

India has the facilities and the desire — now they want Australia's MICE

INDIA is planning a major MICE facilities promotion in Australia of its MICE facilities — and this month's AIME in Melbourne will be the starting point.

"Traditionally, India's main MICE markets are from Europe and the Americas, but there has been encouraging growth from countries in the Asia-Pacific region," said Shanker Dhar, India Tourism's regional director — Australasia. "With so much happening in the country and MICE tourism getting a big boost, we propose to focus on promoting MICE in a big way in Australia, and in other markets in the coming years."

Dhar said that from modest beginnings, India's MICE industry had "come a long way".

"Enormous business opportunities now exist in India for business houses in certain sectors, such as IT, medical, telecommunications, banking, insurance, oil and petroleum, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, agro products, food and water management, among others," he said. "This has given a boost



Shanker Dhar, India Tourism's regional director - Australasia.

to meetings, conventions and incentives taking place in India, since participants can explore the possibilities of business expansion in India."

Dhar said India's MICE infrastructure had grown considerably with the setting up of new convention hotels of international standards. "With world-class hotels and venues — no less than 15 international airports in India are served by almost 50 interna-

tional airlines, it is easy to see why India is slowly earning its place as the upcoming conference destination.

"India has developed its conference infrastructure and facilities to such an extent that it is now recognised as one of the most important convention venues in the world," claimed Dhar. "A 'mature' destination, India's successful track record at hosting international and national conferences gives meeting planners confidence that suppliers will deliver".

He said among the many initiatives announced by the government was one to build four international standard convention centres of 5000 seat capacity each in New Delhi, Mumbai, Goa and Jaipur, in partnership with the private sector. "While it will be a couple of years before these centres are functional, the private sector on its own has done much to augment convention facilities in cities like Kolkata, Hyderabad, Chennai, Cochin, Agra and Jaipur".

Dhar said that along with meeting venues to accommodate domestic and overseas conferences, the travel industry had earned a reputation for organising conferences, incentives and exhibitions. "The bigger travel agencies have specialised sections that handle conferences, with such back-ups as transport, banqueting, entertainment and even media coverage."

He added that billions of dollars had been invested, through private and public sector partnership, for modernising the international airports at New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, and two state-of-the-art airports at Hyderabad and Bangalore. Many other airports had also been identified for upgrading.

"The most significant development in Indian aviation is the emergence of budget airlines, or low-cost carriers (LCC). The last five years have seen a sizeable growth in passenger traffic handled by Indian airports."



India Tourism is taking 60sqm of space at this month's AIME in Melbourne.

It's setting up a custom-built 'Incredible India' pavilion - on the 'Haveli' style structure of the country's renowned MICE destination, Rajasthan - that will accommodate six exhibiting companies from India. There will be a 15-member contingent from India, including Rajeev Talwar, chairman of the India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB). Exhibitors will provide visitors with a glimpse of the diverse attractions and MICE infrastructure that India has to offer.