

All eyes on Germany@ITB Berlin

Celebrating its 50th year, ITB Berlin is scheduled to take place from March 9-13, 2016, at Messe Berlin. Parallel with the trade show, the ITB Berlin Convention will be held from March 9-12. Spokespersons of the five participating emirates share their view on the importance of the European market with a key focus on Germany.



19th year at ITB

Sharjah has a long association with ITB, and will be participating in the show for the 19th consecutive year this March. Our



participation this year will enable us to generate more interest on the diversity of Sharjah's tourism products - its rich heritage, culture, museums, cultural centres, and diverse leisure options. Sharjah has always enjoyed popularity from the German outbound market as a cultural destination, and therefore is looking to tap into the potential of ITB Berlin to draw more visitors from Germany in the coming years. SCTDA also aims to utilise the broad platform offered by ITB Berlin to attract more investments into the emirate. This year the Shariah stand captures heritage. food, culture, traditions and a showcase of new destinations to attract visitors.

H.E. Khalid Jasim Al Midfa

Chairman Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority

Germany: top market for Aiman

According to a statistics report of 2015, there were 324,104 tourists from Europe. Ajman is known for its untouched beaches and Emirati heritage. German tourists travel to this region for two main incentives: culture and good weather. Therefore in order to at-



tract more German tourists, Ajman Tourism Development Department (ATDD) will lead an official delegation to ITB-Berlin with a number of hospitality sector. This year Ajman Tourism will utilise ITB as a platform to launch their new brand identity.

Faisal Al Nuaimi

General Manager, Ajman Tourism Development Department

3 million tourists from Western Europe

The region is a key focus for Dubai Tourism, with Western Europe being Dubai's second highest regional contributor to visitor volumes in 2015, contributing 21 per cent of the 14.2 million overnight visitors welcomed over the course of the year. The emirate saw



nearly three million tourists arrive from this region, marking a 6.1 per cent year-on-year increase. In 2015, 21 per cent of inbound tourism to Dubai came from Western Europe, which was the second highest regional contributor to visitor volumes.

Issam Kazim

CEO, Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DCTCM)

62.5% tourists from Europe to RAK

Europe represents 62.45% of our international visitors and our primary source markets in Europe are Germany, the UK and Russia. We have seen a 6% increase year-on-year in visitor figures and a total revenue growth of 12.4%. Much of this growth can be



attributed to the increased demand from key markets across Europe, with a 24.7% increase from the UK, and a 1.6% increase from Germany. German visitor numbers have seen a Year-on-Year growth of 1.6% and it represents 21% of our international visitors.

Haitham Mattar

CEO, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority

Travel trend shifting towards safety

According to the 2014/15 ITB World Travel Trends Report, Germany remains a key contributor to the worldwide outbound travel market. Cruises and long-haul city visits were the preferred choice for the German traveller. The recently announced 2015 An-



nual Hotel Establishment report for Abu Dhabi revealed Germany posted a 7 per cent rise in guest arrivals into Abu Dhabi compared to 2014, from 138,604 to 148,777. Germany ranked as the sixth strongest overseas market in 2015 for Abu Dhabi.

Sultan Al Mutawa Al Dhaheri

Acting Executive Director of Tourism Sector, TCA Abu Dhab



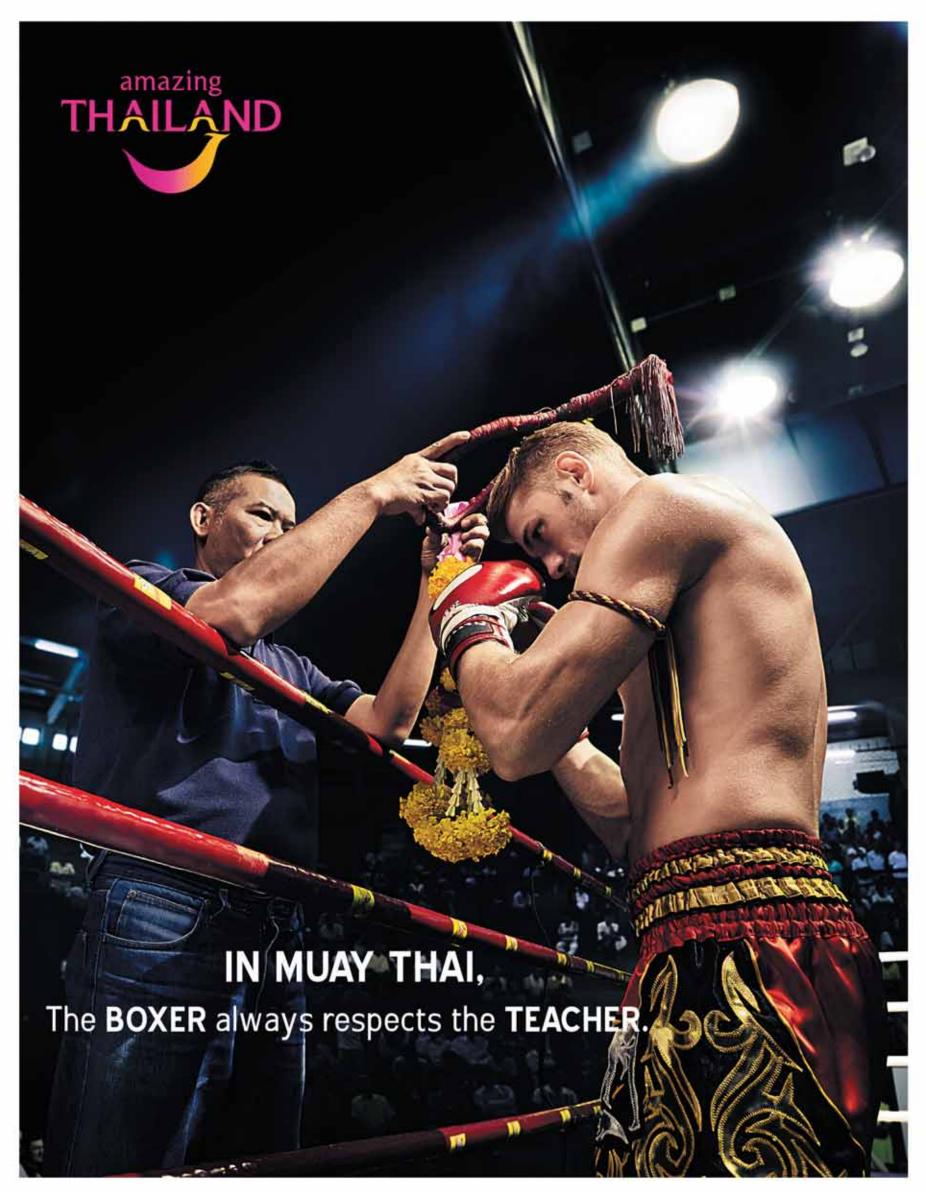
Our simple approach to hospitality means that you can always expect to receive the warmest welcome straight from the heart and an uncomplicated yet professional service delivery. We currently have four different product brands represented across a growing portfolio of properties. To find out more about our present and future prime locations, visit www.timehotels.ae













Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT)
Dubai & Middle East Office,

P.O. BOX 450019 Dubai-UAE,

Tel: +971-4-3250184-5, Fax: +971-4-3250187

E-mail:tatdubai@tat.or.th, www.tourismthailand-middleeast.org



Targeting Ibero markets

Sharjah Tourism recently exhibited at the Spanish travel exhibition Fitur with some of the leading players of the UAE travel & hospitality industry.



It was the fifth consecutive year of participation for Shariah in the Fitur International Tourism Trade Fair. During SCTDA's participation in Fitur, His Excellency Khalid Jasim Al Midfa, Chairman of Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA), addressed a ministerial meeting organised the World Tourism Organisation in cooperation with the Arab House in Madrid on the policies and strategies of tourism development in the Middle East and North Africa region.

The Sharjah delegation held meetings with outbound tour operators, focusing on passengers from South America to the Middle East. Meetings were held with various exhibition organisers for events in countries such as Italy, Spain, China, Japan and France.



Maher Azizia Head of Holidays

It was useful show for 2016 and year by year Fitur takes distinctive place in the markets

Other partners who attended the event shared their comments as well. **Maher Azizia**, Head of Holidays, Cozmo Travels, stated, "It was a useful show for 2016 and year by year Fitur takes distinctive place in the markets, and becoming a leading trade show in the Western Europe. I think



Angela Christodoulopoulou Cluster DoSM Ramada Plaza Jumeirah Beach Residence & Ramada Sharjah

Spanish,
Portuguese, and
Latin America are
developing markets
for the UAE

by attending Fitur next year we will be having more opportunities to maintain our relationship with our buyers as well as to explore a new markets."

Angela Christodoulopoulou, Cluster Director of Sales and Marketing, Ramada Plaza Jumeirah Beach Residence, Dubai, and Ramada Sharjah, says, "This exhibition is focused mainly on the Spanish, Portuguese, Spanish speaking and Latin American markets. These markets are developing markets for the UAE with direct flight connections coming up for more and more locations.

"Guests are looking for alternative destinations and "new" locations so Shariah is an excellent option offering the more traditional feel of the Middle East and is very family-focused. The above mentioned markets are in the developing stage so growth is anticipated within 2016 and the coming years. Travellers realise the safe environment of the UAE and Sharjah in particular, an important aspect that travellers value more. The potential from these markets is very positive as they can just visit Sharjah or use in combination with other emirates or just as a stopover to another destination."

Saudia expands its fleet

Plans are being made to expand the fleet of Saudia to 200 by 2020 and they expect to receive 29 aircrafts in 2016.

TT BUREAU

As part of the fleet expansion and modernization programme of Saudia the third Boeing 787-900 Dreamliner took off for Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, recently

to join the fleet of Saudia, the national carrier of Saudi Arabia. This is the fourth new aircraft delivered by Boeing to Saudia within two weeks, with the Dreamliner

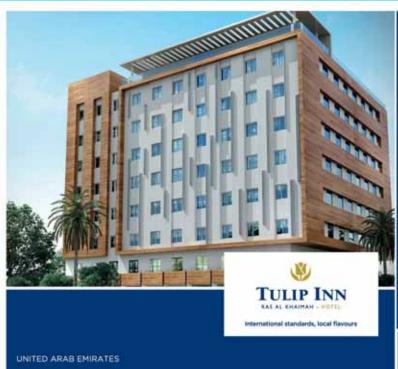
being the third of a total of eight ordered by the airline as part of its fleet expansion and modernization program. Saudia expects to get 29 new aircraft this year. The plan is to increase Saudia's fleet to around 200 by the year 2020.

H.E. Sulaiman Al-Hamdan, President of the General Authority of Civil Aviation of Saudi Arabia and Saudia's Chairman of the Board and Engr. Saleh Al-Jasser, Director General, formally accepted the first three new Boeing aircraft from Ray Conner, Boeing Commercial Airplanes President and



CEO. "We look forward to the 787 becoming an integral addition to Saudia's fleet as we continue our fleet modernisation and expansion as part of our transformation plans," according to Eng. Al-Jasser, Saudia Director General.

Today, Saudia flies to more than 80 destinations and carries more than 27 million passengers annually.



STAY WITH US, AND FEEL LIKE HOME.

The cosmopolitan base in The Rising Emirate, Tulip Inn Ras Al Khaimah Hotel offers ideal accommodation for business & leisure travelers with its strategic location in the heart of Ras Al Khaimah city, easily accessible from all emirates.

The hotel has 102 rooms & Suites, Fresh Restaurant, Champs Sports Bar and Ristretto Lounge, Metting rooms & Keep Fit Gym.

The Tulip Inn Ras al Khaimah is located in walking distance from shopping centers, Exhibition Center and the Free Trade Zone.







ITULIP INN RAS AL KHAIMAH

P.O. Box 13098, Ras Al Khaimah, UAE Tel: +971 7 22 11 222 info@tulipinnrasalkhaimah.com www.tulipinnrasalkhaimah.com

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

EDITORIAL

Technology rules business

arch seems to be a month of more businesses and strong people to people ties between travel trade with important international events such as ITB Berlin and ACE of MICE Turkey taking place. Key stakeholders will gather at these events with a sole purpose of finding key markets which will enhance their business potential. The current travel trends seem to shift a lot more than may be a few months or years ahead.

Technology plays a pivotal role in today's travel and tourism sector and so does security. For travellers today, a mobile phone will serve as his or her security apart from finding a destination which is secure enough to spend their leisure or business meeting. Mobile centric technology is the way forward and even at ITB Berlin there will be discussions on present digitalisation trends.

