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# ME's outbound connect

Travelling to outbound destinations has opened a plethora of options for the Middle Eastern traveller. The increase in accessibility to varied countries, has also opened doors of business for potential outbound tour operators, hotels and airlines. Industry experts highlight what they have on offer for the region.

 Shehara Rizly

Outbound is gaining prominence in the Middle East. Experts of the industry elaborate on the USPs in offering:

## Palladium Hotel Group

### Significance of Middle East market

**Sandra Polo Canudas**, Asia & MEA Commercial Director, Palladium Hotel Group, shares that the hospitality industry in Asia has increased the value of transactions for the last five years and the Middle East market is one of them, thanks to Hard Rock Hotel Ibiza, Ushuaia



**Sandra Polo Canudas**  
Asia & MEA Commercial Director  
Palladium Hotel Group

Ibiza Beach Hotel, and the new Bless collection Hotels. "We have seen an organic growth mainly towards the aforementioned hotels. Palladium Hotel Group has hired Plus Point media agency to be our best ally in the region



**Timothy Njihia**  
Area Manager UAE, GCC Countries\* & Pakistan\* (\*Offline markets) for RwandAir

allowing us to have more awareness about ME," she says.

### Accommodating large families

She further informs, "Our management packages provides a committed



**Kathryn Wallington**  
Country Manager - UAE  
Travelport

service and a support network specifically designed to achieve the highest possible returns. Bless Collection hotel, garners a hedonistic luxury experience. Those who seek to delve deeper into music will choose

our Hard Rock Hotel Ibiza and Hard Rock Hotel Tenerife. The Grand Palladium is well-oriented to children, teenagers and adults. At Agrotourism Sa Talaia, one can relax in rooms with avant-garde designs. In addition, one can rent exclusively for a single family."

### Halal food

"We do offer options. We already had requests of this kind especially for MiCE and small groups," she says.

### Proximity to shopping and leisure

Canudas states that proximity depends on the des-

ination. "For example, in the case of Madrid, we are situated in the Salamanca neighbourhood where all the major brands are concentrated. In Ibiza, we do not have shopping centers, but it is worth taking a walk in the city center," she added.

## Travelport

### Outbound trends of UAE travellers

**Kathryn Wallington**, Country Manager - UAE, Travelport, says that based on Travelport's analysis of bookings made through all global distribution systems (GDS), some interesting patterns in the

Contd. on page 2 ►

## 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.

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# Seeking the real experiences

► Contd. from page 1

inbound and outbound tourism markets of the UAE could be discerned. "For instance, our statistics showed that Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh were the fastest-growing destinations for travellers of the UAE from April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019, which have seen surge in growth of flight bookings. Additionally, ahead of this year's Hajj, the UAE recorded the second highest rise in advanced flight bookings to airports around the holy city of Mecca," she said. "In terms of inbound tourist arrivals, according to our analysis, the UAE was ranked the third most popular long-haul destination for the UK travellers during both the Christmas season in 2018 and the summer holiday in 2019.

Insights as such can give travel agencies, airlines and other players in the industry a competitive advantage," she said.

## Booking with agents

The latest Travelport's Global Digital Traveller Research in 2019 discovered that although a wide range of technologies – especially social media, augmented and virtual reality experiences – are now increasingly influencing travellers' decision making, the dominant majority of leisure and business travellers in the UAE also treasure the recommendations given by travel professionals, such as travel agents and tour operators, informed Wallington.

## Accessible tourists

Regarding accessible tourists, the #TravelUnified campaign, launched

by Travelport in April 2019, has tremendously boosted the use of the DPNA Special Service Request (SSR) code in the Middle East and around the world.

"We are very happy with the improved awareness in the travel industry to provide sufficient assistance to passengers with intellectual or developmental disabili-

ties. The campaign has been extended by four months to the end of this year, and in the coming weeks we will announce the enhanced utilisation status of the DPNA SSR code," she adds.

## RwandAir

### Current trends

Timothy Njihia, Area Manager UAE, GCC Countries\* & Pakistan\* (\*Offline markets) for RwandAir, says that the outbound travellers onboard our flights from Dubai come from the following segments: Holiday or Vacation/Visit Friends & Relatives (VFR), Corporate Travel for Business and Trader Traffic, that is, traders who come from all over Africa. Travel from the UAE is mainly to the hub (Kigali) and onward to Western, Central, Eastern and Southern Af-

rican destinations in the RwandAir network.

