

TRAVTALK

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

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Redefine leisure & luxury

The annual OTDYKH Travel Market, also known as Luxury Leisure Moscow, is Russia's leading travel and tourism event held from September 15-18, 2015. OTDYKH stands for leisure and luxury, and is the perfect start for the upcoming winter season on the Russian inbound and outbound market.

TT BUREAU

Since 1995, OTDYKH is a must attend event for travel professionals, a platform for negotiations and signing contracts for the coming winter season. OTDYKH combines all sectors of the tourism value chain: Leisure travel, Business travel and MICE, Luxury travel, Medical and Health Travel, Travel Technology.

The Luxury Leisure Moscow 2014 was held on 22,000 sq.m of exhibition area with 1,236 exhibitors from 94 countries and Russian regions. As many as 150 business programme events were held over 68,000 visits within 4 exhibition days. Among the 94 countries which participated in the exhibition are Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Qatar and Ras Al Khaimah.

The 21st International Trade Fair for Travel & Tourism

is the leading International Autumn Trade Fair for leisure travel in Russia and CIS countries. The exhibition is fully supported by all relevant Russian and international governmental bodies, associations and private companies. Leisure Moscow offers the best time and the best place to negotiate with Russian partners about winter programmes and to pre-sell summer packages.

Welcoming exhibitors at LLM, **Oleg Safonov**, Head, Russian Federal Agency for Tourism says today the Russian travel industry is experiencing a turning point: witnessing the changes in the market structure and in the tourists' priorities. "The domestic tourist flow is growing as well. We have fixed an increase in travelling within the country by 30 per cent comparing to the previous year, and these figures exceed the plans for 2018," he says.



Oleg Safonov
Head
Russian Federal Agency for Tourism

This year we are going to run several projects, including opening Russian tourist offices abroad & launching the national web-portal Russia.travel

The Russian Federal Agency for Tourism has developed a new marketing strategy — "Visit Russia", which is based on the public and private partnership.



Philippe Zuber
Chief Operating Officer
Emaar Hospitality Group

We are underlining our association with Russia's leading international trade fair by showcasing our diverse selection of properties

"This year we are going to run several projects, including opening Russian tourist offices abroad and launching the national



Diana Ancuta
Director of Sales & Marketing
Al Raha Beach Hotel

Al Raha Beach Hotel is well-established in the Russian market with 10 years' experience and working with most of the major tour operators

web-portal—Russia.travel. We continue to create new tourism clusters, to invest in infrastructure development in the regions within the federal

target programme of the tourism development in Russia," says Safonov.

He adds that the large business platforms like "OTDYKH" exhibition are their partners and allies. "For two decades, OTDYKH International Russian Travel Market has been an essential event for the industry. The exhibition's business programme is held in different formats, and takes into account the interests of all visitor categories. The show's scale and the exhibitor composition demonstrate the growing role of tourism in people's lives," he adds.

The 11th International Trade Fair for Luxury Travel- OTDYKH Luxury- is Russia's leading event when it comes to exclusive resorts and hotels, fine spa destinations and luxury cruises and yachts. International and Russian luxury travel suppliers exhibit

Contd. on page 3 ►



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Travellers look for exclusivity

► Contd. from page 1

their impressive offers on global first-class travel to interested trade visitors and direct customers. Every year more and more Russians are looking for luxury and exclusivity. This year's focus lies on Gourmet & Wine Travel. Food and Wine tourism has seen a growing demand in recent years. Now it is one of the most dynamic segments within the tourism market. The highlight of the section is an area of cooking master classes. It is a unique opportunity for countries and tour operators to present destinations through the best of their national authentic cuisine. In 2014 master classes were shown by Uzbekistan, Russia, Hungary, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Mexico, China, Slovakia, Thailand, Serbia, Japan, Italy, UAE and Serbia.

Philippe Zuber, Chief Operating Officer, Emaar Hospitality Group, states that The Address Hotels + Resorts, the flagship hotel

brand of Emaar Hospitality Group, will participate in this year's Luxury Leisure Moscow exhibition. "The event offers us the platform to present the differentials of our brand. Through our participation, we are underlining our association with Russia's leading international trade fair by showcasing our diverse selection of properties, which will further drive and cement our ambitious international growth plans," Zuber says.

He says that they will reach out to the tour operators by emphasising on the differentials of UAE as one of the world's top tourism destinations and a global hub for business. "Apart from sharing with them the USPs of UAE and Dubai, we will provide marketing collateral that will enable them to promote the destination to their customers. Most of the tour operators we have been interacting with are already aware of the UAE market. In fact, we have hosted several Russian tour operators in the past, and we have recorded strong inter-

est from the Russian market since our inception. We will continue to keep the momentum going through our interactions with the tour operators. The Luxury Leisure Moscow event offers us a credible platform to engage with them directly," he adds.

The Address Hotels + Resorts will showcase its diverse portfolio during the event. "For instance, The Address Downtown Dubai, The Palace Downtown Dubai and The Address Dubai Mall benefit from its location in the world's most-visited retail and leisure destination. The Address Montgomerie Dubai offers a retreat like ambience in one of popular golf courses in the city, while The Address Dubai Marina offers an unmatched waterfront experience in Dubai Marina," Zuber says.

Also, as Dubai prepares to host the Expo 2020, strengthening the hospitality sector to welcome the 25 million visitors expected during the six-month period is an impera-

tive. "We will also support the expansion plans of Emaar Properties, as it focuses on creating varied integrated developments in Dubai and other emerging markets," Zuber says.

As part of its international expansion, The Address Hotels + Resorts is expanding to Turkey, Nigeria, Bahrain and Egypt among others markets. The Address will also manage several new serviced residences as part of Emaar's new projects in Downtown Dubai. Further, Vida Hotels and Resorts, a young brand launched by Emaar for the new generation of tech-savvy entrepreneurs and professionals, has also announced its expansion to operate Vida Marassi Al Bahrain and Vida Residences Marassi Al Bahrain. This marks the first international expansion of the Vida brand, which currently operates two hotels in Dubai – Vida Downtown Dubai and Manzil Downtown Dubai.

They have also launched Rove Hotels, a con-

temporary new mid-market lifestyle hotel brand, with plans to roll out 10 properties across central locations in Dubai and the region by 2020.

Diana Ancuta, Director of Sales & Marketing, Al Raha Beach Hotel, says the hotel is doing good business in the Russian market and working with most of the tour operators in that country. "We are participating in the Luxury Leisure Moscow event. Al Raha Beach Hotel is well-established in the Russian market with 10 years' experience and working with most of the major tour operators. Since business has become very last minute, we are here to discuss opportunities to improve sales for the new season," Ancuta says.

To guide and train Russian tour operators in promoting the UAE, she says, "Webinars and trade visits by Abu Dhabi Tourism along with stakeholders will help educate the tour operators and their reservations team. Hosted

FAM trips and incentive to sell the destination will also help. As hotel, we are happy to host some of the important FAM's while they are in Abu Dhabi.

On the expansion plans of Al Raha Beach Hotel, Ancuta says, "we are evaluating an increase in our F&B outlets which will offer more dining options to the in-house and local guests. Al Raha Club Lounge was recently opened to enhance the guest experience with facilities for both corporate and leisure. The leisure segment continues to be our focus as well as MICE and corporate."

