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with
MS. SHAHA HASHIM
Programme Manager
Blue Marine Foundation and Maldives Resilient Reefs

WOMEN'S DAY EDITION
#EmbraceEquity



Emirates Invests USD135 Million in New Pilot Training Centre



Siyam World Launches World's First Ever Underwater



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Dear Readers,

A year ago, MITDC hosted "Savaadheeththa Dhathuru", a remarkable yacht rally across the Maldives and as we write this publisher's note, MITDC is gearing up for the 2nd edition of the yacht rally scheduled to begin its journey on 1st March 2023 starting from Noonu Atoll and ending in Alif Dhaal Atoll. The rally is designed to visit a total of nine inhabited islands giving guests the chance to see local heritage sites on those islands and experience the island lifestyle, cultural activities, diving, etc. There will be six designated anchor points where yachtsmen can anchor their boats. Sea transfer will be arranged by the organizer to the remaining islands.

With the International Women's Day around the corner, we chose to feature a rising icon from the tourism industry in this issue of the Islandchief, we bring you ocean advocate, Ms. Shaha Hashim, Programme Manager, Blue Marine Foundation and Maldives Resilient Reefs. She reflects on her journey and shares her experiences with us. From her early days from school, Shaha talks about the importance of resilience, and how collaboration can play in enhancing momentum in achieving the climate action objectives and not giving up despite the odds.

We also take a moment to embrace the aim of the 2023 International Women's Day #EmbraceEquity campaign theme as it is important to get everyone talking about Why equal opportunities aren't enough. People start from different places, so true inclusion and belonging require equitable action. So, here are two vital definitions we must remember for life; Equality means each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities. Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances, and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.

Delve into the culinary world with us as we illuminate a culinary gem in our Bon Appetit section. The spotlight is on Aminath Maasha, a gifted Commis Chef from Patina Maldives, Fari Islands, who shares with us her prized recipe - the Fehi Fehi Azaadhee. This exquisite Green Chicken Curry is a fragrant masterpiece, where the bold flavors of fresh coriander, mint leaves, and Greek leaves intermingle seamlessly with the fiery kick of green chilies and an array of other savory ingredients.

There's plenty more in this issue including the perspective of our industry experts on the MVR 2 billion investment to expand the Hanimaadhoo International Airport. They provide their views on whether this expansion will have a significant impact on the tourism and trade landscape of northern Maldives. In other words, they analyze the potential effects of this investment on the region's economy, particularly in terms of attracting more tourists and facilitating trade.

Until our next issue,

The Islandchief Team



Traditional Eid al-Adha Festivities in Maldives

Bodumas Beynun "Big Fish or Whale Fishing"

Immerse yourself in the vibrant and traditional Eid al-Adha festivities! One of the most thrilling events during the celebration is the "Bodumas Beynun" or "whale fishing" ceremony. This eagerly awaited spectacle involves the weaving of a magnificent Bodumas, crafted from the leaves of the coconut palm tree. As the event unfolds, the fishermen courageously attempt to catch the creature, whilst being surrounded by eerie "Maali" spirits from the depths of the sea. With the guidance of a holy man known as "Kivevelibe", the fishermen eventually succeed in their quest to capture the mighty Bodumas. This captivating performance is prepared the night before Eid and takes place on the day of the celebration, where Islanders gather in anticipation to witness this exhilarating spectacle.



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SriLankan Airlines Takes to China's Skies Again



SriLankan Airlines is set to renew its commercial operations to China in the first week of April 2023, with a thrice weekly service each to Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou as China reopens its borders. China was a leading source market for inbound tourism to Sri Lanka and one of

SriLankan's premier leisure traveller segments before the pandemic, and SriLankan is positioning for a strong comeback in China upon its return.

SriLankan will launch passenger flights to Shanghai on 3 April 2023. Accordingly, flights will depart from Colombo to

Shanghai every Monday, Thursday and Friday, and return from Shanghai to Colombo every Tuesday, Friday and Saturday, respectively. Flights from Colombo to Beijing will also commence on 3 April 2023, and are scheduled to depart for Beijing on Monday, Wednesday and Friday every week.

The return flights to Colombo will depart on the respective subsequent days.

SriLankan Airlines currently operates a weekly flight between Colombo and Guangzhou, and a second flight will be introduced on 4 March 2023. Furthermore, SriLankan's services to Guangzhou will become a thrice-weekly operation exactly a month later on 4 April 2023, with flights taking off from Colombo to Guangzhou every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. The return flights from Guangzhou to Colombo will depart every Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.

With Chinese travellers eager to make up for lost time in globetrotting, SriLankan will be working closely with the local travel trade to reignite enthusiasm for Sri Lanka as a leisure destination in China. In addition to specifically curated holiday packages and deals, SriLankan offers Chinese customers the convenience of paying via Alipay and WeChat Pay. For more details and bookings visit www.srilankan.com



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ACROSS THE SKIES

Emirates Invests USD135 Million in New Pilot Training Centre

Emirates will soon build an advanced training facility to accommodate 6 Full Flight Simulator Bays (FFS) for its future Airbus A350 and Boeing 777X aircraft. The brand new, 63,318 sq. ft. facility is slated to open in March 2024.

His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman and Chief Executive Emirates Airline and Group, said: "This US\$ 135 million investment to build a new pilot training centre will ensure Emirates' readiness to commence its pilot training ahead of the delivery of its new aircraft fleet starting from 2024. The building will be equipped with the latest, technologically advanced simulators to provide the best training for pilots, while using solar power to reduce energy consumption."

The new building will be adjacent to the existing Emirates Training Facilities in Dubai, which will provide a great integration and close proximity to all the other pilot training centres.

Pilot trainees will also benefit from being able to set-up and configure the cockpit environment using bespoke devices as part of the pilot training module and upload the data to the Full Flight Simulator (FFS) prior to commencing their training session. This innovative, first-of-its-kind concept is designed to shorten the trainee's preparatory time inside the simulator, help



them maintain focus and take full advantage of the training duration.

With the addition of the new building to Emirates' existing training colleges in Dubai, the airline will have the potential to expand its pilot training capacity by 54% per year. Across the airline's training buildings, Emirates' pilots will have increased flexibility and facilities to hone their flying skills with 17 full flight simulator bays offering a capacity of more than 130,000 training hours a year.

In line with the scheduled delivery of Emirates' first Airbus

A350 aircraft, the airline's newest training college will commence training its first batch of A350 pilots by June 2024.

In addition to modern training facilities for its flight deck crew, the airline offers a range of world-class training and development programmes for its workforce and for other aviation professionals. In Dubai, these include: the Emirates Flight Training Academy for cadets, Emirates Aviation University, Emirates Cabin Crew Training Centre, and numerous programmes specially created for different segments of its employees.

Addu International Airport Receives IATA Safety Audit for Ground Operations (ISAGO) Registration



Addu International Airport Pvt Ltd has received the IATA Safety Audit for Ground Operations (ISAGO) registration and Station accreditation at GAN from the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

AIA accomplished the requirements of ISAGO Standards and Recommended Practices (GOSARPs) after a successful and comprehensive audit carried out by IATA of GAN International Airport in areas of Organization and Management (ORM), Load Control (LOD), Passenger & Baggage Handling (PAB), Aircraft Handling & Loading (HDL), Aircraft ground Movement (AGM), Cargo & Mail Handling (CGM).

"Achieving ISAGO registration is a major milestone for us, and it demonstrates the commitment and importance GAN places in areas of safety & service quality. We shall strive further to improve safety and service levels in all areas and establish ourselves as the southern gateway to the Maldives. I thank & congratulate all my colleagues for their outstanding effort to accomplish this remarkable achievement." Said Gais Naseer, AIA's Managing Director.

The ISAGO is an industry global standard for assessing operational management and control systems for ground handling service providers. Based on industry-proven quality audit principles, ISAGO follows a stringent and structured process that reviews training, management system policies, processes, and procedures.

THANK YOU TEAM AIA

IN A NUTSHELL

Soneva Boosts Sustainable Energy Generation at its Resorts in the Maldives



Soneva expands its solar power developments at Soneva Fushi and Soneva Jani in the Maldives based on a USD 10 million funding provided by German-headquartered Aareal Bank, boosting the electricity generated from renewable energy to over 50% at both resorts.



opportunities in line with the criteria of the Bank’s proprietary Green Finance Framework.

