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Countdown begins

Middle East's only virtual travel show, Gulf Travel Show, is back with its third edition. Connecting the trade digitally, Gulf Travel Show is introducing new features including a business day focused only on buyers from Saudi Arabia.

Shehara Rizly

Partnering for the third edition, **HE Khalid Jasim Al Midfa**, Chairman, Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority, commented: "The Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority

is looking forward to participating in the upcoming Gulf Travel Show 2021, an event that complements our commitment to positioning Sharjah as the ideal global destination for family holidaymakers, while also emphasizing the emirate's status as a well-known cultural hub for historical



HE Khalid Jasim Al Midfa
Chairman
SCTDA



Sanjeet
Director
Gulf Travel Show

and natural heritage. The Gulf Travel Show is an ideal platform to forge new collaborations while showcasing the emirate's dedication to moving forward safely and successfully after the events of COVID-19 and highlighting Sharjah's many new projects and attractions as well as our

beautiful beaches, museums, wildlife reserves and other favorite destinations."

The Gulf Travel Show 3.0 announced that there will be a special day dedicated to VIP buyers from the region and a day focused on the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Back with

Contd. on page 3 ▶

Spain boosts tourism with a new campaign

'You deserve Spain' is a slogan of offerings to all travellers especially from the GCC.

Shehara Rizly

Spain opened its borders on June 7 and we wanted to ensure that all relevant information pertaining to entry to Spain is given out to everyone. We have tried to keep Spain on top of everyone's mind with constant digital campaigns, advertorials, webinars for trade partners etc. This event was to celebrate the opening of Spain's borders to international vaccinated tourists after



Daniel Rosado
Director
Spain Tourism

months of travel restrictions. We also launched our latest campaign which was very thoughtfully created

Contd. on page 5 ▶

DTCM welcomes stakeholders

Dubai Tourism held its first bi-annual 'City Briefing' for 2021 at the newly built Dubai Exhibition Centre.

TT Bureau

As efforts intensified across the tourism ecosystem to accelerate momentum in this landmark year for Dubai and the UAE, the forum featured a detailed presentation on Expo 2020, the multifaceted mega event which runs from October 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022, as well as insights into domestic and global developments and marketing campaigns worldwide aimed at rein-



His Excellency Helal Saeed Al Marri
Director General
DTCM

forcing Dubai's profile as a safe, must-visit destination and the world's best city to live and work in.

Contd. on page 13 ▶

Advocating green hospitality solutions

Pioneering the industry as the 'Green Champion' Iftikhar Hamdani has always been at the forefront.

Shehara Rizly

HM Hospitality appointed **Iftikhar Hamdani** as Chairman of the Green Council in addition to his current position as Area Manager for Bahi Ajman Palace and Coral beach Resort Sharjah. On Hamdani's appointment, **Haytham Abdelaziz**, Director of Operations of Hospitality Management Holding (HMH), commented, "I would like to extend my sincerest



Iftikhar Hamdani
Area Manager, Bahi Ajman Palace
and Coral beach Resort Sharjah

congratulations and high regard to Iftikhar Hamdani for the additional role which is not new at all to him. His

Contd. on page 13 ▶



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Changing work preferences

From travel restrictions to the growth of working from home and wild swings in equity and commodity markets, the last year has changed our region, says **Tim Cordon**, Area Senior Vice President, Middle East & Africa, Radisson Hotel Group.

Following the initial novelty – for those of us able to exercise this privilege – of working from home came a sense of fatigue. Studies show that, whilst most appreciate the flexibility that comes with a hybrid WFH arrangement, this cannot be the way of working, but should rather sit alongside in-person meetings and events where appropriate. A recent McKinsey survey suggests that 90% of organisations aim to incorporate a combination of remote and at-desk functionality in the immediate post-COVID era. But, despite many of us coming to terms with a hybrid way of working, executing this is not without its complications.

In recent months, we have seen the accelerated adoption of technology within businesses. Whilst I believe there will always be a need for physical meetings and interactions, business meetings now-

ously in order to ensure the success and longevity of our businesses. According to the Post COVID-19 Event Outlook Report, an overwhelming 93% of organisers plan to invest in virtual events moving

els in virtual events. With that in mind, many believe that virtual events are likely to stay, as they create a powerful way to build engagement with audiences everywhere. Whilst physical events will come back in the future, they probably won't supplant virtual events; rather they'll exist alongside them.



Tim Cordon
Area Senior Vice President
Middle East & Africa
Radisson Hotel Group

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

“A recent McKinsey survey suggests that 90% of organisations aim to incorporate a combination of remote and at-desk functionality in the immediate post-COVID era”

days have moved to a more hybrid set-up, with smaller teams getting together in one location and connecting with others via videoconference. But the question is, how can we make these meetings as comfortable and collaborative as they were previ-

ously in order to ensure the success and longevity of our businesses. Looking at numbers, it's not unusual for virtual events to capture 6x – 8x the number of registrations compared to the equivalent event. Additionally, both attendees and planners were pleasantly surprised by attendance rates and engagement lev-

A bigger and better Gulf Travel Show 3.0

► Contd. from page 1



its third edition on popular demand, Gulf Travel Show promises to be bigger and better with focused pre-scheduled meetings.

SanJeet, Director, Gulf Travel Show shared, “the success of the first two editions in November 2020 and March 2021, led to its third edition of

to buyers from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to meet with exhibitors from across the globe. Saudi Arabia is a very popular and upcoming destination with a strong outbound travel arm and we want to provide an opportunity

“GTS 2021 complements our commitment to positioning Sharjah as the ideal global destination for family holidaymakers, while emphasizing the emirate's status as a well-known cultural hub”

— HE Khalid Jasim Al Midfa

the Gulf Travel Show 3.0. We are making this edition unique from the earlier editions hence we are launching for the first time a special day dedicated

to our exhibitors to make the most of this. We took this decision based on the feedback we received from the last two editions.”

