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

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Accor to Acquire Remaining Stake in Ennismore for €1.6 Billion, Strengthening Its Global Lifestyle Hospitality Portfolio

What If Colonialism Had Never Happened? Pacific and Caribbean Islands... When the Identity of Tourist Destinations Changed



Saudi Ground Services Renews EgyptAir Ground Handling Contract Across Saudi Airports



Agreement covers passenger and aircraft handling services, strengthening an operational partnership dating back to 2008, with plans to explore expanded services at selected Saudi airports

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia | Al Rehla

Saudi Ground Services Company (SGS) has renewed its cooperation agreement with EgyptAir to provide ground handling services for the Egyptian national carrier's flights at commercial airports across Saudi Arabia, strengthening the operational partnership between the two companies and ensuring the continuity of passenger and aircraft support services.

The renewed contract builds on a relationship that began in 2008 and has undergone several renewals, including an agreement signed in November 2021. It reflects the importance of the Saudi market within EgyptAir's route network, particularly for religious tourism, leisure travel and business journeys.

Comprehensive Passenger and Aircraft Handling Services

The contract covers two main operational areas. The first focuses on passenger services, including check-in procedures, boarding gate management, lounge services, baggage handling and passenger assistance at airports.

The second covers ramp handling operations, including aircraft loading and unloading, baggage handling, and the provision of ground support equipment and services required during aircraft turnaround.

The agreement also includes provisions to explore the possibility of introducing additional services at selected Saudi airports, although neither the nature of these services nor an implementation timetable has been announced.

Agreement Signed in the Presence of Senior Executives

The contract was signed by Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Mazi, Chief Executive Officer of Saudi Ground Services, and Captain Mohamed Alyan, Chairman of EgyptAir Airlines, in the presence of Captain Ahmed Adel, Chairman of EgyptAir Holding Company.

Mazi explained that the agreement



goes beyond maintaining existing operational services to exploring new opportunities for mutual growth and developing solutions that respond to EgyptAir's future requirements while delivering sustainable value to both parties.

Neither company has disclosed the financial value or duration of the contract, nor the annual number of flights covered by the agreement.

Partnership Supports Air Travel Between Saudi Arabia and Egypt

The agreement is particularly significant given the strong aviation links between Saudi Arabia and Egypt, with flights serving a diverse range of passengers, including Hajj and Umrah pilgrims, tourists, business travellers and those visiting family members.

Ground handling services play an essential role in airline operations, encompassing passenger procedures, baggage movements, aircraft preparation, and support for arrivals and departures.

However, the two companies have not announced specific performance targets for reducing aircraft turnaround times or improving flight punctuality under the renewed contract.

Al-Rehla Perspective | Why Does Ground Handling Matter to Travellers?

Although ground handling contracts are concluded between airlines and airport service providers, their impact extends across several stages of the passenger journey.

Efficient check-in procedures, baggage transfers, boarding coordination and aircraft preparation all contribute to a smoother travel experience and more effective airline operations.

For flights between Egypt and Saudi Arabia, these services are particularly important during the Hajj and Umrah seasons and peak travel periods, when coordination requirements increase among airlines, airports and ground handling providers.

The contract renewal reflects EgyptAir's commitment to maintaining its relationship with an established operational partner in the Saudi market. Nevertheless, any measurable improvements in processing times and flight punctuality will depend on actual operational performance indicators, which have not yet been disclosed.

From an aviation industry perspective, the agreement's

significance lies in the continuity of the commercial relationship and the potential expansion of future services, rather than the introduction of new routes or additional flight capacity, as the announcement did not include any changes to EgyptAir's destination network or seat availability.

Two Real Estate Funds Invest in HUSH by LUXOR Resort on Egypt's North Coast



The 60-suite resort targets a summer 2027 opening, introducing a hospitality concept focused on tranquility, privacy, and wellness

Sidi Abdel Rahman, Egypt | Al Rehla

The Egyptians Real Estate Investment Fund and Saqr Real Estate Fund have announced a joint acquisition of hospitality assets within the HUSH by LUXOR development in Sidi Abdel Rahman on Egypt's North Coast. The investment aims to support the development of a luxury resort featuring 60 suites, with operations targeted to begin in summer 2027.

The project will operate under HUSH, an Egyptian hospitality brand developed by Luxor Hospitality. The concept focuses on privacy, relaxation, and reduced noise, offering an alternative to conventional resorts built around high-intensity entertainment and bustling recreational activities.

Neither the acquisition value nor the resort's total investment cost has been disclosed, and a confirmed opening date has yet to be announced.

60 Suites Designed for a Low-Density Hospitality Experience

HUSH by LUXOR adopts a low-density hospitality model, featuring 60 suites designed for business leaders, senior executives, creative professionals, and travelers seeking an environment that combines relaxation, leisure, and the ability to work or concentrate away from distractions.

The brand is built around a concept known as "Hushpitality," which places tranquility and acoustic comfort at the center of the guest experience.

The proposed design incorporates sound-insulation solutions and measures to minimize noise transmission between suites, corridors, and service areas.

This approach seeks to balance peaceful accommodation with optional recreational activities, allowing guests to enjoy entertainment without making constant activity or loud music an unavoidable part of their stay.

Wellness Facilities and Sustainable Features

The resort's announced development plans include wellness and relaxation facilities, such as a panoramic sauna, cold-plunge pools, hot mineral-water experiences, swimming pools, and outdoor spaces connected to nature.

The hospitality concept is organized around three main experiences:



- The Hush: Dedicated spaces for tranquility, meditation, and disconnecting from noise and distractions.
- The Study: Environments designed for reading, writing, working, and focused thinking.
- The Garden: Landscaped gardens and green spaces that encourage a connection with nature.

The development also plans to incorporate solar energy solutions and electric vehicle charging facilities, reflecting the brand's sustainability-oriented positioning under the tagline "The Sun-Powered Sanctuary."

These features remain part of the announced development concept, pending project completion and confirmation of the final operational facilities.

Investment Partnership to Support Resort Development

The participation of the Egyptians Real Estate Investment Fund and Saqr Real Estate Fund represents a new development in the project's investment structure.

HUSH by LUXOR was previously introduced in June 2026 through Fareeda, a real estate technology platform.

Luxor Hospitality is responsible for developing the HUSH brand, with ambitions to establish a specialized Egyptian hospitality concept that could potentially expand to additional destinations.

