, the airline was studying the feasibility of flying to Visakhapatnam, Chandigarh and Hyderabad and raising frequencies to other destinations in India.

Beijing prescribes Chinese medicine for MICE

Collaboration among the Beijing Municipal Commission of Tourism Development, traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) associations and inbound tour operators are underway to invigorate Beijing's MICE industry. Through the marketing of TCM experiences as pre/post event activities, Beijing's MICE tourism specialists are hoping to enhance the city's status as a choice destination for business events.

Park Hotel Group enters Australia

Singapore's Park Hotel Group has ventured out of Asia to manage Park Hotel Adelaide, its first hotel in Australia which is scheduled to open in 4Q2018. The 250-key hotel will sit in the heart of the CBD, close to the Adelaide railway station and central bus station.

Jumeirah Group to operate hotels in Malaysia

Jumeirah Group has signed an agreement with Oxley Malaysia to operate the new Jumeirah Kuala Lumpur Hotel and to brand the Jumeirah Living Kuala Lumpur residences. Both properties will be ready in 2021.

Sydney to host Amway China mega incentive for the third time

Amway China will be taking its 10,000-delegate Amway China Leadership Seminar to Sydney in March 2017, making it the company's third trip to the Australian city since 2005.

Associate director of special events of Amway China, Charming Cao, explained that Sydney was chosen to present a tempting reward for top performers.

Cao said: "We aim to motivate our team to reach and exceed their sales targets, knowing that their reward will be an exciting trip to Sydney. Our delegates will experience the modern, world-class facilities of the newly-opened ICC Sydney (International Conven-

tion Centre Sydney) and an exciting, appealing programme of activities."

He added that his delegates had reported a 93 per cent satisfaction rating during their last visits to Sydney in 2005 and 2011.

"We look forward to inspiring and entertaining our delegates again in 2017," he said.

Destination New South Wales (NSW) CEO Sandra Chipchase remarked that "China is the number one visitor market for NSW".

"ICC Sydney will be Australia's largest and most impressive events space, and securing the coveted Amway China Leadership Seminar for

this state-of-the-art facility reinforces Sydney's international reputation for hosting major events," Chipchase added.

BE Sydney has done well in the incentive sector, deliver-

ing more than 45,000 Asian incentive delegates into NSW over the past three years and injecting A\$213 million (US\$155.6 million) into the local economy.



Amway China's top achievers had a ball of a time in Sydney in 2011 (pictured here) and 2005



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Canton Fair engages Travelport to beef up attendance

By Karen Yue

China's biggest import and export trade fair has roped in travel distribution expert Travelport to promote attendance at the event to business travellers.

Yu Yi, deputy general manager of Canton Fair, told *TTGmice* that his company intends to "leverage on Travelport's strong global corporate network to win new business visitors... and maximise brand awareness".

Travelport, through its Destination Marketing Solution, will target B2B business travellers who are headed for Hong Kong and encourage them to extend their trip to Guangzhou where Canton Fair will be held from October 15 to November 5.

Explaining the procedure, Anna Au-Yeung, global head of

Destination Marketing, Travelport, said that once a targeted traveller is identified by the Global Distribution System, the travel consultant's desktop will flash messages from Canton Fair to recommend the event to the traveller and to register the individual for the tradeshow.

The travel consultant will be rewarded for every registration and attendance, while the traveller will enjoy a waiver on registration fees and be given a US\$100 coupon for use at the show or designated hotels.

Au-Yeung said: "Travellers today are gravitating towards trips that are tailored to their personal requirements and they value the services of a consultant who can plan their trips to cover all their needs."



Acknowledging that "competition has become very keen", Yu said Canton Fair must "maintain its pioneering lead and be innovative in expanding its distribution channels".

Hence, Canton Fair has been cooperating with chambers of commerce, travel agencies, airlines and marketing companies

to introduce various business programmes. It has in place an Advertisement Reward for New Buyers, a programme that rewards qualified first-time buyers, and a Buyer Recruitment Program for business partners. It also hosts video conferences that broadcast live promotions with Canton Fair partners from different continents.

Joint effort in place to court Philippine MICE

Singapore Tourism Board (STB), Singapore Airlines (SIA) and Changi Airport Group (CAG) have joined forces to lure business travellers and events from the Philippines with generous perks and intensified marketing.

The trio have decided to come together due to the "huge volume of traffic from the Philippines," said Carol Ong, SIA general manager Philippines, Guam and USTT (United States Trust Territories). "We have an ambitious target of 15 to 20 per cent increase."

Total Philippine arrivals to Singapore hit 676,000 in 2014, of which 20 per cent is MICE.

Adrian Kong, STB area director Philippines and Brunei, said arrivals from the Philippines is "consistent" and is Singapore's seventh biggest Asian market.

Targeted at BTMICE and through Singapore via SIA and its subsidiary SilkAir, perks from the trio include customised packages featuring land and air components with preferential rates, and financial grants, among others.

Under this falls the trio's collaboration called Singapore MICE Advantage Programme, valid till December 31, 2016 for events taking place by December 31, 2017, and Be in Singapore 2 which offers different qualifying criteria for different BTMICE segments.

All MICE bookings made on both airlines by October 31 for travel before January 1, 2016 will receive travel perks. – **Rosa Ocampo**

MACEOS, Biji-Biji turn accessory designers to cut event waste

The Malaysian Association of Convention and Exhibition Organisers and Suppliers (MACEOS) has partnered Biji-Biji Initiative, a Malaysian social enterprise that champions sustainable living through the creative reuse of discarded materials, to reduce waste at the 16th International Architecture, Interior Design & Building Exhibition (ARCHIDEX) in August.

Through the new MACEOS Green Initiatives programme, all PVC and tarpaulin banners used during the four-day ARCHIDEX were collected and transformed into fashionable and uniquely designed tote bags. All proceeds raised from the sale of these bags were channeled to Biji-Biji Initiative.

Vincent Lim, president of MACEOS and president of C.I.S Network, the joint organiser of ARCHIDEX, said: "Recycling advertising banners into something artistic and practical was the first step we took towards creating a more environmen-

tally friendly events industry."

Matthieu Mertens, partner and head of Systems & Electronics with Biji-Biji Initiative, said: "Those banner tote bags... offered a creative solution for the global waste problem and each (had its) own quirky design. These banners were given a second life, saving them from ending up in the landfill."

Mertens added: "There are countless creative ways we can up-cycle fashionable and useful everyday objects from discarded items. All that's required is an open mind and a willingness to look at waste from a different perspective."

At the same time, MACEOS is calling for industry partners including PCOs, PEOs, venue owners and operators as well as contractors, to be committed towards reducing carbon footprint during the staging of business and leisure events. An official Green Events logo will be accorded to events that meet the green criteria set by MACEOS.



Asia's exhibition industry maintains growth: UFI research

UFI'S 11th edition of *The Trade Fair Industry in Asia* has reported a 6.8 per cent growth in total net exhibition space sold in 2014, rising from 17,453,000m² in 2013 to 18,641,750m² last year.

The study, conducted by Business Strategies Group (BSG), noted that more than 56 per cent of sold exhibition space was transacted in China and 11 per cent in Japan. Among the more than 2,100 trade fairs included in the study, over 600 were held in mainland China compared with 338 in Japan, Asia's second largest market.

Above-average growth was registered in Asia's larger exhibition markets – China was up by 7.4 per cent, India by 7.6 per cent, Taiwan by 8.8 per cent and South Korea by 8.2 per cent.

South-east Asian markets continued to do well 2014. Space sold in Indonesia increased by 9.2 per cent, the Philippines by 8.8 per cent, and Thailand by 8.6 per cent.



Woodward: Big market for business development in Asia

One of the region's smallest exhibition markets, Macau, emerged the top performer last year, registering a growth in net space sold from 143,000m² to 197,500m².

BSG has forecasted regional growth this year for the Asian trade fair industry. It expects to see a 5.2 per cent year-on-year increment in net space sales. Strong performance in South-east Asia is predicted and China's trade fair industry will remain resilient.

UFI managing director, Paul Woodward, said in a press statement: "Asia remains a critical region for those developing international trade fair businesses and many people in our industry will be encouraged to see the results of this important survey."

UFI members are entitled to receive a four-page executive summary of the research and to purchase the full report at a substantial discount. For more information on this study, email asia@ufi.org.

Corporate interest up for meetings in small, luxury city hotels: SLH

Small Luxury Hotels of the World (SLH) has observed a "significant increase" in corporate enquiries and bookings for its city hotel members, noted the company's area and development director for Asia Pacific, Victor Wong.

Speaking to *TTGmice* on the sidelines of a press event in mid-August that sought to showcase its Singapore collection including the new 43-key Hotel Vagabond which offers creative event spaces, Wong said: "We have seen 15 to 20 per cent more enquiries, which is significant for us because one would think that small, luxury hotels are

seldom considered for corporate meetings."

He added: "But meeting planners are starting to see that large chain hotels are not the only option for events. Location and price are important considerations, and our member hotels in the city can satisfy both requirements."

Hotels favoured for meetings in Asia-Pacific include The George in Christchurch New Zealand, Lanson Place in Hong Kong and The Tokyo Station Hotel in Japan.

Another reason for the uptick in corporate interest is the acceptance of more small, luxury hotels into corporate hotel programmes, Wong explained.

Most of the corporate enquiries are from the US, SLH's biggest source market.

"However, we are seeing great interest from Asia-Pacific too, with Australia, Singapore and Hong Kong leading the pack," he remarked, adding that these are also the top performing markets for SLH's leisure segment. – **Karen Yue**

Malaysia's rAWr Awards to recognise incentive operators with new award category

The second edition of the rAWr (Recognising Award Winning Results) Awards will include a Special Award category this year to recognise incentive operators who have brought large groups to Malaysia in 2013/ 2014 with the support of Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB)'s *Twin Deal* ++ global campaign.

Three international operators will receive the Special Award – the International Incentive Operator Award for Excellence at the event on November 12 at Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.

The annual rAWr Awards, a joint collaboration between MyCEB and the Malaysia Association of Conference & Exhibition Organisers & Suppliers (MACEOS), also features four other categories – Business Events, Conventions, Incentive, and Exhibitions. Winners must be Malaysian registered companies that are members of either MyCEB and/or MACEOS, and event owners such as national associations.

