

# Sustainability at core @ GTS 5.0

The two-day Gulf Travel Show 5.0 (GTS 5.0) will kick off on 28 September 2022, under the theme of sustainable tourism. It assures participants of upholding their social responsibility to ensure less carbon emissions.

î TT Bureau

ulf Travel Show (GTS), an event conceived with a purpose, started just after the pandemic, whilst most borders were still closed. It gave the travel, tourism, and hospitality fraternity an opportunity to ensure that confidence is restored in the minds of the people passionate about the industry. It was also a tool that connected online GCC buyers with exhibitors from across the globe. The fifth edition, or GTS 5.0, demonstrates its commitment to uphold its social responsibility



to ensure less carbon emissions while bringing all players to the table to learn and study the stakes, the many opportunities to make things right after a bout of more than two years of the pandemic era. Sustainability has many layers to be addressed. It is no longer a word to be

Contd. on page 13

utilised and passed on as a mere CSR activity. Hence, it is a commitment to ensure that everyone has a part to play on mother earth. Starting off with airlines and their biofuel capabilities, hotels and their sustainable strategies, and tourism boards, which provide and maintain sustainable goals to ensure that the country or destination promoted will not be perturbed or undisturbed, but instead left in its natural state. When UNWTO announced its commitment to the declaration of sustainability in the industry, Contd. on page 9 🕨

### Eur tour fervour soars among UAE travellers

Europe is a popular destination for GCC travellers, says Nasir Jamal Khan, CEO, Al Naboodah Travel.

TT Bureau

hat are the latest summer trends? There is a rise in cruise bookings; travellers are eager to visit Europe during the summer. A predicted surge in travel is recorded despite a 57 per cent increase in the region's average flight cost due to rising fuel costs and high travel demand. Tourists from the UAE are likely to spend more time than usual at the destination. As experts say, there is pent-up demand among travellers keen to make up for lost time due to two years of restrictions.



Nasir Jamal Khan CEO Al Nahoodah Trave

Which destinations are popular among GCC travellers? Destinations with visa-free entry and short-haul flights with economical flight costs, with COVID-free along

Contd. on page 9 🕨

# **Rush for FIFA World Cup** | **Tourism fuels KSA's GDP**

As the countdown to the FIFA World Cup 2022 begins, to be held in Qatar from 21 November to 18 December, fans from all over the world rush to book tickets. Trade partners share their views.



Shantanu S. Mehta General Manager, Orient Tours CWT M&E, UAE, Sultanate of Oman and State of Qatar

than enough indicators that the FIFA World Cup period combined with the Abu Dhabi Formula One Grand Prix will provide a travel boom for the UAE. 77

**W** The tickets are being sold only through the appointed match hospitality agents. Residents from each country must book those tickets individually. Agents and intermediaries are discouraged from purchasing tickets on others' behalf. Qatar is planning 1.2 million beds, including cruise ships docked off its ports. So, a lot of fans will opt to stay in nearby countries. Not only hotels, but ground transportation, excursions, and other tourist services are being sold at exorbitant prices. The situation will exacerbate as we draw closer to the games. As long as they can acquire landing lights and lay down sufficient flights, Dubai and all the major cities in the 1-2 hour flying radius will benefit. As a boutique luxury DMC, we promote bespoke packages. There are already several confirmed bookings. We are helping some of our creative partners explore land transfers between the UAE and Qatar. There are more

The travel and tourism sector in Saudi Arabia is likely to grow at an average of 11% annually over the next decade, making it the fastest growing industry in the Middle East, according to WTTC.

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ccording to the forecast from WTTC's latest Economic Impact Report (EIR), this annual growth, more than six times the 1.8 per cent growth rate of the country's overall economy, will bolster the economic recovery of the Kingdom. By 2032, the travel and tourism sector's contribution to GDP could reach nearly SAR



Julia Simpson President & CEO, WTTC

635 billion, representing 17.1 per cent of the total economy. The forecast also reveals travel and tourism employment could double over the next 10 years, creating more than 1.4 million jobs, to reach almost three million employed within the sector by 2032. The projections for both employment and the sector's contribution to the Kingdom's economy surpass the ambitious goals set out by the government's Vision

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CULTURE OF





## TRAINING

# **'Invest in industry skills for better future'**

A qualified and competent workforce is the key to success as we prepare for the New Normal. This applies to both individuals and organisations, alike, in the emerging world scenario, says **Shakir Kantawala**, Co-Founder and Managing Partner, Wingsway Training Institute (Dubai, UAE) and WingsWay Global Training Academy (India).

### m PTT Bureau

Training in the aviation and travel industries is critical. In current times, training is essential to right-skill the post-pandemic aviation workforce. Over the past few weeks, the aviation and travel industries saw unpleasant disruptions at various touchpoints across the travel chain, from reservations to checkin, through baggage control, to technical and operations, mostly caused by the lack of readily available trained and certified personnel at various positions. The dynamic aviation, airports, travel, and hospitality industries can not easily employ non-skilled people. A certain skill set and standard certified trainings are required



to perform the complex tasks that run their processes.

#### Training for new responsibilities

"That is how we have always done it." This sentence more or less sums up one of the main barriers for improvement in aviation training today. In many instances, such as itinerary and journey pricing, ticketing, and reservations, the processes are now mostly simplified, making it imperative to un-learn and re-learn the new simpler processes and appropriately guide your clients.

#### Adapting to the remote way of working The transition will be facili-

tated by timely re-skilling and

up-skilling, which will aid in understanding and optimising the new processes.