On the Offing

- ◆ Luxury Leisure Moscow will focus on Gourmet and Wine Travel
- ◆ Emaar Hospitality to showcase its diverse properties and international expansion plans
- ◆ UAE hotels to woo Russian travel agents for increasing inbound

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EDITORIAL

All eyes on luxury at Moscow show

Talk of luxury travel and all the attention turns towards Russia in the month of September. The 11th International Trade Fair for Luxury Travel, OTDYKH Luxury 2015, from September 15-18 is expected to draw participants from all over the world, providing a plethora of opportunities.

The Russian Federation is one of the most promising markets for luxury travel products.

Figures speak loud about the success of the event last year. According to the organisers, there were over 1,000 exhibitors from 67 countries with over 68,000 visits within four exhibition days. Over 150 business programme events were held. For the UAE, which enjoys a prestigious international stature, Russia and CIS regions are known to hold a special place.

Interestingly, research by leading luxury hotel and resort marketing specialist SweetBeam has revealed that there has been a significant uplift of in-house guest spending across Dubai during 2014 and Q1 2015. The data reveals that of the top 20 nationalities occupying luxury hotels, Russians were the top spenders while on holiday in Dubai.

Propelled by flydubai's new services to Slovakia, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Croatia, as well as Emirates to Hungary and Smart Wings to Czech Republic, Eastern Europe turned out to be the top region in terms of percentage growth in tourism. Russia and CIS (28.6 per cent) also witnessed robust growth driven by flydubai's new routes to many destinations in Moldova and Kazakhstan.

The luxury travel industry flies high in the region and the fact is also validated by the British Airways announcement that its new Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner, complete with a new First Class cabin, will start flying to Delhi from October 25 with the UAE and Oman to follow later in 2015.

There is little doubt that as various tourism wings in the UAE expand their premium travel offerings, the Russian mega event will add more sheen to the glittering prospects of the tourism industry.

Focus on family travel

2015 has been a successful year for Gloria Hotels and Resorts so far. Despite the recent slump in the CIS market, the hotel group is expecting the market to pick up during winter season.

As a family-friendly hotel group we are providing excellent facilities for a comfortable family stay in Dubai. It consists of spacious suites with a well-designed living room including three different areas – dining area, fun and rest area and working area. Featuring an enclosed

entertainment programme are always free and our guests can enjoy games on the playground, swimming, coloring, henna, face painting, arts, crafts and video games. For our guests' convenience, babysitting service is also available.

We have launched our new group hotel website which combines all seven Gloria Hotels group properties under one domain and captures all their specifics to provide an enjoyable and engaging online experience

kitchenette and private balcony all our suites are designed in four different design styles to match even the most sophisticated taste from Californian to Modern, Classic and Mediterranean style.

Gloria Hotel and Yassat Gloria Hotel & Apartments are packed with entertainment options for our youngest guests. The dedicated and experienced staff at our kids clubs makes sure that the kids are having fun, learning and enjoying their time in a safe and well-equipped environment. The first two hours of the

Parents can indulge in the relaxing atmosphere at the SPA studio or delight in the views over Dubai by the pool with a cold beverage from our pool bar.

With a wide variety of dining outlets including in-room dining we strive to provide the best dining experience with cuisine from all around the world. Our signature restaurants — The Avenue and La Terrasse — have one of the best theme nights selection in the city including Asian, Arabian, Seafood night and Steak night to satisfy the cravings of the most discerned food lover.

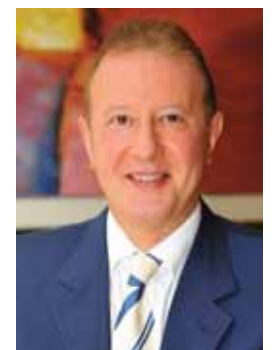
Our close proximity to the metro station is a key advantage to attracting the family groups from CIS market. It provides quick connection to any area in Dubai and the most popular landmarks. One of the most popular complimentary services in our hotels is the complimentary shuttle bus, which is a great way to explore Dubai on a budget. We provide free pick-up and drop-off service to Jumeirah open beach and Burjuman shopping centre three times daily. Dubai Outlet Mall and Dubai Marina walk, as some of the most popular tourist destinations, can also be reached via bus from our hotels.

Having one of the biggest inventories on the hotel apartments market we are proud to announce that we have received a 4-star hotel classification for Yassat Gloria Hotel & Apartments. We have always been dedicated to exceed our guests' expectations, thus, the 4-star license proved that our service quality is well deserved and will even set our standards higher.

We have launched our new group hotel website which combines all seven Gloria Hotels group properties under one domain and cap-

tures all their specifics to provide an enjoyable and engaging online experience. It has been designed and developed to provide an optimal viewing experience — easy reading, navigation and booking across the widest range of devices from desktop computer to mobile phone.

2015 is a very successful year for Gloria Hotels and Resorts so far. Despite the downfall of the CIS market we have strengthened our partner relations by the end of 2014 and beginning of 2015. We are expecting good amount of business by the end of this year due to the scheduled charter flights from CIS and Baltic countries. We are also focusing on markets like Germany, India and Turkey to close the gap from first quarter of 2015.



Freddy Farid
Area General Manager
Gloria Hotels and Resorts

Etihad's new 'Fare Choices' from Sept 14

■ UAE's national airline Etihad Airways will implement a new fare structure from September 14, 2015 to provide more choice and clarity when booking flights. A total of eight new 'Fare Choices' will be introduced, allowing travellers to tailor their bookings to their individual needs. The 'Fare Choices' are transparent and differ in baggage

allowance, flexibility and included benefits that otherwise need to be purchased separately. Additionally, an adapted baggage policy will provide guests with a more standardised baggage allowance structure across the Etihad Airways Partner network, while also reducing the price for excess baggage charges on most routes.

All bookings ticketed from September 14, 2015 will be split into distinct fare choices. A new baggage policy has also been announced to more flexibly respond to individual customer needs and to better align Etihad Airways with other Etihad Airways Partner airlines. As part of the policy change, the cost of excess baggage will be dramatically

cut on the majority of fares. On some routes the cost of buying an additional 23kg piece of baggage will be reduced by up to 90 per cent, with a further reduction of up to 30 per cent if pre-purchased directly with Etihad Airways up to 24 hours before travel. The new baggage policy will also come into effect for bookings on or after 14 September.



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Offices:

DELHI: 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110 001
Ph.: +91-11-23710793, 23716318
Fax: +91-11-23351503
E-mail: travtalk@ddppl.com

MUMBAI: 504, Marine Chambers, 43,
New Marine Lines, Opp. SMDT College,
Mumbai - 400 020, India
Ph.: +91-22-22070129, 22070130,
Fax: +91-22-22070131,
E-mail: mumbai@ddppl.com

UAE: Z1-02, P.O. Box 9348, Saf Zone, Sharjah, UAE
Ph.: +971 6 5528954
Fax: +971 6 5528956
E-mail: uae@ddppl.com

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'The future of airline competition'

Etihad Airways President and CEO James Hogan emphasised the importance of consumer choice and innovation as the fundamental drivers of competition in the international airline industry during a conversation before approximately 4,000 attendees at the 2015 Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) Convention in Orlando, Fla.

