



IT&CM Asia Incentive Travel & Conventions, Meetings
CTW Asia-Pacific Corporate Travel World

IT&CMA and CTW Asia-Pacific
 September 30, 2015 • Bangkok, Thailand



Silver lining in currency woes

By S Puvaneswary and Michael Mackey

Malaysia is reeling under the combined onslaught of a depreciating currency and sluggish economy, but there are signs that the MICE sector could benefit from the market turmoil.

A significant devaluation of the ringgit notwithstanding, MICE operators in Malaysia are seeing strong bookings for 2016, driven by improved air links from China and visa exemption to be granted for Chinese groups of 20 pax and more from October 1 to March 31, 2016.

Air China will resume four-times weekly services between Beijing and Kuala Lumpur from October 25, complementing the daily services of Malaysia Airlines and AirAsia X. China Southern Airlines will also commence thrice-weekly services from Guangzhou to Kota Kinabalu from December 1.

Li Haijiao, account manager

of Beijing-based Comfort MICE Service, said: "Better direct air accessibility and visa waiver for groups will definitely help to promote (Malaysia). Air China also has a good reputation and is a trusted brand among Chinese travellers."

Chinese MICE groups are showing a stronger interest in Malaysia, observed Winnie Ng, deputy general manager of Kuala Lumpur-based Pearl Holiday Travel & Tour, which participated in a recent roadshow organised by Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau to major Chinese cities.

She said: "(Chinese) government officers are limited to a budget of US\$110 per room night in Malaysia. With good rates and promotions from five-star hotels in the capital, many (Chinese MICE) are opting for five-star properties.

"We have a confirmed booking of between 1,500 to 1,800 pax from a multi-level market-

ing company from China for May 2016 and another multi-level marketing company for 3,300 pax in July 2016."

Likewise, KL Tan, general manager of Borneo Trails Tours & Travel in Kota Kinabalu, is also seeing strong forward incentive bookings to Kota Kina-

"Although China's currency had devalued, the ringgit had devalued more, making Malaysia still an attractive destination for the Chinese."

KL Tan

General manager, Borneo Trails Tours & Travel

balu from China for 2016.

Over in Thailand, the MICE sector might see some mild benefits from the depreciation of the baht, buyers at IT&CMA told the *Daily*.

A weaker Thai baht will work in the favour of the Thai MICE sector "a little bit", especially in the context of other

regional currencies, said Aleizer Yrrah Jasmin, MICE travel consultant with Philippines-based Corporate International Travel and Tours.

Longhaul buyers like Jorge Vasques Rodrigues, administrator/executive officer of Lisboa-based Sotito Tour Travel Engi-

Liam Crawley, chief financial officer, Wyndham Vacation Resorts Asia-Pacific, pointed to a more immediate financial problem a dipping baht brings. "Hotels will be negatively impacted should they incur costs not in Thai baht."

On the other hand, despite the Singapore dollar surging to a new high against the ringgit, Malaysia appears less desirable as a destination for Singapore MICE groups, with agents reporting slower business events bookings from the Lion City this year.

RA Jits Travel & Tours managing director, Harminderjit Singh, said the strong Singapore dollar and good flight access out of the country had resulted in corporate companies looking further afield for their overseas events, with many opting for Thailand.

Continued on page 2

Taipei ramps up MICE facilities

To attract more international MICE delegates, Taiwan is rolling out new facilities to improve its destination services.

The 320-room Taipei Marriott Hotel, which just opened in August, is targeting large MICE groups with an event space that can accommodate up to 1,500 pax.

This latest opening adds to the influx of global hotel brands such as Regent, W, Mandarin Oriental and Le Meridien in recent years.

Meanwhile, Taipei Nangang Exhibition Centre will see the addition of a new hall by end-2016 or early-2017 to bring its total capacity to 15,000 seats. The new Hall 2 will feature a 6,048m² conference centre with meeting facilities offering between 50 and 2,400 seats and a 30,240m² show ground.



Taipei Marriott Hotel

Opportunities abound for multi-city programmes

Destinations in South-east Asia could potentially cater to multi-destination business event programmes, particularly for small-sized incentive and conference groups with optional pre/post-show activities, concluded the panellists speaking at the inaugural ASEAN MICE Forum's opening session on Tuesday morning.

Sharing her observations at the session on *ASEAN, a one-stop MICE wonderland*, Pornthip Hirunkate, deputy CEO of Destination Asia Group and managing director-Thailand of Destination Asia, said multi-destination incentives were more popular with longhaul clients "who have come all the way from Europe or the US to this region and want to cover as (many destinations) as possible because incentives don't usually (return to the same region)".

She said these clients would do Thailand-Myanmar-Cambodia, Singapore-Bali or Singapore-Malaysia combinations.

For corporate meetings, multi-destination itineraries are possible when optional pre/post-show programmes



The inaugural ASEAN MICE Forum headlines the education series at this year's IT&CM Asia and CTW Asia-Pacific. The forum kicked off yesterday with a panel discussion on the region's potential to draw multi-destination event programmes. TTTG Asia Media's Darren Ng (from left) and Karen Yue and Tourism Authority of Thailand's Suvimol Thanasarakij join the panellists Destination Asia Thailand's Pornthip Hirunkate, Centara Hotels & Resorts Thailand's Sarah Randall and MCI Benelux Belgium's Hugo Slimbrouck. Photo by Eugene Tang

are included, according to Hugo Slimbrouck, director of strategic partnerships, Ovation Global DMC.

Core programmes are unlikely to be held in more than one destination in South-east Asia, he noted, especially since "meetings nowadays are shorter, lasting one and a half days or two".

Although destinations in

South-east Asia offer much cultural and historical charms, and are seeing new tourism infrastructure developments, Slimbrouck pointed out that the purpose of the corporate or association meeting – not tourism appeal – would drive destination choices.

Referencing her past experience as event manager of major international firms like Morgan

Stanley and First Protocol, Sarah Randall, head of MICE Services of Centara Hotels & Resorts, said destination choices would depend on "the individual market segment and objective of the event, whether it needs teambuilding, CSR elements or purely economic (achievements)."

Business meetings that cover several destinations in the region were more likely with roadshows, Randall said, adding that financial sector clients tended to focus on business hubs like Singapore, Bangkok and Jakarta.

The three panellists believe complex logistics that come with multi-destination programmes will deter event planners. To minimise such challenges, Randall said hotels must help by providing a single point of contact for event planners.

"Hotels in this region must also help to market the destination by educating clients on what's available besides the hotel and its meeting facilities. I have ballrooms in my hotel, but so does the hotel next door. We guide our clients around

CVB must safeguard interest of event owners: Grimmer

By Paige Lee Pei Qi and Mimi Hudoyo

CVBs need to start seeing themselves as customer representatives instead of being “official mouthpieces” lest they start losing their credibility, said Gary Grimmer, CEO of convention industry consultancy GainingEdge.

Speaking to the *Daily* on the sidelines of the ASEAN MICE Forum yesterday, Grimmer who is the former chairman of the board of the International Association of Convention & Visitors



Bureau and former chairman of the Business Events Council of Australia, said: “I think a key (credibility) issue is that most CVBs are structured to be a representative (of their destination and suppliers). When CVBs represent the suppliers, they will always be protecting the supplier’s reputation regardless of the quality of service delivery.

Providing an example of how CVBs can embrace the role of a customer representative, Grimmer said: “If I were representing a bureau, I would encourage people to visit my website and critique the supplier’s service level. It is only then will CVBs be seen as being more transparent and credible.”

He added: “Suppliers are going to get angry when they receive bad reviews but that is the only way to force them to improve their services,

or risk going out of business.”

Hugo Slimbrouck, director of strategic partnerships with Ovation Global DMC, also lamented that CVBs were “not working sufficiently together” with the DMC community which he said were the real experts on the ground.

Sharing this opinion during the opening panel session of the ASEAN MICE Forum, Slimbrouck said: “Very often CVBs would have the whole event plan drawn up on their own, then approach the DMC for sponsorship or to be part of the programme.

“But I do not wait for the CVBs (to come to me); I do the opposite. I would organise the event and then go to the CVB and tell them to do something with what I have.”

Slimbrouck added that this is a problem with many DMCs

all over the world.