Tune Protect powers delayed baggage protection service when you fly Air Arabia via its partnership with Blue Ribbon Bags

Air Arabia offers the Blue Ribbon Bags (BRB) delayed baggage protection service while booking flights. Blue Ribbon Bags is one of the fastest-growing ancillary services in the travel market and the world leader in airport delayed baggage retrieval services.

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'Locally exquisite, exquisitely local'



Personifying rich Arab culture by incorporating its design elements to its contemporary elegance, Grand Mercure presents the rich local Emirati heritage and culture right throughout the whole property to provide locals a home away from home experience and share with international travellers their rich heritage and culture.

 Shehara Rizly

Arab culture its forte

'Locally exquisite, exquisitely local' is the theme employed right throughout the property. As you walk into the lobby, you will be welcomed in pure Arabic tradition by serving coffee 'gahwa' with organic

dates. The ambience is very unique in keeping with their rich Arabic design right throughout the hotel to provide a home away from home experience to the guests from the GCC and a taste of Arab culture entwined with modern design for international travellers to feast their eyes on the rich heritage of the region.

Hotel for locals by locals

The tastefully designed hotel by the local Emiratis is specially designed to welcome Emiratis from other emirates and locals from other GCC countries to experience a home away from their abode. In case of other international travellers they can immerse themselves in the rich culture and heritage of the Emirati or locals in the UAE. The premium four-star hotel Grand Mercure hotel and residences consists of 193 superior rooms with 20

junior suites, 64 executive rooms, suites and standard rooms with 104 residences; 64 one bedroomed units, 32 two bedroomed units and eight three bedroomed units. Each room is tastefully decorated incorporating local Emirati culture into a modern setting bringing out the best of both worlds. The hotel is well designed and thought of considering the most important factors for each clientele, connecting rooms for families and specialised rooms and suites for twin rooms for those who prefer group travel and specialised suites for those who would accompany with medical tourists, thus making it unique.

Taste of local Emirati cuisine

Grand Mercure hotel and residences offer a signature Emirati restaurant, specialty café, conference facilities, a specialised Arabian spa with hammam and two different swimming pools, one pool is especially for kids with a special play area, for adults the most unique


experience is swimming in a glass bottomed pool to enjoy a 360-degree view of Dubai with a state-of-the-art gym are the recreational activities at present.

Diverse markets

During winter last year Dubai received a good number of tourists from across the globe as soon as the borders started opening up. **Tyrone Lodder**, General Manager,

had more family-based leisure travellers from Europe, Africa, GCC as well as group travellers and stopover groups from Europe. Our biggest advantage is the proximity from the airport to all the main attractions for leisure as well as business travellers. It is a few minutes' walk to the GGICO metro station, popular family leisure destinations such as

Exceptional local standards

Customer experience and satisfaction are two important elements in any service oriented industry, the standards are upheld at Grand Mercure as they thrive to serve every client that walks in to experience Emirati welcome, culture and their customs that are exceptional. With so many different hotels within the vicinity we asked Lodder the reason to stand different and unique. He reiterated, "We keep to our tagline; a hotel for locals by locals or locally exquisite; exquisitely local. The hotel made by locals to experience their culture by other Arab nations and international visitors is the main message we would like to send across. The recent opening of the art walk within the hotel presenting a lineup of Emirati artists is another step that we have taken to further enhance our commitment to be the only "uniquely local hotel by locals to locals as I said before." 

“We had different markets over the past almost one year, it was a mixture of family travellers and group business from Europe. Our biggest advantage is the proximity from the airport to all the main attractions for leisure as well as business travellers”

Grand Mercure Dubai Airport, shared, "We had different markets over the past almost one year, it was a mixture of family travellers and group business from Europe. During Christmas we

the IKEA, especially for guests from KSA is just a 10-minute drive or one can visit the Deira City Center, which is a very popular shopping mall and one of the first malls in the region."



Tyrone Lodder
General Manager
Grand Mercure Dubai Airport



Connecting with trade partners

► Contd. from page 1



Daniel Rosado
Director
Spain Tourism

based on human emotions stating 'You Deserve Spain'. It is a wonderful country with amazing offerings, and we feel everyone deserves Spain. It was also important to support the trade partners to help them promote the destination better as they are the primary source of contact for a traveller and they need to be aware and well-equipped to be able to pass on

the correct information to their clients accordingly. The travel safe tool was developed to enable partners and travellers alike to get updated information based on the country of travel to Spain and for travel within Spain. We felt the need to connect with the trade on a personal basis rather than do this online and I am very happy to see this was a huge success based on the positive feedback we have been receiving.

“I support this campaign because in a moment where the travel and tourism industry struggles to adapt its model to an unprecedented crisis, Spain and Catalonia is committed to a high level of safety for everyone and for everywhere together with the highest standard of services, and, more importantly, to keep the destination vibrant and alive. It was a pleasure to see that our country generates interest during the event.”



Esther Oriols
Brand Manager
Catalunya Premium



Namratha Rose
Manager – Marketing &
Trade Relations
Spain Tourism

“Along with our latest campaign launch 'You deserve Spain' which is a campaign based on emotions of people, Daniel Rosado had a very informative presentation that clearly explained all the updated requirements regarding entry to Spain which was followed by a quick presentation by the Regional Head of BLS international regarding the visas. As it was one of the first physical events for the trade after the ATM, all partners were quite eager to connect and network and we have already been seeing positive response from the market in terms of bookings to Spain and hope the trend continues.”

