



TRAVTALK

TravTalkMiddleEast.com

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

Published from : ★ India ★ Middle East

- Dubai set for cruise season 05
- The 'Partner Central' brand 08
- Spike in Indian visitors to GCC 16

PASS IT ON

NAME	SEEN
	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>

AUTOMATE YOUR BILLING PROCESS WITH OV GATE SYSTEM.

OV Gate now captures PNR & Ticket data from your GDS, LCC websites, Online Booking Portal and can seamlessly generate invoices without any manual intervention.



ONEVIEW
IT SOLUTIONS

+9712 441 8565 | info@oneviewit.com | oneviewit.com

Media
Partner



RIYADH
TRAVEL FAIR



AHIC
ARABIAN
HOTEL
INVESTMENT
CONFERENCE



Fruitful year continues...

As the year 2019 comes to an end, achievements in every sector related to the travel, tourism, hospitality and other supported fields enjoyed a year of growth. TTME spoke to some of the leaders who share insights on their journey in 2019 and talk about what they intend to do in the coming year.



Omar Bani Hamour
Head of Marketing and
Exhibitions Department,
Fujairah Tourism and
Antiquities Authority

“ We have continued to keep our key identity which is the unique historical aspect of the emirate with a steady growth of visitors to the destination. Over the past years we have been promoting the emirate as both a historical and an adventure tourism destination. Our aim is to ensure that we obtain a really good growth in tourism by providing diverse fields of marketing

the emirate. Currently there are 35 hotels and apartments with around 4,307 rooms in Fujairah with 17 hotels in 4 and 5-star category within the beachfront hence making them more like resorts. We enjoy some of the best mountain peaks in the UAE. Winter is a very special time as we have significant growth of visitors year on year. Next year, we will be looking at new markets with a special focus on South East Asia such as Indonesia and Philippines. ”



Arshard Munir
General Manager
SATA

“ The year 2019 has been challenging for many industries including the travel industry. SATA to date has had a productive year and this is not by accident. It is due to a commitment to excellent service, intelligent planning and focused team effort. Active Holiday, MICE and Educational Tours Department along with the online booking portal are

some of the areas we have been developing over the last year. In terms of the bookings we noticed that Asia (Far East, Sri Lanka and India) and Eastern Europe continue to be popular over the year. Certain parts of Africa have also shown an increase in bookings. Eastern Europe has continued to gain in popularity and Air Arabia's direct flights to Vienna and Prague have received tremendous response. Croatia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania have also received good response as affordable value for money holiday destinations. ”



**His Highness (HH)
Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed
Al Maktoum**
Chairman and Chief Executive,
Emirates Airline and Group

“ The lower fuel cost was a welcome respite as we saw our fuel bill drop by AED 2.0 billion compared to the same period last year. However, unfavourable currency movements wiped off approximately AED 1.2 billion from our profits. The global outlook is difficult to predict, but we expect the airline and travel industry to continue facing headwinds over the next six months with stiff competition adding

downward pressure on margins. ”

Contd. on page 3 ►

TRAVTALK was invited to attend Expedia Group's Explore'19 at The Venetian Resort in Las Vegas. General Colin L. Powell USA (Ret.), former Secretary of State, headlined a stellar star cast of speakers. Here's a sneak peek of the event, which was attended by the bigwigs of the global travel industry. Turn to Pages, 8, 12 and 13

Paradise, unfolded

The salty wind caresses your skin, your hair leap in joy and your feet is tucked in soft white sand. A refreshing drink in hand, unending blues ahead and fawning leaves overhead. Waves beckon you to take a dip or ride them as you wish. The clear waters invite you to take a peek underneath. Heaven has multiple addresses; and that is at Adaaran Resorts.

Adaaran Prestige Vadoo | Adaaran Prestige Water Villas | Adaaran Prestige Ocean Villas
Adaaran Club Rannalhi | Adaaran Select Huduran Fushi | Adaaran Select Meedhupparu

ADAARAN
MALDIVES

6th Floor, H. Thuniya, Boduthakurufaanu Magu, Male' 20026, Republic of Maldives
T: +96 03 323 323 E: marketing@adaaran.com.mv
www.adaaran.com

شركة الطائرات المروحية
The Helicopter Company

إحدى شركات صندوق الاستثمارات العامة
Owned By Public Investment Fund

EXPERIENCE THE SKIES OF SAUDI ARABIA



Established in 2018 and fully owned by the Public Investment Fund, The Helicopter Company is the first national commercial helicopter operator in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Riyadh based company operates in the entire Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Our services include private air transportation, emergency medical services, and tourism trips to various attractions in the Kingdom.

www.thehelicoptercompany.com.sa

Tapping potential markets

► Contd. from page 1



Arijit Munshi
General Manager
Tune Protect

“2019 has been a year of exploration with regards to new markets, new content as well as further developing our current product portfolio. Jump-starting new markets such as Saudi Arabia, India to ensure that our regional footprint keeps growing. ‘Content is king’ but the right content is even far more important. Our current varied products allow our business partners to cater to different types of travellers. Most importantly we listen to our users, which is paramount to the success of our partnership. We have made some key changes to enhance user experience. Watch the space for more to come.”

“We had a very productive year with more markets added to our global network. Satguru set its foot on the travel markets of Russia, Ukraine, China, USA and Cambodia. Apart from receiving various accolades at regional and global levels, Satguru also received airline awards and recognitions. A major breakthrough in the year 2019 is the introduction of in-house Accounting and Front Office systems across the network. This development is expected to provide a major boost to the operations by providing live consolidated data to international companies. This in turn will enable Satguru to emerge as a global travel management company.”



JVR Fernando
Commercial Director
– Europe, GCC, Asia,
Satguru

Inputs by Shehara Rizly

Flynas signs for 10 A321s

flynas, Saudi Arabia's first low-cost airline, has signed a firm order for 10 A321XLRs at the 2019 Dubai Airshow. The agreement was signed by **Bandar Almohanna**, Chief Executive Officer, flynas and **Christian Scherer**, Chief Commercial Officer, Airbus. The aircraft will deliver an unprecedented Xtra Long Range of up to 4,700 nm – with 30 per cent lower fuel consumption per seat, compared with previous-generation competitor jets.

A word from stalwarts

“Tourism is one of the most important sectors for the UAE economy and its contribution to the GDP is around 9 per cent. The aim of the Government of UAE is to diversify our economy especially to reduce the dependency on oil and gas, increasing the contribution from the non-oil sectors. The contribution of the travel and tourism sector amounted to 11.1 per cent of the GDP in 2018, which is equivalent to AED 164 billion. If you look at the impact of digital economy or recycling economy you will see there is a huge potential in the tourism sector to contribute and be a major activity that will attract blockchain, artificial intelligence in terms of adapting these technologies in the tourism sector. Sharing data for the tourists, the attractions, the activities, events, will expand this sector further.”



I believe with huge development in hospitality, hotels, restaurants, activities, events and medical tourists, lot of creative ideas in this sector will attract more tourists to the UAE. Dubai Expo 2020 is one of the major events coming soon with many activities for tourists. Our expectation is to have 25 million tourists over the six months of the Expo and our economy can benefit from their presence and their visit to the country.”

— HE Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Saleh

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy for Foreign Trade Affairs, UAE

festive gatherings

Book your Christmas parties with us

Celebrate the holidays with friends and family. Stage your event with us and let our Events Team handle all of your requirements.

Christmas Day Brunch from AED 399 | December 25 | 12.30pm-4pm

The iconic Family Brunch brings a Festive themed feast with activities for the little ones and a visit from Santa himself.

New Year's Eve Gala Dinner from AED 449 | December 31 | 8pm-2am

Welcome the new decade in style and join the city-wide celebration at Al Bahou. Extravagant buffet, live band, DJ, and overflowing drinks all night long.

Follow us on social @MovenpickIBG

T: 04 444 5613 | M: +971 52 630 8954

E: hotel.dubai.ibnbattuta@movenpick.com

MÖVENPICK
HOTEL IBN BATTUTA GATE
DUBAI

movenpick.com

Tourism Breaking News

■ Emirates to host first IATA Global Accessibility Symposium

■ Etihad Airways and PIA relaunch codeshare partnership

■ Emirates opens first remote check-in terminal for cruise passengers

■ Turkish Airlines World Golf Cup tournament arrives in Antalya

■ Travelport and Saudia extend partnership

■ DTCM & partners aim to achieve goals of tourism vision 2022-25

■ Abu Dhabi shines as a premium tourism destination at WTM 2019

Listen, engage and respond

VFS Global, the leading outsourcing and technology partner to 63 governments worldwide has an 18-year long domain expertise to renew focus on enhancing customer experience across all its touchpoints.

VFS Global looks further to consolidate its presence worldwide ensuring a renewed focus on customer delight. The new integrated customer care strategy is built around three core elements of Listen-Engage-Respond to go beyond what is commonly expected and deliver a quality, consistent customer experience across all touchpoints.

This approach aims to deliver reliable, timely and accurate response thereby offering a near real-time resolution to concerns and issues. The company is working to leverage technology, analytics and training backed with robust processes and improvements to achieve this objective.

“VFS Global has always strived to not only offer innovative solutions to governments for hassle-free operations and e-Governance, but also provide convenience and consumer experience”

Innovations to enhance convenience

With a focus on making the end-to-end journey and process hassle-free, VFS Global has introduced innovative offerings such as chatbots for faster resolution of queries, real-time updates for applicants to track and trace the status, customised interfaces such as personalised services, prime time appointments, premium and platinum lounges, biometrics at home and so on, based on agreements with the respective client governments. VFS Global started many

initiatives such as Location Independent Document Processing (LIDPro) for government efficiency, self-service kiosks, Visa at Your Doorstep, Mobile Visa Application Centres, biometric solutions and mobile e-Visa solutions.

The new-age tech and chatbot

H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, recently named the country's top five and bottom five government service centres, exemplifying the importance of providing high-quality services

and addressing changing expectations. VFS Global has always strived to not only offer innovative solutions to governments for hassle-free operations and e-Governance, but also provide convenience and consumer experience that is scalable and addresses the evolving needs of the applicants.

The importance of industry support

Lastly, no industry works without a strong ecosystem, and their support has always been the travel trade fraternity. Some of the services are best facili-

tated by the travel agents in the regions they operate in, such as Visa at your Doorstep or the Platinum Lounges in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. They engage with them at various touchpoints to keep abreast of their requirements and hold many meetings and roadshows for a successful synergy.



Belson Coutinho
Chief Marketing Officer
VFS Global

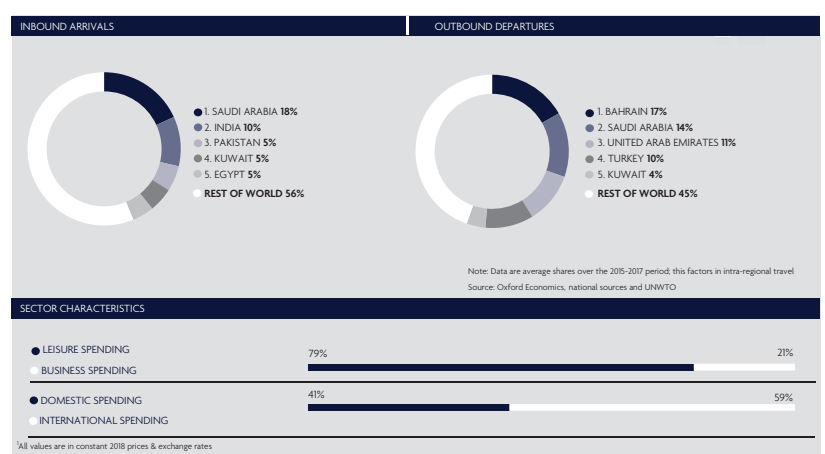
(The views expressed are solely of the author. The publication may or may not subscribe to the same.)

Tourism's share in ME's GDP grows

The latest annual research by World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTTC) states that in 2018, travel and tourism contributed a total of 8.7 per cent of the total GDP of the Middle East region, amounting to US\$ 237 billion. This marked an increase in the sector's GDP by 0.6 per cent over the previous year for the region.



❖ Percentage shares of inbound arrivals of top 5 destinations over the 2015-2017 period. In case of outbound departures, Bahrain leads with 17% followed by Saudi Arabia (14%), UAE (11%), Turkey (10%) and Kuwait (4%).



Dubai set for cruise season

The upcoming 2019-2020 season is expected to welcome more than 200 ship calls and an estimated one million cruise visitors. This follows a successful 2018-2019 cruise season when the city witnessed a record increase of over 51 per cent in cruise tourist footfalls with nearly 850,000 tourists and 152 ship calls.

TT Bureau

With the start of a new cruise season last month, Dubai has stepped up its drive to attract more cruise travellers keen to explore and enjoy the city's winter sun offerings as part of efforts to further strengthen its position as a leading 'cruise hub of the region'. The new cruise season commenced on October 19 with the arrival of TUI Cruises' Mein Schiff 5, carrying over 6,000 passengers. This will now be followed by five maiden calls from leading international cruise liners throughout the season, including Costa Cruises' Costa Diadema, MSC



Cruises' MSC Bellissima, Royal Caribbean's Jewel of the Seas, CroisiEurope's La Belle Des Oceans and TUI Cruises' Mein Schiff 6. The cruise liners will home-port at Dubai's award-winning Mina Rashid Cruise Terminal, home to world-

class facilities capable of handling seven mega-cruise vessels at one time. In fact, the terminal will receive five cruise vessels in a single day on 11 occasions throughout this season and six cruise vessels in a single day twice throughout

the season. **Mohammed Al Muallem**, CEO and Managing Director, DP World, UAE Region, said, "Cruise tourism is steadily increasing its contribution towards making Dubai a multi-faceted leisure destination for in-

“Mina Rashid's status as the premier cruise port of the region is reflected in not just the number of tourists sailing in on an annual basis, but more importantly, the rising number of cruise liners making this their preferred homeport”

ternational travellers. DP World, UAE Region is committed to developing Dubai's cruise industry to its maximum potential in line with the goals set out in the Dubai Silk Road strategy which was developed by the Ports, Customs and Free Zone Corporation (PCFC) in collaboration with key government entities."