Nevertheless, Grimmer underlined the importance of CVBs, saying that “they are vital as they are our hope to developing government support”.

Citing Singapore as an example of a country with a strong CVB, he added: “I like Singapore because it is an example of a modern nation with barely any natural resources. Singapore more than anybody else understands how vitally important it is to have conventions and exhibitions (contributing to its) economy.

“Singapore in general has a reputation for great service and (the Singapore Tourism Board) can continue to encourage radical transparency and move towards engaging communication with consumers beyond providing services to meeting planners.”

“When CVBs represent the suppliers, they will always be protecting the supplier’s reputation regardless of the quality of service delivery.”

Gary Grimmer
CEO, GainingEdge

Continued from page 1

Convenient air links are key

the destination and show them how a meeting in the city like Bangkok could work with a post-event programme in a resort destination like Hua Hin,” she said.

What destinations in South-east Asia have going for them is the availability of convenient air links within the region, said the panellists. While destinations in the region are connected by a multitude of low-cost carriers, Pornthip said these are not options favoured by incentive winners. Instead, full-service regional carriers are preferred.

“That’s why boutique carrier Bangkok Airways has been able to do so well with (business travellers),” said Randall, pointing to its good ASEAN connections and brand positioning.

Commenting on the panellists’ views, Ally Lai, managing director of i Life China which specialises incentive travel, told the *Daily* that destinations in the region that are connected to one another by convenient transportation are favoured.

She also found that “combining destinations in the ASEAN region is possible when a group has fewer than 100 pax”.
– Mimi Hudoyo



Stronger seller presence, sponsorship this year

IT&CM Asia and CTW Asia-Pacific opened yesterday at the Bangkok Convention Centre at CentralWorld Bangkok, presenting its largest line-up of over 20 MICE, events intelligence, corporate travel and association management knowledge sessions helmed by over 30 expert speakers. Chairing the official press conference, organiser TTG Asia Media’s Darren Ng also reported a growth of 14 per cent in exhibitors’ participation, with sponsorship engagements up by more than 40 per cent over 2014. Photo by Eugene Tang

THAI may resume LA links

Despite closing down its US route as of next month THAI Airways International remains confident it will be able to continue serving the US market, its president Charnporn Jotiskasthira, told the *Daily*.

Bangkok-Los Angeles flights will cease from October 25, after

losses from a poorly costed service forced a major rethink.

Much of this optimism rests on keeping in place its network of US agents ahead of a planned resumption of services in approximately 18 months’ time, after an upcoming restructuring, Jotiskasthira said.

“We will maintain our relations with the local agents” he said, adding that these partners do not only sell outbound tickets from the US but also the rest of the world.

Helping matters is THAI’s role within a global network. “We can still sell the codeshare through our Star Alliance affiliates,” he said. – Michael Mackey

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Continued from page 1

Malaysia loses its shine for S’pore meetings

Said Singh: “While our FIT business had grown 15-20 per cent year-on-year, the reverse is also true for our meetings and incentives sector (which decreased 15-20 per cent).”

Similarly, Raaj Navaratnaa, general manager at Johor Bahru-based New Asia Holiday Tours & Travel, has received many enquiries from incentive clients in Singapore looking at destinations such as Myanmar, Philippines and Vietnam.

Its inbound business from Singapore, on the other hand, dipped 30 per cent drop this year, a situation that was further aggravated by the haze in September and the recent ‘red shirt’ rally in Kuala Lumpur.

“A big meeting group of 600 pax from Singapore planning to have their meeting in Kuala Lumpur in end-September cancelled because of the rally,” said Navaratnaa. “They are instead going to Thailand.”

He added that the main challenge for Malaysia is a lack of new products to impress repeat corporate clients from Singapore, as upcoming attractions like the Twentieth Century Fox World Malaysia in Resorts World Genting and Movie Animation Park Studios in Perak will only open in 2016.

Bali seizes Indian incentives

By Mimi Hudoyo

The Indian MICE market, particularly the corporate incentive segment, is looking bright for Indonesia, according to Visit Indonesia Tourism Officer (VITO) India.

Sanjay Sondhi, country director of VITO India, said: "We have seen a growing interest from corporate incentives to Indonesia, particularly Bali."



Cadamuro: growth for Indian MICE

India is one of the few markets posting a strong increase in arrivals to Indonesia. Arrivals from India between January and July totalled 153,521, rising 10.4 per cent from 139,119 during the same period in 2014, according to data from the Ministry of Tourism.

With full-year arrivals from India surpassing the initial arrival target of 210,000 to reach 238,000 in 2014, Sondhi is optimistic the target of 250,000 arrivals would be achieved this year.

Suppliers in Bali are also confident of netting more MICE business from India.

Discovery Kartika Plaza Hotel Bali recorded a 10 per cent growth in the Indian market last year, with MICE comprising 30 per cent of the Indian market.

Alice Matulesky, director of sales and marketing, said: "Most Indian groups staying with us are incentives, with at least one private dinner in-house."

Saraswati Subadia, director of sales MICE at The Westin Resort Nusa Dua Bali, said: "We have had big Indian weddings before but MICE from this market is new. This year, we have seen many inquiries coming in for MICE."

Last year, Bali Nusa Dua Convention Center (BNDCC) handled two incentive groups from India which included meetings and gala dinners at the facility.

Yasinta Hartawan, general manager, operations of BNDCC, said: "They did not require anything specific or themed dinners other than requesting for authentic Indian food prepared by Indian chefs."

The inbound MICE market from India could welcome more diversification though, observed Umberto Cadamuro, COO of Pacto. "Incentives from India are plenty but there is hardly any meet-

ing. (Indian MICE groups) are more leisure oriented."

Nevertheless, Umberto sees strong potential in the Indian MICE market although he stresses the importance of improving the awareness of the destina-

tion, especially among the frontliners.

"Let's take a big incentive request from India to Bali for example. DMC bosses may know the products (in the destination) well because they have been coming, but the ones handling it

is the staff and they may not know that Bali has many quality upmarket hotels with affordable prices to offer their clients," he said.

To address this issue, Pacto recently led a group of hoteliers and suppliers from Bali on a sales mission to Mumbai and Delhi, conducting a table-top meeting for Outbound Tour Operators Association of India members to enhance their product knowledge of Bali.



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{ Hot leads }

Showing SE Asia to MICE groups from Laos

Onchanh Boualivanh, managing director of Vientiane-based Trust Lao Travel, wants to connect with MICE sellers in South-east Asian destinations like Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines. As the MICE market in Laos is still nascent, according to Boualivanh, he wants to find out how destinations in the region have attractions and facilities that can attract the Lao outbound MICE market.

Email Onchanh at md@trustlaotravel.com.

Manila venues sought for large conference

Director of India-based KW Conferences, Arjun Narne, is looking for convention venues and hotels in Manila that can host over 1,000 pax for a conference he is organising in the Philippine capital for the first time in 2017. Convenience and accessibility are his key considerations.

Email Narne at arjun@kwconferences.com.



A day of knowledge sharing

By Eugene Tang



Orientours Thailand's Antonio Conduro and Dusit Thani Hua Hin's Phanpich Praserttham



Dwidaya Nusantara Convex Indonesia's Effendy Dharmawan, Ministry of Tourism Indonesia's Hari Budiarti and Directorate General of Tourism Marketing Indonesia's Robby Hasan



Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau's Jutarat Apiwattanikul and Orachorn Wongpan-ngam, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism Lao's Phouthone Dalalom, and Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau's Wiparat Tharateerapab and Takerngsak Chaikyarn



Thai Airways International's Nathathai Krasaechai, Kulkanda Pokasem and Charlene Suddhimondala



UOA Group Malaysia's Alphansa Kumarie and Anita Khoo, and Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau's Tan Mei Phing



Singco Singapore's James See



You Travel Italy's Leonardo Battiato



SSR Holidays India's Sapneal Rao



Dream Vacation India's Debasish Maitra



Luxury Vacation Hoidays & Tours Philippines' Kane Malvin Hui



Hwabaek International Convention Center South Korea's Sunrak Lee and Youngwook Kim, and Gyeongju Convention & Visitors Bureau's Eric Seo



OGS Public Relations & Exhibition Design Italy's Vittoria Vicini and Maria Elena Puppi



Mystify India's Sayan Guha and Harish Chandran



Trust Lao Travel Laos' Amonxe Xayakoune and Jun Onchanh



Accenture Australia's Yonnie Chiu and Accenture Singapore's Irene Leong



Safe Hotels Sweden's Hans Kanold and Safe Hotels Thailand's Bert van Walbeek

Meet the buyers



"I am interested in five-star hotels that are suitable for the MICE market. I am also looking for unique venues and activities for corporate groups. Destinations I am keen on are Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam, Hong Kong and Dubai."

