

Ministry of Tourism to Expand Focus on the Business of MICE: Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Exhibitions

Industry Experts Call for City-Level Convention Bureaus and a Strong National MICE Brand

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As India positions itself as a global leader in the tourism and events ecosystem, the Ministry of Tourism reaffirmed its strong commitment to scaling up the country's Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) sector. The announcement was made at the South India Thought Leaders Conference (SITLC) in Chennai organised by the Indian Exhibition Industry Association (IEIA) in association with the Ministry.



Inaugurating the conference, Mr. Suman Billa, Additional Secretary and Director General, Ministry of Tourism, stated that States across India are unlocking tourism opportunities in their unique ways-now, it's time to place India prominently on the global MICE map. With iconic venues like Bharat Mandapam, Yashobhoomi, and Jio World Centre, and MICE being prioritised under the Incredible India campaign, our goal is to elevate at least 10 Indian cities, especially in South India into global MICE destinations. He added India currently commands only 5% of the global USD 850 billion MICE market. Establishing city-level convention promotion bureaus as autonomous bodies is critical to strengthening our presence. This move will boost MICE tourism and catalyse growth across the MSME, hospitality, and services sectors.

Highlighting the potential of Tamil Nadu, Mr. T. Christuraj, Director, Department of Tourism and Managing

Director, Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation, noted, Tamil Nadu has some of the best infrastructure for conferences and exhibitions. To unlock the full potential of MICE tourism, it must extend beyond Chennai to cities like Kanchipuram, Coimbatore, Madurai, Tiruchirappalli and Salem. Bridging infrastructure gaps will be key.

Delivering the industry overview, Mr. Dhawan from IEIA shared, the global MICE industry is projected to grow from USD 870 billion to over USD 1.4 trillion by 2030. India is a significant and rapidly rising player. This MICE Leaders Connect brings together key stakeholders from across southern states to chart a cohesive roadmap for the sector.



The event saw enthusiastic participation from MICE organisations, hospitality groups, venue operators, trade bodies, and senior state tourism officials from South India, who discussed strategies for institutionalising the MICE ecosystem and aligning it with India's broader economic vision.

Speakers stressed the need for:

- Creating dedicated city convention bureaus to attract and manage international events.
 - Developing a national MICE branding strategy integrated with global event calendars.
 - Facilitating public-private collaboration to create globally competitive infrastructure.
 - Leveraging India's planned growth in aviation, railways, and highways to support the MICE value chain.
- Dr. Rajendra KV, Commissioner, Department of Tourism, Karnataka; Ms. Amrapali Kata, Managing Director, Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation; Ms. Sikha Surendran, Director, Kerala Tourism and MD, Kerala Tourism Development Corporation;

Ms. Jyoti Kumari, Secretary, Tourism, Andaman & Nicobar Islands; Mr. Gary Khan, CEO, Hyderabad Convention Visitors Bureau; and Mr. Vijay Sharma, Director, jwc GmbH, were among the prominent voices who underscored the importance of cohesive policy frameworks, global collaboration, and capacity building in driving the next phase of MICE growth.

With the country's strategic infrastructure investments and renewed focus on destination branding, India is poised to emerge not just as a travel destination, but as a world-class conference and exhibition hub.

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