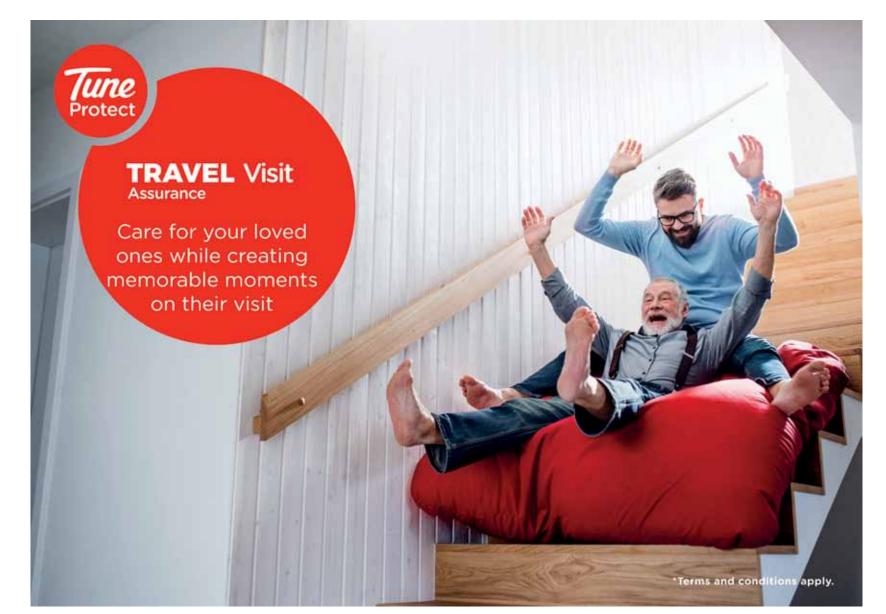


Shakir Raniawala Co-Founder and Managing Partner, Wingsway Training Institute (Dubai, UAE) and WingsWay Global Training Academy (India)

**New employees' training** New employees must receive training as part of the onboarding process. Teams should unlearn and relearn considering that the evolving nature of work environment.

#### It is a virtual world!

During and post-pandemic, we saw the evolution of e-learning and virtual instructor-led training, as we moved from classic classroom theory and workshop practice kinds of training sessions to the study mode where we can learn from the comfort of our homes. Most aviation and travel industry training courses are now available as convenient and affordable virtual options. WingsWay Training Institute is privileged to represent International Air Transport Association (IATA-Canada) as their Authorised Training Centre. Add Wings to your career and say "Hello" to your better future now! 🦻



### Tourism News

Dubai hotels record seven times higher profit than 2019: STR

Malaysia Airlines adds second daily flight to its Doha network

US extends business, tourism visa for Saudis

Air Arabia bookings for FIFA WC shuttles begin

Rotana to open luxury five-star resort in Luxor, Egypt

Cathay Pacific to resume Dubai-Hong Kong flights

Luxury e-hail sectors witness 85% growth

Wego, Indonesia sign agreement to revive Bali tourism

# UAE traveller confidence at its peak

The Marriott Bonvoy report shows only four in 10 people from the UAE have been abroad since the pandemic's start. However, with the gradual lifting of restrictions globally and the summer months approaching, travellers from the Emirates are more likely to explore international destinations.

activities, reconnecting with

family and friends, activities

which allow the individual

to disengage from mobile

devices, and even seek out

healthy gastronomic experi-

ences. Destinations known

for their wellness experi-

ences include Bali, Tuscany,

he Marriott Bonvoy data shows that among the 85 per cent of UAE residents who already know they will be heading abroad this summer (June-September), 98 per cent say they will be spending more than they usually would, on an average of AED 11,832 per person. This is compared to their typical spending on summer holidays pre-COVID-19. The upward trend points to increasing travel opportunities and the fact that most people are now comfortable travelling after the pandemic.

Furthermore, this is predicted to be an ongoing trend due to the upcoming Eid holidays, school holidays, and most people seeking to get away for the summer. Hence, tourism has increased over the past few months, and the industry is noticing many new trends.

Wellness-centric travel The World Health Organization defines wellness as "complete physical, mental, and social well-being" rather

### Wellness can be immersed in cultural activities, reconnecting with family and friends, activities that allow the individual to disengage from phone

than "the absence of disease or infirmity". Tourists are now seeking destinations and experiences that help maintain a healthy mental and physical lifestyle. Wellness can be immersed in cultural and India. Dubai also promotes wellness, with hotels such as Jumeirah offering wellness retreats.

Most holiday seekers opt for

#### Longer holidays

longer holidays due to the long period of no travel. By accumulating vacation days over time, people have pending vacation leaves that they look forward to taking this year and next. The Marriott Bonvoy report states that 43 per cent of the respondents have not been on a holiday of two weeks or longer in three years or more.

#### **Family vacations**

Family vacations are increasingly becoming a priority. Adding to this, schools will soon begin their summer holidays, and families with children use the summer months to unwind. Along with destination holidays, most expats are also looking to visit their hometowns.

#### Last-minute travels

The sprawling hotel properties in the UAE and the quick city getaway hotels also prompt holiday seekers to opt for staycations and make last-minute in-country holiday plans. This has also been due to the long visa processes at most embassies.



ssistant Professor at the Edinburgh Business School at Heriot-Watt University, Dubai (The views expressed are solely of the author.)

### DCT Abu Dhabi and Miral sign 2-year pact to promote Yas Island

With this collaboration, DCT Abu Dhabi and Miral will direct their efforts towards making Yas Island a top global destination for leisure and world-class events.



DCT Abu Dhabi and Miral have a stellar calendar of events running from July 2022 to February 2023 on Yas Island. The lineup promises memorable moments at each event for every guest, featuring everything from global sports championships and family-friendly attractions to top-artist concerts and exhilarating adventures.



Mohamed Abdalla Al Zaabi Chief Executive Officer, Miral Mohamed Abdalla Al Zaabi, CEO, Miral, said, "This is a

testament to achieving our vision of positioning the island as a top global destination for entertainment, leisure, and world-class events. None of this would have been possible without the support of our partners. We will continue to work together to provide our guests with unforgettable experiences and elevate Abu Dhabi's position as a global tourism hub."

# Tourism for inclusive growth

Contd. from page 1
2030 strategic framework.

By 2023, following two years of heartache, Saudi Arabia's travel and tourism sector's contribution to the national economy could surpass prepandemic levels when it is projected to rise 2 per cent above 2019 levels to reach nearly SAR 297 billion.