The announcement did not disclose the ownership stakes acquired by the two funds, the financial value of the assets involved, or details of the project's financing structure.

An independent hotel operator and the terms of any hotel management agreement have also not been announced.

Al-Rehla Perspective | A Specialized Hospitality Concept in a Competitive Coastal Market

The investment highlights the increasing diversification of hospitality products along Egypt's North Coast, where developers are exploring concepts that cater to specific traveler preferences rather than relying exclusively on traditional resort entertainment.

HUSH by LUXOR aims to position wellness, privacy, and tranquility as defining elements of its luxury accommodation experience.

The concept could appeal particularly to travelers seeking relaxation while maintaining the flexibility to work, read, or engage in creative activities during their stay.

However, its ability to attract sustained demand and potentially extend the tourism season will depend on service quality, pricing, accessibility, and the successful delivery of its planned facilities.

Meeting the targeted summer 2027 operational timeline, confirming the hotel operator, and announcing the final range of guest services will be key developments to monitor.



My Travel Experiences

Yoga & Meditation Tourism A Journey Towards Physical, Mental and Spiritual Balance

BY:
Dr. Hossam Darwish
President of the Afro-Asian Union for Tourism
Secretary-General of the Arab Tourism Media Club

Tourism is no longer limited to visiting historical landmarks, enjoying beaches, or staying in luxury hotels. New tourism trends are emerging to meet the needs of modern travelers, and among the most promising is Yoga & Meditation Tourism, an important segment of the global wellness tourism industry.

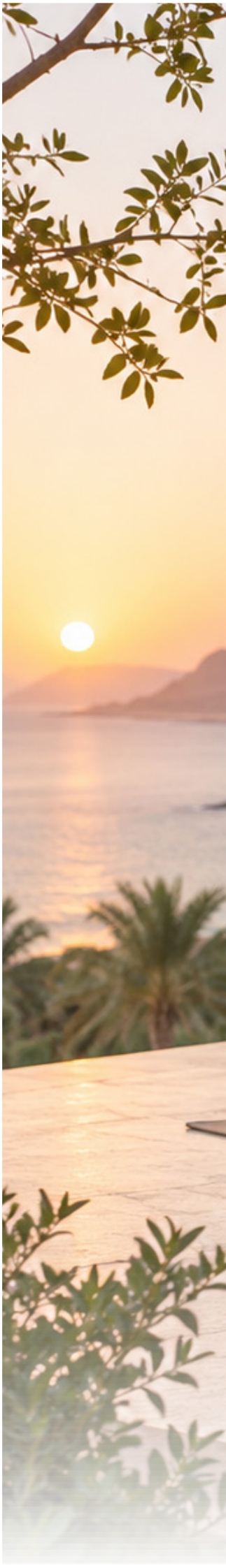
This form of tourism combines travel with relaxation, yoga practice, and meditation, offering visitors an opportunity to escape daily stress, restore their physical and mental balance, and reconnect with themselves.

Experiences include specialized wellness resorts, peaceful natural destinations, yoga and meditation sessions, breathing exercises, healthy nutrition programs, and activities that encourage a deeper connection with nature.

Yoga and Meditation Tourism also represents a promising investment opportunity for Arab and African destinations, particularly those offering unique natural environments, such as Egypt's Red Sea resorts, oases, mountains, deserts, and eco-tourism destinations.

The future of tourism will not belong only to destinations that offer beautiful places to visit, but also to those that provide meaningful experiences capable of transforming people's lives.

Yoga & Meditation Tourism is more than a holiday; it is a journey of self-discovery, inner peace, and returning to life with renewed energy.





Dubai Signs rednote's First Strategic Partnership in the Middle East to Boost Tourism Promotion



Memorandum of Understanding aims to engage Chinese travellers through digital content, user-generated recommendations and content creator initiatives

Cairo, Egypt | Al Rehla

Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) has signed a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Chinese social media platform Xiaohongshu, also known as rednote, marking the platform's first strategic partnership in the Middle East.

The agreement aims to strengthen Dubai's presence in the Chinese market and promote the emirate's tourism experiences through digital channels.

Announced on 20 November 2026, the MoU establishes a framework for exploring cooperation in destination marketing, content creation, storytelling and digital community engagement, alongside the development of initiatives involving content creators.

A Platform Combining Travel and Digital Recommendations

Xiaohongshu is one of China's leading lifestyle and social commerce platforms, bringing together hundreds of millions of users who share reviews, travel guides, photographs and short-form videos.

This model offers Dubai an opportunity to connect with travellers who increasingly rely on personal experiences and user-generated recommendations when choosing destinations, hotels and tourism activities.



Shihab Shayan
Regional Director for Asia-Pacific at Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing



China Remains a Key Market for Dubai

Shahab Shayan, Regional Director for Asia Pacific at Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing, emphasised that China remains a priority market for Dubai.

He highlighted the importance of the partnership in reaching a new generation of digitally connected travellers who value authentic experiences and trusted online content.

Meanwhile, Dudu Kuang, Managing Director of Global Business for Asia and the Middle East at Xiaohongshu, explained that tourism represents a starting point for the partnership.

She added that the company looks forward to exploring future cooperation opportunities across sectors including retail, financial services, education, hospitality and lifestyle.

Supporting Dubai's China Readiness Strategy

The agreement complements Dubai's China Readiness Strategy, which includes providing digital payment options familiar to Chinese visitors and expanding Mandarin-language support across visitor touchpoints.

The partnership also aligns with the Dubai Economic Agenda (D33), which aims to reinforce the emirate's position as a global hub for business and tourism.

Neither party has disclosed a financial value for the MoU or announced a specific timetable for launching joint campaigns.

The partnership's impact will ultimately depend on the initiatives implemented and their effectiveness in reaching and engaging Chinese travellers.



Dudu Kwang
Managing Director, Global Business – Asia and the Middle East at the platform

Episode Four:

What If Colonialism Had Never Happened? Pacific and Caribbean Islands... When the Identity of Tourist Destinations Changed



Prepared by: Azhar Youssef

In the previous episodes of our series "What If Colonialism Had Never Happened?", we explored how colonialism reshaped the global tourism map, looking at the Maya civilization and African kingdoms, and the destruction and looting of their heritage.

