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

295 Hospitals and Clinics Across 13 Countries Feature in Global Medical Tourism Rankings 2027, with Saudi and UAE Presence

DoubleTree by Hilton Project in Nador Secures Building Permit for MAD 585 Million Development

Bahrain Exhibition World Welcomes 3 Million Visitors and Hosts 250 Events in Four Years

Egypt Targets 40,000 New Hotel Rooms in 2027 and Plans Larger Tourism Financing Initiative



295 Hospitals and Clinics Across 13 Countries Feature in Global Medical Tourism Rankings 2027, with Saudi and UAE Presence



Newsweek and Statista assess more than 25,000 healthcare facilities worldwide, with hospitals in Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, and Sharjah featured across nine medical specialties.

Al-Rehla – Special Report

The newly released World's Best Hospitals & Clinics for Medical Tourism 2027 rankings, developed by American magazine Newsweek in collaboration with data research company Statista, feature 295 hospitals and clinics across 13 countries, highlighting growing international competition to attract patients seeking medical treatment abroad.

The rankings include 1,025 specialty-specific listings across nine medical fields, following an assessment of more than 25,000 healthcare facilities worldwide. The number of listings exceeds the number of institutions because some hospitals appear in multiple specialties.

Saudi Arabia: Strong Presence in Specialised Medical Care

Saudi institutions featured in the rankings include King Faisal Specialist Hospital & Research Centre in Riyadh, King Abdulaziz Medical City under the Ministry of National Guard Health Affairs, King Fahad Medical City, and Saudi German Hospital Aseer.

King Faisal Specialist Hospital was listed in the breast cancer category, while King Abdulaziz Medical City appeared in specialties including ophthalmology and orthopaedics. King Fahad Medical City was also recognised in orthopaedic surgery, while Saudi German Hospital Aseer featured in ophthalmology.

Dallah Health also announced on November 4, 2026, that Dallah Al Nakheel Hospital in Riyadh had been included in the rankings, following its achievement of specialised medical tourism accreditation in 2024.

UAE: Specialised Hospitals in Abu Dhabi and Sharjah

The UAE's presence was highlighted by Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi in cardiac care and surgery, alongside several hospitals operated by Burjeel Holdings.



The group announced that four of its facilities were included in the rankings: Burjeel Medical City in orthopaedics, Burjeel Hospital Abu Dhabi in ophthalmology, Burjeel Royal Hospital Al Ain in cardiac care, and Burjeel Specialty Hospital Sharjah in cardiac care and orthopaedics.

According to the group's announcement, nine institutions from the Emirate of Abu Dhabi featured in the rankings, including three Burjeel facilities.

Competition Extends Across Asia, Europe, and the Americas

The rankings extend well beyond the Gulf region, featuring medical institutions in South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and Türkiye, alongside Japan, Germany, Spain, the United States, Mexico, and Brazil.

The nine specialties covered include bariatric surgery, cardiology and cardiac surgery, orthopaedics, ophthalmology, breast and prostate cancer treatment, breast augmentation, liposuction, and rhinoplasty.

How Were the Hospitals Selected?

The assessment was based on five key components: recommendations from medical professionals and medical tourism facilitators, professional accreditations and certifications, patient experiences, services provided to international patients, and a specialised survey conducted by Statista.

The rankings do not represent a single overall ranking of hospitals across all medical specialties. Instead, they provide separate lists according to specific fields of treatment.

Al-Rehla Perspective | International Recognition Alone Does Not Measure Medical Tourism Performance

The rankings provide an indication of healthcare institutions receiving international recognition in specialised medical fields, offering travellers a starting point when researching treatment options abroad. However, inclusion in the rankings does not, by itself, demonstrate an increase in international patient arrivals or higher revenues generated by medical tourism.

To measure the actual economic impact in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, further data is needed on inbound international patients, their countries of origin, average length of stay, and spending on medical treatment and related services.

For patients considering treatment abroad, choosing a hospital should ultimately depend on the suitability of its medical expertise, documented treatment outcomes, costs, accreditation, and follow-up services, rather than rankings alone.

Bahrain Exhibition World Welcomes 3 Million Visitors and Hosts 250 Events in Four Years



Bahrain hosts the UFI Global Congress for the first time, bringing together international industry leaders, as Exhibition World Bahrain records 103 international events since opening in November 2022.



"The centre has welcomed around three million visitors over the past four years, reflecting the scale of its operations since opening."

Fatima bint Jaffar Al Sairafi
Bahrain's Minister of Tourism

Manama – Bahrain | Al Rehla

Exhibition World Bahrain (EWB) has welcomed approximately three million visitors and hosted 250 events, including 103 international events, since its opening in November 2022 through the end of October 2026, according to figures announced by Bahrain's tourism authorities during the 93rd UFI Global Congress.

The congress officially opened on November 3 at Exhibition World Bahrain in Sakhir, as part of a programme running from November 2 to 5, marking the Kingdom's first time hosting this major annual gathering of the global exhibitions industry.

Global Industry Leaders Discuss the Future of Exhibitions

Organised by the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry (UFI), the congress is hosted by the Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA) and Exhibition World Bahrain.

The event brings together executives from exhibition organising companies, convention centre operators, and specialised service providers representing international markets.

Its programme addresses the evolution of exhibition business models, artificial intelligence applications, economic challenges, and strategies for improving the experience of exhibitors and visitors.

Among the speakers is Lord Stephen Carter, Chief Executive Officer of Informa Group, one of the world's leading international exhibition and events companies.

103 International Events Hosted Since Opening





"The total number of hosted events reached 250, including 103 international events."

Sarah Ahmed Buhijji
CEO of the Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority

Fatima bint Jaffar Al Sairafi, Bahrain's Minister of Tourism, said Exhibition World Bahrain had welcomed approximately three million visitors over the past four years, reflecting the venue's operational activity since its opening.

Sara Ahmed Buhiji, Chief Executive Officer of the Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority and Chairperson of Exhibition World Bahrain, confirmed that the venue had hosted 250 events, including 103 international events.

Exhibition World Bahrain covers a total area of approximately 309,000 square metres and features ten exhibition halls offering 95,000 square metres of exhibition space, alongside dedicated conference and meeting facilities.

A Global Industry Supporting Millions of Jobs

The Minister of Tourism noted that the global exhibitions industry generates an estimated USD 444 billion in economic activity and supports approximately 4.3 million jobs, according to international industry data.

These figures highlight the sector's role in facilitating trade, connecting businesses with buyers, and supporting services associated with exhibitions and major events.

Al-Rehla Perspective | What Do the Figures Mean for Business Tourism?

Hosting the UFI Global Congress provides Bahrain with an opportunity to demonstrate its capabilities in organising international events to companies and decision-makers responsible for selecting exhibition and conference destinations.
The reported figures are significant because they document the scale of activity at Exhibition World Bahrain over four years.

However, they do not independently establish how many international tourists visited the Kingdom, how much they spent, or the impact of these events on hotel occupancy.

Measuring the actual tourism contribution of the exhibitions sector requires additional data on international attendees, hotel room nights, and visitor expenditure associated with hosted events.

Egypt Targets 40,000 New Hotel Rooms in 2027 and Plans Larger Tourism Financing Initiative



Tourism Minister says the market needs an additional 160,000–180,000 hotel rooms, with agreements involving international hotel brands and a target of 22 million tourists next year.

London – United Kingdom | Al Rehla

Egypt aims to add between 35,000 and 40,000 new hotel rooms in 2027 while preparing a larger financing initiative to support investment in the hospitality sector, as the country seeks to expand its accommodation capacity to meet growing tourism demand.

Sherif Fathy, Egypt's Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, told Asharq Bloomberg in an interview on the sidelines of World Travel Market (WTM) London 2026 that the Egyptian market requires an additional 160,000 to 180,000 hotel rooms to accommodate its long-term tourism growth targets.

Up to 40,000 Hotel Rooms Targeted for 2027

The minister said Egypt expects to add between 35,000 and 40,000 hotel rooms during 2027, with the possibility of exceeding that figure depending on the progress of projects currently under development.

In October, the government announced that approximately 35,000 hotel rooms were under construction or development as part of its efforts to expand accommodation capacity across various tourism destinations.

These planned additions do not represent rooms currently available to guests, as their entry into operation depends on completing construction, fitting out the properties, and obtaining the necessary licences.

New Financing Initiative Under Preparation

Fathy revealed that approximately 25,000 hotel rooms had benefited from the existing tourism financing initiative, adding that the government was working on a larger programme to support hospitality investments.

Egypt previously allocated EGP 50 billion to a tourism investment incentive programme, with approximately EGP 35 billion reportedly disbursed.