European market is very valuable to the Middle East with Germany playing an important role. As the countdown to 2020 has begun, all stakeholders are making constant efforts to promote the destination to achieve the set target of tourists. ITB Berlin targets 6.5 billion worth of business deals as they celebrate their 50th edition in Messe Berlin. It is a very important platform for all markets such as leisure, MICE and business with participation from over 180 countries with 10,000 exhibitors.

Some of the key highlights of this year will be integration in the tourism employment market and effects on tourism flows. The refugee situation is another area which affects not just politically but in the field of tourism as well. Responsible tourism will be a key focus this year as scientists and experts will provide in depth accounts and tourism professionals will relate their practical experiences on flight and migration. Another key factor in focus is security, the recent months have witnessed many issues pertaining to it. The latest findings in connection with migration, flight and tourism will be presented with analysis of the influx of refugees across Europe which poses challenges for countries such as Jordan, Turkey, Greece and Italy.

Connecting Africa and Dubai

RwandAir is the only carrier connecting Kenya's coastal city Mombasa to Dubai. In 2016 they will affirm the airlines' commitment to become an African airline of choice with the scheduled network and fleet expansion.

ur current routing in the Our current rouss. we operate daily flights to Kigali, Rwanda (four weekly non-stop flights to Kigali and three via Mombasa, Kenya). Our average load factor is 70 per cent, operated by Boeing 737-800 NG, the first Boeing Sky Interior in Africa.

UAE is an important market for RwandAir due to its dynamism as a hub for global commerce coupled with its strategic location in relation to Africa. UAE was key to help unlock Rwanda's trade linkages and opportunities. Subsequently, our Dubai traffic consists mostly of African traders conducting business in Dubai.

Some of the notable travel trends emerging from the market consists of a rise of digital innovation and social media that has seen

UAE national carriers do pose a great deal of competition but thanks to our loyal customer base, we have seen a sustained growth

free visas for transit passen-

gers in Kigali. Leisure seems

to be growing and trending

and RwandAir seeks to play

a big role here by encourag-

ing outbound leisure travel

to its key destinations such

as Rwanda (Kigali), Kenya

(Mombasa and Nairobi),

South Africa (Johannes-

burg) just to name a few in

the network.

We conduct Fam trips for the travel trade to create awareness of our route network and to expose in particular Rwanda's MICE potential and Africa's in general

players in these industries seek to engage with customers directly. As a result of this, travellers are more empowered and are gaining control over the entire travel experience. Customers are looking for added value and RwandAir is at the forefront of this with initiatives such as over the years and that informs our growth plans. We are looking to grow our Dubai capacity in the next coming months.

The travel agents (or the travel trade) account for well over 70 per cent of our revenues hence it is imperative for us to strategically manage the agency relationships. We believe that this strategic approach goes a long way to build loyalty, credible and trusted relationships and better results that are sustainable on a long term basis. For that, we have in place performance based benefits for the various agents.

ship-themed resort famous for hosting some of Africa's finest family entertainments and animation programs, including unique themed journevs across the seven seas. culinary extravaganzas, and special music, fashion, comedy and acrobatic shows.

Our next trips will see travel operators and the media head to Kigali,



We conduct agents Fam trips for product knowledge, product presentations, best practice sessions among other initiatives to get close to this key customer - the travel agent!

We are conducting travel trade and media Fam trips to create awareness of our route network and to expose in particular Rwanda's MICF (Meetings.Incentives.Confe rences & Events) potential and Africa's in general. We recently sponsored a media Fam trip for top UAE Media to Mombasa to showcase the only direct flight service from Dubai (Dubai/Mombasa/Dubai) from the February 10-13, 2016. This was hosted at Voyager Beach Resort, Mombasa, a vibrant.

and home to RwandAir. This is a country where green, mountainous landscape has earned it the nickname 'Land of a Thousand Hills.' Its renowned Volcanoes National Park is home to mountain gorillas and golden monkeys.



Royal Brunei, Turkish Airlines codeshare

Royal Brunei Airlines (BI) has signed a codeshare agreement with Turkish Airlines (TK) which allows for passengers to connect from Bandar Seri Begawan to Istanbul via Dubai (and vice versa). The agreement was signed in Antalya,

Turkey by **Karam Chand**, Royal Brunei Airlines' Chief Commercial and Planning Officer; and **Dr. Ahmet** Bolat, Turkish Airlines' Chief Investment and Technology Officer, Under the codeshare agreement, Turkish Airlines will add its 'TK' code to Royal

Brunei Airlines oper operated Begawan to Dubai and vice versa. On

a reciprocal Royal Brunei Airlines add its 'Bl

code to Turkish Airlines flights from Istanbul to Dubai and vice versa.





Assistant Editor : Shehara Rizly

Ruchi J Singl Assistant Desk Editor : Shivani Kaul nt Manager : Crisna De Guzmar Circulation Manager : Ashok Rana

is published by SanJeet on behalf of Durga Das Publications

Private Limited

Printed at System Graphics India Pvt. Ltd. A-1, Naraina Industrial Area, Phase-I, New Delhi - 28 India

Offices:

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

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

UAE: 21-02, P.O. Box 9348, Saif Zone, Sharjah, UAE
Ph.: +971 6 5528954
Fax: +971 6 5528956
E-mail: uae@ddppl.com

is a publication of Durga Das Publications Private

are advised to seek specific advice before acting on information contained in this publication which is provided for general use, and may not be appropriate for the reader's particular circumstances. Contents of this publication are copyright. No part of or any part of the contents thereof may be reproduced, stored in retrieval system or transmitted in any form without the permission of the publication in writing. The same rule applies when there is a copyright or the article is taken from another publication. An exemption is hereby granted for the extracts used for the purpose of fair review, provided two copies of the same publication are sent to us for our records. Publications reproducing

could face legal action.

The publisher assumes no responsibility for returning any material solicited or unsolicited nor is he responsible for material lost or damaged.

This publication is not meant to be an endorsement of any specific product or services offered. The publisher reserves the right to refuse, withdraw, amend or otherwise deal with all advertisements without explanation.

All advertisements must comply with the Indian and International Advertisements Code. The publisher will not be liable for any damage or loss caused by delayed publication, error or failure of an advertisement to appear.

Turkish Airlines' 300th aircraft

Considered the youngest and most modern fleet in Europe, Turkish Airlines strengthens its presence in global aviation with the addition of its 300th aircraft.



The addition of the 300th aircraft to its fleet was celebrated at the Atatürk International Airport in the new hangar of Turkish Technic Inc. The ceremony saw participation of Turkish Airlines' Board Chairman M. Iker Aycı, Turkish Airlines' CEO Dr. Temel Kotil,

Airbus' Regional Sales Director/ Middle East and Europe, **Douglas Anderson**, and Airbus' Contracts Director **David Bonnel**, as well as a large number of business partners and media representatives.

In his address, Turkish Airlines Board Chairman noted that the airline has set great targets to take measured steps towards becoming the world's leading airline. Indicating that Turkish Airlines has also acted as a "diplomatic" pioneer due to the far-reaching flight network, Aycı said, "As Turkish Airlines, we are at the top among the fastest growing airlines worldwide. Turkish Airlines received its 100th aircraft in August 2006. 73 years after its establishment. Nearly seven years later, in March 2013, its fleet reached 200 aircraft. With 300 aircraft in our fleet today, we are the world's 13th largest airline in terms of fleet size, and with 39 new aircraft to be added by the end of this year, Turkish Airlines will be even more prominent at the international level with its young fleet.

"We are determined that Turkish Airlines will have the strongest base in international aviation with its highly-qualified workforce and its young, modern fleet. We have made huge efforts to reach that objective as a big family working together. The 300th airplane is one symbol of our determination to reach the vision and objectives that we've set."

Anderson commented, "We would like to congratulate Turkish Airlines on the milestone of increasing its fleet to 300 aircraft and we would like to express our gratitude for their confidence in Airbus aircraft. Ten years ago Turkish Airlines was operating with only 7 wide-body aircraft and today they have more than 70. We are honored to be a partner in their growth and look forward to be a part of their growing fleet in the coming years."

Powered by CF6-80E1 engines, the A330-300 is the first aircraft to be equipped with galleys from TCI -Turkish Cabin Interiors- and economy class

seats from TSI -Turkish Seat Industries- all manufactured in Turkey.

The new aircraft will be deployed on existing medium and long-haul routes from the Turkish Airlines Istanbul hub, adding more capacity to enhance the airline's growth strategy.









Resort - Ras Al Khaimah

Who says you can't mix business with pleasure!

Take your team to a place where they can work hard and play hard, take them to The Cove Rotana Resort – Ras Al Khaimah. Only an hour drive from Dubai.

This magnificent 5 star resort offers a tranquil and efficient working leisure environment, excellent meeting facilities and variety of dining and entertainment options.

To find out more and make your booking, call +971 (0)7 206 6000 or send us an email at sales.cove@rotana.com



P.O. Box: 34429, Ras Al Khaimah, UAE T: +971 (0)7 206 6000, F: +971 (0)7 206 6200, cove.resort@rotana.com

rotana.com

HOTELS

Tilal Liwa's renewed products for 2016

Khaled Sharabassy, GM, Tilal Liwa Hotel talks about the importance of constantly renewing its products.

TT BUREAU

Germany has remained the top feeder market for hotels in the UAE for years now. Sharabassy points out, "It is mainly because of the traditional Arabic ambiance of the hotel that every tourist is looking for when they get to the UAE and also the quality of our services."

He says the hotel plans to improve its position as a unique and affordable desert and leisure destination in 2016 and to further that they have come up with special packages and tailor-made promotions. Sharabassy says. "A new set of themed nights were recently introduced in our main restaurant, Al Badiya, covering a wide range of dishes from Spanish tapas to culinary flavours of Asia. We also launched a



Khaled Sharabassy General Manager

new concept for Layali bar, a place perfect for those Latino music lovers as our new Columbian band will serenade you along with the hippest themes like ladies night and cocktail fiesta." They have enhanced their leisure and desert activities, acquired new models of quad bikes, horseback riding off-site, camel ranch visit, renovated its gym and improved its spa experience, he adds.

Outrigger taps Gulf tourists

The untapped Asian region calls on the Gulf source markets to enable discerning guests into their properties. **Silvia Collepardi**, Director of Sales & Marketing, Outrigger Konotta Maldives Resort, shares details of the property.

TT BUREAU

utrigger, an intimate tropical retreat within Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll in the south of Maldives, offers a wide selection of one, two and three bedroom villas to accommodate couples, families and group of friends. Their three-bedroom Grand Konotta Villa offers complete privacy and 24 hour butler service. All guests are entitled to transfers from Kaadedhdhoo Airport by luxury yachts which provide special complimentary amenities and services. The signature Nala Rah - Japanese style Teppan Grill and Raw Bar restaurant is important to mention and their premium signature, Navasana Spa, which includes a Hydro Therapy Pool as well.

Guests are offered unique experiences in the Maldives along with person-



Silvia Collepardi Director of Sales & Marketing Outrigger Konotta Maldives Resort

alised watersport and dive activities by using state-of the art equipment as well as marine biology courses. They cater tailor-made gourmet experiences for any dining option selected by the guests. The Resort is entrenched with a local Maldivian "Sense of Place" experience following Outriggers' world famous heart felt hospitality.

Special Spring time offer for UAE

Currently Outrigger Hotels and Resorts is promoting a Spring time offer that caters to both couples and families offering half board meal plans, roundtrip transfers and free stay for sales meetings with main partners, Fam trips and media trips. The aim is to develop brand awareness and position the resort as a five star in the market. They are also working on

We are already getting bookings mainly from direct guests and we are convinced that by working with Gulf Reps and by strengthening our presence in the market that our number of arrivals will definitely increase

children under 12. Their aim is to highlight their twobedroom Beach Pool Villas and the three-bedroom Grand Konotta Villas that will be perfect for families and groups of friends looking for luxury and privacy.

Role of Gulf Reps

The resort has appointed Gulf Reps as their representative in the region and together they organise some tailor-made packages aimed at special groups who require team building activities. "We think we will attract a good response from this market. We are already getting bookings mainly from direct guests and we are convinced that by working with Gulf Reps and by strengthening our presence in the market that our number of arrivals will definitely increase," she says.



AVIATION MARCH 2016 TRAVTALK 7

Showcasing Antalya to ME

Erol Senol, GM-Riyadh, Turkish Airlines, talks about showcasing Belek Antalya to the travel agencies in the Middle East region.



