



Dubai welcomes 4.6 mn visitors in Q1

Dubai welcomed 4.67 million overnight visitors in the first guarter of 2023, and is on track to become the most visited international destination. The emirate's hotels witnessed a surge in occupancy with the average occupancy reaching at 83 per cent during the January-March period, making it one of the highest in the world, and almost on par with 84 per cent occupancy listed in Q1 2019.



HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohamm bin Rashid Al Maktou Crown Prince of Dubai & Chairm

The remarkable growth in international visits to Dubai in the first quarter of 2023 demonstrates the city's emergence as one of the key destinations leading the way in the rebound of the global tourism sector. This achievement has been made possible by the far-reaching vision of the leadership. The Dubai Economic Agenda recently launched by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Mak-

toum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, charts an ambitious new path for Dubai. ""



ising the vision of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, and Ruler of Dubai to make Dubai the most visited and re-visited destination. The positive industry His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri performance is an endorsement of our well-defined strategy, and

Gallery Q1 2023 has set us off on a

strong trajectory for the year and

is driving us closer towards real-

a testament to the unwavering support of our tourism industry partners and stakeholders. The coming decade will see our industry going through extraordinary phases of transformation.



His Excellency Issam Kazim CEO, Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing

Inspired by our visionary leadership, we have made tremendous strides in our efforts to position the city as a must-visit destination through celebrityled and digital first global campaigns in parallel with initiatives that increase accessibility, minimise barriers to travel, and make it as seamless as possible for travellers to visit Dubai. We express our sincere appreciation for

the steadfast support from all our stakeholders and partners who relentlessly strive to uphold our city's position as a top-tier travel destination globally.

Contd. on page 06 ▶

Bigger share for women in tourism

This year's ITIC Middle East Tourism Investment Summit focuses on the recent case study in Oman on the opportunities for women in the tourism sector. Women make up for 54 per cent of the workforce in tourism globally, says UNWTO.



iscussing the opportunities for women in tourism, Dr. Lubna Bader Salim Al Mazroei, Manager Economic

Diversification Investments, Oman Investment Authority, during the ITIC session shared, "When the Ministry of Tourism was established in Oman in 2004, the first Minister of Tour-

ism was a woman. Our target is to create 500,000 jobs in Oman tourism by 2040 and to further strengthen the Oman tourism sector, we are implementing new education, training and

employment initiatives. We have a dedicated Human Capital department that is overseeing all of the needs of the sector and this department is managed mostly by women."

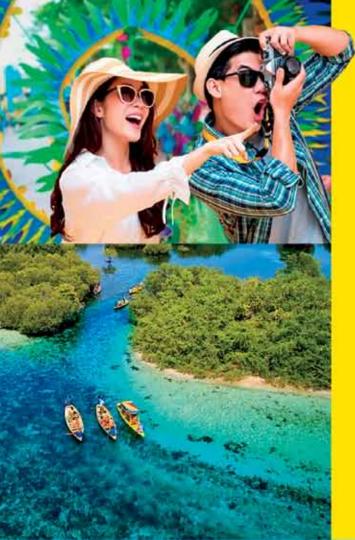
As part of its efforts to boost the tourism industry in the region, the Oman government established the Oman Tourism College in 2001. Initially, there were approximately 80 female



Dr. Lubna Bader Salim Al Mazroei

students, and this number has risen to 400 in 2023. 3





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GCC unified visa on the cards

Tourism has taken a leap in the GCC region and becoming the new oil of the region. The region has been the most resilient and a leader in creation of jobs, especially in the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors. Ministerial level talks are ongoing to introduce a new scheme to unify countries in the region with one single visa akin to the European Schengen visa.

Shehara Rizly

uring the FIFA World Cup, Hayya card proved to be a great help in co-promotion of destinations across the GCC region. Some time back, His Royal Highness in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia had shared that GCC will be the new Europe. This has been proven, especially after the pandemic, as the GCC was the first to take necessary action to provide both locals and expats every opportunity to safeguard themselves, with the vaccination drives and quarantine standards. Today, UNWTO for the second time has announced that Middle East region is the fastest growing in terms of tourism recovery.

At Arabian Travel Market 2023, it was interesting to hear from a panel of speakers about the way the GCC region will unify further to bring in more co-promoting opportunities in future. The



panel comprised H.E. Fatima Al Sairafi, Minister of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism, Kingdom of Bahrain, H. E. Abdulla Al Saleh, Undersecretary, Government of UAE, and Fahd Hamidaddin, CEO, Saudi Tourism Authority. H.E. Fatima Al Sairafi shared that co-promoting the region as a unified destination will increase tourism revenues and footfall in every country of the region. H. E. Abdulla Al Saleh explained how the seven emirates have been

working under one umbrella showcasing their unique attractions to different source markets and success over the years where the UAE is one of the key destinations in every traveller's bucket list. Hamidaddin shared the new ventures and the outlook by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, how things have taken a positive turn, firstly with their proactive nature in making the visa process so much smoother, especially for the residents of GCC.

H.E. Fatima Al Sairafi said, "When we announced our five-year strategy from 2022 until 2026, one of the key performance indicators that we included in the strategy is the number of tourists that would visit Bahrain. Initially the KPI was 8.3 million tourists for 2022, so the actual number that was achieved was 9.9 million. The reason to share this number today is because of one key initiative the Kingdom

of Bahrain did that was different than the previous years. What the Kingdom of Bahrain started to do was co-promote Bahrain as a unified destination with some of the countries in the GCC. We started this as a pilot project with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates and we are un-

where each emirate develops itself as a destination for tourists, at the same time competing with the other, but the competition is healthy."

Hamidaddin explained, "From day one when we launched Saudi, we said welcome to Arabia because we believe the

During the FIFA World Cup, Hayya card proved to be a great help in co-promotion of destinations across the GCC region

derway with the rest of the GCC countries as well. That initiative itself increased the tourism traffic in the Kingdom of Bahrain."

H. E. Abdulla Al Saleh, reiterated, "We have an experience in UAE, we have seven emirates,

whole participants in the panel are part of Arabia. It was announced by UNWTO that this part of the world is the fastest growing region, followed by Asia Pacific. So, what I'm saying is world travellers today, when they think of travel, they think of the region."



\$1 tn worth projects coming up in KSA

More than US \$1 trillion worth of real estate and infrastructure projects, including 315,000 hotel keys, are under development or in the pipeline in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, underpinning the ambition set out in the country's Vision 2030 strategy, according to industry experts at the Future Hospitality Summit (FHS), Saudi Arabia.

