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Thailand's dynamic geo-positioning is a key factor to being an award-winning MICE destination. An unparalleled market access to the region, including the burgeoning CLMV region, and enthusiastic traders in China.

AN EYE ON INNOVATION

Thailand 4.0 has the government of Thailand identifying the key industries that will spur economic growth through innovation. These include Bio-tech, Smart Devices, Digital and more. Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) has aligned support schemes to rally to the national policy.



COLLABORATIVE SPIRIT

10 Special Economic Zones will be established with Thailand's neighbors to facilitate trade flow and offer connectivity with an emerging ASEAN market. An Eastern Economic Corridor will be set-up to provide special investment opportunities in key industries under Thailand 4.0 and a springboard to China, India and ASEAN.



SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Thailand is a champion in CSR and Sustainability. TCEB's MICE Capabilities has incorporated several modules with focus on sustainable best practices, such as farm-to-function, food waste prevention.

PEOPLE & COMMUNITY

Doing business in Thailand is an enjoyable affair, supported by friendly and enthusiastic professionals. World-class brands have redefined success milestones here, with awards like Best Business Hotel 2016 by TTG and World's Leading Green Resort by World Traveller Award World Winners respectively.

EXPERIENCE AUTHENTICITY

Thailand has been pushing the boundaries in giving a unique perspective. Nowhere else will you be able to find the level of authenticity in merging comfort with culture, and the modern with natural marvels.

SUPPORT & SOLUTIONS

The Thailand Conventions and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) instills its presence in the business travel market by elevating standards and supporting positive transformation. To start redefining your business events, speak with us today.



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Issue

3



SE Asia's new stars rise on longhaul map

By Yixin Ng

Longhaul demand for Asian incentive holidays is spreading beyond the usual favourites to destinations such as Vietnam and Myanmar, according to buyers at IT&CMA.

Ben Gosman, managing director of the Netherlands-based FreeStyle Incentives, said Vietnam is becoming an increasingly attractive alternative to the long-popular Thailand.

"The euro is weak compared to the dollar. It used to be at 1.5 dollar per euro, now it's 1.1 – we lost 40 per cent," he said. "Compared to the Thai baht we also lost 40 per cent in the last three years. With the euro down, Thailand gets more expensive, and Vietnam becomes very, very attractive."

In Vietnam, Phu Quoc is an emerging destination for Gosman although mass tourism and construction on this island are becoming growing concerns.

This is also one of the reasons behind the change in FreeStyle Incentives' Thailand programmes in recent years, with Hua Hin now offered as the beach leg in place of Phuket and Koh Samui.

"We used to offer Phuket and Koh Samui, but two or three years ago, we cut those out. It saves us a flight, and these ar-

eas are too crowded. We try to stay away from the mainstream destinations."

Meanwhile, Vietnam and Myanmar are also rising in popularity at Italy's Ita Events, although Thailand remains the main South-east Asian destination for incentive tours, said Sandro Saccocio, senior project manager.

"Clients like South-east Asia for the food experience. They also like to (get hands on), so the local cultural activities such as painting, fruit sculpt-

ing and weaving keep clients interested," he said.

Udo Landow from Show D'Vision Germany is on the lookout for destinations with the "wow appeal". He added: "In Malaysia, we look for lesser-known islands that are not so commercialised but have good convention facilities to support corporate groups."

Nevertheless, classic destinations like Bali and Bangkok still rank highly on meeting and incentive planners' radar.

"I am interested particularly in Bali because there is a new flight that will directly connect with (Moscow). I am also exploring Phuket and Pattaya to see if there are new hotels and activities for me to bring incentives and meetings over." – **additional reporting by Paige Lee Pei Qi**



Saccocio: Vietnam, Myanmar new stars



STARTING THE SHOW WITH A BANG

Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau's (TCEB) president Chiruit Isarangkum Na Ayuthaya, TCEB's chairman Atchaka Sibunruang and TTG Asia Media's managing director Darren Ng addressing delegates and exhibitors at the opening ceremony and welcome reception on September 18. Hosted by TCEB, the grand affair was held at GMM Live House @ CentralWorld.

The sea's calling for meetings in Taiwan

By Pamela Chow

Taiwan is pulling out all the stops to welcome more conferences, meetings and exhibitions to regions outside of Taipei, with vibrant and unique event highlights showcasing these secondary cities lined up for upcoming shows.

Among a colourful calendar of events is the Global Harbour Cities Forum on September 26 to promote the waterfront Kaohsiung Exhibition Centre on the Asia's New Bay Area, as well as the nearby offshore Penghu Island.

To draw even more business traffic to Penghu Island, MEET Taiwan is helping the destination to market the 2018 Most Beautiful Bays in the World World Congress, as well as participating in a business exhibition that features a carnival, concert and container-park show floor.

"For the rest of 2018, we will be promoting Taiwan's business events following an ocean theme, encapsulating destinations like Kaohsiung's bay and islands like Penghu," explained

Jessie Tseng, executive director of MEET Taiwan.

Also on the radar is Taichung, where the Asia MICE Forum 2018 recently concluded and the upcoming Taichung World Flora Exposition will be held from November this year to April 2019 in new facilities across Houli, Fengyuan, Waipu and Shuinan districts.

Complementing the developments of Taiwan's "smart" cities, Tseng added that a majority of local PEOs have caught up with technological advancements with solutions such as event apps, use of VR and facial recognition systems.

Suhir Tuli, general manager – sales of New Delhi-based Southern Travels, told the *Daily*: "Taiwan is full of nature and the night markets are pretty famous. The best thing is that visas are easily granted for Indians who hold a Schengen or US visa. What we need are direct flights, and I hope demand for Taiwan from India will pick up."



Tseng: ocean theme adopted for 2018

"We will be promoting Taiwan's business events following an ocean theme, encapsulating destinations like (Kaoshiung and Penghu)."

Jessie Tseng, executive director, MEET Taiwan

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- Afternoon: Visit of Gruyère & the chocolate factory Maison Cailler
- Evening: Dinner and overnight in Montreux

- Evening: Visit and dinner at the Olympic Museum

Day 3

- Morning: Visit of Gstaad and Glacier 3000
- Afternoon: Time for shopping in Montreux
- Evening: Dinner at the Chillon Castle

Day 2

- Morning: Visit the interactive museum Chaplin’s World
- Afternoon: Wine tasting in the Lavaux vineyards at the Domaine du Daley and visit the city of Lausanne

Departure day

- Brunch
- Flight from Geneva to Zürich with international connections
- Flight from Zurich (2h by train from Lausanne)

Meet Dominique OI at the Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau stand E3 and discuss with her the possibilities for your next incentive to Switzerland.



Meeting legacy gets attention

By Karen Yue

Association meetings are leaving behind more than just tourism receipts for the host destination, emphasised speakers at the Associations Day Forum 1 yesterday morning.

Citing an example, Jane Vong Holmes, senior manager-Asia with GainingEdge, said the World Conference on Drowning Prevention 2015 in Penang, Malaysia brought about nation-wide awareness of the vast number of drowning cases and prevention methods.

"The local host (Life Saving Society Malaysia) also took the opportunity to call for a council to promote water safety culture, and to lobby for swimming lessons in school. A year after this conference, the Malaysian cabinet approved the formation of the Water Activity Safety Council, placed under a ministry," she said.

Fellow panelist, Ishwar Gilada, president of the AIDS Society of India, added that his association's work has led to the establishment of an AIDS/HIV law in 2017 that protected patients from abuse, as well as government support and recognition for the need for AIDS/HIV public education which has helped to reduce the number of infections.

Associations meetings can also achieve CSR legacies, noted Noor Ahmad Hamid, regional director (Asia Pacific) with ICCA. He pointed to the Gift of Love CSR project that is tied to the annual ICCA Congress, which allows delegates to contribute to charitable causes in the host city.

"In the lead up to ICCA Congress 2016 in Kuching, Sarawak, we ran a year-long Borneo Orangutan Project which invited delegates to adopt one of the six orphaned baby orangutans. It drew very good response, where we even had companies – not just individuals – offering large sums of money to support the programme," said Noor.

Holmes said the legacy of association meetings could also include social, health and personal impacts.

However, it is important to measure and communicate the legacies of association meetings to the government and relevant agencies, so that such gatherings aren't only recognised for their contribution to tourism, acknowledged all panelists who also included International Bureau For Epilepsy (IBE) director Richard Holmes, and International Institute of Journalism and Culture secretary-general Jof Calstas.



Bitran: legacy must be planned

IBE's Holmes suggested measuring social media attention garnered in the lead up to, during and after the event.

Speaking to the *Daily* after the session, Iain Bitran, executive director of The International Society For Professional Innovation Management, said he has chosen to "build legacy into our events" which will facilitate measurement.

"Our future events will have challenge-based content. In preparation for our conference in Fukuoka, Japan, later this year, we've met with the city government and had them identify seven to 10 local issues that could be addressed with innovation. From that we picked three: ageing, energy transition and building a start-up ecosystem," Bitran explained. "Our members will work on possible solutions in the lead up to our conference, and present them to the city and local participants at the event. Our solutions will be the legacies we can leave behind for Fukuoka."

