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TRAU TALK

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

Published from : ★ India ★ Middle East

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12th October, 2016
New Delhi

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Theme parks boost tourism

With the theme parks business booming, the UAE is preparing to welcome more family groups from the GCC and other regions. **TRAVEL TALK** finds out from industry stakeholders how theme parks will boost family travel in the Middle East.



SHEHARA RIZLY

“IMG Worlds of Adventure is set to open on August 15, 2016, and is poised to be the world’s largest indoor theme park. It has the capacity to host 30,000 visitors a day and looks to welcome 4.5 million visitors in its first year of operation.”

Entry will cost AED 300 for adults and AED 250 for children. We are working on special packages for travellers. Wholly owned by Ilyas Mustafa Galadari Group, the theme park will house four zones – MARVEL, Cartoon Network, Lost Valley – Dinosaur Adventure and IMG Boulevard in a temperature controlled environment for year-round entertainment. It has several attractions including thrill rides and kiddie rides, 28 original F&B offerings, 25 retail outlets, a 12-screen state-of-the-art Novo Cinema multiplex with an IMAX screen and two VIP theatres. ”



Lennard Otto
Chief Executive Officer
IMG Worlds of Adventure

“Dubai Parks and Resorts is set to become the Middle East's largest family theme park destination, home to three theme parks; motiongate Dubai, Bollywood Parks Dubai and LEGOLAND Dubai, as well as LEGOLAND Water Park.

Bringing together the best of the East and the West, there are over 100 rides, shows and attractions, all linked by a buzzing dining and retail district. It is set to open in October this year and we expect to welcome 6.7 million ticketed visits in 2017, our first full year of operation. We are in regular discussions with our travel trade partners and we will have more details closer to our opening with special rates for the industry. Six Flags Dubai, the fourth theme park to open at Dubai Parks and Resorts, will be completed in 2019. 



Vinit Shah
Chief Destination Management
Officer, Dubai Parks and Resorts



Karim El Guanaini
Senior Vice President-Product
Marketing and Distribution, Miral


“Earlier this year, we announced the opening of Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi on Yas Island in 2018. Owned by Miral, this development will also include the first Warner Bros-themed hotel, situated next to the theme park and will grow visitors to Yas Island. Ferrari World Abu Dhabi’s three-year expansion, which started in 2014, includes the opening of seven new rides and attractions and is expected to increase the Park’s overall capacity by 40 per cent.

We are excited about the innovative skyTran solution for transportation which aims to connect the current and future destinations on Yas Island and eventually link it to Abu Dhabi International Airport. The existing and upcoming developments on Yas Island are expected to increase visitor numbers from 25 million in 2015 to 30 million in 2018.



Bianca Sammut
General Manager
Yas Waterworld

“Yas Waterworld is the world’s only Emirati-themed waterpark, paying homage to the UAE’s tradition of pearl diving. The park’s 45 rides, slides and attractions follow the adventures of ‘Dana’ - a young Emirati girl in search of a legendary pearl that brought prosperity to the people of her village. Yas Waterworld pays homage to the Emirati culture and the country’s heritage in both its design and offerings.



Bianca Sammut
General Manager
Yas Waterworld

The attractions at Yas Waterworld have also been developed taking into consideration different ages and preferences, creating a very wide target base. For example, specific kid's zones such as Yehal and Marah Fortress are ideal for our younger guests; those looking to relax can enjoy the Amwaj Wave pool; among others. We look forward to welcome even more guests of all ages across all markets over the next few years. We create bespoke deals with travel agents and tour operators, tailored to the type and number of guests visiting us. ”



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1.3 mn medical tourists in Dubai by 2021

Dubai Health Experience (DXH), an initiative by the Dubai Health Authority (DHA), aims to build strategic partnerships with the private sector and strengthen its position as a global destination for medical tourism, reveals **Linda Abdulla**, Head-Medical Tourism Office, Dubai Health Authority.

 SHEHARA RIZLY

QWhat is the outlook of the Dubai Government in pursuing inbound medical tourism?

A five-year health strategy aiming at helping Dubai become a regional medical hub was launched by Dubai's ruler His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum in January 2016. One of the initiatives under the health strategy is to develop the medical tourism sector.

Through the Dubai Health Experience program (DXH), the government aims to build strategic partnerships with the private sector and strengthen its position as a global destination of medical tourism in the coming period. DHA has projected an influx of nearly 1.3 million medical tourists by 2021. The annual revenue from medical tourism is estimated to increase by 13 per cent every year in the next five years.

QWhat are the benefits offered by Dubai Health Authority and the government of Dubai to medical tourists?

The overall strategy of Dubai Health Authority caters to the emirate's aspirations to be a global model in the field of health and as a city that has a happy and healthy society. Dubai's healthcare sector is promoting wellness and improving efficiency in providing healthcare in collaboration with the private sector to create patient-friendly environment for medical tourists. A detailed Patient Rights and Patient Protection Plan along with visa procedures are also listed on the DXH website.

DXH group comprises of 25 leading private hospitals and clinics in Dubai. These members are carefully evaluated by the DHA to ensure quality, safety and service standards to inbound medical tourists. Dubai is also home for expert medical professionals, we have 35,000 health specialists from more

than 110 nationalities working in 3000 healthcare facility that are able to cater to all medical tourists visiting Dubai from all around the world. Emirates Airline is our key strategic partner for this initiative. This partnership will play an important role in bringing medical tourists to the emirate.

QDo you have a special visa plan? If so, please give details.

In addition to the tourist visa that can be applied for by patients, Dubai offers 90-days medical tourism visa in cooperation with General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs – this visa is renewable for an extra 30 days depending on the procedure and the patient's case. However, these kinds of visas cannot be applied for by patients and can only be applied for through the healthcare facility. That way our immigration department is sure that they are granting a real patient and accompanying person legitimate visas.



Linda Abdulla
Head of Medical Tourism Office
Dubai Health Authority

QWhat strategy is used to engage participation of travel agents and tour operators in this process?

We have partnered with several government and private bodies such as hotels and travel operators and through these partnerships we aim to provide a remarkable experience for medical tourists. Through our website tourists can find comprehensive packages that have been customised by our travel partners that include hotel accommodation and other ground services like flight bookings, etc. to enhance the medical tourism experience.

