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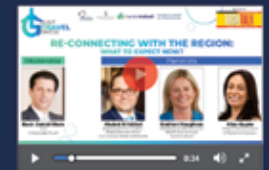
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2-minute news capsule



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UAE gears up to lure travellers

Middle East continues its resilience as they look at a more optimistic new year with special campaigns designed to once again to attract travellers to their destinations. UAE's world's coolest winter campaign will once again promote the hidden gems in the seven emirates until the end of this month.

“Sharjah has navigated a steady course through the pandemic, and as a safe destination certified by the World Travel and Tourism Council Safe Travels Stamp, we are expecting to see a good increase in numbers of international visitors in 2022. We are excited to be part of the United Arab Emirates' World's Coolest Winter Campaign again, promoting the UAE's gems from December 15, 2021 to the end of January 2022. Within Sharjah, while safety measures remain in place, visitors and residents can look forward to our largest annual event making a return in 2022 — the Sharjah Light Festival — which will take place between February 9 and 20,



HE Khalid Jassim Al Midfa
Chairman
SCTDA

2022. International and domestic visitors will want to take advantage of Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority's (SCTDA) first Winter Campaign, 'Find your Sharjah' launched on December 9, 2021. Combining hotel stays with an array of enticing packages based on entertainment, activities, food, luxury and special rates in Sharjah, the campaign will run till February 19, 2022. The emirate's natural landscapes, sustainable projects and new attractions lead the way in supporting our reputation as a family fun destination and we are optimistic about the outlook for the New Year.”

“Flash Horizon expect progress in terms of business. Our expansion plans are on track and plan to open a new outbound segment. Flash Horizon will be able to sell and promote products of the Group's firms in Egypt, Zanzibar, Sicily and Sardinia. We will cooperate with the regional airlines and engage with associates for tie-ups. The demand to UAE and to GCC is promising and the outlook is positive.”



Mohamed Khater
RM and Managing Partner
Flash Horizon

Smart tourism drives demand

Travellers have stated that technology has helped increase confidence in travelling, according to reports.

TT Bureau

The global tourism sector is preparing for a new phase of growth wherein countries are employing new products and allocating deep budgets for its promotion and development. A major component driving this growth will be the development of smart tourism, which will involve digital and



H.E. Dr. Ahmad Belhoual Al Falasi
Minister of State for Entrepreneurship and Small and Medium Enterprises

Contd. on page 4 ▶

Use Al Hosn App to travel to EU

UAE citizens and residents travelling to EU countries can now make the most out of their journeys as the airline has been working with the Al Hosn National Health System team to enable the readability and recognition of customers' health credentials.

TT Bureau

UAE citizens and residents will be able to upload their negative PCR test results and vaccination certificates performed anywhere in the country, without the need to visit specific labs. They have to download the IATA Travel Pass, scan the Al Hosn App's Travel

Pass QR Code and load the results back to the App. The data is stored in the National Cloud per the highest privacy standards and policies set by the UAE Data Protection Law. The new enhancements make it easier for UAE citizens to benefit from the IATA Travel Pass and get their "Ok to Travel" prior to their departure to any



Adel Al Redha
Chief Operating Officer
Emirates

EU destination on the airline's network.

By using the Al Hosn App, those travelling from the UAE to the EU can reliably demonstrate their COVID-19 status, and be able to enter/attend hospitality and entertainment venues, or embark on other experiences that require proof of negative test results or vaccination. This minimizes the use of multiple apps to demon-

Contd. on page 3 ▶



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TRAVEL

IATA Travel Pass for UAE travellers

► Contd. from page 1

strate testing and vaccination status, while in the EU, and also allows for safer, convenient movement for Emirates citizens and residents.

Adel Al Redha, Emirates Chief Operating Officer said: "As part of our plan

ence across the full travel journey when it comes to the administration and uploading test results and proof of vaccination, in partnership with the Al Hosn. We are looking at ways to expand the functionality of the tools available to our customers such as the IATA Travel Pass. Enabling the readability



or COVID-19 tests. Customers' pandemic-related information is treated in a highly-secure manner compliant with data privacy protocols, and are discarded from the Emirates systems after verification is complete. "We are one of the first airlines to trial the IATA Travel Pass and offers the solution to customers flying to 50 cities across its network."

“We are looking to expand the functionality of the tools available to our customers such as the IATA Travel Pass. We are also boosting the customer experience across the full travel journey”

— Adel Al Redha

to implement digital travel verification and make the travel process more seamless, we are boosting the customer experi-

of Covid testing and vaccination QR codes into the app for those travelling to the EU is a step to instill confidence and create

assurance. The Al Hosn has made efforts into obtaining equivalency for the EU Digital COVID-19 Certificate System, and we thank them for making the UAE one of the few countries to secure its testing and recognition status across all EU countries for their citizens and residents."

The Al Hosn National Health System team stated: "Our partner-

ship with Emirates is to showcase how important and rewarding it is to build safe, secure, and delightful technological integrations. Emirates is building a model for safe travel during the pandemic, and we are honoured to be part of it. We thank Emirates for making this collaboration a success and we look forward to furthering our collaborations. As a national project, the Al Hosn is hosted

on the National Cloud, and we invite all national projects to join us in doing so."

In July, the Emirates integrated the Al Hosn National Health System via the National Cloud in its check-in systems, enabling quick digital retrieval and verification of COVID-19 medical records, regardless of where in the UAE, the citizens completed their vaccination,

FACTFILE

■ The purpose is to boost customer confidence while travelling to EU countries.

■ The Al Hosn thanks the Emirates for making this tie-up a success and looks forward to furthering the collaborations.

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Tourism
Breaking News

Saudi ministry of sports announce Diriyah Formula E race in January

Emirates re-opens more than 20 dedicated airport lounges across its network

Kuwait Airways resumes flights to Bangkok

Gulf Air and Bahrain tourism activates new packages to attract visitors

Oman Air growth trajectory strengthened with 18 partner airlines across six continents

Italian Luxury Tour Operator, Arab Fenice, launches its services in the United Arab Emirates

ITA Airways and Etihad sign codeshare partnership

LXR Hotels & Resorts to debut in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Ushering in a new era of tourism

Travel and tourism sectors are important to any country's economy. In the UAE, its contribution to the GDP is forecast to be AED 264.5 billion (US\$72 billion) in 2027. Expo 2020 and the UAE's effective COVID-19 management have been central to the country's tourism industry.