CVBs can play a part in measuring and communicating meeting legacies, noted GainingEdge's Holmes.

She said Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau runs Legacy Clinics for local associations to guide them in such efforts. "(Communicating legacies) could be as simple as telling a good story about what they do," she said.

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JTB seeks global awareness



Hara: all ready to handle business events

JTB is exhibiting at IT&CMA for the first time, determined to make its presence felt and business events capability known to the global marketplace.

Mizuho Hara, manager for events and conventions, Asia Pacific Headquarters of JTB, told the *Daily* that the company isn't new to organising events, with the Tokyo Olympics 1964 being its first event project.

"But we've not really exported our MICE expertise overseas," Hara added.

Furthermore, JTB's specialisation is not accurately perceived in the global marketplace, with the common misperception being that the agency is a Japan inbound specialist and not a global specialist. As well, it is misunderstood that JTB serves only the Japanese clientele.

To set the story straight, particularly among business events players, JTB is sending out a marketing message to emphasise its global reach as well as business events capability.

Quizzed on its targets, Hara said positioning JTB as a global brand has started only about two years ago and that the company is still "testing waters", therefore no targets have been set.

"However, just this year alone, we have done events in Macau, Manila, Indonesia and Bangkok," said Hara.

One of the events was a product launch across six Indonesian cities for construction machinery, and another was the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) Forum in Manila. – **Mimi Hudoyo**

Tighter travel controls in place



Travel managers trade solutions on controlling expenses as prices rise across the region

In the face of rising airfares and room costs, travel managers are turning to consolidators and digital tools to tighten corporate travel spend, revealed speakers at the CTW Asia-Pacific Keynote and Forum yesterday.

Airfare prices are expected to rise by an average of 3.2 per cent and room rates by 5.1 per cent per annum, shared Michael Valkevich, vice-president global sales and program management, CWT Asia Pacific.

In response, companies such as Accenture are looking at "new and innovative ways to negotiate and tweak policies to optimise" internal spending, said Manjunath Shetty, its associate manager – travel management. For example, the company is working with its consolidator to achieve better hotel prices, such as negotiating for a city rate on hotels within

certain geographical parameters, as well as funnelling all corporate travel claims to a single TMC or booking tool for successful reimbursement. It has also mandated the lowest airfare available for a route, but allow separate baggage add-ons.

Rajesh Gupta, consultant – global travel and meeting services for Eli Lilly and Company India, said his company has implemented technological solutions such as Yapta's Room IQ and Fare IQ to control flight and room spend.

Tightening measures are also in place for the booking of sharing economy and other standalone accommodation, as cheaper options surface with the rise of Airbnb and independent boutique hotels.

"We do take bookings for standalone properties, but with caution. The first level of auditing is done by our consolidator based on our given parameters. We zero in on a few (accommodations) and leverage our global security teams to conduct hidden random audits for safety, especially for our female employees," explained Shetty.

Meanwhile, other companies like National Oilwell Varco are remaining strictly against shared or gig economy spend "due to security and safety" concerns, said Kishore Rames, its travel manager Asia Pacific. – **Pamela Chow**

TCEB faces budget cuts

Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) will get lesser ammunition next year, as its budget gets slashed from 1,000 million baht (US\$31 million) to 800 million baht.

"The budget we get from the government has been decreasing due to (money being channelled to developing) the EEC (Eastern Economic Corridor)," explained Nichapa Yoswee, TCEB's senior vice president, business, who quickly added that "it is for a good cause".



Nichapa: smarter use of lesser money

With reduced funding, Nichapa said TCEB will need to focus on collaboration to improve "efficiency" in what it seeks to do.

As one of the major new economic projects undertaken by the Thai government, the EEC will transform the Chachoengsao, Chonburi and Rayong Provinces into a trade and investment hub, and centre for regional transportation and logistics.

Part of TCEB's new efforts for 2019 is the *Thailand: Redefine Your Business Events* campaign. Through it, TCEB will highlight Thailand's position as a hub for South-east Asian MICE; encourage new business events through national economic policies including Thailand 4.0, EEC and 10 S-Curve Industries; and redefine the organisation's role.

Nichapa indicated that TCEB will "play more of a partnership and collaborator role", and be the link between the government and business community.

For the 2019 fiscal year, TCEB projects in excess of 1.4 million overseas business travellers generating about 130,200 million baht in revenue. – **Rachel AJ Lee**



TTG's PicStop lensmen are on the prowl for great photos. See this photo and more at our online gallery by scanning the code above.

Swiss confidence in Asia

By Mimi Hudoyo
Switzerland Tourism has seen strong growth in Asia in the last six years and remains confident of continued good health despite reduced buying power in some Asian markets.
The Malaysian ringgit, Indonesian rupiah and Indian rupee have depreciated in value, with the latter said to be the worst performing Asian currency in 2018, slipping some 13 per cent so far this year.
Martin Nydegger, CEO of Switzerland Tourism, is

unperturbed, telling the *Daily* that with Asians recognising personal experiences as valuable performance rewards, his team will continue to be able to attract corporate groups even in times of economic turmoil.
When asked if Switzerland's pricey products would add further pressure on Asian groups with weaker buying power, Nydegger said: "Switzerland has a lot of assets and competitive advantages as a destination. We are confident

that Switzerland is on the bucket list of many Asians."
Furthermore, some companies allow top performers to vote for their preferred reward destination, he noted.
"Whenever the staff are allowed to vote, we have a great chance (of being picked). Switzerland is an aspirational country and that is not going to change even in an economic turmoil," he explained.

Despite the confidence, Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau has come up with value-added perks to entice incentive planners and corporates.
Dominique Oi, MICE manager of the bureau, revealed that perks include free entry to the Olympic Museum and complimentary local tour guide service for qualified groups.



Nydegger: Swiss aspirations

{ Hot leads }

On the hunt for adventure
Rajas Travel India is looking for new incentive options in Thailand, particularly adventure and water sports in beach destinations. The agency has groups of up to 900 delegates, with clients preferring four-star properties.
Email: vikrant@rajastravels.com

Bangkok venues take priority
TravelSpecialist Ventures Philippines is on the lookout for Bangkok hotels and venues that are suitable for incentive groups hailing from pharmaceutical and agricultural chemicals industries.
Email: chuchi.tsv@gmail.com.

Conference partners needed
Dragan Bombek, conference manager of Brisbane Institute of Strengths Based Practice, is looking to meet Thai organisers who can help him plan conferences with a more idyllic programme in destinations like Krabi and Phi Phi Island.
Email: bisbp2018@gmail.com

Gamers on the go
Travel manager Chris Leo from Wargaming Asia is planning a summit for staff from the company's offices in Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea, Tokyo and Sydney. The summit will be hosted outside of these destinations, and he's keen to get contacts from hotels and venues.
Email: c_leo@wargaming.net.

Anantara Chiang Mai eyes bigger corporate pie slice

The 108-key Anantara Chiang Mai Resort is keen to further grow its burgeoning corporate events business by courting new geographical markets and highlighting fresh hardware.
In the past two years, the Chiang Mai resort has seen its business events segment