Ben Gosman, managing director, Free Style Incentives/Leisure, the Netherlands



"I'm interested in Thailand, Vietnam, China, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Macau, and would like to make contact with hotels, convention centres, ground operators and operators of golf course, adventure activities and spas."

— Tony Handy, Director/CEO, Handy Events & Conferences, Australia



"MD Events is interested in identifying new destinations, tourism bureaus and DMCs with exclusive event theme or services globally for incentive programmes."

— **Jowyn Tan, Account director, Asia & Australia, MD Events Group, Hong Kong**

Destinations most wanted

Taufiq Rahman, chief executive of Journey Plus, Bangladesh is keen on **Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Thailand.**

Teresa Cargill, event manager of MYOB New Zealand, is paying particular attention to **Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, China, the UK and Europe.**



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Meet the buyers



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dedicated services not only to leisure travellers but to MICE travellers as well.”

– **Ryan F Santos, Meetings & events senior consultant, Rajah Travel Corporation, the Philippines**



“I’m particularly keen on Thailand and require hotels with conference facilities, luxury villas, wellness resorts, golf courses and

transport companies that can provide limousine and coach transfers.”

– **Rakhi Anand, director, Upasana Travels, India**

Destinations most wanted

Chow Keng Fong, general manager, Poloair Holidays Shanghai, China is on the look out for contacts in **Thailand, Japan, Taiwan, New Zealand, South Korea, Indonesia** and **Turkey**.

San C Choo, director of Professional Incentives, the UK/Singapore, is interested in **South-east Asia, China, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, Sri Lanka, Maldives** and **India**.

Claude de Saint Perier, director/owner of Serte/MICE Challenger Consulting, France, is on the look out for MICE products and services in **Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, India** and **Japan**.

Christovel, Chief Destination Officer - CDO, My Tours Indonesia

DMC for Europe, Pilgrimage (Israel & Egypt), South America, Asia, Australia, South Africa, America, Indonesia (East)

Joao Goncalves, CEO of tapetevoador, Portugal, is interested in **Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia** and **Indonesia**.

Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia and **Japan** are on the radar of Ricardo Baptista, CEO of Total Fun, Portugal.

Hussein Mattar, managing director of Travel House - Egypt, is keen to buy **Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore** and **Hong Kong**, as well as **Bali** in Indonesia.

Incentive tour operators in **the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam** and **Japan**



To-ji temple in Kyoto, Japan

are needed by Natalia Wojnicka, manager of Travel Office Mistral, Poland. Allen Royce T Cautiverio, sales & marketing officer with Travel Warehouse

Incorporated, the Philippines, requires hotels and tour operators in **Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, New Zealand** and **Turkey**.

Association buyer spotlight

Jof Calstas
Secretary general
International Christian Organization of the Media, Switzerland



What do you hope to accomplish for your association at IT&CM Asia?

I want to meet more partners and look for authentic events.

What are you shopping for at IT&CM Asia this year?

I’m particularly keen to identify seminars, cultural events and activities, and luxury stays and tours that would give my participants a solid impression of the destination’s history and people. I’m interested in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, South Korea, Japan, India, Thailand, Singapore and New Zealand.

Tiani Bradilovic
Conference & event organiser
ACC Australia



What do you hope to accomplish for your association at IT&CM Asia?

Choosing the right location and venue for our inaugural conference; meeting the right

people and building relationships; and understanding the different cultures and ensuring correct business practices are in place.

What are your expected takeaways from the Association Day session?

I hope to establish contacts and relationships, and learn about venue options in Asia-Pacific so as to commence negotiations on our inaugural conference in the region.

What are you shopping for at IT&CM Asia this year?

Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Hong Kong.

Octavio B Peralta
Secretary general
Association of Development Financing Institutions in Asia & the Pacific, Philippines



What do you hope to accomplish for your association at IT&CM Asia?

I would like my association to be more effective and efficient in terms of servicing members’ needs and aspirations.

What are your expected takeaways

from the Association Day session?

I hope to learn more on what other associations are doing as well as tools and solutions to membership recruitment, retention and engagement.

What are you shopping for at IT&CM Asia this year?

As my association is Asia-Pacific wide, my interest lies in destinations that offer better event facilities, incentives and products or services that can enhance the association’s operational efficiency.

Daniel Wood
President
Freestyle Football Federation, the UK



What do you hope to accomplish for your association at IT&CM Asia?

I hope to identify suppliers for my event in 2016, as well as to network and learn from others.

What are your expected takeaways from the Association Day session?

To network and learn more about other associations, and share best practices in membership management.

What are you shopping for at

IT&CM Asia this year?

Destinations across South-east Asia, live streaming services for events, and hotels in Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Shanghai.

Ethan Wang
Chief executive
IDA Executive Committee for IDA Annual Meeting, Taiwan



What do you hope to accomplish for your association at IT&CM Asia?

Development and recruitment of new members is at the top of my to-do list. I also hope to learn how to apply Internet technology in MICE.

What are your expected takeaways from the Association Day session?

I’m keen on green conferences, and to learn how to explore and develop the market of business meetings in China. Budget control and applications of apps in business events are also hot topics for me.

What are you shopping for at IT&CM Asia this year?

Turkey, Thailand, Vietnam, New Zealand, Japan, China, as well as Bali in Indonesia.

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A memorable effect

Melbourne's new branding sells its immersive experiences. By **Rebecca Elliot**

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 MCB to ponder, where to next?

Enter *The Melbourne Effect*, launched in May, which Bolinger explained, is the evolution of *Melbourne IQ*.

"*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... 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*.

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

Numbers

88 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

(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.

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. For the corporate planner, it's about creating a tailored experience for their group that has a wow factor and inspires their staff to increase sales," said Bolinger.

Given that Melbourne is a city that many describe as immersive and one to experience rather than being famed for its iconic attractions, 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.

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."

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.



My Australia

Rebecca Elliott recommends three must-dos in the country

Horseback Winery Tours

One of the best ways to explore the beautiful Mornington Peninsula wine region in Victoria is on the back of a horse. Catering to all levels of experience, Horseback Winery Tours range from two-hour to all-day rides, depending on how much time your group has. It can also be paired with a bathing experience at the Peninsula Hot Springs.

Behind the Scenes Producers Tour

A great alternative to popular Queensland destinations, Gold Coast and



Horseback Winery Tours



Sailing Regatta

Cairns, for business events is the Sunshine Coast. Live It Tours takes delegates behind the scenes of the region's best food producers led by local *Free Ranging Chef* Peter Wolfe. Visiting seafood providers, tomato growers and more are among the highlights.

Sailing Regatta

Sydney is famed for its spectacular harbour and there's nothing quite like taking to the water on board a performance yacht. EastSail runs a range of teambuilding activities including sailing regattas, rallies, treasure hunts and other team challenges, which are custom-designed to ensure everyone takes part. Group sizes range from eight to 200.

DISCOVER
SPECTACULAR
TAIPEI



New Venue, Hotel and Event Unveilings

Taipei Marriott Hotel

Taipei Marriott Hotel is the largest integrated destinational complex in Taipei, offering a wide range of travel and leisure experiences for locals and visitors alike, including a five-star 320-room luxury hotel, modern convention center, and high-end shopping mall. The contemporary Taipei Marriott Hotel has 320 well-appointed guest rooms and suites as well as 5 distinct restaurants with stylish, sophisticated design that reflects the local culture and tradition while also showcasing technology and creativity. With a prime location on the north bank of the Keelung River, the Taipei Marriott Hotel offers unobscured panoramic views of Taipei City from each guest room.