By the end of this year, the sector's contribution to GDP is expected to grow by 15.2 per

KSA is hosting 22nd Global Summit, where WTTC will be able to continue its efforts to showcase the importance of the travel and tourism sector

cent to nearly SAR 223 billion, amounting to 7.2 per cent of the total economic GDP, while employment in the sector is set to grow by 16.1 per cent to reach more than 1.5 million jobs. According to the global tourism body, the Kingdom, due to host WTTC's 22nd Global Summit in Riyadh from 28 November to 1 December this year, is witnessing a faster than average recovery following the government's total commitment to the travel and tourism sector, ensuring it remains at the forefront of the global agenda.

Julia Simpson, WTTC President and CEO, said, "Throughout these difficult times for our

sector, the Saudi Arabian gov-

ernment has recognised the

importance of travel and tour-

ism and has led the world in its

recovery. Through his leader-

ship, travel and tourism will

become a driving force of the

economy and will surpass the goals set out for Vision 2030. I would like to commend Ahmed Al Khateeb, who has shown strong leadership during this crisis, which has boosted the sector's growth with unprecedented investments and new approaches to tourism. I am delighted KSA is hosting our 22nd Global Summit, where we will be able to continue our efforts to showcase the importance of the sector and look ahead to the future of travel."

Before the pandemic, Saudi Arabia's travel and tourism total contribution to GDP was 9.7 per cent (SAR 291.6 billion) in 2019, falling to just 6.6 per cent (SAR 190.6 billion) in 2020, representing a staggering 34.6 per cent loss. The sector also supported nearly 1.6 million jobs before an almost complete halt to international travel, which resulted in a loss of 350,000 (22.2 per cent), to reach just over 1.2 million in 2020. >

# GUESTCOLUMN

### NTO

# Green & low-cost travel offers by Germany

The German National Tourism Board, focusing on eco-conscious options with a wide range of outdoor activities for travellers, recently announced that visitors can enjoy unlimited use of public transport in the country for just  $\notin$ 9, which is expected to result in a further increase in sustainable travel this summer.

### î TT Bureau

Whith schools shut for summer and the mercury rising in the GCC, travellers looking to explore Europe eco-consciously can revel in Germany's plethora of sustainable offerings. With the popularity of rail travel on the rise and the hunt for eco-aware methods becoming ever more necessary, Germany is moving to meet demand by announcing an affordable public transport option for all. For just €9 (Dh33), travellers can enjoy a month of unlimited travel on regional trains, S-Bahn and U-Bahn trains, as well as buses and trams. The offer is valid for travellers until 31 August 2022.





**Yamina Sofo** Director, Sales and Marketing German National Tourist Office (GNTO)

"Germany is serious about sustainable tourism. We recognise the demand for eco-conscious offerings and want to ensure that they are accessible for all, regardless of budget. Germany is a treasure trove of natural beauty and we are confident that GCC travellers will be blown away by the diverse landscapes," said Yamina Sofo, Director, Sales and Marketing, German National Tourist Office (GNTO).

While long-distance journeys are not included in the incred-

Land of Lakes and is home to more than 300 lakes, moors, rivers, and streams. Visitors can participate in all kinds of water activities. The Palatinate Forest Biosphere Reserve in

Now, for just €9 (Dh33), travellers can enjoy a month of unlimited travel on regional trains, S-Bahn and U-Bahn trains, as well as buses and trams

ible €9 offer, by linking the various transport associations, it is still easily possible to explore the whole of Germany with local transport. Some of the key landmarks easily accessible by train include the Uckermark Lakes Nature Park in Brandenburg, which is known as the

Rhineland-Palatinate should also be at the top of the agenda. The dense tree population is unspoilt. The Wadden Sea National Park is home to mudflats, dunes, beaches, salt marshes, islands and the Halligen—stunning German islands. **>** 



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## FAMILYALBUM

# **RezLive.com bolsters trade partnerships**

RezLive.com organised two networking events, one in Muscat and another in Bahrain, which were attended by the leading local travel agents and tour operators. The purpose of the event was to thank the local travel industry for its consistent support and to inform travel partners about the additional benefits of working with RezLive.com.





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# Swiss towns appeal to Gulf tourists

GCC travellers seek a wide range of experiences, and among them are exploring destinations rich in culture and heritage, indulging in activities, experiencing accommodation and the ease of travel with the Swiss Travel System. Montreux-Vevey in Switzerland is one such destination that provides travellers with what they seek: an experience worth their trip.

### 🎧 Shehara Rizlv

evey, known as one of the 'Pearls of the Swiss Riviera' in the canton of Vaud, is a quaint, Riviera-like town on the shore of Lake Geneva. Some of the most interesting sites in this town are the statue of Charlie Chaplin along the lake promenade and a big fork stuck in the lake. The town is well preserved with all its rich historical buildings, churches, monuments, statues, and the wayside boutiques with their unique identity. It is one of many breathtaking views of the Alpine panorama; vineyards that still remain; a town square, which gives it almost a yesteryear image. It is said that Charlie Chaplin spent his last 25 years in this town, and his monument has been built in his honour. The International FMCG Nestle headquarters are also part of the town right beside the lake.

#### Swimmers paradise

Lake Geneva attracts swimmers from across the globe. The cruise boat ride is an unmatched experience, with



**Tiffany Duc** PR and Media Manager. Montreux – Vevev Tourism Switzerland

Sustainability is priority Everywhere in the town, you will see water fountains where you can fill your bottle of water, which is pure and carbon free. Hence. carbon emissions are at a low key as the town is well connected by their Swiss Travel System, from boats to the railway, so travellers and citizens are able to reduce

### Vevey is a destination we want to promote to the GCC market as the travellers from the region are looking for rich cultural or heritage experiences

breathtaking views. The place is a hidden treasure for travellers from the GCC as it is also an unwinding destination. Chocolatiers. patisseries, and trinket boutiques bring out its French heritage. Dinner at one of the most unique places on the lakeshore, 'Ze Fork' restaurant, offers French, Mediterranean, European, and contemporary cuisine friendly to vegetarians and vegans, with gluten-free options to suit every diner.

their carbon footprint and bask in the natural beauty of nature. Tiffany Duc, PR and Media Montreux-Vevey Manager, Tourism Switzerland, reiterated, "Vevey is a destination we want to promote to the GCC market as the travellers from the region are looking for rich cultural, historical, or heritage experiences. Our marketing department accommodates FAM trips all year long. Our intention is to provide maximum information by welcoming tour operators and travel







Andreas Nef

Market Manager GCC Swiss Travel System agents from different markets

to explore and learn about our destination, to discover and indulge in activities, experience accommodation and the ease of travel with the Swiss Travel System as part of our main work with travel agents and tour operators. We also have tour operators dedicated to travelling to the GCC destinations, mostly to Dubai, to promote our destination and also to create and strengthen the networks. We have a partnership with Swiss Tourism, which is also another channel through which we get into contact with the tour operators in the GCC market as they usually attend trade events. The exciting news this

year is that we applied to host the GCC workshop for agents, DMCs, and TMCs in our canton and we won the right to host the event this year from 18 to 28 September 2022. More details will follow in the upcoming months."