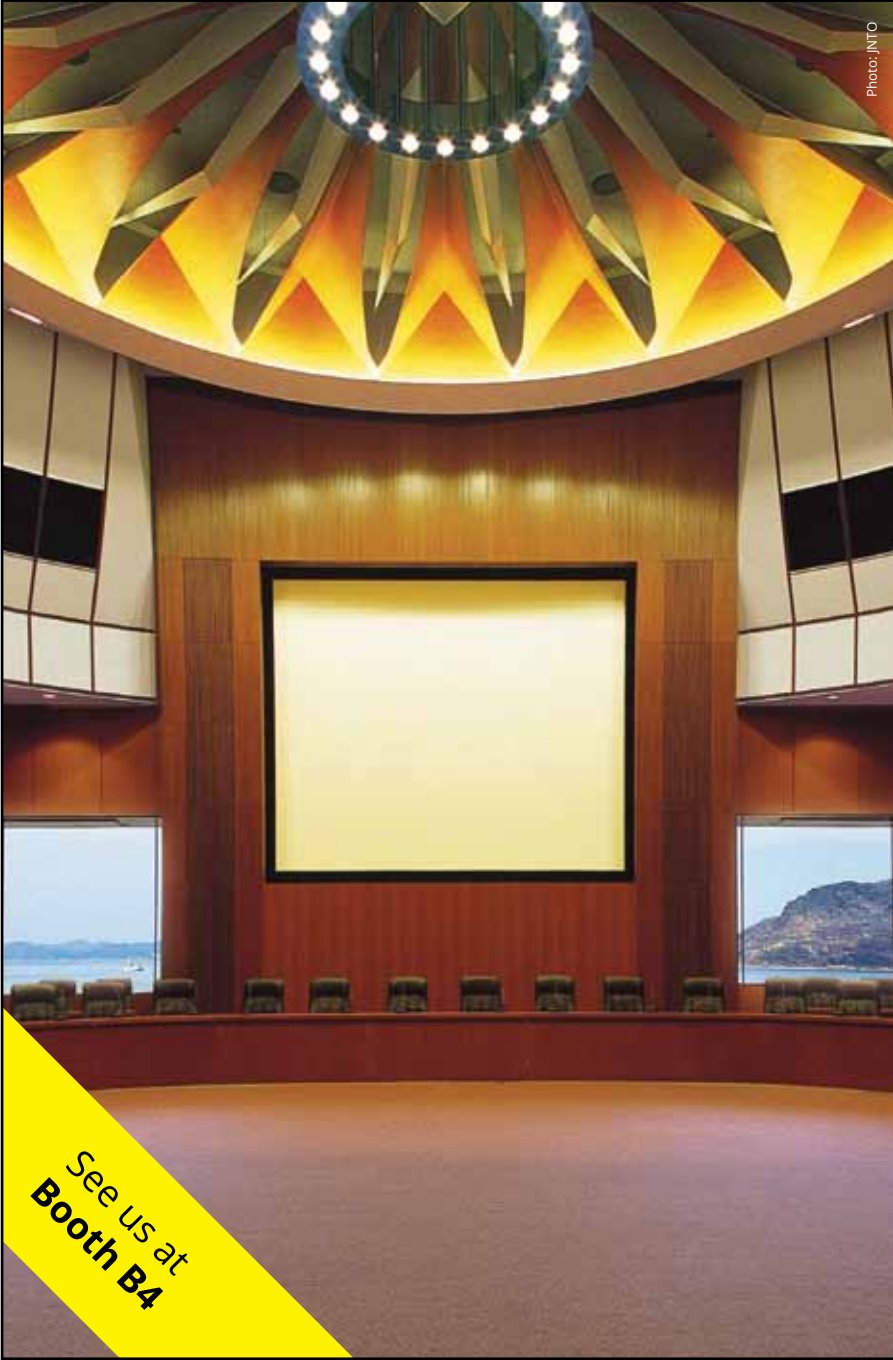
grow from eight per cent to a double-digit number.
Pleased with their progress so far, Chompunut Israsena Na Ayudhya, director of sales & marketing, Anantara Chiang Mai Resort, shared with the *Daily* that she's keen to target "young executives who want to mix



Chompunut: greater ambition

work and relaxation, incentive groups and think tanks".
To increase the property's appeal, the resort's sole 114m² meeting room was renovated in January. Now boasting the latest technology, the space can take up to 80 pax theatre-style, or 56 pax banquet-style.
Also new at the property are 24 serviced suites that were added last year. They come in

one-, two- and three-bedroom configurations.
Chompunut added that while its current market sources are domestic, Singapore and Hong Kong, the hotel is working with parent Minor International's sales agents on possible leads as well as conducting own sales calls, to explore other markets in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. – Rachel AJ Lee



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Scaling up event ambitions

Aided in part by global coverage of the Trump-Kim summit, Singapore is now ever more ready to go after flagship industry events, with a special focus on large-scale association meetings. By **Pamela Chow**



MOLPIX/Shutterstock

Singapore's well-developed business events hardware is supporting STB's move to woo massive meetings

The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) is stepping up its efforts in wooing large-scale conventions and meetings, aided in part by recent global exposure through the prolific Trump-Kim summit in June.

"As with all high-profile visits, (the

summit) placed Singapore on the map for international audiences and showcased Singapore as an ideal destination, especially for business and meetings.

"Hosting the summit also further burnished our credentials as a leading business events city



Lim: keeping an eye on major meetings

as recognised already by international meetings associations like ICCA and UIA," said Jeannie Lim, executive director, conventions, meetings & incentive travel, STB.

The board is intensifying its partnerships with business events stakeholders, and most notably, industry associations, to promote Singapore "as a hub for their flagship industry events", explained Lim.

Examples of events that have recently concluded in the city-state are the ACTE Global Summit and SACEOS' Singapore MICE Forum 2018, which drew record attendance numbers. In October, Singapore will host the ASAE Association Leadership Forum Asia Pacific.

Come 2024, Singapore will welcome the Rotary International Convention, which is set to be the largest association convention ever hosted on the island, with more than 25,000 Rotary members from around the world in attendance.

The event will get around space limitations by splitting the programme across different venues.

Chew Ghim Bok, Singapore's bid chair for the Rotary International Convention 2024, explained: "We suggested having the main event at one venue, and the plenary and break-out sessions at a nearby hotel or convention centre. Singapore is so small, so this mix-and-match element was also very attractive to the organisers."

He added that Singapore also enjoys strong "regional support" in terms of having a good reputation among

its neighbours, who spoke highly of the country's safety and efficient immigration.

Among conference organisers, Singapore is proving to be a "great hub for the marine, corporate business, financial service, legal, oil and gas industries," said Tony Sofianos, CEO, Wings Travel Management.

Mike Lee, vice president, sales, Marina Bay Sands, shared: "We host an average of 3,000 events a year – more than 3,500 events in 2017 – and continue to build a strong pipeline of returning shows. On average, Marina Bay Sands has hosted 34 per cent repeat events each year over the past four years."

To further boost business event volume, STB continues to push its subvention schemes like the Business Events in Singapore (BEiS) scheme, the In Singapore Incentives & Rewards (INSPIRE) scheme and the Singapore Mice Advantage Programme (SMAP).

The BEiS scheme encourages innovation and quality events, INSPIRE curates unique and value-added experiences with a strong local flavour, and SMAP provides organisers and delegates with greater value such as savings on air tickets, enhanced event planning, delegate experiences, and discounts on advertising spaces.

Major business events coming up —

- **Industrial Transformation Asia Pacific**
October 16-18, 2018
- **Amway India Annual Leadership Summit**
December 2018
- **International Council of Nurses World Congress**
June 25-27, 2019

What's hot

Temenggong House 18/20

Located in two historical black-and-white bungalows on the slopes of Mount Faber at Temenggong Road, this new venue serves as a peaceful and unique environment that exudes Singapore's spirit as an arts and cultural hub. Temenggong House 18/20 comprises facilities such as seven function rooms, dining spaces and veranda areas. Tel: (65) 6835-8170

30 Bencoolen

Singapore welcomes its first hotel with a smart in-room solutions system. 30 Bencoolen, formerly known as Bayview Hotel Singapore, emerged from a S\$20 million transformation to boast Smart Room Control Units that proactively monitor and "communicate" every room's status and any defects to operations. The hotel is centrally located in town, with access to three MRT train stations. Email: reservations@30bencoolen.com.sg

Insider Experiences by The Inside Access

Launched by local experience curator The Inside Access, Insider Experiences brings to the corporate event space bespoke gastro-

nomics highlights in Singapore and around the region. Organisers hoping to treat their top employees, delegates or key management to an exclusive and intimate experience may select from a gamut of yacht parties, chef's tables, food tours and more to plan a truly memorable meeting. Email: arron@theinsideaccess.asia

Rainforest Lumina

Rainforest Lumina is a new night walk unveiled in conjunction with the Singapore Zoo's 45th anniversary. Available from now to December, a one-kilometre-long trail in the park will sport interactive light, multimedia projections and sound installations, covering about half of the zoo's area. It is open from 19.30 to 00.00, with the last entry at 22.30. Website: rainforestlumina.wrs.com.sg

Cube Boutique Capsule Hotel at Kampong Glam

Capsule hotel brand Cube has opened its second property in Singapore's Kampong Glam district within three conserved shop-houses, and has proven popular with meeting and conference attendees in town for events at the nearby Suntec Convention and Exhibition Centre. Cube Boutique Capsule



From top: 30 Bencoolen; Rainforest Lumina

Hotel at Kampong Glam offers 56 capsule beds – a mix of singles and queens – in configurations of private group rooms and dormitories. Each dormitory consists of 18 capsule beds.

Email: reservationskg@cubestay.sg

Tribe Theory

For affordable accommodation that is full of character, meeting groups can turn to Tribe Theory – Venture Hotel, a business-friendly hostel accommodation designed for the communal, creative and entrepreneurial community. Located on Ann Siang Road, the hotel features a co-working space and



provides basic amenities such as free Wi-Fi, complimentary breakfast and newspapers, and a laundry service. Guests can also pay for accommodation via Bitcoin and Ethereum. Email: contact@tribetheory.com

Business Events in Surprising Taiwan (BEST) Rewards Program



1 For Groups

2 For Planners



Inspection Package

Organizers are invited to explore Taiwan!



Site inspection arrangements



Inspection subsidy

Group Package

Experience Taiwan hospitality with bonus items and services from MEET TAIWAN!



VIP souvenirs



Visa application counseling



MEET TAIWAN welcome letter and banner



Welcome kits for group members

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Overseas planners and agencies are invited to become MEET TAIWAN partners and promote Taiwan to their clients. The more bookings, the more rewards!