In this fourth episode, we turn to the world of islands, where we uncover a striking paradox: some destinations marketed today as tourist paradises have a history of kingdoms being overthrown, Indigenous communities marginalized, and cultural identities reshaped.

Hawaii... A Kingdom Transformed into a Tourist Destination

Before Hawaii became one of the world's most famous tourist destinations, it was an independent, unified kingdom dating back to 1810, with its own system of government, culture, language, and traditions.

But American economic and political influence grew throughout the 19th century, particularly as sugar plantation owners expanded their interests.

On January 17, 1893, Queen Lili'uokalani was overthrown with the support of a group of American businessmen and the involvement of American military personnel. The islands were then formally annexed by the United States in 1898.

The change was not merely political. The local language and culture were marginalized, and traditional practices such as hula dance declined amid restrictions and religious criticism, before later regaining their presence.

As tourism grew, some cultural expressions became entertainment performances for visitors, while aspects of Indigenous history and the struggle for identity and sovereignty remained less visible in the traditional tourism narrative.

The Caribbean... Peoples Who Never Disappeared Despite Colonialism



Across the Caribbean islands, Indigenous peoples, most notably the Taíno, lived in organized communities before Christopher Columbus arrived in 1492.

The Taíno had social and political systems, along with expertise in agriculture, navigation, toolmaking, and the arts.

But the Spanish invasion, followed by disease, enslavement, and violence, led to widespread population and cultural collapse over the following decades.

Still, it is inaccurate to say the Taíno disappeared entirely. Their legacy lives on in Caribbean cultures, languages, and music. Historical and genetic studies also confirm the continued presence of Indigenous ancestry among communities in the region, while contemporary groups continue to express their Taíno identity.

What Did the Tourism World Lose?

The experiences of Hawaii and the Caribbean reveal that tourism can successfully market natural beauty, but sometimes reduces a destination to beaches, hotels, and entertainment, leaving the history of its Indigenous peoples out of the picture.

Hawaii is more than tropical beaches and traditional dances, and the Caribbean is more than islands and resorts. Behind every destination lies a history of cultures, languages, resistance, and social transformation.

Had these islands been able to follow their cultural and political paths without colonial intervention, they might have developed more diverse tourism experiences today, reflecting their local identities and history in greater depth.

The challenge facing modern tourism is not simply attracting visitors, but presenting a destination's history honestly, involving Indigenous communities in telling their stories, and ensuring that their cultures are not reduced to commercial products.

A tourist does not truly discover a place by seeing its beauty alone, but by understanding its story as well.

In Episode Five, we open another chapter in the story of colonialism: the world's museums. We ask how thousands of archaeological artifacts made their way from their countries of origin into collections and museums far away, and what this means for the future of cultural tourism.

Austria Launches Alpinmesse 2026 in Innsbruck with Over 230 Exhibitors



The two-day event brings together adventure tourism, mountain sports, and innovations in mountain safety and rescue

Innsbruck, Austria | Al Rehla

Alpinmesse 2026 opened today, Saturday, November 21, in the Austrian city of Innsbruck, bringing together more than 230 exhibitors specializing in mountain sports, adventure tourism, and outdoor activities. Held at Messe Innsbruck, the exhibition runs until Sunday, November 22.

The event brings together sports equipment manufacturers, mountain safety and rescue organizations, and outdoor activity experts, offering product demonstrations, workshops, lectures, and interactive experiences.

Mountain Sports and Interactive Experiences

The exhibition covers a wide range of activities, including mountaineering, skiing, snow trekking, trail running, and cycling, alongside specialized equipment and technologies designed for outdoor adventures.

Visitors can test selected products, participate in training workshops, and connect with companies and organizations involved in adventure tourism.

Mountain Safety and Rescue Take Center Stage

Alpinmesse is held alongside Alpinforum, organized by the Austrian Board of Mountain Safety, which addresses accident prevention, risk management, and rescue operations in mountainous environments.

The program also includes training sessions focusing on first aid and avalanche hazards, aiming to strengthen safety awareness among outdoor enthusiasts.

Al-Rehla Perspective | A Model for Adventure Tourism Development

Alpinmesse highlights the importance of combining destination promotion with professional safety standards and training to strengthen the appeal of mountain tourism.

Austria's approach offers valuable lessons for Arab destinations with significant mountain tourism potential, particularly Morocco's Atlas Mountains and Oman's Al Hajar Mountains, through the development of outdoor activities, professional guides, and rescue services.

The exhibition is open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday and until 5 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets cost €15 for a single day or €25 for both days, while children aged 12 and under enjoy free admission.

Last Edition Crowned

the Leaders of Hospitality...

Who Will Claim the Gold This Year?

Nominations Open Now



Dubai Celebrates UAE's 55th Eid Al Etihad with 1,600-Drone Shows and 11 Days of Festivities

Fursan Al Emarat aerobatic displays over Kite Beach, spectacular illuminations at Burj Khalifa and Dubai Frame, and cultural and family activities from Bluewaters to Hatta

Dubai, UAE | Al Rehla

Dubai is preparing to celebrate the 55th anniversary of the formation of the United Arab Emirates with a cultural and entertainment programme running from 26 November to 6 December 2026, featuring aerial displays, traditional performances and family-friendly activities across some of the emirate's most prominent attractions and tourism destinations.

Dubai Festivals and Retail Establishment has announced the celebrations as part of the "Month of the Nation" festivities, with the participation of tourism attractions, shopping malls and cultural institutions.

1,600 Drones to Light Up Dubai's Skyline

Drone shows will be among the main highlights of the celebrations, with Bluewaters Island and The Beach at Jumeirah Beach Residence (JBR) hosting spectacular aerial displays on 2 and 3 December.

Featuring 1,600 drones, the shows will illuminate the night sky with formations depicting the UAE flag and national symbols celebrating the country's unity.

Two performances will take place each evening at 8:00 PM and 10:00 PM, accompanied by traditional Emirati cultural performances, including Al Ayala and Al Harbiya.

Fursan Al Emarat Takes to the Skies Above Kite Beach

The Fursan Al Emarat aerobatic display team will perform over Kite Beach on 29 November, from 4:15 PM to 5:15 PM, as part of celebrations honouring the UAE's aviation heritage.

Burj Khalifa will also feature special light projection shows from 1 to 3 December, while Dubai Frame will be illuminated in the colours of the UAE flag on 2 December.