**Swiss Travel System** Getting by in Switzerland from the airport to the hotel and

beyond is extremely easy. The

cities towns and attractions across the different cantons and even beyond, to visit the rest of Europe. Andreas Nef, Market Manager GCC, Swiss Travel System shared, "We are looking at attracting not only the locals in the GCC but also the expats. We have been able to study this market and we understand the needs of the travellers. Hence, we ensure

We are looking at attracting not only the locals but also the expats. We have been able to study this market and we understand the needs of the travellers

Swiss Travel System provides a traveller with an app to utilise every step of the way. According to a recent study, in the GCC, more Gen Z travellers opt for unique experiences with added rich culture and heritage but to experience them at their own pace. The travel system provides the opportunity, with its boats, trains, and buses that connect

that we cater to their requirements. In every mode of transportation, there are different classes, which gives every individual traveller an opportunity to select the class they wish to travel in and the destinations to be covered. Swiss trains are always on time and will arrive at the specified time at each destination." >>

NTO

### **COVERSTORY**

# **Aiming for sustainable future**

#### Contd. from page 1

players were getting there but just needed that extra push to achieve their final goal. Today, in the United Arab Emirates, single-use plastics are not just frowned upon but made to pay for to ensure the environment is protected.

In the GCC, the number of young travellers has risen more than in other parts of the world, and these travellers are willing to spend extra to ensure that the environment is unharmed. As mentioned before, travel agencies, hotels, tourism boards, and transportation companies are making it their business to ensure they play their part in making it a sustainable environment. The UAE is committed in a way that they have their own sustainable cities already built and active. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman are also enroute to building their very own sustainable cities. It was stated that during the recent visit by the US President to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, their efforts for the 2030 Vision on sustainability were commended.

Partnering with GTS 5.0 will provide an opportunity for every individual to become a key player in achieving the goals of the future: sustainable travel, tourism, and hos-

the globe. The recent bouts of heat waves that spread across Europe are an example and an eye opener as to what our responsibilities should be. It is time to reconnect with the industry face-to-face and virtually to ensure that we become the first responders committed not just to showing and telling a destination but to ensuring that the destinations are sus-

### After four successful editions in November 2020, March 2021, October 2021, and March 2022, GTS is back by popular demand in Q4 2022

pitality industries. SanJeet Director, DDP, reiterated, "Our commitment to ensure that the industry uses best practices for the betterment of the industry is a top priority at this point of time with climate change making a huge impact in cities all across

tainable and will remain intact for a long period of time. This time we have our special segment dedicated to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with its vision 2030 and the many projects undertaken by it. The individual attention given to the buyers and exhibitors

makes us unique and one of a kind. So, I would like to invite you this time to participate and lobby your support and commitment for the need of the hour, sustainability."

The event will continue to focus on business meetings. It will host buyers from across the region. After the success of the first four editions in November 2020, March 2021, October 2021, and March 2022, GTS is back by popular demand in the last quarter of 2022. All exhibitors and buyers will log-in to the GTS platform from either their office or the comfort of their home. Each exhibitor will be given their own private virtual booth with branding, videos, and document broadcast facilities. These can be customised as per the individual requirements. Buyers can visit the virtual exhibition and individual stalls of all exhibitors and have personalised, undisturbed meetings.

# Nations with e-visa grow the pie

Contd. from page 1 regulations, seem to be some of the preferences. Travellers are looking for flexibility to change and packages that offer value for money. Switzerland, Ireland, Georgia, Egypt, Turkey, Germany, France, Austria, Czech Resume large bucket trips with their friends and family after a two-year hiatus caused by

Countries that introduced e-visa system are gaining a significant market share compared to the countries where clients need to undergo the visa process

public, Hungary, Spain, the USA, Thailand, and Indonesia are a few of the names of the destinations which are more in demand and corporates as well as individual leisure travellers are inquiring at present.

How will this summer be different from others? Travellers are eager to rethe coronavirus pandemic. Relaxation of the current COVID-19 restrictions has boosted people's travel confidence once again. However, spending power is limited for

some travellers, which is why

it is causing them to select

short-haul destinations with

a smaller number of over-

night stays. Nevertheless,

travel demand is high this

summer as it was followed

by the Eid break.In terms of

overnight stays, the average

duration varies between 5

and 10 days.

Are travellers looking for luxury or semi-luxury travel and accommodation?

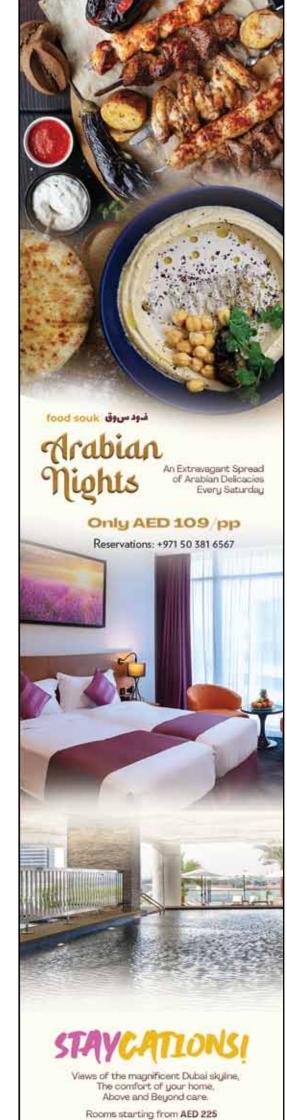
The majority of GCC nationals travel with their families and will look for luxury travel packages. At the same time, there is a lot of demand for semi-luxury packages from GCC residents. Some travelers' spending power is much greater in the GCC region.

