

The islandchief

travel news

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Email : news@islandchief.com | Hotline : +960 7980088



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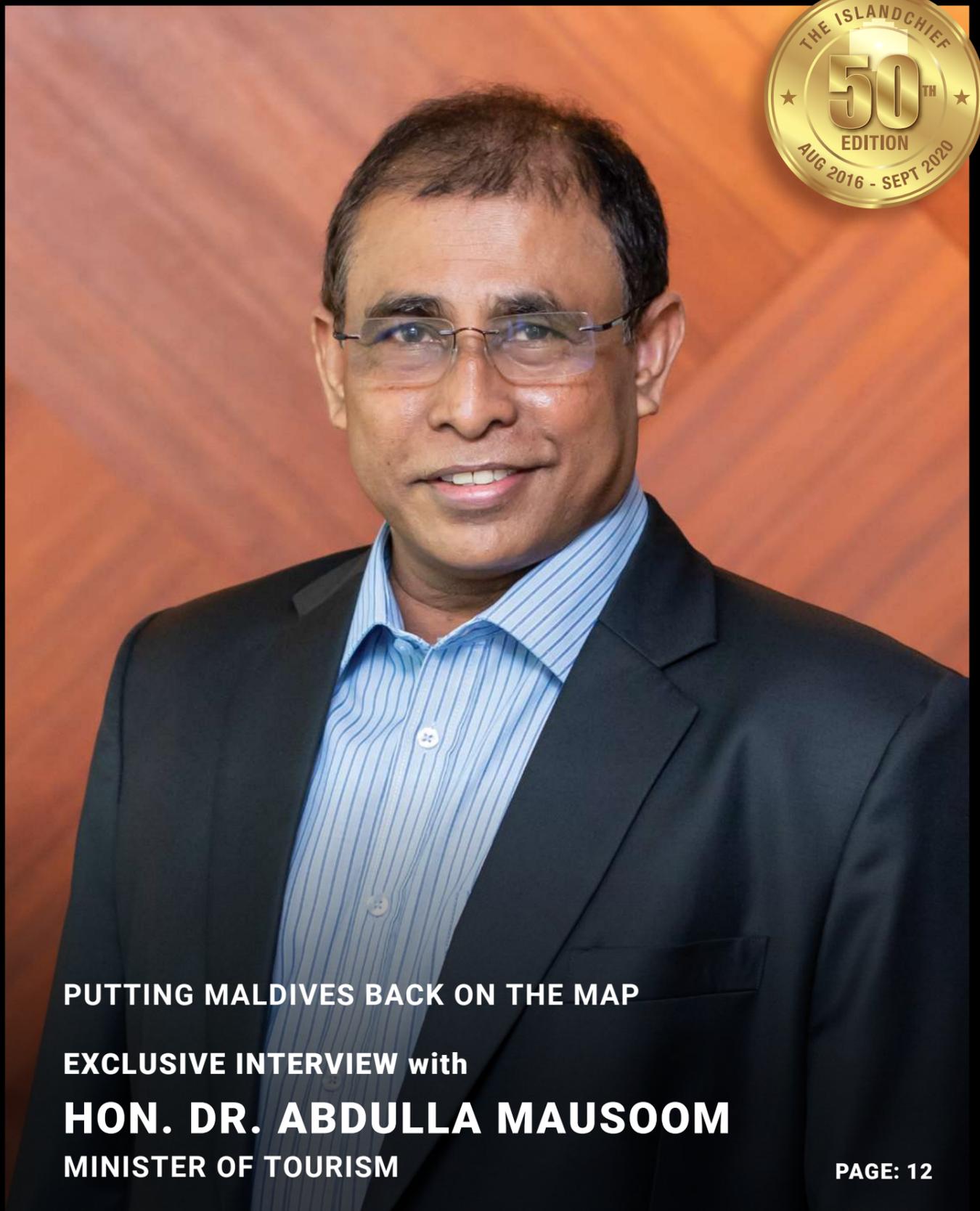
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PUTTING MALDIVES BACK ON THE MAP

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Innovation drives experiences



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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Managing Editor
Maesa Zaki

Director Marketing & PR
Ismail Hameed

Director of Finance
Mariyam Niuma

Managing Director
Ismail Shifraz

Director of Operations
Mohamed Shamin

Director of Sales & Marketing
Mariyam Maisha

Design & Layout
Naafee Ibrahim
Richard Mendonca

Accounts Executive
Yusra Naseer

Content Executive
Mariyam Zeena

Consultant
Ahmed Ijaz

Official Photographer
Mohamed Azmeel

Web Development
Ahmed Fazeel
Ibrahim Nisham (Paighde)

Distribution Support
Shahid Uddin



Dear Readers,

This month, The islandchief celebrates a whopping 4 years along with the tabloid's 50th Gold Edition - The islandchief has been consistently published every month since its initiation in September 2016. We've decided that now is as good a time as any to take stock and reflect on the past.

So much has changed in the world of travel in the last few years; airlines have come and gone; airports have been revamped; there are apps for every stage of the travel process; while old favourites are clamping down on over tourism, new destinations have become hip and cool; resorts and hotels have become super-luxe and also more conscientious; guest houses have become the rage, and the number of international travellers worldwide crossed the one-billion mark.

The Maldives is open. And so are our hearts. As we continue heading into the summer, the heat isn't the only thing that's rising. There has been a wave of optimism that has been slowly but surely building up momentum in recent weeks which is proving hard to ignore. It comes as no surprise to find that the travel-trade and the tourism & hospitality industry aren't putting all their eggs into one basket, but are taking a multi-layered approach in making plans for the future. There is tangible evidence that not only is the industry robust, but the future is looking very bright indeed.

One such piece of evidence is the appointment of the new Tourism Minister Dr. Abdulla Mausoom, who, in an exclusive interview, shared with us his views and hopes that the number of days guests spend in the Maldives will increase although arrival numbers are low, resulting in a much better yield for the country. Next, head over to page 21 to see who September's Personality of the Month is, and check out the deliciously authentic Maldivian dessert recipe in the Bon Appétit column on page 22.

The question of whether the situation can be saved has just one answer - and that is 'yes'. We fully trust this nation's leadership to help us move forward; we have faith in the Maldives' vision and strategy towards an even-better future, and we will continue helping it to do so - no matter what. We hope you enjoy reading our 50th Edition, and we'll see you very soon with more ideas, inspiring thought leadership and hope towards an amazing last quarter of 2020, and a fantastic start to 2021.

**Until next month,
The islandchief Team
Rediscover Maldives... the sunny side of life**

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VIA Receives Airport Health Accreditation Certificate from Airport Council International (ACI)

After implementation of consistent measures in the fight against COVID-19, Velana International Airport (VIA), the main gateway to the Maldives has received the much awaited "Airport Health Accreditation" by the Airport Council International (ACI).



for health measures established by ICAO, CART, EASA, and ACI recovery guidance, including ACI EUROPE's Guidelines for a Healthy Passenger Experience at Airports. ACI's Airport Health Accreditation programme assists airports by assessing new health measures and procedures introduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in accordance with ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force recommendations. Areas of assessment for accreditation include

cleaning and disinfection, physical distancing (where feasible and practical), staff protection, physical layout, passenger communications and passenger facilities. "To have successfully passed the strict audit by ACI demonstrates that our airport is a safe place to visit. This achievement will no doubt build our passenger confidence and also this would be a boost to Destination Maldives. This is the result of consistent efforts by our team and stakeholders and I thank each and every one who were involved," says MACL's CEO & MD Gordon Stewart.

Velana International Airport is the 2nd airport in the Asia Pacific Region and 12th from the world to receive the ACI Airport Health Accreditation, awarded by a special letter sent to MACL's CEO & MD Gordon Stewart by ACI World's Director General Luis Felipe de Oliveira on August 31, 2020. "I wish to extend my congratulations to you and the team at Maldives Airports Company Ltd accreditation in the Airports Council International (ACI) Airport Health Accreditation programme," says Director General Luis Felipe de Oliveira.

VIA achieved the certification by completing a tight assessment by ACI in alignment with the guidelines

The ACI Airport Health Accreditation (AHA) programme provides airports with an assessment of

how aligned their health measures are with the ACI Aviation Business Restart and Recovery guidelines and ICAO Council Aviation Restart Task Force recommendations along with industry best practices.

Benefits of the accreditation include:

- Enables airports to demonstrate to passengers, staff, regulators, and governments that they are prioritizing health and safety in a measurable, established manner.
- Enables airports to validate their own measures throughout their facilities and processes. Reassures the travelling public using the airport's facilities.
- Promotes the recognition of professional excellence in maintaining safe hygienic facilities. Promotes best practices and aligns efforts across the industry.
- Ensures harmonization between ICAO global guidance and industry implementation.
- Accreditation is voluntary with a request to join the programme initiated by the airport.

The Accreditation is based on guidance from the ICAO CART Take-Off document and ACI Recovery and Restart Best Practices which supplement the CART approach. They are consistent with CAPSCA recommendations for States, taking an airport centric approach to common requirements.

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ACROSS THE SKIES

Border Security System Installed at Maafaru International Airport

The Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology announced that the National Center for Information Technology (NCIT) completed the system installation on August 19, 2020.

The Minister of Communication, Science and Technology Hon. Mr. Mohamed Maleeh Jamal stated that “The technologically advanced security system installed at Maafaru International Airport will facilitate effortless travel for tourists to Noonu Atoll and with the implementation of this security system, all International Airports and Seaports across the country has secured its border control systems.”

Given the current situation, the ministry believes the security system will be of great convenience for the country with the arrival of tourists after borders reopened on July 15.

Maafaru International Airport consists of a 2200-meter runway, taxiways, apron with shoulder and service roads built to accommodate and provide all services to Airbus A320-200. The project was developed with a grant aid of USD 60 million from the Abu Dhabi Fund. Maafaru International Airport officially commenced operations in December 2019.

In the month of July, a PCR testing center was built at Maafaru International Airport in only 30 days, offering tourists and locals the convenience of receiving COVID-19 test result in less than 24 hours. Funded by Soneva and Velaa Private Island, the facility is operated by ADK Hospital. The center uses the Roche Lifecycle 96 machine, and can process up to 700 tests per day.



With plans to further expand Maafaru Airport to accommodate the Boeing 777 twin-jet aircrafts, it has been revealed that the government of the United

Arab Emirates (UAE) has approved funding for upcoming developments.

