

News monitored for: Lemon Tree Hotels

Goa hospitality industry betting big on MICE segment

AKSHAY NAYAK
Mumbai, April 16

THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY in Goa is betting big on the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions) segment, but without losing the state's age-old charm. This emerged at the 36th edition of Express Food & Hospitality Expo.

Shridhar Nair, GM, The Leela Goa, kicking off the panel discussion on 'Goa as a MICE market', said: "It is true that Goa has seen a tremendous growth in the MICE segment since the past 8-10 years. MICE constitutes 35% of our business and we expect it to cross the 42% mark.

"We have now plans to expand the MICE facilities to cater to the whole segment. Goa gets about 7-8% of business and we are expecting it to grow at 11-

12%. We want to increase the share of MICE."

Gaura Apte, GM, Goa Marriott Resort & Spa, remarked that they have upped their focus on the MICE market.

"At Goa Marriott Resort and Spa, we were making 25% from MICE market last year, and have taken efforts to achieve 38-39% of business from the MICE segment this year. It is no more true that MICE is price conscious," he said.

Rajendran Menon, GM, The Zuri White Sands Goa Resort & Casino, added that the hotel used to receive 20% of the business from MICE earlier, which has now gone up to 40-44%.

He added: "Earlier, MICE was only seen as an off-season segment in Goa but that is not the case now."

Another five years down the line, weddings and MICE as a segment would account for the majority business seg-



ment for the hotel, he remarked.

Speaking about the importance of rebranding the Hyatt Centric Candolim Goa, the hotel's GM, Rajesh Malliya, said the hotel had earlier a share of only 12-15% of MICE market, but with the

rebranding and putting in new facilities for MICE in the hotel, in just three months since the opening of India's second Hyatt Centric branded property, the brand has grown which is predicted to be at around 28%.

Pracilo Dsilva, GM, Resort Rio, said, "With the decreasing Charter business and increasing discounts offered by OTAs, MICE is the segment that needs to be focussed up on in Goa."

"Ours being a business hotel, 70% of the business comes from MICE," said Rajeev Kumar, GM, The Fern Kadamba.

Speaking on infrastructure challenges, Hasanullah, GM, Lemon Tree Beach Amaranthe Goa, remarked that the whole of Goa market still lacks the infrastructure required to host MICE segments.

"South Goa has a lot of potential for this segment considering the supply and amenities of services in infrastructure."

Ranju Singh, Complex GM, Novotel

Goa Shrem & Novotel Goa Resort and Spa, said the power supply is also an important aspect to look at because the Goa market has long durations of load-shedding due to which they have to bear the costs of maintaining generator runs for 5-6 hours.

"Hence, power and road connectivity is critical, which needs to be looked into seriously," added Singh.

Victor Soares, Senior GM, Radisson Blu Resort Goa Cavelossim Beach, felt that MICE is all good from the business perspective, but when it comes to the preservation of age-old charm of Goa, it needs to be maintained.

Agreeing with him, Cajetan Araujo, GM, W Goa, remarked, "We have to be mindful about promoting the state. We need to be able to sustain what Goa was, is and should be. We need to know that if it loses its charm it will be like any other Tier-II city."