Additional celebratory displays are planned at The Dubai Fountain.

Cultural Experiences and Family Entertainment

Hatta Wadi Hub will host outdoor activities and family-friendly performances on 2 and 3 December, while other destinations across Dubai will offer cultural and heritage experiences alongside activities inspired by traditional Emirati cuisine.

The programme also includes musical performances and special events at shopping malls, providing residents and visitors with a wide range of opportunities to celebrate across the emirate.

Al-Rehla Perspective | Where to Watch the Celebrations

Visitors can enjoy the drone shows from Bluewaters Island and The Beach at JBR, while Kite Beach will serve as the viewing location for the Fursan Al Emarat aerobatic display.

Al-Rehla advises visitors to arrive early at popular viewing locations, check official event schedules before travelling and confirm whether advance reservations or admission fees apply to accompanying activities.







Accor to Acquire Remaining Stake in Ennismore for €1.6 Billion, Strengthening Its Global Lifestyle Hospitality Portfolio



Deal values Ennismore at €3.7 billion and includes stakes held by Qatari investors, with the acquisition to be completed in three stages by January 2028

Paris, France | Al-Rehla

French hospitality group Accor has announced an agreement to acquire the remaining minority shareholders' stakes in Ennismore, the lifestyle hospitality company, for approximately €1.6 billion, as it moves towards full ownership of the business and strengthens its position in one of the hotel industry's fastest-growing segments.

The transaction values Ennismore's equity at approximately €3.7 billion and will be implemented in stages through January 2028, according to Accor's announcement on November 17, 2026.

Three-Stage Acquisition to Secure Full Ownership

Under the agreement, Accor plans to acquire 25.4% of Ennismore's fully diluted share capital by the end of January 2027, followed by an additional 6.3% by July 2027 and the final 12.6% by January 2028.

The transaction covers stakes held by Ennismore founder Sharan Pasricha, Q Lifestyle and other minority shareholders, including Qatari investors.

Pasricha is expected to remain involved as founder and board member, while Ennismore will continue operating under its existing executive leadership with a degree of operational independence.

Nearly 200 Hotels and More Than 800 Restaurants and Bars

Ennismore operates a portfolio of approximately 200 hotels and more than 800 restaurants and bars across 40 countries.

Its hospitality brands include Mama Shelter, The Hoxton, SLS, Mondrian, Rixos, Faena and Paris Society.

The company also has approximately 150 additional hotels in its development pipeline, highlighting the scale of its planned international expansion.

Earnings Contribution Exceeds Its Share of the Hotel Portfolio

According to Accor, Ennismore represents approximately 5% of the group's total room portfolio but contributes around 20% of its recurring earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA).

Ennismore also accounted for approximately 40% of the group's recurring EBITDA growth over the past three years.

Accor expects Ennismore to maintain double-digit EBITDA growth in the coming years, supported by a development pipeline equivalent to approximately 70% of its existing hotel



portfolio.

Transaction Financing and Future Expansion

Accor intends to finance the acquisition through an accelerated disposal programme involving non-strategic assets worth at least €500 million, alongside additional credit facilities.

The agreement also allows part of the consideration to be settled through Accor shares.

Sébastien Bazin, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Accor, said Ennismore had become a strategic pillar of the group's growth, with the acquisition intended to provide additional resources for expansion into new markets.

Gaurav Bhushan, Chief Executive Officer of Ennismore, emphasised that the continued partnership with Accor would support faster international growth while preserving the company's entrepreneurial culture and commitment to innovation.

Al-Rehla Perspective | Lifestyle Hospitality Takes Centre Stage in Hotel Investment

The transaction reflects the growing importance of hospitality concepts that combine accommodation with restaurants, entertainment and cultural experiences, rather than relying solely on traditional hotel room services.

This strategy is particularly evident across Ennismore's brands, which serve different traveller segments through distinctive lifestyle experiences and concepts connected to local destination identities.

For Arab tourism markets, the acquisition is significant amid the expansion of hotel and entertainment developments and increasing investor interest in hospitality brands capable of diversifying revenue streams.

However, Accor's acquisition of the remaining stakes does not automatically signal the development of additional hotels. Its operational and investment impact will depend on future expansion plans and agreements concluded in individual markets.

Bahrain: An Island of Ancient Civilisations, Pearling Heritage and Coastal Charm

Three UNESCO World Heritage Sites, traditional markets, beaches and maritime experiences offer visitors a remarkable journey through history, culture and Gulf hospitality

Manama, Bahrain | Al-Rehla

In Bahrain, travellers do not need to cover great distances to journey through different periods of history. From an ancient fortress that tells the story of the Dilmun civilisation to historic neighbourhoods preserving the legacy of pearl merchants and beaches overlooking the Arabian Gulf, the Kingdom offers a tourism experience that blends past and present within a single destination.

Bahrain invites visitors to explore three UNESCO World Heritage Sites, alongside traditional markets, museums, restaurants and coastal resorts, making it an appealing destination for weekend escapes, cultural journeys and family holidays.

Bahrain Fort: Where the Story Begins

On the island's northern coast, Bahrain Fort stands as a testament to civilisations that inhabited the area over thousands of years, particularly the Dilmun civilisation, which played a significant role in maritime trade across the Gulf.

Inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2005, the site features archaeological layers and a museum displaying discoveries that highlight Bahrain's historical importance as a centre of trade and civilisation.
A walk around the fortress offers an experience, where ancient walls meet coastal scenery, combining historical discovery with the natural beauty of the surroundings.

Muharraq: A City That Still Tells the Story of Pearling

In Muharraq, the journey takes on a different character. Its narrow streets and traditional houses recall a time when pearl trading was among Bahrain's most important economic activities.

The Pearling Path, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2012, stretches through the city's historic neighbourhoods, connecting heritage buildings and sites associated with pearl diving and trading.

The UNESCO property comprises 17 historic buildings and three offshore oyster beds, alongside Bu Maher Fort and its associated shoreline, historically linked to the departure and return of pearling vessels.

Visitors can explore sections of the route on foot, passing through the traditional Qaysariya Souq and historic buildings while discovering the lives of pearl merchants, divers and the families whose livelihoods depended on the industry.

Museums and Ancient Burial Mounds Reveal Civilisational Heritage

A journey through Bahrain's history would be incomplete without visiting the Bahrain National Museum, whose archaeological and cultural collections trace the island's development from the Dilmun civilisation to more recent periods.