In Dubai, the Department of Tourism data shows that the city welcomed 3.7 million overnight visitors from when the borders began opening in July 2020 to May 2021. The positive outlook underlines the initiation of the path to recovery.

As tourism numbers continue to rise again, the local industry will need to usher in a new era of tourism. For hospitality and tourism, to bring back their customers, agility will be critical. Post-pandemic, travellers will be much more mindful of the need to travel to places with COVID-19 awareness and protocols and where it is easy to maintain social distancing practices.

Additionally, the measures that countries have developed and put into place to support COVID-19

curbs and people's movements will be viewed favourably by tourists.

Local authorities have launched initiatives to promote the travel and tourism industry in the UAE. As a result, several plans and projects were implemented to de-

velop tourism and environment-friendly destinations and promote cultural tourism, activities, festivals, and sustainability projects.

“It was reported that UAE hotels experienced an increase in occupancy rate of 62 per cent during the first half of 2021 compared to 53.6 per cent reported during the same period in 2020”

visitors to raise awareness of sustainable attractions and to highlight the benefits of incorporating sustainable practices in daily life. The campaign has supported Dubai's sustainable tourism agenda from eco-conscious actions that promote the city's natural spaces and

hidden gems and spotlighting advocacy organisations, partners, and stakeholders working towards a more sustainable planet.

Department of Culture and Tourism, Abu Dhabi. The portal offers a list of healthcare facilities included in the medical tourism network where users can access medical tourism insurance packages, and touristic services.

Recently, the Emirates Tourism Council has agreed to support gathering tourism data to promote pro-active tourism development efforts. It was reported that UAE hotels experienced an increase in occupancy rate (62 per cent) during the first half of 2021 as against 53.6 per cent reported during the same period in 2020, while total revenue reached AED 11.3 billion compared to AED 8.6 billion in the corresponding period. The total number of hotels guests during the first half of 2021 reached 8.3 million guests, a 15 per cent rise against

the same period of the previous year. Data such as these help the sector keep abreast of the developments and statistics that can help the industry.

Although COVID-19 has halted global travel and tourism, UAE has created pathways through collaborations and government initiatives. From sustainable tourism to in-country tourism, the country is on its way to full tourism recovery.



Sean Lochrie
Assistant Professor
School of Social Sciences
Heriot-Watt University, Dubai

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

UAE employs latest in tech

► Contd. from page 1

technological innovations in this sector. In a recent study, travellers themselves stated that technology will help increase their confidence in

“We are working on ways to advance tourism initiatives. The World's Coolest Winter Campaign attracted nearly 950,000 visitors and brought in revenues of US\$1 billion in as many as 45 days”

— H.E. Dr. Ahmad Belhoul Al Falasi

travelling,” says Guest of Honour at the event, H.E. Dr. Ahmad Belhoul Al Falasi, Minister of State for Entrepreneurship and Small and Medium Enterprises. “The UAE is already employing the latest in digital technol-

ogy across sectors, and in particular to support the travel sector. We have deployed 5G connectivity and have so far trained 100,000 programmers to support

businesses. We hope to continue this drive, reach new horizons, and expand to new sectors.”

He highlighted the importance of a calculated and detailed development strat-

egy in the tourism sector, using the digital technologies to accelerate and attract visitor experience.

“We are working on ways to advance tourism initiatives. The World's Coolest Winter Campaign attracted nearly 950,000 visitors and brought in revenues of US\$1 billion in 45 days. We are seeing an increase in international tourism with global vaccination drives in full swing. With the Expo 2020 Dubai, we have welcomed 3.5 million visitors in just the first six weeks. We also aim to increase the UAE national participation by encouraging more SMEs to lead the sector. There is much to look forward to in supporting the tourism industry to move forward.”

Street Diversions launched

UAE has a new destination Street Diversions - for unconventional, theatrical and sensory experiences. Dubai's latest immersive entertainment destination opens at Souk Madinat Jumeirah.

TT Bureau

Founded on the principles of diversity, inclusion and empowering the unconventional, Street Diversions' unconventional al fresco venue, which has breathed life into the open-air amphitheater at its Souk Madinat Jumeirah home, marries a variety of sensory theatrical performances with quality Pan-Asian food, and international beverage options.

With a full-time global cast of multidimensional performers from three continents delivering an ambitious dai-



ly performance schedule, Street Diversions' shows include a variety of dance, song, and non-musical performances every 30 minutes from 5 pm to 12.30 am. Dance routines include contemporary, modern, street, break, 'bhangra', salsa and

abstract, while music shows range from rap, 1980s, and show tune classics, to Latin, pop and DJs sets. It's eclectic menu ideal for guests to enjoy while they sit back and enjoy views overlooking Souk Madinat Jumeirah and the Burj Al Arab.

Unparalleled experiences await Middle East travellers

Le Duc de Praslin Hotel & Villas in Seychelles is a property which ticks off the boxes of Middle East clientele. With its 64 rooms, suites and villas it offers variety of choices for different clients. It is a four-star property with the value of a five-star one. It is an ideal getaway for both expats and Arabic families of the region.

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The hotel is known for its entertainment and events providing a special vibe during the weekends. The vibrant atmosphere provides the hotel with a unique character which is unmatched in Seychelles. The Le Duc de Praslin Ho-

tel & Villas offers a wide choice of accommodation for different clients.

The rooms of the hotel offer a view of the ocean, while the superior rooms and family suites in a garden setting offer a Zen atmosphere. Their villas up the hill give a 'home away from home' feel and are ideal for



families and friends. Visit the beach restaurant, Cafe des Arts caters, for a wide choice of cuisine to suite every taste. The Elodia Spa and fitness center provides guests with a Wellness programme to complement their stay. The ME market is vital to the hotel since it is a new market and they are tapping its potential. The hotel with its spacious rooms and the panoramic

suites, offers an ideal getaway for both expats and Arabic families residing in the region.

