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TRAVTALK



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Sharjah's new tourism drive @



Arabian Travel Market, the much-awaited event of the year, will be held at the Dubai World Trade Centre from 1-4 May 2023. More than 2,000 exhibitors and 34,000 visitors from 150 countries are expected to attend this year's event, which focuses on its journey towards net zero objective for 2030. **Khalid Jasim Al Midfa**, Chairman, Sharjah Tourism and Commerce Development Authority, shares his view.



His Excellency Khalid Jasim Al Midfa
Chairman, Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority

TT Bureau

The Sharjah Tourism and Commerce Development Authority is proud to participate in the Arabian Travel Market 2023, a significant event for the global tourism industry. Our aim is to showcase latest developments and future plans for the industry while promoting the responsible and sustainable tourism practices that we are fully committed to. We look forward to

Our aim is to showcase latest developments and future plans for the industry while promoting the responsible and sustainable tourism

collaborating with other industry players, sharing our experiences, and seeking innovative solutions to promote responsible and

sustainable tourism practices with confidence. The event's theme, 'Working Towards Net Zero,' is particularly relevant and timely as

we aspire to create a sustainable future for travel and tourism. We are excited to showcase Sharjah's tourism potential across various sectors, in line with the vision of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah, as we travel our own journey to net-zero. We believe that this year's event will provide us with an ideal platform to connect with key stakeholders. D

TravTalk goes Carbon Neutral

Our focus at **TRAVTALK** over the past few years have been on sustainability and reducing carbon emissions in the industry. In our journey towards net zero carbon emissions, we, as a responsible B2B media organization, launch our first Carbon Neutral Edition while pledging to make its operations carbon neutral.

TT Bureau

The travel industry has long been associated with glamour and adventure, but it is also responsible for a significant amount of carbon emissions.

With global travel on the rise, it is more important than ever for the industry to address its carbon footprint. According to a report by IATA, the aviation industry accounted for 2.4 per cent of global CO₂ emissions in 2018. While this



may seem like a small percentage, it is important to remember

that emissions from aviation are increasing at a much faster rate

than other sectors, with a projected 300 per cent increase by 2050. The travel industry as a whole, including aviation, cruise ships, and ground transportation, accounts for roughly 8 per cent of global carbon emissions. This is



Sumeera Bahl
Director, TravTalk

Contd. on page 5 ▶



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TURKISH AIRLINES

Emirates expects robust summer

Emirates continues to get back in full force to pre-COVID levels resuming flights to many destinations across the globe. With its new livery and strategy to be environmentally friendly, Emirates will be looking at many such future initiatives. **Adil Al Ghaith**, Senior Vice President, Commercial Operations, Gulf, Middle East and Central Asia, shares more with .

 Shehara Rizly

The inaugural sustainable fuelled flight made a great impact in the industry, could you share with us about the strategies further to be taken this year in going ahead with sustainability?

Sustainability and the environmental future of the planet are issues that are important for Emirates. Our longstanding efforts have been and continue to be rooted in tangible, meaning-

sibly and preserving wildlife and habitats. We are also deeply aware of our position in the industry to advocate for change and are actively working with a broad range of stakeholders and partners to maximise the impact of our existing and future initiatives.

When will you start more flights with sustainable aviation fuel?

Emirates' first flight powered by SAF blended with jet fuel was in 2017, operating from



Adil Al Ghaith
Senior Vice President, Commercial Operations,
Gulf, Middle East and Central Asia, Emirates

lary operate from Paris, Lyon and Oslo with SAF. Emirates strongly supports the development of a viable commercial supply chain of SAF, and the exciting opportunities it provides us to deliver on our sustainability objectives, along with its measurable benefits to the environment. If it can be produced at scale and sold at commercially viable prices in the next few years, our hope would be for SAF to make up a substantial portion of our total fuel supply in the future.



Are there any new routes planned for this year?

In 2023, Emirates will focus on re-starting the last few pre-pandemic points in our network. We are experiencing robust demand in almost every pocket of our network, and where operationally possible, we are boosting frequencies and adding capacity by reintroducing our flagship A380, which now flies to more than 40 destinations. We will also continue our work with other airline partners to connect our customers to even more cities around the world. We also have a few focus areas and destinations we long wanted to serve on our

radar. We will launch new routes or deploy flights to serve market demand, and this is dependent on the right operational and commercial conditions. We will make official announcements around new routes when the time is right.

How will the summer operations be?

We expect a robust summer with healthy loads already forecasted in the coming months. We have already boosted operations by 31 per cent (total ASKMs) since the start of the last financial year and we have further plans to ramp up capacity in our summer schedule

as quickly as operationally feasible. In the coming months, established routes to Europe, Australia and Africa will be served with more Emirates flights, while in East Asia, more cities are seeing route restarts as well as A380 ramp ups.

Will you be focusing on any new codeshares?

We have taken great strides in the last year to forge strong partnerships across the travel eco-system. This includes new partnerships with airlines and enhancing existing codeshare and interline partnerships to offer more choice for travellers. These airlines include: United, Air Canada, Garuda Indonesia, Philippine Airlines, Gulf Air, Royal Air Maroc and others. We are also already in exploratory discussions with new airline partners. Through our code-share agreements, we offer our customers truly global connectivity across six continents. .

We are also deeply aware of our position in the industry to advocate for change and are actively working with a broad range of stakeholders

ful actions across three focus areas that form our environmental framework: reducing emissions, consuming respon-

Chicago O'Hare airport on a Boeing 777. We have also up-lifted SAF for our flights from Stockholm and today we regu-






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Sustainability in hospitality

We all have a responsibility to take care of our planet and people, and there are so many processes in hotels that can be vastly improved in regard to sustainability. This includes monitoring and analyzing energy and water consumption, having a recycling program, and using eco-friendly cleaning products among other things.

When I founded Aleph Hospitality seven years ago, I was determined to create a sustainable development program for the hotels under our management in the Middle East and Africa. I sin-

Environment and Sustainability. The program is based on five pillars: management approach, energy & water consumption, waste management, product selection and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) & solidar-

We have also made it mandatory for all hotels to monitor and analyze energy and water consumption, to have a recycling program in place, to use eco-friendly clean-

manitarian projects is the group's management agreement for three Boma hotels in Kenya, whereby we donate 5 per cent of our fees to the Kenya Red Cross. We are

At Ramada by Wyndham Addis in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, we are planting trees, outfitting the hotel with eco lighting and a water management system as well as doing much needed community clean-ups. At Century Park Kigali in Rwanda, we have banned all plastic cups, introduced an extensive recycling program and switched to straws made of rice. At The Boma Nairobi in Kenya, we are currently driving a Go Green competition in which each department will be submitting its plans to be more sustainable. Furthermore, we are growing an organic kitchen garden, recycling water bottles as well as donating and offering cleaning services to a children's home and a local hospital. At the Best Western Plus Westlands in Kenya, the hotel has switched to low-flow showers, introduced a recycling program as well as started buying locally sourced products. At two island resorts in Zanzibar, Hakuna Majiwe and Moja Tuu, we

have completely eliminated the use of plastic bottles. We are also planting trees, cleaning beaches, installing solar panels as well as doing regular Friday donations to various charities.

All of these endeavours offer a promising view of a better future. See, we are right on track to reaching our goal of a portfolio of 50 hotels in the Middle East and Africa by 2026.

Aleph CARES is based on 5 pillars: mgmt approach, energy & water consumption, waste mgmt, product selection and CSR & solidarity

cerely believe that we all have a responsibility to take care of our planet and people, and there are so many processes in hotels which can be vastly improved in regard to sustainability. So, I was thrilled when we were finally able to launch a well thought-out and comprehensive program in 2022, named Aleph CARES. In this context, CARES stands for Community, Aleph, Responsible,

ity. All new team members at our hotels receive training in Aleph CARES as part of their induction. Under the Aleph CARES program, each hotel in our portfolio is obliged to appoint an Aleph Cares Pioneer who is passionate about and responsible for raising awareness of sustainability and finding solutions in his/ her hotel as well as able to educate team members in best practices.



ing products, to promote locally sourced food in the restaurants and to create a plan and take action around CSR. In addition, as of 2023, we are setting measurable sustainable objectives for all our General Managers. On a corporate level, an example of Aleph Hospitality engaging with hu-

also committed to raising guest awareness at all the hotels under our management, so guests know how they can do their part to help during their stay.

Across our portfolio of hotels, we already have notable examples in place across the five pillars.



Bani Haddad
Founder & Managing Director of Aleph Hospitality
(The views expressed are solely of the author.)

Modern retailing & its impact on travel

Sabre hosts a panel discussion on 3 May 2023 at the Tech-stage at Arabian Travel Market (ATM) to delve a little deeper into this topic. The session will be joined by **Jason Hooper**, Head of Digital Solutions at dnata, and **Dean Wicks**, Chief Flights Officer at Wego, where they will discuss modern retailing, what it means to different industry players, and the main trends in 2023 and beyond.

TT Bureau

Speaking with **Andy Finkelstein**, Senior Vice President, Global Agency Sales and Delivery, Sabre shared, "Three years on from the start of the pandemic, the travel industry seems to be transforming on so many fronts. Travelers' expectations have amplified since the pandemic. They are now increasingly expecting relevant, personalized, and flawless customer experiences from all travel players. This is fueling much of the technology transformation we're seeing across the industry. Also, operational and economical challenges and opportunities – such as labor shortages and fierce competition – are changing the landscape."

On the industry responses to these challenges, Finkelstein said: "We see travel companies try-



Andy Finkelstein
Senior Vice President
Global Agency Sales and Delivery, Sabre

ing to respond to these changes based on their own commercial priorities, perspectives, and resources, but these individual efforts don't seem to be driving the collective change that the industry needs. The travel ecosystem needs to work collectively and put the traveler at the heart of all players' decision-making process to address the dynamics and deliver meaningful experiences. Travel retailing is a necessity that the industry needs to em-



Dean Wicks
Chief Flights Officer
Wego

brace, but we all need to row in the same direction."