Over 2500 B2B meetings took place with 250 travel agents and 90 media personnel from the MENA region when they attended the inaugural summit for Gulf countries in tourism and investment at the Rixos Premium hotel in Belek Antalya with the compliments of Turkish Airlines, Antalya Governorship, Antalya metropolitan municipality and invest in Turkey.

Dispelling fears about the Russia-Turkey conflict, Senol says, "Everyone is worried after the Russian conflict with Turkey. Actually Antalya is very popular with Russians. Every Russian knows Antalya. There are 150 hotels in the Belek region alone. But in the Middle East not many people know about Antalya so what we plan is to show them a bit of Antalya. We planned to bring some travel agencies in



Erol Senol General Manager-Riyadh Turkish Airlines

In the Middle East not many people know about Antalya so we planned to bring in some travel agencies from the ME and North Africa

the Middle East and North Africa." Speaking on the participation at the summit, Senol says, "Turkish Airlines planned it with Turkish agencies so that we could encourage the businessmen and agencies. There are so many partners in this. We also brought 35 Turkish airlines staff with them.

On their target market, he said, "Our aim is the summer and we chose this month to help increase the business. We planned B2B meetings as the travel agent should be well equipped with information to disseminate and media support would inform the importance of the region.

"Antalya is not only popular for the sea but also the sun. We have green areas as well. We hope that this meeting brings a lot of benefits. We would do it more professionally next year. All travel agents and media were selected by Turkish Airlines. We brought more than 350 people here, which is quite a large number. And it's not easy to handle that many people in one hotel for a week"

Dubai-Jaipur on SpiceJet

India's budget airline SpiceJet will be the first private airline to fly direct from Dubai to Jaipur, adding another nine more cities in India to begin their presence in the UAE.

TT BUREAU

SpiceJet will operate daily flights between Dubai and Hyderabad and flights on the Dubai and Jaipur route will be operated on all days except Mondays and Saturdays. Dubai is one of SpiceJet's six international destinations – Dubai, Bangkok, Colombo, Kabul, Male (Maldives), and Muscat.

With the launch of these flights, SpiceJet will be serving Dubai direct from 10 Indian cities: Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Pune, Kochi, Madurai, Amritsar, Kozhikode, Jaipur and Hyderabad with connections from dozens of more cities including Kolkata, Chennai, and Bengaluru.

The inaugural flight from Jaipur to Dubai received a grand welcome for the budget carrier SpiceJet. The flag-off to Hyderabad was initiated with a traditional lighting of the lamp followed by a ribboncutting ceremony by **Vipin Narula** - Vice Consul, Consulate General of India, Dubai, UAE, **Manas Ranjan Pattanaik**, Regional Director, India officials from Dubai Airports
Authority, Kishore Babu
and Srikanth from Telugu
Community of the UAE and
top travel agents from the
UAE were also present for
the event.



(L-R) Vipin Narula, Vinay Nambiar, Saif Al Shehi, Manas Ranjan Pattanaik, I.R.V. Rao, Sumant Rautela, and Nawal Kishore, at the flagging-off ceremony at Dubai Airport

Tourism, Middle East & Africa and Vinay Nambiar, Country Head for SpiceJet. Among other distinguished dignitaries who graced the occasion with their presence as Guests of Honour were I.R.V. Rao - Assistant Director, India Tourism, UAE, and many senior

In line with the aviation tradition to mark key milestones, SpiceJet's Boeing 737NG aircraft deployed on the Jaipur-Dubai route was greeted with a grand water cannon salute by Dubai Airport Authority on its arrival.





Your Trusted Travel Partner

www.toptraveltrip.com

(+971-4-5561010



Focus on new markets

Cozmo Travels reaches out to new potential markets, whilst strengthening their current business relationships, informs **Jamal Abdul Nasser**, CEO, Cozmo Travels.



member of the Air Ara-Amember of the first LLC commenced its operations as a full-fledged IATA certified travel agency on May 26, 2010 in Sharjah. "Our immediate priority will be the countries where we have opened recently especially like India, Kuwait, and Bahrain, to bring in profitability. Once we make them profitable then we can focus on new markets. We will continue our expansions in to other countries. Currently, we are looking at Africa, maybe Kenya very soon with satellite operations, and the Far East like Indonesia and Malaysia as well," Nasser states.

In terms of its relationship with Air Arabia, Nasser says it's just like any other travel agency relationship with Air Arabia as an airline. "In 2015, we made over AED 800 million in terms of turno-



Jamal Abdul Nasser Chief Executive Officer

In 2015, we made over AED 800 mn in terms of turnover in all countries where we operate in all businesses

ver in all countries where we operate in all businesses which include: ticket and hotel sales," he adds.

Talking about its plans for 2016, Nasser says, "This year is interesting as we

can see some queries coming up not for the traditional European destinations but new ones such as Eastern Europe like Bosnia, Georgia. They can still have the feel of Europe but at very less cost and people are also exploring some other countries like Mozambique, Cambodia, and this was not really familiar to this part of the region. So definitely there will be a change of the regular destinations. Destinations which could afford or offer more at the lower cost will be the winner this year."

He adds that B2B is very important for Cozmo. "Especially markets where we operate such as India, Saudi Arabia and even in UAE, B2B segment is quite huge, we have a separate department, we are supported by a good booking agent to distribute our content, our products into this B2B markets."

Anantara's 15th anniversary

Banana Island Resort Doha by Anantara is celebrating 15th anniversary of Anantara worldwide from March 4-19.



Since the first property opened its doors in the Thai seaside town of Hua-Hin in 2001, Anantara has grown into a collection of 35 luxury hotels and resorts in city, island and desert settings, across 10 countries. Banana Island Resort Doha by Anantara will organise a diverse range of activities over 15 days that will bring

great value and unmatched delight for guests and visitors. Guests coming to the brunch on March 4 and 5 will receive a 15 per cent discount cards on their next brunch experience, 15 per cent discount at Anantara Spa and Balance Wellness Centre as well as a 15 per cent discount on their upcoming stay at the resort. Anantara Spa and Balance Wellness Centre will host 15



different activities throughout the 15 days. To conclude the celebrations on March 15, Banana Island Resort Doha by Anantara will be marking Earth Hour 2016.

TIME Hotels'day out with sales team

Simulating the challenges of climbing a high mountain was the theme for TIME Hotel's 'Basecamp,' sales training course which took place at TIME Grand Plaza Hotel. The key exercise focused on the team engagements at basecamp level. 14 sales professionals engaged in the two days course to identify common leadership threads that were highlighted and discussed during several theme based role play exercises. TIME Hotels run 'Basecamp,' as the foundation course in the 2016 portfolio of eight sales training modules and two marketing programs.





Tehran resurfaces on British Airways' routes

To expand its connections to the Middle East, British Airways will resume direct flights to Tehran from July 14.



The route will launch as six flights per week service before moving to daily flights from winter 2016, giving customers even more choice and flexibility between London and the Middle Fast.

Paolo De Renzis, Head of Middle East, Africa and Central Asia Sales, British Airways, said, "Iran is a large and growing economy and Tehran is a brilliant business city so we are incredibly excited to be adding another gateway to the Middle East for our customers. The recent lifting

Iran is a large and growing economy and Tehran is a brilliant business city so we are incredibly excited to be adding another gateway to the Middle East for our customers.

Paolo De Renzis Head of Middle East, Africa and Central Asia Sales, British Airways

of sanctions opens up exciting new prospects for Iran as a tourist destination and with its rich heritage, unique architecture and world-class food it's unsurprising Tehran is tipped to be a popular destination for 2016."

The airline has a long history of flying to the city and offered the first scheduled flights between London and the Iranian capital in 1946. Tehran is one of 13 routes British Airways will be launching this year, which include Menorca in Spain, Palermo in Italy, Chania in Crete, Kalamata in Greece and San Jose in California. As well as being a bustling business centre, Tehran is a treasure chest of mosques, fortresses and temples and the city's Tachara Palace is worldfamous for its stunning architecture. Travellers can visit the historical town of Koporak in Yazd, skiers can head to the slopes in Tochal, and savvy shoppers can explore the maze of bustling alleys and stalls in Tehran's oldest and biggest bazar. 🚓

AI Express to RAK from March 28

Air India Express, a low-cost subsidiary of Indian national carrier Air India, will start flying to Ras Al Khaimah four times a week from March.

TT BUREAU

Air India Express will start with four flights per week between Kozhikode (Calicut) and Ras Al Khaimah from March 28, and is looking to expand to a daily service in near future. The growing number of Indian expatriates in the northern emirate had

to cope with limited options from air carriers over the past few years as demand has risen. The new route will help to alleviate those issues.

His Excellency Engr. Salem bin Sultan Al Qasimi, Chairman, RAK Airport and Department of Civil Aviation, said, "I am delighted to welcome Air India Express to Ras Al Khaimah. There was much need for this connectivity, but we also believe that this route may require

more than a daily frequency to satisfy the growing demand. We would therefore urge the



authorities to consider the needs of the passengers and increase seat allocations for high demand sectors."



A COMFORTABLE STAY

Welcome to a world of true Arabian hospitality.

Whether you are visiting for business or leisure, Ramada Hotel & Suites Ajman offers a modern, sophisticated home away from home.

From the moment you enter the lobby, we aim to make your stay as enjoyable as possible, and we pride ourselves on offering outstanding service at all times.

The hotel is situated within easy reach of the main airports in the United Arab Emirates, as well as the UAE's major commercial areas and cultural attractions.



ramadaajman.com | Tel: + 971 6 7031111

YOU DO YOUR THING. LEAVE THE REST TO US."

Remails Hotel & Suites Agner is operated by RHotels under a handhise agreement from Wyndham Hotel Group

Where Leisure is a Pleasure





Located in the heart of new Dubai, the five star Grand Millennium Dubai is conveniently accessible from the city's prime business and leisure attractions. The hotel is within close proximity from prominent shopping malls, beaches, touristic destinations and champion-ship standard golf courses.





You are the Centre of Our World











The 340-room hotel features modernly decorated rooms and newly refurbished serviced apartments. The hotel boasts a range of award-winning restaurants and bars, rooftop pool, a nine treatment room spa and health club, state-of-the-art meeting rooms, a magnificent ballroom and exceptional banquet facilities.

Sheikh Zayed Road, Al Barsha South - TECOM, P.O. Box: 212422, Dubai, U. A. E = T +971 4 429 9999

F +971 4 374 3777 • E reservations.gmhd@millenniumhotels.com • www.grandmillenniumdubai.com



German market crucial for hotels@ITB

Leading hospitality and tourism stakeholders in the UAE will be focusing on various types of travel products but the key focus will be Germany. Some of participating hotels share with their expectations from ITB Berlin 2016.



ITB Berlin is a premier meeting place for the travel industry and represents an unparalleled opportunity for us to showcase and promote these exceptional facilities to a global gathering of trade professionals. Grand Millennium Dubai will showcase a range of award-winning restaurants and



bars, rooftop pool and a nine treatment spa and health club, state-of-the- art meeting rooms, a magnificent ball-room and exceptional banquet facilities, at the exhibition. Germany remains one of our prime source markets given there were 460,000 visitors from Germany to Dubai during 2015, up 7 per cent when compared to 2014. Overall, Europe is a growing feeder market that's important for us and since this is the contracting season it's crucial for us to be in Berlin at this time. By sourcing new contacts and maintaining our links with key travel partners in Europe, as well as looking to new markets such as Africa and South America, the Grand Millennium will remain a preferred option in Dubai for both first-time and repeated visitors.

Oussama Chalak General Manager Grand Millennium Dubai



Ramada Downtown Dubai and Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham will showcase its upgraded products and services during the exhibition. Ramada Downtown Dubai will highlight its central location in Dubai, spacious rooms and competitive rates within Downtown area. Hawthorn Suites by

Wyndham will reinforce its position as a suitable accommodation for leisure and family travellers, as well as for the business travellers. The German market plays in the top 10 of the source market for both Ramada Downtown Dubai and Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham. As the largest B2B trade event, ITB Berlin is an opportunity to meet and network with existing and potential partners, not just from Germany but also across West and Central Europe.

Samir Arora
Cluster General Manager
Ramada Downtown Dubai and Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham

ITB 2016 being in its 50th year is a very special event for Tulip Inn – Ras Al Khaimah. We would be opening door to our first guest in April and would be looking to raise awareness on the brand's differtials at the exhibition. ITB would not only enhance our presence in Ras Al Khaimha but also strengthen



our relation with our partner's. Germany is one of the key feeder markets to RAK and I believe that ITB is a great opportunity to further define the positioning of the hotel as a new 3 star property in the heart of RAK good for business as well as leisure travelers. Qatar Airways is now flying to various European destinations from RAK airport and being in Germany we look forward to maximise on the same.