AirAsia Enters Strategic Partnership with Agoda



AirAsia, ASEAN's fastest growing travel and lifestyle e-commerce platform, and Agoda, the world's leading digital travel platform, have announced a strategic partnership to spur travel activities in Southeast Asia and strengthen AirAsia's super app offering. Through the sharing of flight and hotel inventories, travellers will gain access to a more extensive multi-product selection, enjoy greater convenience and benefit from superior value. Initiatives from the collaboration include travel bundles, membership privileges, as well as joint product marketing. Customers of AirAsia can now enjoy more variety with over 600,000 Agoda properties, combined with AirAsia's great value fares by booking through SNAP - offering flight and hotel packages with the best price guaranteed.



Tony Fernandes, CEO of AirAsia Group said: “I am excited to announce our partnership with Agoda, which is part of our group-wide strategy to revitalize travel as we anticipate the reopening of borders in Southeast Asia in the near future. Travellers can now enjoy a more seamless ‘browse-to-buy’ experience on AirAsia.com and book their flights and hotels through SNAP, which is our new way to fly and stay, at unbeatable prices. This collaboration reflects our commitment to providing greater convenience, choice and value to our customers, which has become ever more important in this post-COVID environment.”

John Brown, CEO of Agoda said: “The public's appetite for travel is still strong, and we believe that

our collaboration with AirAsia will help take the hassle out of travel by helping travellers to easily find great value deals as they venture out again. Equally important is the wider impact of this initiative between two of Southeast Asia's well-known and highly regarded travel brands, on the confidence of accommodation partners, hospitality providers and related aviation industry players.”

From its beginnings as an e-commerce start-up based in Singapore, launched in 2005, digital travel platform Agoda has grown to offer a global network of over 2.5 million properties in more than 200 countries and territories worldwide, offering travellers easy access to a wide choice of luxury and budget hotels, apartments, homes and villas, to suit all budgets and travel occasions. In 2019, Agoda added a flight product and packages to help make travel even easier.

AirAsia.com is ASEAN's fastest growing super app offering consumers travel and lifestyle products on a single platform. AirAsia leverages its digital ecosystem of 75 million users and over 15 product lines across travel, lifestyle, e-commerce and content to offer its consumers a personalised and seamless experience, powered by data and technology, so that now everyone can enjoy more than flights with AirAsia.

NEW OPENINGS

Avani Fares Maldives Resort to Open in 2021

Avani Hotels & Resorts announced the opening of 11 new properties by the end 2024, including its debut property in the Maldives, Avani Fares Maldives Resort.



“We are pleased that our partners are reaffirming their commitment to long-term growth with Avani, as demonstrated in their decision to continue with the delivery of at least seven new properties by the end of 2021. With yet more projects expected to be completed in the following two years and additional pipeline announcements coming soon, Avani continues to be the fastest-growing brand in the company,” said Dillip Rajakarier, CEO of Minor Hotels, the parent company of Avani Hotels and Resorts.

The new upscale Avani Fares Maldives Resort is located on Fares Island in Baa Atoll, renowned for its vibrant biodiversity from land to sea. Nearby dive site Ahivahfushi Beyru is an Eden for snorkellers and scuba enthusiasts thanks to a plethora of sea life from Hawksbill turtles to reef sharks and manta rays.

The untouched, private 12.4-hectare island promises a blissful setting and will be comprised of 200 guest rooms, including standard rooms and a selection of villas. Every attention will be given to wellbeing, while the décor blends the genuine pleasures of life, with modernity. Think soothing materials, textures plus high-tech equipment such as complimentary WiFi, media hub docking stations and 40-inch flat screen TVs.

On arrival guests will instantly be welcomed by an arresting view of the Indian Ocean from the open plan lobby. This communal living space will blend reception, lounge, meeting space and gourmet dining options, including The Pantry designer deli, an Avani hallmark serving comfort food and artisanal grab-and-go bites around the clock. Additional resort facility-highlights include; all-day restaurant, specialty restaurant, AvaniSpa,

AvaniKids and a large swimming pool and pool bar. Avani Fares Maldives Resort’s secluded northern location is a thrilling 45-minute journey by seaplane from Velana International Airport and just 30 minutes by speedboat from Baa Atoll’s newly opened domestic airport.

AVANI Hotels & Resorts was launched in 2011 as a sister brand to Anantara Hotels, Resorts & Spas, which currently has three resorts in the Maldives, including Anantara Kihavah which is also located in Baa Atoll. Offering all the details that matter, AVANI blends genuine hospitality and modern lifestyle features with a passion for design. The brand already has a presence in the Indian Ocean with two resorts in Sri Lanka and one in the Seychelles.



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IN A NUTSHELL

Baros Maldives to Re-Open on October 1 with Special Offers & Unique Tribute to Frontliners

Guests who stay at Baros this year will be entitled to a special rate and guests staying in October and November 2020 will be invited to enjoy exciting offers, creating spellbinding experiences.



For Body and Mind

Guests will receive an exclusive Champagne Breakfast in the sanctuary of their private villa while the sound of the waves and warm breeze from the ocean complete the scene, creating a truly beautiful memory of an extraordinary culinary experience.

As beautiful and bountiful are the natural surroundings of Baros, the more it means to give back and to help maintain and support the incredible underwater world. To help, Baros will sponsor a Coral Frame in the name of every guest staying between October and November 2020,

placing them in the translucent lagoon ringing the resort. Guests will receive regular updates on the progress of their Coral Frame and will be able to get to know the inhabitants of their own little coral garden during subsequent visits.

Celebrating Heroes

In gratitude to guests who worked as healthcare workers during this pandemic, Baros will reward them with the extra benefits of a complimentary couples' massage at the island's Serenity Spa, a private dinner for two on the beach, champagne upon arrival, and a choice of a free scheduled excursion with social distancing observed. To commemorate the selfless dedication of healthcare workers, Baros is creating coral frames spelling out "THANK YOU, HEROES" which will be placed in the waters of the island's lagoon so that the message of thanks will be permanent. The Resort Manager of Baros, Ibrahim Shijah, stated that despite the unprecedented times the world is

facing, Baros hopes that the positive consequences of the pandemic, along with compassion, unity and kindness, will be remembered by the tribute.

Baros is a boutique, private island resort of 75 overwater and beachside garden villas, just 25 minutes by speedboat from Velana International Airport. Guests can relax in a tranquil, tropical setting, embark on an amazing culinary journey in the three restaurants and bars, dine on a secluded sandbank or the unique Piano Deck in the middle of the lagoon, and take part in memorable snorkelling experiences around the flourishing house-reef. The resort has been welcoming guests since 1973, and has spent decades honing its services and cultivating its environment, making it a legendary resort. The island has been consistently winning prestigious awards from guests and travel professionals for quality accommodation and outstanding service excellence and is a member of Small Luxury Hotels Of The World.

You & Me by Cocoon Introduces Luxury Wedding Packages at H2O - Underwater Restaurant

You & Me by Cocoon Maldives has announced the launch of luxury wedding and proposal packages at the resort's underwater restaurant – H2O, designed by Italy's finest designer- Lago.

"Imagine saying 'Yes' or 'I do' on your perfect day and tying the knot in paradise with a luxury underwater wedding in the most romantic ambiance such as our fully submerged, underwater restaurant that gives a 360-degree view of the Maldives' breathtaking marine environment," read a statement by the resort.

The underwater "Deeply in Love" ceremony starts from USD 2,500 per couple and includes a wedding coordinator & master of ceremony, flower decorations, underwater wedding wishes, a flower bouquet & lapel flower, a 3-tier wedding cake, a bottle of champagne for the toast, divers swaying in the coral with "congratulations" signs and traditional coconut drink refreshments.

Supplementary incentives include 30 digital wedding pictures plus a 30-second video of the ceremony, romantic bed decorations, in-villa dining breakfast with 2 glasses of champagne, 2 traditional Maldivian sarongs, a couple's massage at You&Me Spa, plant a tree ceremony, wedding plaque souvenir and a cruise trip with some bubbly and canapés, as well as Maldivian Bodu-Beru drummers and a decorated buggy.

Wedding proposal packages start from USD 500 and guests can either choose from 'The Vow Package' or 'The Forever Package'. The Vow Package includes a surprise proposal with a diver holding a 'Will you marry me?' sign, two glasses of champagne and chocolate fondue. The Forever Package includes a surprise proposal



with a diver holding a 'Will you marry me?' sign, two glasses of champagne, chocolate fondue, a cake, photographs and romantic bed decoration.

An adults-only island, targeting couples, honeymooners and friends, You & Me by Cocoon Maldives is a quiet, relaxing retreat, far away from

other hotels. It is a private, rustic and romantic island in a beautiful, untouched corner of the Maldives. The luxury 5-star resort is located in Raa Atoll, northern Maldives, just 20 minutes by speedboat from Ifuru domestic airport, or a 45-minute scenic seaplane ride from Velana International Airport.

IN A NUTSHELL

Dhigali Maldives Introduces New Premium All-Inclusive Experience

From October 1, 2020, Dhigali Maldives will be repositioned as a Premium All-inclusive property, promising the ultimate way to experience everything this verdant paradise has to offer.

Unlike most all-inclusive packages, at Dhigali Maldives your entitlements start from the moment guests arrive until the moment they depart. The instant guests touch down at Velana International Airport, every need will be taken care of. The package includes a personal meet and greet service plus escorted transfer, as well as complimentary VIP lounge access.

The Dhigali Maldives Premium All-Inclusive experience is carefully crafted to ensure it is as fun and stress-free as possible. This allows guests to access superb 'wine and dine' choices with four restaurants and two bars on the island including the minibar.

An exciting array of activities will be available to guests on the premium

all-inclusive package, including non-motorized water sports, dolphin cruise adventures and more. There is an activity every day of the week; from cultural music programmes (Boduberu) to fitness activities or yoga for the guests who are looking for a more relaxing stay. For the young guests (4-12 years), daily activities are available on a complimentary basis at "Play", the children's club.

To set foot on Dhigali's sands is to escape into an adventure. On land, at sea, underwater, the thrill of discovery awaits. A warm Maldivian welcome extends to all guests at Dhigali. Innovation in design, breathtaking scenery and inspired, intuitive service creates a truly sublime island experience



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IN A NUTSHELL

Anantara Hotels, Resorts & Spas to Host World Wellness Weekend Activities Around the Globe

Anantara Hotels, Resorts & Spas invites guests and communities to join an international celebration of wellness with a host of activities and holistic experiences to commemorate World Wellness Weekend on September 19 and 20, 2020.



