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Special Issue ITB Asia

TRAVTALK

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY Published from : ★ India ★ Middle East

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Marhaba ITA! Fly daily to Italy & beyond

Starting 27 October, ITA Airways will be operating daily direct flights from Dubai to Italy with the state-of-the-art A321neo, the new-generation aircraft that combines efficiency and style to make your travel experience truly unforgettable, says **Mohamed Jassim Al Rais**, Executive Director, APG Gulf, the General Sales Agent of ITA Airways in the UAE.



Mohamed Jassim Al Rais
Executive Director, APG Gulf

TT Bureau

Mohamed Jassim Al Rais, Executive Director, APG Gulf, said that ITA Airways, the national carrier of Italy, is committed to providing exceptional service and connectivity. With a modern fleet and focus on sustainability, ITA is well-equipped to offer travellers a comfortable



and memorable journey between Dubai and Rome, and on its vast network beyond. ITA will operate a daily service on DXB-FCO-DXB routes offering highly attractive fares (both in business and economy class) to Rome and beyond sectors, including points in

UK/ Europe and USA. ITA would operate to Dubai with A321neo with a 3-class cabin configuration offering Business Class, Premium Economy and Economy, thereby offering full service product with aggressive fares.

Schedule: Rome Fiumicino to Dubai: Starting 27 October, departure at 10.40 am (local time)

and arrival in Dubai at 7.50 pm (local time). Dubai to Rome Fiumicino: Starting 28 October, departure at 1:50 am (local time) and arrival in Rome at 6.00 am (local time). Expressing enthusiasm over the new venture, Mohamed Al Rais said: "We are proud to partner with ITA Airways to bring this exciting route to Dubai. This collaboration not

only enhances our portfolio but also enriches travel options for our customers." ▶

ITB Asia focus on Corporate & MICE

Three-day ITB Asia begins in Singapore from 23 October 2024. **TRAVTALK** is the media partner for the event, being held under the theme 'Innovating for Tomorrow: Shaping the Resilience of Travel & Tourism'.

Dr Shehara Rizly

About 24.5 per cent of exhibitors at ITB Asia are travel agents, tour operators and DMCs, while 22.3 per cent are hotels and accommodation providers, according to Messe Berlin Asia Pacific, the organisers of the event. Giving further details, **Joyce Wang**, Executive Director, Messe Berlin Asia Pacific, said that tourist attractions at the event represent 8.2 per cent, showcasing a wide range of experiences



Joyce Wang
Executive Director
Messe Berlin Asia Pacific

for travellers. Business travel and MICE make up 9.6 per cent, airlines 8.3 per cent, National Tour-

ist Organisations (NTOs) 6.8 per cent and travel technology exhibitors 11.8 per cent, presenting innovations and digital solutions for the industry.

Four exhibition halls and conference rooms, spanning three floors at Sands Expo and Convention Centre will provide an ideal platform for travel industry professionals at ITB Asia 2024. Among the exhibitors from the Middle East include the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism of Oman,

Contd. on page 6 ▶

Tech propels travel industry

The Middle East region has been at the forefront of revolutionising travel, tourism and hospitality with the use of technology. **TRAVTALK** speaks to industry leaders to know their views on the trend.

“Aleph Hospitality uses Artificial Intelligence in some of the hotels managed by it to help customise marketing messages, for guest analytic, personalised recommendations, dynamic pricing, and enhanced security. Automation drives efficiency across the board, streamlining operations, enhancing accuracy, and allows our teams to focus on personalised guest interactions, leading to improved guest experiences and more effective hotel management. We strive to invest in technologies that helps save on energy consumption, conserve water, reduce waste, and engage guests and employees to get their buy in. Technology plays an important role, as consumers expect more from their previous experiences.” ▶



Jad Shamseddin
COO
Aleph Hospitality

Contd. on page 3 ▶



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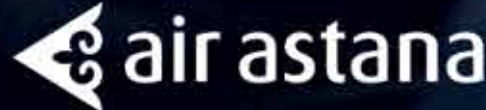
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Tech boost for travel & hospitality

▶ Contd. from page 1



Amit Sharda
Chief Operating Officer
Prologix First

“In today’s fast-paced world, technology is the backbone of hospitality. Incredible innovations are at centre stage. AI is revolutionising how we connect with guests; cloud-based Property Management Systems are game-changers, streamlining operations and bringing everything together under one roof. Contactless tech—think mobile check-ins and digital keys—make travel smoother and safer.”



David Lavorel
CEO
SITA

“We are on the cusp of a new era in travel, as unprecedented demand converges with technological innovations that have the power to revolutionise the journey. The appetite from passengers is clear: they are eager to embrace the latest digital solutions to make their experience swifter and more streamlined than ever before. The responsibility falls to the industry to ensure travellers are fully informed.”



Nicolas Nasra
Head of Hotel Advisory
Hospitality & Tourism, Colliers in MENA

“While AI excels at specific tasks like personalising guest experiences and optimising operations, it is limited to predefined functions. AGI will be capable of understanding and learning across a broad range of tasks, rather like humans. In hospitality, AGI could revolutionise operations by autonomously managing everything from dynamic pricing to real-time guest interactions.”



Piergiorgio Schirru
Executive Vice President
Blastness

“Today, more than ever, Revenue Management Systems (RMS) and Bid Management Systems (BMS) powered by AI and real-time market data are the secret to success for total revenue and direct bookings. With an RMS that suggests and implements real-time price adjustments based on demand fluctuations and hotel performance, hotels can stay competitive and secure the best market price.”



Mohamed Al Rais
Executive Director
Al Rais Travel

“AI and Machine Learning have enabled us to provide highly personalised travel recommendations by analysing customer data, preferences, and past behaviour in real-time, enhancing customer satisfaction. We use sophisticated algorithms and tools that analyse customer preferences, booking history, and real-time trends to create more personalised and relevant travel offerings.”



Fakhri Hindiyyeh
General Manager, Radisson Blu Hotel,
Amman Galleria Mall

“While AI can ensure that operations run smoothly, it cannot replace the warmth and personal touch that human interactions provide. Therefore, fostering a culture of friendliness and delivering delight among staff members remains a critical aspect of hospitality. Technology shapes all we do. As it progresses, consumers expect more from their experiences and the role tech plays in those experiences.”

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KSA sees 73% rise in global tourists

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has registered 73% increase in the number of international tourists in the first seven months of 2024, according to the latest data released by UN Tourism Barometer at the G20 Tourism Ministerial Meeting in Brazil. The Kingdom achieved 56% growth in the number of international tourists during 2023 compared to 2019, with 27.4 million tourists.

TT Bureau

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) tops the list of G20 countries in the growth rate of international tourists and tourism revenues, according to the latest data for the first seven months of 2024 compared to the same period in 2019. The kingdom achieved an increase of 73 per cent in the number of international tourists, while the international tourism revenues recorded an increase of 207 per cent, according to the latest UN Tourism Barometer report issued this week at the G20 Tourism Ministerial Meeting in Belem, Brazil.

