AL-REHLA | Issue 1333
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Winner of the "Most Influential Tourism Newspaper in the Arab World 2026" Award by AFUSU

Leena Alzahrani Wins Best Marketing Manager in Saudi Arabia at Haute Grandeur Awards 2026

Accor and Hard Rock Sign Global Partnership Connecting Hotels to a Loyalty Platform with 125 Million Members

Hyatt Signs First Franchise Agreements in Saudi Arabia, Adding 296 Rooms and Suites in Riyadh

IHG Expands Near Istanbul Airport with Agreement to Develop 130-Room Holiday Inn Hotel



Accor and Hard Rock Sign Global Partnership Connecting Hotels to a Loyalty Platform with 125 Million Members



The agreement covers loyalty programmes, hotel distribution and international development, with Ennismore set to lead the brand's expansion across the Middle East, Europe and Asia-Pacific following completion of the transaction.

Hollywood, Florida – United States | Al Rehla

French hospitality group Accor and US-based Hard Rock International have announced a global strategic partnership covering hotel distribution, guest loyalty programmes and international hotel development.

The agreement aims to expand the Hard Rock brand's presence in new tourism markets while leveraging Accor's global reservation and distribution network.

Under the partnership, announced on November 9, 2026, eligible properties within Hard Rock's portfolio will have the option to join ALL Accor, the group's booking and loyalty platform, which serves more than 125 million members worldwide.

Eligible brands include Hard Rock Hotels, Reverb by Hard Rock, casino hotels and resorts, and branded residential hospitality properties.

Expanding Distribution While Maintaining Independent Booking Channels

The partnership will allow participating Hard Rock properties to access Accor's global sales and distribution network, providing additional opportunities to reach international travellers and loyalty programme members.

Hard Rock will continue operating its own marketing platforms and direct booking channels independently. The agreement also aims to establish cooperation between the ALL Accor and Unity by Hard Rock loyalty programmes, including potential points conversion and membership tier matching.

These benefits are expected to become available following completion of the transaction and implementation of the necessary arrangements.

The companies confirmed that guests at Hard Rock Hotel New York can already access certain partnership benefits, although no comprehensive timetable has been announced for extending these features to other properties.



"The collaboration with Accor and Ennismore opens a new chapter in expanding the brand's presence and offering additional experiences to loyalty programme members."

Jim Allen
CEO of Hard Rock International



"The agreement brings together the global reach of the booking platform with Ennismore's expertise in developing lifestyle hotels, enabling access to new segments of travellers."

Sébastien Bazin
Chairman and CEO of Accor Group

Ennismore to Lead Expansion in the Middle East

Ennismore, the lifestyle hospitality group majority-owned by Accor, will support the development of the Hard Rock hotel brand and the operation of future projects.

The expansion strategy will focus on Europe, the Middle East and Asia-Pacific, alongside destinations where the Hard Rock brand does not currently have a presence.

However, the parties have not yet announced specific hotel projects, destination cities, room counts or the financial value of potential investments.

A Partnership Between Two Global Hospitality Brands

Jim Allen, Chief Executive Officer of Hard Rock International, said the collaboration with Accor and Ennismore opens a new chapter in expanding the brand's international presence while offering additional experiences to loyalty programme members.

Sébastien Bazin, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Accor, emphasised that the agreement combines the global reach of Accor's booking and distribution platform with Ennismore's expertise in lifestyle hospitality development, creating opportunities to reach new traveller segments.

Accor operates a portfolio of more than 5,800 hotels and resorts across over 110 countries.

Hard Rock maintains a global network of more than 300 locations in approximately 80 countries, encompassing hotels, restaurants and entertainment venues.

Al Rehla Travel Insight

The partnership could provide travellers with broader hotel booking options and additional loyalty benefits, particularly for those seeking to combine accommodation with entertainment experiences.

However, points conversion, membership tier matching and reciprocal loyalty privileges will depend on the successful completion of the transaction and the participation of individual hotels.

Travellers should therefore not assume that all Hard Rock properties are immediately eligible for ALL Accor benefits from the date of the announcement.

Bidiyah Sands Carnival Returns for a Month of Desert Adventures in Oman, with International Baja Rally Attracting Competitors from 20 Countries



The third edition runs from November 19 to December 19, featuring Oman's first international Baja rally and an expected participation of more than 150 competitors.

Bidiyah – Sultanate of Oman | Al Rehla

The Wilayat of Bidiyah in Oman's North Al Sharqiyah Governorate is preparing to host the third edition of the Bidiyah Sands Carnival 2026, running from November 19 to December 19.

The month-long programme will bring together motorsport competitions, desert adventures, cultural activities and family entertainment, with more than 150 competitors from over 20 countries expected to participate.

Details of the programme were announced during a press conference on November 8, attended by local officials and event organisers, as preparations intensify for Oman's winter tourism season.

The carnival is organised by the Bidiyah Motorsports Club in partnership with the Oman Automobile Association, under the supervision of North Al Sharqiyah Governorate.

Most activities will take place at the Al Yuraissah sand dune area in Bidiyah, primarily on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays throughout the festival.

International Baja Oman Takes Centre Stage

The International Baja Oman Rally, scheduled for December 17–19, 2026, will be the flagship event of this year's carnival, marking the first time the Sultanate hosts the international competition.

The rally will feature four-wheel-drive vehicles, Side-by-Side Vehicles (SSVs), motorcycles and quad bikes competing across desert stages in the Wilayats of Bidiyah and Al Qabil.

The car competitions will be conducted under the regulations of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA).

The event also holds candidate status for the FIA World Baja Cup and has been included in the 2027 FIA Middle East Baja Cup calendar.

Desert Adventures and Family Experiences

Beyond professional motorsport, the carnival will feature the Bidiyah Sands Challenge, offering a five-kilometre course for adults and a 500-metre course for children.



The activities aim to encourage community participation while introducing visitors to the natural landscape of Oman's desert.

A dedicated festival village will include vehicle displays, areas for small and medium-sized enterprises, restaurants, cafés, exhibitions and children's entertainment, alongside live performances and desert experiences.

Visitors will be able to combine motorsport activities with opportunities to explore local products, traditional culture and the distinctive environment of the Sharqiyah Sands.

Supporting Tourism and Local Businesses

Mahmoud bin Yahya Al Dhuhli, Governor of North Al Sharqiyah, said the carnival aims to stimulate tourism and economic activity across the governorate while strengthening Bidiyah's position as a leading desert tourism destination in Oman and the wider Gulf region.

Accommodation providers, desert camps, restaurants, transportation operators and tourism businesses are expected to benefit from visitor activity during the festival.

However, organisers have not announced official projections for total visitor numbers or tourism spending associated with the 2026 edition.

Al Rehla Travel Insight

The Bidiyah Sands Carnival offers travellers an opportunity to explore the Sharqiyah Sands during Oman's winter tourism season, combining motorsport events with desert camping and authentic local cultural experiences.

Visitors are advised to check competition schedules and public activity dates before travelling, as the carnival extends over a full month while its main activities take place on selected days.

The festival will conclude with the International Baja Oman Rally from December 17 to 19, providing a major attraction for motorsport enthusiasts and adventure travellers.



"The carnival aims to stimulate tourism and economic activity in the governorate, while strengthening Bidiyah's position as a leading desert tourism destination in Oman and across the Gulf region."

Mahmoud bin Yahya Al Dhuhli
Governor of North Al Sharqiyah

Hyatt Signs First Franchise Agreements in Saudi Arabia, Adding 296 Rooms and Suites in Riyadh



Three Artal Hotels properties to join the Unscripted by Hyatt brand, marking its debut in the EMEA region, with Amsa Hospitality managing operations and integration targeted for Q4 2026.

Riyadh – Saudi Arabia | Al Rehla

Hyatt Hotels Corporation has announced the signing of its first hotel franchise agreements in Saudi Arabia, partnering with Artal Hotels to bring three existing properties in Riyadh under the Unscripted by Hyatt brand, representing a combined portfolio of 296 rooms and suites.

The agreements mark the brand's first entry into the Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) region, with the properties expected to join Hyatt's portfolio during the fourth quarter of 2026.

Amsa Hospitality will oversee the operations of all three hotels.

The franchise agreements follow a memorandum of understanding announced in July between Hyatt and Artal Hotels, alongside hotel management agreements signed by Amsa Hospitality, representing a new contractual stage in the partnership.

Three Hotels Serving Different Guest Segments

The agreements cover Gardino Hotel Riyadh, which offers 99 rooms and suites near the capital's medical and university districts, with dining, fitness and wellness facilities.

Vittori Garden Riyadh features 131 rooms and suites in the Al Sahafah district, along the King Fahd Road



"The agreements mark two milestones for the group: introducing the hotel franchise model to the Saudi market for the first time and launching the Unscripted brand in the region."

Brianna Swift
Regional Vice President of Development, Saudi Arabia, Hyatt



"The collaboration with Artal and Hyatt supports the development of hospitality experiences tailored to the needs of the Saudi market."