To mark this year's World Wellness Weekend, almost 20 Anantara hotels and resorts in 11 different countries will host a series of wellness activities ranging from yoga, guided meditations, sleep restoration workshops, chanting, breathwork, sound healing therapies, alms offerings to Buddhist monks, personal training sessions, Muay Thai classes, high-intensity interval training, aqua aerobics, workshops on nutrition and nourishment, and healthy culinary discoveries. From the serenity of yoga to the feat of martial arts, and the gift of a

good night's sleep, Anantara Spa supports the five key pillars of World Wellness Weekend: Sleep and Restoration, Nutrition and Nourishment, Vitality and Movement, Serenity and Mindfulness, Purpose and Solidarity.

Activities in Anantara's Maldives resorts will be streamed via social media channels. The team at Anantara Dhigu Resort will lead a HIIT workout, and the resident yoga instructor at Anantara Veli Resort will perform a meditative chant while resident yoga

instructor Sharath Ram will host a sandbank aerial yoga tutorial.

Anantara's sister properties in the Maldives will also be participating in World Wellness Weekend. Naladhu Private Island Maldives will stream an Abhyanga tutorial, while Niyama Private Islands will host energetic classes and sessions to view via social media. In line with enhanced COVID-19 hygiene and safety measures, group sessions will be socially distanced and in locations where international travel is restricted, the events will be hosted online via social media.

Named the World's Best Hotel Spa Brand at the 2017, 2018, and 2019 World Spa Awards, Anantara Spa draws upon Thailand's wellness traditions, cultural inspirations and therapeutic ingredients to offer unique signature journeys deeply rooted in authentic luxury, holistic practices and indigenous experiences. Anantara Spas are a haven of peace and tranquility – an utterly relaxing and rejuvenating experience in unique settings. Currently, Anantara Spa operates over 40 spas in 16 countries across Asia, the Indian Ocean, the Middle East, Africa, South America and Europe.

Experience Complimentary Yoga with Visiting Specialist Lamirse Motta at Vakkaru Maldives

Vakkaru Maldives welcomes registered nutritionist and exceptionally experienced, multi-styled yoga teacher Lamirse Motta, offering guests a chance to experience complimentary yoga at Vakkaru's ocean-facing deck until the end of September

Lami is the latest specialist to visit as part of the initiative of Vakkare, a new standard launched in luxury hospitality, placing the concept of care at the core of all that Vakkaru Maldives offers. Comprising of four pillars - We Kare, Self Kare, Let's Kare and After Kare - Vakkare incorporates not just the resort's practical responses to the challenge of operating a remote private-island resort in the age of a pandemic but also considers the physical, social and emotional needs of guests who have sought out this peaceful retreat as a timeless sanctuary in which to rest, rejuvenate and refocus following the exhaustions of the last few months. A mantra that will guide the Vakkaru team through this new era, We Kare signifies the resort team's dedication to sincerely investing in the wellbeing of its members and everyone who visits.

Vakkaru Maldives has always upheld the highest hygiene standards, but nonetheless various new measures have been introduced in response to the emergence of COVID-19. They include thorough medical checks for team members and health screenings for new arrivals, alongside enhanced sanitisation practices and the provision to guests of We Kare packs to include face masks and other personal items and keepsakes. While social distancing



is now a consideration around the world, its implementation didn't require a drastic change to the property's infrastructure. With the protection of privacy, a consideration from day one, villas, restaurant seating and the like have always allowed for exclusivity.

Self Kare refers to the many restorative, wellness-minded experiences and services that will



be available to every guest at Vakkaru. Among them are a range of enhanced light- and no-touch spa treatments and rituals that will complement the resort's most popular massages and facials. Those returning to Vakkaru will find a greater emphasis on visiting practitioners who specialise in meditation and yoga, alongside a range of transcendental sound therapies facilitated by the reverberations of crystal healing bowls. The ultimate new spa immersion is the resort's signature Merana Healing Journey, a day-long ritual that incorporates yoga, sound healing and a rebalancing coconut shell massage.

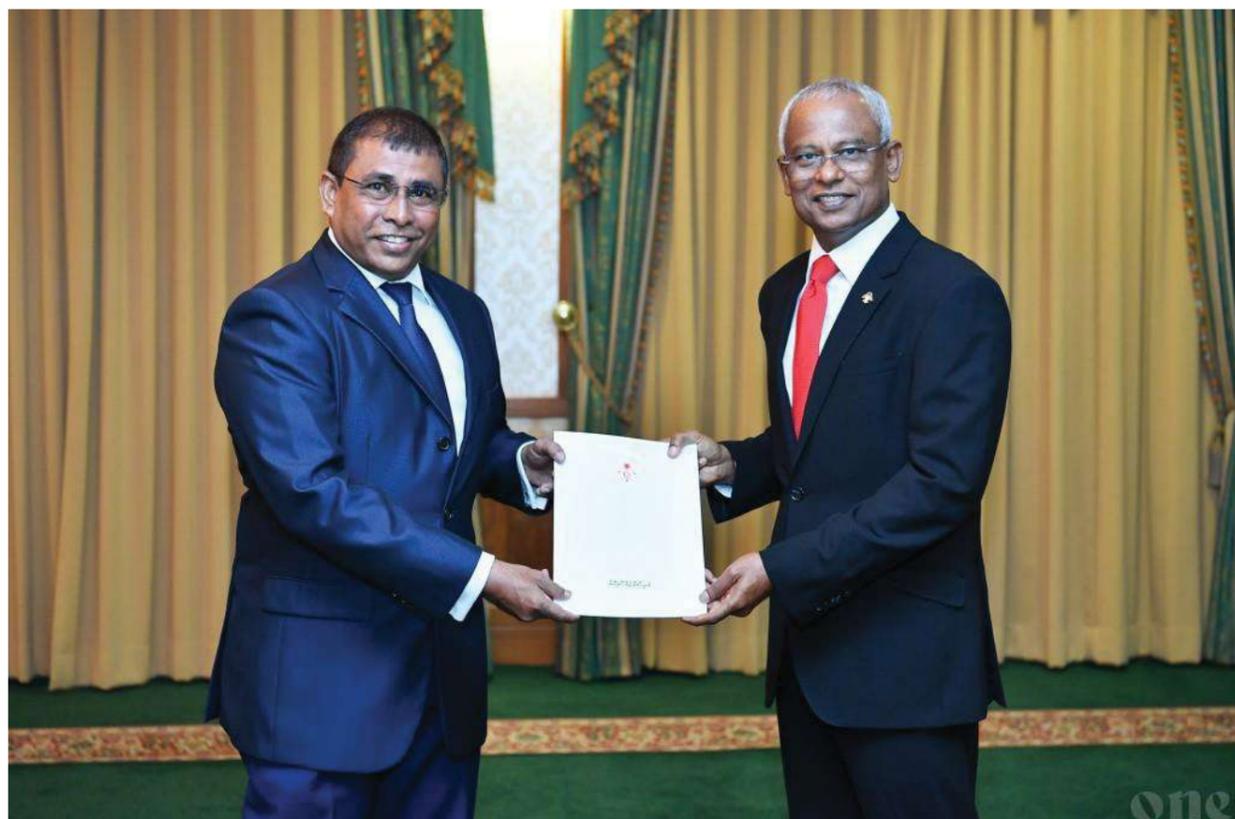
Vakkare's After Kare will be a wellness-centred loyalty programme providing guests with tips from visiting practitioners and the Vakkaru team, alongside a range of exclusive offers and special surprises.



THE NEW **CIP/VIP** TERMINAL

@ Velana International Airport (VIA) is under Development to meet the needs of today's modern traveller. The total transformation of CIP/VIP Terminal in terms of its infrastructure and services has made the Terminal stand out in terms of its services and ambience and takes care of all the airport formalities for its guests in an atmosphere of comfort and luxury.

PUTTING MALDIVES BACK ON THE MAP



“ In the Maldives, we take great pride in providing a service that reflects the traditions of our hospitality with warm, beautiful smiles, and that no other country can replicate. ”

Strung like pearls across the Indian Ocean, the Maldives are acclaimed as a tropical paradise of pristine beaches and clear cobalt and turquoise waters. This singular country features some of the best sand, sun and surf to be found anywhere, with world-class diving, ultra-luxurious resorts, the most chilled-out guest houses and the exciting liveaboards. In an Exclusive Interview with The islandchief, the newly appointed Tourism Minister Hon. Dr. Abdulla Mausoom, expressed hopes that the number of days guests spend in the Maldives will increase although arrival numbers are low, resulting in a much better yield for the country. He hopes to find a collectively defined way forward to make the Maldives a globally competitive tourism destination.

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW with HON. DR. ABDULLA MAUSOOM MINISTER OF TOURISM

The Maldives was the first South Asian destination to reopen for tourism since the global shutdown. What are the preparations and strategies that are being put in place to revive the country's much-admired tourism industry?

It is very exciting for all of us to be listed as the first country to open the borders in this part of the world. For the opening, for the near future and even now - the prime aspect is safety. The second aspect is convenience. Safety and convenience are somewhat challenging to intertwine, because one compromises the other. Now, there are a few little extra procedures that are being required, and it may cause some inconvenience for travellers who have previously experienced the Maldives. However, all-in-all, our main strategy is to make sure that all the tourists who come to the Maldives, as well as the people who are working in the tourism industry are very safe. Now that the new initiatives of the Government involve more locals in the tourism sector; such as island-hopping, operating souvenir shops in local islands and all that, and once tourism is fully opened, safety of the public is also taken into consideration. With safety, comes a bit of inconvenience, but we want our guests to have a very beautiful experience of the Maldives with peace of mind.

Since the Maldivian borders reopened for tourism on July 15, 2020, most of the resorts have already opened their shores, with many more to follow. Going forward, what are the priorities for this industry, and where do you see the biggest opportunities and challenges?

The biggest opportunity for us, of course, is that we are part of only the few who have opened up the borders, and also the fact that the Maldives' unique geographical characteristics enable us to conduct a very safe tourism experience. In our major sector - the resorts - tourists will be able to come from their country, get through the airport, head to the resort and have a very private and relaxing stay, very safely. And the second sector - safari vessels - will also be the same, totally safe. Now, the next sector is the guest house sector which will reopen

on October 15th - once fully open, this will be completely safe as well. All-in-all, the biggest opportunity for the total industry is that we've got the geographical characteristics and commitment from all the stakeholders to safely manage tourism.

The challenge I see is in the numbers anticipated; due to border restrictions in source markets and flight availability, the volume of tourists we can generate in the coming months is not much. We are anticipating perhaps just over 100,000 in the upcoming three to four months - if it gets better, of course we will get a bigger number. When all the facilities are open, one of the biggest challenges would be to generate a good yield.

Another challenge is the investment climate which, from the investor's perspective, we need to improve. Many new products have been initiated and are in various phases of development, but not complete yet. So, we have to make sure that the products on the drawing board, and those that have stalled after commencement, move forward - all the way to fruition.