Mohammed Abdul Aziz Al Mannai, CEO-P&O Marinas & Executive Director, Mina Rashid, said, "Mina Rashid's status as the premier cruise port of the region is reflected in not just the number of tourists sailing in on an annual basis, but more importantly, the rising number of cruise liners making this their preferred homeport."

DID YOU KNOW?

Travel is more social with **Travelwings**

DRAG & DROP CHECK-OUT

☎ 800- 894647 (TWINGS)
✉ customer.care@travelwings.com
🌐 www.travelwings.com

Personality of the Month

Finding synergies, improving efficiencies

Joining Niyama Private Islands in 2017 as a task force professional, today **Hafidh Al Busaidy** is Cluster General Manager and is responsible for looking after three properties in the Maldives.

 Shehara Rizly

Hailing from the UK to Omani and German parents, Busaidy moved out of Europe at the age of 12 and started a childhood of global exploration. He studied in India, Malaysia, Egypt and America, taking a degree in Political Science.

However, he was drawn to hotels and started his career in Oman with InterContinental and worked his way up till leaving as the Acting General Manager of the beautiful Al Bustan Palace. He then moved to Jubail, Saudi Arabia and took over at the InterContinental where he won General Manager of the Year award for IHG Europe Middle East and Africa. Then he relocated to open the iconic Crowne Plaza Suzhou in China. After the successful opening of the hotel, he returned to the Middle East to Doha, then moved again to Asia to open InterContinental's flagship hotel in Osaka, Japan. He played key roles in Malaysia, India, Cambodia until joining to take on a cluster role looking after the prestigious Souq Waqif hotels in Doha. He joined Niyama Private Islands in May 2017 as General Manager and stayed on.

Taking reins in Private Islands

One of the key duties in his portfolio entailed rebranding the whole area from Per Aquum to Private Islands under the Minor portfolio. It is one of the most



“One of the key duties in Busaidy's portfolio entailed rebranding the whole area from Per Aquum to Private Islands under the Minor portfolio”

spectacular and beautiful island resorts in the Maldives with 134 villas and a variety of outlets including Afro-Latin, Asian tree-top, Subsix underwater, EDGE for fine dining in the ocean and Blu pool restaurants. Also, Surf Shack at Vodi is one of Maldives' only island breaks. There were a number of awards and accolades received during this short span of time. Some of them were the Arabian Travel Awards where the resort won the Best Luxury Award, voted 4th Best Resort in the World – Conde Nast Reader Choice and Best Beach Bar in the World – Surf Shack Vodi – National Geographic Magazine Australia.


Key traits in his role

Starting off from the Middle East, Busaidy has played many roles in his career to ensure that the property enjoys good profits. 'Finding synergies and improving efficiencies' is a key necessity in the trade today with many properties vying for that special spot. In his

case re-branding, launching of a new brand, repositioning existing properties to luxury brands and creating awareness and reputation are some of the key traits that differentiate him from others. Personally an achievement which must be mentioned is where Busaidy increased the ranking on TA from 47 to four for hotels in Doha. Overseeing the daily operations in the property to drive service excellence is an inborn talent put into action.

Passionate persona

Some of the key elements in his life which

have been demonstrated throughout his career is the passion for exploration, not just to travel and discover the world but also meet people in different locations, find out their ways and to be rich in terms of knowledge. He shares that he loves music, travel, reading, sky diving and meeting different people in life. 



Hafidh Al Busaidy
Cluster General Manager
Niyama Private Islands

ibis
STYLES **by**
US

Bookings and Inquiries:
Email: HA089-RE@accor.com



2nd December Street,
Al Mina Road Jumeirah 1,
P.O. Box: 121252, Dubai - UAE
Tel: +971 4 327 7001

ibis Styles Jumeira is operated by R Hotels (member of R Holding)
under a franchise agreement with Accor Hotels

Travel cancellation cover

Our hectic lifestyles put the pressure on us to 'book everything in advance'. At the back of our heads is always the thought 'What if I have to cancel my plan'? In a candid discussion with **Ahmed Al Faramawi**, Deputy CEO - AMEA, WebBeds, we seek to find answers to this question.

Do you think a traveller should protect his whole itinerary, before travelling? What can go wrong even before you travel? What are your thoughts?

Travellers spend a lot on their holiday or even business travel. Life is such that things can go wrong anytime; plans can get cancelled, people can fall sick, a visa could be refused, or there could be an unfortunate death in the family. There are so many reasons for cancelling a travel. A travel cancellation policy is important to ensure that the money spent is not wasted in case things go wrong. In such uncertain times, travellers must

protect their travel plans in advance.

Is there any kind of product that covers this?

Tune Protect has a Travel Cancellation Product that takes care of possible travel expenses incurred by the traveller due to travel cancellation including trip interruption.

What is travel curtailment?

Curtailment, due to insurable reasons, is the most important benefit of the travel cancellation policy. When people cancel or cut short the travel, there are certain costs that they face; costs of curtailment like costs of your hotel

stay, sight-seeing tickets, events the traveller has booked, changing the traveller flight tickets and a plethora of other costs, which for the large part is non-refundable. Tune

non-refundable hotel accommodation expenses and more. The other noteworthy feature is the terrorist cover, this protects the traveller in case he cancels his travel

difficult in all cases. Having said that, however, it is extremely important to have an extra cover like the Travel Cancellation Product, which covers the value of travel and allows the traveller peace of mind. And that's why we at WebBeds AMEA will be offering this important travel protection to our clients via Tune Protect technology and partners, as of Dec 19.

“Travel Cancellation Product by Tune Protect covers the travel expenses incurred by the traveller due to travel cancellation”

Protect Travel Cancellation Product includes curtailment due to insurable reasons and protects your travel against such events. The product also has other unique covers like visa refusal (within 14 days from the travel date),

due to terrorist activity at the destination.

What do you recommend? Should the traveller cover everything?

Ideally, yes. But the future is unpredictable, and 100% protection is



Ahmed Al Faramawi
Deputy CEO - AMEA
WebBeds

Advertorial



Submit your visa application from the comfort of your home or office with our optional **Visa at Your Doorstep** service.

Book your appointment now!

- 📍 Service available at your home or office
- 👥 Applicable to individuals & groups
- 🕒 Service offered on all working days
- 👑 Personalised attention to guide you at every step
- 📦 Courier return of passport for your convenience

For more information and to book an appointment:

- ☎ +971 42055761 (UAE)
- ☎ +966 115204875 (Saudi Arabia)
- ✉ VFSservices@Vfshelpline.com

About VFS Global: VFS Global is the world's largest outsourcing and technology services specialist for governments and diplomatic missions worldwide. VFS Global, headquartered in Dubai, UAE, has Swiss parentage and is a portfolio company of EQT, a leading global private equity firm headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden. With 3399 Application Centres, operations in 147 countries across five continents and over 215 million applications processed as on 31 October 2019, VFS Global is the trusted partner of 63 client governments.

Disclaimer: Please note that the availability and the service charges for the above mentioned services may vary depending upon the country/location where it is procured. Available on visa applications to select countries. The grant or refusal of the visa is at the sole discretion of the Embassy and availing any of the above value-added service/s will not affect the processing time or decision of your visa as VFS Global is neither involved in the process nor is liable or responsible in any manner whatsoever for the grant or rejection of the visa application of any applicant by the Embassy. For further information on the same, kindly refer to the VFS Global website. The above mentioned services are optional and will be charged in addition to the visa application fee. The applicant hereby accepts and confirms that they, prior to availing the above mentioned services, have read, understood and agreed to be bound by, without limitation or qualification, all of the terms and conditions associated with the services.

The 'Partner Central' brand

Paula de Keijzer, Senior Director-Market Management, Africa, Indian Ocean, Middle East and Turkey, Expedia Group, talks about growth in the Middle East market and how Expedia creates a level-playing field for small players by bridging the tech gap.

 Peden Doma Bhutia from Las Vegas

Expedia in Saudi Arabia has witnessed a 110 per cent year-on-year growth. What has been a major contributor to this growth and how much of it would be because of the new visa regime?

We've of course had the visa ease, also, the e-visa for 47 countries will be making it much easier. Earlier, one would have to go to the embassy and do the whole visa regime whereas now, one can just go online and get a visa within 24 hours. That helps to make the country more accessible. From our

Besides expedia.com, the group has a plethora of sub-brands, all of which may not be present in the Middle East. Which sub-brands are doing well in the Middle East and what can we expect in the new year?

Hotels.com has been there the longest, and the Arabic version has been there for more than three years now. Coming up next year we will have brand Expedia in the Arabic language, that's the new development for the next year. One of the up and coming brands is Egencia, our corpo-

tools that we provide to our partners it allows them to come up on a level-playing field with the big players who have access to the same tools. Also, that's where our market management team comes in, to work hand-in-hand with our partners and to make them aware of the tools and systems that we have for them to maximise their performance. Smaller individual properties also can't afford to have a sales organisation to cover all the feeder markets. They don't have the headcount and organisational structure to go after all the feed-

pay us locally, instead of having to pay us internationally. With no international exchange fees, no transfer fees etc, it makes it easier for them to do business with us. Making the Partner Central tool in Arabic since the beginning of this year has also been very helpful. Most importantly we encourage more and more face-to-face interactions with our partners.

Dubai ranks fourth amongst top destinations for packages in the EMEA region after London, Paris and Rome. Where are people coming from, what's the profile of travellers and what's the average length of stay for people coming into Dubai?

For Expedia, US is still the top market coming into Dubai where people buy their package and their hotel together, it's very standardised here. Second is UK and then comes Germany and France. The average length of stay for a standalone would be 2.7 days and for package would be 4.7 days, which is quite dramatically longer. The profile of travellers coming into Dubai is very mixed. There are leisure travellers those who come for family vacations and that's where you see 4.7 days or much longer. Mostly when people travel from far they come in for almost a week, but we also see a lot of business travellers coming for one to three business days, very similar to what we see in western Europe. Overall it's a good mix.

What is the proportion of packages vis-à-vis standalone purchases where people only buy a hotel or airfare separately on Expedia?

The package part on an average is about 40-45 per cent coming into Dubai, which are


“For Expedia, US is still the top market coming into Dubai where people buy their package and their hotel together, it's very standardised here. Second is UK and then comes Germany and France”

brought in by the feeder markets, which means that 50-55 per cent is still standalone, where people only buy a hotel or airfare separately.

According to an Expedia research, activities figure in the top priority list that drive people to book a package, what activities do people engage in while visiting the UAE?

Being locally relevant, it's a lot of authentic packages, so for Dubai it would be more like going on desert safaris or Bedouin tours throughout the desert. Of course, a visit to the Burj Khalifa, the old town, souks and going to water parks, like the Atlantis are also very popular. One can say it's a mix of cultural tours and activities like jumping off cliffs and helicopter rides etc.

How thriving is it to exist in the online travel market industry in the Middle East where people still have a traditional bent of mind and would prefer brick and mortar agents?

It's very thriving but it's one of the smaller ones (35-40 per cent) when compared to the world market. That means around 60 per cent is offline where people still go to the travel agencies and book offline. But having said that it is also one of the fastest growing online markets, although it's still small, so the growth is about 30-35 per cent annually. Even though the leisure market contributes three-fourth of our market, corporate travel is mostly online and goes through travel management companies like Egencia. 

Expedia for Expo 2020

We are very excited about Expo 2020, two weeks ago we had a Dubai Expo kick-off summit and we invited all our hotel partners and we also had representatives from Dubai Expo, Dubai Tourism, Emirates Airlines, so we got together all the partners who will be making the expo successful. This was a great event, where we had over 200 hotel partners, it was all about updating them on what the expo is going to be about. Dubai Expo had a presentation on what is there to be expected and we had insights from STR to show what is the outlook for the market looking like for the next 12 months to come and where should we set expectations from a price perspective. It's super important for an exhibition that's six months long to price correctly. Dubai Expo itself has priced the tickets very sensibly, to make it attractive for the people to come and attend because they expect 25 million visits from 20 million visitors and out of that 70 per cent will come from abroad. We will work very closely with Dubai Tourism and Dubai Expo to make this event a great success.

perspective we've been really working on being more locally relevant. Up until January this year our Partner Central tool did not exist in the Arabic language. Since the beginning of the year we now have that in Arabic, so that allows our partners to be way more engaged with us. We've also had market managers that are working with the hotels, so being more locally relevant and being more accessible to the partners has driven the engagement for us and that's what comes up with the 110 per cent growth for us.

rate booking tool, that's definitely driving its way into Dubai, Jeddah and Riyadh so that is great to see in the region.

In the hotel segment how do you engage with small players, who are not so tech savvy? How do you bridge the tech gap for these players, who are competing with international chains?

That's where we have our tools, like Partner Central, to help them. Rev+ gives out complimentary revenue management tools which most small-time hotels can't afford. With the

er markets, which we can bring them.

The partner tools are essential to bring them on a level-playing field, but how are you working to remove partner friction?