Finkelstein talked about modern retailing and the role of travel



Abdul-Razzaq Iyer
VP, Sabre Travel Network
Middle East

agencies in this industry evolution: "Modern retailing is an industry-wide effort. The bulk of development work needed right now for the industry to transition



Jason Hooper
Head
Digital Solutions at dnata

to offer- and-order based retailing relies on airlines and tech providers. However, other stakeholders across the travel ecosystem are also considering how to become modern retailers. We recognize that the travel agency's role is vital. According to a PhocusWright report, agencies and OTAs are expected to process more than 40% of gross airline bookings in the US only this year, representing hundreds of millions of customer interactions. They hold vital con-

nections with travelers 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, and open new partnership and revenue opportunities."

On Sabre's role in the modern retailing evolution, Finkelstein said: "As a leading technology provider for the global travel industry, Sabre is committed to developing technology that can add value to all stakeholders – suppliers, retailers, buyers, and other technology providers – to enable modern retailing and help move the industry forward. Ultimately, our goal is for this to improve the traveler experience." 

The travel ecosystem needs to work collectively and put the traveller at the heart of decision-making process to deliver meaningful experiences

Carbon Neutral TravTalk

► Contd. from page 1

a significant amount, especially when considering the impact of climate change on our planet. Thankfully, there are steps being taken to address this issue. The aviation industry has made significant progress in developing more fuel-efficient planes, with some airlines even experimenting with sustainable biofuels. Additionally, carbon offset programs allow travellers to voluntarily contribute to reducing their carbon footprint. However, there is still much more that needs to be done.

TTB, a leading B2B travel, tourism and hospitality magazine and the industry's leading voice,

zine's publishers to calculate the carbon emissions that result from the printing and publication of the magazine issue (the product carbon footprint) using a Product Lifecycle approach.

In a joint statement, **Sanith de S. Wijeyeratne**, Director, CCC, stated, "With the impacts of climate change more evident than ever, the travel sector is under increasing pressure to adhere to more sustainable practices. Jointly our two organizations have both the domain expertise as well as the reach within the industry to jointly advocate for a more sustainable roadmap



Sanith de S. Wijeyeratne
Director, CCC

oxide Equivalents (tCo2e), CCC will retire the corresponding number of registered carbon credits to compensate for the unavoidable emissions. The certification was issued by the independent certification company – The Sustainable Future Group, (<https://www.sustainablefuturegroup.com>) in accordance to its ZeroCarbon protocol.

Sumeera Bahl, Director, **TTB**, stated, "Travel is a wonderful experience that enriches lives, but it is important to acknowledge the impact it has on our planet. We believe that working together to reduce our carbon footprint, we can ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy the beauty of our planet just as we do." 📌

We have both the domain expertise and the reach within the industry to advocate for a more sustainable roadmap towards a net-zero future

becomes the first magazine in the industry to become carbon neutral with the help of South Asia's leading sustainability consulting company, The Climate & Conservation Consortium. To achieve this, CCC worked with the Maga-

zine towards a net-zero future. And this is what we believe our partnership could bring to the table."

Once the emissions had been quantified in Tons of Carbon Di-

Doha: Arab's tourism capital

The Arab Tourism Organization declared Doha as the Arab Tourism Capital for 2023, in its 25th session at the Arab League General Secretariat Headquarters in Cairo, Egypt.

TT Bureau

Commenting on the occasion, **His Excellency Akbar Al Baker**, Chairman, Qatar Tourism and Chief Executive, Qatar Airways Group, said: "It is an honour to see Doha being named as the Arab Tourism Capital 2023 by the Arab Tourism Organization. One of the industry's most prestigious accolades, the Arab Tourism Capital award is a testament of our exceptional achievements in leisure and hospitality. I am proud of our city's tireless efforts that have culminated in this honourable recognition and look forward to further cementing Doha's position as one of the world's most sought-after leisure destinations."

The session was chaired by Jordanian Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, Nayef Fayez, amongst other prominent Arab leaders. Cities were evaluated based on a selection of criteria, including tourism management, infrastructure and resources, safety and security, diversity of tourism ac-

tivities, and preservation and protection of the environment.

By continuing to host internationally renowned events, investing in hospitality offerings and expanding into more specialised areas of tourism, Qatar is in a perfect position to meet its goal of welcoming

ism Day (February 25), and was attended by tourism ministers, ambassadors and prominent leaders from the nations that are represented by the Arab Tourism Organization, as well as Visit Qatar's brand ambassadors Nasser Al-Attiyah and Mutaz Barsham. In addition to an official



six million visitors a year by 2030. Held under the patronage of His Excellency the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz Al-Thani at the Katara Cultural Village, the event took place on Arab Tour-

key handover ceremony, which saw Doha being crowned the title Arab Tourism Capital for 2023, the event also featured spectacular performances by Dana Alfardan, as well as a Arda and fireworks show. 📌



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Travel maestros of Qatar

Tawfeeq Travel Group, understanding the needs of the travellers, has set up key segments to ensure that every aspect of the industry is covered under their robust leadership. From corporate travel management to leisure, business, MICE and incentive groups, adventure and sports tourism, medical and wellness tourism, as well as VIP movements are some of the key areas to be mentioned.

 Shehara Rizly

Tawfeeq Travel is a leading corporate travel management company in the region. At Arabian Travel Market 2023, they will be exhibiting under the Qatar Tourism pavilion under their prowess as a travel curator.

Rehan Ali Syed, CEO, Tawfeeq Travel, shared, "For the region, ATM is a very important networking event, under one roof you get to connect with various suppliers dealing in Technology, Bed Banks, Hoteliers, Tourism Boards. Basically, it is a one-stop shop for travel related service providers and important arena for all the countries to showcase their projects and developments."

This year will be the first time that all borders across the globe will be opened to meet expectations are running higher than before.



Rehan Ali Syed
CEO, Tawfeeq Travel

the region, as well as to engage with tech companies to understand what is new in their space and how can we benefit out of it."

Tawfeeq Travel's main goal is to create memorable experiences for their guests, especially in the inbound sector, and help them discover the hidden gems in Qatar. The team of travel curators ensures that every guest who


are able to curate bespoke and exclusive experiences to their discerning guests.

Arabian Travel Market is the perfect networking opportunity for the travel trade, especially this year which marks the pledge to be zero carbon within the next few years is a leap towards a new future. Sustainability today is slowly becoming a way of life, as governments across the globe initiate their own programs for people to be more responsible about their environment, to ensure that each person does his or her part for a better tomorrow. Corporate sector has already demonstrated changes and adopted sustainability in their agenda. Syed said, "I feel within the corporates, there are several initiatives on how to reduce the negative impact from travel, more and more corporate are working diligently on their CSR policy. However, if you look at individual travellers, they need to



be apprised and educated more on this subject."

GenZ travellers are now propping up more than before, as they now have the freedom to select their destinations for vacation, short retreats or getaways. This generation thinks rather different from the generation before and most importantly they care about the people and the planet. They are willing to go that extra mile

to ensure that the whole world is helped, no matter what they need to undergo. In other words, they have become responsible travellers. Syed concludes, "GenZ travellers are very conscious about the environment, they want to have the best offers that covers their travel plan, along with the sustainable travel experience. This is a generation which is forward thinking for the betterment of society and its people." 

ATM is a one-stop shop for travel related service providers and important arena for all the countries to showcase projects & developments

Syed explained, "We will be focusing on promoting our DMC – Tawfeeq Holidays, along with our B2B product – ezytrip.com. Our objective is to reach out to potential customers and tie up with other service providers across

signs up with them will leave with a wealth of knowledge before they depart to their destination. Personalisation, especially in the Middle Eastern region, is a key trait. Tawfeeq Travel's expertise also lie here, where they



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Satguru showcases its unique offerings

Venturing into new markets over the past few years, Satguru has made its mark across the globe with its 80 plus offices. At Arabian Travel Market, they will further showcase their unique offerings, expertise and personalised experiences. With their stronghold in Dubai, they will have the opportunity to further demonstrate their prowess to the many expected clients from across the world.

 Shehara Rizly

Speaking to  about what they will showcase this year at the Arabian Travel Market (ATM), **JVR Fernando**, Chief Commercial Officer, Satguru shares, "Our key point is to showcase our agency's expertise and knowledge of the travel industry, and provide travellers with personalized and unique experiences that they cannot find elsewhere. **Destinations:** Highlight the popular destinations that our agency offers and showcase the unique experiences that travellers can enjoy there. **Staycations:** Showcase the various staycation options that we offer, such as



JVR Fernando
Chief Commercial Officer Satguru

hotels, resorts, apartments, villas, and more. **Activities and Tours:** Promote the various activities and tours that our agency offers, such as adventure tours, sightseeing tours, cultural tours, food tours, and more. Highlight the unique experiences that travellers can have

Our key point is to showcase our expertise and knowledge of the travel industry, and provide travellers with personalized and unique experiences

through these activities. **Travel Packages:** Create and promote customized travel packages that cater to different types of travellers, such as families, honeymooners, adventure-seekers, and more. **Technology:** Demonstrate how our agency uses technology to enhance the travel experience for our clients, such as online booking systems, mobile apps, virtual reality tours, and more. **Partnerships:** Highlight any partnerships or collaborations that our agency has with other suppliers, airlines, hotels, and more. This can help to establish our agency's credibility and reputation within the industry."

Sustainability has created a new niche in the industry. Fernando reiterates, "Yes, sustainability in travel has created a new way of looking at business. In the past, the travel industry was focused primarily on profits and growth, with little consideration for the environmental and social

impacts of tourism. Many travel companies are now incorporating sustainable practices into their business models. This includes reducing their carbon footprint, supporting local communities and economies, protecting natural and cultural heritage sites, and promoting

may be priced higher due to the additional costs involved in implementing sustainable practices or in supporting local communities and conservation efforts. For example, eco-lodges or sustainable hotels may have higher rates than conventional hotels due to

because they value the positive impact they have on the environment," explained Fernando.

He said, "Many travellers are willing for sustainable travel experiences because they value the positive impact it has on the environment and local communities. Sustainable travel experiences often provide travellers with a deeper and more meaningful travel experience, and they feel good knowing that their travel choices are making a positive difference."

Over the years, Satguru has been reaching out to every single continent in the world. So what will be the company's next big move.

"We are reaching Australia and plans are in place. Hopefully we will reach that milestone this year. As for summer, we see the hike in bookings leisure and VFR to Asia as well as Europe," he informed. ➔

Sustainability in travel has created a new way of looking at business. In the past, the travel industry was focused primarily on profits

responsible tourism practices." The biggest challenge in sustainability is the price point. If travellers are willing to pay extra for sustainable travel?