Hani Shahwan Hotel Manager Tulip Inn - Ras Al Khaimah TIME Hotels will focus deeper on value proposition strategy to tackle the leisure market which is looking for a heightened brand with numerous accessibility to facilities and services. A unique product for five star hotel seekers, combining a value stay with a matching pricing point to their ex-

pectations. Germans have been a main feeder market to TIME Hotels, and the properties have dealt with German nationals understands their needs and wants. With strategic and prominent locations TIME Hotels caters to the business and leisure Germans markets alike. TIME Hotel have witnessed an major increase in the German guests year on year between 2014 and 2015, which indicates that the hotels are delivering heightened products in an irresistible value. We are looking forward for the figures to multiply for 2016, with more customised products and more sensible pricing.

Mohamed Awadalla CEO TIME Hotels L.L.C.



ibis Styles Jumeira will showcase a unique experience which is personalised, fun and flexible. We will promote the 191-key property and market it as an upscale three-star property with premium service in an accessible location within Dubai. Apart from its strategic location, we will highlight

the hotel's stylish rooms and design, and present costeffective rates to tap potential partners during the exhibition. As a newly-opened hotel with about six months in operation, we have already signed with five key agents handling the German market exclusively in Dubai and we are focused on generating more business throughout the year. The German market is in the top 10 of our nationality mix to date. We aim to tap budget travellers from Germany and other European regions as the brand has good presence in these regions.

> Muhammad Mujtaba Haider Hotel Manager, ibis Styles Jumeira

Golden Sands is actively seeking to remain competitive in an ever growing market, and as such we are refurbishing our apartments in stages. Golden Sands 10 apartments were completed over the last two years, however we will be refurbishing its lobby. We will complete the balance



rooms in Golden Sands 3, as well as refurbishing other key public areas. The market has become more competitive and with many budget properties opening in Dubai, it is vital to stay connected and remain competitive. We need to maintain our relationship with our business partners and continue to offer excellent service and facilities to our guests. The hotel apartments receive a good volume of business from Germany and the UK in 2015 and hope to continue to increase the number for 2016 by actively seeking to remain competitive in this ever growing market.

Mohammed Khoori

General Manager, Golden Sands Hotel Apartments

66 ..

We will be participating at ITB with Ramada Plaza JBR and Ramada Sharjah. Ramada Plaza JBR is under the Wyndham umbrella whereas Ramada Sharjah is under Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority. We intend to showcase both properties. We also plan to meet our



collaborators, discuss current market trends and find the best way we can enhance our current cooperation. Germany has always been an integral target market for the UAE. Until recently, this was one of the main target markets for Dubai, and has now expanded to other emirates. From a hospitality point of view, as the UAE has been gaining much interest and attention for being a sought after travel destination we would like to highlight our properties and services to them, including the Wyndham group.

Alper Can Bulcum
Cluster General Manager
Ramada Plaza JBR and Ramada Shariah.

We are participating under the Ajman Tourism Development Department (ATDD) and on top of our properties, we are promoting the emirate as destination to the German and West European Market. We aim to showcase Ajman as a destination on the rise, which is suitable for both leisure

and corporate travellers. Germany is in the top 10 of our nationality mix, with an increase in arrival during the summer season. Through the exhibition, we aim to strengthen our partnerships with the tour operators and DMCs in the region, thus expanding our reach in this market and in nearby countries in that region. We have exceptional support from our existing partners and this annual event is an opportunity to personally meet, visit and thank them. We seek to increase the flow of German tourists with our new promotions during summer and by signing contracts with new partners during ITB.

Iftikhar Hamdani

Cluster General Manager Ramada Hotel & Suites Ajman and Ramada Beach Hotel Ajman

At ITB Berlin 2016, Sharjah National Hotels is represented by its three properties— Oceanic Khorfakkan Resort & Spa, Hotel Holiday International, and Marbella Resort. ITB is an essential travel trade exhibition allows us to assess with business partners actual figures of coming summer season



and discuss other maximising opportunities in addition to touching base of winter 2016/2017 tactics and strategies before concluding all deals at the ATM in Dubai. Germany is one of main feeder markets for Oceanic Khorfakkan Resort & Spa. Having said that Sharjah National Hotels is more focused on many other markets than West European in ITB such as Central & East Europe, Baltic and Balkan Markets in order to moving forward in diversifying source market portfolio to reduce dependence on limited key markets which would help reducing risk due to currency fluctuations and other global socio-political events.

Emad Saeed

Director of Sales & Marketing, Oceanic Khorfakkan Resort & Spa

ITB: Strong participation by 5 emirates

Celebrating its 50th edition, ITB Berlin is set to achieve another milestone with brand new partnerships and programs which will provide greater insight into the travel and tourism industry. The leading travel trade show, to be held from March 9-13, 2016, will see strong participation from five of the seven emirates in keeping with their targets for Expo 2020. The provided in t



Elaborate on the importance of the Middle East at ITB Berlin?

There is a high level of demand from the Middle East once again this year. Occupying Hall 22 and 23, the Arab countries will be just as strongly represented as last year. ITB Berlin always sees a strong participation from this region. About five per cent of the exhibitors at ITB Berlin come from the Middle East & North Africa (MENA) region. The European and German markets are very important to these countries.

How many emirates will be partcipating this year?

The emirates of Dubai,



David Ruetz
Head

Abu Dhabi, Ras Al Khaimah, Ajman, Sharjah, and Qatar, will be strongly represented at ITB Berlin this year.

Office the trade show?

Bookings are stable compared to last year. Arab countries such as Egypt, Jordan,

Morocco, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have already secured their places. The Emirates Airline is also expanding its booth space this year and is certain to cause

Berlin. The trade show will unite supply and demand from around the world again and send out an important message for the future. The high level of demand from

The trade show will unite supply and demand from around the world again. The high level of demand from Asia and the Arab countries and the growth of popular markets such as Travel Technology are proof of how dynamic the global travel industry is.

a stir with its new stand in Hall 22a.

What do you expect from the show this year?

Despite the difficult economic situation in the world market, the refugee crisis and terror attacks, the prospects are excellent for ITB

Asia and the Arab countries and the growth of popular markets such as Travel Technology are proof of how dynamic the global travel industry is. At the same time, up-to-the-minute and forward-looking themes at the ITB Berlin Convention, where leading experts will be taking part in debates, reiter-

ate ITB Berlin's reputation as the travel industry's driving force. Under the heading 'Travel 4.0 – The Digitisation of the Travel Industry' the convention will examine a number of topics, including virtual reality, digital transition and the use of humanoid robots in the tourism industry.

How many companies are participating this year from the Middle East?

The Halls 22 and 23 are fully booked as was last year. Most of the exhibitors have already booked, but bookings from co-exhibitors keep coming in.

QWhat was the amount of total business transacted last year?

According to our esti-

mates the volume of sales at the world's leading travel trade show was around €6.7 billion in 2015. We expect at least the same number for 2016

The Arab Connection

- Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Ras Al Khaimah, Ajman, Sharjah, and Qatar will participate in ITB Berlin 2016
- European and German markets are crucial for UAE
- UAE will be present at Halls
 22 & 23 at Messe Berlin
- About five per cent of the exhibitors at ITB Berlin come from the Middle East & North Africa region
- The Emirates Airline is expanding its booth space this year with its new stand in Hall 22a.



14 travtalk march 2016 HOTELS

Evening cruises with Jalboot

■ Jalboot introduces more services and stops for Abu Dhabi ferry passengers to take a wider look at the waterside of the destination.

Jalboot Marine Network (Jalboot) is the only private scheduled passenger ferry service in Abu Dhabi and it will be expanding its services to include Hilton Corniche evening cruises and a stop at Abu Dhabi's

is a very popular waterfront residential development and through its quality hospitality offering is increasingly becoming a sought-after call for tourists," said Mohammed Roestali, General Manager, Jalboot.

With the addition of Al Bandar to its daily scheduled services, Jalboot now calls at five key locations within the UAE capital and



up-market Al Bandar area. It is also looking at further geographic expansion and currently are on the look- out for partnership opportunities. Jalboot will be participating for the first time at the Dubai International Boat Show from March 1-5, 2016 seeking new potential partners and to promote their vessel.

"We are constantly looking for ways to add further value to the existing service and to expand our reach further afield and believe the Boat Show could provide partnership leads which will enable us to achieve this. Al Bandar

its immediate surrounds, providing residents and visitors with a unique waterside perspective of the destination.

Jalboot currently offers its passenger services aboard the custom-built, Al Dana ferry which can seat up to 40 passengers in business-class style seating and air-conditioned comfort. The new Jalboot evening cruise along Abu Dhabi's world-renowned Corniche, boards at the Hiltonia Beach Club giving passengers the opportunity to see the glorious Arabian Gulf sunset.

Shifting hotel trends in 2016

The tourism and hospitality industry is changing rapidly and finds out how these changes will shape the industry this year. **Chris Bailey**, Chief Operations Officer, Centara, shares his views.

TT BUREAU

How has 2015 been for the hospitality industry? What can we expect in 2016?

Hard work pays off. Nothing can be taken for granted and it's critical to constantly be questioning your product and services and asking your customer if it works for them. I see no change in 2016, perhaps some shift in source markets.

Will we see more mergers and acquisitions? How does this impact the travel

Undoubtedly, recent events will stimulate greater M&A activity in our industry as organisations try to manage their position and ranking. Obviously this impacts the trade through consolida-



Chris Bailey
Chief Operations Office

tion in the form of fewer trading partners, but also sometimes in terms of business frustrations and indeed interruptions, whilst organisations merge systems, people and policies.

Business hotels vs. luxury hotels. What will grow?

If I had to pick one from these two options I would say business, but in reality I think hotels are rarely exclusive to a segment these days and products need to be adaptable to demand. For example, the needs of a business traveller have changed and rather than hotels being the 'provider' of specific facilities, it is see growth, but whether it's the right kind of growth depends very much on the individual businesses. With oil prices at record lows for recent times and with airlines lifting their total ca-

With oil prices at record lows and with airlines lifting their total capacity it will drive demand. However the consumer from many source markets is concerned about their personal economic outlook and security and for sure these will impact decision making

more about them being the 'enabler' – making it easy for guests to conduct their business their way, through connectivity, technology and device integration.

How do you see the hospitality sector shaping up by 2020?

Without a doubt we will

pacity it will drive demand, however the consumer from many source markets is concerned about their personal economic outlook and security and for sure these will impact decision making. This includes chosen location, type of accommodation, duration of stay and of course discretional spend whilst travelling.

Spotlight on leisure segment

This year, Danat Hotels and Resorts' participation at ITB will be focused on the leisure segment aimed at the German market.

TT BUREAU

anat Hotels & Resorts will clearly focus on the leisure segment and attract a major share of their key feeder market at ITB Berlin. Germany is Danat Hotels & Resorts' major feeder market followed by the British. Chinese and GCC tourists. The difficult economic conditions in Russia led to a sharp drop in the number of tourist from this market, thus, DH&R Team is now tapping new markets like Scandinavia, Japan, Brazil, Italy and the US.

Rima Rawass, Group Marketing Manager, Danat Hotels & Resorts, confirms that they will focus on the leisure segment, other than the MICE and corporate segments in 2016. They will also focus on the DMCs in Dubai that bring German FITs and groups to the hotel. "We are looking forward to better per-



Rima Rawass Group Marketing Manager Danat Hotels & Resorts

We are looking forward to better performance from the Russian market due to the block in Turkey and Egypt

formance from the Russian market due to the block in Turkey and Egypt. Russians are considering other destinations for their upcoming holidays and UAE is one of the primary countries that they want to visit. The Russians, Ger-

mans and British tourists love to spend their holidays and enjoy the beaches and the sun of the UAE. Most of our hotels are located on the beach apart from those located in the desert so we are optimistic to get a good share of this market this year," Rawass added.

A part of the plan is aggressive marketing activities in leading German magazines and brochures and offering special and tactical promotions to the German tour operators. At ITB, the DH&R team will also meet new tour operators and wholesalers and check the DMCs in Dubai for new business opportunities.

The team will meet travel agencies, tour operators, wholesalers and DMCs for the leisure business inbound to Abu Dhabi and discuss the rate they will offer to visit Abu Dhabi

Wyndham Dubai Marina opens

Leading property developer First Group opens its first hotel development in Dubai Marina with a 486-room four star property under the Wyndham hotels and resorts brand.