🏗 TT Bureau

he number of hotel keys in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is likely to almost double to around 200,000 in the next four to five years, with at least 50 per cent of the proposed supply becoming operational by 2028. The Kingdom is set to take its place on the world stage and showcase its vision of an ultra-

6.5 bn

5-Star

11bn

4-Star

KSA govt's strategy includes attracting 100 million visitors by 2030, and that means creating and delivering first class gateways and developments

modern future to a global audience, with a diverse array of giga and mega projects that will transform the country's real estate

The total development

cost of Non-Giga Projects

US\$ 21.3 billion

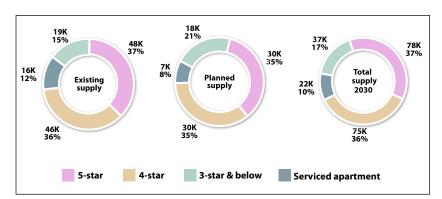
1.5 bn

3-Star below Serviced Apts

2.3 bn

landscape and redefine tourism, living and lifestyle, according to real estate consultancy FHS Saudi Arabia Sponsor, Knight Frank.

Turab Saleem, Head of Tourism and Hospitality at Knight Frank, said: "The KSA government's strategy includes attracting 100 million visitors by 2030, and that means creating and delivering first class gateways and developments, such as the US \$500 billion NEOM. The US \$1 trillion projects already under way represent just one third of the total spending plan, reinforcing the country's aggressive plan to deliver world class infrastructure.



Govt continues to make significant strides in facilitating the growth of different sectors across the country, with notable investments in hospitality

hospitality, tourism and residential facilities to meet the targets set out in Vision 2030. The outlook for hospitality investment in KSA looks promising, with hotel and tourism development

focused not only on the major cities of Riyadh and Jeddah but spreading quickly to other parts of the country too. Our analysis shows that the delivery of all planned hotel rooms — which

cover the luxury, mid-market and serviced apartment sectors – will cost around US \$110 billion."

Knight Frank's views on hospitality investment in KSA are echoed by FHS Sponsor, HVS, the global consultancy focusing on the hospitality sector, which says the government continues to make significant strides in facilitating the growth of different sectors across the country, with notable investments in the hospitality.

A roadmap to net-zero tourism

Tourism is responsible for around 11 per cent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, and it is projected to double by the year 2050, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). Unless measures are taken to limit the emissions, this will aggravate global warming, leading to even more severe and unpredictable weather patterns.

s COP28 commences, the pressing need to tackle global climate and environmental issues is once again at the forefront. The sector is facing mounting pressure from governments and investors to lower emissions and enhance sustainability by implementing stricter emissions regulations, providing green tax incentives, and increasing investments linked to ESG (Environmental. Social, and Governance) standards. Additionally, an expanding number of consumers are expressing a preference for more sustainable travel options. The industry can transition into a more sustainable future and achieve the net-zero 2023 target by following certain practices.

As the global economy progresses, particularly in high-income countries and regions with rapid economic growth, consumers' demand for travel has grown at a much faster pace than their consumption of other products and



services. The desire for unique travel experiences, growing aviation demand, and a desire for lavish amenities in often remote and sensitive areas have turned tourism into a high-carbon consumption category. Despite the efforts to decarbonize tourism operations, the worldwide demand for tourism is surpassing these efforts, leading to an acceleration in global carbon emissions.

Green financing

Tourism can be reimagined and its favourable impact on both people and the planet can be boosted by the Sustainable Development

Goals (SDGs) by utilizing sustainable investments. The financial industry can play a pivotal role in supporting the shift toward a sustainable development model that is low-carbon and inclusive. for instance by enabling small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to obtain green finance. According to a PWC analysis, investing in green initiatives within major industries of the GCC could result in a significant impact by 2030. This includes the potential to unlock up to US \$2 trillion in cumulative GDP contribution, creating over 1 million job opportunities and fostering foreign direct investment (FDI).

The utilization of green financing opportunities in the UAE's tourism sector can facilitate the development of resource-efficient tourism infrastructure, such as eco-friendly hotels and natural heritage destinations.

Use of technology

With climate change's impact becoming more visible, tourism stakeholders such as local authorities, tourism-related businesses, suppliers, and individual travellers must collaborate and The use of solar power, energy-efficient appliances, electric vehicles, and smart building technologies are just a few examples of how the industry is working towards sustainability. These technologies can not only help reduce the industry's carbon footprint but also lead to significant cost savings for tourism-related businesses. For instance, many hotels and resorts are installing solar panels to generate clean energy, which can help reduce their reliance

Carbon offsetting

Carbon offsetting is an increasingly popular approach for reducing tourism's carbon footprint. The process involves investing in projects that reduce or remove carbon emissions to compensate for the emissions produced by a business or an individual. By investing in carbon offsetting projects, tourism-related businesses can contribute to the fight against climate change.

Demand for tourism is surpassing the efforts to decarbonize tourism operations, leading to an acceleration in global carbon emissions

reduce the industry's reliance on fossil fuels. The tourism industry is adopting various technologies to reduce its carbon footprint. on fossil fuels. Another technology that is gaining popularity in the tourism industry is electric vehicles (EVs).



Dr Ross Curran Assistant Professor, Edinburgh Business School Heriot-Watt University, Dubai (The views expressed are solely of the author.)

Malaysia targets more visitors from ME

Malaysia has recorded 10.07 million tourist arrivals since opening of international borders and RM28.2 billion (AED 23.5 billion) in tourist receipts in 2022. Tourism Malaysia continues its efforts to publicize comprehensive promotional activities to the Middle Eastern region to keep the momentum going up and increase the number of international visitors to 16.1 million this year.

🍞 Shehara Rizly

n 2023, Malaysia is targeting to welcome 16.1 million international tourist arrivals (including 300,000 tourists from the West Asia) and generate RM49.2 billion (AED 41.1 billion) in tourist receipts. In 2022, Malaysia recorded 88,534 tourist arrivals from the Middle East.

Hon. Khairul Firdaus Akbar Khan, Deputy Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Malaysia, shared, "In line with the Visit Malaysia in 2025, Tourism Malaysia will strive to attract more tourists from the Middle East to



Malaysia. We are confident that we will be able to achieve our target to put Malaysia as the top destination for Muslim travellers. This region is very impor-

tant for Malaysia and this year alone we have been ramping up promotions and inshallah we are trying to get more visitors than the previous years. I'm sure that with all the promotions and the networking has been done we can get more visitors from this region."