“It was a real pleasure for me taking part in this event and what is more, I had the opportunity to represent the island in the GCC market after such a long time. Regarding the presentation of Tenerife as a luxury destination I hope that all the attendees now could promote Tenerife among their clients because they have seen the potential of the island in terms of luxury and unique experiences. I strongly believe that the island is the perfect place to rejuvenate yourself, We hope that after this event we will receive more requests from the GCC markets.”



Elena Mastora
Exterior Tourist Promotion
Tenerife Select



Marta Aldana
International Promotion –
Europe and US
Barcelona Tourism

“We were more than happy to celebrate the opening of Spain to international vaccinated tourists with travel trade professionals in UAE and our Spanish destination partners, in the first and successful live trade event. It was a great opportunity to participate, reconnect and present our updates about Barcelona, an ever-changing destination. Our perspectives for the next year are optimistic, we are

hopeful of reviving the excellent period and connections we were experiencing with GCC market previously, as well as commercial and promotional actions with this potential premium segment.”

“It was a great chance to show new things going on and giving the audience a glance of Madrid. We think Madrid has a huge potential in this market and the way we managed ourselves to keep going despite the pandemic and how the near future looks will make Madrid a great and appealing destination for everyone.”



Javier Amichis
Regional Manager – Middle
East & Asia Pacific
Madrid Tourism Board

Tourism in the next 50 years

As the United Arab Emirates celebrate 50 years this year, we take a look at the aspirations for the next 50 years in terms of tourism. TRAVTALK spoke to the students and General Manager of Dubai College of Tourism to find out their source of commitment for the future of tourism.



What does the future of the tourism sector look like to you?

Nurnissa Habibullah, Student – Dubai College of Tourism: The future of the tourism sector is very bright. It might not be tomorrow, or next week, that we see the world back to its original or better state after COVID-19, but it will eventually get better as time passes.

Amina Mamria, Student – Dubai College of Tourism: I think tourists will look for authentic experiences, adventures and sustainable options.

Farrah Mahaini Student – Dubai College of Tourism:

ism: I believe the tourism sector will focus more on being sustainable and having trends to create various experiences for people.

What would you like to see more of in Dubai in the next 50 years? If you could design your own Dubai master plan, what would it include?

Nurnissa Habibullah: I would like to see more diversity between every resident and tourist in Dubai in the next 50 years. Also, I would design Dubai as more of a natural paradise than a city populated by towers and other neo-futurism-designed buildings.

Amina Mamria: I want to see more natural attrac-

tions. Even if it is man-made, I think it is important to focus on planting more trees and green spaces.

Farrah Mahaini: Dubai is a city that covers almost every aspect of civilization and development, but what would be a great development is the construction of bike routes in residential and service areas. In my Dubai master plan, I would include more routes for bikes especially in places that are crowded with people or that would attract the tourists. It will encourage residents and tourists to use bikes or electrical scooters, especially as they are getting more popular and more sustainable. In view of Dubai's heat, it could even be a covered route with charging stations for scoot-

ers, and air filling for the bike's tires.

What macro trends will shape travel?

Nurnissa Habibullah: Travel will be shaped by different macro trends, but I don't think we can say for sure what exact macro trends will shape travel in the near future. Travel will grow due to different reasons.

Amina Mamria: The macro trends will be health and safety, as well as climate change.

Farrah Mahaini: I believe the environmental factors will affect the decisions on travelling with the increased awareness of global warming.



Essa Bin Hadher
General Manager
Dubai College of Tourism

“At Dubai College of Tourism, we aim to educate and inspire the next generation of young professionals in their pursuit to become future leaders in Dubai's tourism and hospitality industry. We provide courses in tourism, retail business, events, hospitality and culinary arts that are frequently refreshed to keep in line with domestic demand

and global travel trends. In addition to theoretical knowledge through classes, we equip our students with the practical skills required to set them on the path to professional success. To ensure we create a workforce of well-trained hospitality professionals, our courses are delivered by industry professionals who are committed to driving Dubai's hospitality sector forward, and include mandatory internships where students can put their theoretical knowledge into practice with the support of industry experts. As the industry steadily begins to recover, we recognise the need for a well-rounded, holistic education that will prepare our graduates to welcome millions of tourists to Dubai every year.”

Malaysia

To present 'Rainforest Canopy' at Expo 2020

Malaysia is set to transport visitors at Expo 2020 Dubai to a rainforest experience, with sustainability themes and displays of its rich culture and arts. On October 1, 2021, Malaysia will open its 'Rainforest Canopy' pavilion providing international visitors at the expo a unique and immersive rainforest experience.



Malaysian Green Technology and Climate Change Centre Chief Executive Officer Shamsul Bahar Mohd Nor (left) together with Ambassador of Malaysia to the UAE H.E. Mohd Tarid Sufian (right)

Visitors can look forward to an architectural marvel that blends esoteric design with animation elements for a sublime experience of man-nature relationship. The pavilion is inspired by the country's majestic tropical

rainforests and visitors will find the 'Rainforest Canopy' in the middle of the desert enchanting, complete with tree clusters to walk through, flanked by tropical landscape and a meandering river. The aim is to re-enact the experience

of the benign nature and reflect on how it has protected mankind all along. Themed 'Energising Sustainability', the pavilion spanning 1,234.05 sq. mt., is also proudly the first Net Zero Carbon fixture for the world expo.

With 192 participating countries and organisations and the first event to be held in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia region, the world expo is an opportunity to showcase Malaysia's biodiversity and how it recognises the need to protect the ancient

biosphere for humankind. For example, Malaysia as a small developing country has successfully maintained its forest cover by more than 50% of its land mass since it made the pledge at the Rio Earth Summit 1992.