 SUSMITA GHOSH

On emerging opportunities and challenges in the global aviation industry, Hogan says, "Business and leisure travellers alike are demanding, and should rightly expect, choices in network, schedules, product and services, loyalty rewards, convenience, and price.

"What we bring to the market is competition, we bring fantastic choices in regard to product and services. We see strong demand in premium and we're very focused on the business traveller, when you look at our



James Hogan
President and CEO
Etihad Airways

In our culture, we don't have passengers, we have guests and that guest experience is fundamental, and treating the guest with respect

lounges, when you look at the services that we provide to ensure that the trip is as seamless as it can be."


Hogan highlighted the impact of rapidly growing markets like China, India and Southeast Asia on international traffic flows and traditional international hubs. He also emphasized Etihad's unique approach to constantly innovating in order to better serve customers. "Innovation — one of the greatest things about travel in this era is the consumer can find out so much about your business. In our culture, we don't have passengers, we have guests and that guest experience — whether it's First Class, Business Class or economy — is fundamental, and treating the guest with respect," Hogan said.

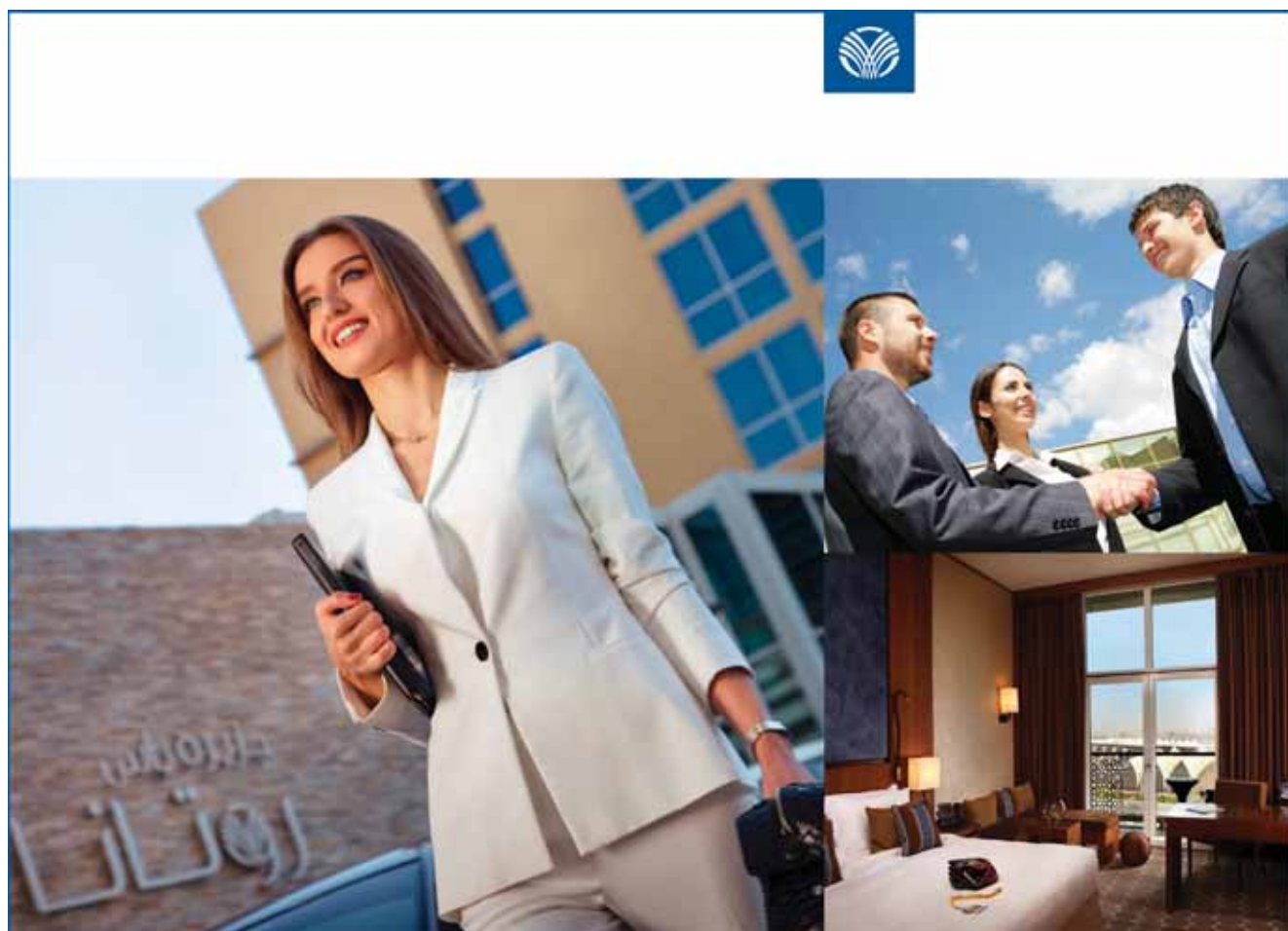
He further noted that Etihad competes on product in the markets in which it operates and that even as a relatively young airline, Etihad has already differentiated itself in

the market and attracted global interest with the best-in-class offerings available across every class of service, which includes The Residence, Business Studios, Economy Smart Seats, in-flight chefs, butlers and flying nannies.

Hogan also discussed Etihad's unique business model which extends the airline's organic growth through code-share partnerships and equity investments in key global airlines, including airberlin, Air Serbia, Air Seychelles, Aer Lingus,

Alitalia, Jet Airways, Virgin Australia, and Swiss-based Darwin Airline. Hogan said, "Our equity strategy is about how we build our network. We work in a digital age where the consumer, whether it's corporate or leisure, can go online and they look

to points of the world they wish to travel. Now within that, we have a partnership with these airlines where we're now strengthening our global network — top line generating revenue and bottom line tackling cost together." 



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Traffic surges at Abu Dhabi airport

Abu Dhabi Airports reported an increase of 17.2 per cent passenger traffic at Abu Dhabi International Airport, during the first half of 2015, when compared to the same period in 2014.

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During the H1 2015, a total of 11,111,577 passengers passed through Abu Dhabi International Airport, compared with 9,481,744 in the equivalent period in 2014. The number of aircraft movements rose to 84,938, representing 15.0 per cent growth compared with 73,862 aircraft movements reported in H1 2014.

Eng. Mohamed Mubarak Al Mazrouei, Chief



Eng. Mohamed Mubarak Al Mazrouei
Chief Executive Officer
Abu Dhabi Airports

Executive Officer, Abu Dhabi Airports, says, "It is very

encouraging to see a constant increase in passenger traffic numbers, despite the challenges it poses. This continuous growth further demonstrates the fact that travellers increasingly see Abu Dhabi both as a destination of choice and as a logical transit point

on long journeys. This in turn is further evidence of the airport's rapidly growing status as a vital global transportation hub."

"The Capacity Enhancement Program, which is helping us address

the more immediate demands of the passenger growth, is on track as part of our commitment to deliver to our promise and present a unique travel experience, through implementing innovative solutions," he added.

Cargo activity in the first six months of the year comprised 414,203 tons handled, representing a 9.6 per cent increase when compared to the first half of 2014. The month of June alone saw 1,848,080

passengers, an increase of 10.8 per cent as compared with June 2014 (1,667,551 passengers).

