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Winner of the "Most Influential Tourism Newspaper in the Arab World 2026" Award by AFUSU

Wyndham Signs Franchise Agreement for 174-Villa Tourism Development in Greece

High-Level African Diplomatic Presence at AFASU Golden Awards Ceremony in Cairo

Second Season of Global City Dammam Launched with Target of 5.2 Million Visits

Italian Tour Operators Plan Two-Night Petra Packages Starting February 2027



High-Level African Diplomatic Presence at AFASU Golden Awards Ceremony in Cairo



Major General Ismail Abdel Aziz Named Man of the Year 2026 and Ms. Sanaa Ramram Honored as Woman of the Year 2026 Amid the Presence of Ambassadors and International, Parliamentary, and Business Figures

Cairo – Egypt | Al Rehla

In an exceptional evening bringing together African diplomacy, Egyptian-Moroccan relations, and business leaders, the Africa-Asia Union (AFASU) held its 2026 Golden Awards ceremony on Saturday evening, November 14, at the Zurich Hall of the Concorde El Salam Hotel in Heliopolis, Cairo, honoring two distinguished individuals for their professional achievements and contributions to business and economic development.

The ceremony witnessed high-level African diplomatic attendance, led by H.E. Ambassador Karim Sherif, Egypt's Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for African Affairs, alongside ambassadors and representatives of African diplomatic missions, including Zambia, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Rwanda, Guinea, Angola, Niger, and Morocco.

The gathering reflected the importance of Egyptian-African relations and the union's commitment to strengthening cooperation among African nations.

The event also welcomed members of the Moroccan community in Egypt, representatives of the Egyptian-Moroccan Businessmen Association, AFASU leaders and members, and prominent public, business, and media figures.

Honoring the Man and Woman of the Year 2026

Major General Ismail Abdel Aziz Ismail of Egypt received the Man of the Year 2026 in Business award in recognition of his professional career, business and investment contributions, and efforts to support economic and export activities, particularly agricultural exports.

Ms. Sanaa Ramram of Morocco received the Woman of the Year 2026 in Business award, recognizing her leadership as General Manager of CUP ELITE and her contributions to management, business development, and strengthening women's economic participation.

Remarks from the Honorees

In her remarks, Sanaa Ramram



expressed pride in receiving the award, describing it as recognition of her professional journey and motivation to pursue further achievements. She thanked AFASU and its organizing committees and praised the close ties between Egypt and Morocco.

Major General Ismail Abdel Aziz Ismail also expressed appreciation for the recognition, describing it as an additional responsibility and an incentive to continue contributing. He thanked the union's leadership, awards committee, and attendees.

AFASU Golden Awards: Recognizing Merit and Achievement

Dr. Hossam Darwish, President of AFASU, emphasized that the Golden Awards represent more than ceremonial recognition, describing them as a tribute to genuine achievement and positive societal impact.

He explained that the awards follow a merit-based and objective evaluation process involving a seven-member Supreme Committee and an international judging panel of 45 experts from various disciplines.

Dr. Darwish stressed that AFASU awards are neither bought nor sold, and no fees are charged to receive them. Instead, they recognize merit and excellence, regardless of titles or fame, reflecting the union's vision of strengthening cooperation between Africa and Asia and promoting Egypt's soft power internationally.

An Egyptian-Moroccan-African Celebration

The ceremony concluded with commemorative photographs bringing together the honorees, ambassadors, diplomats, AFASU leadership, public figures, members of the Egyptian-Moroccan Businessmen Association, and representatives of the Moroccan community in Egypt.



The AFASU Golden Awards are about more than handing out titles. They recognize genuine achievement and the positive impact people make in their communities

Dr. Hossam Darwish
President of the Afro-Asian Union (AFASU)

Guests then attended a dinner reception marked by friendship, networking, and congratulations.

The evening highlighted how meaningful recognition can transcend titles and national borders, strengthening connections between peoples and cultures while celebrating individuals who make a positive contribution to society.

Wyndham Signs Franchise Agreement for 174-Villa Tourism Development in Greece



Turkish developer Ege Yapı targets project completion in 2028, with 43,600 square metres of built-up area and villas to be included in a unified tourism rental programme.

Halkidiki – Greece | Al Rehla

Wyndham Hotels & Resorts has signed a franchise agreement with Turkish real estate developer Ege Yapı for the development of Wyndham Residences Gerakini Halkidiki, a project comprising 174 furnished holiday villas in Gerakini, on the Halkidiki Peninsula in northern Greece.

Announced on November 12, 2026, the agreement forms part of Wyndham's expansion into branded residences, a hospitality segment combining private property ownership with professional management and hotel-style services.

A 43,600-Square-Metre Development

The project is located approximately 400 metres from Gerakini Beach, which holds Blue Flag certification, and about an hour's drive from Thessaloniki International Airport.

According to the developer, the project will have a total built-up area of 43,600 square metres, with property handovers targeted for 2028. However, neither the official opening date for tourism operations nor the total development investment has been disclosed.

The villas will be delivered fully furnished and equipped, with shared facilities including swimming pools, fitness and recreational amenities, alongside housekeeping, maintenance and concierge services.

A Model Combining Property Sales and Tourism Rentals

The agreement follows a franchise model, allowing the development to benefit from the Wyndham brand, its operating standards, international marketing and distribution networks, and the Wyndham Rewards loyalty programme.

Under the announced contractual arrangements, villa buyers will be







required to lease their properties back to the designated operator, allowing the units to be included in a managed tourism rental programme. Owners will be able to generate rental income in accordance with the programme's terms.

The franchise agreement does not mean that Wyndham owns the development or directly participates in financing its construction. Details regarding rental yields and revenue-sharing arrangements with property owners have not been disclosed.

International Expansion for the Turkish Developer

Founded in Istanbul in 2006, Ege Yapı is chaired by İnanç Kabadayı and operates across residential, commercial and hospitality-related real estate development.

According to company figures, its cumulative development portfolio exceeds 2.4 million square metres, with more than 5,000 property units delivered. The total investment value of its projects is approximately $2 billion.

The Halkidiki development forms part of the company's international expansion strategy, focusing on tourism-oriented residential properties supported by specialised hospitality management and operations.

Al-Rehla Perspective | Private Villas Within a Hotel-Style Hospitality Model

The project's significance lies in combining individual villa ownership with a professionally managed accommodation inventory, rather than limiting the properties to private residential use.

This model could provide travellers with the privacy and space of a villa while offering access to selected hotel-style services.