The Taipei Marriott Hotel offers the largest state-of-the-art convention center in Taipei, with 3000 sqm of pillarless, flexible space that can be transformed into up to 12 meeting spaces, as well as an elegant 1,260 sqm Grand Ballroom – the largest at a Taiwan hotel. From large conferences to intimate board meetings, Taipei Marriott is the ideal locale, offering the latest audio-visual innovations and access to gourmet catering and expert event planning. For the most memorable weddings in Taipei, the Ballroom located on the top floor of the conference center offers direct access to a beautiful rooftop garden and a charming chapel.



Perfect for business and leisure travelers, the Taipei Marriott Hotel is conveniently located in the booming Dazhi District, the capital's new commercial hub, just 10 minutes from Songshan International Airport and five minutes from the Neihu Technology Park. In addition, the MRT Jiannan Rd. station, the beautiful Mt. Jiannan Trail and the Miramar Shopping Center are short walks from the hotel. With a lush, green landscape that envelops much of the hotel's property, the Taipei Marriott Hotel is a serene and tranquil oasis of luxury within the bustling city.



Nangang Exhibition Center Hall 2

Located by the Nangang Exhibition Center, together creating a new large-scale national convention center, this facility will be able to accommodate 2,350 booths. Combined, the two halls will have a capacity of 5,000, sufficient to meet the requirements of the most heavyweight international exhibitions.

Courtyard by Marriott Taipei

Courtyard Taipei has 465 guest rooms, restaurants, a lobby bar, multi-functional rooms for meetings/ banquets/ weddings, an executive lounge, and a fitness center, providing a variety of services for both business and recreational travelers.



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Thai MICE on the rebound

Strong campaigns and security measures are expected to soften impact of bomb incident. By **Greg Lowe**



The Erawan shrine bombing in August is expected to impact Thailand's recovery of MICE business this year

Thailand's MICE business for the first seven months of the year posted a steady recovery from the slump caused by protracted street protests and the resulting coup d'état the previous year. However, hopes of a return to 2013 levels of business were shattered on August 17, when a bomb attack at the popular Erawan shrine in Bangkok killed 20 people and injured more than 130.

Industry players have tried to put on a brave face since the attack, hoping that any fallout will be shortlived with any downturn limited to a few months. Tourism officials have stressed added measures to shore up security with bag

searches now commonplace at shopping centres and on public transport.

"In light of the recent Bangkok episode we remain optimistic in order to try and maintain our current MICE business – we are currently working with our partners to develop realistic options that are good for our clients," said Pornthip Hirunkate, managing director Thailand and deputy CEO of Destination Asia.

"We are also currently managing our information advisories to give out honest reviews on the current situation so clients can make educated judgements."

She said prior to the blast the DMC's business had been performing well and was "almost back to normal business

levels pre-2014."

This positive trend was reflected in the most recent statistics from Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) which showed 476,079 business event arrivals in the first half of fiscal 2015 – October 2014 to March 2015 – generating more than US\$1.23 billion. The top five source markets were India, Singapore, Laos, Malaysia and US. This compares to 919,164 visitors and revenue of US\$2.69 billion for the whole of the previous fiscal year.

Parichat Svetasreni, director of marketing and corporate image at TCEB, said the bureau is sticking with its targets for the year. "Looking ahead, TCEB forecasts that the launch of *Thailand CONNECT The World* and *Thailand's MICE United II* together with other market initiatives will enable Thailand to welcome 1,036,300 business events visitors (a 17 per cent increase from 2014 targets), earning the Thai economy a total of US\$3.55 billion (a 22 per cent increase from 2014 targets) in 2015."

Amanda Hyndman, general manager of Mandarin Oriental Bangkok, who spoke to the *Daily* before the bombing, said the property had seen significant growth in its MICE trade. "Business levels are back to normal and are in fact exceeding our expectations thus far for the year," she said. "Our key MICE markets, Hong Kong and Singapore, remain strong, and further afield the Americas market share is growing with US MICE business returning to Bangkok this year after many years, and the South American market showing great potential."

Numbers

7 The average number of nights Australian MICE groups stay in Thailand, according to Destination Asia

426.7

The amount in millions of baht (US\$11.8 million) that is generated by the meetings segment during the the first half of the 2015 fiscal year, according to the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau

5 The number of places China slid from pole position as the leading MICE source market in fiscal 2014 to number six in the first half of fiscal 2015, according to MICE bureau

Destination Asia also reported rising business from the US and Canada, which have emerged as the company's strongest source markets for Thailand this year. Pornthip noted that high-spending clients tend to stay for seven to nine nights in Bangkok and a beach destination, typically Koh Samui or Phuket.

"Koh Samui has become popular with MICE clients as there are now plenty of deluxe hotels and also many activities to choose from, such as island hopping, beach days out at Ang Thong Marine Park, health and wellness treatments, and (shopping)."

Spotlight

A complete waterfront destination

Bangkok River Partners is a concerted effort by eight luxury hotels on the Chao Phraya River — Anantara Bangkok Riverside, Chatrium Hotel Riverside, Mandarin Oriental Bangkok, Millennium Hilton Bangkok, Ramada Plaza Bangkok Menam Riverside, Royal Orchid Sheraton, Shangri-La Hotel Bangkok and The Peninsula Bangkok — to promote Bangkok's waterfront as a destination for leisure and tourism.

While there have been a number of attempts over the years by the cluster of properties to promote their MICE facilities, the new partnership is focused on expanding the remit to develop the destination as a cultural attraction supported by world-class accommodation and meetings venues.

The hotels offer a combined 108 meetings rooms and 14 ballrooms and more than 4,000 guestrooms. Additional event facilities include the Grand Postal Building, a standalone venue with more than 3000m² of events space, the largest of which can seat more than 560 pax in a classroom setting, plus an additional 1,000m² of space outside. The Royal Naval Academy, which offers views of the Grand Palace, is another of the riverfront historic buildings which can be used for events.

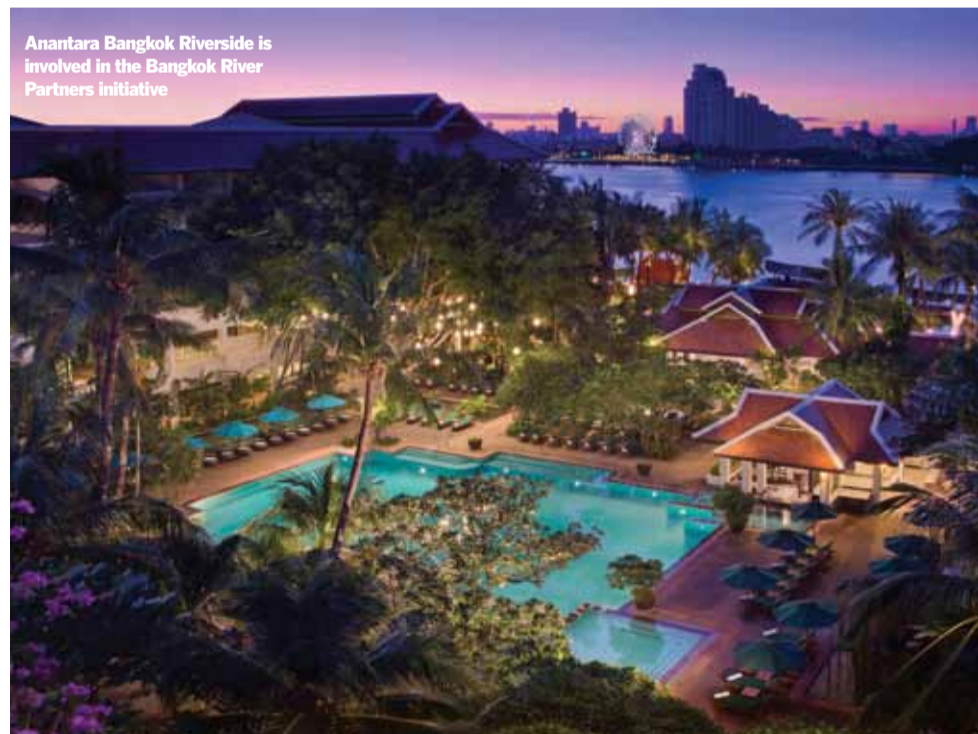
New developments in the pipeline, including ICONSIAM shopping complex, the Four Seasons Private Residences, Four Seasons Hotel and Cappella Hotel will further strengthen the destination's offering.