As a travel consultant, how has your role changed, especially since COVID-19? The travel agent role is important, especially in the current phase of the pandemic, as many clients are more dependent on travel agents as compared to online travel portals to get accurate information related to travel restrictions, destination information, airline guidelines, etc. Real-time information is something travellers are depending on, so they select

travel agents who are able to keep them updated as and when there are updates.

What do you think about visa on arrival or e-visa becoming a key element for travel? Are there any benefits for travellers?

Currently, in Dubai, we are having a tough time with Schengen visa appointments as demand is high. The countries that introduced the e-visa system are gaining a significant market share compared to the countries where clients need to undergo the visa process. Clients can decide at the last minute of their travel with the on-arrival or e-visa system. Another key fact that has become more important is travel insurance. Travel insurance is currently making a huge impact on travel. Ninety-seven per cent of the clients are travelling with travel insurance.



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# 10 **INVIALE AUGUST 2022** STATISTICS STATISTICS STATISTICS SOLUTISTS dominate ME travel demography

This summer is a remarkable one for all travellers, especially in this new normal climate, when they have become more opportunistic and unpredictable. Sojern presents popular summer destinations for visitors from the UAE, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, and Bahrain, as well as length of stay and traveller type, whether solo, family, or couple.

ravel confidence has returned to the region, as it enters the peak summer months of the third guarter. For travellers from the UAE. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, and Bahrain, regional travel is proving popular to Istanbul, Dubai, and Abu Dhabi, all appearing in the top five destinations across these markets. International travel is also making a strong return as destinations such as London. Paris. and Bangkok all appear in the top 15, with London being the top destination. It is well-established that the cosmopolitan cities of London and Paris, with their historical sights, comfortable climates, and some of the most sought-after luxury brands in the world, have long been favourites of regional travellers. With the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) working to strengthen Thailand's presence as the preferred tourist destination among the Middle East travellers, a sustained interLooking at today's traveller profile, well over half of travellers from the UAE (72.7 per cent), Saudi Arabia (55.9 per cent), Kuwait (69.6 per cent), Qatar (70.3 per cent), Oman (71.1 per cent), and Bahrain (68.1 per cent) are solo travellers, with an average across the six markets of 63.1 per cent, with approximately 27.4 per cent of people travelling as a family and 9.5 per cent as a couple. The majority of trips are seven days or longer, with over 50 per cent of trips coming out to take advantage of their remote working capabilities. Years into the pandemic, more travellers are taking what has been coined a 'workcation'. For example, the travel trend is amalgamating work and play and reaping the benefits of increased flexible working practices.

Additionally, 29.86 per cent of travellers from the aforementioned six markets are searching and booking just seven days ahead of their trip versus

### Years into the pandemic, more travellers are taking workcations. They are mixing work and play and reaping the benefits of flexible working practices

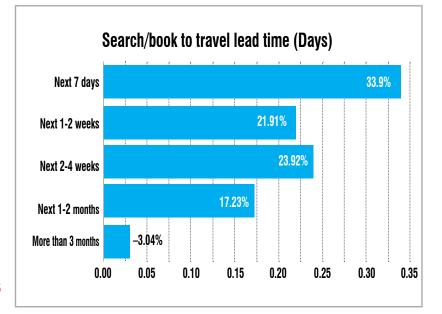
of the UAE (53.93 per cent) and Kuwait (50.27 per cent), 15 days or longer, and a 68.43 per cent average across these six key markets overall. In this climate of the new normal, travellers have

### For travellers from UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, and Bahrain, regional travel is proving popular to Istanbul, Dubai, and Abu Dhabi

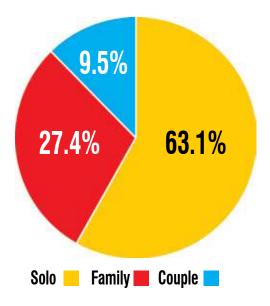
est is antiipated in visiting the vibrant cities and picturesque beaches the 'Land of Smiles' has to offer. become more opportunistic and unpredictable. Therefore, these longer trips may be attributable to travellers extending their stays

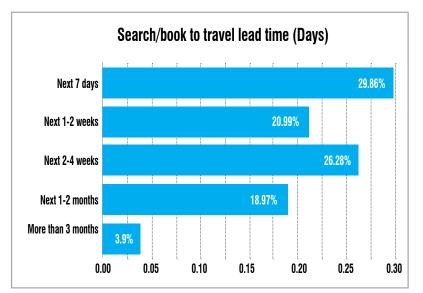
per cent 1-2 weeks before their trip versus 21.91 per cent in 2021; and only 22.87 per cent between one and three months ahead versus 20.27 per cent in 2021. This demonstrates that since the pandemic, travellers have become more opportunistic and unpredictable when it comes to searching and booking. The slight shift in searches and bookings distributed more evenly year-on-year is likely on account of the much welcomed COVID-19 stabilisation, leading to travellers' having increased confidence in booking in a timely manner.

33.9 per cent in 2021: 20.99



### Number of travellers





Trip duration (Days) 0-1 3.25% 2-3 6.18% 4-7 22.15% 8-14 29.2% 15+ 39.23% 0.00 0.05 0.10 0.15 0.20 0.25 0.30 0.35 0.40