Elsewhere in the Kingdom, the Dilmun Burial Mounds, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2019, provide remarkable evidence of ancient burial practices and social life.

These archaeological sites offer history enthusiasts an opportunity to explore civilisations that flourished in the Arabian Gulf thousands of years ago.

From Manama's Traditional Markets to Southern Beaches

Beyond its archaeological attractions, Manama preserves its traditional commercial atmosphere, particularly around Bab Al Bahrain and Manama Souq, where gold shops, spice merchants, perfume stores and textile traders stand alongside cafés and traditional restaurants.

Southern Bahrain offers a different experience, beginning with the Tree of Life in Sakhir, one of the Kingdom's









best-known natural landmarks, and extending to coastal resorts and beaches.

Visitors can spend time at Bilaj Al Jazayer Beach or enjoy waterfront restaurants, marine facilities and leisure activities at Marassi Bahrain, with options suited to family outings and relaxing holidays.

Bahrain also offers experiences connected to its pearling heritage, including organised pearl-diving excursions through licensed operators, transforming stories from the past into contemporary tourism activities.

A Destination That Is Easy to Explore Bahrain's relatively short

distances between major attractions allow travellers to enjoy several experiences during a brief stay.

The Kingdom is accessible by air through Bahrain International Airport and by road from Saudi Arabia via the King Fahd Causeway.

Citizens of Gulf Cooperation Council countries do not require entry visas, while electronic visas and visas on arrival are available to other nationalities, subject to eligibility requirements.

Accommodation options range from city hotels to coastal resorts, allowing travellers to choose holidays focused on culture, shopping or relaxation.

Al-Rehla Perspective | Three Days to Discover Bahrain's Many Faces

Bahrain is well suited to a short itinerary beginning with visits to Bahrain Fort, the Bahrain National Museum and Manama's traditional markets.

A second day can be dedicated to Muharraq, exploring the Pearling Path and its restored heritage buildings.

The third day may include the Dilmun Burial Mounds and the Tree of Life, followed by an afternoon at one of the Kingdom's beaches or coastal resorts.

What makes Bahrain distinctive is its ability to combine history, maritime heritage and everyday local culture within relatively short distances, giving visitors more time to experience each attraction rather than simply passing through.

On this Gulf island, civilisation is not merely a collection of archaeological remains preserved behind museum walls. It is a living story reflected in historic houses, bustling markets and traditional harbours, inviting travellers to discover the heritage of the island and the people who shaped it.

Türkiye Expands Ecotourism Network to 155 Sites, with Estimated Annual Economic Contribution of 2.5 Billion Lira



Ten new ecotourism areas added since June 2026, with approximately six million estimated visits since the programme began and a target of 200 sites by 2028

Ankara, Türkiye | Al Rehla

Türkiye has expanded its network of ecotourism areas to 155 sites, an increase of ten compared with June 2026, while their estimated annual contribution to the economy and rural development has reached approximately 2.5 billion Turkish lira.

The expansion forms part of a national programme aimed at promoting nature-based tourism and supporting local communities.

According to figures released by the General Directorate of Forestry under Türkiye's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry on 20 November 2026, the country's ecotourism routes have attracted approximately six million visitors since the programme began, although no separate updated annual visitor figure was provided.

From Two Sites to a Network of 155 Destinations

Türkiye began developing designated ecotourism areas in 2017 with just two sites before expanding the programme under its 2021–2025 action plan, which focused on making natural and cultural resources accessible to visitors while maintaining environmental protection standards.

The country aims to increase the number of ecotourism areas to 200 by the end of 2028, in line with its 12th Development Plan covering 2024–2028.

These destinations feature walking and cycling trails, scenic viewing platforms, wooden bridges, wildlife observation points and facilities showcasing locally produced goods.

Activities such as camping, horse riding and hiking are also available at selected locations, depending on their natural characteristics and applicable regulations.

Nature-Based Tourism Supports Rural Communities

The programme seeks to create economic opportunities for residents of villages near forest areas by promoting local products, traditional



handicrafts and services associated with nature-based tourism.

The General Directorate of Forestry estimates that these areas contribute approximately 2.5 billion Turkish lira annually to the economy.

However, detailed figures on how revenues are distributed among local communities, or how much income is generated directly by tourism activities, have not been published.

Authorities are also working to raise awareness of forest conservation and promote natural destinations through educational campaigns and promotional initiatives.

Digital App Helps Visitors Explore Nature Trails

The General Directorate of Forestry provides the Benim Ormanım application, meaning "My Forest", to help visitors discover forest parks and ecotourism routes.

The app offers information about destination features, available activities, weather conditions and access routes, helping travellers select suitable experiences based on local conditions.

Al-Rehla Perspective | A Different Way to Experience Türkiye's Natural Beauty

Türkiye's expanding ecotourism network offers Arab travellers additional opportunities to explore the country beyond its major cities and traditional holiday resorts.

Experiences include forest walks, nature observation, visits to rural communities and opportunities to discover locally produced goods.

Some routes combine natural attractions with historical sites and traditional crafts, making them suitable for family excursions and short trips, depending on the facilities available and the difficulty of individual trails.

However, visiting these areas requires advance planning, particularly during winter, when weather conditions may affect accessibility and outdoor activities.

Travellers are also advised to check camping and overnight-stay regulations, as these activities are not permitted at every site.

From a tourism economics perspective, Türkiye's approach illustrates how natural resources can be integrated into local economic activity while supporting rural tourism development.

Nevertheless, measuring the programme's actual impact on village incomes, employment and local businesses will require more detailed economic data, which was not included in the latest official update.

Morocco Explores Integrated Health Tourism and Sports Medicine Model Ahead of 2030



International conference in Ait Melloul brings together healthcare and research experts to discuss service quality, medical liability and innovation

Ait Melloul, Morocco | Al Rehla

The Moroccan city of Ait Melloul, in the Souss-Massa region, hosted the first International Conference on Health Tourism and Sports Medicine on November 20–21, 2026, bringing together researchers, academics and specialists from Morocco and abroad to explore opportunities for developing a national model integrating healthcare services, sports activities, tourism and scientific innovation.

The conference was organised by the Moroccan Association for Scientific Research and the Right to Health, through its Souss-Massa regional office, in collaboration with healthcare and academic partners, under the theme "Towards Building an Integrated Model in Morocco."