Zulkefli Sharif, CEO MyCEB, said: "It is important we recognise extraordinary and innovative excellence in the business events industry to lift Malaysia's stature in world rankings. Winning a rAWr Award seals your reputation as an events professional, instilling a sense of awe and respect for your company and individuals who are game-changers, challenging boundaries and continuously adding value to clients and the industry."

Entries will be accepted until September 30, 2015. – **S Puvaneswary**

{ 2015 Calendar }

September 1-2

MICE Con,
Manila, Philippines

September 29 - October 1

IT&CM Asia,
Bangkok, Thailand

October 21-23

ITB Asia,
Singapore

October 23-25

SITE Global
Conference,
New Delhi, India



Opportunity to do good



From left: Perfect China's Woo Swee Lian and Koo Yuen Kim, with Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia's Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz and Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment Sabah's Masidi Manjun

MALAYSIA At the opening of the Perfect China conference in Kuala Lumpur on July 8, Perfect China's chairman, Koo Yuen Kim, presented a cheque worth RM600,000 (US\$146,099) to Sabah's minister of tourism, culture and environment, Masidi Manjun, to aid the locals whose lives had been affected by the 6.0 magnitude earthquake that struck Ranau, Sabah on June 5.

"While Perfect China has been making donations every time it holds a corporate incentive, this year's amount is the largest so far," said Mint Leong, managing director of Sunflower Holiday, the local DMC that handled the Perfect China group.

The donation will be channelled to

Sabah Foundation relief efforts.

Incentive delegates made a personal contribution of RMB200 (US\$31) each towards the relief fund as part of Perfect China's corporate social responsibility effort, while the rest of the amount was contributed by the company.

Perfect China also donated RM5 million to the Malaysia Table Tennis Association which Koo leads as president. The funds will help the association to organise the World Table Tennis championship 2016 in Kuala Lumpur.

Koo, who is a Malaysian, said he loved making Malaysia a destination for the company's incentive programmes as it allowed delegates to see what Malaysia had to offer.

This year saw 6,000 delegates coming in four waves throughout July, almost double the attendance in 2014.

Koo said one of the highlights for those who went to Alor Setar "was a visit to the king's palace and a chance to break fast with the royal family."

"It was the first time that the palace was open to any corporate company," added Sunflower Holiday's Leong.

Woo Swee Lian, CEO of Perfect China, commented: "This is the best incentive event organised by Sunflower Holiday so far. It was well executed. They have handled us for four years. They know what we want and they are able to deliver to our satisfaction." – **S Puvaneswary**

Indian wedding exhibition shows fidelity to Rembrandt Hotel Bangkok

THAILAND Location and tradition have encouraged the organisers of Asian Bride and Groom Exhibition to chose Rembrandt Hotel Bangkok again this year.

The exhibition, which ran from August 21-22, is a niche one that has been bringing Indian bridal dress, couture and jewellery and its vendors to Thailand on an annual basis for the past fifteen years.

"It's the most centrally located, near Sukhumvit (the city's major shopping street), and there are many Indians here," commented Archana Suebsukhchareon, the Bangkok partner of organisers IT India, on the choice of venue.

The hotel, a member of Warwick International Hotels, is supportive of the exhibition. It helped the organisers with event promotion and offered "a good rate" which benefitted representatives from 27 participating Indian companies.

The exhibition also featured 12 Thai companies.

Archana explained that Asian Bride and Groom Exhibition had also chosen to remain loyal to Rembrandt Hotel Bangkok because it was a venue that performed well in comparison with other options.

The exhibition experienced "very low" footfall when it was once held in upmarket mall Siam Paragon to coincide with *The Merchant of Bollywood*, an Indian musical. Archana blamed the poor traffic on the event location within the mall.

"Siam Paragon is also not the sort of place where people go to look for an Indian outfit. (Over time) people have come to associate the exhibition with the hotel," she added.

IT India is considering a fashion show in future to showcase exhibitor products.

– **Michael MacKey**

{ Advertorial }



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{ Hot moves }



Edward E Snoeks

Edward E Snoeks

Snoeks has been made regional general manager – Thailand and general manager of The Okura Prestige Bangkok. Snoeks was last general manager of the Crowne Plaza Hong Kong Causeway Bay.

Elizabeth Fourchy

Fourchy has joined ACTE as project manager. Based in Singapore, she supports both ACTE Asia and Australasia regions. She is armed with corporate event planning experience, and was last with



Elizabeth Fourchy

AlliedPRA Northern California as national sales manager.

Haydee Cruz

Outrigger Laguna Phuket Beach Resort has named Cruz its new director of sales and marketing. Cruz is armed with more than 20 years of experience, having worked at Marriott and Anantara hotels in Bangkok.

Lars Kerfin

The former general manager of Anantara Lawana Resort & Spa in Koh Samui now helms Renaissance Bangkok



Mark Bulmer

Ratchaprasong Hotel.

Mansell Xue

Xue has brought more than 20 years of hospitality experience to his new role as director of sales and marketing with Beijing Marriott Hotel City Wall.

Mark Bulmer

Bulmer has moved from Carlton City Hotel Singapore to sister property, Carlton Hotel Singapore, taking on the general manager position.

Norhayati Binti Muhammad Yusoff

Putrajaya, scheduled



Simon Rindlisbacher

to open in 4Q2015, has appointed, Norhayati its director of sales. She was last director of sales with The Royale Bintang Kuala Lumpur.

Peter C Draminsky

Draminsky has been appointed general manager of Regent Singapore, replacing Martin Sinclair who has since taken up a new role as general manager of Four Seasons Vancouver. Draminsky was most recently general manager at Four Seasons Hang-



Tyson Bae

zhou, and was also in the same role at Four Seasons Nevis.

Simon Rindlisbacher

Movenpick Hotels & Resorts has picked Rindlisbacher to be general manager of Hotel Sukhumvit 15 Bangkok. He joins from Ramada Hotel and Suites Bangkok.

Tyson Bae

Bae is now the general manager of Shanghai Marriott Hotel Pudong East. Prior to this appointment, Bae was Shanghai Marriott Hotel Hongqiao's general manager.

{ Inspire }

June Seah PR manager
Singapore Exhibition Services

What brought you to Singapore Exhibition Services (SES)?

I was a regular visitor to CommunicAsia, an annual ICT trade event owned and organised by SES. When the job opportunity presented itself, I was naturally curious to discover and be a part of the team behind such a large-scale and important event for the ICT industry.

What are your responsibilities?

I oversee SES' corporate communications and public relations. I supervise PR teams to plan, manage and execute international campaigns for our events held in Singapore, Indonesia, Myanmar and Vietnam.

What's the most surprising as-

pect of your job?

It was the magnitude of PR campaigns for some of our events. Take CommunicAsia and BroadcastAsia for example, the international PR campaign alone comprises at least eight regions: Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam, China, India and Europe. Also, with the need to multi-task between shows, it is akin to functioning as an agency within an in-house environment.

What's your biggest career achievement to date?

It is tough to pinpoint one single biggest achievement. Leading my teams as they fulfil their responsibilities to the highest possible standards gives plenty of satisfaction. The result, to me, is

not as important as the journey to the finishing line. At SES, we are bonded by a common purpose. And this purpose keeps us engaged and collaborative. The sense of wonderment from accomplishing an event never gets old.

What would you say to someone looking to specialise in event marketing and communications?

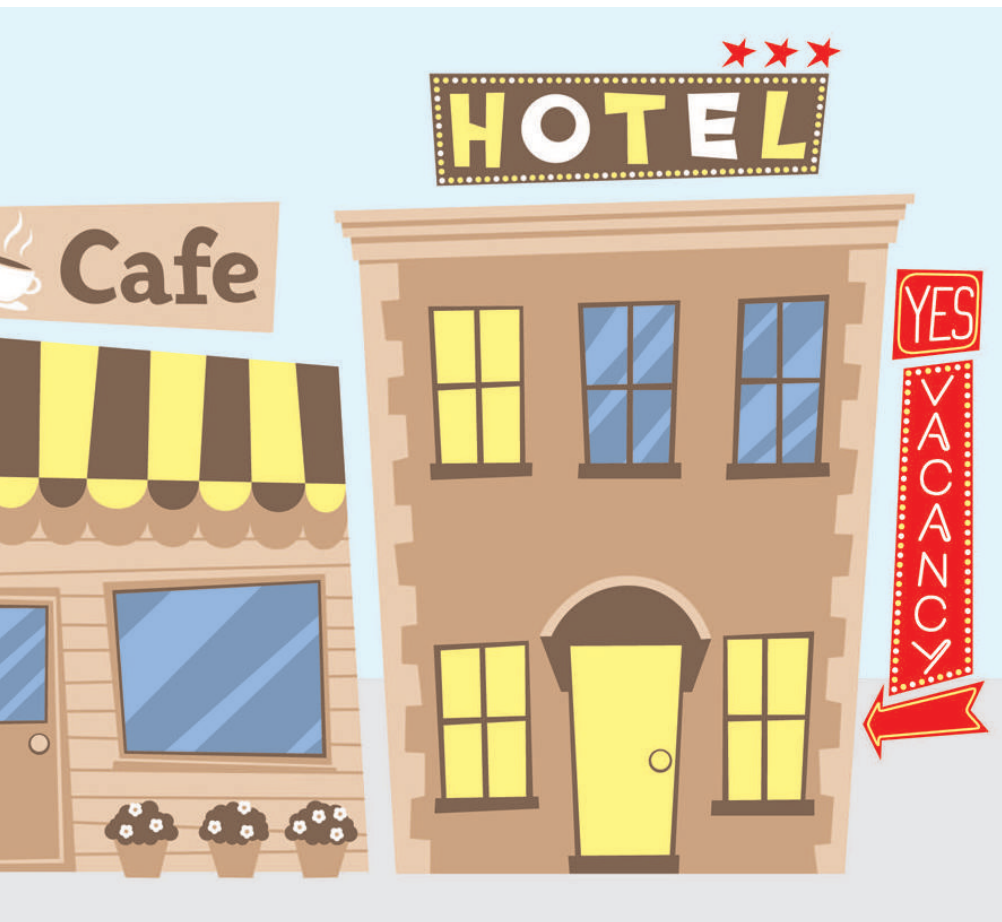
Organising an event is not a one-man show but a melting pot of people from different walks of life, with different skillsets. (We work) as a team... and it involves a lot of hard work. If you prefer to be a solo contributor, think again before signing on with an events or exhibitions company.



