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DUBAI
BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Chief Reporter

Dubai Airports is developing a checkout reminder system that will alert passengers if they are running out of time to reach their gate while shopping or dining at Dubai International Airport.

The initiative, revealed by chief executive Paul Griffiths, will link payment transactions at airport restaurants and retail outlets with passenger flight information to assess whether travellers risk missing their departure.

“When you make a transaction at a restaurant or at one of our retail stores, that transaction will identify who you are, where you’re travelling to, and we’ll do a quick check to see how long it takes you to get to the gate,” Griffiths said.

How the reminder system works

If a passenger is found to be short on time, the system will trigger a prompt at the checkout counter. Retail staff would then issue a reminder encouraging the traveller to head towards their gate. “If you’re running short of time, then a polite reminder from the assistant – ‘your flight departs in 22 minutes, the gate is 10 minutes away, you better move on’ – sort of thing, just to keep people on track,” Griffiths said.

The system is intended to reduce missed flights, which Griffiths said still occur occasionally at the airport, despite extensive signage and boarding announcements.

“We want to avoid that trauma of people missing flights,” he said, describing the project as part of a broader passenger wayfinding programme.

Tracking passengers as departure nears

The technology will also track where travellers are in the terminal as their flight approaches departure time, allowing airport teams to intervene before delays become critical.

Griffiths said the system will

DXB TO ROLL OUT ALERTS TO HELP FLYERS AVOID MISSED FLIGHTS

CHECKOUT REMINDER SYSTEM TO LINK TRANSACTION WITH FLIGHT INFORMATION



100m
Passengers DXB expects to close 2026 with

454,800
5.5m seats handled by DXB in Jan 2026, making it world's busiest by seat capacity

flights operated by DXB in 2025 with an average of 214 passengers per flight

291 destinations across 110 countries with 108 international airlines served by DXB

not affect passengers who arrive well in advance of their flights, but will benefit those who lose track of time while shopping or dining in the terminal’s extensive retail and food outlets.

Dubai International Airport serves as a major shopping and dining destination, with long walking distances between terminals and gates making time management increasingly important.

Dubai International handled 95.2 million passengers in 2025

and has forecast 99.5 million travellers in 2026 as it nears the 100 million milestone.

Griffiths said he expects actual traffic to exceed that projection. “I will be very disappointed if we have to close 2026 at 99.5,” he said.

“Our forecasts are always decently conservative,” he added. “I hope that towards the end of the year, we will be saying it looks more like 100 million.”

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CATCH AIR TAXIS VIA VIP TERMINAL?

Dubai International Airport is exploring a premium option that could let you move straight from your flight to an air taxi without stepping into the main terminal.

Griffiths said a tunnel near DXB’s upcoming vertiport could be used to create direct VIP transfers between the airport and flying taxis, offering a smoother experience for premium passengers.

“There is actually a tunnel that exists between close position to the vertiport and the airport, and we’re just seeing if we can use that tunnel for VIP transfers,” Griffiths said. The idea would extend DXB’s AI Majlis service – which includes fast-track immigration, private lounges and personal escorts – to air taxi users.

—S.S.

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Is Moon Dubai ever taking off? Founders explain ...

Will moon-shaped resort open in 2032?

DUBAI
BY NIVETHA DAYANAND
Assistant Business Editor

Speculation about a \$5 billion (Dh18.5 billion) Moon-shaped resort in Dubai continues to circulate online, but the project remains in the proposal stage, according to its founders.

Moon World Resorts Inc., a Canada-based design studio and intellectual property licensor, first outlined the concept in 2022. Co-founders Michael R. Henderson and Sandra G. Matthews say the development is planned as a large-scale tourism destination built around a central spherical structure described as the “largest sphere in the world.”

Inside the structure would be a fully integrated resort including hotels, convention facilities, wellness and longevity centres, restaurants and lounges. The project’s

main attraction would be a simulated lunar surface and lunar base, designed to replicate the experience of walking on the Moon. Henderson said the facility would target adults and could also host space training and tourism-related experiences.

The wider master plan includes a lagoon and park, as well as around 10,000 branded luxury residential units arranged in a ring around the central sphere.



Moon World Resorts does not plan to build the project directly. Instead, it intends to license up to 10 Moon developments globally, including one in the Middle East. Despite persistent online claims of a near-term launch, Henderson said a 2027 opening in Dubai is unrealistic. If construction were to begin in 2027, the first Moon project would likely open around 2032.

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VALENTINE'S GIFTS

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