We are doing a lot of things to make it easy for the partners to do business with us, from locally relevant payment solutions as well as from a language perspective. Over the last year we have been opening up local bank accounts in each of the Middle Eastern countries so that the partners can



Delta Hotels debuts in ME

Marriott International officially announced the debut of Delta Hotels by Marriott in Middle East and Africa with Delta Hotels by Marriott Jumeirah Beach, Dubai. Within easy access from key business hubs including Media City, Internet City and Knowledge City, the hotel is ideally located in the heart of Dubai.

TT Bureau

With direct beach access, it rises tall between the Dubai Marina, Jumeirah Beach and The Walk, Dubai's first shopping and dining promenade. Offering a simple and hassle-free travel experience, it allows guests to achieve a perfect balance between their work and personal life whether they are on business or on leisure. "We are excited to introduce the first highest observation wheel in the world. The classic American pub – Speak-easy with its rustic ambience blends perfectly with an exquisite selection



of beverages, grills and live entertainment.

"We are excited to introduce the first Delta Hotel to Middle East and Africa region and believe the brand has immense growth potential

in our region with its clear ethos of -- simple made perfect," said Alex Kyriakidis, President and Managing Director, Middle East & Africa, Marriott International. "Delta Hotels by Marriott Jumeirah Beach Dubai will deliver on

this promise by providing a full complement of streamlined services in a simple and straightforward way offering both choice and flexibility. Its strategic location offers our guests the perfect way to discover the

city in a manner that makes travel seamless and enjoyable." The hotel's 45-story tower houses 360 comfortable and stylish rooms, offering a range of room types including suites and serviced apartments, each equipped with premium amenities, focused on what is important to guests for a flawless experience that allows them to glide through their entire stay. Guests can enjoy spectacular views of the Marina and Dubai's dazzling cityscape from beach facing rooms and many different parts of the hotel. The Brazilian restaurant Fogueira located on the 35th floor, takes the guests on a journey into Brazil with



Alex Kyriakidis
President and Managing Director, Middle East & Africa, Marriott International

its 'all you can eat' meat cuts especially crafted to perfection to serve the distinctive palate. The restaurant offers amazing views of Ain Dubai – the highest observation wheel in the world. 🌟

satguru
TRAVELS

MERRY
Christmas
&
HAPPY NEW YEAR

+971 4 5561050 infouae@satgurutravel.com www.satgurutravel.com

Sharjah spotlight on local tourist



The Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA) participated in the World Travel Market (WTM) in London for the 17th consecutive year as part of its intensified campaign to promote Sharjah's diverse and unique tourist offerings on the world stage.

 TT Bureau

The Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA) participated in World Travel Market (WTM) held in London from November 4-6, 2019. During the event, SCTDA showcased a range of attractions that makes Sharjah one of the region's favourite family destinations on the world map today. In cooperation with its partners from the public and private sectors, the Authority also promoted

tourism programmes and initiatives designed to attract tourists to the emirate; cultural and eco-tourism products; a wide range of sports, recreational and artistic activities; and adventure packages capable of delivering an enhanced tourist experience.

Sharjah is known for its rich heritage, history, and unique cultural diversity and is an ideal tourism destination that offers multiple tourist attractions, each of which has

“ WTM 2019 helped to raise awareness about Sharjah's growing tourism sector, showcase Sharjah on the world tourism map and entice more tourists worldwide, reaching closer to the set target of 10 million visitors by 2021 ”

different characteristics and offerings. The central region, for instance, is known for its stunning desert, offering adventure lovers with an opportunity to enjoy its sand and towering dunes while riding on SUVs. The eastern region, on the other hand, has beautiful terrains, exciting mountain ad-

ventures, historical sites, and museums. Moreover, the emirate hosts many popular events, festivals and exhibitions.

SCTDA highlighted Sharjah's entertainment, cultural, and heritage programmes and activities organised by various organisations apart from ex-

clusive tourist packages provided by major tourist facilities, resorts, and hotels. The number of hotel facilities in Sharjah has remarkably increased over the past few years due to growing tourist arrivals to the emirate. The emirate currently has a total of 10,883 hotel rooms, with hotel establishments

in the emirate offering world-class services that meet expectations. An additional 18 hotels and 16 hotel apartments are expected to be completed over the next five years, with a total of 5,679 rooms to be added to the current number in the coming years. The event also provided SCTDA with



H.E. Khalid Jasim Al Midfa
Chairman
SCTDA



attractions in WTM 2019



an international venue to promote Sharjah's most prominent historical sites, museums, exhibitions, festivals, and technology-driven projects such as Smart Mirror, Sharjah Boat, and the Virtual Reality experience.

H.E. Khalid Jasim Al Midfa, Chairman of SCTDA, said, "WTM 2019 allowed us to raise awareness about Sharjah's growing tourism sector. It enabled us to put Sharjah on the world tourism map and entice more tourists worldwide, including travellers from the UK, Ireland, and other parts of Europe, thus bringing

us closer to our goal of attracting 10 million visitors by 2021. In 2018, more than 578,000 European visitors travelled to Sharjah, up 24 per cent from the previous year, which reached 468,034, and we look forward to increasing the numbers further in the coming years."

The Authority will also put the spotlight on its recently launched apps designed to boost the emirate's hospitality and tourism industry. These include the AI Tour Guide Chatbot, Smart Hotel Licensing and Classification, Smart Vehicle Permit System, and the Hotel



Statistics System Business Intelligence (HSS - BI) solution. H.E. Al Midfa concluded, "Our participation at the WTM is part of our response to the directive of H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah, to make Sharjah a global touristic destination. The local



tourism sector, one of the vital economic sectors, has witnessed steady growth and development. During the event, we had an opportunity to see the latest trends in the global tourism sector, showcasing Sharjah's beauty and offerings such as events, festivals, and exhibitions, meet and exchange experiences with decision-makers, and learn about the latest practices in tourism, hospitality, and travel."

SCTDA recently launched the Shj AI Guide to enhance the experience of both residents and visitors. The unique easy-to-use application is designed to help visitors from around the world.

The application acts as a comprehensive and interactive tourist guide, providing all users with the latest information and details about local destinations, leisure activities, restaurants, and hotel facilities. It is available in five languages, namely Arabic, English, German, Chinese, and Russian. Shj AI Guide can be downloaded on Apple Store and Google Play.

SCTDA headed Sharjah's delegation comprising leading entities from the government and private sectors. The government delegates were Sharjah International Airport Authority; Sharjah Museums Authority; Environment & Protected Areas Au-

thority; Shurooq; Sharjah Expo Centre; and Sharjah Institute for Heritage. Participants from the private sector were Sharjah Airport Travel Agency (SATA); Sheraton Sharjah Beach & Resort; Hilton Sharjah; Sharjah Collection; Trav Talk; Hotel Holiday International; Cozmo Travel LLC and Golden Sands Sharjah.

FactFile

■ An additional 18 hotels and 16 hotel apartments are expected to be completed over the next five years, with a total of 5,679 rooms to be added to the current number in the coming years.

■ In 2018, more than 578,000 European visitors travelled to Sharjah, up 24 per cent from the previous year.

Expedia's Explore'19: What travel

Extended to two full days, the newly-formatted Explore'19 boasted of more content offerings, more breakouts and more learning and networking opportunities. Held at The Venetian Resort in Las Vegas, Expedia Group's annual partner conference had powerhouse speakers like **General Colin L. Powell USA (Ret.)**, former Secretary of State; **Barry Diller**, Chairman & Senior Executive, Expedia Group Inc.; **Billie Jean King**, former World No. 1 professional tennis player, **Robin Roberts**, co-host, Good Morning America, Best-Selling Author and **Colin O'Brady**, extreme summit mountaineer & motivational speaker.



has in store for the future

expedia group[™]
lodging partner services







SUN TROPICAL AND BRIGHT SRI LANKA

The aquamarine blue waves of the Indian Ocean gently unfolding on the golden shore. A fresh coconut sipped in the shade of wind-whispering palms. A (not to long) bask in the early morning or late afternoon sun. A cool-off in the vast expanse of sun-glittering sea. Some of the delights of a Sri Lankan beach.

Where beaches are concerned you will be spoilt for choice in Sri Lanka. Beaches totaling 1,340Km fringe the island, from the long-established tourist destinations of the southern coast, to the vast beaches of the deep south, and the less-visited expanses of the north and east. No matter what time of the year, you can find a beach that is in season and just waiting to welcome you to its warm sands.



Spike in Indian visitors to GCC

The number of Indian tourists travelling to the GCC is expected to increase 81 per cent from 5.4 million in 2018 to 9.8 million in 2024, growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 10 per cent, according to the latest data published ahead of Arabian Travel Market 2020.

TT Bureau

As destinations throughout the Middle East prepare to showcase their latest offering at ATM 2020, which will be held at Dubai World Trade Centre from April 19-22, 2020, Colliers International predicts that more than 20 per cent of India's total outbound market will travel to the GCC by 2024 – with business, place of work and leisure underpinning this demand.



Danielle Curtis
Exhibition Director ME
Arabian Travel Market

Danielle Curtis, Exhibition Director ME, Arabian Travel Market, said, "This influx of Indian visitors to the GCC shows no sign of abating, with every reason to believe India will maintain its position as a top source market as the region prepares to welcome an estimated increase of 81 per cent by 2024, providing a significant boost to the region's tourism industry

as we look ahead. This projected growth is being supported by a number of key stakeholders in the region, from immigration initiatives and mega events, to hotels, F&B venues, resorts, theme parks and malls – all of which appeal to Indian travellers. ATM is witnessing this growth first-hand, in 2019, 10 per cent of the total buyers at the show were from India. In terms of potential, we are only scratching the surface

as the Indian middle class represents just three per cent or 40 million of the total Indian population and average real wages are set to quadruple between 2013 and 2030."

In 2018, the UAE welcomed 2.89 million Indian tourists with this figure expected to reach 5.29 million by 2024, increasing at a CAGR of 11 per cent, according to ATM's official research partner,

1 million Indian tourists arriving in the emirate during the first half of 2019.

Despite the UAE leading comparative growth, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain and Kuwait are all expected to witness an increase of 10 per cent respectively between 2018 and 2024. "Driving this growth is a new generation of leisure attractions in the GCC, relaxed visa regulations for Indian nationals, additional



increasing popularity of adventure and eco-tourism in

mately 26.1 million of total outbound trips made, with reports from the UNWTO estimating this figure will increase by 92 per cent to reach more than 50 million by 2022.

Indian tourists are among the world's highest spenders while travelling abroad, with outbound travel and tourism expenditure to increase from US\$ 21.4 billion in 2018 to US\$ 39.3 billion by 2024. 📈

“Driving this growth is a new generation of leisure attractions in the GCC, relaxed visa regulations for Indian nationals, additional airline routes, increasing business opportunities, a renewed focus on Indian weddings and the MICE segment as well as the increasing popularity of adventure and eco-tourism in countries including the UAE and Oman”

Colliers International. Adding to this, India retained its top spot on Dubai's list of source markets for inbound tourism, with almost

airline routes, increasing business opportunities, a renewed focus on Indian weddings and the MICE segment as well as the

countries including the UAE and Oman," said Curtis.

Last year, Indian tourists accounted for approxi-

RAK declared Gulf Tourism Capital

According to a recent report the emirate of Ras Al Khaimah has been declared as the 'Gulf Tourism Capital' by the Ministers of Tourism of GCC member states during a recent meeting in Muscat, where they discussed measures aimed at coordinating tourism efforts in GCC countries.

TT Bureau

The meeting was attended by a UAE delegation led by Mohammed Khamis Al Muhairi, Advisor to the Minister of Economy for Tourism Affairs, on behalf of Sultan bin Saeed Al Mansouri, Minister of Economy, said a report in WAM. Al Mansouri stated that Ras Al Khaimah's selection as the capital of Gulf tourism highlights the UAE's leading stature as a popular tourism destination, noting that the previous

years have witnessed ongoing growth in the number of tourists visiting the country from around the world, and praising the decision of GCC tourism ministers and officials.

He added that the UAE, upon the directives of its leadership, has prioritised the tourism sector, due to its role in driving sustainable development and supporting the post-oil economy while pointing out that all emirates have increased their

The report of the World Tourism and Travel Council in 2019 revealed that the tourism sector made up 11.1 per cent of the UAE's GDP in 2018, amounting to Dh164.7 billion (\$44.8 billion).

numbers of touristic facilities and provide advanced and innovative tourism services. Presenting the key tourism achievements, Al Muhairi said that in 2018, the number of hotel guests visiting the UAE reached 25.6 million, an increase of 3.8 per cent com-

pared to 2017. These guests spent a total of 80.4 million hotel nights, an increase of 3 per cent over 2017. The country has 1,117 hotel establishments with an average 173.4 hotel rooms each and an average occupancy rate of 73.5 per cent while international

visitors made up 83 per cent of hotel guests, compared to 17 per cent for local guests, he added.

He also said that the report of the World Tourism and Travel Council in 2019 revealed that the tourism sector made up 11.1 per cent of the UAE's GDP in 2018, amounting to Dh164.7 billion (\$44.8 billion). This contribution is expected to rise by 3 per cent in 2019, and tourism provided 9.6 per cent of total


jobs in 2018, corresponding to around 611,500 positions. This percentage is expected to rise by 2.8 per cent in 2019, he further added. In 2018, visitor spending amounted to Dh136.8 billion (\$37.2 billion), or 8.6 per cent of the country's total exports. This figure is expected to increase by 4.1 per cent in 2019. Total investments in the country in 2018 amounted to Dh26.4 billion (\$7.1 billion), or 8.1 per cent of the total. 📈

WHITE CHRISTMAS. MORE FUN IN THE PHILIPPINES



Boracay Island, Aklan

seema.datt@buzzindia.in, arjun.chadha@buzzindia.in

 www.facebook.com/PhilippinesTourismIN

Middle East stands out at WTM

World Travel Market in London attracted a record number of visitors this year. In the Middle East section, Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, Dubai and Abu Dhabi had the most number of visitor movements. The key exhibitors from the ME included Dubai Corporation for Tourism & Commerce Marketing, Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority, Sharjah Commerce & Tourism Development Authority, Oman Ministry of Tourism and Jordan Tourism Board.