TT BUREAU

Nown as Wyndham Dubai Marina, the handover marks a major milestone for The First Group, which has built its reputation on developing high-quality serviced apartments and aparthotels in Dubai. The hotel will be managed by Wyndham Hotel Group and is set to become one of Dubai Marina's landmark properties when it opens for business later this month.

"The handover of Wyndham Dubai Marina marks an important milestone for the First Group," said **Danny Lubert**, Co-founder and Joint Chairman, the First Group. "In partnership with Wyndham Hotel Group, we will set a new standard for providing affordable, luxury accommodation in Dubai Marina, in line with the Dubai government's vision to dramatically expand the upscale hotel sector."



Daniel Ruff President and Managing Director, EMEA, Wyndham Hotel Group

Tourism is a major driver of economic growth for Dubai and with annual overnight visitors increasing more than 7% in 2015

Daniel Ruff, President and Managing Director, EMEA, Wyndham Hotel Group, said, "Tourism is a major driver of economic growth for Dubai and with

overnight visitors increasing more than 7 percent in 2015, there's a growing appetite within the city for globally recognised brands. like Wyndham, that not only deliver the experience guests demand but also the international reach. As the world's largest hotel company, we bring a wealth of hospitality experience and expertise to a property that, because of investment from The First Group, is sure to become one of the most unique offerings throughout all of Dubai."

Wyndham Dubai Marina, which will house 486 luxurious rooms and suites, is situated in a key location offering stunning views of the Gulf and Dubai Marina, one of Dubai's most exciting districts, as well as nearby Bluewater Island, which will soon be home to the world's largest Ferris wheel, Dubai Eve.

Looking to capture market share

The emirates in the UAE are formulating aggressive campaigns to better market their destination and increase tourist footfalls in the wake of a stuttering global economy. FRITALL speaks to five emirates on their long-term promotional activities.





Unique family destination

Sharjah is the perfect family holiday destination, not just because of its safety, but the suitability of



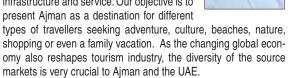
hotels, attractions and its sensible pricing options. Sharjah is working hard at grass roots to partner with outbound stakeholders ensuring that there is real understanding of the product by the main facilitators of outbound holidays. The travel agents are being invited into presentations and workshops and being given travel information packs to encourage their take up of the Sharjah product offering. A large number of outbound operators in Europe have been sent invitations and product enticement postcards and we are optimistic of a good response to our "Date in Sharjah" campaign.

H.E. Khalid Jasim Al Midfa

Chairman, Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority

Diversified tourism options

UAE tourism embraces the sharp growth, mainly due to its strategic location on the crossroad of Europe, Africa and Asia with the great flight accessibility, world-class infrastructure and service. Our objective is to present Aiman as a destination for different

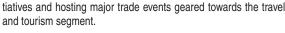


Faisal Al Nuaimi

General Manager, Ajman Tourism Development Department

Brand awareness

B2B marketing strategy in travel and tourism is largely tied to raising brand awareness, creating leads as well as acquiring and engaging travellers. With this in mind, TCA Abu Dhabi works actively with tour operators to raise the brand profile of Abu Dhabi, by implementing joint destination marketing ini-



Sultan Al Mutawa Al Dhaheri

Acting Executive Director, Tourism Sector, TCA Abu Dhabi

Vision 2018 - One million visitors

Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority aims to welcome one million visitors by the end of 2018. The strategy involves increasing the tourism offering for business and leisure travellers and expanding the events sector and infrastructure. This year we are developing a new travel agent train-



ing programme across key source markets, which will enable us to nurture relationships within this integral stakeholder group.

Haitham Mattar

CEO, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority

Dubai Vision 2020

In line with Dubai's Tourism Vision for 2020, Dubai Tourism has been executing strategic, tactical campaigns that focus on promoting those aspects of Dubai that have been identified as most appealing. These include winter sun, summer value, numerous



tourist attractions, as well as messaging that centres on Dubai. Our strategy includes collaborations with tour operators and OTAs, as well as both B2B and B2C campaigns with the ultimate goal of highlighting the diversity and broad appeal of Dubai as a destination.

Issam Kazin

CEO, Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DCTCM)





A premier **City Resort** at the heart of The Walk in Jumeirah Beach Residence, **Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham** offers widely spacious suites ideal for bigger groups and larger families to enjoy all the comfort and convenience of a truly deluxe stay, at more economical rates. Surrounded by a variety of family-friendly options for dining and leisure, it is a short walking distance to the Jumeirah Beach, Dubai Marina Mall and other major Dubai attractions, and a 45-minute drive from Abu Dhabi.





Sincerely

@AJMAN









ism.ae info@ajmantourism.ae P.O Box: 4411 Ajman

Strengthening MICE

The international MICE industry gathered last month in Abu Dhabi to celebrate the 10th anniversary of IBTM Arabia at Jumeirah Etihad Tower. poke to some of the hosted buyers, sellers and organisers on the significance this year's exhibition.



IBTM Arabia has been growing for the past 10 years in Abu Dhabi. Today we have more than 200 exhibitors coming to IBTM Arabia, more than 150 hosts to the destinations and to this event to communicate with the exhibitors here and to seek business opportunities. We are looking to introduce



new initiatives and new tools as a convention bureau

Mubarak Shamsi

Director, Abu Dhabi Convention Bureau



IBTM is a good opportunity to work with different countries with equal minds and it is our second time here. We are looking for the right partner from the Middle East and we are working on inbound to Japan, especially Halal Tourism. It is a good time to see the several companies from the Middle

East and other several places.

Hirokazu Mukumoto

President, Anabas Travel Co. Ltd, Japan

One of the key reasons for Singapore Tourist Board to participate at IBTM 2016 is to ideally promote Singapore as a MICE destination. Our buyers will meet their counterparts from Saudi Arabia, Egypt and ME. Our focus this year would be to get more people from a MICE point of view than as a lei-



sure destination and we see a great potential from regions like UAF and Saudi Arabia

Prasad Shriram Shirke

Marketing and Partnership Manager, Singapore Tourism Board



Through IBTM we will have access to opportunities, we have met a variety of people who are welcoming each and every opportunity we put forward. As we speak, we are expanding in Europe and North America especially to start with Miami and in other countries like Turkey which will be coming soon.

Vishwaieet Chauhan

Head (MICE/Medical tourism/holidays), Satguru Travels

Our future plan is to continue to grow in the region not only in Dubai and Doha but also in places like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Oman. Our intention is to expand the portfolio all over the GCC regions. This is the second year in a row that we are participating at IBTM Arabia. We found it pretty in-



teresting. It's a different lead so far but I think it is the right way for making MICE business in the GCC countries.

David Escolar Diez

Regional Director of Sales Melia Hotels International Middle East

We are celebrating our 10th anniversary this year which means we move to a new venue which is Jumeirah, Ethiad Towers here in Abu Dhabi. So if I may refer to last year, we've got 98% attendees saying they were really satisfied with their participation in the event. You see smiling faces all around and people at their ports

scheduling appointments. I would sum it up as quite positive.

Shinu Pillai Exhibition Manager, IBTM Arabia



We represent the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and this is the second time here. We are focusing on Jordan because India has announced e-Tourist Visa for Oman, UAE and Jordan. MICE being a very important segment for India, our ministry is emphasising more on conventions. We are also focusing on Qatar

which has the highest per capita income here in Middle East.

I.R.V. Rao

Assistant Director, India Tourism, Dubai

Our purpose for participating is networking. We seek new partners and we want to open the Middle East market to our existing customers. 2015 was a difficult year for the MICE industry. However, we did quite well and we want to expose some of the



7 of 9 Services Ltd, Cyprus



We are partnered globally, few of the countries are from UK, Jordan, India, USA and we are interested in bringing the rest of the world to Saudi Arabia through Hill MICE so that's the idea and we think of IBTM as the best platform to connect with hosted buyers from around the globe. This is our first

year and we are meeting some prospective clients already.

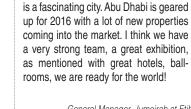
Gazala Arshiya

International Marketing Coordinator, Hill MICE, Saudi Arabia

Our objective of participating at IBTM is to meet new people and get some new contacts. There's such a wide and varied group of people from across the globe that is interested in bringing business to Abu Dhabi so it gives an opportunity to speak to these people directly and face to face which is very important for building relationships.



Director of Sales and Marketing- Venue Management Du Forum and Du Arena, Yas Island Abu Dhabi



We are the proud host of IBTM Ara-



Stefan Fuchs

General Manager, Jumeirah at Etihad Towers Abu Dhabi



IBTM is a very good platform to promote and to show ourselves. This would be our second year here. Last year it was very new to us but this year we have been well prepared for it. We believe it is a very good platform and so far our interaction with clients has been very good. This year the business has

picked up much better compared to last year.

Michael De Souza

Manager, Air India GSA Sales, Abu Dhabi Travel Bureau



The platform we get from IBTM is quite good in concerns of events and meeting new buyers. The good thing I saw here is that the people from CIS, the Middle East coming here to purchase the product and to know what is new in the market. I prefer this kind of platform, IBTM, which you attend so

that in the future we introduce ourselves to new buyers from new regions.

Santosh Punjabi

Regional Manager, Satguru Travels



This is our first time in the Arabian market. IBTM is one of the best shows in networking and opportunities you can have with the incentive world. It was a big attendance and every year I believe it is getting better. After the financial crisis of Greece we have been promoting Greece vastly with new packaging and

a new dynamic with different special promotions.

Pandelis Phillip Radopoulos Vice President of Sales, Tour Greece

We had participated in IBTM Barcelona and I think here it is a great opportunity for the tourism sector and MICE sector companies. It's our first time in IBTM Abu Dhabi. I think the goal is to meet with the people but the most important thing for me is that Dubai and Abu Dhabi has



so much of attractions and at the end of this show we would have a lot of networking. And the fact that people go to the same place, I think there should be something different and that can be found here.

Ozgur Akis

President BRF MICE, Istanbul Turkey

Betting big on Turkey's MICE potential

The 3rd ACE of MICE Exhibition will bring together MICE professionals from across the globe from March 16-18, 2016, at the Istanbul Congress Center and Istanbul Lutfi Kirdar – ICEC. Exhibition Director **Beyza Aksit** throws some light on participation from the Middle East.



What important role does ME play at ACE of MICE?

Turkey is hosting many groups from the Middle East. As ACE of MICE Exhibition, we are aware of the potential in the Middle Fast and that is why we are focusing on the region and bringing hosted buyers from here. We also invite MICE industry companies from the Middle East to AME to promote themselves and make them see the potential in Turkey. We hope AME will give a chance to companies to meet with new contacts from the Middle East. This year there will be 11 companies from the Middle East covering more than 40 square metres.

How is the exhibition this year going to be different from the last?

For two years AME was held at Istanbul Congress Center-ICC. The interest in the show has been increasing each year so, this year the show will be organised in a bigger area as there will be more exhibitors. AME will be held at Istanbul Congress Center-ICC and Lutfi Kirdar - ICEC with the participation of local and international convention bureaus, tourism authorities and all MICE industry companies. This year 'Association of Exhibition and Stand Designers' Workshop & Summit' will be held at AME 2016 and there will be many valuable speakers from corporate companies and the industry at 'Speakers' Corner' in the exhibition area.

What are the expectations for 2016 and expected business this year?

Regarding AME, each

year we are trying to reach out to more destinations and invite them to the show. We make them promote their destination and see the potential of MICE industry in Turkey. We are also working hard to bring qualified buyers both local and international. We are expecting to bring more than 600 Buvers and to reach 350 Exhibitors. Our aim is to organise a beneficial exhibition again for our exhibitors and hosted buvers. After the show in March. we will focus on finding more exhibitors and hosted buvers as well as partners for the next edition of AME.

How much business was transacted last year at AME?

At AME 2015 we had 656 Hosted Buyers, 269 Exhibitors, and the total number of B2B pre-scheduled appointments were 8,551. We find this num-



Beyza Aksit Exhibition Director ACE of MICE Exhibition

Our aim is to organise a beneficial exhibition again for our exhibitors and hosted buyers

ber very effective and we hope there will be more B2B appointments and fruitful business connections between exhibitors and buyers this year again.

How has the growth of the MICE market been in Turkey?

There are 1,300 hotels with meeting facilities and 1,130 event event venues, management companies. 1.890 service providers in Turkey. According to Turkish MICE Industry Survey which was released last year at AME 2015 in February by our company 'Tourism Media Group,' 29.3 per cent of the attendees from Meetings and Event Management companies said their yearly MICE endorsement is between €1 and 5 million and 20 per cent of the companies have €5 million endorsement. 3.8 per cent of the companies have less than €50.000 endorsement.