However, its commercial success will depend on rental agreement terms, operator performance and actual occupancy levels. Participation in a managed rental programme does not guarantee financial returns for property buyers, particularly as the detailed revenue-sharing arrangements and operating obligations have yet to be announced.



Through the Window of Travel

China... When Domestic Decisions Shape Tourism

BY:
Duaa Al-Ajmi
Tourism Media Professional and Volunteer Work Ambassador

During my visits to China, I have often noticed how its cities manage to combine modern development with the preservation of their historical identity. From high-speed trains and modern airports to cultural landmarks and tourist facilities, many details make visitors wonder about the scale of planning and effort behind such development.

Recently, my attention was drawn to reports published by Xinhua News Agency concerning the latest plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, which addressed stronger oversight, anti-corruption measures, and institutional discipline within the Party. Although the subject may appear primarily political, I found that it also raises important questions about tourism and development.

Today, tourism is no longer simply about luxury hotels or beautiful attractions. It has become an integrated industry that depends on efficient institutions, quality infrastructure, simplified procedures, clear regulations, and investor confidence. The more efficiently and transparently resources and projects are managed, the greater the opportunities to develop a competitive and sustainable tourism sector.

China offers an interesting case to examine in this regard, not necessarily from the perspective of its political system, but through the remarkable transformation of its cities and its investments in transportation, services, and facilities that benefit both residents and visitors.

From my personal experience, what often impresses travelers most is not always the scale of major projects, but the smaller details that make a journey easier: organized transportation, connections between cities, the development of historical sites, and services that make exploring destinations more comfortable.

However, it is equally important to distinguish between announcing policies and successfully implementing them. Fighting corruption and strengthening oversight are objectives pursued by many countries, but their real impact depends on effective implementation, transparency, and accountability.

I believe this is particularly relevant to those working in the tourism industry, as weaknesses in management or planning can affect service quality, delay development projects, and undermine the confidence of both visitors and investors.

Ultimately, tourists may not pay much attention to the political details of the countries they visit, but they certainly experience the consequences of decisions made within their institutions, whether at the airport, in a hotel, on the streets, or at a tourist attraction.

This is where I see a deeper connection between politics and tourism than we might initially imagine. Tourism development does not always begin with a new project or a promotional campaign. Sometimes, it begins with an administrative decision that improves efficiency, enhances services, and protects resources.

Travelers see a destination through their own eyes, but what they experience is often the result of decisions made behind the scenes.



Pyramisa Hotels Reports 11.8% Profit Growth to EGP 751 Million in Nine Months



Operating revenues rise more than 20% to EGP 2.62 billion, while standalone net profit surges 47.4% amid improved financial performance.

Dammam – Saudi Arabia | Al Rehla

Egypt's Pyramisa Hotels and Resorts reported an 11.8% increase in consolidated net profit for the first nine months of 2026, reaching approximately EGP 751.11 million, compared with EGP 671.84 million during the corresponding period last year, supported by higher operating revenues.

The figures were disclosed in the company's financial statements published on the Egyptian Exchange on Sunday, November 15, 2026.

Consolidated operating revenues increased to approximately EGP 2.62 billion between January and September 2026, compared with around EGP 2.17 billion during the same period in 2025, representing year-on-year growth of nearly 21%.

The increase in revenues and profits reflects growth in the group's financial performance. However, the disclosed figures do not separately identify the contribution of hotel occupancy, average room rates, or non-hotel activities to this growth.

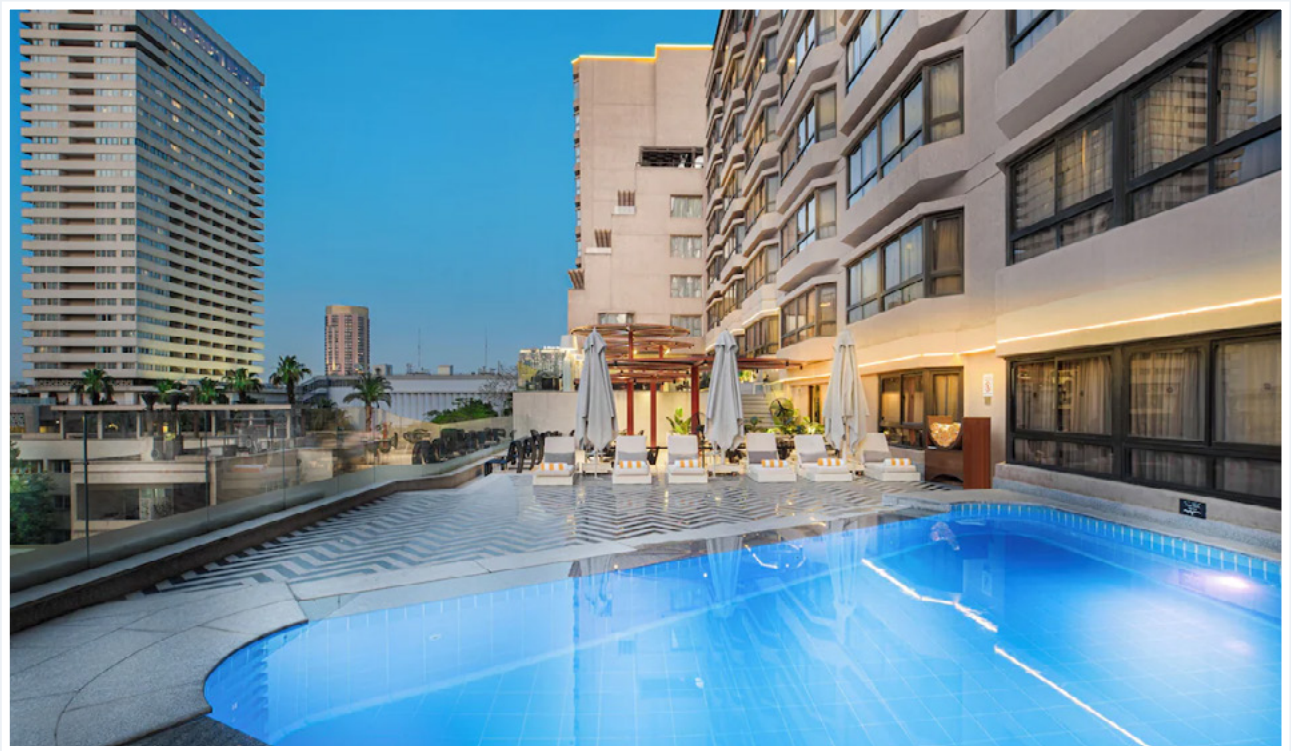
Standalone Net Profit Rises 47.4%

According to its standalone financial statements, Pyramisa Hotels recorded net profit of approximately EGP 387.22 million during the first nine months of 2026, compared with EGP 262.77 million in the corresponding period last year, an increase of approximately 47.4%.