THC promotes global presence

The Helicopter Company (THC), providing commercial helicopter transportation services all over Saudi Arabia, participated at the Dubai Airshow 2019, which was launched at Al Maktoum International Airport, Dubai World Central (DWC).

TT Bureau

The Helicopter Company (THC) is the first and only helicopter operator in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, licensed to operate commercial flights from the General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA). Based in Riyadh, THC was established in 2018 through an initiative by the Saudi government's investment arm, the Public Investment Fund (PIF) as part of Saudi Vision 2030 to diversify the country's economy and expand into new, innovative sectors.

THC participated at Dubai Airshow 2019, which attracted many regional and



international companies from aviation, tourism and travel. On this occasion, **Yahya Al Ghoraibi**, CEO of THC, stated, "We are very pleased with our first distinctive participation at

the exhibition as the first local commercial helicopter operator in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We are confident that the establishment of this company is a massive step forward in support

of our capacities and efforts to ensure the success of the Kingdom's initiatives in line with Saudi Vision 2030, through operating commercial helicopter transportation services all over Saudi

“We are confident that the establishment of The Helicopter Company is a massive step forward in support of our capacities and efforts to ensure the success of the Kingdom's initiatives in line with Saudi Vision 2030”

Arabia, including private air transport services for VIPs, touristic sightseeing tours to explore the Kingdom's attractions, pilgrimage trips in the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah, and air ambulance services.”

Al Ghoraibi asserted that the exhibition provided a successful platform and a unique opportunity to strengthen relations with international companies and

decision makers. THC stood out at the exhibition as a major Saudi company within the commercial helicopter aviation sector. The company's CEO and several executives hosted aviation sector investors and businessmen interested in developing the industry in Saudi Arabia, where they discussed potential future partnership opportunities, especially regarding acquiring world-class helicopter models. 

MERRY

Christmas

&

HAPPY NEW YEAR



Your Trusted Travel Partner

WE

Care

 971 4 556 1010
 joinus@toptraveltrip.com
 www.toptraveltrip.com

Air Canada honours top UAE travel agents

Deepu Cyriac, Country Manager, Air Canada awarded 10 UAE travel agents at its annual awards gala event. The winners were dnata Travel, Orient Travel, Nirvana Travel, Kanoo Travel, FCM Travel Solutions, Hala Travel Management, Al Naboodah Travel, BCD Travel, Omeir Travel and ATPi Travel.



Accor expands portfolio

Ibis Jeddah and Adagio Jeddah by Accor is a contemporary lifestyle-oriented property offering cosy home-away-from-home environment to its visitors. Their opening will boost Jeddah's local and international tourism business and will meet the increasingly diverse needs of domestic and international travellers.

TT Bureau

Accor opens the stunning new complex of Ibis and Adagio Hotel in Jeddah. **Mohammed Farajat**, General Manager, Ibis Jeddah and Adagio Jeddah elucidates on Accor's two leading hospitality brands located in one of Jeddah's most sought-after districts. The complex is offering guests multiple flexible accommodation options and a comfortable and cosy home-away-from-home environment during their stay with multilingual staff. The complex is a hub for business, leisure and socialising, offering ameni-

ties such as 178 hotel rooms at Ibis, 77 serviced apartments at Adagio and a raft of shared facilities including Hadiqat Laila a 24-hour café along with innovative meeting rooms, a gym, an extensive fitness and wellbeing centre an outdoor swimming pool with a 12-hour coffee shop.

Sami Nasser, Chief Operating Officer, Accor Middle East & Africa, said, "We are proud to partner with Al Mohammadia Al Motaheda Company to bring Ibis and Adagio brands for the first time to Jeddah. Ibis has close to 60 hotels in the Middle East & Africa and



Sami Nasser
Chief Operating Officer
Accor Middle East & Africa

with the opening of Ibis Jeddah Malik Road represents the strength of the brand within the economy segment, alongside Adagio, our apartments offering functional spaces in prime city locations."

Ibis Jeddah is a contemporary lifestyle-oriented property that features comfortable king and twin beds across all floors, including the special needs room, complimentary Wi-Fi including all hotel facilities. Dining venues focus on flexibility and include the Ibis kitchen where diners have the option to tailor-make their own meal. The hotel's meeting rooms can accommodate up to 110 guests and a business centre, web corner for internet access, a furnished designated kids' play area and indoor and outdoor car park. On the other side, the luxurious Adagio

Ibis Jeddah and Adagio Jeddah by Accor is all geared up to accommodate the diverse needs of domestic and international travellers visiting the city now and in the future

Hotel Apartments provide panoramic views of Malik road and Corniche Road which is considered a perfect choice for many who do not like the idea of restrictions and prefer a home environment during their stay.

Jeddah is a fast-growing regional business and tourism hub which requires world-class hospi-

tal solutions for transforming into a booming local and international business and tourism hub. Ibis and Adagio by 'Accor' will meet the increasingly diverse needs of domestic and international travellers visiting the city now and in the future commented **Khalid Alturki**, Deputy Executive Manager, Al Mohammadia Al Motaheda Company.

Tracing Al Mahatta's aviation history

The museum first opened its doors in 2000, and since then, it has been a repository of stories of the first plane to land on Sharjah's territories, the development of Sharjah's first airport since the 1940s, and its influence on the economic, cultural and social life in the region.

TT Bureau

The importance of Al Mahatta as the representative of aviation history in Sharjah and UAE is undeniable. The museum features a collection of exhibits in the first airport headquarters and provides an opportunity for new generations to learn about the history of aviation in Sharjah. The story of aviation in these parts began on October 5, 1932, when the first plane landed at Sharjah airport at 4 pm. It came from Gwadar airport (now in Pakistan), on the way to Britain. The Imperial Airways aircraft, named Hanno, fuelled up and left carrying passengers and



Construction of the foundations of the resthouse in August 1932

mail from Sharjah, marking the first flight in the history of the country.

Strategic link

Since its inception, Sharjah's first airport played a

pivotal role in promoting the stature of Sharjah and the country even before the formation of the UAE. The airport served as a strategic link between the East and the West, and as

a bridge to other cultures and civilizations, offering a fast, easy and effective way to connect with other countries in the region and the world. Sharjah's strategic location contrib

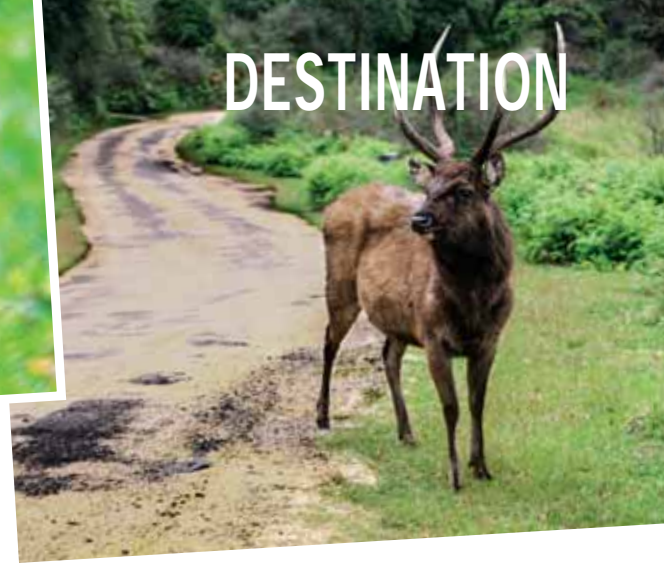
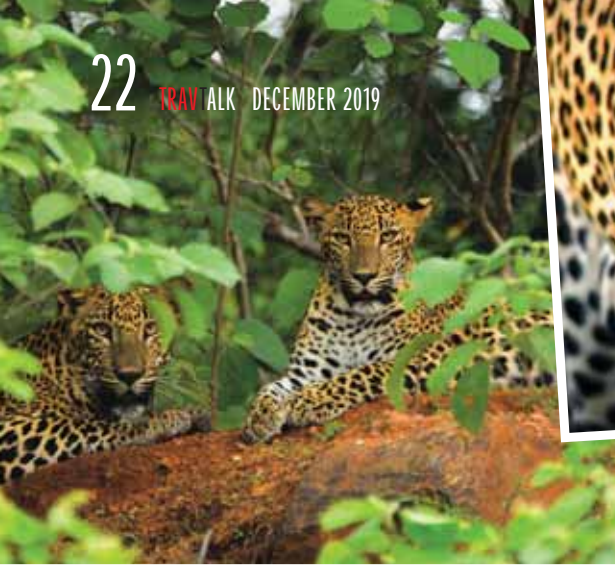
uted to mark a significant change in the international air routes. The Imperial Airways decided to shift their air routes from Persia and launch a new flight route through the Arabian Gulf region to their destinations in the Far East. The new route included Cairo, Basra, and Sharjah Air Station as main stopover airports.

Al Mahatta was strategically used as a link between Europe, Asia and Australia, offering effective communication channels with the Western countries in all cultural and commercial fields. The airport was also the base for military aircraft during the Second World War

until the year 1971, when the last Hunters, British jet-powered fighters, left Sharjah.

Airport amenities

The Al Mahatta was distinguished from the region's other airports by a fortified guesthouse for overnight stops and sleepover making it also the first hotel in the country. The airport's amenities also include a meteorological centre, telegraph and postal services, control tower, fuel tanks, airport defence force and an aircraft landing field that developed into a runway. In the 1960s, the runway was converted into an asphalt street, now known as King Abdul Aziz Street.



AYUBOWAN

Land of unexplored wonders

Sri Lanka has so much to offer its visitors when it comes to rich history and influences of being one of the most active trading hubs in ancient times. From picturesque locations which include pristine beaches to wildlife sanctuaries, Sri Lanka has an unmatched diversified set of experiences.

TT Bureau

Today's traveller behaviour has changed considerably and they seek experiential tourism rather than traditional tourism. Sri Lanka being a year-round destination has a lot to offer the travellers seeking an unmatched experience. A tiny drop amidst the In-

of Smiles' Sri Lanka has some of the most unique splendours in the world. Hospitality is a key ingredient in the land as they celebrate festivals depicting religious and cultural beliefs from ancient times. The land can be explored in about 14 days travelling from Colombo to the highest mountain peaks, most

the most amazing trekking sites as well.

Spiritual retreat

Taking a few days off to spend on a spiritual retreat to Sri Lanka is another feature popular among the visitors to the destination. From yoga to ayurvedic (herbal) treatment centers, Sri Lanka has become an exclusive destination for most visitors.

Pageantry at its best

An unforgettable experience for any traveller is the rich pageantry display especially towards the latter part of the year. It includes traditional dancers who captivate the audience with their talent, breathing fire out of their mouths and wearing masks that depict certain ancient elements.

Wonders of the world

The island may look tiny on the world map but has some of the most interesting wonders in

the world. In some parts of the country 'hot wells' are a very popular experience that one must include in their bucket list. These wells carry natural hot water at different temperature levels, so one can try out several of them and check the difference between them. Apart from that there are many other experiences not to be missed out on in the land of breathtaking beauty. Safari rides to the national parks, camping on ground and exploring to be one with nature, Sri Lanka has the rich ingredients necessary to make it one of the best in the world.

Colonial influence

Sri Lanka was colonised by the British, Portugese and Dutch and even today no matter where you travel the rich influence is depicted as the buildings of the ancient times

have been revived to give it the richest experience one can receive from a destination. Down south in Galle, some of the restored buildings have been transformed into boutique hotels where one can enjoy the rich history within the premises. Galle Fort proves to be one of the most impor-

tant features to be added on to the 'must see' list as it has some of the most amazing historical areas. From the light house to the caves covered under the sea that can only be visited during low tide season, Galle has some of the most iconic stories to share with the rest of the world. 🇱🇰



dian ocean, Sri Lanka offers every traveller an experience which is unique and memorable.

Land of Smiles

A destination known for great hospitality, often referred to as the 'Land

beautiful waterfalls, exotic nature reserves, elephant parks and reserves, bird watching areas, lodges and special natural tree tops for visitors to enjoy a spectacular experience and be one with nature. Sri Lanka has some of

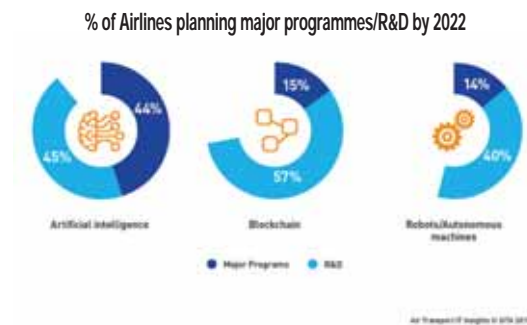


Airline spend US\$ 50 bn in '18

Airlines and airports spent a record US\$ 50 billion in 2018 on IT to support improvements to the passenger journey. Figures published by SITA for the first time show that this investment has resulted in a significant improvement in both the satisfaction levels for passengers and average processing time.