QWhat are the different platforms which connect tourists to DXH?

Medical tourists can connect with us through our website www.dhx.ae, which provides details about the complete patient journey and treatment packages offered by member healthcare facilities. DXH has created a mobile App for easy accessibility which is available on android. In addition, tourists can also stay connected through DXH Connect pages on Facebook and Twitter.

QWhich special countries/regions are you targeting for this segment?

Our strategy is to focus mainly on attracting medical tourists from the GCC, followed by focusing on the Asian market and African markets. The United Kingdom is also an important market for us as well as Africa, including Nigeria and Angola. 🇳🇮

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TRAVTALK

EDITORIAL

Kingdom of theme parks

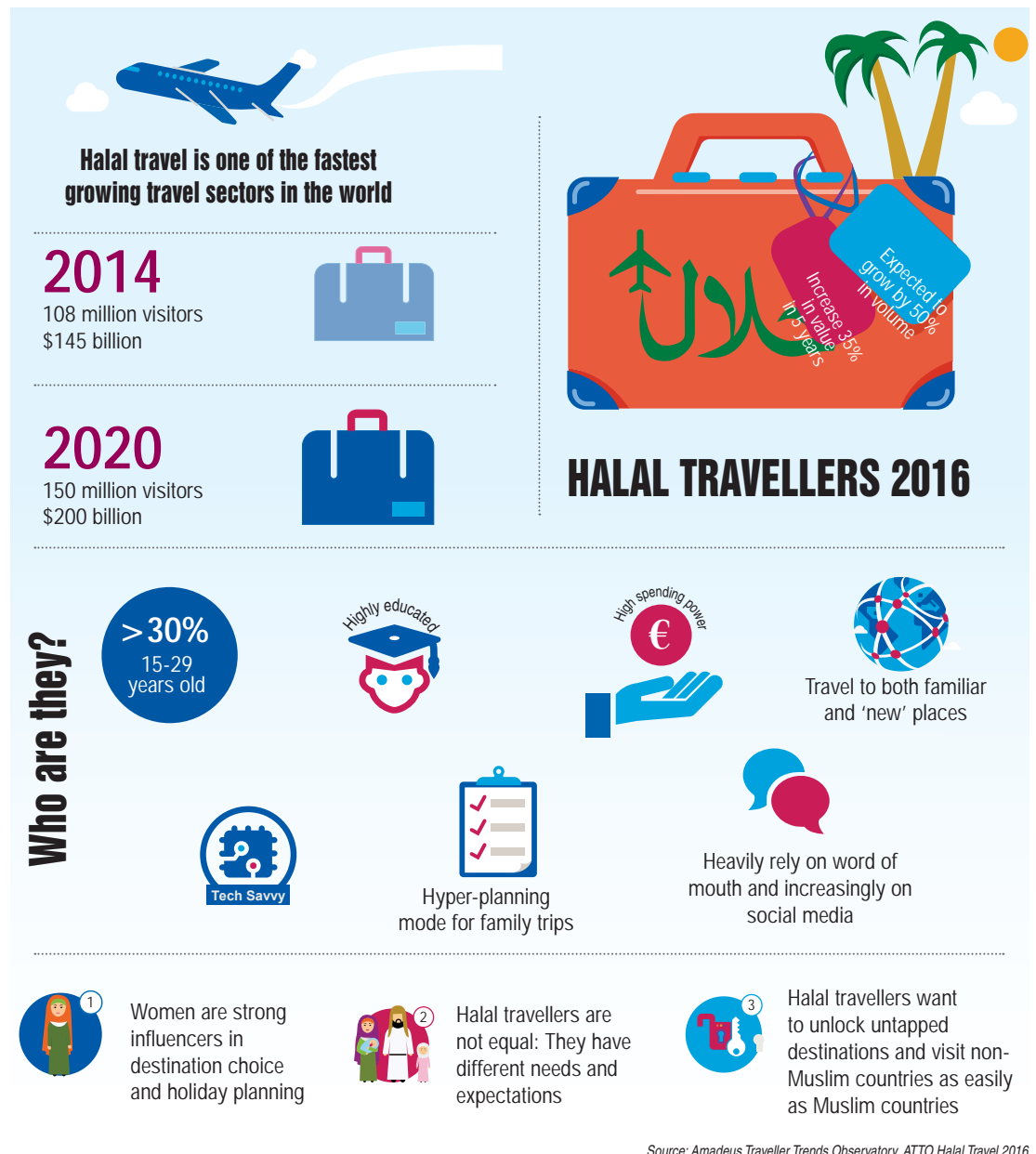
Family-centric travel has emerged as the latest trend in the Middle East over the past few years and will continue to grow. According to Thomson Reuters' data, the value of the global family tourism market was \$140 billion in 2013. This figure is set to rise over \$180 billion by 2018 with growth expected to continue at a rate of 4.79 per cent annually until 2020 compared with just 3.8 per cent of overall tourism growth. The Economist Intelligence Unit estimated that the GCC population would reach 53.5 million by 2020, 24 per cent of which would be under 15 years of age. The Dubai Capital of Islamic Economy initiative has identified the UAE as a top source market for family travel, with spending power worth over \$10 billion.

Therefore, the UAE is applying a new strategy to attract family-centric travellers to its destinations. From August 15, there will be a steady growth in family tourism in the United Arab Emirates with the first IMG Worlds Adventure theme park opening in Dubai. Their expected visitor turnout for the first year is quite promising as they estimate it to be 4.5 million visitors. The next on the cards is Dubai Parks and Resorts which is scheduled to open by October and has an estimated ticketed sales of 6.7 million visitors for the first year. In Abu Dhabi, the Warner Bros World on Yas Island is scheduled to open in 2018 and aims to increase visitors to Yas Island to 30 million by 2018. Ferrari World Abu Dhabi's three year expansion, which started in 2014, includes the opening of seven new rides and attractions and is expected to increase the park's overall capacity by 40 per cent.

With these new developments for family travel, United Arab Emirates is applying a crowd-pulling strategy to get their fair share of tourists from around the globe. In terms of security, it stands out as a safe haven when compared to other countries. The concept of theme parks is bound to put UAE on a forward moving platform to promote the country as a family destination.