Standalone operating revenues also rose to around EGP 1.19 billion, compared with EGP 980.7 million during the same period in 2025.

The difference between consolidated and standalone profit growth rates reflects variations in the financial performance of the parent company and the wider group, including its subsidiaries.

However, the summarized figures do not provide sufficient detail to determine the contribution of



individual subsidiaries or hotel properties to the overall results.

Revenue Growth Outpaces Profit Growth

The year-on-year comparison shows that consolidated operating revenues increased faster than net profit, with revenues rising by approximately 21%, compared with an 11.8% increase in earnings.

This divergence highlights the importance of examining operating costs, administrative expenses, taxation, and other financial items to identify the factors influencing profit margins.

The overall financial figures alone do not establish whether revenue growth resulted from higher guest numbers, improved average room rates, or other sources of income, as detailed operational indicators for the group's hotel properties were not disclosed.

Al-Rehla Perspective | Is Higher Hotel Revenue Translating into Stronger Profit Margins?

Pyramisa's financial results provide an important perspective on the performance of Egypt's hospitality industry.

While the group recorded growth in both operating revenues and net profit, the difference between their growth rates raises questions about the quality of earnings and the extent to which revenue expansion translates into improved operational returns.

In the hospitality industry, financial performance depends on more than hotel occupancy alone. Key factors include average daily room rates, food and beverage revenues, meetings and events, ancillary services, and operating expenses such as labour, energy, maintenance, and distribution costs.

Against this backdrop, Pyramisa's revenue growth to EGP 2.62 billion represents a positive financial indicator, but it does not independently demonstrate improved operating efficiency or higher profitability per available room.

The most relevant indicators for evaluating the group's future performance will include occupancy rates, average daily rates (ADR), revenue per available room (RevPAR), operating profit margins, and the contribution of individual hotel properties to consolidated revenues.

The company's fourth-quarter results will also provide further insight into whether the growth recorded during the first nine months of 2026 can be sustained and whether rising revenues will translate into comparable improvements in profitability.

Second Season of Global City Dammam Launched with Target of 5.2 Million Visits



23 international pavilions, five global markets and 79 food and beverage outlets, alongside new artificial intelligence and robotics experiences

Dammam – Saudi Arabia | Al Rehla

Prince Saud bin Naif bin Abdulaziz, Governor of Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province, inaugurated the second season of Global City Dammam on Sunday, November 15, 2026, with the destination targeting approximately 5.2 million visits, compared with more than three million recorded during its first season.

The new season introduces expanded entertainment, commercial and cultural facilities as part of ongoing efforts to develop tourism destinations across the Eastern Province and strengthen private-sector participation in visitor-related activities.

23 International Pavilions and Five Global Markets

The second season features 23 international pavilions showcasing diverse cultures and products, alongside five open-air global markets, 13 restaurants, six cafés and 60 food and beverage kiosks.

New attractions include the Asian Village, Kabayan Night Market, Future Zone featuring artificial intelligence and robotics experiences, Dinosaur City and an interactive dancing fountain.

These additions aim to diversify entertainment options for families and visitors while bringing cultural, technological and recreational experiences together in one destination.

New Commercial and Investment Opportunities

The project's expansion includes additional investment spaces dedicated to entrepreneurs and emerging brands, alongside enhanced hospitality, retail and visitor services.

Global City Dammam represents a public-private partnership model involving the Eastern Province Municipality and private-sector investors, aimed at developing municipal assets into tourism and entertainment facilities that attract visitors.

Al-Rehla Perspective | A Destination Targeting Gulf Families

The new season expands family entertainment options in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province, particularly for visitors travelling from other Saudi cities and neighbouring Gulf countries.

The increased number of pavilions, markets and restaurants could stimulate shopping, dining and demand for services surrounding the destination, while the variety of experiences may encourage repeat visits.

However, achieving the target of 5.2 million visits will depend on actual visitor demand, consistent operation of facilities and the quality of the visitor experience throughout the season, rather than the destination's announced capacity alone.

Last Edition Crowned

the Leaders of Hospitality...

Who Will Claim the Gold This Year?

Nominations Open Now



Qatar and Philippines Agree to Increase Doha–Manila Flight Rights to 28 Weekly Services Each Way



Memorandum of Understanding expands passenger flight rights and air cargo capacity, with no confirmed date for additional services to begin.

Doha – Qatar | Al Rehla

Qatar and the Philippines have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance bilateral air transport rights, allowing up to 28 weekly passenger flights in each direction between Doha and Manila, alongside increased air cargo capacity, creating further opportunities to strengthen air connectivity between the two markets.

The Qatar Civil Aviation Authority announced the agreement on Thursday, November 12, 2026, as part of its efforts to expand international air traffic rights and strengthen cooperation with global aviation partners.

28 Weekly Flights in Each Direction

The agreement was signed by Mohammed bin Faleh Al Hajri, Acting President of the Qatar Civil Aviation Authority, and Carmelo L. Arcilla, Executive Director of the Civil Aeronautics Board of the Philippines.

Under the agreement, designated airlines from both countries will be permitted to operate an average of up to four daily flights in each direction. However, this does not mean that all authorised services have commenced operations.

The announcement did not specify the previously permitted flight frequencies or when the additional rights would be reflected in airline schedules.

Expanding Air Cargo Services

The MoU also provides for increased air cargo capacity between the two countries, offering airlines greater opportunities to develop freight services and strengthen commercial connectivity through Doha.

However, no specific increase in cargo capacity, measured in tonnes, or additional freighter services has been announced.

Al-Rehla Perspective | More Travel Options Depend on Actual Operations

The expanded air traffic rights could eventually provide passengers with more flight options and improved connections through Hamad International Airport, particularly for travellers between the Philippines and Gulf countries.

However, the actual benefits will depend on airlines' decisions to introduce additional flights, seat availability and passenger demand.

The agreement does not guarantee lower airfares or change visa requirements. Additional services will only become available for booking once airlines officially announce their operating schedules.



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Maldives Moves Closer to Repealing 17% Tax Requirements for Foreign Tourism Companies Following International Opposition



Parliamentary committee backs reversal of tax obligations introduced in October, with final approval still pending as the government faces an estimated MVR 1.61 billion in foregone revenue.

