

**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**Events/  
Communities:**

**"The Decade Ahead: Braving New Realities in Travel" announced as theme for this year's ITB Asia Virtual Conference**

- Wide-ranging sessions on the future of the industry with approaches from industry heavyweights in this pandemic era, ranging from Amadeus, Booking.com, Cruise Lines International Association, CWT, Expedia Group, InterContinental Hotels Group, Microsoft, Tripadvisor, TUI Musement, UFI, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts and many more
- Talks featuring C-Suite speakers from across industry sectors including Leisure, Corporate Travel, MICE and Travel Technologies.

**Singapore, 24 August 2021** – Under the overarching conference theme of "The Decade Ahead: Braving New Realities in Travel", the organisers of ITB Asia, Messe Berlin (Singapore), have announced that ITB Asia Virtual Conference 2021 will address the most pressing issues looking forward to the travel year 2022.

Happening from 25 – 29 October 2021, visionary pioneers and leading figures will be having their say and sharing their up-to-date insights and discuss key strategies on the biggest and most important issues to remove barriers to travel, accelerate international recovery and ultimately make sure the travel, tourism and MICE industries become more inclusive and sustainable. During the five-day event, the conference brings together leaders of national tourism boards and convention bureaus, top CXOs of destination management companies, travel agencies, cruise lines, hotels, attractions, world's major travel brands, MICE planners and travel tech solution providers.

**Key Sessions & Speakers revealed for this year's show**

COVID-19 has indeed plunged the global tourism industry into a deep crisis and drastically changed the world of travel. ITB Asia's travel think tank will cover key topics ranging from "**2022 Global Travel Outlook**", "**What Will Be Key to Travel the World Again?**", "**The Challenge of Digital Health Passports**", "**Getting to Know Your Consumers Post-Vaccine Travel**" and "**Where Do OTAs Stand in the COVID-19 Era?**". High-profile international speakers will discuss the new micro and major challenges such as resuming to travel the world again with implementation of digital health passports and business opportunities emerging from post-vaccine-travels.

The key topics speakers will include **John Wroughton Brown** (CEO, **Agoda**), **Laura Houldsworth** (Managing Director & Vice President Asia Pacific, **Booking.com**), **Todd Hancock** (President, Asia Pacific, **Collinson**), **Ang Choo Pin** (Managing Director, Asia & Senior Director Government and Corporate Affairs, Asia, **Expedia Group**), **James Thornton** (CEO, **Intrepid Travel**), **Stephen Kaufer** (President & CEO, **Tripadvisor**), **Axel Hefer** (Managing Director & CEO, **trivago**) and **David Schelp** (CEO of **TUI Musement**, Member of the TUI Group Executive Committee).



**Press Contacts**

**Messe Berlin GmbH**

Emanuel Höger  
Spokesman  
Senior Vice President  
Corporate  
Communication  
Messe Berlin Group  
Messedamm 22  
14055 Berlin  
[www.messe-berlin.com](http://www.messe-berlin.com)  
Twitter: [@MesseBerlin](https://twitter.com/MesseBerlin)

**ITB Asia/ ITB Berlin /**

**ITB China / ITB India**

Julia Sonnemann  
PR Manager  
Messedamm 22  
14055 Berlin  
T: +49 30 3038-2269  
[julia.sonnemann@messe-berlin.com](mailto:julia.sonnemann@messe-berlin.com)  
[www.messe-berlin.com](http://www.messe-berlin.com)

**For additional details**

<http://www.itb-asia.com>

<http://www.miceshowasia.com>

<http://www.traveltechasia.com>

<https://www.itb-india.com>

<https://www.itb-community.com>

**For enquiries**  
[info@messe-berlin.asia](mailto:info@messe-berlin.asia)

At ITB Asia 2021 key leaders in **corporate travel** discuss future trends, what new priorities travel managers are having, and how Travel Management Companies (TMCs) and other travel partners can adapt quickly to the many changes in the business landscape. Among the key topics are "**Business Travel Post-Vaccine: A Reset for 2022**", "**How Digital Nomads and Bleisure Are Re-Defining the Future of Business Travel**", "**Navigating Through the Industry's Greatest Crisis**", "**Travel Managers' New Priorities**" and "**Who Will Disrupt Corporate Travel?**".