Muin Serhan
CEO of Amsa Hospitality

service route, close to major business and entertainment destinations, including King Abdullah Financial District and Boulevard City.

Meanwhile, Vittori Suites Riyadh provides 66 suites, primarily configured with one or two bedrooms, within a mixed-use development on King Abdulaziz Road. The property is designed to accommodate guests seeking extended stays.

Gardino Hotel and Vittori Garden are already welcoming guests, while Vittori Suites has completed extensive renovations in preparation for reopening and joining the new brand.



A Franchise Model That Preserves Hotel Identity

The Unscripted by Hyatt brand allows independent hotels to retain their individual names, character and design features while gaining access to Hyatt's global distribution and reservation network and its World of Hyatt loyalty programme.

Brianna Swift, Regional Vice President of Development for Saudi Arabia at Hyatt, said the agreements represent two significant milestones for the group: its first hotel franchise agreements in the Kingdom and the introduction of the Unscripted by Hyatt brand to the wider region.

Moein Serhan, Chief Executive Officer of Amsa Hospitality, said the partnership with Artal Hotels and Hyatt supports the development of accommodation experiences tailored to the evolving needs of the Saudi market.

Al Rehla Travel Insight

The agreements are expected to provide travellers with additional internationally branded accommodation options in Riyadh, catering to business visitors, medical travellers and guests seeking longer stays.

However, access to World of Hyatt benefits will depend on each property's successful integration into the brand and the activation of its reservation and loyalty services.

The partnership also illustrates how international hospitality groups can expand through franchise agreements and the repositioning of existing hotels, rather than relying exclusively on new hotel construction.

Marketing and Communications Director at Fairmont Ramla Riyadh Adds Another Recognition to Her Career in Saudi Arabia's Hospitality Sector



"This recognition marks a significant milestone in her professional journey and reflects the value of collaboration, passion and determination in achieving results."

Lina Al-Zahrani
Director of Marketing and Communications
Fairmont Ramla Riyadh

Leena Alzahrani Wins Best Marketing Manager in Saudi Arabia at Haute Grandeur Awards 2026

Riyadh – Saudi Arabia | Al Rehla

"Leena Alzahrani, Director of Marketing and Communications at Fairmont Ramla Riyadh", has received the "Best Marketing Manager in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia" award at the 2026 Haute Grandeur Global Awards, adding another achievement to her professional record in hospitality marketing.

The recognition comes at a time when Saudi Arabia's hospitality sector is experiencing rapid expansion and growing competition among hotel brands seeking to strengthen their market presence, giving marketing and corporate communications an increasingly important role in shaping brand experience and reinforcing relationships with guests and partners.

Alzahrani expressed her pride in receiving the award, emphasizing that professional achievements are not the result of individual effort alone, but rather of teamwork, a shared vision, and the combined contribution of different teams.

Commenting on the win, she described the recognition as a significant milestone in her professional journey and a reflection of the value of collaboration, passion, and determination in achieving meaningful results. She also expressed her pride in working alongside colleagues who demonstrate creativity, dedication, and commitment every day.

The award is not Alzahrani's first recognition within the hospitality industry. She has previously received honours from Hotelier Middle East and has been associated with a number of professional awards and industry rankings related to marketing and public relations in the hotel sector.

Her professional journey reflects experience in developing marketing and communications strategies, strengthening the positioning of hotel brands, enhancing digital presence, and supporting community and cultural initiatives that deepen the hotel's connection with its local environment.

These capabilities are becoming increasingly important amid the transformation taking place across Saudi Arabia's tourism and hospitality industry, where competition is no longer defined by the hotel product alone, but also by the quality of communication, the ability to build a clear brand identity, and the creation of lasting relationships with guests.

Alzahrani's 2026 recognition represents a continuation of a professional path that combines marketing expertise with institutional leadership, while also reflecting the growing presence of Saudi talent in senior positions across the hospitality sector.


HAUTE GRANDEUR
GLOBAL AWARDS
2026
WINNER
HOTEL

IHG Expands Near Istanbul Airport with Agreement to Develop 130-Room Holiday Inn Hotel



The project, developed in partnership with Liper Turizm in Arnavutköy, involves Turkish investors and is expected to open by the end of 2028, with the investment value yet to be disclosed.

Istanbul – Türkiye | Al Rehla

IHG Hotels & Resorts has signed an agreement with Liper Turizm to develop a new hotel under the Holiday Inn & Suites brand in Arnavutköy, near Istanbul Airport.

The planned 130-room property will strengthen the group's presence in Türkiye's hospitality market, particularly in locations connected to international air travel.

The agreement was signed on November 4, 2026, with representatives of IHG and its local partner. The property will operate under the name

Holiday Inn & Suites Istanbul Airport Arnavutköy.

The development reflects growing investor interest in airport-area hospitality markets, which serve a range of travellers, including business visitors, short-stay guests and passengers requiring accommodation before departure or after arrival.

130 Rooms Near Istanbul Airport

The project is located in Arnavutköy, on Istanbul's European side, an area connected to the road network serving Istanbul Airport.

Once operational, the hotel is expected to add 130 rooms to the local accommodation market under the internationally recognised Holiday Inn & Suites brand.

The developers have not yet disclosed the property's total development area, room and suite configurations, or planned leisure and commercial facilities.
Room rates and potential airport transfer services have also not been announced.

Who Is Behind the Development?

IHG Hotels & Resorts is one of the world's major international hospitality groups, operating a portfolio of brands



across different market segments, including InterContinental, Crowne Plaza and Holiday Inn.

The new project is associated with investments by Turkish companies Erpay İnşaat and Liper Turizm, according to information published by parties involved in its development.

Turkish hospitality consultancy MY Otel Yatırım ve Yönetim Danışmanlık provided advisory services related to brand selection and coordination of the agreement with IHG.

The partnership brings together local investors and an international hotel brand. However, details of the final ownership structure and the management and operating arrangements have not yet been publicly disclosed.

Opening Expected by the End of 2028

Turkish hospitality industry reports indicate that the hotel is expected to open by the end of 2028.

However, IHG has not announced a confirmed opening date or a detailed construction schedule.

The parties have also not disclosed the project's total investment value, financing sources or estimated development cost per room.

These figures would provide important insight into the project's financial scale and commercial feasibility.

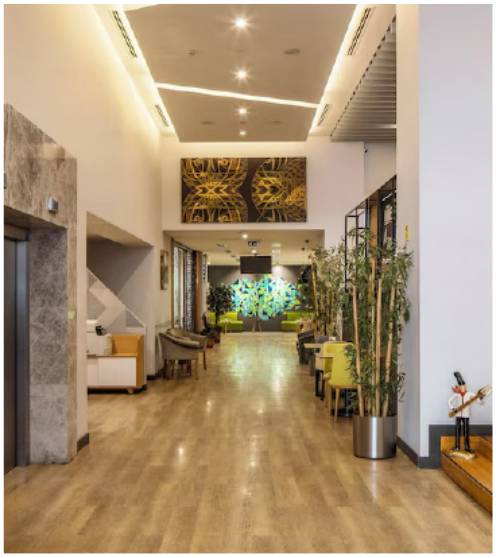
Al Rehla Travel Insight

Once operational, the hotel could offer an additional accommodation option for travellers who prefer to stay near Istanbul Airport, particularly those with early-morning departures or late-night arrivals.

Its suitability for these travellers will depend on airport transfer times, transportation services and room rates when operations begin.

The signing of the development agreement does not mean the hotel is currently open or available for reservations.







When Hospitality Becomes More Human... Hotels That Understand Their Guests From Luxurious Stays to the Comfort of Feeling Safe

BY:
Rajaa Aljeshi
Special Education Specialist

At a seaside hotel, a family enters their room after a long journey. One child is captivated by the breathtaking view, while another pauses at the sound of the air conditioning, notices the lighting, and searches for a quiet corner away from the noise.

The room is the same, but the experience is not.

In a world where international hotels compete through luxurious suites, spectacular views, and smart services, a new measure of hospitality is emerging: Does comfort mean the same thing to every guest?

For families traveling with children who have diverse educational and developmental needs, the priority may not be the largest swimming pool or the most celebrated restaurant. Instead, it may be a quiet room, suitable lighting, clear information, and staff who understand that children respond differently to unfamiliar environments.

A child with autism spectrum disorder may benefit from becoming familiar with the hotel before arrival, while another child may find reassurance in a visual schedule showing mealtimes and activities. Flexible check-in procedures or access to a quiet space may be more valuable to a family than an extensive range of entertainment facilities.

This is where inclusive hospitality goes beyond physical accessibility and becomes a culture of understanding. A staff member who recognizes a child's distress, respects the family's privacy, and allows them time without judgment provides a service just as valuable as any luxury amenity.

As accessible tourism gains greater attention worldwide, hotels have an opportunity to redefine excellence—not simply by introducing special services, but by making flexibility and inclusion an essential part of every guest's experience.

Families may not always remember the number of stars displayed on a hotel's façade, but they will remember the place where they never felt the need to explain or justify their child's differences.

