

# The islandchief

travel news

VOL 68 | March 2022 | www.islandchief.com

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SAVOUR THE DIFFERENCE

NEW



**Air India Celebrates 46 Years of Incredible Service to the Maldives!**

Pg: 04



**First Coral Nursery at Radisson Blu Maldives!**

Pg: 06



**Ooredoo Maldives Appoints New Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer**

Pg: 08



**Limestone**

Pg: 10

## Against All Odds

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW  
with  
**AMINATH SALAH**  
CEO, Voyages Maldives

Pg: 12

WOMEN'S DAY EDITION  
#BreakTheBias



**First Yacht Rally 'Savadheeththa Dhathuru' Completed by Promoting Sailing Tourism, Heritage and Culture of Maldives.**

Pg: 16



**A Brand-New Outlet of Marrybrown Opens at Hulhumalé Phase 1 Waterfront**

Pg: 17



**George Corbin to Join Maldives Golden Jubilee Celebrations**

Pg: 20



**Bison Maldives Signs Contract with Dutch Docklands Maldives to Build First Homes**

Pg: 21

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Dear Readers,

There has not been a single issue of the Islandchief ever published that didn't include important contributions from women. For the past five years, in the stories we share, and behind the scenes, women's voices, talents and values have helped so much to shape our tabloid magazine.

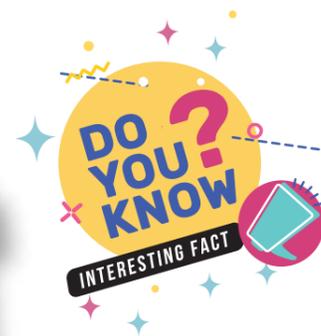
We discovered that 2018 marked the centennial anniversary of women's suffrage – #metoo movement, The Globe & Mail's "Unfounded" stories uncovering police dismissal of an alarming number of sexual assault cases without proper investigation, and allegations of sexual abuse and impropriety arising almost daily against high-profile figures in film, television, music, theatre, industry, politics and almost every aspect of human activity have put "women's issues" on the front burner, steaming hot. This prompted the publication of our first Women's issue in 2019, timed to coincide with International Women's Day on March 8.

Our theme is Break the Bias and this is to commemorate the anniversary of International Women's Day on March 8, 2022. Aminath Salah, CEO of Voyages Maldives, an emerging voice on women's rights explores what it means to break the bias. Our exclusive interview is quite poignant and reflective as she shares her career journey, and the challenges she instilled and overcame at young age in breaking the gender stereotypes to quest success in an industry dominated by men.

We have done our best to support and celebrate the women in our community, and we hope you enjoy our efforts.

Wishing all our readers a Happy International Women's Day 2022.

Until next month,  
The islandchief Team  
#BreakTheBias



## OLD MOSQUE (Laamu Isdhoo)

The Old Mosque in the island of Isdhoo, a historical site of great importance, was built in 1701 CE during the rule of Sultan Ali VII and is still being used as a mosque till today. It is where historians found the Isdhoo Loamaafaanu (the oldest written records found in the Maldives). The book was written in AD 1194 (590 AH) in the Evēla Dhivehi script, an old Dhivehi script that is as of now not being used. The mosque consists of the old well, mosque building, and a burial ground with gravestones. It is one of the best enduring examples of a small coral stone mosque and has been sustained well with negligible changes. The mosque is situated in a remote part of the island as it is believed that the mosque was built from excessive materials left over after building the Malé Hukuru Miskiiy.



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## SriLankan Airlines Enters into Strategic Partnership with Manta Air

Airline to fly to Gan International Airport with four flights per week. The flights came to a halt in March 2020 amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. However, we resumed operations with one weekly flight between Addu City and Colombo in December 2021 – giving travelers the convenience to connect to Europe, Middle-East, India, South East Asia & other key destinations with Codeshare partners via transit at Bandaranaike International Airport, Sri Lanka” - stated Jayantha Abeysinghe. “We also welcome discussions for any other airports expressing interest for SriLankan operations across other regions of the Maldives.” He further added.

“We thank Manta Air for accepting our proposal to enter this strategic partnership to support the development of Southern Maldives. Addu City is the population and transport hub of Southern Maldives, and the logical destination for any investors looking to continue the success of the guesthouse sector.” - stated Mohamed Firaq.

“It has been quite some time since we have been discussing on and off, on how we could address this challenge, and finally today is

that historic day for Southern Maldives. We are here to support the aviation industry in providing facilities and concessions to travel to Addu City.” Gais Naseer highlighted in the press conference.

Mohamed Khaleel, CEO of Manta Air, said “We are excited to announce the start of our services to Addu City. This has been a long-awaited development that we believe will be welcomed by the public. Our promise to all passengers flying to Addu City is that we will change your flying experience by making flying more mantastic, enjoyable and effortless for everyone!”

Using ATR 72-600 type aircrafts, Manta Air offers two cabin classes: Comfort and Sapphire Class. Customers can enjoy baggage allowance with 22kg + 5kg hand luggage in its comfort class and customers travelling on Sapphire Class will enjoy luggage allowance of 35kg + 5kg hand luggage.

This collaboration between Manta Air & SriLankan Airlines will assist inbound / outbound tourists, local travelers and expatriates to fly via Gan for a reduced price & more conveniently.

SriLankan Airlines has partnered with Maldives’ local airline, Manta Air aiming at the development of Southern Maldives. The partnership will allow passengers to enjoy seamless travel with SriLankan Airlines’ via Velana International Airport, Male’ connecting to Manta Air’s domestic flights to Gan, Addu City.

Bringing its five-star experience to the atoll, Manta Air will operate on a pre-published fixed schedule with daily flights between Gan and Male’ from February 24, 2022 onwards. And SriLankan Airlines will be increasing frequency to Gan International Airport from March 27 with two weekly services from its current 1 weekly operation. Flights are scheduled on Tuesday and Saturday – SriLankan’s Colombo / Gan / Colombo will connect immediately for Manta Air Gan / Kooddoo / Gan Flight.

The announcement was made at a joint press conference presided by the following member;

1. Mr. Mohamed Firaq, Managing Director of Inner Maldives Holidays, Ace Travels Maldives, and Ace Aviation Services Maldives (GSA for SriLankan Airlines in the Maldives).
2. Mr. Jayantha Abeysinghe, Regional Manager of SriLankan Airlines for Indian Ocean.
3. Mr. Mohamed Khaleel, Chief Executive Officer of Manta Air.
4. Mr. Ahmed Maumoon, Deputy CEO and Chief Marketing Officer of Manta Air.
5. Mr. Gais Naseer, Managing Director of Addu International Airport.

“SriLankan Airlines first commenced its scheduled flights to Gan, Addu City on December 1, 2016, as the only International

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## ACROSS THE SKIES

## Air India Celebrates 46 Years of Incredible Service to the Maldives!

The national flag carrier of India, Air India celebrates 46 years of incredible service to the Sunny Side of Life.

On February 21, 2022, Air India's flight AI-267 was welcomed with a water canon salute as it landed at Velana International Airport to commemorate 46 years of air service between India and Maldives.

As Maldives reopened borders for South Asian travelers on July, 2021, Air India resumed operations between the countries as travel restrictions eased. The airline currently operates direct flights from four regions of India to Maldives: Trivandrum, Bangalore, Delhi and Mumbai.

Since the start of its operations on October 15, 1932; Air India has spread its wings to become a major International Airline with a network across USA, Canada, UK, Europe, Far-East, South-East Asia, Australia and the Gulf. The airline also has an extensive domestic network, including far-flung areas of India's North-East, Ladakh, Andaman &



Nicobar Islands. Air India has been a member of Star Alliance, the largest global airline consortium, since

July, 2014. Air India operated its first flight from Trivandrum to Malé in Feb 1976.

## National Airline, Maldivian and Emirates Signs MoU



Island Aviation Services Limited announced that Maldivian has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Dubai-based Emirates airline to explore codeshare, interline, and joint holiday package opportunities.

Ibrahim Ameer, Minister of Finance of the Republic of Maldives, said, "Emirates' impact to the Maldives'

tourism industry is significant, with the airline ranking first in terms of international passenger traffic. The possible partnership between the two airlines will benefit the Maldivian economy and strengthen economic ties between the Maldives and United Arab Emirates."