Malaysia's participation in the mega event themed 'Connecting Minds, Creating the Future' is led by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation Malaysia while Malaysian Green Technology and Climate Change Centre (MGTC) is the implementing agency.

"The importance of the rainforest as the lung of the planet has never been greater than now with the challenge of climate change. In reflecting our pavilion's theme and for its ecological importance, our rainforest best represents sustainability and the battle against climate change," said MGTC Chief

Executive Officer **Shamsul Bahar Mohd Nor**. The pavilion will also reduce greenhouse gas emissions through 20% energy savings achieved with eco-friendly architecture and construction.

Building the pavilion was challenging but exciting as it blends superior skills with imagination. Technology and design are combined in the right proportions to create a work of art. The special projections include an awe-inspiring waterfall effect against the backdrop of a desert landscape. The stream originates from the top of the pavilion and meanders its way down the ramp, which gives a feel of walking on a suspension bridge.

Visitors setting foot on the pavilion's grounds will be welcomed by light poles designed to sway lightly. The pavilion graces the ground with lightweight structure,





flexible for dismantling and reuse, made with just the right amount of steel.

"In line with the architectural intent of 'touching the ground lightly', the exhibition halls are suspended on very long slender legs, hovering 4-6 metres above the ground. The three exhibition halls which touch the earth at as few points as possible, are intended to invoke references to the tropical

Situated between the Sustainability District and Mobility District at the expo site, the pavilion uses Meranti wood for its façade, making a bold statement of Malaysia's sustainable forestry resources.

Besides illustrating its messages on sustainable development, Malaysia will leverage Expo 2020 to accelerate economic growth to tide over the COVID-19 impact while communicat-

As an event of prime national interest, at Expo 2020 Dubai Malaysia pavilion will host 26 thematic trade and business programme weeks led and supported by 24 government ministries, five state governments and 45 agencies. They will bring more than 200 companies as business delegates. The programmes will cover 10 industry verticals – Science, Technology, Innovation &

been greatly impacted by COVID-19. A segment is dedicated to the 'Malaysia, Truly Asia' showcase of arts, culture and tourism with a cultural troupe specially flown in to perform more than 500 cultural shows in the pavilion amphitheatre and other expo venues. There will be arts and crafts demonstrations, and screenings daily, while Malaysia Café will serve tantalising Malaysian cuisines.

Tourism is also on the spotlight during Malaysia's trade and business programmes. The Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry will be highlighting Malaysia's ecotourism wonders at the Ecotourism Week (December 26, 2021– January 1, 2022), followed by the Medical Tourism Week organised by the Health Ministry and Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council from January

2-8, 2022. The International Medical Travel Journal has named Malaysia as the top international medical tourism destination for four years running.

Tourism will also be an added highlight during the weeks featuring Johor, Penang, Malacca, Selangor and Sabah states. Malaysia will bring to life its culture and tourism experience with eight Malaysian classic traditional trishaws featured on the expo grounds, which are sure to be a big hit with visitors. 🇲🇾

“The importance of the rainforest as the lung of the planet has never been greater than now with the challenge of climate change. In reflecting our pavilion's theme and for its ecological importance, our rainforest best represents sustainability and the battle against climate change”

— Shamsul Bahar Mohd Nor, Chief Executive Officer, MGTC

jungle, with allegorical tree-columns reaching up for sunlight," Shamsul Bahar elaborated.

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■ "Energising sustainability" pavilion spanning 1,234 sq metres, it is the first Net Zero Carbon fixture for World Expo

ing to the world its sustainable solutions. "We wish to remind visitors on the need to have a sustainable outlook on life and business in these challenging times. Expo 2020 is a nodal global event contributing to the efforts of a post-COVID economic recovery," Shamsul Bahar explained.

Environment; Trade & Fourth Industrial Revolution; Health; Education; Tourism; Digital Economy; Entrepreneurship; Energy; Agriculture & Agri-commodity; and Water.

Tourism is a permanent feature as Expo 2020 serves as a platform to revive the sector that has



Malaysia Pavilion under construction with the Logo of the Pavilion displayed on the meranti wood facade



wtm
HYBRID

London 2021 goes hybrid

Travel professionals from around the globe are able to register for WTM London 2021, which will be held for the first time in an innovative hybrid format. The physical event will take place at ExCeL, London on November 1-3, 2021 and will be followed by WTM Virtual from November 8-9, 2021.



Simon Press
Senior Director
WTM London

WTM London will be one of the first key opportunities for those working in the world's travel and tourism industry to reunite in person as the industry embarks on the road to recovery. The new hybrid format means buyers and exhibitors will be able to conduct business face-to-face. The virtual element enables companies and organisations to increase their brand awareness and join networking opportunities – even if they are not able to physically attend the show.

part of their package. The physical event will feature all the elements for which WTM London has become well-known, including the WTM Ministers' Summit, Responsible Tourism Day & Responsible Tourism

and more. There will also be exclusive networking opportunities for senior buyers to do business.

Simon Press, WTM London's Senior Director, said, "WTM London is always a

to-face, to renew business relationships and forge new partnerships as we look to recover. As well as 40+ years of experience organising physical events, the WTM team has been organising successful virtual shows over the course of the pandemic, which means we have unrivalled skills and knowledge to create an exciting, must-attend hybrid show.

Press added, "Recent research has demonstrated that buyers can't wait to get back to physical events – and trade shows in particular – to look for new business opportunities. WTM London hybrid show will enable all delegates to keep

ahead of their competitors and promote themselves to a global audience. We offer virtual booths combined with an onsite brand presence and new digital tools to generate business leads and keep up to date with the latest industry trends."