"It depends on the specific product or service being offered. In some cases, sustainable travel experiences

the extra cost of implementing eco-friendly practices or sourcing local and organic products. In many cases, sustainable travel experiences do not cost more or may even be cheaper than conventional travel experiences. Additionally, travellers are often willing to pay extra for sustainable travel experiences



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Dubai greets 674k medical tourists in '22

Dubai saw remarkable growth in medical tourism in 2022 with 674,000 medical tourists spending AED992 million during the year, an increase of AED262 million from 2021. According to a report, 39 per cent of the medical tourists who came to Dubai were from Asian countries, followed by 22 per cent from Europe and the CIS, and 21 per cent from Arab and GCC countries.

TT Bureau

His Excellency Awadh Seghayer Al Ketbi, Director General of the Dubai Health Authority, said Dubai's ability to provide high-quality patient-centered medical care has accelerated its growth as an Arab, regional and international healthcare destination. Dubai's strategic location, safety, exceptional infrastructure and world-leading amenities add to the factors that have raised its status as a medical tourism hub, he noted.

The three specialities that saw the highest number of medical tourists were dermatology (31 per



cent) dentistry (24 per cent) and gynaecology (18 per cent). Medical tourists from Asia, Europe and Africa, including from GCC and Arab countries also visited Dubai for treatment in the fields of or-

thopaedics, plastic surgery, ophthalmology, fertility treatments, hospitalisation and recovery.

Al Ketbi said that Dubai's vision to provide a world-class healthcare model and an integrated medical care system, which offers cutting-edge facilities, advanced technologies, smart solutions and state of the art treatment methods, as well as highly-qualified professionals across all fields of medicine, has driven its global competitiveness in the sector.

Highlighting the fact that the healthcare sector plays an important role in enhancing the quality of life of people, Al Ketbi said the Dubai Health Authority has adopted a clear strategy to expand the role of this vital sector in raising the welfare of the community. DHA is committed to attracting investments in the sector by collaborating with prestigious international healthcare institutions to establish facilities that can meet growing treatment needs across all specialities.

Regions from where Dubai attracted highest number of medical tourists in key specialities

Top three regions for dermatology services	
❖ Asian countries	35%
❖ European countries	26%
❖ Arab and GCC countries	20%
Top three regions for dentistry	
❖ Arab and GCC countries	37%
❖ Asia	29%
❖ Europe	19%
Top three regions for gynaecology services	
❖ Asia	54%
❖ Europe	18%
❖ Arab and GCC countries	13%
Top three regions for orthopaedic surgery	
❖ Asian countries	36%
❖ European countries	23%
❖ Arab and GCC countries	23%
Top three regions for plastic surgery	
❖ Arab and GCC countries	37%
❖ Europe	28%
❖ Asia	19%
Top three regions for ophthalmology services	
❖ Asia	33%
❖ Arab and GCC countries	27%
❖ Africa	17%

Dubai's strategic location, safety, good infra and world-leading amenities add to the factors that have raised its status as a medical tourism hub

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offers unique experiences

A guide to the hidden gems of the emirate's sustainable destinations tapping everything from eco-tourism to adventure and culture.

TT Bureau

Discover the many facets of Sharjah - the ultimate destination that caters to every type of traveller. Immerse yourself in the rich culture and heritage, embark on eco-tourism adventures, indulge in world-class hospitality, enjoy exciting sports and outdoor activities, explore the thriving arts and

East Coast, Sharjah offers endless opportunities for exploration and relaxation. No matter what your preference is, the emirate has something for everyone.

Eco-tourism at the heart of it all

For those seeking a more sustainable and eco-conscious travel experience, this emirate has even more to offer. Eco-



From the bustling city centre to the scenic East Coast, Sharjah offers endless opportunities for exploration. Emirates has something for everyone

entertainment scene, take the family on unforgettable outings, or marvel at the stunning wildlife and nature reserves. From the bustling city centre to the scenic

tourism and sustainable travel practices are a key aspect of the experience here, with opportunities to explore the area's natural wonders in a

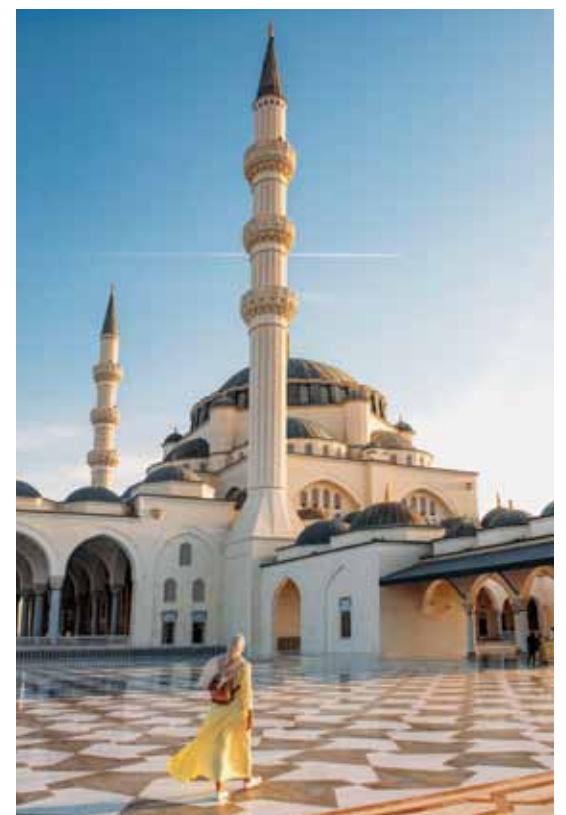
responsible way. Whether it's hiking through the stunning mountains, exploring Sharjah's incredibly diverse wildlife, taking a guided tour of local protected areas, or enjoying locally sourced and organic cuisine,

there are a plenty of options to satisfy your wanderlust while also minimizing your impact on the environment.

Landscapes & biodiversity
From beaches and mangroves

to nature reserves and wildlife sanctuaries, Sharjah has something for nature lovers

and adventure enthusiasts. Kalba Beach is a secluded and pristine beach located in the



eastern region of Sharjah, known for its clear waters, soft sand, and stunning views of the Arabian Gulf. Al Noor Island is a unique destination that blends art, nature, and technology with several gardens, including a butterfly garden, a sensory garden, and a sculpture garden. Visitors can take a guided tour of the Wasit Wetland Reserve and learn about the importance of wetlands in preserving biodiversity. Sharjah Safari is a nature reserve that is home to

tions in the emirate include the Heart of Sharjah, Sharjah Fort (Al Hisn), Mleiha Archaeological Centre, Sharjah Classic Car Museum, Sharjah Art Museum, Sharjah Discovery Centre, and Sharjah Natural History and Botanical Museum.

Adventure & sports

From sandy dunes to crystal clear waters, Sharjah offers an array of adrenaline rousing sports activities for adventure seekers on multiple terrains

Eco-tourism and sustainable travel practices are a key aspect of the experience here, with opportunities to explore the area’s natural wonders

several species of animals, including Arabian oryx, gazelles, and cheetahs. Visitors can take a safari tour of the reserve and learn about the importance of conservation and preservation of wildlife.

Culture & heritage

Sharjah is a treasure trove of cultural and heritage destinations, offering visitors a chance to learn about the history and traditions of the region, with a wide array of museums and destinations that cater to all interests, including the Sharjah

- land, coastal, or lake waters, and even in air. Dive into the depths of Khorfakkan’s coral reefs, paddle through mangroves on a kayak, or go deep-sea fishing on the eastern coast of the emirate. The UIM F1H20 World Championship is yet another annual gathering event for water sports enthusiasts to visit Sharjah.

Visitors can also experience exciting air sports such as parasailing, mountain trekking, skydiving, zip lining, and ropes courses at Sky Adventures of Shurooq. Horse



other locations where families can delight in spending quality time together.

Shopping destinations

Offering a diverse range of shopping destinations that cater to every taste and budget, Sharjah is a shopper’s paradise where visitors can choose between traditional souks or modern malls, each providing a unique shopping experience. The Central Souq is a traditional market, and a famous landmark known for its Islamic architec-

vironmentally friendly practices. Sharjah Farmers’ Market, Manbat, features a range of locally grown, organic produce and artisanal goods, all sourced from nearby farms that prioritise sustainable agricultural practices. The market also offers a selection of handmade crafts and natural skincare products, all made by local artisans.

Sharjah is a destination that offers something for every kind of traveller. Whether you are a culture enthusiast, adventure seeker,

Museum of Islamic Civilization, which is a must-visit destination for those interested in Islamic art and culture, the Sharjah Heritage Museum, which offers visitors a glimpse into the traditional way of life in Sharjah, featuring exhibits on the traditional Bedouin lifestyle, including crafts, music, and dance, and the Sharjah Calligraphy Museum, which has a long and rich history in the Islamic world.

enthusiasts can indulge in equestrian and racing activities at Sharjah Equestrian & Racing Club. Thrill-seekers can delve into sand sports such as dune bashing, sandboarding, and quad biking at the popular Mleiha dunes, adding

a unique experience to their adventure itinerary.

Family & children

Sharjah boasts a variety of family-friendly destinations that provide a remarkable

selection of activities and entertainment options suitable for all ages. These include the Al Majaz Waterfront, Sharjah Aquarium, Sharjah Discovery Centre, Rain Room, Al Montazah Parks, and numerous

Sharjah is a treasure trove of cultural and heritage destinations, offering visitors a chance to learn about the history and traditions of the region

Visitors can also enjoy other culture and heritage destinations such as House of Wisdom and iconic mosques, as well as historic forts and towers. Some of the not-to-be-missed loca-



ture and noticeable blue tiles. Souq Al Arsah, one of the oldest markets in the UAE, provides a glimpse into Sharjah’s rich cultural heritage, with traditional products such as textiles, pottery, and spices.

Sharjah’s sustainable shopping options cater to conscious shoppers who prioritise en-

nature lover, or just looking for a fun family vacation, Sharjah has it all. With its focus on sustainability, the emirate is paving the way for responsible tourism practices that preserve natural resources and promote economic growth. So, if you are planning a trip to the UAE, make sure to add Sharjah to your list of must-visit destinations. 📍

30k visitors attend Dubai Int'l Boat Show

Dubai International Boat Show 2023, the Middle East's largest and most established leisure marine and lifestyle marine event, concluded successfully attracting more than 30,000 visitors and industry players from across the globe to the Dubai Harbour for five days of demonstrations, displays, seminars, launches and workshops.