TT Bureau

The SITA 2019 Air Transport IT Insights show that 60 per cent of airline Chief Information Officers (CIOs) recorded up to a 20 per cent year-on-year improvement in passenger satisfaction. During the same period, 45 per cent of them recorded up to 20 per cent improvement in the rate of passengers processed. These strong returns on investment in technology were also seen at airports where 63 per cent of CIOs reported a year-on-year improvement of up to 20 per cent in passenger satisfaction levels while 44 per cent recorded quicker passenger processing times. Both



airlines and air-ports also recorded an improvement in their business performance.

Matthys Serfontein, President, Air Travel Solutions, SITA, said, "The good news is that the growing investment in automating the passenger journey means the industry is providing a faster, more pleasant air-

port experience. This is a real success story for automating the passenger journey, particularly at a time when we expect passenger numbers to double over the next 20 years, with physical airport infrastructure struggling to keep pace." This year's report shows that the industry continues to increase its IT spend,

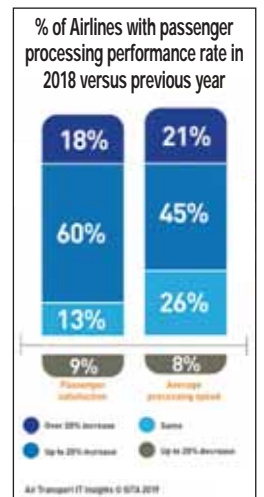
"The increase in airline spend over the past year was driven by the larger airlines which continue to invest to speed up the pace of digital transformation"

reaching US\$ 50 bn in 2018. This was driven in part by a sharp increase in airline IT spend after several years of virtually flat growth. Total IT spend for airlines as a percentage of revenue rose to 4.84 per cent while airport IT spend grew to 6.06 per cent of revenue in 2018. Projections for 2019 show investments will continue to grow.

Serfontein added, "The increase in airline spend over

the past year was driven by the larger airlines which continue to invest to speed up the pace of digital transformation. Investments in business intelligence and cloud services have emerged as priorities."

From an operational point of view, airlines and airports are increasingly investing in intelligence to provide real time and historic views of their operations, allowing



them to proactively manage everything from baggage and passenger flows, to aircraft turnaround and the allocation of key assets, such as parking stands and gates, Serfontein said.

Hahn Air celebrates 20th anniversary

Hahn Air celebrated their 20th anniversary with 87 travel agents, distribution partners and friends. The guests took the opportunity to take pictures with a life-sized Martin, the Hahn Air mascot. Kimberley Long, Vice President of Sales and Agency Distribution, Hahn Air, welcomed the attendees.





Sharjah FDI Forum highlights sustainable development

The fifth Sharjah FDI Forum's spotlight was on how Industry 4.0's technology-driven outputs can be harnessed by investors by capitalising on the lucrative investment opportunities in the sector, which will not just ensure business profitability and high ROI, but also fulfill important socioeconomic goals in order to create an inclusive, human-centered future.



Wego's top 10 New Year spots

Wego, the largest online travel marketplace in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), highlights the best 10 festive countries to celebrate this Christmas and New Year. On offer are fireworks decorating the beautiful skyline across the amazing backdrops to vivacious street parties in the most sought-after cities.

TT Bureau

We have handpicked the best 10 destinations for everyone to soak into the festive spirit of Christmas and New Year celebrations says **Mamoun Hmedan**, Managing Director, MENA and India, Wego. During the holiday period, we notice that most of the people book their holidays at least 27 days ahead of their travel date. Here we offer our insights to some of the best sought-out destinations to bid an amazing farewell to this year.

Proclaimed to be the official hometown of Santa Claus, visit Rovaniemi in Finland and rejoice one of a kind



Mamoun Hmedan
Managing Director-MENA and India
Wego

Christmas in this Finnish village, Christmas trees decked with shimmering gifts is a sight to behold. An ideal winter landscape surrounded by snow-capped mountains is a perfect way to cherish this joyous occasion.

The second trending festive destination is London. Enjoying the city's colourful illumination at the Regent Street or spotting the giant Christmas tree at the Trafalgar Square, Winter Wonderland at Hyde Park and endless fireworks at Thames River are few of the Christmas specials of London.

After London, Paris is the third best romantic destination to welcome the New Year. The City of Lights brims with joy and merriment where the architectural landmarks like Champs-Élysées Avenue and the Eiffel Tower are lit up in all their glory.

“Wego highlights the 10 best handpicked destinations for everyone to soak into the festive spirit of Christmas and bid an amazing farewell to this year”

Dubai comes fourth with great splendour and Christmas is equally enchanting with its winter garden market at Habtoor's Palace. New Year Eve celebration is incomplete without cascades of spectacular fireworks including the palm-shaped firework at the Palm Jumeirah. A fun galore for kids where the snow zone, holiday carols, and festive food treats will leave even the adults entertained. Turkey ranks the fifth most festive city for MENA travel-

lers for enjoying the winter vacation with a milder temperature and celebrate in a unique tradition where Baba Noel, the Turkish version of Santa Claus visits children and leaves gifts under the tree. The Norwegian city of Tromsø is considered the sixth best place to enjoy the natural beauty of Northern Lights (Aurora Borealis) in your holidays.

Indonesia is one of the seventh trending destination to spend the holidays

where people gather at the churches and offer prayers followed by a grand celebration. Travelling to more festive cities by the West, New York in the USA has a reputation for its sleepless nights and Rockefeller's enormous Christmas tree decorated during Christmas and is the eighth in the list. Rio de Janeiro in Brazil is the ninth in the list and you can enjoy an iconic New Year's Eve party at Copacabana beach with musical and dance performances. Finally, Tallinn in Estonia is one of the trending and sought-after festive cities for winter vacations with medieval churches that bring out the nostalgic memory of this celebration.

Kwality
40 Years in Dubai

DINE-IN, DELIVERIES AND CATERING

Arabian Centre, 04-2845164
Mobile: 050 4575243,
E-mail: kwalityrst@gmail.com

► Sojern

UK

Noreen Henry has joined Sojern as Chief Revenue Officer to oversee all global sales and account management teams servicing 8,500 travel clients in more than 100 countries. Bringing more than 25 years of experience to the role, she will be tasked with accelerating the growth of Sojern's hotel marketing solutions globally and deepening relationships with enterprise travel customers. Henry will play a key role in expansion into growth areas like tourism and the attraction space. Henry is a graduate from Harvard Business School and earned a BA from the University of North Texas.



► Travelport

UK

Travelport welcomed **Nick Bray** as its new Chief Financial Officer. He will be based in Travelport's global headquarters in Langley, Berkshire, UK. Bray will play a fundamental role in the execution of Travelport's strategy, focused on a strong business partnership approach and process excellence across the finance organisation. Most recently, he was CFO of Sophos, a role he held for nine years. Bray has spent over 25 years in the technology sector and has a track record of significantly increasing company value by accelerating growth.



► IHG Hotels

Festival City Dubai

Marieke Schellen has been appointed as Area Director of Human Resources, InterContinental Hotels at Dubai Festival City. She will oversee Human Resources for the whole cluster of four hotels as well as the Festival Arena, including a team which consists of 1,100 colleagues from over 63 nationalities. She was initially with the Hilton Dubai Creek and then she joined the pre-opening leadership team of W Hotel Qatar in 2007. After two and a half years, she moved to Europe to be part of the pre-opening of the W London Leicester Square as Director of Human Resources. In 2012 she was promoted to a corporate role at the Starwood Hotels Central London team.



► Jumeirah at Etihad Towers

Abu Dhabi

Jumeirah at Etihad Towers has appointed **Savino Leone** as General Manager. Leone, an Italian national, has a wealth of experience spanning from Asia, Europe and Middle East to Africa. Prior to joining Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts, Savino has held several senior management positions with the InterContinental Hotels Group. He joins from his previous role as General Manager at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa in Kuwait. In his new role, Leone will be responsible for running the hotel's 382 rooms & suites, Talise Spa, and 12 unique dining destinations.



► H Hospitality Collection

Morocco

The H Hospitality Collection has appointed **Olivier Arthur De Kermel** as General Manager of Villa Diyafa Boutique Hotel & Spa. Originally from France, De Kermel has over 36 years of hospitality experience and held several managerial positions in countries such as Tunisia, Seychelles, Morocco and Brazil, working with renowned hotel groups such as Hilton, Holiday Inn, and Ramada. De Kermel's strengths in operations management, guest experience and quality assurance, business development and strategic planning are key to successfully oversee the day-to-day operations of the newly-refurbished Villa Diyafa Boutique Hotel & Spa.



► Grand Millennium

Business Bay/Dubai

Grand Millennium Business Bay announced the appointment of **Mustafa Abu Al Ainen** as General Manager. An Irish-Egyptian national, Ainen joins Grand Millennium Business Bay with a wealth of 25 years of experience in hotel management and operations in which he has worked for many international hotel chains such as IHG, Hilton and Rotana in the Gulf region and UK. In 2018, he joined Millennium Hotels and Resorts, Middle East and Africa (MEA) as Director of Operations for Middle East markets. In his new role, he will be focusing on elevating Grand Millennium Business Bay's reputation as a preferred hotel for both leisure and business travellers.



► IHG Hotels

Festival City Dubai

Karim Abdelhamid has been appointed as Hotels Manager for InterContinental Dubai Festival City, InterContinental Residence Suites Dubai Festival City, Crowne Plaza Dubai Festival City and Festival Arena, with a remit to further strengthen the hotel's existing competitive advantages, establishing new operational and commercial synergies to positively impact financial performance across the properties which consists of 1,088 keys and ten F&B dining venues. Abdelhamid has been in the hospitality industry for nearly 20 years with senior leadership roles with the world's best hotel operators in the USA including The Plaza and The Ritz-Carlton in New York City and the Westin, Georgia.



► Hyatt Place

Dubai/Jumeirah

Hyatt Place Dubai/Jumeirah has announced the appointment of **Miljana Zvicer** as Assistant Hotel Manager. A Hyatt veteran, Zvicer brings 13 years of hospitality experience and will support the operations and functionality of the 204-room and 84-apartment Hyatt Place Dubai/Jumeirah. Having worked in two of Hyatt's most luxurious properties in Dubai – Grand Hyatt Dubai and Park. Before joining Hyatt Place Dubai/Jumeirah, her tenure at Grand Hyatt Dubai comprised of a variety of departmental leadership roles, including Director of Executive Office Services and Director of Events Planning.



► Radisson Blu

Dubai Media City

Radisson Blu Hotel, Dubai Media City has appointed **Claudia Pittau** as its Guest Service Manager. Pittau, originally from Sardinia Italy, joins the hotel after spending four years in London where she started as a Receptionist at Hilton until leaving as Guest Relations Manager at InterContinental London – The O2. In her new role, Pittau will support the management of the front office, Spa & Leisure operations by creating memorable moments for the guests visiting the Radisson Blu Hotel property located in the heart of Dubai Media City.



Jazeera Airways joins Sabre marketplace

Sabre Corporation announced a new agreement with Jazeera Airways at Dubai Airshow 2019. With this development, Jazeera joins other low-cost carriers in the Middle East choosing Sabre to expand its reach and leverage its technology to increase

revenue and improve travel experience.

Joining Sabre's leading Global Distribution System (GDS), Jazeera Airways will gain continued access to Sabre's global travel marketplace, allowing the airline to distribute its fares and offers to more than



425,000 travel agents and thousands of corporations around the world. This will support Jazeera's business strategy by driving its expansion and profitability and expanding its ancillary sales. "We are glad to be partnering with Sabre. It will provide us with extended distribution in key

markets and support our business growth," said **Rohit Ramachandran**, CEO, Jazeera Airways. "Jazeera is fast becoming a significant airline internationally with a strong low fare proposition which many more agents will be able to get access to," he added.



Director
Sumera Bahl
Managing Editor
Peden Doma Bhutia
Assistant Editor
Shehara Rizly
At the Desk
Smriti Kulshreshtha
Tripti Mehta

Business Development Manager
Crisna De Guzman
Sales & Admin Assistant
Angelito Villeza
Manager - Advertising
Gaganpreet Kau
Design
Nityanand Misra

is printed on behalf of
Durga Das Publications (Middle East) FZE
at Modest Print Pack Pvt. Ltd.,
C-52, DDA Sheds Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-I,
New Delhi-110020
UAE : Z1-02, 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 (Middle East) FZE. All information in is derived from sources, which we consider reliable and a sincere effort is made to report accurate information. It is passed on to our readers without any responsibility on our part. The publisher regret that he cannot accept liability for errors and omissions contained in this publication, however caused. Similarly, opinions/ views expressed by third parties in abstract and/or in interviews are not necessarily shared by. However, we wish to advise our readers that one or more recognised authorities may hold different views than those reported. Material used in this publication is intended for information purpose only. Readers 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 readers' 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 material either in part or in whole, without permission 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 UAE 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.

FRIDAY BRUNCH

12:30 PM - 4:30 PM

With a mouth watering selection of food
and free flow of house beverages at the pool side



SWIM & DINE AED 151

Above rate is net inclusive of service charges, local fees and taxes per person.
Children from 6 to 11 years of age, enjoy 50% discount;
Children 5 years of age & below dine for free

FOR RESERVATION:

+971 2 5629100

reservations@goldentulipaljazira.com

Golden Tulip Al Jazira
Hotel and Resort, Abu Dhabi

MORE THAN *Weekend Getaways*

A hidden gem in the northern most part of the UAE, Ras Al Khaimah is a dream destination for all types of holiday seekers. The Emirate boasts of magnificent landscapes featuring breath taking coastlines, terracotta desert planes, and the towering Hajar mountain range with the UAE's highest peak – Jebel Jais.