Khan added, "We can see the future of tourism growing and there are positive signs this year to attract more travellers

from this region. Looking at the response from the private sector participation compared to last year, it has increased the number of participants at this year's Arabian Travel Market. We have about 150 partners with us this year and the private sector is keen on attracting more visitors from this market. We are also speaking with some airlines partners from this region to increase flights so that there is connectivity,

which will increase our potential visitors."

Khan witnessed the signing of two Memorandum of Collaborations (MOC), one between Tourism Malaysia and SAUDIA Airlines, and another between Tourism Malaysia and Air Arabia. The MOCs will benefit the Malaysian economy and strengthen economic ties through the tourism industry between Malaysia and King-

dom of Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates.

The four-day ATM event provided Malaysia an excellent platform to market and promote the latest attractions and destinations for shopping, family fun, eco-adventure, honeymoon, luxury holidays, as well as safe travel destination. ATM 2023 also marked the 29th anniversary of Malaysia's participation in the prestigious event.

As in previous years, this annual event witnessed the participation of a strong Malaysian delegation from 76 organizations comprising hotels and resorts, travel agents, tourism products owners, representatives from various state governments, including Langkawi Development Authority (LADA), Penang Global Tourism, Sabah Tourism Board, Sarawak Tourism Board, Tourism Melaka, Tourism Pahang, and Tourism Johor.

We can see the future of tourism growing and there are positive signs this year to attract more travellers from this (Middle East) region



Dubai Hospitality on exponential growth



Dubai continues to consistently evolve as an international business and leisure hub under the vision of its leaders. This is a market that has something for everyone. Fortunately, we have a fabulous portfolio of properties in the city across all segments select, premium and luxury, that align with the diversity of experiences Dubai offers for every type of traveller. Dubai remains focused on enhancing the city's economic and tourism competitiveness and the collaboration between the Department of Economy and Tourism and the organisations across the industry continue to drive success for the market's tourism sector. Dubai remains one of our better performing markets.



Paul Stevens COO Middle Fast & Africa Pre

1 The tourism industry in Dubai is expected to experience significant growth in 2023, with international visits projected to increase by 17.6 per cent to reach 16.9 million arrivals. This growth signifies an additional 2,521,000 arrivals compared to the previous year, indicating a positive trend in Dubai's tourism sector. One of the key factors driving this growth is the increasing demand for hotel accommodations across Dubai. The leisure segment remains a primary driver, as the city continues to attract tourists from around the world with its varied offering of brands, including affordable premium and midscale properties, iconic landmarks, and vibrant entertainment options.



Abdulla Al Abdulla

Dubai's position as a global hub with an ever-expanding network of flights and unparalleled connectivity has made it a seamless gateway for travellers seeking unforgettable experiences. Global travellers flock to Dubai, the emirate known for luxury shopping, its cosmopolitan fusion of cultures, awe-inspiring attractions, and limitless possibilities. A surge in tourism has profound implications beyond the hospitality industry, affecting the economy as a whole. Dubai's position as a global business and leisure destination will be further enhanced by boosting job creation, investment opportunities, and infrastructure development in the emirate.



from the Hospitality sector in Dubai is experiencing a surge in international visitors with recent data indicating a 19 per cent increase in overnight stays by foreign guests in the first quarter of 2023 compared to the same period in 2022. Dubai is not just a destination for leisure travellers, its status as a global business centre has also attracted an increasing number of business travellers. With its iconic landmarks. beautiful beaches, hotels, and welcoming culture. Dubai. the emirate famous for luxury shopping, is a testament to how innovation, vision, and a commitment to excellence can transform a city into a global tourism icon.



Freddy Farid

Dubai has welcomed 4.7 million international overnight visitors in first three months of 2023, an increase of 17 per cent compared to the same period last year. This is a remarkable achievement as a destination considering the current global economic crisis and pre-pandemic levels. The emirate with its diversification to attract international visitors for business and leisure, and the creation of the Sustainable Tourism, Gastronomy drive, organizing International events to attract Mice Business, leisure events and hosting Global events like the upcoming COP28, will boost and cement Dubai's position as one of the top 3 cities in the world.



G Dubai is thriving as a tourist destination, and as a result, we have seen very positive occupancy figures across our portfolio of properties from both domestic and, increasingly, international travellers. The emirate received 4.7 million international overnight visitors in the first quarter of 2023. The expected rebound of the Chinese inbound market, positive figures from the South East Asian market, and the positive figures the region's airlines are experiencing, point to an encouraging first half of the year for Dubai's tourism industry. We will be closely monitoring the evolving travel trends in the region and adapting our strategies accordingly to capitalise on the boon.



Moussa El Hayek

Dubai's Hospitality and Tourism sector is on a rebound and is getting back on track robustly. Having welcomed over 14 million tourists in 2022, the emirate is expected to witness more than a 50 per cent increase in international visitors this year. The emirate observes progressive developments placing it in an enviable position to steer travel and hospitality demands. Dubai is witnessing a significant increase in occupancy in 2023 with more visitors coming to Dubai for both leisure and business. The emirate has always been a spotlight destination internationally with developments progressive placing it in an enviable position to steer travel and hospitality demands in 2023. Let us hope for the best.



G Dubai as a destination is leading the tourist markets around the world. This is an outcome of the strategic planning and communication efforts led by Dubai Tourism, along with the key stakeholders in the tourism sector, which include the airlines, travel trade partners, hotels, entertainment, and retail. Since October 2020, the renewed focus has been to increase Dubai's tourism footprint across the globe and penetrate new markets. We are fortunate that the government has supported many new initiatives to push the vision of making Dubai No. 1 tourist city across the globe. We witnessed a good growth in Q1 2023 and are trading numbers almost comparable to 2019, while the forecast for the rest of the year continues to remain strong.



Hakan Ozel

We are thrilled to see the continuous growth and positive momentum in the hospitality sector in Dubai. After experiencing healthy arrivals and numbers last year, we are excited to anticipate an even greater influx of international visitors this year. Dubai's reputation as a worldclass destination coupled with its commitment to safety and exceptional experiences make it an irresistible choice for travelers. As the General Manager of Shangri-La Dubai, I am proud to lead a team dedicated to providing impeccable service through our Asian heritage and creating unforgettable memories for our esteemed guests to the colorful iovs of life. We look forward to welcoming even more travellers to Dubai and showcasing the unparalleled hospitality.