Mohamed Mihad, Maldivian's Managing Director

said, "The opportunity to explore a partnership with the largest airline in the world brings about endless opportunities for Maldives. The growth prospects that could follow such a partnership is key when we look to expand our operations and develop partnerships that will allow us to position ourselves in the post Covid aviation industry. The interline and codeshare arrangement being explored would enable both Maldivian as well as Emirates to enhance the connectivity and expand on the service of offerings."

Adnan Kazim, Emirates' Chief Commercial Officer, said, "Maldives is one of the most popular leisure destinations in Emirates' network and we are very pleased to be exploring a partnership with the nation's local carrier. A codeshare and interline agreement will immensely benefit both carriers. For Emirates customers, its enhanced connectivity to and from the Maldivian archipelago. For Maldivian travelers, it'll ease access to our extensive network of more than 120 destinations via Dubai. We look forward to continue strengthening our partnership and to offering customers a seamless travel experience."

Maldivian and Emirates will work on the establishment of an Interline and Special Prorate Agreement (SPA) to initiate an interline relationship by providing routes on reciprocal basis. Through this agreement, the customers of both Maldivian and Emirates shall be collectively offered additional services that not only extend to access to additional routes but improves overall customer experience.

IN A NUTSHELL

## Cora Cora Maldives Introduces First All-Female Airport Welcome Team



Cora Cora Maldives has become the very first and only Maldivian resort to have an all-female airport welcome team, inspiring Maldivian women of the success that lies for them, advancing in the tourism and hospitality industry, given the determination.

Manager Rifga heads the innovative island resort's welcome team comprised of the remarkable ladies; Jamsheedha, Nadheema, and Lomra. Boasting female empowerment, they prove Maldivian women and young girls out there can lead in management positions despite the dominance of men in the industry.

With the assembled team, Cora Cora Maldives shows their prioritization of female empowerment and equality on the way forward. With their great abilities in terms of empathy, precise communication, and networking skills, the all-female airport greeting team have already shown their fantastic value for Cora Cora Maldives and make guests feel welcome the moment they step off the plane.

Justin Swart, the General Manager of Cora Cora Maldives said, "It's not easy for women in Male' to find good jobs and hopefully we have set the standard, and this will encourage more women to seek employment and managerial roles. The Cora Cora Maldives all-women airport team are excellent at handling the incredibly logistically complex and high-pressure job they face at Velana International Airport. We have received only positive feedback from our guests regarding our ground handling team and are

therefore immensely proud of the team who we see as our ambassadors 200km away from the island that is responsible for "the first and last impression" of Cora Cora Maldives."

Cora Cora Maldives is a five-star resort located on the pristine Raa Atoll. Utterly idyllic, this stunning new resort offers a one-of-a-kind immersive experience of the Indian Ocean. The resort's accommodation echoes contemporary Maldivian experience and features 100 beautiful villas that overlook the sparkling waters of the Indian Ocean. Four new restaurants, including a Japanese restaurant complete with traditional Teppanyaki table, an Asian Restaurant and an Italian Beach Club Restaurant as well as a Bazaar serving an array of international cuisine. Catering for a wealth of dietary requirements, Cora Cora Maldives serves an array of healthy options and plant-based dishes, including home-made vegan ice cream created using fresh fruits and organic ingredient. These are all part of the Gourmet Meal Plan.

Cora Cora Maldives is also the first resort in the Maldives to showcase a licensed art gallery and museum! With over 400 incredible local artefacts in the collection, guests can explore the rich history of the Maldives in its breath-taking natural surroundings. Guests can further dive into the spirit of the Maldives at the PADI certified diving school.

Rediscover the fun of Freedom and the Joy of Life without limits at Cora Cora Maldives.

# HONDA MARINE



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## IN A NUTSHELL

# Launch of the Green Globe Sustainability Initiative at Kuda Villingili Resort Maldives

On February 3, 2022, Kuda Villingili Resort Maldives launched their Green Globe Sustainability Initiative in style. The event was held to affirm the resort's commitment to sustainable tourism. Mr. Xu Jing, current Vice Chairman of Global Tourism Economy Research Centre, and Former Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific of UNWTO, inaugurated the event as Chief Guest. Mr. Faisal Naseem, Vice President of the Maldives, Dr. Abdulla Mausoom, Minister of Tourism, and Dr. P. Mohamed Ali, Chairman of Kuda Villingili Resort Maldives graced as guests of honour.

The event took place at The Hawkers, where the Honourable guests planted native trees of the Maldives, connecting with the nature and increasing our ecological footprint. This activity is just a small step of the pledge the resort has undertaken towards long-term sustainability and

preserving the ecosystem for future generations.

Mr. Xu Jing, who started his friendship with Maldivians in 1995 during his tenure in the UNWTO as Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, expressed his sincere congratulations for the launch of this event. He voiced, "With the launch of this Green Globe Initiative, we mark another journey, not only for economic success but also for the social benefits of the people of the Maldives."

Vice President of the Maldives, Mr. Faisal Naseem, warmly thanked all the staff working in the tourism industry for its success. He conveyed his belief that the reason behind this is everyone working together as one. "In an ever-changing world that faces substantial climate change every day, it becomes essential to have better strategies for sustainable tourism



and a sustainable environment. Everything we do every day must contribute to the protection of our environment," he advised.

Dr. Abdulla Mausoom, Minister of

Tourism, concurred, "Following the global outcry about global warming, President Ibrahim Solih has set our Net-Zero target for 2030. I am sure tourism will be a major player there."

## First Coral Nursery at Radisson Blu Maldives!



Radisson Blu Resort Maldives together with the on-site Dive and Watersport Center, Ocean Group Maldives, has built the resort's first coral nursery as a form of active reef restoration aimed at conserving coral ecosystem around the resort.

Located in the middle of the resort, just between the main restaurant and Crusoe's Island, the guests can easily see the newly-built rope nurseries when they swim or snorkel around the area.

The resort's Marine Biologist, Jessica Miller, says

"We started the coral restoration project in order to help recover some of the surrounding reef, utilizing corals that are more resilient to environmental and anthropogenic stressors, to increase the chances of survival of our reefs." In the future, guests will be welcomed to adopt a coral line of their own and they will be receiving updates along the journey until we bring it back onto the reef.

"As a Marine Biologist, my job is to educate guests, study marine life, and help conserve the amazing

marine ecosystem that the Maldives holds. I am starting from scratch in implementing various marine education and conservation projects." Jess added. She has a weekly presentation where she touches on some of the spectacular marine biodiversity that we can find in the Maldives. All the guests are invited to join this presentation accompanied with complimentary cocktails and canapés.

This joint effort is one big step among many activities which will be developed to involve the guests in cherishing and preserving the rich marine life of the Maldives. The resort will continue these efforts with the upcoming creation of a handbook and information plaques about the various type of fish and other marine animals which can be found the around the resort.



# The Sustainability Lab: A Pioneering New Project at Fairmont Maldives

Fairmont Maldives Sirru Fen Fushi, a private island in the remote Shaviyani atoll, has unveiled the latest in a series of pioneering environmental projects – the Sustainability Lab – the first of its kind in the archipelago. A hub of eco-education, the Sustainability Lab will turn plastic waste into bespoke souvenirs and unique products, educate guests and empower local communities. With the launch of Sustainability Lab project, they aspire to be as close to zero waste as they can, using current and future technology improvements to allow them to find better ways to reduce, reuse, recycle and up cycle the waste, whilst inspiring others globally to help secure a better future for the oceans and communities.

As tourism continues to grow and develop in the Maldives, so does concern regarding single-use plastics and its impact on the pristine

ecosystems - experts claim that by 2050 there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish.

Fairmont Maldives' mission - "To fully recycle all the plastic, waste generated by the resort and surrounding local communities, and ultimately, remove ocean plastic from the Maldivian environment".

Uza. Mariya Ahmed Didi, Minister of Defense, Hon. Aminath Shauna, Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Technology, Sabra Ibrahim Noordeen, The Special Envoy for Climate Change, The President's Office were present during the ribbon-cutting ceremony held on February 3, 2022.