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dnata rides on increasing demand

John Bevan, CEO – dnata Travel Group, shares with **TRAVEL** the group's growth over the past year compared to the pre-COVID period and expresses hope that the trend will continue over 2023. Some of the key criteria to determine this progression will be the average booking value, length of stay and, of course, the rise of long-haul travel.

Shehara Rizly

What are the projections for the year from the dnata Travel Group?

We represent the travel division of dnata, one of the world's largest air and travel services providers, with businesses that cover the full spectrum of the industry. Following on from a positive year of travel in 2022, we anticipate growth in all business areas to continue in 2023, reaching – or surpassing – pre-COVID levels.

Already reflecting such trends, as an example, our UK travel brands reported an overall increase in travel sales of 53 per cent in January 2023 compared to the same time last year, during the 'peak' season for UK travel bookings. From 1 January 2023 until date, continued growth has been driven by rising demand in Asia, Indonesia and Australia, and a resurgent USA – the number one destination booked to date across our UK brands. Significant year on year growth across average booking value, bookings and length of stay indicate demand for long-haul travel is on a par with levels not seen since early 2020.

Will you be looking at new source markets this year?

We aim to expand the source markets of our travel businesses, including the UAE's leading destination management company (DMC) Arabian Adventures, and one of the world's fastest growing leisure bed banks, Yalago, to strengthen our product offering to align with the Dubai Tourism Strategy

to attract 25 million tourists by 2025. In 2023, a core focus for Yalago is to expand its hotel portfolio with a more extensive range across European cities, the Asia-Pacific region, and the Americas, in particular the USA



John Bevan
CEO – dnata Travel Group

and Brazil. This will extend the reach of these properties to a wider global audience as travel to these areas continues to grow in popularity. The company is also expanding its reach with global, in-market teams to

From 1 January 2023 until date, continued growth has been driven by rising demand in Asia, Indonesia and Australia, and a resurgent USA

enhance its localised knowledge and expertise, recently appointing business development managers in the USA, Switzerland, and Spain, as well as expanding the Dubai-based team.

By developing Arabian Adventures' offering as a DMC and improving its award-winning desert safari and city tour experiences, we aim to further



enhance Dubai's position as an attractive destination for global travellers. In 2023, we are building on the success of our stopover programs, emphasising Dubai's position as more than just a beach destination – high-

ventures, Gold Medal and Destination Asia, will have a presence at most travel trade fairs around the world this year, while closer to home we look forward to welcoming our clients to join us at Arabian Travel Market for 2023, as we build on the recovery reflected in the success of the event last year.

How do you see travellers responding to sustainable tourism? Where exactly are GenZ or younger travellers as per the sustainability issues are concerned?

Traveller requirements have changed across the board, with more mindful decisions being made. Sustainable choices will impact the future of travel, and it is great to see the amount of work being done across the industry. At dnata, we are committed to investing US \$100 million in green operations to further enhance environmental efficiency across our global network.

to make their own choices on sustainable travel.

Now that Covid intensity has declined, what different trends do you see in terms of travellers? How do they book? Is it still last minute? Or has this changed? Where do they want to go? What do they want to do? What has changed?

Travel is trending. For dnata Travel in the UAE, we are already witnessing a 17 per cent increase in travel bookings across the summer period in 2023 so far compared to the same period in 2022, as travellers are booking further in advance to secure their perfect trip. Our travel experts are also reporting increases in length of stay, and

in 2023 so far from the UAE include Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Maldives, UK, Mauritius, and Turkey – with Italy and USA also growing in popularity, particularly across the summer holiday period.

What or how will you say dnata's role will be for this new era of tourism? At present every organisation has put forward a set of different guidelines and marketing initiatives to suit the current or more relevant needs of the traveller?

We continue to evolve to meet the needs of our global customer base. The beauty of the dnata Travel Group is that we are available across all industry verticals and touchpoints – with travel stores and

Our B2B brands, including Yalago, Arabian Adventures, Gold Medal and Destination Asia, will have a presence at most travel trade fairs this year

in average booking values, as customers look to extend their trips and opt to book fuller holiday packages, including hotels, flights, transfers, in-destination experiences, and insurance. We are also finding in this part of the world that face to face bookings are popular, with customers preferring to make a travel booking in-person at their local dnata Travel store to seek the advice of the travel experts on-hand.

dnata Travel's top international destinations for leisure travellers

solutions online and offline, and 24/7 travel expertise and support. Through our 60-plus years of experience and global partnerships, we work with hotels, resorts and other travel partners to offer global travellers incredible, unrivalled travel content, supplied directly to the end-consumer or out to other operators, all over the world. This extends the impact of the dnata Travel Group, as we support the travel industry in many different ways, on a local and a global scale. 



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Sustainability: what's on GCC trade's mind

Travel curators and tourism boards have been actively promoting sustainability over the past few years. Especially in the GCC, the governments are making extra efforts to ensure that sustainability becomes a way of life. **TRAVEL** takes a look at a cross section of travel agents/ curators and tourism boards on their take on conforming to sustainable travel and tourism.



Jamal Abdulnasser
CEO, Cuzmo Travel

How you as a travel curator/ tourism board share the importance of sustainable travel and tourism?

As a travel curator, it is important to share the importance of sustainable travel and tourism by promoting sustainable travel options and practices. This can include educating travellers about reducing waste, conserving energy, and minimizing their impact on the environment. Sustainable tourism goes hand-in-hand with localisation. Therefore, collaborating with local stakeholders to promote sustainable tourism practices is vitally effective.

Since Europe is one of the key destinations for sustainable travel, how does this impact the GCC region travellers?

Europe is considered a key destination for sustainable travel, with many destinations promoting eco-friendly and responsible tourism practices. This has a positive impact on GCC region travellers, who are increasingly interested in sustainable travel. By promoting sustainable travel options and highlighting destinations that prioritize responsible tourism practices, GCC travellers can enjoy a more fulfilling travel experience.

The young GCC travellers seek sustainable travel/ tourism more than the other generation travellers? Comments on this.

It is true that the younger generation of GCC travellers, particularly Gen Z, are more interested in sustainable travel and tourism than other generations. This is due to their greater awareness of environmental issues and a desire to travel responsibly. They are likely to seek out destinations and accommodations that prioritize sustainable practices and support local communities.



Ayman Al Qudwa
General Manager, Falcon Travel, Qatar

Yes, travel is enjoyable and eye-opening. However, it can bring damage to both, the environment and to the people. In addition, it is essential that all travellers have good intentions when they travel, not all make well-informed decisions with their destination's best interest in mind. Therefore, sustainable tourism has become an afterthought rather than a norm. To help you travel more responsibly, we are here to walk you through the benefits of eco-tourism and how you can make a difference.

Has COVID-19 changed our lives forever? I believe, yes! It is the time for GCC travellers to discover the best sustainable tourism destinations in Europe, to visit destinations rewarded by the European Commission for their commitment to protecting the environment, enhancing local heritage, and developing local activities that respect human beings and the environment. One of the key elements GCC travellers look for are open spaces, where their families can roam freely. GCC travellers' most preferred destinations is Europe, as they provide them every single aspect that they are looking for, such as the natural habitat, the and pure air.

Yes, I totally agree. Today, the youth are "the new visitors in the tourism market". Therefore, today we have witnessed that how is the importance of this market segment and how lies in the fact not only that it is becoming larger but also it represents the market of the future in the GCC countries. It is interesting to see the shift in terms of the younger generations, they seek authentic experiences, want to be involved or as we term it 'experiential tourists' who will immerse themselves whilst being responsible for the future. They often become an example in many ways to travellers today, in GCC we see this trend.



Ashiya Nazar
Director GCC, Akbar Travels

Akbar Travels is committed to promoting responsible tourism by incorporating sustainable practices in our travel packages. We recognize the importance of protecting the environment, supporting local communities, and preserving cultural heritage. One of the major concern is overcrowding because of seasonal travel, so we create packages for throughout the year travel with different pricing and promote to the right customers. Akbar Travels actively shares the significance of sustainable travel by educating their clients about responsible tourism practices.

GCC region travellers are increasingly seeking eco-friendly travel options, especially within the luxury travel sector in the Middle East, due to Europe's emphasis on sustainable tourism. A significant portion of GCC residents are willing to pay extra for responsible, eco-friendly, and sustainable tourism experiences. The initiatives taken by the UAE government and its neighbours such as Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to drive towards sustainable practices places the whole region on the map as the most committed towards preserving the planet for a better tomorrow. GCC travellers are able to adapt to the specific requirements in Europe at any time.

Since the pandemic, there has been a significant shift in GenZ's travel preferences, with many opting for volunteer travel and eco-friendly escapes. Like other age groups, GenZ travellers are conscious of their impact and strive to "give back" to the communities they visit and protect the planet through their decisions. Overall, Akbar Travels is adopting sustainable tourism practices to ensure that tourism is not only environmentally responsible but also socially and culturally sustainable. We aim to create travel packages that benefit both travellers and local communities, while also protecting the planet.



Saleem Sharif
Deputy Managing Director, ATS Travel

At ATS Travel, as part of our CSR initiative and as part of empowering our clients to contribute towards the goal of "Net Zero", we launched our sustainability drive under the brand - "ATS Travel - Go Green" last year. We have invested considerable amount of money to track and facilitate carbon emission reports to be given to our clients. Whilst carbon emission reports for air travel is quite straight forward and easy to derive from the GDS, it's challenging when it comes to calculating carbon emission reports for hotel stay, conferences, car hire, transfers, and meals. Today, we are able to capture the carbon emission effected for each of the touch points.

We see a positive generational shift towards understanding the importance of contributing towards making this planet a safe place to live for the future generations from most of our customers. So, when the rationale of certain challenges associated with travel to destinations that are sustainable are explained to our customers, they understand and readily accept them. Having said that the growing popularity of sustainable travel in Europe is having significant impact on our GCC travellers. For instance, GCC travellers are inspired to adopt more sustainable travel practices themselves after experiencing sustainable tourism in Europe.