From left to right: 2022 versus 2021

### **STATISTICS**

### **OSOJERN**

### Popular destinations for travellers from the UAE, KSA, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain

S. No.	UAE	KSA	Kuwait	Qatar	Oman	Bahrain
1	<b>Dubai, UAE</b>	<b>London, UK</b>	London, UK	<b>Doha, Qatar</b>	<b>Dubai, UAE</b>	lstanbul, Turkey
	(36.13%)	(18.84%)	(20.11%)	(24.62%)	(16.92%)	(17.39%)
2	<b>Abu Dhabi, UAE</b>	<b>Istanbul, Turkey</b>	Istanbul, Turkey	lstanbul, Turkey	Istanbul, Turkey	London, UK
	(20.48%)	(9.05%)	(19.31%)	(12.26%)	(16.27%)	(12.12%)
3	lstanbul, Turkey	<b>Dubai, UAE</b>	<b>Dubai, UAE</b>	London, UK	London, UK	<b>Dubai, UK</b>
	(5.6%)	(8.39%)	(13.44%)	(9.48%)	(9.41%)	(11.85%)
4	London, UK	<b>Dubai, UAE</b>	<b>Cairo, Egypt</b>	<b>Dubai, UAE</b>	Trabzon, Turkey	Bahrain, Bahrain
	(4.18%)	(4.95%)	(5.63%)	(7.34%)	(8.97%)	(7.92%)
5	Bangkok, Thailand	Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt	Sharm el- Sheikh, Egypt	Paris, France	Muscat, Oman	Abu Dhabi, UAE
	(1.96%)	- (3.35%)	(3.37%)	(3.1%)	(7.1%)	(7.92%)
6	Paris, France	<b>Cairo, Egypt</b>	Trabzon, Turkey	Cairo, Egypt	Abu Dhabi, UAE	Cairo, Egypt
	(1.77%)	(3.24%)	(2.18%)	(2.89%)	(3.61%)	(4.59%)
7	Cairo, Egypt	<b>Cairo, Egypt</b>	Bahrain, Bahrain	Los Angeles, USA	Bangkok, Thailand	Trabzon, Turkey
	(1.52%)	(3.21%)	(1.95%)	(2.38%)	(3.52%)	(2.99%)
8	Male, Maldives	Paris, France	Paris, France	<b>Trabzon, Turkey</b>	Baku, Azerbaijan	Sharm el- Sheikh, Egypt
	(1.42%)	(2.63%)	(1.81%)	(1.99%)	(2.63%)	(2.38%)
9	Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt	Madinah, KSA	Hurghada, Egypt	Bangkok, Thailand	Sarajevo, Bosnia &	Bangkok, Thailand
	(1.38%)	(2.47%)	(1.68%)	(1.86%)	Herzegovina (2.44%)	(2.24%)
10	Phuket, Thailand (1.1%)	Bangkok, Thailand (2.34%)	Kuwait City, Kuwait (1.62%)	Phuket, Thailand (1.81%)	Phuket, Thailand (2.37%)	Paris, France (2.06%)



# MCARTHURGLEN<sup>®</sup> @ Discover Europe

FAMILYALBUM

More than 100 travel agents and tour operators were present from the GCC for the specialised B2B event Discover Europe in Dubai with McArthurGlen, exhibiting their offerings to the travel trade from the UAE, Oman, KSA, Qatar, and Kuwait. Specialised face-to-face meetings were held for the first time this year with the European partners.



### **QUICKBYTES**

# **Travellers make beeline for FIFA event**



Aldar Travel and Tours Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain

66 Both local Bahrainis and expats residing in Bahrain who are soccer fans will already be engaged in securing their seats for the sporting event, which is the first major soccer event in the region. As there are no direct flights between Doha and Bahrain, the fans will opt to travel between Dubai and Doha, making it the hub for tourism.

We are seeing the most uptake from European countries, such as the UK, Germany,

Belgium, and The Netherlands,

being the most popular, while

Serbia, South America, Brasil

and Argentina are showing inter-

est and we only expect this to in-

crease over the coming months.

We have three properties within

our complex, so we are only tak-

ing reservations for W Dubai -

Mina Seyahi, The Westin Dubai



We are blessed by being located in a prime location with proximity to the city's touristic attractions, so we are getting bookings from pretty much all countries, such as Brazil, Argentina, the UK, Germany, France, Morocco, and many more. As per Qatar Tourism, there are just under 30,000 hotel rooms in Qatar, and 80 per cent of the rooms are booked for FIFA players, referees, media, and other official guests. A flight from Dubai or Abu Dhabi to Doha takes around an hour. About 1.5 million visitors are expected for the month-long tournament. But with only 130,000 or so rooms anchored off Doha and desert campsites, the wider GCC will be appealing alternative destinations for fans, who will make the day trip for matches. We have active local partners who started sending their bookings for football fans. The UAE is always planning ahead, so during the World Cup, 30 return flights per day will take off from Dubai for Doha with flydubai, while Air Arabia will operate 14 daily flights between Sharjah and Doha in addition to their three daily services, known as shuttle flights.

Nuran Kilani Director of Sales and Marketing, The Tower Plaza Hotel Sh

Jeannette Smit Complex Director of Sales & Marketing at W Dubai - Mina Seyahi, Westin & Le Meridien Dubai Mina Seyahi Beach Resort & Marina

Mina Seyahi Beach Resort & Marina, and Le Meridien Mina Seyahi Beach Resort & Waterpark. However, with these three unique products, we can cater to all ticket holders, whether they are travelling solo, as a group or with family. We are taking bookings direct and through DMC.

### First ME nation to host FIFA WC

The countdown has now begun to the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar. This will be the first time the world's biggest football tournament is hosted in the Middle East. Fans will be able to watch more than two live matches per day, as the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 will be the most compact version of the tournament ever staged. Sustainability has been embedded into major new projects in Qatar since the FIFA World Cup bid was won over a decade ago. In central Doha, you will find the café-lined streets of Msheireb, the world's first sustainable downtown regeneration project. At the heart of the World Cup will be the US\$ 45-billion city of the future, Lusail City, the largest single sustainable development to be undertaken in Qatar, with a host of interesting buildings (the pinnacle of which is the soon-to-open Katara Towers) and innovative eco-friendly ideas. The stadiums built for football have sustainability at their core, and it will be a carbon-neutral event. Stadium 974, for example, is built from repurposed ocean shipping containers and will be completely dismantled after the tournament ends.





The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is currently developing a regenerative tourism destination known as The Red Sea Project. Tracy Lanza, Group Head, Global Brand Development, The Red Sea Development Company (TRSDC), enlightens us with their plans for the smart and sustainable future.