Several tourist destinations in the Kingdom witnessed a significant increase in the number of international tourists this year, with 17.5 million tourists during the first seven months

of 2024. The Kingdom achieved a growth of 56 per cent in the number of international tourists during 2023 compared to 2019, with 27.4 million tourists, and travel receipts recorded a historical surplus of SAR 48 billion during 2023, an annual increase of 38 per cent.

In its September report after the conclusion of the 'Article IV Consultation 2024', the International Monetary Fund (IMF) praised the unprecedented achievements made by the Kingdom's tourism sector under Saudi Vision 2030, diversifying the economic sectors, in which travel and tourism emerged as the most important - recording the highest level in the number of visitors, spending, job creation and contribution to GDP.

These achievements reinforce the Kingdom's position as a



H.E. Ahmed Al-Khateeb, Minister of Tourism, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Julia Simpson, President & CEO, World Travel & Tourism Council

leading global destination, and the continuous growth in the number of inbound tourists reflects in the Kingdom's attractive options and diversity for visitors.

According to the latest World Tourism Barometer by UN Tourism,

around 790 million tourists travelled internationally in the first seven months of 2024, about 11 per cent more than in 2023 and only 4 per cent less than in 2019. Data show a strong start to the year, followed by a more modest second quarter. Results are in line with UN Tourism's projection of a full recovery in international arrivals in 2024 despite ongoing economic and geopolitical risks.

Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General, UN Tourism, said: "International tourism is on track to consolidate its full recovery from the biggest crisis in the sector's history. The ongoing rebound comes despite a range of economic and geopolitical challenges, highlighting the strong demand for international travel, as well as the effectiveness of boosting air connections and easing visa restrictions. This recovery also highlights the growing need for tourism planning and managing to cater for its impacts on communities in a way that the immense socio-economic benefits are paired with inclusive and sustainable policies."

Middle East continues to lead the recovery

With increased air connectivity and visa facilitation supporting the recovery in international travel, the data shows all world regions have recorded a strong year so far.

The Middle East remained the strongest growing region in relative terms, with international arrivals climbing 26 per cent above 2019 levels in the first seven months of 2024. Africa

welcomed 7 per cent more tourists than in the same months of 2019. Europe and the Americas recovered 99 per cent and 97 per cent of their pre-pandemic arrivals respectively during these seven months. Asia and the Pacific recorded 82 per cent of its pre-pandemic tourist numbers (-18 per cent versus 2019) reaching 85 per cent in June and 86 per cent in July.

A total of 67 out of 120 destinations around the world had recovered 2019 arrival numbers in the first half of 2024, based on countries reporting monthly or quarterly data. Some of the strongest performers in

through June or July 2024 were Albania (+128 per cent) and Serbia (+126 per cent) where receipts more than doubled (compared to the same period of 2019), followed by Tajikistan (+85 per cent), Pakistan (+76 per cent), Montenegro (+70 per cent), North Macedonia (+60 per cent) and Portugal (+57 per cent). Strong results were also reported by Türkiye (+55 per cent) and Colombia (+54 per cent). Worth noting based on first quarter data, are Saudi Arabia (+207 per cent) and El Salvador (+168 per cent) which enjoyed extraordinary growth compared to Q1 2019.

Data on international tourism expenditure reveals strong demand for outbound travel in January-July 2024, especially from large source markets, such as the United States (+32 per cent), Germany (+38 per cent), and the United Kingdom (+40 per cent through March), compared to the same period of 2019. Strong outbound spending was also reported by Australia (+34 per cent), Canada (+28 per cent) and Italy (+26 per cent), all through June 2024. Limited data for India shows an impressive surge in outbound spending, with 86 per cent growth in Q1 2024 (versus Q1 2019).

Around 790 million tourists travelled internationally in the first seven months of 2024, about 11 per cent more than in 2023 and only 4 per cent less than in 2019

January-July 2024 were Qatar (+147 per cent versus 2019) where arrivals more than doubled, Albania (+93 per cent), El Salvador (+81 per cent), Saudi Arabia (+73 per cent), the Republic of Moldova (+50 per cent through June) and Tanzania (+49 per cent through June).


Data show stronger results


Regarding international tourism receipts, 47 out of 63 countries with available data had recovered pre-pandemic values in the first six months of 2024, many reporting strong double-digit growth compared to 2019 (in local currencies and current prices). Among the best performers

2024 looks positive

The UN Tourism Confidence Index shows positive expectations for the last part of the year, at 120 points for September-December 2024, though below the prospects for May-August, which stood at 130 (on a scale of 0 to 200, where 100 reflects equal expected performance). Some 47 per cent of the tourism experts participating in the Confidence survey expect better performance for the sector in the last four months of 2024, while 41 per cent project similar performance and 11 per cent worse. This reflects a gradual normalization of tourism performance after a strong 2023.

25% growth in GCC travel to Europe

STM Tours has been catering to the personalised travel services of the clientele from GCC region over the past few years. The company specialises in fixed departure tours for groups and individuals travelling from the GCC, the Middle East, and the USA to Central Europe. **Maheer Azizia**, Managing Director, STM Tours, shares details in an interview with .

 TT Bureau

Tell us about STM Tours and its main activities.

STM Tours LLC is a leading travel company specialising in fixed departure tours for groups and individuals travelling from the GCC, the Middle East, and the USA to Central Europe. Our main focus is on offering tailored travel experiences to some of Europe's most iconic destinations, including Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands. With over 30-year experience in the industry, our mission is to deliver high-quality, hassle-free trips that combine the best of culture, history, and leisure. We pride ourselves on providing personalised services, ensuring that each traveller gets a memorable experience.

What are the key markets or areas you focus on?

Our primary focus markets



Maheer Azizia
Managing Director
STM Tours

are the GCC and the broader Middle East region, as well as the USA. These areas are key due to their strong demand for unique European travel experiences. Our tours mainly target families, leisure travellers, and business professionals seeking well-organised, curated tours of Europe. Central Europe, particularly Germany and Switzerland, is our most popular region due

to its cultural richness, scenic beauty, and accessibility from the GCC and the USA. We have built strong relationships with local partners to ensure our clients receive top-notch services throughout their journeys.

Could you share the importance of the GCC market?

The GCC market is of utmost importance to us. The growing affluence and enthusiasm for outbound travel among residents of the GCC region make it one of our most vital segments. GCC travellers tend to favour high-quality, luxury experiences and are often looking for exclusive,



comfortable, and memorable holiday packages. The demand for tailored tours that combine cultural, historical, and leisure

experiences has grown significantly. We make sure to cater to the specific preferences of GCC travellers, including halal-friendly services, private tours, and accommodations that align with their expectations.

How is outbound travel from the GCC to Europe? Have you seen a rise in terms of visitors from the GCC?