However, it is the creation of more cultural attractions with the aim of developing the area in the vein of world famous places such as Sydney Harbour that sets the partnership apart from its previous incarnations.

Bangkok River Partners director, David Robinson, said: "The creative community is being energised by a growing number of art galleries, small creative businesses such as architect practices, and entrepreneurs establishing bars and restaurants in repurposed shophouses and warehouses.

"Government agencies, led in part by Thammasat University, are protecting historic buildings and improving the lifestyle of the riverside communities."

Social media and a website have been developed to promote the destination brand and include all the MICE contacts for the eight hotels. The partnership is also organising a number of annual events including the BIG FISH river music festival in



September, River-on-a-Plate dining week in December, an international street art festival in January, and a festival of light tabled for later in 2016.

Art gallery hops, cycling and long-tail boat tours, cooking classes and street food excursions are among activities which can be included in a business event itinerary.






Robinson added that markets, palaces

and temples by the dozen are within an effortless cruise along the river.

The partnership is in talks with Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau to develop a co-promotion.

Hotel partners will get together monthly to plan activities and Robinson expects more partners to join the group's MICE-focused co-promotion for the destination.

Meet the corporate travel managers

Which educational topics are you on a lookout for this year's CTW Asia-Pacific?	<p>IMS Health – Global Delivery Bangalore</p>  <p>Prabhu C Head admin and facilities</p> <p>I'm particularly keen on <i>Staying Safe and Secure; Policy Compliance or Traveller Experience; Skillsets: Corporate Travel vs Meetings & Events; and Learning From Success: FlexTravel.</i></p>	<p>Lenovo China</p>  <p>Jacob Hu Category Travel Manager</p> <p>I'm interested in discussions on payment solutions and how to drive savings through policy and travel behaviours.</p>	<p>Madza Motors New Zealand</p>  <p>Swee McGowan Executive assistant to managing director</p> <p>I would like updates on new and exciting developments in the airline sector.</p>	<p>National Oilwell Varco Singapore</p>  <p>Kishore Rames Travel manager Asia Pacific</p> <p>I'm interested in finding out if chain-wide discounts is the way to go for future hotel RFPs.</p>	<p>Unilever Industries India</p>  <p>Geetha Arekal Regional travel manager (ASPAC)</p> <p>I'm interested in technology that is used in travel, such as for booking, reporting, cancellation and refund.</p>
Which kind of corporate travel suppliers do you wish to meet at the show?	Tour operators and hotels.	Carlson Wagonlit Travel, Egencia, Singapore Airlines, Cathay Pacific and Indian carriers.	Exhibitors and suppliers specialising in luxury and high-end destinations.	Hotels, airlines and car limo companies serving emerging markets.	Technology providers and online booking tool specialists



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Positive changes in the wind

Public, private sectors are taking strong steps to raise the Philippines' MICE appeal, writes **Rosa Ocampo**

The underperforming Philippine MICE sector is making up for lost ground through a more vigorous private-public collaboration, infrastructure renaissance, and better air access.

Heeding the call of the Philippine Tourism Promotions Board (TPB), more private companies and associations are going out of their way to bid for and bring international events into the country.

Several months ago, the Philippine Council for the Advancement of Association Executives (PCAA) assembled a group of ambassadors from over 70 national associations to bid for and win international events.

"We too can help in this effort. In-bound MICE will dramatically increase now and in the future as the country continues to get positive economic and political reviews internationally," explained PCAA president and CEO Octavio Peralta.

For its second year in 2016, the B2B Asia Premium Travel Mart (APT) will include not just buyers and sellers for luxury properties but MICE specialists as well, said Edwin Villanueva, director of APTM organiser S8 Exhibition.

He noted rosy prospects for MICE as the Philippines already has an extensive list of upmarket hotels and events venues that are supported by highly trained and service-oriented hospitality staff.

Indeed, private sector confidence reflects developments in recent years that bode well for MICE.



High profile business events in the Philippines this year included Madrid Fusion Manila



First, the shortage of hotels and resorts is being eased by international brands that continue to make a beeline not just for metro Manila but also elsewhere in the Philippines. In the pipeline are Okura, Mandarin Oriental, Conrad, Westin, Hilton, Sheraton and more Marriott, Movenpick, Dusit Thani and Accor properties.

Second, convention centres are being built where there were none - in Cebu City, Iloilo and Bohol apart from new ones in Davao and Bacolod. Another convention centre is under planning in the Makati CBD.

While air traffic congestion at the single runway of Manila's Ninoy Aquino International Airport remains a major hurdle in welcoming tourists, its Terminal 1 has been spruced up while Terminal 3 is now open to foreign airlines.

Airports in secondary destinations are being upgraded, paving the way for increased direct flights from abroad. Mactan-Cebu International Airport will

have a second terminal by 2018. Puerto Princesa International Airport is undergoing expansion while the gateway to Boracay, Caticlan Airport, is being expanded to accommodate wider-bodied aircraft come early 2016.

The Philippines' accessibility has improved substantially this year as more airlines opened routes to Manila and increased flight frequencies even to secondary gateways. Carriers now flying to Manila include Turkish Airlines from Istanbul, Ethiopian Airlines from Addis Ababa, and Garuda Indonesia from Jakarta. Flag carrier Philippine Airlines now flies to New York, Australia and New Zealand and together with Cebu Pacific have opened routes to several points in China and the Middle East.

There also are more nonstop flights from Asia to Cebu, Davao, Kalibo in Boracay, Palawan, Clark and Iloilo.

MICE prospects are sanguine this year, the year of *Visit Philippines 2015* and the

Numbers

13 The year-on-year percentage decrease in the number of meetings hosted in the Philippines in 2014, according to ICCA's latest report. The country welcomed 46 meetings, down from 53 in 2013

50 The ranking held by the Philippines in ICCA's 2014 listing of top countries for international association meetings. It was in 49th place in 2013

67.9 The average occupancy rate of hotels in Manila from January to June 2015, according to the STR Global report

debut of MICE brand *Fun Works*, said TPB COO Domingo Enerio III.

The country is playing host to over 150 meetings of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), culminating in the November summit. APEC is expected to bring in 25,000 international delegates and over 4,000 media personnel.

Other high profile events this year included the Madrid Fusion Manila, the 17th Asia Pacific Retailers Convention and Exhibition, and 70th anniversary commemoration of the end of World War II hostilities. "These give us the opportunity to put our best foot forward," said Enerio.

Spotlight

Presenting the grandest of all venues

Inaugurated in July, the Marriott Grand Ballroom (MGB) in Marriott Hotel Manila is described in superlatives. It is the Marriott group's biggest convention and exhibition space outside the US; the biggest ballroom in the Philippines; the most modern; the grandest; the most technology savvy.

It is bigger than almost all the convention centres in the Philippines but shuns the term, preferring Grand Ballroom instead to denote a grand venue that has everything, from luxury hotel rooms to catering and sophisticated audiovisuals.

MGB is huge: 8,000m² space for more than 4,000 people in cocktail style. Its column-free main ballroom and 28 other meeting spaces including six VIP sky boxes are flexible, allowing more creativity in handling events and accommodating all sizes of MICE and encompassing exhibitions, concerts and performances.

Event attendees can meet and stay under one roof. Marriott Hotel Manila is building 228 luxury rooms to be available next year, in addition to the existing 342 rooms. Furthermore, three restaurants on-site eliminate the need for outside caterers.

MGB boasts several latest technology such as SkyFold, an automatic vertical folding partitions set from the ceiling; 176 programmable ceiling lights that change to 360 colours; adjustable ceiling height from 12m to 10m.

Its booking tools and meeting services



apps ease the stress of time, space and language barriers by connecting meeting planners and MGB in real time, any time. Mobile check-in, for instance, enables guests to check-in before their stay and check-out skipping the front desk. Through a free reservation link, either guests reserve the rooms or the hotel can reserve for all guests. On the day of the event, the meeting services app allows the meeting planner to manage the event without leaving the seat and it personalises every event from planning through billing.

The security system is impressive, including 597 CCTV cameras, security bollards, blast film-equipped doors and windows, smoke evacuation system, automatic air pressurisation system, digital fire alarm system, rollers to absorb tremors, etc.