Promoting Middle East post pandemic

They have recently appointed Elev8 Representation & Consulting, led by **Seema Pande**, Co-Founder, Elev8 Representation & Consulting to be the Sales & Marketing arm of their hotel. The team in Dubai with 25 years of experience in the region is connected with the leisure and corporate market segments, and hope to see a hike in their marketshare from the region. Their aim is to increase the connectivity between the agents either through direct connectivity or static contracts for ease of booking.

Seema Pande shared, "We work with key agents in this region. They are key to the growth of business from this region as most people look at these agents when booking holidays with their families. We give perks to them through promotional offers and commissions where applicable."

Besides appointing Elev8 Representation & Consulting as their sales and marketing arm to create awareness in the GCC region, they intend to increase the exposure of the hotel through training and other forms of education for agents. They are also keen to host agent and media FAM trips from the region to ensure that the market and the key players in the region have a better understanding of their hotel.

The villas in the hotel are located on the hillside above the hotel and are barely one-minute drive away. They enjoy views of the Cote D'Or beach, neighbouring islands and coastline. The villas offer the ultimate in comfort and provide guests with a chance to enjoy a different type of private accommodation while still enjoying the legendary service and hospitality of the hotel. All villas come with a car.

The villas give a 'home away from home' feel to the guests. They can visit Cafe des Arts, which offers dishes to suite every taste

GRANDEUR

At present, the hotel has 64 rooms, suites and villas catering to all sectors of the market and a hotel that 'exceeds the expectations of their clients. Upon arrival, the guests are greeted at a landing amidst a colourful garden of tropical plants and palms leading to an impressive entrance through solid hardwood double doors.

The bedrooms section offers four en-suite bedrooms with large walk-in wardrobes, spacious bathrooms, and indoor/outdoor showers - with the mountain facing bathrooms boasting an additional overhanging bath. Other amenities include, IDD telephone, satellite TV in all bedrooms and living area, free Wi-Fi, in-room safe and all the mod cons of modern-day luxury living.

Villa 270 (400 m2) offers four en-suite bedrooms, all with sea view, large terraces, two fully equipped kitchens, Magna pool with a separate kids' pool, large dining terrace, IDD telephone, satellite TV in all four bedrooms, free 24-hour Wi-Fi, in-room safe, DVD player. The villa, which can accommodate eight adults and four children, is decorated and appointed in a contemporary style and the interior décor captures its natural surroundings and stunning views. All dining facilities are on the terrace.

Villa 180 (300 m2) offers three en-suite bedrooms, with a fully equipped kitchen and large outdoor terrace with spectacular sea views, in-room safe, IDD telephone, satellite TV in lounge and 3 bedrooms, free Wi-Fi, Magna Plunge Pool and decking. The villa is decorated with a contemporary feel and can accommodate up to six persons. The kitchen, dining room and living room is located on the ground level with covered terrace, while the upper floor houses three bedrooms, and a small sitting area.

Villa 360 luxe (700m2) is located on a ridge overlooking the Cote d'Or beach, this spacious and modern four bedroom villa has 360° views of the sea, valley and mountains.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

■ Villa and Events Manager provides fully dedicated concierge service, and is in attendance for weddings and special events

■ Full Butler Service

■ Free car Rental with the villas (Up to five pax one car & over five pax two cars or small mini-van). Guests also have the option of chauffeur driven service.

■ Villas are fully serviced by Le Duc de Praslin Hotel. The clients will have breakfast at the hotel or alternatively, breakfast can be served in the villas (at an additional cost).

■ Half Board clients will dine at the hotel (three restaurant outlets upon booking) or arrangements can be made for a chef to cater for in-villa dining (minimum six persons booked on HB). Clients on HB get a 25 per cent reduction on the in-villa dining menus.

■ A special in-villa dining menu - from 12.00hrs to 22.00hrs - is provided (menus range from Euros 50 to 75 per person).

■ Full 24-hour security CCTV camera, guardroom and patrolling service.

Sabah, the paradise of Malaysia

One of the most diverse areas in Malaysia which entails a rich history, culture, adventure and blessed with the oldest rainforest in the world is a bucket list destination for visitors from across the globe and a new destination to the Middle East visitors. The Honourable **Datuk Jafry Ariffin**, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Environment Sabah shares with **TRAVTALK**.

T Shehara Rizly

Give us a brief about Sabah Tourism?

Known as the Land Below the Wind, Sabah lies just below the typhoon belt, with a pleasant tropical climate. Home to the oldest rainforest in the world, Sabah has one of the richest bio-diversities on the planet with 53 per cent of Sabah being covered by forest. Sabah is blessed with amazing nature, wildlife, food and culture. From mountain high to ocean deep, you can find everything here in Sabah. Catering to all types of tourists, from adventure seekers,

has the smallest elephant in the world, the Bornean Pygmy elephant and the largest flower, the Rafflesia!

Sabah entails all interesting natural areas in Malaysia. Could you share details on which areas you will focus on?

As Sabah is blessed with an abundance of nature and cultural heritages, it is natural that our focus would be on these two areas. In the coastal area, it highlight our long stretch beaches and the many islands such as Sipadan Island (world top diving sites), Marine Conservation Parks such as the Turtle Islands Park and leisure



The Honourable Datuk Jafry Ariffin
Minister of Tourism
Culture and Environment Sabah

among the top eight great places to watch the sunset in the world.

In the highlands, we have the Kinabalu Park home to the majestic Mt. Kinabalu and also Malaysia's first UNESCO World Heritage site. Then there is Crocker Range Park. These are the parks which have all the three highest mountains in Malaysia. Kinabalu Park is also a National GeoPark, and running to be an Aspiring Kinabalu UNESCO Global Geopark. With this in place, Sabah will be the first in Malaysia and the South-east Asia region to receive the UNESCO triple crown award.