150 million Halal visitors by 2020

Halal travel is expected to represent a \$200 billion opportunity by 2020 and grow at 50 per cent in volume and 35 per cent in value. A recent study highlights the unique differentiators of Halal traveller, one of the fastest-growing segments of travellers in the world.



Pullman supports special needs

The Pullman Dubai Jumeirah Lakes Towers, as part of the AccorHotels Planet 21 initiatives and Ramadan 2016 activities, in collaboration with ZeeArts Community and Senses Residential and Day Care Centre for Special Needs, recently launched the Charity Art Project under the theme "Little Picasso". Twenty two artist-volunteers from ZeeArts Community gathered for four art sessions with 15 special needs children from Senses during the month of May to work on paintings under the theme of Love, Kindness, Honesty, Generosity and Gratitude.



Publisher : Sanjeet
 Director : Sumera Bahl
 Assistant Editor : Shehara Rizvi
 Desk Editor : Ruchi J Singh
 Assistant Desk Editor : Shivani Kaul
 Design : Nityanand Misra
 Business Development Manager : Crisna De Guzman
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 Manager Production : Anil Kharbanda
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Offices:

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

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

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

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1st Arabian Travel Awards in Oct

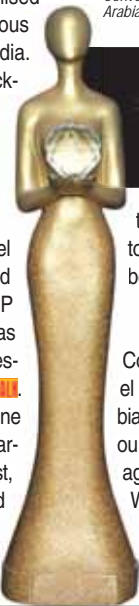
The inaugural edition of Arabian Travel Awards will be held on October 12, 2016, at Hyatt Regency, Gurgaon. The award aims to recognise achievers from tourism industry in ME.

TT BUREAU

Come October, the first Arabian Travel Awards will recognise and honour the best in travel and tourism industry in the Middle East. This initiative started with India Travel Awards in 2014 and has now become a well-established and sought-after award show. The awards have been recognised for its fair and illustrious presence all over India. Being a formal black-tie event the awards are known for its glitzy, world-class ceremonies.



Gunjan Sabikhi
Convenor
Arabian Travel Awards



the region, the response to the inaugural edition has been phenomenal.

Gunjan Sabikhi, Convenor, Arabian Travel Awards, says, "Arabian Travel Awards is our initiative to encourage the industry to grow. We aim to recognise the contribution and achievements of travel

and tourism players and reward those who have gone above and beyond to offer a superior tourism experience. It will also help the winners in improving their relationship with their suppliers, build their credibility and help them break into new markets." Based on a unique system of nomination as well as self-nomination and voting system on the Internet, these Awards will be transparent, fair and unbiased. The highest accolade in travel and tourism of the region, these awards shall be hailed (as in India) as the 'Travel Industry's Oscars'.

To file nominations, the interested organisation may visit www.arabiantravelawards.ae. There is no nomination fees for the awards. "The Awards are being held in India to give the visiting trade fraternity an opportunity to network, interact and influence their trade partners creating a perfect ground for cross pollination," she says.

AI increases global footprint

Melwin D'Silva, Regional Manager-Gulf, ME and Africa, Air India, reveals the airline's plan to increase its global footprint.

TT BUREAU

The recently released Sojern Report for Q2 explains how India has remained on top as a must-visit destination. India's national carrier has been instrumental in getting higher passenger load factor from around the world with Dubai playing a key role.

"Our plan is to increase footprints across the world by adding new sectors and fleet to strengthen and increase networks both domestic and international markets to provide the customers an end to end product," he says.

Among the recently announced expansion plan is induction of 100 new aircraft on lease during the next few years for Air India whilst Air India Express will induct six new



aircraft in the Gulf and in some other key regional touch points.

In terms of adding new destinations, Air India Express has Tehran in Iran to be added this winter. Apart from this, Air India legacy carrier will commence a direct flight on August 15 from Ahmedabad to London which connects to New Jersey. The airline will strengthen its capacity in its hubs in Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata to accommodate the steady growth of visitors from around the world.

The introduction of the "Through Fares" (6th Freedom fares) where you can pay for two holidays with one fare is the latest addition to the AI product portfolio from UAE. The fares have a free stopover facility with hotel layovers wherever connections are longer than six hours at transit point in India.

These fares are available for sectors like Dubai-Delhi-



Melwin D'Silva
Regional Manager, Air India-Gulf,
Middle East & Africa

Air India Express will induct six new aircraft in the Gulf and in some other key regional touch points

Melbourne or Sydney, Dubai-Delhi-San Francisco and many other destinations such as Narita, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Seoul, London, Birmingham, Moscow, Vienna, Paris, Singapore to name a few. It is also offering liberal baggage allowance on these fares with most sectors getting 2 piece concept baggage allowance.

Al Wasl Dhow partners with Ramada Hotels

Pitched as the biggest dhow in the Dubai Marina, Al Wasl's latest offering is in association with Ramada Hotels as its food and beverage partner.

TT BUREAU

This launch of the new biggest dhow in Dubai Marina, with the name Al Wasl Dhow, is in partnership with one of the most renowned and seasoned hospitality professionals in the UAE, **Ifthikhar Hamdani**, Cluster General Manager, Ramada Hotel & Suites Ajman and Ramada Beach Hotel Ajman. Al Wasl, owned by **Ishrat Ali Khan**, comprises of Al Wasl Dhow, Al Wasl Yachts, Asia Pacific Travel and Tourism, and Oasis Palm Tourism, a prominent excursion provider in Dubai. Under the supervision of Hamdani, internationally reputed chefs



will create masterpiece dishes for guests onboard the Al Wasl, so that they could enjoy the dhow cruise dinner along Dubai Marina. These chefs create fusion dishes from European, Asian, and Arabian cuisines which offers

a five star dining experience, having multiple choices from salads, soups, main course, desserts, and beverages.

Al Wasl Dhow is the first five-star dining dhow which is the perfect match for Dubai Marina. Combining sophisticated class with modern facilities is an ideal venue for wedding parties, family get-together events and business lunches/events. It is operated on daily basis in the evening.