Yes, there has been a noticeable

rise in outbound travel from the GCC to Europe, particularly to destinations like Germany and Switzerland. The easing of travel restrictions post-pandemic, coupled with an increasing desire for international travel experiences, has contributed to this rise. The GCC market is evolving, with travellers seeking more than just luxury—there is a strong interest in cultural and historical experiences. We have observed this shift, and as a result, more GCC travellers are opting for destinations in Europe that offer a rich blend of both. While exact numbers are proprietary, I can share that our bookings from the GCC market have grown by approximately 25 per cent over the past year. This upward trend is a testament to the growing interest in European destinations from the region, with Germany, Switzerland, and Italy leading the way as the most popular destinations among our clients. ▶

The growing affluence and enthusiasm for outbound travel among residents of the GCC region make it one of our most vital segments



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UAE eyes its share in sports tourism boom

Sports tourism is one of the most lucrative tourism markets with its international value estimated at US \$564.7 billion in 2023 and estimated to increase by US \$771 billion between 2024 to 2028. It is then no surprise that destinations have enhanced their focus on this segment. The UAE is also strengthening its positioning as a key player in the sector, leveraging its world-class infrastructure and strategic location.

The competition to host sporting events has resulted in destinations investing millions in making them more attractive to key industry stakeholders. For example, the projected cost for Vancouver to host the 2026 FIFA World Cup is estimated to be in the range of US \$483 million and US \$581 million. The UAE is also strengthening its positioning as a key player in the sports tourism sector, leveraging its world-class infrastructure, strategic location, and commitment to hosting international sporting events.

The UAE's ambition to position itself as a global sports destination is evident through hosting several high-profile events, such as the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, the Dubai World Cup, and the DP World Tour Championship. The Emirates has also placed a focus on showcasing wider



sporting events like the upcoming Women's Rugby World Cup. Such events attract domestic and international tourists to the emirates, and in the process enhance the local economy.

The UAE has invested substantially in the development of sports infrastructure, which includes Dubai Sports City, Al Qudra Cycle Track, and Hdayriyat Island. Importantly, the UAE's strength in sports tourism is reinforced by the ample opportunities across all the emirates. For example, Umm Al

The UAE has invested substantially in the development of sports infra, which includes Dubai Sports City, Al Qudra Cycle Track, and Hdayriyat Island

Qudra is ideal for water sports and outdoors activities, such as sailing, skydiving, falconry, and camel racing. Furthermore, the Ras Al Khaimah's Tourism Development Authority has positioned the emirates as a place for sustainable experiences and

adventure tourism. This includes various sporting activities, such as hiking, adventures and water sports, and horse-riding.

One of the most significant aspects of sports tourism is the economic impact that hosting

major international sporting events brings. For example, in 2023 it was estimated that the Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix generated more than AED 1.16 billion for the UAE's economy. The economic benefits of such events extend beyond the immediate influx of tourists. Hosting sports events stimulates job creation, provides opportunities for local businesses, and drives infrastructure development. These events also have a lasting impact on the host country's tourism industry, as they often attract future visitors who are drawn to the host city's enhanced global profile. Furthermore, the influx of international visitors during such events boosts spending in various sectors, including hospitality, retail, and transportation. As the global sports tourism market continues to expand, the UAE is well-placed to capitalise on this

growth, offering a unique blend of world-class events, luxury experiences, and innovative sports tourism offerings. With a focus on cultural appreciation, and community engagement, the UAE is not just hosting events but creating legacies that benefit both the local population and the global sports community.



Dr Sean Lochrie
Associate Professor at Heriot-Watt University Dubai
(The views expressed are solely of the author.)

Industry leaders to meet @ITB Asia

► Contd. from page 1

Visit Jordan, the Palestine Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and Visit Saudi.

Strengthening tourism future

ITB Asia Conference 2024 will unveil latest trends and innovations. The conference spans over three days alongside MICE Show Asia and Travel Tech Asia, across three stages, renowned industry experts, including notable figures from Almaty Tourism Bureau, Booking.com, Croatian National Tourist Board, Dubai World Trade Centre, FCM Meetings & Events,



trends on business continuity and resilience. ITB Asia is jam-packed and full of energy, celebrating the vibrant travel and tourism scene with its cultural and destination

industry's resilience and pave the way for the future," he added.

Opening keynote

The opening day will feature a keynote speech by **Liz Ortiguera**, MD, Asia-Pacific and Sr Advisor to CEO, WTTC, titled 'Global Trends for Sustainable Travel and Tourism'. Attendees will gain an economic outlook on the travel and tourism industry in Asia-Pacific, as well as global and regional trends that are influencing the sector's transition. Those seeking insight into the transformative impact of technology in the industry will benefit from the keynote speech, 'Navigating the Future of Travel: Embracing Technological Innovation', delivered by **Kevin Goh**, Chief Executive Officer, Lodging, CapitalLand Investment Limited and Chief Executive Officer, The Ascott Limited. 📌

ITB Asia Conference is where tourism leaders gather to take the pulse of the future and discuss trends on business continuity and resilience

Live Group, MG Group, Skyscanner, Tripadvisor and World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), will explore, debate and discuss the latest insights revolutionising the travel and tourism sector.

"ITB Asia Conference is where tourism leaders gather to take the pulse of the future and discuss

showcases, complemented by a seamless B2B business meetings scheduler," Wang said.

"The most pressing topics critical to the future of MICE, corporate travel, leisure travel, and travel technology will be discussed by a line-up of high-calibre international speakers to strengthen the



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Yas gets Ferrari-themed esports arena

World's first Ferrari-themed esports arena opened recently on Yas Island, Abu Dhabi. F1 fans and adrenaline junkies can immerse themselves in the ultimate racing experience at the Ferrari-themed park which boasts 20 Gran Turismo simulators, including 14 for adults and six designed for younger guests. **Faisal Al Nuaimi**, General Manager, Ferrari World Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, shares details.

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Can you tell us about the new Ferrari World Esports Arena?

The Ferrari World Esports Arena offers a cutting-edge racing experience that immerses guests in the thrill of driving an F1 car, capturing the adrenaline of real F1 drivers. The arena features 20 high-performance Gran Turismo simulators, with 14 seats for adults and six for children, making it a family-friendly attraction. These simulators are meticulously designed to provide a realistic driving experience, complete with advanced controls and dynamic feedback that make every race feel authentic.

The immersive experience is further enhanced by dynamic feedback systems that simulate the physical sensations of driving, such as the vibration of the engine, the resistance of the

steering, and the impact of road surfaces. This level of realism ensures that every turn, acceleration, and brake feel as though you are behind the wheel of a Ferrari on a real racetrack.

It also includes three F1 motion base simulators, designed with steering controls modelled after real F1 wheels, offering a highly realistic driving experience. Guests can feel the vibration of the engine, steering resistance, and road impacts, making every race feel lifelike.

As a pioneer in inclusivity, the arena features two GT simulators

tailored for people of determination, reflecting Ferrari World's commitment to accessibility. With 14 GT racers competing on the main stage and the action displayed on high-definition LED walls, the arena offers an exciting experience for racers and spectators alike.

How will this boost tourism? Is there a different age group/ demographic you are targeting?