Taiwan Excellence awarded product



Inspection subsidy



SENSE Taiwan Tour complimentary pass



Organized by



Bureau of Foreign Trade, MOEA | Taiwan MICE Project Office, MOEA

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New magnets for planners

Funding support for business events of all size, creation of unique local experiences and promotion of new hardware are HKTb and MEHK's tactics to lure more events onto the island. By **Prudence Lui**



gail jun peng/shutterstock

What's hot

Hong Kong Disneyland

Hong Kong Disneyland has begun its six-year expansion, ending 2023, to bring new themed zones to the park. The first completed zone, Moana: A Homecoming Celebration, offers event planners a new outdoor event venue option. Also new, Jungle Junction is available for corporate buyout. Tel: (852) 3510-6868

Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriott Hotel

The 471-room Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriott Hotel is scheduled to open later this year. A highlight at the property is a 16m-high aquarium in the main lobby. Guest facilities are a mix of business and pleasure, taking in an inviting lagoon, a spa, outdoor dining spaces and a 1,200m² pillar-free ballroom. Tel: (852) 2601-9691



Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriott Hotel

Sheraton Hong Kong

Sheraton Hong Kong's new Seasoned Chef Culinary Masterclasses are a new attraction for corporate groups meeting and staying in the hotel. Led by the hotel's executive chef Thibault Chiumenti, the programme is built around a choice of six cuisines and categories – Chinese, Japanese, Western, Oyster & Wine, pastries & desserts, and cocktails. Participants will receive a certificate of achievement upon completion. The 90-minute class can accommodate group of 15 to 30 persons. Tel: (852) 2369-1111

Hong Kong Foodie Tours

Hong Kong Foodie Tours' new Temple Street Night Foodie Tour takes guests around Hong Kong's favourite street market to sample street snacks and herbal drinks, and to learn about the secret behind sweet and sour sauce. The experience concludes with a seafood dinner. This three-hour walk takes place on Mondays and Thursday, but private tours can be arranged. Email: info@hongkongfoodietours.com



Sample local street eats on the Temple Street Night Foodie Tour



Left: Hong Kong sparkles at night. Above: Nu Skin conference guests get a taste of Hong Kong Disneyland

such as medical, technology, insurance and direct-selling.

Sitting alongside these efforts is HKTb's successful Small-Medium-Sized MICE Development Fund, which was launched in late-2016. This programme has successfully brought in 620 corporate groups with 52,000 visitors since its debut.

Destination China's general manager Gunther Homerlein regards this fund as a valuable move. He explained: "The bidding funds (offered to lure mega shows) have a limited impact on clients. It is not significant enough make a difference between hosting the event in, say, Bangkok or Hong Kong. As such, we feel that Hong Kong's resources would be better spent on (courting) the small and medium-sized events for which the city has sufficient resources (to support). As well, the monetary support for small and medium-sized events are far more appreciated by clients."

He has suggested that application for the fund be simplified for greater impact.

As well, recognising that event ideas are also a critical factor in the planners' decision-making process, HKTb and its meetings division – Meetings and Exhibitions Hong Kong (MEHK) – are doing more to help elevate the delegate experience of inbound business events.

For example, MEHK connected Nu Skin with a local theme park for an exclusive buyout arrangement that added more fun to the Nu Skin Greater China Regional Convention 2018.

A HKTb spokesperson said: "We identify and promote new experiences by developing various tourism products. New attraction at theme parks, distinctive neighbourhoods and customised rewards such as fortune-telling are promoted and introduced

to enhance the experiences of event delegates."

And to encourage Hong Kong business event agents to be more creative in dreaming up memorable event experiences, a MICE Top Agent Awards is being held to recognise and motivate them.

Also on HKTb's agenda is the promotion of new infrastructures such as the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong High Speed Rail, the West Kowloon Cultural District, Tai Kwun Centre for Heritage & Arts and the establishment of a Greater Bay Area.

Pacific World Meetings & Events Hong Kong, business development manager, Dwart J Ang, told the *Daily* that new infrastructure coming up in the Greater Bay Area has already led to rising interest among clients in hosting events there.

He added that he and his team are "continuously looking for new venues that will achieve our clients' meetings and event goals", in particular large venue spaces.

Destination China's Homerlein welcomes the move to bring awareness to the high-profile Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong High Speed Rail.

"(This will show) international groups how much easier it will be to visit factories and companies in Shenzhen and Guangzhou while basing themselves in Hong Kong. This may be a more effective move to grow real numbers (in business event arrivals) than spending on supporting big congresses," said Homerlein.

Homerlein also hopes to see more new destination experiences being introduced for corporate groups, as he opined that the current new attractions were more suitable for the general travel and tour segment.

Major business events coming up

- **The New York Times International Luxury Conference 2018**
November 12-13, 2018
- **22nd International Congress of Parkinson's Disease & Movement Disorders**
November 5-9, 2018
- **2019 Mary Kay Leadership Conference**
January 2019

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Building future MICE hotspots

The Ministry of Tourism is relying on a MICE acceleration team to turn the country’s business events dream into reality, and five potential destinations have been selected for grooming. By **Tiara Maharani**

Indonesia is not letting the lack of a dedicated business events department in the Ministry of Tourism hamper its efforts to advance the destination’s business events appeal. The ministry itself has formed a MICE acceleration team involving the private sector to develop local destinations ready for business events.

Leading the charge is Hosea Andreas Runkat, director of convention services of Jakarta Convention Center, who takes the role of chairman. His programmes are centred around the improvement of accessibility, infrastructure and diversification of products.

Explaining the purpose of the MICE acceleration team, Andreas said: “We cannot rely on Bali all the time. The only way to put Indonesia onto the business events’ world map is to develop our secondary destinations.”

Besides giving event planners more alternative destinations, each destination will boast its own characteristics, capabilities and capacities.

For a start, Andreas has chosen to focus on developing Yogyakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, Medan and Makassar.

He said: “These five destinations were chosen based on the mapping and rating of 16 cities/islands issued by the Ministry of Tourism several years back. Based on the mapping, these destinations are the most ready for development.”

Christina Rudatin, lecturer, Jakarta State Polytechnic, who led the mapping team with the Ministry of Tour-

Major business events coming up

- **IMF-WBG Annual Meetings 2018; Nusa Dua, Bali**
October 8-14, 2018
- **South-East Asia Biennial Conference on Population and Health; Batu, East Java**
November 7-9, 2018
- **2nd Asian Pediatric Mechanical Ventilation Forum; Solo**
March 21-24, 2019



Surabaya’s rich heritage and developed events hardware make it a promising destination for meetings

ism, explained how the process works. “The mapping tells us the strengths and weaknesses of each destination. From it, we can assume that the problems in Indonesia are not just facilities and access, but that the destinations are not properly marketed.”

Citing Surabaya and Medan as examples, Christina said both cities bore the characteristics of business cities, and therefore its destination marketing should be focused on exhibitions and conferences. On the other hand, Yogyakarta, Bandung and Makassar are better suited for incentives, meetings and mid-sized conferences.

Popular business event cities Jakarta and Bali will continue to be promoted, but more for large-scale events while small and medium-sized events will be channelled to secondary destinations.

Arif Hidayat, president director of Exponent Cipta Media, opined that ef-

orts to develop and promote the cities for business events must not neglect the importance of enhancing the overall destination experience.

He pointed out that clients would only choose a secondary destination if it offered an interesting attraction as most of the corporate and association meetings are combined with incentive programmes.

Arif believes that Yogyakarta satisfies this criteria, having many unique venues such as Prambanan Temple where a gala dinner could be held or Ratu Candi Boko which is perfect for opening ceremonies.

For Miranti Andreadi, president director of Dyandra Konvensi Internasional, Surabaya gets her vote as a destination that is “most ready” to welcome mid-sized conferences.

She said: “There is already a convention centre in Surabaya and there are sufficient hotel rooms. There are even more

international (flights) to Surabaya than to Yogyakarta. We can easily vary post-show tour destinations (from Surabaya), taking groups to Malang, Bromo, Ijen and Banyuwangi.”

Miranti would like to see the identity of each destination being strengthened in the effort to raise them up as secondary business events destinations. This could be done by emphasising on the destination’s potential and existing industries.

For example, Bandung’s renowned Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) could be used as leverage to attract business events related to technology, science and education.

Along the same lines, Miranti suggested that Medan could be marketed on its agrotourism, heritage, culinary, ecotourism, handicraft and small industries, while Makassar could leverage its water sports and seafood industries.

The success of the MICE acceleration team’s effort is dependent on investment in human resource development, concluded Effi Setiabudi, chairman of the Indonesia Exhibition Companies Association.

“We do not want local players to just be spectators (of the destination’s progress). It is important to improve the quality of our players. Improved human resource quality will in turn grow the quantity of events to the destination,” Effi said, adding that higher local professionalism will also challenge international organisers that are expanding into Indonesia.