Younger generations around the world are generally more concerned about environmental issues than the older generation(s), as the awareness to this challenge has peaked during their prime life time. Besides, many GenZ activists like Greta Thunberg, Isra Hirsi, Autum Peltier, Bruno Rodriguez, and Helena Gualinga have also contributed to building this awareness among GenZ worldwide. And that is why GenZ is more likely to prioritize sustainability in shaping their lifestyle. GenZ travellers in the GCC region are growing up in a world where sustainable travel is becoming more mainstream and accessible.



Aisling McDermott
Manager, Middle East & Asia, Tourism Ireland

Ireland is green by nature. We love sharing our beautiful island with the world. However, our policy is to do it in a sustainable way that leaves no trace. It is the ambition of Tourism Ireland and the Irish Government to make Ireland a world leader in sustainable travel and tourism. Businesses across the island of Ireland are being recognised by Sustainable Travel Ireland, Green Hospitality and Origin Green for committing to sustainable standards and practices. Hundreds more have become members of Leave No Trace Ireland to limit the impacts that come with outdoor recreation. Lonely Planet recently awarded the Burren Ecotourism Network in County Clare its Community Award - Best in Travel.

GCC travellers to Ireland are making smarter sustainable choices when it comes to the accommodation they book and the activities they do while on holidays across the island of Ireland. Activities include seaweed foraging with The Sea Gardener in County Waterford, and Atlantic Irish Seaweed in County Kerry, offering seaweed discovery courses and workshops. Night sea-kayaking with Atlantic Sea Kayaking in West Cork offering a full immersion into the natural beauty of Ireland and hiking in the Sperrin Mountains in Northern Ireland with Slow Adventure Tours for adventure seekers. Belfast in Northern Ireland was ranked eighth in the world in the 2022 Global Destinations Sustainability Index.

Young GCC travellers are aware that accommodation contributes 20 per cent of all tourism-related carbon emissions. Ireland is seeing trends of sustainable accommodation bookings from the GenZ traveller in the GCC. Ireland has a wide range of sustainable accommodation options, most popular being our castle retreats in Killeavy Estate in County Armagh, where luxury and sustainability go hand-in-hand, Ashford Castle, a found member of Beyond Green, a curated portfolio of the world's most sustainable hotels and Castle Leslie Estate, the first hotel in Ireland to switch to BioLPG, an innovative new renewable fuel that significantly reduces carbon emissions.



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Abu Dhabi now a MICE hub

Abu Dhabi Convention and Exhibition Bureau (ADCEB), a part of the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi), has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with ADNEC Group, owner and operator of the largest exhibition venue in the Middle East, the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre, in a strategic step towards its future business development strategy.

TT Bureau

The newly formed ADCEB and ADNEC Group Joint Fund is a continuation of ADCEB's strategy to harness public-private partnerships to drive increased B2B events and incentive travel in the emirate. The fund will provide additional financial incentives and support

Group to raise awareness of the emirate's readiness to host large Meetings, Incentives groups.

H.E. Saleh Mohamed Al Geziry, Director General for Tourism at DCT Abu Dhabi, said: "This partnership with ADNEC Group is a tremendous step in further solidifying our position as a leading



This partnership with ADNEC Group is a tremendous step in further solidifying our position as a leading global destination for business events

to corporate meeting planners and incentive houses, while simultaneously reiterating that Abu Dhabi is a safe destination that is fully open for business tourism. The partnership will combine the joint marketing efforts of ADCEB and ADNEC

global destination for business events of all kinds. With ADCEB's experience and expertise and ADNEC Group's impressive portfolio of event, tourism and hospitality assets, together we can create the ultimate destination package

that showcases the best of the emirate and attracts ever greater numbers of large-scale and high-profile events to Abu Dhabi."

Humaid Matar Al Dhaheeri, Managing Director & Group CEO of ADNEC Group, said: "We are pleased to partner with the Abu Dhabi Convention and Exhibition Bureau to launch the joint fund for organ-

isers of international corporate meetings and events, who are interested in holding their events at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre. This comes as part of our efforts to strengthen the business tourism in Abu Dhabi and the UAE, and attract more companies to choose Abu Dhabi as an ideal destination for hosting any meetings, conferences, exhibitions, or events."

We are pleased to partner with the ADCEB to launch the joint fund for organisers of international corporate meetings and events

Al Dhaheeri added, "ADNEC Group continues to strengthen Abu Dhabi's position as an exceptional global destination for hosting events by employing modern facilities, advanced infrastructure, and high-quality services, which accommodate events of any size."

ADCEB's existing initiatives that have enhanced and accelerated the MICE sector include Advantage Abu Dhabi Meetings & Incentives 2.0, an upgraded programme that stimulates MICE activities in the region, as well as the MICE Agencies Reward Scheme, targeting intermediaries such as agencies, planners

and travel management companies with training, industry updates and the latest products. The ADCEB and ADNEC Group Joint Fund is an added tool for International and Domestic Agencies (DMCs and Event Planners) to promote Abu Dhabi and fills a gap in Advantage Abu Dhabi's support for groups of over 500 delegates.

For events planned between 1 May 2023 and 31 December 2024, applicants can submit their inquiry/ request for proposal (RFP) to either ADCEB or ADNEC Group for eligibility of support towards their event(s) through the ADCEB-ADNEC Joint Fund. ➔

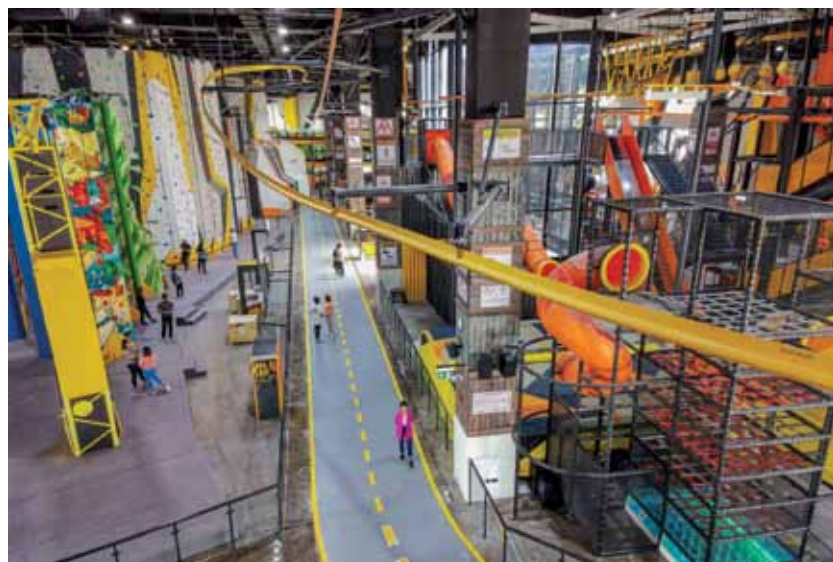
Adrenark Adventure park opens doors

Adrenark Adventure, the largest adventure park in the region located in Al Qana, opened offering a wide range of exciting physical activities for visitors of all ages. Adrenark Adventure features over 20 thrilling activities across a 54,000 square feet area, including the UAE's first multi-level e-karting track, LED slides, treasure caves, bungee trampolines, and much more.

TT Bureau

The park is designed to provide a fun, interactive, and exciting experience for the whole family, with activities catering to people of all ages and fitness levels. Some of the most spine-tingling activities include the "Through the Roof" drop tower that literally transports you through the roof, a Stunt Bag jump from a height of 10m, Climbing Walls for rock climbing, and mixed-height obstacle Rope Courses.

Aerial adventure seekers can glide through the air on the Speed Glider at Adrenark Adventure. In this fun-filled adventure activity, participants wear a harness and sit in a roller glider, which is attached to the cable. Other key attractions at Adrenark include the kaleidoscopic ride with LED slides and treasure caves.



"We are thrilled to announce the upcoming opening of Adrenark Adventure, the region's largest indoor adventure park, which will offer a diverse range of thrilling activities for visitors of all ages. From our multi-level e-karting

track to our climbing walls to the treasure caves, each activity offered by Adrenark Adventure confirms our commitment to providing visitors with a fun, interactive, and immersive experience. We are confident that Adrenark will

quickly become a must for thrill seekers and families alike," says **Paul Hamilton**, General Manager of Adrenark Adventure.

There is plenty for the little ones as well, with rides, soft play,

and mini ropes courses, making Adrenark the perfect place to be, whether one wants to let out the inner adventure-seeker or spend a fun day with family. Adrenark

Bridge Lifestyle Hub, a first-of-its-kind, diverse and inclusive lifestyle hub fostering natural and holistic wellness and Pixoul Gaming Esports Arena, the Middle East's

Adrenark Adventure, the region's largest indoor adventure park, will offer a diverse range of thrilling activities for visitors of all ages

is accessible without a ticket for visitors who want to enter the park and view the offerings.

Adrenark Adventure is one of the main attractions in Al Qana, the most exciting waterfront destination in Abu Dhabi, which is also home to The National Aquarium, the largest in the region, with 46,000 aquatic animals; The

first integrated Immersive Virtual Reality (VR) and Esports hub, as well as UAE's largest standalone cinema complex Cinemacity. Also regarded as a culinary destination, Al Qana offers a number of interesting dining choices for the whole family, boasting flavours from all over the world, many of which have won coveted awards from the Michelin Guide. ➔

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RAKTDA hosts aviation leaders

The 10th edition of Arab Aviation Summit, organised recently by the Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority under the theme 'Impactful sustainability in modern-day travel and tourism', witnessed discussions on sustainability, economic outlook, and how disruptive technologies will shape the next generation of aviation and travel.



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Business aviation back on track

KlasJet, along with an ACMI leasing service provider, recently introduced the Boeing BBJ2 to the Middle East market and continuing its expansion in the region. The company has announced plans to operate a luxurious Boeing 737 from a base in Dubai, catering to the growing demand for exclusive private and corporate air travel.

TT Bureau

With the Middle East being one of the fastest growing business aviation markets in the world, KlasJet has identified a potential niche in the region. "The Middle East market was dominated by smaller business jets and 2-class configuration aircraft," explains **Lukas Petrauskas**, CCO, KlasJet. "However, there was a lack of options for larger groups or delegations. Therefore, we are confident that our luxury Boeing 737 will be an ideal choice for extended families, sports teams, business travellers, and political delegations,

who require a comfortable and convenient mode of travel for their group," he added.