Our rainforests are home to some of the unique wildlife in the world. The Orangutan, the Proboscis

Monkey that is only found in the island of Borneo, the Bornean Pygmy Elephant, Bornean Sunbear and many more. All the animals can be seen in their natural habitat in Sukau, Danum Valley and Tabin.

Cultural experience is best experienced in the rural areas through Homestay and Community Based Tourism (CoBT). In fact, the Batu Puteh Village CoBT programme received the Best Tourism Village Award in Madrid, Spain during the 24th UNWTO general assembly on December 2, 2021. Another village

new destination in Malaysia. Once the Malaysian borders are open, STB will conduct a joint campaign with UAE Airlines to conduct a tour agents, media and social media influencer familiarization trip to Sabah.

What are the features/attractions for the Middle East visitors?

STB will focus on the beach resort, Islands and top diving sites in Sabah coupled with the nature and adventure activities that are popular among the tourists visiting Sabah. The ME will also be spoilt for

As there is a separate airport and sea port, will there be any possibility of opening it to the ME travellers soon? If so, could you share a timeline?

The Kota Kinabalu International Airport and the Kota Kinabalu International Cruise Terminal have received many national and international visitors. Before COVID-19, 11 international airlines flew direct daily and schedule flights to Sabah through KKIA. Meanwhile KKICT have received the berths of many cruise ships such as the Queen Mary

STB will focus on the beach resort, Islands and top diving sites in Sabah coupled with the nature and adventure activities popular among the tourists

nature lovers, leisure travellers, honeymooners and families. The three highest mountains in Malaysia are located here, Mt. Kinabalu (4,095metres), Mt. Trus Madi (2,642metres) and Mt. Tambuyukon (2,579metres). Sabah also

islands such as Matakang and Kapalai that rival the Maldives Islands for every traveller's desire. Beaches in the west coast of Sabah are one of the best spots to view the sunset. After all, Kota Kinabalu has been listed by Huffington Post



that received international recognition is Kadamaian as a recipient for ASEAN Community Based Tourism Standard 2019-2021 at the Asean Tourism Ministers' Conference 2019 held in Hanoi, Vietnam.

As we embark on the post-COVID-19, what are the initiatives or new tourism strategies to re-introduce this destination to the ME travellers?

The Middle East market often visit Penang, Langkawi and Kuala Lumpur. Sabah is a new destination in the ME market and we need to introduce Sabah as a

choices of five-star resort and chain hotel properties in Sabah namely Shangri-la two properties — Hilton, Marriot, LeMeridien and other local five star resorts. They will also be able to enjoy the fresh seafood in Sabah. Sabah is a destination to enjoy nature, adventure and a great holiday destination for families, fit and groups. Visit Sabah Tourism website on www.sabahtourism.com. Sabah, Malaysian Borneo official website offers travel destinations, map, activities, news and updates, accommodation listing for Sabah Malaysian Borneo.

II, MS Magellan, Aida-vista, Carnival Splendors and Seven Seas Voyager to name a few. The KKIA and KKICT are open for visitors from all over the world. ME travellers are more than welcome to visit Sabah. Perhaps carriers from ME region could consider flying directly to Sabah as our airports are ready to receive international carriers.

We are optimistic that international visitors may be able to visit Sabah by 2022 once rules/regulations/SOPs for them are made available. 🇲🇾



Discover hidden gems of Northern Germany

A webinar will be hosted on January 18, 2022 (Tuesday) about the sandy beaches, white chalk cliffs, sophisticated Baltic seaside resorts, cozy fishing villages, sky high brick churches and fairy tale castles of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, says Yamina Sofo, Director, Sales & Marketing, German National Tourist Office GCC.

 TT Bureau

Germany is one of the most popular vacation destinations for travellers of Middle East as it has a diverse offering catering to each traveller from the Middle East, whether it be family, millennial, leisure, MICE among others.

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern located between the cities of Berlin and Hamburg in the north-east of Germany, the federal state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern has guests from across the world for centuries. It is time once again for the

agents in the region to take a sneak peek at the destination to offer a new area to explore to those yearning to discover.

The region welcomes its guests with 2,000 km of Baltic Sea coasts and 2,000 glistening lakes. It is also known as the sunniest region in all of Germany with 2,000 hours of sunshine per year. Also over 30 per cent of the entire region is under conservation. The unspoiled nature of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern inspired painters throughout centuries, and is best explored by foot, bike or boat, says experts.



Yamina Sofo
Director, Sales and Marketing
German National Tourist Office, Gulf Countries


In terms of local wellness they offer such as Thalassotherapy and the so called healing forests or for those who want to let loose with all kinds of activities on land or on water — kitesurfing, stand up paddling or Jeep Safari on an island. Virtually you can immerse

yourself in the culture of a historical region and enjoy the local cuisine with freshly caught fish and the 700-year-old brewing tradition.

These are just a glimpse of the many reasons why

can virtually visit and see for yourself.

Yamina Sofo, Director, Sales & Marketing, German National Tourist Office GCC shares the importance of attending this event and invites

to 'The Gems of Northern Germany' where we will inform and update the GCC trade about Destination Germany and shed light about federal-state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the country's leading tourist destinations. We see potential of Germany's Northern regions for our GCC guests and therefore wish to showcase the special natural wonders and cultural offering there are to experience. From pristine beaches to cozy fishing villages, fairy tale castles to sophisticated seaside resorts the destination has a treat for all age groups." 

You can immerse yourself in the culture of a historical region and enjoy the local cuisine and the 700-year-old brewing tradition. These are just glimpses of the many reasons why the region is popular

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is the most popular travel destination in Germany and enjoys notoriety across borders. Once you join us, you

all trade partners to join and learn about the novelties of this destination virtually at first. "We are looking forward to welcome our trade partners



Safeguard your pets while traveling



Austria Tourism meets trade partners

Austria tourism in Dubai hosted a workshop for travel trade partners recently along with Emirates Airline and 13 Austrian partners representing tourist boards, companies, and hotels. It was attended by many representatives from travel trade companies. Austrian National Tourist Office CEO Lisa Weddig spoke about what Austria has to offer, and the factors that make it a popular travel destination.