### 🎧 Shehara Rizly

#### ould you tell us about The Red Sea Project in Saudi Arabia?

It is a luxury regenerative tourism destination situated on Saudi Arabia's west coast. It spans over 28,000 sq. km., of pristine land and waters and includes a vast archipelago of more than 90 pristine islands. The project is being developed by The Red Sea Development Company.

veloped, 75 per cent of the islands will remain untouched and nine have been designated as special conservation zones. Guests can expect an exquisite, luxury destination offering indulgent experiences, customised to the unique needs of each visitor.

Is the project part of NEOM? The Red Sea Project is an entirely different destination than NEOM. It is a pioneering luxury regenerative tourism destina-

### It is a pioneering luxury regenerative tourism destination that will set new standards in sustainable development and put Saudi Arabia on global map

#### What is the location and outlook of the project?

It is located 500 km north of Jeddah, between the Saudi towns of Al Wajh and Umluj. At the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa, 250 million people will be within three hours of flying time, and an estimated eight hours of flying time for 80 per cent of the world's population. The project is one of the world's most ambitious regenerative tourism destinations. We are going beyond sustainability, aiming to actively improve the environment rather than simply doing no harm. Less than 1 per cent of the entire destination area will be detion that will set new standards in sustainable development and position Saudi Arabia on the global tourism map.

### What are the timelines for the project?

Development has been split into two phases. We are look-

### About the project

- \* The Red Sea Project is grounded in sustainability and sustainable tourism in its fullest sense. The site encompasses an archipelago of more than 90 pristine islands, miles of sweeping desert, and mountain landscapes.
- There are now 80 km of new roads completed, including the new airport road, to better connect the destination.
- A regulatory framework is in development that comprises innovative policies and strategies to facilitate the sustainability and regeneration commitments.



Group Head, Global Brand Developr The Red Sea Development Compan

ing forward to welcoming our first quests early next year. The first phase will be fully completed and operational by the end of 2023. It will include 16 resorts for a total of 3,000 keys, an 18-hole championship golf course, a luxury marina, and retail and entertainment facilities. Phase two is scheduled for completion in 2030 and will include 50 resorts with 8,000 keys and 1,000 residential properties across 22 islands and six inland sites

#### How does it support the Vision 2030?

Regenerative tourism is at the heart of this destination.

We have an unprecedented goal of achieving a 30 per cent net conservation benefit by 2040 by enhancing biologically diverse habitats, including mangroves, seagrass, corals, and land vegetation. Our ambitions go

#### Is The Red Sea Project opening by 2023?

Work is on track to welcome guests in 2023, when our first hotels will open. We are fortunate to be able to partner with some of the world's most iconic hotel brands,

deep into the destination's immaculate inland areas.

Is it more for luxury tourists or for all types of tourists? The Red Sea Project is a luxury tourist destination, but this is a new breed of luxury



beyond environmental sustainability and include having a regenerative impact on society and the economy. The project supports the Saudi vision through the development of a brand-new tourism industry that has never existed in the Kingdom before. It will allow thousands of young Saudis to pursue new careers and opportunities. We expect to create up to 70,000 new jobs and contribute as much as SAR 22 billion (US\$ 5.3 billion) to the nation's GDP.

including EDITION, St. Regis, Fairmont, Raffles, SLS, Grand Hyatt, Intercontinental, Six Senses, Jumeirah, Miraval, Rosewood, and Ritz-Carlton Reserve. Some of these will be able to host their first guests by early next year.

Will there be hotels and tourist attractions? The Red Sea Project offers tourism - we are setting new global standards in sustainable development. We look forward to welcoming a variety of discerning guests from all across the world.

#### Please tell us about the connectivity plans.

The Red Sea International Airport (RSI) will be operational in 2023, providing a luxury trans-

We have an unprecedented goal to achieve a 30 per cent net conservation benefit by 2040 by enhancing biologically diverse habitats

a wide array of experiences, including sandy beaches, canvons, mountains, mangroves, untouched coral reefs, and a significant number of endangered species. Guests will be able to enjoy a full spectrum of leisure activities, from kayaking and diving among our pristine island waters, to wildlife watching, mountain biking, or even paleontology trails snaking

portation experience where sustainability is considered in every detail. The eco-friendly airport design focuses on using shaded areas and natural ventilation to minimise the reliance on air conditioning. The entire destination's infrastructure, including the airport and wider transportation network, will be powered entirely by renewable energy. This includes our boats and seaplanes.



**14 TRAUTALK** AUGUST 2022



### MAKE A SUSTAINABLE CHOICE 28-29 September 2022

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# Our commitment to sustainable travel



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# MCARTHURGLEN<sup>®</sup> meets travel trade

FAMILYALBUM

Leading retail partner McarthurGlen Middle East and Head Office team met with travel trade partners in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, promoting their special offers for summer for the GCC clientele. McArthurGlen has been conducting a special awareness programme right across the GCC, as it is one of their key focus markets for the year.



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### **ONE&ONLY THE PALM**

Kerzner International Holdings Limited, owner of the One&Only Resorts, has appointed **EMANUELA SETTERBERG DI VIVO** as the new General



Manager of Dubai's ultra-luxury resort, One&Only The Palm. Emanuela joins the resort from One&Only Resorts' Global Dubai Office, where she was Vice President of Operations for nearly six years. She oversaw the extensive One&Only portfolio and drove success across numerous metrics, including brand service standards, quality, employee engagement, revenue, and new openings. A Swedish national born in Italy, Emanuela earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in International Hospitality and Business Management from Leeds Metropolitan University.

### **HILTON HOTELS** Abu Dhabi

NADER HALIM has been named as the new Cluster General Manager for Hilton Abu Dhabi Yas Island, The WBTM Abu Dhabi, Curio Collection by Hilton, and DoubleTree by Hilton Abu Dhabi Yas Island Residences. Halim is a seasoned hotelier with over 24 years of experience

in the hospitality industry and has spent 20 of these with Hilton. In his new role, he will spearhead Hilton's three world-class properties located on Yas Island. a popular business and entertainment hub. He is responsible for positioning these properties as preferred destinations for both GCC residents as well as international travellers. Prior to his appointment as the Cluster General Manager of Hilton's Yas Island hotels, Halim managed the group's Ras Al Khaimah properties.