As part of the programme, the resort now tracks over 50 resident Hawksbill turtles, and in 2021, they released over 1,200 baby green turtles born on the east coast of the resort. The Turtle



Rangers also carry out workshops in the Sustainability Lab, converting plastic removed during beach cleaning into turtle shaped products using the innovative recycling machines.

These initiatives are part of Fairmont Maldives' Save the Ocean programme which is split into three key projects; reef conservation and protection, the Sustainability Lab, and an educational

awareness campaign to resort guests and the local community. Each project focuses on different aspects of a sustainable way of saving the ocean and protecting marine biodiversity in the Maldives; Turning Waste into Wonder, Community Upliftment, Educating the Next Generation of Eco-Conscious Travellers, Pioneering Programmes.



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## MOVERS &amp; SHAKERS

## Ooredoo Maldives Appoints New Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer



Ooredoo Maldives announces the appointment of Mr. Khalid Hassan M A Al-Hamadi to the position of Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, effective from February 1, 2022.

Mr. Al-Hamadi is a Qatari national with several years of experience in the telecommunications industry. He has served as a Board Director at Ooredoo Maldives and has previously held several senior positions at Ooredoo Qatar including Senior Director in Consumer Sales and Assistant Director of Planning & Development. Additionally, he brings a rich experience of over 15 years in the Oil and Gas industry with international experience. He has worked with General Electric in Florence, Italy, where he used to be the Head of Planning and Strategy and was key to implementing the reorganization initiative in Sales and Service.

Mr. Al-Hamadi is an experienced and a certified Quality Auditor with distinguishing knowledge about management system, creative initiatives, continuous improvement, processes

implementation, statistical analysis and is a certified training manager. Mr. Al-Hamadi has a Bachelor of Science in System Engineering from the University of Arizona.

Ooredoo Maldives extended appreciation and profound gratitude to the recently parted former Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Najib Khan for his leadership and immense contribution to the growth of the Company. During his tenure, the Company witnessed acceleration in the Digitalization of the market and Ooredoo Maldives. Additionally, the Company has pioneered access to the digital lifestyle of consumers through several digital initiatives, including its e-commerce platform "Moolee", Digital Financial Service "m-Faisaa, and online store "Karti Store" for digital entertainment enablement.

Under his mentorship the Company has

grown, expanded and strengthened its portfolio for Small and Medium Businesses, Corporates, Government and Resort businesses. His guidance, has enabled the Company to launch the first ever tier-3 ready Data Centre in the Maldives, providing unparalleled connectivity, storage, security and support systems for IT- based services and operations, designed to provide reliability and safety for business customers.

Ooredoo Maldives congratulates and welcomes Mr. Al-Hamadi on his appointment as the Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer. They are confident that with his able guidance and expertise, the Company will thrive and achieve greater milestones while continuing its growth journey in the Maldives and enrich the lives of communities through digitalisation and innovative solutions.

## Emerald Faarufushi Resort & Spa Appoints Patrick de Staercke as General Manager



A friendly face to the Maldives hospitality industry, Patrick joins Emerald Faarufushi Resort & Spa from his previous post as General Manager at SAii Lagoon Maldives.

He brings immense experience in the luxury hotel industry, having filled F&B Director and Resident Manager posts and in the recent past, General Manager positions at several high-end resorts in the Maldives including Meeru, Vilamendhoo, Komandoo, Hurawalhi and Kuredu.

Recognized as a passionate driven leader, Patrick nourishes good spirits within the team, keeping a strong focus on guest satisfaction and constant improvement of facilities and services. With his dedication, hard work combined with his perfect background, Patrick at the helm of operations at Emerald Faarufushi Resort & Spa will ensure a successful debut for the property.

"I am delighted to be taking up the role of General Manager at such an exciting time not only for The Emerald Collection, but for the entire travel industry. The main standout features of Emerald Faarufushi for me, is the natural beauty of the island above and below water with a fantastic house reef full of life.

"I look forward to bringing my passion for this incredible destination to what will undoubtedly be one of the archipelago's standout resorts," said Patrick.

Opening on June 30, 2022, Emerald Faarufushi Resort & Spa, a new 5-star Deluxe All-Inclusive Resort, is a member of The Leading Hotels of the World. The resort located in the Raa Atoll, in the northern part of the Maldives archipelago, combines a lush private 7-hectares island with 1.2 km of white sandy beach, and it is surrounded by a gorgeous 100-hectares lagoon with one of the finest coral reefs in of the Maldivian ecosystem.

Designed with the discerning traveler in mind, Faarufushi stands out for its minimalist but modern architecture, authentic cultural experiences and meticulously refined services that defies pretense. The island boasts 80 luxurious villas, split into six different categories of which 38 beach villas and 42 overwater villas.

## Dr. Sham'aa (Anna) - First PADI Platinum Course Director in Maldives



Dr. Sham'aa (Anna) was certified as a PADI Course Director in July 2018. Since then, she has been heavily involved when it comes to professional development and is working directly alongside many educational and training programmes. In 2019, she received silver certification for her work in the previous year and later in 2020, she was officially named as a Platinum Course Director for the massive number of instructor level courses she taught in 2019.

Before being a PADI Course Director, Anna was a professionally trained medical doctor which also gave her the discipline to work hard and the fundamentals to succeed.

Anna has previously been the dean of Faculty of Marine studies at Villa College and she is driven by a goal to produce the best dive professionals possible. She is

currently working with Parley Maldives in the capacity of Project Manager. She hopes to motivate other professionals to take on the same attitude when it comes to diver training and continue to break down industry standards.

She wishes to inspire, encourage and has a passion for more female representation in the scuba diving and watersports industry. Being in a leadership position as a PADI Platinum Course Director is the perfect way for her to reach out and develop female divers all the way to professional level.

In 2010, she established the brand, Ocean Warriors as an Ideal, a Dream, a Mission, to inspire a new generation of Maldivians to become advocates for the ocean, to take the lead in protecting our Marine Nation - to be aware, informed, and empowered to act. Its motto, Mare Nostrum - 'Our Seas' - extends the message that the actions of ALL of us affect the state of our seas. Therefore, it is our responsibility to step up and work to mitigate the impact on the marine environment.

The brand has a registered NGO and a dive centre - PADI 5-Star Instructor Development Centre. Anna also informs that they are in the process of registering the Ocean Warriors Institute.

Anna is a role model, leading by example and encourages more to get involved. In the Maldives, a country of 99% Ocean, being a Diver is definitely a skill we should all learn.

MOVERS & SHAKERS



## Anantara Kihavah Maldives Villas Appoints Earle Enriquez as Marketing and Communications Manager

Anantara Kihavah Maldives has been appointed Earle Enriquez as its Marketing and Communications Manager.

Earle began her first sales position in the hospitality industry with Anantara Hotels in Oman, where she filled the roles of Marketing

and Communication Executive and Assistant Marketing and Communications Manager.

In 2019, Earle joined Seaside Finolhu as Marketing and Public Relations Manager, playing a key role in the property overcoming various challenges during the pandemic, leading to a successful rebranding and reopening through strategically implemented Marketing and PR activities,

utilization of social media and establishment of local and international media relations.

She has completed her Bachelor of Arts in Communication (AB Communication), Public Relations and Advertising, from Holy Angel University, Philippines. Having experienced several markets, Earle brings insight as a successful and innovative sales leader.

A private island located on Baa Atoll UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, Anantara Kihavah Maldives Villas features 80 beach and overwater pool villas and residences. With award-winning underwater dining, picnic on a deserted sandbank or star-gazing from the Maldives' only overwater observatory, guests are offered their dream barefoot luxury paradise.

## Raffles Maldives Meradhoo Appoints Imran Jaufar as Front Office Manager

Raffles Maldives Meradhoo has introduced its newly appointed Front Office Manager, Imran Jaufar.

Maldivian hailing from the Southern Atoll of Huvadhu in the island of Gadhduh. Imran comes on board with more than a decade of hospitality to his name in the Archipelago of Maldives. With his rich background that encompasses Housekeeping, Front Office and Transportation Imran is assured to enrich this beautiful oasis to bring out the

best in service to guests at Raffles Maldives Meradhoo.