On the other hand, 22 per cent of the attendees from Hotels and Venues have MICE

endorsement of €100,000–500,000 and 21 per cent have endorsement of €1,000,000–3,000,000. 7.2 per cent of the companies have €10 million of endorsement. All these numbers show us the growing potential of MICE industry in Turkey is still in progress.

How do you see the MICE sector growing in the ME?

Middle East is already playing a role as an increasing destination in MICE industry. We also follow the promotional activities by tourism authorities in Middle Fast and there is a growth that can be seen clearly. I think accommodation and convention facilities, capacity of venues, incentive and event services which are done professionally will make Middle East one of the most popular destinations in the next vears.



Create Memories... Enjoy Dubai

At Ramada Plaza JBR, we will make sure your stay is memorable. You can explore the city & famous sites, go shopping or unwind at the relaxing Jumeirah beach... All just minutes away!

ramadaplazajbr.com | +971 4 439 8888

YOU DO YOUR THING, LEAVE THE REST TO US.

 IDD16) Ramada Worldwide, Nr. The property is independently owned by Golde Sanda Haste LUC and operated upon a management agreement by Wyncham Hast Group Haft Limited or one of its Affaitm.





Create Memories... Enjoy Sharjah

At Ramada Sharjah, we welcome you with friendly service & comfortable bedroom apartments. Perfect location, just opposite Sahara Center & very close to local attractions.

ramadasharjah.com | +971 6 530 0003

YOU DO YOUR THING. LEAVE THE REST TO US.

 CDIEs Ramada Wastowski, Inc. This property is independently owned by Gao. Ilanda Hates LLC and operated under a transgement agreement by Wyndhom Hi. Sinsip (UN) Limited or one of its Affaires.



Antalya: Turkey's next MICE hub

Over 2,500 B2B meetings took place with 250 travel agents from the MENA region during the inaugural summit for Gulf countries in tourism and investment at the Rixos Premium Hotel in Antalya. Repoke to travel trade stakeholders about their experience and ideas for the betterment of the region's tourism sector.



The program was very good and well arranged. Turkey is a beautiful country and very good for Arabic people. It's easy for them to access and the hotels here are really good. We can start promoting Antalya now. There are many good places and since its only one hour from Istanbul, it is



A.H. Jaleeldeen

Senior Travel Consultant , Kanoo Travel, Saudi Arabia

Turkey is a beautiful country and Antalya is a good place with a mix of European and Turkish culture. People should want to visit this to experience a new culture. If you visit Turkey you have to take two or three days to visit Antalya. It is good for family or even newly-wed couples.



Travel Advisor, GTS (Global Travel Solutions), Saudi Arabia

It was a very successful event. Especially the B2B meetings with tour, hotel and property representatives gave us the opportunity to discover more about Antalya and nearby other cities. We are planning to work out some packages for this destination.



General Manager, Al Ahli Travel and Tourist Agency



well-located.

People mostly travel to Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Europe, and a lot of Europeans visit Dubai especially during the Dubai Shopping Festival. We send the locals to all the European countries especially Turkey, mostly Istanbul. Now we have a new destination to offer in Turkey-Antalya. The hotels

in Antalya are nice and beautiful and their beaches are lovely. I will promote more customers to this city next time.

Faisal Nazimuddin

Manager, Al Jamal Holidays, Ras Al Khaimah



It was eventually a very good, fun and educational trip and we as agents were able to meet so many from the region of Belek Antalya with all their interesting places and properties. Once again I would like to thank all sponsors and special thanks to Turkish Airline. Our main purpose to meet with clients

went well and overall an excellent trip.

Abid Ali Shaikh Branch Manager, Al Tayer Travel, UAE

It is an honor to be a part of the first International Mena Region Antalya Summit and I got a change to talk one on one with DMC and hoteliers. We have added a lot of suppliers from our current list and to go further rest assured that it will benefit us travel agents. The trip gave us an opportunity to discuss and promote

Antalya as a destination and I have seen it personally and it is indeed a lovely place to visit for family and couples.

Michael Alonzo

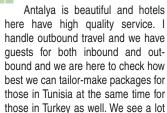
Team Leader, ITL World, Abu Dhabi

Istanbul has always been a hot destination but the summit at Antalya has open windows to see beyond Istanbul. Antalya has all what a leisure and MICE tourist needs and not to forget it has equally good potential for medical tourism as well. We also noticed many upcoming projects which



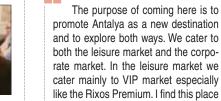
would definitely help in attracting more tourism into Antalya. We are here to see the prospects of the UAE to Antalya in purpose of the MICE movements.

Ahmad Bilal Khan Senior Project Executive MICE, SNTTA Travels and Tours, UAE



of potential in Antalya and will work on how best we can promote for both countries to gain equal travellers.





like the Rixos Premium. I find this place has the potential as it is new and I can offer it to the clients. I am happy to be here because I can

meet new partners and promote my company.

Hemant Baheti

Manager-Leisure Operations, Kanoo Holidays UAE



I would like to thank Turkish Airlines for bringing us all here for the inaugural International MENA Region Antalya Summit in Belek-Serik, Antalya. We got a good opportunity and added value to meet the industry team champions through B2B meetings. UAE is one of the most popular

tourist destinations for visitors from different parts of the world. For UAE nationals and UAE residence's Turkey is one of the prime and frequent tourist destinations.

Shiek Meeran

Key Account Manager-Trade, Gold Medal Travel Group, dnata



I'm very happy to be a part of this event and it's a great opportunity for me as I got to speak to agencies that don't have an international stand and you get to know what they offer by speaking to them directly. We suggest places like Istanbul as a prime destination to UAE travellers and if they want a resort sort

of area we suggest Antalya.

Operations Manager, Globelink Travel UAE



I think this event is important for us as we can get a lot of information and we can give out our own opinions. Antalya is ideal for honeymoons and families. We have a good clientele from the UAE and in Turkey. They prefer Turkey over European countries because of the flight timing, the dura-

tion of the flight, visa on arrival and e-Visa. So I will be promoting Antalya and Turkey as a destination for customers who wish to travel

> Sultan Salahuddin Siddiqui Branch in Charge, Orient Holidays UAE

We have many clients from Tunisia looking for new destinations. We liked what we saw of Antalya and believe we can not only promote Antalya to our clients at home but also promote Tunisia to Antalya. This was a very meeting point as we could meet so many different properties and travel related people who came with lots of information. We are very thankful to the organisers.



Travel Consultant, Atlantis Voyages Tunisia



We are thankful to Turkish Airlines for selecting us for this program. It is a good program where we got the opportunity to meet clients directly. We were able to make many new contacts from Turkey and this is an area which is new to us and it is beautiful. We can definitely promote this as a family vacation, golf holiday or even as a MICE destination as it has hotels with more capacity. Everyone knows Istanbul so now we can sell beyond making this a very new and valuable destination.



Travel Consultant, Bin Ham Travel and Tourism Abu Dhab



RAK on Qatar Airways' network

Qatar Airways will initially operate 4 flights a week to Ras Al Khaimah with the hope that the frequency levels will develop into a daily service in near future.



he new Qatar Airways I flight to Ras Al Khaimah from Doha marked the start of scheduled services between the emirate and the hub of Qatar-Doha. In a short ceremony H.E. Engr. Salem bin Sultan Al Qasimi, Chairman, Ras Al Khaimah International Airport and Department of Civil Aviation, Mohammed Qazi, CEO, Ras Al Khaimah International Airport and Haitham Mattar, CEO, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority welcomed the airline and senior Qatar Airways delegates on the flight. headed by Chief Commercial Officer Dr. Hugh Dunleavy. H.E. Engr. Salem bin Sultan Al Qasimi also expressed his gratitude to H.H. Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah, for his visionary leadership and continuous support in developing the emirate's aviation potential.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His ExcelNorthern Emirates catchment for both inbound and outbound traffic. This is a catchment area of over one million people who will gain



lency Akbar Al Baker, said, "Our network expansion will undoubtedly increase the flexibility and choice for our passengers to travel to and from different emirates in the UAE."

Qazi commented, "Qatar Airways will serve the

much needed long haul connectivity via RAK International Airport, the Northern Emirates' Gateway. RAK International is accessible and convenient to travel through, allowing those local communities who have been waiting to take advantage of these new connections."

Emirates' Festival of Literature

Emirates Airlines in collaboration with Dubai Culture is organising the Festival of Literature (EAFOL) from March 1 to 12, 2016, bringing together over 150 international authors.

TT BUREAU

The Year of Reading, an initiative declared by UAE President His High-

ness Sheikh Khalifa
bin Zayed Al Nahyan,
and supported by the
festival's patron, His
Highness Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid
Al Maktoum, VicePresident and Prime
Minister of the UAE
and Ruler of Dubai, is
being celebrated by
Emirates Airlines
through this initiative.

The Emirates Airlines Festival of Literature (EA-FOL) will be the first initiative to kick off the largest-to-date showcase of city-wide art and cultural events to mark the third edition of the city's umbrella arts initiative, Dubai Art Season, during March 1 to April 30. To highlight the initiative, the Fes-

tival has commissioned a survey to capture and track the reading habits of Dubai's school children. More than 150 writers, poets, illustrawill go on to become the next innovators, thinkers and intellectuals. This is why we are proud to support the Emirates Airline Festival of



tors and thinkers will present a dazzling array of genres, topics and subjects, appealing to audiences of all ages and tastes from March 1-12.

Dina Al Herais, Vice President Commercial - VIP Customer Relations, said, "There has never been more of a need for creative collaboration to inspire a new generation of readers who Literature, the first international literary event in the Year of Reading. As an airline that connects people to their passions, we will help connect the people of Dubai to modern-day authors and writers who speak to all ages, cultures and genres, inspiring local conversations about the written word to create a wealth of wonderful literature activity."



Holidays in heart of nature

Maria Amaral, Director Marketing and Sales Office Gulf Countries, German National Tourist Office, talks about its products in the offing at ITB Berlin and its plans for 2016.



he German National Tourist Office has based its marketing and promotional activities for this year on the theme 'Holidays in the Heart of Nature.' The theme focuses on natural experiences for visitors to the country. With ITB Berlin just around the corner, Amaral says, "Being present at ITB Berlin gives us an opportunity to set up meetings with our German partners and introduce them to our 2016 campaign theme along with the marketing plans we have in place for our GCC office. This event attracts local suppliers, travel agencies and tour operators from around the world and therefore, is a great time to see the suppliers from the GCC market, maintain already existing relationships and building new ones too."

According to figures released by the German Federal



Maria Amarai Director Marketing and Sales Office Gulf Countries German National Tourist Office

Statistical Office, the number of overnight stays by visitors from this region reached 2,076,841 in the period from January to November 2015. The statistics show an increase of 17.9 per cent as compared to the data of 2014 when the overnight stays by Gulf nationals over the same period stood at 1,761,528.

Amaral says MICE is a very large segment of travel within the GCC market and a lot of the travel agencies and

tour operators focus mainly on MICE within Germany. "Frankfurt is one of the most popular cities in Europe for MICE travel according to a number of suppliers in the GCC. We are able to support the local travel agencies and tour operators by providing them with the relevant information, offer them support from our partners who are based in Germany; and also arrange Fam trips for their employees to different German cities."

Tourists from the GCC countries spend an average of €4,344 per trip. All major cities in Germany are able to facilitate the GCC guest with their needs; from halal food, prayer rooms, Arabic speaking staff etc. and no matter what type of traveller the guest is i.e. leisure, corporate, family, couples there is always something for everyone and a tailor made itinerary can be prepared to suit the requirements of all travellers.

Britain's digital campaign

In keeping with the current market trends, the VisitBritain team launched a social media campaign targeting the Millennials from the GCC region.

TT BUREAU

The purpose of the campaign was to showcase to the GCC region the potential holiday areas beyond London which are untapped by tourists from the region.

The 'Great Britain Great Moments' campaign was launched on January 31, 2016, at the Ritz Carlton Dubai, in the presence of **Paul Fox**, Her Majesty's Consul General to Dubai and the Northern Emirates; **Sumathi Ramanathan**, Regional Manager, Asia Pacific and Middle East, VisitBritain, besides key media, tourism trade and industry representatives from the UAE.