Perhaps the future of global hospitality will not be determined by competition for the most luxurious rooms alone, but by the ability to offer something rare that cannot be selected from a list of amenities: the feeling of being welcomed exactly as you are.

A luxury hotel offers its guests a beautiful stay... but a hotel that truly understands them gives them a reason to return.



Amman Brings Together International Medical Tourism Experts to Discuss Investment, Insurance and AI



The 9th Global Medical & Wellness Tourism Conference opens on November 11, bringing together specialists from Jordan, the UAE, Türkiye, Germany and other countries, as Jordan's medical tourism sector welcomed approximately 230,000 international patients in 2025.

Amman – Jordan | Al Rehla

Amman will host the 9th Global Medical & Wellness Tourism Conference & Expo on November 11–12, 2026, bringing together experts and representatives from healthcare, tourism, insurance, technology and investment organisations to explore opportunities for developing international patient services and strengthening cross-border cooperation.

The conference comes as Jordan seeks to expand its presence in the global medical tourism market, which attracted approximately 230,000 international patients in 2025 and generated an estimated USD 1 billion in revenue, according to statements made in June by Fawzi Hammouri, President of Jordan's Private Hospitals Association.

Artificial Intelligence and the Patient Journey

The conference will examine applications of artificial intelligence and medical technology in improving the international patient experience, from remote consultations and diagnosis to travel arrangements, accommodation, treatment and post-treatment follow-up.

Discussions will also address investment opportunities and partnerships between hospitals, insurance companies and tourism service providers, alongside the development of integrated medical travel packages connecting healthcare, hospitality and transportation.

A specialised exhibition will showcase medical services and technological solutions while providing networking opportunities for participating organisations.

International Expertise from Multiple Markets

The announced list of participants includes medical tourism experts and industry representatives from Jordan, Türkiye, the UAE, Germany and other countries.

Among the announced participants are Emin Çakmak from Türkiye, Laila Al Jassmi from the UAE, and Michaela Kehrer from the Berlin Convention Office, alongside healthcare experts

and officials from Jordan.

The conference builds on an initiative launched in 2009 by Ayman Erekat, President of Pioneers Road Event Management, to establish a platform connecting healthcare institutions, tourism organisations and investors through professional cooperation and knowledge exchange.

A USD 1 Billion Sector Facing Competitive Challenges

Jordan's medical tourism industry faces challenges involving entry procedures for patients and their companions, operating costs, international air connectivity and growing competition from other regional medical tourism destinations.

These challenges highlight the importance of strengthening cooperation with international insurance providers and medical referral organisations while improving services supporting patients travelling for treatment.

Al Rehla Travel Insight

Medical travel differs from conventional tourism because it requires close coordination between healthcare providers, airlines, accommodation operators, insurance companies and post-treatment care services.

Developing these services as an integrated experience is an important factor in helping medical tourism destinations compete for international patients.



Oman Hotel Revenues Fall 11.7% to OMR 171 Million as European Guest Numbers Drop 30.7%



Occupancy at three- to five-star hotels declines to 46.5% during the first nine months of 2026, while domestic demand grows despite a 19.9% fall in GCC guests, as the market prepares for additional hotel supply.

Muscat – Sultanate of Oman | Al Rehla

Revenues at three- to five-star hotels in Oman declined by 11.7% during the first nine months of 2026, reaching OMR 171.1 million (approximately USD 445 million), compared with OMR 193.8 million during the same period in 2025, representing a decrease of OMR 22.7 million.

Preliminary data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) on November 8 showed that the number of guests staying at these hotels fell by 10.4% to approximately 1.51 million, compared with 1.69 million a year earlier.

Meanwhile, the average occupancy rate declined from 52.7% to 46.5%.

European and GCC Markets Record Significant Declines

The European market recorded one of the sharpest declines, with the number of European hotel guests falling by 30.7%, from 417,500 to 289,200, a decrease of approximately 128,000 guests.

Guests from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries declined by 19.9% to 132,800, compared with 165,800 during the corresponding period.

Guest numbers from other Arab countries also fell by 8.1% to 69,500, while arrivals from the Americas decreased by 27.5% to 40,100.

In contrast, the number of Omani hotel guests increased by 3.4% to 664,100, while Asian guest numbers rose by 2.9% to 249,700.

These figures highlight contrasting trends across source markets, with domestic demand continuing to support the hospitality sector but failing to fully offset declines in several international markets.

Hotel Expansion Continues Despite Weaker Demand

The downturn comes as Oman continues to expand its hotel



accommodation supply.
According to Cavendish Maxwell's hospitality market performance report for the first half of 2026, approximately 400 new hotel rooms entered the market during the first six months of the year.

The consultancy projected that another 700 rooms would be added during the second half, bringing the country's total hotel inventory to approximately 40,800 rooms by the end of 2026.

The report also identified plans to introduce an additional 1,500 rooms in 2027 and 1,600 rooms in 2028, subject to project completion schedules.

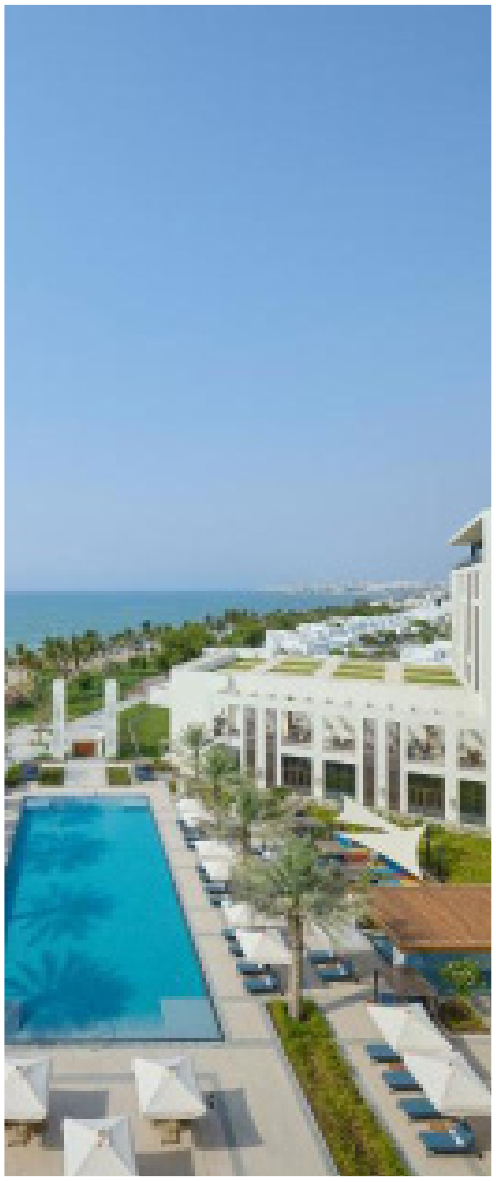
Cavendish Maxwell attributed weaker performance during the first half of 2026 partly to regional travel disruptions and reduced international air connectivity, noting that a recovery in visitor demand would be essential to absorbing the additional hotel capacity.

Al Rehla Travel Insight

Oman's latest hospitality figures highlight the distinction between expanding hotel capacity and generating sufficient demand to support it.

With occupancy declining to 46.5%, recovering international guest numbers, particularly from Europe and GCC countries, will be an important indicator of hotel performance and the commercial viability of upcoming developments.

The nine-month figures specifically reflect the performance of three- to five-star hotels and should not be interpreted as a comprehensive measure of all accommodation establishments or total international tourist arrivals to Oman.





Hotel Recovery After Crises: The Comeback Begins with a Clear Choice

BY:
Ashraf Hindawi
Tourism Expert

As a crisis subsides, hotels tend to focus on one question: When will occupancy return? But the more important question is: What kind of guest experience and profitability will accompany that return?

Filling rooms is not enough if guests stay once and never return. Recovery requires a clear four-step strategy. And that strategy begins with a decision, not a marketing campaign.

Step One: Understand Demand

Who is ready to return now? And what do they expect from their stay?

The answers come from reviewing bookings and cancellations, analysing guest feedback, and speaking directly with customers and partners.

The objective is not simply to measure the volume of returning demand, but to understand why guests choose one hotel over another.

Step Two: Choose Your Target Segment

No hotel can attract everyone at once.

A hotel must identify the guest segment it can serve best, then align its pricing, marketing and service delivery with that choice.

If it targets business travellers, convenient access, reliable internet connectivity and clear contractual arrangements become priorities.

If it focuses on families, it must develop a different experience tailored to their needs.

The decision depends on the hotel's capabilities and the market in which it operates. Anything that does not support the chosen direction should be postponed, even if it appears attractive during the first few weeks of recovery.

Step Three: Ensure Operational Readiness

There is no need to reopen every facility at once if the hotel cannot deliver a complete and consistent service.

Address deferred maintenance, prepare guest rooms, train the team and expand operations gradually according to demand and the hotel's ability to serve it.

Employees who have endured the pressures of a crisis need support and clearly defined authority, not simply greater demands.