Health Tourism and Innovation

Participants discussed opportunities for developing health tourism and the role of scientific research in improving service quality, alongside medical approaches to caring for athletes and patients.

The conference also addressed healthcare policies, insurance, medical liability and ethical considerations in medical tourism, as well as the use of technology and artificial intelligence to enhance healthcare services.

Challenges Ahead of the 2030 FIFA World Cup

The conference examined medical and legal protection requirements associated with Morocco's preparations to co-host the 2030 FIFA World Cup, particularly athlete safety, healthcare quality and coordination among relevant institutions.

These discussions come amid growing interest in developing specialised service sectors that could contribute to diversifying Morocco's tourism offerings.

Al-Rehla Perspective | An Opportunity to Develop a Specialised Tourism Sector

Health tourism presents Morocco with an opportunity to combine healthcare services with its established tourism attractions, particularly in destinations with developed hospitality infrastructure, transport networks and qualified medical facilities.

However, transforming these opportunities into a competitive tourism product requires clear standards for healthcare quality, medical accreditation, patient protection, transparent pricing and insurance coverage.

No new investment agreements or tourism projects were announced in the available conference coverage, meaning the event's immediate significance lies primarily in scientific and regulatory discussions rather than measurable economic outcomes.



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New 160-Metre Suspension Bridge Opens Above the Mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan



Jalabi Bridge rises 30 metres above a valley in Choman, adding a new adventure tourism attraction northeast of Erbil through a private-sector investment

Erbil, Kurdistan Region of Iraq | Al Rehla

A new suspension bridge has opened to visitors in the Balakayati area of Choman district, northeast of Erbil, offering a new adventure tourism experience amid the mountainous landscapes of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Known as Jalabi Bridge, the attraction measures 160 metres in length and rises approximately 30 metres above a mountain valley, providing visitors with panoramic views of the surrounding natural scenery.

The bridge officially opened on 18 November 2026 within a tourist resort complex as part of a private-sector investment project supported by local government institutions responsible for tourism development.

According to local authorities, the bridge is the longest of its kind dedicated to adventure tourism in the Kurdistan Region and Iraq.

A Walk Above the Mountain Valley

The bridge offers visitors the opportunity to cross a valley at a height of 30 metres while enjoying views of the mountains and natural landscapes surrounding Balakayati, an area known for its mountain resorts and scenic attractions.

The experience is designed for adventure enthusiasts and outdoor recreation visitors, reflecting efforts to diversify tourism offerings beyond traditional mountain resort excursions.

Twelve Safety Rules for Visitors

Tariq Abdulrahman, the project owner, explained that the attraction has introduced 12 rules governing the use of the bridge to protect visitors and preserve the surrounding environment.

The regulations include wearing flat shoes and restricting access for pregnant women and individuals with a fear of heights.

Dancing and other potentially dangerous movements are prohibited while crossing, as is carrying food and beverages onto the bridge.

However, independently verified details regarding engineering safety certifications or the bridge's maximum visitor capacity have not been published.

Private Investment Supports Mountain Tourism

Halgurd Mohammed, Director of Tourism in Choman district, highlighted the project's importance in diversifying tourism activities in the area.

He noted that local government institutions had provided the necessary facilities and support to encourage private investment in tourism development.

He also indicated that several other tourism projects are being implemented by private investors to improve tourism infrastructure and visitor services across the district. The total investment cost of the bridge has not been disclosed, nor have figures been released regarding employment opportunities created by the project or visitor numbers recorded since its opening.

Lonely Planet Recommends 100 Inspiring European Trips for 2027 Holiday Planning



From Bavaria's fairytale castles and Scotland's Orkney Islands to Baltic train journeys and Sicily's volcanoes, the guide explores nature, heritage and adventure through itineraries lasting up to several weeks

London, United Kingdom | Al Rehla

Lonely Planet's Dream Trips of Europe travel guide highlights 100 suggested journeys across the continent, offering travellers planning their 2027 holidays a diverse selection of experiences combining historical landmarks, mountain landscapes, rail adventures and cultural attractions.

Published in October 2026, the guide features maps, practical travel information and itineraries ranging from three days to more than two weeks, encouraging visitors to discover destinations and experiences beyond conventional tourist routes.

Bavaria's Castles and Orkney's Ancient Heritage

In Germany, the guide explores the magnificent palaces of King Ludwig II of Bavaria, including the famous Neuschwanstein Castle, Herrenchiemsee Palace inspired by Versailles, Linderhof Palace and the mountain retreat of Königshaus am Schachen.

In Scotland, it recommends exploring the Orkney Islands, home to the UNESCO-listed Heart of Neolithic Orkney, including the prehistoric settlement of Skara Brae and the historic Maeshowe chambered tomb.

Baltic Rail Journeys and Mountain Trails

The guide features a rail journey connecting Tallinn in Estonia, Riga in Latvia and Vilnius in Lithuania, passing through historic cities and landscapes characterised by forests and lakes.

It also highlights the approximately 76-kilometre Liechtenstein Trail and Slovenia's Juliana Trail, which passes through mountain villages and the spectacular scenery of the Julian Alps.

In Italy, the guide encourages travellers to discover Sicily, from ancient Greek landmarks and Baroque towns to the volcanic landscapes surrounding Mount Etna.

Al-Rehla Perspective | Fresh Alternatives for Arab Travellers

These journeys offer Arab travellers opportunities to diversify their European holidays, particularly those interested in nature, cultural heritage, hiking and slow travel.

They also provide travel agencies with opportunities to develop itineraries combining several destinations and activities within a single journey, while considering differences in accommodation costs, transportation options and visa requirements.

The guide's significance lies in encouraging travellers to explore smaller cities and rural communities beyond Europe's major tourism centres.

However, these recommendations do not necessarily guarantee lower travel costs or increased visitor numbers and tourism expenditure in the featured destinations.

Historic American Mansion The Elms Brings 1901 to Life with Immersive Experience Across 20 Rooms

A 90-minute journey combines visual projections, sound effects and customised scents to recreate life during the Gilded Age, with adult tickets priced at $35

Newport, United States | Al Rehla

The historic Elms mansion in Newport, Rhode Island, has launched a new multisensory visitor experience that brings the social life of America's Gilded Age in the early 20th century to life through visual projections, sound design, customised scents and interactive technology.