Having started of his career as a journalist in Sri Lanka, he decided to make a life changing decision decades back after returning to Maldives to explore the wonders of hospitality in the most sought-after destination in the world. Kick started as a humble villa attendant who transformed into a brilliant yet vibrant leader, leading today's guest experience

journey at Raffles Maldives Meradhoo.

Imran takes pride in his work, and he often takes pleasure in surprising guests with bespoke experiences. With a broad mind that's constantly thinking ways to elevate and curate memorable experiences for guests, Imran is there to attend to it all. A sought-out leader, who believes in working together as a team and hides from the limelight to highlight his team and their efforts makes him a true leader in heart.



And today, Raffles Maldives Meradhoo celebrates yet another Heartist with a Soul and passion to both encouraging team members to rise up and grow alongside him to bring out the best in them.



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Photo: FSM Handhi barge delivery  
fuel to One&Only Reethi Rah

RISING TALENTS

# Limestone



Formed in October 2012, Limestone propelled from a humble jam between comrades to a professional live band.

Hopping from one resort to another, the band are renowned in the Tourism Industry for swinging an array of sounds. With an amalgamation of genres and eras suited for all events, the band caters for diverse experiences. From convivial sun-soaked grooves on the beach, serenading diners in candlelight, wooing newlyweds to float away on their dream clouds or elating the couple celebrating their anniversary as they sweep into nostalgia, the ensemble transports a global audience from one dimension to the next. Swapping from rock to romantic, classics to contemporary the band infuses a beat for each occasion.

The band consists of Inma (Lead Vocalist & Rhythm Guitar), Aleaf (Bass Guitar & Vocalist) Bey (Lead Guitar & Backing Vocalist) and Kudey (Drums/Percussion & Backing Vocalist).

Over the years, the band has performed at

numerous resorts: Six Senses Laamu, Sun Siyam Iru Fushi, Conrad Maldives Rangali Island, Fairmont Maldives, The Nautilus Maldives, InterContinental Maldives, Seaside Finolhu, One&Only Reethi Rah, Hard Rock Cafe' Maldives, Soneva Fushi, Soneva Jani, Velaa Private Island, Amilla Maldives Resort and Residences, just to name a few.

Distinct from most other bands, Limestone offers in-house service where they reside in resorts for long-term periods – an incentive for them to incorporate more tunes so they don't become repetitive for guests.

The band also played in Bahrain for a private event and takes pride in their performances with Polina Gagarina (The Voice Russia, Coach) at InterContinental Maldives and with Pixie Lott (The Voice Kids UK, Judge) at Amilla Maldives Resort and Residences.

As their tenth anniversary approaches, Limestone envisions ambitious plans and hopes to bring more sounds and more charm to their audiences.



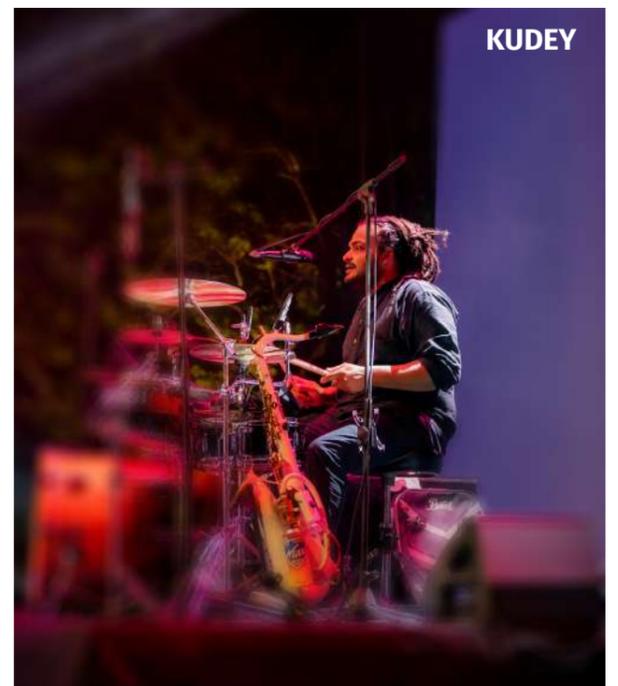
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# Against all Odds

“ Women's entrepreneurship varies and is rich in nuances, yet never an easy course, in fact, trials and tribulations are something of an inevitability. While the opportunity is great – being your own boss, working on your own terms, fueling a passion project, to name but a few – the risk of failure looms large. Yet, with it comes some of life's greatest lessons.

So, who better to put in the spotlight this International Women's Day than Aminath Salah, Chief Executive Officer at Voyages Maldives? We had immense pleasure to sit with her where she shared her career journey, and the challenges she instilled and overcame at young age in breaking the gender stereotypes to quest success in an industry dominated by men. ”

## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

with

## AMINATH SALAH

CEO, Voyages Maldives

### **Tell us about your journey. How did it all begin?**

It all began when I started working at Voyages Maldives during my school holidays when I was 16. At the time, my interest was in science, and I was hoping to be a marine biologist, but my work at Voyages made me more curious about business. I ended up studying Business Management and joined Voyages as a Marketing Executive in 2002 and this is when I found my passion for all things travel, marketing and management. After completing a Master's in marketing, I returned back to Voyages, and 20 years later I am enjoying it even more than I did when I was in my early 20's.

### **Tell us about yourself, the challenges you face as a working woman in this profession and how you overcome them?**

I think a lot of it was pressure I put on myself to work extra hard, to grow out of my father's shadow

who is one of the founders and Managing Director of Voyages Maldives.

My work ethic and dedication to Voyages after I had my daughter showed that I wasn't taking things for granted and knew I had to work just as much as the next person to show my capabilities and capacity as a leader.

In the beginning I tried not to do too much at once. I took small steps, giving myself and our team time to adjust to these major changes. This is what helped me manage the high expectations I had placed on myself and helped me achieve bigger goals with my team.

In addition, as a female in this industry what really helped me was reading up and following female leaders not just in tourism industry but in other

industries as well. The inspiration from other female leaders across the globe, especially as a working mother trying to reach new heights, helps me with these challenges.

### **The theme of this year's International Women's Day is "Break the bias". How would you translate this and relate to your career?**

I was very fortunate to be brought up in a gender-neutral household where I was encouraged to do anything I set my mind to. This laid the foundation for how I thought and made decisions while working in a male dominated industry. I was not limited by my gender to choose my path and work my way up the career ladder.

I strongly believe we have to start young to break the bias by bringing up children without enforcing gender roles on them from play toys to encouraging

the type of activities they want to pursue. And this must happen not just at home but also at schools and universities. Smashing gender stereotypes has many challenges and parents and educators must be well equipped to engage in dialogs that can change the mindsets despite the odds.

***Have you personally come across gender-specific challenges and stereotypes in your career?***

Sadly, yes, along with most women in industries such as ours. As I progressed in my career and reached the level of a CEO, the experiences have become less, but it still exists. The difference now is that I now feel more empowered to speak out about it and put a stop to it which wasn't the case even as recently as 5 years back. I see it happening with other women at different levels in their career, and one of my aims as a CEO and leading multiple teams is that women are not held back because of their gender, and that such stereotypes are eliminated. Both women and men in my teams are aware that I would have zero tolerance for such stereotypes.

***It is said that during the COVID-19 pandemic, women are shouldering a heavier burden of household labor and caregiving and experience physical symptoms of stress and burnout at up to twice the rate of men.***

***How do you think this can be improved in the future?***

I think managers and leaders have a big role to play in this when it comes to allowing both women and men to have equal access to flexibility when it comes to household and child-caring duties. The assumption and stereotypical assumption that only women can take care of a child when they are sick and therefore have to take leave or stay at home needs to be eliminated and men also need to feel more empowered about their roles at home and speaking up at work about such roles and expectations.

***It is said that it can take more than 100 years to reach gender equality. Worldwide, there is still a male majority in leadership and women are paid less than men for the same work. Do you think there should be affirmative action to improve this? For example, should businesses require policies of 50% women, 50% men in leadership?***

Affirmative action is certainly required and needs to be appropriate in the context of our country and our own beliefs. It is definitely a long-term plan and is multidimensional and transcends all industries. We need persistent policy action to go hand in hand with change in social norms. This includes starting at appropriate education for girls, focusing on the role of men in decision-making and phased approach to encourage businesses to be more proactive in focusing on closing the gender gap in women's leadership.