What will help business travel recover and revive will be discussed by the following key speakers from the corporate travel industry: **Michelle McKinney Frymire** (CEO, **CWT**), **Bertrand Salliet** (Managing Director, **FCM Travel Asia**), **Suzanne Neufang** (CEO, **GBTA - Global Business Travel Association**), **Carl Jones** (Vice President, Head of Strategy, Asia Pacific and Greater China, **SAP Concur**), **Brett Thomson** (General Manager, Corporate Travel, **TAG**) and **David Hughes** (Managing Director, Asia Pacific, **UNIGLOBE Travel International**).

The **MICE** industry is slowly getting back on its feet. Visitors to the ITB Asia Conference will learn what lies ahead for MICE players to ensure their business sustainability in the long term and whether remote working and hybrid events will dominate the MICE industry in the following sessions: "**MICE Megatrends: What's Hype, What's Real, What's Next**", "**After Lockdown – The Who, What and How of Bouncing Back**", "**MICE Buyers' New Priorities**" and "**The Rise of Remote Working and the Future of Meetings and Events**".

The powerful line-up of top speakers continues with **Dato' Vincent Lim** (President, **AFECA - Asian Federation of Exhibition & Convention Associations**), **Michael Matthews** (President, **Association of Australian Convention Bureaux - AACB**), **Dr. Adam Wu** (CEO, **CBN Travel and MICE**), **Ashwin Gunasekeran** (Chair, Asia Pacific Chapter, **ICCA - International Congress and Convention Association**), **Dan Rivlin** (CEO, **Kenes Group**), **David Audrain** (Executive Director, **SISO – Society of Independent Show Organisers**) and **Kai Hattendorf** (Managing Director / CEO, **UFI, The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry**).

The global **travel technology** market is expected to reach \$12.5 billion by 2026 ([source](#)) and there's no doubt that technology plays a crucial role in supporting recovery, helping travellers feel safe and comfortable enough to travel and helping companies optimise their operation. Under the headings "**Accelerating Hospitality's Recovery: The Vital Role of Technology**", "**How will Technology Change Travel?**", "**The Recovery is Digital**", "**Tech Trends to Watch in 2022**" and "**The Present and Future of Contactless Technologies**", ITB Asia will gather leaders across travel sectors in a series of talks to share what challenges and strategies they are having going forward.

Renown tech speakers such as **Ramona Bohwongprasert** (SVP for Retail, **Amadeus**), **Renaud Nicolle** (SVP for Business Travel, **Amadeus**), **Eric Bailey**, Global Director Travel, VenueSource and Payment, **Microsoft**), **Shane O'Flaherty** (Global Director, Travel, Transportation and Hospitality, **Microsoft**) and **Patrick Andres** (Regional Vice President Hotels JAPAC, **Oracle Hospitality**) will provide the industry with clearer ideas of how the future of digital travel should look like.

Top speakers from other travel sectors will include **Enrique Ybarra** (Founder, President & CEO, **City Sightseeing Worldwide**), **Stephan Roemer**, (CEO, **Diethelm Travel Group**), **Donggun Lee** (Founder & CEO, **MyRealTrip**) and **Min Yoon** (CEO & Founder, **Tidesquare**).

With everyone looking forward to finally travel on the plan again with the new “travel bubbles”, borders are opening, ITB Asia’s travel think tank gathers airlines leaders to identify the challenges in the **aviation sector** and how they are discussing about the trends with their new implementations measures and procedures to ensure everyone to have the best and safer flight experience again which we all are missing out for a long time. The air travel sessions include topics such as “**Navigating Aviation's Greatest Crisis**”, “**Rebooting Air Travel**”, “**The Digital Airlines**” and “**The New Guest Experience**”.

In addition to the wide-ranging programme, a new conference format, the **Talk Series** will feature a wide range of discussion rounds at the ITB Asia Virtual Conference this year. The Talk Series will kick-off with the **“NTOs’ & CVBs’ Talks: What We Plan for 2022”**. In this series, ITB Asia gathers National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) and Convention & Visitors Bureaus (CVBs) across Asia Pacific and beyond to share their plans for 2022 to the audience. The key topics range from **“Travel trends in Asia and the world, and their implications”**, **“Initiatives and new business models”** to **“Travel bubbles, vaccine passports and policy recommendations”** and **“Exit measures for post-pandemic recovery: Plan for 2022 and years ahead”**.