He further explains, "Lately, there is a general trend of the local Emiratis travelling to Rwanda for tourism and other nationalities travelling for trade and business. This trend is attributed to the good relations between the UAE and Rwanda with business communities from both countries reckoning a 'hub to hub' connection between Dubai and Kigali."

"From the segments mentioned above, this is a combination of both expats (other nationalities), residents (nationals of Rwanda plying the route from Dubai/Kigali/Dubai) and local Emiratis who have since started to visit Rwanda," he says.

## Initiatives to upgrade tourism

"We work very closely with the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) and Dubai Tourism for augmenting tourism into Rwanda and Dubai. Over the last 2-3 years, we have partnered on various initiatives that have seen tourism traffic soar between the two countries," he informs.

## Working with agents

"We recently took some agents to Rwanda for a Fam trip for 2 nights/3 days. It was followed up by a trade mission visit to Rwanda that had a delegation of over 17 senior executives from 8 UAE industry sectors, in conjunction with our GSA (Al Rais Travel). We expect a similar delegation from Rwanda to the UAE," he added. 🇷🇼

## FactFile

■ According to Travelport, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh were the fastest-growing destinations for travellers of the UAE from April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019

■ UAE and Rwanda have business communities from both countries reckoning a 'hub to hub' connection between Dubai and Kigali

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# Bigger and Bolder ITB Asia 2019

ITB Asia this year is all set to witness deliberations from thought leaders on trends in the travel industry. The event will kick off from October 16-18, at Sands Expo and Convention Centre at the Marina Bay Sands Singapore. **Katrina Leung**, Managing Director, Messe Berlin (Singapore), shares more...

 TT Bureau

**Could you share details about this year's ITB Asia?**

ITB Asia 2019 and MiCE Show Asia 2019 will be held concurrently. The theme for ITB Asia this year is 'Bold Thoughts,

for high-level discussions on the trends that are galvanising change in the travel industry.

**How will this year be different?**

For the first time this year, ITB Asia will be organising the inaugural MiCE Show

Under this new initiative, every partner that recommends 15 successful buyers to attend the show will receive complimentary hosting by ITB Asia.

**What will be attractive to the Middle East?**

ITB Asia 2019 features a conference track dedicated to Muslim Travel, discussing business strategies to cater to this growing group of travellers. Additionally, other conference tracks include Travel & Tech, Destination Marketing, where top practitioners in these sectors will share insider tips in sessions such as 'Marketing to Millenni-



**Katrina Leung**  
Managing Director  
Messe Berlin (Singapore)

als', 'Discovering Best Practices from Leading Travel Buyers', and start-up spotlight sessions, among many. In addition, both ITB Asia and MiCE Show Asia will feature exhibitors from various popular tourism destina-

tions, including Thailand, South Korea, Europe, the Baltics.

**Could you share the area covered for Middle East and the number of participants and their details?**

This year, a total of 58 National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) and Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) from Asia, Russia and Europe have registered a year-on-year growth of 23.8 per cent and 25 per cent respectively.

**What are the expectations this year in terms of business?**

Building on the 2018 trade show's record-breaking number of attendees of over 11,000, ITB Asia 2019 will see at least 19 new NTOs and RTOs, with strong participation coming from Indonesia, Russia and South Korea. Europe alone has seen a 37.8 per cent increase in the number of exhibitors due to an increase in interest from Southern and Eastern Europe.

**“ITB Asia 2019 features a conference track dedicated to Muslim Travel, discussing business strategies to cater to this growing group of travellers”**

Bold Moves'. Under this theme, the conference will bring together thought leaders from across the MiCE, Leisure, Corporate, and Travel Tech sectors

Asia 2019, which will focus on Asia-Pacific's burgeoning MiCE sector. ITB Asia has also introduced a new Buyers Elite Partner Programme (BEPP) this year.