Fox said, "The UAE has a long standing relationship with the UK and the bilateral relationship is as strong as ever. The UK's rich legacy of heritage, cultural evolution,



Paul Fox Her Majesty's Consul General Dubai and the Northern Emirates

innovation, vibrant music and some of the best sport in the world, makes it a top destination for Emirati travellers. We have and will continue to invest in this market, with new campaigns, strategic partnerships and innovative and flexible services to maintain the UK's position as the favourite destination for all kinds of visitors from the UAE, whether it be for business or pleasure."

The second phase of the campaign will feature a part-



Sumathi Ramanathan Regional Manager, Asia Pacific and Middle East, VisitBritain

nership with Qatar Airways to drive conversion and provide promotional offers for travellers to fly into some of the Britain's most exciting destinations including Manchester, and the soon to launch Birmingham route.

There were 576,000 international visits to the UK from the GCC in the first nine months of 2015, up 18 per cent on the same period in 2014 with visitors spending £1.2bn, up 6 per cent. △



CONNECTING YOU WITH INDIA. CONNECTING YOU WITH THE WORLD.



With Air India - Star Alliance, fly anywhere in the world.

As part of the world's biggest aviation alliance, our network now spans the entire globe. The Star Alliance network currently offers more than 18,500 daily flights to 1,321 airports in 193 countries. Along with Star Alliance partner airlines, we offer you seamless connections to an array of destinations across every continent.



24 TRAVTALK MARCH 2016 ATTRACTION

SHARUAL offers the best for everyone in the family



The 3rd largest emirate in the UAE, Sharjah is one of the most secure and peaceful countries in the world. Overlooking the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, Sharjah enjoys a unique position in the region. A blend of the old and new, Sharjah is exotic and at the same time sophisticated. The emirate is known for its vibrant festivals and events, cultural offerings and leisure destinations, amid stunning natural scenery and beautiful beaches, making it one of the best places for the entire family.

Festivals and events

Sharjah has been organising a number of festivals and events periodically that highlight its potential as a major cultural and family tourism destination in the Arab world. Among the main festivals and events are Sharjah Light Festival, Sharjah Water Festival, and Sharjah International Book Fair. Held in February every year, the Sharjah Light Festival (SLF) is the first of its kind event in the region. Using art and modern 3D lighting technology over Sharjah's landmarks and historical buildings, international artists create magic and tell the story of the emirate's cultural evolution, rich Emirati and Arab traditions and heritage. The Sharjah Light Festival 2016 marked the 6th year of the highly successful event that has been attracting more families and visitors with each passing year.

The Sharjah Water Festival is held in December every year alongside the UIM F1 H20 World Powerboat Championship, the Sharjah Grand Prix. In December 2015, it also hosted the UIM-ABP Aquabike Class Pro Circuit World Championship - Grand Prix of Sharjah, which was held for the first time in the emirate. The Sharjah Water Festival celebrates the emirati

heritage and love of sea and is a huge draw for families because of its fun events and carnival atmosphere. The Sharjah Grand Prix marks the grand finale of the World Powerboat Championship.

As the oldest and largest event of its kind in the region, the Sharjah International Book Fair attracts a wide range of international publishers, authors and book lovers. One of the top four book fairs in the world, the SIBF attracts more than a million visitors, and thousands of publishers and exhibitors, celebrated authors and critics from around the world. Held in November every year, the Sharjah International Book Fair is a must-visit event in the region for all literary fans.

New developments in Sharjah

Sharjah is witnessing a number of new hospitality and tourism developments that will add to its charm as a popular tourist destination in the region. Al Noor Island in Sharjah's Khalid Lagoon is one of the latest projects, which has been attracting thousands of visitors since its opening in December 2015. The AED 80 million (\$22 million) project, an iconic destination in the emirate, consists of a uniquely designed stream-





Al Qasimiya University during the Sharjah Light Festival 2016

lined structure inspired by the natural environment of butterflies. A key attraction, the Butterfly House, is a nature-inspired structure hosting as many as 500 exotic butterflies brought from Far East Asian countries.

The emirate's latest destination for a family day out is the Al Montazah Park, a 126,000 square metre water themed park featuring eight pulsating rides. The park is also distinct for its massive green spaces and designated facilities for children. For adults and children seeking an extra bit of adventure, the park offers Al Montazah Adventures which consists of a number of gladiator-inspired obstacle courses divided into different difficulty levels.

New hospitality developments include Sheraton Sharjah Beach Resort & Spa, Sharjah's latest and most extensive beach resort nestled amid uninterrupted palm-fringed beaches in the emirate. Another major hospitality development is Novotel Sharjah Expo. a new business hotel that will cater to the requirements of the emirate's various sectors and activities at Sharjah's prime MICE location, the Expo Centre Shariah. Apart from these projects, the Majlis Grand Mercure Sharjah - Resort & Spa operated by Accor is coming up at the Sharjah Corniche as the first Art & Culture themed 5-Star-Deluxe Resort in the luxurv seament.

Sharjah has taken proactive steps to transform its eco-tourism landscape with the launch of a number of projects in this area. Prominent among these is the Kalba Eco-tourism Project which is aimed at preserving the diverse habitats and rich wildlife on the east coast of Sharjah. The location allows visitors to enjoy a peaceful time in natural settings featuring lagoons, mangroves and mountains.

Another landmark eco-tourism project is Sir Bu Nuair Island, located 65 km off the UAE coastline in the Arabian Gulf. The project will host a fivestar hotel and resort, hotel apartments and villas as well as a number retail and leisure offerings amid stunning natural scenery and beautiful beaches.

Sharjah is also transforming a 25,000 hectare area in the Maleiha region of the emirate into a major eco-tourism destination that will reflect the regional culture, history and ecosystem. The project will feature leisure facilities and accommodation such as hotels, resorts, restaurants, and cafes, and Visitors Centre in addition to offering specialist tours of Maleiha's protected areas.

Family attractions

Sharjah has positioned itself as an Ideal Family Tourism Destination, identifying family tourism as one of the key pillars of the Sharjah Tourism Vision 2021 that aims to attract more than 10 million visitors to the emirate in the coming years.

and tourism facilities and events. The emirate offers a variety of attractions for everyone in the family, from dazzling shows and carnivals to enchanting parks and stunning desert landscapes as well as scenic man-made lagoons and an array of cultural and edutainment locations. Shar-

Sharjah is known for its

family friendly atmosphere

jah's outdoors have plenty of activities for families in charming locations such as Al Maiaz Waterfront, Al Qasba, and Khalid Lagoon. Visitors can also choose to

relax with their families in

any of the nearly 55 parks

facilities and amenities.

For the adventurous, the emirate offers water sports, snorkeling and diving activities on its east coast, where families have the option to either camp on the beach or stav in anv of the motels and hotels that line the coast.

Sharjah is known for some of the most colourful festivals and events such as the Sharjah Light Festival, the Sharjah Water Festival and the Sharjah International Book Fair, which have been drawing thousands of

which offer the latest







Diving on the East Coast

families from around the region and beyond.

Sharjah is also a shoppers' paradise with a host of modern malls, stylish shops and boutiques and unique souks and bazaars where shoppers can purchase anything from Oriental carpets to tropical fruits, gold, silver and precious stones, jewellery, gifts and handcrafted souvenirs.

Beaches

Sharjah offers some of the most pristine familyfriendly beaches on the Arabian coast which offer safe, white, sandy palm lined beaches with clear blue seas. Sharjah's east coast is particularly popular for water sports. Visitors to the east coast can either camp on the beach or stay in any of the motels and hotels that line the coast.

Al Khan Beach is the first public beach in Shariah with multiple facilities and activities designed to suit both beach sport enthusiasts and sun-lounging guests. With stand-up paddle boarding becoming one of the fastest growing board sports in the Gulf. Shariah provides opportunities for paddle boarding and surfing lessons and activities at Al Khan Beach, where Surf School Arabia, the first Emirati owned and powered surf school in the UAE and Oman, offers one of the best experiences in board sports.

Cultural breaks

As the cultural capital of Arab region, Sharjah is home to some important cultural and heritage sites such as the Heart of Shariah and the Shariah Arts Area. The Heart of Shariah contains architectural buildings, mosques and markets that bear witness to city's development and evolution through time. It has been registered in the tentative list of World Heritage Sites by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). The Sharjah Arts Area, located adjacent to the picturesque Shariah Corniche, features a handful of exquisitely restored traditional houses as well as an 18th century mosque. This unique area is home to not only the Sharjah Art Museum - the Gulf's biggest art museum - but also Sharjah Arts Centre, the Sharjah Art Gallery, the Emirates Arts Society and the Very Special Art Centre.





25-28 April 2016 • Dubai





Discover the world











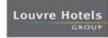
Official Partners











Media Partners





Register now at

arabiantravelmarket.com/register

250 agents at Turkey summit

Over 250 travel agents and 90 media personnel from the MENA region attended the inaugural summit for Gulf countries on tourism and investment in Antalya.

SHEHARA RIZLY

Antalya is a key destination in Turkey which offers an array of naturally beautiful scenic beauty especially in the Turkish Riviera. At the same time the old town will feature the historical and architectural sites from yesteryears which still remain treasured. This year Expo 2016 will take place next month at this agricultural hub with many visitors from around the world.

M. Mustafa Göksu, Senior Advisor - Saudi Arabia/Riyadh, Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Investment Support and Promotion Agency of Turkey (ISPAT), says, "The area of Antalya has a lot to offer the guests from the MENA region. We have hotels ranging from budget to five star, apartment and villa style catering to the discerning travellers of the re-



M. Mustafa Göksu Senior Advisor - Saudi Arabia/Riyadh, Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry ISPAT

Our intention this year is to tap into new source markets which will be a winwin situation for both parties

gion. The many golf courses by international stars and the villas adjacent to the courses can be very important to those who wish to enjoy a golfing holiday. We have high-end brands and the traditional ones which many visitors seek."

Elaborating on the country's plan to expand reach, Göksu says, "Our intention this year is to tap into new source markets which will be a win- win situation for both parties. We brought together 250 travel agents and 90 media personnel from the MENA region so that they could witness the many opportunities available and then tie up with our partners to enable a regular inflow of tourists from the region.

"From our investment and promotion agency we also extend an opportunity not only for tourists but also investors to consider the region with its many resources. We enjoy over \$35 billion annual income mainly from tourism and out of the world's top 100 hotels, 22 of them are from Turkey."

Unique travel with Satguru

Celebrating its 27th year in the industry, Satguru Travel & Tourism plans to expand its business in the Middle East over its existing 66 branches in 56 countries.

TT BUREAU



"We make it our priority that every customer can design their own itinerary with our support and ensure that they have pleasant memories to take home with them," says Chandirani.

"It is my aspiration and objective to provide the best travel experience to the world, be it business or leisure. Our team of professionals is determined to provide cost effective travel management solutions to our valuable clients.



Anil Chandirani President Satguru Travel and Tourism

Satguru Travel had made its mark 66 branches in 56 countries and are all set to expand further. We are humbled and enormously pleased that we are celebrating 27 years of business and thank everyone who has helped us in this journey. We have evolved with the changing times and will continue to soar high with your ongoing help and support," Chandirani adds.

Satguru offers a holistic choice of products ranging from flights, hotel bookings, bespoke holidays for every traveller whether business or



Prakash Lalchandani Vice President Satguru Travel and Tourism

leisure to car hire and insurance, Visa applications and VIP services. They also offer a variety of solutions and services on a corporate level including Expense Management, MIS reports, lodge cards & travel policy compliance. In the wake of crisis management, the company offers a unique solution and a 24/7 approach collectively assisting with requirements. Their flagship corporate booking tool assists with various technology automated solutions while allowing a seamless process in completing bookings.

Capitalising on efficiency

Hiring skilled workers by third party companies like Tierra Mar will be quite beneficial irrespective of the industry as it will reap more returns on your investment.

Tierra Mar is a complete solution provider for B2B companies which seek human resource expertise, profitability, vertically integrated marketing platforms, hospitality consultancy, training and advisory among many other portfolios.

One of the key components of their success is the ability to build a brand that is strong enough to read market visibility and flexible enough to evaluate the market of local business. As one of the best hospitality management companies in the UAE, we are committed to providing a suitable working environment so that every employee associated with their business can derive job satisfaction and a genuine sense of pride.

We have made it their prime responsibility to create a congenial working atmosphere so that everyone within the organisation can achieve his or her maximum potential. There are many needs and requirements depending on the industry or the size of the company. The ing with crisis situations can be a challenge for some of the owners or managers of companies, the experienced team behind the Tierra Mar group offers their superior

The professional team behind Tierra
Mar offers their expertise and skilled
staff as well based on the requirements
of the company. Their efficient quality
management principles are quite
noteworthy as it enhances the investment
and keep resources for the most
productive ones

professional team behind Tierra Mar offers their expertise and skilled staff as well based on the requirements of the company.