Soneva has pioneered clean energy and sustainability in the luxury hospitality industry for decades. Its resorts have been proudly carbon neutral since 2012, and a 2% environmental levy is added to every Soneva stay with proceeds helping to offset carbon emissions. Soneva Fushi was also the first resort to install a solar power facility in the Maldives in 2008, taking advantage of the island nation’s abundant sunshine to reduce operating costs without compromising the guest experience.

“While Soneva has been a carbon neutral company since 2012, it is the elimination of emissions from the operation of our resorts in remote locations that’s presented the greatest challenge to reaching our zero-carbon goal,” said Bruce Bromley, Chief Financial Officer and Deputy CEO of Soneva. “Our partnership with Aareal Bank is a cornerstone of our capital structure and this facility, which will now allow us to take a major step towards achieving carbon-free operations at our Maldives resorts, demonstrates Aareal Bank’s commitment to supporting companies like Soneva on our transition to a zero-carbon future.”

As an international property finance house, Aareal Bank contributes to sustainable global growth by structuring tailor-made financings as well as by creating attractive investment

Once completed, Soneva Fushi will have installed a total of 2.1 megawatts peak (MWp) and battery storage of 2,500 kilowatt hours (kWh) to reach a combined PV penetration of approximately 55% by mid-2023. Meanwhile, Soneva Jani installations will total 2.8 MWp and, combined with battery storage of 2,000 kWh, is anticipated to result in a PV penetration of around 52%.


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IN A NUTSHELL

Coco Palm Dhuni Kolhu & Kind Traveler Empower Travellers to Help Rescue Injured Sea Turtles with the Olive Ridley Project



Coco Palm Dhuni Kolhu joins Kind Traveler, the socially conscious Give + Get hotel booking platform that empowers travellers to positively impact the communities they visit. Travellers unlock special rates & perks with curated Kind Hotels upon a \$10 donation to a local charity that positively impacts the community visited, or to charity of choice on Kind Traveller. 100 percent of the donation is given to charity creating a triple win amongst the traveller, charity, and hotel.

Coco Palm Dhuni Kolhu has long been collaborating with the Olive Ridley Project to help rescue and rehabilitate injured sea turtles. Sea turtles often suffer devastating injuries from entanglement in marine debris, swallowing fishing hooks, boat strikes, or being kept inappropriately as a pet. Coco Palm Dhuni Kolhu is home to the Olive Ridley Project Marine Turtle Rescue Centre, the first veterinarian-led turtle rescue centre in the Maldives to treat these injured creatures. Fully equipped with a laboratory, x-ray and ultrasound machines, an endoscope, and surgical facilities, the centre has rehabilitated and released over 107 turtles back into the wild since its opening in 2017.

By offering exclusive rates as a reward for donations, guests make a conscientious decision to stay at Coco Palm Dhuni Kolhu and support the Olive Ridley Project.

A \$10 donation to the Olive Ridley Project will help fund the charity's core charitable objectives, which includes expanding their rescue and rehabilitation efforts and furthering the understanding of sea turtle veterinary care.

Nearly 70 percent of travellers polled in Booking's 2021 Sustainable Travel Study want to know their travel dollars are benefitting the communities they visit.

The partnership between Coco Palm Dhuni Kolhu, the Olive Ridley Project, and Kind Traveler aims to make it easy for travellers to make conscientious, sustainable travel decisions that support the local community.

In terms of the hotel profile, Kind Traveler highlights each property in a meaningful way by connecting the traveller with the local community impact opportunity and 'Kind Factors' – the term used to describe how the

hotel is advancing individual wellness, sustainability, and community impact. This unique way of telling the hotel's story reinforces a commitment to social responsibility, at a time when transparency is expected from today's travellers and consumers.

Some of Coco Palm Dhuni Kolhu's notable Kind Factors include an in-house water purification and glass bottling plant to reduce the use of single-use plastic, a Chef's Garden where they grow their own fruits, herbs, and vegetables, a coral gardening project to replant and

revive their coral reefs, and the use of local materials and craftwork such as traditional Maldivian lacquer work. Coco Palm Dhuni Kolhu is also a nesting site for green sea turtles, with the onsite Marine Biologist working together with the Olive Ridley Project to protect and record these nests until hatching.

"We are thrilled to become a Kind Hotel by partnering with a like-minded platform that puts sustainable and eco-conscious tourism at the forefront," said Coco Palm Dhuni Kolhu General Manager Siraj Ali Waseem. "This partnership also allows us to further strengthen our support of the Olive Ridley Project and the Marine Turtle Rescue Centre on the resort, and it gives our guests more ways to engage with the charity and their amazing work."

"Our win-win platform offers opportunities for meaningful community impact for everyone involved," said Kind Traveler CEO & Co-Founder Jessica Blotter. "For travellers, they fulfill a desire to give back and create a more purpose-driven travel experience – while supporting hotels and charities that are making a positive impact in the world. For hotels, they cultivate new relationships with conscious, responsible travellers and take another step towards creating a more sustainable and regenerative travel experience. Charities receive 100% of donations and a new, sustainable channel for fundraising."



IN A NUTSHELL

Siyam World Launches World's First Ever Underwater Jet Pack in Collaboration with Cudajet

On its path to become the most revolutionary island resort and gamechanger to hit the Maldives tourism industry, Indian Ocean iconoclast Siyam World is at again with the launch of the world's first underwater jet pack in collaboration with Cudajet.

Siyam World made waves already when it opened with the Maldives' biggest floating water park, had rivals trailing in its wake after launching the Maldives' first ever Seabreacher, along first ever water bikes, even a fleet of Mini Mokes, and is now enhancing its collection of unique experiences and pioneering concepts with the revolutionary underwater jet pack, the Maldives and the world's first ever.

The jetpack is a luxury water sports toy that gives you the feeling of ultimate freedom with predator-like manoeuvrability as you fly weightlessly around a new underwater world. The Cudajet can be mounted and dismounted in seconds to perform hot swaps between divers. The harness provides buoyancy

which allows the diver to rest at the surface in-between dives with ease. The Cudajet not only offers unparalleled freedom to explore the underwater world, it also gives the feeling of weightless flight which enables moves like smooth barrel rolls underwater. With its unique mounts, the diver controls the direction of travel, it's as simple as looking where you want to go and your body will follow. With its compact size that packs a speed of up to 3.0 m/s and thrust of 40kg, Cudajet will redefine the concept of free diving.

Siyam World guests can now enjoy the unparalleled freedom of exploring the underwater world in style and speed at USD 149 for 20 minutes or USD 166 for 30 minutes. From a simple fun dive excursion or a more in-depth course from our Cudajet-qualified Dive Temple , guests are able to learn advanced movements and start the journey of receiving Cudajet qualifications right on the island resort.

Siyam World is an unapologetically quirky,



all-embracing five-star all-inclusive island destination that transcends cultures and borders to offer guests an ever-expanding array of 'never-seen-before' experiences – from the Indian Ocean's biggest floating water park to the Maldives' first resort horse ranch. The natural 54-hectare island resort boasts an enticing variety of 18 accommodation categories ranging from 89 to 3,000 square metres, from lush Pool Beach Villas, expansive Beach Suites and

breath-taking Beach Residences to playful overwater Villas complete with irresistible water slides. An exclusive enclave, The Beach House Collection, also features stunning Grand Water Pavilions and the magnificent Palace. All accommodation types overlook the pristine Maldivian waters, come with direct access to the ocean and feature generously proportioned indoor and outdoor living spaces with private pools.

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MOVERS & SHAKERS

Corinna Luebbe Joins Taj Maldives as the First Female Cluster General Manager



With a strong focus on promoting diversity within the organization in line with Indian Hotels Company's (IHCL) 'She Remains The Taj' framework, Taj Maldives welcomes its first female Cluster General Manager - Corinna Luebbe. A leader, community champion, scuba diver and passionate environmentalist, Ms. Luebbe's appointment at Taj Maldives follows a sterling international career spanning over 25 years.