The Boeing 737, exclusively designed by KlasJet, features 68 spacious and comfortable business class seats, ensuring a luxurious and high-quality experience for the passengers. The aircraft is meticulously crafted with attention to detail, offering subtle yet luxurious touches throughout the cabin to enhance the travel experience.

Aside from a unique aircraft interior layout, KlasJet also offers exceptional passenger care.



"We believe in delivering an all-encompassing experience that surpasses our clients' expectations. We pay attention to even the smallest details, both inside and outside the private jet, to create a personalised and exceptional travel experience. Our crew members are well trained in various fields such as human psychology, fine dining, sommelier courses, protocol-related behaviour, professional presentation, and culture-

specific nuances, including tailored cabin crew uniforms that adhere to specific cultural norms," he explains.

In addition to catering to larger groups with the Boeing 737, KlasJet will also offer a luxurious option for smaller groups and high-ranking individuals with the Boeing BBJ2, which is currently under preparations to be operated from Dubai.

the necessary amenities onboard, including a spacious lounge area, a bedroom, and a shower.

KlasJet is a family member of Avia Solutions Group – the largest global ACMI (aircraft, crew, maintenance, and insurance) provider with more than 165 aircraft fleet, operating in all continents in the world. The Group also provides various aviation ser-

We are confident that our luxury Boeing 737 will be an ideal choice for extended families, sports teams, business travellers, and delegations

We believe in delivering an all-encompassing experience that surpasses our clients' expectations. We pay attention to the smallest details

This thoughtfully designed 23-seat aircraft will ensure the convenience and comfort of its passengers and will feature all

vices such as MRO (maintenance, repair, and overhaul), pilots and crew trainings, ground handling and other interconnected solutions. ➔

Kuwait Airways brings e-boarding pass

Within the framework of Kuwait Airways' continuous endeavours to provide the best services to its customers, the company announced the launching of the Electronic Boarding Pass or E-Boarding Pass as a new service enabling customers to check-in and complete their travel procedures on its website or the electronic application for more than 22 selected stations, for those arriving to Kuwait.

TT Bureau

Captain Ali Al-Dukhan, Chairman, Kuwait Airways, while speaking at the launch of the E-Boarding Pass service, said, "Kuwait Airways is committed to its tireless efforts to introduce the latest services that will enable passengers to save time and facilitate the completion of their travel procedures. The launch of the Electronic Boarding Pass is part of the Blue Bird's efforts to implement its strategic objectives towards digital transformation, which is in line with the best standards and solutions in the aviation sector, and to provide distinguished services for passengers travelling on the National Carrier of the State of Kuwait. This is in addition to the recent launch of various other new services during the National

Customers can check-in through the Kuwait Airways website, select preferred seat, complete reservation norms, and obtain the flight barcode

Holidays, such as the Home Check-in Service and the Limousine Service for Royal and First Class passengers."

Al-Dukhan added, "Customers can check-in through the Kuwait Airways website or the electronic application, select their preferred seat, complete their reservation procedures, and then obtain the barcode for their flight. Passengers without any luggage can proceed directly to the passport control, show the barcode and head to the boarding gate, without the requirements of proceeding to

the check-in counter to check their baggage allowance."

As for the passengers carrying baggage, they can complete their travel procedures either through the self-baggage weighing device according to its availability at the airport or proceed to the baggage weighing counter and seek assistance from competent personnel after showing the flight's barcode.

Al-Dukhan said the launch of the E-Boarding Pass is in line with the international standards of the air transport sector,

which will contribute significantly to protecting the environment, reducing the usage of paper handling and will facilitate effective electronic communication with passengers.

He said that Kuwait Airways is steadily progressing towards excellence by launching new services that meet the preferences and requirements of valued customers, according to the objectives set by the company's Board of Directors and the Executive Management to develop the various systems, thus enabling the company to



reach broader horizons. He added that E-Boarding Pass

is one among the most important and latest services launched that are aimed to facilitate travel procedures for passengers by providing them with suitable and convenient options, as Kuwait Airways strives to increase the number of destinations, thus expanding to the largest possible number of destinations. ➔

E-Boarding Pass launch is in line with the international standards of the air transport sector, which will contribute to protecting the environment

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GenZ travellers go for sustainable ways



Elmira Heshmati
Founder and CEO, Elaxiom Travel and Tourism LLC Dubai

“Promoting sustainable travel and tourism is essential for creating responsible and meaningful travel experiences. At Elaxiom Travels, we prioritize educating our clients on the importance of sustainable travel and encourage them to make responsible choices that positively impact the environment and local communities by recommending eco-friendly accommodations and activities that support sustainable tourism practices. We also suggest destinations that are known for sustainable tourism initiatives. Global Destination Sustainability Index study finds Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Finland, Germany and Spain as the most sustainable cities in Europe.”



Nasir Jamal Khan
CEO, Al Naboodah Travel and Tourism

“Sustainable tourism has become an important concept for travel and tourism industry. We are becoming more aware of the danger that climate change possesses. The travel and tourism industry is taking the necessary steps to motivate and educate the public about the benefits of sustainable travel and tourism. 61 per cent of the UAE residents are willing to pay more for responsible, eco-friendly, and sustainable outbound travel to destinations like Europe, Turkey, and Scotland. Similarly, around 65 per cent of people in the Emirates consider it important to choose travel companies that have a strong sustainability policy.”



Daniel Rosado Bayón
Tourism Counsellor GCC - Director, Spain Tourism Office

“Sustainability is a word, a concept that we are seeing and hearing more and more over the time. But it's not something new for Spain Tourism, where several years back, we developed the sustainable strategy for 2030. For us, it's essential that the promotion of the destination is sustainable in the environmental aspect as well as in the economic and social aspect. This way we are creating an integrated industry where tourists and locals are equally satisfied. With the new products created, which looks to satisfy the new desires of travellers, such as ecotourism, nature or rural tourism among others, we are preserving our destination in many ways.”



Michael Tauschmann
Director, Austrian National Tourist Office

“In order to ensure the sustainability of Austria as a holiday destination in the medium and long term, a transformation is necessary that takes equal account of ecological, socio-cultural and economic needs. Therefore, the Austrian National Tourist Office has set itself the goal of working together with all stakeholders on a sustainable and future-oriented development of tourism in Austria. The basis for all activities is the sustainability strategy developed in 2022. Our vision is to inspire the tourism industry and to take important steps towards the sustainable transformation of tourism and to implement appropriate drivers and ideas.”



Matthias Albrecht
Director GCC, Switzerland Tourism

“Beautiful nature and authentic experiences are at the core of Switzerland. In promoting sustainable travel we just add a small but important contribution to keep the world and Switzerland a loveable place – for many generations to come. So far over 1,700 travel suppliers have signed up for our Swisstainable program, which aims to make Switzerland the most sustainable travel destination in the world. GCC travelers especially enjoy unspoiled green nature. Furthermore, many of them, also Arabs!, love to take sustainable transportation like panoramic trains, trams and cable cars to reach their destination or just enjoy the travelling itself.”



Yamina Sofo
Director Sales and Marketing
German National Tourist Office GCC

“Germany has long since put sustainability at the forefront of its plans and campaigns, recognising the importance of leading the charge as a destination to promote and encourage eco-friendly travel. The past few years have witnessed an increase in interest in sustainable travel from the GCC market, hence our decision to run campaigns such as ‘Feel Good’, which drives messaging around environmentally considerate options suitable for the market. While young travellers are typically well-versed with sustainability, we find that sustainable travel seekers from the GCC are diverse in age, nationality, and traveller-type.”



James de Silva
Senior Sales Officer, NBK Travel and Tourism Qatar

“As a travel and hospitality specialist, my point of view on Sustainable travelling objectives is to increase the positivity and benefits while travelling. The main goal should be to run away from the negativity around you. The main benefits will be protecting the natural environment and animal welfare while travelling. The European tourism industry is closely linked to its sustainability and the European Commission works on a number of initiatives in this area. GCC travellers are aware of sustainable travel and promoting eco-friendly accommodations, taking public and eco-friendly transportation such as electric vehicles, making optimal use of environmental resources, Saying NO to single-use plastic and respecting the culture of local communities.”



Ibrahim Nalkhade
General Manager, Business Travel LLC

“The recent pandemic, health and safety protocol has brought back added focus on sustainable travel and tourism. Whilst most of the travellers have very good awareness towards ecological sustainability is very vital when booking a trip but people are always very reluctant to pay sustainability surcharge. It will take some time for travellers to adopt however sustainable travel is gaining momentum with set of initiatives in the form of green fares, hybrid cars, bikes, reusable water bottles and so on. Many Travel Management Companies in the Gulf sincerely promoting sustainable travel. One of the key factors for the change is the commitment by the government to ensure the responsible tourism practices are carried out across the countries.”



Malith Chamika
Holidays Supervisor, Etavel and Tours Oman

“As a conscious traveller myself, I strongly recommend sustainable travel options to my clientele Offcourse according to their preferences. I suggest them to opt for property types labeled as eco-certified, travel sustainable badge whether its an apartment, hotel, resort etc. Traveling by the public transportation, eating at the local restaurants are my recommendations too. Oman has achieved development in tourism in its sustainable sense. It has a wealth of natural & cultural heritage, from the traditional mud villages to the elegant cities, mountain peaks, deserts and oasis. Europe has initiated the Green deal which will broadly enhance the future of tourism making it sustainable and accessible for all.”

\$200 mn tech boost for Travelport

A \$200 million investment from the company's owners, Siris Capital Group and Elliott Management, will allow Travelport to continue executing its aggressive growth strategy.

TT Bureau

Greg Webb, CEO, Travelport, says the \$200 million investment from Siris Capital Group and Elliott Management re-

momentum,” he said. This month alone, Travelport Announced the game-changing acquisition of Deern, a leading corporate travel management platform, in order to fulfill a growing need for a tight,



flect their confidence in Travelport and the continued recovery of the travel industry. “The main advantage of private equity ownership is agility, which is crucial in a rapidly changing environment. This investment will allow Travelport to further advance its tech innovations, while fueling the company's

fully-integrated tool that provides access to all multi-source content, including NDC.