With regard to the market, the key challenge we have is that Maldives is ideal for the seniors market. But this pandemic is not friendly to seniors. So, naturally a huge chunk of our market is forced to reduce their travel. Having said that, the Maldives is still the safest option available for the seniors market.

Due to travel restrictions, the average stay is also going to be long. Previously, we had an average stay of 7-8 days, and now we predict 14 days or more. So, that will also be an opportunity that the industry can capitalize on and benefit the whole country.

As there is no record of community spread of COVID-19 in the Maldives, except in the Greater Malé Area, compulsory on-arrival negative PCR tests certificates for all tourists was introduced with effect from September 10th, which further reinforces safety and makes the Maldives one of

the safest destinations in the whole world.

Numerous stakeholders and individuals in the industry bring forth varied opinions regarding which segments of the market should be targeted as the country works to revive its tourism industry. Do you think the Maldives should be marketed towards the luxury high-end consumers, mid-range consumers or budget travellers?

The beauty of Maldives is that we are ready for the world market. We have got a product that is so diversified that we can target all the markets. Of course, people would be happier when guests spend more money and when the staff get lots of tips and other benefits, but we should have a balance. Especially after this pandemic, we have to think of the global market and the spending power of the source markets. When we think about it, many of the people who would have joined the workforce and started earning this year, wouldn't be getting that much; many who were in jobs already, have lost their jobs, so we have to really focus on those who will be travelling.

The beauty for us now, is the diversity of the Maldives tourism product - from the very high end to the very reasonable homestay-style guest houses, down to earth safaris and other aspects. We maintain our traditional image of the Maldives' natural beauty; Cultural Tourism and Ecotourism are becoming very strong, and I think Maldives is now geared to cater to all the markets. The government encourages product and service diversity, so that the Maldives would be the first choice, irrespective of the source market.

With the commencement of the new normal, in your opinion what are the top key markets that the Maldives should target?

The markets that have the spending power! Before the pandemic, if you look at the market comparison, we had a very high arrival of Chinese tourists - who have money and spend money. Then we have the Indian market - a strong upcoming market, which also has the spending power. I think these two are very good and equally

important. India is particularly important as it's very close and we should be able to utilize that market to manage demand fluctuations. Both countries, both markets, have got a huge volume.

We must maintain our traditional markets. The UK is an opinion leader and a trendsetter. The UK market is important especially for publicity and global trendsetting, which is essential. For diving, we particularly need the German market, they have always been our loyal partners, and the Italian market who were the very first tourists in the Maldives, are very crucial. I think all-in-all, besides the mentioned five markets, we have to focus on the Arab market. They are high spenders and the Maldivian product is very ideal for them. Even the Russian market is very significant and are also big spenders. Far-flung markets like Latin America who come here for surfing, and the USA are also crucial.

Another segment that we should be focusing on, regardless of nationality, is the expats in the region. Those in the Emirates, Qatar, Singapore, Thailand – these are hubs where the international expat community is huge, plus they have disposable income and get short breaks. We should also concentrate on the Niche markets.

What are the opportunities available for the country's youth – school-leavers, millennials – to join the tourism industry of the Maldives?

I believe that school-leavers should seek a professional career path in the tourism industry. There are loads of professions; if you want to be a nurse – become a nurse and join the industry; if you want to be an engineer – get an engineering qualification and join the industry. After leaving school, get into an institute, college or training center in a field of your choice, get a certificate, get qualified in that area, and join the industry. This would be better for eventual career advancements.

Most millennials will now be above the age of twenty, so I believe they can play a crucial role in shaping the industry. They need to seek the jobs that they love to do, and the most important thing is ensuring that the job pays enough. Now, because of the way the tourism products are being developed, many will be able to live with their families. You just have to decide what you want to do in the industry, all the jobs are there. Tourism has jobs for all professions possible – anything and everything. The job must be something that you are passionate about, not what your parents or friends want you to do. It must be a job close to your heart, and it should generate enough income to meet your needs.

I really believe in internships. Applying for a job usually requires about two years' experience, but if nobody gives you a job, you will never be able to tick that experience box. So, internships provide an entrance for experience and I hope that in the future, many resorts, guest houses, safari vessels, diving facilities, watersports centres and other tourism related businesses will provide even more opportunities for internships.

With regards to the ministry, after coming here, the first thing I did was open up for internship – it acts as a platform for the youth to get a sense of the ministry's work. It will be useful to get a placement for certain courses, and when applying for jobs. We wanted to have only 10 interns, but due to the high number of applicants who met the entry requirements, we have now decided to take 25 interns. In the coming days and months, we will have even more opportunities for people to get a feel of working in the Tourism Ministry. Unless you come and have a feel of it – it can be difficult to commit yourself to a job.

We are also working with the Ministry of Higher Education. We want people to make their career decision based on some kind of experience. So, we will provide opportunities

for youngsters to experience working in the industry before making big career decisions.

As someone who has worked in the industry and managed the biggest resort in the Maldives for four years, there is a myth I would like to debunk regarding the safety of women in the industry. The resort environment is one of the safest environments for anyone, especially for young females to work – it is even safer than working in Malé. I hope to see more women in tourism employment in the future. And as I mentioned earlier, now you don't really have to be away from your family, because the industry has come closer to you.

What strategies should be prioritized by the guest house and boating industry stakeholders to provide reassurance for their guests?

I think this is a critical element that we need to focus on. The guest house and liveaboard products themselves allow guest-host interactions more than the resorts, the safety of guests, staff and community is of utmost importance for us. That means no shortcuts, no easy ways. It's absolutely essential to follow the guidelines and SOPs to the max from the very bottom of their hearts, not because regulators mandated it, but because of their love for the industry, their love for the people. I have full confidence in them, because they are the ones taking the initiatives. So, the priority for the guest houses and the safari vessels is to ensure the safety of their guests and staff. Once we prioritize safety, everything else will fall into place very smoothly.



What are the key USPs we should focus on when promoting and marketing the Maldives as a destination?

I think many would ask "Why should we reinvent the wheel?". The Maldives' unique selling point has been successful through past decades, and those unique selling points are still there – they haven't changed. So, the Maldives' natural beauty with its "one-island, one-resort" concept would be a very strong seller. There are other countries following us, but they can never be "The Maldives".

The guest houses on the local islands are also a rather unique concept, especially with the interactions with local residents and the diversity of Maldivian culture. All inhabited islands are different from one another. There could be two islands very close to each other, but their cultures, food and even their dialect could be completely different. This cultural diversity is a very unique component.

Then we have the upcoming regional developments which will be key aspects we could utilise; For example, the Royal Air Force base in Addu City and its "story" will be a unique seller; and in the Northern region, the island of Utheemu in Haa Alif Atoll, is a treasure trove of rich Maldivian history – it is the birthplace of Sultan Mohamed Thakurafaanu, a national hero of the Maldives who drove away the Portuguese ruling over the country from 1558-1573. These are all historical and cultural links that make the Maldives unique. We have these elements to capitalize on. The product diversifications we are aiming at also include new shipwreck sites and surf points.

The millennial market is massive, and we have the products for a perfect match. We have to distinctively develop them and convey the right message. There will be many new USPs that we will acquire and market in the coming days. Small things like underwater restaurants, underwater spas or maybe underwater guest rooms that have already been here for a while, and more are in the pipeline. Similar products could be found elsewhere, but we are among the very few who offer them. So, we can rightfully claim that these are unique selling points. In the Maldives, we take great pride in providing a service that reflects the traditions of our hospitality with warm, beautiful smiles, and that no other country can replicate.

The country's branding, "Maldives...the sunny side of life" was launched in 2003. Do you believe the Maldives should be marketed under various destinations brandings with regards to the different regions or atolls of the country, or do you think the country should be promoted under one single campaign?

The Maldives needs to do what's best for the destination at any given time. I am happy about my involvement in the Maldives Tourism Promotion Board's Team, and in the development of sub themes such as "the colorful side of life", "the romantic side of life", "the thrilling side of life" and "the spiritual side of life". These slogans have been very effective to portray varied attractions of the Maldives. We should not completely revamp the brand, but with time and with new developments, it will be important that we review it. If the industry feels that we should change it, then we should change it. The industry should have a significant say on destination brand decisions.

Maldives is a brand in itself, whatever way we put it. As we open more international airports, such as Hanimaadhoo, Gan and others, each region, atoll, or island, would come up with their selling stories that they should use in their branding as well.

What initiatives have been put in place in terms of sustainable tourism in the Maldives?

Earlier we focused on environmental sustainability as well as cultural sustainability. These two are continuing and we have now acquired the third dimension, "economic sustainability" which is very much incorporated in tourism development now. We are safeguarding our assets for the future generations, and we are facilitating social happiness. Our development initiatives are in line with international sustainable goals. From the sustainability perspective, I believe we are very much on the right track.

Please tell us about your future plans for the industry and how you see the rebound of the leisure market post-pandemic?

We are heading in the right direction, but the Maldivian product has to be re-energized. New creative developments have to come up. There is a huge focus on rebuilding investor-confidence, and also in creating opportunities for product owners in terms of gaining access to investors. We need to focus on the ownership of tourism supply by Maldivians, as well as tourism employment for locals. Maldivians should concentrate on high-pay jobs across the tourism industry. There should be equal distribution of the industry across the country, so that the entire Maldives would benefit from it. Another important point is that we will take care of our people, because a country can come up with wonderful products, but without the people, the products would be meaningless. We need to emphasize on human capital and human resource development. We need to reach the markets across the globe and welcome them to Maldives.

I am passionate about tourism. I love tourism and all its dimensions.

EVENTS & AWARDS

SATA Concludes Season 1 of South Asian Digital Travel Conversation

The South Asian Digital Travel Conversation is a virtual conversation with leading industry stakeholders organized by the South Asian Travel Awards (SATA), and the organisations has successfully concluded the first season of the series with a total of 15 episodes



The final episode was presented by Founder of Highrise & President of SATA Ismail Hameed, Former Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation of the Maldives and Jury Member of SATA 2020, Dr. Mahamood Shoughee, and Chief Explorer & Founder of India City Walks (A Unit of City Explorers Pvt. Ltd.) and Jury Member of SATA 2020, Dr. Sachin Bansal.

The aim of the South Asian Digital Travel Conversation is to discuss in-depth, to create awareness and to voice the challenges that are being faced in the Travel Trade & Hospitality Industry of the South Asian region.

The conversation, guided by two moderators, was purposefully designed as a series, spread across multiple episodes of 60 minutes each, with special guests from South Asia's Travel, Trade & Hospitality Industry. Each episode highlights a specific topic, and the diverse industry professionals share their voice – their views, experiences, opinions and hindrances – with regional factual data.