The minister explained that extending the current initiative would depend on interest rates, the Ministry of Finance's ability to absorb financing



costs, and the monetary policies of the Central Bank of Egypt.

The government has not yet disclosed the proposed value or launch date of the new financing initiative.

International Hotel Brands to Strengthen Luxury Hospitality

The minister also referred to agreements involving four to five major international hotel brands as part of Egypt's strategy to strengthen its position in the luxury tourism segment and attract higher-spending visitors.

However, the statement did not identify the brands, project locations, or number of hotel rooms involved. The precise nature of the agreements and their implementation status also remain unclear.

The government is pursuing additional investment incentives, including the Golden Licence scheme for eligible projects, to streamline development procedures.

Egypt Targets 22 Million Tourists in 2027

Egypt aims to welcome 22 million tourists in 2027, compared with its target of 20 million for 2026, while tourism revenues are expected to exceed USD 20 billion next year.

According to the minister, achieving these targets will depend partly on regional stability and the costs of energy and travel.

Over the longer term, Egypt is targeting 30 million annual tourists by 2030–2031, alongside annual tourism revenues of between USD 36 billion and USD 40 billion.

Al-Rehla Perspective | Hotel Room Shortage Tests Expansion Plans

The minister's statements highlight a major challenge facing Egypt's hospitality industry: expanding hotel capacity fast enough to accommodate the country's ambitious tourism growth targets.

For investors and hotel operators, the key factors to monitor include which developments actually become operational, where new rooms are being added, which international hotel brands enter the market, and the financing terms available to developers.

Ultimately, the success of Egypt's hospitality expansion will depend on the number of rooms that open and begin operating, occupancy rates, and average room prices, rather than announced targets alone.

Aqaba Expands Air Connectivity with the Gulf: Direct Flights to Riyadh and Abu Dhabi Target New Tourism Markets

An agreement between the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority and Royal Jordanian provides for two weekly flights to each destination, as the city seeks to reduce tourism seasonality and improve access to the Red Sea, Petra and Wadi Rum.



Aqaba, Jordan | Al Rehla

Aqaba is working to expand its air connectivity with Arab markets as part of a strategy to increase visitor arrivals and diversify tourism source markets for Jordan's only coastal city.

On May 6, 2026, the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) announced a cooperation agreement with Royal Jordanian Airlines to operate direct international flights connecting King Hussein International Airport with Riyadh and Abu Dhabi.

The agreement provides for two weekly flights to each destination, aiming to reduce dependence on travel through the capital, Amman, while offering additional options for passengers from Gulf markets.

Riyadh and Abu Dhabi Join the Connectivity Network

The initial announcement identified September 18 as the planned launch date for Abu Dhabi flights and September 24 for Riyadh services, before subsequent adjustments appeared in published flight schedules.

In September, Royal Jordanian announced the launch of its direct Riyadh–Aqaba service, while later schedule information indicated that Abu Dhabi had been added to Aqaba's network from late October.

These differences between the original announcements and updated schedules highlight the importance of checking actual flight operations and departure times directly with the airline before booking, rather than relying solely on the dates announced in the May agreement.

Gulf Tourism as a Key Target Market

The new routes are particularly important for Aqaba because of its proximity to Gulf tourism markets, where travellers frequently seek destinations suitable for short holidays.

Direct flights allow visitors to reach Aqaba without travelling through Amman, potentially supporting tourism packages that combine beaches, marine activities and desert excursions.

Tour operators can also develop itineraries linking Aqaba with Wadi Rum and Petra, enabling other Jordanian destinations to benefit from improved air connectivity.

However, achieving these benefits will depend on flight reliability, ticket prices,



actual passenger demand and the availability of suitable tourism packages.

Cairo and Potential European Markets

When the agreement was signed, ASEZA stated that the Cairo–Aqaba route was operating twice weekly and that additional services connecting Aqaba with European markets and Russia were under consideration.

The objective is to diversify international tourism source markets and reduce dependence on traditional seasonal demand.

However, these plans do not mean that the proposed European and Russian routes have already entered operation.

What Do the New Routes Mean for the Tourism Industry?

The impact of improved air connectivity extends beyond airlines. It can also benefit hotels, transport companies, diving centres, tour operators and restaurants.

At the same time, two weekly flights to each destination represent a relatively limited initial service, making it necessary to monitor passenger demand and operational sustainability before assessing the wider economic results.

AlRehla Perspective

Aqaba's experience demonstrates that tourism destination development depends not only on building hotels and visitor facilities but also on making destinations easier to reach.

The real test for these new routes will be their ability to translate improved air connectivity into actual visitor arrivals, longer stays and greater tourism spending that benefits Aqaba and its surrounding destinations.



Tourist Stops

Tourism Around the World: Continents Compete as Destinations Capture Global Attention

By:
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Tourism Media Consultant

Tourism is one of the world's most important economic and cultural sectors. It serves as a bridge connecting people, a means of discovering civilizations and natural wonders, and an opportunity to explore the customs and traditions of different societies. With advances in transportation and tourism services, many countries have emerged as leading global destinations, attracting millions of visitors every year.

Tourism destinations vary according to their distinctive attractions and the experiences they offer visitors. They can be classified into several major categories.

Cultural and historical tourism destinations, such as France, Italy, Egypt, and Greece, are renowned for their archaeological sites, architectural landmarks, and historical museums.

Leisure and entertainment destinations, including the United Arab Emirates, the United States, and Thailand, attract visitors through their resorts, shopping centres, and diverse entertainment activities.

Meanwhile, nature tourism destinations, such as Switzerland, Norway, and New Zealand, stand out for their mountains, waterfalls, lakes, and breathtaking natural landscapes.

Another important category is religious tourism, with destinations such as Saudi Arabia and Vatican City holding profound spiritual significance for millions of visitors.

Beach tourism destinations, including the Maldives, Seychelles, and Indonesia, offer spectacular coastlines and a wide variety of marine activities.

Europe Leads Global International Tourist Arrivals
Europe remains the world's most visited continent, benefiting from its diverse tourism destinations, convenient cross-border travel, and extensive range of historical, cultural, and natural attractions.

Countries such as France, Spain, Italy, and Türkiye rank among the leading tourism destinations, attracting visitors from around the world.

Europe also offers an exceptional variety of experiences, ranging from winter tourism in the Alps to cultural exploration in historic cities and coastal holidays along the Mediterranean Sea.

Which Types of Tourism Are the Most Appealing?
The answer largely depends on travellers' interests and the purpose of their journeys.

Cultural tourism appeals to those interested in discovering history, civilizations, museums, and archaeological landmarks.

Ecotourism offers opportunities to experience natural environments, protected areas, and forests while promoting environmental conservation.

Medical and wellness tourism attracts travellers seeking healthcare services, therapeutic treatments, and wellness resorts.

Leisure tourism remains one of the most popular categories, offering holidays, resort experiences, and recreational activities.

Religious tourism continues to hold considerable significance for visitors travelling to sacred destinations and performing religious rituals, although some activities are concentrated in particular seasons.

Adventure tourism appeals to travellers seeking experiences such as mountain climbing, diving, and camping.

Meanwhile, marine and coastal tourism

offers cruises, beach holidays, and water sports, with demand typically increasing during the summer months.

Global Tourism in Numbers: Record Performance in 2025

According to UN Tourism data for 2025, published in January 2026, the global tourism industry achieved record results, reflecting the continued expansion of international travel.

Key indicators include:
1.52 billion: International tourist arrivals worldwide in 2025.
4%: Growth in international tourism compared with 2024.
US$2.2 trillion: Estimated international tourism revenues in 2025.
793 million: International tourist arrivals recorded in Europe alone during 2025.

These figures highlight the substantial scale of global tourism and its importance to national economies, international connectivity, and the development of tourism-related industries.

Tourism Beyond Borders
Tourism is no longer simply about travelling from one country to another. It has evolved into a comprehensive experience that combines knowledge, relaxation, adventure, human connection, and significant economic activity.

As interest in sustainable tourism continues to grow and travellers gain access to an increasingly diverse range of destinations, competition among countries is intensifying, encouraging them to develop more distinctive and appealing experiences.

Ultimately, the best tourism destination is the one that offers travellers an unforgettable experience while opening a new window onto the world's cultures, landscapes, and beauty.



Tourism Investment in Iraq: Which Projects Have Moved from Promises to Actual Operations?



Hotels have opened in Baghdad and Mosul, while an archaeological site welcomed visitors in October 2026. Meanwhile, projects in Ur, Najaf and Karbala highlight the gap between announced investment opportunities and operational tourism facilities.

Baghdad – Iraq | Al Rehla

As the Iraqi government pursues strategies to increase tourist arrivals and promotes investment projects across the country's governorates, some tourism investments have begun translating into operational facilities, from new hotels in Baghdad and Mosul to cultural attractions and archaeological sites reopened to visitors.