Malé – Maldives | Al Rehla

The Economic Affairs Committee of the Maldives Parliament has approved a bill seeking to repeal the 17% Tourism Goods and Services Tax (TGST) obligations imposed on foreign travel agencies, tour operators and booking platforms since early October 2026, following objections from international tourism companies and industry associations.

The committee unanimously approved the proposed amendments on November 8, bringing the government closer to reversing a tax measure that had been expected to generate approximately MVR 1.61 billion in revenue.

However, the repeal has not yet taken effect, as it still requires a final parliamentary vote, presidential ratification and official publication.

Tax Measure Sparks International Opposition

President Mohamed Muizzu ratified an amendment to the Goods and Services Tax Act on August 31, 2026, extending tax obligations to foreign companies selling tourism products related to the Maldives without maintaining a permanent establishment in the country.

The new provisions took effect on October 1, covering accommodation, transportation, tourism activities and related booking services, subject to the applicable tax calculation rules.

The measure prompted objections from European and international travel associations and companies, which warned of increased compliance costs and difficulties in managing bookings previously sold at fixed prices.

During the World Travel Market (WTM) in London, Maldives Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation Mohamed Ameen confirmed the government's intention to repeal the new provisions following consultations with industry representatives.

Tax Refunds Await Final Procedures

The proposed legislation includes arrangements for refunding taxes collected under the provisions targeted for repeal, covering the period from October 1 until the amendments take effect. However, the detailed refund procedures have yet to be finalised.

The committee also approved a separate proposal to raise the mandatory Goods and Services Tax registration threshold from MVR 1 million to MVR 1.5 million, effective January 2027.

The proposed repeal does not eliminate the Maldives' existing 17% tourism tax. Instead, it targets specific obligations recently extended to foreign companies selling tourism services associated with the destination.

Abu Dhabi Hosts 33rd Jewellery & Watches Show, Featuring More Than 100 Brands



The exhibition concludes today at ADNEC, featuring a sustainable jewellery pavilion and two new categories in the Ebda'a Awards.

Abu Dhabi – UAE | Al Rehla

H.E. Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, inaugurated the 33rd edition of the Abu Dhabi Jewellery & Watches Show (JWS), organised by RX at ADNEC Abu Dhabi. The exhibition concludes today, 15 November, with more than 100 brands from 12 countries taking part.

Sustainability and Men's Jewellery Design

This year's edition features a sustainable jewellery pavilion showcasing six brands: Thangals Jewellery, Duo Karat Jewellery, Ammar Jewellery, The Diamond Garden, Gamma Jewels and Gem Experience. The pavilion presents designs that emphasise the selection of raw materials, craftsmanship and responsible production methods.

The Ebda'a Awards, launched by Emirati artist Azza Al Qubaisi, have also introduced two new categories: Men's Jewellery Design and Bridal Jewellery Design, bringing the total number of categories to nine. The awards aim to highlight local, regional and international talent and designs, while Emirati designers are also showcasing their work in a dedicated exhibition space.

International Brands and Limited-Edition Watches

The list of exhibitors includes brands such as L'Azurde Jewellery, Rora Jewellery, Solitaire Jewels, Craidi Jewellery, Hasbani Gioielli, Tabarrini and Costis Fine Jewellery. The collections feature watches in a variety of designs and colours, including the Kratistos watches by Costis, with each model limited to just 323 pieces.

Mai Ismail, the exhibition's Event Director, said: "With more than 100 brands from 12 countries taking part, we are proud to offer visitors a unique experience, giving them the opportunity to explore exclusive collections and discover promising creative talents from across the region and around the world."

Free Registration and Visiting Hours Until 10 PM

The exhibition welcomes visitors today in Halls 1 to 3 at ADNEC, from 3 PM to 10 PM. Admission is free, with registration available through the official website, jws.ae.

Visitors can purchase displayed items directly at the exhibition. The programme also includes workshops accompanying the Ebda'a Awards, with the participation of Red Gold Academy, the FIA Foundation in collaboration with Azza Al Qubaisi, Salam Suwaid, and the International Gemological Institute (IGI).

“Skeek Doha” Connects Five Heritage Landmarks in a Six-Month Cultural Tourism Experience

Free walking experience brings together traditional Qatari neighbourhoods, architecture, football history and rare books, with workshops and family activities running until May 2027

Doha – Qatar | Al Rehla

Qatar Tourism has announced the launch of “Skeek Doha,” a cultural walking trail connecting five heritage landmarks in the heart of the Qatari capital. The six-month experience, running until May 2027, aims to introduce visitors to the city’s history and cultural identity through interactive activities and local storytelling.

The initiative forms part of Qatar’s efforts to diversify its tourism offerings and develop experiences rooted in heritage and national identity, welcoming families, tourists and residents.

Five Landmarks Tell Doha’s Story

The trail includes Fareej Al Asmakh, offering experiences inspired by traditional daily life, local markets and handicrafts, and Bait Al Zaman, which explores architecture, trade history and memories associated with the city’s development.

It also features the House of the Founder, Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani, highlighting the historical foundations of the Qatari state.

Doha Stadium showcases the early history of football in Qatar, while Qatar National Library’s historic Dar Al Kutub site highlights the role of knowledge, historical documents and rare books in preserving the country’s national heritage.

Six Months of Cultural Activities

The project features workshops, interactive performances and cultural experiences aligned with national celebrations and seasonal occasions.

The programme includes National Day celebrations in December, family activities in January and sports-related experiences coinciding with Qatar’s National Sports Day in February.

It also features Ramadan evenings and activities inspired by traditional Qatari hospitality and crafts.

According to the official Visit Qatar events calendar, participation is free, with the programme scheduled to continue until May 17, 2027.