Ras Al Khaimah offers an entirely unique experience, and is the perfect getaway from everyday life.



@VisitRasAlKhaimah



www.visitrasalkhaimah.com



Ras Al Khaimah
BEYOND A JOURNEY

ARABIAN TRAVEL AWARDS



GLOBAL Travel SHOW

23-28 March 2020

**Tapping India's 30 million outbound travel market with
table top pre-fixed meetings across the country**

Key features

We provide **6-night accommodation** in 5-star hotels with travel & food.

We guarantee **35 pre-scheduled B2B meetings** in each city.

Only for **companies with no offices, affiliates or agents** in India.

We will conduct **roadshows in 3 key cities** to cover the whole country geographically.

Buyers from smaller Tier II and III cities will be hosted for each region.

Guaranteed **ROI**

Programme



- Day 1** Arrive at Mumbai International Airport. We organise airport transfers and accommodation for you
- Day 2** West and Central India Roadshow
- Day 3** Travel to Chennai
- Day 4** South India Roadshow
- Day 5** Travel to New Delhi
- Day 6** North and East India Roadshow
- Day 7** Depart from Delhi for your countries



Travel Show Participation fee

**Cost per organisation is
USD 5,000 for the first
delegate and USD 2,500
for the second delegate!**

For more information, contact: nikhil.jeet@ddppl.com, +91-9910031313



Night of grandeur and achievement

Over 200,000 entries were received for the third edition of the Arabian Travel Awards which took place at the Westin Dubai Mina Seyahi Beach Resort & Marina with industry professionals from travel, tourism, hospitality, visa services and other support services attending the event.



SHEHARA RIZLY

The black-tie evening started off with the guests at the foyer meeting and networking with fellow professionals in the industry. The official ribbon ceremony was graced by Chief Guest **Ahmed Obaid Al Qaseer**, Chief Operating Officer, Sharjah Investment and Development Authority (Shurooq), **Sanjeet**, Director, DDP Group, **Sumeera Bahl**, Managing Partner and Director, Durga Das Publications, **HE Nabeel Khalid Kanoo**, President, Kanoo Travels, **Kathryn Wallington** – Country Manager UAE, Travelport, **Nasir Jamal Khan**, CEO, Al Naboodah Travel, **Jamal Abdalnasser**, CEO, Cozmo Travel, **Sammy Musa**, Account Director – UAE and KSA, Azerbaijan Tourism Board, and Gladrags Mrs. India – **Anitha Mishra**.

In the opening speech, Convener for Arabian Travel Awards, Sanjeet, stated

that this year nearly 200,000 votes were cast. He continued, “I would just like to thank all your efforts, it is thanks to you that tourism is responsible for 10 per cent of the world’s GDP, responsible for one in five jobs in the future and within the region, again thanks to your efforts, tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors responsible for nearly 25 per cent of jobs.

The MENA region welcomed 87 million international tourists last year which marked a 10 per cent growth from 2017. Congratulations to all of you for being part of such a growing, innovative and successful industry. The Arabian Travel Awards have been convened to recognise this excellence, hard work and success. Today tourism is synonymous with progress, development and opportunity.”

Ahmed Obaid Al Qaseer commented, “Shurooq is excited to be a part of these prestigious awards. We look forward to holding discussions with you all to explore ways in which we can together capitalise on infinite new business possibilities in a way that it will benefit us as well as tourists to experience the UAE. Over the past few years, Shurooq has been actively diversifying its portfolio of investment and tourism projects with Sharjah’s rich culture, heritage and history, creating a unique backdrop for every destination.

We have invested close to US\$ 1.5 billion in eco-tourism and heritage projects in Sharjah. Last year, we launched two spectacular eco-retreats in Sharjah – the luxurious 20 tent Kingfisher lodge in Kalba, which is one of UAE’s

most important nature reserves and mangrove swamps, and Al Bait hotel, UAE’s first five-star luxury hotel built and developed on a 19th century heritage site. Each property celebrates a particular aspect of the emirate’s rich and very natural landscapes and encourages responsible tourism amongst tourists. Our efforts towards Sharjah’s eco-tourism have continued this year with the launch of two distinctive luxury retreats in key locations – the Al Faya lodge in Mleiha and Al Badaya Oasis in Sharjah’s Al Badaya desert.”

The Gallery of Legends award was received by **Asim Arshad**, Group CEO, Orient Travels and Tourism, with the DDP Game Changer award received by Cluster General Manager, Ramada Ajman, Wyndham Garden Ramada Ajman and Ramada Beach Resort Ajman, **Iftikhar Hamdani**. The Face of the Future was awarded to **Salih Gocz** – CEO of BTB Tours with **Anil Chandirani** bagging the DDP Trailblazer award.

There were over 60 awards divided into four categories — Personal Awards, Business Awards, Trending Awards and Partner Awards. They included awards for the Best Business Hotel, Best Family Friendly Hotel, Best City Hotel, Best Green Hotel, Best Leisure Hotel, Best Destination Management Company, Best Hotel Apartments, Best B2B Travel Portal and Best Luxury Hotel, to name a few. 🏆



Chief Guest | AHMED OBAID AL QASEER



Ahmed Obaid Al Qaseer, Chief Operating Officer, Sharjah Investment and Development Authority (Shurooq), said "We have invested close to US\$ 1.5 billion in eco-tourism and heritage projects in Sharjah. Last year, we launched two spectacular eco-retreats in Sharjah – the luxurious 20 tent Kingfisher lodge in Kalba, which is one of UAE's most important nature reserves and mangrove swamps, and Al Bait hotel, UAE's first five-star luxury hotel built and developed on a 19th century heritage site. Each property celebrates a particular aspect of the emirate's rich and very natural landscapes and encourages responsible tourism amongst tourists."

Ahmed Obaid Al Qaseer, Chief Operating Officer, Sharjah Investment and Development Authority (Shurooq) received the award for Chief Guest.

Technology Partner

TRAVELPORT

Kathryn Wallington, Country Manager for the UAE, Travelport, said, "As a GDS evolving to become a true technology enabler, Travelport has been working closely with customers and partners to launch a series of innovative solutions in mobile, artificial intelligence, cloud computing and blockchain. This award is a testament of our vision and dedication, as well as the recognition from members in our ecosystem."

The award was received by Kathryn Wallington, Country Manager - UAE, Travelport



Gold Partner

AZERBAIJAN TOURISM BOARD

Sevinj Zaynalli, International Market Management Director, Azerbaijan Tourism Board, said, "It was a huge pleasure to have participated in the Arabian Travel Awards, being a Gold Sponsor and receiving the Most Promising Tourism Board award. We sincerely hope that our involvement and achievements here help us boost tourist numbers from the Middle East region in the coming years – we really look forward to welcoming everyone!"



The award was received by Sammy Musa, Account Director – UAE and KSA, Azerbaijan Tourism Board, Leyla Mahmudova, Regional Manager Middle East Markets, Azerbaijan Tourism Board and Nadine Bridi, Account Manager - UAE

Hospitality Partner

**THE WESTIN DUBAI MINA SEYAH
BEACH RESORT & MARINA**

Bhavesht Rawal, Director Off Site Business Development, Mina Seyahi Complex, commented, "We are very happy to have been the hospitality partner for this prestigious Arabian Travel Awards 2019 event. This event is important not only for those directly engaged in the hospitality, travel and tourism sectors but also to the many other areas or sectors that support every aspect of the industry."

The award was received by Robert El Khoury, Complex Director of Sales and Marketing – Mina Seyahi Complex





Gallery of Legends

ASIM ARSHAD

It was a great honour to be recognised in the Gallery of Legends at the Arabian Travel Awards 2019. It is indeed very rewarding to gain this kind of recognition for your work and contribution to the travel and tourism industry. On a different note, I would like to compliment you on a wonderful function which was well organised, crisp and full of energy.

The award was given to Asim Arshad, Group CEO, Orient Travel Group. He was felicitated by SanJeet, Mentor, Arabian Travel Awards and Ahmed Obaid Al Qaseer, Chief Operating Officer, Sharjah Investment and Development Authority (Shurooq)



DDP Game Changer

IFTIKHAR HAMDANI

I am thrilled to win the award category, Game Changer, it has given me confidence to do more on sustainability along with my team. Recognition in such a high-profile event in the presence of government dignitaries and industry giants was another honour for me. It was a great networking event where I met hundreds of hospitality leaders under one roof.

The award was given to Iftikhar Hamdani, Cluster General Manager, Ramada Hotel & Suites Ajman. He was felicitated by SanJeet, Mentor, Arabian Travel Awards, Ahmed Obaid Al Qaseer, Chief Operating Officer, Sharjah Investment and Development Authority (Shurooq) and Anitha Mishra, Gladrags Mrs. India

DDP Trailblazer

ANIL CHANDIRANI

It's an honour, a privilege and a very deep responsibility to be here and accept the Trailblazer Award 2019. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all our staff who played a crucial role in my entire journey. I must say it's all about passion, people and customer satisfaction which helped me grow my business. With these ingredients and the grace of God, we will continue to grow further.

The award was given to JVR Fernando, Commercial Director (West Africa, Europe, Middle East and Asia) on behalf of Anil Chandirani, Founder President and Managing Director. He was felicitated by SanJeet, Mentor, Arabian Travel Awards, Ahmed Obaid Al Qaseer, Chief Operating Officer, Sharjah Investment and Development Authority (Shurooq) and Anitha Mishra, Gladrags Mrs. India



Face of the Future

SALIH GOZCU

I would like to thank the Arabian Travel Awards and tourism industry for choosing me as the Face of the Future. My efforts when I was 24 years old as the youngest General Manager in the UAE and at the age of 28 when I started my own business truly paid off with this award. This will be a motivation for me to work even better with my team and company. We are growing with our partners and aim to be the best DMC in UAE in the next three years with quality of service and total amount of pax.

The award was given to Salih Gozcu, Chairman, BTB Tours. He was felicitated by SanJeet, Mentor, Arabian Travel Awards, Ahmed Obaid Al Qaseer, Chief Operating Officer, Sharjah Investment and Development Authority (Shurooq) and Anitha Mishra, Gladrags Mrs. India



GLIMPSES OF Arabian Travel Awards





Best Corporate Incentives Tours Operator

KANOO TRAVEL

Zaeem Gama, Divisional CEO, Kanoo Travel, said, "We are very happy to have been recognised for the second year as the best corporate incentives tours operator as it portrays our efforts as a team to strengthen our brand. This award will ensure that we strive further to achieve success in future."

The award was received by Nabeel K. Kanoo, President, Kanoo Travel

Best Luxury and MICE Hotel, UAE

BAB AL QASR, ABU DHABI

Nemo Acimovic, General Manager, Bab Al Qasr, Abu Dhabi, said, "We are grateful and proud of this prestigious recognition, an indication that reflects the team's hard work and dedication in providing our guests with unparalleled luxury experiences. We are dedicated in delivering only the best of the best services, hence, we have a lot of exciting projects and launches in the near future to elevate guests' experience and add to the hotel's auspicious reputation as one of the leading landmarks in the capital."

The award was received by Nemo Acimovic, General Manager and Ela Angheluta, Sales Manager-MICE, Bab Al Qasr, Abu Dhabi



Best 4 Star Business Hotel - UAE

TWO SEASONS HOTEL & APARTMENTS

Freddy Farid, Managing Director, Two Seasons Management Company FZ LLC, said, "It's such an honour to be voted the Best 4 Star Business Hotel at the Arabian Travel Awards 2019. We wish to thank the guests for recognising our services and facilities and voting for us. The award has been won through the hard work and heartfelt dedication of our team at Two Seasons. We are constantly focused on delivering a hotel product and service that supports the daily demands of the business travellers allowing them to work perfectly when away from home or office."

The award was received by Bashar Turk, Director of Sales and Marketing, Two Seasons Hotel & Apartments



Best Wellness Destination

TOURISM AUTHORITY OF THAILAND

Pichaya Saisaengchan, Director for Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Dubai and Middle East Office, said, "We are so delighted to be awarded 'Best Wellness Destination' during the third edition of Arabian Travel Awards 2019, and recognised among the top destinations in the world. Thailand is known as a land of diversity, catering to a wide spectrum of visitors. With luxurious amenities such as 5-star hotels and resorts, lavish spa and wellness retreats, upscale dining, as well as once-in-a-life time experiences, Thailand truly is amazing."

The award was received by Hatsanai Chaisri, Marketing Manager, MENA, Tourism Authority of Thailand

Best Debut Leisure Hotel

ROYAL CENTRAL HOTEL - THE PALM

The stunning Royal Central Hotel The Palm is a place where fantasy lives up to reality. The 5-star hotel features 207 elegantly appointed rooms and suites, each designed to intuitively meet the needs of discerning travellers. Set in the iconic Palm Jumeirah, Royal Central Hotel offers an array of recreational activities from water sports to an outdoor infinity pool, state-of-the-art gym and health spa, along with dining options. Guests have access to one of the best private beaches in the city while enjoying unhindered views of the world-famous architectural landmarks such as Atlantis The Palm and Burj Al Arab as they unwind and relax in a beautiful setting.

The award was received by Basel Butrs, General Manager and Asif Ansari, Cluster Director of Sales and Marketing, Royal Central Hotel - The Palm



Best OTA

TAJAWAL

Muzzammil Ahussain, EVP Consumer Travel Unit, Seera Group, said, "Tajawal is thrilled to be awarded the impressive title of 'Best Online Travel Agency (OTA)' by Arabian Travel Awards 2019. This significant recognition highlights our commitment to redefine how people in the Middle East travel, by offering the most efficient, convenient, and intuitive travel booking platform to experience the world. We are constantly innovating and striving to provide our users a unique travel experience from inspiration, all the way to their destination and beyond."