Ms. Luebbe will oversee operations for IHCL's award-winning properties in the Maldives - Taj Exotica Resort & Spa and Taj Coral Reef Resort & Spa. Ms. Luebbe's rich expertise in the hospitality industry stems from her years working with Aman resorts in France and Indonesia and Mandarin Oriental in New York. Her illustrious journey with the Taj includes being a crucial part of the pre-opening team at Taj Exotica, Mauritius, followed by stints at the iconic Pierre hotel in New York, Taj Boston as Hotel Manager and Taj Campton Place, San Francisco as General Manager. Under her leadership, Taj Campton Place was awarded a second Michelin star for its

eponymous restaurant and the coveted Forbes Star Award.

Speaking about her new role, Ms. Luebbe, Cluster General Manager - Taj Maldives states, "It is a moment of pride for me. Maldives is the ideal destination for travellers of all ages, known for its turquoise waters and adventure activities. Its rich biodiversity and natural beauty make it one of the most sensitive ecosystems to operate in, and I look forward to furthering Taj's initiatives to conserve this paradise on earth while curating experiences for guests that will create memories of a lifetime."

With a degree in Economics from the Fachhochschule Wilhelmshaven, Germany, Ms. Luebbe is known for her intrepid spirit and guest-centric approach, with a strong focus on sustainability, which is one of the core values around which Taj Maldives operates. Her arrival coincides with Taj Exotica signing an agreement to install one of the largest solar parks in the Maldives. This will allow the resort to shut down generator operation during the daytime, empowering it to operate

one of the lowest carbon footprints in the nation.

Ms. Luebbe was awarded General Manager of the Year Medium-Sized Hotels in 2019 and was named one of 'The most influential women in Bay area Business 2018'. She was active in the San Francisco community as a Board Member of the Hotel Council of San Francisco and San Francisco Travel Association and is fluent in English, French and German.

Fostering a culture that holds female guests in the highest regard and nurtures its women associates and partners, IHCL's 'She Remains the Taj' is a holistic framework of women-centric initiatives for all stakeholders, including guests, employees, partners and the community. Under 'She Remains The Taj', IHCL aims to raise women's participation in its workforce to 25% by 2025, including 25% of leadership roles at upcoming IHCL hotels to be women.

Ms. Luebbe's leadership at Taj Maldives promises to add another successful dimension to IHCL's outstanding global management roster.

Dwayne Krisko Appointed as the New Culinary Director at Conrad Maldives Rangali Island

Dwayne Krisko has been named as the new Culinary Director at Conrad Maldives Rangali Island, the world-famous twin-island resort that is home to the world's first underwater restaurant, Ithaa. The resort, which is part of the luxury Conrad Hotels & Resorts brand, is renowned for providing guests with an exceptional experience.

As the Culinary Director and an experienced chef, Dwayne will oversee all of the resort's culinary and food and beverage operations, including guests' culinary journeys, sustainability practices, and special events. He will use his extensive experience to bring his expertise and ideas to the resort's 12 award-winning bars and restaurants.

Dwayne brings more than 20 years of culinary experience, working in luxury hotels and resorts all over the world.

Prior to joining Conrad Maldives Rangali Island, he served as Executive Culinary Director at VinGroup in Hanoi, Vietnam, where he launched new concepts and managed eco-friendly projects. He also previously held the position of Culinary Director at One & Only Reethi Rah in the Maldives.

Conrad Maldives Rangali Island is a pioneer among the Maldives' 150 resorts, known for its authentic barefoot luxury experience. The resort has been recently refurbished and continues to offer unique experiences such as the world's first underwater bedroom in its two-level residence, The MURAKA. Dwayne is excited to bring his fresh ideas to the resort and elevate guests' culinary experiences. Carla Puverel, the General Manager of Conrad Maldives Rangali Island, commented that she is delighted to have Dwayne onboard to enhance the



resort's culinary offerings.

Dwayne expressed his excitement to join Conrad Maldives Rangali Island after the resort's multimillion-dollar renovation. Being the first international resort in the Maldives, he looks forward to bringing innovative F&B and culinary concepts to the resort. Carla Puverel, the General Manager, is confident that

Dwayne's passion for culinary and F&B operations, combined with his experience, will elevate the guests' dining experience at their award-winning resort. With his proven track record of managing successful culinary and F&B programs, Dwayne is well-positioned to enhance the resort's sustainability practices, special events, and guest culinary journey.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Hamid Afeef Elected as the President of Restaurant Association of Maldives



During the 3rd Electoral Congress held on February 15, 2023. Restaurants Association of Maldives (RAM) has elected renowned Businessman and Restaurateur, Mr. Hamid Afeef as the association's President.

He is one of the chief founding fathers of RAM since the year 2009 and he is also Chairman of Dhon Manik investment Pvt Ltd and Managing Director of Dhon Manik Restaurants [Restaurateur]. To add to the list of expertise, Mr. Hamid has accumulated 23 years of experience in the field.

Mr. Mohamed Shujau and Mr. Athif Hussain Ahmed were elected as the two Vice Presidents and Mr. Ahmed Rasheed as the Treasurer of the organisation in the senior management. Nine additional Executive Board members were also elected for this year's term.

The Restaurant Association of Maldives (RAM) is an active non-governmental organisation formed to protect the restaurateurs who are actively in business, with ambitious plans to develop and enhance the industry.

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MOVERS & SHAKERS

Crown & Champa Resorts Announces New Key Appointments



Ali Navaz, General Manager of Komandoo Island Resort & Spa

Crown & Champa Resorts, a leading resort collection in the Maldives, has announced three new key appointments across their resorts in the Lhaviyani Atoll. The appointments include Ali Navaz as the General Manager of Komandoo Island Resort & Spa, Bahauddeen as the Resort Manager of Hurawalhi Island Resort,



Bahau, Resort Manager of Hurawalhi Island Resort

and Jorge Amaro as the General Manager of Innahura Maldives Resort.

Ali Navaz, a Maldivian with 22 years of experience in the hospitality industry, has been appointed as the General Manager of Komandoo Island Resort & Spa. He joined Crown & Champa Resorts five years ago and was recently



Jorge Amaro, General Manager of Innahura Maldives Island

promoted to Resort Manager of Hurawalhi Island Resort in March 2021.

Bahauddeen, affectionately known as Bahau, has been in the hospitality industry for 22 years and has played a key role in upholding the world-class experience at Kudadoo Maldives Private Island. He has been appointed

as the Resort Manager of Hurawalhi Island Resort from January 2023.

Jorge Amaro, a Portuguese hospitality expert with 25 years of experience, has been appointed as the General Manager of Innahura Maldives Island, a 78-key resort. He brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise from his work in hotels across France, Portugal, Seychelles, and the Maldives.

Crown & Champa Resorts is known for its collection of properties that cater to every purpose of travel, offering world-class hospitality and authentic Maldivian experiences. With nine resort islands, including Kudadoo Maldives Private Island, Hurawalhi Island Resort, and Veligandu Island Resort & Spa, the resort collection provides thoughtful, attentive services that connect travelers with a passion for a life fully lived to the best of this idyllic destination.

W Maldives Welcomes Constance Chang as Director of Sales & Marketing

W Maldives has announced the appointment of Constance Chang as the Director of Sales & Marketing. With over a decade of experience in luxury and lifestyle hospitality, Constance brings a wealth of knowledge and passion and will lead the sales and marketing team at the resort.

Originally from Singapore, Constance earned her Bachelor of Science in Hotel Administration and Hospitality Administration/Management from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where she achieved Dean's List honors for three consecutive years. A wine aficionado, she also served as the Sales & Marketing Director of the University's Wine Society.

Constance has an impressive track record in the luxury hospitality sector. Before joining W Maldives, she was the Cluster Director of Sales & Marketing at IHG Hotels & Resorts Bali, where she successfully launched various marketing campaigns and events, resulting in increased brand awareness and revenue growth. Some of the roles she's held throughout her career include Director of Sales &

Marketing at Hotel Indigo Bali Seminyak Beach; Account Director, Luxury & Lifestyle at IHG Hotels & Resorts, Singapore; and Business Development Manager, Luxury Leisure Sales & Events at Pan Pacific Hotels Group, Singapore among others.

"We are thrilled to have Constance join our team as the Director of Sales & Marketing. Her experience and leadership will help us drive our commercial efforts to new heights as we continue to position W Maldives as a leading luxury lifestyle resort in the Maldives," said Idu Ribeiro, General Manager of W Maldives.

As Director of Sales & Marketing, Constance will be responsible for driving sales and revenue growth, managing relationships with key stakeholders and partners, and developing and implementing marketing strategies to enhance the resort's brand awareness.