## NumberGame

■ Under (BEPP), every partner that recommends **15** successful buyers to attend the show will receive complimentary hosting


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## Tourism Breaking News

- DTCM launches campaign to lure Chinese visitors
- Events to contribute tourism market value of US\$133.6 billion by 2028: WTTC
- Over 1000 travel agents register for Experience Hub 'Yas Expert' Destination Training Programme
- Etihad Guest partners with Emirates NBD
- Ras Al Khaimah attracts 118,000 visitors in August 2019
- Flynas to introduce direct flights to Lucknow and Calicut in India
- flydubai flights to seven destinations to move from Terminal 2 to 3 in DXB
- EGYPTAIR becomes first A220 operator in MENA
- SalamAir launches four weekly flights from Abu Dhabi to Muscat

# UAE & KSA's digital preferences soar

A report namely, 2018 Travelport Global Digital Traveller Survey and 2019 Business Traveller Research has shown that the digital influence among the travellers, be it the leisure or business, has surged in the regions of UAE and KSA. See below...



Source: Travelport

❖ In the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia, tech savvy travellers show different preferences between travelling for leisure and for business, according to Travelport's 2018 Global Digital Traveller Survey and 2019 Business Traveller Research.

**Leisure Travellers:** They are enthusiastically embracing digital tools, such as smartphones, social media and voice search.

	UAE & KSA	Global
<b>Mobile</b>	— <b>58%</b> in the UAE — <b>60%</b> in Saudi Arabia tend to research and book all their travel arrangements on their smartphone	Global: 47%
<b>Social</b>	— <b>84%</b> in the UAE — <b>85%</b> in Saudi Arabia have reviewed videos and photos posted by travel brands on social media when researching their travel	Global: 73%
<b>Voice</b>	— <b>61%</b> in the UAE — <b>61%</b> in Saudi Arabia have used voice search to research their travel using tools such as Apple Siri, Google Assistant or Amazon Alexa	Global: 50%

Sample Size: UAE = 495, Saudi Arabia = 495

**Business Travellers:** They want hybrid support – a mix of agent advice and digital solutions – delivered throughout their travel experience.

	UAE & KSA	Global
<b>Agent</b>	— <b>80%</b> in the UAE — <b>77%</b> in Saudi Arabia feel recommendations from travel agents carry the greatest influence over their travel choices	Global: 74%
<b>Digital</b>	— <b>72%</b> in the UAE — <b>65%</b> in Saudi Arabia cite a good digital experience, e.g. online check-in, gate information, being 'very important' when choosing an airline	Global: 71%
<b>Hybrid</b>	— <b>62%</b> in the UAE — <b>57%</b> in Saudi Arabia hybrid support delivered through Live Chat functions on smartphone apps with travel representatives	Global: 57%

Sample Size: UAE = 323, Saudi Arabia = 309

## Senior Travel Professional Quote

“ Abu Dhabi's strength as a cultural hub is the deep link between our history and future aspirations. Investment in immersive learning spaces like this will develop the young leaders of the future. The Cultural Foundation, situated next to Abu Dhabi's oldest landmark, Qasr Al Hosn, is the manifestation of the vision of our late Founding Father, HH Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, who set the cornerstone for a modern nation, while equally preserving our heritage and history.

**With the completion of renovation work at this significant site, Abu Dhabi's communities and visitors will enjoy greater access to culture, arts, literature and learning experiences that enrich, educate and entertain**”

— His Highness Sheikh Khalid bin Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan



His Highness Sheikh Khalid bin Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Member of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council and Chairman of the Executive Committee, inaugurated new spaces within the Cultural Foundation, marking the completion of major renovation and maintenance work at one of Abu Dhabi's most prominent cultural landmarks. Located in historic Al Hosn, in the heart of the capital, the Cultural Foundation's new spaces include a 900-seat theatre and the all-new Abu Dhabi Children's Library. Developed in line with Abu Dhabi Government's strategy to empower youth through cultural education, the most advanced and immersive library for young people in the UAE encourages youth to read, learn, create, discover and dream up the big ideas of the future.



# Maya to cast its spell again

Dubai will be bedazzled again with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Awards on October 22, 2019, at the Westin The awards recognise the stalwarts in the

edition of the most coveted Arabian Travel Mina Seyahi Beach Resort and Marina. industry for their dedication and hard work.

TT Bureau

According to World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), travel and tourism has become a key driver in economic growth in the Middle East. Dubai and the United Arab Emirates are suited examples of how the industry has boomed into a multi-billion dollar business in the region within a short span of time. Every year, Arabian Travel Award celebrates industry stalwarts for their hard work, commitment and dedication in ensuring the sector's growth.