The new attraction, known as The Elms Experience, opened to visitors on November 16, 2026, following approximately three years of development in collaboration between the Preservation Society of Newport County and Emmy Award-winning creative studio Digital Kitchen.

The organisers describe the project as the first experience of its kind within a historic house museum in the United States.

A 90-Minute Journey Through 20 Historic Rooms

The experience lasts approximately 90 minutes and takes visitors through 20 rooms of the mansion in groups of no more than 15 people.

It uses video projections, digital displays, sound effects and specially designed scents to recreate everyday life in 1901.

In the ballroom, immersive presentations recreate a dance celebration from 1902, while other rooms feature period costumes and scenes depicting the social lives of the mansion's owners and the staff who maintained the household.

QR codes also allow visitors to access additional historical information and documents about the building and its former residents.

Historic Architecture Meets Modern Technology

Completed in 1901, The Elms was built as the summer residence of businessman Edward Berwind and his wife, Herminie, with architectural inspiration drawn from France's Château d'Asnières.

The property is designated a US National Historic Landmark and features art collections and formal gardens reflecting the architectural elegance of the period.

According to the operators, the new technologies were designed to preserve the building's original architectural elements and collections without causing damage.

Advance Reservations Required

Adult admission to the experience costs $35, and visitors must reserve a specific time slot in advance.

Tours are organised in small groups, with entry scheduled at designated intervals.

Al-Rehla Perspective | The Future of Heritage Tourism

The Elms Experience offers an example of how historic buildings can be transformed into more engaging cultural attractions by combining heritage preservation with interactive technologies that help visitors understand the people, traditions and lifestyles associated with a destination.

The concept is particularly relevant to Arab destinations rich in historic palaces, traditional residences and museums, where similar approaches could support the development of more immersive cultural tourism products.

From an economic perspective, innovative museum experiences may help diversify revenue streams for heritage attractions and appeal to new visitor segments.

However, assessing the project's actual impact on tourism demand, visitor spending and the local economy will require measurable data following its launch.







250 Participants from 23 Countries Compete in Skydive Pharaohs Cup in Egypt



Thirty teams gather in Egypt's New Administrative Capital for an international skydiving championship sponsored by Air Cairo, promoting sports tourism and aerial adventures

Cairo, Egypt | Al Rehla

Egypt's New Administrative Capital is hosting the international Skydive Pharaohs Cup championship from November 20 to 22, 2026, bringing together 250 participants from 23 countries across 30 teams in an event aimed at strengthening Egypt's position as a destination for aerial sports and adventure tourism.

Held under the patronage of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, the championship is organised by United Sports in cooperation with Skydive Pharaohs, under the supervision of the Egyptian Federation of Parachuting and Air Sports, with Air Cairo serving as an official sponsor.

International Competition Above the New Capital

The championship brings together professional skydiving teams competing against the backdrop of Egypt's New Administrative Capital, highlighting its potential to host international sporting events. The participation of delegations from 23 countries also provides an opportunity to promote Egypt internationally and showcase specialised tourism experiences beyond traditional sightseeing.

Air Cairo Supports Sports Tourism

Hussein Sherif, Chairman of Air Cairo, said the airline's sponsorship reflects its commitment to sports tourism as a promising sector capable of attracting new visitor segments.

He highlighted the importance of international championships in promoting Egypt as a tourism destination, praising the organisation of the opening day and the positive impressions expressed by foreign participants regarding the mild weather and modern architectural setting of the New Administrative Capital.

Al-Rehla Perspective | Adventure Tourism Offers Opportunities for Diversification

The championship demonstrates the potential for cooperation between airlines and aerial sports organisers, opening opportunities to develop specialised tourism programmes targeting adventure enthusiasts and international sporting communities.

Hosting such events could also support demand for accommodation, transport and hospitality services, particularly with the participation of international delegations and accompanying visitors.

However, assessing the championship's economic impact requires verified data on visitors travelling specifically for the event and their actual spending. Its longer-term tourism value will depend on turning seasonal competitions into sustainable programmes that attract aerial sports enthusiasts and broaden Egypt's international tourism offering.

XENIA 2026 Opens in Athens with Over 500 Exhibitors Showcasing Hospitality Technology and Equipment



Artificial intelligence, sustainability and hotel investment take centre stage through November 23, with more than 50 speakers discussing the future of digital transformation

Athens, Greece | Al Rehla

XENIA 2026, the international exhibition specialising in hospitality equipment and hotel technology, opens today, Saturday, November 21, at the Metropolitan Expo exhibition centre in Athens, bringing together more than 500 exhibitors showcasing products and solutions for hotels, resorts, serviced apartments and alternative accommodation facilities.

Running until November 23, the exhibition brings together hoteliers, investors, developers, suppliers and technology companies, focusing on three major trends: sustainability, digital transformation and the modernisation of hotel infrastructure.

Equipment and Solutions to Improve Operational Efficiency

Exhibits cover furniture, interior design, professional kitchen and restaurant equipment, construction and renovation materials, alongside property management systems, booking technologies, automation and smart lighting.

The exhibition also features solutions designed to reduce energy and water consumption, improve operational efficiency and control costs, allowing hospitality operators to compare technologies and products suited to their projects.

According to official organiser figures, the 2025 edition attracted 34,702 visitors, reflecting strong professional interest in the event.

More Than 50 Speakers Explore Hotel Digitalisation

The Digi Hotel Stage hosts more than 50 speakers specialising in technology, digital marketing and hospitality management.

Discussions focus on artificial intelligence applications, online booking systems, automation tools and technologies designed to enhance the guest experience.

Sessions also explore digital marketing strategies, direct booking channels, customer relationship management and the use of technology to improve operational performance.

Architectural Design and Hotel Investment

The Red Spot Stage focuses on hotel architecture, interior design and smart infrastructure, featuring hospitality project case studies and solutions incorporating modern materials and sustainable technologies.

The exhibition also presents Aither, an architectural project designed by Lianou Chalvatzis Architects, offering an interactive experience that explores how building materials, lighting and design contribute to shaping hospitality environments.

XENIA 2026 also hosts the 14th General Assembly of the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels on November 21, providing a platform to discuss key professional challenges facing Greece's hospitality industry.