Ishrat Ali Khan, Managing Director, Al Wasl Dhow, said, "It is a matter of honour to introduce Al Wasl Dhow because it is a first ever purpose built brand new Dhow in Dubai. Al Wasl Dhow is the biggest at present in Dubai Marina. We feel rewarded when visitors and residents express their joy while experiencing cruise and five-star dinner on Al Wasl Dhow. Another



Ifthikhar Hamdani
General Manager
Ramada Hotel & Suites Ajman and
Ramada Beach Hotel Ajman

dhow of same premium quality will be launched in October 2016 from our group of companies."



Ishrat Ali Khan
Managing Director,
Al Wasl Dhow

Hamdani says, "We are excited to be on board with Al Wasl Dhow on this new venture. A dhow cruise is always on the bucket list of UAE tourists and residents alike, and with our professional and hardworking F&B team, the guests will enjoy not only the spectacular view of Dubai Marina, but also an exquisite dining experience. The food will allow the visitors to taste a slice of the Dubai gastronomic scene with a mouthwatering mix of traditional Middle Eastern and international cuisine."



Brexit impact is temporary, says trade

The historic decision by the British to sever ties with the European Union created different opinions around the world. In terms of tourism, it is still too early to predict the outcome from the UAE perspective, but trade wise it was opined to continue as usual.

 SHEHARA RIZLY

“We are welcoming visitors from the GCC to Britain and we are expecting this summer to see more GCC nationals visiting as we continue our activity in market to promote Britain as a favorite holiday destination. Our global marketing campaign — Home of Amazing Moments — will encourage more people to come and visit Britain. Our latest figures show strong growth from the UAE in the first quarter of 2016, underpinning the best-ever first quarter for total inbound visits. The Office for National Statistics results show that from January to March this year visits from the UAE were up 15 per cent to 77,000, the strongest first quarter on record, with spend also up 9 per cent to £105 million. We will continue to drive a strong value message coupled with great quality to ensure we attract more GCC visitors and with favorable currency exchange rates also helping matters, we expect tourism from the GCC to Britain to have a great performance this year.”



Sumathi Ramanathan
Director, Asia Pacific
Middle East & Africa (APMEA)
VisitBritain



Tony Tyler
Director General and CEO
IATA

“The Brexit vote has triggered much uncertainty—financial and otherwise. As leaders in the UK and the EU work to establish a new framework for their relationship, one certainty to guide them is the need and desire of people on both sides of that relationship to travel and trade.

Air transport plays a major role in making that possible. There were 117 million air passenger journeys between the UK and the EU in 2015. Air links facilitate business, support jobs and build prosperity. It is critical that whatever form the new UK-EU relationship takes, it must continue to ensure the common interests of safe, secure, efficient and sustainable air connectivity.”

“From a logistical perspective there will be no change to travel to the UAE as a result of Brexit. The UK is not part of the Schengen zone and post their separation from the EU there will likely be no practical difference at all to EU or UK citizens visiting the UAE. In the short term we are likely to see fairly persistent sterling and euro strength against the dollar as political and the resultant economic uncertainty is likely to persist until at least the end of this year.

However, I don't see the likely drop in reviews to be as steep as the losses on the LSE and other regional stock markets as Europeans still love their sun and Dubai's ongoing presence and appeal may support relative strength in three and four-star markets, niche and super high end, but the bulk of five stars may face a challenge in an already competitive market.”



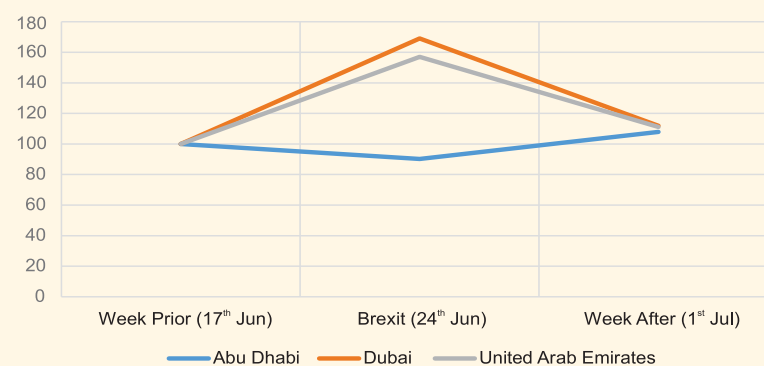
Toby Simpson
Managing Director
Gulf Recruitment Group

UK-UAE travel trends around June 24, 2016

- ❖ Sharp rise in UK travel intent to Dubai on Brexit announcement day.
- ❖ Intent to Dubai levels out in weeks following announcement.
- ❖ Intent to travel to Abu Dhabi appears stronger due to Eid al-Fitr than Brexit.
- ❖ Gradual increase in travel intent to Abu Dhabi after Brexit.

Indexed to 1 day (Friday 17 th July)	Origin: United Kingdom		
	Destination		
Event date	Abu Dhabi	Dubai	United Arab Emirates
Week Prior (17 th June)	100	100	100
Brexit (24 th Jun)	90	169	157
Week After (1 st Jul)	108	112	111
2 Weeks After (8 th Jul)	119	99	102

UK-UAE travel indexed to 17th June 2016



Source: Sojern

“Brexit will have an impact on Dubai Tourism Figures from the UK simply because of the negative impact on sterling which will make the destination more expensive for the UK residents. However, I believe this will, at least partially, be offset with the huge increase of less expensive hotel accommodation in the imminent future here in the UAE.

This scenario could also be helped; at least this year, by families who had planned vacations from early in the New Year. Credit card usage could be a key factor as families use this medium to pay for holidays.”



Leo Fewtrell
Secretary General, Gulf Travel and
Tourism Association Committee and
General Manager, Dubai Travel and
Tour Agents Group

R Hotels' Palm property focuses on health and wellness

■ The R Hotels' 253-room Palm Jumeirah property, set to open in 2017, will be dedicated as a health and wellness property.

Sumair Tariq, Managing Director, R Hotels, says, “People are more health-conscious than before and we have witnessed an increase in demand for products which are designed for healthy lifestyle including leisure activities, food, and even gadgets. With this trend, our group is keen to introduce the region's first health and wellness

resort, by partnering with trusted brands.”