For the third consecutive year, Travelport, the leading travel commerce com-



**Tolga Lacin**  
General Manager, Westin Mina Seyahi Beach Resort and Marina

pany will be the technology partner, while the media partners shall be Travel TV, News, TravTalk Middle East and TravTalk India. "Our hospitality partners this year is Westin Mina Seyahi Beach Resort and Marina and at the same time we are very happy to announce our partnership for the third consecutive

year with Travelport. This is also a great opportunity for our award winners, who will be recognised on a global scale, thanks to the platform that Travelport provides to them," stated **Nikhil Jeet**, Director, Arabian Travel Awards. **Kathryn Wallington**, Travelport Country Manager, UAE, commented, "In the past year, Travelport has worked closely with customers and partners to

launch a series of innovative solutions in travel distribution and emerging technologies. We have solidified our leading position in content with over 270 airlines currently benefitting from Travelport's rich content and branding merchandising. We also have a solid roadmap to embrace IATA's New Distribution Capability (NDC)."



**Kathryn Wallington**  
Country Manager - UAE  
Travelport

**Tolga Lacin**, General Manager, Westin Mina Seyahi Beach Resort and Marina, stated, "The awards appreciate those who are behind the success of the hospitality industry and reward their continued hard work." The awards will be divided into four categories — Personal Awards, Business Awards, Trending Awards



**Nikhil Jeet**  
Director  
Arabian Travel Awards

and Partner Awards. They also include 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.

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# Oman Air's MiCE focus

Adding new destinations to their network in ME, Oman Air is also strengthening efforts to promote Oman as a MiCE destination. **Shahzad Naqvi**, Country Manager for UAE, Oman Air, shares the airline's state-of-the-art facilities and future plans.

TT Bureau

**With the opening of the new airport what has been introduced to the Oman Air customers?**

The service is especially valuable for premium passengers, travelling on short flights worldwide, who can use the lounge to sleep and skip breakfast on board and freshen up ahead



**Shahzad Naqvi**  
Country Manager for UAE  
Oman Air

**“Last year, Oman Air took delivery of its second 3-class Dreamliner that features eight First Class Private Suites, 24 Business Class seats and 232 Economy Class seats”**

of their day in the city. The Arrival Lounge is for every premium international passenger, who is travelling by Oman Air, and disembarking at Muscat International Airport for a short period, before transiting.

**What are the new offerings?**

Last year, Oman Air took delivery of its second 3-class Dreamliner that features eight First Class Private Suites, 24 Business Class seats and 232 Economy Class

seats. Guests travelling aboard this aircraft in First Class can experience one of the longest 180 degrees flat-bed seats available on any commercial airliner. Fully enclosed, the suite has 55-inch extra tall doors to ensure complete privacy. All classes will feature 'Aria', a new state-of-the-art Thales Integrated In-Flight Entertainment System.

**Describe the performance over the past few months this year?**

This year, we started operations to Alexandria and Athens in May and June respectively.

**Are there any codeshares or new routes planned for the next quarter?**

Oman Air extended its codeshare with Gulf Air recently to include Tbilisi in Georgia, Baku in Azer-

baijan, Gassim in Saudi Arabia, Beirut in Lebanon, flights to and from Muscat to Bahrain, Salalah and Khasab in Oman, Nairobi in Kenya, Zanzibar in Tanzania, Goa and Lucknow in India, Kathmandu in Nepal and Jakarta in Indonesia. Also, codeshare arrangements with Kenyan Airways have been expanded.

**Do share some of the plans for the rest of the year.**

The commercial teams are implementing new plans which will be revealed soon.

## FactFile

- The suite is fully enclosed and has 55-inch extra tall doors to ensure complete privacy
- Exclusively curated content will be available for visitors to Oman, who will experience the best of Oman culture from the moment they step onboard



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# Polishing the diamond

Real estate and hospitality sectors are the key revenue drivers of Al Moosa, which had commenced operations in the year 1970. **Mohammed Khoori**, Board Director and General Manager, AA Al Moosa, reveals the company's plans for the next two years.

TT Bureau

**In which countries do you currently manage properties?**

We have hotels in Dubai, Sharjah, Oman; both in Muscat and Salalah and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Dammam. However, we are expanding our portfolio to include more properties to attract visitors.

**Could you share plans for this year?**

This year, we will be re-branding one of the hotels

as 'Golden Sands' – this will be a unique concept as currently under this brand are hotel apartments and we want to venture into the hotel sector to provide more offerings to our loyal guests. For next year, we have planned to open three new hotels in Palm Jumeirah; Hilton, Marriott and Taj.