Our newest attraction offers an immersive racing experience, establishing Ferrari World Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, as a prime destination for esports enthusiasts. With the rising popularity of



Faisal Al Nuaimi, General Manager, Ferrari World Yas Island, inaugurates the new theme park

esports, we aim to attract more gamers and young visitors to the park. The esports arena is set to make a significant impact on the regional gaming scene by delivering unmatched realism and excitement in virtual racing. The arena's striking black-and-red aesthetic, coupled with top-tier gaming stations featuring high-performance PCs, professional-grade equipment, and the latest consoles, creates a fully immersive environment. With state-of-

the-art F1 motion base simulators and Gran Turismo simulators for both adults and kids, the arena provides an authentic racing experience for all. By incorporating esports, we expect to engage a younger, gaming-focused audience and position Ferrari World Abu Dhabi as a leader in cutting-edge entertainment.

Any visitor numbers you expect for its first year of operation?

We anticipate strong interest in

the Ferrari World Esports Arena, especially given the growing popularity of esports and virtual racing in the region. The unique blend of high-performance simulators and immersive gaming experiences positions the arena as a major attraction for both local and international guests. We expect the arena to draw a diverse crowd, including gaming enthusiasts, families, and visitors looking for cutting-edge entertainment experiences.

Our newest attraction offers an immersive racing experience, establishing Ferrari World Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, as a prime destination for esports enthusiasts

Curated wellness packages for GCC

Wellness tourism in the Middle East has grown in leaps and bounds and the travellers are keen to have a holistic holiday added to their schedule. The Farm, a holistic wellness sanctuary in San Benito, Philippines, has become one of the key holiday destinations for the ME travellers. **Jennifer Sanvictores**, Global Head of Sales, Marketing & Communications, The Farm at San Benito, shares details with **TRAVEL TALK**.

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Do share an overview of The Farm?

The Farm at San Benito, part of CG Hospitality, is an eco-luxury medical wellness resort in Lipa City, Batangas, just 90 minutes from Manila. Set across 52 hectares of lush greenery with views of the Malarayat mountains, it offers a tranquil, healing environment. The Farm has won over 100 international awards, including 'Best Medical Wellness Resort in the World' by SENSES Germany. Its integrative health programmes address lifestyle-related conditions like diabetes, obesity, and anxiety, led by specialists in holistic and preventive medicine. With 68 exclusive accommodations, The Farm promises a transformative wellness experience.

What is its USP?

The Farm at San Benito, a multi-awarded eco-luxury medical



Jennifer Sanvictores
Global Head of Sales, Marketing, & Communications, The Farm at San Benito

certified dining at Alive! Vegan Restaurant and Muslim-friendly accommodations, The Farm seamlessly blends medical science with holistic healing practices. Its unique Filipino Brand of Wellness, featuring heartfelt service and indigenous healing traditions, complements its integrative health programmes for weight management, diabetes prevention, heart health, and more. Committed to sustainability, The Farm sources organic

Its unique Filipino Brand of Wellness complements its integrative health programmes for weight management, diabetes prevention and heart health

wellness resort, is a leading destination for Muslim-friendly wellness retreats, attracting travellers from the Middle East and ASEAN regions. With Halal-

ingredients locally, creating a personalised, eco-conscious wellness experience rooted in both personal and planetary well-being.



How important are ME clients?

The Farm at San Benito is positioning itself as a premier medical and wellness destination for Middle Eastern travellers, focusing on Halal-friendly options and family-centered wellness programmes. With a 10 per cent rise in visitors from the Gulf, particularly Saudi Arabia and the UAE, the Philippines is becoming

a key market for medical tourism. The Farm combines top-tier wellness programmes, luxurious accommodations, and the Philippines' renowned warm hospitality to offer a holistic, healing experience for travellers.

Could you share how you work with travel agents?

The Farm at San Benito collabo-

rates with the travel trade in the Middle Eastern region to create bespoke wellness packages, featuring Halal-certified meals, family-friendly activities, and luxurious accommodations. Travel agents receive training and Farm trips to effectively promote The Farm's medically supervised programmes, tailored to Middle Eastern preferences.

'NDC offers personalisation': Blueberry

One of the most positive trends in global tourism in recent years has been the rise of eco-friendly travel. Committed to embracing this shift, Blueberry Travel recognises the importance of responsible travel and strive to offer options that minimise environmental impact while enriching the travel experience, says **Suresh Kirplani (Steve)**, President and Partner, Blueberry Travel.

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Suresh Kirplani (Steve), President and Partner, Blueberry Travel, says that their focus on sustainability reflects their dedication to preserving the planet for future generations while meeting the evolving needs of conscious travellers. "Our company is actively integrating sustainability into our operations and travel offerings through various initiatives. We focus on reducing our carbon footprint by minimising paper use with digital solutions and optimising energy consumption in our offices. Additionally, we promote sustainable travel options by partnering with eco-friendly accommodations and transport providers, ensuring our clients can choose greener alternatives," he explains.

"We have noticed a significant increase in demand for sustain-



Suresh Kirplani (Steve)
President and Partner
Blueberry Travel

able travel options from our clients. To address this, we provide educational resources about eco-friendly choices and curate travel packages that emphasise sustainable practices. By offering options like carbon offsetting and partnerships with local organisations, we empower our clients to make informed decisions that align with their values," he adds.

Initiatives and partnerships

Blueberry Travel's initiatives also include collaborating with organisations specialising in sustainable tourism. "We promote local experiences that support community initiatives and reduce environmental impact. For example, we have partnered with eco-certified hotels and sustainable transport companies to provide our clients with a comprehensive, eco-friendly travel experience. These partnerships help us encourage responsible tourism while meeting the growing demand for sustainable travel," he says.

NDC technology utilisation

On the technological front, they are leveraging New Distribution Capability (NDC) to enhance their offerings. "NDC allows us to provide a more personalised booking experience by accessing richer content, dynamic pricing, and tailored options based

on customer preferences. This not only enhances customer satisfaction but also enables us to stand out in a competitive market," says Kirplani.



However, integrating NDC technology has not come without challenges. "Adapting our existing systems and training staff has required significant effort. Nevertheless, the benefits outweigh these challenges. NDC provides us with greater flexibility in pricing and allows us to offer unique products that traditional GDS cannot," he adds.

Future of airline distribution
Kirplani says, "Looking ahead, we see NDC having a profound

impact on the future of airline distribution. It will enable airlines to differentiate their offerings, fostering a more customised and personalised travel experience. As travellers increasingly

expectations. "To adapt to the changes, our company has implemented flexible booking options and enhanced virtual meeting solutions, catering to the evolving needs of business-

NDC allows us to provide a more personalised booking experience by accessing richer content, dynamic pricing, and tailored options

seek tailored options, NDC will facilitate this demand, allowing for a more engaging and satisfying journey."