Agreeing with Effi, Andreas shared that he and his team will work with universities to conduct training for practitioners in the five new destinations as well as Jakarta and Bali, starting from next year.

Efforts for now will concentrate on connecting with key stakeholders.

“We want to close perception gaps (between the regional government and the industry players) and provide an understanding of the nature of business events. Without that understanding, it will be difficult to develop the destination,” Andreas said.

What’s hot

The Establishment, Jakarta

Run by the Ismaya Group, The Establishment at Lot 6 of Sudirman Central Business District, Jakarta is a multifunctional space catering to events.

The venue comes with audio-visual equipment and can accommodate up to 2,500 people for a standing function or 400 guests for round-table banquet arrangement. There is also an option for amphitheatre-style seating for 1,000 pax. A variety of catering menu is available. E-mail: the-establishment@ismayagroup.com

The Sultan Hotel, Jakarta

The Sultan Hotel, Jakarta now sports a new collection of function spaces. Its Golden Ballroom has completed renovations, and can now accommodate up to



From left: The Establishment; R Hotel Rancamaya Golf and Resort; Golden Ballroom at The Sultan Hotel

2,500 guests for a cocktail party. It can be partitioned into three separate rooms.

As well, there are now seven new meeting suites, with the largest capable of seating up to 250 pax, theatre-style. The conference centre is supported by the hotel’s 694 guestrooms while additional accommodation is available at the Sultan



Residence, just a stone’s throw away. Website: www.sultanjakarta.com

R Hotel Rancamaya Golf and Resort, Bogor

R Hotel Rancamaya Golf and Resort in Bogor has launched its new Diamond meeting



room. Located on the first floor, the meeting room features 243m² of flexible space with natural daylight and a balcony offering views of a courtyard garden. It is equipped with multi-dimensional lighting and audio-visual equipment, and can seat up to 160 guests in theatre-style. E-mail: info@rhotelrancamaya.com

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The article The Technology Experience in TTGmice June 2017 by Karen Yue has been awarded a PATA Gold Award 2018 in Travel Journalism - Business Article category.



Trade fairs get prime attention

The Philippines' first-ever MICE roadmap reveals concrete plans to improve the country's exhibitions capability, as industry leaders recognise the sector's vast growth potential, writes **Rosa Ocampo**



Major exhibition and convention venues in Manila (Philippine International Convention Center pictured) are fully utilised, prompting an urgent call for new, larger centres to cater for future demand

The Philippine MICE Roadmap launched early this year to invigorate this oft-neglected sector has provisions that will help the exhibitions sector shape up and be competitive with its Asian neighbours.

The most urgent provisions being tackled by the government and private sectors include the need for large-scale and world-class venues, improve broadband and telecom infrastructure, and reduce the cost of doing business events in the country.

This "tight collaboration between the private sector and the government is key to achieving the industry's goal," said Monette Iturralde-Hamlin, chair of Philippine Association of Convention/Exhibi-

tion Organizers and Suppliers (PACEOS), which helped craft the roadmap.

The roadmap details how hobbled but promising the exhibition component is. Quoting the *Trade Fair Industry in Asia 13th Edition 2017*, it said the Philippines was the fastest growing trade fair market in Asia in 2016, with space sold by exhibition organisers jumping by 9.6 per cent, comparing favourably with the 5.5 per cent increase in Asia.

However, most of these exhibitions are domestic events, with only 11 per cent international events out of the 334 exhibitions held in the Philippines and attended by 5.63 million in 2016, indicating that "the country is not maximising its potential to attract foreign event organisers and generate more foreign direct investments".

There are only eight large-scale exhibition venues in the Philippines, five of which are in metro Manila and already operating in full capacity. Even with a combined capacity of 70,895m², these venues still pale in comparison with the offerings of other Asia-Pacific countries.

"The size of a single large-scale MICE venue in most of these countries is even larger than the combined capacities of commonly used large-scale convention and exhibition facilities in the Philippines," the roadmap said.

Tourism undersecretary Benito Bengzon Jr said the goal is to bring in large groups of 5,000 to 10,000 participants which would mean needing massive and world-class venues.

Concurring, Tourism Congress of the

Philippines president Jojo Clemente said new and bigger venues should be built alongside mega hotels, as accommodation is still a problem even in metro Manila.

Also being tackled is improving and upgrading the country's broadband and telecom infrastructure – something industry players have been urging for.

This is corroborated by a report from content delivery network service provider Akamai showing that in 1Q2017, while average connection speed increased by 57 per cent to 5.5 Mbps from the previous year, it still falls short of the global average of 7.2 Mbps for the period.

As well, Bengzon revealed that the tourism department is reviewing taxes to reduce the cost of conducting business events in the Philippines even as in recent years the common carriers tax and billings tax were removed.

Indeed, a deterrent to foreign exhibitors is the high transaction cost of organising events in the Philippines as it entails bureaucratic procedures in securing clearance and permits from various government agencies and also the relatively higher cost of hotels and accommodations in the country.

Add to that is the payment of various taxes including value added tax at 12 per cent of landed cost, import duty and valorem tax, a bond for equipment and product display.

Major business events coming up

- **Federation of Asia Pharmaceutical Associations Congress 2018; Manila**
November 7-10, 2018
- **7th International Conference on Precision Engineering; Manila**
April 23-26, 2019
- **Asia Pacific Stroke Conference; Manila**
October 3-6, 2019

What's hot

BGC Arts Center

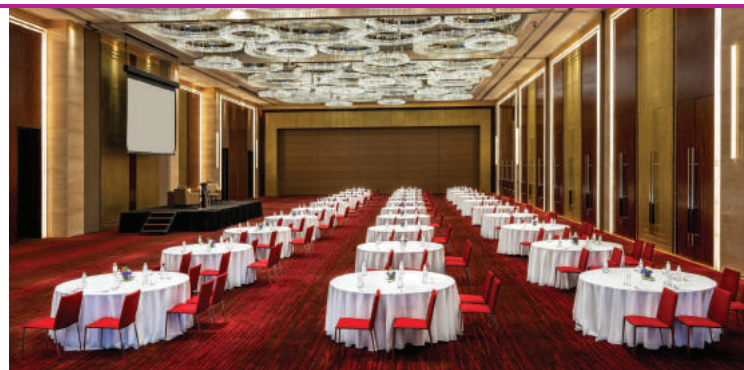
The BGC Arts Center in Bonifacio Global City has flexible spaces for business events of up to 500 guests. Indoor options include the Maybank Performing Arts Theater, an auditorium, a lounge and a lobby area that is suitable for welcome cocktails and pre-event receptions. Outdoor spaces include the central plaza and the amphitheatre. Email: info@artsatbgc.org

Courtyard by Marriott

Launched in May, the 326-key Courtyard by Marriott is the first foreign hotel brand in Iloilo, which is aspiring to become a business events hub with its new Iloilo Convention Centre and Iloilo International Airport. The hotel located in Iloilo Business Park has its own flexible meeting spaces of over 279m², high-speed Wi-Fi connection, mobile check-in and check out, and F&B options. Email: atyourservice.ilocoy@courtyard.com

Western Visayas tourism circuit

Event delegates can try the cruise and tour circuits to be launched by the Department



From left: Grand Hyatt Manila; Ayuntamiento de Manila

of Tourism in western Visayas before the year ends. These include the Iloilo-Guimaras, Capiz-Northern Iloilo, Northern Antique and Bacolod City, Manapla-Cadiz-Sipaway in Negros Occidental which will be promoted to both local and foreign markets. Email: deptour6@yahoo.com

Grand Hyatt Manila

Bonifacio Global City's newest address, the 451-key Grand Hyatt Manila, features 2,281m²

of business events space across multiple floors with the latest audiovisual technology, creative lighting options, show kitchen, flexible menu and a dedicated meeting planner and on-site event manager. Venues include the jewelry box-inspired Grand Ballroom, intimate Garden Pavilion, boardroom-style meeting rooms at the Grand Salon, laid-back setting Apartments, and No. 8 China House VIP rooms. Email: manila.grand@hyatt.com



Ayuntamiento de Manila

It's not easy to book the historical and architectural masterpiece Ayuntamiento de Manila in Intramuros for business events, but it can be done. After a three-year restoration, the centuries-old edifice selectively allows events of up to 150 pax in its grandiose Marble Hall and up to 50 pax for dinner and reception at the elegant Sala de Sesiones. Email: jmartinez@treasury.gov.ph

TOP INCENTIVE IDEAS

From dining in the presence of an illuminated Uluru to a luxurious tea-pairing Michelin-starred feast, here are some of the most exciting and extravagant incentive experiences in Asia

1 Be mesmerised by a dazzling field of light

Arrive by helicopter or camel to a plated bush tucker dining experience in the illuminated Field of Light at Uluru, in Australia's stunning Northern Territory. Enjoy canapés and chilled sparkling wine while listening to the live sounds of a didgeridoo, and witness 50,000 glass spheres come to life as the sun sets in the vast outback landscape. This includes a traditional indigenous welcome ceremony by the local Anangu people, a three-course meal and a 45-minute walk through the award-winning Field of Light. Between October 22 and March 24, a premium experience is offered for up to 16 guests combining a gourmet menu – inspired by ancient flavours – with an escorted tour through the Field of Light.