Several new destinations were added during the six months including flights to Madrid, Pune, Edinburgh, Venice and Entebbe. In addition, the frequency of flights between the existing routes has increased. In July 2015, the airport has announced 271 additional weekly flights for its summer programme. 🌞

The Capacity Enhancement Program, which is helping us address the more immediate demands of the passenger growth, is on track as part of our commitment to deliver

LCC market to offset drop

Airport International Group (AIG) releases Queen Alia International Airport's (QAIA) traffic statistics from the beginning of the year up till end of June.

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Registering sustained growth, year-to-date (YTD) cargo traffic figures showed a significant 8.3 per cent increase to reach 48,973 tons as opposed to 2014. Compared to the same period last year, YTD passenger traffic (PAX) declined by 9.2 per cent to come in at 3,248,413 PAX, and YTD aircraft movements (ACM) dropped by 6.4 per cent to settle at 33,748 ACM.

"During the past six months, Jordan's aviation industry has been experiencing route cancellations driven by regional circumstances, which in turn has impacted QAIA's passenger and aircraft traffic," comments Kjeld Binger, CEO, AIG.



Kjeld Binger
CEO, AIG

Throughout June 2015, QAIA handled 8,874 tons of cargo as opposed to 7,860 tons during the same month in 2014, which represented a 12.90 per cent rise. QAIA also received 593,006 PAX compared to 687,804 PAX, indicating a 13.8 per cent in comparison to the same period last year, and recorded 6,124 ACM as opposed to 6,573

ACM, which signified a 6.8 per cent year-on-year drop. "Nonetheless, our outlook remains positive for the remainder of 2015, stemming in part from cargo traffic's ongoing increase since the beginning of the year, as well as the recent addition of Ukraine International Airlines and the low-cost carrier, Air Arabia Jordan, to QAIA's airline network," he further stated.

"Expanding our low-cost carrier market is a positive step, as it will give the tourism sector a much-needed boost and will hopefully help offset the drop in passenger traffic seen at QAIA so far. Furthermore, we are hoping to witness growth during H2 given the upcoming high seasons of Hajj pilgrimage and Eid Al Adha," he added. 🌞

Sharjah-Varanasi on IX

Air India Express introduced non-stop return flights between Sharjah and Varanasi from Aug 17, 2015. 186-seater Boeing 737 aircraft will ply on this route.

TT BUREAU

Flight IX 184 on the Sharjah-Varanasi sector departed from Sharjah at 1050 hrs, and arrived in Varanasi at 1600 hrs local time on August 17. On the return leg, IX 183 took off from Varanasi at 0700 hrs and landed in Sharjah at 1930 hrs.

"The thrice-weekly flights will operate on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays, fulfilling a long-standing need of passengers in and around Varanasi," informed K. Shyamsundar, CEO, Air India Express.

He further states, "Air India Express is happy to announce an introductory 35



K. Shyamsundar
CEO, Air India Express

Air India Express is happy to announce an introductory 35 kg free baggage allowance on Sharjah-Varanasi sector till Sept 15

kg free baggage allowance on Sharjah-Varanasi sector till September 15, 2015. We will also be offering introductory discounted fares for a limited period," he further added.

"In addition we also offer our passengers already booked on our Dubai - Lucknow and return sector, the facility to rebook IX1841183 for travels, at no extra cost if so desired. This facility can be availed even with change of date till September 30, 2015," mentioned Shyamsundar.

Air India recently enhanced free check-in baggage allowance of 25 kg for its passengers travelling in the Economy Class on its domestic sectors. 🌞



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For over a decade, technology firm ODS2 has been delivering innovative turnkey technology solutions to blue chip organisations across 40 countries in key sectors like tourism and hospitality, telecom, retail, FMCG, consumer goods, media and services, banking and securities, government, manufacturing and natural resources. Founded in the Netherlands in 1999, with offices in the Netherlands, Canada, and the US, ODS2 is headquartered in the UAE.

Gurpreet Jajj, COO, ODS2, emphasised, "We are



Amar Judge and Gurpreet Jajj

a full-service premium technology firm specialising in building web and mobile software applications. Our business intelligence software is designed to streamline business processes, spot areas for cost savings and identify new business opportunities.

"ODS2 software allows hoteliers to organise and manage all their processes from one central system. State-of-the-art security and a hierarchy based permission system allow different levels of user access. Intuitive dashboard design provides a 360 degree insight into business operations in real-time. Advanced KPI's and various forms of reporting convert collected data into meaningful information and allow you to follow trends and make informed decisions as the processes unfold," Jajj stated.

"ODS2 cloud based solutions are fully capable of integrating with your existing IT ecosystem and benefit hoteliers by greatly reducing capital expenditures and IT related costs. From simple content-based metrics to sophisticated analysis, our software provides a more complete view on customer & competitors experience and opportunities therein, and helps executives plan for the future," she added.

Client satisfaction has been a key factor in building this extraordinary reputation. **Amar Judge**, Director, Business Development of ODS2, said, "Client satisfaction has popularised ODS2 solutions within their respective industries fostering an organic growth. We have been delivering software solutions worldwide from small businesses to Fortune 500 companies."

ODS2 cloud based solutions are fully capable of integrating with your existing IT ecosystem and benefit hoteliers by greatly reducing capital expenditures and IT related costs

Gurpreet Jajj
COO, ODS2

Millennium Corniche Hotel in Trip Advisor's Hall of Fame

"Over the past years, the Millennium Corniche Hotel Abu Dhabi has been constantly striving for perfection, brand enhancement and quality assurance," says **James**

travel feedback site with over 50 million monthly visitors. This is extremely gratifying for us all and brings added responsibilities to further spur both my team



Wilson, General Manager, Millennium Corniche Hotel.

This hard work was translated into very positive feedback by the hotel's guests and Millennium Corniche Hotel has been awarded the 2015 Hall Of Fame Certificate by TripAdvisor. This unique accolade is granted only to those businesses that have won the Certificate of Excellence for five years in a row.

"We are deeply privileged to receive this internationally recognised service excellence, as a result of feedback from our valued guests and from the largest

and myself to greater efforts and scale new heights in the days to come for without my hard working team, we would not have achieved this honor," he added.

Wilson assures that this certificate is like a roadmap in the hotel's journey toward quality and excellence. "It will act as a guide in our day to day operation and our continuing drive for outstanding service experiences, to blend in harmoniously in the continuing fame of Abu Dhabi's hospitality sector which is witnessing a rapid growth in the world of tourism," he added.



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Ramada Hotel & Suites Ajman is operated by RHOTels under a franchise agreement from Wyndham Hotel Group.

1st ETA office in Abu Dhabi

The Egyptian Tourism Authority (ETA) has announced the official launch of its new office in Abu Dhabi, which commenced operations at the beginning of July 2015.

TT BUREAU

The office was inaugurated during a celebration event attended by **HE Ehab Hamouda**, Egyptian

for ETA, which reflects the strong ties we have with our neighbors in the Arab world. The UAE has always been a strong supporter of Egypt and is one of the country's key

to Egypt increased by 20 per cent. Visitors primarily travelled from Arab countries, particularly within the Gulf region. During the coming months, the Ministry is set to focus on Nile tourism and also promote cultural tourism by providing programs which combine both beach and cultural destinations.