However, the overall picture remains incomplete. There is no consolidated national dataset showing how many tourism projects have progressed from initial announcements and licensing to construction and commercial operations, or the total amount of investment actually spent.

Mosul: 148 Hotel Rooms Enter the Market

In July 2025, Mosul witnessed the opening of Ramada Plaza, a private-sector hospitality investment in Nineveh Governorate.

Located on the western bank of the Tigris River, the hotel features 148 rooms and suites, alongside restaurants, meeting and conference facilities, and recreational amenities. Its opening represents a tangible addition to the city's accommodation capacity as Mosul works to restore its economic and tourism activities following extensive damage to its urban infrastructure and public services in previous years.

Mosul also welcomed the opening of the Manara Heritage Hotel in December 2025, near the historic Al-Nuri Mosque and its iconic leaning minaret.

The ten-room hotel occupies a building inspired by the traditional architecture of Old Mosul, offering a different hospitality investment

model based on the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings.

Baghdad: Mövenpick Between Partial Opening and Full Operations

In April 2025, Baghdad witnessed the partial opening of Mövenpick Al Zaytoon Baghdad, a private-sector hospitality development.

According to information published by the operator, the property comprises 197 rooms and suites and 72 serviced apartments.

However, the partial opening of key facilities does not necessarily mean that all rooms and services are operational.

The hotel's page on Accor's website still indicates that the property is opening soon, making it necessary to verify the actual extent of commercial operations before counting its entire capacity as available accommodation.

Aqar Quf: An Archaeological Site Begins Welcoming Visitors

On October 20, 2026, the first section of the Aqar Quf Archaeological Park, west of Baghdad, opened as part of an Iraqi–Italian cooperation project aimed at rehabilitating the site and improving public access.

The development forms part of ArTourBagh, a €3 million Italian development cooperation project covering heritage conservation, skills development, and the creation of opportunities related to tour guiding, handicrafts, and tourism services.

The opening of the first section represents a tangible operational milestone for cultural tourism, although it does not mean that all phases of the project have been completed.

Ur Tourism City: Some Facilities Operational, Others Under Construction

In Dhi Qar Governorate, the first phase of the Ur Tourism City project has opened, introducing cultural and recreational facilities, including theatres, restaurants, and open public spaces.

Other components of the development, including the Ur International Museum and additional hotel and cultural facilities, remain at various stages of development.

This distinction highlights the importance of separating the opening of one part of an integrated tourism project from the completion of the entire development.

Investment Opportunities Yet to Become Hotels

Iraq's National Investment Commission lists tourism projects across several governorates, including hotels, recreational complexes, and hospitality facilities.

In July 2026, the Najaf Investment Commission offered an opportunity to develop a tourist hotel on a 392-square-metre plot in the city's historic centre.

However, offering land for investment does not establish that a contract has been signed with a developer, that construction has begun, or that the hotel has entered operation.

Al-Rehla Perspective | From Announcements to Tourism Returns

The documented examples demonstrate that Iraq has made tangible progress in hospitality development and cultural tourism, although they are not sufficient to measure the overall scale of tourism investment across the country.

The most meaningful indicators are not the number of investment opportunities offered or future targets announced, but the number of facilities actually welcoming guests, rooms available for booking, investment expenditure realised, visitor numbers, and revenues generated.

For investors and Iraq's tourism industry, the central question remains: How many projects have moved beyond the announcement stage, who owns and operates them, and what economic returns have they actually delivered?

Tunisia Reopens Hotels and Advances Tourism Projects Worth Hundreds of Millions as Tabarka Leads New Investment Activity



A new five-star hotel opens in Gafsa and accommodation facilities resume operations in Tozeur, while construction progresses on projects in Tabarka and investments exceeding TND 500 million await regulatory approvals.

Tunis – Tunisia | Al Rehla

Tunisia is witnessing renewed investment and operational activity in its hospitality sector, extending beyond growth in tourist arrivals and revenues. Recent developments include the opening of new hotels, the reopening of previously closed properties, and continued construction of tourism projects, particularly in Tabarka, Ain Draham, and Tozeur.

Developments recorded throughout 2026 reveal varying levels of progress across the country. While some hospitality establishments have already entered operation, others remain under construction, and several major investments are still awaiting the completion of licensing and administrative procedures.

Gafsa Adds a New Five-Star Hotel

On May 15, 2026, a new five-star hotel opened in the Gafsa Governorate in the presence of Minister of Tourism and Handicrafts Sofiene Tekaya.

The opening strengthens the region's hotel capacity as Gafsa seeks to expand its presence in Tunisia's domestic and cultural tourism markets.

During his visit, the minister also reviewed renovation and rehabilitation works at another hotel in the governorate, as part of efforts to improve accommodation infrastructure and diversify tourism services beyond traditional coastal destinations.

Tozeur Brings Closed Hotels Back into Operation

In southern Tunisia, Tozeur has seen the reopening of previously closed hotels, with four properties reportedly resuming operations during 2026, according to tourism reports published in September.

These developments coincide with the operation of The Mora Sahara Tozeur, a luxury resort within the portfolio of German tourism group TUI, which entered the market under its new brand identity in late 2025.

The resort features 93 rooms and villas, offering luxury accommodation and experiences connected to the surrounding desert landscape and oases.

Reopening previously closed hotels is particularly significant because it brings existing tourism assets back



into productive use, rather than relying exclusively on the construction of new properties.

Tabarka: Projects Under Construction and Others Awaiting Permits

Tabarka and Ain Draham are among the Tunisian destinations attracting new hospitality development.

According to statements made by tourism officials during 2026, construction has continued on tourism accommodation projects with a combined investment value of approximately TND 250 million.

Among the developments previously reported to be progressing is Aqua Resort Tabarka, a project valued at TND 200 million.

As of February 2026, its reported construction progress had reached 78%, with operations targeted to begin during the first quarter of 2027.

Development has also continued on other hotel and tourism accommodation projects, including Bel Horizon and Fernana Hotel, according to information provided by local officials.

More Than TND 500 Million in Projects Await Implementation

Meanwhile, tourism officials announced in July 2026 that three new hotel projects were planned for the Al-Murjan area of Tabarka, representing investments exceeding TND 500 million and a planned accommodation capacity of approximately 2,000 beds.

The developments include two foreign investments and one Tunisian project. At the time of the announcement, the projects were undergoing the finalisation of technical documentation required to obtain building permits.

Construction has not yet been independently confirmed for these three developments, meaning they remain planned investments rather than hotel capacity under construction or in operation.

The gap between project announcements and actual implementation highlights the importance of urban planning and property-related procedures in determining how quickly new tourism investments can enter the market.

Al-Rehla Perspective | Real Progress Begins with Operations

Developments across Tunisia reveal two parallel trends in the hospitality industry: the reopening and modernisation of existing hotels, and the development of new projects designed to expand accommodation capacity and diversify the country's tourism offering.

However, assessing the scale of progress requires a clear distinction between hotels that have already opened, projects that have reached advanced stages of construction, and investments that remain subject to permits and approvals.

The most important indicators in the coming period will be the number of new establishments entering operation, the value of investments actually implemented, the jobs created, and the ability of these projects to attract sustainable tourism activity to Tunisia's inland and desert destinations.

Bahrain National Museum: How an Artificial Peninsula Became an Architectural Gateway to 6,000 Years of History

Opened in 1988 and designed by architects Krohn and Hartvig Rasmussen, the museum features white marble façades and a complex covering approximately 20,000 square metres, bringing together the history of Dilmun, traditional crafts and Bahraini life.

Manama, Bahrain | Al Rehla

On Manama's waterfront, Bahrain National Museum stands as one of the Kingdom's most prominent cultural landmarks, distinguished not only by its historical collections but also by the way its architecture reflects Bahrain's relationship with its past and geographical setting.

Officially inaugurated on December 15, 1988, the museum was built on an artificial peninsula overlooking Muharraq. It has become a landmark that combines modern architecture with a maritime landscape that has long shaped Bahrain's way of life and commercial history.

White Marble and the Sea as Design Elements

Designed by architects Krohn and Hartvig Rasmussen, the museum is distinguished by its façades clad in white travertine marble, giving the building a calm and elegant presence along the waterfront.

The complex covers approximately 20,000 square metres and consists of two interconnected buildings.

The main building houses permanent and temporary exhibition galleries, an art gallery, a lecture hall and visitor facilities.

The administrative building accommodates offices, conservation laboratories, research areas and storage facilities.

This architectural arrangement reflects the museum's role as an institution dedicated to preserving and studying heritage, rather than simply displaying archaeological artefacts.