WTM London is working closely with local authorities, ExCeL London, Public Health England and Transport For London to ensure the highest possible levels of health and safety for attendees. The global travel industry will attend WTM London to unite, generating business and ideas that will fuel the recovery of the travel and tourism industry. 🇦🇪

FactFile

■ The new hybrid format means buyers and exhibitors will be able to conduct business face-to-face. The virtual element enables increase brand awareness.

An important advantage is the fact that all exhibitors who exhibit at the physical event will automatically be included in WTM Virtual as

Awards, headline speakers, seminars, speed networking, research & trends, Travel Forward – the co-located travel technology show

crucial time for the industry to gather together, in order to plan, network and generate ideas. This year it is vital for us to meet face-

Recent research has demonstrated that buyers can't wait to get back to physical events – and trade shows in particular – to look for new business opportunities. WTM London hybrid show will enable all delegates to keep ahead of their competitors

Top destinations for UAE travellers

Experts at the UAE-based travel brand, part of the dnata Travel Group, are revealing where travellers from the UAE are seeking to take a break between July and October 2021, with a focus on destinations with clear regulations, no rules for quarantine on arrival, and direct flight options.



dnata Travel, the UAE's longest-standing travel provider, is revealing the top destinations UAE travellers are booking for a summer holiday in 2021. The top ten most booked holiday destinations for summer 2021 at the time of publishing include the Indian Ocean islands of the Maldives, Seychelles and Zanzibar; European city, beach and countryside hotspots across Turkey, Greece, Russia, Georgia, Italy and Cyprus; and travel to popular locations in the USA including Orlando, Florida and New York, New York. Emily Jenkins, Head of Leisure UAE at dnata Travel, com-



Hard Rock Hotel, Maldives

choice for summer 2021, the Maldives, which has been open for UAE travellers since July 2020. Traveller confidence and interest in travel to Europe is at an all-time high, as its popular locations continue to open for international tourists. Each country has its own set of guidelines, yet trends remain consistent in eased requirements for vaccinated travellers."

mented, "Ahead of the summer travel season, we have witnessed a surge in destinations easing requirements and opening up for vaccinated travellers. With the UAE's impressive vaccination drive,

our residents have seen the number of destinations open for them to explore increase significantly. Traveller confidence has also grown, particularly in travel to destinations which have been open

for some time and with clear regulations, offer quarantine-free travel, and direct flights.

An ideal example of this is the number one international destination of

Travel trends for UAE

■ The top ten most booked international travel destinations for summer 2021 from the UAE with dnata Travel include the Maldives, Seychelles, Turkey, Greece, Tanzania, Russia, USA, Georgia, Italy and Cyprus, respectively.

■ Emerging trends for UAE travellers include longer stays and more comprehensive holiday bookings made in advance, covering all aspects of a journey, from flights, hotels and attractions, to additional services including insurance, transfers, PCR testing, and more.

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Spain Tourism launch new campaign

Tourism office of Spain in Gulf countries hosted their first travel trade event in Dubai with their new campaign, 'You deserve Spain.' **Daniel Rosado**, Director of Spain Tourism for the Gulf countries, in his opening remarks stated that after meeting agents online, it was refreshing to see them face-to-face.



UAE ready for international travel

Data from YouGov’s “International Travel & Tourism Report 2021” reveals that UAE residents were the most likely among other global consumers to say they intend to travel abroad for leisure in the next 12 months. The new report throws light on the travel plans, considerations, and motivations of consumers from 25 markets globally.

Using YouGov Global Travel Profiles, the report looks at global travel demand, concerns and motivations of approximately 185,000 survey respondents from 25 markets globally. Data from Global Travel Profiles, a daily survey which runs in 25 countries, found that in the month of May, half of the people worldwide said they plan to take a domestic holiday in the next 12 months. On the other hand, appetite for international holidays is lower and less than a fifth of consumers (18%) globally are planning an international vacation in the next 12 months. The United Arab Emirates and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stand out in terms of international travel sentiment, with respondents planning to travel substantially more than consumers in other countries. In fact, in both these countries intent to take international leisure trips is higher than domestic trips.

Global intent for leisure travel

Which, if any of the following trips are you planning to take in the next 12 months? Please select all that apply.

	Domestic	International
Italy	66	23
Spain	66	22
Thailand	65	18
Indonesia	63	21
France	62	31
China	61	11
Denmark	60	46
Finland	60	34
Mexico	60	11
UK	56	28
Australia	55	19
Sweden	55	30
Malaysia	51	23
Norway	51	39
Germany	48	41
Egypt	47	27
India	46	23
USA	46	16
Philippines	45	19
Brazil	40	12
KSA	39	48
UAE	37	58
Canada	31	24
Japan	31	4
Singapore	16	22

Respondents in the Middle East are more likely to travel for business than those in other regions

Which, if any of the following trips are you planning to take in the next 12 months? Those selecting any business trip (domestic or international)

Region	Percentage
MEA	18
APAC	14
USA	11
Europe	6

May 2021

Apart from travelling for leisure, people in the Middle Eastern countries have also shown a higher interest in business trips. Consumer sentiment data shows that respondents in the MEA (18%) and APAC (14%) regions are more likely to travel for business, both domestically and internationally, than consumers in Europe (6%) and North America (11%). This makes them a favourable target market for airlines and hotels, particularly those offering premium products.

Top barriers to travel

Which, if any of the below factors are currently preventing you from travelling? Please select all that apply (excludes don't know and none of these numbers?)