***What do you think it takes to succeed in this industry?***

As COVID19 has shown us, adaptability is certainly on top of the list these days, whether we are talking about individuals or corporations. Personally, for me, passion, determination and an unwavering curiosity and hunger to always learn more have equipped me with some important tools for success. I am a firm believer in the growth mindset, personal growth as well as growth from observing, listening

to others and having mentors in life. To balance all this out, integrity and honesty is critical and as I have learnt time and time again, sooner or later, the industry shows us all who have these skills and who does not.

***What are some of the trends you see impacting the hospitality industry?***

A post-COVID trend that has been on the rise are "workations" or as what may be more appropriate for the Maldives "barefoot workations" as working remotely is forecasted to become more than a trend. This means the hospitality industry of Maldives need to capitalize on this and offer leisure travelers the opportunity of setting up office on an exotic sandy beach.

Another important trend to keep on top are unlike conventional tourists, Millennials and Gen Z travelers are more spontaneous and expects digitalized guest experiences and personalized interactions. Contactless services and widespread use of technology needs to be adopted by the industry in all aspects of the guest cycle and experience.

There are many examples around the world where women-led businesses and cooperatives are featured strongly as events/excursions, a trend we could easily adopt here in the Maldives. With the recent events such as the first ever female surf competition and female-led dive schools, it is something that we can help grow and feature as a Maldivian feature in the hospitality industry as well.

***Do you think the industry lacks access to skilled manpower?***

As a small country of less than half a million people, skilled manpower is scarce. We don't seem to have enough training systems in place for the young population as they enter the workforce. Sometimes entering at very low levels and being stuck there for far too long with no obvious career path. In addition, there are very limited slots available to enter training positions at higher levels.

For example, boat crew have traditionally been all Maldivian especially boat captains. However, recently there has been a trend to employee expatriate workmen for deckhands and cooks onboard again due to lack of skilled labor available locally. Worryingly we're now in a situation that boat captains are becoming harder to find locally and historically the job of a boat captain is very prestigious and held at high regard.

***What will be your advice to young hoteliers or entrepreneurs? And what is your career advice to other women?***

Always follow your passion, not what you think you should do or ought to do but what you want to do. Passion allows you to do things that seem impossible. Don't be too hard on yourselves if things don't go your way at first (or the second or third time either), learn to be flexible and learn from the challenges. Passion cannot be taught or bought; it is your comparative advantage in life.

Be authentic, bring your true self for work. Our society put these pressures on us to be a certain way and that anxiety to play that part could hold you back. Travel industry is a 24/7 job and if you are not true to yourself it just becomes overwhelming and exhausting.

As for women, real change must begin with changing attitudes, within ourselves. Often, it all boils down to confidence. What holds women back is not a lack of competence but confidence. We tend to hold ourselves to an impossible standard of perfection. This needs to change through changing your own mindset and resetting the narrative for yourself. As an employer we are looking for people who can help take our business to the next level, not their gender, so we should all aspire to prove that, and grow within to reach new heights.

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Tourism this year, there are women leading in every front of the industry now, such as Dive Centre Owner and First Female Padi Course Director in Maldives - Zoon Moosa, Dean of Hospitality Faculty - Zeenaz Hussain, COO of Universal Resort Management - Visha Mahir, Summer Island Resort Manager - Maria Shareef, Director of Marketing at Coco Collection - Shafa Shabeer, Planning Director at Sun Siyam Resorts - Aishath Shimani, to name just a few. Even when I joined the industry these things were unimaginable but hopeful. Here we are...





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EVENTS & AWARDS

# F&B Show to Come Back as a Physical Event this June 2022 !



The most-anticipated event for foodies, Food & Beverage Show, Maldives has announced its comeback as a physical event to be held from June 2 to June 4, 2022 at Hulhumalé Central Park in partnership with Housing Development Corporation Limited (HDC).

**Nestlé Professional, Villa Trading and Maldives Gas have signed as the Key Sponsors for the Event**

The 5th Edition of Food & Beverage Show presented by Highrise, is an exclusive show that brings together the food and beverage industry like no other in the industry can duplicate. The 5th Annual Food & Beverage Trade Show will attract domestic and international attendees from resorts, hotels, guest houses, Liveboards, restaurant and foodservice operators, foodservice consultants,

manufacturer’s agents, food brokers, food distributors, food and beverage wholesalers, exporters / importers, equipment manufacturers, culinary experts, etc.

Food & Beverage Show is your opportunity to explore and sample the largest selection of foods and beverages, catering to the taste of the Maldives.

The show makes grand comeback after a two-year break due the unforeseeable causes in the presence of COVID-19 pandemic. As the world gradually recovers and restrictions have eased in the Maldives, Highrise has come forth to resume its annually held events, starting off with Food & Beverage Show in 2022. The event will be held in line with the Health Protection Agency of Maldives (HPA)

regulations and with safety and health standards maintained.

F&B Show pre-event marketing and promotions will commence in a series of exciting and interactive activities from March 2022 onwards. For the latest updates and activities of the event, follow @Highrise on Facebook and @highriseint on Instagram.

**About Nestlé Professional**

Nestlé Professional is committed to providing the finest ingredients, operational knowledge, and uncompromised support to food-service operations. This is accomplished through the team of dedicated and knowledgeable professionals who understand the characteristics and trends of food business. Nestlé Professional will allow every food-service professional to feel the support of the world’s largest food and beverage company—a company that will offer real solutions that address unique business challenges and opportunities, always valuing customer’s perspective and input.

**About Maldives Gas Private Limited**

Maldives Gas, the leading Liquefied Petroleum Gas provider in Maldives was established as a joint endeavor between State Trading Organization Plc (STO) and Champa Gas and Oil Private Limited. The Organization conveys LPG for families and Therapeutic gas to more than 95 percent of medical facilities in the nation. Different gases

prepared over the Maldives, are Mechanical Oxygen, Acetylene, Argon, Helium, Carbon dioxide and Nitrous Oxide. MGPL owns and operates total four conveying terminals dispensed in Male’ Locale. The terminal at K. Thilafushi is the filling facility and the main gas provider terminal for all the islands across the Maldives.

**About Villa Trading**

Villa trading private limited was established in 13th January 2021 as a general trading company which is a subsidiary of villa group of companies. While their core business is to supply quality food and beverages in the market along with other commodities including cosmetics and other household items, their aim is to strategically position themselves among the most admired marketers and distributors of these products, to meet the various needs of consumers every day.

Villa trading is involved in both wholesale and retail business. Where its retail business is mainly targeted towards providing high quality consumer goods at affordable prices. Villa mart is an established retail business 100 percent owned and operated under Villa trading private limited. Currently there are two major outlets of Villa mart operated in the capital city Male’, however the company aims to expand its retail business further by establishing new outlets all over the country.

# Record-Breaking Dive Event, Ocean 6|50 Successfully Concluded

Shafraz Naeem (Shaff) spends 50 hours submerged underwater, successfully completing the record-breaking dive event Ocean 6|50, organized to mark the golden jubilee of the Maldives’ tourism and diving industry.

Minister of Tourism Abdulla Mausoom attended the event site - Kuda Giri near Anantara Dhigu Resort - to greet Shaff on his successful dive record. After required medical inspections, Shaff moved to greet those who were onboard to congratulate him, which included partners, supporters and

guest divers as well as his family members.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, Shaff thanked the Ocean 6|50 team and said this was a team effort as he wouldn’t have been able to accomplish this without the support of all team members.

Minister Mausoom further congratulated Shaff on the record diving event and appreciated Shaff stepping up to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Maldives’ tourism

through such an inspiring event. He also thanked the event team, Unix Sporting and all the sponsors making the event a success.

The event was aimed to raise awareness and advocate for meaningful and sustainable solutions to the issues of plastic pollution, climate change, endangered species and marine ecosystem.