Guests returning after a crisis are particularly quick to notice service shortcomings, and their first impression can determine whether they choose to return.

Step Four: Measure and Review Performance

Look beyond occupancy.

Monitor the average daily rate (ADR), net booking revenue after distribution costs, operating profitability and repeat-guest rates.

Evaluate these indicators alongside service quality to avoid celebrating high booking volumes that conceal weak returns and rising guest complaints.

Every priority should have a designated person responsible for it, and every result should have a scheduled review.

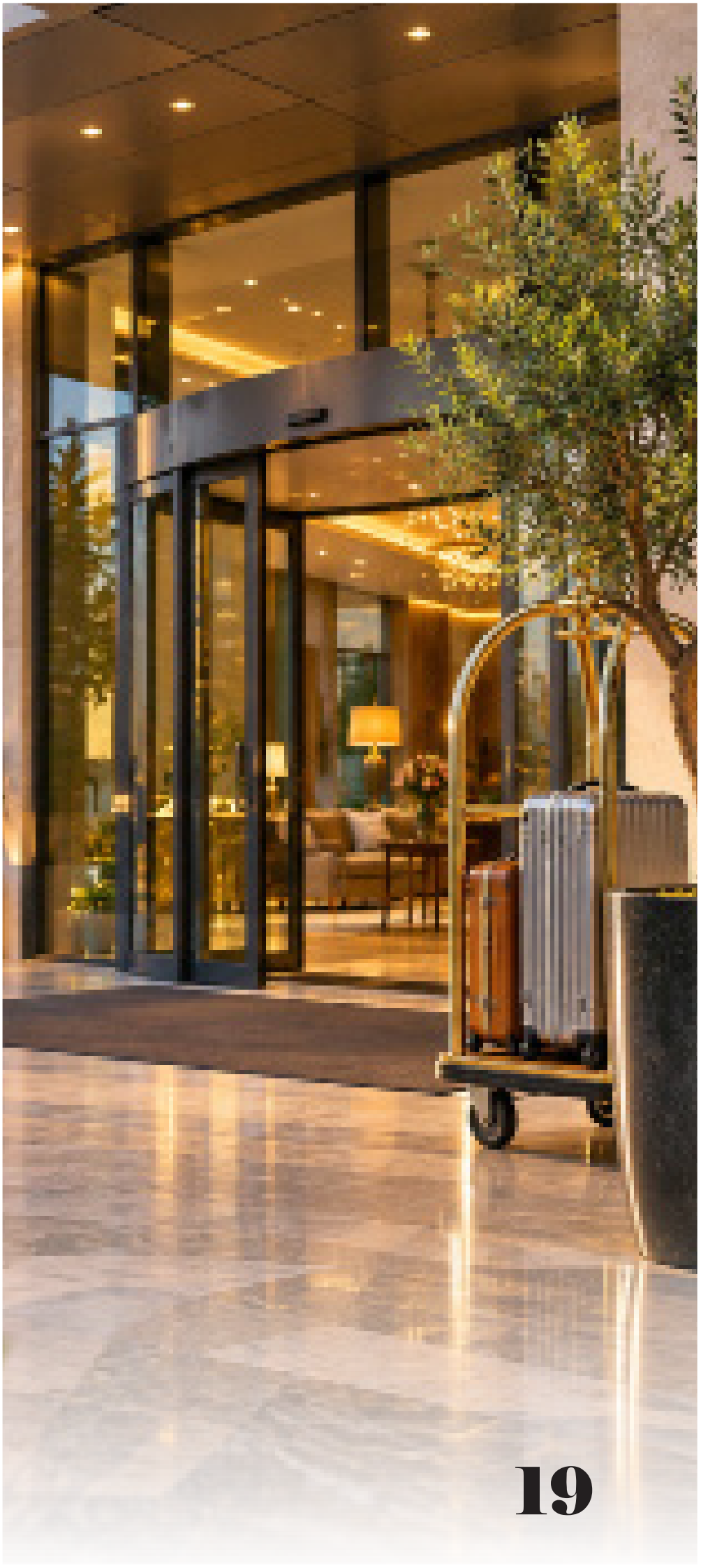
What works should be expanded. What fails to deliver value should be reconsidered.

Broad-based price reductions should remain a last resort, as they may restore occupancy while delaying the return to profitability.

Recovery Means Returning Stronger

A hotel recovery strategy is not about restoring the property to exactly what it was before the crisis.

It is about returning with a clearer direction, a guest experience that inspires confidence, and a team capable of consistently delivering on that promise.



Saudi Arabia Licenses Over 1.3 Million Beds for Hajj 2027, Excludes 400 Non-Compliant Buildings



More than 4,000 buildings provide approximately 400,000 rooms in Makkah and Madinah, while temporary accommodation facilities offer 560,000 beds to expand capacity and improve hospitality standards.

Jeddah – Saudi Arabia | Al Rehla

Saudi Arabia has completed licensing procedures for buildings designated to accommodate pilgrims during the 1448 AH Hajj season, corresponding to 2027, with a reported capacity exceeding 1.3 million beds.

The move forms part of early preparations to ensure accommodation facilities meet safety and quality standards.

Tourism Minister Ahmed Al-Khateeb announced during the Hajj Conference and Exhibition 2026 in Jeddah on November 9 that more than 4,000 buildings, comprising approximately 400,000 rooms, had been designated for pilgrims in Makkah and Madinah.

400 Non-Compliant Buildings Excluded

Al-Khateeb revealed that approximately 400 buildings had been excluded from the pilgrim accommodation system for failing to meet safety and service quality requirements.

Inspections cover structural safety, emergency exits and operational standards, in coordination with relevant authorities, including Civil Defense.

The decision highlights increased regulatory oversight aimed at protecting pilgrims rather than focusing solely on expanding accommodation capacity.

560,000 Beds in Temporary Accommodation

The minister also reported that temporary accommodation facilities provide approximately 560,000 beds, helping expand housing options during the Hajj season.

However, published statements did not clarify whether this capacity is fully included in the overall figure of 1.3 million beds. The figures therefore should not be added together as separate capacities.

Agreement to Improve Accommodation Services

The conference also witnessed the signing of a cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah.

The agreement aims to improve hospitality standards in Makkah and Madinah while strengthening coordination on licensing, operations and regulatory oversight.

Al Rehla Analysis

Early licensing provides hospitality operators and Hajj missions with greater clarity regarding announced accommodation capacity, while excluding non-compliant buildings reinforces the importance of pilgrim safety.

However, licensing does not necessarily mean that all facilities are operational or immediately available for booking.
There is also no confirmed evidence that these measures will reduce accommodation prices.



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ITB Asia 2026 will take place from 21-23 October 2026 at Marina Bay Sands, Singapore, and is organised by Messe Berlin Asia Pacific.

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GCC Beach Hotels and Resorts Market Forecast to Reach $61.64 Billion by 2032



Mordor Intelligence projects annual growth of 7.05%, with the UAE holding the largest market share and Saudi Arabia expected to record the fastest growth through 2032.

Dubai – UAE | Al Rehla

Reported Findings | Mordor Intelligence Study
The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) beach hotels and resorts market is projected to increase from $40.76 billion in 2026 to $61.64 billion by 2032, according to a market research report published by Mordor Intelligence.

The study forecasts that the market will reach $43.85 billion in 2027, representing a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.05% between 2027 and 2032.

The research firm states that its 2026 estimates combine data from the first nine months of the year with projections for the final quarter. These figures are market estimates rather than final, audited annual results.

Luxury Resorts and International Hotel Brands

According to the study, luxury beach hotels and resorts account for an estimated 37.74% of the GCC market in 2026.

Properties affiliated with international hotel chains and brands represent 54.93% of the market.

The report projects that eco-friendly and regenerative resorts will grow at an annual rate of 7.84% through 2032.

International and Domestic Tourism
International tourism accounts for an estimated 60.93% of the market in 2026, according to the report.

Domestic tourism is forecast to grow at an annual rate of 8.76% through 2032.

These figures describe different indicators: the international tourism figure represents estimated current market share, while the domestic tourism figure represents projected future growth.



UAE Leads Market Share; Saudi Arabia Leads Growth Forecasts

The UAE holds the largest estimated share of the GCC beach hotels and resorts market, at 42.81% in 2026.

Saudi Arabia is projected to record the fastest annual growth rate in the region, at 8.56% through 2032.

The study also examines the development of coastal hospitality markets in Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait.

Online Travel Agencies and Direct Bookings

Online travel agencies account for an estimated 41.93% of booking revenue in 2026, according to the study.