Health risks	48
Safety	37
Travel restrictions	35
Price of travel	32
Work	24
Own/family health situation	24
Price of accommodation	21
Availability of accommodations	15
Other	6
Not applicable - I do not tend to take holidays	2

The demand for travel most likely to come from millennials and Gen X

Which, if any of the following trips are you planning to take in the next 12 months? Please select all that apply....% of respondents who said this.

UAE

	Domestic holiday	International holiday
Gen X (1965-1981)	39	59
Millennial (1982-1999)	37	58
Gen Z (2000 and later)	37	45

KSA

	Domestic holiday	International holiday
Gen X (1965-1981)	39	47
Millennial (1982-1999)	38	50
Gen Z (2000 and later)	49	43

May 2021

In the UAE, travel restrictions is the top concern along with health risks (45% each). However, in KSA, health risks is the biggest concern for people (at 45%). The price of travel is also a barrier to travel, with roughly a third of respondents in UAE & KSA (32% and 37%) saying the actual price of travel currently prevents them from travelling.

Besides realising the concerns, it is also important for any tourism board or travel body, to understand the audiences that will lead the travel demands in future. In both UAE and KSA, demand for international travel is largely driven by millennials (58% and 50%). However, in the UAE, we see an equal demand coming from GenX respondents (at 59%).

Dubai leads the way for tourism revival

As Dubai marked one year since reopening its borders to international tourists on July 7, 2020, the latest data published by Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (Dubai Tourism) shows the city welcomed 3.7 million overnight visitors during the 11-month period from July 2020 to May 2021.

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The positive performance reinforces the leading role Dubai is playing in global tourism recovery, underscoring the city's enduring appeal as a must-visit destination and reaffirming its commitment to ensuring the health and safety of all residents and visitors.

HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Dubai Crown Prince and Chairman of The Executive Council of Dubai, said, "The growing momentum of recovery

“The growing momentum of recovery not only reflects the fundamental strengths of Dubai's tourism sector and the diversity of its source markets but also the emirate's economic resilience”

ery not only reflects the fundamental strengths of Dubai's tourism sector and the diversity of its source markets but also the emirate's economic resilience and agility in the face of a rapidly fluctuating global environment. Furthermore,

Dubai's ability to implement a rigorous precautionary protocol regime has made the city one of the world's safest destinations for travellers. As we gear up to host Expo 2020, these exceptional standards will enable us ensure the event provides the highest global benchmarks of safety and security for all visitors."

According to the data published by Dubai Tourism, the emirate received more than 1.7 million visitors between July and December 2020 from markets that were open, and an additional two million visitors



HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum
Dubai Crown Prince and Chairman, The Executive Council of Dubai

Ethiopia and Sudan, that have all exhibited strong growth potential to be among the top 15 source markets for Dubai since it reopened its doors to global travellers.

His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General of Dubai Tourism, commented, "The resurgence in international arrivals demonstrates our commitment to a diversified market strategy, the ability of our tourism sector to adapt and respond with agility across all our markets, the enduring appeal of our world-class diverse offerings and the trust that visitors place in Dubai as a safe destination. The positive performance also

validates the effectiveness of Dubai's public-private partnership model and our robust international marketing campaigns designed to sustain Dubai's appeal as the destination of choice for global travellers. The critical role played by our strategic partners such as Emirates, flydubai, Dubai Airports and other industry stakeholders, as they consistently conveyed the message that Dubai is open and safe for all travellers, contributed immensely towards industry stabilisation."

The provision of a relief package worth over AED7.1 billion combined with a phased reopening of key sectors and Dubai Tourism's strong collaboration with lo-

cal stakeholders and over 3,000 partners worldwide, helped the industry chart a steady course for recovery.

Domestic hospitality sector rebounds

Dubai's recovery strategy, implemented in close coordination with stakeholders, proved crucial in reinvigorating the domestic hospitality market in May 2020, preparing the ground for the return of international visitors to the city in July 2020. Pent-up demand for staycations among UAE residents, both Emiratis and expatriates from over 200 nationalities, drove tourism growth with hotel occupancy rising significantly from 35 per cent in July 2020 to 58 per cent in May 2021. Hotel occupancy in Dubai peaked in December 2020 (69 per cent) and in January 2021 (66 per cent) with the city ranking second globally in terms of occupancy after Singapore and ahead of Paris and London, ac-

cording to data from hotel management analytics firm STR. Notably, the average daily rate (ADR) recovered from AED238 in July 2020 to AED383 in May 2021. Despite the disruption caused by COVID-19 across sectors, Dubai continues to represent a major opportunity for hotel developers. A total of 591 hotel establishments with 100,000 rooms were operating in July 2020 in full compliance with health and safety protocols. This has now increased to 715 hotel establishments offering 128,000 rooms in May 2021.

The concerted efforts of Dubai Tourism and partners to drive demand for domestic travel saw city hotels welcoming 5.5 million domestic visitors for the period between July 2020 and May 2021, compared to 2.66 million domestic hotel arrivals during the period July 2019 to May 2020, an astounding year-on-year growth of 106 per cent. The hotels

Dubai at the forefront of global tourism recovery

- Dubai welcomed **3.7 million** international overnight visitors in July 2020 – May 2021 period
- Overall hotel occupancy of **58 per cent** was recorded in July 2020 – May 2021 period
- **106 per cent** rise in domestic hotel arrivals provides major impetus to tourism rebound
- World-leading health & safety standards have made Dubai one of the globe's safest destinations



also enjoyed an average 56 per cent occupancy during the Eid Al Fitr holiday week in May 2021, which though less than the average occupancy of 62 per cent during the Eid week in 2019, highlighted the crucial role played by the domestic market in Dubai's tourism recovery. Furthermore, domestic hotel arrivals during the Eid week in May 2021 accounted for 62 per cent of all hotel guest arrivals compared to 47 per cent in 2019.