Echoes in an empty capital

Myanmar's new administrative capital, Nay Pyi Taw, has the hardware to support MICE but supply and demand are just not matching up.

Greg Lowe reports why hotel groups still want to be there



On first impression, Nay Pyi Taw is a model of efficiency: on arrival at the airport you can clear immigration, collect your luggage, change dollars into kyat and sit in your transfer vehicle within 15 minutes. The 16km drive into the capital passes quickly as you journey along tree-lined, multi-lane roads that are practically devoid of traffic. Then there's the impressive sight of the hotels: long driveways lead up to massive resorts where the buildings are dispersed over large tracts of land. Everything appears bigger and more spread out. They have the space, so why not use it?

There's also plenty of data to show the city is built for business: Nay Pyi Taw International Airport has a capacity of 3.5 million passengers a year; Myanmar

International Convention Centre features 29,000m² of floor space and can hold 1,900 people in its plenary hall; and there's no shortage of accommodation – there were 4,884 rooms spread across 58 properties at the end of last year, according to data from the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MHT).

What is lacking however is – people.

Nay Pyi Taw is a young city. Construction of the new administrative capital started in secret around 2002. The announcement that power would shift from Yangon was made in 2005, with the official naming of the city taking place the following year. The biggest influx of people, mostly government officials, was in 2008, and the population has grown ever since. While the city has netted a number of large-scale events, such as the World

Economic Forum in 2013 and the ASEAN Tourism Forum 2015, reality appears to be falling short of the dreams of the generals who designed Myanmar's new centre of power.

Andrew Langdon, executive vice president Thailand and Indochina of Jones Lang LaSalle, explained the gap between supply and demand in the hotel sector.

"Nay Pyi Taw witnessed a significant increase in room supply in the lead up to hosting ASEAN events in 2014. With the conclusion of these events, some of the facilities are now significantly under-utilised," he said.

"Existing branded supply in Nay Pyi Taw is very limited but growing. Existing hotels are primarily categorised in the up-scale segment and include Parkroyal (90 keys), Kempinski (141 keys), MGallery (165 keys) and Hilton (202 keys)."

Authorities are trying to fill this gap by promoting the city as a MICE destination. They also recently announced plans to develop it as a multi-development tourism market. This is no mean feat given the current lack of content: a quick search on TripAdvisor yields six attractions, eight restaurants, 30 hotels and not a whole lot more.

Official data reveals tourism performance which can only be described as dismal. While MHT statistics show international arrivals to the city rose from 5,521 in 2011 to 19,261 last year – up by about 52 per cent per year – growth would need to continue at this rate for 11 years, with no new supply, for hotels to run at full occupancy. In other words, last year's international arrivals would have been enough to fill every hotel room in the city for only four nights.

Action is clearly needed to improve performance, however, the trade is far from optimistic about government initiatives to bring in more people.

Stephen McEvoy, managing director of Asia World Enterprise, said: "I don't think Nay Pyi Taw would work in the foreseeable future as a MICE destination.

"For one thing the international airport is very new with no major airlines flying in... There is a choice of hotels in the destination, but no world famous cultural

sites or areas of natural beauty nearby as a hook for selling the destination. Apart from accommodation, restaurants, meeting venues and meeting technology would need to be upgraded.”

Given such weak performance, why are international hoteliers opening shop in the capital? Especially given the overall decline in Myanmar’s hotel sector at the national level: STR Global reported that Myanmar suffered Asia-Pacific’s largest decrease in RevPAR (-22.4 per cent) in February, driven largely by a 16.9 per cent decline in occupancy to 67.8 per cent.

A senior executive at an international tourism business with more than 15 years experience working in Myanmar said major hotel groups need a presence in Nay Pyi Taw to strengthen government relations and help secure licences elsewhere in the country.

“If international hoteliers want licences to operate in key destinations like Yangon, Mandalay and Inle, they need to partner a hotel in Nay Pyi Taw,” he said. “The authorities need the big brands here to make the place look credible. I doubt it’s written down anywhere as a requirement, but everyone knows giving them face will ease the licence process else-

where. What other explanation can there be?” the source said.

Tourism authorities deny the claim, as does AccorHotels, while Hilton and Pan Pacific did not respond directly to the question.

Timur Senturk, vice president operations ASEAN at Pan Pacific Hotels Group, said: “The management contract for Parkroyal Nay Pyi Taw was signed with Shwe Taung Group, one of Myanmar’s leading corporations in real estate and infrastructure development. Shwe Taung Group is also our joint venture partner for the development of the first Pan Pacific hotel in Myanmar, Pan Pacific Yangon, which is scheduled to open in 2017.”

William Costley, vice president of operations for South-east Asia at Hilton Worldwide, said: “As Nay Pyi Taw increasingly (becomes) an appealing destination for travellers, we want to be where our guests want to be.”

None of the hoteliers approached gave performance data for their properties in the capital. And until performance in Nay Pyi Taw matches the vision of its founders, doubts about its viability as a destination are likely to continue to echo around its empty streets.



“I don’t think Nay Pyi Taw would work in the foreseeable future as a MICE destination.”

Stephen McEvoy

Managing director, Asia World Enterprise

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Delegates without borders

Panduit's head of marketing operations APAC, **Philip Goh**, shows how his company and Destination Asia pulled off a successful summit for a multicultural audience from all over the world

Event brief

The 460-pax, three-day conference and incentive programme in Beijing, which includes a city tour to the Great Wall of China at the end of the summit, involves top international partners that help to drive the company. The programme must be an impressive one that will leave these VIPs with fond memories to take home.

Challenges

With 460 delegates attending this event from Singapore, Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea, the US, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Hong Kong and Taiwan, communication was a top concern. While presentations were all conducted in English, we had to make sure that translation was provided, so as to not hamper any of the delegate's understanding of the content.

Apart from the language barrier, the multicultural audience also meant that they would have different tastes and we had to make sure



Event
Asia-Pacific Partner Summit

Venue
Grand Hyatt Beijing

Date
May 11-13, 2015

Number of participants
460

scheduled meeting times, to ensure every delegate was kept up to date on the programme schedule.

To cater to the variety of dietary preferences, we worked closely with the hotel to ensure that food options would appeal to delegates from different countries. Ample options, from halal and vegetarian to spicy and non-spicy, were provided, so were condiments to allow delegates to spice up their meals.

We decided to use the different nationalities of our guests to our advantage and organised games during the gala dinner that required them to compete accordingly to their home countries. This helped to drum up excitement among the delegates who were quickly united by their countries.

These games proved to be an effective icebreaker, and more games were later introduced to allow delegates to network with peers of other nationalities and foster inter-country partnerships.

Key takeaways

The success of the event was evident from the numerous delegates coming forward to ask us for information about next year's event. This has given us the assurance that we had indeed delivered an event up to their expectations.

We realised that in our cross-cultural setting it is worth going the extra mile to make every one feel welcome, especially by presenting content in their native language. This helps them to feel respected, even if it meant more work for us.

Never underestimate the need to be hospitable as this is what will make or break a delegate's overall experience.

everyone's stomachs would be appeased – one of the key factors for a successful event.

Solutions

To break down language barriers, we made sure we had interpreters for various languages such as Chinese, Japanese and Korean. We had all the materials translated and each country also interviewed the translators to ensure they were suitable.

We also provided a free mobile app that could carry the respective content. Apart from information about the event and the speakers, the app also provided alerts on





Come rain or shine

Uniplan's sales & marketing executive, **Mimi Wong**, shows how her company battles Hong Kong's capricious weather while holding Mercedes-Benz's media launch outdoors

Event brief

It was in mid-March that Mercedes-Benz contracted live communications agency, Uniplan, to hold the launch of its new Maybach S-Class and S-Class Pullman models. Scheduled to happen in June, Mercedes was set on impressing the media and its exclusive clientele during the VIP unveiling of the new models. By the end of the month, Uniplan had begun preparing for the event, from creative concept through to production and event management.

Challenges

The media launch would take place in a glass-house atop Hong Kong Central Pier 4, which offers beautiful views of the harbour front during the day and a front seat to the Hong Kong skyline at night.

As with many outdoor events, the key challenge was to design and install a transparent marquee that could withstand the harsh outdoor conditions, which ranged from the blazing sun to Hong Kong's infamous thunderstorms and howling winds during the typhoon season.

The fact that the event was held at the top of the pier meant that large set-ups such as the marquee and portable washrooms had to be

lifted up to the pier using a crane.

In addition, we were limited to only four hours of crane usage daily and only at pre-determined times.

Solutions

The solution to our challenges lay in extensive

pre-event planning. Prior to the launch, we designed contingency plans for different weather conditions to prevent any delays in the event. For example, we added weights to the marquee structure, designed to withstand up to Typhoon Category 3.

During the event, Uniplan also carefully monitored the stand's condition to ensure the comfort and safety of the guests and our team.

To overcome the crane issue, we cautiously designed the event to minimise large set-up structures in order to reduce lifting time. We also worked closely with multiple vendors to ensure all parties were aware of the working schedules to prevent delays in set-up time.

Key takeaways

As the event was held outdoors at the top of a pier – not your everyday go-to venue – we learnt that it is absolutely critical for contingency plans in case of unpredictable weather conditions. Thorough pre-event planning and time management are just as crucial.

We also realised more than ever that clear and concise communication between all parties is essential for a successful and smooth event.

Event
Mercedes-Benz Maybach S-Class Launch

Venue
Hong Kong Central Pier 4

Client
Mercedes-Benz

Date
February 5, 2015

Number of participants
500

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Sail beyond the horizon, party like never before on a floating platform in the middle of the sea in Langkawi Island. Groove to the beat with your smoothest dance moves while gliding on the surface of the crystal clear Andaman sea, against a jewel-toned sunset. A cluster of islands with fascinating legends, mangroves and paddy fields, Langkawi is also known for its pristine beaches and luxury water villas, a paradise for your tropical experience.



Indulge in cultural luxury and explore like never before

in George Town, Penang. The island of Penang will transport her visitors back in time through various experiential time tunnels, from UNESCO World Heritage Sites to reliving the past of enriching cultural activities such as traditional artisanal trades and craftsmanship. A food haven recognised by many, Penang's culinary adventure will bring you on a palatable journey of the many cultures in the island.