Another edge of MGB is its location, just a stone's throw away from Manila's Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

My Philippines

Rosa Ocampo recommends three must-dos in her destination

Corregidor Island

About two hours by ferry from Manila Bay, Corregidor Island is the doomed fortress where thousands of Philippine and American soldiers sacrificed their lives in fighting the Japanese during World War II.

Only staff and employees live in this island museum which bears haunting testament to the cost of the war: bombed bunkers and hospital; mortars and other combat armaments; Malinta tunnel where thousands perished; and Pacific War Memorial, a tribute to the fallen soldiers.

The Manila Hotel

Take a step back in time at century-old The Manila Hotel. The grande dame showcases its heritage and history from its well-preserved colonial architecture and elegant multi-chandeliered lobby to

charming MICE venues and rustic rooms that use a lot of wooden latticeworks and shell trimmings.

Staff swathed in old period costumes bring back the days when The Manila Hotel was home to visiting royalties, dignitaries and high society.

Mystery Manila

Perfect as a fun teambuilding or ice-breaker activity, Mystery Manila gets groups to solve mysteries represented in realistically simulated rooms. Packages can be customised depending on group size and needs of the participants. Mystery Manila has branches in Makati, Quezon City and Boracay.



The Manila Hotel (below); Corregidor Island (right)

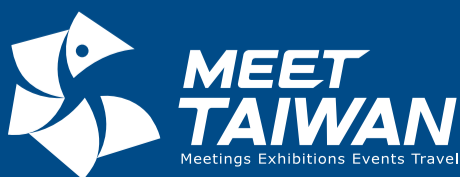
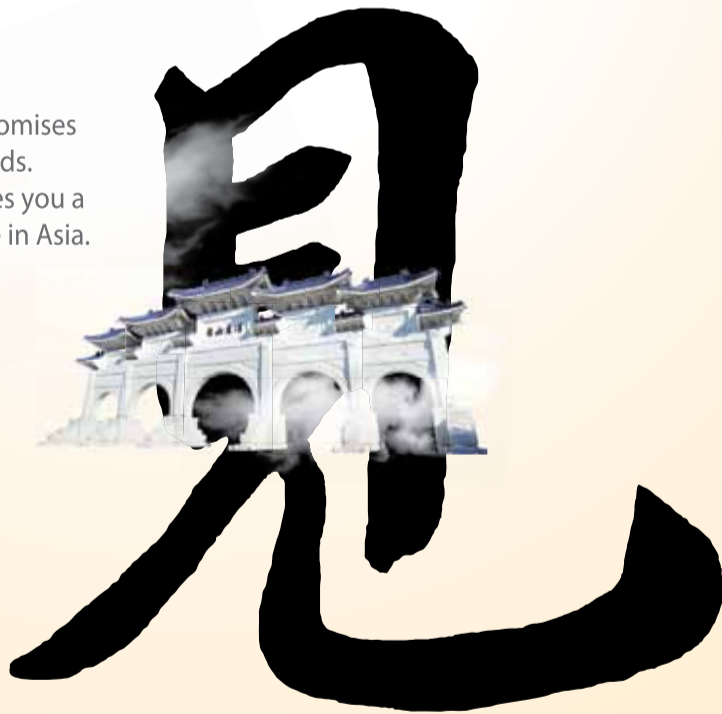




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Leading from the top

Indonesian MICE players are holding their breath for a CVB, writes **Mimi Hudoyo**

There is a sense of urgency among Indonesia's MICE players regarding the government's plan to establish the Indonesia Convention and Exhibition Bureau (INCEB), as the directorate of MICE had been abolished with the formation of a new government cabinet and tourism ministry last year.

Speaking to the *Daily*, Wisnu Budi Sulaeman, board member of Indonesia Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Creative Economy and MICE section and concurrently board member of the Indonesia Congress and Convention Association (INCCA), said: "It is crucial that we have a convention bureau which will market the destination and foster destination development.

"We also need the convention bureau to act as a dialogue partner with other convention bureaus, particularly those in the ASEAN region, in developing competency standards. Previously this role was

undertaken by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy."

Wisnu explained that the plan is for INCEB to report directly to the country's president or vice president for sharper cross-sector coordination.

"We also expect some sort of decree that will guarantee that all programmes and commitments will not change when there is a government change," he added.

A proposal for the convention bureau will be presented to president Joko Widodo for his approval before the end of 2015.

Meanwhile, efforts to promote Indonesia's business events industry will continue. I Gde Pitana, deputy minister for international marketing at the Ministry of Tourism, remarked: "We are fully aware of the importance of MICE. The minister (of tourism, Arief Yahya) has instructed us to boost this sector."

Under the current Ministry of Tourism, deputy assistants who handle the differ-

ent geographic markets are responsible for both leisure and MICE arrivals.

Vinsensus Jemadu, director for Asia Pacific Region at the Office of the Deputy for International Marketing, noted that corporate meetings held in Indonesia are on the rise, especially from China, Japan and South Korea.

While it is no surprise that most business event traffic goes to Jakarta, the country's second largest business hub after the capital, Surabaya, has also reported a thriving MICE sector.

B2B and B2C exhibitions are on the rise in Surabaya, and according to Boediono, director of Debono Mitra Tama Surabaya, an event specialist, trade-shows for the machinery, mechanical and electrical, and building technology sectors are buzzing.

Boediono remarked: "We have seen more exhibitions moving from Jakarta to Surabaya to get closer to the market. We have also seen some international

Numbers

5,580 The number of delegates at the Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the Asian African Conference held in April in Jakarta and Bandung. The event is regarded as Indonesia's biggest international conference

2,000 The number of delegates expected at the recent 13th World Chinese Entrepreneur Convention in September. Held in Bali, the event had rotated to Indonesia for the first time

40 The percentage of MICE arrivals out of Indonesia's total footfalls in 2013, according to latest data from the Indonesia Tourism Promotion Board, published in January 2015

exhibitions, such as HOMEDEC from Malaysia, entering Surabaya this year.

Besides the potential formation of a convention bureau, the tourism minister is planning to create a series of iconic events, such as Bali & Beyond Travel Fair, to promote the country for MICE.



Indonesia Convention and Exhibition is Indonesia's largest MICE venue

Spotlight

All eyes on the new convention centre

The new Indonesia Convention and Exhibition (ICE) centre in Bumi Serpong Damai City, Tangerang is expected to alleviate the shortage of MICE venues in the Greater Jakarta area.

Owned by Indonesia International Expo and managed by Deutsche Messe Venue Operations, the venue was inaugurated by Indonesian president Joko Widodo on August 4. ICE is not only the largest convention and exhibition centre in the country, it also claims to be the mammoth of South-east Asia.

ICE holds 10 exhibition halls over an area of 50,000m² and has an outdoor space of 50,000m² along with a 4,000m² convention hall that can be divided into four. It is supported by other facilities and services needed by event planners and attendees.

Each of the 10 exhibition halls has rigging points at every nine metres, with a maximum hanging load factor of two tons. Smaller rigging points for up to 100kg are positioned at every 4.5m. ICE has a floor load capacity of two tons per

square-metres, and is equipped with utility trenches that enable secured and fast access to electricity, compressed air and water supply, the first of its kind in the country.

Mark Schloesser, president director of Deutsche Messe Venue Operations, said: "As the biggest exhibition and convention centre in South-east Asia, we believe ICE will become the pride of Indonesia on the world level. We believe that ICE will be able to fulfill any organiser's needs."

Elaborating on the capabilities of ICE, Schloesser said: "The pre-function lobbies can be reached through four

drop-off zones strategically located throughout the front of the venue.

"For special guests heading to the convention centre, there is a dedicated VVIP Drop-Off and parking zone."

ICE is designed by COX Australia, the architects behind several prominent exhibition and convention centres around the world.

Schloesser also highlighted ICE's catering prowess. It has a 2,000m² kitchen and five pantries – one for every two halls, two large exhibition bars that can accommodate 216 pax each, and a 152-seat bistro on the mezzanine level of the convention centre.

"As such, we are able to accommodate catering services for any number of events, from cocktail parties, meetings luncheons and refreshment services, to large-scale wedding receptions," he remarked.

To celebrate the launch of the venue, a series of entertainment events, exhibitions, parades and competitions were held under an umbrella event called *All Eyes to ICE* throughout August. The highlight, *National Creative Gathering*, took place on opening day and saw president Joko leading a creative industry dialogue.