Capacity 100 pax

Email conferences@voyages.com.au

Website ulurumeetingplace.com.au



2 A wilderness expedition

Journey in a 4WD vehicle to an enchanting lodge situated in the midst of a primary jungle in Danum Valley, Sabah. The 4D3N programme would allow your group to watch the sun rise, trek in the wilderness, soak their feet, swim in the natural waterfall pool, and dine under the



stars. Be still, and take time to appreciate the green surroundings and nature sounds.

Capacity Up to 40 pax

Email doh_mice@discoveryoverland.com

Website www.discoveryoverland.com

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IT&CM Asia Bangkok, Thailand. 18 - 20 September 2018.

3 In the company of animals

This Wildlife Alliance-run initiative organises private behind-the-scenes tours of its sprawling site on the outskirts of Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre houses a swathe of endangered wildlife rescued from the clutches of poachers and illegal wildlife traffickers.

This experience offers winners the chance to play zookeeper for the day, hand-feed elephants and macaque monkeys, enter the tiger's den, and get up close with leopards and other creatures that call the centre home for a stint, before being released back in the wild.

Capacity 10 pax

Email info@wildlifealliance.org

Website www.phnomtamaotours.com



4 An enchanting jungle safari experience

The Ultimate Travelling Camp offers a luxury lodge experience at Jaagir Lodge Dudhwa – a camp nestled in the rainforests of the Terai, Uttar Pradesh, India. The reserve, at the foothills of the Himalayas, is home to critically-endangered species like tigers, the Indian one-horned rhinoceros, Ganges river dolphins and fishing cats.

Fly your winners in on a chartered aircraft from Delhi. Accompanied by India's best-trained conservationist and naturalists, incentive groups can learn about the successful campaign of turning Dudhwa into a natural habitat for Indian one-horned rhinoceros. Cycle around sugarcane farms, or take a boat ride to see the gharials hunting in the shallows. Hear stories of survival from the ethnic Tharu tribe who happily coexist with the wild.

Capacity 26 pax

Email info@tutc.com

Website www.tutc.com



5 A luxurious wellness escape

Pamper your top achievers with a luxurious wellness experience in a lush tropical rainforest setting in Mulu Marriott Resort & Spa in Sarawak, Malaysia. The resort is located near the UNESCO World Heritage site, Mulu National Park.

Rejuvenate the mind, body and soul with indulgent spa treatments while being enveloped by the serene forest, discover alternative lifestyle with a devoted wellness consultant, and savour local delicacies while being serenaded by the soothing sounds of nature.

Be sure to allocate time to check out Mulu National Park's collection of rare birds, wildlife and exotic plants, and the world-famous Mulu Caves.

Capacity Up to 20 pax

Email mhrs.mymu.reservations@marriotthotels.com

Website www.mulumarriott.com

6 A heritage walking tour of Kotagede

Kotagede is a historic district in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

with remains that date back to the first capital of the Mataram Kingdom in the 16th century. The four-hour tour takes winners on a jaunt through the narrow lanes among the Kalang Houses – an eclectic blend of Javanese traditional wooden *joglo* houses and Dutch architectural design. While learning about the history of the place, guests can also visit the local silver smith in his workshop, make jewellery Kotagede is famous for, and participate in a traditional dance workshop.

The tour includes a pit-stop where local drinks and cookies unique to Kotagede can be enjoyed. Then, settle down for lunch specially prepared by the locals at Lawang Pethuk.

Capacity Up to 30 pax

Email info@werkudaratravel.com

Website www.werkudaratravel.com



7 Keep calm and drink oriental tea

Old-world Michelin excellence meets contemporary local culture in this experience at Regent Taipei.

In this fusion gourmet adventure, tea replaces wine as the complement for each luxurious dish.

The menu comprises Michelin-star-chef-inspired recipes, while a Regent sommelier selects the tea pairings as a more innovative option to the traditional wine pairings. Premier Taiwan tea choices may include the refreshing sparkling bi-luo-chun, elegant cold-brewed osmanthus, full-bodied jinxuan oolong, and sweet oriental beauty.

Capacity Up to 100 pax

Email customerservice@regenthotelsgroup.com / concierge@regenthotelsgroup.com

Website www.regenthotels.com/regent-taipei/overview/regent-academy



8 Say hello to Fuji-san

The Fujino site opened in April, making it the newest and one of the most luxurious glamping venues in Japan. A 90-minute drive from central Tokyo, the 16,500m² property affords breathtaking views of the iconic Mount Fuji. With space for up to 100 guests, and available for buy-out, the site also has a children's play area and event space. Cabins range from 54m² to 153m² in size, and can accommodate up to six people. It is air-conditioned and boasts an outdoor jet bath, fireplace and a deck with grill.

Capacity 100 pax

Email info-kirameki@fu-ji-no.jp

Website www.fu-ji-no.jp/kirameki/en/index.html

Of star draws and serious moves

South Korea dishes out both celebrity lures and serious MICE programmes to attract more business and association event planners.

By **Karen Yue**

Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) and its business events counterpart, Korea MICE Bureau, has taken both fun and solemn steps in the past year to strengthen the destination’s appeal as a hub for business and association events.

The latest effort is Korea MICE Bureau’s move to inject Korean culture and entertainment – better known as *hallyu* – into its Korea Incentives & Meetings Support (KIS) programme.

Kicking into effect from August, the programme allows corporate groups to enjoy *hallyu*-based offerings such as free admission to related tourist attractions, *hallyu* merchandise as souvenirs, or an exclusive concert by popular local artists.

The *hallyu* feature comes in addition to standard event support such as an airport welcome and gala receptions.

Preceding this move was KTO’s appointment of South Korean boy band, SHINee, as its Korea MICE Honorary Ambassador on June 14. The band will promote South Korea as a destination for corporate incentives.

Besides these fun lures, KTO launched two major initiatives in late-2017 – the appointment of local association leaders to act as destination ambassadors, and a campaign to highlight South Korea’s unique event venues.

The Korea MICE Ambassadors programme, which debuted last year with 11 individuals, now boast 14 representatives, according to Kyung Soo Yang, director of the KTO Convention Team.

Kyung said the carefully selected ambassadors are “prominent individuals who are opinion leaders in the society, and are active in the network of academic associations”.

They include Duk Kyung Kim, associate professor, Anaesthesiology and Pain



Kyung: getting greater attention for South Korea

Major business events coming up

- **28th World Nursing Care Congress**
April 29-30, 2019, Seoul
- **Annual Conference of the International Bar Association**
September 22-27, 2019, Seoul
- **20th International Symposium for Therapeutic Ultrasound**
May 2020, Gyeongju



Korea House in Seoul is one of 20 selected unique venues being marketed by KTO

Medicine Samsung Medical Center, Sungkyunkwan University, School of Medicine; Younho Cho, professor, Mechanical Engineering, Pusan National University; and Seok-Goo Chang, head of Pharmacist’s Welfare Foundation and director, Korea Pharmaceutical Association.

Kyung explained that the Korea MICE Ambassadors was created “to boost South Korea’s chances to attract more international conferences”, as “knowledge, expertise, and authority have a significant impact in the process of attracting” these events.

KTO will be combining its expertise and budget with the ambassador’s network and influence at several associations

to promote South Korea for association congresses.

He said: “MICE ambassadors do not receive financial compensation. Nevertheless, as an honorary profession, they are expected to play an active role in promoting academic exchanges, and help improve South Korea’s image as an international meeting destination with support from the bureau.”

When asked if the programme has seen any results so far, Kyung said it would take two to three years for the programme to bear fruit, as that’s the duration taken to attract international meetings.

Rounding off KTO’s latest destination promotion efforts is the Korea Unique

Venue (KUV) programme, which features 20 unique venues that are representative of the country and the region.

Kyung explained that the venues were selected based on recommendations by event-related professionals and field investigators.

“There are many unique venues in South Korea. However, it has been difficult for event professionals to get permission to use these places, especially those that aren’t intended to be a venue in the first place, such as museums,” he explained, adding that the KUV programme will resolve this challenge by picking out special venues that are willing and able to host events.

Some of the selected venues under the KUV programme include the National Museum of Korea and Korea House in Seoul; Nurimaru APEC House in Busan; Daegu Textile Complex; The Spirited Garden in Jeju; and Hwangnyongwon, and Gyochoon Hanok Village in Gyeongju.

According to Kyung, these venues benefit from exposure in KTO’s marketing activities. At the mid-year Korea MICE Expo, a prominent pavilion was created to showcase these venues. Kyung said that brought about greater awareness of the venues on the national level, and gave the venue representatives a chance to “sell and promote their venue and interact with potential buyers”.