Germany, a vibrant shopping destination

The German webinar attracted travel trade in the GCC region. With the recent announcement that limitations on GCC travellers were relaxed, it is time to discover some of the destination's new experiences. The webinar looked at three areas — about Germany, a presentation on Arab travellers paradise, and the campaigns for 2022.

 Shehara Rizly

Explaining about Germany, **Yamina Sofo**, Director, Sales and Marketing, German National Tour-

ed in the previous year (2019) alone."

She explained that one of the most accustomed countries with Muslim travellers which offer a



Yamina Sofo
Director, Sales and Marketing
German National Tourist Office, Gulf Countries



Lena Schulz
Manager, Tourism Marketing
Breuninger, Kurzbeschreibung

futuristic treasures, from worldwide to traditionally German brands at an unbelievable low cost.

Lena Schulz, Manager, Tourism Marketing, Breuninger, Kurzbeschreibung explained about the USP of one of the most important retail destination — Breuninger. Also, the travel industry rediscovered the destination during the ongoing pandemic.

For 140 years, Breuninger has been setting standards in fashion, beauty, and lifestyle," said Lena Schulz. Since 1881, the shopping destination has been em-

phasizing the pleasures of shopping created in Germany. Its corporate culture has been driven by a desire to break new ground while maintaining the core principles of family business. With a range of worldwide designer labels, newbie labels, and good service, she said.

"The shopping destination is one of the leading stores in Europe today," Schulz said. A haven for shoppers and travellers alike, Breuninger displays beauty products with over 190 brands such as Lancome, Estee Lauder, La Prairie, Tom Ford, and La Mer. 

Travellers and shoppers can find anything they want from second hand knick-knacks to futuristic treasures, from worldwide to German brands at low cost

ist Office, Gulf Countries said, "Situated in the heart of Europe, it is the second most visited country in Europe with almost 90 million overnight stays record-

diverse mix of vibrant cities, historic towns and natural landscapes.

She said that Germany's distinction as a shopping paradise, with a

wide network of outlets, with savings up to 70 per cent with 19 per cent VAT refund in both summer and winter sales. With the recent announcement that the curbs on GCC travellers have been relaxed, it is time to discover some of Breuninger's new experiences.

She further explained the new 2022 campaigns for Germany "Feel Good and embrace German nature".

Travellers and shoppers can find anything they want, from discounts to couture, from second hand knick-knacks to



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Dubai records 4.8 mn visitors this year

As per the latest figures released at the second bi-annual City Briefing of 2021, as many as 9.4 million room nights were sold between January and October 2021 compared to seven million room nights during the same period in 2019. The strategy for the New Year is to show Dubai as a global hub in all sectors.

TT Bureau

Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism

the Dubai's DET to update stakeholders with the tourism sector's positive growth and insights into global marketing

ity, travel, and tourism establishments. The forum was part of DET's dialogue with business leaders to collaborate

United Arab Emirates' Golden Jubilee celebrations, Dubai has been at the vanguard of the world's tourism and economic rebound, setting the tone for sustained recovery and growth.

During this period, there were 24.74 million occupied room nights across the emirate at

vision and leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice Presi-



His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri
Director General
Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism

“Inspired by the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of United Arab Emirates, and Ruler of Dubai, Dubai has been at the vanguard of the world's tourism and economic rebound, setting the tone for sustained recovery and growth. Expo 2020 provides us with a unique platform to engage with the global community, since all hotels and tourism partners work closely to facilitate visits for their guests to maximise this opportunity.”

(DET) revealed that the emirate welcomed 4.88 million visitors between January and October, 2021 with international visitation during October reaching over one million. Reflecting the growth momentum and stability of the industry, international visitation was complemented by a robust domestic tourism market, resulting in 9.4 million room nights sold between January and October, 2021 in comparison to seven million

campaigns. As Dubai continues to lead the global tourism rebound and stimulate global business growth, the forum featured a presentation on domestic and global developments, including an overview of increasing visitor numbers, hotel occupancy, and activities in international markets. All these have reinforced Dubai's profile as a safe, must-visit destination and the world's best city to live, work and visit.

and exchange insights to ensure the industry is seamlessly aligned with tourism growth initiatives and strategies. Held at Ain Dubai, the forum discussed ways and means to accelerate growth in the industry, leveraging the landmark attractions to open in Dubai.

His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General, Dubai's DET, commented: “Inspired by the visionary leadership of His Highness

“Our strategy to combat COVID-19 and deploy initiatives to increase our global competitiveness and attractiveness, is the hallmark of Dubai's progressive PPP model, cornerstone of what was achieved in 2021, and what will be achieved in the next 12 to 24 months. Expo 2020 provides us with a unique plat-

Reflecting the growth momentum and stability of the industry, international visitation was complemented by a robust domestic tourism market

an average daily rate of AED384 compared to 15.66 million occupied room nights at an average daily rate of AED335. Room inventory is now 6 per cent higher than in 2019.

dent and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai. Over the last five decades, Dubai has transformed into a global tourism and business hub, and strengthened its position as one of



Issam Kazim
Chief Executive Officer,
DTCM

“We have used innovative global campaigns to further highlight the city's multi-faceted touristic appeal and reach overseas markets, with the latest being — Dubai Presents. This synergetic approach showcasing Dubai's diverse offering involves the enlistment of celebrities, influencers and community personalities to create a steady stream of ambassadors and advocates to narrate Dubai's story across gastronomy, retail, tourism, leisure and events to showcase it as the best city to live, visit and work in.”

form to engage with the global community, since all hotels and tourism partners work closely to facilitate visits for their guests to maximise this opportunity. Through this energized, cohesive tourism and economic ecosystem, I am confident that Dubai will deliver on its vision of being the world's leading global centre for investment, business, talent, visitation and next-generation thinking.”

In a study in October 2021, occupancy was at 64 per cent, while the length of stay showed a 12 per cent rise from 4.1 nights to 4.6 nights.