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A large, detailed Spinosaurus statue is the central focus, illuminated with blue and white lights. It stands on a paved area with circular light patterns. In the background, a roller coaster track winds through the trees under a twilight sky. The scene is set at a theme park, likely Universal Islands of Adventure.

Playground for the corporates



No longer just a wonderland of fun for kids, theme parks are making their spaces friendly for corporate hire and getting clients to see them in a new light



Hong Kong Disneyland Resort welcomes park buy-outs

Asia has witnessed an explosion of theme parks in recent years, many themed around popular cartoon and movie characters and brandishing the latest in fun ride technology.

While these theme parks may have been built with families with children and the young-at-heart in mind, these attractions are also gaining fans in the corporate circle.

Popular theme parks such as Hong Kong Disneyland and Universal Studios Singapore, which offer private venue hires and are equipped with themed spaces that make memorable venues for networking functions, meetings, product launches, gala dinners and award presentations, are no stranger to corporate event organisers. They are also favoured for having quality hotel accommodation located on site or in close proximity.

Several business event specialists told TTGmice that theme parks are hotting up as venues for corporate gatherings.

"We have observed a rising trend for meetings and incentives at theme parks," said Ankush Nijhawan, managing director of Nijhawan Group of Companies, one of India's leading travel conglomerate, noting that cities in Europe, Asia and the Middle East are "particularly successful at winning these events".

He explained that theme parks appealed to corporate clients as they satisfied the need for work spaces and

fun elements under one roof.

Pacific World's regional director Asia, Selina Chavry, agrees. "Theme parks with hotels in close proximity and feature a significant number of meeting and convention spaces (are getting more MICE enquiries) as they are a good alternative to conventional (venues) in city hotels. They are also equipped with facilities for post-meeting activities."

Chavry also noted that theme parks are savvy marketers. "Much focus has been channelled towards MICE buyers. Theme parks are making efforts to distinguish themselves by constant upgrade of facilities, adding new rides, etc. to leverage on the growing (business events) market. In keeping with the growing demand, the (theme park) industry has also become more organised and active on a professional level," she said.

Kota Kikui, general manager, MICE Sales Department of Tokyo-based Tobu Top Tours Co., said Japanese companies loved the idea of hosting incentives at theme parks.

"Theme parks in Japan are popular among the Japanese, so taking staff to a theme park is a way to give (staff) unforgettable memories," said Kikui, adding that the improving national economy has led to an increase in clients rewarding staff with trips to destinations with theme parks.

Of course, not all business event organisers are sold on the idea.

Vidya Hermanto, managing direc-



tor of Corporate Incentive Management with Indonesia's Panorama Leisure, remarked: "Theme parks are perceived to be a place for families, therefore they do not really appeal to corporates. We have not received any requests for meetings in a theme park, although there have been some teambuilding and family day programmes at these venues."

He added: "And because of their characteristics as a family fun place, there are limited activities that corporates can do there. The theme park also cannot reflect the corporate image and goal of a corporate event."

Simon Ang, managing director – operations with Celebrate Life Travel & Leisure Philippines, has observed a decline in corporate requests for theme parks.

"Clients that have done (meetings and incentives at theme parks) in the past are now interested in exploring new destinations. As they become more travel-savvy, they want to take the road least travelled – hikes, safaris, treks and other adventure experiences – instead of visiting yet another theme park which offers the same rides and attractions," commented Ang.

The demographics of incentive winners contribute to a weak demand for theme parks too, according to Richard Vuilleumier, managing director of Panorama Tours Malaysia.

Vuilleumier said: "Many incentive qualifiers are in their 40s and they are not so keen on theme parks as com-

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Theme parks

pared to shopping and visiting iconic attractions. Having said that, a half-day programme can be included in the itinerary provided the theme park is iconic, for example Tokyo Disneyland which stands out because it is the closest to (Malaysia) and one can see iconic Disney characters that adults can relate to. The good weather in Tokyo is another winning factor.”

Tobu Top Tours Co.’s Kikui expects corporate interest in theme parks to rise as more theme parks continue to spring up on Asian soil.

He explained: “Japanese companies want destinations that are not too far from home because (staff) can only go away for three or four days. Japanese firms are not keen to give their staff long vacations. Short trips also keep costs down. Theme parks in Europe or North America are too far away.” – *Paige Lee, Mimi Hudoyo, S Puvaneswary, Rosa Ocampo, Rohit Kaul and Julian Ryall*

Tokyo Disneyland is a popular option for incentives



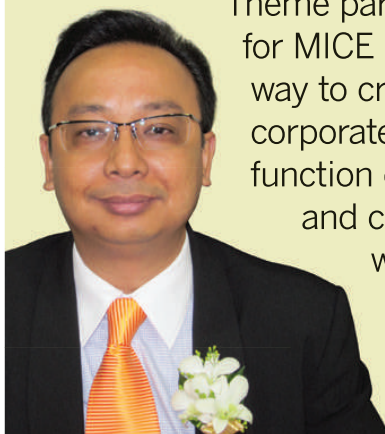
{ Viewpoints }

What should theme parks do to attract corporate clients?

“The (clients) I speak with are always asking for more information about the parties and unique events they can do at theme parks, so park operators need to be better at providing such information.”

Kota Kikui

General manager, MICE Sales Department,
Tobu Top Tours Co.



“Theme parks can create lasting memories for MICE delegates by going out of their way to create (unique) entertainment for corporate groups. For example, a dining function can be enhanced with a theme and characters in costumes mingling with delegates.”

Richard Vuilleumier

Managing director
Panorama Tours Malaysia

“Theme parks offering unique concepts and attractions would be a welcome move to address and adjust to the evolving market.”

Simon Ang

Managing director – operations
Celebrate Life Travel & Leisure Philippines

“Theme parks (that succeed) are continuously focusing on creativity and offering the newest rides, experiences and services to its guests. They are also evolving their MICE offerings such as the provision of express entry for groups, welcome banners, souvenirs and discount coupons.”

Ankush Nijhawan

Managing director,
Nijhawan Group of Companies



Not just for kids

TTGmice spotlights upcoming theme parks that are suitable for business events



Shanghai Disney Resort, China

Targeted opening
Spring 2016

Target markets

Mainly China but also markets across Asia and beyond

Unique selling points

Shanghai Disney Resort will be a world-class family vacation destination that combines classic Disney characters and storytelling with the uniqueness and beauty of China. The resort's vision is to build an "authentically Disney and distinctly Chinese" resort, and aims to provide unique content and experience to all visitors by introducing Chinese elements in its dining outlets, entertainment and architecture.

MICE applications

The resort will have accommodation, function rooms and in-park venues for private events. More details on its events capability will be shared at a later stage.



Movie Animation Park Studios, Perak

Targeted opening
Mid-2016

Target markets

Domestic visitors as well as travellers from Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, China and India

Unique selling points

Said to be the first animation theme park in Asia, Movie Animation Park Studios (MAPS) is one of the most unique and exciting projects underway in Malaysia's leisure and tourism landscape, noted Darren McLean, co-founder and CEO of Movie Animation Parks Studios.

The attraction will be launched with more than 40 attractions in six themed zones. Highlights will include:

- South-east Asia's first live car and bike stunt show, *Stunt Legends*, which will be performed at the 2,000-seat Stunt

Legends Arena

- DreamWorks Animation Adventure Zone featuring themed attractions such as *Mr Peabody & Sherman*, *Megamind*, *The Croods* and *Casper The Friendly Ghost*
- South-east Asia's first *Smurfs* 'Live' animation attractions
- The world's first *BoBoiBoy* animation attraction
- Malaysia's tallest drop tower attraction, *Megamind Megadrop*
- A variety of themed performances, F&B and retail outlets

MICE applications

Stunt Legends Arena has a VIP room and can accommodate large groups, while thematic restaurants will be set up within the park. There will also be open spaces that can be customised to meet the requirements of event organisers.



Twentieth Century Fox World Malaysia, Resorts World Genting

Targeted opening
End-2016

Target markets

ASEAN, Greater China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, India and the Middle East

Unique selling points

The attraction will be the world's first Twentieth Century Fox World theme park.

It will bring the "rich heritage of Twentieth Century Fox movie and television from the screen to be experienced on the ground", said Chow Wei Heng, vice president marketing with Resorts World Genting.

Perfect for family day outings and programmes for accompanying spouses and children, the theme park will feature a wide range of attractions themed after popular cartoon and movie titles like *Ice Age*, *Epic*, *Rio*, *Alien vs Predator*, *Titanic* and *Night at the Museum*.

Chow promises "something for everyone – young and old" at the future theme park.

MICE applications

Meeting venues have been allotted and there are plans to develop itineraries for event delegates. Details will be announced in early 2016.



Planet J, Sands Cotai Central, Macau

Targeted opening
Summer 2015

Target markets

China, Taiwan, South-east Asia and Europe

Unique selling points

Planet J is the world's first player-centric Live-Action-Role-Play (LARP) theme park.

"At Planet J you won't find a roller coaster, but it features out-of-the-world role-playing games, where players can physically act out the actions of fantasy characters, and the pursuing of goals and interaction with other adventurers between realistic and virtual settings," explained a spokesperson.

Connecting the players with the park is a mobile device called Magic Scroll, a person-

alised mobile gear that connects to over 200 whimsical games. Blending state-of-the-art technology and experiential storytelling, it will take players into a total immersive experience, from fun games to exhilarating quests for individuals, and grand adventures to dazzling performances for group challenges.

MICE applications

Planet J can be a unique venue for events or corporate functions, particularly for team-building or interactive events.

Event organisers and corporates can book the venue for exclusive use for a two-hour session. For longer sessions, bookings must be made at least three months in advance.

The Planet J team can also work with event planners to customise the venue and programme.



IMG Worlds of Adventure, Dubai

Targeted opening
End-2015

Target markets

Asia

Unique selling points

IMG Worlds of Adventure is set to be the world's largest indoor temperature-controlled theme park, allowing comfortable year-round visits.

Spanning 139,355m² in size, the attraction will partner globally renowned brands such as Marvel and Cartoon Network to offer a mix of exciting themed rides and attractions that will appeal to visitors of all ages and nationalities.

There will also be an extensive F&B offering, with plans to offer Arabic, European, American and Pan-Asian cuisines.