**How do you promote the properties?**

We partner with Dubai Tourism in their various international exhibitions,

trade shows, roadshows etc. Dubai attracts visitors from all over the world, hence, we receive good number of clients from GCC, US, China, India etc. We maintain a steady growth of tourists from these countries and especially as India is the top source market for Dubai.

**Are you looking at new markets this year?**

Every year, we try to look at new markets and this year, we want to focus on Asia.



**Mohammed Khoori**  
Board Director and General Manager  
AA Al Moosa

So, we are looking at new partners and new markets in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, etc.





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Reserve your main course from a variety of Premium Economy Book the Cook dishes up to 24 hours before you fly, or select from three meal choices on board. Match the food and altitude with your selection of wine or champagne.



## Travellers demand value over cost: Travelport Study

Travellers across the world are increasingly prioritising value over cost, demanding more autonomy when it comes to personalisation, and using digital solutions to research and manage their trips. These are among the findings of Travelport's Global Digital Traveller Research 2019, which surveyed 23,000 people from 20 countries. When booking a flight, value is a top priority for over four out of five (86 per cent) travellers today with just one in



five (18 per cent) now booking solely on cost. This trend is apparent across all age groups led by Baby Boomers (91 per cent) who prioritise value marginally more than younger generations. Across all age categories, when booking a flight, travellers typically want to personalise their own experience (42 per cent) through add-ons like extra legroom, additional baggage allowance and meal upgrades. One quarter (24 per cent), however, prefer to receive branded offers, such as Flexi and Saver, which provide a basic level of personalisation.

Commenting on the findings of the research, Travelport's Chief Customer and Marketing Officer, **Fiona Shanley**, said, "With increasing adoption of emerging technologies and use of new industry standards, this is precisely where the industry is heading."

## Personality of the Month

# A visionary leader

Travelling the world and inaugurating nearly 300+ properties in over 40 countries, **Ian Rydin** is one of the most illustrious General Managers with a 30 years stint in hospitality sector.



Shehara Rizly

### Venturing into hospitality

A Swedish national, who loves numbers and was keen to be an accountant entered the hospitality trade by chance during a summer training. Today, Rydin holds the reins as the General Manager for Mövenpick Hotel Ibn Battuta Gate. This is his second appointment in Dubai. The first was opening of the Radisson Blu Downtown in 2010. Rydin holds an International Hospitality Management Diploma from Gothenburg International Hospitality College in Sweden, a bachelor's degree in Hotel & Restaurant Management from Oxford Brookes University in Oxford, UK and has completed a General Manager Programme from Cranfield University, UK.

### Responsibility and leadership

Rydin started off in Human Resources in London early in his career and was mentored by some of the best in the world. This paved the way for greater opportunities with headhunters of other various brands contacting him for varying roles. He was about to pursue a position as the Director of HR, when he was approached by a Scandinavian chain to take on the role of General Manager for one of their properties. His career took him to destinations like Asia, Africa, Europe and the Middle East.

### Brand promise

Rydin believes that in every organisation there should be proper communication and that diversity is an integral part which ensures balance. "With

the RIISE programme, launched by Accor, we are gearing towards a strengthened presence of



Ilan Rydin  
General Manager, Mövenpick Hotel Ibn Battuta Gate

women in key roles across the board," he shares.

### Guest-centric approach

Rydin shares, "The need for a distinctive human touch in hotels remains indispensable and will definitely continue, however, there are essential needs which can be provided by technology like personalised communications and lightning-speed information at the palm of a guest's hands. A guest centric approach will never change in

“With the RIISE programme, we are gearing towards a strengthened presence of women in key roles across the board. In every organisation a proper communication is required and diversity is an integral part, which ensures balance”

the hospitality industry and the data will keep growing for better analysis. Finally, Dubai is one of the best destinations in the world, we as hoteliers will ensure that we attract new markets and preserve the existing ones.

### FactProfile

- Rydin has helped open over **300** properties in **40** countries
- He has served for **30** years in the hospitality industry





# 60 seconds about...



## WTM London, Senior Director, Simon Press

### What is new for WTM London 2019?

This year WTM London 2019 is extending its reach throughout the travel industry our newest launches.