The South Asian Travel Awards (SATA) is the first ever regional travel award endorsed by multi-national associations providing the tourism sector of South Asia with recognition towards their facilities and service excellence. SATA aims to

encourage and raise service standards within the region's tourism industry. The one-of-a-kind brand, with affiliations from regional associations, ensures a smooth and transparent process. The judging panel consists of high-profile senior representatives selected from destinations with vast knowledge and background of the industry to assure an accurate and fair process. The SATA Team has proudly unveiled their platinum partner as Gulf Craft Maldives and Gold Partner as The Hawks Pvt Ltd and look forward to hosting the prestigious South Asian Travel Awards Grand Gala in the Maldives by the last quarter of 2020. SATA is a Highrise concept.



To watch all episodes of South Asian Digital Travel Conversation -



Maldives Secures Dream Dive Destination Award at Marine Diving Fair 2020

Maldives has won the prestigious Dream Dive Destination award at the Dive and Travel Awards, hosted by the Marine Diving Fair 2020. This is the 12th consecutive year that Maldives has won this award.

The Marine Diving Fair is an annual scuba diving and beach resorts fair that takes place in Tokyo, Japan. It is a platform created to cater to a large number of scuba divers and marine enthusiasts. It has been noted that the dive segment of Maldives attracts the most visitors from Japan. Thereby, the Marine Diving Fair opens the opportunity to reach travellers in the dive segment.

The Maldives Marketing & Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC) has been doing continuous marketing activities in the Japanese market and in other global markets as well, focusing on the online & digital advertising opportunities. Some of the main activities recently conducted include the Visit Maldives Later campaign on social media platforms, Maldives: The Sun Will Shine Again - Facebook live event, and the webinar series conducted under the Rediscover Maldives campaign, which will be used to



share information about the new norms of travelling to the Maldives and to showcase the experiences that await tourists. The webinar series focuses on the different markets including Japan, Southeast Asia, and other major markets to Maldives.

The Japanese market is ranked 10th among the source market to Maldives based on the February

2020 arrival statistics. By the end of February 2020, 4,052 Japanese arrivals were recorded, which is a growth of 2.4% compared to the previous year. In 2019 a total of 44,251 arrivals were recorded, which is a growth of 4.6%. With the continued positive growth in arrivals from the market, the Maldives is hopeful and ready to welcome tourists back, and to ensure that it's a safe haven for all.

IN THE NEWS

Gulf Craft Maldives Launches SilverCat 34 Luxury

Gulf Craft Maldives has launched its all-new SilverCat 34 Luxury. This model is the first catamaran to be added to Gulf Craft Maldives' production line. The SilverCat 34 Luxury will be a distinctive addition to the fleet of speedboats built by Gulf Craft Maldives. This catamaran is also the first solar-equipped speedboat, which runs all its equipment including the air conditioning.

This multipurpose SilverCat 34 Luxury is built as a closed deck layout providing comfortable transportation. The inside and outside seating areas are generous and can seat up to 14 guests. It also houses a dedicated washroom, fully equipped kitchenette, and an ample amount of storage

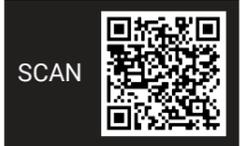
spaces to welcome guests of high-end resorts and 5-star tourist companies.

At a length of 34 feet (10.47m) and a beam of 11 feet (3.24m), the SilverCat 34 Luxury features dual, high-pitch hulls that offer excellent stability at high-speeds in different sea conditions. The advanced hull design, stretching from the shipyard's pedigree in building performance catamarans, also offers much more power options than conventional catamarans. The current model is powered by twin 300hp engines that can reach speeds of up to 40 knots at full load. The boat has been cruising the beautiful islands of Maldives since July of this year. The speedboat has attracted a lot of attention from

tour operators and resort managers in the Maldives.

As Gulf Craft Maldives celebrates 19 years of boat building in the Republic, this addition to the fleet is a testimony of the company's dedication to serving the people of Maldives. The company is also keen on further enhancing transportation methods to make them more efficient, smart, and economical. Gulf Craft Maldives is the first Emirati boat building company established in the Republic of Maldives.

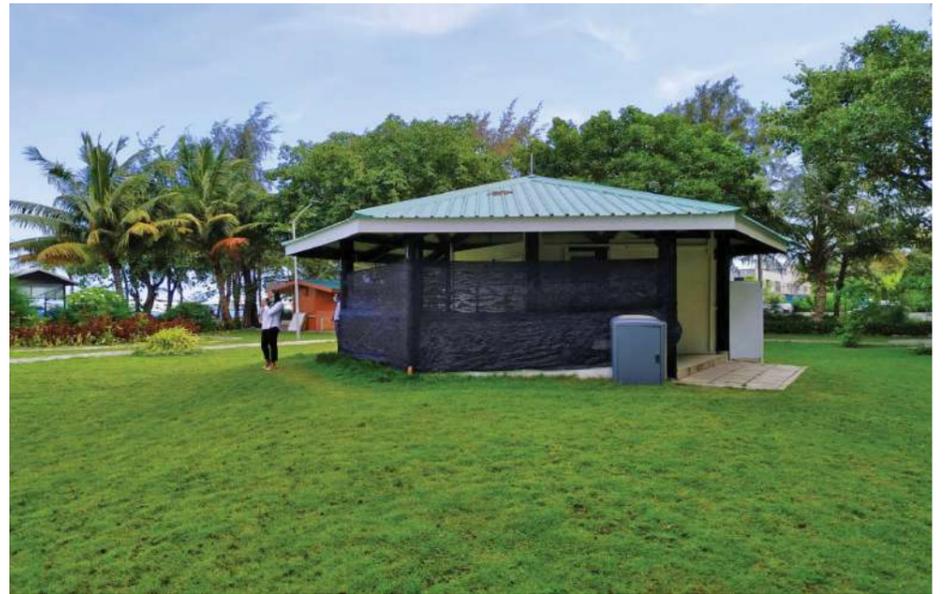
To watch video of SilverCat 34 Luxury



IN THE NEWS

The First PCR Sampling Station in Hulhumalé for Passengers Departing from Liveboards

The NBAM together with the Ministry of Tourism, HDC, the HPA and the Maldives Police Service have established the first PCR sampling station in Hulhumalé for passengers departing from liveboards.



The special testing hut located near the jetty area in Hulhumalé was a proactive initiative proposed by the National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM) to the Ministry of Tourism and Housing Development Corporation Limited (HDC). The team coordinated and set up the hut in five days to facilitate the key stakeholders in the industry, with the support of the Health protection Agency (HPA) team

and the Maldives Police Service. The first guest PCR sampling test was collected at the testing booth on August 11, 2020.

According to the Ministry's statement, vessels operating or cruising across the country may coordinate with the atoll or regional hospital focal points to make arrangements for sampling. Liveboards are required to keep a

stock of UTM testing kits and make necessary arrangements for sample transportation through the respective atoll collection points or any other means of transportation.

The Ministry of Tourism advises all facilities to adhere to the guidelines set forth by all relevant authorities and reminds all facilities to ensure that tourists, who require a negative

PCR test result for their outbound flight or onward destination, are not taken to the airport for departure without a negative test result on hand.

Details of the guests to be tested must be shared in advance to info@boating.mv or +960 7970033 (Ahmed Visaam Hussain, NBAM) in order to pre-book testing and make the arrangements.

Surf Magazine “Dhevi Hifaafa” Releases Its First Issue

The first local surf magazine “Dhevi Hifaafa” has been officially launched at a ceremony held on September 2, 2020, at the Head Office of the Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Cooperation (MMPRC).

“Dhevi Hifaafa” aims to document and archive the long and rich history of surfing in the Maldives. The magazine explores and provides opportunities to nurture journalism, photography, videography and other surf-related activities. It pledges and works to create a hub and dialogue for environmental awareness as well as supporting local brands by promoting their endeavours.

“Dhevi Hifaafa”, the name of the magazine, when translated in the local language Dhivehi is “addiction”, with regards to the passion and desire that flows through Maldivian surfers and is only justified as such. The Magazine was founded by Nahshal Nasir and Amir Amin Didi, both surfers who have brought their different experiences together to explore and deliver news about surfing in the Maldives through various mediums.

Dhevi Hifaafa is an annual publication which is



available for free via their website. This first issue is now available for download on www.dhevihifaafa.com.

Printed publications are available at selected outlets across Malé.

Ooredoo Maldives: SuperNet Upgrades, Exciting Partnerships, & Launches

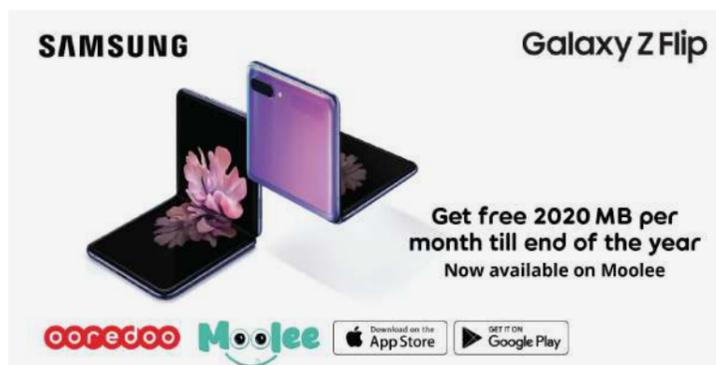
- Ooredoo Upgrades SuperNet Plans: 5X Speeds and up to 68% Increased Data Allowances
- Ooredoo Atholhu Dhuvun Officially Concludes
- Ooredoo Maldives Announces Partnership with Sri Lanka's Leading Telemedicine Platform, oDoc
- Messi & Zuvaan Masveriya Features in Special Campaign to Promote the Best Internet Experience in the Maldives
- Ooredoo Maldives Launches Samsung Galaxy Z Flip in the Maldives with Free Monthly Bonus Data Until the End of the Year

Ooredoo Maldives celebrated 15 years of service, throughout which time it has made continuous investments and brought notable improvements in expanding and enhancing the network across the nation. The company recently **revamped its SuperNet Fixed Broadband** portfolio with up to 5 times the internet speeds, and up to 68% bigger allowances on customers' existing plans, at no additional cost. The enhancements have also been extended to increased allowances on SuperNet add-ons and much faster throttled speeds. The upgrades went live with the renewal of internet packages earlier on August 15, 2020. More information about these exciting changes to the SuperNet Plans can be viewed on Ooredoo Maldives' award winning App or via the company's website at:

<http://www.ooredoo.mv/ooredoo-supernet/>

As part of Ooredoo's celebrations for 15 successful years, the company held a first-of-its-kind virtual run across all twenty atolls of the Maldives. "Atholhu Dhuvun" weekend held from August 28 to 29, was joined by over 5000 runners from across the Maldives. The virtual run featured two categories; preselected runners completed a 15km run across 20 atolls and a 5km category was open for the public to participate from where ever they are. Participants joined the virtual 5K Fun Run from their homes or outside and were given the chance to complete the run anytime throughout the weekend (August 28 & 29). Using the recommended running apps (Strava, Garmin Connect, Runtastic, Nike Run Club and Runkeeper) participants tracked their run and claimed their medals by submitting a screenshot of the completed run route. The 15K Relay across the 20 atolls, held on the evening of August 28, featured a runner from each atoll showcasing the beautiful running routes across the Maldives, which greatly differ from region to region. Together with its partners, Ooredoo prepared exciting giveaways for participants; By sharing Atholhu Dhuvun moments on social media, a lucky participant was able to win an iPhone SE, 100 lucky finishers won MVR 100 vouchers from Ooredoo's partner Habitus Fresh, and by uploading the Finisher's Virtual Medal to social media pages, participants were given the chance to win a voucher worth MVR 1000 from The Marathon Shop or a Dinner for Two from Medmex Bistro.