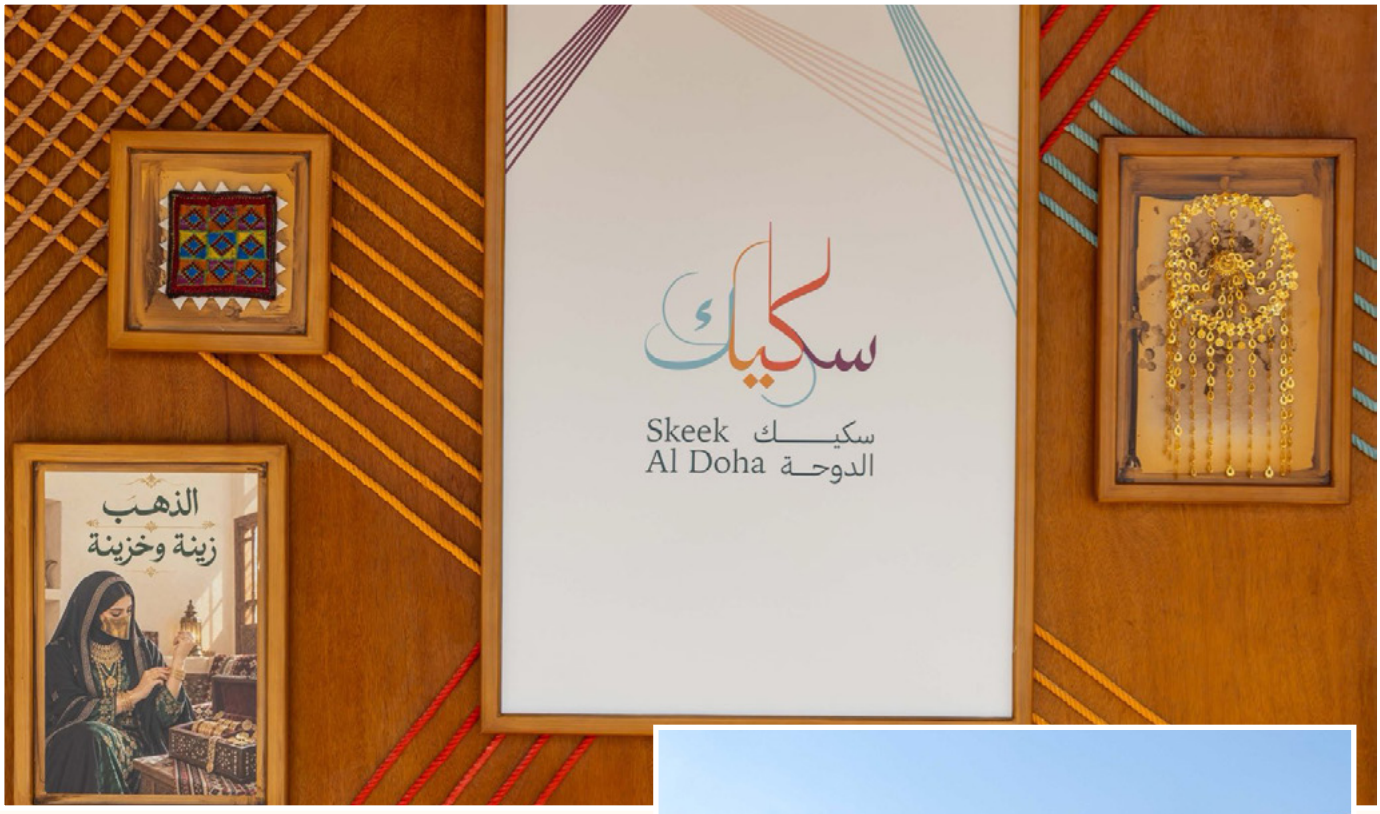
Al-Rehla Perspective | Heritage Tourism Beyond Museums

Skeek Doha introduces an approach to cultural tourism that connects historic locations with immersive experiences rather than presenting heritage landmarks as isolated attractions.

The walking trail allows tourists to explore different aspects of Qatar’s history through a single cultural journey, while its changing seasonal programme encourages repeat visits.

The initiative could also create opportunities for artisans, entrepreneurs and local service providers, particularly in traditional food, heritage products and cultural experiences.

However, no official estimates have been announced regarding the additional tourism spending or economic impact expected from the project.


سكيك
Skeek سكيـــك
Al Doha الدوحـة
الذهـب
زينة وخزينة





Tunisia Approves TND 1.2 Billion in Tourism Investments Across 158 New and Expansion Projects in 10 Months



Approved investments rise 18% through October 2026, while 17 hotels have reopened since 2024 and 137 properties remain out of operation.

Tunis – Tunisia | Al Rehla

Tunisia approved approximately TND 1.206 billion in tourism investments during the first ten months of 2026, representing an 18% increase compared with the same period last year. The approved investments cover 158 projects involving the development of new tourism establishments and the expansion of existing properties, reflecting continued investment activity in the country's tourism and hospitality sectors.

Tunisian Minister of Tourism and Handicrafts Sofiane Tekaya disclosed the figures during a joint plenary session of the Assembly of the Representatives of the People and the National Council of Regions and Districts. The session began on Saturday evening, November 14, and continued into the early hours of Sunday, as lawmakers discussed the proposed tourism budget for 2027.

The figures represent investments that have received official approval and do not necessarily indicate that all projects have entered the construction phase or commenced commercial operations.

Foreign Investment Rises to TND 149 Million

The minister explained that foreign direct investment in Tunisia's tourism sector increased from approximately TND 30 million in 2024 to TND 149 million in 2025, alongside efforts to attract international investors and hotel groups to the Tunisian market.

Ongoing initiatives include exploring opportunities to repurpose certain closed hotel properties for medical and wellness tourism, as well as senior living accommodation. However, no final investment contracts have been announced for these projects.

137 Hotels Remain Out of Operation

Meanwhile, the minister revealed that 137 hotels remain closed, including 73 properties that ceased operations in 2015 or earlier and 30 establishments that have been closed since 2020.

The closures have been attributed to financial difficulties, outstanding



debts, legal disputes and the need for refurbishment, alongside cases of seasonal closure.

He noted that the status of 28 hotels has been resolved since 2024, with 17 properties reopening and rehabilitation work continuing at another 11 establishments.

Tourism Revenues Reach TND 7.15 Billion

In terms of tourism performance, revenues reached approximately TND 7.152 billion by the end of October 2026, representing year-on-year growth of 3.4%.

During the same period, Tunisia welcomed approximately 9 million non-resident visitors, reflecting continued activity in the country's tourism market.

Al-Rehla Perspective | Can New Investment Revive Tunisia's Idle Hotel Capacity?

The figures reveal two parallel trends in Tunisia's hospitality industry: newly approved tourism investments and a substantial existing hotel inventory that remains partially out of operation.

A key economic opportunity lies in rehabilitating closed properties, particularly where their locations and existing infrastructure make reopening commercially viable, rather than relying exclusively on the construction of new hotels.

However, assessing the actual impact of investment growth requires identifying which approved projects have entered implementation, how investment is distributed between new hotel developments, expansions and renovations, and how much additional accommodation capacity will become operational.

The most meaningful indicator is not simply the value of approved investments, but how much of that capital translates into operational tourism establishments, available hotel rooms and actual employment opportunities.