Changes in corporate travel

The corporate travel landscape has transformed significantly in recent years, influenced by many factors, such as remote work and changing employee

es," he reveals. Talking about industry trends, Kirplani says, "We are witnessing key trends in corporate travel, particularly in technology, service expectations, and cost management. Companies are increasingly focused on traveller safety and wellness, integrating technology for seamless travel, and data analytics for better cost control." (Advertisement)

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Amsa Hospitality: A Game-Changer on the Saudi Hospitality Scene

Amsa Hospitality, a homegrown brand in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, is supporting Saudi Vision 2030 by adding more inventory to the industry. Speaking to **TRAVEL MIDDLE EAST** on the sidelines of Saudi Travel Market 2024, Amsa Hospitality's management team members explained how their dynamic beginnings will revolutionise the hospitality industry in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

TT Bureau

Amsa Hospitality has been rapidly expanding across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia since it launched in 2022 under the visionary leadership of its founder, Mohammad Alathel. With an ambitious plan for the next decade, Amsa Hospitality is keen to transform the Saudi hospitality scene through sustainable innovation and become a reliable partner for key players in the industry.

The company's business model is agile, evaluating all opportunities to expand their portfolio of managed assets across the Kingdom. Among the various models Amsa Hospitality operates with, franchising and part-



ner, Amsa Hospitality is pioneering the entry of international hotel chains to the country's secondary cities, areas often overlooked. This focus gives

its Vision 2030 projects to the world, Amsa Hospitality is actively supporting this vision by positioning itself as a service-oriented hospitality group, ready

materials from sustainable suppliers. Additionally, Amsa Hospitality emphasizes community engagement by supporting local economies through job creation, sourcing local products, and participating in development projects. Their initiatives have already led to concrete results and continue to yield improvements in their daily operations.

Human-Friendly Tech

The company's commitment to innovation is another critical factor, as they aim to make their guests have the most seamless experiences using modern technology. Yet the use of hotel tech should never replace the human touch that makes the industry so special. In today's world, it is imperative to strike the right balance between the

Amsa Hospitality invests heavily in secondary Saudi cities, markets often overlooked. This focus gives them a distinct competitive edge



nerships are key, allowing the company to expand rapidly by leveraging local knowledge and existing infrastructure.

High Potential

As part of its 2023 agreement with Accor, a major hospitality

it a distinct competitive edge, allowing it to tap into untapped potential. Its approach combines innovative market strategies with cultural authenticity, making it a strong contender in the hospitality industry. As the Kingdom gears up to unveil

to showcase several Saudi destinations on the global stage.

Talent Acquisition Drive

Amsa Hospitality has recently launched its own hospitality academy in partnership with Luxury Hotelschool Paris, further

enhancing its reputation as a top-tier contributor to the Kingdom's educational endeavours.

Amsa Hospitality Academy is open to all Saudis interested in pursuing a hospitality career, not only prospective employees of hotels managed by Amsa Hospitality. The collaboration with the French training school adds to Amsa Hospitality's already extensive range of recruiting initiatives while also providing development opportunities to benefit the entire national hospitality sector, including other hotel groups.

Key to the success of the newly-launched academy will be the



many partnerships with leading educational players in the public and private sector.

Sustainable Operations

Sustainability is a core pillar of Amsa Hospitality's ethos. The company invests in eco-

warmth of human interaction and the efficiency of technology. As it grows in market share, Amsa Hospitality is carving out a unique niche in the global hospitality industry by combining affordability with reliable quality. It is also

Sustainability is a core component of Amsa Hospitality's ethos. The company invests in eco-friendly practices like energy-efficient buildings

friendly practices, including energy-efficient buildings, greywater systems, and using

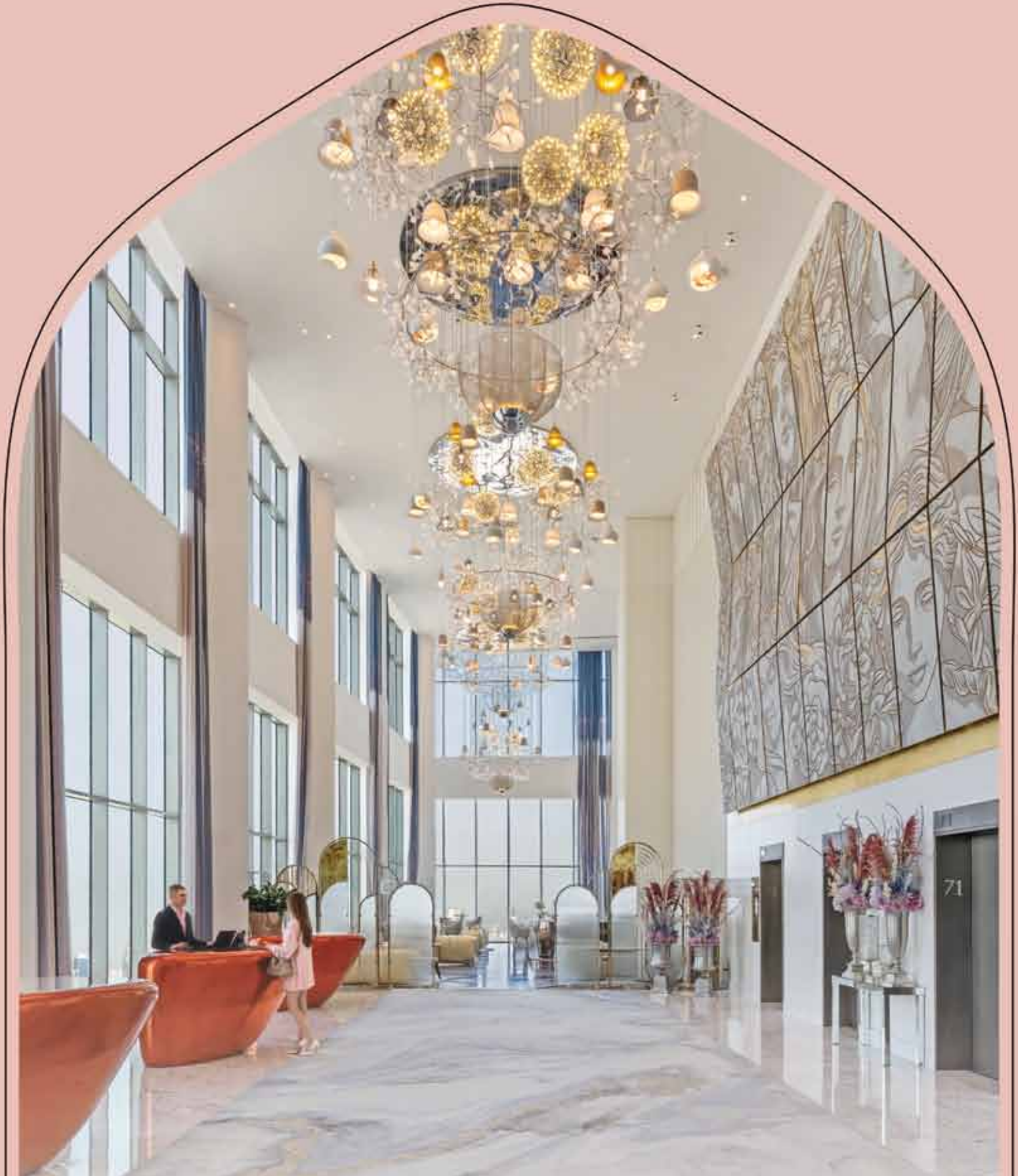
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KSA champions sustainable tourism @G20

At the G20 Tourism Ministerial Conference in Brazil, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to make its tourism sector sustainable and a powerful force for forging closer cultural ties with other countries. 'KSA shares and celebrates the G20's dedication to boost tourism growth and to put sustainability at the heart of our work,' says **H.E. Ahmed Al-Khateeb**, Minister of Tourism, KSA.