Natural Light Shapes the Visitor Experience

Spacious halls and openings that allow natural light to enter play an important role in defining the museum's interior atmosphere.

Visitors are welcomed into a large central hall illuminated by natural light before moving into exhibition galleries that explore different periods of Bahrain's history.

This architectural progression creates a distinct rhythm throughout the building, moving from open spaces to specialised galleries and from the surrounding maritime landscape to the archaeological details displayed inside.

Six Thousand Years of History Within a Modern Building

The museum presents a historical narrative spanning approximately 6,000 years, from the ancient Dilmun civilisation to later periods in Bahrain's history.

Its galleries explore ancient burial mounds, Dilmun, Tylos, the Islamic period, customs and traditions, traditional crafts, documents and manuscripts.

Rather than relying solely on chronological displays, the museum connects political, social and economic history, offering visitors a broader understanding of how life developed across the Bahraini archipelago.

Architecture as Part of the Tourism Experience

The museum's waterfront location highlights the relationship between contemporary architecture and Bahrain's coastal environment.

One of its defining strengths is that the building does not attempt to reproduce historical architectural styles literally. Instead, it adopts a contemporary architectural language that allows the heritage collections themselves to remain at the centre of the visitor experience.

The combination of permanent and temporary exhibitions, alongside cultural activities, also helps ensure that the building remains an active and evolving cultural institution.

AlRehla Perspective

Bahrain National Museum demonstrates that the success of cultural architecture is measured not simply by the scale of a building, but by its ability to support historical interpretation and provide visitors with a clear, engaging experience.


متحف البحرين الوطني
Bahrain National Museum





DoubleTree by Hilton Project in Nador Secures Building Permit for MAD 585 Million Development



Marchica Med and HenriPay Holding are developing a waterfront complex featuring 120 hotel rooms and 160 luxury apartments overlooking Marchica Lagoon, with operations targeted for 2029.

Nador – Morocco | Al Rehla

Moroccan developer Marchica Med has announced that the DoubleTree by Hilton Marina Nador project has obtained its building permit, marking a new step towards the development of a luxury hotel and residential complex in the Atalayoun area overlooking Marchica Lagoon.

The project represents a total investment exceeding MAD 585 million, including the value of the land.

The development follows a partnership agreement signed in April 2026 between Marchica Med, HenriPay Holding N.V., and Hilton to establish a mixed-use hospitality and luxury residential complex.

280 Hotel and Residential Units

The project will feature a five-star hotel operating under the DoubleTree by Hilton brand, comprising 120 rooms, alongside 160 luxury apartments, bringing the total planned accommodation capacity to 280 units.

The complex will also include conference and meeting facilities, restaurants, swimming pools, wellness and relaxation amenities, recreational areas, and underground parking.

Located in Atalayoun, the development forms part of the wider Marchica Lagoon regeneration programme, which began in 2012 with the aim of transforming the surrounding area into a Mediterranean tourism destination.

Who Is Behind the Project?

Marchica Med, a company affiliated with the Marchica Lagoon Development Agency, is developing the area in partnership with the Dutch-German HenriPay Holding group.

The April agreement also involved Hilton through arrangements for the management and operation of the hotel brand over a 20-year period.



Once completed, the project is expected to introduce additional accommodation options to Nador, combining waterfront hospitality with leisure facilities and access to golf amenities.

Opening Target Revised to 2029

Updated project information identifies 2029 as the expected opening year, following earlier reports that had indicated 2028.

Securing the building permit represents progress in the project's regulatory procedures. However, it does not establish that construction has begun or that the full announced investment has been spent.

The latest announcements have not provided a confirmed construction start date, a detailed implementation schedule, or financing arrangements.

Al-Rehla Perspective | When Will the Investment Become Available Accommodation?

The project is significant for Nador's hospitality sector because of its location overlooking Marchica Lagoon and its association with an international hotel brand.

However, its actual impact on tourism will become measurable as construction progresses and the hotel rooms and facilities enter commercial operation.

The key indicators to monitor will be the start of construction, the project's completion rate, the opening of reservations, and the number of accommodation units actually welcoming guests, rather than relying solely on the announced investment value or projected opening date.





When Occupancy Collapses, Don't Let the Hotel Collapse With It

By:
Ashraf Hindawi
Hospitality Expert – Saudi Arabia

In a crisis, the real question is not simply how far occupancy has fallen. The more important question is how long a hotel can remain financially stable before a revenue problem becomes a cash problem.

The crisis of 2020 showed that the hotels that survived were not always the biggest or the most famous. In many cases, they were the ones that acted early and treated the downturn as a mathematical problem rather than an emotional one.

In my view, the first priority must always be cash. When revenue falls sharply, liquidity becomes the first line of defence. Hotels should operate with a rolling 13-week cash forecast and clearly separate essential expenses—such as core payroll, utilities, insurance, taxes and debt service—from costs that can be postponed, reduced or renegotiated.

Labour is usually the largest controllable cost, but it is also the area where careless decisions can create long-term damage. Reducing hours before reducing people, cross-training employees, consolidating occupied floors and protecting key operational talent are often far more effective than broad, indiscriminate cuts. Rebuilding an experienced team later can easily cost more than the savings achieved during the downturn.

Another critical mistake is confusing operating break-even with cash break-even. A hotel may cover its day-to-day operating costs and still lose cash if it cannot meet debt obligations and other fixed commitments.

Pricing also requires discipline. Deep discounting rarely creates demand when travellers are not moving. What it can do is damage the property's rate positioning for months or even years. Every hotel should therefore establish a clear price floor based on incremental cost, then focus on realistic sources of revenue such as local drive markets, long stays, day-use rooms, corporate clients, essential workers and food and beverage.

Downturns should not be managed through panic. They should be managed through arithmetic, discipline and timing.

The hotels that protect cash, retain their core people and defend their pricing power are the ones most likely to recover faster and emerge stronger when demand returns.



Paris Accommodation Bookings Fall 18% Following October Unrest as Luxury Hotels Face Cancellations



AirDNA data reveals declining short-term rental bookings for two consecutive weeks, while cancellation rates at luxury hotels reached 20% in the final week of October.

Paris – France | Al Rehla

Short-term accommodation bookings in Paris declined by 18% in the week following the unrest of October 17, 2026, compared with the same period last year, according to data from AirDNA, a company specialising in short-term rental market analytics.

A Bloomberg report published on November 2 revealed that the decline continued for a second consecutive week, alongside rising cancellations and weakening new bookings, placing additional pressure on the French capital's hospitality sector.

Nearly One-Third of Stays Cancelled in One Week

Jamie Lane, Chief Economist at AirDNA, said bookings across Airbnb, Booking.com, and Vrbo fell by 18% year-on-year during the week following the October 17 unrest, with a similar decline recorded the following week.

He added that nearly one-third of stays scheduled to begin during the week of October 19 were cancelled.

Meanwhile, Agence Butler, which manages up to 150 rental properties per month, reported that new bookings had fallen by half since the unrest, while last-minute bookings had declined by approximately 75%.

These figures relate to specific companies and booking platforms and do not necessarily represent the performance of France's entire accommodation market.

Luxury Hotel Cancellation Rates Reach 20%

The disruption also affected the luxury hospitality sector.
Christophe Laure, a representative of UMIH Prestige, an organisation representing upscale hospitality businesses, said cancellation rates reached approximately 20% during the final week of October.

He also reported a 60% decline in last-minute bookings compared with normal levels, alongside indications of weaker demand for November and December.

Some visitors' itineraries were also disrupted by the temporary closure of the Louvre Museum on October 24 following security instructions.

Estimated Tourism Losses

Didier Arino, Managing Director of Protourisme, estimated in media comments on October 21 that losses associated with cancellations and visits that might not take place could amount to approximately €100 million.