General Manage Grand Plaza Movenpick Media City, Duba

On property level, we are already seeing spikes on inbound business travel, booking patterns, and occupancy that is significantly higher versus last year. Based on increased overall pipeline activity we anticipate luxury and premium hotels to outperform the market this year for the region. Optimistically, Dubai's hospitality sector is poised to welcome a surge in international visitors in 2023, surpassing previous year's numbers. Looking at available data, Dubai experienced a remarkable recovery in 2022 with nearly 14.4 million overnight visitors, a significant increase of 97 per cent compared to 2021 and 86 per cent of the 2019 figures. These trends reinforce our confidence in the growing appeal of Dubai's hospitality sector. making it a top destination.



Manish Jha

Dubai has experienced remarkable growth in international tourists visiting the city in the recent years. The hospitality sector has played a crucial role in attracting and accommodating these visitors with world-class amenities and services. The number of tourists visiting Dubai has increased significantly from 2021 to 2022 and now we are seeing a remarkable increase in 2023 already. This growth can be attributed to various factors, including the city's strategic location, diverse demographic, worldrenowned attractions, and cultural heritage. The hospitality industry has responded by expanding its offerings to meet the demand. New hotels, such as our own NH Collection Dubai The Palm, and restaurants and entertainment venues are opening regularly.



Nishan Silva

Since 1998, we have been welcoming guests from around the world, and have seen the steady increase in international business and leisure visitors year on year. Dubai experienced a brilliant recovery in 2022 with nearly 14.4 million overnight visitors. Aligning our strategies to reflect the Department of Economy and Tourism's ambition to position Dubai as one of the most visited and revisited cities in the world, our hotel cluster has adapted to the changing demands of the global traveller. In addition to our authentic and holistic approach to the guests' journey, and our creative Food & Beverage offering, as a company we have a strong commitment to welcoming international guest as Dubai prepares for COP28.

Gulf travellers seek new experiences

Every year, travellers from the Middle East seek new destinations to escape the summer heat. After the pandemic, this year will be the first summer when all borders are open. Countries around the world are promoting their lesser known destinations to give the Middle East travellers a new experience. We at _____ ask experts in the field to know about this year's popular destinations.



Spain is a well known destination for the GCC region. It offers world class cities, beaches, heritage, nature and much more. But the eyes of the travellers are mostly caught with the main destinations, leaving a vast country still to explore and discover. This summer we are focusing on the Balearic Islands. Mallorca and Ibiza are two islands that offer an incredible experience for all travellers. The mediterranean vibe of this Islands will conquer the traveller though its huge offer of luxur accomodations. ""



Deepa Rajesh Director Sales and Rusiness Development Cozmo Trave

Summer school break with two-month-long vacation is an optimal period for families to travel together and explore new destinations in USA, Europe, Far East Asia and the Middle East region. The traditional destinations are moving to new unexplored places. Furthermore, the agreements we recently signed during the ATM 2023 with tourism boards representing destinations like Switzerland, Austria, Jordan, Oman, Saudi and Morocco mark an exciting expansion of opportunities for outbound travellers. "



Matthias Albrecht

Andermatt is still quite a new destination, especially in the Middle East. Andermatt is in the middle of Switzerland and has been known for centuries - not as a holiday resort, but as the main town on the Gotthard Pass, the easiest route from northern to southern Europe. In recent vears, the accommodation infrastructure has improved enormously and quests can now enjoy the breathtaking nature with countless mountain lakes, small glaciers, impressive side valleys and many sporting activities. "



Aisling McDermott

The island of Ireland is home to hidden gems and unique holiday experiences that Middle East travellers will relish. Accommodation such as Finnlough, a luxury hideaway in Northern Ireland, where guests sleep in palatial transparent domes with uninterrupted views of the starry night skies. Inis Meáin Island Stays is another stunning and unique accommodation experience on the tranquil Aran Islands, famed for their landscapes, flora and culture. It has earned an international reputation, ""



Avman Al Qudwa

Air ticket prices are the key to the main destinations during the summer vacation this year, as many citizens and residents of the State of Qatar are preparing and planning for their summer vacation, starting from the second week of June 2023 until the third week of August 2023. It is likely that European destinations such as the UK, France, Spain, Germany, Italy, the USA and Turkey, along with Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Emirates and Saudi Arabia will return to the tourism scene. ""



Mahmood Salmar

In Bahrain and in GCC, we are always looking for new destinations that offer activities for the whole family. Summer is the time of the year when the entire family travel, hence they look for new attractions, activities to engage their small kids, teens and even the adult kids. We like the experience to be unique with different types of theme parks, and shopping for women. This is an important time for GCC travellers and they opt for European destinations that offer them memorable experiences. ""

Wellness tourism on the rise

The past years have seen a marked increase in Middle East travellers seeking more wellness and medical travel to various destinations around the world. From Europe to Asia, every region is making sure that it gets a piece of this affluent market of travellers. speaks to some of the experts in the field to shed light on what the latest is from their side.



In recent years, wellness and medical tourism have grown in popularity worldwide. More people are now travelling abroad for medical treatments and wellness experiences due to affordable options, top-notch facilities, and the desire for overall well-being. I'm delighted to mention the recent partnership between Cozmo Travel and HealthTrip.com. This tie-up aims to improve the accessibility and quality of medical and wellness tourism services in the 11 countries we serve.



Asoka Hettigoda

Sri Lanka plans to attract Middle Eastern travellers for medical tourism. During Arabian Travel Market, we met several parties, who are keen to support us. Within Sri Lanka, we are currently conducting a program to train and certify all therapists, and everyone involved in the wellness industry, and I think that is important, and also, we are located just four-and-a-half hours away, and after the treatments we can follow up much easily than other destinations.



Ashiya Nazar Director GCC - Akbar Travel

Wellness and medical tourism destinations have become an integral part of travel plans for ME travellers. They have always had a strong inclination towards leading a healthy lifestyle, and this mindset extends to their travel choices. The region's residents are increasingly recognizing the significance of holistic well-being, encompassing physical, mental, and emotional aspects. They seek destinations that offer comprehensive wellness experiences.