EVENTS & AWARDS

# First Yacht Rally ‘Savadheeththa Dhathuru’ Completed by Promoting Sailing Tourism, Heritage and Culture of Maldives

‘Savaadheeththa Dhathuru’, the first ever sailing event organized by the Maldives Integrated Tourism Corporation (MITDC) where sailors from across the globe participated on a journey across the Maldives seas (Haa Alif, Haa Dhaalu, Noonu & Baa Atoll), making stops at 9 local inhabited islands, exploring the heritage, experiencing famous dive sites, sandbanks etc. The journey began on February 5, 2022 from the most northern atoll of the country, Haa Alif Atoll, taking a course of 2 weeks to reach Fari Islands, in North Male Atoll.

Gala night ceremony for the ‘Savaadheeththa Dhathuru’ Maldives Yacht Rally 2022 was celebrated on February 20, 2022 at the Fari Marina Village, in Fari Islands.

The Fari Islands archipelago is home to a large-scale luxury private yacht marina, boasting state-of-the-art facilities, along with round-the-clock security to ensure security of vessels. The Fari Marina Village boasts luxurious retail options, art, music and a diverse offering of food and beverage including a menu curated by 2 Michelin star chef Nick Brill at Fari Beach Club.

The spacious berths and 3-metre-deep lagoon could accommodate up to 10 yachts in the marina and 3 yachts of up to 60 meters in the lagoon.

Fari Islands, the luxury archipelago home to Patina Maldives and The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands, is generously sponsoring our Gala night to end this journey with a joyous night with their great hospitality and a short ceremony to give away certificates and plaques for the participants and sponsors.

Opening remarks by Managing Director Mohamed Raaidh highlighted the opportunity to learn, grow and experience what Maldives has to offer and the importance of diversifying tourism products in the Maldives.



Chief guest Minister of Arts, Culture & Heritage Hon. Yumna Maumoon called for tourism diversification for the benefit of the local communities.

The event also comprised of a speech from Minister of Youth, Sri Lanka Honorable Namal Rajapaksa, followed by presenting of plaques and certificates to Yachties, followed by a special dinner and live music.

The ceremony was attended by Minister of Tourism Honorable Dr Abdulla Mausoom, Minister for Preseidents officer, Dr. Musthafa Luthufee, our sponsors and yatchies.

The ‘Savaadheeththa Dhathuru’ Rally was sponsored by MTCC, MMPRC, Fari Islands (Patina Maldives and The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands), Voyages Maldives, National Centre for Cultural Heritage, MTDC, Hawks Pvt Ltd, TMA, Maldivian, MWSC, MFMC, Dhiraagu,

Road Development Corporation (RDC) Ltd., SME Development Financial Corporation (SDFC), SIWEC, Coca Cola Company, JLS Yachts, Cobia Tours, Red Lip Media, Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI), National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM), Maldives Police Service, M7 Print, Maldives Polytechnic, The Island Chief, Floating Asia and Fachuvi Music.

In the ceremony to conclude this successful event, MITDC announced first ever Maldives-Sri Lanka Regetta; sailing regatta between Maldives and Sri Lanka.

Following the event, the organizers have already begun preparations for the next Yacht Rally to be held in 2023. Owing to the success of this rally, MITDC anticipates next year’s event to be much greater with a larger participation of yachties from across the globe.

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## Mandarin Oriental Announces a Private Island Resort in the Maldives

Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group has announced that it will manage a new resort on a private island in The Maldives that is scheduled to open in 2025.

The resort is currently work in progress on a pristine Indian Ocean site and will extend across three private islands on Bolidhuffaru Reef in South Male Atoll, accessed by an easy 20-minute speedboat ride from Velana International Airport.

Surrounded by white sand sea shores and the energetic coral reefs for which The Maldives is eminent, the resort will provide a beautiful setting from which to partake in an assortment of activities including wellness experiences and water sports.

The accommodation comprises 120 stand-alone villas, made up of 56 overwater villas and 64 beachfront villas, including 10 branded Residences at Mandarin Oriental. Ranging in size from 200 to 1,000 square metres, the villas will be some of the largest in the market, each providing exclusivity and seclusion, with private pools and sweeping ocean views. The Group is working with a number of international consultants to ensure sustainability best practises are followed in all stages of the development.

Six dining outlets, including three speciality restaurants and a sunset bar, will ensure that guests have a varied choice of venues during their stay. In addition, creative indoor and outdoor event space will provide unique locations for meetings, social gatherings and weddings.



Spacious wellness facilities will be located in the resort's tropical gardens, and will include 12 treatment suites, vitality pools, sauna and steam rooms as well as a beauty salon. Mandarin Oriental's expert team of wellness practitioners will offer tailored experiences and the Group's signature treatments.

Additional leisure activities will include a water sports and dive centre, tennis courts, a kids and teens club, a swimming pool and numerous private coves and beaches to explore.

"Mandarin Oriental is focused on developing its resort portfolio and has been looking to enter The Maldives for some time. This project represents the

right opportunity for the Group" said James Riley, Chief Executive of Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group.

The 34-hectare site is being developed by DAMAC Properties, part of Dubai-based DAMAC Group, one of the world's foremost luxury real estate developers.

"The DAMAC brand is synonymous with luxury products and service, and so we felt The Maldives was a perfect fit for us. DAMAC has extended its global footprint outside of the Middle East, from the UK to Canada, and we are thrilled to have reached The Maldives as well. We look forward to working with Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group to manage our new resort on this beautiful island." Hussain Sajwani, Chairman of DAMAC Group said.

## A Brand-New Outlet of Marrybrown Opens at Hulhumalé Phase 1 Waterfront



The Malaysian franchise chain operating in the Maldives, Marrybrown has unveiled its brand-new outlet at Hulhumalé.

Marrybrown expands its service after a decade of operating its main outlet in Malé City. The new outlet is located at Water's Edge, a waterfront commercial complex developed by Huruvalhi Beach Resort Investment Private Limited in Hulhumalé phase 1 area.

The outlet was officially opened by Hon. Mohamed Aslam, Minister of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure on February 15, 2022.

Starting with Marrybrown's outlet as the first to extend service, the residents of Hulhumalé can expect to experience several other outlets including Secret Recipe, Coffee Republic and Pizza Mia at the complex.

## IN THE NEWS

# Ooredoo presents to you Ooredoo Maldives Data Center (OMDC), the first of its kind tier 3 compliant Data Center!



The global digital revolution has massively changed how we do business. Data has become the universal key to success and every business - albeit the size - has become extensively data driven.

And with data as your core, businesses start outgrowing their IT infrastructure quickly. This leads to further difficulties in acquiring high capital investment, high uptime, technical resources, capacity and know-how to effectively manage their IT infrastructure along with the challenge of hiring the required & right IT team and experts to support your business.

With two decades of connecting businesses across the Maldives, Ooredoo Maldives introduced the Ooredoo Maldives Data Center (OMDC) in 2021 to address these issues and to bridge the gap of making digital transformation easier, secure and stress-free. Being a world class technological facilitator with years of experience and accolades, the data

center offers the ability to enhance operations with the latest technology & expertise, improve redundancy & flexibility, deliver higher availability and better use of IT assets.

Imagine having a large-scale IT department but at a fraction of the cost with the newest technology and subject experts at hand with the latest infrastructure. That is exactly what the OMDC aims to deliver.

The OMDC is a first of its kind tier 3 carrier grade data center that was made to cater the best possible solutions for your IT hardware expansion - a relaxing "spa hotel" experience for your IT infrastructure. The spa experience comes with temperature control for optimal performance, emergency power supply to avoid power cuts and high internet connectivity with round the clock digital and physical monitoring systems with disaster measures in place. Bearing the stamp of Ooredoo's commitment to safety & security of



customer property, it also ensures critical data and infrastructure is protected at all times by being a safe haven for all your IT needs.

OMDC gives a strategic advantage of not only the physical architecture and location, but also many technological benefits like direct access to international gateway, specialized resources for designing and deploying bespoke cloud-based solutions and managed services.

Ooredoo Maldives has always been

the leading figure at the country's digital forefront. Ever since establishing in 2005, the organization has been playing a pivotal role to bring Maldivians the much-needed modern day technology and connecting the country to international innovations and opportunities. With the reputation and trust of the global Ooredoo network, we can be sure that the OMDC will become the leading partner for companies to take charge into global digitalization while taking the digital economy of the Maldives to the next level.