Tunisia Plans 11 New Tourism Sites in Addition to 19 Existing Ones, Allocates TND 9 Million to Support 57 Municipalities



Strategy aims to expand tourism into inland, mountainous and desert regions, alongside a €28 million programme to modernise tourism training institutions

Tunis – Tunisia | Al Rehla

Tunisia's Ministry of Tourism and Handicrafts has announced plans to expand tourism activities across the country, with 11 additional tourism sites planned alongside 19 already developed, and approximately TND 9 million allocated to improve the tourism environment in 57 municipalities across 18 governorates.

Tourism Minister Sofiane Tekaya outlined the strategy during a parliamentary session discussing the ministry's 2027 budget, held in the early hours of Sunday, November 15, 2026.

The strategy aims to capitalise on the natural, cultural and environmental assets of Tunisia's different regions while strengthening tourism's contribution to local economic development.

11 Additional Tourism Sites Planned

The minister confirmed that Tunisia currently has 19 developed tourism sites, with 11 additional sites included in future development plans.

The initiative seeks to diversify the country's tourism offering beyond its traditional destinations, particularly by capitalising on mountainous, oasis, desert and coastal environments.

However, the ministry has not disclosed the locations of the 11 proposed sites, their estimated investment values or their implementation schedules.

TND 9 Million to Improve Tourism Infrastructure

The ministry has allocated approximately TND 9 million to 57 tourism municipalities across 18 governorates through the Tourism Areas Protection Fund.

The funding will support infrastructure improvements, public lighting, the enhancement of tourist routes and city entrances, cleaning services and improvements to the overall appearance of destinations.

Tekaya explained that funding allocations are based on programmes and applications submitted by municipalities and assessed by a joint committee involving the Ministries of Tourism and Interior, in coordination



with local authorities.

He also emphasised the need to protect natural and tourism areas from unauthorised construction and unregulated development to preserve their environmental characteristics and visitor appeal.

€28 Million to Modernise Tourism Training Institutions

Tunisia is continuing a €28 million programme to modernise tourism training institutions, covering schools in Aïn Draham, Tozeur, Monastir and North Sousse.

Enrolment in basic tourism vocational training rose to 2,069 trainees in the 2026–2027 academic year, compared with 1,776 in the previous year, representing growth of 16.5%.

The programme aims to upgrade facilities and equipment, develop training specialisations and improve alignment between vocational education and the needs of hotels and other tourism businesses.

Digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence in Tourism

The minister also announced preparations for a national forum on digital tourism and artificial intelligence, bringing together startups, tourism professionals, researchers and academic institutions.

Proposed initiatives include digitalising tourism investment procedures, tourist routes and recreational marinas, as well as developing digital maps, virtual experiences and interactive visitor services.

Implementation timelines and individual budgets for all these initiatives have not yet been announced.



"Tunisia has 19 completed tourism resorts, with plans to develop 11 additional ones as part of efforts to diversify tourism destinations beyond traditional hubs."

Sofiane Tekaya
Tunisian Minister of Tourism

Jordan to Present 573,000-Square-Metre Entertainment City Project to European Investors



First phase spans 290,000 square metres and includes attractions, retail outlets and visitor facilities, as the project takes centre stage at the upcoming Dead Sea investment conference

Amman – Jordan | Al Rehla

Jordan is set to showcase a major entertainment city project in the new city of Amra as part of the investment opportunities presented at the Jordan–EU Investment Conference, scheduled to take place at the Dead Sea on November 19, 2026.

The initiative aims to attract investors and support the development of the Kingdom's tourism and leisure infrastructure.

According to the Jordan News Agency (Petra), the project covers a total area of 573,000 square metres, with its first phase extending across approximately 290,000 square metres, forming the main entertainment hub within the city's master plan.

Integrated Theme Park and Visitor Facilities

The project involves developing a phased entertainment destination featuring amusement rides, attractions, retail outlets, restaurants, cafés and visitor facilities under a design-build-operate model.

In June 2026, the Jordanian Company for Cities and Facilities Development announced the awarding of a contract to a British-Saudi consortium to prepare the project's designs, master plan and economic feasibility study.

Initial estimates placed the first phase's development cost at JOD 50 million, with operations targeted to begin by the end of 2028. It remains unclear whether these estimates have been revised as part of the current investment offering.

Dedicated Investment Session

The conference will feature a specialised session on Wednesday, November 18, titled "New Amra City: Smart and Sustainable Urban Development Opportunities," focusing on private-sector participation in the city's development.

Amra is located approximately 30 kilometres from Amman and 35 kilometres from Queen Alia International Airport.

The broader urban development plan includes tourism, sports, healthcare, logistics and commercial facilities, positioning the city as a potential new centre for investment and economic activity.

Saudi Arabia Offers 11,500-Square-Metre Tourism Resort Investment Opportunity in Badr Al Janoub



A 25-year investment contract forms part of 14 new opportunities in Najran, including a restaurant and café at Mouah Park, aimed at attracting private-sector investment in tourism and leisure activities

Najran – Saudi Arabia | Al Rehla

The Najran Region Municipality, represented by Badr Al Janoub Municipality, has launched an investment opportunity to develop, operate and maintain a tourism resort covering 11,526.06 square metres.

The project forms part of a wider package of 14 investment opportunities spanning a combined area of 60,413.9 square metres, designed to attract private-sector participation in tourism, commercial and service developments.

The opportunities were announced on November 15, 2026, through the Furas municipal investment platform as part of efforts to develop available sites and improve local facilities and services.

Tourism Resort Offered Under a 25-Year Contract

According to the official Furas platform, the proposed resort is located next to the municipal rest house in Badr Al Janoub.

The investment opportunity covers the resort's development, operation and maintenance under a 300-month contract, equivalent to 25 years.

Tender documents are priced at SAR 500, while the bid opening date is scheduled for January 3, 2027.

The announcement does not specify the required investment value or the proposed number of accommodation units. Further details are expected to emerge from the tender documents and development proposals submitted by investors.