Lennard Otta, general manager of IMG Worlds of Adventure, said the company will be developing fully licensed, bespoke merchandise, not available anywhere else in the world.

MICE applications

IMG Worlds of Adventure will play a supporting role in Dubai's quest for a growing MICE sector.

Catering to both formal and informal events alike, the attraction will house state-of-the-art facilities like amphitheatres, event halls, cinemas and themed private dining rooms. It will also provide bespoke teambuilding and entertainment packages.



TTG

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Todd W. Arthur
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Other panelists include:

- **Sabah Parks**, Jamili Nais
- **Scott Asia**, Ken Scott
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Spotlight on Selangor



With the country's main airport close by and an inventory of business hotels and accessible entertainment, Selangor is the new darling of event organisers, discovers **S Puvaneswary**

The MICE sector in Selangor is starting to see a rebound in business following a tough 2014 when two air tragedies and a slowdown in travel led to a dip in arrivals to Malaysia.

Recovery has been attributed to Selangor's infrastructure developments and the depreciation in the ringgit. Trade players believe that the destination's close proximity to two major gateways into Malaysia, namely Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) and low-cost carrier terminal klia2, is a contributing factor.

The new klia2, much bigger and far better equipped in terms of safety and comfort features than the former budget terminal, enabled low-cost airlines using the facility to expand their frequencies and introduce new routes, thus improving opportunities for inbound players to tap new secondary markets for business events.

Access into Malaysia through klia2 has improved this year, with AirAsia raising its frequency from Manila

from twice to thrice daily; AirAsia and Malindo Air both starting the new Kuala Lumpur-Visakhapatnam route; and AirAsia X commencing a new service from Chongqing with four weekly flights.

Ganneesh Ramaa, manager of local DMC Luxury Tours, said: "The aggressive expansion of low-cost carriers...opens new markets for business events."

Ramaa said business hotels in Selangor are benefitting because they are close to these gateways, have large meeting spaces and guestroom inventory, and are cheaper compared with hotels of similar star rating in Kuala Lumpur.

"Hoteliers (in Selangor) are also more flexible with rates," he remarked, adding that it is "easier to promote Selangor" than Kuala Lumpur to MICE clients.

Arokia Das, senior manager of Luxury Tours Malaysia, said the rates for business events held at four- and five-star hotels in Selangor were "easily 30 per cent lower than

the rates (of similar hotels) in the outskirts of Bangkok".

Adam Kamal, CEO of Rakyat Travel, said: "Regional or international conference organisers with two- or three-day events don't want destinations too far from the capital city, such as Penang or Langkawi which require an additional flight. At the same time, they may choose not to do it in Kuala Lumpur, as there are too many distractions. So Selangor is an obvious choice."

Citing an example of how valuable accessibility is to clients, Kamal told *TTGmice* that Bank Rakyat, the organiser of an international conference on Islamic finances in August, had chosen to host the event at Putrajaya Marriott Hotel because the hotel was close to KLIA and klia2, had large conference facilities, and was near Putrajaya, enabling a day tour to the administrative capital.

Rakyat Travel was the groundhandler for the conference which was attended by 150 delegates from all over the world.

Thanks to a weaker ringgit, foreign MICE groups can get greater value out of their event at Sunway Resort Hotel & Spa (pictured here)

Putrajaya Marriott Hotel also provides free shuttle services for its guests to the nearby IOI City Mall, allowing meeting delegates to end their day with shopping and entertainment. The mall features more than 300 outlets, including an ice skating rink, a cinema with 13 halls, and an indoor Apocalypse themed adventure park known as District 21 which provides challenges and obstacle courses for adults.

Putrajaya Marriott Hotel and IOI City Mall are part of the IOI Resort City, which also includes the four-star 151-key Palm Garden Hotel.

According to Lydia Mae Hendroff, assistant director of marketing at Putrajaya Marriott Hotel, IOI Resort City is being marketed as a single destination this year, resulting in growing interest especially from China, India, Vietnam, the Philippines, Singapore and Brunei.

Hendroff said: "Cluster marketing provides convenience for meeting planners as their main point of reference is the sales team who will liaise with the different entities within IOI Resort City (on their behalf)."

Another hotel that is benefiting from its close proximity to the airports is AVANI Sepang Goldcoast Resort. Pamela Yew, its director of sales and marketing, said event organisers found the hotel convenient for time-strapped foreign delegates, especially speakers who would often fly in to make their presentation in the day and leave at night.

The seafront property also appeals to event planners with its seclusion

from the busy city centre and access to two ballrooms. Its location allows the provision of an "extreme park" with paintball courts, a go-kart track and ATV rides. Corporate teambuilding activities can be arranged on site. The two ballrooms are pillarless and have high ceilings. They can accommodate 1,000 and 400 pax respectively.

Yew said: "Many competing MICE hotels only have one ballroom which is used for the main conference, leaving not enough venues for private dining."

Also playing to Selangor's advantage is the steady depreciation of the Malaysian ringgit this year. At press time on August 14, it slumped to its weakest level in 17 years, and reached a historic low of 4.03 against the US dollar.

Kamal observed that the weak currency has made Selangor a more attractive destination for business events, and said his company had seen increased enquiries from ASEAN member countries, such as the Philippines and Indonesia, for the second half of 2015.

He said: "The depreciation of the ringgit had resulted in clients using their savings to (add value to the programme), such as by organising a gala dinner outside the hotel or requesting for entertainment options."

Yew too is seeing increased enquiries from companies based in Singapore, India and China for 2H2015. While demand is up from financial service sectors, Yew noted that it was the reverse with oil and

gas clients. She explained that the weaker currency had impacted the latter's revenue.

She remarked: "The devaluation of the ringgit has helped business as organisers want to stretch their budget. During the low season, we are able to provide value adds such as room upgrades, complimentary rooms, coach transfers from airport to hotel or from hotel to the city centre, and flexible room rates and meeting packages."

Selangor's Sunway Resort Hotel & Spa group director of brand marketing & communications marketing, Farizal Jaafar, said the integrated resort is now more affordable to its main markets from the Asia Pacific region which contributed 60 per cent of its guests in 2014.

Rakyat Travel's Kamal agrees. "In the past, the total package price of holding an event at Sunway was beyond the budget of our clients. Now with the devaluation of the ringgit, it (is affordable). This is also a good option for clients who have already done Kuala Lumpur and are looking for a new destination."

Meanwhile, the two-year-old Setia City Convention Centre in Selangor's Shah Alam is banking on the integration of ASEAN as a single community to further drive business, said its senior manager, Francis Teo.

Currently, part of its business comes from multinational corporations in Shah Alam and Subang Jaya who prefer to do their events at the centre which is nearer than venues in Kuala Lumpur.

{ Talking numbers }



30

The rank Malaysia holds on ICCA's latest Global Ranking 2014 of top countries for association meetings, up five spots from 2013



3.6

The average number of days international conventions were held in Malaysia, up from 3.3 days in 2013. These events were supported by MyCEB in 2014



1.56

The economic impact – in billions of ringgit (or US\$380 million) – of international business events supported by MyCEB in 2014, up from RM1.2 billion in 2013

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WHERE COMMERCE, CULTURE, COLOUR CONVERGE

{ Spotlight }

Journey into the capital's past



Mud takes the audience into Kuala Lumpur's past

MICE planners having an event in Kuala Lumpur should incorporate this 50-minute live performance in English into their programme as it gives foreign visitors a lively introduction into the early beginnings of the city.

Everyone who watches this show will have their hearts go out to the colourful, multiracial settlers who lost their homes

and their possessions when the Great Fire of Kuala Lumpur broke out in 1881. To further add to their misery, The Great Flood that year destroyed the city and settlers were left with two choices, leave and start anew elsewhere or rebuild the city and their lives. Thankfully they chose the latter.

While the characters are fictional, the story is based on historical accounts from the 1850s during the tin mining boom which promised riches and attracted an influx of pioneers from Asia to the muddy junction of the two rivers, Lumpur River (now known as Gombak River) and Kelang River.

What also makes the show interesting is that the audience can choose to participate, and by doing so, they become part of the unfolding drama. For instance, they can form a line and become volunteers to pass pails of water to help put out the ravaging fire of 1881.

The intensity of the fire is projected through visuals on the LED screen.

It is fitting that the tale of Kuala Lumpur is staged at Panggung Bandaraya, built in 1901. Panggung Bandaraya is

located at Merdeka Square, the heritage area of Kuala Lumpur where buildings are more than a century old. This was the "new" city of Kuala Lumpur then.

Mud: Our story of Kuala Lumpur is the longest running musical in Kuala Lumpur; it will be staged till end-2017. There are two performances daily, at 15.00 and 20.30, except on the second and fourth Monday of the month.

This musical is the perfect post-lunch/dinner entertainment. If an afternoon show is chosen, the programme can include a horse carriage ride – provided the group size is small. The ride starts and ends at KL City Gallery, which is within walking distance to Panggung Bandaraya.

Drawn by Friesian horses, the carriages will take visitors past the old parts of the city, where buildings date back to the 1800s. Visitors will be able to see some of the architecture that will be featured in the musical. The ride lasts 20 minutes and a carriage can fit up to four people.

With advance bookings, Kuala Lumpur City Hall can prepare up to five carriages to take groups around at any one time.

{ Insider }

Ganneesh Ramaa, manager of Luxury Tours Malaysia, points out Malaysia's many attractions that delegates must experience

Diverse destinations

Malaysia has a lot to offer to visiting MICE delegates. There is an old world charm to experience in Penang and Malacca, beautiful beaches to play at in Langkawi, Terengganu and Sabah, and a lively city centre to explore in Kuala Lumpur. Good highways, rail and air links make travelling from one state to another easy.

Culture club

Explore cultural diversity in Malaysia by sampling different food and experiencing the way of life of locals. Homestay programmes allow delegates to spend a night with locals, while day trips to villages and longhouses promise memorable experiences for foreign delegates.

Be one with nature

Many opportunities for nature-based pre/post-show activities are on offer. For example, Forest Research Institute of Malaysia in Kepong is one of the top eco-tourism destinations in Malaysia, and offers the excitement of walking along a 150m canopy walkway, suspended 30m above the ground. Dark Cave in Batu Caves and Tempurong Cave in Gopeng, Perak are also waiting to be explored. For venues with a twist, planners can pick The Lost World of Tambun's 400 million-year-old Kepura Cave which can accommodate meetings. To escape the tropical heat, head up to Cameron Highlands and explore Endau-Rompin National Park on a four-wheel drive or bicycle.