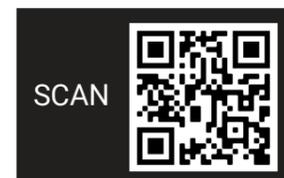
Ooredoo Maldives further announced its partnership with **oDoc** - Sri Lanka's leading telemedicine platform, connecting patients with doctors for audio/video consultation with an aim of providing high quality health care that is universally accessible and affordable to all. Customers will be able to consult a doctor online and charge it to their phone bill or deduct the fee from their postpaid or prepaid package, eliminating the need to provide credit card/debit



card. oDoc virtual clinic provides access to medical consultation from over 450 Sri Lankan doctors including general practitioners, pediatricians, psychiatrists, dermatologists, gynaecologists and more. In the coming months oDoc will expand their doctor profiles by onboarding Maldivian doctors onto the platform. All doctors on oDoc are fully qualified, registered and have at least 5 years of post-internship experience. Doctors on oDoc can also issue prescription to the patient's phone bearing the doctors seal and signature after a thorough video consultation. Over 200,000 Sri Lankans currently trust oDoc for their healthcare needs. For more information and to download oDoc app, visit: <http://ore.do/odoc>

Ooredoo Maldives also unveiled a special network experience campaign featuring its **Global Brand Ambassador Lionel Messi and Local Brand Ambassador Zuvaan Masveriya**, teaming up to promote Ooredoo Maldives' unbeatable internet experience. The Ooredoo Team was accompanied by Zuvaan Masveriya to South Africa earlier this year to shoot the exciting global commercial.

To watch the campaign video,



Adding to the excitement, Ooredoo Maldives in partnership with Samsung launched the **Samsung Galaxy Z Flip** in the Maldives. The foldable full screen phone that is incredibly compact, features a camera made to stand on its own, and a dual battery that lasts all day. With the purchase of the Samsung Galaxy Z Flip, Ooredoo Prepaid, mix and Postpaid customers will receive 2020MB (2.02GB) free bonus data per month until the end of the year. The offer will be available exclusively via its e-commerce platform Moolee on the Ooredoo app, enabling free nationwide delivery to all corners of the country.

Ooredoo Maldives provides a wide range of innovative voice, data, broadband, content and enterprise services tailored to the growing needs of today's consumers and businesses. Guided by its vision of enriching people's lives and its belief that it can stimulate human growth by leveraging communications to help people achieve their full potential, Ooredoo has transformed the communications industry for the people of the Maldives. With the aim to open up the opportunities of the digital age to local communities and businesses, the company continues to invest in the most advanced technologies and innovations, providing the first and fastest nationwide 4G+ network in the Maldives.

IN THE NEWS

Ambassador Mohamed Jinah Meets CEO of THAI Smile Airways



Ambassador of Maldives to Thailand Hon. Mohamed Jinah met with the Chief Executive Officer of THAI Smile Airways in Bangkok on August 20, 2020. The meeting was held with the aim of exploring and discussing the establishment of Bangkok-Maldives flights.

Ambassador Jinah noted that the government of the Maldives is working towards boosting the country's travel and tourism industry in the 'new normal'.

THAI Smile Airways, a subsidiary airline of THAI Airways International Public Company Limited (THAI) launched its services in 2012 with a fleet of Airbus A320 aircrafts. The carrier is a regional airline operator for short and medium range flights.

Passenger travelling with THAI Smile can enjoy the Royal Orchid Plus (ROP) mileage same as on Thai Airways International flights. As of July 2020, THAI Smile flies to 12 destinations in Thailand and 21 destinations across Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, India.

SERENITY

SUMMER WELLBEING

Beat the heat on holiday with five tips for warm-weather wellbeing from Director of Wellness at Minor Hotels, Sarah Dalton.

With Anantara Hotels, Resorts & Spas

1 Stay hydrated (even if you don't like water)

Start with the basic rule of eight glasses a day, and you can even opt for water-dense foods such as watermelon, cucumber and celery instead. Hit the spa for a hydrating facial. All the fun parts of summer can have a very dehydrating impact on your skin. Anantara Spa is your one-stop destination to ensure your skin stays as hydrated as possible while you enjoy your summer.

2 Wear the right sunscreen for you

An estimated 90% of skin damage is caused by sun exposure, so always wear a factor which protects against UVA and UVB rays. Apply 30 minutes before going into the sun, and reapply every two hours – more often if you've been swimming or sweating. Ensure your sunscreen is marine-friendly and does not contain oxybenzone or octinoxate.

3 Get your heart pumping

Exercise has so many benefits it would be hard to list them all here. Treat it as a gift to yourself, not a punishment or a chore. Moving, sweating and elevating your heart rate will leave you feeling energised and balanced. Set achievable goals and work towards a better life for yourself and your loved ones.



4 Connect to nature

Summer is a great time to explore new horizons and take that bucket-list trip. Gain spiritual awakening in the Buddhist temples of Siem Reap, snorkel the pristine waters of the Maldives or explore the wadis of Oman hunting for frankincense amid long-lost cities. Just don't forget your sunscreen.

5 Mind your head

Stress can have a severe impact on our physical health, which directly impacts our state of mind. Take a breathing class or join a meditation group. Download one of the many

mindfulness apps available on any smartphone, or turn off your smartphone, and embark on a wellness programme in a tranquil destination. Spend time in nature, be truly present. Anxiety and stress-related illnesses are on the rise, but you are the master of your destiny and it is your responsibility to take care of your own wellness.

Sarah Dalton is the Director of Wellness for Minor Hotels and is based at the company's headquarters in Bangkok. A seasoned Wellness expert, she has dedicated the last 15 years of her life to the rapidly and radically changing Spa industry. Well-versed in holistic therapies, sustainability, spa and international business development, Sarah brings a wealth of knowledge to the pages of the Anantara journal and into Anantara spas. "Increasing wellness for every single Anantara guest is my passion and I hope you find your happy place in one of our stunning spas." -- Sarah Dalton

Personality of the Month

What sparked your interest in the hospitality industry?

Being in the hospitality industry is the most exciting experience for sure. My interest grew during the opening of Coco Palm Dhuni Kolhu in 1996. As a young teen, I got the opportunity to help out in the back of the house during the prep for the first arrival. This keenness for event management led me to pursue my career in Tourism Management and have been working in this industry for last 15+ years.

What's your favourite spot at the resort and why?

Coco Palm Dhuni Kolhu has always been my special place. Every time I step on the island the calmness and tranquillity engulf me. Watching the sun go down with a cup of tea at the Beach Bar is the best moment of the day. Yet chilling at the Conch Bar is loved for its easy mood. It's the most relaxing place to lounge around with a refreshing drink as you enjoy the lively atmosphere.

What do you most like about your work, and what do you find to be the most challenging aspect?

My journey began at Coco Collection as a receptionist. From reservations, to sales, I have worked in so many roles since then and today I am working in the marketing department. As a marketer, it's all about being creative and technical at the same time. We work as a team and the best part is always executing a project successfully. Yet, limited resources have always been a challenge.

What are the positives and the opportunities that you have gathered from the pandemic?
This was a day that we weren't expecting and neither of us were ready for it. Day to day life came to a halt, being trapped inside our homes. Nevertheless, it was a new experience and we all explored new ways of working remotely. The best part was being able to spend more time with my daughter and getting engaged in different activities.

If you could change absolutely anything in your life – big or small – what would it be?

Nothing, I love my life how it is.

How would you describe the DNA of Coco Collection?

For more than 25 years, Sunland Group has been sharing its passion for travel, adventure and life's luxuries.

Coco Collection is a prestigious hotel group, and a subsidiary of Sunland Hospitality Group. Since opening our flagship hotel in July 2007, we have continued to grow and develop our reputation as a



AISHATH LULU

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER AT COCO COLLECTION

trailblazer in stylish and sophisticated, yet, sustainable hospitality.

Built on a simple ethos and spirit, the Coco brand has its own unique attributes and allure. As for the future, our goal is to become the region's premier luxury holiday lifestyle resort brand, while keeping a firm focus on service excellence, product quality and residential design.

Who are you listening to at the moment?

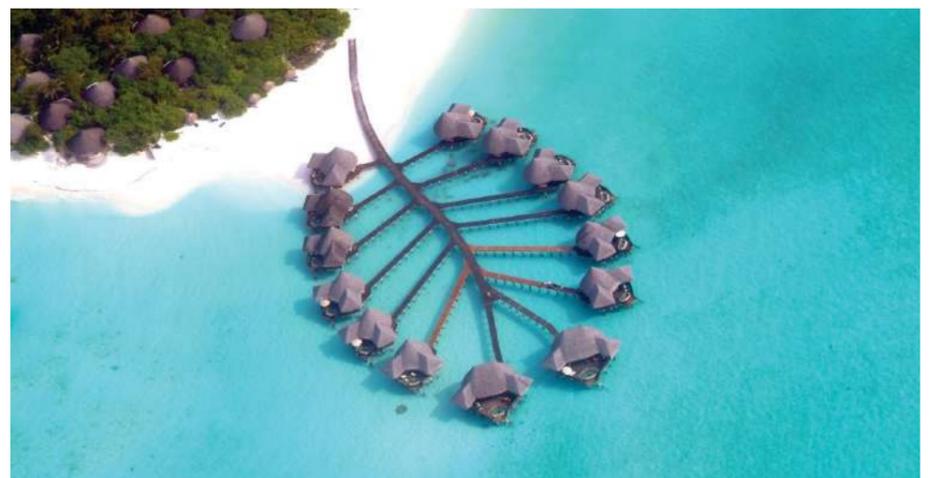
I am currently listening to Stick Figure. My day usually starts with that, and a cup of coffee.