The award was received by Muzzammil Ahussain, EVP Consumer Travel Unit, Seera Group



Best Airport Hotel, UAE

MILLENNIUM AIRPORT HOTEL DUBAI

Simon Moore, General Manager, Millennium Airport Hotel Dubai, claimed, "We are absolutely thrilled to win this coveted accolade for the third year in a row. We are truly grateful to Arabian Travel Awards for this amazing recognition. I take this opportunity to thank all our team members as well as our guests who are the real force behind this remarkable achievement."

The award was received by Sheryl Aquiatan, Marketing & Communications Manager, Simon Moore, General Manager and Purnima Sunil, Director of Sales & Marketing, Millennium Airport Hotel Dubai

Best GSA

AL NABOODAH TRAVEL

Nasir Jamal Khan, CEO, Al Naboodah Travels, said, "It is extremely gratifying to be recognised for our continuous efforts to best serve the interests of our partner airlines in the UAE with the award of 'Best GSA Agent 2019' at the Arabian Travel Awards for the second year in a row. Our journey started in 1973 with Air France as a GSA partnership. Since then we have expanded our portfolio to represent 11 leading international airlines today."

The award was received by Nasir Jamal Khan, CEO, Al Naboodah Travel



Best Leisure Hotel

SOFITEL DUBAI DOWNTOWN

Klaus Assmann, General Manager - Sofitel Dubai Downtown, said, "We are incredibly honoured to be chosen to receive this prestigious award. This recognition confirms my team's consistent approach to achieving our property goals and curating tailored experiences, all defined by luxury and uninterrupted privacy. We, at Sofitel Dubai Downtown, strive to provide a second-to-none experience for our guests - where memories don't just last a moment, they last a lifetime."

The award was received by Klaus Assmann, General Manager and Covi Larxe-Rey, Director of Sales & Marketing, Sofitel Dubai Downtown



Best Tourism Investment Authority

SHARJAH INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (SHUROOQ)

Ahmed Obaid Al Qaseer, COO, Shurooq, said, "We are proud to have Shurooq become the first investment authority in the UAE and MENA to receive this distinction, recognising once again our efforts in continuously transforming Sharjah's investment climate and public experiences through the development and launch of our world-class tourism projects that promote sustainability, culture, leisure and authenticity."

The award was received by Eng. Khalid Deemas, General Manager, Heart of Sharjah

Best Travel Agency

ALMOSAFAER

Muzzammil Ahussain, EVP Consumer Travel Unit, Seera Group, said, "It is a great honour to be recognised as the 'Best Travel Agency' by the Arabian Travel Awards 2019. Over the past seven years Almosafer has built a deep understanding of regional travel needs and preferences, which has powered our expansion plans to transform the way booking travel is perceived in Saudi Arabia. Almosafer is adding the human element to give customers the choice and freedom to book their travel exactly in the manner they want."

The award was received by Muzzammil Ahussain, EVP Consumer Travel Unit, Seera Group and Abdulrahman Mutrib, CTO, Seera Group



Best Wedding Hotel

THE WESTIN DUBAI MINA SEYAH BEACH RESORT & MARINA

Robert El Khoury, Complex Director of Sales and Marketing, Mina Seyahi Complex, said, "We are very thankful to Arabian Travel Awards for recognising the Westin Mina Seyahi as the Best Wedding Hotel. This award means a lot to us and we are very proud of the product and service we have to offer here at the Westin Mina Seyahi to make memorable moments."

The award was received by Robert El Khoury, Complex Director of Sales and Marketing, Mina Seyahi Complex



Best B2B Travel Portal

COZMO TRAVEL

Deepa Rajesh, Director for Sales and Business Development, Cozmo Travel, said, "It was a pleasure to bag another award for the night on the behalf of Travtrolley, our own B2B booking platform, as the 'Best B2B Travel Portal 2019.' Winning these awards wouldn't have been possible without the dedication and hard work of all the team members working tirelessly to provide top quality services for clients."

The award was received by Deepa Rajesh, Director for Sales and Business Development, Cozmo Travel, Jamal Abdulnazar, CEO, Cozmo Travel and Vijay Gadepaka Bhaskar, Chief Technology Officer, Cozmo Travel

Most Innovative Destination Management Company

BTB TOURS

Salih Gozcu, CEO, BTB Tours, said, "We are very thankful to the organisers of Arabian Travel Awards for recognising us as the most innovative destination management company. This award will be a key motivator for us to ensure that we go further to improve ourselves in becoming more innovative and support the UAE's vision of becoming one of the most innovative destination management companies in the region."

The award was received by Salih Gozcu, Chairman, BTB Tours



Most Comfortable Hotel Apartments

GOLDEN SANDS HOTEL APARTMENTS

Mohammed Khoory, General Manager, Golden Sands Hotel Apartments, said, "We are very happy to be the recipient of the Arabian Travel Awards for the third consecutive year as the Most Comfortable Hotel Apartments. This win further strengthens and motivates the team to strive ahead with confidence. We see it as a builder of confidence between the clients and the publicity received is quite a lot."

The award was received by Mohammad Khoori, General Manager, Golden Sands Hotel Apartments



Best Corporate Travel Management Company

SATGURU TRAVELS

JVR Fernando, Commercial Director (West Africa, ME & Asia), Satguru Travel & Tourism LLC, said, "Satguru Travels is honoured to receive 'The Best Corporate Travel Management Company' award for the second consecutive year. We could not have made it without the hard work and dedication of our entire team."

The award was received by JVR Fernando, Commercial Director - West Africa, Europe, ME & Africa, Srinivasu Kolla, Chief Investment Officer and Ashish Tahiliani, BDM Satguru Dubai

Most Promising Airline

RWANDAIR

Timothy Njihia, Area Manager GCC, RwandAir, said, "It was an honour to receive this significant recognition by the Arabian Travel Awards for the second time running. This is a testament that our efforts to provide high quality services as a fast-growing airline are being recognised within the region and further. The award challenges and encourages us to work harder and smarter to continuously improve on our service offering."

The award was received by Timothy Njihia, Country Manager - UAE, GCC, Pakistan and Arnold Anthony, Sales Manager, RwandAir



Best Business Car Rental Company

LUMI

Azfar Shakeel, VP, Lumi, said, "We are delighted to have won 'Best Business Car Rental Company' award for Lumi at the renowned Arabian Travel Awards 2019. It is a fantastic achievement to be recognised by our customers. Lumi is the newly rebranded car rental business of Seera Group and is continuously transforming the automotive rental market with an enhanced fleet and digital-driven customer services."

The award was received by Azfar Shakeel, VP, and Mueed Masood, Marketing Manager, Lumi





Best Business Travel Agency - UAE

SHARJAH AIRPORT TRAVEL AGENCY

Arshad Munir, General Manager, Sharjah Airport Travel Agency, said, "SATA has continued to maintain the highest level of exemplary service offering competitive rates and increasing clients' faith in SATA. This has resulted in more corporate companies utilising SATA as their preferred travel expert."

*The award was received by **Thomas Varghese**, Deputy General Manager and **Mohammed El Gedawy**, Manager Business Travel, SATA*

Best 5 Star Hotel, Makkah

M HOTEL MAKKAH BY MILLENNIUM

Mohamed Abdel Fattah, General Manager, M Hotel Makkah by Millennium, commented, "We are extremely proud of this achievement. The award crowns our dedication and continuous efforts in providing exceptional services that go beyond the expectations of independent travellers and aim to create a memorable experience for every guest. This recognition inspires us to further adapt and develop the best hospitality practices, and remain the hospitality partner of choice for our guests."

*The award was received by **Hisham Al Sharif**, CEO and **Mohamed Abdel Fattah**, General Manager, M Hotel Makkah by Millennium*



Best City Hotel

JOOD PALACE HOTEL DUBAI

Ahmed Badawy, General Manager, Jood Palace, said, "It is indeed a great honour for Jood Palace Hotel, Dubai to win the 'Best City Hotel' award after receiving the 'Best Family-Friendly Hotel' award for two consecutive years in 2017 and 2018. At Jood Palace Hotel Dubai we always strive for excellent levels of guest satisfaction and this award is a great motivation for our future endeavours. This award is a token to our associates for the efforts and passion they put in their commitment to excellence journey."

*The award was received by **Ahmed Badawy**, General Manager, Jood Palace Hotel Dubai*



Best Outbound Tour Operator - Oman

BAHWAN TOURISM

S.A. Gururaj, General Manager, Bahwan Travel Agencies LLC, said, "I would like to thank the jury members for the unanimous choice of our company as the 'Best Outbound Tour Operator - Oman.' This indeed is a very proud milestone for us to be recognised for our efforts and commitment in delivering quality holiday products. I would especially like to thank our customers too, who believe in us and give us continuous support that keeps us motivated to work harder to give the best services and products."

*The award was received by **S.A. Gururaj**, General Manager, Bahwan Tourism*

Best Business Hotel Brand

MILLENNIUM HOTELS & RESORTS MEA

Kevork Deldelian, CEO, Millennium Hotels and Resorts Middle East and Africa, stated, "We are proud of these achievements as they reflect the unique experience that Millennium Hotels and Resorts provides to its guests. Modern hospitality revolves around chic concepts and technology adaptations; the two pillars of our strategic development plan every year. I would like to extend my deep thanks to every member of the Millennium family."

*The award was received by **Haitham Assem** (MCIM), Regional Associate Director of Marketing & Communications, MEA, Millennium Hotels & Resorts MEA*



Best Debut Hotel Apartments

MÖVENPICK HOTEL APARTMENTS DOWNTOWN DUBAI

Eric Seso, General Manager, Mövenpick Hotel Apartments Downtown Dubai, said, "As a new property in Dubai, to be given the recognition as the best hotel apartment at the Arabian Travel Awards is a great breakthrough not only for the property but for the team as well. This award is an embodiment of the team's hard work and passion since the pre-opening days. It also serves as a motivation for us to continue doing well in what we do and that is to provide a home away from home experience for every guest."

*The award was received by **Eric Seso**, General Manager, **Kimberly Pasco**, Marketing Manager, **Hadi Almashama**, Talent and Culture Manager, **Rihan Fazlur**, Finance Manager and **Jeki Kasanga**, F&B Manager, Mövenpick Hotel Apartments Downtown Dubai*



Fastest Growing Destination Management Company

STELLAR DESTINATION TOURISM LLC

Vimal Joshi, Chairman, Stellar Destination Tourism, said, "It is like a fabulous thing and I probably feel award winning is an achievement and probably after getting the award we will have more privilege to get more business."

*The award was received by **Vimal Joshi**, Chairman and **Alica Shamsi**, Managing Director, Stellar Destination Tourism LLC*

Best Visa Outsourcing Company

VFS GLOBAL

Vinay Malhotra, Regional Group COO, Middle East, South Asia and China, VFS Global, commented, "We are truly honoured to have received the award for 'Best Visa Outsourcing Company'. This award is a true reflection of how far we have come as a service provider in this sector and encourages us to continue putting our best foot forward."

*The award was received by **Vinay Malhotra**, Regional Group COO - Middle East, South Asia & China and **Atul Marwah**, Regional Head-Middle East, VFS Global*



Best Luxury Business Hotel, KSA

MILLENNIUM HAIL HOTEL

Bassem Yakout, General Manager, Millennium Hail Hotel, said, "We are extremely honoured to be receiving the 'Best Business Luxury Hotel KSA' award. Winning this award would not have been possible without the inspiration we have received from the Millennium Hail Hotel team. This achievement inspires us to continue levelling up our luxury accommodation and an extensive array of services and amenities and state-of-the-art venues."

*The award was received by **Bassem Yakout**, General Manager, Millennium Hail Hotel*





Best Contemporary Hotel Apartments

BURJUMAN ARJAAN BY ROTANA

Ulrich Hoffmeister, General Manager of BurJuman Arjaan by Rotana and Jumeira Rotana, said, "We are honoured to be recognised by Arabian Travel Awards. We are incredibly proud of our colleagues who committed their energy to driving all our initiatives in favour of all our guests and stakeholders. This remarkable award is dedicated to our guests, colleagues and owners who supported us throughout."

*The award was received by **Ulrich Hoffmeister**, General Manager, BurJuman Arjaan by Rotana*

Best Family Friendly Hotel

RAMADA HOTEL AND SUITES BY WYNDHAM DUBAI JBR

Binu Varghese, General Manager, Ramada Hotel and Suites by Wyndham Dubai JBR, said, "Our team is honoured to receive its first accolade since its launch in September this year. We will continue to create reasonably-priced packages for families and deliver a top-notch standard of service to ensure that our guests, especially the ones travelling with children, will have a convenient and comfortable stay."

*The award was received by **Binu Varghese**, Hotel Manager and **Shalet Sutari**, Marketing Executive, Ramada Hotel and Suites by Wyndham Dubai JBR*



Best Online Travel Marketplace

WEGO

Mamoun Hmedan, Managing Director, MENA and India, Wego, said, "We're thrilled to win the Arabian Travel Awards for the second year in a row. This recognition is a true testament and a reaffirmation for Wego's position as the largest online travel marketplace in the Middle East and North Africa."