Aga Pytlik

I wanted to bring your attention to the growing trend of wellness tourism, which has gained significant popularity among Middle Eastern travellers, particularly those from countries like the UAE and Saudi Arabia. The Middle Eastern culture often places a strong emphasis on holistic approaches to health and well-being. Wellness tourism provides an ideal opportunity for travellers to engage in activities that promote relaxation, stress reduction, and rejuvenation.



Director GCC. German National Tourist Office

We have seen steady increase in wellness tourism from the GCC market. Our campaign, Embrace German Nature spotlights natural landscapes and activity holidays and shortlists an array of offerings to enjoy wellness in Germany. In addition, our ongoing successful 'Feel Good' sustainable travel campaign emphasises how to enjoy an eco-friendly holiday in Germany with a plethora of options just waiting for visitors to experience.



Head of Health Marketing, Manager EMEA & As

What do quests from the Middle East need when undergoing treatment abroad? High-quality medical care combined with international offices that address the needs of Arab patients accordingly, excellent tourist infrastructure because the treatment is either combined with a vacation and/ or the relatives who come with you should also recover. And a mild climate, especially when it comes to rehabilitation. Düsseldorf covers all these points. "

Brainstorming future of hospitality

More than 1,000 hospitality leaders and stakeholders attended the Future Hospitality Summit organized under the theme 'Invest in Change' in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The summit comprised three stages, which witnessed interesting sessions on the industry and signing of many new partnerships with various hospitality brands.



Thailand expects 1 mn ME visitors by '25

One of the key outbound travel destinations for Middle East travellers, Thailand is back on track again, as it expects greater numbers of visitors from the region. The destination welcomed about 3.15 lakh Middle East visitors in 2022 and now with a new campaign, it aims to achieve one million visitors by 2025, says **Yuthasak Supasorn**, Governor, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT),

🔐 Shehara Rizly

laborating on the Thailand Tourism's campaign, Yuthasak Supasorn, Governor, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), said that responsible and sustainable tourism will be the main direction in the future. "Earlier this year, Thailand Tourism announced 17 sustainable tourism goals divided into four main categories to be incorporated and serviced over the year and beyond. From sustainable development goals it goes on to sustainable tourism goals, which focus on awareness, education and accessibility, the



second main criterion is the socio-economic way in which the inclusivity and development of local sourcing to waste man-

agement play a key role. Thirdly, the aspect of developing cultural strategies such as promoting sustainable destinations and local communities and the last seament, which is the impact of environment, a key factor in supporting tourism climate action and promoting land tourism ecosystems. The growing interest of the Middle East market in sustainable travel, shopping, health and wellness activities,

we wish to deliver fresh travel experiences through Thailand soft power 5F: Food, Fight, Fashion, Film, and Festival, while highlighting Thailand's strength in

nature, and Thainess. TAT aims

to create a meaningful travel

experience that will not only be

meaningful for travellers, but also

for the local communities and the

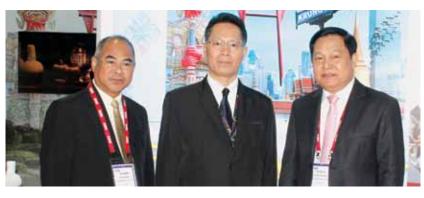
environment. In terms of the ATM

exhibitors, we will have a total of

46 exhibitors from Thailand par-

ticipating in the event," he said.

Sharing the visitor numbers from the region, Supasorn said, "In 2022, Thailand welcomed 314,882 Middle East visitors, with nearly 100,000 visitors from growth. "Our campaign aims to attract both first-time and repeat visitors to experience the 'Thai Way of Happiness'. We will then encourage them to share their



Saudi Arabia, and around 66,000 visitors from the UAE. Visitors from the Gulf countries have a high average length of stay and daily expenditure.'

The TAT will focus on promoting Thainess, Happiness, Sustainable, Balanced, and Equitable experiences on social media with their loved ones, friends, and colleagues. By focusing on the idea of 'forwarding messages' in the online world, we will offer promotions to promote this practice. This will help raise awareness of Thailand and attract future visitors," he added.





Thailand has declared 17 sustainable

tourism goals divided into four main

categories to be incorporated and

serviced over the year and beyond



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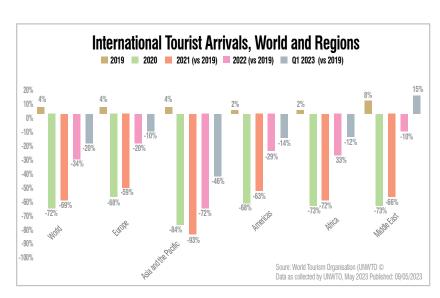
ME tourism recovery strongest: UNWTO

According to the latest data from UNWTO, the Middle East region saw the strongest recovery exceeding the visitor arrivals of 2019 (+15 per cent) in the first quarter of 2023, even as the international tourism is well on its course returning to the pre-pandemic levels. An estimated 235 million tourists travelled internationally in the first three months, more than double the same period of 2022.

🔐 TT Bureau

nternational arrivals reached 80 per cent of the prepandemic levels in the first quarter of 2023, according to the latest data from UNWTO. An estimated 235 million tourists travelled internationally in the first three months, more than double the same period of 2022. Tourism has continued to show its resilience. Revised data for 2022 shows that more 960 million tourists travelled internationally last year, which means two-thirds (66 per cent) of the pre-pandemic numbers were recovered.

Europe reached 90 per cent of the pre-pandemic levels, driven by strong intra-regional demand. Africa reached 88 per cent and the Americas about 85 per cent of the 2019 levels, whilst Asia and the Pacific ac-



celerated its recovery with 54 per cent of the pre-pandemic levels. But this upward trend is set to accelerate now that most destinations, particularly China, have re-opened. **Zurab Pololikashvili**, Secretary-General, UNWTO, says: "The start of the year has shown again tourism's unique abil-

ity to bounce back. In many places, we are close to, or even above pre-pandemic levels of arrivals. However, we must remain alert to challenges ranging from geopolitical insecurity, staffing shortages, and the potential impact of the cost-of-living crisis on tourism, and we must ensure

tourism's return delivers on its responsibilities as a solution to the climate emergency and as a driver of inclusive development."

International tourism receipts grew back to hit the US \$1 trillion mark in 2022, growing 50 per cent in real terms compared to 2021, driven by the important rebound in international travel.

Looking Ahead: What's in Store?

The Q1 2023 results are in line with UNWTO's forward-looking scenarios for the year, which project international arrivals to recover 80 per cent to 95 per cent of the prepandemic levels. UNWTO's

dicates performance for the period is on track to be even better than 2022.