Taking a closer look at the profile of global visitors, research showed that in the first half of 2021, Dubai visitors were balanced across genders with 52 per cent male visitors and 48 per cent female visitors. This apart, the emirate attracted a higher first-time visitor's volume, reflecting the attractiveness of the city despite the pandemic.

Issam Kazim, CEO, Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) said: “At Dubai's DTE, we are proud to be part of the success. Dubai has in 2021 achieved on the

the safest destinations in the world. With world-class infrastructure, Dubai is becoming the preferred business hub for conglomerates and start-ups alike. We have used innovative campaigns to highlight the city's touristic appeal and reach overseas markets, the latest being — Dubai Presents.”

To ensure that Dubai was the destination of choice for 2021, DET launched a global marketing campaign via 'Dubai Presents' that broadcast 3,500 assets across 25 languages and targeted audiences seeking international travel. 🇦🇪



room nights sold in the same period in 2019.

The latest tourism figures were released at the second bi-annual City Briefing of 2021 held by

His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General, Dubai's DET, presided over the meeting which was attended by 1,150 representatives from leading hospital-

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE, and Ruler of Dubai and strengthened by the success of Expo 2020 Dubai and the



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Experience Philippines at Expo 2020

Leading agents from the UAE were invited by the Philippines Department of Tourism to experience the pavilion at Expo 2020. Her Excellency Hjayceelyn M. Quintana, Ambassador, the Republic of the Philippines, UAE addressed the agents and thanked them for their support, especially over the past year for working to place Philippines as priority destination of Middle East travellers.



Watching a movie literally in snow

Majid Al Futtaim, the leading shopping mall, retail and leisure pioneer across Middle East, Africa and Asia has launched the world's only movie theatre in an indoor ski resort in Dubai. Snow Cinema by VOX Cinemas allows guests to watch movies, literally, on the snow-laden slopes of Ski Dubai followed by Christmas treats.

 Shehara Rizly

UAE always takes the first step in introducing novel experiences to visitors from across the globe. As the first desti-

ists over the past few months. From mid-December to end of January 2022 begins the winter season for the UAE: Many attractions are introduced to increase tourist footfall.

Cinema was introduced parallel to the Christmas spirit. Snow Cinema by VOX Cinemas allows guests to experience the magic of movies on the snow-laden slopes of Ski Dubai, which has been crowned the 'World's Best Indoor Ski Resort' for five consecutive years.

During Christmas, the guests were able to experience the winter wonderland and the snow cinema together, including a special conversation and photo opportunity with Santa in his village, followed by Christmas treats such as mince pies and hot chocolate.



From mid-December to end of January 2022 begins the winter season for the UAE. Several attractions are introduced to attract tourist footfall

nation to open post-pandemic and making sure that safety and health is high priority, the UAE has been able to attract nearly four million tour-

Last year, the special winter wonderland with Santa's village kickstarted the winter season, and for the first time in the region, the Snow

As the season continues, the guests can snuggle up and relax on lounge-style seating, while watching cinemas such as Raya and the Last Dragon, Tom

& Jerry, and blockbusters. In November, Majid Al Futtaim was awarded the 'Best Innovation in Health and Safety' at the MENALAC Awards. It en-

sured enjoyed an exceptional and comfortable experience at Snow Cinema. To make a booking visit voxcinemas.com or skidxb.com. 



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Montenegro hosts B2B workshop

Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Nicholas of Montenegro, a special B2B workshop was held for the agents of the UAE. His Royal Highness thanked and welcomed everyone for taking time off their busy schedules to discover the many offerings in Montenegro. After the introduction, the agents were given a special tour of the pavilion.



A season of fun, feasts and thrills

From its combination of award-winning leisure and entertainment experiences to one-of-a-kind theme parks and world-class shopping and superb dining, Yas Island is fast becoming the preferred destination for families and friends this winter season. Travel professionals can now save up to 45 per cent, while booking Yas Island packages through Experience Hub.

TT Bureau

Experience Hub, the trade and promotion arm of the Yas Island Abu Dhabi and a subsidiary of Miral, is encouraging travel professionals to take advantage of the competitive holiday packages, which enable guests to receive access to the record-breaking theme parks when booking via their website.

Liam Findlay, CEO of Experience Hub said: "Yas Island is one of the world's fastest growing leisure and entertainment destinations and as the UAE approaches



Liam Findlay
CEO
Experience Hub

evolve our popular 'Stay and Play' package. It allows guests to enjoy a luxury stay at one of Yas Island's leading hotels, including Hilton Abu Dhabi Yas Island, and the recently opened 'The WB Abu Dhabi,' while also gaining access to one of the three award-winning theme

Island packages that include hotel stay and theme parks access through Experiencehub.com or their preferred travel partner.

To ensure sustainable growth and encourage

the first Curio Collection hotel in Abu Dhabi. From featured artworks, characters and recreations of famous sitcom scenes, The WB Abu Dhabi has five restaurants, including Sidekicks, The Director's

Island offers families and friends a mix of leisure and relaxation with the record-breaking CLYMB™ Abu Dhabi, Yas Marina Circuit (home to the FORMULA 1 ETIHAD AIRWAYS ABU DHABI GRAND PRIX™),

ing that international travelers can be confident in experiencing Yas Island safely.

As a result, many of the attractions on Yas Island have also been awarded the 'Go-Safe'

As global tourism recovers, we have worked with our partners to evolve our popular 'Stay and Play' package. It allows guests to enjoy a luxury stay at one of the Yas Island's leading hotels

cooler months. Yas Island continues to deliver memorable and action-packed experiences to its guests of all ages, in a safe environment. As the global tourism industry recovers, we have worked with our partners to

parks for every day booked across Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, Yas Waterworld Abu Dhabi, and Warner Bros. World™ Abu Dhabi."