*The award was received by **Dean Wicks**, Chief Flights Officer, **Nadine AbdelKhalek**, PR Manager and **Salah Mustafa**, VP, Digital Marketing – MENA, Wego*



Best Desert Resort

TITAL LIWA HOTEL

Ahmed Margoushy, General Manager of Tital Liwa Hotel, said, "Winning for the third time, it gives Tital Liwa Hotel's management and team a great honour. This achievement inspires us to continue levelling up our services, products and offers as well as our long-standing commitment towards delivering a mix of heritage, culture, and luxury hotel experiences to our valued guests and for travellers visiting the country."

*The award was received by **Ahmed Margoushy**, General Manager and **Imane Aadjou**, Cluster Assistant Director of Sales, Tital Liwa Hotel*

Best Debut Hotel

GULF COURT HOTEL BUSINESS BAY

Melville Gracias, Director of Sales & Marketing, Gulf Court Hotel Business Bay, said, "Awards like these remind us that we need to deliver consistently more value to our organisations, our clients, to their customers, and to everyone whom that business affects in order to be successful." **Volker Mandlowsky**, General Manager, Gulf Court Hotel Business Bay, commented, "Only through the continuous effort of our team was it possible to accomplish this distinction, furthermore it will motivate us to even higher performance, while at the same time guaranteeing and enhancing our guests' satisfaction."

*The award was received by **Melville Gracias**, Director of Sales & Marketing and **Volker Mandlowsky**, General Manager, Gulf Court Hotel Business Bay*



Fastest Growing Mid Market Hotel Brand

FOUR APPLE HOTELS

Ravi K Nair, Cluster General Manager, Four Apple Hotels, said, "Thank you very much for recognising our efforts for the third consecutive year. We are today rebranded as Four Apple Hotels, together with the nine hotels at present under the leadership of Sunain Yousuf. We are a fast-growing chain due to this visionary leader and this award will motivate us further to achieve even greater heights."

*The award was received by **Ravi K Nair**, General Manager, Four Apple Hotels*



Best Family Friendly Resort, Mussanah

MILLENNIUM RESORT MUSSANAH, OMAN

Dermot Birchall, General Manager, Millennium Resort Mussanah, said, "We are glad that Millennium Resort Mussanah has been bestowed with the 'Best Family-Friendly Resort' award for 2019 in the Middle East. The award is a testament to our niche services and offerings that are family-friendly, and a symbol of our exemplary hospitality."

*The award was received by **Dermot Birchall**, General Manager, Millennium Resort Mussanah, Oman*

Best Travel Management Company

ELAA

Abdulrahman Mutrib, CTO of Seera Group, said, "It is a great honour for Elaa to be recognised as the 'Best Travel Management Company' at the prestigious Arabian Travel Awards 2019. This award is a testament to the incredible growth and continuous investment in advanced technology by Seera to seamlessly deliver the travel requirements of clients."

*The award was received by **Waleed Youssef**, Director, Elaa, **Abdulrahman Mutrib**, CTO, Seera and **Saeed Alfuraih**, Vice President Travel Management, Seera Group*



Best Hotel Apartments

FIRST CENTRAL HOTEL SUITES

Equally well-located is First Central Hotel Suites within easy reach of the emirate's key leisure hubs. In close proximity to the hotel are Dubai Internet City Metro Station, Dubai Media City, Dubai Marina, Montgomerie, Emirates Golf Club, and Mall of the Emirates. The deluxe hotel features 524 spacious and modern apartments equipped with top-notch facilities combined with award-winning hospitality.

*The award was received by **Hany Samuel**, General Manager, **Mustafa Hassan**, Group Director of HR and **Jean Al Hayek**, Cluster Director of Revenue, First Central Hotel Suites*



Best Travel Technology Provider

TRAVELPORT

Kathryn Wallington, Country Manager for the UAE, Travelport, said, "The Travelport team is excited to walk away with this significant award. From continuously enhancing our travel commerce platform to exploring the practical applications of emerging technologies, we believe the technologies that we are building are essential to this new era of travel."

The award was received by Kathryn Wallington, Country Manager - UAE, Travelport

Fastest Growing Travel Management Company

COZMO TRAVEL

Jamal Abdunnasser, CEO – Cozmo Travel, said, "Consistency is the best route to guaranteed success in the industry. Cozmo Travel was awarded the 'Fastest Growing Travel Management Company 2019' for the second year in a row. This award honours our efforts in working towards achieving our vision of providing top quality services to our clients in order to rapidly and consistently grow in the travel industry."

The award was received by Malik Naseer, Head of Operations, Vijay Gadepaka Bhaskar, Chief Technology Officer, Mohamed Ziyad, Senior Software Development Manager and Srikanth Alwala, Network Team Lead, Cozmo Travel



Best Debut Business Hotel

CANAL CENTRAL HOTEL - BUSINESS BAY

If you are looking for the magical allure of the iconic Burj Khalifa then Canal Central Hotel Business Bay is the place to be. It is only a few minutes away from The Dubai Mall, Burj Khalifa and Dubai Fountains. Equipped with the finest amenities, each of Canal Central's 280 spacious rooms and suites offer spectacular views of the Dubai Canal or Burj Khalifa.

The award was received by Shady Dawad, General Manager, Mustafa Hassan, Group Director of HR and Ahmed Samy, Cluster Finance Controller, Canal Central Hotel



Best 4 Star Business Hotel, KSA

COPTHORNE HOTEL RIYADH

Ayman Sallam, General Manager of Copthorne Riyadh Hotel, said, "We are extremely proud of this achievement. This award reflects the efforts of our team in delivering excellent services and unique experiences for each guest. Finally, we would like to extend our deep thanks to the organisers of this grand gala ceremony that attracts hoteliers and hospitality key players every year, and we promise our guests that we will go beyond their expectations in every stay."

The award was received by Haitham Assem (MCIM), Regional Associated Director of Marketing Communications - MEA

Most Promising Tourism Board

AZERBAIJAN TOURISM BOARD

Sevinj Zaynalli, Azerbaijan Tourism Board, said, "It was a huge pleasure to have participated and being a partner in the Arabian Travel Awards. We truly believe that this event will bring a big impact to us and will help us to be recognised by the travel trade across the Middle East. The Arabian Travel Awards exceeded all our expectations as it was a very well organised and successful event. We are looking forward for future collaboration."

The award was received by Leyla Mahmudova, Regional Manager Middle East Markets, Azerbaijan Tourism Board and Sammy Musa, Account Director - UAE and KSA, Azerbaijan Tourism Board



Best Luxury Beach Resort – Maldives

NIYAMA PRIVATE ISLANDS MALDIVES

Deveeka Nijhawan, Cluster Director Maldives, Niyama Private Islands Maldives, said, "It is a true honour for us and we would like to thank the Arabian Travel Awards for giving us this recognition especially in the Middle East. You know it is one of our key source markets and to be recognised as the Best Luxury Beach Resort in the Maldives means a lot to us. We are proud and delighted to be honoured with this award and we look forward to welcoming everyone."

The award was received by Deveeka Nijhawan, Cluster Director Maldives, Niyama Private Islands Maldives



Best Corporate Travel Company

KANOO TRAVEL

Zaeem Gama, Divisional CEO, Kanoo Travel, said, "Our expertise and experience in the industry is key to this award and we are grateful to Arabian Travel Awards for providing us the opportunity to be among the achievers. Thank you to our team for their unstinted efforts to achieve this recognition."

The award was received by Zaeem Gama, Divisional CEO, Kanoo Travel

Best 4 Star Business Hotel, Kuwait

COPTHORNE KUWAIT CITY

"We are proud of receiving the Arabian Travel Awards for this year. This award demonstrates our consistent dedication towards our guests' comfort, where we raise the bar of excellence for others to follow. Our efforts in making the property the Best 4-Star Business Hotel in Kuwait have paid off. This award is a testimony to Copthorne Kuwait City Hotel's distinctive hospitality and impeccable service offerings."

The award was received by Alaa Selim, GM and Omar Shahin, Director of Sales, Copthorne Kuwait City



Most Trusted Travel Partner

AL NABOODAH TRAVEL

Nasir Jamal Khan, CEO, Al Naboodah Travel, said, "As the most respected awards programme for the travel and tourism industry in the region, it is a great honour to be presented with the award of 'Most Trusted Travel Partner 2019' at the Arabian Travel Awards. Al Naboodah Travel was established in 1973 and has completed more than 45 years in the travel industry, taking care of all our customers' travel needs, and we believe it is important to recognise these efforts to build a strong platform for growth in the region."

The award was received by Nasir Jamal Khan, CEO, Al Naboodah Travel



Best 3 Star Leisure Hotel

STUDIO M ARABIAN PLAZA

Ursula Chidiac, General Manager, Studio M Arabian Plaza, commented, "It is a great honour to have won this prestigious award and this speaks volumes of Studio M Arabian Plaza's striking hospitality and service offerings. We have been successful in providing an up-to-the-mark hotel experience to both our hotel guests & long-term hotel apartments' residents and this win is a testimony to it. This award is an encouragement for us to make Studio M Arabian Plaza a traveller's first choice."

The award was received by Ursula Chidiac, General Manager, Studio M Arabian Plaza

Fastest Growing B2B Travel Portal

TOP TRAVEL TRIP

JVR Fernando, Commercial Director (West Africa, Europe, ME & Asia), Top Travel Trip, said, "We thank Arabian Travel Awards for selecting Top Travel Trip (T3) as 'The Fastest Growing B2B Travel Portal for 2019'. We were the first in this region to introduce this B2B concept, thus becoming the forerunners in employing the latest technological know-how in this sector. Our new portal has deployed a lot of advanced features, thus ensuring smooth and easy transaction for our customers."

The award was received by JVR Fernando, Commercial Director - West Africa, Europe, ME & Africa, Albert Fernando, COO-TW, Srinivasu Kolla, Chief Investment Officer and Sam Varghese, BDM - Top Travel Trip



Best Serviced Apartments

TWO SEASONS HOTEL & APARTMENTS

Freddy Farid, Managing Director of Two Seasons Management Company FZ LLC, said, "We sincerely thank our clients, guests and everyone who supported and voted for us. The digital transformation and other investments we are making in quality improvements are a clear example of how constant renewal keeps us ahead of the game. This is what enables us to respond even more effectively to our guests' personal wishes and guarantee them top class service."

The award was received by Bashar Turk, Director of Sales and Marketing, Two Seasons Hotel & Apartments



Best Family Resort, Salalah

MILLENNIUM RESORT SALALAH

Hesham Youssuf, DOSM, Millennium Salalah, said, "Millennium Resort Salalah is extremely delighted to have won this award. Our efforts in making the property one of the best family resort has paid off. This award is a testimony to our distinctive hospitality & impeccable service offerings, and this has become our foremost priority."

The award was received by Hesham Youssuf, Director Sales and Marketing and Arsanious Saad, Account Director, Oman Hotels

Best Airline - South East Asia

PHILIPPINE AIRLINES

Agnes F Pagaduan, Country Manager UAE, Philippine Airlines, said, "It was really an exciting night and we would like to take this opportunity to thank the organisers for recognising us as the Best Airline for Southeast Asia for the second consecutive year. We hope that we continue to hold our position at number one next year and in the years to come. We would also like to thank you for your continued support to the airline."

The award was received by Joey Tiberio, Sales Manager, Sabina Fernandez, Sales Support Executive and Kristine Anne Teves, Key Account Manager, Philippine Airlines



Best Leisure Destination Management Company

BTB TOURS

Salih Gozcu, CEO, BTB Tours, commented, "We are proud to have been recognised for the second time this evening as the 'Best Leisure Destination Management Company'. There is a lot of teamwork and hard work that goes into becoming the best out of the best and this is clearly seen as an important achievement for us as a company as we believe in promoting some of the key destinations to our clientele."

The award was received by Salih Gozcu, CEO, Anastasiya Gozcu, Sales Manager and Ahmed Mardini, Deputy General Manager, BTB Tours



Leading Hotel Residences, UAE

MILLENNIUM ATRIA BUSINESS BAY

Ziad El Hawi, Hotel Manager at Millennium Atria Business Bay, said, "We are honoured to receive this prestigious recognition. This award reflects Millennium Atria's commitment and dedication to providing the best service to all guests. I would like to extend my appreciation to every member of our family who contributed to this achievement."

The award was received by Ziad El Hawi, Hotel Manager, Millennium Atria Business Bay

Sharjah's Leading 4 Star Hotel

GOLDEN SANDS HOTEL SHARJAH

Mohammed Khoory, General Manager, Golden Sands Hotel Apartments Sharjah, commented, "We are really honoured to have received the award for Sharjah's leading 4 Star brand hotel by Arabian Travel Awards. This award is a testament of who we really are, a token of appreciation for all those behind the scene for all their hard work as well as our owners for their continued strength and support. We are very proud of this achievement and look forward to furthering ourselves as professionals in the industry."

The award was received by Mohammed Khoory, General Manager, Golden Sands Hotel Apartments Sharjah



Best 3 Star Hotel

IBIS STYLES JUMEIRAH

Muhammad Mujtaba Haider, General Manager, IBIS Styles Jumeirah, said, "We all are delighted to receive the Best 3 Star Hotel award. We would like to thank Arabian Travel Awards for not only selecting us but providing an opportunity to be a part of the most significant event of our professional career. We thrive in becoming / being recognised as happy mood makers, one of our brand's essence."

The award was received by Arun Mehta, Assistant Director of Sales, Adnan Ahmed Khan, Assistant Revenue Manager, IBIS Styles Jumeirah



Nominations are open



ARABIAN TRAVEL AWARDS

September 2020

sonia.butalia@arabiantravelawards.ae +91-9650311774,
nikhil.jeet@ddppl.com +91-9910031313
www.arabiantravelawards.ae

MEDIA PARTNERS