My Indonesia

Mimi Hudoyo recommends three must-dos in her country

Museum Angkut + Movie Star Studio, Batu

The latest attraction in Batu, a town some 20km from Malang, East Java, is a museum that tells the story of how transportation around the world had evolved. It displays more than 300 rides, some of them rare and original, others replicas of vehicles dating as far back as 1910. Arranged to show different eras and themes, the museum is divided into zones such as Europe, Hollywood and Batavia. Private groups can arrange to have thematic events and team-building activities in the museum through



From left: See Bali and Lombok from high above; get happy and drenched at Surf & Turf Nusa Dua Beach

the help of an event organiser or local DMC.

Bali Adventure Sky Tour

Bali Adventure Sky Tour is offering new helicopters tours to see Bali and Lombok. Up to six passengers are allowed each time on a Eurocopter B2, and the tours take passengers over various landmarks such as the Kin-

tamani volcano, Bedugul Lake, Gili Islands and Mount Rinjani. Customised adventure flights are available too.

Surf & Turf Nusa Dua Beach, Bali

Tjendana Corporation, Bali has launched a new beach club and amusement water



park called the Surf & Turf Nusa Dua Beach.

This attraction offers several thrilling rides such as Bali's first surf rider, water slides that tower six metres high, and the not-to-be-missed Space Bowl which glides participants down a 12m-high tower.

Other facilities include a two-storey fusion restaurant and bar that serves European and Asian cuisine.

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Singapore

Name of venue: Universal Studios Singapore

Seating capacity: Up to 3,500 pax

Background: The theme park opened in March 2010 and is one of the key attractions at Resorts World Sentosa.

Why it's unique: This is South-east Asia's first and only Universal Studios theme park. Event organisers have a variety of venues to choose from. Some of the more popular ones include New York Street which replicates the streetscape of 1950s and 1960s New York, and the WaterWorld Stunt Show Amphitheatre. The Scavenger Hunt is also popular as a company teambuilding activity.

Who's been there: Chung Shan Association's opening ceremony, 2014; Hewlett Packard

Ways to use the venue: The WaterWorld Stunt Show Amphitheatre, which seats 3,500 pax, is ideal as a gathering point for large groups. From there, participants can access a park buyout encompassing different rides, shows and attractions tailored to the organiser's needs and budgets. Not only can rides, shows and attractions be chosen, a selection of characters is also available for meet-and-greet events. Special requests ranging from giant LED screens to stage set-ups and performances can also be accommodated by the in-house production and technical teams.

Smaller groups preferring a more cosy setting can gather at a certain zone, such as New York Street (good for 1,500-pax banquets) or New York Harbour with street buffet or butler-style canapés as food options. The park has also hosted welcome events and opening ceremonies.

Hong Kong

Name of venue: sky100 Events

Seating capacity: 50-1,000 pax

Background: Developed by Sun Hung Kai Properties, this venue is ideal for both small intimate gatherings and large corporate events. It has hosted corporate events since

2012, although the brand, sky100 Events, was established in 2014.

Why it's unique: Located on the 100th floor within the International Commerce Centre in West Kowloon, it is the city's highest venue with a 360-degree view of Hong Kong and its huge space boasts a high ceiling and has no pillars. Flexible canvas dividers allow multiple zoning for a wide range of activities happening at the same time. Clients are also provided with a wide variety of catering options from the venue's various partners such as the Ritz-Carlton.

Who's been there: The 35th Asian Racing Conference's cocktail reception; Sony's multi-zoning event including a product launch, game experience and cocktail party; Giorgio Armani's Eccentrico Exhibition and corporate gala dinner

Ways to use the venue: The venue's space can be divided into four different zones, such as a product display area in the north, cocktail party in the east, press conference in the west and gala dinner in the south. It awes delegates with the use of digital devices to create an amazing journey from the lobby all the way up to the deck on the 100th floor. The deck is perfect for incentive groups to enjoy stunning views of the city and its world-renowned Victoria Harbour. Cocktail events can also be held up there.

South Korea

Name of venue: Busan Cinema Center

Seating capacity: Up to 4,000 pax in the biggest theatre

Background: Opened on September 29, 2011, the Busan Cinema Center is owned by Busan Metropolitan City and run by the centre itself. It comprises three buildings.

The outdoor BIFF Theatre, where the annual Busan International Film Festival's opening and closing ceremonies are held, has 4,000 seats. Smaller theatres are available. Double Cone offers a café, visitor centre and information centre, while the rest of the building is occupied by restaurants and bars.



Busan Cinema Centre

Why it's unique: The centre plays host to the prestigious Busan International Film Festival every October. Planners can choose from the range of theatres, cinemas and restaurants for their events.

Who's been there: 15th Busan Film Critics Association Awards ceremony, 2014

Ways to use the venue: The BIFF Theatre is equipped with technology that allows live, simultaneous telecast to the Haneulyeon Theatre and three other cinemas. Meetings with more than 4,000 delegates can ensure that the same content is broadcast to all attendees elsewhere in the venue. Screens and stages make the venue perfect for film screenings and performances to entertain incentive winners.

The Philippines

Name of venue: The Forum

Seating capacity: Up to 1,000 pax

Background: Opened end-2014, The Forum is a 2,000m² MICE venue in the Sky Tower of Solaire Resort & Casino (in Entertainment City, Manila), the flagship property of Philippine-listed firm Bloomberry Resorts Corp. It comprises a column-free ballroom for 1,000 pax (table seating), flexible pre-function area, eight meeting rooms and two boardrooms.

Sky Tower also boasts a 312 all-suite hotel tower; a 1,760-seat Lyric Theater for concerts and other events; a 2,500m² luxurious spa and beauty salon; additional VIP gaming areas; and two gaily bedecked restaurants, Waterside Restobar serving Mediterranean and Latin American cuisines and Oasis Garden Café overlooking two waterfalls.

Why it's unique: The venue is brand new, plush and opulent, with luxury at all corners. Novelties include gold-plated ceiling accents, giant chandeliers and art displays. Solaire's 11 restaurants are fast gaining popularity for their wide array of gastronomic delights, including a chocolate dessert topped by 24 carat gold leaf.

Who's been there: National Congress for the Oral Health of Filipino Children, 2015; Philippine Paediatric Dental Society's 22nd Annual

Convention & Induction Ceremony, 2015

Ways to use the venue: The Forum's main ballroom has a seating capacity for 1,000 and cocktail-style for 1,200. It is column-free and can easily be divided into five sections for breakout sessions, smaller functions and simultaneous meetings and workshops.

The ballroom's opulence and grandeur can be a theme in itself. With 11 F&B outlets in the resort means a wide array of food catering choices for planners.

The outdoor swimming pool, spa and beauty salon can be incorporated in special incentive programmes.

Taiwan

Name of venue: Huashan 1914 Creative Park, Taipei

Seating capacity: Up to 2,000 pax

Background: Huashan 1914 is a multipurpose park with a renovated building that was originally one of Taiwan's most significant wine factories. It is a cultural events platform where many large-scale exhibitions, installations, theatre productions and performances have been held.

Why it's unique: While it is located in the centre of Taipei City, it has been lauded as a 'secret base' for a quiet escape from the busy city with its offer of huge spaces in the warehouses. These spaces find a following with planners of art events, concerts, conferences and exhibitions.

Who's been there: The International Committee for the Industrial Heritage Congress, 2012; Facebook Asia-Pacific executives meet and dinner party, 2013

Ways to use the venue: The remodelled, spacious warehouses offer a retro and chic setting, and can fit up to 2,000 pax for conferences, an ideal breakaway from conventional hotels and meeting centres. Meanwhile, fancy restaurants in this park are ideal for corporates to host dinner parties, such as the Trio Café which offers a beautiful park-side view, and the French VVG (Very Very Good) Thinking restaurant.



Universal Studios Singapore



Huashan 1914 Creative Park

Trade gains from ICCA's crisis management paper

By S Puvaneswary

Since launching its *Crisis Management Guidelines* white paper in May, ICCA has helped CVBs, association executives, association management companies, PCOs, DMCs, hotels and conference venues plan, prepare, manage and recover from numerous crisis situations.