The company launched Smart-point Cloud, delivering a more intuitive and efficient way for travel agents to sell and service travel. It became the first GDS to offer a



Greg Webb
CEO, Travelport

complete solution for American Airlines' NDC content. The company's next-generation platform, Travelport+ has had NDC content from American Airlines live for nearly a year now; and as of mid-March, the content is live across the entire Travelport portfolio. The \$200 million investment, along with a recent refinancing that received the support of 100 per cent of Travelport's First Lien Lenders, provides Travelport with significant liquidity while demonstrating investors' strong belief in the company's bright future. ▶

This investment will allow Travelport to further advance its technological innovations, while fueling the company's growth momentum

Race to net zero in focus @ATM

The 30th edition of Arabian Travel Market takes place in Dubai, with a record number of exhibitors attending the event from all over the world. Sustainable travel and working towards a common goal of practicality for net zero is the way forward this year. **Danielle Curtis**, Exhibitor Director ME, Arabian Travel Market, shares more details with **PRIVILEGE**.

 Shehara Rizly

Could you elaborate about this year's theme and its importance?

The growing sustainable travel trend is undeniable, as such sustainable travel will represent the central focus of ATM 2023, under the theme of Working Towards Net Zero. The 30th edition of ATM will drive home the importance of working towards net zero, showcasing the practical steps that are being taken across our industry to achieve regional and global sustainability goals. This year's show



Danielle Curtis
Exhibitor Director ME, Arabian Travel Market

tor participation will be 27 per cent higher than last year, with growth across all show sectors. These include regional upticks

There are new destinations participating this year as well, such as Instituto Guatemalteco de Turismo - INGUAT, West Hollywood Travel + Tourism Board, Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc, Mexican Caribbean/ Los Cabos and Chonburi Provincial Administrative Organization.

What are the special discussions that will take place this year? How many stages will you have?

Featuring over 150 speakers across 63 sessions, ATM will feature three stages:

❖ **Global Stage** – hosting a range of sessions focused on pivotal industry issues such as hotels and hospitality, aviation and transport, MICE and business travel, responsible tourism, workforce diversification, and emerging sectors.

❖ **ATM Travel Tech Stage** – showcasing how cutting-edge innovations including artificial



We will also be unveiling a dedicated sustainability pledge, not only to make the ATM 2023 event more sustainable, but to announce 30 long term goals

will provide an ideal platform for industry players to engage with sustainability experts and their

for the Middle East (15.1 per cent larger), Europe (30.9 per cent larger), Asia (18.6 per



peers to address the challenges ahead. In addition, we will also be unveiling a dedicated sustainability pledge, not only to make the ATM 2023 event more sustainable, but to announce 30 long term goals, as we work towards net zero in line with the RX Global pledge. Moreover, ATM can support and raise further awareness of COP28, which takes place at Expo City Dubai in November.

How will this year be different from last year, especially after all borders are now open?

We are expecting more than 34,000 attendees from over 150 destinations, including over 2,000 exhibitors. Exhibi-

cent larger) and Africa (44.7 per cent larger), as well as representation from Travel Tech and hotels, which has expanded by 57.9 per cent and 23.5 per cent, respectively. We will also welcome back a number of destinations, after more than two years of travel restrictions. These include Rwanda Development Board, Tourism Department Seychelles, Montenegro National Tourism Organisation, Investment and Development Agency of Latvia, Czech Tourism Authority, Switzerland Tourism, Croatian National Tourist Board, Department of Tourism, Government of Goa and Nepal Tourism Board.

intelligence, the metaverse, cryptocurrency and big data are driving environmentally responsible tourism.

❖ The brand-new Sustainability Hub - featuring dedicated sessions on sustainable travel trends and innovations, as well as providing the backdrop for the ATM 2023 Start-up Competition, where entrepreneurs will go head-to-head in a 'Sustainable Tech Pitch Battle'.

As reducing carbon emissions is the way forward, how will ATM adopt sustainable best practice? ATM is committed to reducing its environmental impact. RX

has pledged to become net zero by 2040, 10 years ahead of our industry's commitment to net zero. Furthermore, in celebration of our 30th annual event, ATM will announce 30 short, medium and long-term sustainability goals, providing a roadmap to make ATM more sustainable and to support our corporate pledge.

What will your key sustainability objectives and expectations be from this year's ATM?

❖ Creating a roadmap in line with industry pledge via UFI (The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry) and its roll out across the broader RX portfolio.

❖ Initiating emissions measurement to calculate our carbon footprint moving forward.

❖ Setting KPIs to reduce carbon emissions and creating long term action plans.

❖ Raising awareness and achieving short-term-goals.

❖ Implementing an 'Exhibitor Environmental Checklist', intro-

ATM is committed to reducing its environmental impact. RX has pledged to become net zero by 2040, 10 years ahead of the industry's commitment

ducing the Sustainable Stand Award and the brand-new Sustainability Hub.

As part of our commitment to ensuring the upcoming show is the most climate-conscious in its history, some of the initiatives introduced for ATM 2023 include:

❖ Introduction of Best Stand Award Category with sustainable goals to encourage best practice.

❖ Sustainable guidelines for stand builds.

❖ Recyclable materials used across Show Feature Builds, carpeting, sustainable badge & wallets with plant silks for lanyards and recycled paper for show daily and yearbook.

❖ No Single Use plastic across venue encouraged on the exhibition stands.

❖ QR codes versus printed brochures.

❖ Single host hotel for Media and Buyers to reduce carbon emissions through ground transportation.

❖ Reduction in quantity of printed graphics/ signage for show and use of more sustainable material.

❖ Paperless media centre.

Ultimately, we hope ATM 2023 will provide a platform for experts from across the Middle East and beyond to explore and shape our sector's sustainable future.



ME travellers ready to pay more for luxury

Sustainability is becoming an increasingly important consideration within the Middle East's luxury travel sector, especially in the United Arab Emirates where 61 per cent of residents say they are willing to pay a premium for more responsible, eco-friendly and sustainable tourism experiences. Obviously, this tendency is more prevalent among high-income travellers.

TT Bureau

One in 10 consumers has stayed in luxury eco-friendly accommodation during the past three years, according to YouGov's Global Travel Tourism Whitepaper 2023 Luxury Travel Post Pandemic. This trend is especially prevalent among high-income travellers whose sustainable luxury hotel stays have increased by 50 per cent during the same period.

The UAE topped global rankings in terms of the value placed on exploring, with almost two-thirds (58 per cent) of respondents

reporting that travel has become more important to them since the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to sustainable luxury travel, consumers' appetite for authentic excursions is also on the rise within this segment. Over half (51 per cent) of affluent tourists have sought more meaningful travel experiences since the pandemic, and more than a quarter (27 per cent) are willing to pay extra for secluded villas and chalets. These figures

coincide with growth across the Gulf's travel industry. By 2028, the value of the UAE's outbound sector is set to reach \$30.5 billion, Saudi Arabia is on course to hit \$27 billion, Kuwait is expected to grow to \$17 billion, and Qatar is likely to exceed \$13 billion.

Premium travel will be placed under the microscope at ATM 2023, as high-profile names from across the sector gather in Dubai to discuss luxury-related trends, challenges and opportunities during the session entitled,

The UAE topped global rankings in terms of the value placed on exploring with almost 58% saying that travel has become more important to them now

reporting that travel has become more important to them since the Covid-19 pandemic. In

ter (27 per cent) are willing to pay extra for secluded villas and chalets. These figures



terms of luxury travel priorities, a quarter of those living in the Emirates are looking for great entertainment, whereas 19 per cent place the biggest emphasis on premium-quality accommodation when booking trips.

Danielle Curtis, Exhibition Director ME, Arabian Travel Market, said: "The Middle East has developed an unparalleled international reputation for luxury tourism, with consumers across the region placing a high value on bespoke, memorable and environmentally

responsible experiences. This is especially pertinent given ATM 2023's theme, 'Working Towards Net Zero'. Industry leaders will be showcasing the innovative ways in which they are delivering luxury, sustainable travel experiences across the Gulf and beyond."

responsible experiences. This is especially pertinent given ATM 2023's theme, 'Working Towards Net Zero'. Industry leaders will be showcasing the innovative ways in which they are delivering luxury, sustainable travel experiences across the Gulf and beyond."



Sustainable Luxury: At What Cost?. The session, moderated by **Joe Mortimer**, Editor-at-Large at Destinations of the World News, includes **Amir Golbarg**, Senior Vice President Operations – Middle East & Africa at Minor Hotels; **Candice D'Cruz**, VP Luxury Brands at Marriott International; and **Nadia Ibrahim**, Member of the Board of Directors at the UN Global Compact, as speakers. They will discuss a range of industry critical topics,

as 44 exhibitors engage with a select group of buyers catering to high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs) across the GCC and broader region.

ATM 2023 will feature an array of exclusive brands from the Middle East's luxury hospitality segment, including Kerzner International's Atlantis The Palm and Atlantis The Royal; Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts' Burj Al Arab; Caesars Palace Dubai; Emaar Hospitality Group; and more. The ILTM Lounge will also host a range of international luxury exhibitors, such as Japan's Hotel New Otani Tokyo Executive House ZEN; Adaaran Resorts Maldives; Switzerland's Red Carnation Hotel Collection; France's Airelles; and The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach in the United States, among others.

The 30th edition of ATM will explore the future of sustainable travel in line with its theme,

'Working Towards Net Zero'. Having officially initiated its journey to net zero, the conference programme will explore how innovative sustainable travel trends are likely to evolve, allowing delegates to identify growth strategies within key vertical sectors, while providing a platform for regional experts to explore a sustainable future ahead of COP28,

be recognised based on the extent to which they have considered the environmental impact of their stands, as well as their efforts to reduce their carbon footprint.

ATM 2023 is held in conjunction with Dubai World Trade Centre and its strategic partners include Dubai's

Over 51% of affluents have sought more meaningful travel experiences since COVID and 27% are willing to pay extra for secluded villas and chalets

which will take place in November 2023 at Expo City Dubai.

The conference will also feature a sustainability category at its annual exhibitor awards for the first time. Exhibiting organisations will

Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) as the Destination Partner, Emirates as the Official Airline Partner, IHG Hotels & Resorts as the Official Hotel Partner and Al Rais Travel as the Official DMC Partner. 📌



Sustainable LUXURY

Oman's drive for luxury tourism

Over the next year Oman will be opening more luxury hotels than any other destination across the GCC. Focussing on Oman's first integrated tourism complex, **Al Mouj** had a quick chat with the five-star luxury accommodations across Oman to find out more on what the country has to offer for visitors.