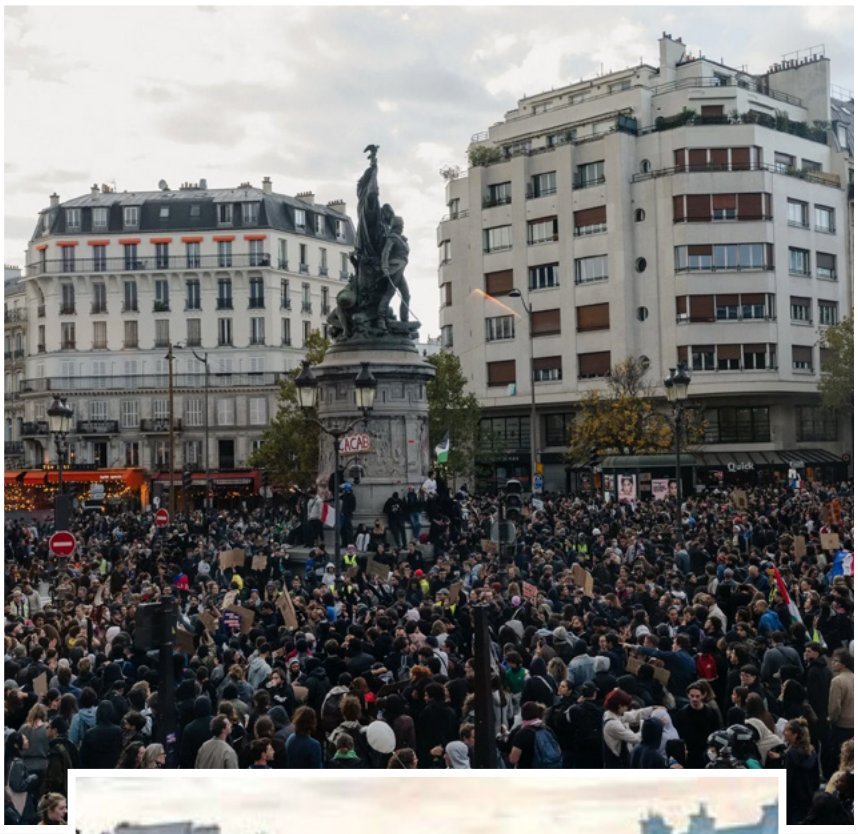
The figure represents an industry estimate of the potential economic impact, rather than a final assessment of confirmed losses or damage incurred in a single day.

Al-Rehla Perspective | Booking Trends Reveal the Impact Before Annual Statistics

The figures indicate that the unrest affected booking and cancellation decisions among certain segments of visitors to Paris, particularly in the short-term rental and luxury hotel markets.

However, assessing the overall impact on French tourism requires broader data on international arrivals, overnight stays, actual occupancy rates, and the duration of weaker demand.

Monitoring new bookings and cancellations throughout November and December will be essential to determining whether the disruption has a temporary or more prolonged effect on the tourism market.





Langham to Open Historic Venice Hotel in 2028, Appoints General Manager





Vincenzo Veneziano
General Manager of The Langham, Venice

A luxury hotel featuring 133 rooms and suites on the island of Murano, renowned for its glassmaking heritage. The project will breathe new life into a 16th-century building and a former glass factory on the shores of the Venetian Lagoon.

Venice – Italy | Al Rehla

Langham Hospitality Group is preparing to open its new luxury property, The Langham, Venice, in 2028. The tourism project will repurpose historic buildings on the Italian island of Murano. Alongside the announcement, the group has appointed Italian hospitality veteran Vincenzo Venezola as the hotel's General Manager, tasking him with leading operational preparations and assembling the team ahead of the opening.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, November 4, 2026, the group said Venezola joins with more than four decades of experience in the luxury hospitality sector. During his career, he has held senior leadership positions at prestigious hotels in Italy and the United Kingdom, including serving as General Manager of Four Seasons Hotel Milano for more than 20 years and as Managing Director of Ca' Sagredo Hotel in Venice.

The project occupies a distinctive waterfront location on Murano, an island internationally renowned for its artistic glassmaking traditions. The historic 16th-century Palazzo Mocenigo and a former glass factory are being transformed into a luxury resort featuring 133 rooms, including 30 suites.

Designed by Matteo Thun & Partners, the project will preserve the original frescoes and historic architectural features while incorporating contemporary hospitality facilities. These will include indoor and outdoor restaurants, a rooftop bar, a culinary school and an internal garden centred around a 20-metre swimming pool.

Nils-Arne Schroeder, Chief Operating Officer of Langham Hospitality Group, said Venezola's in-depth knowledge of Venice and its cultural heritage, combined with his experience in luxury hotel management, makes him well suited to lead the project and oversee its opening.

The hotel's development forms part of the group's expansion across Europe, building on the legacy of its British brand, which began with the opening of The Langham, London, in 1865.

The project represents a model of heritage-led hospitality investment, giving historic buildings a new purpose through tourism while bringing a luxury accommodation experience to Murano that draws on the island's distinctive artistic and architectural identity.



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Afyonkarahisar: Where Thermal Springs, Mud Baths and Culinary Heritage Meet

From the historic Ömer-Gecek thermal springs to the renowned Hüdai mud baths, this western Turkish destination combines relaxation, resort stays and local cultural experiences.

Afyonkarahisar – Türkiye | Al Rehla

Located in the inland Aegean region of western Türkiye, Afyonkarahisar stands out as a destination known for its thermal springs and mud baths, which have established the province as a prominent centre for wellness tourism, alongside its rich historical heritage and distinctive culinary traditions.

Türkiye's Ministry of Culture and Tourism describes the province as the country's "Thermal Tourism Capital", reflecting its abundant geothermal resources and wide range of accommodation and wellness facilities, from luxury resorts to other lodging options.

Ömer-Gecek: Thermal Springs Steeped in History

Approximately 15 kilometres from the city centre, the Ömer-Gecek thermal area is home to mineral springs and thermal bathing facilities.

The history of the Ömer baths dates back to the 19th century, with official sources referring to an inscription from 1889. The area was also mentioned in the writings of Ottoman traveller Evliya Çelebi.

Some establishments offer wellness, physiotherapy and rehabilitation services, although it is important to distinguish between recreational thermal bathing and medical treatments that require professional supervision.

Hüdai: The Traditional Hot Mud Experience

In the district of Sandıklı, the Hüdai thermal baths are renowned for their use of mineral-rich water and mud, offering a distinctive wellness experience that attracts visitors.

The province is also home to the historic Gazlıgöl and Heybeli thermal springs, both associated with a long tradition of mineral-water bathing.

These destinations provide additional options for travellers seeking thermal resorts beyond Türkiye's major cities.

Beyond Wellness: A Culinary Destination

Afyonkarahisar's appeal extends well beyond its thermal waters. In 2019, the city joined the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the field of Gastronomy.

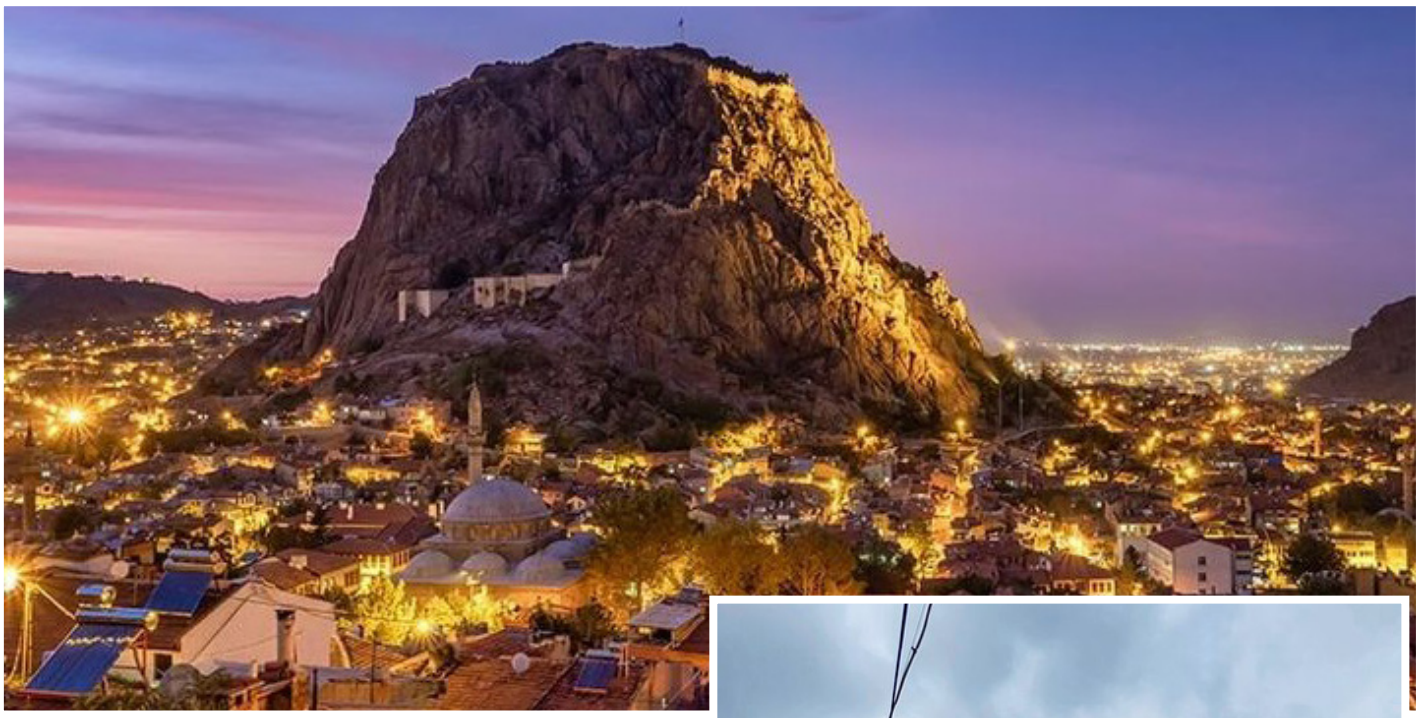
The destination is particularly known for its traditional clotted cream, Turkish sweets and local meat products, allowing visitors to combine relaxation with an exploration of regional cuisine and cultural heritage.