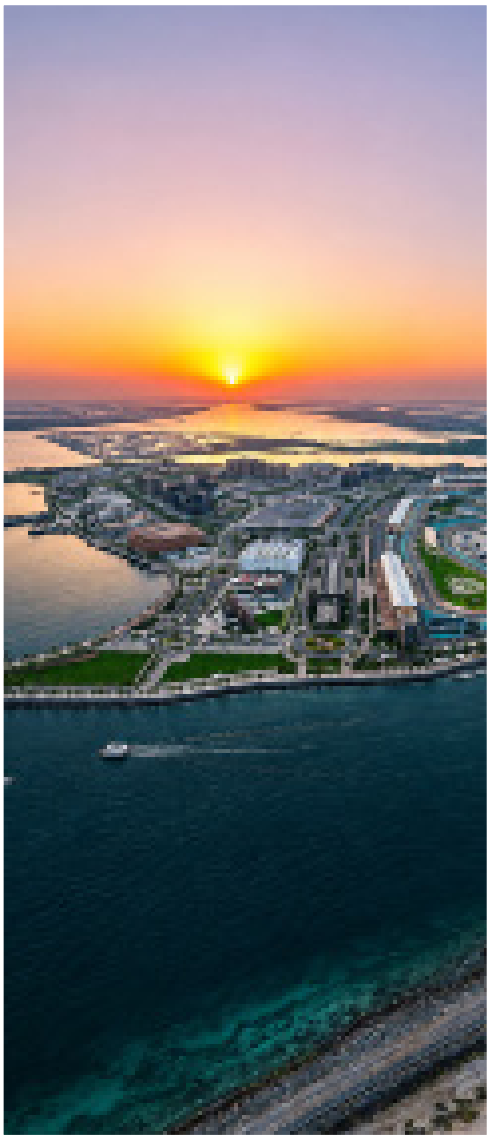
Direct booking channels are forecast to grow at an annual rate of 8.93% through 2032.

The report also identifies high summer temperatures, development and operating costs, increasing competition, and geopolitical uncertainty among the challenges facing the regional market.

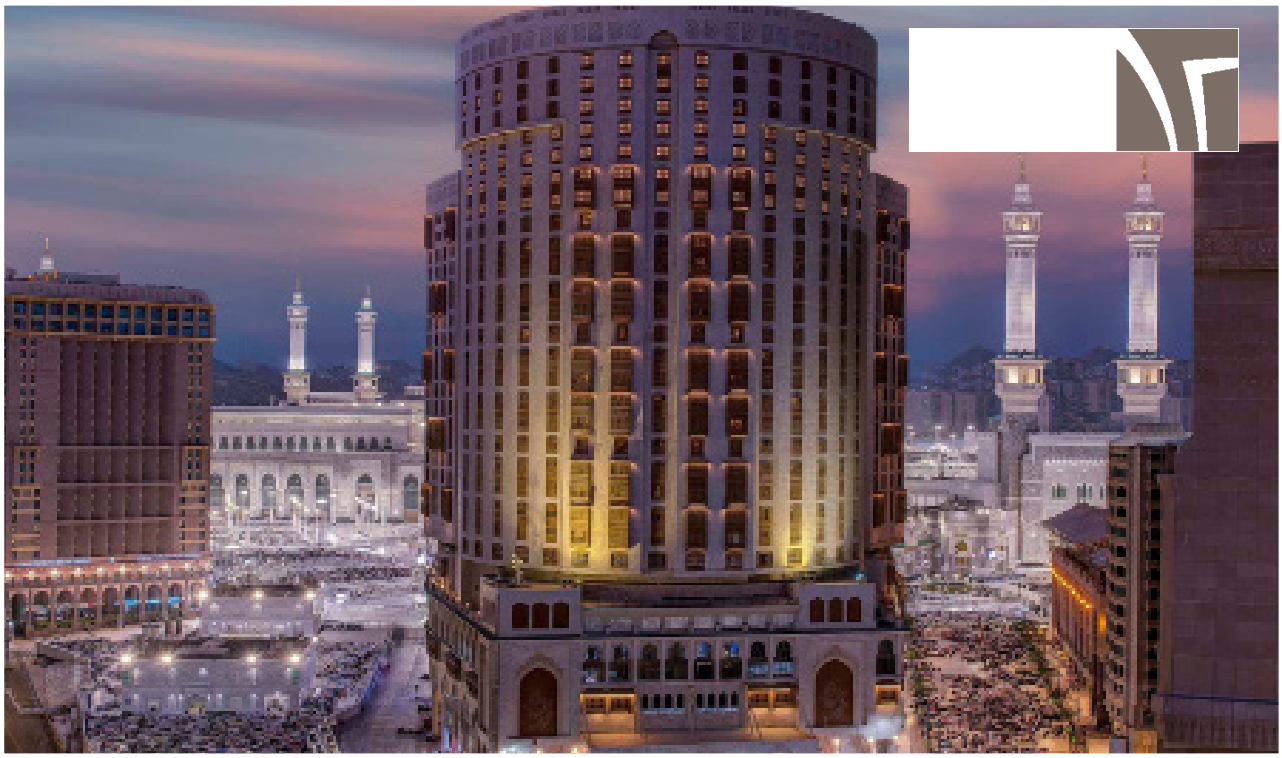
Al Rehla Perspective

The study's findings point to a shift in Gulf competition, from expanding room capacity to offering diverse, integrated tourism experiences.

For travellers, this growth could mean a wider range of choices, from luxury resorts to eco-friendly and family-oriented accommodation. However, prices will continue to depend on seasonality, demand and service standards, with no guarantee that increased supply will necessarily lead to lower rates.



Makkah Construction & Development Renovates Hotel Rooms, Temporarily Taking One-Third of Capacity Out of Service in Q3



Hospitality revenue rises over the first nine months of 2026 despite renovation works, as higher average daily room rates support segment profitability

Makkah – Saudi Arabia | Al Rehla

Makkah Construction & Development Company has reported ongoing hotel asset upgrades and room renovations that temporarily took approximately one-third of its rooms out of service during the third quarter of 2026, as part of a programme to modernise its hospitality facilities in Makkah.

In a financial disclosure published on the Saudi Exchange (Tadawul) on 9 November 2026, the company said the renovation works affected the availability of hotel rooms between July and September, alongside seasonal fluctuations associated with the Hajj and Umrah markets.

The company did not disclose the total number of rooms covered by the programme, the investment cost of the renovations, or the expected date for returning all rooms to service.

Hospitality Revenue Improves Despite Renovations

The company's financial results showed that hospitality segment revenue increased by approximately SAR 6 million during the first nine months of 2026 compared with the corresponding period of 2025, supported by an improvement in the average daily room rate (ADR).

Hospitality segment profit also rose by around SAR 10 million over the same period, despite approximately 13% of hotel rooms being temporarily unavailable due to ongoing asset upgrades and renovations.

These results indicate that improved room rates helped the hospitality business achieve revenue and profit growth over the nine-month period, despite the temporary reduction in available capacity.

One-Third of Hotel Rooms Temporarily Closed in Q3

During the third quarter alone, hospitality revenue declined by approximately SAR 18 million year-on-year, while segment profit fell by around SAR 9 million.

The company attributed the decline to the temporary closure of approximately one-third of its hotel rooms as part of the renovation programme.

The period also reflected seasonal variations in revenue, with most Hajj-related activity in 2026 concentrated in the second quarter.

The company did not specify whether the renovations cover its entire hotel portfolio or selected properties. It also provided no detailed breakdown of the planned improvements to rooms and facilities.

Hajj and Umrah Seasonality Shapes Financial Performance

The results highlight the seasonal nature of hospitality and pilgrimage-related operations in Makkah, where revenue is influenced by religious travel patterns and the timing of revenue recognition.

The company reported an increase of approximately SAR 142 million in Hajj segment revenue during the first nine months of 2026, reflecting an expansion in its activities during the pilgrimage season.

However, third-quarter Hajj revenue declined by around SAR 133 million year-on-year, primarily because of differences in when Hajj revenue was recognised in 2025 and 2026.

This divergence underlines the importance of assessing the performance of pilgrimage-related hospitality companies over longer reporting periods rather than relying on a single quarter.

About Makkah Construction & Development Company

Makkah Construction & Development Company is a Saudi-listed company trading on the Saudi Exchange under ticker symbol 4100. Its activities include real estate investment, hospitality and retail operations in Makkah.

The company's financial performance is supported by several business segments, including Hajj-related services, hotel operations and commercial property leasing.

For the first nine months of 2026, the company reported total revenue of SAR 1.104 billion and net profit attributable to shareholders of SAR 415.6 million, representing a year-on-year increase of 9.45%.

These figures reflect the company's consolidated performance across all business segments and should not be interpreted as results attributable solely to hospitality operations.

Al Rehla Insight | Hotel Renovations:

Balancing Temporary Capacity Loss with Long-Term Returns

Taking hotel rooms temporarily out of service for renovation directly reduces the inventory available for sale and can put pressure on short-term revenue, particularly in destinations with pronounced seasonal demand.

However, upgrading rooms and facilities can strengthen a property's competitiveness, maintain service standards and potentially support higher average daily rates once renovated rooms return to operation. Such improvements do not, however, guarantee stronger financial returns.

Makkah Construction & Development Company's experience illustrates the importance of balancing renovation schedules with operational capacity, particularly in Makkah, where accommodation demand fluctuates with Hajj and Umrah travel.