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The Saujana Hotel Kuala Lumpur



The Saujana Hotel Kuala Lumpur is a gem. Following major refurbishments which completed in June, the almost 30 year-old hotel feels spanking new. It also scores on location, being accessible via the Federal Highway and the New Klang Valley Expressway.

Although it is a city hotel, I felt transported to a resort on a beautiful island, thanks to the lobby's high ceiling which brought a cool breeze through the reception area. This vision followed through to my deluxe room which offered views of the lake and free-form swimming pool. With views so tempting, I was glad I had my portable notebook with me, allowing me to write this review outdoors.

FACT FILE

Smallest venue

The Boardroom seats nine

Largest venue

The Saujana Ballroom takes 700 pax, theatre style

Events handled

Unilever (M) Holdings Series Training, 30 pax; Kuehne + Nagel Regional Talent Programme, 26 pax; The ARCADIS Asia Management Meeting 2015, 95 pax; La Farge Cement Industrial Workshop, 40 pax; Young Presidents Organisation board meeting, 15 pax

Meeting facilities There are nine meeting rooms and a ballroom at Block 1, while Block 2 features six meetings venues, all of which were renovated. In my view, they appeal to two types of planners.

For the planner who desires a stimulating environment for brainstorming, an air-conditioned meeting room with beautiful views of the lake may be ideal. There are three venues with such views. They are equipped with two 70-inch flat-screen TVs in each room, whiteboard, LCD projector and sound system. Delegates also get to enjoy the convenience of a well-stocked private minibar and charging stations for mobile devices.

For the planner who wants for a venue for solemn meetings, an enclosed environment would be more suitable and there are five venues to suit this need.

All meeting rooms sit on the ground floor and are close to the Saujana Ballroom which has a permanent stage and capacity for 700 pax in theatre-style. The entrance to the ballroom was renovated, now allowing cars to be easily driven in,

making the venue ideal for car launches.

Saujana Hotel & Resorts vice president of operations, Peter J Hourigan, told me that the hotel is keen on winning over car events "since many luxury automobile brands are located in the vicinity".

With 160 hectares of manicured gardens, there's ample space for outdoor teambuilding activities.

Rooms All 250 guestrooms were refurbished. I enjoyed the 50-inch flat-screen TV in my room and the iPod docking station on my bedside table. A free app, designed for use in the hotel and downloadable from Google Play Store, allowed me to project photos from my smartphone onto the TV, which was great.

My deluxe room was spacious, even with two super single beds, a comfortable lounge chair, a side table and a long work desk with a multimedia hub.

F&B Seven restaurants, each specialising in a different cuisine, provide variety for event delegates who are staying a few nights at the hotel.

Senja Italian restaurant has a live band playing every night, a lounge area, a cocktail bar and a dining area.

Charcoal opened last year, serving prime meats, quality seafood and a wide selection of Peranakan dishes. It has a private dining area for 60 pax.

Kogetsu features a classic Japanese countryside, complete with a show kitchen in the main area, separate sushi and teppanyaki counters for alternative seating options and three tatami rooms for private functions.

Other facilities Complimentary Wi-Fi is available for in-house guests throughout the resort. Free parking is offered too.

VERDICT



A convenient city hotel with a resort feel.

S Puvaneswary



The impressive Hwaseong Fortress surrounding the centre of Suwon, the provincial capital, is a star attraction

Rising star

MICE interest in Gyeonggi is up, thanks to a young and eager CVB and available convention facilities. By **Paige Lee Pei Qi**

The formation of the Gyeonggi MICE Bureau in July 2011 has brought good news to the South Korean province's MICE sector. Active promotion of the destination for business events has resulted in MICE arrivals leaping from six million in 2012 to eight million in 2013.

According to the bureau's deputy general manager, Charles Park, destination promotion efforts so far have included participation in international and domestic exhibitions and publicity campaigns in industry publications.

"It is about getting the word out that there is a lot of MICE potential

here in Gyeonggi," Park said.

Gyeonggi MICE Bureau also offers a highly-coordinated support system for event bidding, over-seas promotion and the hosting of international events. This system is available to societies, associations and corporations planning on holding large events in the province. Events that qualify for support can enjoy perks like a hosted lunch or dinner banquet with performances for event delegates, complimentary guidebooks and promotional materials, or subsidised rental of convention facilities.

Its latest development is the establishment of a MICE alliance to conduct joint marketing initiatives and market research. Alliance members include Korean Folk Vil-

{ Talking numbers }



150,000

The number of participants expected at Hair World 2016, a biannual professional competition that is regarded as the world cup of the beauty industry



40

The approximate time – in minutes – taken to travel from Incheon International Airport to KINTEX by car



8

The number of business travellers – in millions – to Gyeonggi in 2013, up from six million in 2012

lage, Hotel ibis Suwon Ambassador and MVL Hotel Kintex.

Aiding the bureau in its MICE promotion efforts is the province's stellar geographic location – it sits close to South Korea's main gateway, Incheon International Airport, making it easily accessible to time-strapped business travellers.

Its convention centre is also the country's largest and Asia's fifth largest. Korea International Exhibition Centre – or KINTEX which it is commonly known as – features 108,049m² of flexible event spaces, including 57 meeting rooms, a 6,000-seat event hall and a 2,000-seat grand ballroom. The entire venue can accommodate up to 10,000 delegates at one time.

“(KINTEX) gives us a competitive edge and we are able to attract many large-scale international conferences with this facility,” he remarked.

Besides KINTEX, Gyeonggi also offers business event planners three other venue options – Cheongshim Peace World Centre, Sintex, and Gyeonggi Small and Medium Business Centre. They can accommodate 25,000, 1,000 and 500 delegates respectively in their largest halls.

Park believes that Gyeonggi's competitive hotel rates, which can be at least 10 to 20 per cent lower than that of Seoul, is also a pull factor. Furthermore, the province has an inventory of 9,360 hotel rooms at press time in August, enough to

support large-scale business events.

One of the latest hotel additions to Gyeonggi is the 377-room MVL Hotel Kintex, which sits adjacent to the convention centre. It has been a popular option for event delegates since its opening in 2013. The hotel itself can support business meetings too, through its grand ballroom with capacity for up to 680 guests.

Park said the upcoming 2016 Rotary International Convention which will see 56,000 participants and Hair World 2016 with 80,000 participants are a testament to the growing international appeal of the province.

Gyeonggi, which is the centre of South Korea's manufacturing industry, will appeal especially to relevant multinational companies. Exclusive factory tours can be arranged with local corporations such as Samsung Electronics, LG Electronics and Hyundai Motor Group.

The latest highlight for trade missions is the five-storey Samsung Innovation Museum which opened last year in the province and showcases 150 inventions and products.

Gyeonggi is not short on pre/post-event recreation too. Onemount Snowpark, the first indoor winter theme park in South Korea, offers activities like sledding and can accommodate 2,000 people at any one time.

Tommy Lee, overseas sales team senior manager of Onemount

Snowpark, said the attraction has customisable spaces for corporate groups that are keen on taking their gatherings somewhere unique.

In March this year Onemount Snowpark hosted a 500-pax winter themed dinner banquet.

Describing Onemount Snowpark as a “very special place” that will give delegates a “memorable time”, Lee said the park appeals with its ability to “bring winter to (delegates) at any time of the year.”

Local MICE specialists have, however, noted that interest in Gyeonggi still pales in comparison with the other more established South Korea MICE cities.

While Bosuk Tours CEO Richard Suh recognises Gyeonggi's accessibility, he has yet to hold any events there. “The more popular options would still be Busan or Jeju,” he remarked.

E J Fieldhouse, Pacific World South Korea's country manager and director of Kim's Travel Service, told *TTGmice*: “Most of our clients still opt for Seoul and we will usually plan a day trip there (to Gyeonggi). But if their priority is accessibility to KINTEX, then they will choose Gyeonggi.”

Fieldhouse noted that Gyeonggi's Korea Folk Village is a star attraction among her clients. The village features real traditional houses that were relocated and reconstructed to bring to life Korea's ancient lifestyle and culture.

{ Spotlight }

A glimpse into the mysterious North

The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) that sits between North and South Korea is known to many for being a well-preserved stretch where peace and tension coexist between the two countries.

The only way into this restricted area is by joining an organised tour and Gyeonggi MICE Bureau is able to assist corporate groups in tailoring one.

Several observatories are available in the DMZ and they offer visitors a peek into the mysterious North.

Tours start off at Camp Bonifas, the joint US and Korea army camp just outside the DMZ, and are led by soldier guides. Visitors will then board designated buses to travel into the Joint Security Area. Straddling the ceasefire line, this is the only place where one can take a safe step into North Korea.

Once back on the bus, delegates will be taken to one of Panmunjeom's lookout posts where two villages within the DMZ can be seen – Daeseong-dong in the South and Gijeong-dong in the North. The latter is also known among South Koreans as Propaganda Village because all buildings there are empty.

Later at Dora Observatory at the top of Dorasan, visitors can peer through binoculars for a closer look at Kaesong city and Kaesong Industrial Complex.



The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) slashes across the Korean peninsula, separating the north and south

But to truly understand the complex and confrontational relationship between North and South Korea, one must go on the 3rd Infiltration Tunnel tour. Designed by the North for a surprise attack on the South, this 1.7km long, 2m high and 2m wide tunnel is said to allow an estimated 30,000 soldiers to move through it per hour. It was

discovered in 1978 by South Korean forces.

The tunnel offers various sightseeing points such as the DMZ Video room, symbolic sculptures, the souvenir shops and more.

A tour of the 3rd Infiltration Tunnel will no doubt offer an unforgettable experience for any visitor. – **Paige Lee Pei Qi**

{ Insider }

E J Fieldhouse, Pacific World South Korea's country manager and director of Kim's Travel Service, identifies three hot experiences in South Korea

Have a taste of kimchi

Kimchi is synonymous with South Korea and a class on how to make this traditional fermented side dish will be a memorable experience for any traveller.

The 30-minute class will also teach participants the many uses of kimchi in the Korean diet.