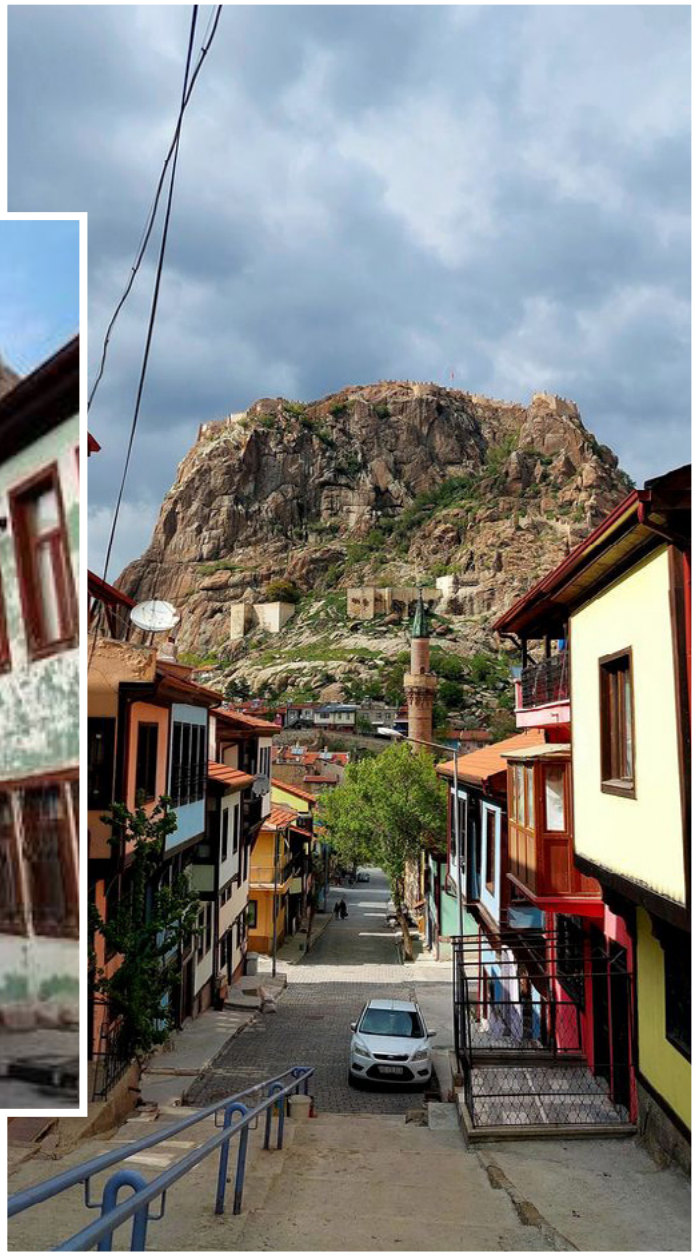
Al-Rehla Perspective | A Different Side of Türkiye

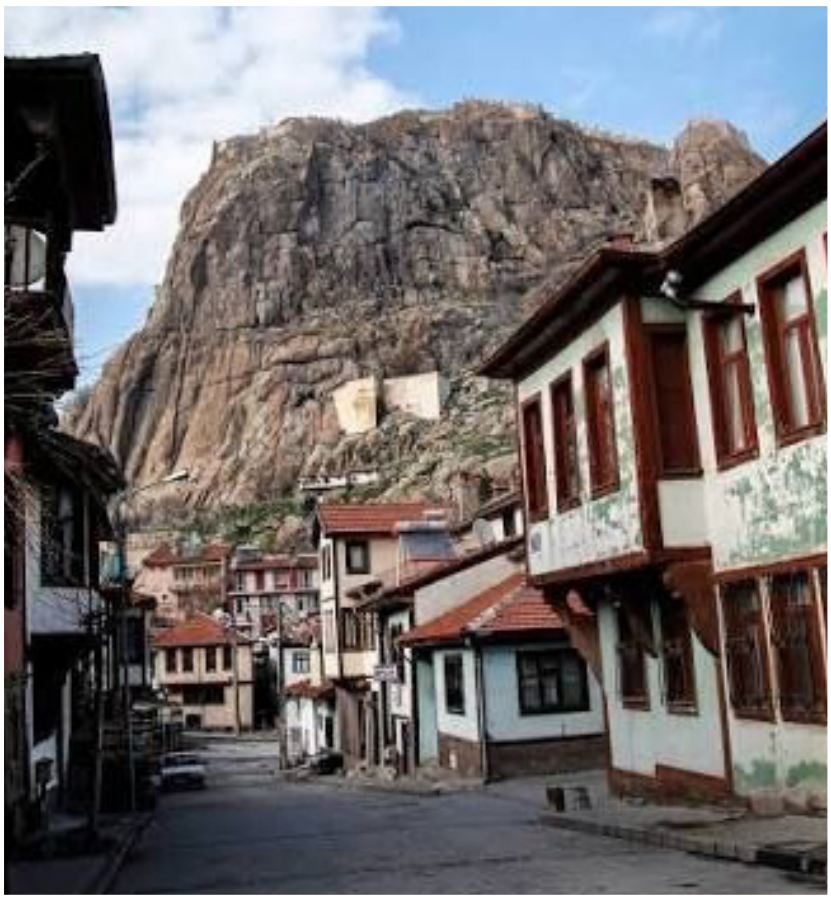
Afyonkarahisar offers an appealing alternative for travellers seeking peaceful accommodation and wellness experiences away from crowded coastal destinations.

Visitors are advised to check the facilities and services available at each resort before booking, particularly when seeking physiotherapy or medical rehabilitation programmes.

While the region's thermal springs have a long history of recreational and traditional use, their popularity does not establish their effectiveness in treating every medical condition.







Project on the Map

Grand Hyatt The Red Sea Opens on Shura Island with 430 Accommodation Units and 2,400 Sq Metres of Event Space

Red Sea Global announced the resort's opening on October 31, 2026, adding conference and business event facilities to Saudi Arabia's Red Sea destination. The property is located near a marina accommodating 159 yachts.

Tabuk, Saudi Arabia | Al Rehla

Red Sea Global announced the opening of Grand Hyatt The Red Sea on Shura Island on October 31, 2026, as part of The Red Sea tourism destination on Saudi Arabia's western coast.

The opening adds new hotel capacity to the destination, with a particular focus on attracting meetings, conferences and events alongside leisure tourism.

430 Rooms, Suites and Villas

The resort features 430 rooms, suites and villas, together with a selection of restaurants and family-oriented facilities.

It offers more than 2,400 square metres of dedicated event space, including a main ballroom covering 1,390 square metres and another venue measuring 683 square metres, in addition to meeting rooms and outdoor areas.

These facilities are designed to accommodate conferences, corporate meetings and social occasions, expanding the range of tourism demand targeted by The Red Sea destination.

Marina Proximity Enhances the Maritime Experience

The resort is located near Shura Island Marina, which features 159 berths for yachts measuring up to 125 metres in length.

Its location also provides access to shopping facilities, restaurants and other leisure attractions across the island.

This integration positions the resort within a wider tourism ecosystem rather than relying exclusively on its own hotel facilities.

Who Is Behind the Project?

Red Sea Global is responsible for developing The Red Sea destination and is the company that announced the resort's opening.

The company is led by Group CEO John Pagano, who stated in the opening announcement that the resort strengthens the destination's capacity to host international conferences, corporate meetings and major events.

Grand Hyatt is the hospitality brand under which the resort operates, forming part of the global portfolio of Hyatt Hotels Corporation.

The published opening announcement does not disclose the resort's standalone investment value or detailed ownership structure. Therefore, assigning a specific investment figure to the property would require additional official disclosure.

What Does the Resort Add to the Market?

According to the developer, the latest opening brought the number of resorts welcoming guests across The Red Sea destination to 12.

The addition of substantial event facilities reflects a strategy to diversify tourism demand by targeting corporate travel, conferences and special occasions rather than relying solely on leisure stays.

However, the resort's actual commercial impact will depend on booking volumes, occupancy rates and the number of events hosted.