TT Bureau

His Excellency **Ahmed Al-Khateeb**, Minister of Tourism, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, addressing delegates at the G20 Tourism Ministerial Conference in Brazil, highlighted the meeting's overarching theme, 'Building a Just World and a Sustainable Planet'.

"There is more than just an economic benefit from the strides we are making to improve connectivity. They also provide the chance for people from around the world to explore the rich culture of Saudi Arabia and for our people to experience



Delegates at the G20 Tourism Ministerial Conference at Belém in Brazil

the wonders of other countries and cultures," Al-Khateeb said.

The high-profile gathering in Belém is bringing together not only the G20 nations - of which Saudi Arabia is the only permanent member from the Gulf Cooperation Council - but also 32 additional guest countries and international organisations. Saudi Arabia approved the creation of the G20 Tourism Working Group during its

presidency in 2020 and among the Ministers' key objectives at this meeting in Belém finalising a report by the Working Group that details measures taken by its members to promote robust, sustainable, and balanced global tourism growth.

During the event in Belém, His Excellency met with ministers

and senior political figures from Brazil, India, Italy, Spain and Japan, as well as with **H.E. Zurab Pololikashvili**, Secretary General, UN Tourism and Julia Simpson, President & CEO, World Travel & Tourism Council. In addition to meeting with global leaders, His Excellency also joined a WTTTC Public-Private Dialogue to coincide with the

launch of a jointly branded report analysing the impacts of COVID-19 on the Travel and Tourism sectors, including employment trends with a focus on youth, women, and high-wage jobs. As part of its Vision 2030 strategy, Saudi Arabia has a strong focus on eco-friendly tourism developments, including pioneering projects in Diriyah and NEOM. ➔

The high-profile gathering in Belém brings together not only the G20 nations, but also 32 additional guest countries and global organisations

Resorts World Cruises to home port in Dubai

Resorts World Cruises launches the home port deployment of Resorts World One in Dubai from 1 November 2024 with the support of DET, Dubai, together with Oman Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Qatar Tourism, Department of Culture and Tourism, Abu Dhabi and the port authorities. Resorts World One will home port in Dubai via DP World's Mina Port Rashid to offer three weekly departures.





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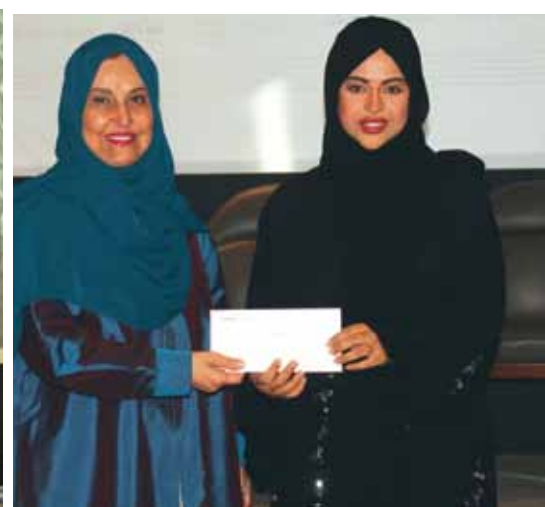


, along with SLS Dubai, celebrates

TRAVTALK, in association with SLS Dubai, organised a special event to celebrate Emirati Women's Day, which witnessed a gathering of key women leaders in the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors. Seychelles Tourism, Tourism Malaysia and McArthurGlen Designer Outlet were the platinum partners. Suaad Al Suwaidi, world's first Emirati and Arabic female wildlife photographer, was the Chief Guest.



Emirati Women's Day, key leaders attend





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Uzbekistan emerges as top luxury destination

One of the prominent figures in travel, tourism and hospitality industry, **Roula Jouny** heads a global conglomerate, Rocket International, as the Chief Executive Officer. This visionary leader with over 30 years of experience speaks to **TRAVELTALK** about her new venture, as the Destination Management Company plans to spread business in four more countries.

TT Bureau

Rocket International, a Destination Management Company (DMC) with presence in six countries, plans further expansion. Elaborating on the company's expansion plans, **Roula Jouny**, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Rocket International, said, "We are currently present in six countries, namely Turkey, Egypt, Tunisia, Spain, Uzbekistan and UAE. At the end of this year, we should be in 10 with the addition of Qatar, Thailand, Greece and Croatia to the list."

While a regular tour operator's business has changed over the years, Jouny's new venture is a different one that provides its customers a seamless experience throughout their journey. One of the most shocking news this year was the closure of FTI, which created a void in the



Roula Jouny
Chief Executive Officer
Rocket International



Bakhtiyor Fazilov
Founder
Silkroad Samarkand & Air Samarkand

market, but experts like Jouny, committed to bring back that business, continued to work on meeting the requirements of each category and age group.

Their latest addition to the portfolio is Uzbekistan, where they will be promoting the destination in various parts of the world. **Bakhtiyor Fazilov**, Founder Silkroad Samarkand & Air Sa-

markand, has been investing on promoting his country and Jouny and her team are working hand-in-hand to ensure that Uzbekistan remains a top-of-mind destination to travellers from the Middle East. Jouny shared, "He understands that connectivity is key and having a gem of a nation, he wants to share the rich heritage and culture with all travellers and GCC is a market that



Luxury travel also has two sides, the one which is affordable luxury and the one available during the peak season, which will be costly

he is keen to promote to, as it is closer in range and has many similarities which will be enjoyed by travellers. In terms of luxury, he invested in an airport, then in an airline called Air Samarkand, in order to open up the destination to the world. Fazilov, in addition

to the airline and the airport, built the largest luxury resort in Central Asia, Silkroad Samarkand consisting of nine hotels, an old city centre and the largest conference centre in Central Asia. He keeps developing it and he is building in the resort this summer the

largest man-made beach in the whole of central Asia. When you visit Europe, you do see the rich history and the past culture, but in Uzbekistan, it is a different story, as you basically live that culture, it is as if time has just stood still, or you have just gone back in time. It is magical and amazing at the same time. We want to promote this hidden gem to our valued partners in the Middle East and we are working on some programmes to ensure that there is enough awareness about the destination."