Their efficient quality management principles are quite noteworthy as it enhances the investment and keep resources for the most productive ones. Deal-

knowledge and expertise to overcome and find best possible solutions.

Today, the markets have become more challenging as the needs of the consumer are more complex, therefore it is time for companies to be more vigilant thus focusing on hiring skilled staff who are able to tackle any situation without

any problem. The first thing which cross the minds of the industry specialists will be the fact that more money will have to be spent in order to get the services of a quality third party organisation which will not only improve the skills of the staff but will also have new ideas with a much broader outlook. We hire skilled staff but at the same time we do train the existing staff who need training so that the company can capitalise on them. The team behind Tierra Mar has been in the trade of hospitality for a very long time therefore, they know the requirements of the industry.

Motivation and leadership are important skills which will take the industry to the next level. As a leader, you need to train the sub ordinates to take charge of different areas of work. The motivation provided by the leader will definitely have a positive impact which will reap you benefits.

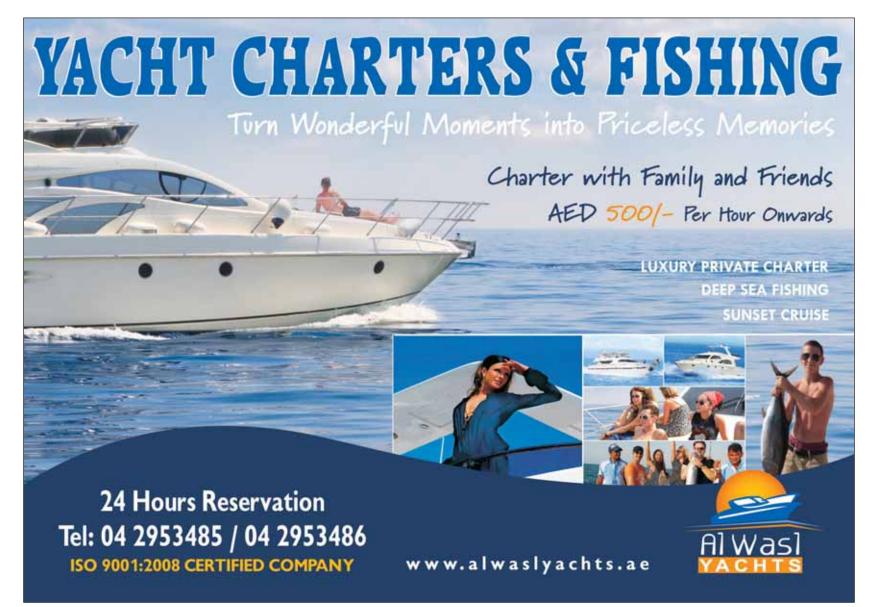
People need inspiration and something novel to work with as well. If you take a situation where the trainer is one of the management staff, and the trainees are your workers, they deal with each other daily, the output of the exercise may not be very beneficial as the staff would be more interested in seeking something new. If you have third party trainers, your trainees will be more attentive. They want to hear something new and learn new information from a different person who might inspire them.

Another important aspect to deal with is finding out the weak points in an organisation. This weakness could be transformed to strength by nurturing the right way. Every simple problem has a very simple solution and it is up to the management to focus the right way and make the best possible choice. The team behind Tierra Mar will

first implement a complete study of all the important aspects of the organisation and depending on the requirements make the possible suggestions for improvement and training as well. Their focus is to increase the profit of the company without increasing the number of staff and capital. Their tailor-made solutions will ensure that you derive the best services from your staff which will eventually turn into profit.



The author is Mahmoud Hamza Owner/ CEO Tierra Mar Management Consultancy



IBTM Arabia turns 10!

It was a grand celebration for the specialists who gathered at the Jumeirah Etihad Towers and Emirates Palace Abu Dhabi as IBTM Arabia (formerly GIBTM) turned ten last month. This year witnessed representatives from over 40 countries with 3,000 appointments which took place alongside networking parties, opening forum, knowledge forum, lunches and dinners with over 250 participants. It was another successful year of strengthening the MICE traffic to the UAE.

























Mobile centric future

Technology plays an important role today in the travel and tourism industry. Rabih Saab, President & Managing Director, Europe, Middle East, Africa and South Asia, Travelport, shares some of the latest trends in the market.



Please elaborate on the latest industry trends.

Looking forward to 2016, I see further maturation of airline merchandising. as more and more airlines recognise the enhanced revenue opportunities offered by new distribution options that allow for a full and rich content retailing experience to the travel agency and corporate channels. The content, devices through which it is sold, and the airline needs regarding content have all evolved. Airlines want to more effectively control how their flights and ancillaries are visually presented and described on travel agency screens. Travelport's leading merchandising solution Rich Content and Branding enables airlines to market and retail their products more effectively. Airlines

want their content aligned to the airline's value proposition and displayed more in line with the airline's own website. The key is making

all this new airline content available in an intuitive, comprehensive merchandising platform that allows travel agencies to offer their customers more travel convert choices. more sales opportunities, and sell more airline products and services more often.

Approximately 140 airlines are now live on Rich Con-

tent and Branding which is fully integrated into TravelportSmartpoint, Travelport's award-winning agency point of sale product that has transformed the traditional distribution model concept. TravelportSmartpoint, travel consultants are equipped with superior booking technology that enables them to sell more effectively and efficiently, in-

continue to see additional adoption and growth of VANs or Virtual Account Numbers, an alternative to the older, outmoded forms of payment.

ciled back to the individual element of the customer itinerary for which it has been paid, freeing up significant time and resources for travel agencies.

payments. A single-use and unique number is used for each new booking or payment transaction, making it a highly safe and secure

way to pay or to be paid. And each individual VAN

can be automatically recon-

How Can Agents Keep **Up With The** Rise Of OTAs?

In the Middle Fast, research released by Travelport as part of a cosponsored study with Phocuswright vealed that a host of 'hybrid' travel agents those whose transactions take place online and offline are expected to emerge as successful regional agents

in the coming years, fueled by a young, middle class, affluent population with a high tendency to travel and Travelport acts as a partner to these agencies by providing the technology to allow them to operate effectively



President & Managing Director, Europe, Middle East Africa and South Asia, Travelport

online. Our "Rich Content and Branding" merchandising solution is making waves across the travel industry globally as the benefits to travel agents include significant upselling opportunities on both core fares and ancillaries. Specifically, Rich Content and Branding allows airlines to control how their products are visually presented and described to agents. Mobile technology is a fast-growing segment of the travel industry, and we should see growth in new, comprehensive mobile travel products that enable airlines and travel companies to deliver sophisticated mobile services I believe there is tremendous opportunity for the fast-growing hotel and car rental distribution segment of the travel industry.

Technology News Powered by



Redefining travel commerce

crease revenues, and grow

Another travel industry trends we witnessed recently was the explosive growth of virtual payments. Looking forward to 2016, I think we'll

their businesses.

Many in the travel industry are converting to VANs, as an alternative to the older, outmoded forms of payment. VANs are an automatically generated credit card number that travel intermediaries can use to make supplier

Technology upgrade at Gloria Hotels

Offering stronger and more reliable connectivity through the largest in-room WLAN deployment in the UAE is the latest addition as Gloria Hotels undergoes a major ICT upgrade project.



AE-based Gloria Hotel announced the completion of a major ICT upgrade project aimed at providing its quests with the ultimate digital experience by enjoying high-speed, secure and reliable wireless connectivity on any device across the hotel's premises.

The project saw Gloria Hotel partner with Huawei-a leading global ICT solutions provider—implementing its WiFi technology solutions to provide the largest in-room 11ac WLAN deployment in

Together with Huawei, we have now made it easier for people to enjoy our interactive hotel services and a superior customer experience during their stay

> **Dylan Fernandes** Cluster IT Director, Gloria Hotels and Resorts

the UAE. "Gloria Hotel has made a name for itself by offering state-of-the-art facilities and services to our custom-

ers. In line with this ambition, we know that consumers in the digital age place great importance on being connected to their families, friends and colleagues while travelling. Together with Huawei, we have now made it easier for people to enjoy our interactive hotel services and

a superior customer experience during their stay," says Dylan Fernandes, Cluster IT Director, Gloria Hotels and Resorts.

"The competition in the hospitality industry is fierce and guests want more for their money as costs are always on the rise. Whether holidaymaking or here on business, we recognise that today's traveller has come to expect smooth and seamless internet access anytime, anywhere," remarks Rhazi Saveh. Real Estate and Hospitality solutions, Huawei Middle East.

Travelport Smartpoint

Sell more airline content more often

Every day airline offers get more complex and travelers become more demanding. Travelport Smartpoint lets you keep up to-date with the widest range of real-time content from over 400 of the world's leading network airlines and low cost carriers, all from

Discover how Travelport Smartpoint is redefining the selling experience.





Visit us at the Arabian Travel Market TT1520 - Sheikh Saeed Hall 1

www.travelport.com (y) (in)





MOVEMENTS

Rotana Group

Abu Dhabi

Rotana Group has appointed **Amr El Naggar** as the new Cluster Director of Revenue for Capital Centre Arjaan by Rotana, and

Centro Capital Centre. Taking up his role with immediate effect, El Naggar is responsible for overseeing the revenue department of both hotels, balancing their financial objectives to ensure profitability for the group, value for money for customers and strong returns for shareholders. A highly experienced hospitality finance professional, El Naggar was previously Director of Revenue at Park Rotana and Park Arjaan by Rotana complex, Abu Dhabi.

Wyndham Dubai Marina

Duha

Rogier Hurkmans a veteran hospitality professional with over two decades of experience in all aspects of hotel management is set to take charge as the Opening General Manager of the first Wyndham Hotels and Resorts property in the UAE. Hurkmans brings with him a wealth of experience with reputed hotel chains including key achievements in pre-opening and hotel openings. In his new role, Hurkmans will oversee the management team, set strategic plans to meet budgets and exceed revenue targets, ensure maximum quest satisfaction

and above all support a large

standards.

team to deliver first-class

Wyndham Dubai Marina has appointed Jan Siddiqi as Director of Sales and Marketing. With over 25 years' experience, including the past five years with Wyndham Hotels and Resorts in Qatar and UAE, he is proud to be part of its first Wyndham Hotel opening in the UAE. Siddiqi's new role will be to lead an experienced and dynamic Sales & Marketing team with key focus on creating brand awareness in the market, drive top line revenues, establish and position the hotel as the best four star branded hotel in Marina area.

Hyatt Hotels & Resorts, ME & Africa

Duha

Hyatt International has announced the appointment of **Christian Pertl** as the Regional Vice President of Sales Operations for Hyatt Hotels & Resorts,



Melia Hotels International

Duba

Saurabh Tiwari takes charge as Melia Dubai's Hotel Manager. His leadership sets a paradigm in the hotel industry. Albeit mastering

the area of Food and Beverage and given his eight years of experience in Melia Hotels International in 3 different countries and 6 hotels, Tiwari is a jack of all trades. His understanding and clear vision on cultural and professional differences have rocketed his way in effectively managing a team. In the past few months, Tiwari has been exceling as the Acting General Manager for Melia Dubai.

Satguru Travel and Tourism LLC

Duba

JVR Fernando has been appointed as the General Manager of Satguru Travel and Tourism LLC. With travel experience of over 20

years, Fernando had successfully shouldered responsibilities at senior level positions with Emirates Airlines, Royal Brunei Airlines, dnata and their GSA airlines. With extensive experience in travel industry and proven track record of achieving targets, Fernando is aiming to provide the best travel experience to customers and elevate Satguru Travel and Tourism as a leading global Travel Management Company.













MEDIA PARTNERS:



































































486 luxurious rooms and suites offering stunning views of the Arabian Sea and Dubai Marina. The hotel's prime location just walking distance from the public beach. The Walk' at JBR and Dubai Metro is ideal for both business and leisure travelers. Additional facilities include Essence - an all-day dining restaurant; Range Grill Restaurant and Bar; Spa, sauna and steam room; fully equipped gym; outdoor swimming pool and bar, multi-function meeting & events space; club lounge; Café Azur and a hotel gift shop.

WYNDHAM.COM 1-800-WYNDHAM



© 2016 Wyndham Høtels and Resorts, LLC. All rights reserved. All Wyndham® hotels are either franchised by the company or manufed by Wyndham Hotel Management, Inc. or one of its affiliates

Deposit more memories

INTRODUCING THE EMIRATES NBD STARWOOD PREFERRED GUEST® WORLD MASTERCARD®