Cultural explosion

Traditional Korean lifestyle can be explored first-hand in a folk village (such as Gyeonggi's Korean Folk Village, www.koreanfolk.co.kr). Gain insight into the unique lives of the days gone by in the village that illustrates the diversity of the country's rich traditional and cultural heritage. Observe Korean folk customs and handicrafts while strolling through an open-air village recreated with more than 200 traditional homes.

Conquer a giant

Leave the busy city behind and go on a one-day excursion to Mount Sorak (Seoraksan), South Korea's third highest mountain and a UNESCO Biosphere Preservation District. Regarded as one of the country's most popular attractions, it is loved for its snow-clad surfaces and community of animals like the musk deer.



Korean Folk Village



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KOREA

BEYOND MEETING



Energetic Korea continues to surprise and delight the many millions of international visitors who travel to the country annually for business and leisure. This enthusiasm for Korea is strongly reflected by its regular position in the top 5 UIA convention destinations – ranking 4th since 2014 – and why Korea continues to host an impressive array of major international events.

Among the various discoveries awaiting the inbound arrivals are rich and diverse natural landscapes characterized by majestic mountains, lush green valleys, clear and winding rivers, long, dramatic coastlines, and picturesque islands.

Integrated into this natural beauty are the cultural contributions of the nation itself, shaped and developed over many thousands of years by a vibrant people who continually push for growth and change, leading to the colorful, highly-developed society that is modern Korea. A rich and diverse cuisine, well-preserved ancient palaces and temples, lively

festivals, and fast, affordable high-speed communications technology are just some of the major achievements and draws to be enjoyed here.

All of which both benefits and contributes to Korea's world-class business events industry, offering extensive, all-in-one infrastructure nationwide for MICE, which benefits from some of the most up-to-date technology in the world, as well as highly-capable event professionals backed by the strong support of local government agencies that recognize the enormous benefits of the meetings industry for its citizens and the nation as a whole.

Standing ready to assist any international event organizer seeking to tap into the country's wide array of MICE offerings is the Korea Tourism Organization; its dedicated Korea MICE Bureau division providing a full range of services and support, including Communications, Site Inspection, Marketing, and much more. The KTO is your gateway to successful and rewarding events in Korea, hosted in a country that places all this and more besides at your disposal. Welcome to Korea, the perfect events destination that always takes its guests Beyond Meetings.



2014 Amway China's incentive tour gala dinner at Yeosu Expo.

DESTINATION SPOTLIGHT

Whether it be an international event or an exciting incentive trip, Gyeonggi and Gyeongnam Province are two of

GYEONGGI

Surrounding Seoul, the nation's bustling capital, vibrant **Gyeonggi Province** has long been home to many of Korea's key resources and industry. Today, it is an active hub of Korean tourism and also home to KINTEX, the nation's largest exhibition center. Made up of 31 cities and counties, Gyeonggi regularly attracts business visitors for its varied attractions and high-quality business events infrastructure.

Since 2011, the Gyeonggi MICE Bureau (G-MICE) has been promoting the province to the world as a prime events destination, as well as providing a wide range of support for international events organizers. Key G-MICE services include:

- Assistance with bidding for, and hosting of, international events in Gyeonggi.
- PR and marketing for international events hosted in the province.
- Research and education on Gyeonggi business events activity, and joint-marketing initiatives with Gyeonggi MICE Alliance members.

CONTACT

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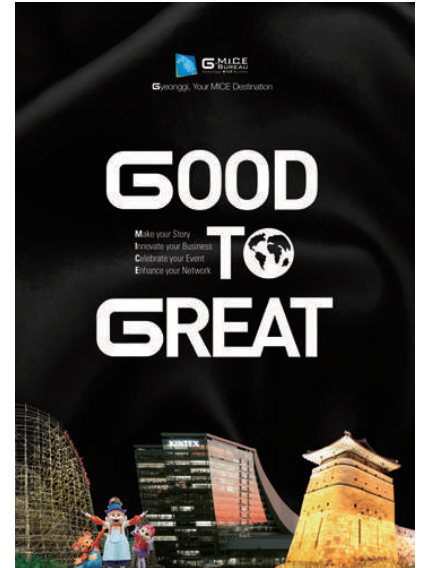
Online: <http://en.gmice.or.kr>

Suwon Hwaseong Fortress

Constructed by order of King Jeongjo (1752-1800) in honor of his father, the fortress is today one of Korea's most impressive UNESCO World Heritage sites.



Everland Resort Korea's largest theme park has something for everyone, including thrilling rides, a safari park, golf club, water park, and exciting seasonal parades throughout the year.



Petite France A village based upon French novelist Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's famous work *The Little Prince*, Petite France is a colorful fantasy getaway – and occasional filming location.



One Mount A shopping, dining, and entertainment complex, One Mount contains a water park, the world's first indoor snow park, brand and beauty stores, and various restaurants.

Korea's most exciting business and leisure destinations. Read on to discover what they have to offer!

GYEONGNAM

Located in Korea's southeast and accounting for over 10% of the nation's area, Gyeongnam, or South Gyeongsang Province, contains many of the nation's natural and historical Korean assets, from sub-tropical islands to agricultural and marine wealth and the Tripitaka Koreana, the world's oldest complete Buddhist text, and a UNESCO World Heritage.

Gyeongnam is also a nationwide leader in the machinery, shipbuilding, and aviation industries, accounting for many of Korea's cutting-edge innovations in each field. As such, the province offers visitors a harmonious blend of nature and human endeavor with something for everyone.

For over a decade, the Gyeongnam Convention & Visitors Bureau (GNCVB) has been actively marketing this rich environment to the world as an equally strong meetings venue, with services and support including:

- Assistance with attracting and hosting international events in Gyeongnam.
- Gyeongnam host city PR and marketing.
- Development and management of Gyeongnam business events infrastructure.
- Event personnel training and education.

CONTACT

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CECC (Changwon Exhibition Convention Center)'s complex provides the one-stop convention service with convention facilities, a first class hotel and City7 Mall composed of duty free shops, movie theater, restaurants and more than 150 stores all in one place.



Hilton Namhae Golf and Spa Resort located on the Namhae is designed to give you a picturesque scenery at a glance from your luxurious room. You can enjoy a fantastic golf course with its own 18-hole and marina, an upscale spa and seven restaurants, cafes and bars.



Geoje Shipyard Among the top 10 best shipyards, four of them are located in Gyeongnam, Korea, which boasts a state-of-the-art shipbuilding industry and has the world's best shipbuilding technology.



Hallyeohaesang National Park As the first national park in Korea, Hallyeohaesang National Park which is well known as the most beautiful waterway has about 400 islands spread out across the sea like diamonds. It extends along the 120km shoreline from Geoje in Gyeongnam province to Yeosu.

CREATE MEMORABLE EVENTS WITH THE KOREA TOURISM ORGANIZATION



International events hosted in Korea benefit not only from a rich and vibrant host destination and top-class business events infrastructure, but also a wide and comprehensive support program facilitated by the **Korea MICE Bureau**, a division of the **Korea Tourism Organization**.

The Bureau opens the doors to, and keeps the lines of communication going, between non-domestic meeting planners and key local contacts in related government and private sector organizations and businesses. In addition, it will help planners select suitable convention facilities, accommodation, and other business events suppliers, and can recommend and help structure customized pre- and post-tours for attendees, along with nearby attractions, shopping, and entertainment options. Promotion of the event ahead of time to boost delegate attendance is also included.

Also available are complimentary site inspection tours of key event facilities such as meeting venues, accommodation, and other related venues for top-level decision makers, eg – association leaders, corporate travel managers, and



ICN Conference and CNR 2015 Seoul Opening Ceremony.

etc. This includes complimentary accommodation (subject to availability), scheduled appointments with the selected venue representatives, complimentary tours, interpreters, and local guides.

For incentive travel, the Bureau offers a range of themed programs and support packages to international corporate travel managers and other event planners visiting Korea. Designed to appeal to a broad range of interests and activities, the themed programs include K-Experience, Teambuilding, Theme Parties, Korean Cultural Experience, and Special customizable programs. K-Experience programs bring *hallyu*, or Korean Wave fans in direct contact with various Korean pop culture attractions, such as TV drama filming locations or pop concerts. Teambuilding activities, especially ideal for corporate groups, bring co-workers together through games such as paintball, horseback riding, or ziplining, while Themed Party options

include fully-catered events at the nation's five-star hotels, boat parties, and wine trains.

Additionally, the Korea MICE Bureau will work closely with local associations or other organizers working to attract international congresses and other meetings through a range of activities. Services in this category include on- and offline promotional activities both domestic and international, as well as assistance with developing effective bid presentations, setting up a promotional booth at the congress venue, and support with the creation of all relevant promotional materials to assist the bid presentation, such as multimedia content, tourism guidebooks, maps, and brochures.

CONTACT

Contact the Korea MICE Bureau via **mice@knto.co.kr** or get even more information on KTO services at **www.koreaconvention.org**.





jean123RF.com

Effective experiences

Melbourne's new brand positioning is designed to drive success for its clients by being the ultimate MICE destination. By **Rebecca Elliot**

Melbourne is a globally-renowned city to hold successful business events in

It has been just over three years since the Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB) launched *Melbourne IQ: The Intelligent Choice for Conferences*, the city's inaugural marketing campaign for business events under CEO Karen Bolinger.

Designed to showcase the city's knowledge capabilities, *Melbourne IQ* positioned Melbourne as a business events destination "beyond the bricks and mortar", according to Bolinger.

While Melbourne was one of the first cities globally to market its intelligence as a unique selling proposition to the MICE industry,

the terms 'knowledge economy' and 'intellectual capital' have become buzz phrases in recent years, leaving Bolinger and her team to ponder, where to next?

Enter *The Melbourne Effect*, launched by MCB at IMEX Frankfurt in May, which Bolinger explained, is the evolution of *Melbourne IQ*.

"We've got the bricks and mortar, we've got the intellectual capital. *The Melbourne Effect* is about bringing this to life and actually making a difference to your conference – once you've had your conference, what does it leave behind?" said Bolinger. "We conducted extensive research

across our key market segments – international associations and corporate and incentive planners – and what stood out was their desire for a city and bureau to not just tick the boxes, but to facilitate collaboration and deliver real outcomes.

"Melbourne is creating a real point of difference by driving action and real change, and creating legacies. These are becoming a compelling reason for planners to choose Melbourne," she said.