Ali said, "We are striving to explore new horizons in our tourism partnerships with Arab nations, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and Lebanon in particular."

ETA's new Abu Dhabi Office is in the process of collaborating with all airlines that cater to the Egyptian market, by launching direct flights to Sharm El Sheikh, the Red Sea and the North Coast in Egypt. 🇪🇬



(L-R): Sami Mahmoud, Chairman, Egyptian Tourism Authority, HE Ehab Hamouda, Egyptian Ambassador to the UAE and Ahmed Ali, Head, ETA's Abu Dhabi office

Ambassador to the UAE, **Sami Mahmoud**, Chairman, ETA, and **Ahmed Ali**, Head, ETA's Abu Dhabi office, joined by a number of prominent public figures, diplomatic representatives and media.

Mahmoud said, "The opening of our new Abu Dhabi office is an important milestone

tourism markets. The launch is a key element of the strategic plan developed by the Ministry of Tourism and ETA to attract 20 million visitors to Egypt by 2020 and drive tourism revenues to reach \$26 billion."

During the first half of 2015, visitor numbers

Wooing Down Under

In a bid to increase awareness about the Emirate's growing tourism opportunities, Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority took a four-city roadshow to Australia.

TT BUREAU

A delegation of 11 members, led by the Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority (TCA Abu Dhabi) headed to Perth, Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney from

Abu Dhabi from Perth in July 2014 by Etihad Airways.

Mubarak Al Nuaimi, Director, Promotions and Overseas Offices, TCA Abu Dhabi, along with representatives of MSC Cruises, among



Mubarak Al Nuaimi
Director, Promotions and Overseas
Offices, TCA Abu Dhabi

August 3-6, 2015, to apprise the Australian retail travel agents and MICE consultants about current and new tourism experiences and offerings across Abu Dhabi.

The delegation visited Perth in Western Australia for the first time to leverage interest and potential trade between the two cities since the launch of daily flights into



Stefan Fuchs
General Manager
Jumeirah at Etihad Towers

others, met around 450 travel agents and key influencers from Australia's top retail chains along with representatives from leading tour operators at a time when more Australians are visiting Abu Dhabi than ever before.

Etihad Airways currently operates daily flights from all four cities with double daily flights from Sydney and

Melbourne into the UAE capital. In the first six months of this year, 23,794 Australians stayed in the Emirate's hotels and hotel apartments, an increase of 11 per cent on the corresponding period the previous year.

In 2014, a total of 49,450 Australians arrived in the Emirate, a rise of 24% on the previous 12 months

and delivered 161,371 guest nights, staying on average 3.26 nights.

Stefan Fuchs, General Manager, Jumeirah at Etihad Towers, said, "The Australian market continues to grow in its importance for our hotel as the air links between our two regions continues to deepen.

"We have seen steady growth in booked room nights by Australian guests over the last two years. In 2014 the total number resulted in a more than 50 per cent increase compared to the total number of room nights booked by Australians in 2013," he added. 🇦🇪

Seychelles hosts agents

Seychelles Tourism Office Middle East recently organised a fam trip for the agents who already support and sell the UAE to their clients.

TT BUREAU

The fam trip was supported by Constance Ephelia Resort, Avani Resort & Spa and Raffles Praslin Seychelles where the group enjoyed the hospitality, amenities and hotel experience they had while staying at these properties.

Fam trip's success was with the assistance of Maia Luxury Resort & Spa, Kempinski Seychelles Resort, Banyan Tree Seychelles, Eden Island, L'habitation des Cerf, Coco De Mer Hotel, Constance Lemuria Resort and Savoy Resort & Spa as they earnestly open their doors for the agents to be accustomed to other proper-



Ahmed Fathallah
Regional Manager
Seychelles Tourism Office Middle East

We are truly delighted and we are inspired to execute more of such activities as this is truly beneficial for both the parties

ties in Seychelles. DMCs from Seychelles like Vision Voyages, select- Seychelles, Masons Travel, Creole Travel Services and 7° South also contributed to this trip.

"With Seychelles Tourism Office Middle East slowly climbing the top, being the #3 feeder market to Seychelles with more than 10,000 visitors from the region for week 29, we gained tremendous increase with 58 per cent from January to July week ending (week29 of July 2015) statistics report on visitor arrivals compared to the same period last year for the UAE region," commented **Ahmed Fathallah**, Regional Manager, Seychelles Tourism Office Middle East. 🇸🇪

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Eat like an Egyptian

The Arabian Courtyard Hotel & Spa under the management of Planet Hospitality Group announced the soft opening of an Egyptian themed restaurant, Pharaoh Café & Restaurant. Set as a mini Egyptian Museum right across the Dubai Museum, the restaurant is ideally situated for visiting tourists, resident and group meals.



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A new Star shines in Dubai skies

Sheraton Grand Hotel, Dubai, on Sheikh Zayed Road, is connecting guests to the heart of the booming business district and the city's main tourist attractions to ensure the property becomes a local landmark. The hotel which opened in November last year has positioned itself comfortably as both a business and a leisure hotel.



MEGHA PAUL FROM DUBAI

Are long flights, waiting for the cab or shuttle, or cab ride to the hotel, followed by the much-longer inevitable queues for check-in, taking a toll on you? Not if you are staying at the Sheraton Grand Hotel, Dubai. In one of the most innovative ways to check in at the hotel for larger groups of travellers, the Starwood property can do check-ins in the bus or cab itself on your way to the hotel.

"As conventions and group business grows, guest arrivals are sometimes compressed into very narrow time-frames. Thus, we want to consider multiple registration locations and other means of eliminating long lines and the amount of time our guests spend in the registration process," says **Ramon Von Schuckmann**, Director of Sales, Sheraton Grand Hotel, Dubai. Located at the forefront of Dubai's most prominent

thoroughfare in Sheikh Zayed Road and in the proximity of Dubai World Trade Centre, the hotel's target market is clear, he adds. "Primarily our guests are corporate and business travellers, and thus hassle-free check-ins and other innovative measures keeping them in mind becomes a critical aspect at our property."

The hotel is the first new-build for Sheraton in Dubai in more than 30 years. It is also the first Starwood property within walking distance from the Trade Centre. The hotel is also targeting another niche market, which is the long-stay segment. "In a total of 654 keys, we have 180 apartments — fully serviced, with 100 one-bedroom apartments. So we specifically look at corporate customers who want to stay a bit longer, anything between one month and a year," Schuckmann explains. With Dubai being an evolved MICE destination, MICE and



Ramon Von Schuckmann
Director of Sales
Sheraton Grand Hotel, Dubai

Primarily our guests are business travellers, thus hassle-free check-ins become a critical aspect at our property

groups will also be a key focus for the hotel, especially during trade shows and conferences at the convention centre, Schuckmann explains, refer-



Barun Gupta
Account Director-Global Sales,
Starwood Hotels and Resorts

Dubai is one of the most-preferred destinations for Indians. Starwood wants to cash in on this growing set of travellers

ring to the two-storey ballroom and six meeting rooms.