These performance indicators were not disclosed in the opening announcement.



John Pagano
CEO of Red Sea Global







Qatar Targets Six African Markets to Attract Tourists Through New London Partnership



Agreement between Visit Qatar and Satguru Travel & Tours at WTM London 2026 aims to develop travel packages and promote sporting events, family experiences and winter tourism.

London – United Kingdom | Al Rehla

Qatar is seeking to expand its tourism presence across Africa after Visit Qatar signed a strategic partnership agreement with Satguru Travel & Tours, aimed at increasing tourist arrivals from six key African markets. The agreement was signed on the sidelines of World Travel Market (WTM) London 2026, taking place in the British capital from November 3 to 5.

The one-year agreement builds on a previous memorandum of understanding signed by the two parties in 2025, transforming it into a programme of cooperation focused on tourism marketing, product development and the creation of tailored travel programmes for African travellers. The initiative is intended to strengthen Qatar's position as a destination for leisure and family tourism.

The partnership focuses on four promotional pillars: sporting tournaments and international events, winter tourism and outdoor activities, family and leisure experiences, as well as culture and festivals. These are key offerings that Qatar seeks to leverage to attract new visitor segments.

The agreement gains added significance from Satguru's international reach. The company operates in more than 80 countries and has offices and an established presence in 42 African countries, giving it an extensive network for engaging with travel agencies and tour operators across the continent.

Under the agreement, Satguru will be responsible for developing tourism packages, implementing promotional activities and engaging with trade partners. Visit Qatar, meanwhile, will provide marketing materials, destination information and details of its events calendar, helping to create travel programmes tailored to the interests of travellers in the targeted markets.

The move forms part of Qatar's broader strategy to strengthen its presence in 11 priority African markets, diversify its source markets for international visitors and capitalise on growing demand for leisure travel, cultural experiences and sports tourism.

The partnership reflects a shift away from traditional promotional campaigns towards building direct tourism sales channels through travel agencies. This approach is expected to help convert interest in Qatar as a destination into bookable travel packages, while reinforcing tourism's role in economic diversification.

$100 Million Investment Package in Bahrain Includes Taj Hotel and 80 Luxury Branded Residences



Kingdom Projects and Indian Hotels Company Limited announce three hospitality, dining, and retail developments, with fit-out works underway at Bombay Brasserie and Hamleys and a 200-room Taj hotel preparing for construction in Seef.

Manama – Bahrain | Al Rehla

Bahrain-based Kingdom Projects and Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL) have announced a portfolio of investment projects in Bahrain valued at a combined $100 million, including the development of Taj Downtown Seef, the launch of Bombay Brasserie in Bahrain Bay, and a flagship Hamleys store at The Avenues Bahrain.

The announcement was made during Gateway Gulf 2026, held on November 1–2, providing updated details on the companies' investments and the implementation stages of their hospitality and retail projects.

200 Hotel Rooms and 80 Taj-Branded Residences

The centrepiece of the investment package is Taj Downtown Seef, a luxury development comprising a 200-room hotel alongside 80 residential units carrying the prestigious Taj hospitality brand.

IHCL originally announced the hotel development agreement with Kingdom Projects in August 2024, as part of a partnership that also included a 251-room resort in Hamala.

The latest announcement provides additional details on the branded residences and the wider investment package.

Construction of the Seef hotel is expected to begin soon, although no confirmed construction commencement or opening date has been announced.

Two Projects Enter the Interior Fit-Out Stage

In Bahrain Bay, interior fit-out works are underway at Bombay Brasserie, a restaurant concept associated with the Taj hospitality portfolio, ahead of a targeted opening in the first quarter of 2027.

Meanwhile, a flagship Hamleys store is being fitted out at The Avenues Bahrain, with its opening also targeted for the same period.

The British toy brand is owned by Reliance Retail.

The progress of interior works represents a tangible implementation milestone for both developments, although neither has entered commercial operation.

Who Is Behind the Investments?

Kingdom Projects serves as the local investor and developer and acts as Taj's exclusive partner in Bahrain.

Indian Hotels Company Limited, part of India's Tata Group, is expanding its Taj hospitality brand in the Kingdom through the partnership.

The investment package also includes dining and retail activities within Kingdom Projects' portfolio.

However, the companies have not disclosed how the combined $100 million investment is allocated among the three developments.

53% of European Ski Resorts Face Snow Shortage Risks as UN Report Warns of Economic Consequences



A new report by the World Meteorological Organization and the International Ski and Snowboard Federation highlights 25 race cancellations during the 2025–2026 season, while declining snow cover increases operating challenges for mountain resorts.

Geneva – Switzerland | Al Rehla

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the International Ski and Snowboard Federation (FIS) have warned of growing climate-related risks facing ski resorts and winter tourism, as declining snow reliability and rising adaptation costs place increasing pressure on mountain destinations.

The warning comes in a joint report released on November 3, 2026, providing guidance for ski resort operators and mountain tourism facilities based on meteorological data and long-term climate projections.

53% of Resorts Face High Snow Shortage Risks

The report draws on a scientific study covering 2,234 ski resorts across 28 European countries, which found that 53% could face very high risks of insufficient snow if global warming reaches 2°C above pre-industrial levels, in the absence of artificial snowmaking.

Originally published in Nature Climate Change in 2023, the study's findings were referenced in the new report to illustrate the scale of challenges confronting the winter tourism industry.

25 Races Cancelled Due to Weather Conditions

The International Ski and Snowboard Federation reported that adverse weather conditions led to the cancellation of 25 World Cup races during the 2025–2026 season.

The report also highlighted a historical decline in snow cover duration, averaging approximately five days per decade across many regions, particularly at lower elevations.

In Switzerland, glaciers have lost around 20% of their volume since 2021, while the number of snowfall days in areas below 800 metres has fallen by half since 1970.



Rising Operational Challenges for Ski Resorts

Lower-altitude ski resorts face increasing difficulties in maintaining reliable operating seasons.

Although some facilities rely on artificial snowmaking, the technology requires suitable temperature and humidity conditions, along with substantial water and electricity resources, making operating costs and investment planning increasingly important.

The new report encourages resort operators to incorporate weather forecasts and climate projections into operational scheduling, risk management, and long-term investment decisions.

Al-Rehla Perspective | What Does This Mean for Winter Tourism?

The findings suggest that the future of ski tourism will depend not only on the appeal of resorts and their facilities but also on their ability to maintain suitable operating conditions.

For travellers, checking actual snow conditions, slope opening schedules, and cancellation policies is becoming increasingly important, particularly when booking winter holidays in advance.

For investors, hoteliers, and mountain resort operators, the challenge is to develop diversified tourism activities that reduce dependence on snowfall alone and enable destinations to attract visitors throughout different seasons.



Three International Consortia Compete for Terminal 6 Construction Contract at King Salman International Airport



Saudi, Turkish, Italian, Chinese, Qatari and Greek companies prepare to submit bids for a terminal designed to accommodate 40 million passengers annually ahead of Riyadh Expo 2030.

Riyadh – Saudi Arabia | Al Rehla

The Terminal 6 project at King Salman International Airport in Riyadh has entered a new stage of construction competition, with three international consortia preparing to submit bids for the main construction contract following the completion of the early contractor involvement phase.

According to a report published by project intelligence magazine MEED on November 2, 2026, the consortia are expected to submit their proposals by the end of 2026 or early 2027, paving the way for the selection of the contractor responsible for building the new terminal.

Consortia Representing Six Countries

The competition includes a consortium comprising Saudi Arabia's Al Gihaz Holding, Türkiye's TAV Construction and Italy's Webuild.

A second consortium brings together Saudi Arabia's Modern Building Leaders (MBL), China's PowerChina and Metallurgical Corporation of China (MCC).

The third consortium consists of Qatar's UCC Holding and Consolidated Contractors Company (CCC), which has Greek connections.

King Salman International Airport Development Company shortlisted the three consortia in March 2026, before completing the early contractor involvement phase in October. This phase included the submission of construction methodologies and technical proposals for the project.

Capacity for 40 Million Passengers Annually

Terminal 6 is designed to add approximately 40 million passengers in annual capacity once completed.

The terminal forms part of the wider King Salman International Airport development, which aims to accommodate more than 100 million passengers annually by 2030.



Covering approximately 57 square kilometres, the airport's master plan includes six aircraft runways, cargo and logistics facilities, and commercial developments.

Preliminary Contracts Awarded Ahead of Main Tender

In July 2026, a separate contract for preliminary works and foundations associated with Terminal 6 was awarded to a consortium comprising China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation and Saudi Arabia's Mofarreh Al Harbi & Partners.

However, the main construction contract remains under competitive tender, with neither its value nor the winning consortium announced.