The pre-opening of the property will be headed by **Samir Arora**, General Manager, Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham JBR. The property, which is the first four-star rated hotel at The Palm, will offer not just spa and beauty treatments, but various wellbeing and lifestyle packages. The hotel will hire certified nutritionist and wellness coach for the programs such weight loss, both for kids and adult. Some

of the fitness classes planned includes yoga, tai chi, Pilates and aerobics.

The overall design concept of the property will be organic, with the use of earth colours and materials like wood, to imbibe a fresh, calm and soothing atmosphere. It will offer an Executive Lounge on the seventh floor, and Executive and Presidential Suites on the sixth and seventh floor, all boasting private terrace with exquisite views. There will also be a dedicated kids'

swimming pool, playground, gym and tennis court, and separate spa for men and women.

Arora says, “We are all excited to see the project taking shape, and to break new ground with a health and wellness resort. We aim to offer a holistic experience for the senses – the mind, body and soul. The idea is to keep the guests engaged



throughout the whole stay, where every aspect – from check in to check out, the room, the food and

beverage offers, amenities, wellbeing programs and the outstanding service – is appreciated.”

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**World Travel Market
London, the leading
global event for the
travel industry, has
opened registration
to the new-look
three-day WTM
London 2016.**

WTM London 2016, which takes place between Monday 7 – Wednesday 9 November, is poised to be the most successful yet. The new-look three-day format has been universally well received from all participant groups. Delegates will be able to conduct even more business than last year's record £2.5 billion and save on the ancillary cost with WTM London being one day shorter. Opening hours have been extended from 10am to 7pm on all three days of the event, to increase the business opportunities available.

The WTM Inspire Theatre, a new 300-seater amphitheatre, will be added to the exhibition floor in the North Hall of ExCeL, while the WTM International Press Centre has been moved on to the exhibition floor for the first time (in the South Hall). More than 80 seminars will take

place throughout the three days covering all the key sectors including aviation, hotels, sports tourism, responsible tourism, blogging, social media and travel technology.

Monday 7 November will remain an exhibitor invite-only day, allowing exhibitors to conduct business meetings with key contacts. The event will kick off with the WTM Speed Networking in the WTM Global Stage at 9am – before the exhibition floor opens at 10am. A taste of ILTM at WTM returns for the fifth year across the Monday and Tuesday.

Tuesday 8 November is the new day for World Responsible Tourism Day, keeping sustainability at the heart of the event.

Wednesday 9 November is the new day for the UNWTO & WTM Ministers' Summit, which is this year celebrating its tenth edition. WTM London 2016 will conclude with the WTM Festivals, which will see a number of exhibitors hosting parties showcasing their culture, music and cuisine.

WTM London 2015 saw almost 50,000 participants, including 9,100 buyers conducting business worth more than £2.5 billion with almost 5,000 exhibitors from 182 countries and regions.



To pre-register visit
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World Travel Market London delegates can take advantage of discounted air fares with oneworld airlines following a groundbreaking deal between the alliance and World Travel Market's parent company Reed Travel Exhibitions (RTE).

Visitors and exhibitors are able to make reservations for themselves and a companion via a dedicated channel on the oneworld web site – www.oneworld.com/events – by using the unique code - OW24D15

Flights must arrive at the event's location no earlier than one week before the event begins and depart no later than one week after the event finishes.

There are 15 carriers in the alliance, serving more than 1,000 destinations. Members of any oneworld alliance carrier's loyalty scheme will be able to earn points and enjoy the usual benefits when taking advantage of the offer.

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FROM ECUADOR TO SOUTH KOREA, WTM LONDON ATTRACTS NEW EXHIBITORS

The world's largest hotels search site, an aircraft charter specialist and the fourth largest city in Ecuador are among the new exhibitors already signed up for World Travel Market London 2016.

The highest profile first-time exhibitor is Trivago, a price comparison site focused on hotels which is part of Expedia Inc. It will be present in the Global Village region, where it will be joined by other first-time exhibitors including Autoclick Rent a Car, a car hire business based in Spain.

Visitors to the Travel Technology region will have the chance to do deals with a range of WTM London debutants, including some businesses based in Asia such as Fish Iyagi, a South Korean

marketing agency with branches in Shanghai and Tokyo.

Making a shorter journey is German hotels software business Booklogic.

Airlines are a vital part of the global travel industry and WTM London continues to attract new carriers to the event. Atlas Global, a Turkish airline operating domestic and international flights into Istanbul from many European, Middle Eastern and Asian destinations, is another first time exhibitor.

Coach travel is also an important player in the industry, and DJ Coaches from Kent is taking a stand in the UK and Ireland region for the first time. Finally, the Americas region will welcome for the first time representatives from the city of Machala in southern Ecuador.



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Emirates' second daily between Dubai-Milan from Oct 1

■ In a bid to increase capacity between Dubai and Milan, Emirates will deploy a second daily A380 on the route from October 1, 2016. The shift from a Boeing 777-300ER to the double decker represents a capacity increase of 1,834 seats per week between the two cities; enabling more A380 to A380 connections to and from key destinations in Australia, China, South Korea and South East Asia with just one stop in Dubai.

Emirates flights EK91/92 will be operated by an Airbus A380 aircraft in a three-class configuration with 14 Private Suites in First Class, 76 flat-bed seats in Business Class and 401 seats in Economy Class. Passengers in all classes will enjoy access to free Wi-Fi. Emirates' flight EK91 departs from Dubai at 15:45hrs and arrives in Milan at 20:30hrs. The outbound flight EK92 departs from Milan at 22:20hrs and arrives in Dubai at 06:25hrs the following day. The airline currently operates three daily services between Dubai and Milan, as well as a daily flight from Milan to New York JFK.

Turkish Airlines' mobile App

In a move to be more transparent with its stakeholders, Turkish Airlines has released a new investor relations mobile App compatible with Apple and Android devices.



With this application, users will have on-line and offline access to various information and documents about Turkish Airlines including public dis-

closures, operational and financial disclosures, investor presentations and annual reports both in Turkish and

Iker Ayçi, Chairman of the Board and the Executive

I expect that this Investor Relations Application will enhance our transparent communication with our stakeholders and hope it will be a useful tool for everyone interested in the latest information regarding Turkish Airlines



Comittee Turkish Airlines, made the following statement regarding the subject, "We have been using digital

communication channels very effectively in our dialog with our passengers and have been rewarded many times regarding this effort. This time we are extending the same approach to our financial communication. I expect that this Investor Relations Application will enhance our transparent communication with our stakeholders and hope it will be a useful tool for everyone interested in the latest information regarding Turkish Airlines."