**Travel Week** will be the seven day travel celebration over the week of WTM London. This is going to allow travel professionals and enthusiasts to come together to raise awareness on how big the travel sector really is.

We aim to show the impact of travel VIPs coming to London for the first week of November, due to them coming for WTM London. We want to extend our hand to the industry, without taking full ownership. More information about Travel Week is due to be launched shortly, so watch this space!

**BorderlessLive** is the brand-new event where content where creative

thinkers, worldwide brands and destinations from across the globe will come together for a festival style exhibition and conference.

On Friday 6 and Saturday 7 September, WTM London will be launching this one-of-a-kind event, in partnership with influencer-marketing agency Traverse, where we will be presenting how the nature of the industry has changed and where it will be moving to next.

On the first day of the show (Monday 4th), we will be increasing networking opportunities at senior level by introducing an invitation only Leaders Lunch.

### What else can we look forward to at WTM London 2019?

The year ahead will see the return of the International Travel & Tourism Awards, Travel Forward and the dedicated regional Inspiration Zones.

The **International Travel & Tourism Awards** celebrate the success of national, regional and city tourist boards and recognise outstanding private sector companies and individuals. Showcasing the best in class of the global travel & tourism industry at the new London venue, Magazine London on Tuesday 5 November 2019. There are still some sponsorship opportunities available for our awards so do get in touch with the team if you're interested.

**Travel Forward** is the travel technology event co-located with WTM London and will take place on 4-6 November 2019 at ExCeL London. The second Travel Forward conference, exhibition and buyer programme is due to once again inspire the travel and hospitality sectors with next-generation technology.

The Inspiration Zones within each region will continue to connect exhibitors through engaging new ideas whilst focusing on current and future concepts. We are continuing to reshape our conference programme to incorporate the expansion of the Ideas Arrive Here theme.

On the subject of inspiring stories, our new video concept, #WTMStories, will give viewers an insight into travel trends – as seen through the eyes of key industry figures and consumers.

### Show dates and location

**Monday 4 November 2019:**

10:00 - 19:00 (invite only)

**Tuesday 5 November 2019:**

10:00 - 18:00

**Wednesday 6 November 2019:**

10:00 - 18:00

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# Recognition awards for top agents by Singapore Airlines

Singapore Airlines, in partnership with Singapore Tourism Board, conducted their annual recognition awards for the top performing agents in the passenger segment for 2018-2019.



## Government Update

### Sharjah Tourism roadshows in Beijing, Chengdu & Shanghai

As part of its efforts to achieve the Sharjah Tourism Vision 2021, which aims to attract more than 10 million tourists to the emirate by the year 2021, the Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA) conducted roadshows in three Chinese cities — Beijing, Chengdu and Shanghai. The campaign, which was held from September 16-20, was aimed at stimulating the Chinese outbound travel market to Sharjah by encouraging them to take advantage of the UAE's



H.E. Khalid Jasim Al Midfa  
Chairman of SCTDA

visa-on-arrival policy for Chinese tourists.

The growing number of Chinese tourists to Sharjah who come to explore the emirate's cultural and heritage identity has made

it one of the most important markets for SCTDA. H.E. Khalid Jasim Al Midfa, Chairman of SCTDA, said, "The number of visitors from China during the second quarter of this year has reached to 13,289, which reflects the consistently increasing interest of Chinese tourists to visit Sharjah. SCTDA's roadshows held in three Chinese cities aims to strengthen communication channels with travel, tourism and hospitality industry leaders, and promote latest trends of the tourism industry."

## Collaboration

### Palladium Hotel gains a point

Palladium Hotel Group will be the new official sponsor of Real Madrid Basketball. The Santiago Bernabéu stadium hosted the presentation of the agreement in the presence of the President of Real Madrid C.F., Florentino Pérez, and the CEO of Palladium Hotel Group, Abel Matutes Prats.

The agreement, whereby Palladium Hotel Group will sponsor the shirt of Real Madrid Basketball's first and second team, was confirmed with the signature of the directors and will be in force for the next three sports seasons. Pérez referred to the agreement, "We link the real Madrid name to a prestigious company that will help us to be stronger and face new challenges." Prats stressed the relevance of this agreement for the hotel company. Palladium Hotel Group's sponsorship agreement with Real Madrid Basketball shows the great expansion of the group in recent years, as well as the efforts to reposition its brands and their identity. Thanks to this sponsorship agreement, the hotel group's logo will appear on the official polo shirt of Real Madrid Basketball's first team, both for the players and the technical team, as well as on the club's kit. All these new designs are available from September 18th in the official stores of Real Madrid, Adidas, etc.