"I am excited to join the team at W Maldives and work with such a talented group of individuals. I look forward to contributing to the resort's continued



success and delivering exceptional experiences to our guests," said Constance Chang.

Constance's fluency in English, Cantonese, and Mandarin is also a great asset for the resort and will facilitate communication with guests and partners from all around the

world. An adrenaline junkie, Constance enjoys Crossfit, Muay Thai, and skydiving in her spare time.

W Maldives is proud to welcome Constance Chang to the team and looks forward to the impact she will make on the resort and the hospitality industry at large.

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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

with

MS. SHAHA HASHIM

Programme Manager
Blue Marine Foundation and Maldives Resilient Reefs

Fostering Resilience

“ *I believe that the local communities must be front and centre of the conservation decision making process because without their support, we would not have effective conservation. We can protect areas and introduce new fisheries management measures, but these would only be on paper if local communities are not involved throughout the decision-making process. We must change this.* ”

In this issue of the Islandchief, we sat with ocean advocate, Ms. Shaha Hashim, Programme Manager, Blue Marine Foundation and Maldives Resilient Reefs. She reflects on her journey and shares her experiences with us. From her early days from school, Shaha talks about the importance of resilience, and how collaboration can play in enhancing momentum in achieving the climate action objectives and not giving up despite the odds.

Can you tell us about your journey to becoming a marine conservationist and programme manager at Blue Marine Foundation?

Growing up in Male', I did not get many opportunities to explore the ocean. However, when I was in fifth grade, my primary school carried out a programme to teach every child to swim. Ever since my first swim, I have felt a special connection with the ocean. It was a place where I felt free and liberated. This affinity opened new doors for me. Soon I joined the school swimming team, and had the opportunity to go snorkelling in Kuda Bandos on one of the programmes. Little did I know back then that I was witnessing what our reefs looked like just before they suffered one of the worst coral bleaching events that killed more than 95% of our corals. I remember it being truly magical. The reef that looked so plain and scary from the surface was full of action, corals and fish of every shape and colour. There was so much life there I did not know where to look at or which was which. I was hooked, but I did not get to pursue this thrill until later in life. I started SCUBA diving recreationally as soon as I started working. Soon I was SCUBA diving almost every weekend and most of my holidays were spent volunteering with marine science and conservation projects. It was through these experiences that I

began realizing the threats to our coral reefs, biodiversity and for us as Maldivians to have a safe future on our small islands. There was no holding me back from the ocean. I enrolled on short-term programmes where I gained technical knowledge and the more experience I gained, the more I wanted to be working in a job where I could pursue my passion and love for the ocean.

In 2016, I got the opportunity to join the grouper fishery and conservation project implemented by Blue Marine Foundation and the Maldives Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture, based in Laamu Atoll. It was a deep dive into marine conservation where I got to directly engage with fisherfolk on how the fishery has declined over time, see first-hand how this had affected grouper spawning aggregations and got to do some cool science on grouper maturity sizes in the Maldives. After the project concluded, I kept on working with Blue Marine Foundation and started developing projects to help gather more evidence and support for improved marine protection. The more knowledge and experience I gained, the more pressing and urgent it became for me to do everything I can to sustain our marine habitats and species and our way of life. In 2020, Blue Marine helped set up the local NGO,

Maldives Resilient Reefs, which I am now heading. Today, we are a team of five Maldivians working on various projects related to marine science and conservation.

How did your experience in STEM fields contribute to your work in marine conservation?

Science provides the knowledge and tools in decision making for conservation. For example, the evidence we gathered in Laamu Atoll on the baseline status of coral reefs, seagrasses, mangroves, and grouper spawning aggregations was used to justify the protection of some of the critical biodiversity hotspots in the atoll. The evidence we gathered on maturity sizes for groupers in the Maldives helped increase the minimal landing size limit for some of the highly valued grouper species.

Advocacy and lobbying are also important if you are working in the STEM fields because the science needs to be understood by policy makers and the public. We use a variety of different science communication techniques. For example, our #FishForTomorrow campaign reached a large percentage of the Maldivian public through social media with interesting messages about vulnerable species on our reefs in a fun and engaging way. Just

two months after the campaign, all parrotfish were declared protected in the Maldives and the campaign helped the public understand the vital role of parrotfish for our reefs and islands in a changing climate.

What are some of the biggest challenges you face as a programme manager for Blue Marine Foundation, and how do you address them?

Conservation is never an easy job anywhere because you are trying to change the way something works to achieve the conservation goals. Undertaking research projects is the easy bit and what we usually have control over. The most challenging part is bringing about effective management which require a lot of time, effort and relationship building. I have faced many challenges along the way, but that is to be expected when you are trying to change the status quo. The important thing is to be guided by your goals, values, and scientific evidence. I step out of my comfort zone every day, but I have no choice to not do this if I want to help bring about effective change.

How do you involve and engage local communities in your conservation efforts, and why is this important?

Maldivians have been living on these islands for hundreds of years, if not thousands. The reason we have what we have today is because our forefathers passed them on to us. I believe that the local communities must be front and centre of the conservation decision making process because without their support, we would not have effective conservation. We can protect areas and introduce new fisheries management measures, but these would only be on paper if local communities are not involved throughout the decision-making process. We must change this.

Today's generation have lost the connection to the ocean that our forefathers had because they do not get to spend as much time in the ocean. So, the first step is to get them to experience the ocean. Through our 'Laamaseelu Farudhun' citizen science programme, we teach the basic ecology of our marine habitats to young people in the communities. We train young Maldivians as citizen scientists on our projects so that they could get first hand exposure to the status of our marine habitats. We present our scientific findings to the communities and try to get them more involved in the decision-making processes.

Can you tell us about a particularly impactful initiative you have led in your role at Blue Marine Foundation?

We have had quite a few conservation successes to date including supporting the protection of new Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) on Laamu Atoll through our research, outreach, and education work. Our campaigns have been very successful. For example, the #ProtectMaldivesSeagrass campaign helped garner the support of 25% of the Maldives tourist resorts in support of seagrass conservation. Our #SaveOurSharks campaign helped form an alliance of over 250 local and international stakeholders in support of maintaining the Maldives shark fishing ban. We have made very good progress on improving the understanding of reef fisheries in the Maldives, particularly on Laamu Atoll. At Six Senses Laamu, we have established a sustainable resort reef fishery model, where fishers from neighbouring communities sign up to a Code of Conduct and take part in the fishery management by reporting their catches and

participating in management meetings. In return, they are guaranteed the best market price for their catch in the atoll, access to safety at sea equipment and trainings. We are now in the process of rolling out this model to other tourist resorts in the Maldives. Very little is known about the resort reef fisheries in the Maldives which hinders effective fisheries management. The health of our coral reefs is very much dependent on healthy reef fish stocks, so this project is extremely important to promote resilient reefs.

How do you measure the success of your conservation efforts, and what metrics do you use to evaluate impact?

We have an organizational strategy with clearly defined goals, impacts, and outcomes and all our projects align with these. For each project there is a monitoring and evaluation framework to measure the success of the interventions. Conservation impacts are often only achieved over a long term so it is important to have a clear vision of what you want to achieve and pathways of achieving them.

How do you stay up to date on the latest research and trends in marine conservation, and incorporate them into your work?

Blue Marine Foundation has a very supportive team in the UK and in other countries they have projects and a strong network of partners. We are very lucky to have access to their expertise. When you are working in conservation, you also get the opportunity to network and work with other organizations and universities. These connections help us stay connected with latest research and trends in marine conservation and help bring new ideas.

This year's International Women's Day theme is #EmbraceEquity. What does this slogan mean to you? What advice do you have for individuals who are passionate about marine conservation and want to make a difference in their communities?

Women makes half the population, yet women are very much underrepresented in management and decision-making roles. It is crucial for women to be

able to have an equal say about things that can affects our lives. The hurdles that women must go through to find a seat at the table is far greater and complex than for men. That is why special considerations need to be given to actively seek women's participation and say in the decision-making processes.

My advice to those who are passionate about marine conservation is to knock on as many doors as possible and find opportunities to gain experience in the field. There are many conservation organizations looking for Maldivians at entry level positions now. Do not worry if you do not have the experience or the skills yet as these are things that you can build as you grow if you have the passion and the drive. The most important advice that I have been given is to have a 'thick skin' because you will face many challenges and criticism along the way, especially when you are trying to change things. Believe in yourself and stand true to your values.