According to **Carmen Ortiz**, Director of Marketing,

Sheraton Grand Hotel, Dubai, the hotel has positioned itself as offering a crossroads to Dubai. "First of all we're in the middle of the city and we are very accessible to the old and new parts of Dubai. We have the metro station and we can target the corporate traveller since we are in front of the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) and you can walk to the World Trade Centre and the many offices nearby," she points out. The hotel will also appeal to a small number of leisure travellers, in particular those with short stopovers in the city who do not require a beach or mall location, but would still prefer to be in close proximity to the city's major attractions, she informs. "In 10 minutes you can get to the Old Souks or Dubai Mall and with the metro you can go to the marina or JBR or any other mall in the city," she adds.

Talking about the importance of India as a source

market for Starwood and this hotel in Dubai, **Barun Gupta**, Account Director-Global Sales, Starwood Hotels and Resorts, reveals, "Dubai plays a vital role for growth of the Starwood portfolio. It is the second market after New York where Starwood will be opening all its 10 brands. And, India is growing in terms of outbound partnership with all destinations. With Dubai being just a few hours away, it is one of the most-preferred destinations for Indians for leisure and MICE. Starwood wants to cash in on this growing set of travellers. Thus, we recently hosted a fam trip to Sheraton Grand Hotel, Dubai to showcase our properties to top MICE agents from India."

Star Debut

◆ Sheraton Grand Hotel, Dubai, on Sheikh Zayed Road is the first new-build for Sheraton in Dubai in more than 30 years

A cruise specialty website

CruiseXplore CEO Lakshmi Durai, a cruise industry professional with 20 years of experience in the Middle East, tells TRAVTALK about the one-stop-shop for planning and booking cruise vacations.



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"We make it extremely comfortable for the guests to plan the cruise and also book online. As an exclusively designed cruise-only website, what **CruiseXplore.com** aims to facilitate for the guests is the unmatched and rich experience of a cruise vacation," said **Lakshmi Durai**, CEO, CruiseXplore. "We have a team of cruise professionals in every department who bring with them expansive knowledge about the industry."

CruiseXplore.com is a powerful source of knowledge about the cruises across the globe. It is the 'one-stop shop' where the guests can explore multitude of options to choose from.



Lakshmi Durai
Chief Executive Officer
CruiseXplore

We have a team of cruise professionals in every department who bring with them expansive knowledge about the industry

Cruising is a fast growing holiday choice, particularly in the Middle East. People from Middle East travel with family on long vacation during summer ranging from 14 to 56 days and their preferred cruise destination are Europe, Alaska and the Caribbean.

These guests are observed to include 7 to 14 nights cruise itineraries to their summer plan. The inbound cruise tourism is also growing steadily.

DTCM recently announced that they are expecting to welcome 450,000 annual cruise tourists by 2016 which is anticipated to record a sustainable growth into 2020 and beyond.

Cruising is one of the most preferred vacation options amongst the people of this region for its sheer convenience and luxury that it provides at an affordable price. The cruise takes the holidaymakers to multiple destinations — something which other travel choices cannot simply offer with such ease and convenience.

The unmatched feature of cruise holiday is the value for money. The cruise price is an all-inclusive price to the holiday makers for their stay on board and multi-cuisine boarding and use of state-of-the-art facilities and entertainment on board the ship during the entire period of the cruise vacation. ☺

Cove Rotana Resort goes green!

The Cove Rotana Resort—Ras Al Khaimah has recently strengthened its commitment to the environment by acquiring a machine to decompose waste food. The liquid food composter is installed in the hotel wet garbage room and has a capacity of 270 kg of daily food waste input, which accelerates the digestion of most food products and bio-plastics within 24 hours. The output is a grey water that is environmentally safe and that goes down the drain. The machine accurately weighs the amount of waste food and produces composting data per hour, day, week, month and year, including the amount of CO2 diverted from the landfill during these periods. More than 12,000 tons of waste food are sent and dumped from the UAE landfills yearly.



Egypt Tourism opens Abu Dhabi office

Egypt Tourism inaugurated its first office in Abu Dhabi during a celebration event attended by HE Ehab Hamouda, Egyptian Ambassador to the UAE, among other prominent public figures and diplomatic representatives.



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Travelport renews deal

Travelport has announced the renewal of its multi-year agreement with Al Futtaim Travel, which specialises in corporate and leisure travel management.



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The recent agreement provides Al Futtaim Travel agency with Travelport's leading technology, including the Travelport Universal API which provides access to a world of content and functionality through a single API connection by aggregating air, hotel, car, rail and merchandising content from multiple sources.

The agency's customers will continue to have access to Travelport's travel content inventory which currently includes the ability to search, sell and book fares from approximately 400 airlines globally as well as browse through the industry-leading Travelport's beyond air content which includes over 650,000 hotel properties (both chain and independents).



Rabih Saab
President and Managing Director for Africa, the Middle East and South Asia (AFMESA), Travelport

Travelport's technology is ideally suited to fulfill Al Futtaim Travel's business objectives and we are dedicated to supporting them in growing their presence in the region

Rabih Saab, President and Managing Director for Africa, the Middle East and South Asia (AFMESA), Travelport, says, "We are delighted that Al Futtaim Travel has recognised the value and demonstrated such strong confidence in Travelport's offering. Travelport's technology is ideally suited to fulfill Al Futtaim Travel's business objectives and we are dedicated to supporting them in growing their presence in the region."

According to Al Futtaim Travel, the renewal of the partnership with Travelport will help arise new developments from accessing Travelport's industry leading technology. Working with Travelport will allow them to continuously improve and enhance the tailor-made services they provide to the customers across the Gulf region.

All eyes on Iran's market

With an annual visitor target of 20 million by 2025, Iran is set to become one of the region's most lucrative hotel markets, according to the Cristal Group of Hotels.



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Following the recent agreement with international negotiators on capping nuclear capacity, trade and financial sanction are due to be lifted in 2016, paving the way for expansion of the country's infrastructure and industrial base," says **Peter Blackburn**, President and CEO, Cristal Group. A huge influx of business traffic has already been into Iran which has underlined the lack of accommodation in the capital Tehran that has an estimated 100 hotels, many of which are in need of renovation.

"There has already been talk of an investment of US\$185bn in oil and gas projects, as well as further development of the country's metals and automotive industries, while general trade is certain to rise which will give a



Peter Blackburn
President and CEO
Cristal Group

tremendous boost to the region, and Dubai as a major hub," he added.

"Hospitality has moved on in recent years and international travellers expect a certain level of service, product and communications which are currently lacking in Iran," says Blackburn.

"Importing the services of experienced hotel operators who have a knowledge of the

region will enable Iran's hotel sector to up its game in the short-term and this is where we see a role for Cristal Hotels, working with partners in the country," he emphasizes.

In addition to the business interests, there is a considerable demand for Iran as a new tourism destination. Hence has potential to grow in all sectors in the country, taking advantage of new financial incentives as well as the transformation of the image of Iran in global markets.

Growth Potential

◆ The group operates hotels in Iraq, Lebanon and the UAE, with further properties under development and negotiation in Saudi Arabia, Kurdistan and Turkey, and Iran

Travel insurance online

Travel insurance online facilitator, Tune Protect, has partnered with AMA Assistance to offer travel insurance via AMA Travel Shield, an online travel insurance portal.