Bolinger said the 20th International AIDS Conference hosted in Melbourne in 2015 was a prime example of *The Melbourne Effect*.

Destination: Australia



Flinders Street Railway Station is a city icon and Australia's oldest train station

Over the four years prior to the conference, MCB enlisted the support of the local, state and federal government and other city stakeholders, and worked closely with the International AIDS Society right through to event execution.

Not only was it the largest health related conference ever hosted in Australia, attracting more than 13,000 delegates to the city and delivering A\$80 million (US\$59 million) to the local economy, it also saw Australia's health ministers sign the AIDS 2014 Legacy Statement, signifying their commitment to see the virtual elimination of new HIV infections by 2020.

While *Melbourne IQ* was squarely targeted at the international association market, *The Melbourne Effect* also translates to the corporate and incentive travel market.

"*The Melbourne Effect* speaks to everything about the city; its ability to transform ideas into innovations, the community into a collaborative force and the everyday into immersive experiences," said Bolinger.

"For the corporate planner, it's not about education, it's about creating a tailored experience for their group that has a wow factor and inspires their staff to increase sales."

Given that Melbourne is a city that many describe as immersive and one to experience rather than being famed for its iconic attractions like Sydney is for its Harbour Bridge and Opera House, Bolinger said *The Melbourne Effect* will enhance the

city's appeal in Asia in particular because it will allow planners to more easily describe and sell the destination.

At the end of May, MCB co-hosted a familiarisation with Business Events Australia, which was attended by corporate buyers from Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore from a variety of industries including direct sales, manufacturing and FMCG.

While the trip was not themed *The Melbourne Effect*, it provided MCB with an opportunity to test out the concept with the buyers while they were experiencing the city.

The three-day familiarisation saw the group participate in quintessentially Melbourne experiences including a coffee and street art tour, a hot air balloon ride over the city and a day trip to Phillip Island to see the famous Penguin Parade.

MCB's director corporate meetings, incentives and membership Jasmine Lim said: "We verbally shared with them the thinking behind *The Melbourne Effect* and everyone took to it positively. By the end of the fam they were using it to describe the positive outcomes of the fam for themselves."

The story behind *The Melbourne Effect* is available on MCB's website and Bolinger said the campaign would be rolled out through bids, presentations and other platforms over the next 12 months.

"It's evolving as it's going and we're really happy with it."

{ Talking numbers }



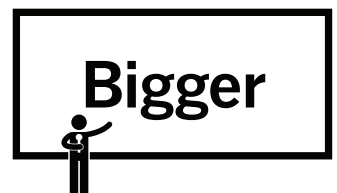
86

The number of incentive events hosted in Melbourne originating from Asia in the 2014/2015 financial year, a 68 per cent increase from the previous financial year



4,000

The number of delegates who attended the Tupperware Indonesia incentive trip to Melbourne in April 2015



42,000m²

The area that the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre will occupy once its expansion is complete

{ Spotlight }

A new place to stay, meet and play

DoubleTree by Hilton Melbourne – Flinders Street is the latest hotel to open in the World's Most Liveable City and joins its sister property, Hilton Melbourne South Wharf. Formerly the Citigate Melbourne, the hotel underwent a multimillion dollar refurbishment before opening in December 2014.

Owned by M&L Hospitality Group and managed by Hilton Worldwide, the 180-room boutique-style hotel neighbours Flinders Street Station and takes many of its design cues from the Melbourne icon, even down to the bed headboards which are inspired by the concertina folds connecting the train carriages.

Hotel manager Clinton Farley said: "The hotel has performed exceptionally well since opening and is ahead of market expectations. The completion of our refurbishment combined with our global brand, team culture, management and prime downtown CBD location has assisted in a significant shift in the market mix to become a hub for corporate guests throughout the week and leisure on weekends."

Upon entering the hotel, the check-in desk doubles as a funky, inner-city bar, which is the perfect location to enjoy the complimentary DoubleTree by Hilton signature warm chocolate chip cookie with a drink.

Guestrooms come in king, queen and twin configurations with custom



designed features, like the black-and-white photographs of the city, by interior designers Mill Interiors and Dreamtime Australia Design. The king guestrooms on the higher floors boast spectacular views of the bustling station below.

The first level of the 13-storey hotel houses two meeting rooms, which when combined can seat 140 delegates. In

addition, a boardroom is available along with a 24-hour business centre.

The in-house restaurant Platform 270's dining room has a distinct industrial feel reminiscent of the city's famed laneways. Head chef Tony Moss has created a playful modern Australian menu that utilises ingredients from the hotel's rooftop garden and regions in Victoria.

{ Insider }

Pamela McMurtry, head of groups and events, The Conference Team, gives three ideas that one should add to the itinerary when holding events in Melbourne

Progressive dinner experience

Melbourne is full of multicultural dining experiences. The best way for a delegate to experience some wonderful dining opportunities is to organise a progressive dinner.

Art scene

If art is your thing, there are guided tours through the city which take your delegates into laneways to see graffiti art, as well as museums.

Go on a regional day trip

A visit to Melbourne is not complete unless your group experiences some of the world-class wines that come from different regions around Melbourne such as Yarra Valley.



From left: A plethora of dining opportunities can be had in Melbourne; Brown Brothers Milawa Vineyard's barn welcomes private events

Seoul focus

More than 60 MICE experts attended the **Seoul MICE Alliance Professional Meeting** on July 21 to exchange ideas on furthering Seoul's business events potential and to learn about the latest MICE initiatives by the Seoul Metropolitan Government and Seoul Convention Bureau



A top ten celebration

Ian Reid, general manager of both the **Crowne Plaza Manila Galleria** and **Holiday Inn Manila Galleria**, kicked off the properties' 10th anniversary celebration on July 17 with a welcome address. The party saw a stellar attendance comprising clients and business partners



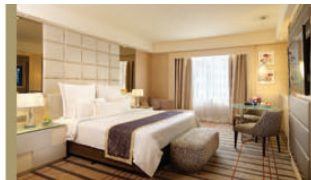
TTGmice

What's next?

TTGmice heads to the golfing greens in October to suss out some of Asia's best courses that are equipped with quality meeting facilities. The issue also spotlights the latest MICE developments in China, Hong Kong, the UAE and Thailand. Don't miss it!



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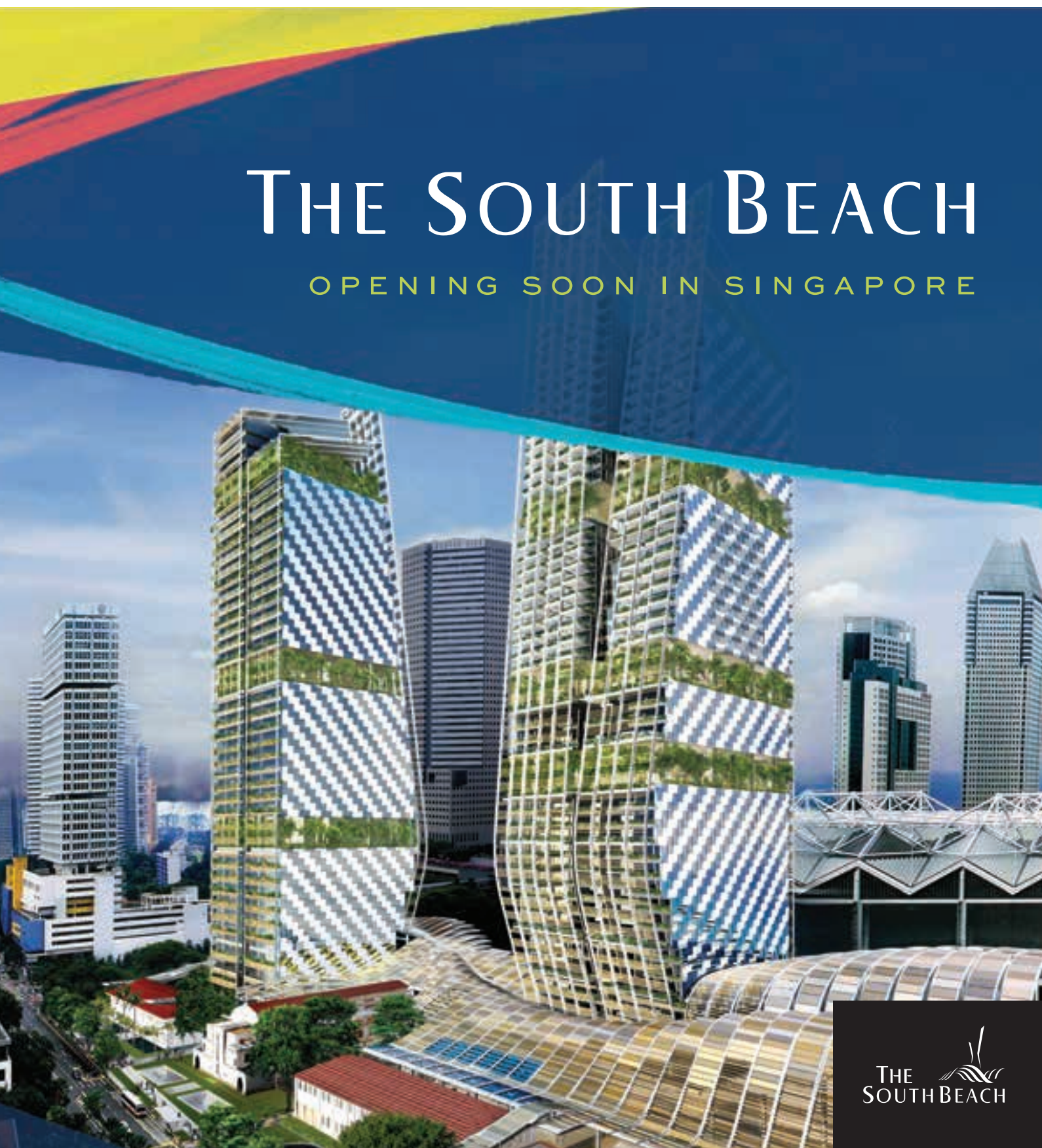
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Be a visionnaire

With 19 state-of-the-art meeting rooms and a Business Centre, The South Beach is a refreshing option for off-site meetings & workshops. The hotel is also conveniently connected to Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre via aerobridge.



BE INFINITE, BE INSPIRING