The key indicators to monitor will be the number of rooms returned to service and any subsequent improvement in occupancy rates, average daily rates and revenue per available room (RevPAR).

Kabul's Bala Hissar Fortress Reveals 2,000 Years of History as Plans Advance for Archaeological Park

Excavations uncover Buddhist remains, a Mughal palace, ancient coins and Islamic pottery, while the Aga Khan Trust for Culture continues restoration work with no confirmed public opening date.

Kabul – Afghanistan | Al Rehla

Archaeological excavations and restoration work at the historic Bala Hissar Fortress in Kabul are uncovering evidence of civilisations spanning more than 2,000 years, as part of a long-term conservation project led by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

The initiative aims to protect the ancient citadel and eventually transform it into a public archaeological park.

According to a report published by the Associated Press on November 9, 2026, excavations within the fortress walls have uncovered ancient coins, fragments of Buddhist statues, Islamic pottery and oil lamps, alongside the remains of residential buildings, monasteries and historic palaces.

Mughal Palace Reveals Royal Life

Among the most significant discoveries are the remains of a Mughal-era palace featuring wall paintings, bathing facilities and a star-shaped pool carved into the rock.

These findings provide valuable insights into the region's architectural heritage and royal life.

Archaeologist Babak Rafiei Alavi, who has participated in the excavations, said the scale of the discoveries exceeded the research team's expectations, particularly as artefacts from different historical periods continued to emerge.

Situated on elevated ground overlooking old Kabul, Bala Hissar has served military, political and religious purposes throughout its history.

Its strategic position connected the fortress to historic routes linking the Indian subcontinent with Central Asia.

Restoring Walls and Protecting Archaeological Layers

Conservation work at the fortress began in 2018, before some excavation activities were interrupted by the political developments of 2021.

Restoration and preservation efforts expanded again in 2022.

The project includes reinforcing damaged walls and towers using locally sourced stone, while maintaining visible distinctions between historic structures and modern additions in accordance with archaeological conservation principles.

It also provides practical training for Afghan archaeology students in excavation, documentation and restoration techniques.

Mustafa Nouri, Project Director at Aga Khan Cultural Services, explained that preserving the fortress could take decades because of its extensive size and the complexity of its archaeological layers.

Archaeological Park and Museum Planned

The long-term vision is to transform Bala Hissar into a public archaeological park featuring landscaped gardens, a museum and visitor facilities.

The proposed development would allow visitors to explore the site's history and the different civilisations that shaped it.

However, no official opening date has been announced for the archaeological park or its planned facilities, while archaeological research and conservation work continue.

Al Rehla Travel Insight
Bala Hissar demonstrates the importance of protecting cultural heritage in regions affected by decades of conflict.

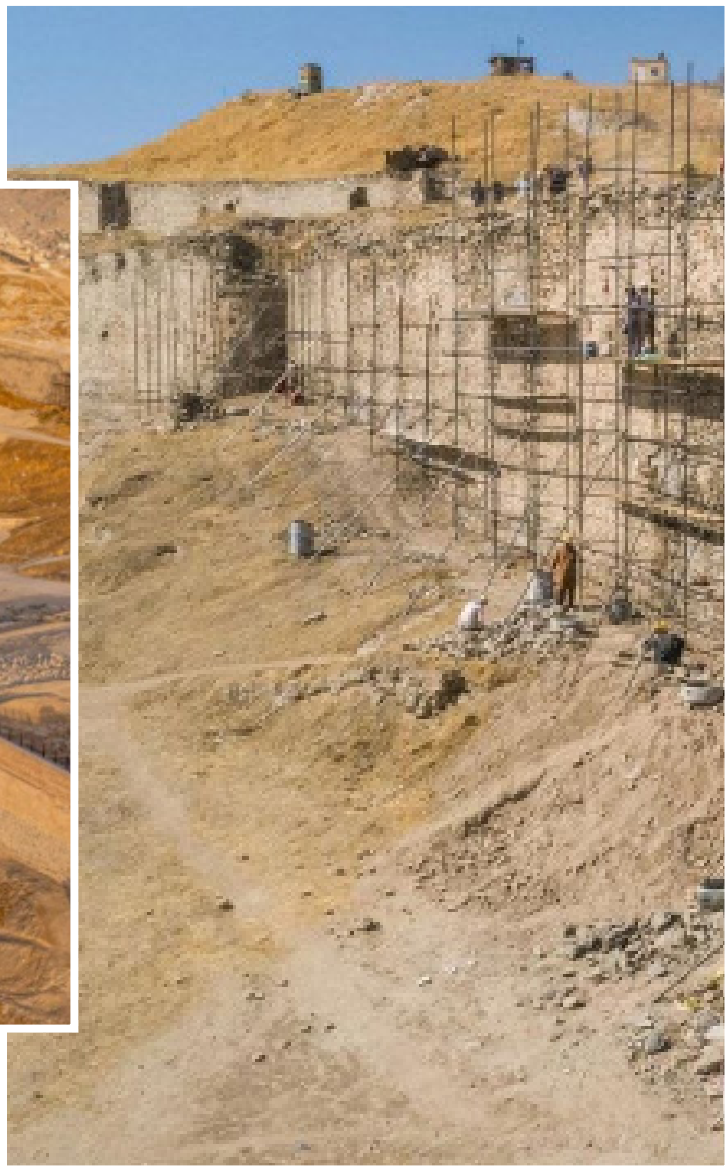
Its archaeological discoveries reveal a rich history extending far beyond the fortress's military role.

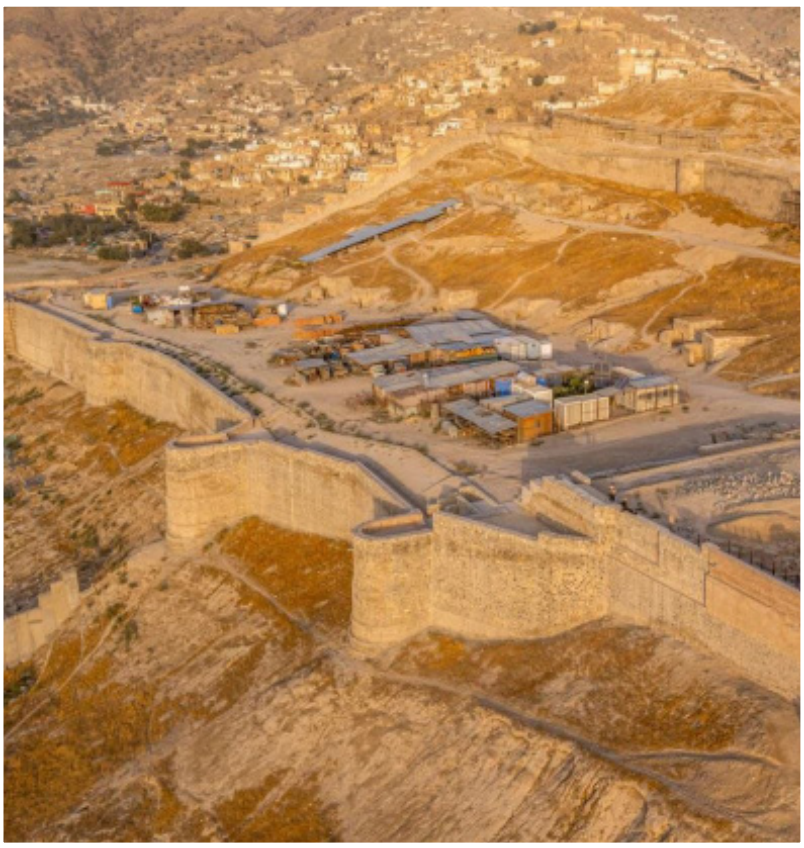
In the future, the project could provide a distinctive cultural experience, presenting Kabul's Buddhist, Islamic and Mughal heritage through its surviving archaeological remains.

However, the fortress should not currently be regarded as a fully developed tourism attraction ready for visitors.

The immediate priority remains protecting the discoveries and completing conservation work to preserve this remarkable historical legacy for future generations.







European Union Adopts First Sustainable Tourism Strategy to Ease Pressure on Overcrowded Destinations



The plan includes a European Tourism Observatory and Tourism Academy in 2027, followed by a common tourism data space by 2029, aiming to support five million tourism businesses and improve visitor management.

Brussels – Belgium | Al Rehla

The European Commission has adopted the European Union's first comprehensive sustainable tourism strategy, introducing measures to better distribute visitor flows across destinations and seasons, strengthen digital capabilities, develop professional skills and improve the tourism industry's resilience to economic and climate-related challenges.

Presented in Brussels on November 4, 2026, by European Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism Apostolos Tzitzikostas, the strategy seeks to strengthen an industry that supports more than 20 million jobs and comprises approximately five million businesses, 99% of which are small and medium-sized enterprises.

Redistributing Tourism Beyond Overcrowded Destinations

The strategy aims to address the concentration of visitors in a limited number of European destinations while encouraging travel to lesser-known regions and during different seasons.