King Salman International Airport Development Company, a subsidiary of Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF), is overseeing the development, with the terminal targeted for completion ahead of Riyadh Expo 2030.

Al-Rehla Perspective | From Tendering to Operational Capacity

Progress in the Terminal 6 tender represents an important step in developing Saudi Arabia's aviation infrastructure, particularly as Riyadh prepares for future growth in air travel.

However, the project's actual impact on tourism and air connectivity will not be measured by planned capacity alone.

The key milestones will be the award of the main construction contract, progress on building works, the terminal's entry into commercial operation, and ultimately the number of passengers and flights it accommodates.



From Amalfi to Vienna and Rome, Anantara Celebrates 25 Years Across Eight European Destinations



Special Christmas and New Year 2027 programmes bring together winter markets, musical performances, Michelin-starred dining and wellness experiences as the hotel brand marks its silver jubilee.

Dubai – UAE | Al Rehla

Anantara Hotels & Resorts is preparing to conclude celebrations marking its 25th anniversary with a travel programme spanning eight hotels and resorts across seven European countries. Bringing together the festive spirit of Christmas and the arrival of 2027, the programme features experiences inspired by local heritage, culinary arts, music and wellness.

The participating destinations include Amalfi and Rome in Italy, Amsterdam in the Netherlands, Vienna in Austria, Marbella in Spain, Budapest in Hungary, Nice in France, and Dublin in Ireland. Each hotel will offer a programme reflecting the cultural identity of its city.

From Amalfi's Monasteries to Vienna's Christmas Markets

On Italy's Amalfi Coast, Anantara Convento di Amalfi will host Christmas celebrations within a historic monastery dating back to the 13th century. The programme will feature a market showcasing local artisans, musical performances, candlelit experiences and dining evenings inspired by Italian cuisine.

In Vienna, Anantara Palais Hansen will invite guests to explore traditional Christmas markets and enjoy afternoon tea and a luxurious festive dinner. Meanwhile, Anantara Grand Krasnapolsky Amsterdam will host an expanded New Year's Eve celebration for the first time, transforming its historic lobby into a setting for musical performances and social gatherings.

In Rome, Anantara Palazzo Naiadi is partnering with the Rome Opera House to present a programme inspired by The Nutcracker, featuring family activities and workshops for children, before welcoming the New Year with a rooftop celebration.

Mediterranean Experiences and Rooftop Celebrations

In Marbella, Spain, Anantara Villa Padierna Palace Resort will combine wellness experiences with family cooking workshops, while Anantara Plaza Nice will mark New Year's Eve with celebrations overlooking the Bay of Angels on the French Riviera.

Budapest will showcase its winter traditions through Hungarian sweets and Christmas markets, while Anantara The Marker Dublin will celebrate Irish cuisine and local literature, culminating in a New Year's Eve celebration on the hotel's rooftop.

Founded in Thailand in 2001, Anantara is part of Minor Hotels and has a global portfolio of more than 50 hotels and resorts.

Saudi Arabia's Tourist Lodge Registrations Surge 52% to Over 18,000 in One Year



Official data reveals a 37% increase in tourist accommodation registrations, a 33% rise in tour guide registrations, and 32% growth in tour operator registrations by the end of Q3 2026.

Riyadh – Saudi Arabia | Al Rehla

The number of active commercial registrations for tourist lodges in Saudi Arabia increased by 52% year-on-year, reaching 18,115 by the end of the third quarter of 2026, compared with 11,900 during the same period last year, according to data released by the Saudi Ministry of Commerce on November 3, 2026.

The increase reflects expanding commercial activity across the tourism sector, with registrations rising in accommodation, tour guiding, and travel organisation services, indicating broader business participation in tourism-related activities.

Accommodation and Tour Services Record Growth

Ministry data showed that commercial registrations for tourist accommodation facilities increased by 37% to 18,956, compared with 13,819 at the end of the third quarter of 2025.

Registrations for tour guide activities also rose by 33%, from 5,784 to 7,735, while tour operator registrations grew by 32%, reaching 11,949 compared with 9,057 a year earlier.

These activities cover various segments of the tourism services industry, ranging from accommodation options to organised tours and professional guiding services.

Commercial Growth Does Not Necessarily Mean New Openings

The Ministry of Commerce stated that the increase in registrations reflects expanding opportunities for businesses and small and medium-sized enterprises, alongside the development of tourism destinations across the Kingdom.

However, these figures do not mean that an equivalent number of tourist lodges or accommodation facilities are operational, as commercial registration differs from tourism licensing and actual business operations.

The data also does not disclose the value of investments implemented, the number of newly available hotel rooms, or occupancy rates.

Al-Rehla Perspective | Where Is the Real Growth?

The figures demonstrate an expanding base of tourism-related commercial activities in Saudi Arabia, particularly in accommodation and supporting services.

However, assessing the impact of this growth on travellers and the tourism market requires additional data on facilities that have actually commenced operations, available accommodation capacity, and the number of customers using tour organisation and guiding services.

Saudia Unveils New Premium Economy Class with Up to 43-Inch Seat Pitch



The new cabin features 15.5-inch entertainment screens and enhanced passenger comfort, with operations expected to begin on Boeing 787 aircraft in 2027.

London – United Kingdom | Al Rehla

Saudia has unveiled its new Premium Economy Class seats during World Travel Market (WTM) London on November 3, 2026, as part of its efforts to expand passenger travel options and introduce an additional level of comfort between Economy and Business Class.

The new cabin forms part of the airline's "New Saudia Experience" initiative, which includes upgrading aircraft interiors and enhancing onboard hospitality and entertainment services.

More Spacious Seats and Advanced Entertainment

The new seats offer a pitch of up to 43 inches, approximately 109 centimetres, alongside 15.5-inch entertainment screens, extendable leg rests, additional storage space, and a design intended to provide greater privacy.

The product targets passengers seeking additional comfort, particularly on long-haul flights, without upgrading to Business Class.

Operations Expected to Begin in 2027

Saudia plans to introduce Premium Economy Class on new Boeing 787 aircraft scheduled to join its fleet in 2027.

The airline subsequently intends to expand the new cabin product gradually to selected Airbus A330, Boeing 777, and Boeing 787 aircraft already in its fleet.

However, Saudia has not announced ticket prices, the first routes to feature the new class, or when reservations will open.

The airline also showcased its Business Class configuration on Airbus A321XLR aircraft, featuring 24 suites with fully flat beds alongside 120 Economy Class seats.

Al-Rehla Perspective | A New Travel Option Awaiting Launch

The unveiling of Premium Economy represents a tangible addition to Saudia's passenger offering, although the service has not yet entered commercial operation.

Its practical value will become clearer once the airline announces fares, routes, and services included in the ticket, allowing passengers to compare Premium Economy with existing Economy and Business Class options and choose the most suitable travel experience.

Oman Air Increases Muscat–Amsterdam Flights by 75% to Daily Service Starting December



Seven weekly flights instead of four from December 1, 2026, enhancing direct travel options between Oman and the Netherlands during the winter season.

Muscat – Sultanate of Oman | Al Rehla

Oman Air has announced an increase in direct flights between Muscat and Amsterdam from four to seven weekly services starting December 1, 2026, representing a 75% increase in flight frequency as part of the airline's winter 2026–2027 schedule.

On November 3, the airline confirmed that the move to daily service responds to travel demand between Oman and the Netherlands while expanding air connectivity options with European markets.

From Four Weekly Flights to Daily Service

Oman Air launched its Muscat–Amsterdam route on July 1, 2025, establishing the first direct air connection between the two countries.

The increased frequency will give passengers greater flexibility in choosing departure and return dates, particularly during Oman's winter tourism season.

Daily flights will also create additional opportunities for travel agencies and tour operators in the Dutch market to develop tourism packages based on direct services to Muscat.

Increased Capacity Across European Routes

The Amsterdam expansion forms part of broader adjustments to Oman Air's winter schedule, which began on October 25.

Previously announced changes include tripling capacity on the Zurich route compared with the summer season, using wide-body aircraft on up to five weekly flights.

The airline's winter schedule also includes increased frequencies to Paris, Frankfurt, Munich, Milan, and Istanbul, with up to five weekly flights to each destination.

Oman Air's European network serves 11 destinations, providing enhanced travel options between the Sultanate and European markets.

Al-Rehla Perspective | Opportunities for Winter Tourism

The increase in Amsterdam flights is particularly relevant to Oman's tourism sector during the winter season, when European visitors can explore destinations ranging from Muscat and Jabal Akhdar to the Sharqiya Sands.

The transition to daily flights represents a specific operational expansion. However, its actual impact on tourism will become clearer through passenger numbers, flight occupancy rates, and hotel booking volumes throughout the winter season.

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