Iker Ayçi
Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee Turkish Airlines

China Eastern partners with Disney Shanghai

China Eastern Airlines (MU) is offering special Disneyland Shanghai tour packages from Dubai for discerning travellers.



China Eastern Airlines, as the official business partner of Disney Shanghai, is one of the three major Airlines in China, member of sky team alliance. Taking Shanghai as the main hub, it serves 182 destinations and operates a world-wide flight network covering China, connecting Asia, Europe, America and Oceania. China Eastern takes a leading position in terms of flight safety and on-time performance among Chinese Civil Aviation Industry.

Currently two flights are flying weekly from Dubai to Shanghai via Kunming on China Eastern. "As the only authorized body of promot-



Randy Cui
General Manager
China Eastern Airlines UAE

ing Disney products, we are now offering very attractive Disney tour packages from Dubai to Shanghai for groups and individuals. Passenger travelling to Shanghai for Disney tour may now book from us directly for flights and Disney entry ticket," **Randy Cui**, General Manager, China Eastern Airlines UAE.

Nile Air enters UAE market

Nile Air (NIA) has introduced four weekly flights between Al Ain International Airport Abu Dhabi and Cairo International Airport.



The NIA 147/8 flights, operated on Airbus A320 aircraft, will take place on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays. Between July 1 and October 1 the flight will depart from Cairo at 1005 GMT, arriving in Al Ain at 1340 GMT, and the return flight will leave the UAE at 1440 GMT and arrive back in Egypt at 1830 GMT. In October the service will become bi-weekly, with flights on Fridays and Sundays. A free shuttle service is available for passengers wishing to connect from Al Ain Airport to Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

operations to Al Ain, as this will further strengthen tourism between the UAE and Egypt and build Al Ain's prominence as a growing international tourist destination. The airline anticipates high demand for this route,

ecutive Officer, Nile Air, said, "Nile Air is pleased to announce our entry to the Emirati market, our 7th country, with a new route connecting Cairo and Al-Ain city in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. The new service to Al-Ain will pro-



particularly during the busy summer season, and we wish them every success."

This is Nile Air's first flight to any destination in the United Arab Emirates, and commenting on this new service, **Ahmed Aly**, Chief Ex-

vide an easy and convenient travel option between both cities for business travelers and tourists visiting Egypt, and the estimated 100,000 Egyptian nationals residing in the city of Al-Ain and its surrounding region who wish to travel home."

Mohammed Al Katheeri, Acting Chief Operations Officer of Abu Dhabi Airports, said, "We are delighted that Nile Air has begun

'Sterling' opportunity @WTM

World Travel Market London 2016 claims to be the most cost effective event in the travel industry thanks a number of initiatives designed to give participants a greater Rol.



This year's WTM London, which takes place at ExCeL - London, from November 7-9, is the first to be held over three days, with doors remaining open later into the evening. That means participants will cut down on ancillary costs – but have greater opportunities to do business. That is against the current backdrop of a very favourable exchange rate for overseas visitors after the UK's vote to leave the European Union, which saw the pound fall to a record 31-year low.

To ensure participants' money goes even further, WTM London's parent company, Reed Exhibitions has teamed up with HotelMap.com, offering unique prices and an array of special offers on accommodation in London for the event. Furthermore, exclusive discounted air fares to WTM London have been

agreed with airlines in the oneworld alliance. WTM London, Senior Director, **Simon Press** said, "With the pound

a 'sterling' opportunity for our overseas participants to book now to come and do business. We look forward to seeing everyone in November."



at a record low following the UK's Brexit vote, WTM London has never been better value for participants, giving those from Europe more to show for their Euro.

"The reduction in ancillary costs of WTM London being a three day event in 2016 have been reduced even further thanks to the favourable exchange rate for overseas visitors, alongside the flights and accommodation deals we've agreed with oneworld Alliance and HotelMap.com "It's

WTM London is the event where the travel and tourism industry conducts its business deals. Buyers from the WTM Buyers Club have a combined purchasing responsibility of \$22.6 billion (£15.8bn) and sign deals at the event worth \$3.6 billion (£2.5bn).

Money saver deal

- ◆ The value of pound has been at a record low following the UK's Brexit vote
- ◆ Buyers from the WTM Buyers Club have a combined purchasing responsibility of £15.8bn and sign deals £2.5bn

Travelport workshops in Lebanon

A series of workshops were conducted by Travelport in Beirut, Lebanon, for Abu Dhabi's leading travel agents, which provided them a platform to learn about leveraging the most innovative technology that redefines travel commerce.

TT BUREAU

Among the attendees were representatives from travel agencies such as Asian Gulf Travel, Shams Abu Dhabi Travel, Al Badie Travel Agency, Al Dana Travel, Liberty Travel, Smart Travel and Latakia Travel. Travelport is a key technology partner for the Abu Dhabi agents who were in attendance, all of whom have recently signed long-term agreements with Travelport.

The three-day workshop was an interactive gathering where Travelport's product experts showcased technologies such as Travelport

Smartpoint. There are more than 650,000 hotel properties and 36,000 car rental locations available from within Travelport Smartpoint.

Matthew Powell, Regional Director, Middle East and South Asia, commented, "In order for traditional travel agents to remain competitive they need to be 'consultants' rather than merely trip bookers and our Travel Commerce Platform creates synergies and network effects that facilitate revenue growth across the

travel value chain. This series of workshops provided the platform for some of the UAE's travel leaders to glean a complete understanding of how Travelport technology con-

tinues to lead the industry in redefining travel commerce so we can continue to partner with them to reach our mutual goal of growing the UAE's travel industry."

Mohamed Ashraf, Managing Director, Asian Gulf Travel, commented, "The UAE's travel industry is constantly evolving and embracing new trends and the technologies



Matthew Powell
Regional Director
Middle East and South Asia

cutting-edge tools and technology available to improve efficiency and business func-

Technology News

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Travelport 
Redefining travel commerce

This series of workshops provided the platform for some of the UAE's travel leaders to glean a complete understanding of how Travelport technology continues to lead the industry in redefining travel commerce

that support its progress and growth. As a travel industry leader in the UAE, we see it as best business practice to embrace the most

tion. Investing in technology is an instrumental component of a thriving agency. As long term partners of Travelport, we were delighted to participate in this event."