TT BUREAU

AMA Assistance, an independent Global Medical and Travel Assistance company, believes in delivering the best medical and travel assistance services in the market. With focus and expertise on cost containment services, AMA has been delivering huge savings for insurers via its Global



Arijit Munshi
General Manager
Tune Protect

This strategic move helps us solidify our regional foothold and showcase our capabilities on a digital front, providing greater flexibility and convenience to travellers as they seek 'peace of mind' for their travel needs

across UAE, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait. This strategic move helps us solidify our regional foothold and showcase our capabilities on a digital front, providing greater flexibility and convenience to travellers as they seek 'peace of mind' for their travel needs," said **Arijit Munshi**, General Manager, Tune Protect.

Tune Protect is a facilitator of online travel insurance on behalf of its insurance partners, where its product offers comprehensive travel related benefits like personal accident, 24-hour emergency assistance, medical support, travel inconvenience, baggage delay or loss.

This provides travellers with the flexibility and convenience to easily purchase travel insurance via the web and mobile channels.

Alarm Centers based in Vienna, Dubai, New Delhi, Bangkok, Kathmandu, Colombo and Chengdu with a large pool of partners at a global scale.

"Tune Protect with its network of insurance partners and AMA Assistance can now offer easy and quick travel insurance online via an emerging digital platform

Ramada shines through

Ifthikar Hamdani, General Manager, Ramada Ajman, tells TRAVTALK about R Hotels expansion plans and upcoming projects.



TT BUREAU

QWhat does Ajman offer to its corporate and leisure travellers?

Ajman is growing in terms of business, many business are establishing here particularly in the free zones, Hamriyah and Ajman Free Zones, there was a time when only CIS market was active for the Ajman hotels, while now China, India, Turkish, East Europe and West Europe are taking interest because new 5-star hotels are big attractions for the international tour operator, demand is increasing every year.

QHow will ATDD help to meet higher room demands in the next couple of years?

New travel exhibition, travel roadshows are important and there is planning to tap new markets in coming years to support hotels, no doubt that inventory of the hotel rooms is increasing and we need more business to fill these rooms, collective as team we are trying to get new market to support destination under the umbrella of ATDD.



Ifthikar Hamdani
General Manager
Ramada Ajman

QHow will R Hotels' development plan accommodate the demands of the growing market?

Ramada Ajman is leading hotel in terms of occupancy for last 4 years, our occupancy remains high and that is the reason that growth is logical, we had open Ramada Beach Hotel in 2013 and still demand is more than our inventory that is the reason

that we are getting new hotels on the cornice with 182 keys, not decided which brand but will finalise it very soon, Our operation at Ajman is very successful cause products are great value for money and we have created our loyal customer who are supporting us for the last 4 years.

QElaborate on the expansion plans of the group?

R Hotels is expanding very fast as we are opening our new property Ibis Style in September 1, 2015, our two hotels in Dubai are doing record business, Ramada Downtown Dubai and Hawthorn Suite, another development in the Palm is going on speedy. Though expansion is fast but all the hotels are doing fantastic business with professional team on board.

Savoring the tastes of Thailand

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) in partnership with Royal Thai Embassy to the United Arab Emirates, Royal Thai Consulate-General Dubai and Thai Airways International Dubai, launched its 'Amazing Tastes of Thailand Festival 2015' at Al Wasl Ballroom-A, Dusit Thani hotel. Thirteen restaurants across the UAE participated in the festival.



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New daily from Venice-Istanbul

Turkish Airlines has recently announced that it will keep on reinforcing its presence in the Northeast of Italy, increasing the flight frequencies to Istanbul by offering a new route. As well as the already existing 24 weekly flights connecting the Venezia Marco Polo Airport to the Istanbul Atatürk Airport, from August 24 the air carrier inaugurates a new connection to the Sabiha Gökçen Airport.

This new flight will be operated daily, thus increasing to 31 the total number of weekly connections between Venice and Istanbul. Turkish Airlines network is the 4th largest flight network in the world and includes 10 Italian cities; Rome, Milan, Venice, Bologna, Turin, Genoa, Naples, Catania, Pisa and the most recent addition Bari. Turkish Airlines now adds flights to Venice as its 25th flight destination operated from/to Sabiha Gökçen International Airport.

TIME's right to save energy

TIME Hotels Management has partnered with Smart4Power to roll out a new corporate initiative aimed at reducing energy use at a number of its UAE properties.



TT BUREAU

Newly implemented Aircosaver technology reduces total energy consumption by 20 per cent per unit; six participating properties realise cumulative saving of approximately AED 222,000 on electricity.

Spearheaded by Gaetan Lavoie, TIME Hotels' Corporate Director of Technical Services, Smart4Power was commissioned to conduct an initial energy audit, which revealed that window and split air-conditioners were responsible for roughly 60 per cent of total energy consumption and associated electricity bills at the company's six Dubai and Sharjah-based properties. In order to address this high level of consumption and determine a more sustainable and cost-effective alternative, TIME charged Smart4Power with responsibility for testing



(L-R): Frederic Cantin, Energy Conservation Executive, Smart4Power; Gaetan Lavoie, Corporate Director of Technical Services, TIME Hotels; Andreas Kolb, Co-Managing Director, Smart4Power.

the latest generation Aircosaver technology, which improves the energy efficiency of existing A/C units.

"The results of the testing showed that implementation of the Aircosaver technology could reduce the energy consumption of each unit by 20 per cent; and

that translated into an extremely feasible payback period of just 16 months. To date, we have installed Aircosaver at the TIME Grand Plaza, TIME Oak Hotel and Suites, TIME Opal, TIME Crystal, TIME Topaz and Oak Villas & Residence sites," said Mohamed Awadalla, CEO, TIME Hotels.

Aircosaver employs a smart control device that optimises the operation of the compressors in direct expansion air conditioners, which include window, ductless and ducted split, and package unit types.

We constantly try to achieve further energy savings, and are identifying ways to improve the energy efficiency of the chiller system. Lavoie stated,

"Specific solutions under evaluation include implementation of a chiller plant management system, and an evaporative cooling wet wall system. Combined, these improvements could save as much as 30 per cent of the properties energy consumption."

TIME Hotels' official company policy includes a dedicated environmental section with listed and time-linked priorities such as the reduction or elimination of pollution through enhanced preventive maintenance, the effective use of environmentally friendly materials, and the reduction of utilities usage through the effective implementation of best practices. In addition, two of its busiest properties, the flagship TIME Oak Hotel & Suites and TIME Grand Plaza Hotel are both international Green Globe certified.

For a cause

◆ The flagship TIME Oak Hotel & Suites and TIME Grand Plaza Hotel are both international Green Globe certified

◆ Aircosaver technology could reduce the energy consumption of each A/C unit by 20 per cent

Making dream weddings a reality

Plan every detail of a dream wedding with the help of experts at 'The Address Wedding Fair 2015,' the leading wedding fair in the UAE, organised by The Address Hotels + Resorts from September 25 and 26, at the Symphony Ballroom, The Address Downtown Dubai.



TT BUREAU

Now in its seventh edition, the The Address Wedding Fair 2015 will cover wedding concepts to the execution of pre and post-wedding events, hair dressing, make-up, transportation, flowers, food and accommodation for guests, among others. Brides-to-be and wedding planners can meet with experienced wedding planning professionals to determine the latest acces-

sories, discover the best photographers, decide on charming wedding invitations, pick the best entertainment options and interact with travel consultants to finalise honeymoon trips.