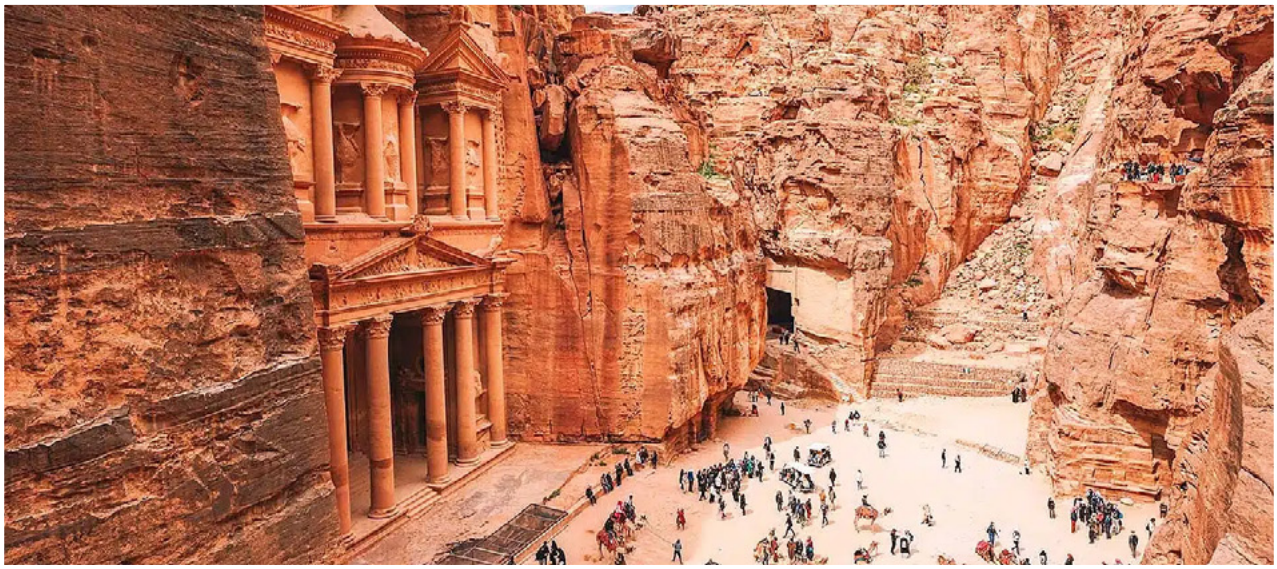
Restaurant and Café Planned at Mouah Park

The tourism and leisure opportunities also include the development and operation of a restaurant and café at Mouah Park in Hadadah Centre, alongside several commercial and service sites across the governorate.

Other opportunities include a wedding and events venue covering 25,430.71 square metres, an existing fuel station occupying 6,849.8 square metres, mixed-use commercial and residential plots, and retail premises.

Investors can submit their bids electronically through the Furas platform ahead of the January 3, 2027 deadline.

Italian Tour Operators Plan Two-Night Petra Packages Starting February 2027



Discussions at a Milan tourism conference aim to extend visitor stays and increase local tourism spending, as Jordan welcomed 32,600 Italian tourists in 2025.

Petra – Jordan | Al Rehla

Italian tour operators and travel agencies participating in a tourism conference in Milan have agreed to work towards introducing comprehensive travel packages to Jordan's Petra, featuring stays of at least two nights, with the programmes expected to launch in early February 2027.

The initiative aims to encourage longer visits and broaden the economic benefits for local tourism businesses serving the Italian market.

The agreement emerged from a conference organised by Italian travel company Kel 12 under the theme "Petra Is Bigger Than Petra... Petra Beyond the Treasury," with the participation of the Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority (PDTRA), the Jordan Tourism Board, Royal Jordanian Airlines, and representatives of Italian travel and tourism companies.

The Jordan News Agency (Petra) reported the conference's outcomes on Saturday, November 14, 2026, although the names of the companies expected to introduce the packages and the anticipated booking volumes were not disclosed.

From Short Visits to Extended Stays

The proposed programmes aim to encourage Italian tourists to explore Petra's wider archaeological sites, natural landscapes and community-based tourism experiences, rather than limiting their visits to the iconic Treasury, or Al-Khazneh.

Adnan Al-Sawair, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of PDTRA, presented ongoing infrastructure development projects, urban expansion planning initiatives and efforts to meet international sustainable tourism certification requirements.

An expanded meeting between the Petra Authority and Italian tourism companies is scheduled for April 2027 to discuss joint programme development and follow up on the implementation of the proposed arrangements.

Italian Market Records 30.7% Growth

The initiative forms part of Jordan's efforts to strengthen its presence in the Italian tourism market, which generated 32,641 visitors to the Kingdom in 2025, representing a 30.7% increase compared with 2024, according to Jordan Tourism Board figures.

Despite this growth, arrivals remained significantly below the 2023 level, when Jordan welcomed approximately 127,610 Italian visitors, highlighting the challenges of restoring tourism demand from this important European market.

In June 2026, the Jordan Tourism Board appointed Hopscotch Italy to represent and promote Jordan in the Italian market, as part of a broader strategy to strengthen relationships with tour operators and enhance destination marketing.



Al-Rehla Perspective | How Two Nights Could Transform Petra's Visitor Economy

The significance of the proposed packages lies in repositioning Petra from a destination for short sightseeing visits into one that encourages multi-day stays, potentially generating additional business for hotels, restaurants, tour guides and local experience providers.

Longer stays would give visitors more time to discover attractions beyond the Treasury, including the Monastery (Ad-Deir) and the Royal Tombs, while experiencing the region's cultural heritage and surrounding natural landscapes.

However, the initiative's economic success will not be measured by the number of programmes announced, but by the packages actually sold, the average length of stay among Italian visitors and their spending within Petra.



Riyadh Air Completes Production of Its First Airbus A321neo Ahead of Delivery and 2027 Entry into Service



The aircraft leaves Airbus' paint facility in Hamburg ahead of flight testing, as the Saudi carrier prepares to receive the first of 60 narrow-body aircraft on order.

Riyadh – Saudi Arabia | Al Rehla

Riyadh Air has announced the completion of production of its first Airbus A321neo narrow-body aircraft, registered HZ-RXFA, which has emerged from Airbus' paint facility in Hamburg, Germany. The milestone marks another step in the Saudi airline's fleet expansion programme and its plans to diversify the aircraft types serving its growing route network.

In an announcement issued on November 13, 2026, the airline confirmed that the aircraft will undergo a series of test flights in the coming days before completing the delivery process and being transferred to its operational base at King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh.

The development marks the completion of the aircraft's production and painting stages, but does not mean it has been formally delivered or entered commercial service.

Part of a 60-Aircraft Order

The aircraft forms part of a firm order placed by Riyadh Air with Airbus on October 30, 2024, for 60 aircraft from the A321neo family. The order is intended to support the airline's network expansion and provide greater flexibility in allocating capacity across different destinations.