IN THE NEWS

# Ayady Introduces COVID-19 Cover for Travel Takaful



Allied Islamic Window; Ayady Takaful has introduced COVID-19 Cover as an extension to Travel Takaful.

In a press conference held in Allied Building, the new feature was announced by Allied Insurance Company of the Maldives General Manager Ibrahim Firushan and Ahmed Shabiq.

This affordable plan that offers protection against a range of travel-related emergencies including the coronavirus pandemic is designed to boost travel confidence with reassurance that wallets are safe-guarded against the unexpected.

Now, the customers can benefit from coverage of isolation facility charges arising from a positive diagnosis for COVID-19 and medical emergency as well as medical evacuation required as a result of COVID-19.

The high on demand, Travel plans can be acquired Online at any time of customers convenience via portal myallied.mv. Ayady aims to provide secure peace of mind during customers travel journeys.

# Dhiraagu to Connect Maldives to the Latest Global Super-highway SEA-ME-WE 6 Submarine Cable System

Dhiraagu has entered into a contract with a consortium of 13 global telecom and tech companies to connect Maldives to the global super high-way SEA-ME-WE 6 (SMW6) submarine cable system. This cable system is planned to connect South-East Asia, the Middle East, and Western Europe at eleven countries from Singapore to France and is expected to be completed by Q1 2025.

SMW6 is a 19,200 km long submarine cable system with a minimum transmission speed of 100Tbps, using the latest undersea cable technology. This cable system, will provide direct access to key Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) and Data Centres (DCs) from South-East Asia to Europe. This investment by Dhiraagu will significantly strengthen Maldives' International connectivity, improve quality and resilience of its services to consumers, businesses and fuel future growth of digital services across the country.

With the growing demand for digital services, this addition to its existing submarine cable systems is an



important step towards making the Maldives a global digital hub and strengthening the digital infrastructure of the country. It gives increased confidence to customers and investors looking to host their services in the Maldives. Additionally, it will enable further exploration of the potentials of emerging technologies such as 5G, artificial intelligence and virtual reality.

“We are delighted to be a partner of SMW6 consortium and achieve this important milestone in the development of our telecommunication services in the Maldives. This is a significant investment that will bring immense benefits to the nation, customers and shareholders. The SMW6 cable system will provide direct connectivity to multiple key locations across the

world, which will help reduce latency, improve quality and reduce costs of Dhiraagu’s internet services” stated Ismail Rasheed, CEO & MD at Dhiraagu.

Dhiraagu continues to enrich lives by investing in modern technologies to enhance customers’ digital experience and empower our communities to ‘take on tomorrow’.

## IN THE NEWS

## President Inaugurates Madivaru Airport Operations

On February 18, 2022, President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih has officially inaugurated Madivaru Airport in Lhaviyani Atoll.

Describing the new opening as a joyous occasion for the people and resort operators of Faadhippolhu Atoll, President said that it would create new jobs and aid in the promotion of tourism in the region, for resorts, guest houses, and homestay facilities alike, in addition to other economic activities. He further noted that every atoll north of Malé has been integrated with an airport.

The new airport was developed by Kuredu Holdings Pvt Ltd and would be operated by Island Aviation Services

Ltd. The fully equipped new airport will provide reliable and quality services to the residents and tourists visiting the atoll, as per the wishes of President Solih.

President also revealed that the developer of Madivaru Airport is currently preparing for expansion, which would see it develop into an international airport.

The Madivaru Airport is equipped with a 1200-metre runway and can accommodate four aeroplanes at a time. The airport terminal also comes with an 80-passenger VIP lounge. The Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation has recently presented Island Aviation Service Ltd with the aerodrome certification for the airport.



## George Corbin to Join Maldives Golden Jubilee Celebrations



The Italian travel agent who once took a chance in heralding Tourism across the Indian Ocean, and helped introduce Maldives as a tourist destination - almost 47 years ago - has arrived in the Maldives to participate in the Golden Jubilee celebrations.

Mr. Corbin greatly contributed to the introduction of tourism to the Maldives with his first visit in 1972 as an Italy-based diving tour operator. This marks the third visit to the island nation, with his most recent being back in 2018.

Corbin was greeted at the Airport by the Tourism pioneer Hon Ahmed Naseem, Minister of Health and Hon

Dr. Abdulla Mausoom, Minister of Tourism and officials from Tourism Ministry and MACL. During his six-day visit to the Maldives, Mr. Corbin met with Senior officials of the Tourism Industry and Associations to discuss on ways of expanding the United States Tourist market in the Maldives and focused on ways to strengthen the Maldives' tourism industry.

Mr. Corbin met with HE President of Maldives, Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM), Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI), Maldives Association of Travel Agents & Tour Operators (MATATO).

President Solih went on to speak

about the administration's commitment to developing the tourism sector and highlighted the recent introduction of homestay tourism in the Maldives. Mr. Corbin described Maldives' tourism sector's progress as "superb" and said the future looked bright, despite room for progress. He went on to highlight the importance of attracting more middle-class travellers.

President Solih and Mr. Corbin also spoke about strengthening the domestic transportation network, describing the building of new domestic airports as a positive development. The two went on to discuss ways to ease travel for tourists from distant markets like the Americas.

Ministry of Tourism released a collection of special stamps in celebration of 50-year Anniversary of Maldives Tourism industry. The stamps were released by tourism industry pioneers including Mr. Mohamed Umar Manik - Chairperson of MATI, Hussain Afeef - Crown Company Co-founder and hotelier, Ahmed Naseem - Minister of Health, Mr. George Corbin, and the very Tourism Minister of Maldives, Mr. Ahmed Mujthaba.

The collection of stamps made available by Maldives Post Limited consists of six different stamps, in which highlights the events; the inception of tourism,

introduction of overwater accommodation, introduction of hospitality training institutes, introductions of seaplane services, beginning of guesthouse tourism and lastly, the celebration of golden jubilee of Maldives tourism.

Mr. George participated in "Tourism Upbeat: The Pioneer's Talk", an interactive discussion session organized by the Ministry of Tourism for the travel and tourism students in the Maldives. This hybrid session was held to discuss on the experiences of Maldives tourism pioneers with students given the chance to interact and question the speakers on their curiosities in the field. The speakers include Mr. MU Manik, Mr. Hussain Afeef, Mr. Ahmed Naseem and Mr. George Corbin. The session was held on February 17, 2022 at Maldives National University Auditorium.

Speaking about his experience with the Maldives, Mr. Corbin delightedly noted, "I have seen many, many places. Maldives is a very different [from other] places. The reefs in Maldives are also different. So, don't destroy those reefs. The damage caused by the destruction of the reefs will also be seen. Previously, red sea had a variety of beautiful marine life. But there is nothing we can see now."

National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM) board members met with George Corbin and discussed on ways how we can market Maldives cruising in the European market.

## IN THE NEWS

## Bison Maldives Signs Contract with Dutch Docklands Maldives to Build First Homes in Floating City



Bison Maldives signed a contract with Dutch Docklands Maldives on February 9, 2022 for the construction of the first homes in Maldives Floating City — a new, floating development of 5,000 homes being constructed in a lagoon five minutes speedboat ride from Male'.

The first houses will enable people to visit the site and get a real world look and feel for the new housing development.

Maldives Floating City uses the latest technology from the Netherlands, where engineers have already completed floating housing projects. The 5,000 housing units will be tethered to the lagoon floor, and linked together to create a safe and comfortable environment.

The first houses will be ready after Ramadan, and tours for members of the public will commence shortly afterwards. The houses are being constructed locally, to specifications designed by engineers from the Netherlands.

Bison Maldives is a major resort construction company based in Maldives. With over two decades' experience in the construction business, Bison Maldives has built luxury resorts such as Cocoon Maldives, You & Me by Cocoon and properties for Atmosphere group as well.

Abdul Majeed, Founder and Managing Director of Bison said:

"Bison Maldives is delighted to be part of this ground-breaking housing project and we look forward to delivering the first houses on time."

Commenting on the contract signing, Maldives Floating City director Ibrahim Riyaz said:

"We are excited to start the physical construction of Maldives Floating City, after months of painstaking legal and technical work to prepare for this world class and affordable housing development. I look forward to taking members of the public to the first houses, so they can see the project for themselves. In such an innovative development, seeing is believing."