Guests are also encouraged to browse the crystal studded furniture, elegant chairs and banquet carvers or meander round the interactive live demonstrations or view the celebration tables, great displays,



The Address Downtown Dubai

and take the opportunity to network with other patrons. The venue will also wear a spa ambience and visitors will have the opportunity to experience a hand, shoulder or head massage by therapists from all spas at The Address Hotels + Resorts.

The latest trends in wedding dresses, hair styling for brides, and designer wedding cake with an expert French Executive Pastry Chef

are other aspects that participants can plan. Would-be couples will get numerous opportunities to meet with The Address Wedding Consultants to map out the wedding ceremony while vendors and visitors can liaise around a particular product at joint stations – allowing clients and industry professionals to learn, understand and educate each other on what makes the perfect wedding.



The Palace Downtown Dubai

Participating properties at the 'The Address Wedding Fair 2015' include: The Address Downtown Dubai; The Address Dubai Mall; The Address Dubai Marina; The Address Montgomerie Dubai; and The Palace Downtown Dubai. Leisure assets of Emaar Hospitality Group include Dubai Marina Yacht Club; Dubai Polo & Equestrian Club; and Arabian Ranches Golf Club.

Further, from August 20 to September 24, couples can upload their couple pictures to any social media account such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest under the #TheAddressWeddingFair with the chance to win a bridal gown and two dresses for a bridal party, supplied by Saks Fifth Avenue and made by Japanese-born American fashion designer, Tadashi.



The Address Montgomerie Dubai

Air Seychelles

Abu Dhabi

Roy Kinnear joins Air Seychelles as its new Chief Executive Officer. Kinnear joins Air Seychelles from strategic partner Etihad Airways, where he held the position of Senior Vice President – Revenue Management and Planning. During his three decades in the airline industry, Kinnear is known for delivering leading practices across the commercial and financial operations. Kinnear started his career with British airline, bmi, holding the position of General Manager Revenue Optimisation, before moving to Bahrain to become Head of Network Revenue Management at Gulf Air from 2002 to 2006.



Royal Rose

Abu Dhabi

City Seasons Hotels has appointed **George Demitry** as General Manager of their recently open Royal Rose Abu Dhabi. Demitry moves in from City Seasons Muscat where he was general manager for the past two years. An Egyptian national, he brings along more than 17 years of experience in the hospitality management spanning 8 local and international brands of which three were hotel openings. At Royal Rose Abu Dhabi, he will oversee the 5-star property's operations, while working on its F&B expansion and positioning in the capital.



Atana Hotels, Musandam

Oman

Khaled Elwan has been appointed as Cluster General Manager for Atana Hotels, Musandam, Oman. A native raised in Kuwait, Elwan joins Atana Hotels with an impressive track record from five star international hotel chains in the UAE, Qatar, Egypt, Morocco and Bahrain. He is responsible for both Atana Musandam and Atana Khasab hotels, overseeing operations, development of team members and supporting hotel's sales and brand awareness activities.



Etihad Airways

Seoul

Etihad Airways has appointed **Jinmoon Ahn** as General Manager for Korea, based in Seoul. Ahn will lead the Abu Dhabi-based airline's commercial strategy in South Korea and will be responsible for further strengthening Etihad Airways' partnerships with travel trade partners and corporate customers. Ahn held a number of sales and marketing roles at Air France-KLM before joining Etihad Airways in 2010 as Sales Manager Korea, the year Etihad Airways commenced daily flights between Seoul (Incheon) and Abu Dhabi, bringing with him more than a decade of airline sales experience.



Kazakhstan

Etihad Airways has appointed **Robert Douglas** as its General Manager for Kazakhstan. He will lead the airline's commercial operations in Kazakhstan. Douglas' career spans more than 30 years, including over 10 years with Etihad Airways, prior to which he worked with British Airways and its partner airlines in more than 10 countries, including Kazakhstan. He joined Etihad Airways in 2005 as the Manager for Northern India and Nepal and later served as the General Manager for Indonesia for seven years before moving to Yerevan as General Manager for Armenia.



Grand Millennium

Dubai

Mohamed Abbas Elaraki has been appointed as Director of HR at the Grand Millennium Dubai. Elaraki is a seasoned professional who has been associated with a number of 5-star hotels based in the UAE for over a decade. Just before joining the Grand Millennium Dubai, he was working with Rotana Hotels – Dubai. In the past, he was associated with Crowne Plaza Hotel – Dubai, and Hilton Corniche Residence - Abu Dhabi.



Sachin bats for Dubai

Musafir.com and Dubai Tourism have announced a joint campaign to promote Dubai as a key destination for Indian travellers. The campaign launched in Dubai as Musafir.com marks 10th anniversary in the UAE and announces regional expansion plans.

 **SUSMITA GHOSH**

The partnership, which will seek to build awareness and boost inbound tourism, was officially launched in the emirate by Sachin Tendulkar, the international cricket legend and Musafir.com's brand ambassador.

The new initiative will highlight the wide range of cultural, leisure and entertainment options available for vis-



Sachin Tendulkar with Issam Kazim, CEO of Dubai Tourism, and Sachin Gadoya, Managing Director, Musafir.com

India is a hugely important market for Dubai, consistently ranking among our top five feeder markets and with approximately ten per cent of the emirate's total number of international overnight visitors coming from India last year

Issam Kazim
CEO, Dubai Tourism

itors to Dubai. To assist in showcasing the vast array of attractions in this dynamic city, Tendulkar visited several of Dubai's best-known landmarks including Burj Al Arab and the Palm Island.

"I've had an absolutely fantastic time in Dubai this week," commented Tendulkar. "On a personal level, Dubai has always been my favourite

destination for its rich cultural heritage, spectacular scenery and diverse leisure and entertainment options. I am thrilled to be a part of this great initiative and cannot wait to share my experiences with friends and family on my return to India."

"India is a hugely important market for Dubai, consistently ranking among our top

five feeder markets and with approximately ten per cent of the emirate's total number of international overnight visitors coming from India last year," said **Issam Kazim**, CEO, Dubai Tourism.

"Our ongoing partnerships and collaborations with online travel agents play a vital role in helping us realise Dubai's Tourism Vision for 2020, which aims to welcome 20 million annual visi-

decade," said **Sachin Gadoya**, Managing Director, Musafir.com. "Today, we offer flights on over 270 airlines, rooms in over 85,000 properties and much more to individual travellers and over 7,000 companies across the UAE. It is now the right time to build on this success and take our business to the next level by expanding our presence to Saudi Arabia and Qatar," he commented.

As the UAE's first premium-experience travel website, we are proud to have played a key role in the development of Dubai's travel industry over the past decade

Sachin Gadoya
Managing Director, Musafir.com

tors by 2020. The new campaign with Musafir.com will allow us to reach even more Indian travellers and encourage them to visit Dubai and experience everything the Emirate has to offer," he added.

"As the UAE's first premium-experience travel website, we are proud to have played a key role in the development of Dubai's travel industry over the past

The launch of the new campaign represents an important milestone for Musafir.com, as the popular travel provider celebrates its 10th anniversary in the UAE.

During the event, Musafir.com revealed a number of product updates — including a new mobile travel app — and outlined ambitious expansion plans, with regional launches in Saudi Arabia and Qatar before the end of 2015. 📱



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