However, tourism's recovery also faces some challenges. According to the UNWTO Panel of Experts, the economic situation remains the main factor weighing on the effective recovery of international tourism in 2023, with high inflation and

International tourism receipts grew back to hit the US \$1 trillion mark in 2022, growing 50 per cent in real terms compared to 2021

Panel of Experts expressed their confidence in a strong peak season (May-August) in the Northern Hemisphere, reflected in the latest UNWTO Confidence Index, which inrising oil prices translating into higher transport and accommodations costs. As a result, tourists are expected to increasingly seek value for money and travel closer to home.



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Going green in travel & tourism

Today, focus lies on becoming sustainable, and it applies to travel and tourism also. At the recently concluded Arabian Travel Market, SanJeet, Founder and Managing Director, DDP Group, moderated an interesting session with Jehan de Thé, Managing Director, Europear Mobility Group, **Daniel Rosado**, Director of Spain Tourism - Middle East Office, Spain Tourism.

🔐 Shehara Rizly

Rosado, Director, Spain Tourism GCC, sharing his views at the ATM, said that they were making several efforts to move towards sustainability. "It is not a new concept for us as we have been working on it for a long period of time. Today, we have invested over 3.4 million euros on getting the sector up to date with digitalisation and sustainability, we are making changes in infrastructure, including windows to make it more sustainable. When tourists enter the hotels, they can visually see the various methods practised



on sustainability, as such all stakeholders in tourism are involved in making changes to ensure sustainable practices are followed.

According to studies 87 per cent of the travellers are looking for sustainable travel destinations when they select a destination to travel to, hence we want to attract those travellers. So, before they come to the destination, they are aware of our sustainable practices."

SanJeet, Founder and Managing Director, DDP Group, following up on Rosado's comment, asked Jehan de Thé, Managing

Director. Europear Mobility Group, "Do travellers come to you in search of electric cars. as that seems to be the current norm?" On this, de Thé explained, "When it comes to B2B, it is decided by the company, but when we talk about non-resident passengers or drivers, it is difficult, because the reality is that it is not that simple to rent a car and then to recharge, especially when you go to a different coun-

try, first of all you have to look at the charging ports. When you arrive at the charging station, you try to pay by using your credit card, but you cannot, you have to download the specific app. Then you go to the next charging

want. For us, it is not that easy to explain to the customer that it is not easy as the reality is slightly different. This is why in terms of usage, we see huge differences in terms of EV adoption, if you are familiar with the features and

When we talk about passengers, it (seeking EV) is difficult, because the reality is that it is not that simple to rent a car and then to recharge it

When tourists enter the hotels, they can visually see the various methods practised on sustainability, as such all stakeholders in tourism are involved

- Daniel Rosado

port, so you are super happy, I have the application, but then it will not work and you have to do the same thing again, so what we have to do is ensure that there are more changes, so that we make it simple for the customers. They should be confident and in a position to say I have one app and I can go wherever I

confident when we are talking about inbound tourists.'

SanJeet concluded by saying that latest figures from European cycling federation show that 44 billion prefer cycling in Europe, which is an initiative that enhances the concept further to go green. 🤰

Emirates opens check-in facility at DIFC

Emirates launched a new City Check-in and Travel Store recently at the ICD Brookfield Place in the bustling Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC). The state of the art facility will enable customers to conveniently book travel, check-in for flights, drop luggage, shop for travel essentials, and save time at the airport.









'Discover Europe' eyes GCC travellers

One hundred and six partners, comprising 13 from Ireland, 27 from Germany, 45 from Switzerland and 21 from Austria, took part in Discover Europe Summit 2023, held recently in Dubai. Eyeing visitors to the four European destinations, they networked with more than 110 travel agents from the GCC region during the two-day event.



More than 40,000 attend 30th edition

The 30th edition of Arabian Travel Market (ATM) concluded with a record-breaking 40,000 visitors attending the mega event. The theme for this year's edition was 'Working Towards Net Zero', which explored how innovative sustainable travel trends will evolve and identified strategies for growth within specific key vertical sectors.



























of Arabian Travel Market in Dubai























Exclusive networking night in Dubai

Rezlive.com, & Turning Point hosted a unique Red Carpet Desert Networking Event on 2nd May in Dubai on the sidelines of ATM. Attended by over 350 industry professionals from more than 16 countries, this spectacular event included an afternoon of dune bashing, followed by a sumptuous dinner while relishing fascinating cultural performances.



Rolling out the red carpet in Dubai

Rezlive, and Turning Point treated stalwarts of the travel and tourism industry from 16 countries to a unique experience at Red Carpet Desert Networking Event in Dubai recently. The event, organised on the sidelines of this year's Arabian Travel Market (ATM), provided a great networking platform for the participants.

🔐 Shehara Rizly

After a period of almost three years, travel partners from more than 16 countries were able to network on an informal setting last month on the beautiful desert in Dubai. The travel trade partners explored the terrain in fourwheelers, bashing through the sand dunes in Dubai. This was

followed by a grand red car-

pet welcome to an interactive

evening, which kicked off with

the famous belly dancers mes-

merising the crowd with their

dance steps, and fire danc-

We (industry) had some rough years.

ATM was not the same as it used

to be, but this year we saw a good

opportunity to network with people



ing, which kept the guests on

their toes. Speaking to

Jaal Shah, Group Managing

Director of the Travel Designer

Group, shared, "Our industry

went through tough times; we

Jaal Shah Group Managing Director Travel Designer Group

to be, but this year we saw a good opportunity to network with people; meet them in a comfortable environment after two very productive days at the show and we thought that we will choose the evening of the second day where people can come and enjoy the desert. We wanted to show them hospitality of Dubai, what Dubai tourism is all about, how people enjoy in the desert and we wanted to ensure that the weather is right and it has been very kind, it was a fantastic weather and a fantastic evening and a very good turnaround. We are

had some rough years. ATM

was not the same as it used

Shah added, "Land has been a very important part of this, they were targeting some dignitaries here and I see them here, all my friends from India and so many

glad that we could meet and

host people."

markets, today we have guests from more than 16 countries and its fantastic to be here and be able to organise this. For us, has been part of our legacy, the relationship we have it has been the learning, the most credible media in India and TravTalk Middle East has been pioneer in the industry together in Middle East and I remember launching Rezlive in 2007 in Middle East



Ali Hussain Managing Director Turning Point Tourism

We wanted to showcase the beauty of the desert in Dubai, this is our new venture, which we wanted to showcase to our partners from over 16 countries

and the first article and recognition was covered. Mr. SanJeet has been a very successful entrepreneur launching various ventures. It's been fantastic working with him and ______."