Personalising experiences for travellers

Sabre has unveiled its next-generation travel agency platform featuring data insights and merchandising capabilities. The new Sabre Red Workspace is set to transform the way consultants and suppliers work together to create personalised experiences for travellers and strengthen their retail capabilities.

TT BUREAU

Sabre Corporation has recently given travel consultants and suppliers across the airline, hotel, rail, cruise and car rental industries a sneak peek at Sabre Red Workspace.

The software solution aims to provide both retailers and suppliers with a content rich marketplace, intelligent decision support tools and predictive data insights that enable agents and suppliers to more easily create personalised experiences for travellers.

Developed on Sabre's merchandising platform providing access to its award-winning GDS, travel consultants around the world will benefit from a more intuitive way to book travel, while airlines, hotels and other industry suppliers are now empowered to market their brands in the same way they market in other channels.

"Data, analytics, personalisation and mobile have been trending in the marketplace for some time and offer exciting opportunities for buyers and suppliers to meet changing traveller needs," said **Sean**



Menke, President, Sabre Travel Network. "Travellers want more than an itinerary; they want to feel confident about their purchases and expect a trip built around choice. That's why in addition to a superior user experience, our new Sabre Red


Workspace provides travel consultants with data insights, relevant offers and price transparency. Data and analytics are critical assets to increase productivity and efficiency in the retail world, and our travel insight engine will help drive

decision-making, revenue optimisation and true personalisation. Sabre Red Workspace was designed with both supplier and agent needs in mind. Suppliers can count on improved consistency across channels while agents can work wherever and however they want, moving seamlessly between command and graphical interfaces," said Menke.

Sabre will begin upgrading travel agency customers in Europe, Middle East and Africa

(EMEA) to the new solution in early 2017, after a pilot later this year.

"Europe, Middle East, and emerging regions like Africa may have very different growth rates and characteristics, but they are united by a desire to make better use of technology in their business operations and for their travellers," said **Harald Eisenaecher**, Senior Vice President, Sabre Travel Network, Europe, Middle East and Africa. "Our new workspace is a step change for agencies and suppliers looking to strengthen their retail capabilities."




Enhancing your selling experience

At Travelport, we are always striving to find ways to improve our solutions to meet your business needs. With Travelport Smartpoint 71 we've improved usability and some additional features that you've been asking for to help you sell more travel, more easily.

Travelport Smartpoint 71 lets you:

- Now hold seats and defer payment with United Airlines
- Book hotels seamlessly with direct access to Travelport Rooms and More
- Improve search with new application settings for air search results and more consistent fare information
- Experience easier navigation with the new toolbar settings in Grid View Mode
- Save time by sending account codes for ACH direct payment carriers in addition to GDS carriers
- Book the right car by viewing images via the car code directly from car availability

Discover more about Travelport Smartpoint at www.travelport.com/smartpoint



Travelport
Redefining travel commerce

Wyndham spreads iftar joy



Wyndham Dubai Marina, the first Wyndham Hotels and Resorts hotel in the UAE, teamed up with The First Group to spread the joy of Ramadan by giving away 350 iftar boxes to the local community. Individually packed iftar boxes containing chicken biryani, raita, dates, banana and water were prepared by staff at Wyndham Dubai Marina and distributed to labourers working at sites of the two upcoming sister properties. General Manager and all department heads gave 250 boxes to those working at the TRYP by Wyndham Dubai property in Barsha Heights and 100 boxes at the second Wyndham Hotels and Resorts property in Dubai Marina.



Golden Tulip gets a facelift

Golden Tulip Al Barsha is undergoing rapid renovation to ensure that it's available when two of the four leading theme parks open for public in a few weeks' time in Dubai.

TTT BUREAU

Golden Tulip Al Barsha Hotel is undergoing major renovation in two phases — Phase 1 for interior and Phase 2 for exterior. The hotel has already started with phase 1, says Fares Khreich, Director of Sales, Golden Tulip Al Barsha. "In the first phase we are renovating the corridor, carpets in all the rooms and some changes inside the rooms. Phase 2 will begin by October." He further stated



Fares Khreich
Director of Sales
Golden Tulip Al Barsha

that renovation is taking place simultaneously with the hotel's

daily operations hence will be done floor by floor.

Some of the latest activities they are promoting to their guests includes the Catwalk; newest night club in Al Barsha. The past seven months have been the same in terms of arrivals as last year, comparatively, and there has not been any big difference, but they are expecting more business in the coming months due to the opening of two theme parks, namely Marvel Land Dubai and Dubai Parks & Resorts.

Their key source markets are guests from GCC countries especially Saudi Arabia who spend a minimum of three nights at the property. The opening of these theme parks will play a pivotal role in gaining the different travellers from across the globe to check new attractions which will once again boost tourism revenues of this region.



Holiday Inn Dubai brings Ramadan cheer

The Holiday Inn Dubai-Al Barsha hosted its annual corporate iftar by inviting children and their families from SNF (Special Needs Future Development Center) to celebrate Iftar with people from the mainstream in five-star surroundings.



GME 2016: Bringing Ajman on tourism map

FRHI's Global Meeting Exchange 2016 was held in Ajman from June 22-26, giving the emirate an opportunity to celebrate its uniqueness with 230 participants from the world over. **TRAVTALK** spoke to **Khaled S. Al-Idrissi**, Cluster Director of Sales and Marketing, Fairmont Ajman and Fairmont Fujairah Beach Resort, on the sidelines of the event.

SHEHARA RIZLY

Q Could you give details about the Global Meetings Exchange and its objectives?

Global Meetings Exchange (GME) is actually a great opportunity for us. It has allowed us to expose not only the destination of Ajman but the hotel itself. To bring so many people from so many different destinations and to have them here means that they live the properties; what it is and what it represents and that's an important aspect because as much as we go to different exhibitions outside in different countries around the world we are not allotted to the feel and touch of the destination and property itself.