Travel professionals can now save up to 45 per cent, while booking Yas

repeat visitation, Yas Island has expanded its offerings with two new hotel properties opening this year. The WB Abu Dhabi is the world's first Warner's Bros. themed hotel with 257 keys. Located next to Warner Bros. World™ Abu Dhabi, the themed hotel is operated by Hilton under the Curio Collection by the Hilton brand, also making it

Club and The Overlook — a lounge with an infinity pool and 360-degree views over the Island, theme park and the Arabian Gulf.

The recent announcement of the new DoubleTree by Hilton Abu Dhabi Yas Island Residences aims to offer a diverse range of amenities and leisure facilities to business travelers and larger families. Equipped with 156 apartments and access to leisure and recreation facilities, the DoubleTree by Hilton Abu Dhabi Residences stands testament to Yas Island's award-winning and immersive attractions and experiences.

In addition to the award-winning theme parks and hotels, Yas

Yas Marina, the award-winning Yas Links golf course, and Abu Dhabi's largest mall, Yas Mall. Yas Bay Waterfront, Abu Dhabi's vibrant day-to-night destination.

To reassure global visitors of their safety and well-being, Yas Island has welcomed back the domestic and regional market, introducing numerous initiatives such as the widely commended 'Yas Wellness Program', which enables direct access to all precautionary measures on the Island. What's more, 95 per cent of eligible team members across the island have been vaccinated, including attractions, experiences, hotels, restaurants and retailers, ensuring

certification from the Department of Tourism and Culture – Abu Dhabi, reinforcing the destination's continued commitment to safety and well-being, including Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, Yas Waterworld Abu Dhabi, Warner Bros. World™ Abu Dhabi and CLYMB™ Abu Dhabi. The certification is also one of 25 health and safety accreditations received by the destination, including the coveted 'Safe Travels' stamp by the World Travel and Tourism Council in August 2020 — the first destination in Abu Dhabi to receive the international honour.

Learn more about the attractions of Yas Island and packages, guests can visit www.Experiencehub.com.



UAE hotel guests seek homely experiences

As we become more open to taking vacations, a new global travel survey has found that 36 per cent of UAE travellers said they like to feel like they are visiting a friend's home and nearly a fifth (19 per cent) said they are bothered when there are not any personal touches in their hotel, according to a global travel survey.

TT Bureau

While travel curbs continue in parts of the world, many of us are now willing to travel once again, with vaccine drives in many countries opening their borders. As we become more open to taking vacations, a new global travel survey has found that UAE travellers seek a homely experience while staying in a hotel — 36 per cent said they like to feel like they are visiting a friend's home, and nearly a fifth (19 per cent) said they are bothered when there are not personal

touches in their hotel. Cleanliness and comfort were the top priority for guests. An uncomfortable bed rated the most disliked factor about a hotel stay (33 per cent), while good food and clean rooms or communal areas among the experiences most likely to make guests book again at 49 per cent and 43 per cent, respectively.

On the dining front, 37 per cent of those surveyed said they would prefer a mix of cuisines on offer, while 36 per cent would like buffet or help yourself options. With an emphasis on feel

at home crucial to the guests, it is not surprising that 36 per cent prefer when food is served for longer hours e.g. not a two-hour window for

An uncomfortable bed rated the most disliked factor (33 per cent), while clean rooms or communal areas among others were most likely to make guests book again

breakfast, lunch or dinner. With clean eating a key trend, 13 per cent said they disliked it when there are not enough vegan and vegetarian options on hotel menus.

Sustainability was a key point of interest for UAE guests with nearly half (46 per cent) keen to see hotels purchase more environmentally-friendly

products. For example, using glass instead of plastic, which 41 per cent would support.

However, the survey commissioned by voco

hotels to launch their new Turn Up Service found guests' experience with staff to be among the most crucial of any hotel stay. In fact, 46 per cent said friendly service was the third most likely to make them rebook a hotel brand, with 55 per cent preferring staff who are friendly, approachable (46 per cent), caring (40 per cent) and kind (39 per cent).

As per the survey, voco hotels will roll out Turn Up Service across some of their key locations to cater to the travellers' needs. The enhanced service offerings will de-

liver bookable offerings to guests, such as Turn Up Service rooms in the UK, and brunch after dark soirees in the Middle East and the US.

Breaking the mould of traditional hotels, voco combines familiar comforts with unexpected touches to create a stay that is reliable, yet different.

FACTFILE

■ 46 per cent said friendly service was the third most likely to make them rebook a hotel brand.

DXB operates at 100 per cent capacity

Visitors to Dubai exceeded one million during October and DXB reached the milestone of one million passengers per week in November, with origin-destination passengers reaching 94 per cent of pre-pandemic levels. The passenger numbers are likely to reach 28.9 million by 2021-end, 2.1 million more than the September 2021 forecast.

TT Bureau

Following the opening of the final phase of Concourse A at Dubai International's (DXB) Terminal 3, the world's busiest international airport is 100 per cent operational with all terminals, concourses, lounges, restaurants, and retail outlets now open.

"Reaching to the point where 100 per cent of our facilities are now open and serving customers, plus the huge resurgence in passengers arriving into Dubai marks an important milestone for the aviation sector



and for the city of Dubai and its economic growth. We took measures to implement latest hygiene and health protocols, fast track PCR testing facilities, and enhanced customer service and guest support resources to ensure the comfort, convenience and safety of travellers — this has

resulted in a recovery towards pre-pandemic levels of passengers," said **Paul Griffiths**, CEO, Dubai Airports.

He also added, "This is because of team effort. Our employees and stakeholders have responded magnificently to the

significant challenge of getting DXB back up and running at 100 per cent capacity."