“We also received a great number of interest from other venues that wished to be nominated as well,” he added.

However, KTO has no immediate wish to expand the pool of venues, choosing instead to “focus on promoting our current selection this time”.

What’s hot

Gyeongwonjae Ambassador Incheon

Gyeongwonjae Ambassador Incheon is the country’s first five-star *hanok* hotel, a traditional Korean house.

With just 30 rooms – 14 suites and 16 standards rooms – the hotel welcomes property buyouts. On-site facilities include Sura restaurant, which comes with three private dining rooms, and two meeting rooms that can seat up to 250 banquet guests.

As a property associated with AccorHotels, planners will enjoy Accor loyalty perks and earn points from their bookings.
Email: gwjrsvn@ambatel.com

Hilton Busan

The newest hotel to emerge on the rocky coastline of Gijang, Busan is the luxury Hilton Busan which welcomes guests through a visually stunning ‘cave’ with wavy, symmetrical structures for its walls and ceiling. Guests ascend 10 floors to the main lobby, a cavernous space that appears one with the ocean in front.

The rest of its facilities are just as impressive. Its grand ballroom, rightly named Cruise Grand Ballroom, evokes the vibe of a cruise ship with floor-to-ceiling windows all around, bringing ocean views right in.

It is of little surprise that the beautiful hotel has become the darling of luxury brand events since its opening in July 2017.
Email: push_hotel@hilton.com

Novotel Ambassador Seoul Dongdaemun

The new Novotel Ambassador Seoul Dongdaemun features 331 guestrooms and 192 residence units, with all rooms featuring high-speed Wi-Fi, a 55-inch full HD television



Clockwise from above: Gyeongwonjae Ambassador Incheon; Hilton Busan; Novotel Ambassador Seoul Dongdaemun

and one-touch temperature control. Other smart features in the hotel include a mobile concierge, a smart phone pre-loaded with hotel information and offers call and message functions, and an iStay app that allow guests remote access to room controls and service requests.

Events planners can avail any of the four meeting spaces, ranging from the Grand Ballroom which can host up to 280 guests banquet-style, to the meeting room for smaller-sized functions for up to 20 pax.
Email: HA5U6@accor.com

Seoul Dragon City

AccorHotels’ massive 1,700-key hotel complex, Seoul Dragon City, is welcoming planners of memorable events with its entertainment central, Sky Kingdom.

Said to be the world’s first four-storey sky bridge that houses a cluster of uniquely themed, world-class lounges, Sky Kingdom occupies levels 31 to 34 of the towering Seoul Dragon City in Yongsan District.

There are five themed lounges in all. One of them, King’s Vacation on the 31st floor bears a sleek, European design and boasts a glass-bottom dance floor that casts one’s eye



onto the traffic down below. One floor up and connected by stairs, is the elegant Queen’s Garden which comes with cosy and private semi-circular booths that are perfect for small-sized gatherings. Another venue worth keeping an eye out for is the Sky Beach on level 34, a spacious venue that brings to mind the sprawling open decks of modern cruise ships.

Each of the five themed lounges can accommodate parties of 30 to 40 people, depending on the desired layout, or more when combined. Seoul Dragon City will be using these venues to organise fun events and welcome business event planners who desire unique settings for their social and business gatherings.
Email: welcome@SeoulDragonCity.com

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Fascinating entertainment

From a dramatic dance with water to aerial hoop performers, our reporters pick out some of the most fascinating entertainment ideas for business events

Digital Water Curtain

With a stunning curtain of water cascading from the ceiling, this act can be synchronised with elegant dancers, a solo aerial dancer within the waterfall, or a vocalist or musician in tune with the flowing droplets. The Digital Water Curtain combines digital and water effects, and can be featured as an installation piece, or as part of a bespoke performance.

What's unique: The performance is dramatic and injects an element of surprise into the event experience.

Great for: Opening/closing ceremony, gala dinner, VIP product launch

Contact: Wildfire Entertainment, Singapore; email@wildfire.sg



Digital Water Curtain

gala dinner, as a roving act for delegate interaction

Contact: @Dance, Hong Kong; dance@atdance.hk

LED Monkey King

A spectacular fusion of technology, dance and Chinese culture, the LED Monkey King performance commands audiences' attention with electrifying glow-in-the-dark costumes, precision beats and an amazing choreography.

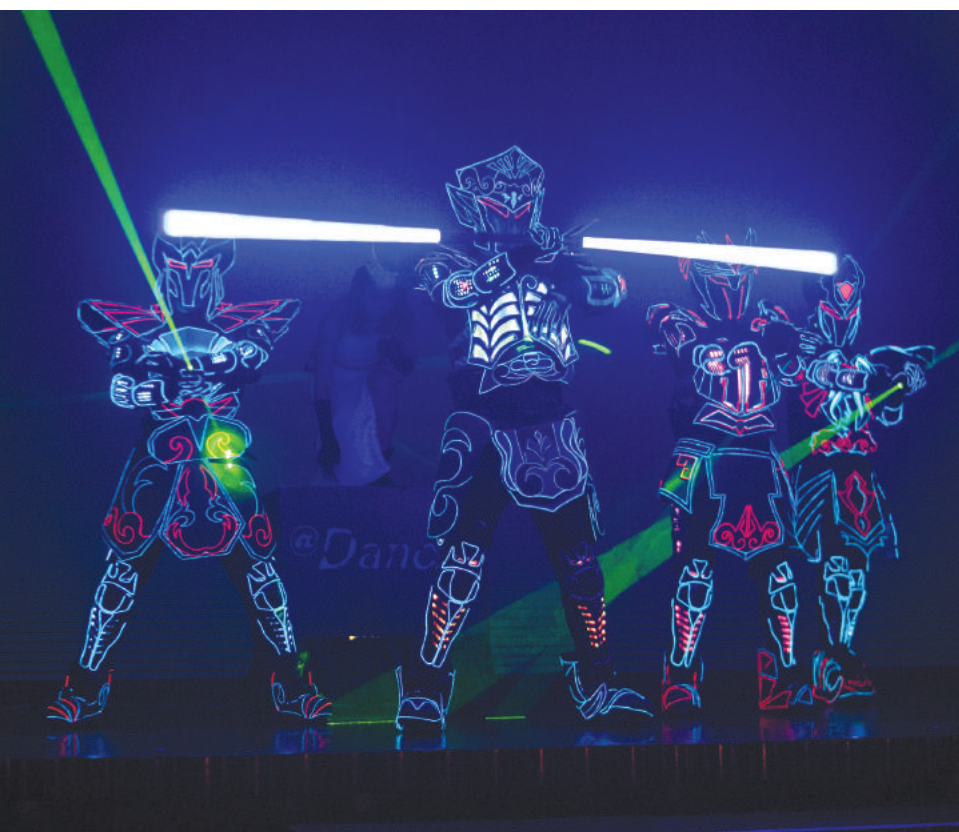
What's unique: As a beautiful amalgamation of western pop-culture's *Tron: Legacy* and eastern classic, LED Monkey King is a glowing sight to behold.

Great for: Opening/closing ceremony,

Hyper Light Drum

This visually stunning performance is delivered by female drummers on LED water drums. Water splashes as the energetic routine gains intensity. The performance can feature up to 15 drummers, and the length of the show can vary according to the planner's requirement.

What's unique: All aspects of the



LED Monkey King



performance can be customised, from the music (cultural to futuristic sound tracks) to the costumes, to be aligned to the theme of the event.

Great for: Gala dinner, accompanying act for an arriving VIP, product launch

Contact: Hyperactive Entertainment, Malaysia;
info@hyperactiveentertainment.com.my

Luminatrix

The show brings fire, light, juggling, acrobatic stunts and dance together on stage for a performance delegates won't forget.

What's unique: Luminatrix is a fusion of contemporary dance and modern circus. Performances can be customised to include corporate branding, and can be delivered indoors or outdoors by two to 10 performers.

Great for: Conference opening, gala dinner, annual dinner, company celebration, family day, award ceremony

Contact: Pscusix, Malaysia;
pscusix@gmail.com

Grand Opera Thailand

Grand Opera Thailand was established in 2011 by British operatic impresario, Stefan Sanchez, who has been grooming Thailand's young opera singers and launching them on international careers. The professional opera company has under its wings several groups and individual singers, allowing event planners to pick the one best suited for their event.

What's unique: Grand Opera Thailand's portfolio of performers is versatile. For a memorable experience, surprise delegates with a flashmob performance at an off-property dining venue.

Great for: Gala dinner, cocktail reception, networking party

Contact: PIGS Co, Thailand;
david@pigsdmc.com

Geisha Dance Troupe

Dressed in vibrant kimono and obi belts, the Geisha Dance Troupe incorporates traditional Japanese and modern dance, as well as everything in between. The act transitions seamlessly from traditional moves accompanied by *shamisen* and *taiko* drums to contemporary steps driven by bass, pop and dance hits. The robotic routine of pop animation dance fuses ancient and fu-



Clockwise from top left: Hyper Light Drum; Luminatrix; Grand Opera Thailand; Hikarie Light Painting



turistic Japan, as well as essences of the country's manga culture.