Favourite motto or saying:

Never let anyone pull you down. Be proud of who you are and do not let what others think of you, drag you down.



Coco Bodu Hithi



Coco Palm Dhuni Kolhu

Approved Opening dates of Resorts, Hotels, Vessels and Transit Facilities

TOURIST RESORTS

Facility Name	Opening Date Approved by MOT
Cocoon Maldives	15-July-20
Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Kuda Huraa	15-July-20
Furaveri Island Resort & Spa	15-July-20
Grand Park Kodhipparu Maldives	15-July-20
Hard Rock Hotel Maldives	15-July-20
Kudafushi Resort & Spa	15-July-20
Oblu Select by Atmosphere at Sangeli	15-July-20
Oluveli Beach and Spa Maldives	15-July-20
Ozen By Atmosphere At Maadhoo	15-July-20
Saai Lagoon Maldives	15-July-20
Soneva Jani	15-July-20
Taj Exotica Resort and Spa Maldives	15-July-20
The Residence Maldives At Dhigurah	15-July-20
You & Me By Cocoon	15-July-20
Angsana Resort & Spa Maldives Ihuru	15-July-20
Banyan Tree Maldives Vabbinfaru	15-July-20
Constance Halaveli Resort	15-July-20
Radisson Blu Resort	15-July-20
Paradise Island Resort and Spa	15-July-20
Cinnamon Dhonveli Maldives	15-July-20
Cinnamon Velifushi Maldives	15-July-20
Cinnamon Hakuraa Huraa Maldives	15-July-20
Ellaidhoo Maldives By Cinnamon	15-July-20
Noku Maldives	15-July-20
Amaya Kuda Rah Maldives	15-July-20
Gangehi Island Resort	15-July-20
Fihaalhohi Island Resort	20-July-20
One & Only Reethi Rah, Maldives	24-July-20
Ayada Maldives	25-July-20
Adaaran Prestige Vadoo	27-July-20
Vakkaru Maldives	29-July-20
Anantara Kihavah Villas	25-July-20
Emerald Maldives Resort & Spa Fasmendho	01-Aug-20
Joali Muravandhoo	01-Aug-20
Royal Island Resort and Spa	01-Aug-20
Centara Ras Fushi Resort & Spa	01-Aug-20
Dusit Thani Maldives	01-Aug-20
Six Senses Laamu	01-Aug-20
Sun Island Resort and Spa	01-Aug-20
Holiday Island Resort and Spa	01-Aug-20
Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi	01-Aug-20
Bandos Maldives	01-Aug-20
Coco Palm Dhunikolhu	01-Aug-20
Coco Bodu Hithi	01-Aug-20
Sun Aqua Iru Veli Maldives	01-Aug-20
The Sun Siyam Iru Fushi Maldives	01-Aug-20
Biyaadhoo Island Resort	01-Aug-20
Nika Island Resort and Spa	01-Aug-20
Cheval Blanc Randheli	01-Aug-20
Lux South Ari Atoll, Maldives	14-Aug-20
Maafushivaru Maldives	16-Aug-20
Riu Atoll and Riu Palace Maldivas	17-Aug-20
Holiday Inn Resort Kandooma Maldives	25-Aug-20
Komandoo Maldivian Island Resort	29-Aug-20
Adaaran Select Meedhupparu	31-Aug-20
Cocoa Island	01-Sep-20
The Nautilus Maldives	01-Sep-20
Hurawalhi Island Resor	01-Sep-20
Veligandu Island Resort	01-Sep-20
Embudhu Village	01-Sep-20
Kudadoo Maldives Private island	01-Sep-20
Summer Island Maldives	01-Sep-20
Adaaran Club Rannalhi	01-Sep-20
Heritance Aarah	01-Sep-20
Meeru Island Resort	01-Sep-20
Kandima Maldives	01-Sep-20
Milaidhoo Island Maldives	01-Sep-20
Gili Lankanfushi	01-Sep-20
Drift Thelu Veliga Retreat	03-Sep-20
Inter Continental Maldives Maamunagau	10-Sep-20
Atmosphere Kanifushi Maldives	15-Sep-20
Finolhu Baa Atoll Maldives	15-Sep-20
Conrad Maldives Rangali Island	28-Sep-20
Anantara Resort and Spa Maldives	01-Oct-20
Raffles Maldives Meradhoo Resort	01-Oct-20
South Palm Resort Maldives	01-Oct-20
Naladhu	01-Oct-20

Outrigger Konotta Maldives Resort	01-Oct-20
Pullman Maldives Maamutaa Resort	01-Oct-20
Kuramathi Maldives	01-Oct-20
Diamonds Athuruga Beach & Water Villas	30-Oct-20
Four Seasons Private Island Maldives at Voavah	In operation
Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Landaa Giraavaru	In operation
Lily Beach Resort	In operation
Lux North Male' Atoll	In operation
Oblu By Atmosphere at Helengeli	In operation
Soneva Fushi Resort	In operation
Varu Island Resort	In operation
Angsana Resort & Spa Maldives - Velavaru	In operation
Velaa Private Island Maldives	In operation

TOURIST HOTELS (in uninhabited island)

Facility Name	Opening Date Approved by MOT
Amilla Fushi	15-July-20
Mecure Maldives Kooldoo	01-Aug-20

TOURIST VESSELS

Facility Name	Opening Date Approved by MOT
Stella 2	15-July-20
Blue Star	15-July-20
Maavahi	15-July-20
Oceanic Manta	15-July-20
Safira	16-July-20
Gurahali	23-July-20
Koimala	23-July-20
Seafarer	23-July-20
Blue Shark	26-July-20
Madivaru	30-July-20
Fascination Maldives	30-July-20
Gahaa	30-July-20
Gulfam	30-July-20
Sea Coral	30-July-20
Over Reef	01-Aug-20
Searex	01-Aug-20
Atoll Jade	01-Aug-20
Soneva In Aqua	01-Aug-20
Noah	01-Aug-20
Manthiri	01-Aug-20
Flying Fish	03-Aug-20
Leo	04-Aug-20
Handhu	04-Aug-20
Dhinasha	05-Aug-20
Adora	05-Aug-20
Princess Dhonkamana	05-Aug-20
Horizon 3	05-Aug-20
Horizon 2	05-Aug-20
Sunkissed	05-Aug-20
White Sand	05-Aug-20
Ritrella	06-Aug-20
Emperor Leo	06-Aug-20
Emperor Atoll	06-Aug-20
Emperor Serenity	06-Aug-20
Emperor Explorer	06-Aug-20
Emperor Virgo	06-Aug-20
Emperor Voyager	06-Aug-20
Nawaimaa	07-Aug-20
Sachika	07-Aug-20
Nautilus Cruise 2	09-Aug-20
Soleil	10-Aug-20
Soleil 2	10-Aug-20
Alice	10-Aug-20
Hamathi	10-Aug-20
Hariyana	10-Aug-20
Hariyana 1	10-Aug-20
Haira	10-Aug-20
Island Safari 1	11-Aug-20
Island Safari 2	11-Aug-20
Maldiviana	11-Aug-20
Eagle Ray	13-Aug-20
Kefi	15-Aug-20
Marselia Star	15-Aug-20
Four Seasons Explorer	15-Aug-20

Princess Sara	15-Aug-20
Honors Legacy	15-Aug-20
PearlWin	15-Aug-20
Blue Shark Safari Boat	15-Aug-20
The Ocean Queen	17-Aug-20
MV. Kaena	17-Aug-20
Myna	18-Aug-20
Princess Rani	18-Aug-20
Maldivian Dream	20-Aug-20
Iruvai	20-Aug-20
Assidha	20-Aug-20
Manta Cruise	21-Aug-20
Hammerhead 2	22-Aug-20
Maldives Explorer	24-Aug-20
Top Cruiser	24-Aug-20
Thanburudhoo-1	24-Aug-20
MV. Sharifa	25-Aug-20
Carpe Novo	25-Aug-20
Bolero of the Grand Safari	25-Aug-20
Felicity	25-Aug-20
Maaha Maldives	27-Aug-20
Maldives Sail	28-Aug-20
Scuba Ying	01-Sep-20
Scuba Yang	01-Sep-20
MV Blue Voyager	01-Sep-20
Sea Spirit	01-Sep-20
Carpe Diem	01-Sep-20
Carpe Vita	01-Sep-20
Ocean One	01-Sep-20
Mariyana	01-Sep-20
Song of Meeru	01-Sep-20
Princess Ulua	01-Sep-20
Moonima	01-Sep-20
Princess Haleema	01-Sep-20
Azalea Cruise	01-Sep-20
Kamana	01-Sep-20
Goma	01-Sep-20
Norah	01-Sep-20
Handhufalhi	01-Sep-20
MV Maldives Princess	01-Sep-20
Madivaru-7	02-Sep-20
Handy Cruise	02-Sep-20
Adventure-2	03-Sep-20
MV Aisha	07-Sep-20
Ocean Divine	10-Sep-20
Mistral	01-Oct-20
Ari Queen	01-Oct-20

TRANSIT FACILITIES (in Greater Male')

Facility Name	Opening Date Approved by MOT
Maagiri Hotel	15-July-20
Unima Grand	30-July-20
Hulhule Island Hotel	01-Aug-20
Hotel Jen Male', Maldiv	01-Aug-20
Beehive	01-Aug-20
Noomoo	01-Aug-20
Crystal Beach Inn	01-Aug-20
Season Holidays	01-Aug-20
H78	01-Aug-20
Awesome Suite	04-Aug-20
Samann Host	06-Aug-20
The Somerset Inn	10-Aug-20
Airport Comfort Inn	10-Aug-20
The Somerset Hotel	10-Aug-20
Surf View Raalhugandu	12-Aug-20
Hulhu Villa Beach	15-Aug-20
Coral Grand Beach & Spa	20-Aug-20
Dream Relax Inn	20-Aug-20
The Park House	24-Aug-20
Awesome Comfort	24-Aug-20
Tourist Inn	30-Aug-20
Mookai Hotel	01-Sep-20
Mookai Suites	01-Sep-20
Huvan Beach	01-Sep-20
Star Shell	01-Sep-20
Azuvia Beach Retreat Hulhumale	01-Sep-20
Casa Retreat	03-Sep-20
Avoca Inn	01-Oct-20

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Carla Puverel Appointed as General Manager of Conrad Maldives Rangali Island

With a career spanning over 18 years, Carla has an extensive hospitality management experience with various luxury hospitality brands.