The journey back to full operations following the closure in March 2020

Reaching to the point where 100% of our facilities are now open, and the huge resurgence in passengers arriving into Dubai marks an important milestone

began with the reopening of Terminals 2 and 3 and Concourses B and C for normal inbound passenger operations from June 22, 2020,

following the easing of international travel regulations for residents by the UAE authorities. Outbound travel for UAE citizens and residents was opened on June 23 while Dubai Airports

reopened Terminal 1 and Concourse D, home to over 60 international airlines, on June 24, 2021. Over past 18 months, there has been a steady

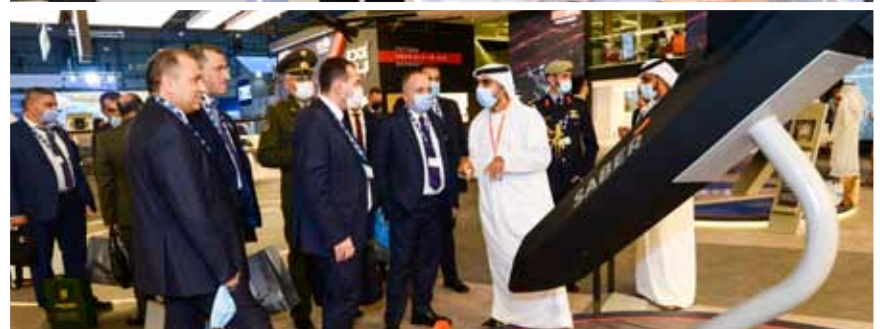
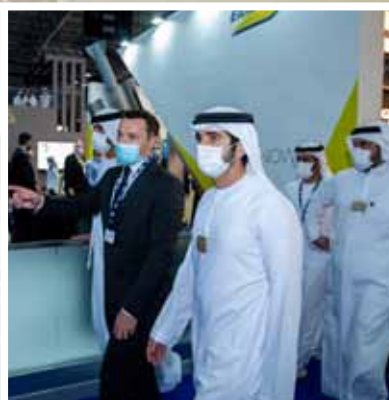
increase in passenger traffic which has intensified in recent months.

Traffic reached 10.6 million passengers in the first half of 2021, followed by a robust growth in Q3 of 2021 and a surge in October 2021 which took the year-to-date passenger numbers to 20.7 million.

Paul Griffiths added, "The rate of recovery of DXB has exceeded most other airports and highlights the positive global reputation that Dubai has as an attractive city that has taken decisive steps to protect its visitors and residents." 🇦🇪

150 countries at Dubai Airshow 2021

Dubai Airshow attracted industry experts and leaders from aviation, aerospace, space and defence sectors from across the globe. Almost 150 countries were represented at this year's Airshow which included 20 pavilions and additions such as Czech Republic, Belgium, Brazil, Israel, and Slovakia. There were also civil and military delegations from over 140 countries and 370 new exhibitors.



ALEPH HOSPITALITY

Dubai

Daniel Ebo has been appointed as VP, Sales of Aleph Hospitality. Based in Dubai headquarters of Aleph Hospitality, Ebo will be responsible for building and leading high-performance sales teams globally. He worked with experts to implement product and service standards, procedures and systems requirements. He worked in regional, area sales and, marketing positions in Oman, South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, UAE, and England.



RAMADA HOTEL & SUITES BY WYNDHAM JBR

Dubai

Binu Varghese has been promoted as the GM of Ramada Hotel & Suites by Wyndham Dubai JBR. He joined the group in November 2018 as its hotel manager. Under his leadership, he led its rebranding and refurbishment in 2019, launched an Indian restaurant in 2020, and introduced new sales and marketing strategies. Before joining R Hotels, he was the director of sales and marketing at Millennium Airport Hotel Dubai and Copthorne Hotel Dubai.



INTERCONTINENTAL RAK MINA AL ARAB RESORT & SPA

Ras Al Khaimah

Mohamed Mahmoud has joined as the GM of Intercontinental Ras Al Khaimah Mina Al Arab Resort & Spa. The RAK Properties announced the appointment. Mahmoud has previously worked as the GM of the Intercontinental Durrat Al Riyadh Resort and Intercontinental Fujairah Resort as the Resort Manager. Having spent 20 years with IHG Hotels & Resorts based in Egypt, Bahrain, KSA and the UAE.



New hotels in the region

This year will witness many new hotels opening in the Middle East region. As the region is steadily recovering through resilience, with Dubai taking the lead with Expo, FIFA this year will further add positivity to its momentum. We share a quick update on the upcoming hotels in the region.

Hampton by Hilton Doha Old Town

Qatar | Number of Rooms – 221

Situated in the Old Salata district, Hampton by Hilton Doha Old Town will feature 221 modern guest rooms, an all-day dining restaurant, juice bar, 24-hour snack bar, work zone and world class fitness centre. The hotel is conveniently located close to Doha attractions such as the corniche, the Museum of Islamic Art, the National Museum of Qatar, and the famous Souk Waqif among others. It will also be in close proximity to the banking district and the Emiri Diwan Palace, and just 12 kilometres from Hamad International Airport.



JW Marriott Hotel Riyadh

Riyadh Kingdom of Saudi Arabia | Number of Rooms/Apartments – 349



Situated on King Fahad Road, a peaceful oasis amidst a dynamic city and just a five-minute drive from King Abdullah Financial District, JW Marriott Hotel Riyadh resides in one of the most desirable addresses in Riyadh. Due to open in Q1 2022, the landmark hotel will stand as one of the tallest buildings in the city, spanning 66 floors. The hotel is expected to offer dining outlets, including JW Steakhouse.

InterContinental Ras Al Khaimah Resort & Spa

Ras Al Khaimah | Number of Rooms – 351



InterContinental Ras Al Khaimah Resort & Spa will open in Q1 2022. It will offer guests a luxury island experience on the Hayat Island shoreline in Mina Al Arab, UAE. The flagship beachfront resort has all accommodations such as a private balcony or terrace area. From a romantic retreat to private pool villas, it is 45 minutes from Dubai. The retreat will also present six new culinary outlets, including the fine-dining Levant & Nar.

Andaz

Qatar | Number of Rooms – 318



Hyatt Hotels Corporation announced that a Hyatt affiliate has entered into a pact with Al Mirqab Tourist Company LLC to debut Andaz brand in Qatar. The Andaz Doha may open in fall 2022. The hotel will mark the fourth Hyatt hotel in Qatar. The luxury hotel celebrates the individuality of every guest and speaks of the uniqueness of each locale. It will be located in West Bay area of Doha.



Nominations *Open*

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