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Siddhalepa Ayurveda is a leading Ayurveda treatment and Ayurveda (herbal) products company in Sri Lanka, having an Ayurveda history exceeding 200 years. The company maintains a full-scale Ayurveda hospital, a dedicated Ayurveda Health Resort and a city hotel with optional Ayurveda while producing a wide range of Ayurveda products including medicines based on 100% natural ingredients. All the oils, tonics, creams, powders, and decoctions are produced by Siddhalepa's own manufacturing facilities under strict international standards conforming to ISO 9001, 14000, HACCP, GMP, and EU Pharmacopeia Standards. All Siddhalepa products are approved by the Department of Ayurveda, Ministry of Health of Sri Lanka. The company celebrates 90 years in 2024.

Over 100 buyers, 80 suppliers gather

More than 100 buyers with 80 suppliers attended the China Visitors Summit (CVS), organised with  as the media sponsor in Dubai recently. **Alexander Glos**, CEO, China i2i Group-Shanghai, creators of the CVS 2024 in Dubai, said, "The CVS is the premier global workshop where Chinese travel buyers come to learn about destinations, experience travel products firsthand, and network with potential partners."



for China Visitors Summit in Dubai



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ME key market for Sun Siyam Resorts

The Middle East has become a key source market for Sun Siyam Resorts, as travellers from the region are attracted by their all-inclusive offerings, diverse dining options, wellness programmes, and unforgettable experiences. 'Our six resorts are easy to reach with direct flights from major cities in the Middle East,' shares **Ahmed Naufal**, Group Director of Sales & Marketing, Sun Siyam Resorts, with .

 TT Bureau

Could you share the importance of travellers from the Middle East? Are they seasonal travellers? If so, when do they come in big numbers? Or are they a niche number of travellers?

The Middle East is an important market for Sun Siyam Resorts due to its proximity to the Maldives. In three or four hours you are there and it's a perfect short-haul destination, for either a long weekend getaway or a short break with the family. We see both niche and seasonal travellers from this region. While we have a steady flow throughout the year, the summer holidays and long weekends around Eid bring in the highest numbers. This demographic values privacy, family-friendly options, and premium services, all of which are key offerings at our resorts.

Do you see a younger generation coming over? If so, what are their key interests?

Absolutely! There is a growing trend of younger travellers visiting our resorts, especially in recent years. They are more adventurous and often seek thrilling experiences, such as water sports, wellness retreats, and immersive local experiences. Digital connectivity, Instagram-or snapchat-worthy moments, as well as sustainability are also high on their list of priorities. We have tailored many of our activities and services to cater to this new wave of younger travellers and offer experiences at our resorts that break the traditional mould of the Maldives being a honeymoon-only kind of destination.



Ahmed Naufal
Group Director of Sales & Marketing
Sun Siyam Resorts

What are the key criteria travellers look for when they select your properties in Maldives and the one in Sri Lanka?

The key factors are luxury, privacy, and an all-encompassing experience. For the Maldives, couples and honeymooners from the Middle East are drawn to dreamy and picture-perfect overwater villas, private pools, and unforgettable memories, while families prefer the private beach accommodations as kids



appreciate that our six resorts are relatively easy to reach with direct flights from major cities in the Middle East.

How do you describe your source markets and their key requirements?

Our source markets vary depending on the season. The



While we at our resorts have a steady flow of visitors throughout the year, the summer holidays and long weekends around Eid bring in the highest numbers

can play in the sand and safely access the beach. In Sri Lanka, it's more about the combination of nature, culture, and relaxation. Across all our properties, travellers are keen on our all-inclusive offerings, diverse dining options, wellness programmes, and unforgettable experiences. Another important factor is accessibility; travellers from the Middle East

Middle East, the UK, Russia, Germany, China, and India are our most important markets. Each market comes with its own set of requirements and desires. Middle Eastern guests prefer privacy, halal dining options, and wellness, while guests from Europe, including Germany, focus on sustainability, value for money, and adven-

ture. Guests from the UK similarly seek adventure and cultural experiences. Asian travellers, particularly from China and India, are drawn to immersive cultural experiences and luxury combined with affordability.

Which are the USPs to drive business?

Our USPs include our commitment to offering something for everyone at our six resorts in the Maldives and Sri Lanka — whether it's our signature overwater villas with slides, our all-inclusive benefits across the properties, the unique and unforgettable experiences we create for our guests, or our innovative approach to holidaying in the Maldives. We constantly innovate, such as being the first in the Maldives to offer electric go-karting, having the largest floating water park in the Maldives, opening the first ever horse ranch on a resort island, and our emphasis on wellness retreats, which all sets us apart in the region. We are also proud of our locally-inspired hospitality; being Maldivian-owned and

managed allows us to deliver an authentic experience.

In your opinion, which months brought in more revenue than others?

Summer has been particularly impressive this year. In fact, Sun Siyam Resorts has reported a 25 per cent increase in occupancy during the low season in the Maldives. This summer was our best to date, with occupancy across all five resorts increasing year-on-year by 20–25 per cent. We have seen a strong surge in

two to three weeks of arrival, particularly in August.

What are the plans for Q4?

We have exciting plans for Q4, especially as we gear up for the festive season. Our focus will be on driving bookings through tactical offers and boosting our PR and marketing activities to target specific markets. We aim to offer unforgettable experiences for our guests. In addition to regular promotions, we are also planning special events, such as Siyam World's Birthday

The Middle East, the UK, Russia, Germany, China, and India are our key markets. Each market comes with its own set of requirements and desires

bookings from the UK, Russia, Germany, China, and Middle East with many travellers planning their trips six to nine months in advance. However, for 2024, we have also seen a trend of last-minute bookings—within

Bash, Halloween celebrations, Diwali festivities, and our signature festive season experiences. All of these are designed to make the holidays magical for our guests and encourage repeat visits. 



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MOVEMENTS

BANANA ISLAND RESORT DOHA Qatar

Banana Island Resort by Anantara has appointed **ROBERTO SIMONE** as the General Manager. Simone brings with him more than 15-year experience in Hospitality Management. He transitions to the new role in Doha from his recent tenure as General Manager at Anantara Peace Haven Resort, Tangalle in Sri Lanka. Previous roles for Simone include an impressive record as Area Country Manager for East Africa, where he managed a cluster of resorts for a renowned global brand. His hospitality experience spans four continents, enhancing his ability to navigate and thrive in diverse hospitality markets. Simone's career history with prestigious brands, such as Kempinski, Marriott, and Silversea, has endowed him with a perspective to lead in the evolving hospitality landscape.



AMSA HOSPITALITY Riyadh, KSA

As part of its corporate expansion, Amsa Hospitality has appointed **MUIN SERHAN** as the Chief Executive Officer. A seasoned hotelier with an international background, Serhan will report to Mohammad Alathel, founder and now Managing Director of the Saudi hospitality startup. Serhan brings 24 years of global experience with leading hotel chains to the new role. His award-winning career has demonstrated his ability to successfully build and operate large properties in various locations, both within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and abroad. Among the initial projects under Serhan's leadership will be the opening of 18 Accor midscale properties in secondary Saudi cities, including Mercure Khamis Mushait. Another imminent hotel opening is that of Radisson Hotel Madinah.