Tzitzikostas highlighted that just 13% of European regions account for half of all tourist accommodation nights across the continent, demonstrating the need for a more balanced distribution of tourism's economic benefits and associated pressures.

The Commission plans to introduce a common destination management framework and a balanced tourism toolkit during the second half of 2027, helping national and local authorities develop policies suited to their destinations' capacity and infrastructure.

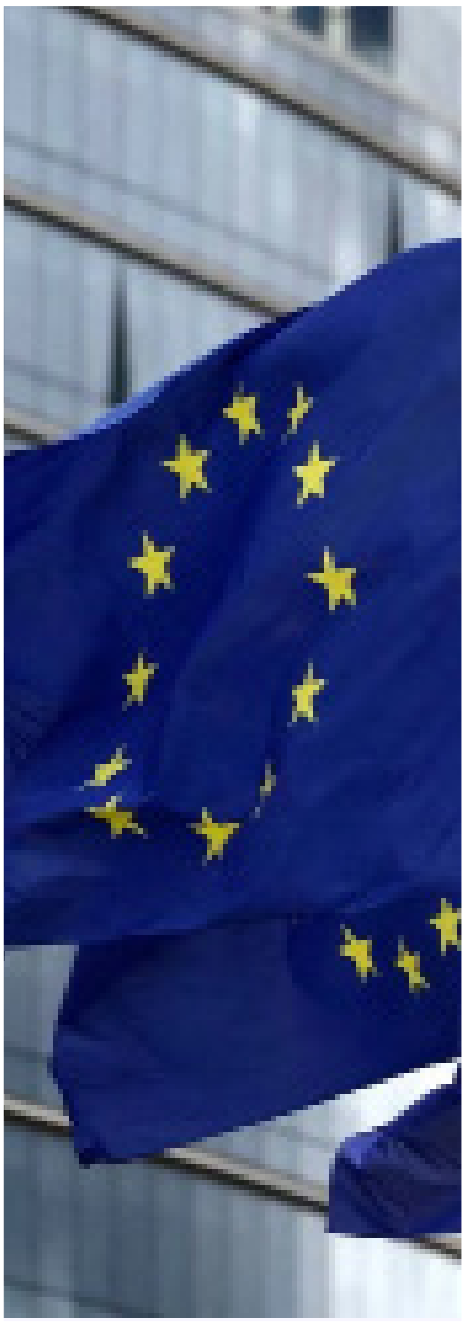
European Tourism Observatory and Academy

The strategy includes establishing a European Tourism Observatory in the first half of 2027 to monitor industry performance, analyse trends and support data-driven decision-making.

The Commission also plans to launch a European Tourism Academy in the second half of 2027 to strengthen professional skills and address workforce shortages.

Meanwhile, the European Tourism Data Space is scheduled for further





development and deployment during the first half of 2029, helping destinations and businesses access more reliable and coordinated information.

Additional initiatives include establishing a European Tourism Alliance and a tourism crisis coordination network during 2027.

Travel Industry Welcomes the Strategy

The European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Associations (ECTAA) welcomed the strategy, describing it as a framework for strengthening industry competitiveness, promoting balanced tourism and improving connectivity between destinations.

The International Road

Transport Union (IRU) also welcomed the Commission's attention to the different local restrictions affecting tourist coaches entering European cities, calling for better access to regulatory information.

However, a comprehensive European platform providing unified information on these restrictions has not yet been launched.

Al Rehla Travel Insight

The strategy could create new opportunities for Arab travellers to explore less crowded European destinations over the medium term, while allowing travel agencies and tour operators to develop itineraries beyond traditional peak seasons.

However, the planned digital and professional development tools will be introduced gradually under a timetable extending to 2029.

The strategy does not introduce immediate changes to visa requirements, travel prices or booking procedures.

It represents a significant shift in European tourism policy, with its long-term success depending on how effectively governments, destinations and tourism businesses implement the announced initiatives.

Emirates Opens Hospitality Excellence Centre to Businesses and Organisations



Training programmes ranging from one to five days are offered at an AED 30 million facility, covering customer service, fine dining, hospitality and leadership.

Dubai – UAE | Al Rehla

Emirates has announced that its Centre of Hospitality Excellence is now offering specialised training programmes to businesses, organisations and brands across the UAE, allowing them to benefit from the airline's expertise in customer service and premium hospitality.

The announcement, made on November 9, 2026, follows the centre's opening in October 2025 to train Emirates cabin crew, marking an expansion of its services to other business sectors.

Located within Emirates' cabin crew training facility in Dubai, the centre was developed at a cost of approximately AED 30 million.

It features a restaurant and lounge accommodating around 170 guests, specialised training kitchens and eight technologically equipped classrooms.

Specialised Programmes and Practical Experiences

Training programmes range from one to five days and cover fine dining service, hospitality etiquette, guest communication, customer experience, leadership and team development.

The courses include interactive workshops, practical exercises and sessions delivered by Emirates executives, alongside guided tours of training facilities, including aircraft simulators.

Bringing Aviation Expertise to Other Industries

Thomas Ney, Senior Vice President of Service Delivery at Emirates, said exceptional hospitality requires a deep understanding of people, culture and service excellence, alongside technical skills.

Emirates confirmed that the centre has already welcomed government organisations, universities and regional companies.

Its training approach draws on a hospitality strategy developed in collaboration with Switzerland's EHL Hospitality Business School since 2020.

Emirates employs more than 25,000 cabin crew members representing over 140 nationalities.

Al Rehla Travel Insight

The initiative offers tourism and hospitality companies an opportunity to strengthen their employees' skills by drawing on Emirates' international service expertise, with programmes tailored to individual organisational requirements.

Standard course prices have not been publicly announced.

From Egypt to Milan: Buddha Statue and Berenice Artefacts Featured in Global Exhibition Exploring 1,600 Years of Cultural Exchange



Fondazione Prada's Global Antiquity exhibition brings together more than 150 artworks and archaeological objects from multiple civilisations and welcomes visitors until March 1, 2027.

Milan – Italy | Al Rehla

The Global Antiquity exhibition in Milan, Italy, has been welcoming visitors since November 5, 2026, featuring archaeological treasures from Egypt and several Arab, Asian and European countries in a cultural experience exploring the commercial, artistic and religious connections that linked ancient civilisations across continents.

Organised by Fondazione Prada, the exhibition runs until March 1, 2027, and features more than 150 artworks and archaeological objects documenting cultural exchanges between the Mediterranean region and Asia over approximately 1,600 years, from around 600 BC to AD 1000.

Egyptian Buddha Statue Reveals Ancient Trade Connections

Egypt is participating with three archaeological objects selected by the Supreme Council of Antiquities, including a marble statue of Buddha from the Suez Canal Authority Museum collection and two limestone stelae discovered in the Berenice area on the Red Sea coast.

The two stelae are preserved in the archaeological storage facility in Qift, Qena Governorate.

These artefacts are particularly significant because of their connections to ancient trade and cultural networks linking Egypt with regions across Asia and the Mediterranean.

Berenice was an important historical port on the Red Sea, giving the objects discovered there particular relevance to the exhibition's central theme.

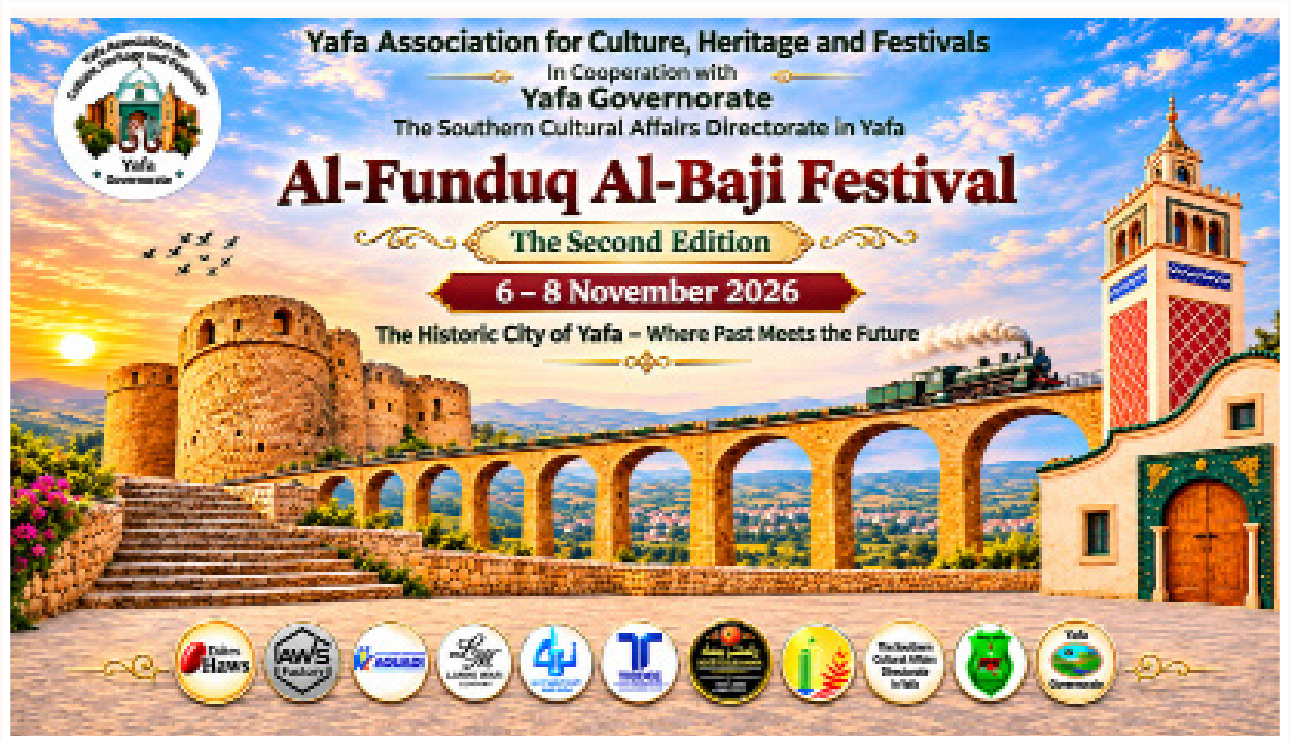
Artefacts from Nine Countries Connect Ancient Civilisations

According to Egypt's Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the participating countries include Egypt, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Italy, Greece, Iraq, India and China.