DTCM hosts over 1,000 executives

► Contd. from page 1

Presided by His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General, Dubai Tourism, the forum hosted over 1,000 key executives from leading establishments in the hospitality, travel, and tourism sectors.

HE Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General, Dubai Tourism, commented, "Dubai has continued to lead global tourism recovery and has con-

success of the city's reopening strategy. Incremental increase in tourist arrivals month on month from markets that are open delivered 3.7 million international overnight visitors in the July 2020 – May 2021 period.

Adnan Kazim, Emirates' Chief Commercial Officer, said, "Emirates is proud to have played its part to help



Adnan Kazim
Chief Commercial Officer
Emirates



Paul Griffiths
Chief Executive Officer
Dubai Airports



Mark Willis
CEO, India, ME, Africa & Turkey
Accor



Sandeep Walia
Chief Operating Officer Middle East
Marriott International

“As the city prepares to host the region's first World Expo, as well as play a leading role in the UAE's Golden Jubilee celebrations, we look forward to making significant progress in 2021 and beyond”

— HE Helal Saeed Almarri

stantly set new precedents in how to safely yet effectively open internationally and critically stay open. The emirate's tourism rebound in the second half of 2020, leading to industry stabilisation in 2021, is also a reflection of the crucial support extended by our stakeholders and partners. As the city prepares to host the region's first World Expo, as well as play a leading role in the UAE's Golden Jubilee celebrations, we look forward to making significant progress in 2021 and beyond.”

Dubai Tourism data shared with participants shows the

reopen air travel, closely working with DTCM on health and safety measures to safeguard the well-being of visitors. These collective efforts and the safe and gradual restart of our network, which today stands at over 115 destinations, brought in 2 million visitors to the city on Emirates since July 7, 2020 and saw bookings growing over 30% from last year.”

Paul Griffiths, Chief Executive Officer of Dubai Airports, said, "Despite the challenges during a period that was the most turbulent time

in the history of international air travel, Dubai Airports retained its position as the world's busiest international airport for the seventh consecutive year with 25.9 million passengers in 2020. After having welcomed nearly 6 million passengers in Q1 2021, DXB now looks set for a stable second quarter and the outlook for the second half of the year looks positive thanks to the seasonal travel rush and upcoming major international events including the Dubai Expo 2020 and the Dubai Airshow 2021.”

Mark Willis, CEO, India, Middle East, Africa & Turkey for Accor, said, "Undoubtedly, Dubai has been, and remains, one of the strongest markets in which we operate in the region. As a hotelier, it has been very reassuring to see how the recovery plans have been managed and implemented city wide, helping restore confidence in travel-

lers, which has aided the recovery of the tourism sector at a faster rate. Having such clear direction and forward-thinking plans ensured that we, as part of the tourism industry, were able to plan our resources to support the

“Dubai remains one of the most accessible and attractive markets globally. As the excitement and momentum builds towards Dubai Expo 2020, we are expecting an incremental increase in occupancies and stronger recovery in 2022”

— David Todd

reopening of the city to the best of our ability through global campaigns of our own, which strengthened the global message even further that "Dubai is open".

Sandeep Walia, Chief Operating Officer – Middle East, Marriott International, said, "Dubai continues to

provide a safe-haven destination for its people and for travellers and has adapted quickly to change – both of which have undoubtedly helped the hospitality and travel sector begin its journey to recovery. The reopen-

ing of the city to international tourism last July certainly brought great opportunities for the hotel industry. We've seen our hotels in this market perform particularly well over the past year.”

David Todd, Head of Operation, MEA, IHG, said, "Dubai has built a strong

perception of safe travel internationally with consistent adherence to health and safety guidelines across the travel and tourism sector. We are seeing the return of small to medium events including International conferences. As the excitement and momentum builds towards Dubai Expo 2020, we are expecting an incremental increase in occupancies and stronger recovery in 2022.”

FactFile

■ Incremental increase in tourist arrivals month on month from markets that are open delivered 3.7 million international overnight visitors in the July 2020 – May 2021 period.

■ The restart of Emirates' network, which stands at over 115 destinations, brought in 2 million visitors to the city on Emirates since July 7, 2020 and saw bookings growing over 30% from last year

Campaign for sustainability

► Contd. from page 1

impressive experiences in overall corporate social responsibility, his ingenuity and commitment to the environment will give the HMM an edge in its responsibility to continuously contribute to preservation of our environment and aim to encourage many to do the same.” This announcement by HMM Hospitality proves their commitment to this

outstanding responsibility to every single person in this planet and the importance of conducting green initiatives. Over the past ten years Hamdani revolutionised the hospitality industry with his ground-breaking green initiatives such as in-house compost machine project, an Urban Farm and numerous notable community-related activities

“Hamdani's ingenuity and commitment to the environment will give the HMM an edge in its responsibility to contribute to preservation of our environment and aim to encourage many to do the same”

— Iftikhar Hamdani

and charities. He bagged various sustainable and professional accolades by the different award-giving

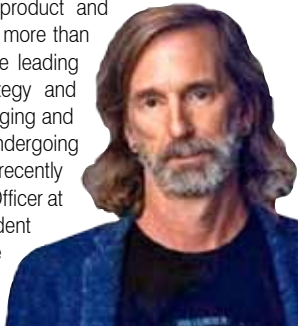
bodies. Known as the initiator of green programmes in Ajman, Hamdani has made his mark to engage

many through his endless campaign for sustainability by participating in various forums within and outside UAE. He is inspiring leader who motivates the next generation to not just follow in the footsteps of protecting the environment for a much longer period of time, but taking action and finding their voice to make the change that is much need-

ed. At a time when food is scarce in some regions due to the irregularities in distribution of food and lack thereof and even water and fuel, Hamdani pans out his initiatives for bio-fuel, reusing waste materials, growing one's own food to ensure fresh produce from farm/garden to the table are some ways to make that difference. 🌱

TRAVELPORT UK

It was announced that **Tom Kershaw** has been appointed Chief Product & Technology Officer at Travelport. Kershaw is a seasoned product and technology executive, with more than two decades of experience leading innovation, technical strategy and execution within both emerging and mature organisations undergoing transformation. He most recently was the Chief Technology Officer at one of the largest independent advertising platforms in the world, Magnite, Inc.