HOTEL BY GEWAN Dubai

Gewan Hotels and Resorts has appointed **EMAD IBRAHIM** as the Hotel Manager for MD Hotel by Gewan, in Dubai. Ibrahim has worked with renowned international hospitality brands, such as Intercontinental, Movenpick, Marriott International, Jumeirah, and Accor. Ibrahim's appointment is one of many strategic appointments and hotel upgrades being taken by Gewan Hotels & Resorts to address growing demand and elevate its offerings, with MD Hotel by Gewan, in Dubai. The newly refurbished MD Hotel by Gewan will include fresh, innovative dining concepts and improved accommodation options. In his new role, Ibrahim's mandate is to oversee the daily operations and elevate the already high standards of service.



MIRAVAL THE RED SEA Saudi Arabia

JUAN PAOLO ALFONSO has taken on the role as General Manager of Miraval The Red Sea. The highly anticipated luxury wellness resort is set to mark the international launch of the Miraval brand outside the USA. The resort will boast 180 rooms, suites, and luxury villas as well as the island's largest spa complemented by extensive fitness and wellness facilities. Alfonso is an accomplished General Manager, who is tasked with bringing Miraval's life in balance ethos to the kingdom. He started his hospitality career in 2003, and progressed his way across various departments, including Front Office and Housekeeping, before advancing to leadership positions. His career spans iconic resorts in multiple destinations, including the US, Caribbean, Costa Rica, Indonesia, and Oman.



THE RITZ CARLTON Ras Al Khaimah

The Ritz-Carlton, Ras Al Khaimah, has appointed **KETI GVRTISHVILI** as the Multi-Property Director of Sales & Marketing. With a distinguished career spanning over a decade in the luxury hospitality industry, Gvritshvili brings a wealth of experience and a proven track record of success to her new role. Gvritshvili's journey in the Middle East began in Doha in 2014 where she quickly established herself as a dynamic and results-driven professional across the luxury hospitality space. After two and a half years, she transitioned to Dubai where her dedication and exceptional performance led to multiple promotions, culminating in her first leadership role. Her leadership and strategic vision were key to driving growth across all of her roles and positioning brands in a competitive market.



ROTANA Abu Dhabi and Al Ain

Rotana promotes **HARALD FEURSTEIN** to the position of Area General Manager Abu Dhabi and Al Ain, and General Manager Saadiyat Rotana Resort & Villas. In this key position, Feurstein will oversee operational strategies at one of Rotana's flagship properties, Saadiyat Rotana Resort & Villas, and at an area level, working closely with Operations teams at Rotana hotels across the emirate. In line with Rotana's promise of 'Treasured Time', Feurstein will focus on enhancing the customer experience, ensuring the highest standards of service and guest satisfaction, and maximising performance. Feurstein brings with him over two decades of industry experience. Most recently, he served as General Manager Khalidiya Palace Rayhaan by Rotana, where his hands-on approach and strategic vision were instrumental in establishing new benchmarks.



ROYALJET Abu Dhabi

RoyalJet, the premium private jet operator, has appointed **SHAFIUL SYED** as the Chief Executive. His areas of focus will be safety, customer service and strategy development. A seasoned aviation industry executive, Syed comes with more than three and a half decades of aviation management experience, across many departments and functions. He has led major brand organisations through tough business and culture change with his inspired and passionate leadership, as well as an uncompromising commitment to safety, strategy and the customer as key success factors. He has worked across various locations in the world, specialising in starting-up new airlines, turning them around, or providing strategic management. Under his leadership, Aero FlightOps UK received one of the first Air Operator Certificates.



KEMPINSKI HOTELS Switzerland

Kempinski Hotels has appointed **MASSIMO BRANCALEONI** as the Chief Commercial Officer. An Italian national, Brancaloni, who most recently held the position of Senior Vice President Sales and Revenues at Silversea Cruises, brings over 25 years of commercial experience to his new role. He has a proven track record of leading large teams and developing profitable global sales strategies. He spent a significant part of his career, a total of 20 years, with the cruise ship company Costa Crociere. He began as Pricing & Revenue Management Director, and then progressed to become VP Asia Pacific Operations, VP Worldwide Sales Services and was later promoted to Senior Vice President Global Sales. Brancaloni was educated at the University of Economics in Genoa and the IESE Business School in Barcelona.



RIXOS PREMIUM Dubai

Rixos Premium Dubai announces the promotion of three of its outstanding employees, including **ZELIHA KAPLAN**. Kaplan has been promoted to the position of Revenue Manager. Earlier, she worked as the Assistant Revenue Manager. Kaplan, who has been part of the Rixos family for over two decades, will now oversee the Revenue Operations at Rixos Premium Dubai. Her tenure as Reservations Manager has been marked by her unique style of leadership, strategic thinking, and a profound understanding of industry dynamics. Her dedication to optimising revenue streams and adept management of the reservations team have been instrumental in the hotel's success. With her proven track record, she exemplifies the core values of Rixos Premium Dubai.



HBX GROUP Spain

HBX Group has appointed **XABIER ZABALA** as the Chief Operations Officer. This announcement marks a significant step in strengthening HBX Group's executive committee as the company continues to expand its global footprint and drive forward its strategic objectives. Zabala, who joined the company in 2016 and has occupied leadership positions in the Commercial and Operations areas, now joins the executive committee as Chief Operations Officer (COO). With a strong management consulting background at McKinsey & Company and an MBA from MIT Sloan, he has held senior roles across strategy, analytics, digital transformation, customer service and financial services. He will supervise the company's global operations across brands and products.



GRAND HYATT RED SEA Saudi Arabia

JEAN-FRANCOIS DURAND will lead the 430-room Grand Hyatt The Red Sea, set to open in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by the end of 2025. Durand has been appointed General Manager of Grand Hyatt The Red Sea – a luxury property with 430 rooms, and the largest of 11 hotels set to open on the island. He is a seasoned General Manager with over 30 years of experience with the Hyatt Group. Throughout his career journey, he has held various positions at properties across several regions in the world, garnering numerous awards and recognitions, particularly for his expertise in successfully opening hotels and resorts. He brings a wealth of expertise to the kingdom, spanning sustainability, people's career development, creative food and beverage concept development, and unparalleled guest experiences' initiatives.



Rixos Premium also promoted **SALMAN KHAN** as Front Office Manager. Previously serving as Assistant Front Office Manager and with over 13 years of progressive hospitality management experience in the Middle East, Khan will now oversee the Front Office operations at Rixos Premium Dubai. He has been a vital part of the Front Office and Guest Relations team, consistently demonstrating dynamic leadership and a positive approach to guest service. His dedication, proficiency, and commitment to guest service excellence have defined his career at Rixos Premium Dubai. His deep understanding of hospitality management makes him the ideal candidate to lead the Front Office team.



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