The exhibition presents objects illustrating how goods, ideas, religious beliefs and artistic traditions travelled between geographically distant societies, challenging the conventional perception of ancient civilisations as isolated entities.

The exhibition is curated by Salvatore Settis, Anna Anguissola and Chiara Ballestrazzi, while architect Rem Koolhaas and the AMO/OMA team designed the exhibition display.

Tunisia's Béja Kasbah Illuminated by Spectacular Light Projections During Fondou Béja Festival



The second edition brings together architectural heritage, traditional clothing and digital technology through three days of cultural activities.

Béja – Tunisia | Al Rehla

The historic Kasbah of Béja in northwestern Tunisia was transformed into an open-air visual spectacle during the second edition of the Fondou Béja Festival, held from November 6 to 8, 2026, bringing together local artisans, creative professionals and cultural organisations.

The festival opened with an artistic lighting display and digital projections illuminating the walls of the historic fortress, highlighting its architectural features and presenting the landmark to audiences through modern technology.

Organised by the Faqa Association for Culture and Entertainment, the festival combined artistic performances with activities celebrating local heritage.

The event also featured contributions from the Madad Creative Lab, affiliated with the Tunis International Centre for Digital Culture.

From Traditional Cuisine to Cultural Fashion

The programme included fashion displays inspired by the traditional clothing of the Béja region, alongside presentations of local cuisine and interactive activities for young people and children.

Other highlights included an interactive game titled Key to the City, a guided discovery tour through Béja's old town, and a cultural seminar exploring the city's historic gates and architectural heritage.

Rania Abdelli, President of the organising association, said the festival aims to combine authenticity with innovation while introducing younger generations to local cultural heritage through contemporary approaches.

Al Rehla Travel Insight

The Fondou Béja Festival demonstrates how digital arts and creative technologies can help bring historic landmarks to life, offering opportunities to develop cultural experiences that go beyond conventional sightseeing.

However, transforming temporary events into sustainable tourism attractions requires regular programming, clearly defined visitor routes and professional guiding services.

Such initiatives could encourage travellers to explore Béja's historic kasbah, old town and local traditions throughout the year, extending the city's cultural appeal beyond individual festivals.

When Travel Becomes Music.. Qatar Airways Introduces Hans Zimmer's Compositions Onboard



Five original compositions inspired by Qatari culture and the emotions of travel, as the airline introduces its new signature music onboard from November 6, 2026.

Doha – Qatar | Al Rehla

Qatar Airways began introducing its new signature music onboard its flights on November 6, 2026, in collaboration with world-renowned composer Hans Zimmer, as part of an initiative to enhance the passenger experience through a musical identity inspired by Qatari culture and the emotions associated with travel.

The airline unveiled the compositions during a concert performed by Zimmer in Doha, where guests heard excerpts from the music and watched a film exploring its production and creative inspiration.

The launch follows a partnership announced in July 2025 to develop a distinctive sonic identity for the airline.

Five Compositions Reflecting the Journey

Titled Burgundy Symphony, the project features five original compositions capturing the emotions of travel, from the anticipation of departure to the feeling of returning home.

Dawn reflects the excitement of discovering new destinations, while Dusk evokes the tranquillity of flying above the clouds at sunset.

The Orchard draws inspiration from the indoor tropical garden at Hamad International Airport, while Homecoming celebrates the emotions and memories associated with returning home.

The collection concludes with An Ode to Qatar, a musical tribute to the country's heritage and cultural identity.

A New Auditory Experience for Passengers

Qatar Airways confirmed that its new signature music became available onboard from the launch date, while the album was also released to the public through the airline's official YouTube channel.

The airline did not specify whether all five compositions would be played onboard or during particular stages of the journey.

Al Rehla Travel Insight

Music adds another dimension to an airline's brand identity alongside cabin design, service and hospitality, creating a distinctive auditory experience that passengers may associate with their journeys.

Through this project, Qatar Airways introduces another way to express its cultural identity, both onboard its aircraft and beyond.

Emirates Completes 12-Year Islamic French Lease Financing for Two Airbus A350 Aircraft



The completed transaction, arranged with Dubai Islamic Bank and Natixis, combines two financing structures into a single Sharia-compliant arrangement, with the financing value and costs remaining undisclosed.

Dubai – UAE | Al Rehla

Emirates has completed a new 12-year aircraft financing transaction combining the French lease structure with Islamic financing principles to support the acquisition of two Airbus A350-900 aircraft in 2026, in collaboration with Dubai Islamic Bank (DIB) and Natixis Corporate & Investment Banking.

Announced on November 9, the transaction represents a new approach to diversifying aircraft financing solutions by integrating two structures traditionally used separately into a single arrangement that meets both legal and Sharia-compliance requirements.

Innovative Financing Structure

Dubai Islamic Bank and Natixis acted as financiers and arrangers of the transaction, while DIB also played a specialised role in Sharia structuring, aligning the requirements of the French lease framework with Islamic financing principles.

The structure enables Emirates to combine international aircraft financing mechanisms with Sharia-compliant funding sources, providing an additional option for financing its fleet investments.

The parties did not disclose the total financing value, financing costs or detailed commercial terms.

Supporting Fleet Modernisation

Derek Blaney, Acting Chief Financial Officer of Emirates Group, said the airline continues to develop diversified financing solutions as part of its long-term strategy, highlighting the contribution of Dubai Islamic Bank and Natixis in supporting fleet expansion and broadening funding sources.

Naveed Ali, Head of Corporate Banking at Dubai Islamic Bank, emphasised that the transaction demonstrates the ability of Islamic finance to support complex international aviation transactions.

The financing forms part of Emirates' ongoing Airbus A350 fleet expansion programme.

The A350 entered service with Emirates in November 2024 and has since been deployed across a growing network of international destinations.

flynas Launches Two Direct Routes from Madinah to Tashkent and Namangan in Uzbekistan



Direct flights to the Uzbek capital begin on November 8, 2026, with services to Namangan scheduled to launch on November 10, in cooperation with Saudi Arabia's Air Connectivity Program.

Madinah – Saudi Arabia | Al Rehla

Saudi low-cost carrier flynas has announced two new direct international routes connecting Madinah with Tashkent and Namangan in Uzbekistan, in cooperation with Saudi Arabia's Air Connectivity Program, expanding travel options between the Kingdom and Central Asia.

According to the announcement, direct services to Tashkent, the Uzbek capital, are scheduled to begin on November 8, 2026, followed by flights to Namangan on November 10.

Direct Connections to a Key Asian Market

The expansion forms part of flynas' growing international network and efforts to strengthen air connectivity between Saudi Arabia and Uzbekistan, an important source market for religious travel and visits to the Kingdom's holy cities.

The new routes provide additional travel options for passengers visiting Madinah, allowing them to fly directly with the airline without connecting through intermediate airports.

flynas already serves destinations in Uzbekistan from Jeddah, while the addition of the two Madinah routes represents a further expansion of its network from Saudi Arabia.

Cooperation with the Air Connectivity Program

The new services are being introduced in partnership with Saudi Arabia's Air Connectivity Program, which works to expand the Kingdom's international air links and attract new routes supporting visitor traffic and the travel and tourism sector.
flynas has listed flights between Madinah and Tashkent on its official booking platform and announced plans to introduce services to Namangan from November 10.

No figures have been released regarding the routes' expected impact on visitor numbers or hotel occupancy in Madinah.

Al Rehla Travel Insight
The new routes offer additional travel options between Madinah and Uzbekistan, particularly for travellers planning to perform Umrah and visit the Prophet's Mosque.

Passengers are advised to check flight schedules, fares and entry requirements through flynas' official channels before confirming their bookings, as operating schedules may change during the initial launch period.

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