Looking to the future, what are your goals and vision for the future of marine conservation in the Maldives and beyond?

I want to see a Maldives where there is a strong collaboration between the national and local governments and civil society in conservation projects. Being such a small country, we need all hands on deck if we are to be able to tackle the problems in our way. The climate crisis is not something that we have much control over, but maintaining and restoring our natural assets that can protect us from its impacts is.

What legacy do you hope to leave through your work in marine conservation, and what impact do you hope to make on future generations?

I hope to be able to help develop new and more effective models for marine conservation in the Maldives that could be easily replicable. Through our work, I hope that we can contribute to the career development of more Maldivians in this field. My wish is for our future generations to be able to witness and experience the natural beauty of the Maldives so that we could sustain our way of life.



NEW OPENINGS

Diver's Paradise in North Malé Atoll Begins New Chapter as Dhawa Ihuru

Dhawa Ihuru, located on North Malé Atoll, is a beautiful island retreat with a range of world-class diving experiences. The property has recently been rebranded from Angsana Ihuru and is now part of the Dhawa hospitality brand from the Banyan Tree Group. Dhawa Ihuru is a contemporary, limited-service hotel that offers a sense of discovery to independent, design-savvy travelers. The resort features a collection of relaxed dining venues that promote natural immersion and connectivity through local flavors in stunning settings.

Dhawa Ihuru can be experienced through a variety of all-inclusive packages that cater to different types of holidaymakers, from gourmet travelers and wellness aficionados to marine adventurers and young families. The dive-centric retreat offers environmentally-conscious diving in the crystalline waters of the house reef and world-class snorkeling

in the North Malé Atoll. The resort's signature dive spot, the Rannamaari Wreck, is located just a few meters off the house reef and offers a wide variety of species to discover.

Guests at Dhawa Ihuru can enjoy the relaxed comforts of 45 nature-integrated villas that offer privacy and communal areas. The Beachfront Villas are modern and bright, with ample outdoor living spaces, a king-size bed, and direct access to the beach. The Beachfront Jet Pool Villas offer 68 square meters of indoor/outdoor space, including a roomy veranda with a dining area and an outdoor shower with a jet pool. The Beachfront Rainmist Villas offer a private rainmist lounge and a revitalizing water-centric experience.

Dhawa Ihuru offers a range of dining options with all-inclusive packages that take care of daily meal planning. The restaurants are oriented to capitalize on breathtaking sunset



panoramas, while the new Twin Island dine-around concept offers travelers a chance to explore premium dining at sister resort Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru. The Nest is Dhawa's signature 24/7 concept, and the Velaavani Bar offers a chic yet relaxed dining experience centered on local bites and cocktails. The Riveli Restaurant serves elevated fare with breathtaking beachfront views, and Nectar offers bento box-style dining with a range of flavors.

The water sports center at Dhawa Ihuru offers windsurfing, wakeboarding, water skiing, canoeing,



and private sailing excursions with Kahan'bu Catamaran. Guests can snorkel among some of the most beautiful reefs in the Maldives and dine on uninhabited islands. With its natural wonders and immersive experiences, Dhawa Ihuru is the perfect island playground in the North Malé Atoll.

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EVENTS & AWARDS

Food & Beverage Show 2023 Successfully Concludes at Central Park, Hulhumalé



The Maldives' largest food exhibition, the Food & Beverage Show 2023, has recently concluded after three exciting days of showcasing the latest innovations in food and beverage technology. The event, which was held at Hulhumale Central Park from February 23 to 25, 2023, featured the most extensive selection of food and beverage products that catered to the taste of the Maldives.

The event successfully brought together the food and beverage industry of the Maldives, attracting over 10,000 visitors from various sectors, including resorts, hotels, guest houses, liveaboards, restaurant and foodservice operators, foodservice consultants, manufacturers, agents, food brokers, food distributors, food and beverage wholesalers, exporters/importers, equipment manufacturers, culinary experts, and the general public.

Visitors had the opportunity to explore the latest innovations in food and beverage technology during the event, with demonstrations from leading manufacturers and suppliers. Lucky draws, special discounts, and free sampling were also available for visitors to experience before making purchases. Little Chefs, Let's Get Cooking, a segment dedicated to kids, was also held during the event, where young chefs demonstrated their skills in making delicious dishes.

The Food & Beverage Show 2023 was sponsored by BHM Traders, with Nestlé Professional and MHA Pvt Ltd serving as co-sponsors. The event was also supported by Housing Development Corporation Plc (HDC), Business Corporation Center (BCC), Chefs Guild

of Maldives (CGM), and Coca Cola as the Beverage Partner. Gift Partners included Astrabon, Enzi, INK Investments, Mifco, Euro Marketing, and Experglobal. Others included Printlab as Printing Partner, GAGE as Security Partner, Maldives Business Network (MBN) as Videography and Photography Partner, Ooredoo as Digital Partner, Minoos as Media Partner, and Le Souq as Catering Partner.

The Food & Beverage Show 2023 brought together industry leaders and experts to share their knowledge, insights, and experiences, and it provided a platform for networking and collaboration among stakeholders. The event was a great success, and it is expected to continue to grow and evolve in the coming years, as it remains the go-to event for the Maldives' food and beverage industry.

The Food & Beverage Show 2023 also provided a platform for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to showcase their products and connect with potential customers and partners. Many local producers and entrepreneurs exhibited their products, including traditional Maldivian delicacies, homemade jams, and artisanal beverages. The event helped to promote entrepreneurship and support local businesses, contributing to the growth and development of the Maldives' economy. By providing a space for SMEs to participate in the exhibition, the Food & Beverage Show 2023 demonstrated its commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive industry that supports all players in the value chain, from producers to consumers.

Sponsors and Partners Unveiled at the Signing Ceremony of Maldives Marine Expo 2023



The flagship event of the National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM) namely, the Maldives Marine Expo returns with its 8th edition in conjunction with ADEX Maldives on the 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th of March 2023 at Central Park, Hulhumalé. The signing ceremony of Marine Expo, with sponsors and partners was held on February 12, 2023 at Maagiri Hotel, Malé.

The event was attended by the Executive Board Members of National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM), sponsors and partners, special invitees and the media.

Sponsors and partners included: Housing Development Corporation Pvt Ltd (HDC) as Official Host, Maldives Transport and Contracting Company Plc (MTCC) as Main Sponsor, Gulf Craft

Maldives as Co-sponsor, Hawks Pvt Ltd as Official Fuels Supplier, Al Shaali Marine as Official Boat Building Partner, Hassan Marine Engineering Solutions Pvt Ltd as Official Product Partner, Honda Marine / Marine Vibes as Official Marine Engine Partner, Ocean Group as Official Watersports Partner, Marine Equipment as Official Supplier, Itajai India as Official Diving Equipment Supplier, SriLankan Airlines as Official Airline Partner, Beehive Hotel and Maagiri Hotel as Accommodation Partners, Allied Insurance Company of the Maldives as Official Insurance Partner, Clean2Gleam (Happy Market) as Official Boat Cleaning Product, Damas as Official Marine Paint, Cleantech as Hygiene Partner, Graphite as Printing Partner, M7 as Publishing Partner, Shott Beverage as Coffee Partner, Rauch Brand (Happy Market) as

Beverage Partner, Maldives Moments and Official Events as Sound and Light Partners, One Online as Media Partner, IMTM as Media Partner, Minoos as Media Partner, The islandchief as Official Tabloid Partner, Maldives Business Network as Photography and Videography Partner and G Live as Broadcasting Partner. Supporting partners included the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, Business Center Corporation (BCC), Maldives Association of Travel Agents and Tour Operators (MATATO), SME and Entrepreneur Federation of Maldives (SEFM) and Maldives Association of Tourism Industry.

Marine Expo organised by Medium Pvt Ltd is the longest running and the largest commercial event in the Maldives for the marine industry. The event will host all the prominent boat

builders, engine brands, international marine brands, watersports and dive brands participating. The show features multiple opportunities for both participants and visitors to engage in, such as; new product launches, product highlights sessions, boat & equipment display and showcase area, marine foods area for local seafood tasting and product showcase, informative panel discussions about crucial topics in the industry, commercial activities, etc.