Q How do you think this event will help promote Ajman?

People are not exposed to Ajman as they are to the other destinations within the UAE like Dubai. There are certain people who we



Khaled S. Al-Idrissi
Cluster Director of Sales and Marketing,
Fairmont Ajman and
Fairmont Fujairah Beach Resort

have met today who say they didn't expect to see this level of hotel activity in Ajman and that's great for the destination. We're talking about MICE and incentive groups that come here to the destination.

Q Tell us about your target markets?

China is becoming a very important destination for us here and we see a lot of participation from Chinese partners at GME. In addition to the traditional markets we know, the Russian CIS market

is already strong in Ajman and in Northern Emirates. Bringing in destinations like China allows us to grow the hotel base in terms of group business.

Q What is the strategy used to promote your properties in MICE market?

I think MICE is an important element to both hotels (Ajman and Fujairah) as both of them are resorts. We have a very strong weekend staycation business that comes from various different Emirates. Fujairah is just about to open but I'm assuming the same level of pattern of business that we've had. As any hotel you need to have a right base during weekdays and I think that's where the MICE business comes in, you need to expose that so that your international markets realise the importance of a resort like Fairmont Ajman and resorts to come up like Fairmont Fujairah. The type of business that has to come to this area is different to each

hotel but I think to have a pretty good group base is a very healthy pattern and you can't be dependent on one segment. You have to diversify what you do and it will be the opportunity to be a much stronger hotel.

Q Do share some insight on the property in Fujairah.

Fairmont Fujairah will be opening in the first quarter of 2017. It has 180 rooms so it will be fairly smaller than the one in Ajman. It's a beautiful property nestled in the mountains of Fujairah which Fujairah is very well known for. It has a very beautiful marina, great beach club, diving center, kids clubs, a seafood restaurant, a number of pools.

Q What is the USP for Fairmont Ajman?

It offers the best for leisure clients, you have beautiful beach facilities, kids clubs, pools and all the expected amenities that you would need as a leisure client. There's a lot of thought in terms of build


and innovation that we are able to incorporate to a product like this.

Q Are there any special tour operators you work with?

We work with a number of operators in the UK, Germany and a lot of our local partners in Dubai selling the destination of Ajman. We make brochures and send them around globally and slowly we are starting to understand Ajman.

Q Will you be participating in any forums recently?

We are going to be participating in a very interesting forum in November in Germany which will give us the chance to sit across key agents and discuss this nation and educate them.

It is beyond the contracting of what we do. It is about going further than that and making sure that the understanding is down to the front line so that the people who are selling the destination know what it is. 



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DINE IN, LUNCH BOX DELIVERY AND CATERING

Marriott Hotel and Marriott Executive Apartments Downtown Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi

David Lance has been appointed as the General Manager of the Marriott Hotel and Marriott Executive Apartments Downtown Abu Dhabi. Lance has over two decades of international experience. Prior to this role, Lance was General Manager of Marriott Executive Apartments, Sukhumvit Park in Bangkok, Thailand. In his new role, Lance will be focused on pulling together a highly skilled and experienced management team to launch and eventually operate these new properties.



Andrew Dickson has taken over as Director of Operations at Marriott Abu Dhabi. He has over 15 years of experience in the hospitality industry and joined Marriott in 2008, where he was appointed Director of Operations at Wailea Beach Resort & Spa in Maui, Hawaii. His previous appointments include JW Marriott Phuket, London Marriott Grosvenor Square and Sprowston Manor Marriott Hotel & Country Club UK. In his new role as Director of Operations, Dickson will be overseeing the entire operational team to ensure a successful opening of the first Marriott Hotel in the capital.



Nicholas A. Rana is the new Director of Sales and Marketing at Marriott Abu Dhabi. Rana started his career in the sales discipline at the Copenhagen Marriott Hotel in 2003. Marriott Hotel Downtown Abu Dhabi will be his fifth hotel opening with Marriott across five different countries and three distinct Marriott brands. Nicholas will be responsible for Sales & Marketing for both properties and in seeing through the launch of the first Marriott Hotel in the capital.



Wyndham Hotel Group

Dubai

Wyndham Hotel Group has now entrusted **Rogier M. Hurkmans** as Cluster General Manager for Wyndham Dubai Marina and TRYP by Wyndham located in Barsha Heights, which is due in the first half of 2017, as well as continuing to oversee operations at Wyndham Dubai Marina. With more than two decades of experience in the hospitality industry, Hurkmans brings a wealth of expertise and experience with reputed hotel chains including InterContinental, Hilton, Steigenberger, Swissôtel and Bilderberg working on a number of hotel openings, renovations, and rebranding projects.



Ramada Downtown Dubai

Dubai

Shahzad Butt has been appointed as the General Manager at Ramada Downtown Dubai. In his 25 years of industry experience, Butt has worked with Chelsea Tower Hotel Apartments and Chelsea Gardens Hotel Apartments, Hilton Worldwide, Renaissance and Avani Hotels International, both in Pakistan and the UAE, where he served various positions including Assistant Manager, Regional Sales Manager, and Sales & Marketing Manager. In his role as General Manager, Butt will oversee the day-to-day operations of the 181-room property, ensuring high standards of quality and service in all aspects of guest experience.



Mandarin Oriental, Bodrum

Bodrum

Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group has announced the appointment of **Gunter Gebhard** as General Manager of Mandarin Oriental, Bodrum. Gunter Gebhard joined the Group from One & Only Hayman Island. He has over 20 years of experience in the global luxury hospitality industry, with senior management roles at Mazagan Beach & Golf Resort Morocco, Atlantis the Palm Dubai, St. Regis Bangkok and Jumeirah Group, together with other assignments in the Middle East, Germany and New York.



'Know India' seminar for agents in Cairo

India Tourism in Dubai and Indian Embassy in Cairo organised a 'Know India' seminar for the travel trade at Tagore Hall, Embassy of India in Cairo on July 14, 2016. **I.R.V. Rao**, Assistant Director, India Tourism in Dubai; **Sanjay Bhattacharyya**, Ambassador of India to Arab Republic of Egypt; officials from Air India along with 45 travel agents, representatives from Egypt Air and Qatar Airways, and Government of Egypt attended the event.





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