

## Dubai tops world in hotel occupancy

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Dubai recorded about 4 million visitors in the first quarter of this year, up 214 per cent compared to the same period last year, Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed, Crown Prince of Dubai, said in a tweet.

The emirate also ranked first in the world in terms of the hotel occupancy rates, with hospitality establishments recording a rate of 82 per cent in the first three months of 2022.

These "figures confirm the strength of our tourism sector" and Dubai's top position within the industry, Sheikh Hamdan said.

"The tourism sector is a major tributary of the national economy, and we are continuing to work on developing its capabilities and opening new horizons for growth in cooperation with local and international partners to consolidate Dubai's position as a leading global destination," he added.

Dubai, the commercial and trading hub of the Middle East, was one of the first destinations to reopen to tourists in June 2020 after it put in place steps to curb the Covid-19 pandemic.

The emirate's economy grew 6.3 per cent year-on-year in the first nine months of

2021, according to preliminary data from the Dubai Statistics Centre. Emirates NBD estimates Dubai's economy grew about 5.5 per cent for the full year 2021 – an upwards revision from its earlier forecast of 4 per cent.

The latest figures underscores an ongoing recovery in Dubai's tourism sector. The emirate hosted 7.28 million international overnight visitors between January and December 2021, up 32 per cent year-on-year, data from Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) shows.

International visitors to the emirate crossed 3.4 million in the fourth quarter of 2021, which is 74 per cent of the total pre-pandemic tourist arrivals in the same period in 2019.

The growth in international visitors last year was led by India with 910,000 visitors, followed by 491,000 travellers from Saudi Arabia, and Russia and the UK accounting for 444,000 visitors and 420,000 visitors, respectively, according to DET.

The Middle East and North Africa and GCC markets collectively contributed to 26 per cent of Dubai's total international visitor volumes, while western Europe accounted for 22 per cent of total visitors in 2021.

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