This year's Marine Expo will be held on a greater scale compared to the previous years with more international and local exhibitors. Recently, international interest in the Maldives marine industry in luxury boating, luxury transportation, and watersports equipment has further expanded the horizons of the marine industry.

Skyrock Band Releases New Single on March 8



The Skyrock band has announced to release a new single on March 8 this year. The band announced that this single is part of their album, which will be released later on this year. The song paints an empowering powerful

message about willingness and determination in the face of hardship. The fact that the single is released on international women's day is intentional on the band's behalf, as they stated that this decision was

made with the message of their song in mind. The recognition of women who break through the glass ceilings is something that is highly commendable and something that Skyrock feels is a great note to start their journey towards the release of their album.

The Skyrock band is hopeful about the message that this song will give to the public. The band members state their excitement regarding this release and the future projects they have planned in the following months

The band's socials continue to mark their journey going forward, with many performances and songs to be released in the near future.

About Skyrock Band – Skyrock band is a Maldivian band consisting of 6 professional artists. The band has performed in various resorts on various occasions and has appeared in notable events in Male' on the local stage as well.

Skyrock band can be found on – Instagram : @skyrock_band

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/skyrockbandofficial?mibextid=LQQJ4d>

YouTube : <https://www.youtube.com/@Skyrockband>

EVENTS & AWARDS

JOALI Maldives and JOALI Being Named Five-Star Hotels in Forbes Travel Guide's 2023 Star Awards

Forbes Travel Guide ("FTG"), the only global rating system for luxury hotels, restaurants, spas and ocean cruises, today announced its 2023 Star Awards. JOALI Maldives and JOALI BEING have both earned a new Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star award and are showcased with other honorees on

ForbesTravelGuide.com. Forbes Travel Guide is the world-renowned authority on excellence in hospitality, and JOALI Maldives and JOALI BEING are the latest addition to its illustrious annual Star Rating list.

"We are honoured to have both JOALI Maldives and JOALI BEING receive the highest Five-Star ranking by Forbes Travel Guide and be among an esteemed portfolio of destinations," said Esin Gral Argat, founder of JOALI. "A true seal of success, this prestigious award is a testament to our dedicated teams who continue to provide personalised, inspiring and unforgettable experiences to travellers. We look towards a bright future for the JOALI brand as we continue to showcase our unwavering commitment to sustainability, nature

immersion and responsible travel." Celebrating its fifth anniversary this year and also receiving the coveted Five-Star Rating in 2022, JOALI Maldives is the first and only art-immersive retreat in the Maldives. With a joie de vivre or "Joy of Living" philosophy, travellers to JOALI Maldives experience this ethos through an incredible collection of artworks that unfold across the island, created in collaboration with artists and local artisans to support the surrounding community. Located in one of the largest and deepest atolls in the world, the 73-villa resort features dedicated "jadugars" (the Maldivian word for "magician") for each villa, various innovative dining concepts including the iconic Manta Tree House, JOALI Spa by ESPA, marine adventures, programming for the whole family, and more.

JOAL BEING, the only wellbeing retreat of its kind in Maldives, opened in November 2021 and this year celebrates its first Five-Star Rating. A dedicated, wellbeing destination like none other, JOALI BEING meets guests



where they are at for a personalised journey of self-discovery and renewal, leading the pathway to true "weightlessness".

With 68 exclusive guest villas, JOALI BEING is home to the finest wellbeing facilities and unique transformational spaces that allow guests to immerse in elemental therapies and healing experiences, paired with educational workshops and experiential classes with wellbeing experts, culinary

maestros, herbalists, and more.

"Travel is in an incredible position for continued growth, as people prioritize authentic, in-person experiences," says Amanda Frasier, President of Ratings for Forbes Travel Guide. "The hotels, ocean cruises, restaurants and spas on our 2023 Star Rating list demonstrate an impressive commitment to creating memorable environments that nurture connection, joy and sense of place as we experience the world to its fullest."

Paradise Island Resort & Spa Achieves International Environmental Green Key Award



Villa Resorts has announced that Paradise Island Resort & Spa has been awarded the International Environmental Green Key award. A leading standard of excellence in the field of environmental responsibility and sustainable operation within the tourism industry, this prestigious eco-label award represents Villa Resorts commitment to a sustainable way of life and preserving the

Maldives fragile environment.

Paradise Island Resort, located in North Male' Atoll have implemented a sustainability policy and concrete plan with objectives and annual actions formulated for continuous improvements in environmental management, social and cultural commitments and health and safety issues. The resort has developed

strategies to keep the natural ecology of the island untouched for the future. This includes avoiding the use of pesticides and environmental pollutants and using natural alternatives as well as using eco cleaning products.

The installation of an advanced solar panel system aids in the resorts production of clean, renewable energy. Moreover, Paradise Island Resort & Spa continually monitors the usage of energy and water and has devised innovative initiatives to minimize usage with the aim to reduce the carbon footprint and work towards the goal to achieve carbon neutrality.

The resort has elected an Environment Manager and Environment Committee to oversee the environmental initiatives and continue to work towards annual goals. The high environmental standards that Paradise Resort has achieved to become Green Key certified will be

maintained through rigorous documentation and frequent audits.

In addition to environmental initiatives, the resort demonstrates consistent commitment to ocean preservation. Paradise Island Resort's dive center, diveOceanus have implemented a Coral Garden restoration programme in the hope to preserve and protect the coral reefs for the future. The restoration programme aims to reproduce healthier coral which will be resilient to ocean temperature changes and in future foster a healthier and more robust house reef.

Villa Resorts invite all guests to be part of a sustainable future by supporting the resort in their sustainable initiatives to save energy, recycle and conserve the natural environment; which in turn offers a more immersive adventure and inspires a deeper connection with the Maldives nature during their vacation.

EVENTS & AWARDS

Alila Kothaifaru Maldives Achieves EarthCheck Design Silver Certification



Exemplifying the commitment to sustainable and responsible tourism that is a hallmark of the Alila brand, Alila Kothaifaru Maldives has been awarded EarthCheck Design Silver certification, having met the rigorous certification criteria of EarthCheck's Building Planning and Design Standard (BPDS).

EarthCheck is the world's leading scientific benchmarking, certification and advisory group for the travel and tourism industry. EarthCheck Planning and Design science is aligned with the international best practice for the built environment. Its Design Standards provide a holistic sustainability framework to guide development and refurbishment projects towards asset efficiency and business improvement.

Opened in 2022, Alila Kothaifaru Maldives was mindfully designed in alignment with EarthCheck's BPDS standards and best practice performance benchmarks. The resort echoes the values of Alila Hotels and Resorts by presenting a blend of luxury and innovative style designed in harmony with the surrounding environment. Here, simplicity, sustainability and physical connections to the environment combine to create understated, sophisticated spaces for guests to unwind, breathe, reflect and be restored while preserving the extraordinary natural beauty of the destination.

Located on the island of Kothaifaru in the scenic Raa Atoll, the all-pool-villa resort's modern minimalist architecture was designed by

Singapore-based Studiogoto, which took its cue from the island's flat topography to create an environment that feels completely at one with nature by conserving up to 70% of the island's natural vegetation.

The resort's landscape-oriented design unfolds in terraced layers integrated into the natural surroundings to provide a sense of intimacy and total privacy for each of the 80 beach and water villas while being open to awe-inspiring views. Against the quiet backdrop of the island's lush vegetation, the low-rise pavilions and villas cascade gradually, creating the experience of living in a garden and looking out towards the ocean.

Beyond the conservation of natural vegetation, Alila Kothaifaru Maldives implements a variety of other measures to minimise its impact on the environment, including water conservation, a recycling and waste management system, and efforts to minimise carbon emissions.

"Congratulations to Alila Kothaifaru Maldives on achieving EarthCheck Design Certification! The EarthCheck Design Standard provides a clear signal to owners and operators that the resort has been designed and built to meet or exceed industry best practice performance levels. Alila's ongoing commitment to responsible and sustainable tourism continues to set a benchmark for other operators to follow and this achievement is a testament to the dedication and commitment of the entire team," Stewart Moore, CEO of EarthCheck shares.

