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Al Ain Times  
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www.alaintimes.ae

21 October - 3 November 2006 • Vol. 1 Issue 8 • www.alaintimes.ae • 2 Dhs

Proudly published every Saturday by Alpha Beta Publishers, Al Ain

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# Al Ain emerged as popular destination for Eid holidays

## Room rates go high as all major hotels booked to capacity

### BIG RUSH ON MONEY EXCHANGE CENTERS, TRAVEL AGENTS COMPLAIN OF A LOW TURNOVER

Al Ain Times report

Travel agents in Al Ain are complaining of a low turnover but the garden city is expected to have a high inward flow of visitors during the Eid holidays.

All the major city hotels are fully booked and have increased their room rates from 50 to 100 per cent to make the best of the holiday rush. Rotana Hotel is charging Dh 650 plus service charge for a regular room for one night while Hilton's Eid rate is Dh 696 including charges. Intercontinental is asking for Dh 800 plus for a regular room.

The normal rate for a single room in these hotels ranges from Dh 350 to 400.

"We are fully booked for Eid," was the answer of all hotels when Al Ain Times contacted them on Wednesday, four days before Eid.

UAE residents will have a minimum of 5 days of holidays counting the weekend and holidaying within emirates is considered a preferred and cheaper option as compared to go overseas.

According to a veteran Al Ain travel agent the higher cost of overseas travel has forced people to look for other options like coming to Al Ain, a green peaceful city with many tourist attractions.

Meanwhile money exchanges, especially in the city center, were also having a big rush and customers

were complaining of higher fees charged for money transactions.

Mohammed Yousuf, a Jordanian told the Al Ain Times he was charged almost double when he went to send money to his family. A student had a similar problem when she went to get money transferred to her from overseas.

"They charged me more and also it took me almost one hour to get my money," said Rasha Mohammed of Saudi Arabia who is studying in Al Ain in Abu Dhabi University and was sent money from her parents for Eid.

Travel agents are also complaining that the traditional Eid Al Fitr travel rush this year has not gathered momentum.

According to them business is as low as 25 per cent as compared to last year and not many extra Eid flights arranged this time (full story p6).

Al Ain residents attribute low business to the high cost of travel.

"The prices of airline tickets have gone up due to higher taxes while salaries are the same. Holidaying within country is cheaper and more enjoyable," says Arif who used to go to Karachi to celebrate Eid and will go to Fujaira this year with his family. "Similarly many friends I know in Dubai and Sharjah were planning to take a break in Al Ain," he added.

YOUR STARS INSIDE!

## EID HOLIDAYS

Private sector firms and institutions will remain closed during the first and second day of the month of Shawwal of the Hijri year 1427, for the Eid Al Fitr holiday, it was officially announced by the Ministry of Labor.

Meanwhile the public sector will have 4-day holidays and will remain closed from Sunday 22 October until Wednesday 25 October.

The UAE University in Al Ain will remain closed for the week during the Eid starting Sunday 22 October and will open on Sunday 29 October.

## New housing schemes to replace old houses in Al Ain

### INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPED TO GIVE ALL AMENITIES IN NEW HOUSING SCHEMES

By Ekram Youssef

The government is working on a plan to replace old houses and build new houses in Al Ain for the local population. Many such houses are already complete and were handed over to their new owners.

Mohammed Hareb, Deputy Director of property registration told the Al Ain Times that old houses are not suitable in a modern and expanding city and

are being replaced with new ones more appropriate for residents.

According to the official, a number of new houses are being constructed in Niama and South Al Yahar, while Al Maqam will be restructured and the government will examine the feasibility of signing a partnership agreement with the private sector to develop the area on a commercial basis.

According to a report 2,500 old, traditional houses will be replaced with modern villas. The government will also construct 1,200 new villas each in North and Al South Al Yahar, where work is expected to complete in December 2009. 1,300 villas will be constructed in Al Salamat. Mohammed Hareb told the Al Ain Times that with new housing,

infrastructure is also developed to provide all amenities.

Giving details about new housing he said 100 houses in Al Dahra, 100 houses in the Al yahar (allaa), 290 new houses in Al yahar, 450 houses in Al faqaa, 100 dwellings in the area of Arad, 20 in the area of Nema "Kareh," and 50 houses in the area of Umm Gafh are being constructed.



Newly constructed villas to be given to nationals

## NO ISSUE OF AL AIN TIMES NEXT WEEK

There will be no issue of the Al Ain Times on 28 October due to Eid holidays and the next issue will now appear on Saturday 4 November. The offices of Al Ain Times will remain closed from Sunday 22 October to Tuesday 24 October and will open from Wednesday from 9 to 11 in the morning and 4 to 9 in the evening.

# Al Ain Times wishes its readers and advertisers A Very Happy Eid

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