Destination management company Turning Point Tourism partnered for this experience providing their new camp grounds to host this successful evening, they put together

a great group of performers, who kept the audience mesmerised and engaged throughout the evening. Publisher of SanJeet got the travel trade on stage to showcase their talents at the end of the evening, which was enjoyed by the audience.

Ali Hussain, Managing Director, Turning Point Tourism, said, "We are happy to organise this wonderful event, thanks to Mr. Jaal Shah, who has been a great support. We wanted to showcase the beauty of the desert in Dubai, this is our new venture, a new camp, which we wanted to showcase to our partners from over 16 countries. We thought that this is the right platform to showcase what we want to offer to the expected quests and we are happy to receive the positive feedback and to see that they are enjoying themselves."

Experts discuss future of travel @ATM

Sabre hosted a panel discussion on 'The Main Trends Impacting Travel in 2023 and Beyond' at ATM last month featuring prominent industry experts from dnata and Wego. The experts shared valuable insights into the current and future landscape of the travel industry, including the emerging trends, challenges, and opportunities that are shaping the travel industry.

TT Bureau

abre Corporation sponsored the travel tech stage at the Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2023 in Dubai, providing a platform to facilitate industry discussions and debates about technology and innovation.

Andy Finkelstein, Senior Vice President of Travel Solutions at Sabre, delivered an introduction on the industry trends impacting the travel industry and transforming its landscape. He emphasized the significance of modern retailing and digital transformation in reshaping the industry's outlook, stressing the importance of collaboration among all parties to achieve common goals.

"Enabling modern retailing is an industry-wide effort. The bulk of development work needed right now for the industry to transition



Andy Finkelstein Senior Vice President Travel Solutions, Sabre

to offer and order-based retailing relies on airlines and tech providers. But agency's role is crucial too! They hold vital connections with travellers and, arguably, understand their needs and expectations the most. Many agencies are already delivering intuitive and personalized retailing experiences. They can also tap into the industry's transformation, using it as an opportunity to redefine their role in the ecosystem, streamline processes, deepen relationships with customers,



Head of Digital Solutions dnata Travel Management

and open new partnership and revenue opportunities."

Jason Hooper, Head of Digital Solutions at dnata Travel Management, the Middle East's leading corporate travel provider, highlighted the remarkable growth of corporate travel across the region. He pointed out the factors driving the growth, including mega-projects and local companies seeking expansion opportunities. He further outlined the key considerations for cor-



Dean Wicks Chief Flights Officer

porate travel managers in 2023, including cost mitigation, sustainability, traveller well-being, and duty of care.

"At dnata, we have been witnessing strong growth in corporate travel across the region," said Hooper. "Factors such as cost mitigation, sustainability, traveller well-being, and duty of care are high on the agenda for corporate travel managers in 2023. We have invested significantly in integrating NDC content into

our platforms, enabling us to enhance the corporate travel experience by providing customized recommendations and the ability to purchase meaningful add-ons."

Dean Wicks, Chief Flights Officer at Wego, shared his knowledge about the recent advancements

project focused on incorporating a natural-language voice and text interface. This interface will allow users to interact with the Wego app and ask questions to effortlessly book their flights. "The giant leap forward in generative Al and Large Language Models has opened up a whole new toolkit of technologies for us," said

The bulk of development work (in modern retailing) needed to transition to offer and order-based retailing relies on airlines and tech providers

in generative AI and Large Language Models. Wicks highlighted the transformative impact of these technologies on their products, enabling Wego to provide smarter solutions to their users. He revealed that Wego has created an AI task force to fast-track a Wicks. "We are actively working on integrating a natural-language voice and text interface into the Wego app, allowing users to communicate with our platform seamlessly. This project has gained significant momentum," he added.

MOVEMENTS

WYNN AL MARJAN ISLAND

Wynn Resorts has named **THOMAS SCHOEN** as President of Wynn Al Marjan Island, its new multi-billion-dollar integrated resort set to open in Ras Al

Khaimah in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in early 2027. In his new role, Schoen will oversee all operational aspects of the resort, the company's debut in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and its first beachfront destination. The project is being developed with local partners Marjan LLC and RAK Hospitality Holding LLC. An industry veteran with more than 30 years of luxury hospitality experience, Schoen's appointment will build on his extensive background in opening and operating prestigious integrated resorts to deliver an exceptional brand experience for the new Ras Al Khaimah property.

CHEVAL MAISON - THE PALM

Luxury hospitality group Cheval Collection has appointed HOSSAM NABIL as the General Manager of Cheval Maison - The Palm Dubai, the group's first ever

international property outside of the UK. Hossam will bring his wealth of experience and destination knowledge to lead the team at the all-apartment boutique property from Cheval Collection, located on the trunk on the iconic Palm Jumeirah. With more than 20 years of experience in hospitality, Hossam has led a number of hospitality teams across the Middle East and North Africa, including the InterContinental Hotels & Resorts Groups and IHG, Millennium Hotels & Resorts,

and Rotana Hotels. During his career, Hossam has been involved with the launch of more than 20 new four and five-star hotel openings.

HILTON RAS AL KHAIMAH BEACH RESORT

Hilton Ras Al Khaimah Beach Resort has appointed **DANIEL EBO** as its new Commercial Director with a focus on fuelling growth for its fast-expanding

portfolio. Daniel Ebo brings a mix of sales and marketing acumen to his new role. He has been at the helm of several global hospitality brands before holding the reigns at Hilton Ras Al Khaimah Beach Resort. As a commercial growth expert with strong relationships across the EMEA region, Daniel has a proven track record of delivering exceptional results in challenging markets. Well-versed in the region's cultural diversities, Ebo's strategies have been bringing incredible results for regional and global hospitality names for well over 20 years. In his new role, he is expected to create a culture of execution, accountability, and exceptional performance.

SWISSOTEL AL MUROOJ

Dubai

Swissotel Al Murooj has appointed HAROLD ALVAREZ as the new Director of Sales. Alvarez has more than 15 years of experience in the hospitality industry,

including a successful career at Holiday Inn and Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts. He most recently served as Assistant Director of Sales for Mövenpick Hotel Jumeirah Beach. In his new role, he will be responsible for leading the sales team and initiating strategies across different segments such as M!CE, Leisure, Government and Corporate. Alvarez is a customer-centric, strategic and results-driven leader, focused on developing teams to be successful whilst delivering optimum solutions to exceed business goals. Alvarez will attend roadshows and travel markets in order to expand the business and reach new markets.