SWISSOTEL AL MUROOJ DUBAI AND MOVENPICK GRAND AL BUSTAN DUBAI Dubai

Mouna Ouni joins as Cluster Director of Marketing & Communications, Swissotel Al Murooj Dubai and Movenpick Grand Al Bustan Dubai. Counting over 20 years' experience in the industry Ouni is one of the most dynamic female leaders who inspire and deliver exponential value to every hotel she has worked in. She has maintained strong contacts with key trade, consumer, government and freelance travel media.



SHANGRI-LA

ME, Europe, India, Indian Ocean & the Americas

Kapil Aggarwal has been promoted to Co-Head the MEIA region, Aggarwal will overlook operations in Turkey, the Middle East, India and the Indian Ocean. Aggarwal was Vice President of Investment & Asset Management as well as Deputy to the Executive Vice President of Operations for the MEIA region. Aggarwal, who has been working with Shangri-La for eight years now, originally joined in 2013 as Director of Asset Management.



SHERATON JUMEIRAH BEACH RESORT Dubai

Sonia Parmar joins the team as Marketing Manager for Sheraton Jumeirah Beach Resort. Born and raised in India (New Delhi). A digital marketing & communications professional with 17+ years' experience, Parmar has worked with an array of hospitality groups in the region. Her career began at Clariges Hotel followed by successful roles at Emirates Palace, UAE, Meydan Hotels & Hospitality, Royal Rose Hotel, Abu Dhabi and Gloria Hotels & Resorts. She later moved on to Meraas – Dubai Gourmet, UAE and then joined the team at Sharjah Collection by Mysk.



MERCURE HOTEL DUBAI BARSHA HEIGHTS Dubai

Levent Tasbas has been promoted as the new General Manager of Mercure Hotel Dubai Barsha Heights. Having held senior management positions with Rixos Hotels, The Grand Blue Sky International Hotel, and Mercure Hotels, Tasbas showed impressive financial and operational achievements while holding the Director of Finance position. His hard work have led him to lead and manage the largest Mercure Hotel in the world.



ME, Europe, India, Indian Ocean & the Americas

Choon Wah Wong has both been promoted to Co-Head the MEIA region at Shangri-La. Wong will take responsibility for Europe and the Americas. Prior to their latest appointments, Wong was Vice President of Investment & Asset Management. Choon Wah Wong, joined Shangri-La in 2018, having spent the majority of the previous 18 years in the private equity real estate investment sector. Wong has an engineering degree from the University of Cambridge.



Crowne Plaza opens in Jumeirah

IHG Hotels & Resorts, one of the world's leading hotel companies announced the opening of Crowne Plaza Dubai Jumeirah in partnership with the region's reputed hospitality group, Ishraq Hospitality. Located in the heart of Jumeriah 1, Crowne Plaza Dubai Jumeirah's excellent location enables its guests to be within reach of Dubai's key leisure and business areas.

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Established as one of the world's largest upscale and fastest growing hotel brands, Crowne Plaza has presence in over 60 countries, Crowne Plaza Dubai Jumeirah offers modern business travellers the perfect blend of balancing work and life so guest feel fulfilled and successful.

The 252 room and suites hotel offer guests a distinct sense of place with stunning views of the Burj Khalifa, Jumeirah beach and the city. Located in the heart of Jumeriah 1, Crowne Plaza



Dubai Jumeirah's excellent location enables its guests to be within reach of Dubai's key leisure and business areas. The hotel is an ideal choice for business and leisure travellers alike as guests can enjoy a relaxing day at Jumeirah Beach or visit nearby lifestyle or shopping landmarks.

Commenting on the opening, **Alexander Suski**, Acting CEO of Ishraq Hospitality, said, "Ishraq Hospitality is proud to add this property to the Crowne Plaza family, further cementing Ishraq's reputation in the hospitality industry. We are committed to accelerating the growth of our portfolio, and we look

forward to expanding our footprint in the Middle East. With the opening of Crowne Plaza Dubai Jumeirah, Ishraq once again demonstrates its ability to elevate properties in the region to 5* status." Speaking on the new launch, **Joseph Kar-** am, Cluster General Manager Crowne Plaza Jumeirah,

Comments

“With the opening of Crowne Plaza Dubai Jumeirah, Ishraq Hospitality once again demonstrates its ability to elevate properties in the region to 5* status” — **Alexander Suski**

“The location of the hotel is the perfect mid-way point for guests to experience all aspects of Dubai, and we look forward to being a key player in the industry” — **Joseph Karam**

Crowne Plaza Dubai-Deira, said, "With the hospitality industry finally getting back on its feet, it is a pleasure to be opening the Crowne Plaza brand in the Jumeirah 1 area. Globally we are completely transforming the brand as we build hotels

of the future with flexible design and innovation that modern travellers crave. The location of the hotel is the perfect mid-way point for guests to experience all aspects of Dubai, and we look forward to being a key player in the industry.”



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