

UAE tourism back on track with 10 pc growth in Q1

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The UAE's tourism sector achieved a new growth milestone in the first quarter of 2022 with hotels recording a sterling performance both in terms of revenue and occupancy level.

Dr Ahmad Belhoul Al Falasi, Minister of State for Entrepreneurship and Small and Medium Enterprises and Chairman of the UAE Tourism Council, said the tourism sector's performance exceeded pre-pandemic growth rates as hotels recorded a 20 per cent jump in first-quarter revenues to Dh11 billion compared to the same period in 2019. The occupancy rate at 80 per cent was among the highest globally, he said, noting that the remarkable show underlined the competitiveness of the sector at both regional and global levels.

Al Falasi attributed the sector's achievement to the unlimited support and directives of the UAE's wise leadership and its interest in this vital sector, which is deemed one of the future sectors and a key focus area in the UAE's development vision for the next 50 years.

According to tourism data, hotel establishments attracted nearly six million visitors who spent 25 million hotel nights, reflecting a growth of 10 per cent compared to the same period in 2019. The average duration of hotel guest stays reached 25 per cent during the same period, up from three nights to four nights. Hotels resumed

operations at full capacity of around 200,000 hotel rooms.

Al Falasi said during the first quarter of this year, the national tourism sector exceeded the growth rates recorded not only in 2020 and 2021 but also during the same period in 2019, which is the benchmark for measuring recovery and growth rates in most countries today.

The period was one of the best in terms of economic growth in general and tourism in particular, and this confirms the strong comeback of the sector thanks to the forward-looking vision of the UAE's wise leadership. "Equally important was the concerted national efforts to develop national tourism, provide a supportive environment and integrated incentives for the development of tourism products, offer adequate tourism infrastructure in the country, and focus on the delivery of high value-added services," he said

The first quarter of 2022 saw a resurgence and a strong comeback of inward tourism flows from foreign markets as hotel establishments in various emirates hosted nearly four million international tourists. India, Saudi Arabia, the UK, Russia, and the US topped the list of international tourists.

The remarkable Q1 results reflect the growing confidence of visitors in the national tourism sector and the UAE's reputation as a safe and favorable destination capable of providing a rich and distinguished tourism experience, Al Falasi said.

He noted that major events hosted by the UAE over the past several months played in supporting the sector. These include Expo 2020 Dubai, which successfully attracted more than 24 million visitors over six months, and the 'World's Coolest Winter' campaign in its second edition, which over one and a half months generated total revenue of Dh1.5 billion and attracted more than 1.3 million local tourists.

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