HONDA MARINE



Marine Vibe

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IN THE NEWS

Ooredoo Maldives to Host Ooredoo STEM Fair to Promote STEM Education

Ooredoo Maldives, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Women in Tech Maldives, is proud to announce Ooredoo STEM Fair, an interschool event where students will showcase their projects in the different STEM fields - science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The fair is scheduled to take place on March 2-3, 2023, at Izzudheen School Hall in Male, Maldives.

The objective of the Ooredoo STEM Fair is to promote the use of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to solve real-world problems while creating awareness among the students in the STEM field. This fair will be an educational and motivating experience for the students to experience STEM subjects, learn from industry professionals and have the

opportunity to showcase their creativity, innovative thinking, and technical skills.

"We believe in the importance of promoting STEM education among the youth in the Maldives. Ooredoo STEM Fair is an excellent opportunity for students to demonstrate their talents and ideas, learn from their peers, and get inspired by the innovations that are happening around them. We are excited to provide a platform for students to explore their interests in STEM fields and showcase their skills." Ooredoo Maldives Chief Commercial Officer, Hussain Niyaz.

The Ooredoo STEM Fair promises to be a fun, engaging, and educational event for all participating students and visitors. It is open to the public, and everyone is invited to visit the fair.



Ooredoo Maldives provides an innovative range of 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 Maldives has transformed the digital lives of communities across the Maldives.

'Savaadheetha Dhathuru' Maldives Yacht Rally 2023 Second Edition Commences



Savaadheetha Dhathuru" is Maldives Integrated Tourism Development Corporation's (MITDC) flagship voyage, where sailors from across the globe participate in a journey that showcases the beauty, diversity, and culture of the Maldives, which can only be experienced within the local islands.

Through these efforts, MITDC intends to promote community-based tourism, along with sail tourism, and utilize the benefits to strengthen the position the Maldives hold as one of the best travel destinations in the world. The second edition of the rally began on March 1, 2023 from the Noonu Atoll, taking a course of 2 weeks to reach Maamigili in Alif Dhaal Atoll.

The opening ceremony was held at the first stop of the rally, N. Landhoo. The ceremony started with locals clad in traditional attire welcoming the guests and dignitaries with cooling drinks. The official opening ceremony commenced with the recital of the

Quran, followed by a Welcome note by the Island Council.

Speech by Managing Director of MITDC, Mohamed Raaidh, Thanked Landhoo Council and all other councils for their support during this year's rally. During his speech he paid a tribute to the pioneers of the 2 pioneers of the Maldives Nautical Tourism – Mr. Hickory Ahmed Adam and Mr. Solah Shihab. Raaidh also said "I believe that now is the time to introduce new products to the market and for a nation of seafarers who love the sea, what better products than that of sail or nautical tourism, intertwined with community-based tourism".

The ceremony also consisted of a cultural event by the students of Landhoo School. In his speech, Chief Guest Honorable Dr. Abdulla Mausoom focused his attention on the importance of preserving the local culture and diversification of tourism. He further called all local communities to work together in bringing the



necessary services for tourism to start in these islands.

The CEO of JLS, Captain Stephen Corbett shared information on the upcoming employment opportunities through JLS Yachts in the middle eastern countries and also the opportunities the youth have in completing their licenses in powerboats here in the Maldives.

Mr. Fabian Fernandez (the Malaysian Circumnavigator) said "It's absolutely right that Maldives is a small country with a big heart". The MP of Manadhoo Constituency Mr. Ahmed Haaron thanked MITDC and all government authorities for the opportunity and in his speech, he mentioned that Landhoo is one of the most culturally rich island in Noonu Atoll.

The ceremony was concluded with a scrumptious Maldivian Style Breakfast for all the guests and dignitaries. The ceremony was attended by Minister of Tourism Honorable Dr Abdullah

Mausoom, Minister of Arts, Culture & Heritage Honourable Yumna Maumoon, High Commissioner of India to Maldives, His Excellency Shri Munu Mahawar, Defence Advisor Captain Mahesh Chandra Moudgil State Minister for Arts & Culture Mr. Mohamed Thoriq, Deputy Minister of Economic Development Mr. Riyaz Mansoor, Member of Parliament, Manadhoo Constituency, Honourable Ahmed Haroon, Chairman of MITDC Dr Mohamed Kinaanath, Managing Director of HDC Mr. Ahmed Athif, Head of Marine police, Maldives Police Service Mr. Ibrahim Adnan Members of the Landhoo Council Royal Selangor Yacht Club Commodore Mr. Che Wan Mohamed Azuar & Vice Commodore Mr. Ramasamy Menon Managing Director of Sail Malaysia Mr. Sazli Kamal Basha, Representatives of various Partner Corporations & Companies.

MITDC is embarking on this journey with a total of 13 yachts registered in 6 different countries. Sailors of 13 different nationalities will be sailing in these 13 yachts, and MITDC is extremely pleased to announce that, for the very first time, 2 vessels registered in the Maldives, are also joining us in this Rally. Sailors will be out in the sea for 19 days, cruising through 5 atolls and making stops at 9 inhabited islands. This journey will start off from Landhoo, and make stops at Hinnavaru, Goidhoo, Thoddoo, Rasdhoo, Ukulhas, Dhangethi, Dhigurah and Maamigili. The first activities of the rally started with a two day stay at the first stop, N. Landhoo.

IN THE NEWS

China Opens Doors for Maldivians with Visa-Waiver Agreement



The Maldives and China have announced that their visa-waiver agreement has now taken effect, allowing Maldivian travellers to enter China without a prior visa. Although the agreement was signed in 2020, it

had not taken effect due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, with restrictions being lifted, Maldivians can now travel to China without a visa on a 30-day visa-free basis. This new visa-free travel arrangement is

expected to promote tourism and strengthen ties between the two nations.

The Maldives is a small island nation located in the Indian Ocean, and its

economy is highly dependent on tourism. Over the years, China has become an important source of tourists for the Maldives. The new visa-free arrangement is therefore expected to boost tourism in the Maldives, which has suffered greatly due to the pandemic.

In addition to the visa-waiver agreement with China, the Maldives has also signed similar agreements with other nations in recent years. For example, in 2019, the Maldives signed a visa-waiver agreement with the United Arab Emirates, which enabled Maldivians to travel to the UAE without a visa for a stay of up to 90 days. Similarly, a visa-waiver agreement was signed with the Seychelles, allowing Maldivians to visit the island nation without a visa for up to 90 days.

This visa-free travel agreement is part of China's efforts to boost tourism and strengthen ties with the Maldives. In recent years, China has been actively seeking to deepen its economic and diplomatic ties with countries around the world, including in South Asia. The visa-free arrangement with the Maldives is therefore an important step in strengthening the bilateral relationship between the two nations.

President Solih Inaugurates Kudagiri - Picnic Island in Male' Atoll

President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih has officially inaugurated the Kudagiri picnic island on Saturday, February 11, 2023. Developed as a picnic destination for the residents of the Malé region, Kudagiri offers a modern and eco-friendly concept for families to spend time together in comfort.

The island, located 10.5 km from the capital city of Male', takes about 15 minutes by speed boat. Kudagiri was developed through dredging and planting of trees, which delayed its opening from the original Independence Day schedule of 2022.

Kudagiri offers facilities including a convenience store, changing rooms, showers, mosque, and a café that provides various dining options for those visiting for picnics, events, and

special occasions. The café also offers 'Dhathuru Packs', set meals for families and groups visiting Kudagiri who may not be able to prepare their own meals.

Kudagiri also prioritizes People with Disabilities (PWD) needs. PWDs have free entrance to the island and require no fees for transportation. The island has dedicated Ashi and allocated a Gifili for their convenience. Ring roads and a special ramp have been built to make it easier to access the beach and ocean. The island provides three wheelchairs for free use.

Kudagiri also prioritizes security, with 44 security cameras installed for the safety of visitors. "We're so proud and grateful for the unwavering support shown by Housing Development Corporation Limited



employees. We would like to thank them for their incredible contributions, tireless dedication, and the amazing things they have done! Their efforts can be seen all throughout Kudagiri."

Kudagiri is a welcome addition to the Maldives, providing a beautiful and accessible destination for families to enjoy picnics and events in comfort.

BON APPÉTIT

Fehi Fehi Aazaadhee (Green Chicken)



Green curry has become more vibrant over the years with the addition of fresh coriander, mint leaves, Greek leaves. These herbs are combined with fresh green chilies and several other ingredients. You can have it as breakfast or dinner. Its not a heavy curry. It taste light.