Oman's first integrated tourism complex: Al Mouj

Al Mouj Muscat welcomes 3.9 million visitors annually and through outstanding leisure experiences, Oman's first Integrated Tourism Complex (ITC) is delivering on its promise of developing tourism in the Sultanate, thus contributing to major economic growth. Al Mouj Muscat, a world-class destination, attracts local, regional and international tourists through its award-winning golf course, lively marina and an array of oceanfront culinary experiences. This comprehensive destination is home to leading hotels.

Championship Golf Course

Al Mouj Golf is a travel and tourism success story in its own right, with the Greg Norman-designed course earning global recognition as a World 100 championship



course and consistently being placed in the top two in the Middle East owing to its exceptional playing attributes and magnificent oceanside setting.

5-time Accredited Gold Anchor Marina

Another jewel in Al Mouj's crown is its

show-stopping Gold Anchor marina, which surrounded by luxury residences, is also expanding and upon completion will accommodate 400 berths. It provides an unrivalled setting for yacht owners and boating enthusiasts, who have a superb team of experienced marina staff and sup-

port services at their disposal. In addition to being able to welcome more vessels, Al Mouj Marina established the marine tourism industry and is currently home to 17 sea tour operators.

Oceanfront Culinary Experiences

The oceanfront destination is also a well-established and vibrant hub for shopping and dining out, boasting over 85 international and independent retail brands located in architecturally beautiful malls and open spaces close to its marina.

Sports Tourism

It is by creating opportunities for exceptional experiences that Al Mouj has played a major part in developing sports tourism, a growing and increasingly important feature of Oman's tourism sector. It has hosted several prestigious events. ➤



Nasser bin Masoud Al Sheibani
CEO - Al Mouj Muscat

“Tourism is a key pillar of Oman Vision 2040 as it boosts job creation, in-country spend and creates new avenues for enterprise. Since inception, we have seen the development and growth of the sector, bringing in tourists from around the world. Al Mouj Muscat is a key destination, attracting international events such as the Louis Vuitton America's Cup World Series, which generated an impact of 10 million Omani Rials.”



Juan Paolo Alfonso
General Manager, Alila Hinu Bay

“We are continuing to see growth in sustainable tourism and now eco-conscious travellers are selecting hotels based on its eco-friendly practices. Alila Hinu Bay is the first resort in the region that meets Earth Check standards. We have 112 eco-friendly rooms and villas, minimally designed with natural and mostly local material, we are also conscious of water use, waste management, biodiversity conservation, and community engagement. In our restaurants, our chefs work towards creating a sustainable menu focusing on local produce and ingredients, supporting the native fisherman and fruit traders.”



Zeki Ozal
General Manager, Jumeirah Muscat Bay

“Sustainable luxury today is less about “things” and more about experiences – it's about careful craftsmanship, unique cultures, untamed landscapes, and going slow. Oman fits these criteria perfectly, making it a popular destination for those looking to combine nature and wellness with cultural interest. At Jumeirah Muscat Bay, we have focused on taking cues from the natural landscape. From our design and architecture - created to be in harmony with the surrounding landscape and interiors offset - to our adventurous wellbeing offering across mountains and sea, and innovative dining concepts.”



Maren Kuehl
General Manager, Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar Resort

“Every day we see more demand on sustainable travel and we believe that sustainability should be a part of everyone's lifestyle. We continuously look for opportunities to be more sustainable at Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar and showcase that to our guests. Just to name a few of our important initiatives: eliminating plastic in all areas, adding a hydroponic garden, and growing and harvesting fruits and vegetables in our gardens. Our resort is located in the mountains of Al Jabal Al Akhdar, and with its many wadis and villages, there is a lot to see and do to enjoy its beautiful nature. We always try to reflect on the nature.”



Andrea Orru
General Manager, Al Baleed Resort Salalah by Anantara

“Al Baleed Resort Salalah by Anantara offers sustainable luxury by prioritising the environment and the needs of our guests. We use sustainable practices, such as energy and water conservation, eco-friendly product usage, local community support, and environmental preservation, to minimise our impact. Nestled in Salalah's natural beauty, visitors can enjoy eco-friendly activities like hiking, traditional markets, and historical sites that showcase the region's rich heritage. A visit to the Al Baleed Archaeological Park and Frankincense Museum, a UNESCO World Heritage site, and the stunning Wadi Darbat are highly recommended.”



René D. Egle
Area General Manager, Shangri-La Al Husn and Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah, Muscat, Oman

“Immersive and Cultural Experience introduced by Shangri-La Al Husn, Muscat. Oman offers a wide range of immersive and sustainable experiences for those looking for the perfect getaway from the hustle and bustle of the city. As an emerging destination in the Middle East, Oman has so much to offer from scenic mountain discoveries and canyons to beach escapes and deserts exploration. The rich art, culture and heritage of Oman is fundamental in the promotion of the destination to high-end travellers looking to experience something unique. Outdoor and cultural enthusiasts can ride on a Frankincense tour.”



Erkan Karatas
General Manager - Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Oman

“With the growing demand for purpose-driven travel, luxury travellers are putting sustainability at the forefront of their next holiday destinations. Oman's Vision 2040 will significantly enhance its pace by leveraging sustainable tourism as one of its pillars — making Oman as a top sustainable travel destination. Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel, embraces this pillar by catering to luxury travellers seeking eco-friendly experiences through a host of ongoing sustainable practices. Oman's vision plays a pivotal role in the Sultanate's tourism development. Oman boasts several natural ecotourism attractions.”

MOVEMENTS

ACCOR ME, Turkey and Africa

Managing a fast-growing regional portfolio of strategic significance for Accor, **PAUL STEVENS** has been appointed Chief Operating Officer, Middle East, Turkey and Africa, overlooking the Premium, Midscale and Economy division. Bringing a 30-year proven record of delivering operational and financial performance to his new role, Paul is a strong hospitality leader who has worked with iconic brands such as Sofitel Hotels & Resorts in Fiji, the Bezzina Property Group and Novotel Hotels & Resorts in Australia. In his new role, he will oversee a portfolio of more than 200 hotels across 11 brands, ranging from Premium to Midscale and Economy. His responsibilities include new hotel developments, alongside conceptualization and execution of operational & commercial strategies.

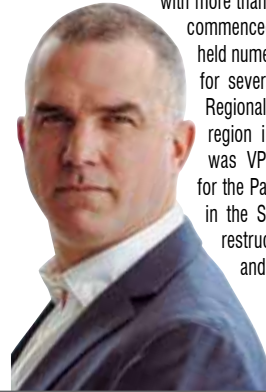


VICTORIA SERTIC has been appointed as SVP, Brand, Marketing & Loyalty. Victoria's impressive tourism and hospitality career spans over 26 years in the tourism sector, with extensive expertise in commercial management, brand strategy and management, marketing, sales, public relations and communications. She has held various senior leadership positions in luxury hospitality and regional destination management companies driving and maximising opportunities across diverse initiatives. Most recently VP of Brand Management, Marketing & Communications for Southeast Asia, Japan & South Korea, Victoria will continue to be based in the Singapore office. According to Accor's restructure, Sertic will be covering MEA and APAC.



ACCOR EMEA

KENT WARREN has been appointed SVP, Topline Performance & Business Intelligence. Based in Sydney, Kent is a highly respected hotelier with more than 28 years of high-level experience. He commenced his career in Accor in 2014 and has held numerous roles, including General Manager for several hotels, as well as the position of Regional Revenue Manager for the NSW/ ACT region in Australia. Kent's most recent role was VP Revenue and Business Intelligence for the Pacific region, and he will remain based in the Sydney office. According to Accor's restructure, Warren will be covering MEA and APAC.



BUSINESS TRAVEL LLC UAE

IBRAHIM NALKHANDE is the newly appointed General Manager at Business Travel LLC, a leading Dubai based Travel Management Company. Nalkhande, described as a man of wisdom, insight and understanding, said he is very excited about the upcoming challenges and opportunities. Having established reputation in the travel industry and got experience from some of the renowned brands of the industry, Nalkhande said he had a clear mandate to take Business Travel to the next summit. "The fiscal year 2023 started on a positive note with special mention to first two months recorded performance, the momentum will gain further pace, and I am optimistic that we will exceed the pre-pandemic numbers in this year," he stated.



SWISSOTEL AL MUROOJ DUBAI Dubai

Experienced hospitality professional, **AMRO NAGAH** has been appointed as the General Manager of the 528-unit Swissotel Al Murooj Hotel in Dubai. With more than 18 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Amro worked with one of the leading hotel chains in the Middle East covering properties across UAE. Nagah has built an impressive career in the hospitality industry, with over a decade of experience in various management roles. He began his journey as a Front Office Supervisor in Intercontinental Hotels Group. Throughout his career, Nagah has demonstrated a commitment to excellence. As General Manager, Nagah will oversee all aspects of the operations of this well established 5-star hotel, located in the heart of Downtown Dubai, ensuring that the high standards are maintained and exceeded.



HYATT EMEA

Hyatt Hotels Corporation has appointed **HEIDI KUNKEL** as Senior Vice President of Commercial Services. The appointments bolster the region's executive team, as it prepares for continued growth under the leadership of EAME Group President Javier Aguila. Kunkel will lead Hyatt's Commercial Services function in EAME, which combines sales, revenue management, distribution strategy, corporate marketing, brands, communications and digital, along with oversight for the World of Hyatt loyalty platform. She joins from Hilton Hotels and Resorts, where she held the position of Vice President of Operations for Australasia, and previously spent 15 years at Club Med with Commercial and Operations responsibility across Asia Pacific and Europe & Africa.



News in pictures



Al Manal and Sabre renew agreement for tech advancement



Elaf Group and Kinan International sign a memorandum of understanding for a hotel project in KSA



Hilton AlAhli REIT fund to open new Double Tree by Hilton hotel in Jeddah



Knight Frank, Pan Holding to build 2,000 rooms in Makkah



SAUDIA launches its first direct flight to Dar Es Salaam



IHG expands premium offering in Egypt with Arabella



Where Art Meet Business

Experience the new Shaza Doha, where art and culture meets the world of business. The hotel features 171 elegantly appointed rooms and suites, 5 dining venues, a rooftop shisha lounge, infinity pool, meeting rooms hosting upto 100 guests, Hammam & Spa and many more.

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