Riyadh Air CEO Tony Douglas previously indicated, in statements published in October, that the airline expected to receive its first aircraft of this type in late November 2026, with commercial operations scheduled to begin in early 2027.

Narrow-body aircraft can operate a variety of short- and medium-haul routes, allowing airlines to better align seating capacity with passenger demand and operating costs.

Pearl-Inspired Livery Reflecting Saudi Heritage

The aircraft features Riyadh Air's distinctive pearl-inspired livery, combining indigo and lavender shades with flowing lines influenced by traditional Bedouin tents and Arabic



calligraphy, alongside feather-inspired patterns towards the rear of the fuselage.

The airline has announced that further details of the cabin configuration, passenger experience and destinations to be served by its narrow-body aircraft will be revealed in the coming weeks.

According to reports published by specialised aviation media, citing statements from the airline's CEO, the A321neo aircraft will feature reclining business-class seats, while the longer-range A321LR variants will be equipped with fully flat beds.

Expanding the Route Network

Riyadh Air began commercial operations using Boeing 787-9 wide-body aircraft in June 2026, launching services connecting the Saudi capital with several destinations, including London, Jeddah, Dubai, Cairo, Madrid and Manchester.

The airline, wholly owned by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF), aims to connect Riyadh with more than 100 destinations worldwide by 2030.

However, the carrier has yet to announce the initial routes that will be operated by its A321neo aircraft, their commercial launch dates or their flight schedules.

Al-Rehla Perspective | Why Does Riyadh Air Need Narrow-Body Aircraft?

The significance of adding the A321neo to Riyadh Air's fleet extends beyond increasing aircraft numbers. It gives the airline additional operational options alongside its Boeing 787-9 wide-body aircraft.

Narrow-body aircraft can serve routes that do not require the higher seating capacity of wide-body jets. They may also allow airlines to increase flight frequencies on selected routes without a proportionate increase in total available seats.

For passengers, this flexibility could eventually translate into a wider choice of departure times and improved connecting flight options through Riyadh. However, these benefits will depend on the destinations selected, aircraft deployment and actual operating schedules.

The aircraft's formal delivery and the launch of its first commercial service remain the two most important developments to monitor, particularly as the completion of production does not yet mean that seats on this aircraft type are available for booking.

SunExpress Launches Direct Flights to Damascus from Antalya and Izmir with Four Weekly Services



The Turkish Airlines–Lufthansa joint venture expands its Syrian network under its winter schedule while continuing flights between Izmir and Aleppo.

Damascus – Syria | Al Rehla

SunExpress, the joint venture between Turkish Airlines and Germany's Lufthansa Group, has launched direct flights to Damascus from the Turkish cities of Antalya and Izmir, starting November 12 and 13, 2026, respectively, with a total of four weekly services under its winter flight schedule.

The new routes provide additional direct travel options between Türkiye and Syria, particularly for passengers who previously relied on connecting flights through Istanbul or other airports to reach Damascus.

Two Weekly Flights from Each City

The first flight from Antalya to Damascus departed on Thursday, November 12, with regular services scheduled every Thursday and Saturday.

Flights between Izmir and Damascus began on Friday, November 13, operating twice weekly on Wednesdays and Fridays. The inaugural flight, XQ816, was operated using a Boeing 737-800 aircraft.

SunExpress also continues to operate flights between Izmir and Aleppo during the winter season, further expanding air travel options between the two countries.

The airline has not disclosed passenger numbers or load factors for the newly launched services.

Special Procedures at Damascus Airport

SunExpress confirmed that all passengers departing from Damascus International Airport must visit the airline's check-in counter to obtain their boarding passes, even if they have already completed online check-in.

The airline noted that check-in counters open three hours before the scheduled departure time.

Al-Rehla Perspective | Direct Connections Expand Travel Options

The significance of the two new routes lies in providing nonstop flights from Antalya and Izmir to Damascus, supporting family visits, business travel and passenger movement between the two countries.

Direct services could help reduce overall travel times and make journeys more convenient. However, assessing their actual tourism and economic impact will require reliable data on passenger volumes and seat demand.

Al-Rehla advises travellers to verify flight schedules, entry requirements and airport procedures before departure.

SalamAir Launches Copenhagen Flights via Baghdad with Two Weekly Services



New route strengthens air connectivity between Oman, Iraq and Northern Europe, as the airline reports carrying more than 210,000 passengers on its Baghdad route since 2023

Muscat – Sultanate of Oman | Al Rehla

SalamAir, Oman's low-cost carrier, has launched its new flights to Copenhagen, Denmark, via Baghdad, operating twice weekly. The service expands the airline's European network and provides additional travel options between Oman, Iraq and Northern Europe.

Operations commenced on November 14, 2026, following the opening of bookings in September. Baghdad International Airport hosted an inauguration ceremony attended by Oman's Ambassador to Iraq, Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Bahrani, alongside Iraqi officials.

New Route Connecting Three Capitals

The service connects Muscat, Baghdad and Copenhagen, allowing passengers to book direct flights between the Iraqi and Danish capitals under fifth-freedom traffic rights.

These rights permit airlines to transport passengers between two foreign countries as part of an international route originating in the airline's home country.

Copenhagen becomes SalamAir's ninth new destination in 2026, supporting its international expansion strategy and strengthening affordable travel options.

Over 210,000 Passengers Carried on Baghdad Route

SalamAir has transported more than 210,000 passengers on its Baghdad route since launching services in 2023, highlighting the importance of the Iraqi market within its network.

The new route targets leisure and business travellers, as well as passengers visiting friends and relatives, while creating additional opportunities for travel agencies and tour operators across the three markets.

Al-Rehla Perspective | A New Gateway to Northern Europe

The new service provides travellers from Oman with an additional option to reach Copenhagen via Baghdad, while offering passengers from Iraq a direct air connection to the Danish capital.

It also creates opportunities to promote Oman as a tourism destination in European markets, particularly during the winter season, with potential for developing combined travel packages.

However, the route's actual impact on tourism flows and hotel occupancy will depend on passenger demand, booking volumes and the continued reliability of scheduled operations.

Editor-in-Chief: Mahmoud Al-Jishi
Managing Editor: Safaa Makki
UAE Bureau Chief: Dr. Saleh Al-Makhdoum
Saudi Arabia Bureau Chief: Abdullah Hassan
Egypt Bureau Chief: Dr. Ramadan Youssef
Tunisia Bureau Chief: Leila Bint Atiyat Allah
Syria Bureau Chief: Waleed Adb-Ulkarim
For news submissions: news@seyyaha.com
For contact and advertising: +973 3701 4477

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