Aminath Maasha is an enthusiastic young chef who grew up in the island of Holhudhoo, in Noonu Atoll with a passion for culinary arts. After finishing O' Levels, she moved to Male' in 2017, joined Maldives National University and completed a 6 months course on culinary arts, to pursue her culinary dream. It was short but intensive program that led her to the hospitality industry in 2018; an apprenticeship Opportunity at Four Seasons Resort Maldives.

Her career as a Chef began at Jumeirah Vittaveli when she started working at the resort as a Commis Chef. Moving up the ladder and broadening her exposure to the culinary field in the hospitality industry; she moved to Six Senses Laamu in 2020 and is working there as a Commis. Encouraged by the diversity of opportunities available in the tourism sector, Maasha had always dreamt of working in the hospitality industry even as a little girl, "I always loved the hospitality industry and the opportunities it provided for the young people"; she said. Living in a resort island, away from family and friends was one of the toughest decisions she had to make so far. She believes it made her become responsible and independent. "It also taught me useful life skills like time management and multitasking" she said feeling gratitude.

Maasha has a loving family behind her back, cheering for her and motivating her. Her mother is her role model, "she inspires me to work hard and live independently" she said with love and admiration, Her biggest dream is "to excel in this career and be an inspiration to all the girls who are thinking about a career in this industry" she declared confidently. Her advice to those reluctant but dreaming of a career in the hospitality industry is simple, "this industry is a great platform to showcase your skills and build a rewarding career. Always believe in yourself. Don't let anyone stop you from achieving your dreams. Nothing is impossible with hard work and determination".

INGREDIENTS:

- Chicken 1kg
- Salt/ pepper to taste
- Oil 3 Table soon
- Garlic (chopped) 4 - 5 Cloves
- Onion (chopped) 2
- Dried Fenu Greek leaves 1 tea spoon.
- Yoghurt, half cup
- Coriander 1 cup
- Mint leaves 1/4 cup
- Green chillie 4 nos
- Garam Masala 1/2 tea spoon

METHODS:

- Cut the chicken into medium size.
- Pieces grind coriander mint leaves and green chili to a fine paste.
- Heat oil in a pan and add chopped garlic and fry for 4.5 seconds, then add the onions and fry for 4.5 seconds, then add the onions and fry till golden brown.
- Add fenugreek leaves and fry for a minute.
- Add gram masala and fry on a low heat very well till the oil begins to separate.
- Add yoghurt and continue to fry.
- Add the month and coriander paste and cook for a minute or 2.
- Add the chicken pieces continue to cook on a low heat.
- Adjust the salt and add fresh cream.
- Serve hot with chapathi or rice.

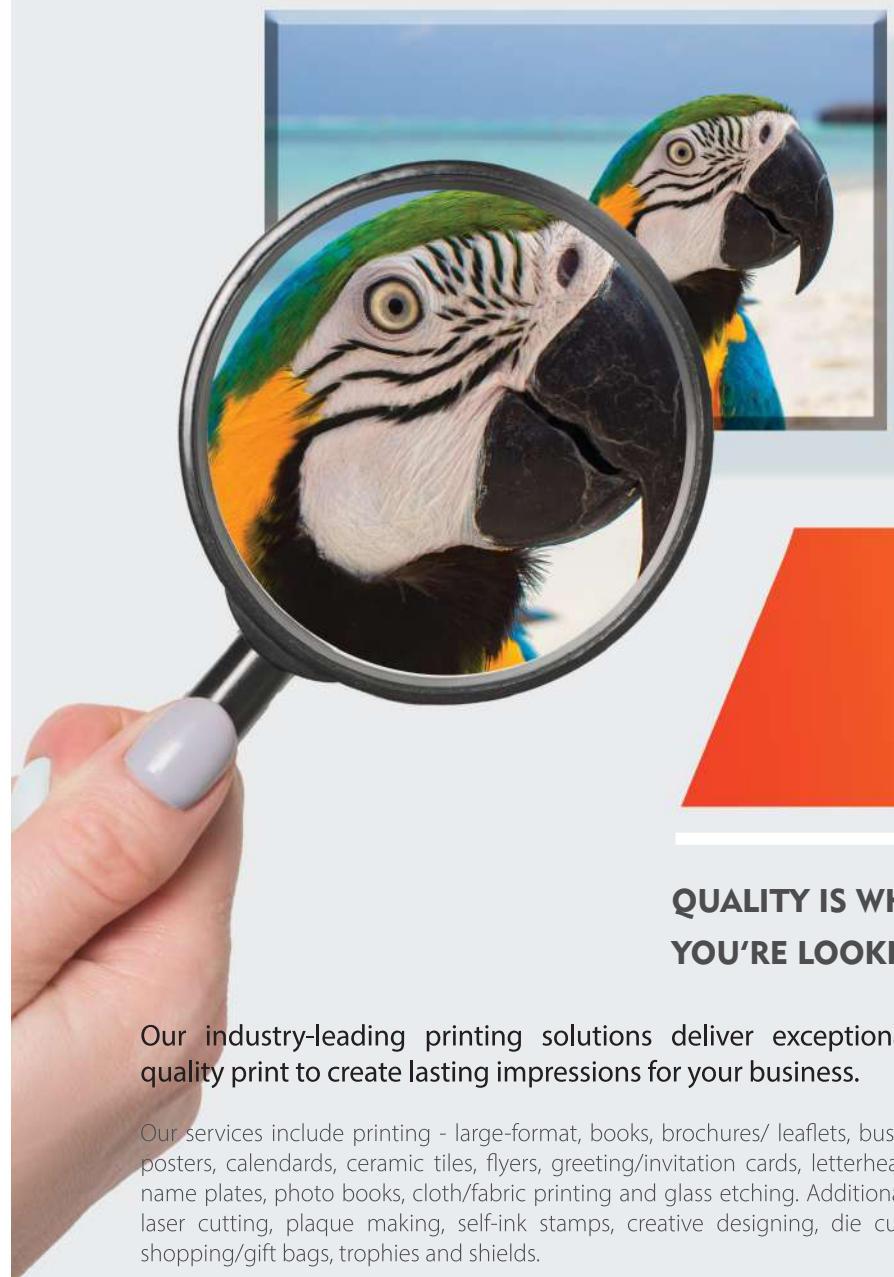


Courtesy
Commis Chef
Aminath Maasha
Patina Maldives, Fari Islands



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Frankly Speaking

It is expected that the expansion of Hanimaadhoo International Airport with an investment of MVR 2 billion will change the entire tourism and trade landscape in northern Maldives. What are the pros and cons from this project?



Ibrahim Ali Jaleel
Vice President
SEFM

Direct international flights will pave the way to grow the tourism sector in the region, which will change the entire trade system in the region. HIA will create business opportunities and jobs in the region.

Hanimaadhoo is about 30 minutes by air to India and now with many budget and commercial airlines, and 1 in 3 Indians being in the middle income band means we can consider India as the major arrivals.

To cater the demand of this new Airport, we need to create at least 10,000 beds in the region, and upgrade the port in the region, to facilitate the goods and support services.

Furthermore we need to train and upgrade the skills of the people in the region, for these new businesses coming to the region. One of the Major challenges is to get the required youths from the region as we have a limited population.



Ahmed Zubair Adam
Managing Director
Blue Horizon

Expansion of airports is a good initiative as it diversifies the international airports but without funding for the necessary beds (single borrower limits and over exposure to tourism sector etc...) the beds cannot come , hence without the funding the airports cannot become the catalyst. Maldives also needs to change from Fitch C rating to B rating , national airline and ports need to come as well.



Mohamed Khaleel
Managing Director
Reollo Travel

I think this is not required and the Government should spend this money to develop VIA instead. If we have a surplus budget then we can do these nice projects. For me, it's nice to have an airport similar to GAN.

About GAN airport , I don't think that the airlines are not coming there because of lack of facilities. Runway is good enough to land the Airbus A330, Terminal is good enough to cater the A330 full load capacity, and the fuel firm is there.

Hanimaadhoo is not going to change the tourism landscape as portrayed. Airport is just one component of the tourism landscape.

VIA can change the landscape and have potential to make it a transit hub for East to West traffic.

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