What's unique: The act leaves the audience in constant wonder and surprise about the moves that will come next. The audience can experience not only Japan's rich cultural heritage but also its balance of old and new. Interactions with the audience through humour are also engaging.

Great for: Opening ceremonies, awards dinners, high-end product launches

Contact: Scarlett Entertainment;
becky@scarlettentertainment.com

Musicland

Arriving guests are directed into a dimly lit area where a female dressed in an elegant lycra costume sits above head height, beckoning guests as they approach. With anticipation in the room

heightened from the dramatic first encounter, the lights are dimmed further as patrons fill up the main space, which features high cocktail tables.

Spotlights then reveal the lycra-clad lady as an aerial hoop performer striking an acrobatic pose and then dropping head first to serve champagne. Described as "a bar except the service is upside down," a host will also be on hand to ensure a smooth service.

What's unique: Few acts command as much attention and intrigue especially at a welcome event. It's also very social-media worthy, and a unique talking point that adds glam factor to a corporate function.

Great for: Welcome event, networking party, gala event, conference dinner, awards event, post-dinner before an event swings into party mode

Contact: Musicland, Australia;
chad@musicland.net.au

Hikarie Light Painting

Japanese light painter Jinpei uses his original technique of swooping arcs of light on a wall-sized canvas in complete darkness to create "paintings." From the "brushstroke" of each light, figures, landscapes and even symbolic imagery is layered on the canvas. The result is a living picture; one light fades and another is created, leaving the audience in a waking dream world. The technique is soon to mark 30 years of popularity, having been developed in 1989.

What's unique: This form of painting inspires creativity in the audience as well as a sense of serenity and thoughtfulness.

Great for: Opening ceremony, awards dinner, high-end product launch

Contact: Scarlett Entertainment;
becky@scarlettentertainment.com



From left: Geisha Dance Troupe; Musicland

Peso pains, domestic gains

By Rosa Ocampo

As the Philippine currency sinks in value to 54.1 pesos against the greenback – the weakest in nearly 13 years and eight per cent lower than at the start of the year – the business events sector is rethinking its strategies, and reining in outbound travel in favour of domestic and shorthaul destinations.

Angel Ramos Bognot, owner of Afro Asian World Events, said the peso’s reduced value has already spelt “disaster” for outbound business. “Travellers are spending more and their money is of less value, which will result in delays or suspensions of their international trips, and they may opt to hold MICE domestically”.



Bognot: demand dips for overseas trips

For those going ahead with MICE abroad, “a shorthaul trip is advised as it’s more affordable,” Bognot pointed out.

Since this year, Canon Marketing Philippines has been limiting overseas trips in favour of rewarding its champions with local trips or a combination of domestic meetings, cash incentives, and non-cash products like raffling off luxury cars and Rolex watches.

With the peso’s depreciation, a trip abroad would exceed the company’s “fixed budget”, so Canon would opt for a domestic trip or host a business meeting locally combined with other perks, said Grace Obeya, sales and marketing manager, consumable group, consumer systems products division.

Such flexibility will enable the company to “still attain business objectives” although foreign trips combining business and relaxation are still booked in cases of special events, such as the launch of a new product or prototype, Obeya said.

While Tradewings Tours and Travel Corp has yet to experience any direct impacts of a weaker peso, general manager Feliz Axalan expects “to minimise

our margins” for MICE business in 2019 when bids are awarded around October to November this year.

The effects of the peso’s depreciation will likely be more acutely felt next year, he added.

Furthermore, Axalan expressed worries about outbound demand next year not only due to exchange rate fluctuation – with some experts predicting a further drop to 55 pesos to the US dollar by year-end – but also the impending

hike in fuel surcharge for airlines and the general election next May. On the other hand, industry players expect the peso’s depreciation will make the Philippines a more attractive destination for inbound business. “However, there is a negative impression overseas on the economic perspective of the country, linking the weak peso with high prices and instability in commodity pricing,” Bognot said.



Penang MICE contest now open

Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau (PCEB) has joined forces with TTTGmice to launch a digital contest in conjunction with the BE @ Penang 2018 business events industry conference.

The “Are You A Penang Business Events Guru” contest invites delegates to answer eight questions about Penang as a MICE city, and perfect scorers will stand a chance to redeem economy flights into Penang from any Asia-Pacific city, plus three nights’ accommodation, and a free pass to attend BE @ Penang.

Taking place on December 6 and 7, 2018, at the Setia Spice Convention Centre, BE @ Penang expects to welcome 400 delegates from around the world.

The conference will feature 20 experts, including Nina Freysen-Pretorius, president of the International Congress and Convention Association, as the keynote speaker, PCEB’s CEO Ashwin Gunasekaran told the *Daily*.

The contest is now open for participation at www.beatpenang.com. – Paige Lee Pei Qi

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On your mark, get set, go!

By Yingyong Unanongra



Elite International Travel Centre UAE's Conrad Caeiro (centre) at Macau pavilion



Meet Taiwan's Jessie Tseng



Thai Airways International's Phannisar Vongtrakulkit (centre) and crew



Resorts World Genting's Evelyn Chen and Doreen Lim



Korea Tourism Organization's Jetch Virutudomsin and Hyeongjoon Kim



Centara Hotels & Resorts Thailand's Ferry Tjahjono (third from left) stands strong with his team



Seoul Tourism Organization's Jin Hyeok Park



Jeju MICE Organization's Ramy and Julie Park



Princess Cruises Singapore's Farriek Tawfik (third from right) runs a tight ship



Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau's Zulkefli Sharif (fourth from left) heads a winning delegation



Hotel Reservation Service (HRS) India's Santosh Kumar, HRS Singapore's Alicia Lee and Emmanuel Ebray, and HRS India's Sushmitha Prabhu

Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau's Nichapa Yoswee (centre)



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Hyped up for a good show

By Yingyong Unanongra



Ministry of Tourism Indonesia's Igde Pitana (front row, third from left) and Masruroh (front row, third from right), together with Indonesian contingent



Resorts World Sentosa Singapore's Joey Seah and Mon Lim Wee Seng



Bangkok Marriott Marquis Queen's Park's Stephen Sinsap (second from right), plus company



Representatives from the Department of Information and Tourism, Taipei City Government



JTB Singapore's Mizuho Hara (centre)



Switzerland Tourism's Martin Nydegger



Laguna Phuket's Laddawan Somniyam and Chengdu Everbright International Travel Agency's Helen



Tourism Council of Thailand's Ampai Chaipijitr (centre) and members



Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau's (standing) Ashwin Gunasekaran and Bryan Khoo; (seated) Toh Mei Chern and Tricia Loh



Embassy of India Thailand's Abbagani Ramu (centre), flanked by members of Indian trade



Tourism Promotions Board Philippines' Karem Miranda (back row, seventh from right) and team



Travel to *another level* at 6,000ft up

Set amid misty clouds and a majestic rainforest, Resorts World Genting makes an exceptional destination for both personal and business events. Once you are here, a whole new world of business-friendly infrastructure, entertainment choices, and shopping and dining options are available within your reach.



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Following the execution of a US\$2.5 billion Genting Integrated Tourism Plan (GITP), Resorts World Genting has strengthened its position to become an ideal venue for business and leisure.

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For a spectacular theatre experience, you'll be delighted at the state-of-the-art [Genting International Showroom](#). With high-end multimedia facilities, sound and lighting, and stage theatre equipments,

you can impress up to 1,000 guests at this indoor venue. Meanwhile, the [Awana Hotel](#) offers a grand ballroom that can accommodate 630 delegates in theatre-style seating and 16 meeting rooms.

ENDLESS ENTERTAINMENT

It isn't all work and no play at Resorts World Genting. Make your event memorable with a touch of pleasure, through a wide range of activities available at the integrated resort.

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On the horizon is the highly anticipated [20th Century Fox World](#) theme park.

Expect an extraordinary journey into the cinematic world through thrilling

rides and attractions inspired by Hollywood blockbusters.

SAVOUR DIVERSE FLAVOURS

Resorts World Genting is a haven for gastronomic delights with over 180 food and beverage outlets offering top-notch cuisines from all over the world.

It is proudly home to Southeast Asia's first [Burger & Lobster](#) from London, Asia's first [Motorino](#) pizzeria from New York, and the world's first brasserie for French coffee roaster [Cafés Richard](#).

The highly-acclaimed outlets join a string of excellent restaurants at Resorts World Genting, including the award-winning [The Olive](#), [La Fiesta](#), [e18hteen Inspired Cuisine](#), and more.

The resort also presents an authentic hawker fare at the unique [Malaysian Food Street](#), where it brings together 20 established household names from different parts of the country such as Kuala Lumpur's Chinatown and Little India, Penang, Melaka, Ipoh and Kuching.

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