# Services that meet and greet

Today when travellers go online they are looking for more than just an airline ticket or a hotel. In what could be termed as Pro-Traveller services, Tune Protect has collaborated with RST Holdings Pte Ltd. to offer end-to-end service to its travellers, who can access everything in the comfort of their homes.



Raminder Singh  
Founder, RST Holdings Pte Ltd.

## What will the collaboration with RST Holdings Pte Ltd. bode for the business?

RST Holdings Pte Ltd. is just the right partner when it comes to an end-to-end service for the travellers

starting from home. Our premise of adding RST holding services such as airport transfers, meet & assist, lounge services, is a value-added service, which is an important part of our business partner's offering to ensure their travellers are 'wowed' with an access to over 500 airports and growing.

## Do your end-to-end airport solutions meet all passenger needs?

While travel protection has become a mandatory requirement in today's times, various value-added comfort services are also gaining impor-

tance. This service encompasses Airport Meet & Greet Services (Arrival, Departure, Transfer & Transit) and Airport Lounge Services.

## Please elaborate on the Airport Meet & Greet Service

RST Holdings Pte Ltd. offers Airport Meet & Greet Service on 500 + airports in the world. These include Meet & Assist, Arrivals Meet & Greet, Departures Meet & Greet, Transfer and Transit Services. These include complete assistance from our special Meet & Greet Team right from parking

your car at the airport to helping travellers, guiding them through the airport,

for arrivals, departures, transfers and transit travellers and is available

**“RST Holdings Pte Ltd. offers Airport Meet & Greet Service on 500 + airports in the world. These include Meet & Assist, Arrivals Meet & Greet, Departures Meet & Greet, Transfer and Transit Services”**

providing travel tips, and helping them complete procedures at security, immigration and baggage drop off and collection; including special needs assistance like wheelchair assistance. The Meet & Greet service is available

for all passengers, on any airline, in any ticket class.

## What value does the Lounge Service add to the traveller?

RST Holdings Pte Ltd.'s Lounge Service accords access to special airport

lounges with premium services for the tired traveller looking for some shut-eye or peace. Airport lounges come with fast Wi-Fi, business centres, a selection of good food, relaxed interiors and easy seating, showers and a well-stocked bar. Some even have a special kids' room.

## How do you foresee the market for e-Visa growing?

RST Holdings Pte Ltd. will soon launch e-Visa solutions to several countries, so that travellers do not have to face the drudgery of applying for a visa.

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# RwandAir promotes African culture

RwandAir participated at the African Market event held at KIZA Restaurant & Lounge in DIFC, Dubai. The airline seized the opportunity to showcase its products and services to the local and expat community in Dubai. **Timothy Njihia**, Area Manager UAE, GCC Countries\* & Pakistan\* (\*Offline markets), RwandAir, graced the event.




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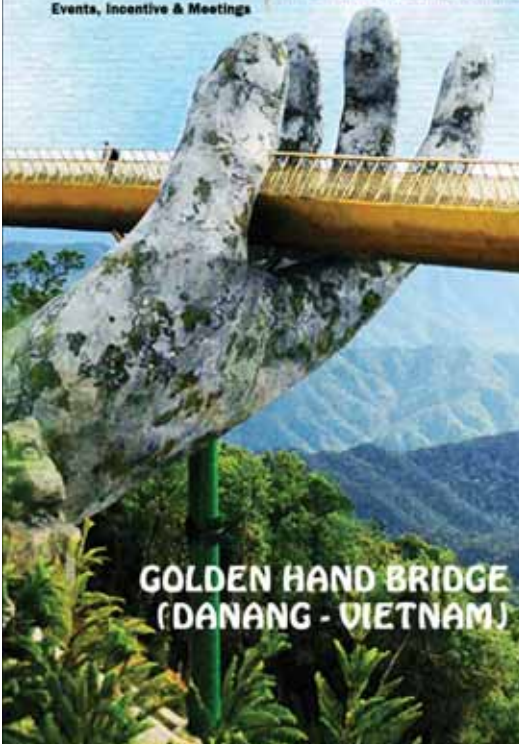
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## GOLDEN HAND BRIDGE (DANANG - VIETNAM)

## ► Sabre

### Bahrain

Sabre Corporation has appointed **Aditya Varma** as Regional Director for Sabre Travel Network Middle East (STNME) based in Bahrain. Varma will lead the sales operations and customer relationships for Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman and Qatar. He shall identify and executing commercial and new sales opportunities to help accelerate growth in the region. Varma brings more than 20 years of experience in the aviation and travel industry. He joins Sabre from Travelport where he was the Regional Manager for distributor markets in ME & South Asia. Prior to this, he held senior commercial positions with KLM and Air Arabia.