Under the heading **“Hotel Leaders’ Talks: Road to Recovery”** ITB Asia will ask hotel leaders to share their observations on what has changed in the hotel business landscape. Attendees will explore how ultimately the industry players across Asia Pacific can work together to bring travel back. Hospitality experts will discuss issues surrounding some of the most hard-hitting questions facing the industry including notable changes in traveller's behaviours since the start of the pandemic, what hotels can do to bounce back more effectively, and how we can build trust among travellers as markets begin to recover.

Among others, the Hotel Leaders' talk series brings together top industry experts from the hospitality sector: **John Flood** (President & CEO, **Archipelago International**), **David Kong** (President & CEO, **BWH Hotel Group**), **Markland Blaiklock** (Deputy CEO, **Centara Hotels & Resorts**), **Rainer Stampfer** (President, Hotel Operations - APAC, **Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts**), **Alan Watts** (President, Asia Pacific, **Hilton**), **Rajit Sukumaran** (Managing Director of South East Asia and Korea, **IHG Hotels & Resorts**), **Paul Town** (COO, **Marina Bay Sands**), **Rajeev Menon** (President, Asia Pacific (Excluding Greater China), **Marriott International**), **Michael Marshall** (CCO, **Minor International**), **Dean Schreiber** (CEO, **Oakwood Worldwide**), **Katerina Giannouka** (President, Asia Pacific, **Radisson Hotel Group**), **Olivier Berrivin** (Managing Director - APAC, **WorldHotels**) and **Joon Aun Ooi** (President, Asia Pacific, **Wyndham Hotels & Resorts**).

People's demand and desire for travel remains strong, but the fear of COVID-19 is changing how they approach the trips. In the Talk Series **“Cruise Leaders’ Talks: Re-Sailing & Recovery – The Future of Cruise Holidays”**, **Kelly Craighead** (President & CEO, **CLIA - Cruise Lines International Association**) and **Ben Angell** (Vice President & Managing Director, APAC, **Norwegian Cruise Line**) will offer ideas and insights on how cruise companies can explore new business strategies and technologies, both to drive bookings and to facilitate safe travel.

For more information on ITB Asia 2021 events and conferences, visit [itb-asia.com](http://itb-asia.com). For enquiries on virtual booth participation, please email [sales@messe-berlin.asia](mailto:sales@messe-berlin.asia).

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## **About ITB Asia**

ITB Asia, Asia's leading travel trade show, is organised by Messe Berlin (Singapore) Pte Ltd and supported by the Singapore Exhibition & Convention Bureau. The annual B2B trade show and convention will feature hundreds of exhibiting companies from the Asia-Pacific region, Europe, the Americas, Africa and the Middle East, covering not only the leisure market, but also MICE and corporate travel. Exhibitors from every sector of the industry, including destinations, airlines and airports, hotels and resorts, theme parks and attractions, inbound tour operators, inbound DMCs, cruise lines, spas, venues, other meeting facilities and travel technology companies are all expected to attend.

ITB Asia is the premier meeting place for the travel trade industry for forging new partnerships and strengthening existing business relationships with the most important players in the region. ITB Asia 2020 Virtual concluded with a record-breaking participation of almost 35,000 travel professionals.

## **About MICE Show Asia**

MICE Show Asia is where the incentive travel, meetings and events industries come together to connect and build the future of MICE. The annual business-to-business trade show and convention featured industry suppliers, meetings & events professionals to up-and-coming MICE innovators from a wide range of disciplines, sectors and all levels of seniority. The show is co-located with ITB Asia.

## **About Travel Tech Asia**

Organised by Messe Berlin (Singapore) Pte Ltd and supported by the Singapore Exhibition & Convention Bureau, the trade show and conference will feature leading travel brands and innovative start-ups to attendees from all levels of seniority across a wide range of disciplines and sectors in the travel industry. The conference will be co-located with ITB Asia and MICE Show Asia.

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