# 40/60

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## BON APPÉTIT

# Kukulhu Riha (Maldivian Chicken Curry)



Born in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Sous Chef at Ellaidhoo Maldives by Cinnamon, Darshika Nadeeshani graduated from the Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism & Hotel Management. Her career started off in 2007, as a Management Trainee at the Hikka Tranz by Cinnamon in Sri Lanka. Since then, she has spread her wings and grown with Cinnamon Group of Hotels & Resorts, and is now part of an elite team of culinary experts.

*"Since the Maldivian Cuisine uses coconut as one of their main ingredients, which is quite similar to the Sri Lankan Cuisine, I was inspired to dabble a little in the fine art of cooking and create my own dishes, with a Maldivian twist."*

## Ingredients :

- 1 (1200g) whole chicken – skinned, cut into 8 pieces
- 4 tbsp vegetable oil
- 100g finely sliced onion
- 10 g curry leaves
- 1 tsp ginger – grated
- 4 cloves garlic – pressed/grated/very finely chopped
- 3 pieces of Pandan leaves
- 3 cardamom seeds
- 1 tsp chili powder
- 1 Scotch Bonnet (githeyo mirus) – finely chopped
- 2 tbsp chicken curry powder/paste
- 1 cup coconut cream/milk (thick)
- 1 cup coconut cream/milk (thin)
- 1 cup water
- Salt to taste

## Mas'huni :

- 1 cup freshly grated coconut
- 1 Maldivian chili (chopped)
- 40g canned tuna
- Salt (to taste)
- Lime Juice (01 no.)

## Roshi :

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 cups hot (just boiled) water

## Bis Keemiyaa :

### Filling

- 1 cup smoked tuna – diced/sliced (substitute: 1 can Light meat tuna chunks)
- 1 Dorset Naga (Chinese capsicum/ghost chili/githeyo mirus) – finely chopped
- 15g curry leaves – finely chopped
- 100g finely sliced onion
- 1 tbsp pepper – crushed
- 250g finely sliced cabbage
- 5 eggs – hard boiled, chopped
- Salt to taste

### Dough

- 3 cups flour – sifted
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 1 tsp salt
- Warm water
- Vegetable oil for frying

## Method:

### Kukulhu Riha

- Heat the oil, sauté the onions, garlic, ginger, curry leaves, pandan leaves.
- Add the chili powder, while stirring, then add the curry powder and ½ cup of water. Cook on low heat, stirring frequently.
- When the curry paste starts bubbling, add the chicken pieces and toss until all pieces are well coated.
- Add salt, pepper, cardamom, thin coconut milk and the remaining water. Cook on low heat, stirring occasionally.
- When the chicken is cooked, add the thick coconut milk and simmer for about a minute.

### Mas'huni:

- Add all ingredients to a bowl & mix well by hand
- Then correct the seasoning

### Roshi

- Mix all the ingredients then add warm water gradually, kneading until have a dry, smooth dough.
- Break the finished dough into golf ball sized pieces.
- Smooth the balls using your hands.
- Dust each ball with flour and using a rolling pin spread evenly into circles that are about 6 -7 inches in diameter.
- Heat a shallow frying pan, place roshi on the pan and flip using a flat ladle until both sides are cooked.

### Bis Keemiyaa

- Sauté the onions and curry leaves in the vegetable oil.
- Add the cabbage and stir-fry until the cabbage is soft.
- Add the tuna, Dorset Naga, pepper and eggs. Let stand to cool.
- In the meantime, make the dough by mixing all the ingredients for the dough and then adding warm water gradually and kneading until have a dry, smooth dough.
- Break the finished dough into small golf ball sized pieces.
- Using a rolling pin spread each dough ball evenly into circles that are about 4 inches in diameter.
- Put about 2 teaspoons of the cabbage, egg and tuna mixture in the centre and fold two ends over it. Then fold the other two ends to form a square.
- Make a thick flour paste (water+flour) to glue the sides of the keemiyaa to prevent it from opening up during frying.
- Deep fry, drain and serve.



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Courtesy of  
Sous Chef Darshika Nadeeshani  
Ellaidhoo Maldives by Cinnamon

# Frankly Speaking

Several lagoons are in process of reclamation and development for luxury resorts, and whilst Maldives advocate as Champions of Environment, how healthy is it to develop all lagoon in Male' or Ari Atoll with artificial islands where tourism is already congested in such zones? What outcomes in terms of good and bad are from these developments?



**Abdul Latheef**  
Managing Director  
Casa Retreat

Reclaiming lagoons by destroying marine life and building more resort islands already in congested locations will become very unhealthy. By doing that we are going to get the same result as they got in the Red Sea. Mr. George Corbin also asked us not to do that and suggested us to take tourism to far away islands and asked us to build a more efficient and cost-effective transport system.

People come to Maldives because water sports in Maldives are better than Bali. Mauritius is one big island with many beach resorts and in Maldives each island is a resort of its own. Maldives offer more luxury accommodations and Hawaii is more backpacker friendly. Fiji is also good with beautiful surroundings. But couples who are not ready to compromise snorkeling experience and tranquility of the beaches find a more romantic getaway in the Maldives. Do not let go all that we have.

Why destroy marine life and building so many artificial islands like in the Red Sea and congest tourist points like snorkeling, diving, and water sports etc. Maldives is a different experience for a holiday with a lot of nature.



**Abdulla Nashid**  
Managing Director  
Villa Air , Fly Me

The topic of land reclamation for any purpose is a hotly debated one. As you know the islands of Maldives are small and spread out and difficult to reach. This raises the need to reclaim land around development centers such as Ari Atoll for tourism and other purposes as well. Let's say instead of reclaiming reefs and lagoons, we try to spread out tourism development throughout the Maldives. Now comes the question, do we put power houses on all these islands?

Do we use more and more vessels and aircraft to transport passengers to these islands? What would be the impact of these additional contributors to the environment?

All these factors make it a complicated question to answer. But i do believe we need to maintain a delicate balance when reclaiming land for any purpose not just tourism.



**Ibrahim Ali Jaleel**  
Vice President  
SEFM

Keep the lagoons for natural beauty and natural movements for birds etc. Get a mechanism to get the pending 130 resorts so they start paying tax. Government should get funds and make a JV with these resorts and get them completed and let them buy back state share and should stop sale of islands at low low rates with a low acquisition fee like 200k to 2-3millions.

Selling of lagoons and islands for immediate buck don't help and these buyers or MP's don't have funds to develop these islands. Again, these will add to pending resorts under construction.



**Hussain Rasheed (Sendi)**  
First PADI Course Director

Major reclaimed areas in Malé Atoll are a preparation for environmental disaster towards the underwater habitats. As nature is naturally designed in its most fitting way, especially the islands. We won't know, for example, how to design an island to look like Embudu. However, for countries such as Sri Lanka or India, they can develop the land as they do not have the lagoons. We have enough islands and don't see how the same islands need to go through that. But there are three factors affecting these activities; social, cultural and economics managing.

In managing, social and cultural aspects are looked over by the indigenous people. It is not separated with tourism or any other aspect. The indigenous people face unjust in this management process. 'At the end, we are going to die.' That is what Shauna said in the last COP conference. 'My grandchildren will not be able to have a family in the Maldives.' I believe socio-cultural people face corruption injustice. From every disaster we face, the nature is telling us a story. In the Maldives, the nature is below the surface. It is not prioritized as much as it should be.

I know all the Tourism and Environment Ministers that have come to pass in my 57 years of lifetime. Most of the people going to negotiate regarding these matters are not people who are friendly around the sea. We need to go back to researches done by Maldives Marine Biologists in the late 70s and early 80s. They predicted that if we continue to keep on taking corals from the reefs, at some point it will be of scarce, and we will have to artificially produce corals. The same situation applies here.

I have been living in B. Fulhadhoo for the past 5 years, and the harbor built here by the government has helped greatly to all the locals living in the island economically and socially. At times minimal damages done to the coral reefs are overlooked, as it is important to develop necessary infrastructure for the indigenous people living in inhabited islands.

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