### **VOCO BONNINGTON** Dubai

BRUNO GUILLOUX was recently appointed General Manager of voco Bonnington Dubai, bringing over 30 years of international

experience in the hospitality industry. Guilloux graduated with a degree in Hotel Management from Ecole Hôtelière de Paris, France in the 80s. Following his graduation and military service, he worked with the Savoy Group at the luxurious hotel Le Lancaster, located off the Champs Elysées Avenue in Paris, before starting his expatriation, first to Germany and then Thailand with the Kempinski group. Guilloux worked in Asia for over 15 years, where he worked in various luxury properties.

HADIR OMAR has has been appointed Director of Sales of the newly rebranded voco Bonnington Dubai, bringing 16 years of sales experience in the hospitality industry to the role. Omar graduated with a degree in Journalism and Media, from ISIC in Rabat, Morocco. Following her graduation, she worked in a variety of fields. The early career diversity gave Hadir valuable experience across a myriad of sectors

that would certainly benefit and bolster her sales career. It was the role of Sales Coordinator at JW Marriott Marguis that brought Hadir to Dubai in 2012, giving her an insight into a UAE based sales and marketing role. Now Omar is ready to make her mark on this recently transformed JLT property. She aims to diversify business segments, enhance hotel

performance, penetrate new feeder markets, strengthen brand positioning, and increase revenue.



### ANANTARA DOWNTOWN DUBAI HOTEL

Dubai

The newly opened Anantara Downtown Dubai Hotel has appointed **HUSAM MALKI** as General Manager. Husam assumes the role after a move from Banana Island Resort Doha by Anantara,



overlooking day-to-day operations at the busy city property. Jordanian national Malki brings over two decades of experience in luxury hospitality. Malki has gained valuable industry knowledge working with leading hospitality groups, including Accor, Hyatt, Marriott and Starwood before he joined Anantara Hotels, Resorts & Spas in 2014. He first worked as Resident Manager at Qasr Al Sarab Desert Resort by Anantara. In 2019, Malki became GM of Banana Island Resort Doha.

### **RITZ CARLTON DIFC**

Dubai

The Ritz-Carlton, Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), has appointed CHRISTIAN EL KHOURY as the new General Manager. Christian moved into his new role in July 2022 having previously held the position of Cluster Manager in Millennium Kurdistan since August

2021, managing four hotels, which also includes the tallest hotel in Iraq. He started his career with the Regional Sales office of Le Meridian Hotels in Paris. His passion for the industry paved the way to land himself the role of General Manager with the Millennium Hotels in Doha, Moving forward Christian moved to Dubai in October 2000 and worked as the area Deputy Director of Sales & Marketing for Rotana Hotels & Resorts, managing eight properties.

### HILTON EMEA REGION

KIM ISKANDAR has joined Hilton as Vice President and Commercial Director for Middle East, África & Türkiye (MEA&T). An experienced leader



held various GM and commercial roles at Hilton properties in Europe before taking on her first regional role as Director of Brand Performance Support. She will spearhead the commercial strategy for the region, responsible for more than 170 hotels across 27 countries. Based in Dubai, she joins the regional leadership team, playing a prominent role with hotel owners, customers and senior stakeholders.

### AKHOM CONSULTING Dubai

ZOHAIB HAIDER joined AKHOM Consulting as Global Sales Director. He will be based in the Dubai office, working internationally for their clients

located in the USA, Europe and Asia. He is sales expert with over 15 years of experience in hospitality and real estate. He held commercial roles with well-known brands such as Armani Hotels, Address Hotels, Vida Hotels and Rove Hotels. From high-end city hotels to upscale boutique hotels, he has a deep knowledge of hospitality in the Middle East Region. He specialised in developing and implementing sales and marketing strategies according to the ME inbound and outbound traveller profiles. He is pursuing his MBA from Ascencia Business School based in Paris, France,



# MOVEMENTS

### **COPTHORNE LAKEVIEW HOTEL & EXECUTIVE APARTMENTS** Duhai

Copthorne Lakeview Hotel & Executive Apartments, the new four-star hotel property in Dubai Green Community - Dubai Investment Park, has appointed MALIK MEZIANE as General Manager of the hotel. Malik brings a wealth of hospitality experience working in Europe and the Middle East for various hospitality brands, including Radisson Blu and Montgomerie. Copthorne Lakeview Hotel and Executive Apartments offers a choice of dining options, including an international dining restaurant, lake side pool bar and Neighborhood, and a gastro-pub.

### **VFS GLOBAL** UAE

VFS Global has appointed ADITYA ARORA as its Chief Operating Officer. He will be responsible for managing the company's global

operations, focusing especially on developing greater efficiencies and synergies across all of its services and products for applicants and client governments. He will oversee the transformation of systems and processes through increased technology leverage. Arora has spent over two decades in the outsourcing industry. He has set up several large businesses with cross-cultural teams, across many verticals. Prior to this, he was the Chie Executive Officer of Teleperformance, India.

VFS Global has appointed SUKANYA CHAKRABORTY as the Chief Communication Officer. Sukanya will bolster brand advocacy and reputation management through the 360-degree global communication mandate of the organisation. Sukanya joined VFS Global in 2018 as Head of Corporate Communications and CSR. She has been in different



communications and marketing roles in global organisations before joining VFS Global. In her over 23 years of experience, she worked extensively on building B2B and B2C communication strategies and integrated campaigns focused on building an offline and online presence, creating narratives to enhance corporate reputation and brand perception

### **HOSPITALITY SALES & MARKETING** ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL – ME

Dubai

Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International Middle East has appointed JERASTINE ANTIA as Head of Partnerships & Marketing with an additional role in Insight Out Consultant -Consultancy as Senior Marketing & Communications. Bringing with her over 20 years of experience in the travel and hospitality industry, Antia is a resilient marketing and events professional. She will oversee the marketing activities across the region, in addition to managing new and existing partnerships.

ess Development Manage Crisna De Guzman Director meera Bahl Sales & Admin Assistant aging Editor Middle East Angelito Villeza **ager - Advertis** Jaspreet Kaur At the Desk Sushil Kuma Design tyanand Misra

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across hotel operations, brands, and commercials, she has been with Hilton for over 20 years. She has

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