كشفت وزارة السياحة التونسية عن تراجع إيرادات القطاع السياحي بنسبة 64 في المئة، منذ بداية العام الجاري ولغاية العاشر من ديسمبر (كانون الأول) الحالي، وذلك بالمقارنة مع الفترة نفسها من السنة الماضية. وقدّرت العائدات المالية بحوالي 1.9 مليار دينار تونسي (حوالي 691 مليون دولار) في حين كانت سجلت الإيرادات 5.3 مليار دينار تونسي (قرابة 1.9 مليار دولار) خلال الفترة نفسها من 2019.

ويعد هذا التراجع إلى انكماش حركة السياح الأوروبيين (الفرنسيين خاصة والألمان) خلال موسم الصيف الماضي، مما أثر بشكل كبير على كامل المنظومة المرتبطة بالقطاع السياحي من صناعات تقليدية وكماشات سياحة وسفر وشركات تأجير السيارات.

وأوضح وزير السياحة التونسي الحبيب عمار، إلى أن "إجمالي السياح الوافدين إلى تونس تراجع بنسبة 78 في المائة هذا العام، كما تراجعت عائدات القطاع السياحي بنسبة 64 في المائة، لافتا إلى أن "لم تتوفر فرصة استثنائية لأي كابوس، فسارت الحكومة التونسية مجموعة من الإجراءات الحفروية الهادفة للإبقاء على المؤسسات العاملة في السياحة والصناعات التقليدية".

 المصدر (صحيفة الشرق الأوسط، Edited)

Tourism Revenues declined in Tunisia 64 percent

The Tunisian Ministry of Tourism revealed that the tourism sector revenues have decreased by 64 percent, from the beginning of this year until the tenth of December this year, and that compared to the same period last year. Financial revenues were estimated at 1.9 billion Tunisian dinars (about 691 million dollars). While the revenues were recorded at no less than 5.3 billion Tunisian dinars (about 1.9 billion dollars) during the same period in 2019. This decline is due to the contraction of European tourists (especially the French and Germans) during the last summer season, which greatly affected the entire system associated with the tourism sector, including traditional industries, travel and tourism agencies, and car rental companies.

Tunisia had opened its tourist spaces to expatriates on June 27, and encouraged tourists to visit the country, but the rapid spread of the epidemic in the neighboring European space, and the entry of Tunisia in a second wave of infections, prevented any results. In this regard, the Tunisian Minister of Tourism, Habib Ammar, indicated that "the total number of tourists coming to Tunisia has decreased by 78 percent this year, and the financial sector revenues have decreased by 64 percent," he pointed out that "to cope with this exceptional situation, the Tunisian government approved a set of incentive measures aimed at preserving the institutions operating in tourism and traditional industries." Source (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat newspaper, Edited)
**IMF Expects Qatari GDP to Grow 2.7 percent in 2021**

The International Monetary Fund expects Qatar’s real GDP to reach 2.7 percent in 2021, supported by increased gas production, the recovery of domestic demand, the speedy provision of Coronavirus vaccines, and the end of the pandemic.

The IMF praised the rapid measures taken by the State of Qatar to limit the spread of the Coronavirus and mitigate its repercussions on the local economy. Noting that the Qatari authorities’ immediate response to the virus at the policy level led to the mitigation of the economic impacts of the shocks. He also noted the effectiveness of adopting a package of financial and economic stimulus measures worth 75 billion Qatari riyals to support the economy.

IMF noted that the Qatar Central Bank provided a window to buyback, with zero interest, amounting to 50 billion Qatari riyals, which provided abundant liquidity in the banking system, which led to the strengthening of credit available to the private sector. The fund also praised the importance of the credit guarantee program, with a total value of 5 billion Qatari riyals, noting the program’s role in providing direct support to small and medium enterprises and protecting jobs. The fund also noted the opportunity for the families and business sectors to postpone the repayment of outstanding loan installments until the end of the year, as well as to benefit from exemption from rental and public utility fees. Revealing the contribution of these measures to maintaining confidence in the economy, mitigating shocks on the business and household sectors, and continuing to respond to health care needs.

Source (Al-Raya Qatari newspaper, Edited)

**Iraq Devalues the Dinar to Close the Inflation Gap in the 2021 Budget**

The Iraqi government announced the largest reduction in the national currency exchange rate ever, by more than 20 percent. The Iraqi government approved an economic plan for the advancement of the national economy, represented by the devaluation of the currency, and the viability of sectors such as industry and agriculture with neighboring countries such as Iran and Turkey, whose currencies declined by 80% and 60%, respectively.

The Central Bank of Iraq decided to raise the price of selling the dollar to banks and exchange companies to 1460 dinars, from 1182 dinars to the dollar, with the aim of compensating for the decline in oil revenues caused by the deterioration of oil prices. Noting that the main reason behind the devaluation of the dinar is to bridge the inflation gap in the 2021 budget after the collapse of global oil prices, which is a major source of Iraqi financial resources.

The Iraqi Central Bank revealed that the financial crisis that Iraq was subjected to due to the Corona pandemic had led to a large deficit in the public budget, the bank disclosed that the decision to devalue the currency came as a precautionary step and the bank was keen to avoid depleting its foreign reserves, to help the government secure the salaries of public employees. It is worth noting that Iraq depends for 95% of its income on oil revenues. The last time the dinar devalued was in December 2015, when it raised the selling price of the dollar to 1182 dinars from 1,166 dinars previously.

Source (Al-Arabiya.net, Edited)
The government of the Sultanate of Oman announced the approval of a plan to reform the costly subsidy system, according to which work will be carried out starting next January, so that the focus will be on water and electricity subsidies for the poorest groups.

The plan, along with new labor laws, privatization and taxes, aims to reduce the growing fiscal deficit, which the International Monetary Fund expects to reach 10 percent of economic output this year. The Sultanate of Oman has accumulated debt in the past few years and holds a high risk rating by all major credit rating agencies.

According to the government, the new subsidy system for electricity and water will exclude families whose income exceeds 1,250 riyals ($3,260) per month. Revealing that families whose income is less than 500 riyals will continue to receive government support in utility bills. For other groups, support will depend on the number of family members.

The Sultanate of Oman had started preliminary talks with some Gulf countries to obtain financial support. Low oil prices and an economic slowdown due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus have weighed on the sultanate's finances. Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said also made changes in the government and state entities, and approved in October the application of value-added tax, starting next April, in order to support public revenues.

Source (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat newspaper, Edited)