WYNDHAM HOTELS & RESORTS

Türkiye, the Middle East and Africa

Wyndham Hotels & Resorts promotes **PANOS LOUPASIS** to the role of Market Managing Director for Türkiye, the Middle East and Africa. In his new role, Loupasis

will be at the helm of driving brand operations, business development, as well as owner relations and commercial leadership across the region. As an integral part of Wyndham's leadership and development team for more than 10 years, Loupasis has played a key role in driving the company's expansion across the Middle East, Eurasia and Africa region. In the Middle East and Africa region alone, Wyndham has reached approximately 70 properties. He will also be responsible for Türkiye, a key growth market for Wyndham with a portfolio of approximately 100 hotels across more than 40 cities, supported by Murat Özel, Wyndham's newly appointed Country Director of Türkiye.

TRAVEL GENIUS Middle East

Travel Genius, the innovative location intelligence platform, has appointed **ROSHNI PANDEY** as a Director for the Middle East region. The appointment

follows the recent launch of SpotQuest, the world's first solution with actionable insight for travel professionals. Pandey has spent more than 20 years delivering strategy and solutions, as a consultant, head of various functions at global MNCs, entrepreneur and board member. A firm believer in the balance between art and science, intuition and data, she has been leveraging insights, innovation and data analytics to create new products, experiences, brands, programs and lead strategy development and delivery for global brands, across markets and sectors.



FAIRMONT RIYADH HOTEL

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Fairmont Riyadh appoints ROLF LIPPUNER as its new General Manager. With an exceptional career of over three decades, Lippuner's vast experience includes recently serving as CEO and Chief

of Asset Operations at AlUla Development Company, Managing Partner and Head of Ethics at Crown & Co, and General Manager at Four Seasons Hotel Riyadh. In his new role, Lippuner will lead development, product innovation, and mentor a guest-centric team at the Fairmont Hotel Riyadh. Lippuner's focus on balancing resources

to impact visibility, guest perception, profitability, sustainability, and revenue development will be instrumental in optimizing operations and resource management at the property.

TWO SEASONS

Dubai

NIHEL BUSMAN has been appointed as the new Director of Human Resources for the Two Seasons hotel, bringing with her a wealth of experience and expertise. As a Chartered CIPD member, she has demonstrated a strong

commitment to professional development and staying upto-date with the latest industry trends and best practices. In her new role, Nihel will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of human resources management for the Two Seasons hotel, including recruitment and talent management, employee engagement and development, and ensuring compliance with relevant employment laws and regulations. She has 14 years of experience in the hospitality industry and

is committed to fostering a positive work culture that promotes employee wellbeing, productivity, and growth.

Travel Genius also appointed **JAGDISH SIDHU** as a Director of the Middle East region. Over the next few weeks, the company is planning to announce a

number of innovative products that are set to disrupt the Travel and F&B industries by bringing together Al-powered technology and a proprietary database of millions of micro-location data points to create accurate insights. Sidhu is a business process design, transformation, information security and governance expert with over 20 years of experience across the education, media, subscription, and telecommunications industries. Having worked in China and India for extended periods gives him a unique ability to understand diverse perspectives and ability to work within agile networks.

JUMEIRAH MARSA AL ARAB

Dubai

Jumeirah Group has named HARUN DURSUN Managing Director of Jumeirah Marsa Al Arab, its latest iconic destination that is set to be another incredible addition to the Dubai skyline. Building

on a rich background in luxury hospitality spanning over 20 years working with exclusive ultra-luxury destinations, Dursun will oversee all aspects of the new luxury lifestyle resort, which includes a striking, architecturally designed hotel, superyacht marina, exclusive residences and a wealth of unique dining and lifestyle experiences. His appointment comes at a time when the company is actively identifying new assets to expand its presence in key locations and gateway destinations around the world. Dursun joins Jumeirah Group with an impressive track record.

INTERCONTINENTAL DURRAT AL RIYADH

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The soon-to-open InterContinental Durrat Al Riyadh Resort & Spa has announced the appointment of MARC REISSINGER as General Manager

of the resort. In his new position, Marc will oversee the refurbishment and relaunch of InterContinental Durrat AL Riyadh, whilst leading the team in delivering operational excellence and innovative quest experiences in the urban resort. Marc brings more than 30 years of hospitality experience in worldwide luxury hospitality businesses and resorts with senior leadership positions in international hotel chains across the globe. Located at the northern gate of Riyadh, the resort resides on 154,000 sqm of a lush green oasis with a lagoon and exclusive cascades for guests.

Travel Genius also appointed DAVID KING as a Director for the Middle East region. King has more than 30 years of international marketing

experience gained across developed and emerging markets, working in advertising and strategic consulting. His hospitality consulting roles have focused on Sales & Marketing Strategy, Loyalty, Market Entry, Brand Development, New Hotel Opening and Partnerships. King has also run over 25 sales and marketing positioning workshops for some of the world's largest and most iconic hotels, which have given him first-hand experience of the importance of local insights for planning successful





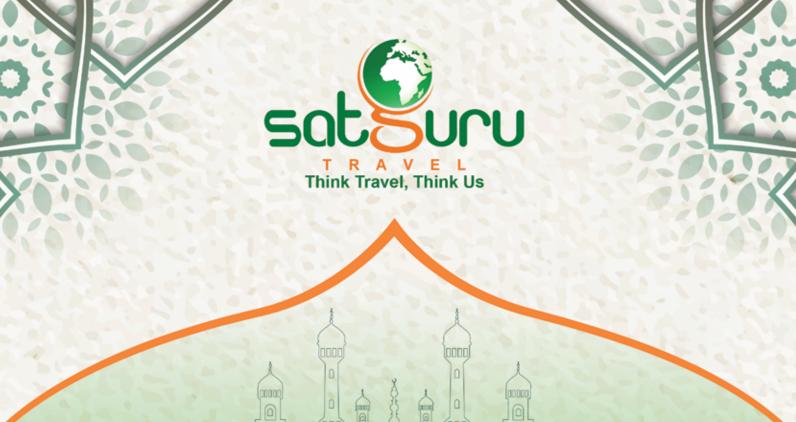
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