Upon designation, Carla is set to spearhead the operations and elevate the overall performance of the resort while ensuring it is aligned with the global brand strategy within the Maldives.

Prior to her recent appointment, Carla served as the General Manager of Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort in Sri Lanka. She carved a niche for herself in resort operations from her time at Pezula Resort Hotel & Spa in Knysna, South Africa to working with various resort groups in different geographies ranging from the United States to the Middle East and South East Asia. Carla took her first hotel leadership position in 2011 as Resort Manager at Naladhu Resort Maldives where she oversaw the overall

operations and managed the Naladhu Private Island. She moved to Phuket two years later to lead the pre-opening team at Anantara Layan Phuket Resort before relocating to Koh Phangan in 2017 as General Manager of the Anantara Rasananda Koh Phangan Villas.

Set on 2 separate islands connected by a bridge, the luxurious Conrad Maldives Rangali Island offers 151 spacious private villas. Stretching up to 500 m into the Indian Ocean, Conrad Rangali Island's villas are packed full of creature comforts, including free Wi-Fi, flat-screen TVs and DVD players. Beautiful sea or beach views are framed through wooden floor-to-ceiling windows. Total relaxation can be enjoyed at the lagoon Spa Retreat and Over-Water Spa – two award-winning spas. Guests may make their stays extra rewarding by visiting the on-site Italian boutique, or learning about local culture on a day trip to one of the surrounding islands. Conrad Maldives' 12 world-class restaurants and bars serve an assortment of international, Mediterranean and grilled dishes and over 600 bottles of premium wine can be enjoyed at The Wine Cellar. Conrad Maldives Rangali Island is reachable via a 30-minute scenic seaplane transfer from Velana International Airport.

Nila Suparmi Appointed as Director of Human Resources at Waldorf Astoria Maldives

Nila Suparmi, with more than 18 years of hospitality experience in the area of human resources, has been appointed as the Director of Human Resources at Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi.



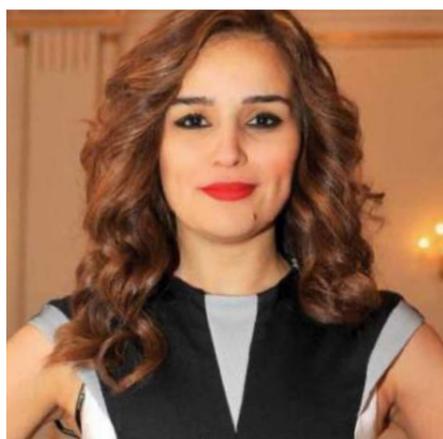
Starting off her new task at Waldorf Astoria Maldives, Nila will be responsible for leading and managing the strategic areas pertaining to recruitment, talent acquisition and succession planning, performance management, plus coaching and developing colleagues to achieve overall business goals.

Nila joined the global brand Hilton in the year 2008 and most recently filled the position of Director of Human Resources at its Indonesian property, Hilton Bali Resort. Over the years, Nila build up her experience while working with some of the major international hospitality

brands including Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts, Pan Pacific Hotels Group and InterContinental Hotels Group.

Spanning three interconnected islands in the South Malé Atoll, and a 30-minute yacht journey away from Velana International Airport, Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi is an iconic resort paradise surrounded by the crystal-clear Indian Ocean. An escape for families and couples in search of space and exclusivity, the resort boasts 122 luxuriously appointed villas, each equipped with a pool and uninterrupted views of the Indian Ocean in its own private enclave. Each reef, beach and overwater villa will open onto an indoor and outdoor deck featuring a swinging daybed, dining gazebo, an infinity pool, in-water lounge and an outdoor shower. For those seeking the ultimate exclusivity, Stella Maris Private Ocean Villas are an intimate getaway, exquisite duplex villas with direct ocean access, accessible only by boat. Discover indulgent choices from 11 celebrated dining venues, a world-class lifestyle spa sanctuary, and a plethora of activities for all generations.

The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands Appoints Lamya Sebti as Director of Marketing



Marriot International's flagship luxury brand The Ritz-Carlton has appointed Lamya Sebti as Director of Marketing (pre-opening) at The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands.

Lamya will be focusing on driving and developing the marketing and communications strategies to reinforce the positioning of The Ritz-Carlton brand in the Maldives. Lamya has over 15 years of extensive marketing experience, where she led marketing and communications in renowned global hospitality brands such as The Ritz-Carlton by Marriott International and Movenpick Hotels & Resorts by AccorHotels.

Prior to joining the The Ritz-Carlton Maldives pre-opening team Lamya served as Director of Marketing and Communications at The Ritz-Carlton Bahrain. She previously held the post of Multi-Property Director of Marketing & Communications at The Ritz-Carlton,

Rabat Dar Es Salam and The Ritz-Carlton Tamuda Bay, Morocco. Before that she served as Group Director of Marketing for MMC Catering, Groupe Lenôtre in Kuwait. Lamya initially joined The Ritz-Carlton brand in 2013 as Marketing and Communication Consultant for The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Jnan Amar Polo Academy Morocco. She also served as Director of Marketing and Communication for Palmeraie Hotels and Resorts, Morocco and as Director of Marketing for Mövenpick Tower and Suites Qatar prior to joining The Ritz-Carlton.

The property is located at Fari Islands, an archipelago that features three world-class hospitality brands

inclusive of The Ritz-Carlton, in the North Malé Atoll of the Maldives – a 50-minute journey by speedboat or a 10-minute seaplane flight from Velana International Airport. Shaped by the Maldivian sun and shored by the Indian Ocean, guest villas at The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands are expected to range in size from one to three bedrooms, featuring the refined elegance and legendary service that define The Ritz-Carlton brand. The property is also expected to offer a choice of outstanding culinary venues serving an array of international and local cuisine, in addition to a full suite of fitness and recreational facilities including a signature Ritz-Carlton Spa.

BON APPÉTIT

GABULHI BOAKIBAA ADHI BOA KURI FALHO

Coconut pudding topped with papaya and condense milk compôte



Chef Rohan Herath started his carrier in the hospitality industry in 1996 at the Heritance Tea Factory, the first themed hotel in Sri Lanka under the well-known conglomerate Aitken Spence Plc. Rohan's passions led him to excel in his career, joining the Maldives in 2002 with Addaran Select Meedhupparu. In 2012, he became the Executive Chef at Adaaran Club Rannalhi. Though initially famed as a pastry chef, Chef Rohan's enthusiasm in the culinary world pushed him to learn and experience a variety of cuisine, especially Maldivian cuisine. He even brought the Dhivehi Rahathah Challenge trophy 2017 to his resort (a Maldivian culinary competition amongst Adaaran group).

To prepare this special Maldivian dessert, Chef Rohan uses fresh ingredients such as grated coconut and papaya. The dessert can be served as a hot or cold dish, arranged on a platter separately or with papaya compôte topped over the coconut pudding. To add more flavor, it can be served with caramelized coconut. Chef Rohan invites you to sweeten your taste buds with this unforgettable dish.

Ingredients

Coconut Pudding

- Butter 190g
- Sugar 190g
- Eggs 3
- Wheat flour 20g
- White bread crumbs 180g
- Baking powder 5g
- Fresh grated coconut 125g

Papaya Compôte

- Semi-ripe papaya cut into 1cm cubes 250g
- Condense milk 75ml
- Sugar 20g
- Water 50ml

Method

Coconut Pudding

- Combine butter and sugar together to form a creamy texture.
- Add eggs one by one, at a time.
- Mix all other ingredients (wheat flour, white breadcrumbs, fresh grated coconut and baking powder) together and fold into the butter mixture gently.
- Pour into molds or a baking pan and steam for 25 minutes.

Papaya Compôte

- Bring the water, condensed milk and sugar to a boil in a pan.
- Add the papaya and cook until tender and soft, reducing to 2/3.
- Allow to cool and place a layer on top of the steamed pudding.



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Courtesy of
Executive Chef Rohan Herath
Adaaran Club Rannalhi

Frankly Speaking

As we reopen our borders, welcoming the world to the Maldives, will it be feasible for the government or tourist establishments to handle quarantine and isolation expenses of travellers without a dedicated COVID-19 coverage insurance for tourists?



Ahmed Afrah
President
National Boating Association of Maldives

The government cannot continue to bear the full cost of isolation and quarantine charges. At the same time, putting the full expense on the facilities is also going to be difficult for many small facilities. Having mandatory insurance to cover this cost is crucial in addressing these costs and risks.



Mohamed Ali Janah
President of the Maldives National Association of Construction Industry (MNACI) & International Federation of Asian & Western Pacific Contractors Association (IFAWPCA)

Having a COVID-19 coverage insurance for the tourists who travel to the Maldives would definitely help reduce the burden on the coffers of the Maldivian government. However, it's very important that any mandatory life insurance, or any insurance that covers COVID-19 or infectious diseases, is well-tailored for a country like the Maldives. We should be mindful of the extent it would cover expenses; the level of coverage in case you test positive; travel expenses; the extent it would cover your quarantine costs and whether the cover issued matches the policies in the country of the origin as different countries have different policies; and if it covers pre-existing medical conditions as it may not cover those risks. In short, yes, a COVID insurance, in addition to a normal travel insurance, will definitely help to alleviate a lot of additional costs that are being borne by the Government right now. The premium of such an insurance should also be affordable.



Mohamed Ali
Vice President
Association of Travel Agents (ATA)

It is very important that a proper COVID-19 insurance package is available for the tourists. At the same time, I would like to emphasise that this coverage is to be specifically offered from a Maldivian Insurance provider. It is equally important that this is made available easily through an online portal with just a few clicks, providing ease for the tourists coming to Maldives.



Abdul Latheef
Managing Director
Casa Retreat Maldives

The best thing the government can do is to designate a resort as a COVID-19 hospital facility for the duration of this pandemic. Any person who is positive shall be transferred to this resort for treatment. And the payment attributed to the booking days the tourist has not utilised shall be transferred to the hospital resort for his treatment.

In addition to this, every tourist who arrives in Maldives must be mandated to acquire a special COVID-19 health insurance from the Maldives. This way, we can guarantee both a vacation for the tourist, as well as their health and safety. The Maldives would even sell more rooms this way. Moreover, any resort converted into a hospital facility will be compensated and earning as well.



Moosa Rasheed
Managing Director
Aimo Travels / Island Safaris

It's always better to have an insurance that's safer for all. I've heard some insurers are already working on it.



Abdulla Nasheed
Managing Director
Kaani Hotels

Without an insurance, it will not be feasible for the government or establishments.



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