## ► Avani Hotels & Resorts

### Dubai

Avani Hotels & Resorts has appointed **Amer Ammar** as General Manager of the new 360-key Avani Ibn Battuta Dubai Hotel. Having worked in the hospitality sector for over 25 years, Ammar, originally a native of Jordan, began his career in 1994. In 2001, he moved to Dubai where he worked in various operational leadership roles for Taj Palace and Coral International. Between 2011 and 2015, Ammar was the General Manager at Premier Inn Abu Dhabi Capital Centre, and subsequently Cluster General Manager for Premier Inn Abu Dhabi hotels. His last assignment prior to joining Avani Hotels & Resorts was General Manager at Premier Inn Dubai Investments Park.

## ► Ritz Carlton

### Ras al Khaimah

Tracey Oliver has been appointed as General Manager at The Ritz-Carlton Ras Al Khaimah. She previously managed leading hotels and resorts such as Hotel de la Paix in Thailand and Hotel de l'Opera MGallery Collection in Vietnam, after having worked as the Director of Operations at Dorado Beach, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve in Puerto Rico. Oliver developed her leadership skills when she became part of the management team at The Ritz-Carlton in Palm Beach and South Beach in Florida. After working in numerous properties across USA and Asia, Oliver has now returned to The Ritz-Carlton.

## ► Babylon Rotana Hotel

### Baghdad

Hussein Hachem has been appointed as General Manager of Babylon Rotana Hotel in Baghdad. Hachem is an industry veteran with nearly 42 years of experience. He is an active supporter of several environmental and charity initiatives, and has many awards to his credit, including being named among the top five General Managers in the region by Hotelier Awards 2012. He has been a part of Rotana for the past 26 years, and in his current role, he will lead all aspects of the hotel's operations, including the management of guest relations, human resources, and communications, etc.

## ► Emirates

### Dubai

**Adel Al Redha** has been appointed Chief Operating Officer at Emirates. He is responsible for Flight Operations, Service Delivery, Airport Services, Emirates Engineering, Crew Manpower, Aircraft Procurement and the Emirates Flight Training Academy; as well as Worldwide Network Operations including Crisis Response. During his 31-year career with Emirates, Al Redha has been instrumental in leading and implementing Emirates' global strategy. He has also led the introduction of various National Development programmes.

## ► Emirates

### Dubai

Emirates has appointed **Adnan Kazim** as Chief Commercial Officer. In his new role, Kazim will be responsible for worldwide Commercial Operations, e-Commerce, the Emirates Skywards loyalty programme and Emirates SkyCargo. He will continue to lead the airline's Strategic Planning and Revenue Optimisation teams. Kazim had successfully led the airline's commercial operations in major markets such as the UAE, Switzerland, Pakistan and East Africa.

## ► Emirates

### Dubai

Emirates has announced new executive leadership appointments and **Sheikh Majid Al Mualla** is Divisional Senior Vice President, International Affairs. In his new role, Al Mualla will drive the airline's government, industry, public policy, regulatory, environment and international affairs agenda. He will also lead teams that represent Emirates in government negotiations and air services talks, as well as various aviation industry bodies.

## ► Grand Hyatt

### Abu Dhabi

Grand Hyatt Abu Dhabi hotel and residences Emirates Pearl welcomed **Rene Mayer** as Director of Sales and Marketing. Involved in the hotel industry from the age of 17, Mayer established his career with several leading hotel groups in Europe, and eventually attained management positions at international companies. After moving to Asia in 2011 to assume the position of Director of Sales and Marketing at Sofitel Hanoi, he became the Director of Global Sales for Regent Hotels & Resorts in Taipei. Mayer spent the past five years with Fairmont Hotels in Indonesia.

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