Six Arab Countries Represented on ICAO Council Following Oman's Election and Expansion to 40 Members



Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Egypt and Morocco retain their seats as Oman joins the Council, alongside Türkiye, Ethiopia and Indonesia, until 2028

Montreal, Canada | Al Rehla

The number of Arab countries represented on the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has increased to six following the election of the Sultanate of Oman during the 43rd Extraordinary Session of the ICAO Assembly, which concluded in Montreal on November 20, 2026.

The election coincided with the expansion of the Council from 36 to 40 member states.

ICAO announced the election of four countries to the newly established seats: Oman, Türkiye, Ethiopia and Indonesia, completing the expanded Council's composition ahead of the next elections scheduled for 2028.

Six Arab Countries on the New Council

The Arab countries represented on the ICAO Council are Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Egypt, Morocco and the Sultanate of Oman.

This representation strengthens Arab participation in international discussions concerning aviation safety, security, air transport efficiency, travel facilitation and environmental sustainability.

Such participation is particularly significant amid the expansion of airports and airlines across the region, alongside growing investment in air connectivity, infrastructure and logistics services.

Historic Expansion of the ICAO Council

The elections followed the entry into force of an amendment to Article 50(a) of the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation on June 12, 2026, after the amendment was adopted in 2016.

The expansion aims to provide broader representation for countries and geographical regions within the governing body of ICAO, which has 193 member states.



The Council carries out key administrative and regulatory responsibilities, including directing the organisation's activities and supporting the development of international standards and recommended practices relating to aviation safety, security, air navigation and environmental protection.

Four New Members Until the 2028 Elections

The addition of Oman, Türkiye, Ethiopia and Indonesia broadens regional participation in the Council while the existing 36 member states retain their seats.

The expanded Council is expected to serve until the elections held during the 44th Session of the ICAO Assembly in 2028.

The elections coincided with the Seventh Worldwide Air Transport Conference in Montreal, where officials and aviation experts discussed global air connectivity, economic development and industry resilience amid operational and environmental challenges facing international aviation.

Al-Rehla Perspective | Stronger Arab Representation in Global Aviation

The presence of six Arab countries on the ICAO Council provides the region with broader participation in discussions shaping international aviation policies and standards.

This development is particularly relevant as Arab airlines expand their networks and regional airports strengthen their roles in connecting tourism and commercial markets across continents.

However, Council membership does not automatically result in new flight routes, lower airfares or faster airport procedures. Such developments require separate operational decisions, investments and commercial agreements.

The significance of the expansion lies in strengthening international representation and coordination on aviation safety, security and sustainability—essential foundations for the continued growth of global air travel and tourism.

Oman Air Offers Up to 25% Off International Flights Until November 30



Black Friday promotion covers Economy and Business Class travel between January 15 and June 30, 2027

Muscat, Sultanate of Oman | Al Rehla

Oman Air has launched a Black Friday promotional campaign offering travellers discounts of up to 25% on Economy and Business Class fares across its international network.

According to details published by the UK-based travel industry publication TTG, the booking period runs from November 21 to November 30, 2026, with eligible travel dates extending from January 15 to June 30, 2027.

Discounts Across International Destinations

The promotion provides travel opportunities across Oman Air's international network, connecting Muscat with destinations in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

The airline serves major leisure and business destinations, including London, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Zanzibar and several European cities, while offering onward connections through Muscat International Airport.

Actual savings vary depending on the route, travel class and available fares, with the advertised 25% representing the maximum discount rather than a guaranteed reduction on every booking.

Opportunities for Travel Agencies to Boost 2027 Bookings

The campaign targets travellers planning international holidays and business trips during the first half of 2027, while offering travel agencies an opportunity to promote packages combining flights, accommodation and tourism services.

The promotion comes amid increasing competition among airlines to attract advance bookings and stimulate travel demand across different seasons.

Al-Rehla Perspective | How Can Travellers Benefit?

Arab travellers planning their 2027 holidays may benefit from the promotion by booking early and comparing final ticket prices, flight schedules and available routes before confirming their reservations.

Passengers should carefully review fare conditions, baggage allowances and ticket change policies, as promotional discounts do not necessarily apply to every flight or travel date.

For travel agencies, the campaign offers an opportunity to develop integrated holiday packages combining air travel, accommodation and destination experiences.

However, discounted fares alone do not guarantee increased bookings or higher tourism revenues, as their actual impact will depend on passenger demand and booking patterns.

Tunisair Flight Punctuality Rises to 45% as Debt Reaches 698 Million Dinars



Rescue programme aims to improve performance, with a contingency restructuring plan in place as the national carrier transports 1.91 million passengers in nine months

Tunis, Tunisia | Al Rehla

Tunisair continues to implement a rescue programme aimed at improving its operational and financial performance, while preparing a contingency restructuring plan should the current measures fail to achieve their objectives, amid improving flight punctuality and persistent financial pressures.

Tunisian Transport Minister Rachid Amri confirmed during a parliamentary session discussing the ministry's 2027 budget that the rescue programme is being monitored in phases, with an alternative restructuring plan ready if the current measures prove insufficient.

Flight Punctuality Improves to 45%

The minister revealed that flight punctuality improved from 27% in 2024 to 36% in 2025, reaching 45% in 2026, based on flights departing or arriving within 15 minutes of their scheduled time.

He added that the rate rises to approximately 70% when allowing a wider delay margin of one to two hours, highlighting the operational challenges that remain.

Debt Reaches 698 Million Dinars

The airline's latest operational indicators showed that its debt increased by 15% to approximately 698 million Tunisian dinars by the end of September 2026, despite a 2% rise in passenger numbers to 1.91 million during the first nine months of the year.

Meanwhile, passenger transport revenue declined to 1.254 billion dinars, compared with approximately 1.270 billion dinars during the corresponding period of 2025.

The minister confirmed that the government provides no direct financial subsidies to Tunisair, as the airline is a commercial enterprise expected to improve its financial position.

Al-Rehla Perspective | Flight Reliability and Passenger Confidence

Improving Tunisair's flight punctuality is a positive development for the tourism sector, particularly for tour operators and international tourism markets.

However, restoring passenger confidence requires better aircraft availability, service quality and schedule reliability, alongside measures to address debt and strengthen revenue.

The success of the rescue programme will ultimately determine the national carrier's ability to improve air connectivity and strengthen Tunisia's competitiveness as a tourism destination.

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