The guidelines are suitable for both man-made crises such as civil unrest and bombings as well as natural disasters.

"The general feedback is that members find the document a very useful resource and they appreciate our support," said Mathijs Vleeming, ICCA's communications strategist, adding that public relations assistance is also offered to members and ICCA Verified Association Executives in getting their messages out.

Two complementary forms of crisis management – operational and communications – are addressed in the document.

Operational crisis management focuses on the practical organisation and arrangements to deal with a crisis, with people and assets taking priority.

Provided by Andy Williams, vice president quality assurance & business development for Safehotels Alliance, content includes the main components of a crisis management and emergency plan, examples of a crisis situation, roles and responsibilities of a crisis management team, an appendix with practical guideline templates and links to useful resource and information.

Communications crisis management focuses on handling public relations and the media with a priority on reputation. Prepared by Tina Altieri, managing principal of Media Australasia Xchange, this section features tips on how to engage the press and general do's and don'ts when talking to the media.

Altieri said: "I have received feedback from people who were involved in natural disasters and outbreaks such as bird flu that they didn't know they could have had more control of the situation when they did media interviews."

There is also an article by Vleeming entitled *Reactive or*

proactive? Seven factors for effective crisis communication for international meetings, which includes a pre-event checklist.

ICCA members and ICCA Verified Association Executives can download the publication from the association's website by accessing My ICCA login section.

Gracie V Geikie, director/principal consultant of Planet Borneo Group of Companies in Sarawak, said: "ICCA has provided the right tools to help us streamline, coordinate and synergise during a crisis. This is one of the benefits of being an ICCA member. In a crisis, the destination has to work together (with its stakeholders). The same, consistent message must be given at all times."

Mike Cannon, managing director of Sarawak Convention Bureau, added: "In today's society, crisis is a given. One must understand crisis management and know how to recover business and deal appropriately with the public. The guidelines is authored by at least three credible people and endorsed by ICCA. It is a great tool and one that can always be updated as needed."



Geikie: must work together in a crisis



Masrani: other destinations will get the business

Malaysia stands to lose Indian MICE with MAS' service cuts

Malaysia Airlines' decision to halve frequencies of air services between Kuala Lumpur and Delhi to daily flights since September 1 had resulted in a loss of MICE business to Malaysia, said agents interviewed.

Suneet Goenka, group managing director of Red Apple Travel in Kuala Lumpur, declared the reduced frequencies "a disaster". He elaborated: "It is going to be very difficult to get MICE business from northern India where companies place great value on connectivity and pricing. Many Indian companies book last minute – three to four weeks in advance – and a hybrid carrier like Malindo Air will not give airfares in advance for large groups."

Goenka revealed that some Indian companies had already removed Malaysia from their list of preferred destinations.

He also warned that reduced capacity on scheduled airlines would lead to higher airfares on the India-Malaysia sector.

Also impacted by Malaysia Airlines' service reduction is Hidden Asia Travel & Tours in Kuala Lumpur.

Its managing director, Nanda Kumar, told the *Daily*: "Many corporate companies in India want their staff to arrive on the same day. Due to this requirement which cannot be fulfilled through reduced frequency, we have lost a number of potential MICE businesses to other destinations."

However, an agent from Delhi, Rajendra Dhumma, director of Classic Travels & Tours, has

downplayed the effect, saying that the weakened ringgit is enough to keep Indian clients interested in Malaysia.

He said that "Malaysia (is) an even more attractive destination" due to the currency exchange in India's favour.

"(Moreover) many companies in India have also cut spending and will opt to send employees on (cheaper) airlines like Malindo Air," he added.

Amit Singla, managing director of Scotch & Water Innovations, Bangalore, disagreed. "Organisers who can pay for scheduled carriers will want a direct connection for their groups. The distance from Delhi to Kuala Lumpur is too short for one stop. The suspension of the morning departures from Delhi to Kuala Lumpur will also affect onward connections from Kuala Lumpur for business travellers from India."

Dilip Masrani, managing director of Favourite Tours & Forex Gujarat, remarked: "Malaysia will lose out to other destinations once Twentieth Century Fox World Malaysia opens in 2016. This will be a very big attraction for the Indian market and will appeal to Indian business event delegates who often travel with their spouses."

"If organisers fail to secure enough seats to Malaysia for their groups, they will simply choose another destination that can offer better connectivity and airfares." – S Puvaneswary

BCCK ups event experience with a river cruise

Borneo Convention Centre Kuching (BCCK) will soon manage a catamaran and offer customised river packages to its clients.

The catamaran, owned by the Ministry of Tourism Sarawak, is scheduled to be operational by 4Q2015, and will ply two routes – Kuching Waterfront to BCCK and from the Marina Jetty to Bako National Park. It can hold 40 pax in theatre-style on the lower deck and 30 for cocktails on the upper deck.

BCCK's CEO, Eric Van Piggelen, said: "This new product will differentiate us from other convention centres in Asia. We will accommodate customised requests from clients – be it an event for privileged customers of a company or as a means to ferry conference delegates back to their hotels at the Waterfront area."

Associations can also hold outdoor dining and themed events on the catamaran, suggested Van Piggelen.

The state government will build an overhead bridge linking the convention centre to the jetty for the convenience of passengers by 2016. – S Puvaneswary

{ Hot leads }

CITS East China in search of contacts in Phuket

Cennic Koh, executive director of MICE Regional Office, CITS East China, is looking for a venue and DMC in Phuket for an event next year. She needs a range of teambuilding programmes and meeting facilities, as well as ideas for a gala dinner. Email cennickohlh.cits@citssh.com.

Eka Voyages keen on Vietnam

Eka Moncarre, managing director of Paris-based Eka Voyages, wants contacts of MICE hotels and teambuilding facilities in Ho Chi Minh City and Phan Thiet for a group of 100-200 pax, spending five days/four nights in the destination in 1H2016. Email eka@ekavoyages.com.



An investment in the future of Asia's MICE industry

Judging by the burning enthusiasm of the student participants at yesterday morning's IMEX-MPI-MCI-IT&CMA Future Leaders Forum, the future of Asia's MICE industry looks truly bright. The annual forum is organised in strategic partnership with IMEX, Meeting Professionals International (MPI) and MCI Group, and supported by Thailand Convention And Exhibition Bureau and Thailand Incentive And Convention Association. It seeks to inspire students to join the industry. Photo by Eugene Tang

Warm smiles in Bangkok By Eugene Tang



Entourage Bangladesh's Rezaul Ekram



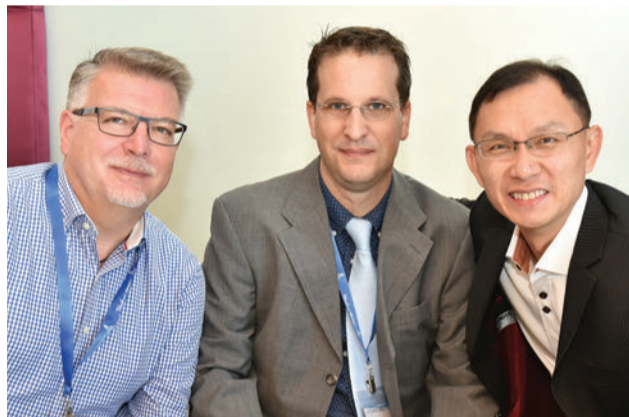
CSL Travel & Tours Cambodia's Srauy Virith, B2B Cambodia's Eang Sokravy and Asia Explorer Travel Cambodia's Kim Chan Lekha



Daejeon International Marketing Enterprise Korea's Gue Heon Kang and Young-il Yoon



Shun Tak-China Travel Ship Management Hong Kong's Alcun Li



Robert Bosch Thailand's Michael Beck, CIMB Investment Bank Malaysia's Peter Theo Hupperich and CTW Asia Pacific Advisory Panel Singapore's Peter Koh



Thai Association for the Study of the Liver Thailand's Paitora Chaochalard



Panorama Medica Group Thailand's Zadok Lempert



Journey Plus Bangladesh's Taufiq Rahman



BTL Group Ukraine's Inna Melnykova and Suzhou CITS' Ding Hai Yang



Borneo Destination Management Company Malaysia's Susan Soong and Sabah Tourism Board's Josephine Chai



A&A Holidays USA's Mario Scozia

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